

The Ring Lake Carillon

Ring Lake Ranch • Dubois, Wyoming • Fall 2013

An ecumenical retreat center • “renewal in a sacred wilderness”

*“No synonym for God is so perfect as Beauty. Whether as seen carving the lines of the mountains with glaciers, or gathering matter into stars, or planning the movement of water, or gardening—still all is Beauty!”
• John Muir*

THE SECRET LIFE of Ring Lake Ranch

One of our guests took an amazing time-lapse video this summer, an overnight sequence shot from the canoe beach on Trail Lake. One frame of that video caught a meteor streaking across the sky with the glow of the Milky Way in the background. I spent a good amount of time watching the stars this past summer, both by myself and with other people. If we were lucky and attentive, we were rewarded with a brilliant, momentary slash of light like the one in the photograph.

This sense of having been in just the right place at just the right time brought to mind other, similar experiences at the Ranch. The majesty of the surrounding mountains is a constant, as is the warm community of each seminar, and even the wind can seem unrelenting and ever-present. But there are many little things to enjoy that require timing, luck, patience, knowledge – sometimes all at once.

Two summers ago, I stayed in Cabin 5 for the last few weeks of the season and I noticed a stand of half a dozen tall, dark green plants with a burst of purple blossoms on the top. It was a stand of Rocky Mountain Bee plant. This summer, the stand expanded to dozens of plants that filled a circle 6' in diameter. The only

place that it seems to grow around the Ranch is next to cabin 7, so it was only the couple dozen guests that stayed in Cabin 7 or 5 in the late summer who got to enjoy the flowers and the dozens of bees that they attracted.

On the rare days when I don't lead morning prayer, I like to walk down to the corral and help feed the horses. There are always a few moments of high emotion as the horses come in and sort out who will eat what pile of hay, but after that, they settle in and munch quietly on their breakfast. The time before the sun rises fully and we have to move on to other things is never long, but there is hardly a more calming, meditative place on the Ranch than standing for those few minutes at the corral fence in the early morning, listening to the horses.

Sunday afternoons at the Ranch are sometimes a little hectic: Where is everyone staying? Who will be arriving late? What time is orientation? Once everyone gathers for our first meal together, however, I often notice something remarkable: full, intense, spirited conversation among people who, in most cases, have just met a few minutes before. Most Sundays I look up from my own table and conversation and hear peals of laughter or the heartfelt

connection of “oh, you too?” I've been in many group conferences and mission trips, but there is nothing like the immediate connection that people find around meals at Ring Lake Ranch.

I share these experiences partly because Ring Lake Ranch is a place of almost boundless beauty and wonder. I hope as you come to the Ranch that you can come with the intent to be present, to be here, enough in your particular time to find your own 'secret' encounters. But I also see these experiences representing one of the challenges of the Ranch as a whole. If you are reading this article, you've probably already been to the Ranch. From the perspective of the great wide world, there are really only a handful of us who have had the timing, luck, knowledge, and whatever else, converge to have visited Ring Lake Ranch. As I have shared a few hidden experiences with you, I hope you will share your own favorite Ranch times with family and friends. Even simply handing on this newsletter to someone else can help ensure that the life of Ring Lake Ranch doesn't stay a secret and that its offerings of peace and renewal will be available to others for many years to come.

• *Andy Blackmun, Director*



FAMILY REUNIONS *at Ring Lake Ranch*

Lynn Williamson has come to the Ranch several times with clergy groups, but last summer, she and her two sisters brought their families for a week together. If you would like to do the same, Amanda Verheul, Ranch Business Manager, will be happy to work with you on the details of your stay!

Three sisters, three families, ten people, one teenager, three young adults, all looking for a place to spend time re-connecting with one another---we found that place at Ring Lake Ranch this past summer.

For one week, we walked, hiked, rode horses, went whitewater rafting and canoeing, and explored petroglyphs. We enjoyed the evening speaker as much as we enjoyed the day's activities.

There were opportunities to be alone with our books and with piano and voice practice. There was time for cousins to have the freedom and space to be together. There was time for sisters to laugh and cry together.

Even though we came from four different states, travel arrangements were easy. Amanda and the Ranch made the rest of the logistics simple: three cabins, one for each family; all meals provided (no one had to plan, shop, or cook). Three sisters, three families, ten people --we will definitely return for another reunion to Ring Lake Ranch—we hope next time with even more family members.

•Lynn Williamson

The Ring Lake Ranch Carillon

Published twice yearly by
Ring Lake Ranch
Designed by
Roderick Robertson
Selected photographs by
Linda Bryant
Anna Pinckney Straight
Bill Oliver, Wendy Belkin
Marge McIntosh
Amanda Verheul

RLR Board of Directors
David Cramp, *President*
Sean Roche,
Vice-President & Treasurer
Kathy Leithner, *Vice-President*
Judith Plows, *Secretary*
Ann Hunter, Gerry Balboni,
Julie Mavity Maddalena,
Bill Brown, Doug Melius,
Jerry Campbell

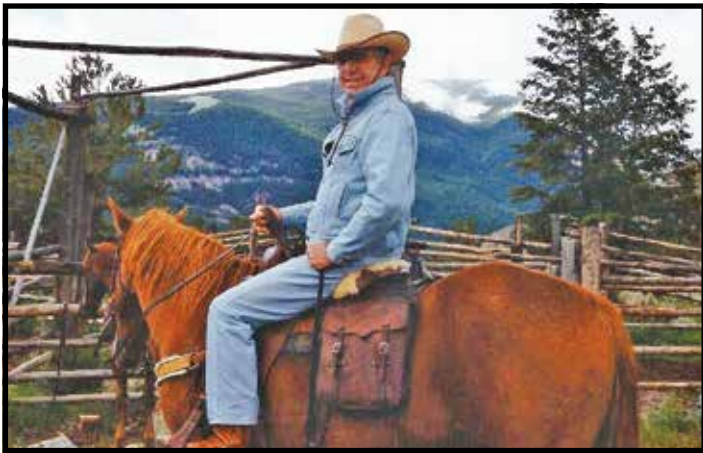
Online Gift Shopping for the Holidays!

You may not be able to get out to the Ranch again until next summer, but you can still get to our online gift shop! We have great merchandise available for gift-giving before the holidays, including special sale items each month. Have a look at www.ringlake.org/store.



Ring Lake Ranch and the Elements of Life

Take a moment to reflect on the distinctive and uplifting experience that all, young and old, find at Ring Lake Ranch. I think of it as a balance among four important elements in life: affirming camaraderie, healing solitude, enjoying the natural world, and growing by learning. In differing quantities and mixes, all of us need these to give our lives renewed richness and imbue our perspectives with increased wisdom. These are among the experiences that make us human--and that make us better humans.



In today's technology enhanced, media driven, and globalized world these are also increasingly difficult experiences to find. The opportunity to experience all that Ring Lake Ranch represents becomes rarer every year. This is why your support of Ring Lake Ranch is so important. You have the chance to help preserve this pristine and scarce treasure so that it may continue to offer its gifts of richness and wisdom to all who come in years ahead.

If you can, please consider joining me in supporting Ring Lake Ranch with a financial contribution.

• *Jerry Campbell, RLR Board of Directors*

In Memoriam: Dick McIntosh

Friends of Ring Lake Ranch will be saddened to hear that Dick McIntosh, former President of the Ring Lake Ranch Board, died on June 27, 2013. Dick provided leadership during the transition that brought the Ranch to a stable position. Dick and his wife, Marge, spent many summers attending seminars at Ring Lake Ranch. Dick and Marge also lead three mission work trips from the Fullerton Presbyterian Church to Ring Lake Ranch for Volunteer Week. Their volunteer efforts can be seen everywhere around the Ranch. Because of their love and appreciation for the serenity and spiritual renewal that Ring Lake Ranch provided, Dick and Margery helped plan and finance the building of cabin 8.

Dick McIntosh was the Dean of Humanities at Cypress College and taught English and German at Fullerton College.

• *Terri Schulz, RLR Board of Directors*



A New Arrival!

We are thrilled to announce that we have another addition to the Ring Lake Ranch family! Dayla Marie Verheul was born to Ben and Amanda on August 22nd. She was 7 lbs 14 oz and 19 inches. Everyone in the family is doing fine, and Ben and Amanda appreciate all of your support. Welcome, Dayla!

Ring Lake Ranch



June 1 - 7 Jan Richardson & Garrison Doles *Essential Treasure: Engaging a World That Believes It Has Seen Everything*

Art. Story. Song. Poetry. We in the church often treat these as frivolous and secondary, something to engage in if there's time and budget enough after our "real" work is done. What would our churches look like if we understood these instead as treasures that hold the power to help save us? What if we were to view the richly expressive telling of our sacred story as the starting place for ministry? This will be a great week to explore art, story, song, and poetry as sacred gifts that hold the power to transform us, the church, and the world. [Jan Richardson](#) is an artist, writer, and ordained minister in the United Methodist Church. She directs The Wellspring Studio, LLC, and travels widely as a retreat leader and conference speaker. Her books include *Night Visions* and *In the Sanctuary of Women* as well as popular blogs. [Garrison Doles](#) is an award-winning songwriter known for his distinctive style that's hard to describe and easy to love. Through his Song Chapel concerts, Garrison engages audiences around the country with his fresh approach to scripture that draws listeners deeper into the heart of God.



June 15-21 Larry Loendorf & Grant Bulltail *American Indian Memories of the Absaroka and Wind River Mountains*

(Session is Full; Wait List Only, Please)
In the 1800's Wyoming's Sheep Eater Indians were respected by other Shoshone bands because they lived high up among the powerful spirits of the cannibal owls, the rocky-skin ghosts, and the water ghosts, supernatural entities we see among the petroglyphs around Ring Lake Ranch. [Larry Loendorf](#) will focus on the Sheep Eater Indians and their use of the spiritual forces associated with the petroglyphs on Ring Lake Ranch. Loendorf is a cultural anthropologist and archaeologist who has done ground-breaking work on the 'Dinwoody Style' petroglyphs of the Torrey Valley.

For the Crow Indians, the Greater Yellowstone area was a homeland alive with the presence of the sacred. Their Creation Story takes place along the Yellowstone, or as the Crow called it, the Elk River. [Grant Bulltail](#) will focus on the Crow idea of sacred energy - the creative powers of the universe that stemmed from the Ultimate Source and undergirded the relationship the Crow had with the natural world and with their spirit helpers. Bulltail is a spiritual leader and Pipe Carrier for the Crow's Sacred Tobacco Society, a former rodeo rider and professional cowboy, and professor of Crow Culture and History at Little Bighorn College.



July 13-19 Barbara Brown Taylor *Lunar Spirituality: Learning to Walk in the Dark*

(Session is Full; Wait List Only, Please)
While human fear of the dark is so well-established that "darkness" has become a synonym for everywhere we do not want to go, plenty of us are called to keep moving even when we cannot see the way ahead. In spite of everything we have been taught, learning to walk in the dark puts us on the sacred way of unknowing, where there are fewer obstacles to encountering the God we did not make up. This week's program will include some experience of the actual dark along with discussion of what is sometimes called "the negative way" by writers as diverse as Meister Eckhart, John of the Cross, Dorothee Soelle, and Gerald May. [Barbara Brown Taylor](#) is the Butman Professor of Religion at Piedmont College in rural north-east Georgia. An Episcopal priest since 1984, she is the author of twelve books, including the New York Times bestseller *An Altar in the World*. Her first memoir, *Leaving Church*, met with widespread critical acclaim, winning a 2006 Author of the Year award from the Georgia Writers Association.



July 20-26 Alan & Jeanie Mebane *This Living Land*

Ring Lake's surroundings amid the Wind River Mountains intrigue us all. Why is Wyoming composed of ancient granites, former sea-beds, up-and-coming mountains, and even a modern volcano? What plants and animals live here today? How do they adapt to these environments and each other? What evidence shows that Ring Lake's early human inhabitants revered this area as early as 6,000 years ago? Our session includes hikes and strolls in this dramatic and intriguing landscape, as well as illustrated evening sessions. [Alan and Jeanie Mebane](#) came to the Rockies after graduation from Duke University and the University of Nebraska. Alan was a National Park ranger/naturalist for 31 years including three years at Grand Teton NP and ten years as Chief Interpreter of Yellowstone NP. Jeanie has been a naturalist with both the National Park Service and US Forest Service. She currently authors children's books and articles on natural history.



July 27 - Aug 2 Carol Newsom *Looking at Job, Looking in the Mirror*

The book of Job has often been a reflecting pool where succeeding generations have looked to see the urgent issues of their own time mirrored in this enigmatic book. In recent decades this engagement with Job has often taken place in art—especially drama and film. In this session we will look at the engagement with Job in two critical periods. The aftermath of World War II saw an outpouring of dramas and poetic works (most famously, MacLeish's *J.B.*, but also Elie Wiesel's *The Trial of God*), most of which were post religious or deeply alienated. In the twenty-first century, the PBS Holocaust film, "God on Trial," echoed Wiesel, while Terrence Malick's extraordinary film "Tree of Life" offers a different vision of Job. [Carol Newsom](#) is the Charles Howard Candler Professor of Old Testament at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University. A scholar of the book of Job and of the Dead Sea Scrolls, she also is interested in the formation of religious responses to the impact of climate change.

2014 Schedule of Programs



Aug. 3 – 9
Frances Taylor Gench

Desperate Housewives? Engaging Challenging Texts

The Bible is full of embarrassing, offensive, problematic texts that present serious interpretive challenges for contemporary Christian faith and practice. Should they be repudiated? Discarded? Silenced? Or are there perhaps more effective and faithful ways of handling them? This session will tackle the importance of engaging difficult texts directly, with the expectation that we may encounter the living God in our conversation with them. It will provide the opportunity to wrestle with such texts, to consider interpretive strategies for engaging them with integrity, and to reflect on the authority of Scripture. **Frances Taylor Gench** is the Herbert Worth and Annie H. Jackson Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, VA. Frances is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Her recent publications include *Faithful Disagreement: Wrestling with Scripture in the Midst of Church Conflict*, *Back to the Well: Women's Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels* and *Encounters with Jesus: Studies in the Gospel of John*.



Aug. 10 - 16
Don Saliers

Hymns, Psalms and Spiritual Song: Music and The Human Heart before God

What did Augustine mean by saying "they who sing, pray twice?" We will explore questions of music, poetry and theology in a range of hymns, psalms and spirituals, paying attention to little known treasures as well as recent surprises. **Don Saliers** is the William R. Cannon Distinguished Professor of Theology and Worship, Emeritus at Candler School of Theology. An accomplished musician, theologian, and scholar of liturgics, and a United Methodist pastor, he is the author of numerous books on the relationship between theology and worship practices, including *A Song to Sing, a Life to Live* and *Worship Come To Its Senses*.



Aug. 17-23
Roberta Bondi

Amma, Give Me a Word

The desert fathers and mothers of ancient Egypt believed that love is the goal of the Christian life, and life in the desert vastly contributed to it. In our time together we will reflect and meditate on some of the most wonderful, delightful, and life giving insights that come out of their experience. These are folks every modern Christian needs to know! **Roberta Bondi** is retired from a distinguished teaching career with Candler School of Theology at Emory University, where she was Professor of Church History. She holds degrees from Southern Methodist University and Oxford University, and is the author of several books, including *Memories of God and Houses*.



Aug. 24-30
Carl Koch

Journalkeeping: Exploring a Powerful Spiritual Practice

From the earliest cave paintings to digitized text in electronic files, humans have always kept journals. And for centuries, journals have been an important tool for spiritual growth. During this session, we will find perspectives that cross time and tradition, plus plenty of practical help to: guide our spiritual journey with writing, find approaches that are right for each of us, recognize and understand our inner dialogues, and make our journals an avenue for prayer and meditation. **Carl Koch** has been a writing teacher for forty years and a journal keeper for 30 of those. Carl has authored more than thirty books on adult spiritual growth and on writing, including *Journalkeeping: Exploring a Great Spiritual Practice*. He holds master degrees in religious education, spirituality, and English and a doctorate in English from the University of Michigan. We also know him as emeritus director of Ring Lake Ranch.



Aug 31 - Sept 6
Sandra Smith

Awakening to Our Essence

Ring Lake Ranch is pleased to host an advanced Enneagram workshop and retreat led by **Sandra Smith**, a certified Enneagram teacher. A working knowledge of the Enneagram is required. For more information, contact Sandra at sandrasmith@charter.net or 828-684-2339.

For more details on all these programs check our website: www.ringlake.org

Scholarships Available

Partial scholarships are available to anyone needing assistance to come to programs at the Ranch. All people are welcome at Ring Lake and we don't want the cost to keep anyone, especially first-time guests, from attending a session. If you have any questions or would like a copy of our simple application, please contact Andy Blackmun at andy@ringlake.org or 888-458-5253.



THANKS to all of our Volunteers!

Volunteers continue to provide invaluable support to the Ring Lake Ranch staff and community. Volunteer Week this year was a great time – cool weather, good work, willing hands, and a special treat: entertainment one evening by the Never Sweat Players, a western swing band from Dubois! Thanks to all of help during the week: Linnea Probert, Emily Thompson, Bev and Jim Young, David Turpin, David Petersen and Sara Myers, Amy Mears and Danny, Lara and Mia Mears Webb, Jacque Franklin and Ellen Francis, and Kathy and Michael Murphy. These volunteers completed a long list of tasks: Sanded and stained handrails around the Dining Hall, Living Room, as well as porch benches and the rails to Lake Lodge and Top Cabin, fixed

board/batten siding on the Bunk House, repaired woodpecker damage to Cabin 5, repaired wheelbarrows, repaired Old Blue, the Ranch hay truck, fixed multiple torn screens, cleaned out gutters & fixed gutter leaks, removed rocks in the corral, cleaned and prepped the cabins, Living Room, and Chapel, dug post holes for a new shoeing shed, hauled 10 tons of hay, cleaned and organized the tack shed, updated the horse notebook, did preliminary trail rides, and stocked and organized the gift shop. Even with all of these tasks, there was still time for hiking, fishing and relaxing in the evenings.

We are also grateful for everyone who volunteered during the summer weeks: Emily Thompson, Amy Mears and Danny,

Lara and Mia Mears Webb, David Turpin, Liz and Kevin Sellstrom, Mike Morris, Nick Hatalski, Alice Nichol, Carl Koch and Joyce Heil, Dorian McGlannan, Lee-Joan and Kaylie Cospito, Leslie Stugelmayer, Donna Rolfs, Jack Damien, Becky Meyer, David Hendersen and Dwight Haberman. We appreciate greatly all of the maintenance, kitchen and corral help this year!

Our Volunteer Week for 2014 will be held the week of May 25th through May 31st. We have some spaces available for volunteers during our seminar weeks, but they are filling quickly. If you are interested in volunteering for either Volunteer Week or during a seminar week, please contact Andy at andy@ringlake.org or call him at 888-458-5253.



Staff Assistants

Another summer, another season of great staff assistants. We were fortunate to host three staff assistants this year, Lara Mears Webb, Mia Mears Webb, and Nikki Aiken, and we thank them all for their hard work and delightful presence in the Ring Lake Ranch community.

We also thank Lily Schulz and Graham Opie for their continued work on the Ranch. They graduated from high school this year and joined us as wranglers for part of the season.

Young people between the ages of 13 and 18 are welcome to apply to be staff assistants during the 2014 season. The work we ask of them is varied: sometimes they work in the kitchen, sometimes feed and wrangle horses, sometimes care for young children during the evening seminars. We ask staff assistants to work between 20 and 30 hours per week. In return, staff assistants receive room board and a small stipend during their stay. Depending on rooming arrangements, staff assistants may stay for one or more weeks. Staff assistants need to have come to the Ranch as guests at least once. Teenagers interested in working as staff assistants should contact Andy Blackmun at andy@ringlake.org or 888-458-5253.

2014 Registration

2014 RATES

All rates are per person and based on double/multiple occupancy

Includes lodging * meals * seminars * horseback riding * guided hiking * boating. No charge for children 12 & under.

Scholarships are available: Contact **Andy** at mailing address below or andy@ringlake.org

ADULT FEES FOR 6 DAY SESSIONS

Basic lodging with shared bath	\$825
Basic lodging with private bath	\$930
Large Family cabin with private bath	\$985

YOUTH FEES FOR 6 DAY SESSIONS

Youth (ages 13 – 17)	\$625
Child (ages 12 and under)	no charge

ADULT FEES FOR 2 CONSECUTIVE SESSIONS

Basic lodging with shared bath	\$ 1437
Basic lodging with private bath	\$ 1630
Large Family cabin with private bath	\$ 1710

YOUTH FEES FOR 2 CONSECUTIVE SESSIONS

Youth (ages 13 – 17)	\$ 1040
Child (ages 12 and under)	no charge

All fees exclude sales & lodging taxes. Contact **Amanda** at amanda@ringlake.org or 307-455-2663 to inquire about daily and off-season rates. To guarantee a private room, contact **Amanda** about additional fee & availability.

Receive a 10% discount on your session fees by bringing someone new to the Ranch with you.

Please indicate on your registration form who the new guest is. When they register, we'll record the discount. Thank you for spreading the word about Ring Lake Ranch.

Deposit:

To hold your reservations, we request a deposit of \$250/adult and \$135/youth for 6 day sessions or \$430/adult and \$200/youth for two sessions. The deposit is refundable (less a 20% handling charge) up to 60 days in advance of the session for which you have registered. After that time, the deposit is refundable (less 20%) only if we can rebook your space in the session.

No. of Registrants:

_____ Adults @ rate	_____
_____ Youth (13-17)	_____
_____ Children(12 & under)	<i>no charge</i>

TOTAL (without taxes) _____

Deposit Amount _____

Session

Dates _____

Registrant Name(s) _____

Names & ages of children (if applicable) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone () _____ Work Phone () _____

Cell () _____ Email _____

Accommodation preference:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic/shared bath | <input type="checkbox"/> Basic/private bath |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large Family/private bath | <input type="checkbox"/> Cabin # |

Roommate preference (registering separately)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> One bed? | <input type="checkbox"/> Two beds? |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|

Is walking over steep or rough terrain difficult for you?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

Any other physical limitations? _____

Dietary restrictions/food allergies: _____

Will you need transportation from the airport?

(see spring Carillon or website for charges)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Jackson/Riverton |
|-----------------------------|---|

Signature _____

Date _____

We accept Visa, Mastercard, Discover and American Express. Pay by cash or your personal check and receive a 5% discount in fees. For security purposes, please do not include your credit card number on this form. Please use the online store at www.ringlake.org/store to pay deposits and fees.

Return form to:

Ring Lake Ranch

P.O. Box 806

Dubois, WY 82513

(888) 458-5253 toll free

(307) 455-2663

amanda@ringlake.org

www.ringlake.org



RING LAKE RANCH

P.O. Box 806 • Dubois, WY 82513

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. Postage PAID

Permit No. 25

La Crosse, WI



**Come join us at Ring Lake Ranch for
"renewal in a sacred wilderness."**

A Wyoming Sacrament

*Sing, my words, of the smell of sage
of ancient figures on rock faces,
stony trails and diamond studded water,
of pines living and dying in green and brown
skin-felt air there down from snowy heights.*

*Sing of stars so near, so deep, so piercing,
of insistent day brightness everywhere,
Music in trees and bodies climbing, descending,
A sense of finding inside and outside as one--
all in a petroglyph place of pilgrims.*

*Sing of people over time loving the land,
the world, sheer being here, in wonderment.
Of steady horses and the festal hall of food
Sturdy construction and ample hospitality,
In a Wyoming sacrament called Ring Lake. . . .*

*If you so sing, you know that you have been known
by sky, earth, air, light, and creatures under the Mercy.*

• Don Saliers

Find information on Don's session next summer, "Hymns, Psalms and Spiritual Song: Music and The Human Heart before God," and other great Ranch programs on pages 4 and 5.