

February 2021



# The Friendly News

## San Antonio Quakers

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San Antonio, Texas 78209

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Dear Friends:

Spring is coming!! It's still cold, San Antonio's COVID level is still high, and we are still meeting by Zoom rather than at the Meetinghouse. But there is hope on the horizon. To get ready, we will have a **garden workday on Saturday, Feb 20<sup>th</sup>** and an **afternoon planning session on Sunday, Feb 21<sup>st</sup>**. At the latter, we'll weigh where we've been and are so we can write our annual report to South Central Yearly Meeting. We'll also start planning what changes we need to make to hold in-person Meetings for Worship *inside* the Meetinghouse when it is safe to do so. **See pages 3-4 for details.**

We are also planning a **virtual potluck after Meeting on Feb 4<sup>th</sup>**. We'll have several virtual tables where people can sit and talk over real or virtual lunch. People can table-hop to visit with those they haven't seen in a while.

Jim will be leading a **Forum on Vocal Ministry on Wednesday, Feb 10<sup>th</sup>**. See page 3 for information.

Finally, Megan G. has joined Jim as Newsletter Co-Editor. Both of us will be writing and soliciting material for upcoming newsletters. You can contribute too! See page 12 for information. As you can see on pages 5, 6, 10, and 11, some people have already begun.

For other Meeting events and Zoom details, click on the items on our website's redesigned calendar page: <http://bit.ly/3rK61CV>

-- Jim S. & Megan G., Newsletter Co-Editors



## February Query

**In the new year , what are your hopes for community in our Meeting and in the nation?**

### Regular Events (by Zoom)

Here are the direct links for our weekly Zoom events. You do not need a Zoom account to join.

- **Meeting for Worship – Sundays 10-11am**, followed by check-in and discussion: [CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#)
  - ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
  - **Special Virtual Potluck after Meeting on February 7<sup>th</sup>!**
- **Course in Miracles discussion – Tuesdays 7-8pm**; led by David
  - [CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#)
    - ID # 988 3173 6394; passcode: 724708
- **Midweek Forums – Wednesdays 7-8:30pm**
  - [CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#)
    - ID # 991 4427 4366; passcode: 143247
      - **February 10<sup>th</sup>: Forum on Vocal Ministry**; led by Jim S. (*see page 3*)
  - Check for updates on our new Calendar on our website: <http://bit.ly/3rK61CV>
- **Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business – Wednesday February 17<sup>th</sup> 7-8:30pm**
  - Please review the agenda at <http://bit.ly/2BoFt4Y>
    - [CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#)
    - ID # 940 4710 0437 Passcode: 958945
- **Friday Morning Meeting for Worship – Fridays 8-8:30 am**
  - [CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#)
    - ID # 921 1215 1035; passcode: 023644

*For ALL Zoom Meetings: by telephone at +1 346 248 7799, then enter ID#*

### Special Events

- **Virtual Potluck after Meeting for Worship on Sunday, Feb 7<sup>th</sup>** – same address as Sunday Meeting for Worship, above
- **Workday at the Meetinghouse: Feb 20<sup>th</sup> 9am-1pm** (*see page 3*)
- **Special Discussion on the State of the Meeting** and to begin planning how we will resume meeting inside the Meetinghouse when it is safe to do so (*see page 4*)
  - **Sunday, Feb 21<sup>st</sup>: 2-3:30pm**
    - [CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#)
    - ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077  
(this is our regular Sunday Morning Zoom address)

### Contents

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## *Upcoming Meeting Events*

### *Forum on Vocal Ministry, Wednesday Feb 10<sup>th</sup>, 7-8pm*

Unprogrammed Quakers have no assigned pastor to give ministry. We wait on the Spirit for inspiration, and we are sometimes led to speak into the silence. What is our experience of this process? How do we know when to speak and when to refrain? Come share your experiences of Quaker vocal ministry, good and bad, while you listen to and learn from others.

Our Clerk, Jim Spickard, will facilitate the discussion. Those who feel led may wish to read two articles from [Friends Journal](https://www.friendsjournal.org/) on this topic. They are:

- “The Divine Source of Vocal Ministry” by Benjamin Lloyd (<https://www.friendsjournal.org/2004135/>)
- “Two Perspectives on Vocal Ministry” by Diane Bonner and Carol Holmes (<https://www.friendsjournal.org/2003079/>)

We will start by viewing a short video from the [QuakerSpeak](https://www.quakerspeak.org/) series. Two good ones are:

- Giving Vocal Ministry (Sept 25, 2014: <https://bit.ly/3ozmWWe> )
- When to Speak in Quaker Worship (May 9, 2019: <https://bit.ly/2L4BWxF> )

### *Meetinghouse Work Day on Saturday, Feb 20<sup>th</sup>, 9am-1pm*

Come join us for a work day at the Friends Meetinghouse, 7052 Vandiver Road, San Antonio (corner of Eisenhower). We will clean up the garden, make minor repairs, and have a good time together. Bring gloves, a water bottle, a mask, and some lunch. Good, physically distanced fun.



Photo by Joni Mize



## *Special Discussion: Sunday Feb 21<sup>st</sup>, 1-2:30pm*

### *1. Of the State of the Meeting*

### *2. About plans for (someday) resuming meeting in the Meetinghouse*

Each year, we write a State of the Meeting Report. We do this both for our own use – self-reflection is a long-standing Quaker practice – and as a report to South Central Yearly Meeting about how things are with us. We also need to begin to plan how we will resume our in-person Meetings for Worship in the Meetinghouse after the COVID crisis has subsided in San Antonio.

This has been a hard year. Rather than write a long report about it, Friends at the Clerks and Conveners meeting on January 27<sup>th</sup> decided to engage in a short, fun exercise to generate material for a short, fun report that might lift both our spirits and those of SCYM Friends. Think Quaker Mad-Libs, where we get to tell the truth but laugh at it as well.

We will combine this with the first of several discussions about how we will prepare so that we can safely open our Meetinghouse for activities. We need to talk as a community about our visions for the future.

Please join us for this Sunday afternoon event! Zoom info posted on the [FMSA website calendar page](#).



*Photo by Jim Spickard*

## Inspiration

### A Benediction For Trying Times

by M.P.

This last month has seen unprecedented horrific actions, in already unprecedented times. Many are struggling, angry. I often find myself unable to find the humanity in others, carrying frustration into my work and relationships. At the end of a recent evening meditation class the gracious teacher spoke a well-known series of lines that flooded my angry mind with loving kindness, changing my demeanor instantaneously. The lines, a consecrated benediction, are:

These words began a great embodiment, sending a warm pink light moving through my body, replacing

**May all beings have happiness  
and the causes of happiness.**

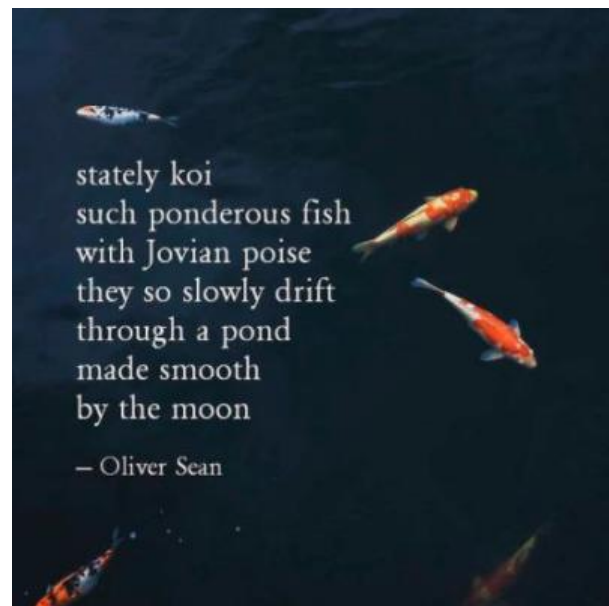
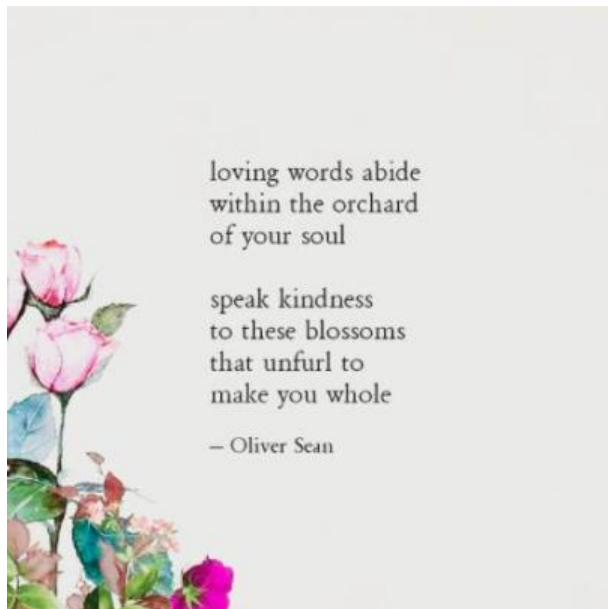
**May all beings be free from  
suffering and the causes of  
suffering.**

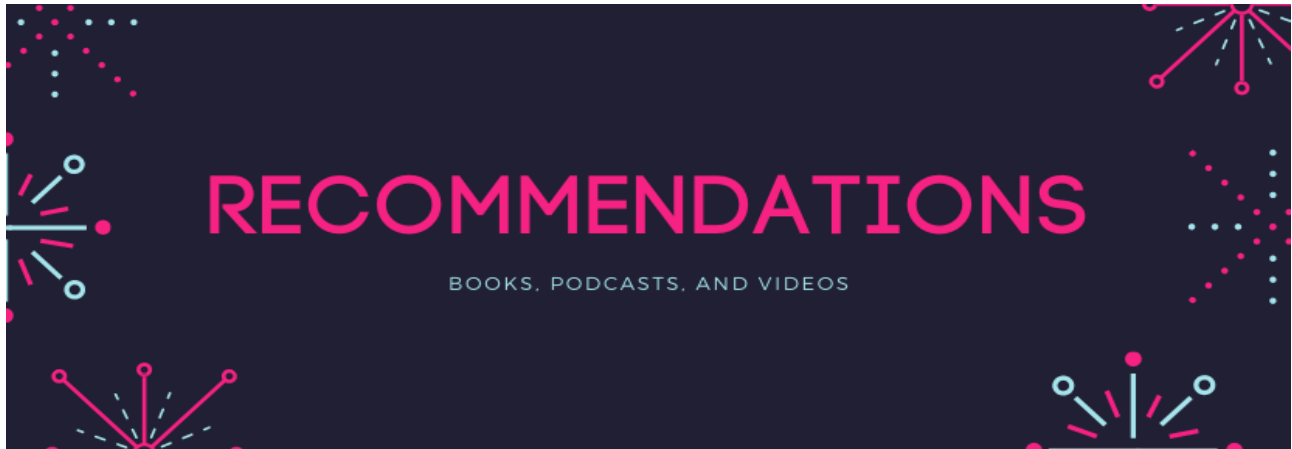
**May all beings rejoice in the  
well-being of others.**

**May all beings live in peace,  
free from greed and hatred.**

an angry red light which had been living in me lately. As I continued throughout my week, I would feel this anger returning, arising in my shoulders, my fists, my neck. I would then speak these words out loud. The relationship between language and reality must be strong, as these lines changed my countenance and demeanor. Perhaps if we are filled with anger or fear, love cannot live in us at the same time. May this prayer be a boon, a catalyst for you to feel love for those, who do not seem to inhabit compassion, when your anger burns stronger than your softness. May you also live in peace, free from greed and hatred.

### Two Poems





- **Podcast:** Brene Brown with President Barack Obama on Leadership, Family, and Service
  - <https://brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-with-president-barack-obama-on-leadership-family-and-service/>
- **Video:** Amanda Gorman, the first Youth Poet Laureate recites “The Hill We Climb” at the 2021 Presidential Inauguration
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wz4YuEvJ3y4>
- **Quaker Books:** Spirit-Led Healing
  - [https://quakerbooks.org/collections/spirit-led-healing?goal=0\\_834ba22447-63d2e0aafe-288753801&mc\\_cid=63d2e0aafe&mc\\_eid=2e3a843ea6](https://quakerbooks.org/collections/spirit-led-healing?goal=0_834ba22447-63d2e0aafe-288753801&mc_cid=63d2e0aafe&mc_eid=2e3a843ea6)
- **Book:** The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration by Isabel Wilkerson
  - In this epic, beautifully written masterwork, Pulitzer Prize–winning author Isabel Wilkerson chronicles one of the great untold stories of American history: the decades-long migration of black citizens who fled the South for northern and western cities, in search of a better life.
  - <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/190696/the-warmth-of-other-suns-by-isabel-wilkerson/>
- **Video:** TED Talk, “The Art of Stillness” by Pico Iyer
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUBawr1hUwo>
- **Volunteer Opportunities:**
  - Drive for **Meals on Wheels**. Go to <https://www.mow-satx.org/volunteer> to explore your options.
  - Volunteer at the **San Antonio Food Bank**. The need help in the sorting room, their garden, and more. <https://safoodbank.org/ways-to-help/give-time-opportunities/>



Anden Chandler packs food boxes at the SAFB

## **The Wider Quaker World**

### **Report from Representative Meeting, held 23 January**

By Bill Sweet

#### **2021 annual sessions of South Central Yearly Meeting**

Representative Meeting approved the program for the 2021 Yearly Meeting. The theme, continued from last year, is **Loving in the Light: Quaker Engagement in Times of Crisis, Part II**. There will be workshops, panel discussions, Home Groups (small groups for worship sharing), breakout rooms for interest groups and small group chit-chat, as well as the beloved Meeting for Business. There'll even be worship!

The keynote speaker is Eileen Flanagan, a Quaker and nationally known activist and spiritual writer. One of her books, *The Wisdom to Know the Difference*, was praised by one at RM and, per her website, the Dalai Lama. Try Quaker Books <http://quakerbooks.org> for a copy. See more at <https://eileenflanagan.com>. Besides the Keynote Speech, she will participate at other times.

Because many comments after 2020 SCYM were about "Zoom fatigue", the Planning Committee spread events from Sunday, 28 March to Sunday, 4 April (Easter), with Monday through Thursday events just 1 ½ hours in the evening. Friday through Sunday will be full day. The full schedule and registration will be on <https://www.scym.org>. The registration fee is \$50 per screen, so if two in your household are simultaneously on different computers, it's \$100. The fee applies whether you join only one event or all of them.

#### **FMSA member on SCYM Nominating Committee**

SCYM Nominating Committee members are to be from the three Quarterly Meetings plus the four largest Meetings, of which FMSA is one. Oh no! Presently, FMSA's slot is vacant! It's a good way to get to know Quakers from AR-LA-OK-TX. Nominations, including self-nominations, should be given to the FMSA Nominating Committee, [nominating@saquakers.org](mailto:nominating@saquakers.org)

#### **2022 Yearly Meeting program**

Our Cielo Grande Quarterly Meeting (the level between our FMSA Monthly Meeting and SCYM) is responsible for the YM program in 2022. What you like – or need – for a program? Suggest!

### **From Friends Committee on National Legislation**

#### **Lobbying the New Congress: Virtual meeting Wednesday, February 10 at 8:00 pm EST (7:00 Central)**

The new Congress was seated on Jan. 6 and lawmakers are already setting their priorities for the year. We know that what Congress does in the first six months of 2021 will largely determine the agenda for the next two years. How can you best influence those decisions now, even before bills are introduced and hearings are scheduled? Join us to learn more. Register to participate here <https://act.fcni.org/event/quaker-welcome-center-events-watch-home/2011/>

## *Friends World Committee on Consultation—Section of the Americas Meeting*

*Online: March 12 - 21, 2021*

Answering God's call to universal love, FWCC brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications, and consultation to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the world.

Experience bilingual worship, workshops, business sessions, and small group activities. Share your musical gifts, your prayers, and your concerns with the largest gathering of Friends organized by the Friends World Committee for Consultation in the Section of the Americas.

Join us to get to know more Friends from throughout the Americas and to learn more about FWCC!

All Friends are welcome to attend! Information at

<https://fwccamericas.org/wp/event/2021-section-meeting/>  
REGISTRATION DEADLINE FEBRUARY 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2021

## *Quaker U.N. Virtual Summer School for Young Leaders*

The poster features a world map background. On the left is the QUNO logo, which includes a red star with a black cross inside, surrounded by a laurel wreath, with the text 'QUNO' below it. On the right is a blue circular logo with the word 'QUAKERS' inside. The main title 'Quaker United Nations Virtual Summer School' is in large blue font, with '5-16 July 2021' below it. The text describes the program for young people aged 20-26, mentioning topics like peace, disarmament, and human rights. It provides application details, including a website link, an email address, and a deadline of February 15, 2021. The dates '5 - 16 July 2021' and the schedule 'Monday-Fridays from 2:30pm - 6pm CEST' are also listed.

**Quaker United Nations Virtual Summer School**  
5-16 July 2021

Are you 20-26 years old with a keen interest in the United Nations and would like to learn more on peace, disarmament, sustainable and just economic systems, human rights, migration and climate change?

Join other young people in finding out about Quaker work at the international level and develop knowledge and competencies relevant to the work of the United Nations. Spend 10 days together on a virtual programme that will equip you with the skills to think constructively about the value of the multilateral system and international politics.

Application forms and more information are available on our website:  
[www.quno.org/quaker-un-summer-school-2021](http://www.quno.org/quaker-un-summer-school-2021)

or by Email:  
[gunss@quno.ch](mailto:gunss@quno.ch)

⌘ **Deadline for applications – 15 February 2021**

📅 **5 – 16 July 2021:**

🕒 **Monday-Fridays from 2:30pm – 6pm CEST**

For more information, visit: <https://quno.org/quaker-united-nations-summer-school#>



## **Explorations on the Practice of Worship**

**Every Wednesday in February at 7 PM [EASTERN: 6pm CENTRAL]**

Facilitated by Zachary Dutton, Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting will begin hosting a new type of mid-week worship on Wednesdays at 7 PM [EASTERN: 6pm CENTRAL], starting Wednesday February 3. All are invited! Please join us!

**It will take place virtually, to receive the Zoom information,  
contact Zachary at [zdutton@pym.org](mailto:zdutton@pym.org).**

### **Here's How it Works**

- A special presenter will speak for the first ten minutes of each session about the very practical and concrete ways in which they worship. Some example queries are below.
- Then for 20 to 30 minutes thereafter, all of the participants will be asked to try out the presenter's way of doing it based on their presentation... we'll follow their body position, foci, visualizations, and/or rituals, etc.
- Then we'll take time at the end of the hour to reflect on how it went, trying on this way of worshipping.

For the month of February, the scheduled presenters are:

- Wednesday February 3 at 7 PM, Dwight Dunston
- Wednesday February 10 at 7 PM, Francis Elling
- Wednesday February 17 at 7 PM, Melinda Wenner Bradley
- Wednesday February 24 at 7 PM, Meg Rose

**The Queries are:**

- How do you prepare?
- How do you position your body?
- What do you train your mind upon? How does that change through the hour?
- Do you use any visualizations?
- Do you have any small rituals that you practice?
- Are there other things you do?
- How do you end worship? Do you do anything specific afterwards?

## *Food for Thought*

### *The Virtue of Curiosity*

by BarbaraAnn

When I was a child, the most memorable axiom that I heard about curiosity was: “Curiosity killed the cat.” What an egregious thing to tell a kid. Sadly, curiosity is rarely encouraged in many churches, families, and organizations. In fact, it is often discouraged. Instead, certainty is promoted, celebrated, and frankly, demanded. Mid-way through my fifties, I find myself grieving, because I have fallen victim to our culture’s attitude towards crushing curiosity.

When I was growing up, my family attended a Caucasian Southern Baptist Church. I went to a Christian school. My gullibility to believe exactly as I was told was encouraged and a quest for knowledge through questioning and curiosity was discouraged, especially in the areas of faith and science. Theologian Fr. Richard Rohr has a great quote about science and faith that speaks to the importance of curiosity. He says: “My scientist friends have come up with things like ‘principles of uncertainty’ and dark holes. They’re willing to live inside imagined hypotheses and theories. But many religious folks insist on answers that are always true. We love closure, resolution and clarity, while thinking that we are people of ‘faith’!” Churches often push for certainty in personal spiritual belief and discourage curiosity.

Our lack of curiosity is a huge hindrance in relationships. In fact, most arguments, hurt feelings, and fractures in relationships and organizations stem from a deplorable lack of curiosity. Our egos like to make decisions about the intentions of others. Our egos thrive on taking offense. Our ego deceives us to believe that our victimhood is our virtue. We don’t want to be wrong about such opinions or decisions, therefore we bypass curiosity about the words and behaviors of others and go straight to condemnation and disconnection. Perhaps, that is one of the reasons Jesus said “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” - Matthew 5:23-24

I firmly believe reconciliation requires curiosity, not certainty. However, it is hard. It is humbling. It is scary. It often subjects you to words you may not want to hear. Our ego, pride, flesh, sin nature (whatever you want to call it) resists curiosity, because it is uncomfortable.



Curiosity is brave. My heroine Brené Brown says “Curiosity is an act of vulnerability and courage. We need to be brave enough to want to know more.” I find this to be true. As I have grown in my faith, I am less certain, and more curious. It’s not for the faint of heart, as having no certainty can be scary. Brené also says curiosity is a “shit-starter,” and I believe her!

While I have found peace with not having certainty in my beliefs about God or the church. I am grieved to see that certainty of belief is celebrated and often with it comes hate and misunderstanding about the “other” (other religions, other races, other cultures).

By crushing curiosity, it means we tend to dismiss or push away the other. The riots, the protests, the anger that is erupting in our world today are “Exhibit A” to my whole premise here that we all need to be more curious. We need to be curious about the experiences of those who are angry about racial/social injustice and how they have personally been affected. Why are people leaving the church tradition in which they were raised? Why are our friends changing political affiliation? Why are our spouses so withdrawn? Why are we resistant to listening to the stories, values, and virtues of those that identify as LGBTQ+? Why does our adult child not want to come visit? Why is a friend suddenly avoiding you? We can and should be so much more connected and understanding of each other. Curiosity is the key to increasing connection and understanding. Leaning into curiosity is the way forward. We need to have curiosity about others, ourselves, and our faith.

I believe if we engage with curiosity, we will begin to feel empathy for others. Empathy and curiosity breed connection. If we are not curious about our fellow humans, how can we be empathetic? We are much more comfortable defending our delusions than confronting them with information. We would rather be offended because it makes us both the hero and the victim of the stories we are telling ourselves. We would rather reject the other, than confront our preconditioned, pre-existing biases and prejudices. We would rather gather around our own than to allow the presence of those that may breach our gated kingdoms.

The Bible has a lot to say about this. Here is a link if you’re ... CURIOUS: (See what I did there?) [https://www.openbible.info/topics/listening\\_to\\_others](https://www.openbible.info/topics/listening_to_others) If I am a Christ-follower, I should be leading in teaching the virtue of curiosity.

The applicability of this information to families, marriages, politics, friendships, churches, and businesses is profound. Truly, we can all benefit by practicing curiosity. I urge you to be that person who nurtures curiosity. Be that person that fuels curiosity and encourages asking questions, creativity, learning, and discovery. Be the person that asks questions instead of defaulting to only having answers. Be that person who seeks to understand before being understood.

Just remember: A B C - Always Be Curious!

### Other Events

- **Mystics Summit: Uncover the Ecstatic Wisdom of the Mystics to Reclaim Your Own Connection to the Sacred**, with Richard Rohr, Mirabai Starr, Anne Lamott, Krishna Das, Imam Adé Mendes, and more. February 1-5, 2021, price: free
  - <https://mysticssummit.com/>
- **Virtual Documentary Night**, every 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month, coordinated by Adam Hicks (who attended Meeting when he lived in San Antonio). Watch a documentary, then discuss it. Write for information to [AdamHicks@Emory.edu](mailto:AdamHicks@Emory.edu)

Join our  
**VIRTUAL DOCUMENTARY NIGHT 2/12/2021**

**The First Rainbow Coalition**

This film shows how the Chicago Black Panther Party, the Latino group Young Lords Organization, and the Young Patriots organization banded together in 1969 to confront issues such as police brutality and substandard housing.

We meet every 2nd Friday of the month from 7 - 9 pm. Attendees come from around the country and range in age from 20s to 80s. We start with 3 small group discussions & end with a whole-group discussion. Stay as long as you like!

Watch the film on your own and join us on zoom for the discussion!

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, CONTACT ADAM.HICKS@EMORY.EDU



## Calling all artists!

Seeking writers, poets, photographers, or those with thoughts to share.

Our newsletter is now accepting contributions in the form of:

- photographs 📷
- drawings 🖌️
- poems 📝
- blog-style writing, no more than 500 words 📖
- other artistic forms
- suggestions of podcasts, books, or articles to peruse.

**Topics:** Meeting news, activism, spirituality, social justice, and/or other Quaker-related content. We welcome contributors of all backgrounds, so recommend your f/Friends!

If you are interested, e-mail: [newsletter@saquakers.org](mailto:newsletter@saquakers.org)

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*Jim Spickard: Moon on a Sea of Clouds*

Friends Meeting of San Antonio  
7052 N Vandiver  
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