

FRIENDS IN SAN ANTONIO

7052 North Vandiver at Eisenhower

July 2015

Visions of Creation Restored

[These quotations were assembled by James for the May 9 retreat. We repeat them here. Quotations of those known to be Friends are shown in italics.]

Now I was come up in spirit through the flaming sword, into the paradise of God. All things were new; and all the creation gave unto me another smell than before, beyond what words can utter. I know nothing but pureness, and innocency, and righteousness; being renewed into the image of God by Christ Jesus, to the state of Adam, which he was in before he fell. The creation was opened to me ...

George Fox, Journal, p. 97

It would go a great way to caution and direct people in the use of the world, that they were better studied and known in the Creation of it. For how could Man find the Confidence to abuse it, while they should see the Great Creator stare them in the face, in all and every part thereof?

William Penn, Some Fruits of Solitude, 1692

...As the mind was moved by an inward principle to love God as an invisible, incomprehensible Being, by the same principle it was moved to love him in all his manifestations in the visible world. That as by his breath the flame of life was kindled in all animal and sensible creatures, to say we love God as unseen and at the same time to exercise cruelty toward the least creature moving by his life or by life derived from him was a contradiction in itself.

John Woolman (1720-1772), Journal

The fullness of the godhead dwelt in every blade of grass.

Elias Hicks (1748-1830)

We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own—indeed to embrace the whole of creation in all its diversity, beauty

Calendar

5. Sunday
Potluck lunch at
11.30 a.m..

12. Sunday
Yearly Meeting and
Quarterly Meeting:
Planning and Sharing
Ideas for Program
Themes in 2016 and
2017

19. Sunday.....
Contemplative Sing-
ing, 9.00-9.45 am.
Meeting for Busi-
ness, 11.30.

26, Sunday
Forum – To be de-
termined

29. Wednesday
Midweek Meeting,
7.00, Gary's home.

and wonder. Wangari Maathai, Kenyan Environmental activist

All things are bound together. All things connect. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls also the children of the earth.

Chief Oren Lyons, Native American Faithkeeper

Those who think to win the world by doing something to it,
I see them come to grief. For the world is a sacred object.
Nothing is to be done to it. To do anything to it is to damage it. To seize it is to lose it
Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching,

“Our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors.” Jonas Salk *”“all we possess are the gifts of God to us; now in distributing it to others, we act as his stewards”*

John Woolman

“All things are connected. We did not weave the web of life. We are but a strand in it. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the people of the earth.” —Chief Seattle

“The world we are told was made especially for man—a presumption not supported by the facts . . . Why should man value himself as more than a small part of the one great unit of creation??”

John Muir

Only when we see that we are part of the totality of the planet, not a superior part with special privileges, can we work effectively to bring about an earth restored to wholeness.

Darkness is no less desirable than light. It is rather, a rich source of creativity... First there is the darkness of the earth in which the seeds wait all through the winter. Second, there is the darkness of the womb in which the young mammal grows into sufficient viability to be born and take its place on earth, as a separate being.... And third, there is the darkness of night, when the garish sun has gone down and the things of earth are blotted out, and we may glimpse the vastness of the universe of which we are part...

We say that God is the Inner Light, but I want to affirm also the Inner Darkness, and I do not mean desolation or evil, but a quiet waiting and creativity. "The darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

Elizabeth Watson, "Your God is Too Small", 1996

If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder without any such gift from the fairies, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in.

Rachel Carson The Sense of Wonder 1956



Personal News

We had a call from Sharon S in California. She says she is settling into life in Berkeley, which is “different.” She has gone to one of the Meetings there and plans to visit a Friends Church to see the differences. Both are very much involved in social issues. She also visited Pacific YM and found that very interesting, also involved in issues. She lives in a co-op near her children, whom she sees often. She follows our newsletter and she says “Hi!” to all of you Texans, saying she misses Texas and San Antonio.

But Texas is not the way Californians think it is and California is not the way Texans think it is!

Meredikth McGuire, a Friend we see seldom, was featured in the Express-News in June. She wrote an article on SAWS’ proposed rate structure, arguing that it is unfair to residents in the city. We shall not attempt to repeat her argument here but note that it is one in accordance with Friends testimonies.

Janet and Ken went to their granddaughter’s wedding in Minneapolis – to someone else’s granddaughter. The couple, both in white gowns, were so happy to be united.

Memorial

A memorial meeting for worship was held at the beginning of June for Sal, Michelle’s brother. About 20 people were present, half of them friends or family. They spoke movingly of his life, a life of working for nature conservation and social justice. He was actually fired by Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey for trying to form a clowns’ union. He moved to San Antonio some years ago and attended meeting. Then he stopped coming, but his presence was felt each week by the cookies he baked for us.

Michelle says, Sal’s world travels were to get to know varied people, yet, “compassionate care for his parents showed his true character.”

The Gathering

It is very likely that even as you read this the program of Friends General Conference’s national “Gathering” is taking place. This year, it is at Cullowhee, NC, July 5-11. The 2015 Theme is “Seeking Wholeness.” Friends who want to listen to the Bible Half Hour or view selected plenary evening events during the week of July 5th through 11th can do so by going to this website:

[http://www.fgcquaker.org/resources/recordings-2015-gathering.](http://www.fgcquaker.org/resources/recordings-2015-gathering)

Gretchen will be there. Who else?

Meeting for Business

Meeting for Business commenced with silence

Meeting was reminded that Quarterly Meeting is approaching and we will be responsible for hospitality. As treasurer, Bill explained that we have had yard work done more often but used less water due to rain. Basically 80% of the budget for property has been used this year.

Under Property, discussion was held about the low hanging branches over the walkway to the Meeting . The drainage project next the meetingroom has been finished.

Gretchen shared that she will be attending Friends General Meeting near Asheville during the first week of July. She sent a proposal and was asked to present information on the immigrant crisis, what our Meeting has done and what else can be done.

Meeting closed in silence.

Full Week!

This is the message we received from FCNL:

It's been a full week.

We've celebrated Supreme Court decisions on health care access, fair housing and equal treatment for same-sex couples seeking marriage. Some of us joined the crowds gathered in front of the Supreme Court (just a few blocks away from FCNL) to await the rulings.

It's also been a week of grappling with violence. As funerals begin for the Charleston shooting victims, more than 60 people are dead in France, Tunisia and Kuwait, the latest victims of another form of violent extremism.

In response to the deaths in Charleston, Diane Randall asks how we can act justly to take down the foundations of racial injustice, in our personal lives and in our institutions. Taking down the foundations of violent extremism requires that we not just respond to the symptoms but root out the causes and build peace in their place.

Other things we're following :

Iran: Opponents of a diplomatic agreement with Iran are spending millions to defeat it. All the more reason you should urge your senators to let diplomacy work.

Health care: A report released just days before the Supreme Court ruling shows that more people with low incomes have health insurance since the Affordable Care Act's passage.

Climate change will have a high cost, reports the EPA.

Solitary confinement: A photographer documents its effects on people's appearance.

Justice work matters: A reminder from our friends at Sojourners.

Sincerely,

Alicia McBride

Communications Director

LITANY FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY

Oh America, happy birthday. Happy remembering how we declared our independence from the world's most powerful rule.

Happy remembering how we proclaimed our freedom from the very idea of empire, when we declared, "all humans are equal," when we pronounced that governments get their powers from the consent of the governed, when we deemed it our right and duty to overthrow any rulers who impose on us empire and the ideas of empire.

Today, on this your birthday, we declare again our independence from empire and from the notions of empire;

from the notion that the need to control requires that some dominate others, we declare our independence,

from the belief that the rulers may use us to achieve their goals, we declare our independence, from the prejudice that nature equips men better than women to dominate, and some races and classes to dominate, we declare our independence,

from the assumption that imperial ends justify the use of any means, we declare our independence,

from the dogma that violence is redemptive, that violence is the only language enemies understand, we declare our independence.

from the doctrine that those with weapons, technology, wealth and the largest markets are the ones who deserve to survive, we declare our independence,

from the idolatry that money is the most important value, we declare our independence,

from the supposition that the production of material goods is more important than the production of healthy and normal people, or the preservation of neighborhoods and the building of community, we declare our independence,

from the conviction that property is sacred, and property ownership is an absolute right, we declare our independence,

from the inference that in organizations or nations great size is proof of power and value, we declare our independence,

from the opinion that institutions are more important than people, we declare our independence,

from the pomposity that there is no higher value or being or power than the state, that if there is a God, God is the protector and patron of the state, we declare our independence,

Happy birthday America and here is to the day when you will enjoy independence from your own empire.

* Adapted from "The Powers that Be" by Walter Wink. Tom Keene, July 4, 1994

Miscellany

Dzhokhar Tzarnaev, the younger Boston bomber, was finally cornered and captured, to face justice in the courts, when firing at the police, who fired back. He now faces death, by execution, which Friends oppose. What is Friends' approach to the use of guns by the police to quell, and arrest, him? Do Friends have a nonviolent way of doing this? Back in the early days of Philadelphia men were detained for unruly or illegal behavior. How? Rabbi Michael Lerner points out that "Police officers are better trained and equipped to respond violently than nonviolently . . ." That must be of concern to us, as is the multiplicity of guns throughout America. But how should police respond to gunfire?

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Jihadists bomb us. We bomb them. Hamas hurls rocket bombs into Israel. Israel bombs Gaza. What is the difference? The clearest difference is that the US, and Israel, have armies and airforces backed and funded, openly, by national law, and are defending themselves from prior jihadist attacks. What is the jihadist equivalent? They have no recognized government, budgetary and judicial systems, and the decision to attack is necessarily covertly made either by a secret organization or, often, by individuals emulating them, as in the case of the Boston Marathon. That decision is probably backed by accusations that Muslims have been attacked, or subjugated, as in European empires, in the past and in the need for oil, and that this situation is ongoing, backed now by US power. "National" boundaries demarcated by Europe in the Middle East after WWI are still internationally recognized, though they do not match cultural identities there. The state of Israel was created by a Western-dominated UN without consultation with existing residents. Anger at domination by "others" is soon transformed into righteous Islamic fury fueled by memories of a glorious past Caliphate. Just as American fury is fueled by 9-11 and the vision that the USA is morally unique. Who was damaged first?

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As many of you know, Scott Simon, who hosts NPR's "Weekend Edition" program on Saturday mornings, is a Friend. Scott has recently published a book, *UNFORGETTABLE: A Son, a Mother, and the Lessons of a Lifetime*, a tender account of "a mother's love for her son in the face of unavoidable loneliness." During his care of her he and she "tweeted" to each other, followed by his 1.2 million followers, providing them with "a bedside seat to a mutual farewell . . . emotionally entertaining and often instructive. She died and their twitter exchanges have become an unintended book. The reviewer in the *NYT* found it "a cocktail of humor, honesty, and compassion."

But, as a broadcasting host he may have to express opinions to stimulate thought, on

many subjects of public concern. What are his responsibilities there as a Friend? Dan Kovalik, in article in *Counterpunch*, an online newsletter, accuses him of hypocrisy, as a self-described Quaker, supporting Bush's invasion of Iraq (because it would save lives) and more recently arguing for military intervention in Syria for the same reason, though it did not in Iraq.

But, suppose he did this in the manner of a debating society, supporting a policy he did not believe in in order to promote discussion? [we have not heard the program.] Friends should develop empathy for others, but this requires placing ourselves in their position and "being" them. AVP may contain such a role-playing in its procedure. Does Judi Dench, a prominent actress and a Friend,, contravene Friends' testimony of truth-telling when she plays a role, a personality, which is not hers?

As a Quaker, she said "I think it informs everything I do ... I couldn't be without it". An actor may, if he or she enters the role very fully, give us a greater understanding of the problems others face and how they try to deal with them, but do it by pretense.

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William Kashatus has written a history, *Abraham Lincoln, the Quakers, and the Civil War*, showing that Lincoln sought inspiration from anti-war Quakers (he had Quaker ancestors.) He seems to have paid good attention to the Quaker delegations that met with him. Quakers contributed more to the Union cause than is apparent. Lincoln's thoughts on emancipation, conscientious objection, and the relief and education of freed slaves were affected.. Quaker schools for free blacks were models for the Reconstruction.

Our forebears were weighty people. Could we do the same? We probably need to attend the annual FGC Gatherings to get a better appreciation.

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"Nothing should be celebrated except God," he taught, leading to the rejection of saints and national "holy-days." Sound familiar? This was the teaching of Sheik Abdul-Wahhab, the founder of the official form of Islam in Saudi Arabia. That statement, taken from the *New York Times*, actually referred to the destruction of saints' tombs rather than mere rejection. Abdul-Wahhab stripped the current Islamic worship of accretions since the days of the Prophet.

Quakers, also, have rejected commemoration of saints and rejected holy days and names of days and months which commemorated Roman and Norse gods. But Quakers also emphasized nonviolence and Wahabism, so-called, embraced by revolutionaries, has become highly intolerant and exceedingly violent. Yet surely we should respect Abdul-Wahhab's original principles. His worship and ours may not seem too far apart.

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Antony's words in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*:

Blood and destruction shall be so in use  
And dreadful objects so familiar  
That mothers shall but smile when they behold  
Their infants quarter'd with the hands of war;  
All pity choked with custom of fell deeds:  
And Caesar's spirit, ranging for revenge,  
With Ate by his side come hot from hell,  
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice  
Cry 'Havoc,' and let slip the dogs of war;  
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth  
With carrion men, groaning for burial.

War varies over time in the weapons with which it is fought, but its effects seem to be much the same. Destruction now achieved by pressing a button required close human effort then. "Havoc" was a military command in the Middle Ages, directing the soldiery to rape and pillage. We now say events "play havoc," forgetting its original meaning, though havoc in that original sense is much too prevalent in the modern world. "Ate" was a fiend from Hell disguised as a beautiful woman. Men gotta be careful around those beautiful women!

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Yossi Kuperwasser, the former director general of Israel's Strategic Affairs Ministry, wrote that "while Obama and the optimists offer their critiques, Netanyahu and the realists will be on the ground, living with the consequences the optimists have wrought." He was writing of the hostility of Palestinian youth, not of Hamas and ISIS. We must understand this, yet question that military might rather than good neighborliness will be the ultimate protection for Israel.

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"Jerusalem" means "City of Peace." There is an Arabic equivalent which leads to the names of the city Dar Es Salaam and the country Brunei Darusalam, (there "Abode of Peace.") How sad that Jerusalem should so frequently have been a focus of war. The Israelites took it from others, Persians, and Alexander the Great took it. The Arabs conquered it. The Crusaders went there. Saladin conquered it. Britain took it. It lay on a crossroads of the Middle East and could not avoid wars of conquest, right up to the present. "I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night" (Isaiah 62:6). Not a place of peace. The "Peace" in its name is more a prayer than history.

## Friendly Folk

Rosemary Coffey had an article in March's *Friends Journal*, telling of a visit of the Friendly Folk Dancers to Congo. Remember them? They visited San Antonio a few years ago. Well, not them, exactly. The group obviously changes from tour to tour. In this case they included Kenyans and Congolese.

And the tour was very different, along dreadful roads, performing in villages to poverty-stricken children, and getting beaten up and robbed by gangs in a lawless environment. They danced dances from Palestine, Israel, Iraq, and the USA, and others from Romania, Hungary, Croatia, and Switzerland.

She describes children, "in rags, numbers of them with the protruding bellies and patches of light-colored hair that speak of *kwashiorkor*, a form of malnutrition caused by insufficient protein." She speaks also of other needs, books and laptops for schools, wheelbarrows for building projects, disposable materiel at a hospital, and support of a project forming an orchestra from young people of different tribes. African Friends are prominent in these.

And then she invites us to get in touch with her via <[rosemarycoffey@aol.com](mailto:rosemarycoffey@aol.com)> to know how we can help.

## Mother and son

The McClatchy Washington Bureau reported on June 8 that a teenage mother found bleeding from her wrist in the bathroom of a Texas family detention center was in the process of being deported. She is 19, held with her 4-year-old son since October and quietly taken from the Karnes County Residential Center after being kept four days under medical observation without being taken to a hospital or allowed to meet with an attorney,

Locally, we are hearing that Lilian is still here (June 9), but astonishingly to all of us, no one is being told where she is being held. We have a stay of removal pending, hoping we'll be able

to save this women. So far ICE has detained her 4 year old son not in the custody of his mother, for at least 4 days. Today women reported to us that the phones at Karnes were taken down and did not work until after Lilian and 2 others were removed.

## **Voltaire and Andrew Pitt**

The following statement about Friends' attitude toward war is from Friend Andrew Pitt's conversation with Voltaire. Voltaire's "Lettres Philosophiques," published in 1734, contains four letters quoting the Quakers, here translated by Joe Latham of Glasgow Meeting in Scotland:

"We never go to war. This is not because we fear death. On the contrary, we bless the moment that unites us with the Being of Beings. It is because we are neither wolves, tigers nor mastiffs, but Christian men.

"Our God, who has commanded us to love our enemies and to suffer without complaining, would not permit us to cross the seas to slaughter our brothers, just because murderers clothed in scarlet, wearing caps two feet high, enlist citizens by making a noise with two little sticks beating on a stretched ass's skin.

"When after a victory, all London is lit up with illuminations, and the sky is ablaze with fireworks, and the noise of thanksgiving is heard from bells, organs and cannons, then we groan in silence about the murders which caused the public rejoicing."

We have no idea of why English recruiters dressed in such a manner. The drum we recognize. Voltaire chose an eloquent Friend, to inquire about his religion, who also explained why Friends do not baptize nor circumcise.

## **Home for the Ill**

If you have a friend or family member who is mentlly ill and finding difficulty in making a home, you should know that there is an organization called "Home Comforts" dedicated to helping mentally ill people establish and maintain their own homes. It is at 311 S. St. Mary's St. #5T, or 5258 Evers Rd. SATX78238, tel. 517-3464; e-mail [evershomecomforts@yahoo.com](mailto:evershomecomforts@yahoo.com)

Meeting for Worship is held on Sunday at 10 a.m., followed by refreshments and often a Forum discussion at 11.30, usually lasting until about 12.45. Children are invited to join worship for the first fifteen minutes, after which they may go to join with the Young Friends program. Child care is available during Forum.

Clerk: Carol Balliet; e-mail: [clerk@saquakers.org](mailto:clerk@saquakers.org).

Newsletter Editor: Ken Southwood, (210)828-1513; e-mail: [jksouthwood@grandecom.net](mailto:jksouthwood@grandecom.net)

Website: <http://www.sanantonioquakers.org>

Donations may be made to Friends Meeting of San Antonio, P.O. Box 6127, San Antonio TX78209.

Meeting telephone for meeting times or to ask for other information: (210) 945-8456