

# QUAKER NEWSLETTER

GAINESVILLE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS  
702 NW 38th Street, Gainesville, FL 32607; (352) 372-1070

[www.gainesvillequakers.org](http://www.gainesvillequakers.org)

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*Only from the heart can you touch the sky.*

*Rumi*

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

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**Calendar of Events:** (online at [www.gainesvillequakers.org](http://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

Every Monday: 5:00 pm Witness at Corner of 23rd Ave and 43rd St to Support Immigrant Justice (weather permitting)

Every Tuesday: 5:30 pm Tai Chi with Arun

Every Wednesday: 5:30 pm Spiritual Explorations and Meeting for Worship

**Sunday, September 2**

9:30 am Library committee

9:30 am Meetinghouse committee

**Sunday, September 9**

1:00 pm Meeting for Worship for Business

Tuesday, September 11

12:00 pm Friendly Lunch - at the Meeting House

**Sunday, September 16**

9:40 am Peace and Social Concerns Committee

12:45 pm Earthcare Committee

**Wednesday, September 19**

...Deadline for newsletter items... Email to Bonnie Zimmer at [afquakernews@gmail.com](mailto:afquakernews@gmail.com).....

Saturday, September 22

10:00 am Reframing Workshop

**Sunday, September 23**

9:40 am Peace and Social Concerns Committee

1:00 pm Biblical and Spiritual Explorations

**Friday, September 28**

Deadline for Agenda items for October Meeting with a Concern for Business

**Sunday, September 30**

1:00 pm Threshing Session: Local Child Abuse Prevention Program (CAPP) Training

**Sunday, October 7**

1:00 pm Forum / Worship Sharing Listening for Spirit

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Friends are reminded that it is the responsibility of the entire community to assist with cleaning up the kitchen area after the social hour.

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**September 22: 10 am - 2 pm: Reframing Workshop**

The Foundations of Framing Workshop is designed to help participants begin effectively communicating the shared values, vision and beliefs that bring people together. This workshop was developed by Scott Wittkopf (Frame for the Future) and is based on the science of Dr. George Lakoff, and others, as applied to current political and public discourse. You will learn about the science of the mind and how it applies to effective communications. You will learn and practice the difference between the dominant conservative frame, and the progressive frame - and how they result in differing views of democracy. You will learn how to effectively pivot the frame on any issue, and create positive, proactive, progressive messaging that resonates across issues and constituencies.

To attend this FREE workshop, you MUST REGISTER by emailing your name, address, and phone # to: [gainesville4quakers@gmail.com](mailto:gainesville4quakers@gmail.com) or by signing up at the Meetinghouse

Other relevant information:

- 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM **Session 1** - Whole Group  
Science of the Mind and Effective Communication,  
Conservative and Progressive Frames and Democracy
- 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Lunch (provided)
- 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM **Session 2** - Small Groups -  
Practice Framing and Reframing

**September 30: 1:00 pm Child Abuse Prevention Program Threshing Session**

We have scheduled a Threshing Session on September 30 at 1 pm to consider the direction that Gainesville Meeting may take concerning CAPP training in the future. Please read the following background information and be prepared to consider in what ways we might be able to meet the needs of all members of our community.

The youth programs and intergenerational activities of the Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends are intended to provide an educational and enjoyable experience for youth, with emphasis on the beliefs, values, testimonies and practices of the Religious Society of Friends. Consistent with that goal, it is essential to provide an environment where our youth feel safe and are safe. (SEYM CAPP Training Manual)

**Current Program.** At the current time, youth workers for Gainesville Meeting are trained under the SEYM CAPP training procedures, including background checks and training conducted at approved SEYM training sessions.

**Issue with Current Program.** SEYM has determined that SEYM approved training sessions can **ONLY** occur at SEYM events or at monthly meetings that have insurance that covers child sexual abuse. Prior to this decision, training could occur at monthly meetings, which meant that individuals did not have to attend SEYM events where training was offered. These events are typically Yearly and Half-Yearly Meetings. Gainesville Meeting does not have this insurance and can not offer the SEYM-approved training locally.

Potential Options for Gainesville Meeting: (There may be others.)

1. Continue to have training only at SEYM events.
2. Obtain insurance covering child sexual abuse and then be able to offer approved SEYM training in Gainesville. Our current insurance provider does not offer this type of insurance and it appears that obtaining this insurance would increase our insurance cost by about \$3000 per year. That amount may be a little high, but is in the ballpark.
3. Use SEYM training materials and train locally. This would not provide those trained with registration to assist at SEYM events. We would have to determine if SEYM would continue to do the background checks.
4. Develop our own training materials and train locally. This would not provide those trained with registration to assist at SEYM events. We would have to determine if SEYM would continue to do the background checks.
5. Stop CAPP training. This option would not provide protection for our children.

**New from QuakerBooks:****The Meaning of Belief: Religion from an Atheist's Point of View**

By Tim Crane. Reviewed by Brian Drayton . Friends Journal, August, 2018

"I don't believe you / You had the whole damn thing all wrong / He's not the kind [of God] you have to wind up on Sundays." —Jethro Tull

Charles Taylor asked (in *A Secular Age*) "Why was it virtually impossible not to believe in God in, say, 1500 in our Western society, while in 2000 many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable?" People who are dismayed by this development see various causes. People who applaud the movement to secularization also have their own favored accounts. Many of these, especially the more polemical intellectuals such as Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and Steven Pinker, premise their arguments on descriptions of religious experience that seem quite uninformed—fighting against both straw men and straw gods, so to speak. Tim Crane, an avowed atheist, is a philosopher who has decided not to start off with a simplistic framework upon which to rack religion, but to explore it in a way that neither compromises his atheist stance, nor oversimplifies what he calls "the religious impulse." The result is a book that I can recommend to both the seeking theists and the seeking nontheists in our meetings as a more thoughtful and therefore more educative companion to the work of mutual understanding.

Crane points out that many of the modern atheist critiques of religion assume that the core of religion consists in the positing of a supernatural being, an assumption on which other irrational and unwarranted claims are made, often as a result of tradition, and maintained by the indoctrination of youth and other means. I have always felt that this general stance is quite unrelated to my own experience of religion, and seems primarily designed as a convenient target for attack. The aim then seems to be that all you need to do to get people to abandon their irrational, Bronze-Age worldview is just to explain how irrational it is, and what bad consequences it has had.

Taking roughly the same approach as that of William James, Crane assumes that something much more complex and subtle is going on, and that any framing, necessary for the purposes of reflection and reasoning, must recognize that "religion" is not definable as a proposition, nor based on a "hypothesis," in the scientific sense. He explains his point of view:

This book ... differs from some recent atheist writings on religion in two ways. First, it is not about the truth of religious belief but about its meaning: what it means to believe in religious ideas, what it means for believers, and what it should mean for nonbelievers too.... Second, it differs from much recent atheism in the picture of religion it draws.... While I think there are both cosmological and moral elements in religious belief, I reject the reduction of religious belief to either of them, or even to their combination.... We will fail to understand this fundamental human phenomenon if we try to force it into these preconceived categories.

Still, Crane must define the grounds for his inquiry. He posits four key elements of the "religious impulse," and it's his discussion of these which I think would be very useful in personal reflection or meeting discussion:

1. Religion is systematic: Your religion involves a number of ideas, practices, attitudes, narratives, metaphors—a rich field of symbolic material—which form a fabric. Moreover, as Crane points out, most people's religious fabric provides resources for interpretation and revision to reflect new times, new challenges, new sensitivities to moral or other challenges.
2. Religion is practical: It is intended to shape one's life, decisions, and actions—first as a member of the group, and second in relation to those outside the group. I would say that this is a key place in which a religious person includes themselves in the religious narrative with which they identify.
3. Religion is an attempt to find meaning (and, I would add, a way to do so). He argues that, while "meaning" can come from a lot of different sources, the religious impulse is a holistic one, which might be paraphrased (here he quotes philosopher Thomas Nagel): "How can one bring into one's individual life a full recognition of one's relation to the universe as a whole?"

4. Religion appeals to the transcendent. Crane points out that this need not be (indeed often is not) an appeal to God, a god, nor any “supernatural being”; rather, “God” is an oft-used term that in fact merely labels the experience of that which transcends our own personal scope and in some sense embraces the whole. Crane argues (following Émile Durkheim) that for many religious people, “supernatural” is not relevant, since that implies some opposition or separation between the Transcendent and the Immanent—a tension Friends are well aware of experientially.

Taking these together, Crane suggests that “religion is the systematic, practical attempt to align oneself with the transcendent.” It is not an intellectual construct, but a whole-self response, which can have intellectual as well as emotional, esthetic, and ethical elements: heart, soul, strength, and mind (Mark 12:30).

He then goes about exploring the ramifications of this impulse for the construction of our identities, and then into an extended and plain-spoken consideration of the “case” made by many polemical atheists that wickedness (especially wars and similar violence) represent the outcomes of irrationality. And since in their analysis religion is inherently irrational, therefore it is an easy thing to demonstrate a causal link between religion and war. Crane points out, “The obvious facts are that reasonable, rational, educated, and knowledgeable people can be wicked and vicious; ignorant, irrational people can be good and kind. And vice versa.” I cannot reproduce all his argumentation here, but it is worth engaging wit—especially in light of traditional Quakerism’s assertions about the seeds of war, and the work of Christ to bring us off from the spirit out of which wars come.

In his final chapter, Crane advocates an honest toleration of religion by the non-religious, and vice versa—acknowledging that religion in its multifarious forms is a persistent feature of human life, while not privileging it, in the exchanges of civil society: “The idea that all views or opinions are worthy of respect is entirely false. What is closer to the truth, however, is that all people, rather than their opinions, are worthy of respect.” He concludes with “Any view about how atheists and theists should live together and interact must ultimately confront the fact that neither religion nor secularism is going to disappear.... we can hope for a kind of dialogue between those who hold very different views of reality.... [T]he first step must be for each side to gain an adequate understanding of the views of the other.”

In one of my favorite challenges from the Psalms, God says, “Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.” Crane’s accessible, philosophical inquiry represents a helpful companion in the construction of such dialogues, starting as it does from a commitment not to take it for granted that we know how others inhabit their world, to ask hard questions, and to listen as the answers come.

### Reading Suggestions From the Library Committee

1. Peter Brown & Geoffrey Garver: *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*. This small book with big ideas is in our very own Quaker library. “Peter G. Brown and Geoffrey Garver use the core Quaker principle of “right relationship”—respecting the integrity, resilience, and beauty of human and natural communities—as the foundation for a new economic model.” President Jimmy Carter says, “We are all stewards of the earth but often lack specific information and advice on what we can do personally and collectively. Right Relationship provides a wonderful guide for all of us.”
2. Michael Pollan: *How to Change Your Mind: What the New Science of Psychedelics Teaches Us About Consciousness, Dying, Addiction, Depression, and Transcendence*. Very readable. Pollen mixes latest science with his own experiences. This one, in our public library, has a waiting list.

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

August 28, 2018

I had pruned the yellow anise (*Illicium parviflorum*) on the entrance side of the the parking lot when Bill showed up for our walk. I was heading to the shed to get the garden cart to carry the branches away, but he got out his circular sled and fabric bucket, and saved me the walk. He suggested we start our walk with a look at the butterfly

On Saturday, October 13, starting at 9:00 am, we will be leading members of the local chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society on a walk through the Meetinghouse grounds. We hope that members of the meeting will want to join us to see what is happening on the lot,

milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), recently planted, which had been found by a monarch butterfly (he had seen the caterpillars). We saw the loss of leaves. There was no caterpillar; we looked for a chrysalis but didn't see any. We photographed a flower on a nearby plant which had survived the earlier mowing. We think it is Golden Tickseed (*Coreopsis tinctoria*). Then we headed down the drive, Bill with his sled full of yellow anise and me smoothing the way by sliding the cable that blocks the drive away from the path of the sled.



Monarch caterpillar (*Danaus plexippus*). A lean, mean, eating machine.



On our way to woods at the end of the drive, we stopped by one parking bay with a young tree bent over (a large branch had

fallen on it in a storm) that dangled flowers.

I encouraged Bill to take a picture since I did not recognize the tubular flowers,

but he recognized the plant as a familiar

nemeses, skunk vine (*Paederia foetida*), and I recognized it by its smell as he crushed wads of it together searching for the root.



Blossoms of Skunk vine (*Paederia foetida*). About 1/2 inch in diameter.

We left the load of yellow anise in the berms Bill is building to slow the stormwater run-off. We headed to the place where the ditch leaves Shir Shalom and enters our property. The water was

flowing smoothly down the ditch and the plants Bill has planted were doing well. Next we headed for the bank downstream of the confluence of the ditch and Royal Park creek. The grasses he planted were faring well, and the cassia-like (but native) Maryland wild sensitive plant (*Senna marilandica*) planted last year was blooming. We spotted a volunteer tropical sage (*Salvia coccinea*) by its red flower.

We continued roughly along the creek in an area where fallen trees have made us look for alternate paths to the point where the creek turns sharply south. The shape of the creek has changed with sand being pushed around by stormwater. We looked closely in the deeper water and were rewarded with the sight of some small fish, probably mosquito fish (*Gambusia affinis*).

We headed north and found an empty bucket, which we started loading with trash. After stepping over a large log in the old meeting for worship in nature area, I started pulling invasive chinaberry seedlings (*Melia azedarach*). We were surprised to see how many there were.

It was already past the cool of the morning when we had started, so I headed home, with Bill following sooner than he had planned due to the combined heat and humidity. We cooled down with glasses of water and lime juice bars. Do you take care of yourself, not working too hard, too long, or in adverse conditions when your goals can be met with further planning and later work? Do you keep yourself in shape and able to care for all around you?



Golden Tickseed (*Coreopsis tinctoria*)



Maryland wild sensitive plant (*Senna*)

**Queries for the Ninth Month:**

Do our lives reflect Quaker testimonies? ■ Are we open and responsive to continuing revelation, and do we incorporate it into our spiritual life? ■ Is our Quaker witness characterized by humility and a willingness to learn from others? ■ Do we recognize that the Spirit works in the world through us? ■ Does our witness lead us to the condition in which we “walk cheerfully over the earth answering that of God in everyone”? ■ Do we as a meeting try to share in the religious life of our wider community, availing ourselves of opportunities for worship and service with other local religious groups?

**Advices for the Ninth Month:**

Strive to keep true to the testimonies of integrity and simplicity. ■ Try to keep before us the essential truths, and test our life by them. ■ Endeavor to make our lives consistent with the high principles we profess. This involves the often-difficult discernment not only between good and evil but also between the better and the best. ■ Live adventurously. Let not failure discourage us. Witness so that others can perceive the presence of God within us.

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