



The Friendly News

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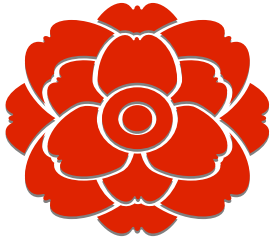
News of Friends

Friends Peace Teams Global Meeting in Philadelphia

In under two weeks, Val covered 3,500 miles by car with Kevin King, the other South Central Yearly Meeting representative, on the way to Friends Peace Teams' (FPT's) Global Meeting in Philadelphia. They began with a Pupusa dinner, a mini-concert by Val's son, guitarist Edward Grigassy, and a presentation by Salomon Medina, Coordinator of Peacebuilding en las Americas (PLA) at Liveoak Friends Meeting in Houston and another presentation at Friends Meeting of Memphis TN.

In Philadelphia, they attended three-and-a-half days of meetings with FPT, including a presentation by four Central and South American members of PLA. The conference brought 20 Friends and FPT colleagues from on other countries and 40 from around the U.S.

Val said it was wonderful to hear reports of activities around the world. FPT is working on anti-racism and decolonization, and this year made the Council (made up mostly of representatives of US Yearly Meetings) into a North American Regional Group, on par with the other regional groups (PLA, Asia West-Pacific, African Great Lakes Initiative and the new Europe Regional Group) which all send representatives to the new Global Council, that decides issues that involve the whole FPT.



Query How do I distinguish between divine leadings and my own needs and desires?

We have built our Meeting House on Payaya People's land.

Here are the direct links for our weekly activities.

- **Sunday Meetings for Worship**
10-11am, in-person in Meetinghouse & Zoom.
 - **Children's Program 1st & 3rd Sundays**
- **[CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#)**
ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
- **Sunday Forums: 11:30-12:30**
[CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#)
ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
- **Tuesdays 7-8pm: Course in Miracles**– led by David
 - **[CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#)** –
ID # 988 3173 6394; passcode: 724708
- **Friday Meeting for Worship – Fridays 8-8:30 AM**
 - **[CLICK HERE to join by Zoom](#)** –
ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
- **1st Sunday Pot Luck Lunch**
- **3rd Saturday “Meeting for Weeding”**
- **3rd Sunday Meeting for Worship with Attention To Business** *join by Zoom* –
ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
- **For ALL Zoom Meetings: by telephone at +1 346 248 7799, then enter ID#**

Please send July news, pictures & events by 6/25/2023 to newsletter@saquakers.org

Special Events

JUNE 2 Pot Luck 11:15

JUNE 11 Forum 11:30 TBA

JUNE 18 Meeting for Business 11:30

JUNE 25 Forum 11:30 Isaac Pennington, led by Gary (more info p 5)

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Joni and James: A Fond Farewell

Our best wishes go with them as they make the move to Bakersville, North Carolina this summer. They are waiting on an assessment about putting in a septic system on property they plan to buy. Joni's brother is a building contractor and will supervise their retirement home on the hill. In the meantime, they will rent part of a house nearby and get to know folks. If all goes well, they will be packed up and ready to roll by mid-July. Joni says her heart is here while her mind is already there. They have a head start by worshipping with Celo Friends Meeting.

See the article "Building Cultural Topsoil: A Community of Growers in Southern Appalachia" in the May Friends Journal for a fascinating story of various forms of sustainable farming by the Celo Friends Meeting folks and neighbors.

Gary and Vivian

A two-week camping trip to Colorado Springs was their way of celebrating Viv's recovery from the mysterious neurological bout. On their return, Gary will pick up the thread of his three-part series focusing on quotes of early Quakers: Margaret Fell in April, Isaac Pennington in June and George Fox in July. Combined, these quotations form a foundation for the discoveries of these searchers.

George continues his visits to Chicago

No, he's not avoiding the Texas heat, but rather helping his sister negotiate the complex health care system. She was on dialysis, then the providers kicked her off on a technicality. She can't get into assisted living until she's back on dialysis. Yes, it's a tangled web of bureaucracy but George is determined to set it all straight. He has done that all his life whenever someone needed help. His most recent trip was for two weeks. We will hold you and your sister in the Light.

Gretchen

Gretchen finally got to see the orthopedic doctor and learned what was causing the back pain: eight compression fractures. These have accumulated over the years and are apparently healing themselves. So, no procedures needed, just a low dose of Tylenol, no heavy lifting or twisting. What a relief.

A Request Bonnie Zimmer, a Friend from Maryland, writes:

My son and I would like to travel to Texas to see the solar eclipse on April 8, 2024. We would prefer to find Friendly hospitality among perhaps somewhat 'geeky' Friends where we might also find good conversation.

I am a retired ecologist in my mid 70's and live in a Quaker retirement community (Friends House) in Maryland. Oolan is a math/computer sort who lives in Huntsville, Alabama. If you can help me / us find such Friendly hospitality, I would be very grateful. (sandbox33@gmail.com)

Reorganization – a review

The minutes and newsletters of the last six months, and more, show the concentration on the present state and future of San Antonio Meeting. The Covid situation cut into our participation in worship and activities. Continuing all the activities with a half to two thirds of Friends proved unsustainable. What could we let go and still function? What was the basic minimum?

Out of the efforts of many came the concept of time-limited volunteering and a chart of the tasks needed. The illustration for May shows that Zoom is fully covered by two Friends and two days of closing by one Friend. Pot luck set up by a couple. No other boxes are filled.

The chart for June looks about the same. Is there a lesson to be drawn? Is it too soon to tell? Are the same people fated to carry the load?

And yet we worship.

Someone unlocks the doors. Someone puts out snacks and makes the coffee. In May the Pot Luck was taken down, and after Meeting for Business, the snacks were put away, mugs and dishes put into the dishwasher, doors were locked, not all by the person whose name was on the chart.

Sunday Tasks	5/7/23	5/14/23		
Open Meetinghouse procedure*				
Put out guest book shelf				
Greet visitors as they arrive				
Set up & run zoom and assisted listening equipment	Kara	Hector	Kara	Hector
Set up after Meeting snacks & coffee				
Close Meetinghouse procedure*	Jackson		Jackson	
set up potluck tables & chairs	Kara/Hector			
Take down tables & chairs				

You might say it's magic, but actually, it's Quaker Community. Friends do what they see needs doing, while chatting together. So, if you don't see your name on the Task chart, it's not too late to make it official. If you're not sure what's involved in a particular task, please ask about how to it. That's how we build our community.

Naming Committee

Each fall, the Nominating Committee prepares a list of those Friends who will serve the Meeting in the year to come. But they, in turn, must be named. In the spring, three Friends get together and nominate the Nominating Committee. This year is particularly significant because both our Co-Clerks complete their term of service in December.

Because San Antonio Meeting doesn't have a paid clergy, we are all ministers. But we do need one or two Friends to take on particular responsibilities. These are laid out in detail in the Handbook and are summarized here.

The most obvious is presiding over the Monthly Meeting for Business where the various committees report on their activities and needs. The Clerk and Recording Clerk prepare the record of the proceedings, known as the Minutes, and circulate them. She or he then keeps track of any decisions made to be sure the instructions of the Meeting are carried out. The Clerk is the main contact of Meeting members, clerks of committees and outside groups.

There are the rarer events, such as arranging and presiding over marriages and memorial meetings, oversight of preparing the annual State of the Meeting Report and naming the Nominating Committee.

We have often had Co-Clerks who divide the responsibilities as best serves their gifts.

Children's Program continues in Summer

Three of our families requested that the program continue over the summer. We will take a brief break for 4th of July, so the dates will be June 4 and 18, then July 16, August 6 and 20. The committee looks forward to enlisting the help of one or two more adults to learn the special program of Faith & Play, the Quaker curriculum. Please speak to Gretchen to help out.

It's a Party, June 4

Its bigger than a Pot Luck. We celebrate all the birthdays between January and July. The children decorate the cake and create the card. Sorry Hallmark. Don't miss it.

Juneteenth

For anyone not familiar with Texas history, this holiday, celebrated on June 19, commemorates the emancipation of enslaved people in the US.



The now federal holiday was first celebrated in Texas, where on that date in 1865, in the aftermath of the Civil War, enslaved people were declared free under the terms of the 1862 Emancipation Proclamation.

Forum. June 25, 11:30

Isaac Pennington was an early convert to Friends and became an influential defender of the movement, writing extensively on many topics. His writings are valued for their insightful and eloquent exploration of spiritual experience, with his Letters being read continuously within Quakerism for their spiritual counsel. His complete works were first published in 1681 and are still in print today. Pennington also published several books about the movement.

He was imprisoned six times for his beliefs, starting in 1661. Sometimes the charge was refusal to take an oath, as this went against Quaker teachings. Such action was prohibited by the Quaker Act of 1662, which sought to control members of the group. At other times Pennington was charged with attending a Quaker meeting, which was forbidden by the Conventicle Act of 1664.

Join Gary as we will examine one of his quotations to see how his thoughts still apply to our lives today. This is the second in a three-part exploration of early Quaker writings.

Friends General Conference (FGC)

The annual **Gathering** is held on college campuses and moves around the country. This year it will be in the west – Western Oregon University in Monmouth, Oregon from July 2 to 8.

The week offers many forms of worship from early morning outdoors to afternoon; elements of worship are in every workshop and an ongoing circle is at the check in table. There are small worship sharing groups on four afternoons. The week begins and ends with a full group worship. Imagine the depth of silence in a room with hundreds of Friends.

Four evening programs offer thought-provoking dialogues and Tuesday is set aside for interest groups. These explore peace, justice, education, spirituality and other Quaker concerns. And every day there is the Noon Sing – from Rise Up Singing book, late evening films, and if you have any energy left, dancing.

The highlight for me is the choice among 36 morning workshops, to name just a few: *The Importance of the Mystic*; *Mindfulness Practice and Quaker Practice*; *Telling Our Whole Religious Stories*; *Photography and the Art of Seeing*. You can see the whole list at the website. Because we meet with the same people all week, we can get to know each other in greater depth.

The cost of the program, lodging and meals can be offset by financial aid from FGC and our home Meeting. All the details are set out in the brochure posted in the foyer and on the FGC website. It is an opportunity to broaden and deepen our Quaker experience. I have been attending Gathering since 2003; so if you want more details, I'd be glad to share.

Gretchen

Interfaith Welcome Coalition

The **Advocacy Committee** of the **Interfaith Welcome Coalition (IWC)** of San Antonio is motivated by values informed by faith traditions in Bexar County and beyond. We speak, write, and demonstrate for change that will bring justice and the blessings of liberty for asylum seekers seeking safety in our county, state, and nation.

Join us as we explore ways to advocate for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Our hour-long Zoom meetings are spirited, informative, and inspiring; the next one is **Monday, June 5, at 8 pm**. Email co-chair Meg Scott [here](#) for an invitation.

Building community is important, and after the pandemic, we all need opportunities to connect and reconnect. For the months of April - June, IWC will host a **First Friday Platica** at the **SA Mennonite Church**, 10—11:30 a.m. This gathering is open to IWC volunteers and supporters, community members, asylum seekers, and anyone else interested in coming.

These casual gatherings will feature round-table conversations on a monthly theme plus free coffee and donuts.

Feel free to join us in June, even if you never attended before.

RSVPs are not required but are helpful for planning. To RSVP please email director@interfaithwelcomecoalition.org.

What: IWC First Friday Platicas

When: Next Event - June 2, 10—11:30 a.m.

Location: SA Mennonite Church, 1443 S. St Mary's, San Antonio, TX 78210

Hosts: Tori Salas (IWC Coordinating Director) & Katie Myers (IWC Board Chair)

Express News Op Ed, May 24, 2023

by Gary Whiting & Poonan

Mass shootings continue to dominate the news. Opponents of gun control have doubled down on the argument that this is a mental health issue and does not require restrictions on gun availability. This is debatable, though as practicing psychologists we are again called upon to address the mental health issues involved in anonymous killings. We previously published an op-ed piece in the Express News after the Uvalde massacre which presented the following argument: these behaviors can clearly be labeled “antisocial” given the damage done to our public trust and security. The opposite of this is termed “prosocial” and there is much research in our field that confirms that active care and support, or fostering prosocial behavior, is healthy and healing. This is common sense: kindness fosters kindness, and meanness does damage. We recommended that our schools become resource centers, given that here is the crucial juncture at which the public community becomes aware of the beginnings of antisocial behaviors in children. This would mean adequate teacher-child coverage to allow for individual attention for problem children, in addition to counselors and social workers to reach out to the homes. The research on enrichment programs in schools is encouraging, as is any form of individual attention when a child is clearly struggling. As therapists, we have time and again heard stories from adults who were from rough homes who were able to use school as a refuge and as a place for positive achievement, helping them gain ground on a stable sense of self.

Here is a sobering fact: reports confirm that the young man who returned to his fourth grade classroom in Uvalde as a shooter had been bullied and tormented in that very room, with notable changes in behavior from that point forward. He had apparently presented as a regular kid in the school years prior, though with increasingly isolated and threatening behaviors in the years to follow. These were known facts, but what help was available?

So, if a “mental health” solution is called for, it is necessary to properly fund social support programs, both in the schools and even in our larger communities. It is fair to say that increased financial stress, poor nutrition, low quality child care, and increasing desperation in your daily life do not help with a sense of stability and security. If mental health really is the central driver of continued mass shootings, why not support psychological stability by properly funding programs that support the most basic of human needs? And yet, at the federal level, there is ongoing talk about reducing or eliminating food stamps, Medicare, housing allowances, and other programs meant to help struggling families stave off this sense of slowly going under. People acting from a place of fear, reactivity, and despair are incapable of giving their best to society. A feeling of safety is foundational to prosocial behavior.

Prosocial means that we are intent on being a compassionate, inclusive society, that we have an active sense of being in this together. It does not mean diverting money from public schools who serve everyone and pouring it into private schools where the privileged can escape. Schools can play a pivotal role in helping children develop a healthy sense of self, a feeling of joy in life, and solidarity with each other. Where else do we gain this vital sense of togetherness, if not in our early classroom experiences? And yet, interview one of our dedicated elementary school teachers and ask them if they have adequate resources to help this happen, and very few will answer affirmatively. An adequate staff-child ratio is necessary to

teach the basic “commandments”, like taking turns, sharing, talking nice to each other, and not hitting. And for our high school students who are clearly lost: why not fund participation in something like JobCorps or Americorps, get them out of a dead-end home and learning a trade?

It makes good social sense to cultivate strong, healthy young lives, as doing so ultimately benefits us all. If we fail to offer our kids realistic hope for improving their lives and achieving their dreams, we will ultimately pay the price as a society, as we are now. Human beings who feel helpless and isolated and have nothing to lose can easily commit antisocial acts. Yet as therapists and parents we know this: individual attention and concern can make all the difference.