The Elephant’s Perspective: June 9th Unconference

By Kimberly A. Maynard, Ph.D.

Remember George Lakoff’s book Don’t Think of an Elephant? It’s about how conservatives frame their arguments and how progressives can counter them. Well, what if instead of countering, progressives simply listened? And vice versa? What if each side has only one piece of the complete puzzle and by hearing different views, we are able to find the whole? This year’s JRPC unconference is about just that. The theme, Seeing the Elephant: Why Does My World Look Different From Yours?, follows the parable about the blind men who each feel a different part of the elephant and each believe his own part to be the whole truth. What would it look like if we were to experience the full elephant?

Divisiveness prevents us from reaching a higher perspective that may, indeed, hold the keys to our collective solutions. When I am backed into a corner by my own defensiveness about an issue, I have nowhere to go. By being right, I’m stuck. When I can let go of my ego and prioritize the relationship in front of me over my righteousness, the world of possibilities opens up. Now I can hear the value in the other person’s perspective and soften to a truth that is larger than my own. Maybe even elephant size.

What truth is bigger than all of our perspectives? And what kind of journey will take us there?

I love adventure. When I let my curiosity lead, I inevitably discover something fascinating. Sometimes the road is uncomfortable but it always is mind opening and rewarding. I am intrigued by the notion that beyond the individual is a collective space that we all inhabit. Within that space lies the awareness that connects us all. It is also the source of creativity. What creative responses to our current world are available when we tap into that place that is bigger than our individual values, opinions, and philosophies?

On June 9th from 8:30 – 5:00, this fourth JRPC unconference, Seeing the Elephant, invites the community to explore any and all aspects of this compelling question. In the morning, the Missoula Chapter of the Montana Women’s Chorus will sing and three brief “lightning” speakers, Udo Fluck on trans-cultural, Janice Springer on transpersonal, and Julie Cajune on Native American perspectives, will ignite the participants with their individual passion on the theme. Then, using “Open Space Technology,” participants are invited to bring up topics of interest to them. These become breakout sessions throughout the day in which people share inspiration and questions. This powerful methodology encourages high levels of engagement, intensive learning, and stimulating discussion on the most pertinent topics of our time. The unconference will take place at the University Congregational Church, 405 University Ave, Missoula. It is open to the public, free of charge (donations accepted), and includes lunch and a reception afterwards.

Bring your ideas and ideologies, your fears and your frustrations and join us for an exploration about how we see our worlds and what we might be missing. What becomes possible when we put all the parts together? Hmmm… I wonder what the elephant sees.
“Seeing the Elephant: Why Does My World Look Different From Yours?”

...is a stimulating, daylong “un-conference” invites the public to participate in an exploration of new interpretations of our world.

We are calling attention to the age-old parable of the blind men who each feel a different part of the elephant and each believe his own part to be the whole truth. If we listen carefully to each other’s views, can we put together the whole elephant? What would that look like?!
Never before in history has the human race been so united in a common fate with so much potential in front of it.

This critical time demands all our strengths and ideas. These are conversations that truly matter! True creativity in the search for solutions comes from exploring outside of what we already know. Come join us in compassion, courage, and respect as we investigate new ways of seeing and perspectives outside of our own. From such rich dialogue, we will undoubtedly leave better educated and we may even find solutions in our examination of the entire elephant! Plus we can enjoy each other over lunch, snacks and an evening reception.

The event is free and open to all but we ask you to register so we know how much food to prepare.
Register at www.jrpc.org
Thanks for honoring your loved ones in Peace

in Honor of:
Danielle Lattuga
Betsy Mulligan-Dague
Patty Zapp
Arlene Boyd

From:
Cristina Lattuga
Miriam Morgan
Gerry Blackman
Kelly Willett

in Memory of:
Dan Gallagher
Matthew Shepherd
Esther Chessin
Anne Pfeiffer
Esther Chessin
Wm McAllister
Ron Therriault
Evan King

From:
David Felton
Patrick Boyce
Dorothy Peterson
Dorothy Peterson
Sonja Chessin
Jane McAllister
Ginny Therriault
Carol and Tom King

The Olive Branch Fair Trade Store
by Jenny Zaso, Development & Outreach

Our fair trade store has been so busy with the final return of sunshine and warm weather! Locals and tourists alike are coming in for all we have to offer - jewelry, wine and pint glasses, soap, toys, candles, coffee and more! We have new fair trade artisans from Cambodia and Thailand that are doing incredible block printed and beaded wallets and purses. We have more local honey and beauty products that have just arrived from Hindu Hillbilly Apiaries in the Bitterroot and Lillian Organics!

We are recognizing more and more the importance of our store as a portal to all of the peace and justice work that we do. With your help and input, we are working to create a unique customer and member experience that lets everyone who walks through our doors know that their purchase contributes directly to international peace-building efforts and economic empowerment for marginalized people across the world, supports the local community, is eco-friendly and also supports all that JRPC does as a non-profit peace and justice resource center – our programming, events, library, and more.

Finally, we are dipping our toes into “direct trade”, focused on setting up direct artisan relationships with our own local indigenous populations in need. Native crafts from individuals who live on nearby reservations are plentiful; however, transportation logistics and other barriers prevent many of those artisans from being able to sell their crafts. We hope to work with local tribes to reduce some of these barriers and to share their work with the larger Missoula community over the next year by selling some of their work in our store. Right now, check out our Cree Spirit cards, featuring native artwork by Eric Cree from Arlee, MT.

Plus we will always have a new featured artist for First Friday Gallery nights through the summer!!
I first met Steve a few months after 9/11/2001 when I answered an invitation from Anita Doyle to serve on the JRPC Coordinating Council. Steve, who had moved to Missoula only a year or two earlier, had been on the Council since 2001, having been encouraged by other community members, who recognized him as a hardworking peace friend, to get involved in JRPC. Before long he was recruited to the Coordinating Council, where he served from 2001 until his second 3-year term expired in 2008. He served as CC chair for much of his time on the Council. He volunteered often and carried through on doing more than his part in the success of the many JRPC events, from numerous peace rallies in 2002 and 2003 to the annual peace party. His was always an important voice in the many important decisions the Council made from 2002, when we grew, and increased donations and activism indicated a need to add staff members, and 2005, when the Council found itself faced with an inability to sustain staff. Steve was deeply engaged in maintaining the peace work, and used his skills in mediation, facilitation, and strategic planning to help sustain JRPC for several difficult months in 2005 until we could finally pay a director. When he left the Council, he was given the title of Emeritus JRPC CC Member, but rather than just sitting back glowing, he continued to work, especially on the annual Peace Party. And then, in 2017, he came back as an active member of the Coordinating Council, and, not surprisingly, has been the chair or co-chair since.

But of course, being named Peacemaker of the Year is not about what the recipient has done for the Peace Center. It is about modeling peace -- the character and actions that inspire others to believe in and act to encourage peace and justice. Steve is a visible, peaceful presence in Missoula, known as a friend to hundreds of people from various peace, justice, and sustainability groups. You will find him at nearly every Missoula rally calling for non-violence, welcoming the stranger and supporting our diverse population, seeking justice, and saving the earth. He is often the person handing you a petition or a sign or a flyer for an event. He’s a presence at the many fundraisers and gatherings of Missoula’s numerous non-profits, from Missoula’s 350 (Climate Change) to helping out at the Poverello Center.

Another person might have included details I don’t know about Steve. I only recently learned that he helps out at the Poverello Center. Does he also volunteer at the Food Bank? The UCC, where he’s a member? Youth Groups? I look forward to learning more at the Peacemaker of the Year award on May 20. Steve McArthur richly deserves to be named Missoula’s 2018 Peacemaker of the Year.
All the Buzz is True about Missoula Gives!!

Wow! You did it! We did it together! Our goal for this year’s Missoula Gives campaign was $5,000. We set a goal that challenged us to raise more than last year, faster than last year and we came in at $5,110!!!

Two amazing things made this possible:
1) We had an extremely generous handful of members who got together $2,000 to match, dollar for dollar, any early donations made to Missoula Gives. Not only did this bring in the full $2,000 of matching donations, but we made over half of our total Missoula Gives goal before the giving day even started!
2) The support of our members never ceases to amaze and inspire us each and every day. We were in the top 20 non-profits for both money raised and number of donors participating in all of Missoula for Missoula Gives. Peace and justice is a priority in our community and we have people showing up in so many ways to keep this important work building, expanding and permeating into Missoula’s way of life.

Youth Peacemaker Award
The Fr. Jim Hogan Peace Award

We know our young people hold the key to the future. New this year, JRPC added a youth peacemaker component to our celebration. In 2001 Fr. Jim Hogan, our 2000 Peacemaker, designed a contest that would bring the voices of youth into our conversations about peace. This year, the contest became our first Youth Peacemaker Award. The beginning of the Peacemaker award ceremony focused on the nominees for the Youth Award. Each nominee was introduced with their story by one of the four youth volunteers who served on the JRPC selection committee of their peers. The 2018 nominees are: Allison Moran—a 5-year-old kindergartner at Cold Springs Elementary, Birch Banks—an 8th-grader at Missoula International School, Marita Growing Thunder—a UM student, The SOAP Girls—a group of 4 girls who have been working on social justice issues since they were ages 9-10, the Group that organized the Hellgate HS walkout on 1/18, and the long list of students—grades 3-12 who organized Walk Outs at schools on March 1st and spoke to a community rally on March 24th.

We were inspired to hear the stories on these young Peacemakers and to have them at the 2018 Peacemaker of the Year ceremony where all nominees received a certificate and the SOAP girls received the Fr. Hogan award of $500. We honor and appreciate all of them for giving us hope for the future.

You Can Help Us Bring More Visitors to the Peace Center, and we’ll even include a free coffee!

Do you know someone who might not know about us yet? Or, hasn't been to the JRPC in a long time? Invite them in for a free fair trade coffee or tea and a tour of the Peace Center and store. Word of mouth is one of the best ways to let people know we exist, and our members are our strongest and most valued ambassadors in the community.

Betsy and Jenny would be happy to help you set up a tour for friends and/or family! We simply want more people to know we are here, what we do, and how they can use us as a community resource. If they become a member, great! If not, we hope they will spread the word and come in for a visit now and then, bring in friends who are visiting for some fair trade shopping or volunteer in the future!

E-mail peace@jrpc.org or call us 543-3955 to let us know when you are coming by so we can be ready to meet and greet and commune over a cup!
Today, June 1, 5-8 pm, Olive Branch Fair Trade Store

First Friday pop-up art gallery featuring work from local artist Andrea Morgan of Blue Rooster Arts!

Local beer and popcorn ALSO – the entire Hip Strip is playing BINGO!! Pick up your card at JRPC, get a BINGO space marked for each Hip Strip business you visit tonight, and you might to win a huge hip strip gift basket!