

January 2019

# The Friendly News

## San Antonio Quakers

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## January Calendar

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| SUNDAY Jan 6     | 10 am—Meeting for Worship<br>11:15—Potluck Lunch   |
| MONDAY Jan 7     | 4:30-5:30 pm—Yoga with Peggy   |
| THURSDAY Jan 10  | 6 pm—Soup and Conversation<br>7 pm—Mid-Week Meeting for Worship  |
| FRIDAY Jan 11    | 7 pm— <b>Movie Night: Selma (part of MLK Week)</b>   |
| SUNDAY Jan 13    | 10 am—Meeting for Worship<br>11:30 FORUM: “Exploring our Peace & Social Concerns” w/ Greg C  |
| SATURDAY Jan 19  | 11:00 Women’s March at San Fernando Cathedral ( <i>sign up for transportation in the Community Room</i> )                          |
| SUNDAY Jan 20    | 10 am—Meeting for Worship<br>11:15—January Birthdays!!<br>11:30—Meeting for Business<br>4 pm—Interfaith MLK Gathering, 2nd Baptist |
| MONDAY Jan 21    | 10 am-2pm—MLK March ( <i>meet at 9:30 am at St. Phillips College parking lot.</i> )  |
| SUNDAY Jan 27    | 10 am—Meeting for Worship<br>11:30 FORUM: <b>Worship-Sharing: “What is the state of our Meeting?”</b>                              |
| WEDNESDAY Jan 30 | 7-8pm—Mid-Week Worship at Gary & Vivian’s home   |

*Note: Children may join in worship for the first 10 minutes then go to the children’s program*

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## January Query:



**As you reflect on the past year, and seek the way forward, what leadings are guiding your spiritual journey?**

## Upcoming Events:



**1st & 3rd  
Mondays of the Month**

~  
4:30 - 5:30pm  
~

September 3rd & 17th  
October 1st & 15th  
November 5th & 19th  
December 3rd & 17th  
January 7th  
February 4th & 18th



6pm - 7pm  
Soup

&



7pm - 8pm  
Silent Worship

**2nd Thursday of the Month**

October 11th  
November 8th  
December 13th  
January 10th  
February 14th

## Movie Night!: Friday, Jan 11



**Friends Meeting will show the movie  
Selma at 7pm.**

*[Summary from IMDb]*

The unforgettable true story chronicles the tumultuous three-month period in 1965, when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led a dangerous campaign to secure equal voting rights in the face of violent opposition. The epic march from Selma to Montgomery culminated in President Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, one of the most significant victories for the civil rights movement. Director Ava DuVernay's "Selma" tells the story of how the revered leader and visionary Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr and his brothers and sisters in the movement prompted change that forever altered history.

## Future Forums – Jan 13 & 27, 11:30am

**Jan 13:** Greg will lead a discussion to discern Friends' current concerns for peace, justice, and the welfare of our local community. Please come and share what concerns most interest you.

**Jan 27:** Jim will lead a **Worship-Sharing on "What is the state of our Meeting?"** *Each year, we submit a "State of the Meeting" report to South Central Yearly Meeting.*

## Two Marches for Social Justice – Jan 19 & 21

Members & attenders of Friends Meeting invite you to participate in two marches for social justice this month, carrying the Quaker banner.

- The San Antonio Women's March begins at 11am at San Fernando Cathedral and lasts until 1:30. It is connected with the national Women's March group in Washington. Pam S. and Katherine F. will help coordinate transportation. This may be a simple carpool or possibly a small shuttle, if enough people sign up and the price is low. In any case, SIGN UP in the community room!
- The San Antonio MLK March will start at 10am on Monday, January 21st. It is one of the nation's largest and FMSA has long been well-represented by Friends. We typically meet about an hour before the march and walk together with our t-shirts and our banner. We will announce details at Meeting and in the January newsletter.

## Minute on Immigration & Refugees:

Business Meeting approved a minute on immigration and refugees:

**Minute 2018.12: Friends Meeting of San Antonio affirms the rights of all peoples to be safe from violence of all kinds. We further affirm the duty of all peoples and nations to help the victims of violence. We affirm the right of those seeking asylum to be treated with respect, dignity, and timely due process during the application procedures. We call upon the U.S. government to honor its legal obligations under the Refugee Act of 1980 and the 1967 United Nations Protocol on Refugees to provide protection to those who qualify as refugees.**

*Isaiah 58:6: "Is this not the fast I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice, to untie the yokes, to let the oppressed go free?"*

## A Quote on the Refugee Crisis

In her essay "We Refugees," Hannah Arendt wrote, "Nobody wants to know that contemporary history has created a new kind of human beings—the kind that are put into concentration camps by their foes and internment camps by their friends." Nearly eighty years later, the world

has come no closer to ensuring the rights of a human without a country. Mostly, governments propose quarantine. Internment camps grow in Tornillo, Texas, in Lesbos, in Zaatari, and in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. It won't work. Each year, the world grows warmer. The oceans rise. Wars are fought for ever-scarcer resources. If the wealthy West worries about one million Syrians, what will it do with millions of climate refugees?

-- Molly Crabapple, "Where Else Can They Go"  
New York Review of Books, Dec 6, 2018.

## Recent Meeting Events:

### New Members!

Three new Friends have joined FMSA! Meeting welcomed Joni Mize, Stephen Shearer, and Peggy Dial to membership. Each has been attending for the past 2-3 years, and each has found Meeting to be a rich source of personal reflection, support, and community.

### December Forums

#### Dec 9<sup>th</sup>: "My 5 Ways" to Produce Change, led by Greg C.

Greg led an interactive forum on five ways that we can produce personal and social change. Each person's five ways are different. Friends talked about what they feel they need to do to facilitate change. We identified our own top changes and talked about how we might accomplish them.

#### Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>: Worship Sharing Forums on "Why do we sit in silence?" and "Our Wishes for the New Year"

This facilitated (but not led) traditional Quaker practice encourages participants to speak honestly and genuinely from their own experiences. It provides an opportunity for deep, non-judgmental reflection. Both discussions were rich.

### Silent Retreat at Leab Shomea

Eighteen of us spent a silent weekend at Lebh Shomea in December. Fourteen were Meeting members & attenders, and four were family or friends. This is the site of the former Kenedy ranch, now an Oblate retreat center on the coast south of Corpus Christi. Many explored the extensive library while others explored the extensive grounds. The wildlife includes a family of javelinas, wild turkeys, tame deer, a bobcat interested in a turkey, and countless turkey buzzards circling the skies and roosting in the woods. And, of course, the little ones: squirrels, chipmunks, and moles. It is also prime birding territory. But more than nature, we were free to

meditate in quiet corners and high places, and at each meal. Evenings were the exception with worship sharing on a range of topics. On Saturday, the low clouds let a brilliant sunset break through, giving us a fine subject of contemplation. On the walk back to our sleeping quarters, the now cloudless sky shone with stars never seen in our light drenched city.

**Read Pam's account of her Retreat experience on page 7**



## Giving to Others:

### Christmas Social for Legend Oaks Residents



On December 25th, Kellie and her family hosted the 2nd Annual Christmas social for residents at Legend Oaks Healthcare and Rehabilitation in West San Antonio. Kellie collected funds to purchase 100 blankets, 55 fuzzy socks, gift bags, and craft supplies. Kellie's husband, Carl, had the residents create holiday themed posters, which were then used to decorate the dining area. Kellie and her family were joined by Gretchen, Pam, and Saqqara's

grandma, Carol. Pam brought additional craft supplies and 30 pinecones that she'd sprayed green to look like tiny trees. The residents enjoyed decorating miniature pine cone Christmas trees, while festive holiday music played in the background. Residents with less mobility were assisted with their trees so that everyone who attended the social had something festive to keep. After the craft session, clean up, and gifts,



Carl, Kellie, and Saqqara delivered the remaining blankets to residents in their rooms. The residents expressed deep gratitude to the participants and it was very clear that they truly enjoyed the event.

Kellie thanks every Friend who donated to this effort, and to Gretchen and Pam for their participation. It was truly a joy to serve others and bring warmth and community for the holiday.

## Women's & Children's Shelter

On behalf of San Antonio's Battered Women and Children's Shelter (<http://www.fvps.org/>) thank you to all the Friends who have brought donations to the Meetinghouse. Those donations have been consolidated and dropped off on a rolling basis to FVPS's donation location.

The shelter volunteers say they now need warm clothing for children, as well as diapers for babies. However, they will gratefully accept donation of all kinds, including children's books and toys, housewares, and monetary contributions.

Oliver will continue to collect donations and the Meetinghouse and bring them to FVPS on a rolling basis for the month of January. Starting in February, however, he asks that you please bring in your donations to the first Sunday Meeting for Worship each month. This will allow for "greener" donations, cutting down on gas and emissions as he can take everything in one load.

## Children's Program



Ivory and Eleanor made bowls and painted them after they were glazed.



Laura and Joni help the children decorate Christmas cookies.



Saqqara made a photo of the Randles boys on the Meetinghouse porch

## Other News

### Pam's Experience at Lebh Shomea

It was a long drive down to Sarita, Texas. the weather was bad; it rained so hard we couldn't see the cars in front of us at all, much less the road. But just when it was at its worst, all of a sudden it would let up a bit and I would just say out loud "thank you, God". I thought maybe my passenger would think I was a little crazy, but I always have my best conversations with God when driving.

We arrived safely but missed lunch, which I soon found out was really something I did not want to miss! I always travel with lots of emergency food, but the food provided for the retreat was so delectable I never even thought of raiding my stash of treats.

One worry down. My next niggling fear was of the silence. Mind you, I manage to be silent at Meeting all the time. Well, it seems the occasional whisper happens at Lebh Shomea. Not a lot, but enough to relieve that concern.

If you are thinking, now what else can worry a person going to their first silent retreat? Yep, there was one more big concern: what am I



going to DO in all that silence? I had heard during an announcement at Meeting that one person just slept almost the whole time they were at Lebh Shomea. That was reassuring. That was when I figured bird watching was probably ok too. I put 13 miles on my pedometer in two half days and one whole day. My bird list was not long but it was quality! S andhill cranes, kiskadee, Vermillion fly catchers, tons of turkeys, kestrels, caracara, Harrier Hawk, Harris hawk, curlews, blue gray gnat catcher, green jay and more.

Evening Meeting for worship and sharing was a learning experience for me. I found out what keeps me from doing things sometimes even though I feel led to do them. It's the critters!

Critters in my head. Now I have a name for them. Thanks to David B. I am working on quieting them.

The most memorable moment of the weekend was shared with Peggy D., Stephen S. and James M. It happened Saturday night after Meeting. Someone during Meeting for sharing mentioned the stars being visible after two days of rain. So I glanced up when I went out into the very chilly dark night and was stunned by the absolute clarity of the air. I had not seen the Milky Way like it appeared that night since being stationed in a remote area of Korea in 1981. I remembered Stephen saying he liked watching the vultures from the top of the building where several of us were staying. I saw Stephen and Peggy and motioned to the stars and suggested a late-night foray to the top of the building for some stargazing. James joined the party and up we went. Oh, my goodness, it was so worth climbing that scary metal stair in the dark by flashlight! Don't tell anyone. We were not silent up there: we were so awed and excited by the enormity of creation, we whispered the whole time. James is quite the astronomer and was able to point out Mars and various constellations. I won't forget that sky ever.

Lebh Shomea is an unforgettable place. It will definitely be on my to do list next December.

## Quaker Book Shelf

You are welcome to borrow books and pamphlets from the Friends Library. Here a few classics to get you started.

- ***Testament of Devotion*, Thomas Kelly**, a mystic and educator in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
- ***Let Your Life Speak*, Parker Palmer**, another Quaker educator; listening to the inner teacher in finding a pathway toward vocation.
- ***Guests of my Life*, Elizabeth Watson** musing on the death of her daughter, she finds solace in poets.
- ***Four Doors to Meeting for Worship*, William Taber**, “The heart of worship is communion with the invisible but eternal stream of reality” that is Spirit, and how to proceed through the doors to worship.
- ***Quaker Spirituality*, ed. By Douglas V. Steere**, selected readings from George Fox, Isaac Penington, Caroline Stephen, Thomas Kelly & others.
- ***Light to Live By*, Rex Ambler**, the personal practice of Quaker meditation.
- ***Beyond Consensus*, Barry Morley**, a non-Quaker describes the workings of our decision making & defines “sense of the Meeting.”
- ***Open for transformation: Being Quaker*, Ben Pink Dandelion**, finding and strengthening one’s Quaker identity every day.
- ***Gospel Order: A Quaker Understanding of Faithful Church Community*, Sandra L. Cronk** explores what it means to belong to a community of faith commitment.

These are my standby books, and authors. Actually, any book by any of these writers is worth the time. Tell me your favorites. Gretchen

## A Brief History of Friends Peace Teams

by Val Liveoak

(To be published in *The Western Friend* ([https://westernfriend.org/.](https://westernfriend.org/))

At the the 1993 Gathering of Friends General Conference, David Hartsough (then with American Friends Service Committee) convened a group to consider Quaker responses to armed conflict. About forty of us came together to consider what Friends could do. We saw that the sort of “peace keeping” actions conducted by the U.N. were only another kind of war. We met several times during that week to ponder possible responses to: “How can Friends respond to the many crises in our world?” and “How can we wage peace?” We determined to meet again and convened a consultative group in Philadelphia that November. As a result, in January 1994, Mary Lord and Elise Boulding undertook to be the founding co-clerks of the “Friends Peace Team Project.”

For the next five years, we met about twice a year. We spent much of that time looking for clarity on what to do and how to do it. We dealt with organizational questions and made connections with more-established groups. In 1998, David Zarembka organized an exploratory team to Central East Africa, which turned into our African Great Lakes Initiative. It became our major project, working in Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Congo, and Uganda to bring divided communities together for reconciliation, healing, and building trust.

In 2002, I organized an exploratory team to Colombia, South America. In 2007, our exploratory team went to Central America. Eventually, we formed a project, “Peacebuilding en las Américas,” that works in Colombia, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. I coordinated this work until my retirement in 2016.

Nadine Hoover brought her work in Indonesia to Friends Peace Teams in 2007. That work has since expanded to include numerous locations, including Nepal, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea.

There have certainly been growing pains during our twenty-five years. At times, we’ve struggled with conflict and disagreement. At our best, we’ve been able to find unity in the Spirit, and move forward together. But over this time, some Friends have left the group.

We have excelled, I think, in creating and upholding relationships with our partner groups abroad. We have indeed made and been friends to people in areas of great conflict and supported peace builders who face tremendous challenges.

Friends and others ask: “Why aren’t you working in blank, blank, blank?” The blanks are filled in with certain groups, regions, or problems. We’ve learned, I think, to respond with: “Friend, if you are led to work in blank, blank, blank, please come to us with your concern and let us see if we can support your work.”

Wise Friends from the past have counseled that we are not called to do everything. My friends in Latin America say, “Each person must put in their little grain of sand.” I am proud to have been praised by a colleague who said that, through Peacebuilding en las Américas, I had actually put in a grain of gold. I believe we will continue to be faithful to our vision of Friends Peace Teams as we hone our skills in discernment of and support for the leadings of the Spirit.

*Val Liveoak is the emerita coordinator of Peacebuilding en las Américas, an initiative of Friends Peace Teams. She is co-Clerk of San Antonio Friends Meeting. A longer version of this article appeared in the Friends Peace Teams Fall/Winter 2018 newsletter: <https://friendspeaceteams.org/stories/#peaceways>. It was taken from her keynote talk at the April, 2018 PeaceQuest conference at Nashville Friends Meeting.*