Lessons Learned
Part II

In last spring’s edition of the Carillon, I offered some thoughts on lessons of support and strength that I believe time on retreat at Ring Lake Ranch can teach us in times of struggle. I want to return to that general theme of lessons learned, but, some of you may be relieved to hear, without the political tinge. I want to return to that theme because witnessing the total eclipse over the Ranch on August 21st – aside from being one of the most deeply moving experiences of my life – was a near-perfect encapsulation of so much of what Ring Lake Ranch offers us.

To be honest, I was not especially excited about the total eclipse, even that morning as the moon began to cross the sun’s path. But as the temperature began to drop, the quality of the light and the scenery around the group gathered above Top Cabin began to change, and the eclipse finally reached totality, it was as if something was unveiled. Sunlight is, after all, a basic and ever-present element of our daily lives, but behind this seemingly common thing turned out to be the sun’s corona: wisps of gorgeous silvery-white light streaming from the edges of the sun, impossible to see under normal circumstances. Venus and some bright stars became visible for those precious few moments and a blue-orange sunset appeared all the way around us on the horizon. Aside from the gasps of those of us gathered to watch, the process was entirely silent. And then, after just over two minutes, the moon moved on and everything returned to normal. It was as if a curtain had been drawn back, revealing astounding beauty and wonder and peace behind the most basic, mundane element of our lives. I hope this revelatory experience is what Ring Lake Ranch offers us all – a brief interlude to step behind our lives, whatever our joys or struggles of the day might be,
I found an article about the total eclipse later in the day, “A Total Eclipse Is Really, Really Weird” by Bob Berman, that pointed out that the ancient Babylonians understood indeed beauty and wonder and recorded the phenomenon in total eclipse later in the day, “A Total Eclipse Is Really, Really Weird” by Bob Berman, that pointed out that the ancient Babylonians understood indeed beauty and wonder and recorded the phenomenon in total eclipse. The article by Bob Berman points out that there is no way to replicate it. Partial eclipses don’t produce the same quality of light, let alone make the corona visible. Single photographic images aren’t capable of recording the depth of contrast as the light changes on the landscape and the varying quality of light in the inner and outer corona. So, as the saying goes, “you had to have been there” and I apologize for talking about something that many of you didn’t experience this summer. But, I also say it with a note of encouragement, thinking of both the eclipse and time at Ring Lake Ranch: “You have to be there!” There is indeed no substitute for the blessings of real places and people and lives around us, wherever we are.

Lesson Learned I continued from page 2 and to understand that there is indeed beauty and wonder and love behind all of it, at every moment.

Finally, I have to offer a semi-apology. My reflections are dependent on having been physically present there during the total eclipse. The article by Bob Berman points out that there is no way to replicate it. Partial eclipses don’t produce the same quality of light, let alone make the corona visible. Single photographic images aren’t capable of recording the depth of contrast as the light changes on the landscape and the varying quality of light in the inner and outer corona. So, as the saying goes, “you had to have been there” and I apologize for talking about something that many of you didn’t experience this summer. But, I also say it with a note of encouragement, thinking of both the eclipse and time at Ring Lake Ranch: “You have to be there!” There is indeed no substitute for the blessings of real places and people and lives around us, wherever we are.

In Memoriam:
Ed Everding, February 2nd, 1934 – June 29th, 2017

We are deeply saddened to announce the passing of former RLR Board member Ed Everding on June 29th. Ed was Professor of Christian Education at Iliff School of Theology from 1967 until his retirement in 1999 and active in United Methodist Church leadership and education throughout his career. Ed was first invited to lead a session at the Ranch by Maggie Kahin in 1976. He shared this experience with his four children, and cherished the spiritual connection the landscape and friendly people inspired. He enjoyed staying in cabin 5 and laying on the giant boulder outside the cabin to watch shooting stars and satellites with his children. His son, Henry, would return to become a junior staffer, and it became a tradition for them to drive up to the Ranch together at the beginning of every summer and back at the end. Ed fell in love with Ring Lake Ranch, and he loved to share the experience with family whenever he could throughout the decades. He treasured every detail—the food, the communal washing up in the kitchen, the horses, the mountains, the storms, porch-sitting, the square dances in Dubois. It became a place to commune with nature and, after Henry died tragically in 2005, to connect with his son. Ring Lake Ranch was a magical, magnetic, powerful attraction for Ed for over 35 years. He came nearly every summer until he couldn’t anymore. The Everding family has graciously requested that memorial gifts be given to the Ranch’s Henry Everding Equine Fund.

Gifts to Fill the Gap

Most of you in the Ring Lake Ranch community know that we are in the midst of a capital campaign, the 50/50 Campaign: Preserve the Experience, and indeed, many people have given generously to the campaign already. We appreciate that generosity and all of our guests have begun to benefit from the campaign by way of the new cabin furniture, the ongoing refurbishing of the cabins themselves, and the like.

As many donors have made long-term commitments to the campaign, however, we find ourselves in the bind of seeing annual donations decline over the last year or so. This is not surprising, but the reality is that we still have financial needs to meet each year, including program and facility expenses, as well as the scholarship needs of guests.

We certainly hope that everyone who can pledge to the campaign will do so, but even if you cannot do that, please consider making a one-time gift this year to help meet our immediate needs. Particularly if you haven’t given before now, or haven’t made a financial contribution in a while, you hope you will reflect on your experience at Ring Lake Ranch and consider joining the community in making sure that experience is available for future guests.
2018 Schedule of Programs

July 15 – 21
Marianne Borg
Days of Awe and Wonder Days of Awe and Wonder

How to be a Christian in the 21st Century is a new collection of writings by the late Marcus Borg. Using Marcus’ book we will review some of his foundational affirmations and understandings that enabled so many of us to see the person of Jesus anew and discern what is the heart of Christianity. In addition to reviewing Marcus’ work, we will reflect on our understandings of Christianity and its place in the complex, questioning and religiously pluralistic world. We will also use the work of a variety of poets and artists to address the “eloquent listening” in hopes of helping us see again and hear afresh the hope that calls us to courage, grace and the heart of what we are to become.

Marianne Borg is the widow of Marcus Borg. She is a retired Episcopal priest and was the widow of Marcus Borg. She is a retired Episcopal priest and was the first lay president of the Episcopal Church.

July 22 – 28
The Wind River Reservation
Contemporary Perspectives on Archaeology and Reservation Life

We will explore a variety of topics related to the history and current cultural life in the Wind River Reservation. Carson BMW archaeologist Craig Bromley will present how archaeological understandings of the last three decades have changed about the people who inhabited this region over the last 12,000 years. Gina Cingiexigia, also a BLM Archaeologist, will explore the history of the fur trade-era spur point that she discovered in 2015, tracing its manufacture from Silicon, England to its arrival in the University of Wyoming’s Archaeological Repository. Jordan Oetjen will discuss his role in the film “What Was Ours,” a documentary film on the Native American experience of the past and present.

Bob Loy, a member of the Eastern Shoshone tribe, will present the efforts to restore buffalo to the Wind River Indian Reservation. We also hope to have an opportunity to visit the buffalo restoration site on the reservation. Session is full, wait list only, please.

August 12 – 18
Rubaiyat
What Choice Do I Have? What Choice Do I Have?

Christian Woman in Reimagined World

Images of oppressed Muslim women are common in the media. Malala Yousafzai nearly killed by the Taliban for wanting to read and write. Parda-clad Saudi women singing in the streets of protest against the new dress code, and others subjected to the brutal violence of honor killings. While the question of violence against women and its implications in the media is vital, perhaps something has gone missing altogether in the picture. In the case of Muslim women we will discuss the ways of life and culture that enable them to practice their faith. In these two primary spiritual practices on their own, by accident. Our sacred texts make clear that gratitude and love are at the core of a well-lived life. But while we teach nearly everyone reading, writing, and arithmetic, we assume people will learn these two primary spiritual practices on their own, by accident. Diana Butler Bass and Brian McLaren will guide you in the way.

Diana Butler Bass is an author, speaker, activist, and networker among innovative Christian leaders. Her dozen-plus books include Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road? and The Great Spiritual Migration. Session is full, wait list only, please.

August 19 – 25
Steven Davis and Abdullah Antelopi
The Things that Make for Peace: The Bible and The Qur’an in Conversation

The increase of religiously motivated violence is a compelling reason for Christians and Muslims to develop a deeper theological understanding of neighboring religious communities and “the things that make for peace” (Luke 19:42). This seminar will explore core values of Islam and Christianity, highlighting points of similarity and difference. We will give special attention to the bases in both the Bible and the Qur’an for interfaith cooperation and respect, as well as to contemporary writings and theological statements. We will consider our own faith practices and the challenges and opportunities of living in a pluralistic culture.

Steven Davis is an Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Practical Theology at Duke University Divinity School. He has written on African biblical interpretation and the Qur’an as a means of understanding the Bible. Abdullah Antelopi is Chief Representative for Muslim Affairs at Duke University. Antelopi is a native of Turkey. Inam Antelopi worked on a variety of faith-based humanitarian and relief projects in Myanmar and Malaysia from 1996 to 2004 and served as Duke University’s first Muslim chaplain.

Sept 2 – Sept 8
Luther as Conflict Transformation: Being Fully Present, Authentic, and Creatively Engaged

Luther’s Death Anniversary Seminar: Being Fully Present, Authentic, and Creatively Engaged

Our dreams for nurturing relationships, creative work, and experiencing beloved community are often shattered by situations of conflict. Although “conflict” is blamed for such broken outcomes, more fundamental matters are the real culprits. Avoiding conflict, rushing to resolution, political maneuvering, character assassination, and remaining anonymous and silent are just some of the dysfunctional behaviors in disputes. With skills to confront conflict, even at times to initiate it, we can create transformational opportunities that enact our dreams. Through presentations, discussions, video, and role-play, we will engage concepts and processes that enable us to live faithfully in conflict. Luther Smith is Professor Emeritus of Church and Community at the School of Theology of Emory University. He speaks and writes extensively on Howard Thurman’s legacy, spirituality, church practices, and social transformation. Throughout his career Luther has been active with issues of reconciliation, interfaith collaboration, child advocacy, poverty, and people with intellectual disabilities.
Thanks to our 2017 RLR Volunteers

Sara Myers and David Petersen, Dwight volunteers also provided all sorts of support throughout the season. David summer rides.

chairs, dressers, lamps, and nightstands. cabin furniture for new writing desks, and other cabin items, clearing trails, and cleaning cabins, repairing screens also did the usual rounds of prepping getting the horses and tack ready for Riding programs.

Wm Williamson and Dan Hauck, Becky and Ryan Collins, Mike McKee, Ken Blumer, Haberman, Jeff and Will Reed, Lynn Williamson and Dan Hauck, Becky and Harold Walker, David Henderson, Jim and Bev Young, Graham Opie, and Ted and Renette Lasse all pitched in to gather the old furniture (most of which was donated to Eagle’s Hope Housing Program in Riverton) and stock each cabin with the new items. The Volunteer Week crew also did the usual rounds of preparing and cleaning cabins, repairs screens and other cabin items, clearing trails, and getting the horses and tack ready for summer rides.

Volunteers also provided all sorts of support throughout the season. David Turpin and Amelia Carrell, Ellie Rosin, Maria Battista and Steve Weiman, Steven Koenh, Dan Hauck, Ken Iha, Lyn Chan, Becky Brown, Julie Wakelee Lynch, Katy Johnston and Suzanne Seaton, Lesley and Glen Stugelmayer, Ryan and Kani Collins, Gretchen Williams, Dorian McClanndon, Alice and Fred Nicol, Carl Koch and Joyce Heil, Sean Roche, Amy Mears, and Jean and Bill Wolfe all happily gave their time and energy to the dining hall, the kitchen, maintenance projects, and the hiking and riding programs. Special thanks as well to RLR Board members Julie Mavity Maddalena, Suzanne Seaton, and Alice Nicol for talking with guests about the capital campaign throughout the summer. Volunteers are vital to continuing the Ranch experience for everyone. Please consider joining us, either during our 2018 Volunteer Week, May 27th – June 2nd, or during one of our sessions. Contact Andy Blackmun at andy@ringlake.org or call him at 888-458-5253 to sign up or ask any questions.

Staff Assistants

The Ranch also welcomed the help of several dedicated young people as staff assistants during the 2017 season. Thanks very much to Jacob Winslea, Taylor Stugelmayer, Zoe Kinnard, Beau Bryant, Olivia Pratt, Elizabeth Blackmun, and Christian Blackmun for all of their hard work around the Ranch. We invite young people between the ages of 13 and 18 who have been to RLR at least once to apply to be staff assistants for our 2018 season. We ask staff assistants to work between 20 and 30 hours per week. In return, staff assistants receive room, board and a small stipend during their stay.

Depending on rooming arrangements, staff assistants usually stay for one or two weeks; more weeks may be available at the discretion of the Director. The work can vary each day: sometimes we need help around the kitchen, sometimes down at the corral, sometimes covering the back of a group on a hike. Teenagers interested in working as staff assistants should contact Andy Blackmun at andy@ringlake.org or 888-458-5253.
Come join us at Ring Lake Ranch for “renewal in sacred wilderness.”

“The world is full of magic things, patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper.”

W.B. Yeats