

Fifth Month, 2017

QUAKER NEWSLETTER

GAINESVILLE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
702 NW 38th Street, Gainesville, FL 32607; (352) 372-1070 www.gainesvillequakers.org
Sandy Lyon, clerk

Today, I am grateful for the presence of my Friends.

Hold in the Light: Hap Taylor, Anne and Phil Haisley, Connie and Tim Ray, Arnold and Amy Von der Porten

Calendar of Events: (online at www.gainesvillequakers.org)

Every Sunday: 11:00 am Meeting for Worship; 11:15 am First Day School
Every Monday: 5:30 pm Yoga with Gary

Sunday, May 7

9:30 am Library committee
9:30 am Meetinghouse committee

Tuesday, May 9

11:30 am Friendly Lunch - at the Meeting House

Saturday, May 13

1:00 – 4:00 pm The Art of Fearlessness Exhibit

Sunday, May 14

12:45 pm Meeting for Worship for Business

Sunday, May 21

12:45 pm Earthcare Committee

Wednesday, May 24

Deadline for newsletter items. Email to Bonnie Zimmer at gfquakernews@gmail.com

Sunday, May 28

9:40 am Peace and Social Concerns Committee
1:00 pm Bible Study

The **Fundraising Committee** is responsible for organizing set-up and clean-up of food after Meeting for Worship. The list for committees responsible for set-up and clean-up is located on the bulletin board in the social room.

The Art of Fearlessness Project

The Art of Fearlessness is a nationwide project of the Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts. (Bonnie Zimmer is a member.)

This project is intended to be a community conversation about the intersection of art and fear. How do we use art to give voice to our fears or to transcend our fears?

Gainesville Meeting is participating by hosting an art exhibit on May 13 at the Meetinghouse from 1 – 4 pm. There will be space for hanging art as well as space for reading poetry or prose and performing. Friends are encouraged to participate. Please fill out an intent to show form (there are some in the foyer) to help the committee plan the afternoon.

Earthcare Committee: Campaign to Protect Big Cypress National Preserve and Ban Fracking in Florida

A federal judge in Fort Myers handed environmentalists a resounding defeat Monday (4/24/2017) ruling in favor of the Burnett Oil Co. (Midland, TX) and the National Park Service. The ruling allows Burnett Oil Co. to engage in seismic testing for oil and gas in preparation for fracking in Florida's Big Cypress National Preserve in eastern Collier County's sprawling mix of swamps and pine hammocks.

Senate Bill S 442, which would prohibit fracking, has advanced to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Environment and Natural Resources. Please note that Senator Keith Perry is a co-sponsor of S 442, but is not on the committee. However, many of us are his constituents. A letter can be emailed to Senator Perry and to other Senators who are members of the committee.

Senator Keith Perry

312 Senate Office Building

404 South Monroe Street

Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Phone: (850) 487-5008

Email: perry.keith@flsenate.gov

The House Bill HB 451 (a companion to the Senate bill) is currently in the House Natural Resources and Public Lands Subcommittee. Representative Clovis Watson is a member of the committee and represents constituents in the Gainesville area. A letter sent to Representative Watson can also be sent to the other Representatives who are members of the committee.

Clovis Watson Jr. [D]

200 House Office Building

402 South Monroe Street

Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Phone: (850) 717-5020

Email: Clovis.Watson@myfloridahouse.gov

This information, along with additional details and names and addresses of committee members was emailed to those on the local Meeting email list on April 27.

Friends General Conference Gathering: July 2–8

2017 Theme : Ripples start where spirit moves

Taste the vibrancy and the variety that is available by immersing yourself in this community of Friends for a week. We eagerly look forward to welcoming you—in person—at Niagara University, New York. Registration is open now and scholarship money is available.

Plenary speakers include Kenneth Deer, Sa'ed Atshan, Sandra Tamari, Dalit Baum and Pamela Boyce Simms. Morning workshops meet every morning, providing an opportunity to make life-long friendships with Friends from other parts of the wide family of Friends. Workshop topics range from making kites to learning mindfulness.

Gainesville Friends planning to attend include Bill Mitchell, Jean Larson, Bonnie Zimmer and Joshua Killingsworth (co-clerk of the Adult Young Friends).

Quaker Earthcare Witness

Quaker Earthcare Witness is a network of Friends (Quakers) in North America and other like-minded people who are taking spirit-led action to address the ecological and social crises of the world from a spiritual perspective, emphasizing Quaker process and testimonies.

While QEW supports reforms in laws, technology, education, and institutions, its primary calling is to facilitate transformation of humans' attitudes, values, identity, and worldview that underlie much of the environmental destruction going on in the world today.

Quaker Earthcare Witness Mini-Grants

Applications for QEW Mini-Grants are now being accepted! QEW has grants available for Friends' organizations who want to enhance their physical/spiritual relationship with the Earth. We offer matching grants of up to \$500 each to support projects consistent with QEW values. Application deadlines are May 1 and October 1.

We are now accepting applications for Friends projects which:

1. Improve your immediate environment
2. Involve, inform, and educate members young, old and in between
3. May reduce carbon footprints
4. Create opportunities to improve and learn about your own local ecosystems
5. Enrich your local community
6. Set examples and inspiration for others
7. Provide spirit-led, meaningful work and create fun for all participants

We welcome your project ideas and energies! Past grant recipients have used QEW Mini-Grant funds in the following ways:

1. Creating an edible garden for their meeting

2. Adding a composter for a Friends' school
3. Completing a meeting solar energy project

Gainesville's Interfaith Alliance for Immigrant Justice

WHO IS THE IAIJ?

We are a network of local synagogues, mosques, churches, fellowships, student groups, community organizations, and political and academic leaders who joined together during July 2010 to study about, educate the community and work towards a just solution for our local and national immigration crisis.

Join us for our meetings! We meet on the second Monday of every month, 6pm at La Casita (the Institute of Hispanic Latino Cultures), 1504 West University Avenue. Free Evening/Weekend Parking is available in the back.

The Meeting is planning to hold weekly candle light vigils on Bo Diddley Plaza under the care of the Ministry and Nurture and Peace and Social Concern Committees in support of immigrant justice. We anticipate that these will begin on May 8.

New from QuakerBooks: The Anti-War by Douglas Gwyn

Review by Brian Drayton

Quaker author Doug Gwyn's new book *The Anti-War* will raise questions and maybe hackles, but by taking the time to wrestle with it, both you and your meeting will find yourself exploring your understanding of Quakerism.

There is something to unsettle everyone here, I think, and this is because the author himself has clearly wrestled hard to think and write about it. You'll have to read the book backwards and forwards—if only because the book is composed of two essays bound back to back, a structure that turns out to be compelling because its chiasmic structure reveals how the two pieces start from very different directions but then converge on a double nucleus: the peace testimony, and the very nature of Quakerism as a body, a corporate entity. It may seem complex, but by the time you've worked your way to the heart of the labyrinth, you will have been shown a view of the nucleus that illuminates many aspects of Quaker practice and faith, and been challenged to ask yourself what in fact is at your center as an individual, and as a meeting.

The first essay I read is entitled: "The Anti-War: militant peacemaking in the manner of Friends." Right away, the reader becomes aware that, while this book addresses the peace testimony, it is also an exploration of the radical Quaker worldview. It seeks the reality available to us if we take seriously the first Friends' interpretation of the world and God's work in it—and by "take seriously" I do not (nor does Gwyn) mean "try to recreate," but rather "understand how an analysis and testimony of similar depth and freshness could look in our time." Gwyn points out that a statement like James Nayler's "final words," that begins "There is a spirit that I feel..." is "a non-sequitur to most talk about war and peace," in that it suggests a drastically different value-system. Essentially, he writes, the "Lamb's War" is "an anti-war: an inversion of war; a nonviolent campaign against the entire social order that generates violence and war through the machinations of envy, greed, competition, and conflicts of interest."

The essay starts by inviting us into the Book of Revelations as it was understood in its time, and by the first Friends. Drawing on much recent scholarship on that difficult book, Gwyn presents it as a trenchant account of the world's imperial power-centers and their social-psychological "meanings" through the eye of faith. This eye is not that of political analysis, though it makes use of it; rather, it is in a sense the language of "myth," that is, of persistent characteristics and narratives that carry great power for humans because they are experienced over and over in many forms, and seem unavoidably embedded in human life. They are why history "rhymes:" The Beast (political-military power), Babylon (money), their synergistic (money and power mutually intoxicating) alliance (Babylon riding the Beast), and the False Prophet (the rationale developed to justify empire, using a mockery of religion pragmatism, emotion, and reason). Opposed to these is the Lamb in covenant with the New Jerusalem, in which grows the Tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

Early Friends read Revelations in some such way, and therefore were led to declare "war" on all the manifestations of this system in their day — a war conducted with weapons intended to break mind-bonds and bring about the New Jerusalem with a renegotiation of power relations, a transformed understanding of our right relation to "the creatures" (the natural world), and a renewed commitment to an engagement with a living God not under our control, not of our making and whose ultimate effects we can hardly understand.

The Light had for them an "apocalyptic" power, in the sense that it revealed veiled realities, and showed them a deeper truth about the world — starting from themselves, but linking each human atom's condition with that of the whole world system. As we do the work that early Friends did to see how the powers are at work in our times, under different names, subverting all things to their own imperatives, we too can awaken, through the Light and wisdom of God, from our comforting, compromised, acquiescent sleep, and make a "peace testimony"

that is truly against "war in any form" — whether it is against the earth, against the poor, against the different, against the truth.

Essay #2, entitled "The Anti-War: Peace finds the purpose of a peculiar people," declares that "a tougher-minded and more spiritually resilient witness is required if Friends are to meet the challenges of this century. Commitment will only continue to weaken until we dig down and rediscover the first principles of Quaker faith and purpose in the world."

This essay surprised me by the "personal testimony" in the introduction, but Doug's retrospective of his life in ministry helped me hear his voice beyond the "authorial" tone of his essay. He also provides a fascinating review of how each of his major writing projects build upon each other, arriving at the present book, his latest essay in trying to see "Quaker theology in history" — including in the history we're living now.

The essay also helped make visible a sub-text within this book ostensibly about the Peace Testimony: What does it mean for us to be a people with a distinctive service or meaning, in these days? It is clear that in various ways Friends are deeply secularized (as the broader society has become), and that this makes it difficult for us to make any testimony rooted in our experience as Friends that can reach the human heart and speak to the human condition. Doug's persistent longing is for us "to renew covenantal faith and reconciliation among Friends. Covenant renewal is...both binding and cutting. It strengthens the true basis of our unity and renounces the extrinsic elements that keep us apart." This yearning is based in the confidence that Quakerism represents a distinctive line of inquiry and discovery in human life, that it is a unique species (as he writes) that can work symbiotically with other species for the renewing of the world in hope. Moreover, he sees that there are those living that path in ways that have authentic power, regardless of the words they use to describe their spirituality. But we can't let ourselves take too-easy refuge in saying that "it's our life that should speak." Quakers once understood what uncomfortable

and messy work it is, to live truly under the guidance of the disconcerting Spirit.



Gulf fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*) on a Firewheel flower (*Gaillardia pulchella*)

A Walk in the Quaker Woods — Jean Larson, with photographs by Bill Mitchell

April 27, 2017

Bill shared some of the things he has been doing at the meeting property for our walk today.

We first headed to the children's yard where I could see the yellow table top he had constructed to replace the rotted top of the picnic table. As we walked up the ramp to the

children's yard, we stopped to admire the blanket flowers (*Gaillardia pulchella*) volunteering at the top of the ramp and the orange butterfly, likely a Gulf fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*), which was resting on one of the flowers. The yellow top of



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This essay then works first from the first letter of Peter, and its call for Christians to see themselves as a "peculiar" people (I would say, people following a path with a distinctive integrity and voice), serving as a way to bridge between humans and the divine. "Our awareness that true freedom is a gift and not a personal accomplishment keeps us humbly open to divine motions in our hearts," Doug writes. "It also makes us more gracious, patient, and hopeful towards others. It makes use better peacemakers. Thus we become a people created out of nothing, by the way we have responded to a call."

The essay explains some of the enduringly relevant nuances of 1 Pet. 2, and then explores how the first Friends, especially Fox and Nayler, understood this and developed it under their experience of the Light to help a new people gather, renewing the covenant of Light, in their time. Doug then goes on to challenge us to do the same for ours — and his answer to this challenge serves as a sort of example for each of us that takes it up for ourselves. In words that "spoke my mind," he writes:

"As long as Friends import our identities, ethics, and goals from secular society, we will continue to be doctrinaire about peace and confused about our purpose. Over the past century, our activist impulses have kept us grasping for social relevance rather than living in radical faithfulness...and letting the conflicts and talking points develop from the ways we puzzle and offend the mainstream."

Voting Rights Restoration

Florida voters will determine the fate of nearly 1.6 million ex-felons across the state in 2018. On April 20, 2017, the Florida Supreme Court approved the language of the Voting Restoration Amendment and certified the more than 70,000 petition signatures in support of the constitutional referendum to allow ex-felons the right to vote.

For nearly 200 years, Florida has had one of the strictest voting regulations in the country when it comes to released felons. Florida is one of three states in the country which disallows ex-felons who have served part or all of their sentences the right to vote for the rest of their lives.

the picnic table called attention to the yellow flowers of the bushy seaside oxeye (*Borrichia frutescens*) growing nearby. We walked behind the meeting house, seeing new sprouts from the base of Bud's rose, some late blooms on Bart's rose, and the absence of the non-native Valamuerto (*Senna pendula*) locally known as a Christmas cassia.

Then we headed down the drive, noting an oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) with soft green leaves and a vigorous Florida yam (*Dioscorea floridana*). At the end of the split rail fence, I followed Bill into the woods where he led me a short distance from the old meeting for worship in nature area in the direction of the pond to see a cluster

of the plants he bought at the April native plant sale: wood oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*), paw-paw (*Asimina triloba*), woodland phlox (*Phlox divaricata*), saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), black seed needle grass (*Piptochaetium avenaceum*), woodland hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*), Bird pepper (*Capsicum annuum*). Nearby he planted a Bastard False indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*) and a Simpson's stopper (*Myrcianthes fragrans*).

Then we wandered up the dry bed where the water runs when it rains, as it has not for some time, noting that the green dragons (*Arisaema dracontium*) were still on display. Before we reached the ditch we headed south to check on the plantings by the side of the creek, just below its junction with the ditch. There were two clusters of plants by the creek. One cluster had milkweed, both butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) and white flowered swamp milkweed (*Asclepias perennis*) and the latter were blooming, rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*), inkberry shrub (*Ilex glabra*), and fakahatchee grass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*). The other clump had rayless sunflower (*Helianthus radula*), a Maryland senna (*Senna*

marilandica), and two partridge peas (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*) planted near a small plum tree that has been struggling and around which Bill put a ring with a steady supply of water.

We walked up the creek until we came to a pool of water and spotted a swamp milkweed planted last year that was blooming again. Then we turned back down the creek, up the ditch and headed back to the meeting house.

Bill is adding plants to the meeting property to bind creekside soil and to provide food for the butterflies. How are you caring for the Earth?



A flower on the Bird pepper (*Capsicum annuum*). Larger than life-size.



Rattlesnake Master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) near the creek.



A display of Florida yam (*Dioscorea polystachya*) visible behind the split rail fence. With experience this native plant can (usually) be easily distinguished from the air potato (*Dioscorea bulbifera*); however it can more easily be distinguished by the look of the calendar. The first air potatoes won't begin appearing until the middle of May.



Flowers on an Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*) on a tree flattened by the flood during the last rain.



Saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), near the old meeting for worship in nature area.

Queries for the Fifth Month:

Do we share our deepest beliefs and values with each other and with our children, while leaving them free to develop as the Spirit may lead them? ▪ Does the meeting give the children loving care and promote their spiritual life through religious education and other activities? ▪ Do we encourage our children's participation in the meeting's work and cultivate their desire for service to others? ▪ How do we educate our members and attenders about the Bible (especially the teachings of Jesus), other spiritual literature, and the history, principles, and practices of Friends?

Advices for the Fifth Month:

Seek for ourselves and for our children the full development of God's gifts, which is true education. ▪ Realize that education should continue throughout life and that all should share its opportunities and privileges. Make time for regular personal prayer and worship and for reading the Bible, Friends literature, Faith and Practice, the queries and advices, and other sources of spiritual value. ▪ Seek truth together in our families and among Friends in shared worship and discussion. ▪ Teach by being teachable. Be open to new ideas and approaches. ▪ Reach out to that of God in

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