



MGOF Summer 2018

Living Our Testimony of Equality: Awakening to Our White Privilege

We have invited Laurie Childers , our Friend in Residence, to give us a roadmap for our shared journey into understanding our implicit bias. She will be leading a plenary session in which she will provide a productive exploration of our theme. Worship sharing in small groups will follow where we get to explore our personal experience in a safe, spirit filled space. The following is her description of what she brings to us.

Knowledge. Compassion. Justice. Peace.

I list these 4 words as a suggested road map for our shared work on racism here.

To struggle to live up to the Quaker Testimonies is to work for peace. Peace is more than an unwillingness to go to war; in peace, people live in such a way that their basic physical, emotional and spiritual needs can be met with ease. In such a state humans can thrive, can supersede our known potential. One cannot fully imagine Peace without the other Testimonies in play; our lives must have integrity and community to supplant fear and isolation; we must achieve sufficient simplicity and stewardship of the earth to avoid violent conflicts over resources; and without sharing equality with all, violent revolutions are almost inevitable.

It is the historical inequality between the so-called races that concerns us at the MGOF weekend. The US was originally set up to favor people of European descent, and this impulse and the lie (that white people are inherently superior) behind it continue today in ways that are nearly invisible to those of us who unwittingly benefit from the system. We are taught that individual choices and effort determine our fate. It is vital that we open our minds and hearts, in the spirit of continuing revelation, to learn what systems (laws and practices) have created the modern racial wealth gap, mass incarceration, and other suffering. Comprehending another's suffering leads us to deeper understanding and compassion. We are then in a better position to help establish just systems, which are necessary for a peaceful society.

Please note that I do not place Guilt on the roadmap. Guilt is a useless quagmire that no one wants us to wallow in. History is not about us individually. Let us walk the purposeful path together. -Laurie Childers

Knowledge. Compassion. Justice. Peace.

State of Society Reports



Knowledge. Compassion. Justice. Peace.

Bozeman Worship Group meets each First Day at the Christus Collegium on the campus of Montana State University. We average 2 to 12 people, privileged to have two lovely girls becoming teens and a couple of wonderful young women high school students. We also benefit from sojourning Friends who play an important role in the life of the worship group.

Last summer we had a potluck in Kelly Canyon and enjoyed the warm summer air and beautiful view. In September we had a potluck and business meeting (the only one of the year). In October we decided to help provide home welcoming supplies for a refugee family in Missoula. Folks came together to meet this need.

Meanwhile, a few members and other community folks started a FCNL Advocacy Team which has met with staff members of our Senators and representative. In November two of our group travelled to Tucson to participate in the SOA Watch demonstrations. December found us with difficult roads but we still held our annual potluck and worship sharing evening.

January with its cold and snow found us starting an Inner Life series in which we shared several Sundays after meeting on topics such as understanding the spiritual message of dreams, the power of creativity through musical improvisation and new to us concepts of disease and health from a Native American/Eastern perspective.

In February at MGOF, a young person from the WG was a leader in developing a minute on gun violence. In March there was a movie night celebrating the idea that girls can do anything! In April we took time to consider the FCNL priorities and came to unity that our highest priority is the repair of the political process of our country. In May we said farewell to a member who moved to Colorado. Later this month great joy will be shared as a child of MGOF marries his sweetheart in Kelly Canyon surrounded by loving family and friends.

Although we are a small group, the sense of the presence of Spirit is strong. Individuals come and go and all are welcome. We find ourselves nurturing each other and newcomers and being nurtured in

Great Falls Worship Group: Through nearly blizzard conditions several Friends drove from different directions, one from a farm 40 miles out of Great Falls, and another 60 miles from a mountain home to worship together with those of us here in town and consider the state of our worship group. What is the spirit which pulls our worship group together even in such conditions?

How does the Truth fare in the Great Falls Worship Group?

Friends find, in the silence and spoken word, support and help in living their lives more in tune with the Creation. Here we are reminded how all of Creation is tied together as one. Injustice for another is injustice to me. Many of us are privileged and through worship become more aware of our responsibilities to the Whole. For many of us, it is a joy to come together and feel cared for and supported by our group as we journey together in times that are not reflective of our vision.

Although this speaks for many of us, some find that vocal ministry is not satisfying. They would rather have more silence. Together, we need to wait for Way to Open, for the ways we are called to engage with each other and in the world to heal our earth. We need to be uncomfortable with the way things are.

The dynamism of our worship group reminds us of deep soil, a seed bed. The soil, rich in nutrients, is able to nurture us to have the strength to poke our heads above the ground. Here is energy allowing us to engage in the work we each see fit to do with our unique portion of the Light. Many in our group have gratitude for our spiritual community as it supports each of us in making personal choices. Together our varied gifts and stories Spirit allows us to see insights, struggles and joys of one another. As Seekers, we are expanded in our vision of what is possible.

This past year new people have come and joined us and we have not only appreciated their contributions but feel as a result more alive with new voices and spirits welcomed into our group. Together we read and discussed Rex Amblers, "Living in Dark Times" which helped in the education of us all, but especially our new attenders. Still, there have been several strong supporters of the group previously, who have chosen to leave us recently. We miss their presence and gifts.

We have continued to meet in a church library which has made it easier for new comers to join our small group. We have happily accommodate those with children who attend occasionally, and have varied ways to educate ourselves about our Quaker history and thought. Our outreach includes working with other faith





groups in our community to provide support for Family Promise, a program providing food and housing for homeless families. Recently some of us gathered several times for worship with a Quaker friend from out of state who was residing at Hospice House.

For our attenders and members who gather faithfully every Sunday, a sacred stillness in Community is provided, ripe with potential. All is sacred.

Montana Youth Changing Gun Talk

By Eleanor Guerrero
Carbon County News Senior Reporter

Youths are in the news around the country taking to the streets protesting and advocating for no more gun deaths.

But for Montanans, guns are a natural way of life, and hunting a sport as comfortable as fishing. Many families do not simply recall their parents bringing home a deer for the season, the still depend upon that annual hunt to fill the winter freezer.

Misuse of guns is not something most Montanans expect, and many rural families raise their children passing on careful

gun care and respect for their fellow man and creatures. As such it may come as a shock that the children of Montana are not immune to the rallying call sweeping the nation. Marches are planned by youths in Billings, Bozeman and Missoula this month.

Julia Childs, of Red Lodge, is a Quaker. She attends their church service or "Friends" service as they are sometimes called, and attended their annual 3 day Montana Gathering of Friends Retreat at Gold Creek outside Anaconda last weekend, Feb 2-4.

The Quakers are a quiet bunch, not known for marches and protests. But at the conference an adult did discuss with the youths present the recent school shootings in Florida. "It was fairly emotional," said Childs. With the adult's input, they prepared their own statement.

It should be said here that according to Childs, Quakers are "really democratically based. Young people have just as much voice and power as an older person." The youths pick up on that very quickly.

Still, it was with some surprise said Childs, when a few of the youngsters present "went off by themselves for a while" and came back with a much more involved statement of their rights to be safe from violence and for a plea to work together across the board for their safety. "Our schools are not war zones," they commented. The entire commentary was read aloud to the whole group attending the retreat.

The adults were shocked and impressed. "I supposed I was brought to tears at the thought of these young people," said Childs.

The mother of one of the two female teens involved in the main draft was so inspired also burst into tears. Said Childs, "Never in her whole life had she felt her daughter was so listened to and so honored. She didn't think she could do something like this and have an adult body take this so seriously. Other adults were in tears. It was coming out of such a pure place. No one coached them. It took us all by surprise!"

The statement includes: "a sense of safety needs to be established for everyone in our schools, including and especially those students who could potentially be violent towards themselves or others. We support our youth in sharing their hopes and concerns. We join in their vision of a world without a

ubiquitous background of violence where people learn how to express feelings of anger and pain constructively. We have been numb to this need for too long. An issue this important should not be polarizing and it should not be postponed.”

After the statement was read, the approximately 45 attendees unanimously agreed to support it. The adults “tweaked the terms to include their support as well,” she said.

The group didn’t “sign” it as most people might. Childs explains, “We discuss them until we have a consensus. So the fact that it passed out of the meeting means we had consensus on it. Sometimes there are people who ‘stand aside’ and let it pass but not this time. This document is less than two weeks old, but we were encouraged to do with it, as I am, bring it to our home communities. It will also be passed up the line, so to speak, to the North Pacific Yearly Meeting which is the larger Quaker group that we are affiliated with. They will discuss it as we did and decide to do whatever with it.

Childs was amazed, “that a freshman and a senior girl were both strong enough and articulate enough to come up with a statement and bring it to us.” Childs said she realized then, “It was part of the movement of young people starting in this state.”

She commented, “That these young girls, ordinary teens came up with this...is heartbreaking.”

Maybe Quakers can help lead the way. They have managed to coexist in society since before this country’s founding, devoted to nonviolence. They have Christian roots, forming a settlement in America in 1675. In 1681, King Charles II gave William Penn, a Quaker, a charter for the area that became Pennsylvania. They worship together sitting in silence to allow each to experience the Divine within him.

The last statement of the consensus appears to sum up their thoughts. Like their faith it is simple, inclusive and kind: “We should look towards peace through compromise and engagement. This is an issue for us to unite around in protection of the children and people we love.”

Go to montanafriends.org/minutes for more information and the full statement.



MONTANA GATHERING OF FRIENDS MINUTE ON COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

We, the Montana Gathering of Friends, are heartbroken over the lives lost at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida last week and the 33,000 people who lose their lives to guns each year through suicide, spousal abuse, accidents, and mass shootings. We are heartened by young people across the country finding their voice on the issue of gun violence with clarity about how it impacts their safety, security, well-being and hope for the future. We empathize with the pain and fear they feel going to school every day, with the knowledge that the students and teachers they value in their own schools and in schools across the country face this threat.

Though we recognize the current need for defense procedures, we hold the belief that establishing lasting safety is more important than solely ensuring physical defense. The idea of bringing guns into schools to protect from shooters- who often are students themselves- is a violence that is just as scary as the threat it's reacting to. Our schools are not war zones.

Our children demand that our government, school systems and the adults in their lives take this problem seriously and take steps to face the root causes of violence in our society. A sense of safety needs to be established for everyone in our schools, including and especially those students who could potentially be violent towards themselves or others. We support our youth in sharing their hopes and concerns. We join in their vision of a world without a ubiquitous background of violence where people learn how to express feelings of anger and pain constructively. We have been numb to this need for too long. An issue this important should not be polarizing and it should not be postponed. We should look towards peace through compromise and engagement. This is an issue for us to unite around in protection of the kids and people we love.



Thursday Retreat

Not Quakers! Not me!

Embracing the testimony of Equality, many Friends are certain that they are not “racist.” Unconscious bias is just that—UNCONSCIOUS. Is RACE one of the first things I am aware of when I meet someone? This time together is planned to help us recognize that we too have beliefs and ideas that denigrate people of color and lead to actions that are inconsistent with what we want to believe about ourselves.

Through examining the facts of prejudicial treatment of Black people, historically and currently, reading and discussing books by Black authors (your choice or mine), assessing our own level of bias and worship sharing about our self discovery, we will prepare for the theme of summer MGOF.

The schedule is flexible, but we will look at the history of racism and racial equality in the United States, examples of “white privilege” and unconscious bias, assess our own attitudes and biases and how they are reflected in our behavior, and share about “white privilege” in literature.

Some Queries

How do Quaker practices, programs, etc. benefit white society and oppress people of color?
What can I do to heal my own heart and bring this awareness to others?

The retreat will be held in Glendive Cabin beginning with a potluck at 5:00 on Thursday night. Breakfast will be on our own and we will finish with worship sharing just in time for friends/Friends to attend committee meetings in the afternoon. Lunch will consist of the inevitable Quaker leftovers.

To participate, please call or text Claire Leonard at 575-519-8806 or by e-mail at coleonard@iCloud.com. Everyone is welcome . Participation will be limited to 12.

Friday Hike

Arrive on Thursday or Friday morning before 8 to hike to Pine Creek Lake. The hike is about 9 miles round trip, and gains almost 4,000 feet in elevation. Spectacular views, and the full gamut of wildflowers. If you'd like to come, let me know and we'll arrange to meet on Friday morning.

Jasmine
406-781-5699



Children's Program

As always, there will be a lively children's program as a part of summer MGO. The program accommodates children of all ages, is driven based on the leadings of the children, and will be active during all programmed sessions throughout the weekend. Last year included a wilderness survival hike, an intergenerational kick-ball game, polar plunges into the creek, acrobatics and lots of play in the octagon. Two adults are present at all times to ensure safety and to provide a seasoned Quakerly presence. Registration at MGO for those under age 18 is free, a gesture on behalf of MGO that children are treasured in the community. Peter Walker-Keleher serves as Children's Program Coordinator and is currently recruiting a helper for the weekend to meet the special needs of particularly young children. Adults are encouraged to participate in the Children's Program and we hope you will.

How to Get There and What to Bring

- From where ever you are get on I 90 heading toward Livingston Montana.
- At Livingston, take Exit 333 for Route 89 south toward Yellowstone National Park
- 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

Here is the google map link: <https://www.google.ca/maps/dir/Livingston,+Mt,+USA/Luccock+Park+Assembly+Grounds,+Livingston,+Mt+59047,+United+States/@45.5988282,110.5531017,11z/am=t/data=!3m1!4b1!4m14!4m13!1m5!1m1!1sox534513be27a04723:ox459632265a848c4c!2m2!1d110.5599556!2d45.6614105!1m5!1m1!1sox534f88b146018f31:ox66696e9d66b591a7!2m2!1d-110.528526!2d45.499637!3eo>

Summer MGO attendees will need on Friday, Saturday and Sunday:

- * Bedding of your choice
- * Towels and Personal Wash Gear (soap, toothbrush,shave,etc)
- * Clothes for both warm and chilly (it can go either way)
- * Flashlight
- * If you are going to visit Chico, hike, or do a river float, bring the needed gear.

MGOF SCHEDULE—August 2018



THURSDAY

5:00 Pre MGOF Retreat. Begins

FRIDAY

8:00-12:00 PreMGOF Retreat continues

1:00-3:00 Ministry and Counsel meets

3:00 REGISTRATION BEGINS (Lodge)

3:30-5:30 Steering Committee meets

6:00-7:00 Dinner (Dining Room)

7:30-8:00 Welcoming (all ages) and Intergenerational Games

8:00-9:00 Singing (Lodge)

SATURDAY

6:30 Early Morning Worship in the Lodge

7:30-8:15 Breakfast on your own

8:30-10:00 Plenary Session in the Lodge. With Laurie Childers, Friend in Residence

10:15-11:45 Worship Sharing

12:00-1:00 Lunch (Dining Room)

1:15-2:15 Interest Group

2:30-3:30 Interest Group

4:00-5:45 Meeting for Worship for Business (Lodge)

6:00-7:00 Dinner (Dining Hall)

7:30-9:00 Community Night (Lodge)

9:00 Singing

SUNDAY

6:30 Early Morning Worship (Lodge)

7:30-8:15 Breakfast on your own

8:45-10:15 Worship Sharing

10:30 Singing followed by Meeting for Worship at 11:00 (Lodge)

12:00-12:45 Lunch (Dining Hall)

Clean Rooms and say goodbye