

SEASONED GREETINGS

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF
ROANOKE MONTHLY MEETING

Spring 2020

*its been a long cold lonely winter
it feels like years since its been here*

HERE

the smiles returning to the faces

Comes

*I feel that ice is slowly melting
it seems like years since its been clear*

the SUN

SUN SUN SUN

here it comes

and I say its all right

(lyrics by George Harrison)

*From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the
LORD's name [is] to be praised. Psalm 113:3*

SPRING AT ROANOKE FRIENDS MEETING

MARCH, APRIL, MAY, JUNE

PLEASE NOTE THAT SCHEDULE CHANGES ARE CURRENTLY IN PLACE DUE TO THE CORONA VIRUS

EVERY SUNDAY: 10:30 AM: MEETING FOR WORSHIP

EVERY SUNDAY: FOLLOWING RISE OF WORSHIP: SNACKS AND FELLOWSHIP

FIRST SUNDAYS: 12 NOON: POTLUCK MEAL FOLLOWING RISE OF MEETING AT NOON

COLLECTION OF FOOD ITEMS FOR BACK PACK PROGRAM ON THESE SUNDAYS
(WHEN SCHOOL IS IN SESSION)

SECOND SUNDAYS: 12 NOON: ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DISCUSSIONS

THIRD SUNDAYS: 12 NOON, MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS

FOURTH SUNDAYS: 12 NOON: VARIED PROGRAMS OF INTEREST TO FRIENDS

FOURTH TUESDAYS: 7:00 UNTIL 8:00 PM: CHANTING AT THE MEETINGHOUSE)

SECOND WEDNESDAYS: 7:00 PM: EVENING WORSHIP. FOR MORE INFO: CONTACT GARY SANDMAN: garysandman@cox.net

EVERY THIRD SATURDAY: 12 NOON: PEACE VIGIL AT ROANOKE CITY MARKET BUILDINGS



OTHER EVENTS, AS THEY ARE SCHEDULED, WILL APPEAR ON THE MEETINGHOUSE CALENDAR AT THE MEETINGHOUSE, ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE AND ALSO WILL BE CIRCULATED VIA EMAILS



THE NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED 4 TIMES A YEAR, ON THE FIRST DAY OF EVERY SEASON.

THE SUMMER NEWSLETTER WILL BE PUBLISHED ON JUNE 21ST, THE FIRST DAY OF SUMMER.

PLEASE NOTE THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR THE SUMMER NEWSLETTER IS JUNE 10TH.

REGRETFULLY, SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED AFTER THAT DATE WILL NOT APPEAR IN THE WINTER NEWSLETTER.

QUERIES FOR SPRING

CONSIDERING THE PRESSURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DAILY LIFE, HOW DO I SET ASIDE TIME FOR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT?

HOW DO I SEEK DIVINE OR SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE IN MY LIFE?

WHAT SPIRITUAL PRACTICES NOURISH MY SPIRITUAL GROWTH::

MEDITATION, PRAYER, WORSHIP, SERVICE TO OTHERS?

WHAT SACRED OR INSPIRATIONAL WORKS ARE A SOURCE OF NEW LIGHT FOR ME?

IN WHAT WAYS DO I SHARE MY SPIRITUAL INSIGHTS WITH OTHERS?

HOW DO I RECEIVE SPIRITUAL INSIGHTS FROM OTHERS?

ALL AROUND THE MEETINGHOUSE...



CORONA VIRUS CONCERNS

Our clerks, Mike Heller and Tony Martin, have conferred with Ministry and Counsel, addressing concerns about Meeting during the present pandemic. Mike circulated the following information last week:

Due to corona virus concerns, we will not meet through the remainder of March.

March Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business has also been postponed as well as the Pendle Hill pamphlet discussion on March 29.

As an alternative to being together, we encourage everyone to observe the meeting time wherever you are, and to gather in spirit remotely.

Tony and I have been conferring with the Ministry and Counsel Committee, and we have been listening to the advice of Friends, particularly those with medical experience. To paraphrase an email from Ellen DeHaven,

Many of us are around people who have been exposed to COVID 19 who are unaware of that exposure, because of the low rate of testing in our area. We still don't have enough tests in Virginia to get accurate numbers of those with the illness. There are continuously people traveling through our area who have likely been exposed to this virus, as well.

As various Virginia boards of medicine are recommending, we should cancel public meetings that are not absolutely necessary. Our members and attenders are mostly in the high-risk category for COVID 19 illness.

We want to look back on this time with having taken an overabundance of caution rather than with regret.

We are looking into online alternatives for worshipping together. We welcome suggestions.

We are considering setting up a phone tree in order to check on how each person is doing. Let us know if you would like to be a part of a phone tree. If you would like a phone conversation, of course, please call someone.

UPDATE ON OUR FIRST VIRTUAL MEETING!

Friends participated in our first-ever online Meeting for Worship Sunday, March 15th, using Zoom.

Zoom is an online platform that enables people to connect virtually and be able to see and hear one another.

Patsy Martin set this up via an invitation that Friends with computers or smartphones could click on and connect.

This worked very well. There were a goodly number of Friends connecting, including Ruth Mabry in Cairo!

The Meeting for Worship was a rich one, with profound vocal ministries.

As Clerk Tony Martin said, "Although, as Marvin Gaye sang many years ago, 'Ain't nothin like the real thing', I've been surprised to discover that Spirit can be powerfully present in this way."

FURTHER INFO FROM MIKE HELLER - IMPORTANT, PLEASE READ

This Sunday we will have Quaker Worship through a Zoom call. We will have a practice Zoom session this Saturday at 10:00 a.m. (for 15-20 minutes). If you have never done Zoom before, a practice session is very helpful. I hope you can join us!

Below is the Zoom invitation for Saturday practice at 10:00 a.m. To connect online, click on the link under "Join Zoom Meeting" or copy the URL into a new tab. You may also phone in (audio only) using 669-900-6833 or any of the phone numbers below.

When a screen opens, click on "click here" or "open in your browser." (You do not need to "download & run Zoom.")

If prompted, enter your name. When the Zoom screen opens, click "join audio by computer."

On the Zoom screen bottom left, you'll need to use two icons -- "unmute" your microphone and "start video."

We're all learning to do this together! It takes a bit of patience.

Hope you can join us for an adventure in technology and Quaker worship!

IN MEMORY OF DAVID HENLY

*Roanoke Friends remember lovingly the life of David Henley,
a faithful attender and part of pur spritual community*

They that love beyond the world cannot be separated by it.

Death cannot kill what never dies. ~ Wm. Penn

The following is David's obituary, taken from the Roanoke Times:

David Andrew Henley, age 81, of Roanoke, passed away on Sunday, March 1, 2020, at his home. He proudly served his country in the United States Army and he graduated from VCU and Duquesne University. He was an avid collector of book and memorabilia on various subjects. He devoted his passion to the Thomas Paine Society. He was preceded in death by his parents, five sisters, and two brothers. Those left to cherish his memory are his loving wife of 54 years, Nancy Henley. Also, many loving nieces, nephews, and extended family and friends. A celebration of David's life will be held at a later date at the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin, Va. The family wishes to express their sincere gratitude for the kindness extended by the VA Medical Center, Salem, Va. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made in his name to the Roanoke Society of Friends and the Good Samaritan Hospice.

David was an articulate story-teller and poet. Nancy shares one of her favorite poems with us, we are thankful for her gift in this difficult time:

I Believe



I believe in my heart
that I love you
I know in my soul
that I care
and I feel it on my bones
if you leave I'll be alone
my whole body tells me
that we're meant to be together
forever

when i breathe the air you breathe
I feel better
when you lie close beside of me
nothing else matters
when you hold my hand
I feel like the worlds first man
And like Eve and Adam, we beget 'em
and start a new world of love together
forever



We remember David as a man of many and varied interests: story-telling, geneology, history are but a few. He endured his struggle with illness with strength and grace. From the writings of Thomas Paine comes a fitting quote:
"The greater the struggle, the more glorious the triumph."

Every blade in the field - every leaf in the forest -
lays down its life in its season as beautifully as it was taken up.
~ Henry David Thoreau

FROM ADVANCEMENT AND OUT REACH COMMITTEE

Realizing many neighbors walk past our Meeting House (often wondering what happens inside)

Advancement and Outreach Committee (with the aid of the Building and Grounds Committee) has installed a pamphlet holder near the sidewalk. Now passersby with questions can easily access information about our Quaker Meeting.

In our discussion, one member of the committee mentioned it would be like tabling 24/7 at our Meeting House location.

This initial installation will test our premise. If people actually take pamphlets, we hope to replace the “test display” with a more permanent version in the future.

The first Sunday the display was installed, a new visitor to the Meeting commented on it.

A cedar post was used so as not to add chemicals to the ground or harm the flowers. In time, the post will turn gray and look more like the building.

Our committee would like to hear YOUR ideas regarding Outreach.



IF A COLLECTION OF GEESE IS A GAGGLE, KITTENS CALLED A KINDLE, SHEEP, A FLOCK... WHAT MIGHT YOU CALL A COLLECTION OF QUAKERS?



Women's March for a Fierce Femine Future!
March 7, 2020 Roanoke VA

A Witness, perhaps. A Witness of Quakers!

Roanoke Friends assembled on March 7th in Elmwood Park, Roanoke, to join in the local Women's March, held in solidarity with Women's Marches across the US and abroad.

In this way we came together not only for women's rights but peace and human rights as well, as we bore witness to our Quaker testimonies.

A few friends are shown at left. Others were present including Gary Sandman, Charlie Finn, and Kim Millirones with Pax and Xan who tabled tirelessly all afternoon.

Thanks to Peter Chapman for taking the photo.

FROM NOMINATING COMMITTEE

July 1st marks the beginning of terms for committees.

The Nominating Committee is currently looking forward to the make-up of committees and their memberships.

Nominated persons will receive a first reading at May Meeting for Business followed by a second reading and approval at June Meeting for Business. Members will begin their terms on July 1st. Terms are 3 years duration but committee members may resign before, if desired.

We are a small Meeting so filling committees is often a challenge. Being on a committee is a wonderful way to become closer to your spiritual community! Please contact any member of the Nominating Committee (Judy, Letty or Jenny) if you have any interests or questions. We look forward to hearing from you!

Following are the committees of our Meeting, their members and brief descriptions of each:

Advancement and Outreach

Carries the message of Quakerism to the community. It lets people in the Roanoke area know about our Friends Meetings, where we meet, and encourages those who have visited us to visit again.

Current members: Kim Millirones Clerk, Gary Sandman, Joy Sylvester-Johnson, Patsy Martin (on leave)

Building and Grounds:

Coordinates care and maintenance of the Meetinghouse and grounds.

Current Members: Judy Marlow, clerk, Peter Chapman, Jenny Chapman, Floyd Daniels, Joyce Foote, Virginia Powell

Meetinghouse Management

Provides oversight of the use of the Meetinghouse. Ensures that existing policies are followed, recommends new policies as needed.

Current Members: Judy Marlow, Clerk, Herb Beskar, Letty Collins, Mike Heller,

Membership consists of clerks of other committees

Religious Education

Guides, coordinates/conducts formal religious education of the Meeting.

Current membership: Kim Millirones (clerk), Judy Mott, Xan Whitt. ex officio: Susan Adams

Hospitality

Ensures a welcoming environment for members, attenders and visitors. Arranges for end of meeting snacks to be available.

Sees that visitors are welcomed, helps plan special events and arranges for opening and closing of the Meetinghouse.

Current members: Ellen DeHaven (clerk), Kent Walton, Robert Foote, Mike Heller, Meade Eggleston, Larry Hendrick

Stewardship and Finance

Responsible for all financial activities of the meeting, provides quarterly reports, prepares the budget, provides committees with financial advice as needed.

Current members: Letty Collins (clerk), Otis Kenny, Floyd Daniels, Jeff Smith

Peace and social Justice

Bears witness to our testimonies by identifying and addressing needs locally and globally. Responsible for distributing 1/3 of our income in giving to the outside world.

Current members: Herb Beskar, (clerk), Jenny Chapna, Peter Chapman, Judy Mott, Tom Nasta, Joy Sylvester Johnson, Kent Walton,- Sue Williams, Emily Smith

OTHER POSITIONS INCLUDE

Blue Ridge Gathering Roanoke Coordinator

Our representative to the Blue Ridge Gathering Committee.

Current Representative: Charlie Finn

Librarian

Maintains the library

Current Librarian: Susan Adams

RECORDER:

Maintains Meeting records

This position is OPEN. *Recorder must be a member of the Meeting.*

Nominating Committee:

Brings forth names for positions and officers in the Meeting. Provides oversight of committees as well as committee descriptions)

Current Membership: Judy Marlow, (clerk), Jenny Chapman, Letty Collins, Patsy Martin (on leave)

Members of this committee must be members of Roanoke Monthly Meeting

Ministry and Counsel

Helps build and unite the Meeting in a shared spiritual life.

Current members: Mike Heller, Charlie Finn, Heidi Koring, Tony Martin, Sue Williams

Members of this committee must be members of Roanoke Monthly Meeting

ROANOKE ASYLUM-SEEKERS SUPPORT NETWORK

After a year of operation, our network of volunteers is doing the work our name suggests, supporting asylum-seekers living in the Roanoke area. We currently have approximately 70 volunteers providing supportive services to 12 families, comprising 25 adults and 26 minors. After entering the country and requesting asylum, a person has a year to legally apply for asylum. Thus we have gone through the full process with some of our earlier asylum-seekers. Of those who have had their cases heard by the immigration court, one person is in detention awaiting almost certain deportation, another is in the community with no stay on the deportation order. meaning that ICE could pick him up at any time. The hard reality is that, statistically, a person without legal counsel has a very slim possibility of gaining asylum, and a person with legal counsel has a less than 50% chance of asylum.

Our working model is to have mentors, volunteers who focus on a family, to assist them with their daily living needs. Initially there is the need to assist in finding a job, although the asylum-seekers are very resourceful and proactive in doing this. Finding an apartment is much more difficult for them with more assistance needed, and then enrolling the children in school. Coordination and transportation to food banks, clothing closets, medical and school appointments, trips to ICE appointments in Richmond take significant time by the mentors. Toward the second half of their legal year to apply for asylum, there is a significant need for financial assistance to sign with an attorney, and the need for transportation to Arlington for immigration court and to Charleston, W.Va. for finger prints. Bus service is not available for these two long trips, and thus volunteers or hired drivers are needed. Other volunteers are brought into the process when the mentors need assistance with daily living needs and the long trips.

The good news is that we now have non-profit status with plans to set up a checking account within a week. Checks can now be made out to the Roanoke Asylum-Seekers Support Network. I will continue to function as treasurer, address being: 2046 Knollwood Rd. S.W., Roanoke, Va. 24018. A 501C3 designation is obtained from the I.R.S. and is a more complicated and lengthy process. Several sources have told us that with last year's tax reform law, the benefits for the donor have been greatly reduced with most donors having little if any benefit. Further research is needed to determine if the work to obtain and maintain this status is worth the benefit achieved for the donor. Any input on this issue is welcome.

It is notable that of the twelve families with whom we are supporting, we met only two literally getting off the bus here in Roanoke. The others were already here, needing assistance but not knowing how to find it or even fearful of coming out of the shadows. We know that there are many more asylum-seekers needing our support. But to look for them and give our assistance, we need more volunteers and contributions. Especially needed are volunteers with some Spanish.

A big Thank You for all your support! Helping these asylum-seekers is our way to tell the world that this is who we are as a society, not the cruel immigration policies of our government. Spread the word; flyers are available if you have a good place to post.

Thanks and Take Care
Herb Beskar
540-989-6875



THINKING ABOUT RACE (APRIL 2020) INCLUSIVE QUAKERS

"I adore silence. However, as a Black woman, I am aware that for Black, Indigenous, and communities of color (among other marginalized groups), silence has been a form of oppression that cuts us off from sharing our voice and agency and more. A reframe for those quiet meetings would require us to explore questions about speech and silence. How do we teach about vocal ministry? What messages about silence and speech do we send to seasoned Friends and newcomers? How might silence inadvertently encourage greater distance among Friends? What is the right balance?"

"... Even as we gather for meeting for worship and offer Spirit-led vocal ministry, this too is within a broader societal context of structures, systems, and institutions that further oppression and racialization.

A reframe for Quakers would be to take a deeper exploration of our good intentions. How do our intentions affect others, either intentionally or unintentionally? How might we look deeper at our intentions and align them with our actions? When might our intentions not align with our values? What do we do individually and as a corporate body when this happens? How might our good intentions further support our implicit bias?"

~From "How to Be an Inclusive Quaker: The Unwritten Norms of Speech and Silence," by Valerie Brown, March 2020 Friends Journal, pp. 18- 20.

FROM RUTH MABRY:

Friends may remember Ruth Mabry who worshiped with us when she was in our area. She lives in Egypt now and joined us last week by Zoom, our virtual Meeting for Worship.

Here she tells us a bit about herself and also sends an article she wrote about the death of the Sultan of Oman:

I miss Quaker meetings terribly so I was delighted to hook up with all of you.

For the past 18 months, I have been in Cairo working in the WHO Regional Office in Cairo on strategic cross-cutting issues (Sustainable Development Goals, Gender, Equity and Human Rights) in the Office of the Regional Director working across all health programs and with partner agencies. I miss my family (in Oman and the US) terribly so to keep my spirits up, I sing in the Cairo Choral Society (until the school closures this week, we were working on Mozart's Requiem for our concert in May), do yoga, read, cross-stitch, and socialize with friends and colleagues. Although American by birth, I was raised in India and am married to an Omani; Oman has been home for 20+ years.

In Memoriam

As I write this, my adopted country, Oman, is mourning the passing of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said (1940 – 2020), the longest serving leader in the Arab world. During his near 50-year reign, the country emerged from isolation to a modern state. His greatest legacy is his peaceful international diplomacy, maintaining relations with a wide range of countries like Iran, Israel, the United States and Yemen. He once said, “we are committed to a foreign policy approach which supports justice, peace, security, tolerance and love”.

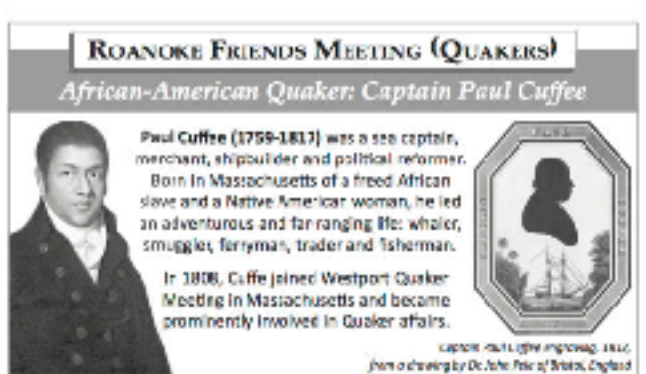
This policy of neutrality is the closest thing to the Quaker peace testimony I have seen in a public figure. It was demonstrated in the negotiations that lead to the Iran Peace deal and the release of hostages in Iran and Yemen as well as the decisions to not join neighbors in the intervention in Yemen or the embargo with Qatar. These actions speak louder than words and are reflected in everyday life.

Omanis from three Islamic traditions (Ibadhi, Sunni and Shiite) intermarry and pray together. Foreign workers, whether unskilled laborers or professionals, find a multicultural society for people of all faiths. Not surprisingly, visitors to this land of frankincense and myrrh are enamored by the warm hospitality and peaceful nature of Omani people.

This commitment to peace and reconciliation is visionary for a country in an embattled region. It is also important and necessary in these difficult times which is why Omanis were relieved to know that his successor, His Majesty Sultan Haithem bin Tariq, has it at the top of his agenda.

- Ruth Mabry

PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE: ANNUAL ROANOKE TRIBUNE AD



ROANOKE FRIENDS MEETING (QUAKERS)
African-American Quaker: Captain Paul Cuffee

Paul Cuffee (1759-1817) was a sea captain, merchant, shipbuilder and political reformer. Born in Massachusetts of a freed African slave and a Native American woman, he led an adventurous and far ranging life: whaler, smuggler, ferryman, trader and fisherman.

In 1808, Cuffee joined Westport Quaker Meeting in Massachusetts and became prominently involved in Quaker affairs.

Captain Paul Cuffee engraving, 1810, from a drawing by Dr. John Peck of Bristol, England

Each February, the Roanoke Tribune, the region's weekly African-American newspaper, devotes an edition to Black History Month. Local organizations, businesses, churches, politicians and individuals place ads for a double purpose: to give financial support to the Tribune and to highlight a particular piece of black history.

As has been our custom for the past several years, we placed an ad in the Tribune issue celebrating Black History Month. Thank you to Gary Sandman for providing the information and photo.

Like water, be gentle and strong. Be gentle enough to follow the natural paths of the earth, and strong enough to rise up and shape the world.

~ Brenda Peterson

QUAKER ARTISTS COLUMN by Gary Sandman

MILTON MAYER

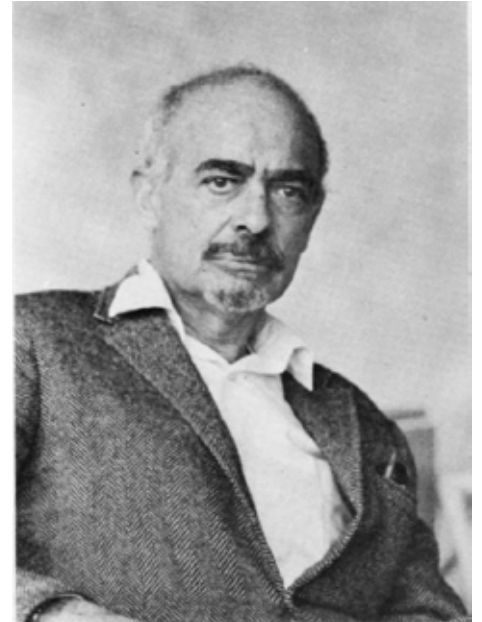
Milton Mayer (1908-1986) was an American journalist, author, teacher and activist. He was best-known for his column in the Progressive magazine. He was also a reporter for the Associated Press, the Chicago Evening Post and the Chicago American. His books included *They Thought They Were Free: The Germans, 1933-45*; *Man v. the State*; *Robert Maynard Hutchins: A Memoir*; and *Conscience and the Commonwealth*; his articles appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Friends Journal*, *Christian Century*, the *Nation* and *Life*. Mayer taught at the University of Chicago, the University of Massachusetts, the University of Louisville and William Penn College. He was a consultant to the Center for Democratic Studies. For his journalism he won the George Polk Memorial Award and the Benjamin Franklin Citation for Journalism.

Mayer was a life-long activist. He sought a moral revolution, rather than a political one. He focused especially on the threat that authority of any kind posed to the individual, calling for resistance to evil-doing the moment it was recognized. During World War Two he considered himself a conscientious objector. In 1963, after being denied a passport because he refused to sign a loyalty oath, he sued the U.S. government in the Supreme Court. He won the case, receiving the passport and striking down the law. In 1968, in response to the Vietnam War, he signed the "Writers and Editors War Tax Protest" pledge and became a war tax resister. He was also a member of the War Resisters League.

Mayer was raised in reform Judaism. In 1945, in Pittsburgh, he attended his first Friends Meeting. (He wrote an article about it called "Sit Down and Shut Up", noting that he made himself remain seated and listen to the ministry, rather than get up and start orating). Later he became a Friend while living in Germany. He said he liked Friends' acceptance of African-Americans; openness to everyone in ministry; rejection of sacraments; and work for peace. He was troubled though, by Friends' materialism and their failure to recognize people's potential for evil. He also feared that Quakers had become assimilated into society to the extent that they had no problems participating in war or racism. In line with his belief in resistance to authority, he also questioned Quaker organizations, such as *Friends Journal* and the American Friends Service Committee. He never rejected his Jewish background but rather blended it with Quakerism, calling himself "a Jewish Quaker by profession". Mayer was active with the American Friends Service Committee. Along with Bayard Rustin, A.J. Muste, Clarence Pickett and others, he belonged to the committee that wrote the AFSC pamphlet *Speak to Truth to Power*. He is credited with coming up with the title, a phrase which is now widely used. (Some scholars, however, attribute it to Rustin).

Milton Mayer has perhaps been forgotten these days. He should be better-known. Though I do not always agree with what he had to say, he remains a valuable voice among Friends.

~ Gary Sandman



Offerings From Charlie Finn

No Wonder Big Winds

It used to be that March began the year,
hence September through December's naming from
seven through ten.

It makes more sense that way
what with March marking life's resurrection,
vernal equinox,
birth of spring!

No wonder big winds
to blow out the old, blow in the new.
No wonder month of sweeping change
to sweep the new year in!

Charlie Finn has a new book out that he has entitled
"Mining for Gold: Climbing Mount Empathy and Reclaiming the Mystical."

The two words, empathy and mystical, are where the gold lies but it will take a little digging to uncover their treasure, and he presents wisdom figures past and present who assure us the digging is worth the effort.

Charlie has multiple copies (\$8 apiece) if any are interested. They can contact him at Meeting or at charles.c.finn@gmail.com.

From Sue Williams:

As I sit in silence this morning, reaching out to feel in unity with the Meeting and with others, the current crises kept biting at me. For some reason, I thought of what my friends Dekha Ibrahim Abdi said at Steve's funeral. It's a bit like Mother Teresa's: We are not called to be successful, we are called to be faithful. Dacha's thoughts remind me that we each have one life, which we use as we can, and pass everything on to those who follow. At this moment, that seems oddly consoling.

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH, RIGHT LIVELIHOOD AWARDS

Stockholm, Sweden, 7 December, 2007

Dekha Ibrahim Abdi

A few days ago, I was honored to receive the Right Livelihood Award. It is for me and those who are alive, as well as those who have passed on, with special mention to Kenyan Peace Worker Rose Barmasai, Somali Peace worker Issa Abdi Issa and Dr. Steve Williams (May Almighty GOD rest their souls in Peace) who lost their lives in the line of duty to bring peace. They are a reminder that the world we live in is harsh and violent, yet it has the capacity to be a nurturing and caring place for us.

Individuals are important in any process, as they create the energy and momentum to mobilise for peaceful change, to be the yeast that enables and facilitates the growth. As individuals, over a time we accumulate knowledge and experience and become the institutional memory of the society. How can this information, Knowledge, skills and accumulated wisdom be in the public sphere? I was in utter shock one day when I realised: what will happen if I die, what have I left behind? This was the beginning of seeing the importance of interesting more people in peace work.

As I and others continue to work for Peace in Kenya and other countries, and share our learning with the rest of the world, we are aware that the underlying issues of structural violence that contribute to violent conflict still remain unresolved. But we are also aware that we are re-defining family. I explained to my mullah that Steve had worked with me in many countries, he had known my children since they were born, he had carried them and played with them and read to them. The mullah said: Oh, he is your family. And for an hour we prayed together for Steve's soul. His soul is with us; his soul is at rest.

Building peace takes time. I have learnt to take each issue, understand it, and transform it. I have learnt to question what is seen or understood as normal. I have learnt the importance of valuing relationships, the importance of people and looking at their positive side, even in a context of intense violence.

It takes time to build sustainable peace in society. If you are lucky you see the fruits, but sometimes our role is to prepare the field and allow others to take it forward, leaving a heritage for the next generation.

In these present times
of disturbance and
uncertainty,
I take heart in one
of my favorite
poems by a favorite
author:
the poet, writer, farmer,
and activist
Wendell Berry.
I hope it resonates with
others.
~ Jenny

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron
feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.



CORONA VIRUS RESOURCES

Thanks to Patsy Martin for sharing these resources available from Friends General Conference. Obviously, the pandemic is a fluid and an ever-evolving situation.

Updates are available at fgcquaker.org.

FROM FGC:

We are aware of the growing concerns Friends have when it comes to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and we want to offer resources for you and your monthly meeting or church to help you plan ahead should your local community be impacted. Taking steps to safeguard each other's health meeting community



PREVENTION IN YOUR QUAKER COMMUNITY

We want to emphasize that if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms and/or have a fever, PLEASE DO NOT COME TO MEETING. Avoiding Quaker gatherings and Meeting for Worship when you feel sick, like adapting the way you greet each other, is an act of love. It is the most effective way to help create a safe space for individuals who face an increased risk of developing the virus, including those with respiratory illnesses and compromised immune systems.

INDIVIDUALS

Wash your hands THOROUGHLY AND FREQUENTLY.

Confirm that your monthly meeting or church is holding worship beforehand. Many Quaker communities are cancelling in-person worship or opting to organize virtual Meeting for Worship. Look for email messages from your meeting or church, check their social media channels (if they have them), or contact them directly. Contact information for Quaker meetings can be found via Quaker Finder.

Greet one another using means that do not involve handshakes, hugging, or kissing. Some Friends have adopted greeting alternatives like waving, or verbally saying "Peace be with you." (Keep scrolling for a resource with 14 greeting alternatives)

Avoid sharing food from the same plate and utensils, as well as beverages from the same container.

In addition to handwashing, use hand sanitizer. Bring your own travel size container.

Sneeze and cough into a tissue and dispose of it in a trashcan immediately. DO NOT REUSE IT!

Refrain from using handkerchiefs (unless you are planning to wash it immediately after use).

Keep calm and follow updates from FGC and/or the primary event organizer. Stress can weaken your immune system and make you vulnerable to viruses. Do your best to practice prevention in the present moment, and be flexible if an in-person event evolves into a virtual gathering.

MEETINGS

Print and display posters like this one from the CDC in multiple places in your meeting space or event.

Publicize virtual Meeting for Worship opportunities or cancellation of in-person worship via email/listerv, on social media, and on your website. This will help inform Friends in your meeting and newcomers who are considering visiting your meeting or church for the first time.

Provide large containers of hand sanitizer near entrances, bathrooms, and in dining areas (especially at the front of the potluck line).

Consider alternatives to shaking hands at the rise of meeting

HERE ARE SOME QUERIES TO HELP YOU AND YOUR QUAKER COMMUNITY ORGANIZE YOUR PLANNING (ADAPTED FROM THE WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES):

How can we reduce people's chances of contracting a virus while at our meeting?

How can we respond to those in the meeting who are sick, worried, experiencing economic need and/or grieving due to this outbreak?

How will our meeting adapt our operations if many people are ill, or health officials recommend restricting contact or shutting down public events entirely?

How will we help our community of Friends recover once the crisis is over?