

We welcome you to the Summer 2014 Montana Gathering of Friends (MGOF), August 14 – 17. It will be held at Luccock Park camp nestled in a beautiful high valley at the foot of peaks. It's a chance to connect with Friends of all ages – in play, in worship, in learning, in deep sharing – to refresh our bodies, minds and spirits. The regular gathering begins 8/15, with Friday night supper. (A pre-gathering of fun will be offered Thursday evening through Friday noon. See below for details.)



Call to Summer MGOF Aug 14-17 2014

The theme is **Learning to Listen to My Heart's Song**. We will explore the Quaker clearness meeting process as it is used for personal spiritual discernment.

The clearness meeting process has been used by Quakers since the time of George Fox. A small group of people gathers to focus on someone who has a question, a problem or a situation about which he or she wants to gain clarity. This practice may be new to those who have recently come to Friends, but familiar to many of us who have used it. This gathering will focus on how Parker Palmer does clearness committee meetings. Co-planners for the plenary, Georgia Foster and Lucretia Humphrey have recently been involved in Circles of Trust retreats designed by Quaker Parker Palmer. In these retreats we have experienced clearness meetings using techniques that seem powerfully respectful of a focus person's inner teacher. We are eager to share Parker Palmer's way with Friends in MGOF.

We have asked David Henderson, an experienced Circles of Trust trainer, to lead us in this practice. David lives in Bozeman and recently became a member of MGOF. At Saturday morning's plenary, David will help us strengthen the art of listening by using love and offering open ended questions. Then, those who would like to practice it in an actual clearness meeting may do so Saturday afternoon, foregoing free time. If you know now that you would like to be a focus person or participant in such a meeting, please call one of us (Lucretia 406-453-2714 ; Georgia 307-672-6779). Also, if you would like to be a focus person, please ask three people to join you in this clearness meeting. In preparation for the gathering, we invite you to read an article posted in this newsletter, entitled, The Clearness Committee in Retreats: A Communal Approach, by Parker Palmer.

Our schedule will be nearly the same as usual. We will have Worship Sharing, but because of the length of David's presentation, it will be shortened to just one hour each day. There can be time for hikes, float trips, special visits and rest – the choices will be yours!

Children's Program Tina Visscher

We are planning to create a balance between time exploring the beautiful natural surroundings, allowing for adequate play and movement, and having children experience the clearness process at a level they can understand and practice. Adults experienced in the clearness process who would like to be a part of modeling this for the children would be appreciated. We hope to find a time that doesn't conflict with the Friend in Residence program. Noah has volunteered to do some fantastic feats with the children, perhaps doing some traditional balancing. Peter will be their rock again this summer. Parents expressed a desire for the community to get to know their children and reach out informally to them so they feel included in the community. Friday evening will include some fun intergenerational game. Anyone interested in the children's program's development is invited to come to an initial Children's Program Committee. We also appreciate volunteers to help in ways they are comfortable with. There will be a sign up at the registration table.



The Clearness Committee

A Communal Approach To Discernment

by Parker J. Palmer

Many of us face a dilemma when trying to deal with a personal problem, question, or decision. On the one hand, we know that the issue is ours alone to resolve and that we have the inner resources to resolve it, but access to our own resources is often blocked by layers of inner “stuff”—confusion, habitual thinking, fear, despair. On the other hand, we know that friends might help us uncover our inner resources and find our way, but by exposing our problem to others, we run the risk of being invaded and overwhelmed by their assumptions, judgments, and advice—a common and alienating experience. As a result, we often privatize these vital questions in our lives: at the very moment when we need all the help we can get, we find ourselves cut off from both our inner resources and the support of a community.

For people who have experienced this dilemma, I want to describe a method invented by the Quakers, a method that protects individual identity and integrity while drawing on the wisdom of other people. It is called a “Clearness Committee.” If that name sounds like it is from the sixties, it is—the 1660’s! From their beginnings over three hundred years ago, Quakers needed a way to draw on both inner and communal resources to deal with personal problems because they had no clerical leaders to “solve” their problems for them. The Clearness Committee is testimony to the fact that there are no external authorities on life’s deepest issues, not clergy or therapists or scholars; there is only the authority that lies within each of us waiting to be heard.

Behind the Clearness Committee is a simple but crucial conviction: *each of us has an inner teacher, a voice of truth, that offers the guidance and power we need to deal with our problems.* But that inner voice is often garbled by various kinds of inward and outward interference. The function of the Clearness Committee is not to give advice or “fix” people from the outside in but rather to help people remove the interference so that they can discover their own wisdom from the inside out. If we do not believe in the reality of inner wisdom, the Clearness Committee can become an opportunity for manipulation. But if we respect the power of the inner teacher, the Clearness Committee can be a remarkable way to help someone name and claim his or her deepest truth.

The Clearness Committee’s work is guided by some simple but crucial rules and understandings. Among them, of course, is the rule that the process is confidential. When it is over, committee members will not speak with others about what was said and, equally important, will not speak with the focus person about the problem unless he or she requests a conversation.

Guidelines for facilitating Clearness Committees at retreats:

1. Facilitators assign members to committees. But before doing so, ask each focus person for a confidential list of any persons he or she especially wants to work with or feels unable to work with. Promise focus persons they will be given as many names from the first list as possible, and none from the second list.
2. At a retreat, focus persons are asked to reflect on the following three areas:
 - a concise *statement of his or her problem*, even if it is not clear—this process can work as well with murky issues as with clear ones;
 - a recounting of *relevant background* factors that may bear on the problem;
 - an exploration of any hunches the focus person may have about *what’s on the horizon* regarding the problem.
3. This is done so that the focus person can present their problem orally to the committee at the start of the session in a concise but helpful way, ten or fifteen minutes maximum.
4. Clearness Committees last two hours. A detailed schedule is provided to all committee members before the process begins. When fifteen, and then five minutes remain, someone on the committee needs to notify the others, for reasons explained in note 9 below. Committee members for whom note-taking enhances attentiveness may take notes, turning them over to the focus person before leaving the room. This helps guarantee confidentiality and is a great gift to the focus person, helping him or her remember the questions and answers in the hours, days and months to come.
5. The meeting begins when the focus person breaks the silence, and gives a brief summary of the issue at hand. Then the committee members may speak—but everything they say is governed by one rule, a simple rule and yet one that most people find difficult and demanding: *members are forbidden to speak to the focus person in any way except to ask honest, open questions.* This means absolutely no advice and no amateur psychoanalysis. It means no, “Why don’t you...?” It means no, “That happened to me one time, and here’s what I did...” It means no, “There’s a book/therapist/exercise/diet that would help you a lot.” Nothing is allowed except real questions, honest and open questions, questions that will help the focus person remove the blocks to his or her inner truth without becoming burdened by the personal agendas of committee members. I may think I know the answer to your problem, and on rare occasions I may be right. But *my* answer is absolutely no value to you. The only answer that counts is one that arises from your own inner truth. The discipline of the Clearness Committee is to give you greater access to that truth and allow you to have a personal dialogue with it—while the rest of us refrain from trying to define that truth for you or guide that dialogue.
6. What is an honest, open question? It is important to reflect on this, since we are so skilled at asking questions that are advice or analysis in disguise; e.g., “Have you ever thought that it might be your mother’s fault?” The best single mark of an honest, open question is that the questioner could not possibly anticipate the answer to it; e.g., “Did you ever feel like this before?” There are other guidelines for good questioning. Try not to get ahead of the focus person’s language; e.g.,

“What did you mean when you said ‘frustrated’?” is a good question, but “Didn’t you feel angry?” is not. Ask questions aimed at helping the focus person rather than at satisfying your curiosity. Ask questions that are brief and to the point rather than larding them with background considerations and rationale—which make the question into a speech. Ask questions that go to the person as well as the problem—for example, questions about feelings as well as about facts. Trust your intuition in asking questions, even if your instinct seems off the wall; e.g., “What color is your present job, and what color is the one you have been offered?”

7. Normally, the focus person responds to the questions as they are asked, in the presence of the group, and those responses generate more, and deeper, questions. Though the responses should be full, they should not be terribly long—resist the temptation to tell your life story in response to every question! It is important that there be time for more and more questions and responses, thus deepening the process for everyone. The more often a focus person is willing to answer aloud, the more material the person—and the committee—will have to work with. But this should never happen at the expense of the focus person’s need to protect vulnerable feelings or to maintain privacy. It is vital that the focus person assume total power to set the limits of the process. So everyone must understand that *the focus person at all times has the right not to answer a question*. The unanswered question is not necessarily lost—indeed, it may be the question that is so important that it keeps working on the focus person long after the Clearness Committee has ended.
8. The Clearness Committee must not become a grilling or cross-examination. The pace of the questioning is crucial—it should be relaxed, gentle, humane. A machine-gun volley of questions makes reflection impossible and leaves the focus person feeling attacked rather than evoked. Do not be afraid of silence in the group—trust it and treasure it. If silence falls, it does not mean that nothing is happening or that the process has broken down. It may well mean that the most important thing of all is happening: new insights are emerging from within people, from their deepest sources of guidance.
9. From beginning to end of the Clearness Committee, it is important that everyone work hard to remain *totally attentive* to the focus person and his or her needs. This means suspending the normal rules of social gathering—no chitchat, no responding to other people’s questions or to the focus person’s answers, no joking to break the tension, no noisy and nervous laughter. We are simply to surround the focus person with quiet, loving space, resisting even the temptation to comfort or reassure or encourage this person, but simply being present with our attention and our questions and our care. If a committee member damages this ambiance with advice, leading questions, or rapid-fire inquisition, other members, including the focus person, have the right to remind the offender of the rules—and the offender is not at liberty to mount a defense or argue the point. The Clearness Committee is for the sake of the focus person, and the rest of us need to get our egos to recede.
10. The Clearness Committee should run for the full time allotted. Don’t end early for fear that the group has “run out of questions”—patient waiting will be rewarded with deeper questions than have yet been asked. About fifteen minutes before the end of the meeting, someone should ask the focus person if he or she wants to suspend the “questions only” rule and invite committee members to mirror back what they have heard the focus person saying. If the focus person says no, the questions continue, but if he or she says yes, mirroring can begin, along with more questions if they should arise. Mirroring does not provide an excuse to give advice or fix the person—that sort of invasiveness is still prohibited. Mirroring simply means exactly what the word suggests: reflecting the focus person’s language—and body language—giving him or her a chance to say, “Yes, that’s me” or “No, that’s not,” though no response is required. In the final five minutes of the meeting, the clerk should invite members to celebrate and affirm the focus person and his or her strengths. This is an important time, since the focus person has just spent a couple of hours being very vulnerable. And there is always much to celebrate, for in the course of a Clearness Committee, people reveal the gifts and graces that characterize human beings at their deepest and best.

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State of Society Report MGOF MM

From wheat fields, to rushing streams and mountains full of life, from nuclear missiles to university and college towns, to the mighty Missouri River, the unique Montana Gathering of Friends MM collects its member and attenders in four small worship groups. Coming together as a group in the winter and in the summer sustains others who are isolated and nourishes these four worship groups, plus two other MM of Montana. None of the worship groups has a permanent meeting house. Homes, assisted living homes, and meeting rooms provide the structure of a place to meet. About ½ of the groups meet every Sunday with flexibility for people's schedules. The other half meet regularly, but twice a month.

Yet, with this wide range of diversity, there is a sense of growth and energy. There have been three new members this past year, several transfers of membership from other MM outside of Montana, and a renewed interest in transferring membership to MGOF MM from attenders who have been here in Montana for over a decade. One worship group has begun to thrive with the energy and direction of a young Friend. People who have not attended for some time are coming back, and becoming involved in the MM as a whole. Other worship groups have grown steadily, and although still rather few in number have become a dependable size to count on for consistent worship on Sunday mornings. In nearly all of our worship groups we have seen younger people becoming involved. This is very cheery news for so many of us with gray hair.

The Meeting ebbs and flows as it works to meet the needs of our attenders and members with support for our children's program, education for us all in good Quaker process, and our ongoing search for Truth in the Spirit. Our Quarterly Meeting (meeting only twice a year) has started to grow again in numbers. This is largely due to some members reaching out and inviting those we have not seen recently and letting them know that they are missed. We have been led with strong clerking and committees able to find the balance between doing the important business while providing fellowship. The phone conference has also been important to keep us in touch.

MGoF has seen the witness of the Spirit through the involvement of a number of Friends not only in MGOF, but also in active roles in NPYM, as well as AFSC, FCNL and Right Sharing of World Resources. This leadership has brought education and connection to the wider world of Quakers back home to Montanan Quakers. (We are also happy to include a Friend from Sheridan, Wyoming).



**Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Quaker Business and news
from around the state.**

State of Society Report for Great Falls Worship Group 2014

Great Falls Worship Group gathered in worship sharing to reflect on the state and condition of our small group. Several spoke of the ways in which our group has

allowed them to pursue a spiritual life of honesty and has given them the freedom to explore their faith safely. There is a diversity of backgrounds and outlooks in our small group. We have been told that we have a welcoming quality to all that come our way, perhaps forming a true community. Our worship with this wide variety of spiritual beliefs has deepened and reflects our hope for connection with the Divine.

We are amazed at the newcomers and visitors that we have had in the past year. It seems that after years of trying hard to find the right place, the right time, and the right outreach, Spirit has brought us new people with their varied experience of the Divine.

We have an average weekly attendance of about 10 people. We have had two new members join the Society of Friends through our Worship Group and the Montana Gathering of Friends MM. If we have a special gathering such as a potluck we can have over 20 attenders.

For many of our regular attenders there is a feeling that we are breaking open and giving rise to new energy and vitality of Spirit. We are sending one woman off on a pilgrimage to Mississippi where her parents participated in the Civil Rights Summer of 1964. Another member has supported the work of an Iraqi student and his poetry by inviting him to our worship group. Out of our small worship group, we have the editor of our Quarterly newsletter, the clerk of MGOF M&C, and involvement in Right Sharing of World Resources and FCNL.

The Spirit moved two of our members to write op-ed pieces for the local paper speaking out concerning our community's economic and psychological enmeshment with its nuclear missile base. Others have steadily written letters to the editor on other topics close to Quaker hearts. Another Friend passionately brought back to us information about FCNL after touring their headquarters in Washington, DC. Her enthusiasm has renewed the efforts of many of us to write letters to our Congress people.

As we look forward to the new year with our faithful committed worship group, we see a responsibility to continue these activities and to now reach out with other churches in our area to homeless families through a program called Family Promise. Our worship group plans to provide a meal a month for these families. We also want to make a commitment to use our first 45 minutes before our un-programmed worship for more adult education. This seems especially important as we gain new attenders who may not be aware of our Quaker process, history and faith.

State of the Society Report Bozeman Worship Group June 2014

A year of challenges and changes: Bozeman worship group continues to meet weekly at the Christus Collegium near the Montana State University campus. This space works well enough and does allow us to have a separate space for children to meet when that is possible. We pay a modest rent and donations are sufficient to our needs.

We experimented with our schedule last summer, changing the meeting time to evening, resulting in lower attendance. We currently meet on Sunday mornings at 10am followed by a brief sharing of joys and concerns. Our worship group is small. Sometimes there are only 2 in attendance, but other times there are 7 or more adults and up to 4 children, all delightful girls who are bright and wise beyond their ages.

Sojourning members are important to our worship group. Old members who visit Montana and new participants who are here only occasionally enrich our group with their positive energy and with their appreciation of the depth of worship they find.

Speaking of worship, often the worship is deep, centered and gathered, especially when there is some ministry. However, there are other times when the worship feels more diffuse and disconnected. The variable attendance is a challenge for us. Attenders of the worship group are busy with careers, outdoor recreation and other responsibilities.

There have also been significant challenges for several BWG attenders. One individual had emergency heart bypass surgery, another traveled out of state to care lovingly for a dying family member. Still another made major work changes. Yet another dealt with a declining parent living far away.

Yet when we do gather with intention, Spirit moves among us. We met for a potluck and worship sharing in April, attended by 13 people. Sharing centered on the theme: After the long winter, what new life is trying to emerge in your life, in you soul? Although a very small group, the Bozeman Worship Group displays a strong sense of loving community in which offers of clearness committees and support abound.

How does the meeting speak? This year the convictions of the worship group shone through the lives of individuals. Participants in our worship group are active and witness through their occupations and community involvement. In terms of Quaker responsibilities, worship group members are active in MGOF, NPYM and RSWR.

Perhaps some of our challenges come from the average age range of the group, probably somewhere around the mid 60s. We treasure our college student who assists with the children's program and would welcome other students. How to connect with the university community is not yet clear to us. It is a great joy; however, that one of our attenders felt the leading to provide 1st day school every other week. The meetings where children and their parents attend have a special vitality, not to be missed. Alas, of late, the interest has seemed to have waned despite the faithfulness of the children's leaders.

The Bozeman group is tiny and we are mindful of our limitations, yet aware that our worship does provide an

important respite from the difficulties of our daily lives. We often find just what we needed to hear in worship. And we encourage our attenders to be faithful in the discipline of seeking the Spirit in this precious way.

Meeting For Worship for Business Steering Committee 5/17/14 Luccock Part

Present: Kate Weiss, Clerk, Nora Martin Recording Clerk, Halie Oines, Judy Visscher, Georgia Foster, Claire Leonard, Jasmine Krotkov, Tina Visscher.

Kate Weiss opened the meeting with silence.

I Steering Meeting Minutes 2/7/14 were read and accepted with one correction.

II NPYM Coordinating Committee Report:

Minute: Discuss Assessment change in support of NPYM Children's Program Committee

III Nominating Committee Report: Judy Visscher has now officially stepped down from the MGOF nominating committee. Julia Child has agreed to serve with me and Starshine on the committee.

We have nominated Peter Walker-Keleher to serve as Children's Program Coordinator. Peter is definitely committed to work in this capacity for the upcoming summer gathering. He is seriously considering, though he has not committed to, serving in this role on a longer term basis.

We also nominate Tina Visscher to serve as clerk of the MGOF children's committee.

We have not yet found a person to work with Nora Martin as the coordinator for the summer 2015 MGOF gathering and have not yet found coordinators for the winter 2015 MGOF gathering. It would also be desirable for MGOF nominating committee to find someone willing to serve on the NPYM nominating committee.

Minute: We approve Candida Quinn to Represent Quakers in the Montana Federation of churches

Minute: Thank you to Tina Visscher for chairing the children's program committee

IV Contact list. There will be a printed contact list at Summer MGOF

V Tax Receipts: Receipt will sent for donations over \$250 in value.

Minute: in Newsletter will be a reminder that to have a receipt for donations should be a separate check for the donation part. That check will then be the receipt.

VI Children's program report. Tina will form a committee by asking clerks of the meetings to inform their meetings, seeking anyone who may feel called to serve. It was recommended by the committee that Tina Visscher will ask a Missoula member (likely to be on the children's committee) to look for the standards of behavior published in a newsletter between 2000 and 2002.

VII MGOF Assessments will be sent out.

Minute: Kate Weiss and Nora Martin will send out annual assessments

IIX Quaker Youth Pilgrimage

Minute: Three hundred dollars will be given to Alex Anderlik toward his trip.

IX Summer MGOF Coordination

Minute: Georgia Foster will submit the information to the newsletter.

Minute: Kate Weiss will lead a Thursday night, Friday Morning Quaker Art Activity. Summer Coordinators will help with the materials and organization of the activity and invitation/description in the newsletter.

X Newsletter:

Submit on Date: July 1st- Publication Date July 12th Registration Date Due August 1st.

Summer MGOF Dates: Aug 14, 15, 16th

Minute: Email will be sent out July 12. A paper copy will be sent to the clerk of each meeting in black and white. Color photo will be sent to Missoula for display.

XI Winter MGOF

Coordinators are needed since Great Falls Worship Group no longer will coordinate.

Minute: Nominating Committee will ask for one or two people to coordinate the Luccock Park clean up and fall Quarterly at Boulder Hot Springs.

Discussion: As a result of winter minutes an interest in Quaker history was mentioned. What is activism and the call to activism? Re-enacting early Quakers and sharing their story.

VI Discussion of Future. Consultations from NPYM M and O.

Minute: Description and some queries will be sent to the newsletter. Meetings will be asked if their state of the meeting report may be shared via the newsletter.

Update for MGOF on Montana Association of Churches Activity

May 31, 2014

Candida Quinn (ckcquinn@msn.com/495-0374)

- MGOF has observer status at MAC (voice at table but no vote)
- Candida has just started this spring as MGOF's representative. Attended two MAC meetings in May: commission and board of directors. This is a summary of what came out of those meetings.
- MAC is in transition now. Apparently meetings were poorly attended and MAC's working group, the commission, had not been as active or effective as desired. The board is therefore considering a reorganization, to take place by the end of 2014:
 - Organization name would change to Montana Association of Christians, in effort to reclaim the expression "Christians" from what one Board member described as fundamentalists. I told the Board that some Friends could be uncomfortable with this name change.
 - Anyone, including individuals, wanting to affiliate would be invited to do so. (I.e. not just official reps of congregations.)
 - Mission: unity/freedom/openness in the Spirit, "being present in our state's broken places."
 - Values: unity, justice, compassion
 - Continue with annual assembly (add interested individuals)
 - Board would morph into Council, staffed by historic MAC congregations. Decisionmaking method is under discussion. Bylaws state unanimity; Board also discussed consensus.
 - Council would appoint (1) standing committees and (2) ministry teams as needed. Teams would form around a topic or emerging need, last up to two years. Idea is to add flexibility.
 - Separate admin team and one paid staffer.
- Legislative platform proposed (by MAC's lobbyist/advisor) – to be advanced at MT legislative session next spring. General positions on many of these issues can be found on MAC's website, www.montana-churches.net.
 - Abolition
 - Focus on practical (e.g. financial, public safety) issues, rather than emotional.
 - Co-ordinate efforts with MT Abolition Coalition.
 - Child welfare

Meeting for Worship Ministry and Counsel 5/17/14 Luccock Park

Present: Georgia Foster Clerking for Julia Child, Nora Martin-Recording Clerk, Kate Weiss MGOF Clerk, Judy Visscher

Georgia Foster opened the meeting with a period of silence, and a brief spiritual check-in.

I The minutes from Winter MGOF 2/7/14 were read and accepted.

II Summer MGOF

Discussion: Summer Plenary and plans. Our MGOF community is unique and has been fostered by the clearness process. One process that Parker Palmer's work offers is a clear process to focus on the needs of the individual discovering for themselves the directions and explorations for themselves with only the support of the group. Summer will focus on sharing this process training with the group. Wording of the theme was discussed. Georgia, Lucretia and David are designing the schedule and activities. The descriptions and schedule will be in the newsletter. Worship sharing Queries will be developed by the three as well.

Minute: Summer MGOF theme will be, Learning to Listen to my Heart's Song.

III State of the Meeting Reports:

Great Falls, Dillon, Missoula have sent reports.

IV There will be two Clearness Committees for the transfer of membership of the Lovedays and Candida Quinn.

V Winter MGOF:

- MAC seems to be responding to recent increase in abuse/neglect court cases
- Related: sex trafficking issue
- Parole reform & prisoner re-entry into society
 - Working with state corrections dept. (which seems receptive)
 - Interest in revising parole eligibility criteria, recording board hearings for greater transparency
 - E.g. faith-based housing
- MT Medicaid program expansion (proposed by MT Human Rts Network) – Board interested, took under advisement
- Fed'l bill protecting Rocky Mtn. Front (proposed by MT Wilderness Assn.) – Board took under advisement
- MAC lobby day to be Monday, January 26, 2015 in Helena – they would like maximum turnout that day.
- Comments & recommendations
 - This is a really nice, inspiring group. They know a lot about Friends, seem keen on our involvement, and appreciate guidance they've received from Paul Whiting and Jim Humphrey, e.g. re/decisionmaking by consensus.
 - Because I don't happen to have any history with MAC, I can't really comment on how drastic the proposed org changes will be in practice.
 - I asked MAC administrator re/MAC finances – she told me that member congregations contribute 1% of their budgets.
- Next steps
 - Next board meeting scheduled for September 18, 2014, in Helena – I plan to attend.
 - MAC's annual assembly October 27/28 in Great Falls – I've got this calendared, too.

- What do we do to sustain our vitality, both as a place of worship and as a human community, for both established attenders and newcomers?

The committee is always interested to learn of topics of concern that might be the focus for future consultations. Contact person: Georgia Foster, NPYM M & O Clerk.

Parker Palmer, Continued from Page 3

11. Remember, the Clearness Committee is not intended to fix the focus person, so there should be no sense of letdown if the focus person does not have his or her problems “solved” when the process ends. *A good clearness process does not end*—it keeps working within the focus person long after the meeting is over. The rest of us need simply to keep holding that person in the light, trusting the wisdom of his or her inner teacher.

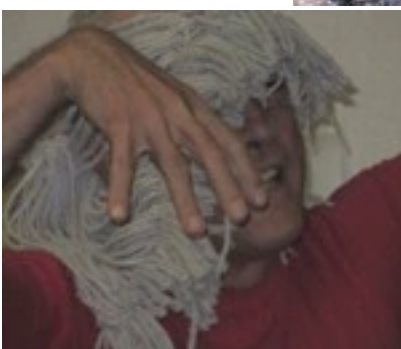
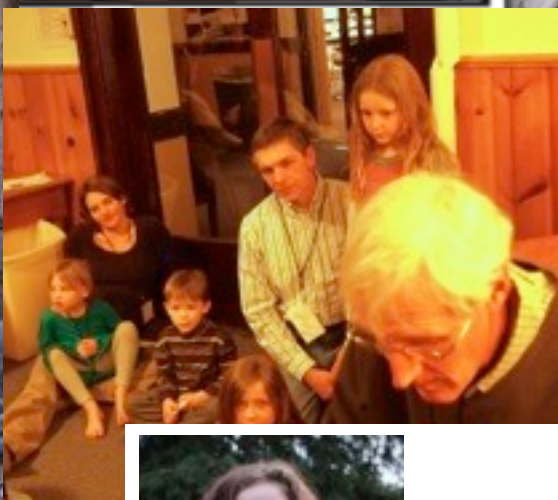
The Clearness Committee is not a cure-all. It is not for extremely fragile people or for extremely delicate problems. But for the right person, with the right issue, it is a powerful way to rally the strength of community around a struggling soul, to draw deeply from the wisdom within all of us. It teaches us to abandon the pretense that we know what is best for another person and instead to ask those honest and open questions that can help that person find his or her own answers. It teaches us to give up the arrogant assumption that we are obliged to “save” each other and learn, through simple listening, to create the conditions that allow a person to find his or her wholeness within. If the spiritual discipline behind the Clearness Committee is understood and practiced, the process can become a way to renew community in our individualistic times; a way to free people from their isolation without threatening their integrity; a way to counteract the unhelpful excesses to which we sometimes take “caring;” and a way to create space for the spirit to move among us with healing and with power.

NOTE: People who wish to make significant use of the Clearness Committee process are urged to read Chapter VIII, “Living the Questions,” in Parker J. Palmer, A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2009). There you will find detailed, step-by-step guidance, as well as a DVD with footage of the author teaching the process to a group. The Clearness Committee is a powerful method that is both simple and demanding. Done well, it is a positive experience for everyone involved. But done poorly, it can cause hurt and even harm. So a deep understanding of its principles and practices is essential to using it responsibly. People who want an experiential immersion in the process — which is, of course, the best way to learn how it works and how to offer it to others — should peruse our retreat calendar and learn more about our programs, many of which offer the Clearness Committee experience.

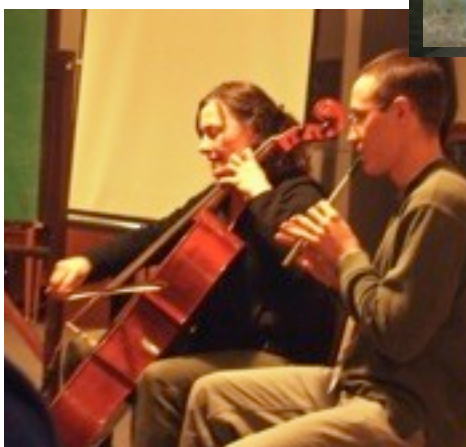
Consultations by NPYM Ministry & Oversight Committee

Each year, the M & O committee of North Pacific Yearly Meeting committee holds open consultations by conference call on topics of concern that have come to their attention. The consultations are offered to Clerks of Ministry and Counsel (or the equivalent) of Monthly Meetings, Worship Groups, and Quarterly Meetings. The call is held in a worship discussion manner where we share with each other our experiences. The most recent one, held on May 4th, was on “Integrating Newcomers into our Meetings.” The three queries discussed in the call were the following:

- Do we actually want new people to become part of our group?
- What follow-up, if any, do we do with new people who have attended our meeting once? Who have attended several times and then stopped coming?



Come to MGOF prepared for **community night on Saturday.** We want to have the evening last about 1 1/2 hours. We love the variety of offerings from everyone: skits, music, poems, jokes, acrobatics -- from children, oldsters, and in-betweeners.





The **pre M&OF sessions** have become a new tradition which has enriched the gathering for many of us. This year, there will be at least 2 options for group activities.. You are also welcome to come early just to enjoy time in this beautiful place.

Everyone is welcome to gather for a potluck at 6 PM Thursday evening, in Glendive cabin (it is on the right side of the oval, down a small hill from the level of the drive). After dinner those joining the collage workshop (see below) will gather to begin that process.

Bring your own breakfast for Friday morning and pack a lunch. The camp doesn't feed us till Friday dinner. There is no official child care, but families often do the outdoor activities together. ****If you want a bed or beds in Glendive cabin Thursday night, please call me so I can make sure we have enough room****. Tenting is also an option.

Here are the possible choices of activities:

- 1) Friends are welcome to come Thursday evening or Friday morning to hike the trails in the nearby hills. There is a waterfall a short distance from camp, and a lake several miles and a few thousand feet of elevation gain farther up.
- 2) We have usually had a float trip down a section of the Yellowstone River, but none of the usual leaders is able to commit at this time, so it may not happen this year. If someone is able to step forward, an e-mail will be sent to everyone.
- 3) We will have a workshop/retreat based on collage as a spiritual exercise. Kate Weiss and Judy V will lead it, and it is open to Friends of any gender. We'll start after dinner Thursday (about 7) and end at noon on Friday. This is limited to the first 10 people who sign up by calling Judy (leave a message at [406 549-1780](tel:4065491780)).

Afternoon committee meetings start at 3PM (M&O) and 4:30 (Steering), so plan accordingly if you're involved in those.
Judy Visscher



Schedule for Summer MGoF August 14-17 2014

Friday

3-4:20 Ministry and Counsel Meeting

4:00 REGISTRATION BEGINS

4:30-5:50 Steering Committee Meeting—

6-7 Supper is Served---dining room

7-7:30 Gathering in the Lodge—fellowship for all folks, young

and old

* 7:30-8:30 Introduction to the Weekend

Saturday

6:15 Early morning Worship

7:30-8:15 Breakfast served—Dining Room

*8:30-10:30 Plenary in the Lodge

*10:45-11:45 Worship Sharing (See room assignments by the Lounge.)

12:00-1:00 Lunch—Dining room—

1:15-4:30 FREE TIME

Clearness Meetings for those who choose to participate. Clearness meetings take a minimum of Two hours. The exact time will be arranged at Luccock.

*4:30-5:45 Meeting for Worship for Business—Lodge

6:00-7:00 Dinner—Dining Room

7:30-9:00 Community Night—Lodge

9:00 Singing!!--Lodge

SUNDAY

6:15 Early morning Worship—Lodge

7:30-8:15 Breakfast—Dining room

*8:30-9:00 Follow-up from Clearness Meetings

*9:15-10:15 Worship Sharing

10:30-11:00 Singing

*11-12 Worship

12:15 Lunch

1:00 Clean rooms and Say Good bye
Drive SAFELY!

* Indicates when we will be having the Children's Program

What You'll Need and How to Get There

- From where ever you are get on I 90 heading toward Livingston Montana.
- There are two Livingston exits, take the eastern one.
- At the bottom of the exit ramp, at the light, turn left (south) on US 89.
- Drive South toward Gardener and Yellowstone Park for 4.7 Miles.
- Turn left on East River Road. (If you miss East River Rd you can go down to Pine Creek Rd)
- Drive 7.7 miles you will pass the Pine Creek in and the little white Methodist church.
- Turn left at the entrance road that will lead you to Pine Creek Campground and the Luccock Church camp.
- Wind up the hill, about 2 miles, and then into the forest until the road forks between the church camp entrance and the campground.
- Go to the left, down into the Church camp

What to Bring

Thursday eve (If you are coming)

- Bedding of your choice. Example: sheets and blanket for inside cots. Or sleeping bag and tent for outside.
- Towels for the shower
- All of your regular camping type clothes and personal items.
- Thursday night food to share. Friday morning breakfast items. (Don't forget your tea or coffee)
- Plate and silverware.

• Friday-Sunday

- Bedding of your choice
- Towels and personal items
- Clothes for both warm and chilly (it can go either way)
- Flashlight
- Hiking or river gear if you are going on one of those outings.