



August 15, 2013

Dear Echo Hill Families and Alumni,

It's only since we've been home in Maryland for a few weeks that we've begun to fully absorb the closing up of Echo Hill. For people who are used to helping others, it's difficult to realize just how much disappointment and sadness our decision has created. For the many parents and ranchers we have gotten close with since we've been running camp, we know the decision may be very upsetting for your family; it may disrupt your child's friendship network, and shake their confidence in a special place that they thought would be there, if not forever, at least long enough for them to become a Spur or Star or TLC or on staff!

We realize that our camp community is much bigger than ourselves as camp directors, and is a valued institution for hundreds of families and kids across three generations. For all of these reasons we must tell you in sincerity and humility that we're very sorry we couldn't keep it going.

In 10 short years, we succeeded in building a nature-focused, progressive and wholesome camp community for the future. Our work was based on the firm foundation of Aunt Min's and Uncle Tom's unique child-centered and non-competitive camp vision which they started in 1953, and continued with Marcie's help, beyond Aunt Min's death in 1985 until Uncle Tom's death in 2002.

Since 2003, we have built a network of friendships with many of you and your children, and with our counselors and senior staff that we cherish, and don't want to lose. We never tired of being amazed by how kids seem to grow in a matter of days at the ranch and then mature even more each summer they return. We were never happier than when we joined the whole camp in singing bunk songs like "Little Green Valley," "Rick the Rowdy Rancher," "So Shake My Hand," and "Round and Round" in such boisterous harmony on Banquet night that the whole dining hall began to shake with joy.

But we were not able to keep it all going---and we tried our best. Over the past year and a half we searched for ways to continue the camp business, which involved a need to reduce the work stress on ourselves, and to meet the very different needs of our partners, Kinky and Marcie Friedman. What happened to us happens to many second generation family businesses: after the founders are gone, different and conflicting agendas begin to emerge among the next generation of ownership. These agendas reflect the interests of each owner's life, and when these interests greatly differ, as they did with us, the natural consequence is either a reorganization of the ownership of the business, or selling or closing it.

Some have asked us to recommend other camps, but that's hard for us to do right away. If you'd like to share with us a camp you are considering, we will try to give you feedback if we are knowledgeable of their program. If you have further questions about the closing of camp, you also may email us at ehbranch@aol.com and we'll respond as best we can. For now we will say Green Trees again...we do plan to come out with a 2013 yearbook this fall and winter and to stay in touch. We wish your kids a healthy and enriching school year.

From our friendship circle to yours,

Roger and Roz