

Out & About

with Lori Sunflower

Column & Photos by Lori Nagel

This Month's Topic:
What's Your Vision for Crestone?




Usnea

My dream for Crestone, oh my God, this is interesting. Well, I would like it simple, that people can afford to live here. Being a senior, 72 years old, it's hard to live on a small income here, I mean, you're in poverty all the time. I love Crestone. I love Crestone because of the diversity of the people, and ya know, we have our characters—we have our people that we kind of scratch our head and go, "mmm, OK." But ya know, we tolerate most of them, and most of them are harmless. And there's ones that are not harmless, and we run 'em outta town! We just get rid of 'em—we figure out a way to get rid of 'em, ya know? But I really think that we should start thinking about affordable places for people to live here. Not so expensive that we have to move to Alamosa to live in senior housing or that we have to move to Salida or Denver or Grand Junction. To be able to live here in my old age would really be a blessing, but I don't see it happening, just because of the cost of it.



Jeremiah Bayes

I've been here for 17 years, and I've seen it go in a lot of cycles. Or maybe not a lot of cycles—just one big cycle. And when I first came here, everything was very interconnected and communal and we were all helping build each other's homes, and hanging out with each other, communally involved in businesses and growing and things like that. And then as time went by, we all married and had babies and

started going down separate paths and whatnot, and Crestone kinda stepped into this individually finding yourself rather than communally finding yourself. And I think that's part of the cycle, and I think it's really important. But I'm looking forward to when we get comfortable inside of ourselves and we're able to come back together and start working together in a good way. I've always liked tribe, and things like that. And one time I went to a Gathering and the whole Gathering was about the distinction between communities and tribes and why communities fail and tribes have succeeded for thousands of years. The main distinction was that communities are built on a belief, and beliefs come and go at the whim. Tribes are based on sustainability or necessity—the tribe staying together and working together. I'd like to see necessity facilitate our coming back together, growing food together, working together, raising our children together, and including elders in the raising of our children. Meanwhile, I just intend to be sittin' out on my land, waitin' for it to come, cuz I'm not a big social butterfly! (laughing)



Megan Riley

I have 2 visions for Crestone. The first is mine personally. I grew up sensitive, and a lot of kids and their parents don't know what to do about that. So, I would really love to have something, like some kind of center or school for sensitive psychic kids. The Charter School is extraordinary, but I'm thinking of an after-school program, something for these kids that are being born cable-ready—already plugged in and nobody knows what to do with them. Regarding a future in Crestone, I picture that it's not really big and the Creative District is really active. And it's almost like the spiritual community of Lily Dale, NY, where there's so many creatives, so many spirituals, but there's no need to compete—there's something that we offer that no one else can provide and it's for the perfect person at the perfect time. Having that old town feel, art-walks, creative, artsy, very thriving. Schools do better when

there are more creatives in town, the town does better, people are happier—it goes all over the board. So, if the Creative District can push this, and push those of us who are creative, it will be somewhere people visit for healing and art and . . . our beer! (Author's note: Megan's brother and sister-in-law happen to be 2 of the 5 owners of the new Crestone Brewing Co.)



Donovan Spitzman

What would my dream for Crestone be? It's a very difficult thing because we have such incredible diversity. I guess my dream really follows William and the Harmony House that he put together over there. Striving to see both ends of the spectrum, find some place of balance and harmony in the center, where suddenly we're actually all getting along and effectively communicating, and addressing each other's needs—however that looks, and I have no idea what that looks like. Yeah. That's my dream. Because right now, we seem to be very disjointed on a lot of levels, and we shouldn't be.

If you look at the history as well as the current status of this community, it truly is the owner-builders, homesteaders, and that end of the spectrum that make this community work. And are there more people here? Absolutely! Do we see them? Very rare. They're travelling or they're hangin' out at home, or they're doing something, but they're not here supporting the inner workings and dynamics of the community. And in order for this community to actually experience an abundant future for its residents, it's those residents that create it. And so, that's what makes it work here.



Sharron Rose

Well, there are 2 specific projects. One is, because I'm a filmmaker, and I love working with Doug Beechwood, we're going to do an in-

terview series with people who visit. I call it, "Crestone Live" and feel it would help attract people here, if we could put it up on YouTube and on the siteto really show the amazing spiritual teachers we have here, and community. So that's one. The other is, we have all these spiritual centers, and we're all sittin' and doin' meditation, but, except for Shumei, who has the drummers, there's really no ritual performance—music, dance! From my own experience, working in the arts for so many years, I've found that music and dance is the best way to harmonize people. So I really want to put together both a choir, and I have people interested in that, and a ritual music dance performance community group.

One more idea I've been discussing with Kairina Danforth [Crestone's mayor] and John Milton and Peter May, is to create a program that would help bring children into nature by using mathematics and sacred geometry. They would go for nature walks to find the geometric forms in nature and they could take things and make collages—a way to really connect them.



Doug Beechwood

Not much would change. I can't see much changing. The natural environment is always gonna be key. The lifestyle here will always be simple and small but I see it being a community where people can sustain themselves with their artistic livelihood, with their artistic vision. They can sustain themselves, remain off the grid, still live sustainably/alternatively but be able to thrive instead of just grasp for, ya know—it's not like we're so much facing a poverty mentality here, it's just there's nothing to base the economy on. So I hope there'd be a base for the economy, and actually provide some type of input from outside. It also allows artists, artisans, educators, authors, all the creative, independent people we have here to find a market in the outside world. I'd like to see Crestone be known for its natural resources, its simplicity, and the difficult environment to live in—ya gotta still be pretty special to be here, full time. But I see there being an economic basis where we could actually all make a living—we wouldn't have to fight for trumps anymore. It's difficult to make an economy based on all the independent people without something coming in from outside, and us reaching outside as well. Outside of Crestone, outside of the valley, outside of the state. I think we have . . . we have wisdom to share with the whole world.