
MGOF NEWS

Montana Gathering of Friends- Winter 2024



Welcome to Winter MGOF 2024 !

February 23 - 25
“Crossing the Divide”

Hooray! For the first time since the advent of Covid we are meeting in person at Camp Māk-A-Dream February 23-25! We are excited to have a Friend in Residence from the East Coast joining us, Karen Tibbals (more below). However, for our Gathering to be a success we need to have lots of Friends attend in person.

We have even imagined travel assistance should the roads be uncooperative. Use of the lovely Camp-Mak-A-Dream grounds does require that we **register for winter gathering by February 7**. This is a change from our usual lack of a deadline but is necessary to meet the planning needs of Camp Māk-A-Dream. For planning purposes the camp will be absolutely strict this year about not allowing any late registrants to attend. Register now!

Although we hope that you will come in person to MGOF, we plan to have parts of the weekend stream online including the plenary, meeting for worship for business, worship sharing and closing worship. This hybrid plan will accommodate those who cannot travel but still wish to participate in our MGOF community gathering.

Conflict, whether we plan for it or not, takes us by surprise when it confronts us, creating a challenge in so many of our interpersonal relationships and certainly in the world surrounding us. The good news is that we have a Friend in Residence for Winter MGOF who has made a career of studying the origins of conflict and discovering creative ways to address them. Karen Tibbals started with a successful career in marketing for pharmaceutical companies followed by life-changing graduate study at Earlham College. Karen's book *Persuade, Don't Preach/ Restoring Civility Across the Political Divide*, has received national attention. She has developed a significant media presence while remaining active in Quaker circles, including founding the organization "Quakers in Business." Here, in her own words is what Karen plans for and with us:

Loving your enemies

What does the Quaker peace testimony mean in this world of turmoil and war? In the New Testament, Jesus goes even further than that, telling us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. How can we achieve peace when we are only human, living in a broken world?

To help us, Karen will facilitate a weekend of spiritual approaches to the latest psychology research. During this weekend, you will gain insight into yourself and those with whom you disagree, which you can use to love them more.

Bring your conflicts and the things that puzzle you about the people you disagree with, and we will work together with Spirit to develop ideas to help you solve these issues in a peaceful, positive and loving manner.

Camp Mak-A-Dream is a modern camp designed for children and adults with significant illness. All facilities are handicapped accessible. Most of us will sleep in cabins with a central fireplace, inspiring views and shared bathrooms. There are a limited number of private rooms which can be reserved for an additional fee. The main lodge features a large fireplace and an outdoor hot tub, perfect for late night philosophical discourse. There is a game room, appealing to young people, and there will be art supplies available to all. Musical instruments and other entertainment are most welcome for Community Night.

Bring warm clothing and winter boots as we will walk to and from different buildings.

Covid Policy: Masking is optional. Please stay home if you have symptoms of communicable illness. Testing for covid will be available at the camp.

Please note that **we will NOT be able to refund money to those who register to attend in person but fail to show up**, due to Camp requirements and policies.

The camp is about an hour's drive east of Missoula on Interstate 90. The camp turn off is clearly signed – Exit 166 Gold Creek.

Remember- REGISTER NOW!



Karen Tibbals

Will be our Plenary speaker at Winter MGOF, Feb 16-18, 2024 . She is the Author of *Persuade, Don't Preach: Restoring Civility across the Political Divide*.

Minutes of MGOF Business Meeting

August 9, 2023

The Montana Gathering of Friends met for meeting for worship for business, during MGOF's Summer Gathering at Luccock Park. Larry Leonard served as Clerk of the business meeting and Jim Humphrey served as Recording Clerk.

The MGOF nominating committee currently has no one serving following the resignation of Lucretia Humphrey, who has been the only person serving on that committee for some time. Needed now are a new clerk of MGOF nominating committee and at least one other person to serve on that committee. The meeting approved of Steering committee meeting this fall on Saturday October 21, 2023. One of the primary tasks of this Fall's Steering committee will be to plan for the Winter MGOF Gathering. Subject to availability of the campground and contingent on cost, the business meeting further approved of February 16-18 as the dates for the 2024 MGOF Winter Gathering at Camp Make-A-Dream.

Linnea Wang reported on Ministry & Counsel undertakings, the most prominent of which has been the planning of this summer's gathering at Luccock Park, including inviting Shelley Tanenbaum of Quaker Earthcare Witness to address our gathering as MGOF's Friend in Residence. M&C has also undertaken outreach to Friends who have not been heard from in a long /me, has worked to secure more support for those in MGOF doing social justice work, has supported the MGOF Woman's Group, and has worked to resolve conflicts in the manner of friends. Ministry and Counsel also gave beautiful ceramic birds to Jack Rowan and Dee Mast, reminding them of how much the MGOF community loves and appreciates them. Artist, Cathy Weber, provides the lovely sculptures at cost. Much thanks to Cathy! No MGOF funds were used for the gifts.

Larry Leonard reported on the work of the MGOF committee for the Implementation of the Indigenous People's Minute. Serving on this committee are Robin Whyatt, Linnea Wang, Larry Leonard, and Nia To-Go-There. Nia is a member of the Turtle Mountain Tribe. The committee has produced a five page report, copies of which were made available at the gathering, and a copy of which is also posted online in the MGOF Dropbox account located at

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/n2nplrf6g2ny7es2qn3p7/h?dl=0&rlkey=v6ykry6f4z5l0z8dqv08cb1i1>.

Larry also urged Friends to check out this same Dropbox site for its copies of many MGOF documents including minutes of this meeting.

Jana Ostrom, the clerk of North Pacific Yearly meeting, reported on Yearly meeting activities. Jana's term ends on September 30, 2023. Also present was Paul Christiansen, the rising clerk of NPYM. Jana began by discussing the NPYM decision to not hold its 2022 annual session in Missoula as previously planned and instead to hold it at Western Oregon University in Monmouth, Oregon. Jana fully knows that decision was hurtful to many Montana Friends, who were not consulted with by NPYM prior to the decision being made. Jana was a participant in that decision and takes responsibility for it. Two of the major reasons for the decision were the Covid epidemic and fears of some for the safety of LGBTQ attendees. More specifically, there seemed to be a risk of lower attendance by many older Friends at the 2022 Annual Session because of worries that Montana was less Covid vigilant and might even bar mandatory use of masks; and there also seemed to be a risk of lower attendance by LGBTQ Friends and their supporters who had worries about the safety of LGBTQ people traveling in eastern Washington and Montana. Jana said that her previous explanation of why NPYM changed the Annual Session location had fallen short of a full accounting, a shortcoming which Jana takes responsibility for and now seeks to rectify.

Jana further reported that the 2024 NPYM Annual Session will be held at the University of Montana in Missoula from July 10 -14, 2024, and that the 2025 NPYM Annual Session will also be held at the University of Montana in Missoula from July 9-13, 2025. The Friend in Residence in the 2024 Annual Session will be Paula Palmer who will speak regarding America's past treatment of Na/ve Americans and the way forward in our future relations with our Native American neighbors. Jana invited input from Montana Friends on creating well-attended and satisfying Annual Sessions in Missoula in 2024 and 2025. She also encouraged Montana Friends to contribute to the NPYM newsletter on any topic.

Ted Etter, the former clerk of the NPYM nominating committee, explained that he no longer is serving in that role and encouraged someone from Montana to serve on that committee which among many other responsibilities selects people to represent NPYM on such national Quaker organizations as the American Friends Service Committee and the Friends committee on National Legislation.

Jasmine Krotkov reported on FCNL activities, particularly as these affect Montana. A fuller report on FCNL activities can be found in the current MGOF newsletter located online at www.montanafriends.org. Jasmine reported that the Great Falls Worship Group paid for the attendance by Montana Friend Georgia Walker-Kelleher at the spring

FCNL youth lobbying week training in Washington DC. She encouraged Montana Friends to be involved with FCNL by participating in FCNL workshops, attending FCNL Zoom meetings held every Wednesday, attending Quaker Changemaker events, and joining or starting an FCNL Advocacy Team. Linnea Wang and Jasmine are currently both NPYM representatives to FCNL.

Peter Husby serves as an NPYM representative to the American Friends Service Committee, which Peter reports experienced conflict between staff and management over the restructuring of the AFSC, a restructuring which some staff feared will result in reduced Quaker connection and Quaker AFSC participation. This restructuring is now complete and from one report is working well. Peter also reported that the AFSC has offered positive support to migrant programs operating in our region. Tina Visscher reported on Bienvenidos, the Bozeman migrant aid organization which Tina currently directs. This organization, started four years ago, became a 501c3 in December of 2021, and currently serves 36 migrant families through the care and work of 75 volunteers, many serving as mentors to the families. Until recently, as director of Bienvenidos Tina met every two weeks with representatives of Bozeman community organizations and agencies. While about 100 community organizations are Bienvenidos members, on average 20 to 30 organizations participate in the regular meetings. Most immigrants served are from Honduras. Bienvenidos has received encouraging financial support amounting to tens of thousands of dollars and is now seeking to hire a paid Executive Director. Though most participants in Bienvenidos are not Quakers, the organization's culture reflects the original Quaker imprint.

Cathy Weber, who has served as MGOF Treasurer since 1999, shared with the meeting her concerns on money issues that today affect both MGOF and her role as Treasurer. While Cathy typically does not attend MGOF gatherings, she has always prepared the financial reports that are presented to and considered by the business meeting. Cathy is very supportive of MGOF's abundant financing model. She has found that there is no need to panic about money because when money is needed, donations tend to show up. She questions whether current fixations on the annual budget and strict, almost rigid procedures for spending decisions really comport with the Quaker spirit. She felt that Friend's financial support for projects involving men sometimes came more readily than for those involving women. She also asked that MGOF members/attenders please pay their assessments on /me rather than months later which would greatly simplify the complex assessment process.

Respectfully submitted, Jim Humphrey, Recording Clerk

Ministry and Counsel Committee

Summaries of recent meetings

September 21, 2023

We warmly welcomed Linda Tracy to our committee. We appreciated Georgia Foster for stepping up to serve as nominating committee and has already found friends to take some positions! We reviewed the summer gathering with appreciation to Shelley Tanenbaum who served as our Friend in Residence!

Julia reported that the Elders Group had met with about 10 people on the invitation list. Please let Linnea know if you wish to participate. The group meets by Zoom and has discussions such as the "challenges of aging."

With great sadness we remembered Jack Rowan. Some friends will attend his memorial in Missoula.

We began planning for Winter MGOF and agreed upon Karen Tibbals as our plenary speaker should she be available.

Concerns for friends were shared.

November 26, 2023

We met to continue planning for Winter MGOF which will be held in person with some streaming available on line. The theme is to be determined; we hope to take our lead from Karen Tibbals who has agreed to be our FIR. We began our initial review of the M and C tasks for the winter gathering such as securing worship sharing leaders and planning the groups.

We then focused on holding in light those among us and far away who are suffering of illness, war, displacement, death of family, loss of function and other troubles.

Other concerns

Separate from our meetings we have made effort to visit some of our community who are unable to leave their homes. We continue to look for ways to be welcoming to newcomers, returning folks and all of our community.

The Indigenous Peoples Study Groups have met in Missoula and Bozeman, the process being well received. We will be evaluating the process and making changes as needed. Thanks to Robin, Larry, Linnea and Nia To Go There.

MGOF Steering Committee

October 18, 2023

Clerk, Larry Leonard, began the meeting at 7:00 with silence. Attending were Larry Leonard, Claire Leonard, Linnea Wang, Jo Ann Kidder, Carol Bellin, Kate Weiss, Judy Visscher, Georgia

The minutes from Feb. 11, 2023 and August 9, 2023 had not been distributed. They will be placed in the Dropbox. They were taken by Jim Humphries who is not present tonight. Jim does not plan to continue serving as the Recording Clerk. The evaluations from summer MGOF have been reviewed by Larry and Linnea. Twenty eight have been received. They mostly concerned Luccock Park and were generally positive.

Materials developed by a committee addressing the Minute on Indigenous People are also in Dropbox. Bozeman Worship Group will begin using them to educate themselves about the subject. There will be 5 sessions to start with. The Committee that has been working on this consists of Larry, Linnea, Robin, and Nia.

Mailing List

The MGOF directory is very much out of date. It needs updating as well as an effort to determine who is active and who is inactive. Larry and Linnea have been working on this. JoAnn pointed out that there is a procedure described in Faith and Practice to address how to deal with people with whom we have lost touch. Geoff is also working on updating addresses. Carol volunteered to call all the people in the directory to determine who can be reached by telephone and who wishes to remain active.

We also need a way to print the directory.

Linnea asked whether we had a Committee on Children and Youth and stressed the need for this.

Winter MGOF

Larry has been working with Camp Mak-a-Dream but has not yet been able to get figures about cost from them. Our resource person will be Karen Tibbals, a Friend from New Jersey. She will join us in person. She has a publication entitled Persuade don't Preach. Judy said that we need time to to develop a plan for Children and Youth.

Our major concern is that we do not have a Coordinator for the gathering.

Ministry and Counsel report

Work has been discussed above—Karen Timbals will be our winter MGOF resource person, the Elders group is meeting, and they have been working on the mailing list.

Treasurer's report Larry has not yet received this from Cathy Weber.

Nominating Committee (Georgia)

Nominated for Presiding Clerk is JoAnn Kidder. Registrar is Carol Bellin. Recording Clerk—Jim Humphrey will do it for Winter MGOF Still needed—Finance Committee, Coordinator for Winter MGOF, Coordinator for Summer MGOF, Various NPYM Committees.

Carol Bellin (Registrar) has extensive experience with interacting with the administrators at the camps. She indicates that we need the Coordinator and the Registrar to sit down together with the camp administrator to develop trust and determine the financial arrangements. She is willing to go to the Camp-Mak-a-Dream office in Missoula and talk with them.

Website

Jasmine has indicated an interest in expanding the website and making it more timely and not only a site for the biannual newsletter. She would need some help with this. Larry has talked with Geoff about this but it is not clear that Jasmine and Geoff have spoken together or what the division of labor might entail. A more dynamic website could facilitate communication between meetings and worship groups as provide more outreach. There is a process for determining what is posted on the website—approval by the Presiding Clerk and the Clerk of M&C, but this has not been followed recently. Kate will talk with Jasmine and Geoff about this idea.

It is clear that we need another meeting once we have the financial information from Camp Mak-a-Dream.

The deadline for submission to the newsletter is December 15.

Carol Bellin is interested in more active outreach and inviting others to join us in actions. She is particularly interested in anti-nuclear actions and would like to organize an action on 1/22.

Respectfully submitted, Claire Leonard

An Intention for our World.

by Maria Arrington

I am sure I am not alone when I say that I have been struggling for the last several months whenever I see the headlines. It was not enough to know about the many war zones across the world, the mass shootings occurring with increasing frequency and the tensions that have accompanied the ramping up toward a presidential election year. No, it was also necessary to countenance the violence between Israel and Palestine. The question that is uppermost in my mind has been, “What can I do to make a difference – to bring more light into this world?” Surely there must be some way that I can stand up against this flow toward darkness. Then, I came across an article in a newsletter that talked about the Intention Experiment. Quite a bit has been written about the Intention Experiment by Lynne McTaggart, a journalist who is very interested in quantum physics and its impact on our culture. In the Intention Experiment, a group of people gather together and spend their time in a meditative state, focusing their awareness on a specific intention with very clear outcomes in mind. These experiments have shown that when a group does this, it changes the outcome of the situation on which they were focusing. In this article, one such group gathered online and focused on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict a week after this latest renewal of bombing. Their intention was clear: an immediate cease fire, an immediate return of the hostages, and peace and justice in Israel and Gaza for all. Nine days after this “experiment” we DID see a cease fire and many hostages were released. It turned out to be only a limited cease fire and partial release of hostages, but I cannot help but wonder if there was indeed a connection between the two.

As I thought about it, I realized that this is something that I CAN do. As a Quaker, I believe that there is a power that underlies all of reality and that it is a power for good, for wholeness, for Love. When the world is in such a dire place, it is totally appropriate for me to use this Silence that I know so well to bring more Light into this darkening place. And so, I have begun to spend my spare moments during the day visualizing a world in which people behave as though their main intention is to LOVE each other – no exceptions. What would that look like in my valley, in my state, in our presidency, in the world? Just to visualize.... I am only doing this by myself a moment at a time, here and there – not the 10 minutes done in a meditating group, but instead in a semi-continuous way throughout my day. From a spiritual standpoint, what else is an Intention Experiment but a very strong way to pray consciously and intentionally? We know how to do this. How can we NOT do what we can to make this difference in our world? Will you join me? Shall we try what LOVE can do?

References: Lynne McTaggart – lynnemctaggart.com.

McTaggart, Lynne, *The Intention Experiment; Using Your Thoughts to Change Your Life and the World*.

What have we been doing since last summer?

Quaker news from around Montana

Remember the Children! Act for Peace

by Noorjahan Parwana

On November 13, a contingent of Butte citizens walked across the street from the Carpenter's Union Hall in Uptown Butte to the offices of Senator Jon Tester to present letters demanding Senator Tester advocate for a cease-fire in Israel and Palestine. The group also bore scrolls upon which were written the names of more than 3,000 children killed in the bombing of Gaza as of October 27. It was a solemn meeting.



A couple dozen people had gathered the previous afternoon and evening to write the names of the victims on the scrolls. The group labored in silence for three hours and had to stop out of weariness before the task could be completed. Most of those participating in this solemn ritual were young, in their 20's and 30's. It was a repudiation of the concerns I have heard expressed so often at organized rallies and events over the past 20 years: Where are all the young people? They are here!

One organizer observed, "I felt the most powerful part of the whole process was quietly writing the names with all the others and sharing the grief for these children. Unfortunately, I think those emotions are lost on callous politicians and I don't know if what we did will have an effect on Jon. What I did feel was a powerful connection with all the others and it reaffirmed that, despite all the propaganda to the contrary, there is a clear and moral path forward." Another participant shared, "Wars are not won by killing innocent children."

The effort was organized by the Butte America Foundation, a 501(c)3 whose mission is to educate the public by providing education and tools to uphold the tenets of social justice. BAmF is a licensee of a low-power community radio station – KBMF LP 102.5 – which broadcasts for the Carpenter's Union Hall in Uptown Butte. There are 70 or more DJ's ranging in age from high school students to long-retired oldsters, with a nice balance across the age-range. BAmF led in the restoration of the Carpenter's Union Hall which is the oldest operating Union office of its kind in the state of Montana. BAmF is also the fiscal sponsor for Butte HEART, a group that was formed out of concern for all people who are fleeing violence and deprivation through no fault of their own. So far, HEART has welcomed two Afghan families to Butte.

For me, the people involved in the action to influence our Senator from Montana exhibit many Quaker values including integrity, equality, community, and peace.

Update from Bienvenidos

by Tina Visscher

A Story of Impact: Meet Maria

Maria and three of her children moved to Bozeman almost three years ago from Honduras. When they first arrived, they were staying in a homeless shelter. With the help of Bienvenidos mentors, the family has moved into a stable rental home and Maria has even started a successful catering business. Her children are attending school in Bozeman and her oldest daughter will graduate from high school in December, with plans to attend junior college. Last year, her two boys, ages 12 and 8, were able to join the family in Bozeman after being separated from her for five years.



From a Seed Born

In the fall of 2019 the Bozeman Worship Group decided we wanted to get involved with a social justice project in our community. Within days Peter Husby became aware there were Central American immigrants living and working here. We met with the English Learner Coordinator for the school district, Ellen, and learned about the dramatic increase of Spanish speaking children enrolling in school. The cold and snow flurries came early in October of that year and we scurried around trying to find winter clothing for about 10 families. Soon after Tina and Tim Visscher, Heather Jackson, and Peter Husby started meeting with Ellen to see if we could organize something to help families adjust to living here.

We decided on a mentor team model and had the first training for the mentor volunteers 2 weeks before lock down, in late February, 2020. Despite the barriers Covid posed, the project grew and grew. Heather and Tina started a 2X month Migrant Community Coordination meeting to create a forum for local agencies and organizations to solve access and equity problems in receiving services. We got a website going for volunteers to keep track of community resources. MGOF and the worship group collected funds for emergencies and pediatric dental care during this time. Finally, in November, 2021 Bienvenidos became a 501c3 non profit with a board of directors and its own bank account. Jim Humphrey, in his role on the MGOF finance committee was a patient and important “nudger” in this process.

Since becoming a non profit, Bienvenidos continues to grow, serving about 38 families with mentor teams, giving micro loans and emergency funds, supporting recreational opportunities, and advocating at the state level through the Montana Compact on Immigration brought forward by representative Ed Staffman (it missed getting out of committee by only one vote). On the local level we are woven into the newly adopted “Belonging in Bozeman” plan recently unanimously adopted by the Bozeman City Commission.

This Fall we received a grant from the Moonlight Foundation to hire a resource coordinator to serve Bozeman and Big Sky 3 days a week and raised enough money to hire a full time Executive Director to take us into the next phase. I am finally able to retire for the second time! It has been a creative, hopeful and energizing project. Seeing community members volunteering to welcome and support immigrants and to create an organization with such a positive collaborative culture has been very fulfilling and overwhelming at times. I am certain that this organization is grounded in Quaker values even though they don't know it! ,

Tina Visscher
bienvenidosgv.org

MGOF 2023 Responses to “How are We Addressing Climate Change?”

Write stories to give people hope and inspiration.
 Build an energy efficient home. Make your home super insulated and energy efficient. Recycle.
 Bicycle rather than drive.
 Install solar panels.
 Grow your own garden.
 Make your own compost.
 Shop locally to reduce transportation costs.
 Use LED's and turn off lights.
 Demonstrate against MT Power's proposed natural gas plant.
 Avoid/reuse plastic packaging.
 Ride share.
 Don't idle your car engine.
 Write letters to Congress to DO more.
 Install a heat pump to heat and cool with.
 Wash clothes in cold water and avoid a clothes dryer as much as possible.
 Mulch.
 Don't drive a truck.
 Drive a hybrid car.
 Elect officials who care about the environment.
 Make corporations follow the rules.
 Replace your toilet with a super low water use type, like Niagara.
 Run the dishwasher without the heated drying cycle. Run the dishwasher only when full.
 Drive fewer miles. e.g. Stay overnight near a place you intend to ski at for several days.
 Conserve water. e.g. Turn off running water while brushing your teeth.
 Take a shorter shower. Turn off water when soaping up.
 Electrify.
 Travel thoughtfully. Take public transit locally.
 Support good local and community actions.
 Listen. Don't panic.
 Write articles.
 Give/ arrange for public presentations.
 Hug trees.
 Travel by train when possible, instead of by car or plane.
 Participate in public events, direct action.
 Connect spirit with action.
 Pay attention to stories of climate tragedies and stories of mitigation from around the world.
 Reuse containers.
 Eat local and seasonal food. Conserve water.

Become a vegetarian. Continue to decrease the meat you eat. Cook with an induction stove.
 Drive one family car, sharing with several drivers in the family. Repair your appliances.
 Buy used clothing. Repair clothes. Wear clothes until they wear out. Donate/recycle. Buy other secondhand items, like furniture.
 Drive slower on highways.
 Consider walking when you can.
 Lower the temperature of your hot water heater.
 Use less heating and cooling by adjusting your clothing.
 Buy items with less packaging.
 Keep track of your gas mileage. Use less gas by coasting more/braking less. Live small.
 Eat only grass-fed beef.
 Restore your property e.g. a streambank, a pasture.
 Contribute to ecological causes.
 Create presents rather than buy manufactured ones.
 Cover porches with plants.
 Engage in political activism – from working with farmers and ranchers on climate change, promoting solar where you live, testifying at PSC commission hearings, etc.

Frugal Fannie

Right Relationship Rachel is out of town so her good friend, Frugal Fannie, stepped in to suggest 8 questions to ask yourself before purchasing any item:

- 1) Do I really need it?
- 2) Is it worth the time to dust, store, clean or otherwise maintain it?
- 3) How many hours of work will it take to pay for it?
- 4) Is this something I could borrow?
- 5) Is there anything I already own that I could use instead?
- 6) Was this item made with renewable resources?
- 7) Is the product socially and environmentally friendly?
- 8) Can I recycle it when I am through with it or will it help clog a landfill?

She also suggests considering the following queries (from the Voluntary Simplicity Movement):

How do my choices impact the lives of others, including those far away from me?
 What do I place between me and Spirit that interferes with my ability to live with integrity?
 What am I called to change in my life so that others can simply live?

Op-Ed calling for Peace

By Jasmine Krotkov



Bozeman Worship Group filling Christmas baskets for the families of Bienvenidos



A Peace Vigil in Great Falls

Watching the violence unfold in the middle east has been heart wrenching. Innocent civilians on both sides have suffered atrocities. Montanans and their members of congress (MoCs) have voiced myriad and often opposing views of the conflict and how the US should respond. As Montana members of the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), we think that there is room to vigorously disagree, while still working together for peace. The goal of terrorism is to get attention and provoke a violent response. Now is the time to recognize that war is not the answer.

The military-first approach has not worked. Our MoCs should be speaking out publicly about solutions to the problem that will work to prevent more war, break cycles of violence and rebuild relationships. With a new Speaker finally installed in the House, decisions on spending will be moving forward. Congress has the opportunity now to fully fund non-violent interventions that have been proven to work: diplomacy, unarmed civilian peacekeeping, mediation, atrocities prevention, complex crisis intervention and reconciliation.

Not only are these non-violent interventions effective, they save money. The Institute for Economics and Peace found that every dollar invested in peacebuilding can save \$16 in the cost of responding to an armed conflict. Discretionary spending for Defense is now at \$797b, and non-defense discretionary spending is \$766b. There is only \$91m allocated for peacebuilding. Given the grave atrocities occurring in real-time atrocity prevention can no longer remain siloed, under-resourced and a “second order” issue in US foreign policy and assistance.

We could fit 13 Israels, and the West Bank, the Golan Heights and Gaza into Montana. We and our MoCs should consider what it would be like to be at war in such a small space. We can give the combatants space by supporting the work of the Atrocities Prevention Fund, and devising a comprehensive, non-violent strategy that emphasizes de-escalation and restraint in Gaza and Israel.

The future for Palestinians and Israelis is being erased each passing day. Before it is too late, the United States and Congress should side with peace, not more war, in the Middle East.

MEMORIAL MINUTE

for JOHN THOMAS ROWAN

John (Jack) Thomas Rowan cut a wide swath through life with that infectious smile, his can-do attitude, his loving heart, and his boundless energy. With his passing, he leaves behind many accomplishments and countless voids in the hearts of his family and friends.

Jack was born into a Catholic family in Arizona in the summer of 1967, the last of nine children. He grew up among the red rocks of Sedona. He attended the University of Arizona, earning a Bachelors of Arts in Education. Subsequently, he taught history and politics at a Catholic high school and coached baseball and basketball. To this day, he remains “Uncle Jack” to his former students.

Inspired by [A River Runs Through It](#), Jack took a Greyhound bus trip north, visiting Yellowstone and Missoula. He found a home in Missoula, where he settled and continued his education, earning a Masters degree in Cultural Anthropology.

While supporting himself through a variety of occupations from carpentry to landscaping, Jack became deeply involved in the Missoula community. He helped found a food coop located in a low income area, served on the board of a wildly successful recycling center for building materials and served on the board of the Missoula Urban Demonstration Project.

In 2015 he unsuccessfully campaigned for a seat on the city council, highlighting his interest in affordable housing and public transportation. Jack felt serving on the city council would be a form of ministry; he hoped to be a voice for those who were often ignored.



Jack was a man of many different skills and interests, as his education, jobs and community activities demonstrate. And possibly most crucial, he had a boundless heart, a deep compassion for others, solid integrity, and a gentle sense of humor. These pieces of his life seemed to coalesce when he received a leading to become a hospital chaplain. He had the spiritual grounding and the ability to listen deeply to others to make a fine chaplain. The journey took him to the Earlham School of Religion for three years, an internship in a Spokane hospital, and finally a staff position at a Missoula hospice. He served as “Chaplain Jack” until the final months of his life.

Jack had led a life of spiritual seeking and ultimately found a home in Quakerism. He formally joined the Missoula Friends Meeting in 2005 and served the Meeting in numerous capacities. He was Clerk for two years during the height of the Covid pandemic. He also shared his leadership and organizational skills as a member of the Ministry and Oversight Committee. Jack was a person who was sensitive to the leadings of Spirit and led a life based on the Quaker testimonies. In addition, he was the go-to-man for advice and assistance on meetinghouse maintenance and

landscaping.

It must be said that one could always count on Jack.....to be late. This was forgiven with the understanding of his tendencies to put the needs of others ahead of his own physical, emotional and fiscal health ...and that he was out there doing something useful for someone else.

Jack was involved in the wider Quaker world and served as Friend in Residence for one gathering of the Montana Gathering of Friends. He was a rock for the Quaker Dudes, a fellowship of men with Montana and Quaker roots. This group has gathered several times a year for decades and Jack will be dearly missed.

Jack began having health issues in the summer of 2022 and lived a mere 5 months after receiving a diagnosis of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). As his body failed he was faithfully supported by caring family and friends, including the Missoula Friends community. He came to define the quality of his life by his life-long “sense of wonder”. Jack announced he was “closing shop” when that sense of wonder faded and ceased. He died a day later on July 27, 2023, at home surrounded by those who loved him.



Montana Gathering of Friends
PO Box 1
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History of Indigenous Peoples

Robin M. Whyatt, DrPh

Twelve Friends from Missoula Friends Meeting have been participating in the MGOF Study Guide sessions on the History of Indigenous Peoples. The meetings are held on the third Sunday morning of each month from 9:30-10:45. We begin with an Indigenous prayer or song and end with worship sharing. The group has completed Chapter One, on who the Indigenous people were, and will be starting on the second chapter, on who the settlers were, on December 17. Friends have expressed appreciation for the Study Guide, including how much material it contains and how well organized it is.

Six members of the Bozeman Worship Group participated in mostly weekly meetings on Sundays after Meeting for Worship. We met for 1.5 hours each week using powerful video followed by worship discussion for the queries. Evaluations are just being completed but the response has been positive with strong elements of "Why were we not taught this material?"



Attendees of Summer MGOF, 2023