

March 2022



# The Friendly News

**San Antonio Quakers**

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**This edition of the Newsletter is dedicated to the people of Ukraine who are suffering and resisting the invasion of their country, to the people of Russia who are protesting the aggression of their government, and the people of Russia who are misled by the lies of their government.**

"I live in the virtue of that life and spirit that takes away the occasion of all wars." George Fox

## **State of the Meeting Report 2022**

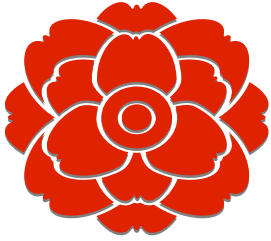
This is the first reading of the 2022 Report. Friends may comment and send suggestions to [ministry@saquakers.org](mailto:ministry@saquakers.org). The second reading is March 20.

## **Connected in the Light Wherever We Are**

Friends Meeting of San Antonio spent much of 2021 finding a way to live deeply and meaningfully in the Light, strengthening and nurturing our connections with each other and the Spirit, and meeting the challenges of the times. While we have experienced a continued decline in participation in the life of the meeting, and while we acknowledge the toll that the continuing strain has taken on Friends, we are grateful that at the end of the year we are finding our way back.

Many Friends found a meaningful worship experience by Zoom, while some had difficulties feeling the connection with others through a screen. We experimented with porch worship [Continued on p 5]

March 2022



## March Query

**How do we reject military training, preparation for war, or participation in war, and seek non-violent alternatives to physical conflict?**

### Regular Events

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

- **Sunday Meetings for Worship**
    - **8:30-9:30am**, in-person in the Meetinghouse.
    - **10-11am**, in-person in the Meetinghouse AND on Zoom.
      - [CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#)  
ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
  - **Sunday Forums: 11:30-12:30**

March 13: Consciously engaging in the world, led by Karen Ball  
March 27: Flawed Quaker Heroes: William Penn, with Gretchen Haynes  
[CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#)  
ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
  - **Tuesdays 7-8pm: Course in Miracles discussion –**  
led by David
    - [CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#) – ID # 988 3173 6394;  
passcode: 724708
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday Simple Meal and Meeting for Worship**
    - Feb 10: 6-7:30pm at the Meetinghouse
  - **3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday “Meeting for Weeding”**
    - Mar 19 9am-1pm at the Meetinghouse
  - **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business**
    - Sunday Mar 20 11:30-1:00 in-person in the Meetinghouse AND on Zoom.  
[CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#) – ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
  - **Friday Morning Meeting for Worship – Fridays 8-8:30 am**
    - [CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#) – ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
- For ALL Zoom Meetings: by telephone at +1 346 248 7799, then enter ID#**

### Special Events

- **Mar 6: 11:00: Book Exchange & Stone Soup**
- **Mar 13: 11:30 Forum:** Consciously engaging in the world, led by Karen Ball
- **Mar 27: 11:30 Forum:** Flawed Quaker Heroes - William Penn, with Gretchen Haynes

### Contents

#### **p 1 State of the Meeting Report**

- p 2 March Query  
Regular & Special  
Events
- p 3 News of San Antonio Meeting  
Book Exchange  
Forums 3/13 & 27  
Children’s Program  
FCNL Priorities
- p 4 Quaker Fair?  
5 SoM, Continued & On-  
going Concerns
- 6 Wider Quaker World  
Yearly Meeting 4/10-17
- 7 FGC Gathering
- p 8 Black Lives Matter Films  
How Has Covid 19  
Changes Us?
- p 9 Pendel Hill Programs  
Ballitore Project
- P 10 Rethinking William  
Penn
- p 11 Book Review

Please send April events by 3/28/22 to [newsletter@saguakers.org](mailto:newsletter@saguakers.org)

March 2022

## ***News from San Antonio Meeting***

### **Book Exchange, March 6**

Need a new read? Just search the many books, CDs and DVDs on offer. Bring what you have finished and trade. Or just pick up something new [to you]. We'll sort out the adult and children's books for those appropriate for our library.

### **March Forums**

#### **March 13: Consciously engaging in the world, led by Karen Ball**

#### **March 27: Flawed Quaker Heroes – William Penn, led by Gretchen Haynes**

Friends are reconsidering the high esteem bestowed on this seventeenth century Quaker leader. Beside being the founder of the Pennsylvania colony, he was a slave owner and trader. Two articles shed new light on this dilemma; see page 7 for details and explore for yourself before the forum to exchange views on the ethical implications of taking our faith into judgment of history.

### **Children's Program**

#### **"How to Retain Young Families in Quaker Meeting"**

The children enjoyed making peanut soup so much that they will be making **Stone Soup on March 6**. Adult Friends enjoyed their efforts and are invited to stay for soup again. An interesting article online at Friends Journal was co-written by Janaki Spickard Keeler. The young adult authors have collected information about the needs of young families in Meeting. We are currently on track in several areas and can learn to do better, particularly with Tween and Teen kids. We want these parents to know they are important and should be [or become] an integral part of our community. One example is that Renta is now available 'til 12:30, so parents can stay for forums and Business Meeting.

### **FMSA Priorities for FCNL**

On February 13th, eleven Friends attended a forum to determine the legislative priorities for the Friends Committee on National Legislation for the 2023 – 2024 Congress. By consensus of the group, the following seven priorities were discerned to be submitted to FCNL.

- 1) The Climate Crisis. With emphasis on methane emissions, commercial agriculture/livestock, and the carbon tax.
- 2) Budget Reform. To reduce spending on defense and prisons in order to promote social and human-centered services.
- 3) Humane Refugee Policy. Reevaluating the policies putting strict limits on accepting refugees, particularly in light of the workforce shortages in the US.
- 4) Women's Rights. The right to bodily integrity to include freedom from domestic and sexual violence, and equal pay.
- 5) Economic Inequality. The widening gap between the most wealthy and the rest of the population, particularly those with the least resources.



March 2022

6) Health Care. Strengthen and expand ACA or move towards Medicare for all, and address inequities in the rural health systems.

7) Racial Inequality. This includes the wider issues of criminal justice system reform, federal voting rights legislation to ensure access to voting, and discrimination/violence against racial and ethnic minorities.



## Shall we have a Quaker Fair, May 7 ???

It all depends on whether Friends step forward to take up the key tasks. **Coordinator:** send out requests for sellers, in the Meeting and the community (6 weeks); decide if there will be donated baked goods and rummage goods (4 weeks); sign up people for jobs on the day (4 w); get City Permit on S Alamo (3 w); check on progress of other helpers [on going]. **Publicity:** update poster & distribute; prepare p.r. for distribution to list (3 w); up date street signs (in table closet), set out and note locations, with help of Friends(2 w); **.Site Coordinator:** take reservations for booths, (6 w onward). Gretchen has the full job description list and will consult on procedures. The decision will be made at the March Meeting for Business. Shall we do it?

March 2022

## State of the Meeting First Reading, continued from page 1

as the weather warmed, and then with hybrid online/in-person worship when, with many precautions, it became safe to gather in the worship room. We continued to be grateful for the opportunity to worship with distant Friends, both former members and attenders who had moved away and newcomers who found us. We enjoyed seeing new faces on the Zoom screen, and we welcomed new attenders in person as well.

We made an effort to keep in touch with people who were not coming to Zoom meeting, and visited and cared for two older Friends. Those of us who experienced health challenges found joy and spiritual deepening through the care and outreach from meeting.

We mourned the deaths of long-time Friends Janet Southwood and Mark Hickman.

In the fall we began to hold two meetings for worship: an early traditional technology-free hour, and a later hybrid hour. Worship both in the room and online has become deep and centered for most Friends, although vocal ministry is increasingly rare. At the same time, there is a decline in the sense of community spirit with Friends split between the early screen-free worship and the later hybrid hour.

A new integrated audio-visual system will be installed soon which will give us permanently mounted and unobtrusive equipment, a system which will no longer require set-up and take-down for each use. It will also enable Friends with hearing difficulties to hear people in the room and online much more easily. We are hopeful that the less intrusive arrangement will help nurture the sharing of vocal ministry.

Meeting has been able to maintain our connections to the wider world. We have shared online worship and forums with other meetings in Cielo Grande Quarter. Our website, our newsletter, and our Facebook page continue to foster community and further outreach. In May we held our annual Spring Fair, visited by a number of neighbors and friends despite the uncooperative weather. We continue to support a wide variety of causes, especially those pertaining to justice and to refugees and asylum seekers. Outside groups have resumed using the meetinghouse, helping us to strengthen bonds with the community.

We continued to hold deep and substantive forums on spiritual and faith concerns; sessions on discernment and community support were particularly meaningful to newcomers, helping them connect with Quakerism and San Antonio Friends. "Meeting for Weeding" provided an opportunity to gather safely outside to tend to the meetinghouse and grounds. One Friend hosted a weekly study of "A Course in Miracles". We held monthly tailgate picnics in our parking lot, and in general strove to get together as much as possible given the pandemic restrictions.

The suspension of the children's program was perhaps the most difficult challenge of this time. Toward the end of the year, we developed a plan to re-start the children's program. It has been thrilling to welcome a new (small) group of young ones, and the joy in the meetinghouse in their presence is palpable.

March 2022

A perpetual issue that has been exacerbated by the pandemic is that a disproportionate share of the work of the meeting has fallen on a few Friends. We are hopeful that as we return to more in-person activities we can focus on helping everyone find their own ways to support the life of the meeting. Looking back over the past year, we feel strongly that we are part of a community where we care for one another, where we strive to help everyone be the person they want to be, and above all, a place where we can thrive centered in the Spirit.

### ***Ongoing Concerns from the State of the Meeting Process***

Friends Monthly Meetings are asked to annually review the State of the Meeting, and the draft of this report is included in this newsletter (p 1 & 5) & posted online. Val reviewed notes of our forum that gathered information for the draft and the draft itself, and came up with several issues that were of concern for us, which were considered by a few Friends in attendance at the Feb 27 forum.

Val hopes everyone who cares about the future of the Meeting will consider these concerns and not only hold them in the Light, but also listen prayerfully to the leadings of the Spirit to see if there is a response you can make to them. The Ministry, Care, and Guidance committee would like to receive your responses at <[ministry@sauquakers.org](mailto:ministry@sauquakers.org)> The items are in no particular order:

What can we do to address a lack of participation in Meeting relative to pre-Pandemic?

How can we reduce the strain on a few Friends and their burnout?

How can we address a concern that there is little sense of community between attenders of the two Meetings for Worship on Sundays?

What can each of us do to improve vocal ministry in worship?

After we receive your responses, we'll add them to a report to be published next month

### ***Wider Quaker World***

#### ***Led by Faith to Work for Justice*** ***South Central Yearly Meeting, April 10 – 17, 2022***

**Kallan Benson**, a young Friend engaged in environmental activism is the featured guest of the Annual Session. She became the national coordinator for Fridays For Future USA and co-organizer for FFF International's outreach group. She attended the 2021 climate talks in Glasgow and traveled in Europe meeting other young activists and accompanied Greta Thunberg during her many meetings with U.S. young people.

Kallan will offer a workshop illustrating how her faith led her to undertake this work and will meet in person with our young people to engage them in her concerns. Other workshops will explore building relationships with indigenous peoples, environmental justice, volunteering for Quaker service, how to



## March 2022

deepen relationships across generations, opposing the death penalty. To encourage participation, the YM is offering a \$50. fee for in-person and virtual registration. To see the full schedule of workshops and other events, please see the SCYM website.

Representatives met on 2/26 to discern **whether to hold the annual session in person** at Greene Family Camp or completely virtual. In over two hours, Friends expressed concern for safety, particularly in sleeping arrangements. About 100 adults attended last year; safe sleeping quarters are available for that number in 2022. They concluded that a poll was needed to determine how many adults and children are planning to attend in person. An email poll is going out to get a preliminary count, and Friends will reconvene 3/5 to make a final decision.

### **FGC Gathering July 3 – 9**

On behalf of the 2022 Gathering Committee, we invite you to join us for a Spirit-filled week of workshops, plenaries, worship, music, fun, fellowship and more as we come together both in-person in Radford, VA and online for FGC's annual Gathering July 3-9, 2022. Visit the website for complete details of program and [soon] plenary speakers.

Mornings: Adults and high schoolers sign up for a [week-long workshop](#) when they register for the Gathering. All children (birth through rising ninth grade) are in age-specific Junior Gathering groups (the children's program).



Evenings: Adults gather each evening to hear a [speaker or performer](#). On Wednesday night, Friends of all ages gather for an evening together - usually for a concert. High Schoolers are welcome at all evening programs.

Location: Radford University is located in Radford, Virginia, in the "heart of the New River Valley" near

the scenic Blue Ridge Mountains. It is about 15 miles southwest of Blacksburg, 45 minutes from the Roanoke airport, 20 minutes from Claytor Lake State Park and about an hour from the Blue Ridge Parkway. There is Amtrak service to Roanoke. For those who are driving, it is quite close to I-81.

For Friends who aren't travelling to Radford, we will have a Virtual Gathering option, with [workshops](#) just for online attenders, and livestreamed [Evening Programs](#).

[Sign up for email updates about the Gathering, and/or to receive the 2022 Advance Program.](#)

The 2022 Advance Program will be published and downloadable in mid-March, 2022.

**Early Registration starts April 11, 2022** around 10:00am (Eastern Daylight Time.) All full-time registrations completed during this time have equal access to workshops and housing options, and priority consideration for financial aid. Early registration closes April 21, 11:59pm EDT.

March 2022

**Registration will temporarily close from April 22–28:** Lotteries will occur for any oversubscribed workshops & housing choices. All early registrants will be informed of their workshop & housing assignments.

**Standard Registration starts April 29:** Workshops and financial assistance will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Beginning June 1, there is a late fee for all full-time and half-Gathering registrations. Late fees will not be charged for part-time registrations.

***Black Lives Matter Film Festival*** Friends are invited to the Black Quaker Lives Matter Film Festival, a first-of-its-kind film festival that endeavors to educate all about the importance of Quakers of Color who for too long have remained within the margins of the Society of Friends and the wider world. From 12 February 2022, during Black History Month, until Paul Robeson's birthday on 9 April 2022 we will screen films centered on a Quaker of Color with an introduction from a guest expert and a follow up discussion facilitated by BQP Director Dr. Harold D. (Hal) Weaver. Screenings will take place every other Saturday on Zoom at 1pm ET. [More Info and Registration](#)

### ***How Has COVID Changed Us? A Reflection***

Jude Isabella is the Editor-in-Chief of Hakai Magazine (<https://hakaimagazine.com/>), a Victoria, B.C.-based online magazine that focuses on coastal science and societies. Her recent "Notes from the Editor" reflects on her team's experience of the last two years. Our own newsletter editor finds her reflections helpful in thinking about the state of our Meeting. Here are a few paragraphs from her several-page long piece:

"We spent March 2020 to June 2020 in a state of urgency: we made a dramatic pivot, dropping our usual beat to assist our colleagues at a regional publication reporting on COVID-19. That three months was a blur. Editors and writers worked fast. We stressed about finding enough writers. We stressed about accuracy. We stressed that we could not keep up the pace.

"Somehow we managed until we could ease back into our usual beat and less reactive rhythm. But something had shifted: our contributors were having a hard time writing, a hard time filing on time, a hard time getting the work done because even sources found it more difficult to find time or energy for an interview. Not all writers and not all sources, but enough for us to notice. And almost two years into the pandemic, things have improved but a malaise lingers.

"In some cases, writers and sources are dealing with child-care and eldercare issues. Others are playing hot potato with stress in various forms. A pandemic coupled with the effects of climate change playing out before us must worry even the most stoic. In British Columbia, we've had three climate-related emergencies in 2021: a heat dome (which led to the death of almost 600 people), wildfires (one of which obliterated a town), and flooding that has largely cut part of southern British Columbia, including Vancouver, off from the rest of Canada. Sometimes it seems as though the fourth horseman of the apocalypse is looking down on us, ominously paused on a hill nearby.

"This constant simmering threat of disaster and death running in the background is distracting. It's logical that we'd be instinctively hardwired to care more about our mortality than a deadline. We live in uncertain times. Stocking our closets with toilet paper at least makes us feel prepared: we're doing something. It doesn't take much thought either; it's a fast, reactive, and selfish action. Spend almost



## March 2022

two years with a chronic fight or flight response hovering in the amygdala and it's easy to spend your day rushing and reacting to the most innocuous events and overreacting to threats, real or imagined.

"I've been thinking about two fables lately, "Chicken Little" and "The Tortoise and the Hare." I know that Chicken Little warns against fearmongering, but my biggest takeaway as a kid was this: even if the sky is falling, racing around in a panic won't help. My takeaway from the struggle of the tortoise and the hare was the same as everyone else's: don't rush, you'll get there. . . . We do our mightiest work when we focus on quality, not speed."

**Hakai Magazine** is free to read online at <https://hakaimagazine.com/> You can also sign up for a free weekly newsletter featuring new articles.

## *Pendle Hill Programs*

### Opening to the Heart of Worship

**Mar 11-13, 2022**

A weekend workshop in person with Christopher Sammond (Friday at 4:30pm through Sunday at noon.)

This workshop will focus on practical skills that will enhance our ability to enter into deep, transformative worship. We will explore how we prepare for worship, how we center down, how to listen to each other with our whole being – body, mind, and spirit – and how to better open to each other and the Divine during worship. [Read more and register.](#)

### The Ballitore Project

Dear colleagues: We are excited to announce the launch of [Corresponding with Quakers](#), a collaborative transcription project on the [Zooniverse](#) platform. We need your help transcribing thousands of pages of 18th- and 19th-century Irish Quaker correspondence and journals!

The [Ballitore Project](#) is an investigation into the papers of the Shackleton, Leadbeater, and Barrington families, held at UCSB Library's Special Research Collections. Dating from the period when Quakers were central to issues of abolitionism and women's rights, these documents can offer new insight into British, Irish, and American political history.

The project is a collaboration between UCSB, Cal State-Northridge, and Howard University that brings together teams of undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty to investigate the Ballitore Collection. We combine archival research with computational methodologies to read the materials in new ways. In order for our work to be successful, we need to create plain-text transcriptions and metadata for each document.

Corresponding with Quakers is our transcription site using the Zooniverse platform. The site will ask you to complete two tasks: transcribe a document (usually a 2- to 4-page letter) and then choose some keywords to describe the document. The letters offer fascinating views into daily life in the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as new knowledge about the era's key political debates.

For more information on the project, please visit our [website](#) and/or [Twitter feed](#). Rachael King and the Ballitore Project team E-mail: [rking@english.ucsb.edu](mailto:rking@english.ucsb.edu), [rachaelsking@gmail.com](mailto:rachaelsking@gmail.com)



## Rethinking William Penn

by Trudy Bayer

I have consistently heard vocal ministry on the dangers of judging William Penn by today's standards. *Yes, Penn was a slaveholder, but his slaveholding was the product and expression of his historical period and can only be understood and judged within that context.* On multiple occasions, I have heard this historical explanation of Penn and slavery: *White, wealthy, propertied men owned slaves. That's what they did.*

But are these statements accurate? What are the documented facts of the historical record? Would an honest accounting of the historical record alter our understanding of Penn's role as a Quaker slaveholder?

Penn was among a scant seven percent of Philadelphians who owned slaves. Among his fellow Quakers in Penn's Woods, he was even more of an anomaly. In 1688, the nearby Germantown Meeting issued a "Petition Against Slavery," indicting the evil institution, demanding its immediate abolition, and calling for universal human rights. The fact is that many of Penn's Quaker contemporaries "woke" to the horrific suffering of slavery and human bondage, despite the constraints of their historical moment, but he did not.

**[Read the entire essay** online at Friends Journal website: click on the magnifying glass symbol in the left of the tool bar, enter "Bayer" in the search bar, see the article box.] ] [See also *Flawed Quaker Heroes: Questioning the Narrative of William Penn*, Friends journal, January 2022. An objective view of Penn by Kathleen Bell, a British Quaker. "As Quakers, we have testimonies of

March 2022

truth and equality. Adhering to these values would seem to suggest that we have a responsibility to examine and face up to the uncomfortable truths of the past, with all their awkward and painful implications.” These articles are the basis of the Forum on Mar 27, led by Gretchen Haynes.]

## Also in Friends Journal

### How Agent Provocateurs Harm Our Movements

by Steve Chase, reviewed by George Lakey

As a young Friend in the 1960s, I learned much from older Friends who advanced Friends testimonies through social movements. Once again, we have younger Friends whose futures are in peril, and many understand that the outcome depends on skillful navigation by social movements. The question is: What does “skillful navigation” look like when we hit the white water?

Researcher and writer Steve Chase has been tracking the controversy over whether some social activist violence might be useful, at least for the purpose of defending activists against right-wing armed individuals and militias—a timely question in the United States. As polarization increases, more activists may want to meet that threat by resorting to violence, and that in turn creates more opportunity for local and state governments to employ agents provocateurs who pretend to be activists and use violence that can then be blamed on us.

## Other News of Interest

After a hiatus in January and February, the State of Texas is scheduled to execute three people in March and April, including an 81-year-old man who has spent three decades on death row and a Mexican-American woman who was wrongfully convicted for an accidental death.

On March 8, 2022, Texas is scheduled to execute **Michael Gonzales**, who was convicted in Ector County (Odessa) in 1995. The State is scheduled to execute **Carl Wayne Buntion** on April 21, 2022. Buntion, who at 81 is the oldest person on death row in Texas, was convicted in 1991 in Harris County. You can find information about how to protest these executions at The Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (<https://tcadp.org/>)

Most concerning of all is the April 27 execution date set for **Melissa Lucio**, who was wrongfully convicted and sentenced to death for the accidental death of her daughter, Mariah, in Cameron County in 2008. Melissa is on death row despite forensic and eyewitness evidence that her daughter died from a head injury she suffered in a fall. Read more about Melissa’s case and [sign a petition launched by the Innocence Project](#) calling on the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles and Governor Abbott to grant clemency. Go to @innocence on Twitter and @innocenceproject on Instagram for updates and share posts with the hashtag #SaveMelissaLucio or #SalveMosAMelissa.



March 2022

### FCNL Letter Writing Request

Since 1945, thousands of people have suffered without compensation from radiation exposure caused by U.S. nuclear weapons production and testing. Victims of nuclear testing and uranium mining are still here and deserve restitution and recognition. The House will soon consider legislation that would expand and extend the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA). If Congress fails to act, RECA will expire this summer, leaving communities who were exposed to nuclear radiation with no way to pay for cancer treatments and hospital bills.

Urge your Representative to support nuclear testing survivors and extend the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (H.R. 5338) before July 2022. <https://fcnl.quorum.us/campaign/36985/>

Please send your news, items of interest and pictures to [newsletter@saquakers.org](mailto:newsletter@saquakers.org) by March 28 for the April newsletter. Thanks.



Martin Luther King, Jr. March, January 21, 2019