

FRIENDS IN SAN ANTONIO

7052 North Vandiver at Eisenhower

August 2014

Friendly Formality

We are not formal, are we? At least, we do not have elaborate procedures which have to be followed, from prayerbook and priest. But, the Poleys (in their humorous “Friendly Anecdotes”) recount this of the time, 1827, when Friends in Philadelphia had divided into Hicksites and Orthodox and, moreover had Yearly Meetings for men and women separately. A woman Friend in Women’s Yearly Meeting:

“Expressed a concern to visit the Men’s Yearly Meeting, which was then held at Fourth and Green Streets. The meeting concurred in her concern. A small committee, presumably of two women Friends, was appointed to visit the Men’s Yearly Meeting and ascertain when they would receive her. As the two meetinghouses were several squares apart, Philadelphia Friends placed their carriages and coachmen at the service of such messengers. They rattled over the cobblestones and arrived at Fourth and Green.

The doorkeeper saw them approaching and announced to Men’s Yearly Meeting, ‘Women Friends in attendance!’ The women entered the meeting, took seats in the gallery and after suitable silence, one of them rose and said that a woman of Women’s Yearly Meeting wished to visit them in the spirit of ‘Gospel Love.’ After due deliberation, Men’s Yearly Meeting agreed to receive her at that time.

The two women messengers left the meeting, entered their carriage and rattled over the cobblestones to Fifth and Cherry Streets. After they had reported to Women’s Yearly Meeting, a committee of two was appointed to accompany the concerned woman Friend. They entered their carriage and again rattled over the cobblestones to Fourth and Green Streets. Again the doorkeeper saw their approach and stated to the meeting, ‘Women Friends in attendance!’ The three Friends entered the meeting, took seats in the top gallery and after a suitable pause, the concerned Friend took off her bonnet, handed it to one of her accompanying Friends, arose, and, after a solemn silence, delivered her sermon. This was it: ‘Jesus wept.’ She then sat down and after another weighty silence the three women Friends arose, left the meeting, entered their carriage, and rattled over the cobblestones to Fifth and Cherry Streets, with their mission completed. It was reported to have been an effective and impressive sermon.”

Calendar

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

10. Sunday
Forum, “Action Matters,” following George Lakey .

17. Sunday.....
Contemplative Singing, 9.00-9.45 am.
No Meeting for Business. Forum: “An Inquiry into Teachings on Love.” led by Suzanne

24, Sunday
No Forum .

27. Wednesday
Midweek Meeting, 7.00, Gary’s home.

31. Sunday
No Forum

The Clerk announced that there will be no meeting for business in August. She also said that the forming of a new Nomination Committee awaits other current appointments.

M&O Committee have met to discuss future needs and Val's work in Central America and recommended the admission of Suzanne into membership. This was approved with pleasure. The Treasurer's report, with no exceptional news, was approved.

Outreach recommended a change in the wording of the form completed by those applying to use the meetinghouse property. This was approved with changes.

Two applications were approved, for a PowerBreath Workshop for compassionate rehabilitation of military veterans. This was approved, being consistent with our Peace Testimony. And Suzanne's request to use the property to teach continuum movement classes was approved.: She will accept donations for the value of the class, to be given to Meeting.

Meeting approved the Property Committee recommendation for entering into a contract with Domingo Rangel of Rangel Painting, for preparation and painting of exterior surfaces, and to Tiger Services to repair a hole in the coil of the meetingroom's air conditioning unit. The committee is looking into other problems.

Meeting closed in silence.

Cielo Grande Quarterly Meeting

Please mark your calendars for Labor Day weekend, August 29-31, for the Cielo Grande Quarterly Meeting of Friends hosted by the Austin Meeting. Our region consists of Meetings in Texas and we hope all Meetings can be represented. Quarterly Meeting will run from Friday evening, Aug. 29 through Sunday, Aug. 31. The main Meetings will be on Saturday with activities for Young Friends of all ages, childcare will be provided for our youngest Friends. Friends will have opportunities to explore and discuss spirit-led social justice, Quaker process, and the intersections of spirit, witness, and our role in the world. A tentative focus of our Faith Practices discussion may be Care for Immigrant Children at the Border and in Detention Centers.

For comments, questions, or more information, please email: John Moorman jmskeptic2@gmail.com

A Difference of Perspective

Ruth tells us, from Village at Incarnate Word:

"While I was living in New York, I knew of the 14th Dalai Lama's exile into India. His book, The Universe in a Single Atom, is inspiring. He is one of my heroes, and I contribute to the International Campaign for Tibet. I resented the way he was treated by the Chinese government.

A few weeks ago, the son-in-law of a resident here at the Village, Dr. Brantly Womack of the University of Virginia, was visiting and gave a talk, "Tibet: Viewpoints and Views," in our Assembly room. "It had little to do with the Dalai Lama," I said to a new resident who attended the talk. (His name is Robert Washington, an Anglo, even to being heavy, but he has a Buddhist rosary. The first time I saw him, he was sitting at a table saying his beads.) He said, "Dr. Womack is a specialist on China and the Far East." For the first time, I learned about the very complex history of that area of the world.

From the internet I learned more. In 1914, the British annexed 9,000 sq. km. of southern Tibet to India. China declared it illegal. The 13th Dalai Lama announced, "We are a small, religious and independent nation." Earlier, in 1910, China had sent a militia to establish direct rule over Tibet. The 13th Dalai Lama had fled to India then. He returned to Lhasa, Tibet in 1913 when Tibet was de facto independent of Chinese control.

The following week at lunch the new resident gave me a book by the Dalai Lama, Towards the True Kinship of Faiths, How the world's religions can come together. When he inscribed the book to me, he wrote, "...from your friend, just a Tibetan Buddhist monk." So, now I have 2 Buddhist

friends.

It's amazing how my feelings have changed as I put the 14th Dalai Lama's history in a broader context. His treatment by the Chinese is part of an historical pattern, not personal to him. My sense of righteous indignation is gone, my admiration has increased, knowing what an advocate for world peace he continues to be. I do have a sense of resignation (history goes on and on). "When will we ever learn?"

Perspective is important!"

The Cowardice of Charlie

"The Americanization of Emily," a 1963 film starring James Garner as Lt. Cmdr. "Charlie" Madison, a cynic who idealizes cowardice as the answer to war, was shown recently on TCM. War has always been waged for idealistic reasons, Charlie says, and is supported by the "virtues" of heroism, courage, self-sacrifice, and patriotism, Do away with these and war become unthinkable, so his religion is cowardice. If everybody was like him the ongoing war, just approaching D-Day, would not exist. He has wangled the safe job of "dog-robber" for an admiral, getting him whatever he wants. But the admiral has a naval epiphany, and seeks to downgrade the importance of the army in the D-Day landings. His vision unexpectedly mobilizes Charlie to become "the Unknown Sailor," the first man to die on the beaches of Normandy, proving that the Army cannot outdo the Navy in the bravery and magnificence of that operation.

This leads to the unexpected portrayal of the horrors of that scene with the central humor of Charlie's desperate and deliberately cowardly scramble to avoid the honor of being the first to die there. Ducking fire and scrambling back towards the ship, he is shot by his superior, turns and faces the horror and disappears into the chaos. He is idealized in the American press but reappears a couple of days later among the wounded at an English port. Really, Charlie isn't a coward; not wanting to storm the beach at Normandy isn't cowardly, it's intelligent The film joins "Dr. Strangelove" and the later "MASH" as a critique of war as an alternative to diplomacy for the State Department.

Miscellany

Rabbi Michael Lerner's fervent prayer for Israel and Palestine: STOP ALL THE VIOLENCE, END THE OCCUPATION AND CREATE A LASTING PEACE AND A RECONCILIATION OF THE HEART.

He sees on both sides tonedeafness to the other's suffering and the most negative interpretation of the other's intentions, while recognizing the responsibility of the more powerful partner to take the first steps to peace. Meanwhile, Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein says, from a different viewpoint, "The people of Israel have been suffering under the weight of Hamas's bloodthirsty hatred for far too long now — and no end is in sight!" The death numbers currently are about 1,650 Palestinians to 66 Israelis.

Let us hope prayerfully for a reversion to sanity, even compassion, in the Holy Land. It is to be found, though in small amounts. The father of Naftali Fraenkel, one of the Israeli boys killed, has said, "There is no difference between Arab blood and Jewish blood. Murder is murder." And the father of Abu Kdeir, the Palestinian boy killed, said, "Whether Jew or Arab, who would accept that his son or daughter would be kidnapped and killed? I call on both sides to stop the bloodshed."

Guns elsewhere – right here. Rick Casey, in the Express-News, writes of his house being invaded by a man whom he managed to "shove out." The man, found by police, turned out to be on drugs, paranoid, believing he was being chased by murderers. And, Casey says, he got dozens of e-mails "accusing [him] of being less than a man for not shooting him." And one from the man's mother thanking him for not shooting her son.

~~~~~

While we oppose violence, we are thankfully sure that the police are always alert and ready to

respond wherever there is trouble. Sadly, when Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated on June 26 in 1914 there was no police force capable of stemming a burst of international conflict, World War One. During the era of empires, the British army was stretched across the world, backed by local forces such as the Indian Army, the Fijian Regiment, the Malay Regiment, the East African Rifles, etc. The latter were all called in to help quell the Communist uprising in Malaya. In the 70s, the Khmer Rouge government of Cambodia killed hundreds of thousands of their own citizens, with no international police force to prevent them., no imperial French government to intervene.

So it will come as no surprise to learn that, for General Odierno, Chief of Staff for the Army, peace, the state for which we Quakers hope and work, is merely Phase Zero, alternately the first of five phases or the last. The ones in between chart the rise and suppression of conflict.

## **Quakers and Transgenders**

A Quaker university in Oregon, George Fox University, has bumped into problems with a transgender student. For purposes of dorm housing, etc., how is a person to be defined, by anatomical characteristics or by self-identification? The student involved identifies as male but is anatomically female. He is typically male and is having testosterone therapy and quit the women's basketball team for that reason.

The State of Oregon agrees that he is male. In California a federal court ruled that a school must accept a student's self-defined gender. But traditionally gender has been defined by anatomy, and transgender persons thus complicate rules for use of dorm bathrooms and sharing of dorm rooms. Jayce, the student at Fox U, says he is attracted to women. Should he, in external appearance male, be required or allowed to use the women's bathroom? Fox U denies discriminating against him and says the university has been welcoming, but is jibbing at allowing him access to male facilities.

Forbes ranks George Fox among the top 10 "Best Religiously Affiliated Colleges" in the United States. Fox U derives from an evangelical tradition, but FGC-derived colleges, such as Swarthmore, face similar problems. Swarthmore is adopting gender neutral, single stall restrooms to avoid discrimination, but this is not everywhere possible. Such gender-neutral restrooms are what this Meeting did when building, but City code required otherwise; hence, the figures on our restroom doors. Friends, if you ignore these, who is going to complain?

But let us ponder, empathetically, the problems faced by transgender people. The rate of attempted suicide among them is nine times the national average, suggesting the stress that they experience..

## **Microcredit**

The modern idea of microcredit was begun in 1983 by Muhammad Yunus to give small loans at low-interest rates to the rural poor. Based on its success, he started the Grameen Bank to do this on a larger scale. The name Grameen is derived from the word gram which means "rural" or "village" in the Bengali language.

Because microcredit is recognized as a successful way to bring people out of poverty, Right Sharing of World Resources developed its own definition which is a little different than other microcredit organizations. Because its focus is on the redistribution of wealth in the world, RSWR does not give loans that are paid back to us. Rather RSWR gives grants to support women's groups in developing countries. The women in the group take loans from the RSWR grant to start their small businesses, but they pay the loan back to the group, not to RSWR. Then the group loans it out again to other women. In this way, the original gift is revolved many times to help the community.

You can find it at [www.rswr.org](http://www.rswr.org).

## Scott Keyes (“Polyester Rag,” 1987):

Herewith, Scott’s unexpected musings on what was, what ought to be, how things should be done, and what can be done about it, if only he had the energy.

### The Right Stuff

Out on the town  
I declare a pox  
On mashed potatoes  
Out of a box.

But when I’m home,  
You understand,  
To get them out of a box  
Is grand.

### Polyester Rag

I’ve thought a lot about it  
But never known what to say.  
It’s nice in the polyester,  
But oh! That romp in the hay!

### Civic-Minded

My papers are piled up  
All neatly in stacks  
And my cans are all flattened  
And loaded in sacks.

My bottles are sitting there  
Ready to go,  
All sizes and shapes  
Oh, a hundred or so.

But not to the landfill,  
Oh, no! No sirree!  
If they’re overloaded  
It won’t be by me:

I’m a proud ecological  
Damage preventer!  
Some day I’ll get to  
The recycling center!

Activist, ret.

Time, time, and energy,  
And a world that needs help,  
Needs help from me.

When I was young  
I had energy  
But didn't have time  
To look and see  
All the world's problems,  
Look and see  
To be indignant,  
To get angry.

Now I have time  
To look and see  
And I'm really indignant,  
Really angry.  
I know that the world  
Needs help from me  
But oh! Where is all  
That energy!

Scott was a regular winter visitor from Illinois until he died some years ago.

## **Modern Morality**

What is the greatest moral problem facing the world today? Is it the increasingly violent battle between religious extremists? The increase in the arming of governments and potential insurgents? The future use of robots (e.g., drones) to fight wars, making them appear less costly? The rise of China as the dominant power in the world, with the consequent shifting of alliances, involving potential conflicts? These all need attention to ensure peaceful processes.

But looming over all of these is a problem 100 years from now, but for which decisions have to be made now, the problem of global warming. If it continues without strong global action to stop/reduce the increase in 2120 the predictions are that, in the Pacific, Kiribati; Vanuatu; the Marshall Islands; Tuvalu and parts of Papua New Guinea, may be overcome within quite a short time. The government of Kiribati has bought land in Fiji for many of their population forced to move, but it will be insufficient. Though, in addition to those on small islands, millions of people will be forced off their land to move – where? Perhaps one hundred millions live on low land in the Ganges delta of Bangla Desh, the largest delta in the world, where it is estimated that about 10% of the land would be flooded if the sea level were to rise by as little as 1 m (3.28 ft). Low-lying areas of the coastal United States will be affected, particularly in Florida and Louisiana, but coastal areas on the East coast are vulnerable; Padre Island would almost disappear. Will San Antonio be ready for the refugees? Before that, the value of seafront properties will collapse. And now, is the needed action to be taken by governments showing the way, or by treaty agreement binding on all? The latter so far has failed, perhaps because governments are unsure.

## **Hanna**

Friend Hanna Newcombe, co-founder of Peace Research Abstracts and Peace Research Reviews in Canada, was the recipient of the 1997 Pearson Medal of Peace and was elected a member of the Order of Canada in 2007 for her work in peace research and international relations. Her childhood and early adolescence were in Prague. When she was 17, the Nazis marched into Prague, prompting her Jewish parents to emigrate with her to Canada in 1939. Professionally she was a chemist but ceased to work when having children. After meeting Norman Alcock, a physicist who had founded the Canadian Peace Research Institute, Hannah realized that she had found her calling: the use of

science to better understand the path to peace. She and her husband founded and published for many years two scholarly journals: Peace Research Abstracts and Peace Research Reviews. They also organized summer institutes on peace research at Grindstone Island, located in the Rideau Lakes, which was a center for peace education managed by the Canadian Friends Service Committee. She died in 2011. Ken and Janet knew her at Grindstone Island.

## Statues

A statue of Mahatma Gandhi is to be erected opposite the Parliament buildings in London. It will join statues of Winston Churchill, Abraham Lincoln and Nelson Mandela. They are honored as statesmen. Two of them did so peacefully, remarkably averting conflict. Lincoln and Churchill would surely have wished they could have done so too, but had to concentrate on victory. Gandhi, of course, led a non-violent campaign for independence from the nation now honoring him with a statue. Times change. What was it Churchill called him – “a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir of a type well known in the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the Vice-regal palace ...”

There is also a statue of Boudicca (Boadicea) there; she is described elsewhere as, “a little upset at having her lands taken from her by the Romans and her two daughters raped, so opted for affirmative action rather than the diplomatic approach.” She led a revolt against Roman rule in Britain, and is now honored by the English despite the fact that she was a pre-English heroine. The invading Angles, later, overran her descendants. What next, Sitting Bull on the Mall? Santa Anna at the Alamo Plaza?

## Peacebuilding En Las Americas

In her open letter, Val says:

It is no wonder to us, after hearing stories of violence from participants in our Alternatives to Violence Project--AVP and Community Based Trauma Healing workshops, that children and adolescents are fleeing these countries to escape violence and in the hope of finding some semblance of security.

While Friends Peace Teams' Peacebuilding en las Americas (PLA) hopes that the United States can provide safe sanctuary to these children and adolescents, we are aware that the US has not signed on to the UN Rights of the Child Convention, joining only Somalia and South Sudan in the group of member states not signing the document. Nevertheless, we hope that the U.S. can provide a safe humanitarian response.

In the midst of all this, PLA will continue our mission to actively work in those countries with local partners and communities to decrease violence and build communities where people can live peacefully.

It is sad to note that immigrants also have to be protected from violence within our country, from authorities and civilians alike. Please let lawmakers and public officials know that the violent treatment these children have received in some detention locations is both unacceptable and un-American.

Also please show support for public officials who call for kind and just treatment of the children, and support the many civilian offers and demonstrations of safe shelters for these young people.

We suggest that we all become more informed about the history of Central America, especially the US government and corporate involvement, and form relationships with people in our communities who are from Central America.

She writes of programs in California and New Mexico. In California there was a “Trail for Humanity” from Merced to Delano in support. Surely, when America is “graying,” we need these young people.

PLA will post information from its partners on its FriendsPeaceTeams.org website.

Meeting for Worship is held on Sunday at 10 a.m., followed by refreshments and 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