

VALUES!

by Mari Lu McGinnis

Many of us have visited Yellowstone National Park and walked among the steaming hot pots of poisonous water, erupting geysers, large and small. We have seen the effects of earth's seismic action. Twisted trees, canyons, lakes, rock formations and of course, the steam, popping up from vents, seemingly at random. There have been many earthquakes in the past. The last one was in the late 1950s. A sizeable mountain slid into an adjoining lake, flooding the shores and killing fishermen and campers. Yellowstone and its vicinity is a major world hot spot and is monitored by the hour by earth quake scientists.

Stepping into the vortex of values is much like visiting Yellowstone. Judgment calls, which we call values, are formed by one's family and educational background, religious beliefs, political leanings, friends and socio-economic background. Where we live is also influential. In a small town or in a city, North or South, East or West, may determine how we see the world. This is true world wide, of course, as we have learned with difficulty, but even in the United States, and I say that advisedly, one sees an enormous difference in values.

There are hot spots in the states that the FBI monitors. Various hate groups, white supremacy groups, possibly some in the NRA. So called Tea Party marchers are hot tempered groups of amorphous dissatisfaction venting anger at anyone trying to speak rationally to them. Ultra religious folks whose biblical values lead them to shun doctor's care for their children are toxic to most parents. If I were to be transplanted to that cultural Yellowstone called the state of Mississippi, for example, my values would run into all kinds of seismic action. I would eat salad in that fattest of all states and not go to church. Children would be pulled from my path because I might be strolling with a person of color. My education level would not be noticed, but I would cause the ground to tremble if I were to foolishly discuss politics, birth control, voting rights, or equal education for everyone. Back home in Colorado, some or all of my values might be disapproved of, but they would probably be respected. That's all I ask. No eruptions.

Meanwhile we can walk around the values of some, while keeping track of the radical values of the dangerous, hoping to get at least a warning of a seismic break.