

2020-2021

# Lama Alive



Collage by Scout Fernandez, with photos taken by Scout Fernandez, Willow Brook, and Lin Diagonales

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**LAMA ALIVE DESIGNED BY  
SCOUT FERNANDEZ**

Original photos/art by:  
Kima Nelson, Scout Fernandez,  
MD Berkholder, Ahad Cobb,  
Steve Waldvogel, & Peggy Chung

# A Letter from the Coordinator

It's a curious thing to find myself the person to write this; to speak for this circle. I stepped - with enthusiasm and humility - into the role of Coordinator just a few weeks ago. It's an honor to be entrusted with this task, and yet I can say with certainty that this group of residents can speak for itself with more fire and lucidity than any I've been in. But one of the beautiful ways Lama works, and works us, is to find a job that anyone can do and let us see how we do it. Or find a job that no one could possibly do, and let us see how we do that. I already sense this job is some of each of those.

It is, as always, an immeasurable blessing to live here. I once heard Pat McCabe speak of ancestry as our relationship not just to those who came before us, but also those who will come after. I feel this deeply in my place at Lama. We know how much bigger Lama is than this circle at this time, and yet we are the ones now here to soak in the light of Lama and help shine it into the world. We are diving headlong into this work, and the mountain as always is pushing us further, and holding us.

Though the moment we find ourselves in is unarguably unique, the question of how we can best use this privilege, this place and opportunity to serve the world is not a new one, though it is clearly more pressing now. The need in the world for community and solidarity, for a foundation of love and service, for a space to be and ask and feel has never been clearer in my lifetime. These are things Lama has offered so many of us, and it feels imperative to reconsider how we can best offer them now.

We're continuing to experiment with ways we can reach out digitally. Our virtual Shabbat offerings have been a great point of connection, and the virtual retreat this July was a smashing success. That said, it's challenging to find virtual ways to nourish all those who are fed by Lama and cannot join us here. It's also challenging to not just be that one more thing we're all doing on Zoom.

Another of the ways we tried to answer this call was by opening a conversation on racial justice. Please read Willow's excellent piece about this work!

This spring, when we went to the drawing board to imagine a Lama summer without retreats, we landed on inviting our summer community into a deeper dive into community. We decided the simplest way to ensure the community's safety was for us to commit to staying here on the land for the summer. We limited town trips to sending in two people, once per week. We also decided that rather than having our usual scattershot days off throughout the week, we'd all be on together most of the time, and observe shabbat as a day of rest. We had weekly meetings with everyone on the land, talking about topics ranging from what we wanted from our weekly schedule, to the power structures we have in place and how they're serving us. We did a remarkable job of wading through the inevitable conflicts that are the source of some of our most valuable lessons. We also emerged with the largest resident circle I've ever been a part of, which is perhaps the most telling result.

Looking forward, it seems the next year holds little more clarity than the last. We don't know if we'll be hosting retreats this summer. We don't know what the world will ask of us, nor do we yet know exactly how we will rise to meet what is asked. While I consider myself to be deeply spiritual, I'm not really a man of faith. Lama has grown in me this much faith: I believe that the people Lama needs are here. This circle is not just the largest I've been part of, but also the youngest, and the one that spends the most time in spiritual practice together. We have passion, creativity, insight, and courage. We are also firmly rooted in care for this place and it's work and values, and committed to questioning how best to live those things. These times are unprecedented and auspicious. I am confident we can all move into them with love and dedication, and inshallah, we will emerge stronger, wiser and with more fortitude to face the future.



-Jamil

As I walk into the Lama kitchen on a cold day in late October, I give thanks to the warmth emanating from the coils of hot water beneath my feet, below a blanket of concrete. I give thanks to the shiny granite countertops that now rest where cracked green stone once did. I give thanks to the doorway between the kitchen and the pantry where a wall once stood, which makes getting eight cups of beans so much easier than before. And I praise the Lama kitchens of the past for holding hearts, hands, and vegetables; our kitchens, where we gather again and again in service. After numerous evolutions, the spirit of the Lama kitchen, that hasn't changed.

Over one year ago, the kitchen was emptied of every spatula and soup pot. Beloved serving bowls and bakeware were stored away in cardboard boxes and plastic bins. Twenty-year-old countertops and cabinetry were torn, dug, and thrust apart by the caring hands that had chopped countless onions in the kitchen they were now gutting.

After jack-hammering, shoveling, and rebuilding, by this time last year we had a floor again. Around that time, maple and oak cabinetry were slowly taking root in the concrete ground, and we had freshly-painted adobe walls thanks to George Weiss. David Zimmerman was crafting plans to fabricate our one-of-a-kind stainless steel countertops and sliding cabinet doors. Ray Bernhardt was coordinating with those two Questa contractors/artists and hard at work with everything related to the kitchen renovation.

Meanwhile, Lama residents were cooking in a makeshift kitchen on the portal and washing dishes at the three-sink "carwash" like we had all summer, but in freezing temperatures. One morning we found a sink full of frozen bowls... From then on we double-checked that all sinks were empty before going to bed.

Piece by piece, granite slab by measuring spoon, the kitchen grew into a habitable space through winter and spring, just in time for a regular summer retreat season that never happened. Although we did not get to prepare large trays of cookies and hotel pans of mac-n-cheese for guests and retreatants, the Residents and Summer Stewards of 2020 have made our new kitchen a home. When we normally would have been rushing to get lunch out on time, we moved slowly, imbuing this new space with ease. For many in our large family, the Lama kitchen is a source of connection to service, the divine, and each other. Though great stretches of earth may separate us for now, we hope that you may feel some of the warmth emanating from our new floor and prayers. We look physically sharing this space with you and our entire Lama Family.

Thanks to the kitchen renovation, I now know the earth beneath our radiant-heated floor. I touched it with my bare hands when the old floor was excavated. As I held the concrete rubble-infused dirt in my palm, I was struck by the reminder that no matter what we pile on top, no matter how many layers of concrete we pour, or fancy countertops we lay, the source of everything we have within the kitchen is right there. Right under our feet. Always. I want to remember this in these seemingly groundless times, and invite you to do the same. There is ground, even after it is excavated. May we find this ground, wherever we are.

*Thank you to Ray Bernhardt, the project manager for the kitchen renovation. George Weiss for cabinetry. David Zimmerman for stainless steel fabrication and installation. Surya, Kaia, Nasima, Davy and Jamil for design and more. Kestrel for painting. A number of stewards & residents for helping in various ways including moving out of the old kitchen, excavating the old floor and moving back in.*

## THE KITCHEN RENOVATION

written by Kaia Friton

PC: Kima Nelson



PC: Scout Fernandez



PC: Scout Fernandez



PC: Willow Brook



PC: Scout Fernandez



# The Kitchen



PC: Kima Nelson



PC: Kima Nelson

PC: Willow Brook



PC: Scout Fernandez



PC: Scout Fernandez

## Max's Pretzel Challah

### INGREDIENTS :

1/4 C + 1 C warm water, about 110-115°  
1 tsp active dry yeast  
3 C all purpose flour  
1 1/2 tsp + 4 1/2 tsp organic sugar  
3/4 tsp salt  
1/8 C sunflower oil

### BAKING SODA BATH:

2/3 C baking soda + 8 C boiling water  
coarse salt and sesame seeds optional



PC: Scout Fernandez

1. In a medium bowl mix the yeast + 1 1/2 tsp sugar. Add 1/4 cup warm water (115°) and stir gently. Let sit until foamy (5 - 10 mins).

2. In a larger bowl whisk together 1 cup warm water, salt, and oil.

3. Add foamy yeast mixture the water mixture and then 2 cups of flour. Mix to make a wet dough.

4. Add more flour, a few tablespoons at a time, until you have a cohesive dough. Knead by hand for 5 - 10 minutes, until dough is smooth and satiny.

5. Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl, big enough for the dough to double in size. Oil the top of the dough and cover with plastic wrap and a towel. Allow to rise in a warm place until doubled (1 - 1 1/2 hours).

6. In a medium glass bowl mix yeast + 1 1/2 tsp sugar. Heat water on stove to 115°. Add 1/4 cup to yeast + sugar mix. Gently stir with wooden spoon to be sure all yeast babies get some water. Leave it alone until it gets foamy, (5-10 min).

7. In another big bowl, whisk in 4 1/2 tsp sugar + 1 cup warm water + 3/4 tsp salt + oil.

8. Add 2 cups of flour to big bowl. Mix w/ wooden spoon. Add yeast mixture. This should make a thick but wet dough.

9. Add more flour, a few tablespoons at a time, until you have a cohesive dough that stays together as you knead. Knead with your hands, 5-10 minutes, until dough looks smooth and satiny.

10. Place dough into lightly oiled bowl, cover with lightly oiled plastic wrap and towel. Allow dough to rise in a warm place until doubled in size, (1 - 1 1/2 hours).

11. Once dough has risen, pre-heat oven to 350°. Dump dough onto lightly floured surface and knead a few times. If dough is too sticky, knead in more flour, until it's easier to work with.

12. The braid: Divide dough into 3 equal balls, roll each into a long strand. Braid the 3 strands of dough into a challah loaf (or wreath, loaf, mini-loaf, etc.).

13. The bath: Use the biggest pot you have. Boil 8 cups of water and slowly whisk the baking soda in. Carefully dip entire loaf into solution for 10-15 seconds, covering the whole thing. Then place it on a parchment lined baking sheet.

14. The bake: Brush the top of challah with a little more water from the bath and top with coarse salt and/or sesame seeds. Bake 30 minutes- until challah starts to brown.

15. Serve warm with mustard! The loaf will be very crispy on the outside and soft and yummy on the inside. I enjoyed surprising the community with this special variation of challah during our Lama variation of Shabbat.

Renovation



*Dylan + Kima at the spring*

# From Mountain Child to Lama Bean



*Written by Kima Nelson*

Where to even begin. Growing up at lama was never something I labeled myself as...a Lama Bean. I've always had a strong connection with this mountain and these grounds, and the spring has been the most magical place in the world for me since I was a child (I knew that's where the fairies lived), but the thing I never realized was how saturated I'd become as a human being in that spring, and the way of living that it allowed for.

These ideals of taking full accountability, of looking at the world as a reflection of Self, and working toward unity instead of separation. These ideals I hadn't realized were so unique until I jumped into the pool of freedom and world travel, and found my body sunk through to the other side studying at college on the east coast, and struggling to connect mind to heart. Thank God I did because it pushed me to recognize the importance of my spirituality, of my practice, and of being at a place that would support and understand that. So back to my roots I went full of gratitude, and since then all I can say is, yes, I was definitely raised a Lama Bean.

What has it been like to go from being a child chasing boys around with my ridiculously long fake nails at Shabbat to making sure I'm in the prayer room every morning at 8am? Ha, well I think I've realized that for the most part I'm still that little girl, and thank God for that too because I was getting Wayyy too serious out there in the normal world. I thought my unique childhood separated me from everyone, sometimes sending my ego sky high and sometimes crashing it down. My time here this summer has done much to nurture that fracture, and given me many teachings

needed to dissolve the weight of that separation.

Being at lama is constant transformation and constant healing. I'm shedding all the layers I had built up to construct myself as part of the "normal" world, and at the same time being stripped of all the fantasy aspects I had been letting rest here. I've realized the magic of Lama is not just in getting blessed by the wizard at Shabbat or Zikr (though I'm quite sure it'd happened to me long ago), and it is not just the fairies at the spring. It is in the integrity and integrating of spirit to body, and it is just as much in the blurriness of reflection as in the outstanding moments of synchronicity. It is in learning to take accountability for your actions and to live in harmony with your surroundings, and with the help of everyone around me and the incredible founders and extended lama community, these lessons are quite inescapable.

In learning to let my heart serve this place I've had to also let go of the many attachments I've had to what this place is. In this I find how little I know, and how to learn with humility and truth. Because the truth is, it is what it is no matter what turns it takes and what decisions happen in consensus. It is what it is, and the magic of it is only going as far as you let your mind push it away. I continue trying to hold my values of lama gently, and when I get out of sit in the morning, often I am that five year old girl running around with wild hair and dirty feet all over again, and the magic of the mountain healing me and holding me is a treasure unique in this world I cannot wait to share. Thank you, Mama Lama, 10,000 times.

# ANTI-RACISM WORK AT LAMA

WRITTEN BY WILLOW BROOK



At the beginning of this summer we saw the emergence of a national and now international movement aiming to expose and abolish individual and institutional racism with tens of thousands of people rallying around the simple yet powerful words: "Black Lives Matter". Inspired by this energy, the Lama Community decided to carve out two evenings per week to educate ourselves and engage in anti-racism work. We are informed and inspired by leaders such as Resmaa Menakem, rev angel Kyodo williams, and Ruth King who teach that white communities need to lean into conversations around race so that we can better recognize the trauma we all have from being racialized. Given that Lama has been a predominantly white community we are investigating how we can evolve and do our part for collective healing and better foster the awakening of consciousness.

This work, while challenging, emotional, imperfect, and mostly improvised was especially meaningful to me because of my studies with rev angel Kyodo williams and the Radical Dharma movement. Through these studies I have deepened my belief that justice work is spiritual work and if we want collective liberation, looking at the shadow of racism in North America is essential. My attraction to Lama has always been its mission statement of awakening consciousness and encouraging awareness of our internal and external existence. I believe that undoing our collective racial traumas is a part of that.

Lama isn't a traditional academic setting and it was a creative process to apply the valuable tools Lama has such as personal sharing in a circle format, talking sticks, spiritual practice, and reflective listening to the content of anti-racism. For example, we began each meeting with a practice and as we learned about the history of whiteness and discussed topics like how we know our racial identity, we consistently returned our awareness to observing emotions, images, and sensations that arose. Sharing in circle provides an opportunity for deep vulnerability and trust which nourished the foundation for our conversations. This summer, stewards needed to commit to at least two months on the mountain, creating the opportunity for consistent engagement with anti-racism work and a stronger container. Some of the content we worked through

included discussions about the importance of anti-racism work, why we chose to participate, and forming agreements about how we do this work together. We shared with each other where we are coming into the conversation about race from, our life exposure and privileges, and the cultures that have shaped us. We learned about current events such as police brutality, the impact of COVID on essential workers, and the eviction crisis, and each of us decided what we wanted to do to be of use, which included sending out personal emails, individually signing petitions, and making personal phone calls. The community also attended Sky Blue's online workshops on White Supremacy Culture in Spiritual Communities, listened to talks, and watched movies on race.

We experienced significant growing pains while embarking on the journey of looking at our community's relationship to race. There were heated disagreements and exposed wounds. Some weeks the emotional intensity of not being able to leave the mountain asked us to resource ourselves with rest instead of diving deeper into anti-racism content. Ultimately, I believe that through the hardships of the work, we were able to illuminate shadows and move toward healing.

Anti-racism work is never over. The circle will continue through the coming year and I hope to see it integrate more into the vision of Lama as a place to awaken consciousness. Our ideas for this year include following a more structured book by a person of color, bringing this work into our intensive season with spiritual activism led by people of color, and continuing to engage in personal outreach.

Personally, I learned a lot this summer about bringing a justice lens to spiritual community. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue inviting anti-racism work to Lama and am incredibly humbled by the process. It is clear to me that engaging in collective healing and spiritual liberation means looking at the collective trauma of systemic racism so that we can heal and be together as the human family that we are. As beings involved in a spiritual community we have access to spiritual practice and deep universal love as a way to inform justice work. I believe that is both a gift and a responsibility.

*For more information, check out Sky Blue's workshop offerings ([ic.org](https://www.skyblue.org)), Resmaa Menakem, Ruth King, rev angel Kyodo williams (Radical Dharma), and White Supremacy Culture by Tema Okun.*



Paolo

P A O L O  
Before Lama, I lived in the mountains of western North Carolina. I was an apprentice at Mountain Gardens, a botanical garden of useful & medicinal plants. I learned about pre-culture & traditional Chinese medicine. This summer at Lama taught me how to recognize my beliefs & opinions in the words & actions of my comrades. It is a lesson of humility & acceptance.

# The Residents

where were you before lama?  
what was your work in the world?  
what is a vivid memory of this summer?

S C O U T  
Before returning to Lama this year, I was wwoofing at intentional communities around Australia. My current work in the world is creating digital art. One of my favorite memories of this summer is dancing in the pitch black dome with my friends while Paolo played on the drumset.



Scout

Photo: Paolo Evans

K E S T R E L  
I made a daily practice of watching the sunset from the field near the acequia. I found a small dirt mound that I adorned with a few nearby stones and this became the place I returned to evening after evening. Lots of time spent in silent reverie & contemplation.



Kestrel

Photo: Kestrel Alexander

B I L L Y  
Before coming to Lama, I was living in Taos, NM & working at the Taos ski valley teaching kids how to snowboard. One vivid memory I have from the summer is walking into the music room and seeing Paolo playing the drums. Lin started dancing and I went and played the didgeridoo.



Billy



Kima

W I L L O W  
I was born and raised in Colorado and since completing my degree in Art Education have taught English to students around the world and worked as a Waldorf teacher. International travel was a very important part of my young adult life during & after my years of academic study. I'm so excited to continue studying and sharing spiritual practice through practicing and teaching yoga, walking the sufi path, & engaging in interfaith ministry training during my time as a resident at Lama!



Willow

Photo: Lin Diagonides

L O U I E  
After living as a resident at Lama for a year, I went to live at Khankah SAM in San Francisco. During my time in California, I worked as a barista & began deepening my study & relationship to the path of Sufism. Much of my work in the world has been developing a spiritual practice & living life more fully through a spiritual lens. After some time away, I decided to return to Lama to deepen my self work & continue on this path of growth. My favorite summer memory was going to the river with the whole community and swimming in the Rio Grande together.

\*Louie identifies as non-binary & uses they/them/theirs pronouns



George

G E O R G E  
Two summer stewards drove up the mountain in a 3-ton Sprinter van. They found themselves stuck on the San Cristobal High Road when some of the dirt road gave way. The spare tire attached to the undercarriage was jammed on a mound of dirt & the van couldn't move. As one of the steward guardians, I assembled a team to free the enormous vehicle. The couple didn't expect to see 6 folks arrive with shovels & pick-axes in hand but they were delighted at our ragtag welcoming party. After 4 hours in the hot June sun the van finally climbed out of the ditch to cheers from everyone. I've heard many stories about the curious circumstances through which people arrive at Lama. I'm happy to know this story of camaraderie & collaboration gets to join the ranks.



Zach

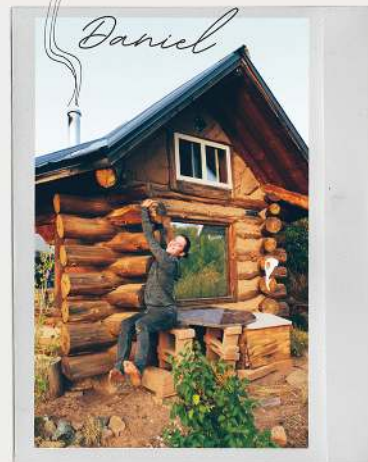
Z A C H  
I was living in Austin, TX. I had just graduated high school & was feeling a general discomfort with going straight into a college career track that I didn't feel spiritually aligned with (especially with the instability of a pandemic & other world crises). So I figured Lama was the best place to come into better alignment with my deepest aspirations and spiritual center. We were chanting 108 Hanuman chalisas on a practice day, that happened to land on my birthday. I had dozed off & awoke to beautiful prayer & a procession of community members bringing birthday cinnamon rolls. I loved breaking my daily fast with such delicious Prasadi!

M O N I K A - D E N I S E  
Before Lama, I was living in Harrisonburg, VA, working as an Art Therapist. What is this land that I have come to? I am beckoned down an unknown trail & toward something sacred I have been encouraged to visit my first days at Lama, yet I do not know what awaits me--this spring in the high desert. I do not know any person on this mountain or what exactly pulled me to Lama except a queen red ant leaving me her wings on my book, inviting me to "start a new colony." The air cools instantly as sun is filtered through aspen leaves. A blanket of familiarity starts settling over me under tree cover, & when I stumble into a ring of Aspens & at the feet of an adobe altar, my jaw meets my chest. Sea shells, blue rocks. Her. A wooden goddess figure captures my affection and I have the sensation of pulling out seaglass from underneath the sand. Somehow, the feminine divine crossed the country with me and found me in a grove by a spring in the middle of a high desert. I am home.



Monika-Denise

J A M I L  
This year, annual gathering capped a marathon of meetings over the course of a few weeks, as well as landing just after my watch. The next week, Ravi came up to lead the community in an "erosion control project" for the Dargah. This turned out to consist of taking a small mountain of rocks the size of my head up in wheelbarrows & placing them by hand along trenches. As I sweated & wheezed in a vain attempt to keep pace with my vegan friends, I felt a sense of community and elation that can only partially be attributed to an excess of endorphins. There's a magic to living with people that I can sit around talking with, pray with, eat with, & haul rocks like a mule with.



Daniel

D A N I E L  
It's the first week of June. A time we typically would be ramping up in order to serve retreats. At this point in time, Paul DeLapa is the sole addition to our community beyond the resident circle. Suddenly, the first group of quarantining stewards has received their COVID-19 negative test results and are present in the kitchen. To me, this joyous surprise marked the beginning of summer, and what a ride it would be!



Kaia

Photo: Peggy Chung

H O L M E S  
I remember sitting in a sweat lodge ceremony at night under a full moon in August. The prayers from the people around me were so heartbreaking, poignant, powerful. I felt like I was ... home



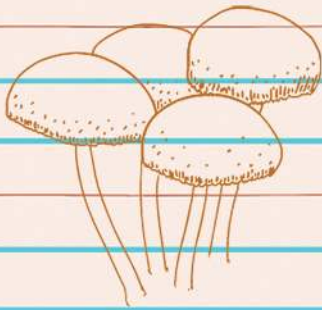
Holmes



Jamil

Photo: Beth Garrigus

# LAND 2020



Ingrid and Daniel headed our land team this summer, with support from Billy, Lin, Monika-Denise, Richard, Gracy, myself, and others. We grew tons of chard and arugula! The apricot, cherry, peach, pear, and plum trees had a prolific year. Our guardian dome-squirrel has stored away nearly half the pits that the apricots produced – the naughty lad didn't even eat the fruit! Another young squirrel was often spotted running across the portal carrying a pear larger than her head. We made jams and dried fruits, and even managed to store away a small amount (that we didn't eat!) for the winter. We have given lots of love back to the trees in appreciation of their bounty, including mulching with leaves from the mountain.

Hardly any rain has fallen this summer and the small cisterns have run dry. We would like to resurrect some old cisterns next spring/summer so that we may have ample water supply for our trees and vegetables.

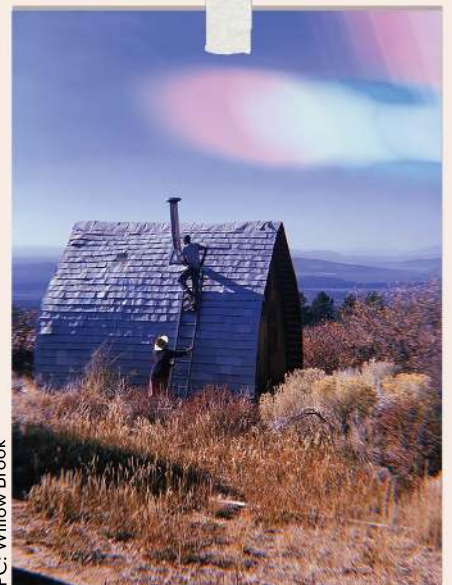
Lin, Ingrid, Richard, and Gracy have left the mountain for the winter, but we hope they will return next summer. Our new resident land team includes myself, Daniel, Monika-Denise, and Billy. We are planning our next growing season now, with dreams of increasing vegetable and medicinal herb production, synchronization with the kitchen, deepened spiritual awareness, and connection with the land, grounds cleanup/general beautification, and a whole lot of loving awareness!



PC: Scout Fernandez



PC: Louie Trecaso

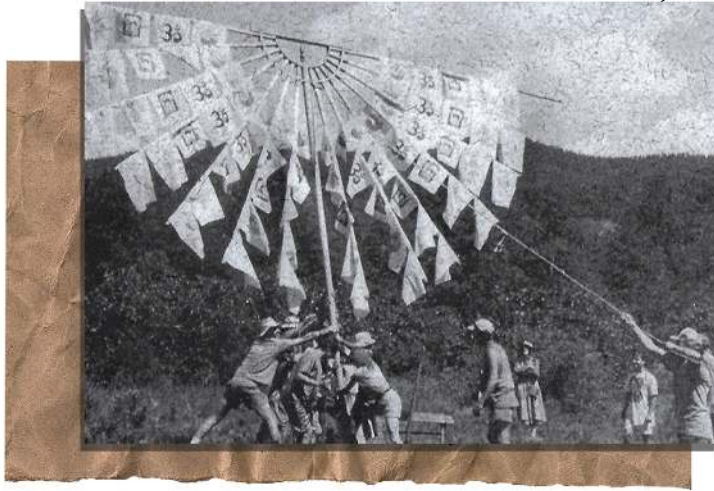


PC: Willow Brook

# The Peacock

## A Symbol of Interdependence and Prayer

BY SPENCER FOON



If asked which structures at Lama Foundation have deep meaning for us, most would be quick to name the Dome or the Original Kitchen, both integral to the Foundation since the beginning. One structure that might be overlooked, however, is the Peacock, with its many prayer flags welcoming visitors with its arms outstretched. The Peacock is part of the breathtaking view from the Portal looking west towards the Rio Grande Gorge – always there, with its flags fluttering in the breeze.

However, the Peacock has not always been there. In fact, it wasn't constructed until twenty-four years after the founding of Lama.

The story of the Peacock, originally called the "Prayer Flagpole," began in July 1991, when Julie Tato, then a Lama resident, approached Steve Waldvogel, another Lama resident, about coming up with a community project to celebrate what Julie was calling "Interdependence Day" (July 4th).

Steve, by practice an artist, mulled the request over for a week before he had an "aha" moment while meditating in the prayer room. He ran to the Dome and, gazing out the octagonal window, stretched out his hands, imagining what was to become the Peacock. He already knew the exact spot where the structure would stand, on a path that he took every day, where he would always stop to absorb the expansive horizon.

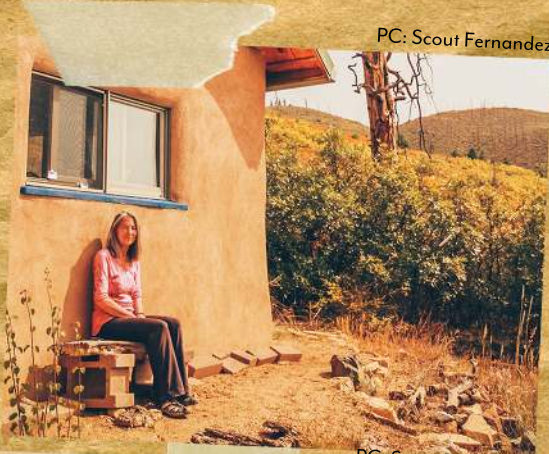
On butcher paper, Steve sketched a full scale drawing of the top of the post - the part he calls

the "hub," the point from which all of the poles radiate.

He took the sketch to a somewhat skeptical welder in Questa to construct the hub and the main flagpole out of steel. From there Steve went to El Prado to buy fourteen latillas, decorative poles used in traditional New Mexican building. After figuring out what prayer flags to use, the next steps were to attach prayer flags to each of the poles and then pour a small concrete foundation with a hole inside to hold the main post. After this was done, a group of residents and guests gathered to watch as a crew of ten lifted the Peacock, flags and all, into position.

And there the Peacock has stood for almost thirty years, surviving the great Hondo Fire of 1996 and even being used as a backdrop for the TV news. Though the original latillas have lasted all this time, Steve is now working on fashioning fourteen new poles made out of elm that he hopes to have installed in 2021.

Asked to reflect upon the creation of the Peacock, Steve noted recently that it was truly a process of interdependence, as so many people were involved in its creation. To this day, it continues to take the community together to make the prayer flags, take down the poles so that the old prayer flags can be replaced with new ones (aka "refeathering"), and then to put the poles back up. And so, with the spirit of interdependence, we all get to enjoy this iconic structure, with its flags fluttering, sending prayers continuously out to the world.



PC: Scout Fernandez



PC: Scout Fernandez



PC: Scout Fernandez



PC: Scout Fernandez

# Summertime Sweetness

PC: Willow Brook



PC: MD Berkholder



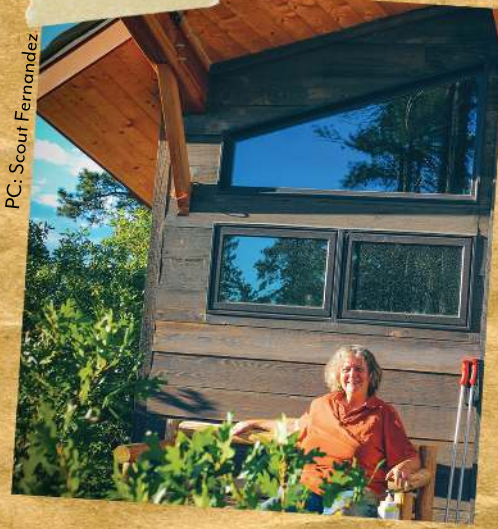
PC: Scout Fernandez



PC: Kestrel Alexander



PC: Lin Diagonales



PC: Scout Fernandez



PC: Lin Diagonales



PC: Kim Nelson



PC: Scout Fernandez



PC: George Marshall



PC: Scout Fernandez

PC: Scout Fernandez



PC: Willow Brook

PC: Kestrel Alexander



PC: Willow Brook



PC: Scout Fernandez



PC: Willow Brook



PC: Willow Brook



PC: Willow Brook



PC: Willow Brook



PC: Lin Diagonales




# Perspectives on Lama

## FROM TWO TRUSTEES



In 2020 the truth of impermanence became painfully evident. The residents at Lama responded swiftly and the summer program, as we have known it for so many years, was cancelled. Lama residents created a beautiful way to welcome stewards while adhering to health guidelines. Without retreatants to serve, the focus of the summer became community itself. Two trustees who were able to spend time on the mountain, Irit Umani and Julie Tato, share some of their impressions.



In early September, I was blessed with almost two weeks at home on the Mountain. A stunning circle of new & old beloveds welcomed and nourished me with the miracle of unmasked smiles and unrestrained hugs! Adapting with grace to the oddly evolving present of our world, Lama is delightfully and inspirationally ALIVE. Old ways are refreshed, with silence and Zikhr in the prayer room; meals are as joyous and delicious as any I've shared in 30+ years; circles of deep truth-telling revolve as always.

As I arrived the warm air was thick with smoke from distant forest fires, the familiar magical view hidden. The very next day an early snow blanketed us with quiet and light. The skies themselves reflected the community's dedication to deep contemplation, intimacy, and fun - in the face of all.

The largest winter circle in some years is also the youngest, rich with connection, spirituality, attunement to the land, active love of justice, appreciation for tradition and fresh eyes both. In these times which can so easily seem impossible, the youth, spirit, depth, balance, and creativity of this Lama moment is our hope. Ya Fatah!

*-Julie*

I was burnt out from the stress of working in a large city in COVID conditions with unhoused people. Lama residents generously provided a way for me to spend three weeks on the mountain on "refugee status."

I was exhausted, mentally, and physically; I asked for a healing time. After I realized that I had brought with me an accumulation of frustration and anger, I was able to take a deep breath and arrive. Thank God. What a gift it was! The beauty of this sacred land, the conversations, the morning sit, the portal, the kitchen, the Dargah, the spring house, ...you know, Lama.

There were 11 of us on the mountain when I came and 18 when I left, with 5 or 6 more completing their quarantine in different dwellings at Lama. Most significant to this healing time was the community, the belonging, the continued commitment of a group of beings to the path of awakening.

I left in love. I had three weeks in a community that is conscious and conscientious. They were deeply involved in learning about racial justice and examining white privilege. It was an energized group willing to tune-in each day to the challenges of creating new ways to "do," and experience summer at Lama. Spiritual practices were expanding: Zikr, Shabbat, silent sit, kirtan and much free spontaneous singing, music and laughter and fun.

Lama is good. Lama is magic. Lama is important to me and to the world now more than ever.

*-Irit*

# What is a Continuing Member?

SIDDIQ VON BRIESEN

The formal governing structure of Lama Foundation seems abstract, but it has been important, making it possible for Lama to continue its mission of “the awakening of consciousness” for over 50 years. It is this profound commitment to awakening — through inner work — spiritual and personal growth — that gives the structure real meaning. It has evolved with the aim of supporting this aspiration, individually and collectively.

When Lama was founded in 1968, the year legal papers were filed, two types of memberships were set forth in the bylaws, drafted by founder Stephen Durkee (Sheikh Nooruddeen): Permanent Members, who were residents, and Participating Members, who were part of the community. The first permanent members were the three founders, Stephen and Barbara Durkee (now Asha Greer) and Jonathan Altman.

Participating members were those accepted into the community by consensus of both permanent and participating members. Generally, visitors were allowed up to three days before asking for consensus to stay. Consensus was granted or refused during a meeting of the community with the candidate, in which a full discussion was held. These meetings were as much about the community as about the candidate. A ‘no’ was public, and was expected to have some explanation. To be the only voice saying ‘no’ was a serious responsibility.

After the two oldest families at Lama had broken up and left, around 1971-2, the concept of permanent membership was no longer relevant, especially since yearly turnover of the community was near 70%. Continuing Membership replaced Permanent Membership, and no longer required residence on the land. Over the decades, and through many generations of membership, several revisions of the bylaws, and a few serious institutional crises, Lama has held a tradition of governance that has survived all of these, entailing several changes of formal structure. The main anchors in all of these changes has been

consensus — in spirit if not strictly held — and the commitment to awakening on all levels.

The formal governing circles of the Foundation now consist of Residents (formerly Caretakers), Trustees, Lama Council, and Continuing Members. Teacher and former resident Ben Haggard has been working with each of these circles to help them think more clearly about their roles in relation to Lama Foundation as a whole. Indirectly but profoundly, Lama’s business meetings have been changed by this work, for the better.

Of these circles, continuing members are now those living “in the world” (that is, no longer on the premises) who have spent at least one winter at Lama and have been nominated and elected to continuing membership by the existing circle of continuing members. Once elected, they renew yearly as they wish. They carry their Lama experience with them in whatever they are doing. For most, if not all of us (I am a continuing member), that experience is a basic part of who we are now. Nevertheless, it has been difficult to define our function with respect to Lama Foundation as a whole.

There are roughly 40 of us. We are of very different ages, and belong to different generations of the Lama community. Our current involvement with Lama varies widely. Sometimes we say we are ‘alumni’, or that we carry in our persons what Lama has to offer the world. We are the closest of all the Lama circles to being permanent in our membership, but only if we want to be. We have been meeting online once a month for almost a year, usually 10 to 15 of us, to continue exploring what we are to Lama, and to maintain our connection both to Lama to one another.

*Siddiq was a visitor to Lama in 1967 and 1968, a resident 1969-71, and a continuing member or resident 1971-present. He has served Lama variously, as its Treasurer, 4th Coordinator, and Chair of the Board of Trustees.*



# From The Fundraiser

Thank you for your generosity. Your participation and contributions are core to Lama's vitality.

Lama fundraises to support its residents and stewards on the mountain, the infrastructure of the Foundation, and our connection with and offerings to our community around the world. This year has been challenging in so many ways, but it has also shown us how connected we all are, even when we can't be together on the land. We know the whole is strengthened through the good health and well-being of each individual, and we hold strongly to this focus, now perhaps more than ever.

In order to maintain, grow, and thrive, we are seeking your support. The cancellation of summer programs and the lack of visitors amounted to over \$150,000 in lost revenue. We've made spending cuts, decreased resident stipends, made fewer town runs, cut budgets, and have held off on non-essential repairs this year in conservation. We've also made efforts to create new forms of income through online offerings, like our Lama Together retreat.

Now, as we head into the winter, we find ourselves with a small reserve of funds and a resident body full of enthusiasm and dedication. Our special projects list is generally on hold, and we are assessing our repair and maintenance projects on a timeline of 1 – 5 years\*. Still, with all our conservative efforts, we recognize our need for further funding.

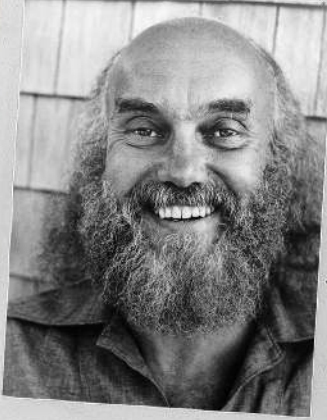
We invite you to tithe this year, any amount that you can. Donations are tax deductible and will go directly towards sustaining Lama Foundation for us all.

*-Tracy Cates*

*\*Our projects list, all needing attention within the next 5 years, includes: rebuilding on the site of the "Old Kitchen," a new "media" center, a new cistern, rainwater catchment and new smaller cisterns, replacement solar batteries, new resident housing, a new car, more retreatant housing, heating in the prayer room and wash house.*

# In loving remembrance . . .

April 6, 1931 - December 22, 2019



Ram Dass

## Remembering Ram Dass

Our beloved elder brother, mentor and spiritual guide, Ram Dass, died in Maui, Hawaii, on December 22, 2019. He was 88 and had lived with the effects of a stroke for over two decades. As we approach the one-year anniversary of Ram Dass' passing, we would like to honor his legacy in the Lama family.

Ram Dass is woven into the fabric of Lama's soul. His practices run through our days and his insights light up our consciousness. His deeply human example taught us to be more fully human. Lama and Ram Dass came of age together.

It was to Lama that Ram Dass headed when he returned from his life-transforming meeting with Neem Karoli Baba ("Maharaji") in India. Ram Dass' iconic book, *BE HERE NOW*, which translated thousands of years of dharma for a modern western audience thirsty for enlightenment, was created in collaboration with Lama in 1971 and has been a meaningful source of support for the foundation for fifty years. Having sold over two million copies, *BE HERE NOW* continues to contribute to the awakening of the collective heart.

Ram Dass had a special love for Lama. In his memoir, *BEING RAM DASS* (forthcoming from Sounds True in January 2021), Ram Dass conveys his deep love for the Lama land, appreciation for how Lama creates conscious community, and acknowledgment of the way Lama contributed to shaping his life as an emerging voice in the spiritual arena. Ram Dass' dynamic blend of devotion and service was rooted in his experience of Lama as a school for the whole soul: body, mind, and spirit.

Many of us have treasured memories of Ram Dass on Lama Mountain: ordinary moments sharing a meal at the picnic table, exalted moments chanting in the dome, times of deep quietude in the prayer room, conversations on the path to the ISC, laughing at his jokes and basking in his lovingkindness. It was Ram Dass who introduced countless Lama Beans to spiritual practice and we owe the foundation of our spiritual lives to his influence.

Thank you, beloved Ram Dass, for blessing our way. Your Lama family cherishes your memory.

-Mirabai Starr

Nur-I-Din Durkee was one of three founders of Lama Foundation. A man blessed with spiritual insight and the strength and drive to ground his vision into what we now call Lama Foundation. He envisioned a place where teachers from diverse paths and traditions would come and be available to seekers of all persuasions.

As a founding member and primary architect of Lama I am so grateful to him and to his contribution towards understanding, love and acceptance between faiths. He will be remembered for many things but to Lama Beings his initial intention of peace, harmony, and beauty is embedded in every building and pathway on the land.

May Allah Bless his secret.

-Jamil Kilbride

October 3, 1938 - September 13, 2020



Nur-I-Din Durkee

Photos: Ahad Cobb

Stay tuned for special events and tributes in 2021 in celebration of the 50th anniversary of *Be Here Now*!



Abraham Roy Sussman, Ahad Cobb, Alexandra van den Berg, Alf Watt, Alice Karow, Alison Smith, Amanda Noonan, Amrita Burdick, Ana Bregman Avital, Andrea Roberts, Andrew Utman, Angeline Thomas, Anita Reichmann, Anita Ruchman, Annat Provo, Anne Degan, Anne LaMantia, Annie Garretson, Asha Bernard, Asha Lela, Ashley Traut, Athena Huckaby, Ayesha Candy Cruz, Azima Lila Forest, Barakat Carolynn Bryan, Barbara Brown, Barkat Ferar, Becky Reardon, Beki Halpin, Bernice Martinez, Beth Rodger, Bette Myerson, Beverly Hsu, Bill Sortino, Bob Kilarjian, Bobbi Shapiro, Bonnie Henning, Boyd Holmes, Bradley Silling, Brady Hogan, Brenda Beeley, Brenda L Barstow, Britney Lewis, Brooks T Kasson, Caitlin Peerson, Candace Babcook-Blocker, Carmen Retzlaff, Carol Ann Scott, Carol E Hinton, Carol Snyder, Caroline Carter, Caroline Goff, Carrie Blowers, Catherine Aumen, Catherine Rashmi Karnitis, Catherine Sheehan, Cathy Collins, Cathy Dombrowske, Cathy Strubel, Chad Oba, Chado New Mexico, Charles Beardsley, Cheryl Botts, Cheryl Fish, Cheryl Odom, Cheyenne McClain, Chris Gillan, Chris Snyder, Christopher Miller, Christy Bartlett, Christy Engels, Christy Wesselman, Clif Coughlin, Cid Backer, Conie Borchardt, Constance McCloy, Corliss Motto, Cynthia Ghiron, Cynthia M Smith, Cynthia Rea Daniell, Cynthia West, Dana Schubert, Dani Hart, Danielle Freeman, David Anderson, David F. Bower, David Fore, David Froebel, David Jenkins, David Paul Pascale, David W Franz, Dawn Schmaling, Dean Olson, Deb Novak, Deborah Chance, Deborah Snyder, Debra Hoffman, Debra Mcdonald, Denise Green, Denise Sleeper, Diane Adkins, Diane Cullumber, Diane Head, Diane Olden, Digby Kirby, Donna Calame, Douglas Conwell, Earl Bush, Eartha S A Sutton, Edward Bilek, Edward Ewbank, Eleanor Briseno, Eliezer Sobel, Elise Miller, Elizabeth A Ebner, Elizabeth Bullock, Elizabeth Clemmer, Elizabeth Cogburn, Elizabeth Kohlenberg, Elizabeth Waldron, Elsa Katana, Emilia Clements, Emily D. Moore, Emily Kedar, Emily Rose, Emma Avalos Arguedas, Eric Doud, Eric K Albrecht, Erin M Wolfe, Erin Peepels, Eve Samuel, Fadhilla N Bradley, Fatima Rigsby, Flavia Patino, Flora Torra, Forest Vakil Shomer, Fran Garn, Frances A. Ritchings, Gail Karr, Gary Beavers, Gary Nicholson, Gayle Mace, Gilbert M Renault, Gina Gershon, Greg Luna, Grietje Sloan, Gwenn Correll, Habib Bishop, Hal Brill, Haqiqa Jeri Anne Hampton, Harry Kenney, Hassan Raven Wolf Jennings II, Helen Chantler, Irene Walkiw, Irit Umani, Isabel Ribe, Ivy Barger, Jai Cross, James E Stanford, Jan Alexander, Jan Waldmann, Jana Hornung, Jane Hurford, Jane Mossa, Janet C Tiegerman, Janice M Bibeau, Janice Pezzoli, Jean Ellen Stevens, Jean Kenin, Jeanette Scott, Jeff Anglen, Jeff Lewis, Jeffrey Kosiorek, Jeffry King, Jenna Paulden, Jennifer Avian, Jennifer Friedman, Jennifer Latifa Till, Jessica High, Jill Averitt, Jim Bier, Jim Hunt, Joel Kapp, John A Duvall, John Babbs, John Daily, John F O'Regan, John O'Regan, John Sherburne, John Stocke, John Visnauskas, Joliange Wright, Jonathan & Kathleen Altman Foundation, Jonathan Scharfman, Joseph Justice, Joseph Lightman, Judith Dack, Judith Henry, Judith Voss, Julia Carr, Julia Vazquez, Julie Grossman, Julie Weinstein, Justin E Friedman, Justin Friedman, Kallie Jackson, Kamilah McShine-Gregory, Karen Hammond, Karen Higgins, Karen Tarnower, Kari Krogh, Karin Arielle Kilbride, Karina Fehrmann, Kat Maier, Kate A Munger, Kate Brown, Kate Clearlight, Katharine Wendy Larsen, Kathe Hudson, Katherine Cary, Katherine Miller, Kathleen Fitzgerald Azarnoff, Kathryn Hankinson, Kathy Chudoba & Dave Powelson, Kathy Eads, Kathy Lyons, Kati Roske, Kay Mathew, Kayla Parks, Kelli Mayfield, Kelly Rivera, Kenneth Kalata, Kevin Padilla,



Photo by Scout Fernandez



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## Flag Mountain

### Cottage Industries:

Willow Brook, Louie Trecaso, Kima Nelson, Scout Fernandez

## Lama Together teachers and staff:

Allaudin Ottinger, Asha Greer, Becky Reardon, Ben Haggard, Cathy Walker, Daisy Neshoma Meyer, David Roemmele, Dylan Trachtman, Ela Ramos, Heather Nuanes, Jai Uttal, Kate Munger, Kathy Lyons, Kripa Kirtan, Krishna Das, Lesley Maclean, Lex Gillan, Melanie DeMore, Mirabai Starr, Miryam Levy, Nina Rao, Rameshwar Das, Sakina von Briesen, Siddiq von Briesen, Sitaram Dass, Spencer Foon, Terry Garthwaite, The Lama Residents, Thomas Renault, Tracy Cates, Yasmine Scott, Zuleikha

## Residents:

Billy Winters, Daniel Rozel, George Marschall, Holmes Bryant, Jamil Paurel, Kaia Friton, Kestrel Alexander, Kima Nelson, Louie Trecaso, Monika-Denise Burkholder, Paolo Evans, Scout Fernandez, Willow Brook, Zach Steiner

## Beloved Departing Residents:

"Our beloved **Bird** Sharples left Lama this year and the place just doesn't feel the same without her. It is difficult to describe Bird's presence to those who have never had the opportunity to live with her. A bona-fide saint and a holy terror; Bird is one of the most ferociously sincere and dedicated people I have ever met. She brings a sense of urgency to every task she takes on, from fixing a leaking roof to finding rays of acceptance and compassion in difficult interpersonal interactions. She strives to interpret every circumstance in a spiritual context and so imbues everything she touches with that perspective. We love our Bird and will miss her very much." - Holmes

"**Ingrid** was a steward twice, before staying on as a resident. One of two Steward guardians and Land Guardians, she loves animals, chocolate, cycling, diligent cleaning, and seamlessly shared her endearing laughter with us." -Daniel

"What I'll miss most about **Karen** is her sharp wit, friendship, warm hugs, and love for the cats. I always admired Karen for her honesty, tenacity and big heart. Karen contributed so much to Lama and her presence is definitely missed in the circle. I hope her new life path is fulfilling and beautiful." -Louie

**Fundraiser:** Tracy Cates

**Lama Alive Designer:**  
Scout Fernandez

**Lama Alive Editors:**  
Tracy Cates & Spencer Foon



# Online Offerings



LAMATOGETHER.ORG/EVENTS

## Lama Together

This past July, Lama Foundation hosted our very first online retreat. A summer without gatherings just didn't feel right, but wanting to keep everyone in our community safe, meeting in person was not an option. Our Lama Together retreat attracted over 200 participants! Not only was the event successful in numbers, but it was incredibly heartwarming to visit with friends, old and new, to practice together, to learn, and to really feel the strength of our community.

We learned a lot from this first retreat, enough to know that, if the pandemic prevents us from gathering in 2021, we can carve out a space to be together again online.

## Summer Schedule

We normally post a draft of our summer schedule in this publication, but it is too soon for us to know whether gatherings will be possible. Our dearest hope is to welcome you all back on the land. We will be monitoring CDC guidelines and working to publish our summer 2021 schedule as soon as we can, be it on-land retreats, or virtual gatherings.

## Please Join Us!

**Shabbat**, Friday at 6:30 pm Mountain Time  
**Lama Tea**, first Thursdays of the month, from 1:45 - 3:15  
**Virtual Heart Club**, coming soon!  
**Readings from the Library**, coming soon!  
Visit [LamaTogether.org/events](https://LamaTogether.org/events) for more details



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PRAYER FLAGS

PHOTO BY SCOUT FERNANDEZ



HAND-DYED FLAGS  
AND SHIRTS

PHOTO BY KIMA NELSON



BEHIND THE SCENES:  
WILLOW SEWING FLAGS

PHOTO BY SCOUT FERNANDEZ

# NEW FLAGS



**POLICE/HIPPIES**  
**14 X 14 INCHES**



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**NOV15 - DEC24**

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**LIMITED EDITION**

**REMEMBER**

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*The purpose of the Lama Foundation  
is to be a sustainable spiritual community and  
educational center dedicated to the awakening of  
consciousness, spiritual practice with respect for  
all traditions, service and stewardship of the land.*

Photo by Willow Brook



Lama Foundation

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Glue Flap



Lama Foundation is a unique refuge. A place where people of all ages, backgrounds, and of all traditions learn and grow with reverence for land and spirit.

**Your Donation Helps ♥ Thank You**

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