

# *Woman's Way* RED LODGE

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Written by Kendra E. Thornbury

"We are the ones we have been waiting for..." Can you feel it? Can you feel the stirring in your soul? Do you have a sense that it is time for something significant to occur? Can you sense the momentum of our community expanding and moving? Our community is evolving as we listen to our collective soul and acknowledge that who we are, what we do, the way we be is needed in the world. Our medicine is potent, and the universe is calling us forth.

This change was set in motion years ago. In November 2000, through Connor's vision and call, A gathering of the Woman's Way for a Feast of Possibilities brought about 50 women together to explore Red Lodge. In years following, creative inspirations emerged in the form of visions for a CD and a book. A core dialogue surfaced in the Fall of 2003, addressing fundamental questions such as, What is Woman's Way? What is Red Lodge? It became the springboard for the gathering of several women who met in January 2004 who created a proposed vision statement for Red Lodge (which was accepted at the February Council meeting! See it on page 3).

At the Spring Council 2004, the Red Lodge dream continued to unfold through meaningful sharing of vision and considerations thus far. "At Wisdom Council, it was clear to every woman present that something very deep and mysterious and important led us not only to the open door but also across the threshold towards transformation of our community. We invite you to come across this threshold with us." At that Council gathering, we identified values and what we want as a community. One of the statements that was clear, "Take Woman's Way out in the World."

After Long Dance 2004, a group of women called to further the vision and action of Red Lodge, organized and became known as the "working group". Their dialogues and writing continued the momentum and helped to identify possible organizational structures for Red Lodge.

In September 2004, Mary captured our story in "A Summary". This offering provided the first in depth and thorough writing of our Red Lodge journey to date. It was provided to the community and used as a framework as we entered into the November Council. At this gathering, it was acknowledged that, "We are in the process of deep sharing and growing a community vision". Processes that are integral to our way were explored such as decision-making and leadership. A next step identified was to call a Winter Council in which the Red Lodge working group would present the information gathered so far about possible organizational structures.

The magic of our journey thus far culminated in a decision at the February 2005 Council to adopt the proposed vision, mission and purpose and to move forward in becoming an organization. As captured in the notes, "In the room, a wave of courage, inspiration, excitement, and trepidation passed from woman to woman. We are on our way!"

True to our way, space was created for fears to be witnessed. What if this change waters down our ways? What if it fragments our community? What if the structure oppresses the very nature of who we are? We acknowledged the fears, and remembered what is TRUE. We are reminded that our ways, our integrity, our values, will guide us as we navigate the new territory together.

As those of us stepped up to serve at the Council, we knew not the journey we were saying yes to. I heard something once...." The bad news is that there is no key; the good news is that the door has always been open." With the door wide open, we embarked on our journey with no key. No formula, no script.

As processes were tried and decisions made, questions and lessons surfaced. Ultimately, we are led by that which will serve the community. This is one way we surrender to the mystery, acknowledging we don't have all the answers, yet we have the values, vision, purpose and practices to do well by our goals.

Much has occurred since the Council gathering, including rich, generative dialogues that are leading to establishing our ways in written, concrete forms. For instance, the leadership committee talks about the guidelines for being a board member and is challenged to articulate why a particular one would be of service to the community, why is it important? The naming committee embarks on a voting process electronically that brings our attention to how we could ensure integrity in such processes in the future.

One of our on-going dialogues concerns involvement and inclusion. Some of us wonder how to involve the community while continuing to move forward in the task before us.

One of the gifts of our community is transparency. We communicate, lead, heal, learn and live out loud. With the magnitude and volume of our work increasing, we offer this eNews. We hope it will ripple out widely to reach many women in our circle and connect us all more deeply with the process of unfolding our collective vision. This is the first of what we envision to be many "eNews" for our community. In the spirit of inclusion, trust, communication and celebration, we offer you information and an invitation. Read on!

*We wish to acknowledge and thank Drai Bearwomyn for designing and managing WWRL eNEWS and eARCHIVE; Kendra E. Thornbury for her participation in the communications development; and Marsha Cook for disseminating information for our community. Please know that WWRL eNEWS will be sent in PDF format. If you cannot read PDF, please contact Marsha at qndrgnfire@aol.com and let her know if you prefer to receive via Microsoft Word document or via snail mail. Lastly, if you choose not to receive eNEWS, please communicate "remove from list" to Marsha as well.*

# WE HAVE A NAME... WOMAN'S WAY RED LODGE

Written by Peg Hopkins

For years our dream has been called Red Lodge. This was born from Connor Sauer's vision and the deep connections she and others made to our blood mysteries and the insights gleaned from the book *The Red Tent*. There has been much discussion, simmering and reflection upon retaining this name, exploring our comfort with it as we move out into the world, and simply wondering if another name is calling out to be heard and recognized as THE name for our organization.

The simmering evolved to a rolling boil at the February 12th Wisdom Council. Although deciding on a name was not on the agenda, it soon became an important topic once the vote to proceed with our nonprofit application passed. Without a name, our Articles of Incorporation with the state of Washington could not be filed, which is the first step needed before filing a 501(c)(3) application with the federal government.

So with only a few hours remaining for this Wisdom Council we stepped hopefully into the 'naming' bowl. The twenty women present began a brainstorming session which resulted in over twenty-five names emerging. The energy was flowing, and we decided to chant each name as we stood in a circle. This proved to be a great honing process, as in some cases, we were doubling over in laughter. Some of the names were eliciting some interesting responses! We did manage to hone our list to five names. However, we ran out of time and the energy shifted for those needing to leave and/or catch a ferry. It was decided another working group was needed to continue this process to solicit additional names and continue a honing process which would eventually result in a list returning to the Wisdom

Council attendees and the Red Lodge working group. It was felt by all in attendance that choosing our name should be contained within the bowl of this council based upon a feeling of the importance of having shared the discussion, energy and wisdom of the day spent together.

Lori Kramer, Nan Draper and Mariah Hoyt stepped-up to continue the discovery of our name. In late February this group sent out an invitation to those that were at Wisdom Council and the Red Lodge working group to add any additional name ideas that may have percolated up for them. They then met and worked a deep and thoughtful process that resulted in seven names. They used our "consensus from the heart" model to survey the same women by email. The resulting tally showed that "Woman's Way Red Lodge" held the highest interest and acceptance. A single "1" response (wholeheartedly disagree and it is not okay for the group to consider this decision) didn't eliminate the name but activated dialogue to hear the thoughts and feelings behind that response. This process wasn't perfect, but it was a good first step. And, as a result, we have gained new and important insights into our decision-making processes, including how we can utilize effective ways of communicating to ensure clarity and integrity when we undertake to make decisions."

So, we have a name—Woman's Way Red Lodge! Our deep gratitude for all those that entered into this process and shared their ideas and concerns. A special thank you to Lori, Mariah and Nan who guided us to this great outcome.



## VISION

Woman's Way Red Lodge offers the opportunity to participate with a community of women grounded in the natural web of life (the beauty way) and the way of the spiritual warrior (impeccability) collaborating in the work of creating space, time, relationship, and ceremony to invite each other to engage through sacred mystery in the empowerment of women as we move our culture into balance

## MISSION

To empower women to share our vision, wisdom and experience by creating sacred rites of passage, educational programs, and creative projects which nurture sustainable community

## PURPOSE

To enliven the divine feminine as we move our culture into balance.

If you have questions or concerns, please email Draí Bearwomyn at [goddessdrai@earthlink.net](mailto:goddessdrai@earthlink.net).

She will disseminate information to the appropriate committee and or members of the working group. As for all of us, life is full, so please be patient about response time as we consider each bit of information that is brought forward from our community. Thanks!



# DIRECTORY OF VOLUNTEERS

## WORKING GROUP

Connor Sauer  
Drai Bearwomyn  
Kendra E. Thornbury  
Kristina Turner  
Mary G.L. Shackelford  
Peg Hopkins  
Suzanne Lichau  
Victoria Pilkington

## LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

Jodi Ann Rodriguez  
Kendra E. Thornbury  
Norleen Overman  
Suzanne Lichau

## DECISION-MAKING COMMITTEE

Lori Kramer  
Nancy Lieurance  
Suzanne Lichau

## NAMING COMMITTEE

Lori Kramer  
Mariah Hoyt  
Nan Draper

## COMPASSIONATE LISTENING COMMITTEE

Barbara Krulich  
BonneeLee Cleverdon  
Kendra E. Thornbury

Kim Orte  
Kristina Turner  
Nan Draper  
Patricia Menzies

## STRUCTURE COMMITTEE

BonneeLee Cleverdon  
Mariah Hoyt  
Peg Hopkins  
Victoria Pilkington

## SURVEY COMMITTEE

Julia Moore  
Nancy McLaughlin  
Norleen Overman  
Victoria Pilkington

## BUDGET COMMITTEE

Mary G.L. Shackelford  
Peg Hopkins

## SIDEBY SUPPORT TEAM

Marsha Cook  
Maureen Oar  
Susan Landau



## 15 PRINCIPALS WE SHARE

Written by Kristina Turner

At the February 05 Red Lodge Council, we were excited to articulate 15 principles or essential agreements by which members of our community strive to live. Inspired by values gleaned from the Red Lodge 2000 meeting, these principles were named and informally agreed upon by the circle with the understanding that they are organic and evolving in this formative stage of our community.

Dee Hock's work in chaordic organization guided us. "Principles are clear, commonly understood statements of how Participants will conduct themselves. Individually and collectively, they are the parameters against which all subsequent decisions, organizational structures, and practices will be judged. Together with Purpose, Principles constitute the body of belief that will bind the community together and against which all decisions and acts will be judged."

- 1 **Living from the Core.** We agree to live from the core: with impeccability, taking responsibility to act consciously, with the intention of loving.
- 2 **Direct Spiritual Access.** We believe that each of has the ability to access spirit directly. We respect our own and each other's autonomy and authenticity.
- 3 **Willingness to Step into Power & Service.** We are willing, each in a unique way, to step into our power in service of the highest good of the community.
- 4 **Sustainability.** We commit to conserve, recycle and renew resources, to generate income through right livelihood, and listen to our sense of enoughness.
- 5 **Reverence for Life.** We honor the interconnected web of all life. Daily life is sacred. We believe that all beings are graced with the fundamental right to be.

- 6 **Inclusiveness and Acceptance.** We value diversity, honoring the sacredness of each person's heritage, experience, wisdom and contribution to the whole.
- 7 **Collaboration.** We work and play co-creatively, both among ourselves and with other groups with complementary purposes and principles.
- 8 **Gratitude and Generosity.** Gratitude is fundamental to our way of being in the world, and we generously give back to our communities and to Mother earth in a spirit of deep appreciation.
- 9 **Witnessing.** With aware presence, we witness who we each are today.
- 10 **Willingness to Play and Laugh at Ourselves.** Our most practical magic!
- 11 **Embracing Paradox.** We accept and (at times!) embrace the creative interplay of opposites: light/shadows, tradition/evolution, freedom/limits, order/chaos.
- 12 **Seeking Knowledge of the Ways of Wisdom.** We step into our sacred lineage, honoring the wisdom of our Ancestors, Elders and Youngers.
- 13 **Generativity.** We commit to generating positive and creative energy to pass on to future generations.
- 14 **Balancing Feminine and Masculine.** We honor the beauty, passion, power and expression of the dance of inner feminine and masculine.
- 15 **Our Bodies Open Us To Mystery.** We experience connection with spirit through our bodies. We honor and celebrate our deep, visceral and intuitive body connectedness with nature and our natural cycles. Our bodies are living portals into Mystery.

# UPDATES. CLASSES. PROJECTS.



## CD UPDATE

Ready to shake your body and soul to the magical vibrations of Long Dance songs?! After a time of gestation and pause, we heard the spring stirrings so Kimber, Suzanne, and Kendra had a conference call recently to re-connect and make decisions about next steps.

We will identify several songs that will be re-mixed at the studio and burned onto a CD for you. Our intention is to provide you with the CD prior to Long Dance. This is phase one of a two phase project.

The second phase will include establishing more clarity around the purpose of producing a CD and how it would support our community, re-recording some of the original songs and spending time on a more "polished" CD that we could potentially sell. Dialogue about this will occur after the first phase of this project is complete.

## COMPASSIONATE LISTENING TRAINING

When misunderstandings and conflicts arise within our Long Dance/ Woman's Way Red Lodge community, would you like to be able to listen with new awareness and help create healing resolution? Come join us in learning new skills, in a workshop led by Therese Charvet: May 21st, 9:30-5:30, with potluck lunch at the Moon Lodge at Sacred Groves, Bainbridge Island. Seven of us have already signed up and there's room for several more! Suggested Donation \$25. To register: kristinaturner@earthlink.net or (800) 788-1770.

## STRUCTURE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Purpose: To coordinate and write the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and the IRS Application with the input of leadership committee, decision-making committee and the working group. Victoria has received information that the committees have created and thought through with much love and discussion. She has started crafting it into the Bylaws and now the Structure Group will start pulling the pieces together. The Bylaws are an agreement that we make, and an understanding that we arrive at, as an organization to be the "rules" that we will conduct our business by.

As soon as the WWRL PO Box is set-up, Victoria will forward the Articles of Incorporation to Maureen, who has agreed to file them with the Washington Secretary of State. The Articles of Incorporation is what makes us a legal corporation with the authorization to do business within the state. After the Articles are filed and the Bylaws are created, she will take the information from those documents, plus some other information and craft it in a way that makes sense on the IRS application. The IRS application is the federal portion where the government/IRS grants our organization the right/status to operate as a nonprofit with the tax benefits that go along with it. It is what gives someone who donates to our organization the right to write their donation off of their taxes; it gives our organization the tax benefit of not paying taxes on any revenue that we have earned.

## LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

Purpose: To define our unique approach to leadership in a way

that serves us as we move forward into organizing as a 501(c)(3) structure - bridging our views with that of a specific legal model. We have accomplished much in this area and fine tuning will be done as our thoughts are actually put into the 501c3 application document. More will be available about this process and results in the next news letter as well.

## DECISION MAKING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Purpose: To formulate and articulate a decision making process around the consensus model that reflects our uniqueness as a community-We have outlined a basic consensus process which will work for us and are still fine-tuning some areas.

## SURVEY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Purpose: To launch an initial effort to inventory experience, skills, time, and financial resources available within our community as well as collect information about regional resources we may want to collaborate with. Could also engage women in prioritizing concepts for future projects. Survey to be delivered sometime in the fall, after the papers have been filed.

## COMPASSIONATE LISTENING COMMITTEE UPDATE

This committee is currently engaged in a wonderful, rich dialogue about specifically defining its purpose.

## INTENTION TIMELINE

At the February Council, we set an intention to file the papers necessary to make us an official organization for April 15. All along, we held that intention in the spirit of trusting the process, using it as an aim to generate momentum and propel us into action. The momentum and action has definitely been flourishing! And, as the time approached, the working group evaluated what still needed to occur and decided that it would be wise to change the filing date. We want to ensure that the time is taken to establish a strong foundation for our organization, and so we choose to take the time upfront to create the processes and structures that fit who we are and our ways. In addition, we recognize that we need to move together as a community, and want to take time to generate communication between the working group, committees and community. We also want to receive input from you.

April	File Articles of Incorporation
May	eNews to community
June	Launch eArchive
June	eNews to community! NOTE: This eNews will include information, an invitation, and a process for you to provide your feedback on the by-laws.
July	eNews to community!
August	eNews to community!
Sept 5	File the final IRS paperwork.

# eARCHIVE COMING SOON

Written by Draí Bearwomyn

As part of our venture into conscious commerce, we have secured a web address for disseminating information and sharing the vision. The new address is [www.WomansWayRedLodge.org](http://www.WomansWayRedLodge.org). The site itself will be a malleable and flexible project that will birth and grow, over time, to best serve the needs of our community and also to inform and inspire the myriad people we have not yet had the fortune to meet. Portions of the site will be publically accessible and other parts will be secured for internal "sisterhood" access only. In the future we will use the site to communicate about Long Dance, to sell our CDs and Books, to post events calendars and more.

Today, we have one immediate goal: to post historical documents as a rich source of information. This portion of our site will be called eArchive. Our intention is to keep people in the loop. On eArchive, you will find documents of the "storytelling" nature, which track the unfolding of our process of becoming. Women have been dreaming WWRL for years, dialogues have gone on for many moons... much of this has been recorded and will be shared on this archive. You will have access to all editions of WWRL eNEWS for future reference. And you will be able to review formal organizational papers like by-laws, vision/mission/purpose statement, principals, etc. As you wish to learn more about WWRL and the core philosophies, we invite you to access eArchive for self-education and as a resource to answer your questions.

We intend to have eArchive ready to visit late spring/early summer. We will send an announcement when we go LIVE!

## AN INVITATION

Written by Kendra E. Thornbury



I remember standing in the dish washing line at Long Dance about 7 years ago. I was talking with a sister about Long Dance related matters and Connor jumped in and inquired in her oh-so-direct-matter-of-factly way, "when are you going to step up to the helm?" Huh? ME? What? Is she crazy? Oh, maybe she's talking to the other women in the line. No, she's looking at me. Oh, Goddess, I'd love to run right now.

Seeing each other is another gift in our way together—it invites us heal, to know our value in community, and to ignite and bring forth our greatness. While the invitation always stands for you to engage and participate as a co-creator in this community, at a level you feel drawn to, we'd like to extend an invitation to you...If you feel called to get involved, please do!! Your unique presence is one in the many that comprises the beauty in our community. Your gifts, resources, voice, perspective, questions...all of you is welcome.

As stated earlier, one of our on-going dialogues concerns inclusion. How do we engage people with different skills, backgrounds, experience, and working styles with the complexity and depth of the issues and work we are pursuing? How do we match the desire to contribute and participate with the reality of our time commitment? How do we manage effective communication among an expanding vision and group? How will we find balance between the need to be included and the desire to take action? How do we continue to deepen our trust in the knowing that our leaders will represent our best interests, even when we are not at the table?

While we do not have the answers to the questions above, we do have the willingness to engage them. Our community needs time to question, process, integrate, and understand our evolution together. We are a work in progress.

So, what are we inviting you to? As Peg extended, we invite you to... "join us in this birthing in the way that best suits you...and best suits the process. We invite you to read, to learn, to inquire, to step up, to follow, to hold." For those of you who feel called to connect with us in some manner, we will listen and consider your suggestions, concerns and ideas. We will open the dialogue where needed. Another way to engage is to hold the container. Sit with the vision, mission and purpose and envision the manifestation of our organizational structure coming together with ease and timeliness, grounded in who we truly are.

I believe everyone wants to be included somewhere or in something. As far as our community goes, I think we have always done a stellar job at inclusion. I do think it is each of our responsibility to keep our awareness open to how we create processes that enable inclusion to continue to occur. I also think we each need to let go of the illusion that what is happening is "out there" and take responsibility for getting involved as we desire.

At the same time, we acknowledge that not everyone can lead all of the time. In this time of change, I found it useful to remember what our leadership model has beautifully demonstrated over the years—shared leadership, prompted by inner stirrings, supported by the container of trust we hold for one another. When women step forward to lead, we give our trust over to the leaders to hold our collective best interests and have faith that the decisions made will represent the whole. We "give over" to our trusted leaders. I imagine with this whole new realm of being together through an organization some opportunities to stretch in this regard will reveal themselves.

I believe there is a relationship between these two elements, inclusion and trust. So, we will navigate this balance together as we continue to grow and learn. And, as you feel the nudgings of your spirit, listen, and bring forth your greatness!!