

# FRIENDS IN SAN ANTONIO

7052 North Vandiver at Eisenhower

## February 2017

### Standing Rock January 19, 2017:

Dear Friends, we continue to learn about and be involved with water protectors at Standing Rock. Over 600 protesters arrested, 16 this last Monday and Tuesday. Young to old people here, majority Native American, but young here from across US and several nations. I had forgotten a bit how big a heart young people can have. The camps (there are three) are small communities with health, waste management, wood supply, kitchens, etc set up and staffed in each community. There is a veterinarian technician in the Oceti Sakowan camp and this medic team sees most of the sick animals including ponies that run free through the camp. Have not examined a horse yet but have examined and treated sick pets. Delivered veterinary supplies that I gathered in Colorado from a very supportive DVM. The Oceti Sakowan camp even has a midwife.

Huge snow year and the small Rose Bud Camp and the larger Oceti Sakowan camp are in the flood plan of the Cannonball River. Campers are packing up and, hopefully, will consolidate in a camp on higher ground, although, we see very little evidence of the high camp being readied. Also, the tribe does not want waste from these camps flooding into the Missouri River. The hope of the Standing Rock Tribe and many of the protesters is that the next camp might be a permanent camp with an eco-sustainable future. We have seen the plans and talked to people involved. Here is their hope statement: "A powerful unique, spiritual gathering place honoring wisdom of Lakota/Dakota/Nakota lifeways and indigenous cultural practices as a guiding force for people on Unci Maka (Grandmother Earth) who seek to find a sustainable balance of water, food, shelter, energy and economy in ways dramatically less dependent on fossil fuels." This is a very long range plan and still much preliminary work to do.

Lee and I have been disturbed by one aspect the camps. The large Oceti camp and Rosebud camp seem to have no leadership at this time. The tribe asked the camps to break up when the very heavy snows came. Talking to the elders it seems that the leaders had left, leaving a vacuum.

### Calendar

**5. Sunday .....**  
**9.00 Spiritual Deepening. Potluck lunch 11.30..**

**12. Sunday .....**  
**.9.00 Spiritual Deepening.**  
**Forum: Sustainable Energy Options for the Meetinghouse**

**19. Sunday.....**  
**Meeting for Business, 11.30.**

**22. Wednesday .....**  
**Midweek Meeting, 7.00, Gary's home.**

**26, Sunday .....**  
**Forum – M&O, to be announced**

We hear the young people talking about going on actions or saying things like, “we were up late last night, we went on three actions.” The actions are defiant action at the bridge that separated the Native Americans from the Dakota Access Oil Pipeline. The closing of this bridge by the state of North Dakota has placed a real hardship on the tribe as for many districts on the reservation this bridge is the most direct route to Mandan and Bismarck where major medical help can be provided, diabetes being a major problem on the reservation. The elders and the tribal council never authorized these actions and felt the actions were hurting their efforts for a peaceful, prayerful protest. The young people say it is defiance in that the pipe line company and the State of North Dakota restrict their right to demonstrate. We cannot know all the politics of this situation. We have helped some Standing Rock Sioux dig their tents out of the snow in anticipation of a move. With donations from our Friends Meeting in San Antonio, we have bought food where we saw a need. We bought bins for the medical groups in each of the low camps. These bins are for packing up medical supplies for the anticipated move out of the flood plan.

The good news: “The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe applauded the federal government Wednesday (Jan 18) for beginning additional environmental review, while some North Dakota leaders called the process a delay tactic that will likely be rescinded by the Trump administration. The Department of the Army published a notice Wednesday to begin gathering information to prepare an environmental impact statement for the pipeline crossing at Lake Oahe, the site of the recent protests.” (The Bismarck Tribune January 19<sup>th</sup>) Lee says beginning the formal process for the EIS and having notice published in the National Registry severely limits the ability for the Trump administration to stop the EIS. But, of course they will try. Lake Oahe is the dammed up waters of the Missouri River, The Cannonball River and the Grand River.

Lee and I are in complete sympathy with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The pipeline does disrupt sacred ground to the Standing Rock Sioux and will most certainly in time or the near future threaten their drinking water both subsurface and surface due to leaks. Earlier in the week the Bismarck Tribune reported 201 pipeline leaks in North Dakota since 2010. Currently, there is a large leak in an oil pipeline north of Standing Rock. This was brought up in a tribal meeting today, but I need the reference. This pipeline would go beneath the Oahe Lake/Missouri River, and tribal people wonder how they would ever know there was a leak before it was too late. Also, treaty rights have been broken with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the Army Corp of Engineers will also review these rights in their EIS.

Yesterday Lee and I attended a Tribal Council meeting on the meaning of the legal battles won thus far and the legal battles to come. Earth Justice Lawyers from Seattle explained the meaning of the legal victories thus far and the next legal battle which will be heard by Judge Boesberg in Washington DC. He ruled in favor of the tribe in his most recent decision. This next hearing the Dakota Access Pipeline will plead that the Army Corp of Engineers has already done their study and that all permits have been granted for the DAPL to move forward. The lawyers for Earth Justice say this is not the case and feel the tribe should also win this round. The council then moved for an executive council meeting with the Earth Justice Lawyers to discuss the legal strategy if the Trump administration moves against them. The council room was cleared for this meeting. No president in the past has tried to rescind a judge’s order once it was placed in the National Registry. Lee says that to try to do so will bring on its own legal battle. If the Army Corp of Engineers moves forward as they are now ordered to do so (the Army Corp of Engineers favors the new study) then a full study could take up to two years.

When the council opened again to the public, we heard concerns by the tribal districts that the camps were now deteriorating and starting to hurt the image of the protest as a peaceful, prayerful movement, an image which has garnered good will toward the tribe and its cause world-wide. In short, after many testimonies, the Tribe voted unanimously to close the lower camps in the floodplain. We will report more on this later. David



## Personal News

James G is experiencing much stress at this time. Please hold him in the Light. We believe Fabian has gone to New Mexico after visiting his family in Mexico. We received a New Year card from Catherine S, who says she thinks of us often.

Gary told us of meeting with a refugee from Guinea, a Muslim Fulani. After the fall of the dictator Nguema, he had welcomed democracy but supported an opposition party, The new government was not democratic either and eventually he was seized, tortured for three days and held for another three weeks until his father was able to raise the funds to have him released.

From Africa he was able to get to Brazil. Since then he had managed to travel, destitute, through South and Central America to Texas. Gary asked him why he wanted to come this far, to the USA. "Because it is a democracy," he replied.

David and Lee, as you see above, have gone to Standing Rock to accompany Water Protectors through the week around the inauguration of the President. They appreciate the donations sent by Friends and the Meeting to help them provide support directly.

They also suggest that Friends can support the Water Protectors' struggle by sending funds to Friends Committee for National Legislation (FCNL) which plans to bring some young people from Standing Rock for Lobby Days in March. If Friends want to support this effort, please include "Support for youth from Standing Rock to participate in Lobby Days" with their donations.

And now, the president has decreed that the pipelines will continue.

Marian has visited Cuba in January. She says that the Cuban government stands to make a deal of money on tourists, who get good tours, with good food, in all of the right places. The old cars and the old buildings in central Havana are lovely. She was not able to talk to ordinary Cubans though. Bu the guide was extremely good.

Ken is on an Illinois Meeting email list. So, therefrom, he received a message from Pam W inviting him to consider "a wonderful experience for any young music students, 10-18," at Friends Music camp at Earlham College, on July 9 to August 6.

## SAVE the DATE!

South Central Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions will be on April 13-16, 2017, at Greene Family Camp!

The theme for this year's sessions is Climate Change, Environmental Racism, Friends' Faith and Practice--What's the Connection? Register at <http://www.scym.org/help/register>.

Stay tuned to the SCYM website as new information will be coming out soon! Organizers are needed. SCYM encourages workshops related to the theme, but workshops on more general topics are equally welcome. See the website for more information on how to submit a proposal. Deadline is February 10, so don't delay!

## Business Meeting

Meeting for Business commenced with an advice of Faith and Practice of PYM:

*By maintaining a spirit of worship throughout the [business] meeting, participants nurture their openness to the leadings of the Spirit, and its gifts of trust, humility, compassion, and courage.*

For the Treasurer, Pat reported that our balance had improved in December but that the year ended in the red due to HVAC repairs. She presented the 2017 Budget, which was approved, slightly larger than that for 2016.

M&O reported that they did not feel that a threshing session was needed concerning security needs. This was questioned. They presented a State of the Meeting Report for 2016. There were several comments, which were referred back to the committee, but the report was well-received.

Peace and Social Concerns Committee brought the following minute for meeting to consider:

“Friends Meeting of San Antonio opposes the Women’s Protection Act (also known as the Bathroom Bill) proposed in the Texas legislature for this session, and authorizes our co-clerks to write to local and state representatives and to the editor of the San Antonio Express-News expressing our opposition.”

The minute was approved. Appointment of Stephen S to the Property Committee was approved. Gretchen provided an account of a visit to Senator Cornyn’s office to express Friends’ concerns.

Thereafter, Meeting closed in silence.

## **Bill S. at FCNL**

I first attended the Annual Meeting of Friends Committee on National Legislation in 1989, memorable because I saw the headline “Berlin Wall Falls” in a newspaper vending machine as I crossed in the snow to the cafeteria at the National 4-H Conference Center in Chevy Chase, MD. FCNL was small, 2 lobbyists and 1 Executive Secretary/lobbyist, each with a just-out-of-college intern, and a business office support staff, including a fund-raiser or two. Oh, there were a couple of locally-resident Quakers who volunteered. FCNL occupied a building cobbled together of two Civil War-era buildings, decrepit, but oh what a location for lobbyists. Not on far-away K Street lobbyist row but on Capitol Hill. A semi-athletic 8-year-old could stand on the steps and chuck a baseball onto the Hart Senate Office building. The next couple of years were tough, as the old Philadelphia Quaker mercantilist money was all but gone. But the Spirit lifted up the vision in a younger, that is, under 60, crowd, including a new Executive Secretary.

About this time, continuing as a South Central Yearly Meeting Appointed Representative, I was appointed to the Policy Committee, on which I served 6 years (the maximum permitted). The Policy Committee sends out those annoying requests for input into what Quakers think are the national legislative priorities for the next Congress, that is, every two years. Carefully considered, the draft is passed to the General Committee for consideration and eventual approval. The General Committee is composed of Representatives appointed by every Yearly Meeting (that chooses to participate; Evangelical Friends are few), plus a limited number appointed by Quaker organizations such as Friends General Conference and American Friends Service Committee. In the latter 1990s, inspectors found that 2<sup>nd</sup> floor filing cabinets were in acute danger of suddenly arriving in the 1<sup>st</sup> floor finance office.

A capital campaign raised sufficient funds to rebuild while preserving the historic façade: 5 government approvals were needed, including the historical commission and The Architect of the Capitol! The building conformed to the “We seek an earth restored” motto, being the first LEED-certified building on Capitol Hill. After moving to metro Boston in 1999, I went to 2 Annual Meetings in the early 2000s, but dropped out, for mostly ill-defined reasons. This past November was my first Annual Meeting in about a dozen years. What did I find? A bunch of stunned people: the meeting started not quite 48 hours after the Presidential election outcome was announced. Stunned too were the Congressional officers we met with. For at least 20 years, Thursday is Lobby

Day, with the Annual Meeting starting that evening. I went with 6 or 7 other Texas Quakers to the offices of both Senators and to Rep. Lloyd Doggett, in whose district roughly 40% of FMSA folks live, to lobby for our assigned topic, bipartisan bills with many cosponsors, which had languished since spring, to correct some of the unproductively harsh mandatory minimum sentences, mostly for non-violent drug crimes. My household is the only FMSA one in Rep Henry Cuellar's district and I lobbied solo in his office.

All responses to our request to pass these bills in the lame duck session was a variant of "we're trying to figure out what to do and we **must** pass appropriation bills, so there won't be time". The mood of Annual Meeting attendees over the weekend generally progressed from shocked and despairing to regardless of the apparent situation we will, as we have for going on 75 years, continue speaking truth to power. As for me, I was awash in unfamiliar faces, as nearly all the staff and much of the General Committee has changed. The staff has gotten larger too, partially to make the most of the opportunity afforded by social media. Media, among other functions, supports major new programs: Advocacy Teams, Quakers from around the country building enduring relationships with legislators, and Advocacy Corps, a 9-month program for young adults, 19-30, around the country to organize their community around national legislation. They are paid a small stipend. Additional staff were added for the present capital campaign, which bought and is renovating an adjacent row house, with an apartment for a Visiting Friend and a meeting room for legislators or their staff discussions away from gossiping eyes. Also, the "new" building, at roughly 15 years, needs some refurbishing, just like our FMSA Meetinghouse.

Bill S.

## AFSC's Proposals

AFSC has issued a summary of its immediate focuses (foci?) for action. These involve some of President Trump's executive orders which it feels to be dangerous, divisive, and a threat to our human and civil rights. AFSC opposes:

Cutting federal funding for brave sanctuary cities, choosing not to tear apart communities and families.

Expanding militarized enforcement and infrastructure on our southern border, contributing to the deaths of thousands of migrants.

Advancing the Dakota Access Pipeline and Keystone XL Pipeline. AFSC stands with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to protect their water and land.

Suspension of aspects of the U.S. refugee or immigration program, which might target majority Muslim countries, and block thousands of refugees fleeing war and violence,.

## The 2017 Gathering

In January FGC told us:

A new year has begun, and with it come new opportunities to build community and deepen our spiritual lives together. Six months from now, we will come together for a week of Quaker worship, workshops, and community for all ages at Niagara University for the 2017 FGC Gathering. Our theme this year, Ripples Start Where the Spirit Moves, couldn't be more timely. If you're not counting down the days as we are, you will be by the time you've finished this month's Vital Friends.

So "settle in, grab a cup of tea (or a bowl of Quaker Oats!), and explore the offerings and events of the 2017 FGC Gathering. And don't forget to follow FGC on Facebook and Twitter for important Gathering updates as they happen!"

In the Spirit, FGC Staff

This issue of FGC's E-News contains:

- Gathering 2017: Meet the Plenary Speakers
- Meet Your Staff: Patsy Arnold Martin

- Featured Resource: Gathering Workshops Page
- Web Extra: Tips for a Non-Quaker at the Gathering
- QuakerBooks Reading List: Six Spirit-Led Activists Worth Knowing
- Among Friends: News and Events from the World of Friends

The Gathering team is excited to present this year's schedule of speakers for our evening Plenary sessions. This July, experience a thanksgiving address from the people of the Six Nations, go on a spiritual journey with the advocate who has worked tirelessly for 30 years to promote and defend the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the United Nations system, commemorate the Centennial of American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) with Palestinian Quakers and an Israeli Jew as they discuss their Spirit-led resistance and liberation, and learn from the clerk of New York Yearly Meeting's Earthcare Working Group how you can build up the physical, emotional, and spiritual muscle needed to navigate uncertain times.

Meet this year's Plenary Speakers:

Patsy Arnold Martin has served as a teacher, a radio DJ, a public librarian, and a Peace Corps Volunteer in Malaysia. Her role as Junior Gathering Coordinator was one she felt compelled to do from the moment she was interviewed at FGC, and one she still sees as vital, fulfilling work.

Workshops offer Gathering adults and high school participants the opportunity to be immersed in a topic with other interested Friends. Friends stay in the same workshop throughout the week, forming a small community within the Gathering. Choose from topics including Dance It Out, Dance It In for Caregivers, Writing Out of the Presence, Tansi: Indigenous Solidarity Across Borders, and Soulful Singing.

Discover Gathering 2017's Workshop offerings now.

How do you get the most out of the Gathering when you're...uh...you know, not Quaker? Our friendly, non-Quaker Communications Manager Marta Rusek has compiled your go-to guide using her experience (along with some helpful hints from the Gathering team) in Tips for a Non-Quaker at the Gathering. Read more on the FGC website.

Seeking inspiration as you advocate for causes you care about? These selections about or written by spirit-led activists are must-reads for Friends and readers looking for role models who weren't afraid to take action in the name of their faith.

View this Reading List on QuakerBooks.org.

In January 2016, FGC's ministry dedicated to helping couples grow together in their Quaker faith and practice became its own entity, Friends Couple Enrichment. Learn about the latest developments for Friends Couple Enrichment, plus updates from Pendle Hill, AFSC, and Friends Journal!

View the full updates on FGC's website.

## Spiritual Deepening

The Spiritual Deepening Program will begin Feb 5 with ten newcomers and experienced Friends. They will explore Quaker thought, share and listen to each other's spiritual stories, and practice new ways of connecting to Spirit.

In an introductory meeting, the group decided to meet the first and second Sunday of the month at 9:00 for four months and begin with the topic Silence and Expectant Waiting. They will engage in activities, discussions, role-plays, spiritual practices, art and music and worship sharing.

If other F/friends become interested later, another series will have a "rolling start." At the end of four months, each group will decide whether to continue with the first topic, or move to The Light, seed, Christ Working in Us, or to Friends Practices. And whether the time and days meet the most needs. For more information please contact [jmhaynes@earthlink.net](mailto:jmhaynes@earthlink.net) or <spiritualdeep-

## Miscellany

Quaker House tells us “Wonderful News!” that the “The [Defense] department is reviewing and consolidating all of the related policies to reinforce the department’s commitment to ensuring fair and equitable review of separations for all veterans. Whether the discharge or other correction is the result of PTSD, sexual orientation, sexual assault, or some other consideration, the department is committed to rectifying errors or injustices and treating all veterans with dignity and respect.”

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The PeaceCenter will hold its award of Peace Laureate, at the WhitleyCenter, Oblate Center, on Sunday February 5 at 3 PM. This year the award goes to Dr. Rajam Ramamurthy. Ruth received thie first such award.

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Our visit to the masjid took place, more or less. Much disjointed email commiunication beforehand, between the imam, Ken, and his Muslim friend, which left an hour in the visit empty. Some uncertainty about how to enter also occurred, but eventually three Friends attended. Others, we hope, were at work, not lost.

Nevertheless, the imam welcomed us, announcing after the service that we were there, and several men came up afterwards to greet us. It was a worthwhile friendly visit, one of peace.

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What shall we do when environmental change begins to threaten us? Sell our homes, the meetinghouse, and move north? How far should we move? Our Meeting Corporation would have the funds raised by that sale. What should the trustees do with them?

But what could the poor, meaning largely those of different race, do? They will surely become part of the new wave of migrants fleeing, walking northwards, across the world. Joined by more refugees in flimsy boats across the Caribbean? What is our responsibility for them? SCYM will be considering this “environmental racism.”

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A Quaker entrepreneur, quoted in *Friends Journal*: “I consider our work to be not only a business but also a ministry. The way I write software and run my business reflects my personal values and the Quaker testimonies of integrity, equality, simolicity, and peace.”

We will all hope that those similar daily items, bits and pieces, of our work and play will show those qualities.

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And, after reading such an article in *Friends Journal*, a reader, Janet Reddy, responds, “Seeking a purpose in each activity seems appropriate for Quakers. The article brings me guidance today in a choice I face. I ask what is my purpose? and is it worthy? Will I use my efforts to benefit others or just myself?”

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By the time you read this the Women’s March on Washington will have taken place. But beforehand there was dissension among the women, black and white. Black women were complaining that white women were blind to the unfairness that black women experienced from the day of their birth.

Friends will surely be sensisitve to this. But do we fully appreciate the privilege our whiteness brings? Black Friends are rare. We are able to take stances because of our race even though we may not fully appreciate what our stance means, to ourselves and to those we are supporting.

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Phil Gulley says, "Good and healthy religion should seduce our spirits, should tantalize us, should woo us, not bludgeon us. But think how often religion and religious people do just the opposite. Think how many Christians want to get their way by compelling us, often through the force of government, to do as they demand, who believe it is entirely appropriate to gain our cooperation and obedience by compulsion and law. They're like the teacher I used to have who said, 'You'll do it, because I said you'll do it and I'm in charge. . . .'"

Did you ever take a child somewhere and they were whining and you said, 'You better straighten up and have a good time.' How did that work for you? Did the child suddenly say, 'Oh, okay. I'll start enjoying myself.' No, of course not."

### This Month's Query

**What am I doing with my talents, time, money, and possessions? Am I sharing them according to the Light I am given?**

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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