

FRIENDS IN SAN ANTONIO

7052 North Vandiver at Eisenhower

May 2015

One Meeting's Challenge

In February 2014, the Ugandan Parliament approved and President Yoweri Museveni signed a new law criminalizing homosexuality, with sentences up to and including life imprisonment. The law also makes “aiding and abetting” homosexuality a criminal offense, carrying a sentence of up to seven years in prison.

Since the law was passed, attacks on lesbians, gays, bisexual, and transgender people have increased, with large numbers of beatings and several murders. There have been many arrests, with few emerging from the jails; lawyers are afraid to take their cases as they might be seen as aiding and abetting homosexuality. LGBT people are being evicted summarily from their homes as landlords don't want to be known as harboring them. University students are being expelled, as are high school students, seminarians dismissed from theological colleges, people fired from their jobs.

LGBT people are being denied treatment in hospitals and clinics, and treatment for those with HIV discontinued. Church leaders are calling on parents to turn their own children in to the police. A 24-hour ‘Christian’ radio station, supported with funds from American evangelicals, has been reading the names of ‘known or suspected’ homosexuals, and calling for their castration or sterilization in prison.

Most recently, a new law has been introduced in the Uganda Parliament that would make it illegal for any non-governmental organization (such as Amnesty International or the Gates Foundation) to offer aid to LGBT individuals.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, have gone into hiding as best they can, or are trying to escape the country.

Several individuals in Uganda – both gay and straight – independently contacted members of Olympia Friends Meeting, asking for our assistance to help them make it possible for LGBT people under threat to leave Uganda. Some of these individuals are literally running for their lives.

Since then, this new ‘underground railroad’ in the manner of Quaker practice in the United States prior to the Civil War, has sprung up in

Calendar

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

9. Saturday
Silent Retreat, Meetinghouse, 9.30 a.m. - 3.30 p.m.

10. Sunday .
Forum – “White Privilege: Unpacking the Knapsack,” with Carol Balliet.

16, Saturday
Come to the Fair! 10.00 am – 1.00 pm.

17. Sunday.....
Contemplative Singing, 9.00-9.45 am.
Meeting for Business, 11.30.

24, Sunday
Forum – “White Privilege: How We Can Repack Our Knapsacks”

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

were only three people there, but that was enough.” Yes, it would be.

We’ve heard from Julia. She says “I’m fine. My work is especially satisfying these days.” You will remember that she works with children with speech difficulties. We miss her.

Do you remember Margaret M? She attended Meeting several years back. She became very ill in January but was improving by the end of February. She says she was difficult and uncooperative. She has now moved to Florida permanently,

We hear that Jude Filler, of Austin Meeting, has been accepted into hospital. She has been the sponsor of the San Antonio Carcinoid Cancer Support group, which has met in the Community Room for a couple of years. We hope to hear soon of her recovery.

Business Meeting

The April Meeting for Business commenced with words of Martin Luther King, Jr.: “The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.”

The clerk explained the format of a Memorial Meeting for Worship for Sal DiGiacomo, to be held in the meetingroom on Friday June 5. This is Environment Day, a day after hirthday, a cause Sal was deeply concerned about.

The treasurer gave his report, stressing the good relationship Meeting has had with our insurance company. Ther was no unusual activity in March except for a total annual contribution by one Friend. Expenses included the bench near the parking lot, and higher than usual grounds expenses due to the increased rain. Meeting accounts are in good shape.

The Outreach Committee report proposed the acceptance of an application by the Welcome Home Troops organization for use of the Meetinghouse on Sunday afternoons. Discussing the unusual request, it was explained that the organization is a local part of the International Association of Human Values, which offers programs to reduce stress and develop relationships, for human values to flourish. The application was approved. Two misunderstandings occurred with Celebration Circle, in each case a failure to inform us of proposed programs. These both involved a musical group, for which donations were invited, a violation of our denial of income-producing programs.

Changes to the Conditions of Use form were held over for seasoning. There was some discussion of what exactly we mean by “sponsorship” of a group by a Friend, which is defined by the change as full participation in the sponsored events. The M&O report covered some transfers of membership and donation of 50 backpacks by Santa Fe Meeting for immigrant children.

Meeting closed in silence.

Events

COME TO THE FAIR!

This exciting Meeting event is happening on Saturday, **May 16** from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m

The Quaker Meeting will host a collaboration of several humanitarian non-profit organizations whose goal it is to raise money for the relief of Central American women and children currently incarcerated in South Texas.

The Interfaith Welcome Coalition [funds for refugee travel] and RAICES [Refugee & Immigration Center Education & Legal Services bond fund] are participating. In addition, Friends Peace Teams will feature the sale of Guatemalan handicrafts in order to support their non-violence programs.

We hope to raise enough money to bond one family out of detention. This is the first combined effort of its kind to respond to the humanitarian disaster on our doorstep.

Friends can help by the following:

- Find items for a “Yard Sale” table [kitchen, home, etc. but please not clothes].
- Bake yummy things for the day, or that can be frozen in advance.
- Loaning a cover tent or large stable umbrella
- Volunteer to set up and/or staff a table.
- Take down tables and pack left over items for donation to Goodwill.
- If you wish to provide suitable goods or services, you may have a table and donate 10% of the proceeds to the immigrant aid funds.

Members of Meeting have been working with IWC and RAICES in visiting refugee families held at Karnes Detention Center, a for-profit facility run by GEO detention for Homeland Security. These groups provide pro bono legal, medical, and counseling services to the refugees.

This is our chance to build community, with each other, our neighbors and the humanitarian groups helping the refugee families.

So, Come to the Fair! Right here! Meet our neighbors, find Treasures, Saturday May 16, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., at the Meetinghouse (rain date, the following Saturday)

Yard Sale Items

Home Baked Goodies

Organic Vegetable Plants

Home Grown Citrus

Guatemalan Handicrafts

Books, Art

Hand made Jewelry

Herbal Healing soaps and salves

Children’s books, Toys, Games

Refreshments

Information Tables for Humanitarian Groups.

And there is a **Silent Retreat** at the meetinghouse on Saturday **May 9**, 9.30 a.m. - 3.30 p.m. Bring a sack (silent.) lunch. A suggested focus of meditation is the protection of all God’s things. E.g., John Woolman:

“ . . . as the mind was moved by 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.”

Interfaith Welcome Coalition

---- This is really wonderful news! A district court in California is inclined to order the end of detention for children. She gave the government 30 days to negotiate ---- More later!

Meeting joins with others in the Interfaith Welcome Coalition in local events. There is one on:

Friday **May 1** from 6 – 8 p.m at the First Presbyterian Church, 404 North Alamo:

Community Dinner and Education Event about the **Detention of Mothers and Children in Texas**

Detention of children on the sole basis of their migration status of that or their parents

is a violation of children's rights, is never in their best interests, and is not justifiable.

- UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

In Karnes Family Detention Center hundreds of women and children are detained and labeled as threats to national security. In Dilley, Texas, the family detention center will operate at a full capacity of 2,400 beds.

At this interfaith dinner we will hear the stories of the women and children, learn from people who have been fighting tirelessly to end their unjust and immoral detention, and learn about what we can do to stop it.

Individual tickets are \$15; A table of 8 can be sponsored for \$120. To buy tickets for the dinner, please go to <http://tiny.cc/1May2015>

For Questions, email Jorge or Traci:

Jorge.Montiel@gmail.com

smith.traci@gmail.com

And then:

Saturday **May 2** at 11 a.m.

Vigil/rally in Dilly, Texas at the Dilly Detention Center

There are several ways to get there:

1. You can drive yourself.

2. Lori Segura is taking a car down and she is looking for folks to ride with her. Contact

Lori at lorisegura@gmail.com

3. Also a bus is leaving from First Presbyterian Church downtown at 9 am. Bus tickets are \$15.00 per person. You can purchase bus tickets at

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/faith-in-action-go-to-dilley-to-endfamilydetention-tickets-16422741863>

Contact David (deardavid14@hotmail.com) if you want to take the bus.

Those going on the bus will meet at First Presbyterian Church at 8:45, have a short prayer and instructions about the day, and then, after the event, return to First Presbyterian Church by 5:00 p.m.

EVERYONE who is going: Please plan to bring a sack lunch, water, and comfortable walking shoes.

For more information about the vigil and rally please contact Traci (see above):

And here are other ways to help the Coalition (email SanAntonioWelcome@gmail.com):

* **Overnight Housing** (Spanish speaking families.)

* Buy something from the **Amazon Wishlist**.

* Help **organize donations** and assemble backpacks.

* **Detention Visitation** Visit refugees at Karnes. Talk to Paul Pfeifer, mondomofo@aol.com, about this.

* **Advocacy – Host a gathering** in your home, participate in Direct Action against Family Detention. Talk to Jorge Montiel about your ideas, jorge.montiel@gmail.com.

A recent Express-News contained a report that two little Guatemalan girls, 10 and 8 years old, with no family members, were among a group of would-be immigrants crossing the border. What horror must have led parents even to think of such an uncertain journey for their young daughters? And what would be their fate if returned across the border?

Also, on Saturday, May 9, at 8am-4:30PM:, San Antonio Pax Christi, a Catholic peace organization, will be holding their annual convention in San Antonio, at the Oblate School of

Theology. The theme is "Sowing Seeds of Peace" -- and it's not just for Catholics! Find out more and register (only \$15, including lunch) at <http://www.pax christisa org/>. PeaceCENTER co-founder Rosalyn Collier will be receiving the Pax Christi Texas Teacher of Peace Award.

Quakerbooks

The Quaker bookstore will move to Pendle Hill beginning Monday, April 13. Customer service will be available 9:30 am- 4:30 pm, Thursday through Monday beginning Monday, April 13.. To reach QuakerBooks of FGC, use the same phone number: 1-800-966- 4556 (toll-free) or 215-561-1700 x3044 (local). The QuakerBooks website will continue to be available 24/7.

"We think you'll love our selection of books, pamphlets, CDs and tracts on a wide range of Quaker topics as well as books on general spirituality, activism and for children. If you wish to renew your Pendle Hill Pamphlet subscription, please call Pendle Hill at 610-566- 4507 ext. 2. You can order Pendle Hill pamphlets from both the Pendle Hill and QuakerBooks websites."

Oppression Of American Indians

Since Christmas Day nine young people have committed suicide on Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, population 28,000. On Christmas Day, a 15-year-old Lakota girl took her own life. Soon afterward, a boy, just 14, took his. Since then, a young man and six more girls, one as young as 12,

The rate of suicide among Native youth in the United States is more than three times the national average. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, Ph.D., says, "Historical trauma is cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma. Native Americans have, for over 500 years, endured physical, emotional, social and spiritual genocide from European and American colonialist policy."

Parts of this are alcohol and drug abuse, poverty and depression. We remember visiting Pine Ridge and seeing a rural slum. Quakers have been at work there, but clearly this is quite inadequate.

Miscellany

Do you have relatives or friends who are mentally ill and need a place to live? Get in touch with evershomecomforts@yahoo.com. That is the address of Home Comforts, an organization devoted to helping the mentally ill establish and maintain their own homes.

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40 cents on your income tax dollar goes to the Pentagon. Just apply that to your taxes for last year Just under half. How much might be allocated to what we might call legitimate defense, or interfering/-vening in foreign conflicts, and in overweening power?

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1.6 million young people in America are struggling with homelessness. This, according to a program on youth homelessness on PBS.

And from FCNL: More black men are imprisoned in the U.S. today than were enslaved in 1850. And black people comprise 12% of drug users but 38% of those arrested for drug offences. African-Americans serve nearly as much time in prison for non-violent drug offences as whites do for violent offences.

Do we take two steps backwards for every step forwards? The United States is the world leader in incarceration with 2.2 million people currently in the nation's jails or prisons, 5 times as many as 30 years ago. One in three black men will spend time in prison or jail at some time in his life.

Governor Pence of Indiana has signed a law allowing businesses to refuse service for religious reasons. A writer, stophurtingamerica, has penned a satirical response online, by a supposed businessman who will now, with biblical support, refuse service to:

1. Divorcees.
2. Anyone who has ever read their horoscope or called a psychic hotline
3. Anyone with a tattoo.
4. Anyone born illegitimately or, back to ten generations, is descended from someone born illegitimately.
5. Anyone who makes a practice of praying aloud, or in public.
6. Any woman with braided hair or gold jewelry.
7. Any man who has ever, by accident or not, had his genitals damaged.
8. Kids if they have a bowl cut.

He supports each of these by biblical references and New Testament defenses of Old Testament prohibitions. Nothing personal, he says, just "love the sinner but hate the sin," and all, but "I simply can't serve anyone who would blatantly disregard God's sacred law in such a fashion."
from Daily Kos, online.

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One for Bo: A Buddhist monk walks up to the hot dog truck and says, "Make me one with everything." The monk pays with a twenty dollar bill, and the vendor sticks it into the cash box before handing him the hot dog. "Don't I get change?" asks the monk, puzzled. The hot dog vendor replies: "You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

From the PeaceCENTER

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The Quakers in Kenya, like most Christian denominations there, are homophobic. Gay or lesbian persons are expelled from the church which is the official policy. In April 2012 there was a world gathering of Quakers in Kenya. After the issue of homosexuality was raised and discussed at the gathering, it was clear that in fact many Kenyan Quakers did not agree with the official Quaker stance, which is promoted mostly by the male leadership in Nairobi. Some said that gays/lesbians should not be pushed out of the church but should be allowed to attend. Of course, if LGBTI people remained in the church, the Quaker congregations would soon learn how to tolerate them which in time would lead to the dialogue that is necessary in the church that is already happening in the larger society.
David Zarembka

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How did the name "Quaker" come to stick so firmly? How many people out there think of us as "Friends?" Originally a term of abuse, poking fun at the way Friends "quaked" in the sight of the Lord. Other, respectable people, didn't quake in church. They sang hymns! And the word "Friend" was a widely used term for acquaintances. As Quakers we are distinguishable. As Friends we are not.

## SCYM

Val, Clerk of South Central Yearly Meeting, sends us the following:

" Hello everyone,

Here are two resources from the Quaker UN Office that relate to issues that were discussed at South Central Yearly Meeting:

1. SCYM signed on to the Quaker Statement of Conscience Regarding Climate Change-- here's the original call for this.

<http://www.quno.org/sites/default/files/resources/QUNO%20Call%20to%20Conscience.pdf>

(We published the Statement itself in our March newsletter. What are our collective

and individual responsibilities?)

2. Also SCYM continued its concern regarding Mass Incarceration, and discussed the effects on women (Oklahoma incarcerates the highest rate of women in the US) and their families. I found this statement on the QUNO site: [http://www.quno.org /re source / 2015/ 4/ children-incarcerated - parents -international -standards-and-guidance](http://www.quno.org/re%20source%20/2015/4/children-incarcerated-parents-international-standards-and-guidance)

FYI: SCYM also signed a letter from New York YM asking for a compassionate release of Leonard Peltier, a Native American leader who has been imprisoned since the 1970s and is now elderly and quite ill.

Also, over \$1000 was donated to the Friends New Underground Railroad (see above)

## **Nonviolent Communication**

A writer, Thom Bond, who taught Nonviolent Communication, has developed an online course in Compassionate Living. It has become popular. "It has changed my life radically, I'm still amazed. Relationships that were stuck in old patterns have become fluid, caring and loving. Perhaps, at sixty-six, to find a new love with my husband, a warmth and closeness with my children, it all seems like a miracle."

Through weekly email messages, the course imparts concepts, stories and practices that empower us to be more compassionate. "We learn clear practices that help us and those around us, have more understanding and well- being in our lives (see sample weeks below). The lessons explain and demonstrate ways of thinking, speaking and acting that allow us to get through conflict without hurting or hating."

The 2014 Compassion Course (that is in progress) has over 3,000 participants from over 80 countries. For four years running, this course has proven to be "life-changing", "fun" and "transformational"

So, if you lack enough compassion or know somebody who has problems relating to other people, and if you have questions or need assistance for any other reason, call 646.201.9226 or email [coursecoordinator@ nycnvc. org](mailto:coursecoordinator@nycnvc.org). There seems to be no website. But the Zen Cruise website says:

Thom's passion, experience, and knowledge of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) combine to create a practical, understandable, humorous, and potentially profound, approach for learning and integrating the skills of peacemaking.

### The Query for May

*Do I live simply, mindful of how my life affects the Earth and its resources and all the people that depend on them?*

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.

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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