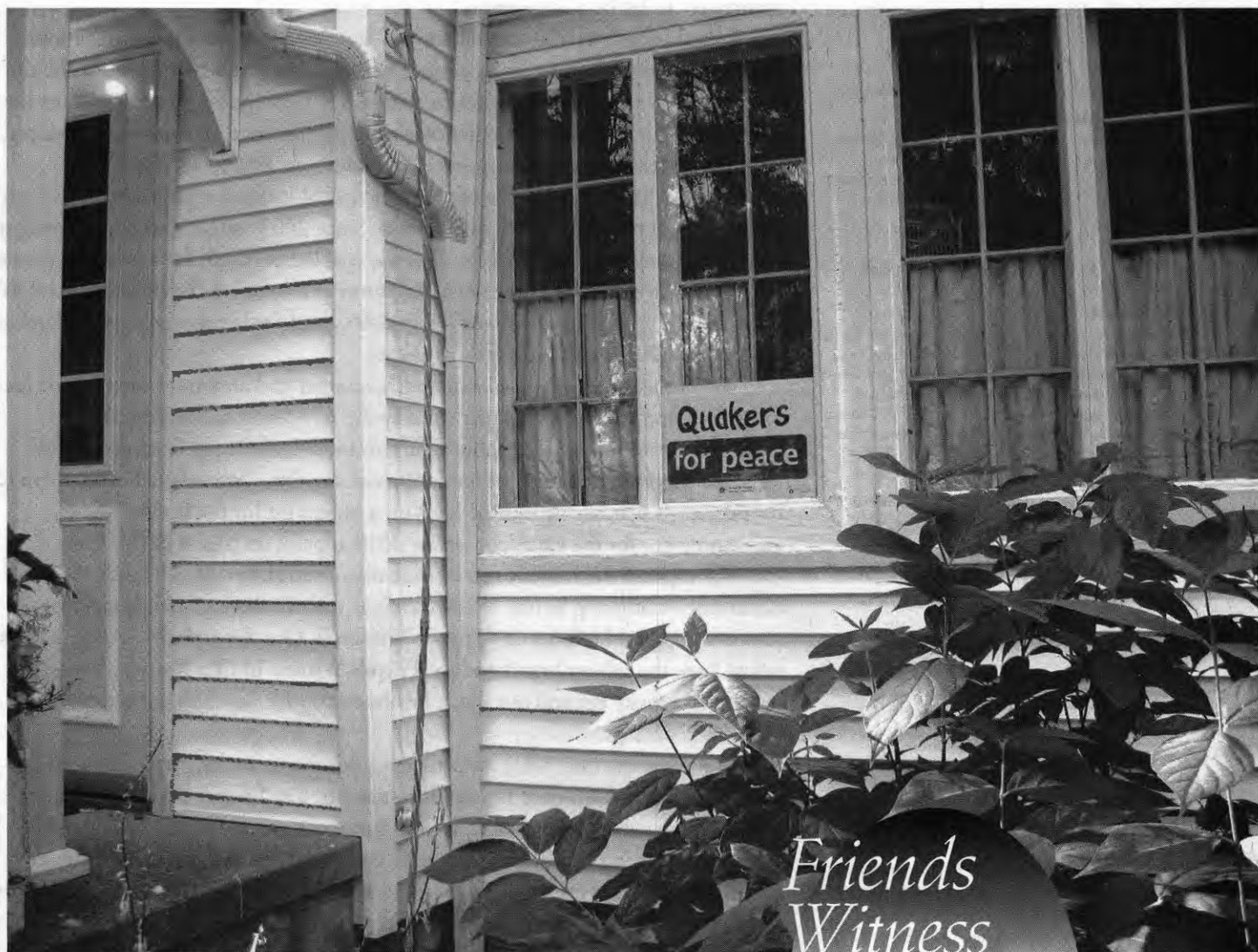


October 2009 • \$6

FRIENDS JOURNAL

Quaker
Thought
and
Life
Today



*Friends
Witness
in Our
Everyday
Lives*

**An independent
magazine serving
the Religious
Society of Friends**



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■ AMONG FRIENDS

On the Genesis of Special Issues

Most of what appears in FRIENDS JOURNAL—feature articles, as well as in the departments—comes from individuals (mostly Friends, but also others) who are self-motivated to share their writing and send us unsolicited submissions. Friends love to write, and we are blessed to receive proposed articles all the time, from which we assemble a coherent offering each month. It may surprise you that it is the exception rather than the rule for us proactively to invite a submission.

Special issues, however, are different. There have been occasional single-topic issues going far back into this magazine's 54-year history. The occasion may be the anniversary of a leading Quaker organization, the passing of a noted Friend, or the emergence of heightened awareness of a topic (for instance, the issue on "Japanese American Internment: a Retrospective" of November 1992).

FRIENDS JOURNAL's pattern of planning special issues at regular intervals began shortly after the turning of the millennium. Since 2002, we have scheduled two pre-announced special issues each year. This has enabled us to call for writing on themes that otherwise receive too little attention. Some examples are "Friends and the Arts" (May 2002), "Friends and Money" (July 2006), and the last special issue, "Marriage, Gender, and Relationships," (this past June).

We set the topics of special issues each summer and announce them in the fall for publication the following year (usually the June and October issues), with deadlines for submissions set about four months before the publication date. We welcome suggestions for special issue topics at any time, and we hold on to them to consider each year, saving unused ideas on a master list for the future. The announcement for the issues chosen for 2010 appears on page 4 of this issue.

The topic of this current special issue originated at the 2008 Friends General Conference Gathering in one of our meetings with Gathering attendees, when someone suggested a focus on "Friends Witness in Our Workplaces." As we editors talked later, the subject broadened to "Friends Witness in Our Everyday Lives," to include all activity beyond our direct involvement with our faith community on First-day mornings.

As is often the case, when we settled on this theme we had little clarity about the range of what we would receive. It turned out that Friends were ready for it. The resulting collection of articles is both harmonious and broadly based, and it lends itself to being read straight through, cover to cover. We expect the issue to provoke thought for readers from brand-new meeting attenders to seasoned Friends, and it can easily become the subject of group discussion in meetings as Friends consider what it means for our faith to permeate our everyday conduct.

Bob Dockhorn



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Jake Levin

Have you experienced a "gathered meeting"?

I am writing to the readers of FRIENDS JOURNAL with a special request for help with research. A 2003 graduate of Haverford College, I have been an intern at the JOURNAL during the summers of 2002, 2007, and 2008, helping with editing, writing, and collecting articles for anthologies. Although not a Quaker myself, my experiences at Haverford, as well as my time as an intern, have inspired an interest in Quaker practices. I am particularly interested in silence during meeting for worship and the decision-making process. I am currently starting work on the dissertation for my doctorate in Communication at University of Massachusetts, Amherst, with a plan to explore the gathered meeting for worship, which I have come to understand as central to the worship experience of many Quakers. The way in which Friends understand the gathered meeting fascinates me, and I am curious to hear how different Friends describe this experience.

I would greatly appreciate it if FRIENDS JOURNAL readers would be willing to share their experiences of gathered meetings. I would be interested in any stories readers might have of meetings for worship that they have felt to be covered, what led up to these meetings, and also what may have resulted from them—for example, following a gathered meeting for worship with attention to business. My research will focus on how Quakers understand and communicate about the gathered meeting and what role it might play in the meeting community as well as the wider Quaker community, in particular through decisions that arise through a gathered meeting.

I thank readers in advance for their help and for sharing their experiences, and I also thank everyone at the JOURNAL for their support and encouragement. Readers can send their responses to <emarkham@comm.umass.edu>.

Elizabeth Molina-Markham
Amherst, Mass.

Correcting a "factual correction"—and more

I disagree on only one point with Rabbi David Osachy's letter ("Factual Corrections," Forum, FJ Aug.): his claim that my article, "Homosexuality and the

Bible: One Quaker's Response to the Pope" (FJ June) conflates the quotes I mentioned from Leviticus with the faith and practice of most Jews in the present, or even in the past. That objection aside, I do very much appreciate David's reminder to all of us that the vast majority of modern Jews support gay and lesbian rights—something that cannot yet be said about self-professed Christians worldwide. This is a very important point, and one I wish I had also highlighted in my article.

I also think David is right that it is nothing but a long-standing anti-Jewish prejudice to assume that Judaism is at root a "religion of severity and intolerance" whereas the faith and practice of most Christians embodies love, justice, and compassion. Any serious look at the history of these two deeply entwined religious traditions indicates such a comparative claim is patently false.

Also, let's remember that Jesus was himself a radical Jewish mystic, prophet, and teacher who organized a nonviolent Jewish renewal movement within first century Palestine, then under an oppressive occupation by the Roman Empire. Nor was Jesus the first Jewish

prophet to compassionately reject those few elements in Leviticus that are hateful, cruel, or violent, let alone the several other less harmful cultural and legalistic norms that are attributed to Moses in the Torah, but which have long been seen by many Jews as not really important or necessary in living a faithful life.

As I mentioned in my article, the nonfundamentalist view of Jewish Law held by Jesus was actually something he held in common with much of the ancient prophetic tradition within Judaism. In my article I specifically mentioned Micah, one of my favorite Jewish prophets, to make just this point. There is not much in Jesus' ministry and life example that is not an echo of Micah's call to love justice, practice kindness, and walk humbly with our God. Nor was Micah the first ancient Jewish prophet or teacher to hold such views.

Just to be clear, I also don't personally agree with the later, Gentile-oriented belief that has so separated Christians from Jews for close to 2,000 years—which is the creedal claim that Jesus of Nazareth was himself a divine being. For me, the

Continued on page 52

Special Issues for 2010

Most FRIENDS JOURNAL issues offer feature articles on a variety of subjects, but periodically we publish thematic issues. For 2010, we invite submissions for the following two special issues:

Fiftieth Anniversary of Earlham School of Religion (June 2010)

ESR has had a wide impact on the Religious Society of Friends. We will take the occasion of its 50th anniversary to look at it more carefully, and we invite submissions, long and short, from all who have been involved in or affected by ESR.

We request complete submissions by February 1, 2010.

Friends and Education (October 2010)

In January 2001 we published a special issue with this same theme. Nine years have passed, and we are ready again for an across-the-board look at the diverse experiences and issues surrounding Friends involvement in primary, secondary, and higher education—including, but not limited to: financial issues, home schooling, Friends in public education, the mission of Friends schools today, putting Friends values into a curriculum, what to do when no Friends school is at hand, encountering challenges, facing issues of privilege, building Quaker community among Friends school and Friends college students.

We request complete submissions by May 15, 2010.

If you are interested in contributing material on these topics, please get in touch with us. We invite advance inquiries and suggestions from prospective authors and artists. Contact Robert Dockhorn, senior editor, at <senioreditor@friendsjournal.org>, or by postal mail, telephone, or fax; for addresses/numbers, see the masthead on page 2. The general Submission Guidelines for FRIENDS JOURNAL are posted on our website, <www.friendsjournal.org>.

Knowing Experimentally

In "Christ-Centeredness and Quaker Identity" (*FJ* July), R. Scot Miller writes that his "fear is that Quakerism will be swallowed by the universals of the modern world, and when the universals are practiced, there are no 'heretics' to express an alternative vision of what faith might look like." He urges us to keep our unique voice Christ-centered. He reserves particular concern about the presence of nontheist Friends among us potentially "devaluing the praxis of a worship community whose identity was profoundly centered in the person of Jesus of Nazareth."

Arriving yesterday from the Friends General Conference Gathering and finding this in the issue of *FRIENDS JOURNAL* that greeted my return home, I contrast it with my experience in a weeklong workshop on "Quaker Identity and the Heart of Our Faith." I completely agree that it is important to stay grounded in the roots of our Quaker faith and our "practice of peculiarities." I understand and I agree that we must not "abandon our history" and the value of "its presence in our witness." Let me assure you that though I have met many, I have never met a nontheist Friend who believed otherwise.

I disagree deeply about what R. Scot Miller lays claim to as the essence of that faith and heritage. It is wrong to assert that this essence is a belief in the supernatural Christ Jesus. The heart of Quakerism as a religion, as a tradition, and as praxis, is instead, at its essence, a belief in the primacy of "knowing experimentally," of each person having the capacity for unmediated direct access to the experience of the sacred.

As evidence for his stance, Miller quotes from Fox's *Journal* the passage in which, during his central religious transformative experience, Fox heard the words, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition." Read on, Friend. The paragraph ends, "And this I knew experimentally." Here is the soul of our religion, built up from the foundation of George Fox's epiphany.

In Fox's personal religious, historical, and social context, he had no possibility of interpreting his experience

other than in terms of Jesus Christ. But he did know from this ineffable, self-validating experiential basis that it was the direct personal experience of that source that made the difference, and he went on to understand that every person had the capacity to directly know "that of God" within him or her. It is on this rock that our church is built.

From the principle that all may have direct experience of the Divine, it is a small step to the Testimony of Integrity, with its mandate of truth-telling and its difficult call to live our beliefs, to act in accord with the divine inspiration and knowledge available to one willing to seek it. Equality comes naturally forth, since all have that capacity for unmediated access, and so must we all be equals with respect to it. Simplicity as a testimony arises from the demanding depth and fundamental importance of that unmediated personal experience, which calls for ignoring and stepping aside from that which distracts from and is not grounded within that experience. Many Friends in our modern world are finding that the unmediated religious experience's importance calls us not only to step aside from distractions, but to step towards the care of our Earth as we understand our interconnectivity with all things, and link this care to a sense of the importance of fairly sharing the world's resources. Peace is a testimony that came late to Quakerism, as Fox recruited many of Cromwell's former soldiers; yet it, too, came to be understood as called for by the sacred nature of that within each of us and its call to each of us towards love, creation, and affirmation rather than hatred, violence, and destruction.

I dwell on the testimonies to make the point that none require Christ Jesus. Each stands on its own, affirmed and grounded in what Fox taught us we can know "experimentally." Another distinct and characteristic Quaker practice founded on the same rock is the practice of coming to unity on decisions in worship, which enables us to rise above personal issues and power struggles to find solutions led by that great and deep "experimental" force within us. Waiting worshipfully in silent expectation is of course our signature mode of religious praxis, and the one that often makes it possible to come to unity. We liberal unprogrammed Friends consider the rejection of

professional minstrels as a core component of our Quaker practice, which places on each of us as individuals the responsibility, as it affirms our power, to find ministry within ourselves and each other without a church hierarchy that might undermine our personal connection to the experiential core of our religious experience.

Once again, belief in Christ Jesus, the supernatural Son of God, is neither necessary nor sufficient for a strong Religious Society of Friends.

Miller offers a prayer for nontheists such as I, and I gratefully accept his hope that I and others like me in the Religious Society of Friends may find wholeness as "kinder and gentler materialists." I don't pray for divine intervention in which I do not believe, so I cannot return the favor *per se*, but I shall instead pray to you directly.

R. Scot Miller, I pray to you to seek within yourself in that deep font of love and wisdom from which we all may drink if we choose, rich and nuanced responses to some queries:

Of the many nontheists among Friends, many in weighty roles, who among them would you ask to leave?

In the eyes of Jesus Christ as you know him, which is more important, belief or behavior?

For each of us Quakers, from our varied and diverse backgrounds, all of whom may know "experimentally" the ineffable, self-validating, and enormously important religious experience at the core of our faith, must we all call it by the same name?

What would it be like to imagine how trust, love, and faith could overcome the fear that "there will be no Quakers left to work for the equal standing of all faiths in the world community" if we embrace our nontheist Friends?

David Britton
New York, N.Y.

David Britton is a member of Morning-side Meeting in New York, N.Y. After 20 years in the technology industry, he is pursuing a PhD in Cognitive Neuroscience at City University of New York.

A Family Responds to Suspicionless Drug Testing

by Gilbert Ambler

The whole issue started in the spring of 2006 when I was a freshman in high school. The school district announced they were planning on obtaining a grant for and adopting a policy of mandatory, random, suspicionless drug testing for all participants in co- and extra-curricular activities. The way the school's testing worked was that if you wished to participate in such activities (sports, school plays, band, clubs, student government, etc.), your name would be entered into a pool from which names would be chosen randomly for drug testing. This was funded by a federal grant, and the program was heralded by the George W. Bush administration as "a silver bullet against drugs."

The School Board held a meeting in order to gauge public opinion about the concept of suspicionless drug testing. The superintendent showed a pro-drug-testing video, and then asked the audience members whether they would vote for or against the testing if they were all made honorary members of the school board. Out of approximately 50 people that showed up for the meeting, only three voted in favor of the testing. My father spoke up and said that, as Quakers, the method of the policy would cause our family unease and the need

for deep soul searching.

The policy's *objective* certainly resonated with our family; it was the *method of accomplishing it* that did not seem right. When we considered the policy from a Friends point of view, it appeared to be against our approach, beliefs, and testimonies. The policy seemed to be at inherent conflict with the Truth Testimony and went against the principle of integrity, and it had a non-trusting aspect in general. When we discussed the policy with other Quakers in our meeting and in other meetings that we visited, they were, very largely, all on the same page in feeling that the policy was harmful and against Quaker ideals. Often non-Friends seem to have difficulty understanding that Friends have no creeds or laws, but testimonies, which are like time-tested examples of feelings to follow. This in itself is a way of allowing freedom—giving people guidelines to follow, but letting them use their individual consciences to make decisions for themselves. It is one way of encompassing the belief that there is that of God in everyone, and it is a way of seeking to recognize it.

In many ways these guidelines are very similar to the principles upon which our nation was founded. Being innocent until proven guilty and protected from unlawful searches and seizures are ideas that are fairly close to the way most Quakers would deal with issues. Drug testing is often used in professional sports and the workplace, yet in schools it seemed like a small erosion of freedom and an inappropriate example for students, besides the substantial conflict with our religious beliefs. It was one small thing we could stand up to, and one little way we could try to help the school to look at the idea of teaching

responsibility instead of fear. To try to steer students in the right direction and offer guidance in their decision making regarding drug abuse would be a wonderful cause, but to scare them into making a good decision felt wrong. While there are those who believe it is better to be feared than loved, I do not fully understand or agree with this. I know fear can be a powerful motivator, yet in the end it does not seem right. To have an entirely effective policy or law, people have to develop their own self-guidance. They need to have a conscience, and that should be encouraged. They need

to make the right decisions for themselves. In a certain sense, policing breeds the "it's okay to do it if you don't get caught" mentality. People need to have the opportunity to be trusted in order to have a chance to prove to others that they are trustworthy.

It seemed to my family, and to some others in the community, that the policy would further isolate kids with drug troubles. I didn't think drug usage was a large problem in our school, but this policy seemed to have the potential to escalate whatever problem already existed. With suspicionless drug testing, students that take drugs and participate in some sort of extracurricular activity would either be forced to quit the activity, quit the drugs, or risk getting caught. I thought that many students who used drugs would probably, and unfortunately, pick the drugs over the potentially helpful school activity.

Other Quakers offered us a great deal of support in seeking religious exemption from the policy. Our local meeting set up a clearness committee to help us feel our way forward. I had a couple of very lengthy talks with the

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Gilbert Ambler is attending Earlham College this fall and is interested in political leadership and law. Gilbert's two younger brothers, Amos and Harry, and his parents, John and Peggy, have all participated in thinking through this article about the situation they all lived. Gilbert and his family are members of Germantown Meeting in Philadelphia and attend Penn Hill Meeting in Wakefield, Pa. Should another Quaker family encounter a suspicionless drug test policy and feel the need for religious exemption, a lot has been learned, and exemption may be possible with comparative ease. The Juvenile Law Center is a helpful resource, and Quakers are invited to contact the Amblers through FRIENDS JOURNAL.

ricular activities. The principal was very nervous about his role in the situation, although I do think I was able to provide him with more insight toward resolving the matter.

The superintendent told us the Board was "looking at creating a religious exemption policy in light of our need," and gave us the feeling the problem would be resolved. It took them several months to consider an exemption policy before they decided that it was not needed because the state already has a religious freedom law in place. We were told that we were not covered under the

because, unbeknown to us, the school had also taken it upon themselves to research Quakerism and in doing so made numerous mistaken assumptions, putting forth the view that the random suspicionless drug testing did not interfere with our faith, but was consistent with it. We responded by talking with the sources the district would disclose to us, and then writing a letter to the district pointing out the misunderstandings, trying to help them to understand our Quaker view. We received no response to the content of these letters.

We were then told by the district's lawyer that to be religiously exempt, we would need to provide a letter from a religious authority in our church, such as a priest, stating that the drug testing policy was a substantial burden to our faith. We spoke with, and obtained letters from, three Quaker "authorities": Jay Marshall, dean of Earlham School of Religion; Thomas Swain, clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM); and Arthur Larrabee, then clerk of PYM Interim Meeting and now general secre-

The school district said that review of the letters would take a couple of weeks, which became four months with my brothers and me still out of school programs. During this delay we became concerned that our request might somehow be denied, so we wrote to the superintendent asking that if for any reason they were going to deny the request, we be given the opportunity to come before the Board to address any concerns the Board might have. Because the district had made the situation a legal matter, and despite our not having involved lawyers, Board discussions had been in executive session without us present because they were discussing "a legal matter." This enabled the attorney for the district to push a one-sided perspective and seemed to distance us from the Board and negate our Quaker view. Some Board members believed in our position all along, and the Board remained closely divided throughout. Still, the balance was not yet tipping our way, despite the effort and attention the Board gave the matter.

The school district's attorney generated a 12-page legal brief against our being granted a religious exemption and attempted to invalidate what the Quaker leaders had written on our behalf. Because the district had made the situation a legal matter, our meeting committee urged us to seek legal help in response, something we were very hesitant to do. After Mom read some legal briefs on suspicionless drug testing at the local library, Dad contacted the lead lawyer, Marsha Levick, one of many who had jointly authored one such brief to the U.S. Supreme Court. Marsha is a co-founder at the Juvenile Law Center in Philadelphia. The Juvenile Law Center kindly volunteered to help us pro bono in our continued efforts to seek a religious exemption and lined up Matthew Hamermesh of Hangley, Aronchick, Segal, & Pudlin to anchor the efforts, along with some of his colleagues.

We were told, based on a preliminary vote, that we would likely be denied an exemption, but we could address the School Board. We decided the lawyers from the Juvenile Law Center should come to the meeting to listen to what

Opposing this drug testing was one little way we could try to help the school teach responsibility instead of fear.

A Further Explanation of Our Family's Avoiding Suit

Our family's hesitancy about suit is founded in a multitude of feelings. Most significantly we sought the district's understanding of our need rather than challenging the district. With the school district serving a small in-touch community, suit would have tended to divide community opinion on one side or another where unity would be better.

Until we were very far into the matter the district's lawyer rarely attended Board meetings, nor did he talk with us. Therefore communication between the Board, the district lawyer, and ourselves was funneled through the superintendent. It evolved to appear that the superintendent and/or the lawyer wanted a policy without exceptions.

The district's heavy reliance on its lawyer for guidance from a distance resulted in a focus on fears and professional standards of safety of

position. This conflicted with achieving personal understanding and reasonable comfort. The Juvenile Law Center's contrary legal reasoning allowed our effort to gain legal respect and kept the matter active. With the benefit of hindsight over a year later, to our knowledge the district's fears of a floodgate opening with our being granted an exemption were unfounded.

We as a family, during our significant frustrations and sacrifices, regularly resorted to jokes and humor in our discussions. Our very considerable efforts were collectively directed toward analysis, creativity, and friendly communication. Having faith, a strong sense of direction, and the support of many Friends helped our family remain cohesive and to not need to resort to filing suit in a matter where what we were seeking was understanding and perhaps some respect for our need.

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Witnessing to Integrity in an Untruthful World

by Shelley E. Cochran

I have to admit, when I think of the traditional Quaker testimonies, Integrity rarely tops the list. It is certainly *on* my list, but it doesn't seem to be a life-or-death matter the way the Peace Testimony can be. Nor does Integrity seem to be socially revolutionary, the way the Testimony on Equality has been (and continues to be) among Friends. Indeed, compared to other testimonies, Integrity seems pretty tame, almost like a kindergarten lesson on honesty.

Of course, Friends *practice* integrity. As much as we are able, Friends work very hard to always tell the truth. Most of us strive valiantly to match our actions with our words, and both our words and our actions with our beliefs. We may even ask ourselves queries to probe how well our daily practice of integrity is going.

But how often do we actually *witness* to integrity? I'm not thinking of the garden variety honesty most folks of goodwill already practice, but Integrity with a capital "I." How many of us have made a public witness to that? A testimony, in other words, that would clearly brand us as a Friend of Truth even to those who have no acquaintance with our Religious Society.

In that light, the Integrity Testimony doesn't seem quite so tame. Indeed, for most of us, telling the truth seems relatively easy compared to *witnessing* to Truth. This may sound like a fine distinction, but for some reason, taking a public stand for Integrity is often a lot more complex and difficult than simply being honest in our personal lives.

At least that's how I've experienced Integrity. Like most Friends, I tend to think of myself as an honest person, and

most of the time I am. Recently, however, I discovered anew that Integrity is not quite that easy. I wasn't expecting it, but suddenly there I was, face to face with an opportunity to not only be honest, but also to make a public witness to our testimony.

The whole thing started out quite innocently. I went to the local university, now one of the largest employers in the area, to apply for a job with their in-house temporary agency. The receptionist handed me a sheaf of papers, told me to fill them out, and that a recruiter would then speak with me. Nothing new there. I had expected as much from other interviews I had been through.

What I was not expecting was the form asking me to authorize the university to conduct a criminal background check, and another form asking me to do the same for a drug test. On the application form, they had already asked me if I had ever been charged or convicted of a long list of offenses. I hadn't been. The application also asked me if I had ever used illegal drugs. I hadn't done that, either, and told them so.

I needed the work, so I signed the forms, but for some reason I felt uneasy about it. Indeed, I felt a little like John Woolman reported feeling when he signed that now infamous bill of sale for a slave. At the time, I didn't fully comprehend what it was about those forms that bothered me. All I knew was

that adding my signature simply didn't feel right.

It was only later that I realized the significance of what had happened. In asking me to sign those innocent-looking papers, the university was in reality requiring me to sign the functional equivalent of an oath. Though university officials never asked me to put my hand on a Bible and swear, they might as well have. Not trusting my word on the application, the university wanted verifiable proof that I was indeed "telling the truth and nothing but the truth." Just like the courts, the university wanted something more than my simple statements as assurances of my honesty. They didn't call it an oath, but it had the same effect.

Traditionally, Friends have witnessed to Truth by refusing to take such oaths. George Fox, for instance, was very clear on the matter. When he was asked to verify the truth of his statements by taking an oath, he refused. Jesus, in Matthew 23:16-22, said not to swear, so Fox wouldn't, either. Later Friends likewise refused. They said oaths implied a double standard of truth, freeing one to lie when not under oath. So early Friends didn't swear, either. Period.

That is our tradition. But what about now? My yearly meeting advises Friends, when asked to take an oath, "to advance the cause of truth by simple affirmations, thus emphasizing that their statement is only a part of their usual integrity of speech" (*Faith and Practice*, New York Yearly Meeting, Advice 13). Other yearly meetings have similar advices.

Such sentiments are fine on paper, but how do they play out in day-to-day life? Curious, I began to ask other Friends about their own Integrity witness. What do they do when faced with oaths and oath-like situations? How do they respond?

Interestingly, George Fox and yearly meetings notwithstanding, most Friends I talked to admitted fudging a little when the chips are down. One Friend, when sworn in as part of a jury pool,

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Shelley E. Cochran is a member of Rochester (N.Y.) Meeting. She has worked with several nonprofit and faith-based agencies and has a special interest in grant writing.

didn't stand. Some Friends have substituted the word "affirm" for "swear" when repeating after the judge. Others have figuratively held their noses and signed papers that were essentially oaths. Few of us, however, have chosen to make a public witness.

not paragons of truth-telling and we rightly avoid words or behaviors that call attention to ourselves rather than our witness.

But I suspect that often our reluctance is more a matter of convenience than principle. Most times, I think, we

bond." But even so, like so many of us, she still handed me the forms and shrugged. "That's just how the world is these days. You can't trust anyone."

But as tempting as the path of least resistance might be, I am convinced that the world today still needs our witness. Think about all the spurious advertising claims that bombard us day after day. Think about all the politicians who will say almost anything to get elected, the CEOs who hide their own mismanagement, and the religious leaders who break trust with the very people they have promised to serve.

With so much untruth around, lying has become the norm. Today, stretching the truth, and in many cases actually breaking it, is now almost expected. It is assumed that everyone will lie unless they are threatened with some dire consequence for doing so. In fact, most of us have become so accustomed to untruth that anyone who tries to be scrupulously truthful today is likely to be suspected rather than trusted.

Fortunately, I don't think that is the whole story. The news media might not report it, but I see a growing desire for truth telling. Today, in spite of a culture that is not only rife with lies but tolerates them, an increasing number of people are at the same time searching for Integrity. Everywhere you look, people are yearning for truth. They are looking and hoping for someone, anyone, who will tell them the truth.

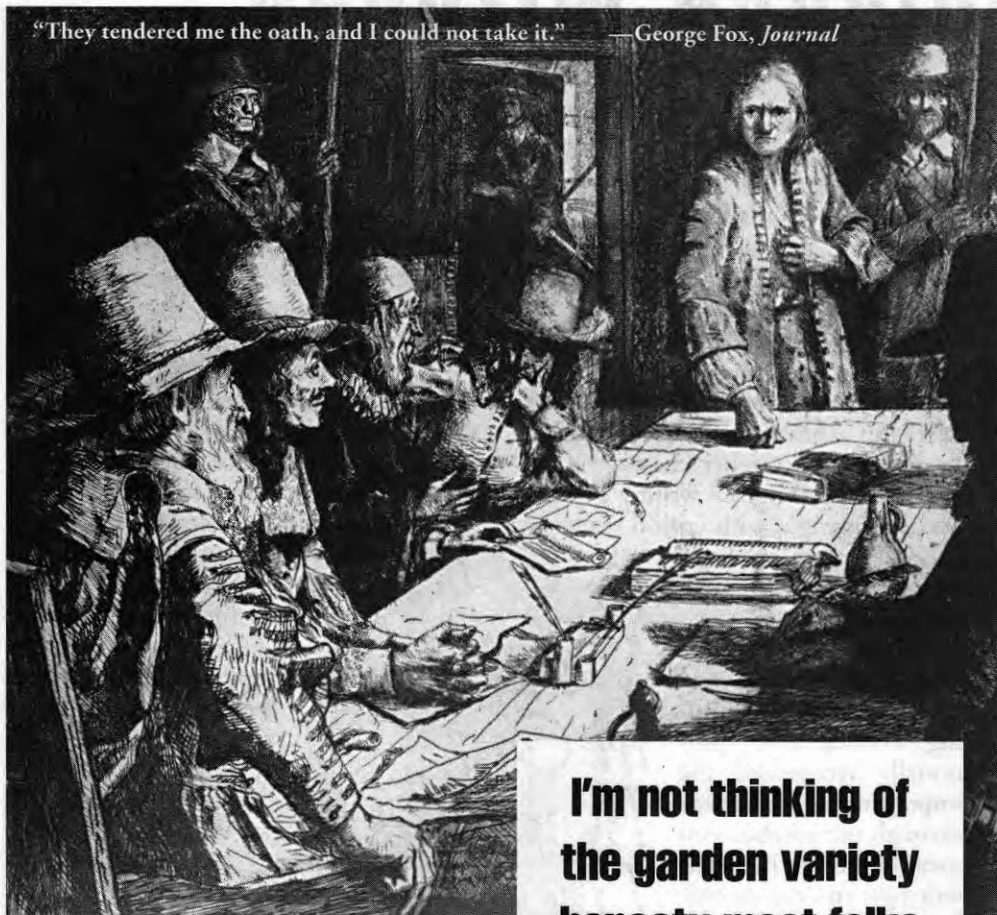
The need is clear. Indeed, our world right now needs Friends to testify to Integrity every bit as much as it needs us to testify to Peace. We have an historic witness that can speak directly to this need. Not only that, we also have the witness of early Friends, who often spent time in jail rather than doing anything, including taking an oath, that would compromise their integrity.

If refusing to take oaths, a traditional form of the Integrity Testimony, has lost its power, how do we testify to Integrity now? What is our witness today, in this time and in this place? What can we say here in the 21st century to publicly witness to that more truthful world Friends have been seeking since the time of Fox?

□

"They tendered me the oath, and I could not take it."

—George Fox, *Journal*



I'm not thinking of the garden variety honesty most folks of goodwill already practice, but Integrity with a capital "I."

Why? What is behind this modern day reluctance? Is refusing to take oaths becoming dated, an historical artifact like plain dress and speech? Is it because we lack clarity and only know that we should avoid oaths but not why? Is it because the teachings of Jesus on oath taking have lost their force? Is it because we are afraid to make a scene or call attention to ourselves? Is it because we fear coming across as "holier than thou," or like religious fanatics who maintain they don't ever lie?

All of those reasons are likely to bear to varying degrees with Friends, depending on who we are and the situation in which we find ourselves. I can especially understand concerns about how our witness will come across to others. Friends today are right to be reticent about witnessing to their own per-

fudge because we simply find it easier to go quietly along than to witness. Faced with social pressure, many of us choose the path of least resistance.

That's what I did. That's what the receptionist at the university seems to have done, too. She herself was sympathetic to my discomfort. She was not easy with the forms, either. Indeed, she even wistfully shared with me that when she was

Engraving, by Robert Spence, courtesy of the Library Committee of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain

Language and Friends Witness

by Harold Branam

In our era of mass media, the world is not just “too much with us,” as the poet William Wordsworth feared, but *always* with us. The media’s ability to set discourse is one of today’s most significant challenges facing Friends, who are in danger of being drowned out amid the cacophony.

The media present an attractive world of entertainment, consumerism, and commercial values; a world characterized by materialism but also by fashion, fantasy, and virtual reality. One might compare it to the floating world (*ukiyo*) of Japan’s urbanized, pleasure-loving Edo Period (1603–1827 C.E.). It is a seductive world, and in many ways antithetical to Friends.

Friends must constantly negotiate the process of staying afloat while still anchored to our beliefs and values. Luckily, Friends are generally good at using language, one of the means by which the mass media impose their worldview on us. But it still behooves us as Friends to hone our language skills.

Language is very significant, but of course it is secondary to our actions in the witness of our everyday lives—actions speak louder than words, as the saying goes. Our actions define us, note the existentialist philosophers. However, actions may be taken at random, in intervals, or only once in a lifetime—often in reaction to some event or other circumstance. Actions grow out of a context of beliefs, thought, and language use. Language is vital in that it enables us to define these beliefs, thought, and actions.

Actions, once taken, cannot be re-

Harold Branam is a former Marshall Scholar, professor of English, and assistant editor of the International Encyclopedia of Communications (1989). He is a member of Savannah (Ga.) Meeting.

versed, and they can only sometimes be corrected through another action (such as marriage and divorce). We have all made decisions that we later wished we hadn’t.

Language, on the other hand, is flexible. Along with imagination, it is the means by which we try out what we believe and rehearse how we should act. As any English teacher knows, we find out what we think by writing about it and discussing it with critical readers. We draft, revise, and hope we come up with something definitive.

Language, then, is essential to thinking and acting, as well as recording. Friends have traditionally recognized the importance of language through our emphasis on speaking in meeting, our writings, and our record-keeping. Because of this recognition and our concern for education, Friends have been able to influence the world in a manner disproportionate to our small numbers.

Friends have a language buffer that sets us apart from the wider world. This special vocabulary is briefly defined in such publications as Warren Sylvester Smith’s *One Explorer’s Glossary of Quaker Terms* (ed. Mae Smith Bixby, rev. Deborah Haines) and elaborated on in numerous pamphlets, articles, and books. It is a prized resource that helps provide solidarity to Friends surrounded by the floating world.

But since our special vocabulary requires a glossary (sometimes even among Friends), it is often not an efficient medium of communication with non-Friends, who may not understand—or may see the special vocabulary as quaint,

peculiar, or even pretentious, on a par with the use of *thee* and *thou*. When non-Friends are curious about Friends beliefs and actions, Friends must be able to put their beliefs into everyday language that can be understood.

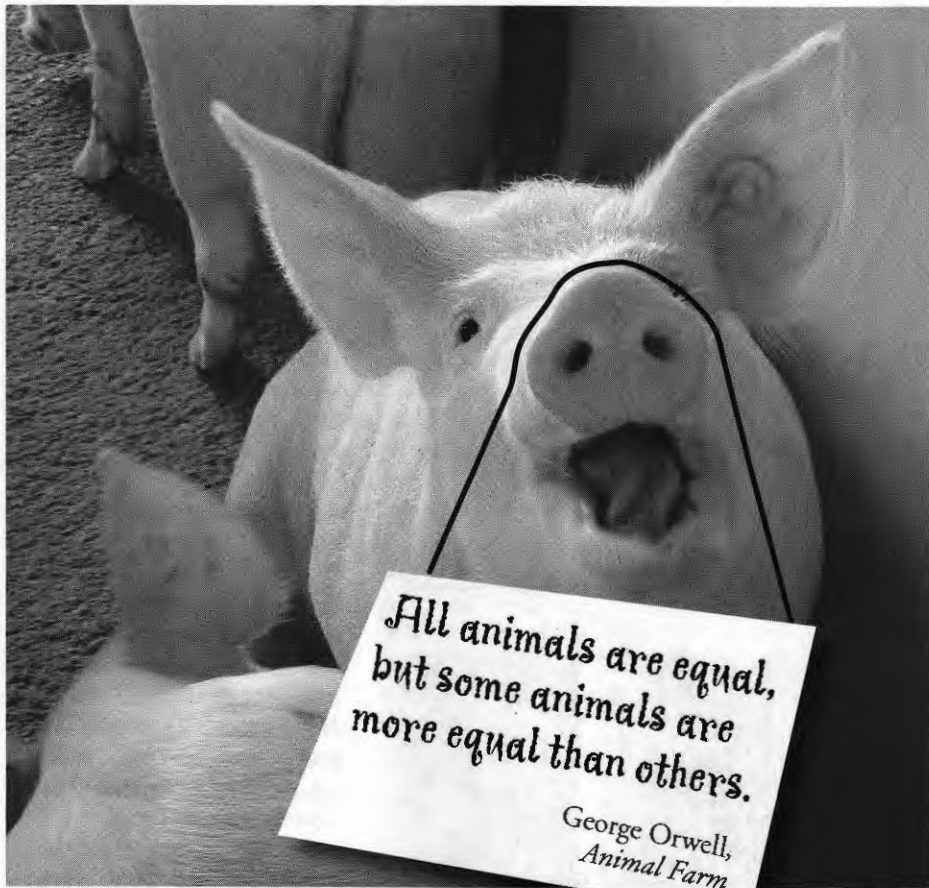
Whether among Friends or non-Friends, the first order of business for Quakers in today’s media world is to resist the toxic flood of triviality, misplaced emphasis, misinformation, oversimplification, propaganda, and outright lying. Corruption of language influences not only the lifestyles, but also politics in our country, most notably the continuous involvement of the United States in some kind of war since the beginning of World War II.

George Orwell was one of the first to call attention to the media-era corruption of language in his 1946 essay “Politics and the English Language.” He further demonstrated how politics corrupts language in his two famous novels, *Animal Farm* (1945), where democratic principles erode (“All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others”), and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), where language has morphed into state-sponsored *newspeak*.

Since Orwell’s day, political abuse of language has progressed around the world. Beyond mere language barriers, these political nuances and distortions of language pose difficult obstacles to world peace. In our own country, too, the undermining of language has reached an appalling stage and contributes to our social, economic, and political woes.

If the recent George W. Bush admin-

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istration had not thrown around inflated rhetoric about 9/11, al-Qaida, and weapons of mass destruction, maybe the U.S. would not have rushed into the Iraq War. Without all the hype over "terrorism" and "homeland security," maybe we would not have seen the USA Patriot Act erode our civil rights, water down definitions of words like *torture*, and give new meanings to words like *rendition*.

In news broadcasts, talk shows, columns, letters to the editor, and everyday conversation, loaded words like *socialism* and *fascism* are hurled about with such heat that they have lost all meaning. A loving term like *family values* has been turned into a weapon against single parents, gays, and liberals; the "right to bear arms" might return us to the frontier or the Old West; and "senior security" is a prepaid burial.

Such misuse of language leads to trouble. And after the trouble comes, our country has a tendency to engage in some equally problematic hindsight corrections, like the current reexamination of "enhanced interroga-

tion." We are constantly challenged to use critical thinking to detect muddled or deceptive language, and to do so in a timely manner. If we don't, we are fated to be stuck with linguistic constructs rather than reality. Take, for instance, the current effort of the coal industry to convince us that it produces "clean coal." As someone who grew up in the Appalachian coalfields—who played in coal waste, and who saw his father return from work every day covered in coal dust and later succumb to black lung—I can assure you that coal is not clean. Nor do newer methods of mining it—like strip-mining and mountaintop removal, which reduce the coalfields to moonscapes—make it any cleaner.

Yet I am not sure how many people living comfortable, urbanized lives made possible by electricity from coal-fired plants are aware of (or care

about) the destruction caused by coal mining in poor places like Appalachia and Native American reservations. Out of touch with the land, they accept a convenient version of reality hawked by the mass media.

Amid the sound and fury, Friends must continue to exercise critical thinking and be voices of reason. Traditionally, Friends have always questioned the status quo, taken oppositional stances, and spoken truth to power. It is important for Friends to continue to speak in public forums, write articles and letters to editors, contact politicians, utilize email and the Internet, maintain publishing programs, get voices in corporations, and support Friends organizations and other organizations compatible with Quakers. Among such organizations, Friends Committee on National Legislation provides an excellent model for political analysis, lobbying, and, in its *Washington Newsletter*, clear writing.

Through these efforts, Friends can influence, or at least clarify, the political discourse. For example, after a tragic explosion at a local sugar factory (attributed to dust accumulation), which injured many and caused deaths, one of our members of Congress rushed onto center stage calling for "swift action," projecting a hands-on, take-charge attitude consistent with a reputation for doing personal favors for constituents. In response, I wrote a letter to the editor of our daily newspaper detailing the representative's record of support for the Bush administration's gutting of OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration), which seriously decreased OSHA staffing and inspections of workplaces like the sugar factory. Since the newspaper is almost as conservative as the member of Congress, I was surprised that the letter got printed immediately. The representative beat a hasty retreat from the media spotlight, and for over a year the newspaper followed up on the tragedy, with criticism of some important figures.

Friends can also continue to educate the young in language use and critical thinking. A couple of standard books that I used to assign, and that have gone

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family values

Enhanced Interrogation

HOMELAND SECURITY

A Sign in My Window

by Rick Artzner

When my neighbor from across the street mentioned to me that members of the youth group from my church were coming to rake and remove her leaves, I thought, *what a wonderful service for an older person!* When she paid them it would help fund their mission trips. Then she said the youth director from Rivertree Church set the project up.

"Rivertree?" I asked. "But I go to Jackson Friends Church." She apologized; she thought I went to Rivertree, a church on the same street as mine.

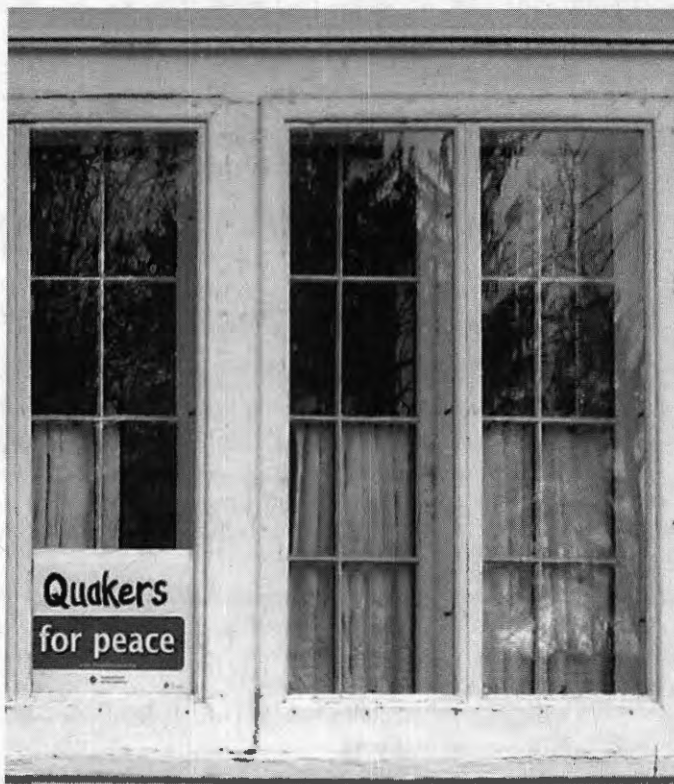
That short conversation bothered me because I had told her more than once which church I attended; I had even invited her to visit sometime. She knows who Friends are; her daughter once worked at Malone College (now Malone University), a nearby Friends college. Besides, I had a sign in one of my front windows that had been there for several years, which read, "Friends for peace." I got it from American Friends Service Committee. I

had displayed it thinking it was common knowledge who Friends are, and that it would not be unusual to have a sign promoting peace at the home of someone who attends a Friends church, a so-called "peace church." My neighbor has a daily view of that sign.

I began to wonder if others, seeing a

Rick Artzner, a retired teacher, attends Jackson Friends Church in Massillon, Ohio. He has spent his retirement as a guest lecturer at local colleges and churches speaking on various topics including peace, economic justice, and civil disobedience. He has served on the hospital ship Africa Mercy as a missionary. He is also an avid bicyclist.

What message does it send?



sign like that in someone's window, would also misunderstand. What would they think it meant? *Here live friendly people who like peace? Or, I'd like to think that I'm your friend and that I'm against war?* I thought I might need a sign that would better demonstrate who I was and what I believed.

Fortunately, the AFSC office in Akron has blank signs; that is, signs with a large blank space over the blue and white "for peace" section. These are great because you can fill in any name or word you want, such as, "Engineer for peace," "Student for peace," "Ludite for peace," "Feminist for peace," or

even "Michael for peace." You get the idea. I took a blank sign home, wrote "Quakers for peace" on it, and put it in the window, replacing the one that read "Friends for peace."

But there was more to it than just making sure my neighbor understood who Friends are. I did it also to promote Quakerism as a living peace theology that fits my beliefs and lifestyle. My wife asked me why I didn't write "Christians for peace" or "Rick and Pam for peace." I told her that I think "Quakers" says more.

In our country, the word "Christian" has been watered down, misused, misunderstood, and made all-inclusive to the point that almost everyone can say, "Christian? Yes, I'm a Christian," with only a vague notion of what that means. Today, the meaning may be so broad that any belief system or lifestyle choice can easily fit under the umbrella term. With all honesty and sincerity, people who claim to be Christian include Catholics, Baptists, Mormons, Republicans, Democrats, pro-

life, pro-choice, rich, poor, capitalists, socialists, Amish, soldiers, pacifists, used-car salesmen, etc. I think everyone who says it believes it, but is everyone correct? Is everyone incorrect?

I am a Christian. But what I want people to understand is that I think the Religious Society of Friends fits me best as to my dedication to the message of Jesus Christ and the kind of life he would have me live. Being Quaker means having a heart for seeking meaning in our worship and in our lives. It means obedience to the Inner Light of

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Irony in Grade Four

by Jeanine M. Dell'Olio

My nine-year-old daughter's two favorite words this school year have been "sarcastic" and "ironic." Sarcasm was fairly easy to master—after all, most children's television programming is brimming with it. After a few astute questions on her part and apprehensive caveats from me, she moved with astonishing speed into the knowing *lingua franca* of fourth graders. She also learned the requisite use of index-finger-middle-finger "air quotes" to underscore when she deemed it necessary to demonstrate her application of sarcasm in action.

Irony has proven to be a more elusive concept. I would try to provide examples that might trigger her understanding. But when I asked, "Does that make sense, Joanna?" her usual reply was "No."

We had a breakthrough a few weeks ago when she showed me her social studies homework. A white sheet of construction paper was folded neatly into four parts with pictures in each quadrant. She had struggled with these pictures and apologized the way some children do when they announce they cannot draw the image in question. I was surprised at her illustrations, so I inquired what her assignment had been. "We are studying democracy, and my assignment was to draw pictures of the armed forces. I can't think of the last one." She had the Army, Marines, and Air Force covered. She had forgotten the Navy. I reminded her that Naval officers commanded ships of many kinds, and unlike the other three branches of

At her school, kindergarteners through fifth graders were bringing items to send to "their" soldiers in Iraq.

military, the Navy had sailors rather than soldiers. I was curious whether she had chosen this topic for herself, or whether it had been given to her. Evidently, each student had been randomly assigned a separate topic by the teacher. After a beat, I asked hopefully, "What is ironic about this, Joanna?" "Well," she said, "we're Quakers." I was torn between revisiting Quaker philosophy in view of her homework or letting the moment ride. I chose to state simply, "Yes, it *is* ironic, isn't it?"

Fast forward a few weeks. Jo brought home a handout providing information about a special collection that each classroom was undertaking. At her school, kindergarteners through fifth graders were bringing items from a comprehensive list of packaged foods, supplies, and personal grooming needs for

"their" soldiers in Iraq. The soldier that Joanna's class had adopted belonged to a troop stationed in Germany that was waiting to be sent to Iraq. His mother worked in Food Service at the school. One of the school's teachers had been this young man's first grade teacher 12 years before.

My immediate responses to the items on the list were varied and contradictory, generous and cranky. I wanted to send everything I saw. I wondered why many of the items on the list were not guaranteed to them already. (Sun-

block? Bug spray?) I wondered why some items even appeared at all. (Balloons?) What was I missing here? I wondered, once again, why we were *there* at all. At the college where I teach, I have frequently tried to make the distinction for my students that in our society we can support our troops in Iraq without supporting the war. If I have made any converts, I am unaware. My experience since the beginning of the war has been preaching to a sea of skeptics—students earnestly concerned about "freedom" and "democracy." Is it just my imagination that they believe my earnestness about those seminal U.S. values pales against the colors of our flag—or the yellow ribbon stickers that punctuate the traffic in our small town?

When Joanna and I talked about our shopping excursion to purchase things for her soldier, I had a similar teaching opportunity, one that I pray will be more profitable: as Quakers, we do not support war, but we can hold these soldiers in the Light and help make their time in the Middle East as comfortable as possible. We can make their days easier and bring them some cheer.

Before my daughter and I left the house, we considered what we might send. Joanna was concerned that her soldier would have enough food. High on her list were canned goods. My concern was personal hygiene. The list gave no indications as to preferences in grooming items, brands, or flavors. We were flying blind.

Our trips to the grocery store and to our superstore-of-choice netted us a couple of items in each category on the

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Jeanine M. Dell'Olio, a member of Holland (Mich.) Meeting, is a professor in the Education Dept. at Hope College in Holland.

list. We were able to reach a Quaker consensus on a number of things after considerable discussion. (Our most fervent disagreement centered

on canned dinners. I was concerned with their weight and transport—both on the way to Iraq and once they were in his possession. These exchanges alone taught me how little I know about soldiers' everyday lives on the ground.) Our contributions to the soldier's box in Room 110? Instant oatmeal. (Quaker Oats, as it happened. Plain, we decided; he might not like our choice of fruit.) An oversized bag of Twizzlers. (After much debate, we agreed that regular strawberry Twizzlers would be preferable to the chocolate or rainbow variety—and more likely to be shared among his fellow soldiers.) Medicated body powder. (The kind with triple-action relief!) A three-color 12-pack of 100-percent cotton washcloths. (Something I would appreciate.) Toothpaste and a double-pack of toothbrushes. (Both blue. Soft bristle, of course.) I insisted on sending him plastic storage bags in a couple of sizes. (Double-zip for extra precaution.) Plastic bandages. (This decision sparked a noteworthy conversation about the relative benefits of having more bandages versus fewer heavy-duty ones on hand. We chose large, heavy-duty, brand-name bandages. Joanna said it just seemed like the right thing to do, under the circumstances.)

I have to say that this shopping trip—coming when it did, at the age she was, for the reasons we had—prompted some of our most fruitful discussions as a mother and daughter team. I wondered to what extent I should talk about the dangers of being in Iraq. As a fifth grader, I had two older brothers in the Air Force in Southeast Asia. My parents, always apolitical even during the Vietnam War, never mentioned their being in harm's way. What I knew about the perils of that war I learned from the correspondent Morley Safer. Like thousands of U.S. soldiers in the Middle East, this painfully young man will soon be receiving letters from children he does not personally know. One of those children will be my daughter. Learning to hold this soldier in the

I had never experienced my students viscerally before. The difference was clear to me in a heartbeat.

Light—an intangible, yet vibrant reality for Quakers—is an important, yet risky, endeavor. If anything happens to this soldier, Joanna will experience his loss in a tangible way. Our family landscape may change once again.

Nine years ago, my husband and I adopted Joanna from South Korea. At 44, I had only been a mother for a few weeks when a student advisee came into my office to talk about some difficulty she was having that spring. I don't recall what was troubling the young woman, but I do remember how I felt when she

walked into my office and sat down across from me. This is what passed through my mind, "My daughter is hundreds of miles away, a college sophomore, or maybe still in her first year. Something is on *her* mind, and she needs counsel from an adult she trusts—or perhaps is just learning to trust. How will this advisor respond? As a mother, how do I want her to respond?"

From that moment on, I would like to think I became a better advisor, a more focused listener, someone more trustworthy, less likely to judge, more likely to appear unhurried—even when that is not the case at all. The moment brought together for me the tangible and the intangible of Quaker experience. I can respond to the Light in each of my students in a tangible way by regarding them as if they are my own. I know, I know—this sounds suspiciously like the Golden Rule. Even though I had taught elementary school, middle school, and college for many years, I had never experienced my students viscerally as a mother does. The difference was clear to me in a heartbeat—a silent annunciation, of sorts. Individuals may believe this parental feeling is extraneous to being a good teacher, but it changed me for the better.

I have two soldiers to pray for in Iraq—the son of a friend who left this week for Baghdad to fly Apache helicopters, and Joanna's soldier. They are now my sons. So far, I have prayed over the war in Iraq in a vague, "Lord help us all" manner. My prayers, I am afraid, were mitigated by my anger against the George W. Bush administration—prayers thoughtlessly, perhaps conveniently, diluted by my disaffection. I must see events as opportunities to become a more compassionate mother; a discerning Quaker; a focused, gracious listener; an individual even more trustworthy, less likely to judge, more likely to be unhurried in prayer, more specific as I beseech the Divine, and less taken with the ironic political commentary of the times. □



Long-Distance Relationships, Or, The Message I Didn't Give in Chapel Hill

by Sean M. Crane

Mary introduced us by email. By the time we met in person, Nora and I had pleasantly corresponded by email and spoken by phone off and on for months. We had both entered middle age and each thought we might desire a partner. Much of our conversation and correspondence centered on getting to know each other.

Our meeting took place in her home as I traveled from Philadelphia to Georgia via Chapel Hill, North Carolina, on business. With a new-rental-car-smell stuck to my clothes, and feeling a bit ruffled from the 400 miles of road, I

Sean M. Crane laid down writing and music in 2007 to follow a leading arising in part from the incident described in this article. He has since studied climate, oil, and energy issues and is now a certified energy auditor. He and his partner have formed an Energy Star Partner company, which audits homes and then helps people reduce their energy use, to include the sealing and insulating of houses and the installation of renewable energy. The website is <www.hometowngreen.net>. They have six employees. Sean speaks nationally on Home Performance and Carbon Footprint. Immersed in the witness of this work, Sean sporadically attends Providence Meeting in Media, Pa. The committee of war dead from the park he sees more often; they are a somewhat more silent bunch. Names, time frames, and places in this story have been altered to respect the privacy of others.

found a smiling woman welcoming me to her home. After a pleasant visit of only two hours, I had to be back on the road. I drove feeling positive about the meeting, yet beginning to feel part of me questioning the wisdom of a long-distance relationship.

A few days later, I had to be in Chapel Hill again for a First Day afternoon meeting. I decided to arrive early to attend meeting with Nora there. Coming into meeting from being on the road again, long-distance relationships were much on my mind. Something seemed not right about the concept.

I was glad to see Nora at the meetinghouse before First Day worship. We talked awhile with others before meeting. After some Friendly introductions, I entered a crowded Chapel Hill meeting room and found a seat next to Nora. The first message surprised me: it felt too early—I could not have been in my seat more than 30 seconds when it came. The speaker asked the gathered to hold in the Light the value of our children and spoke of the young people as the meeting's future.

With the message done, the room settled into a hanging silence. With

Nora beside me, I, too, settled in and began to free-associate, touching the meeting room, and then going where the flow took me. I breathed old Friends in and out. I remembered nights during a previous summer when a group of us had danced on the Delaware River waterfront in Philadelphia. I thought of I-95 running parallel to the river near Penn's Landing.

Then I was led in thought to one of my favorite stops when I go to the Philadelphia waterfront; a small park, no more than 60 feet square, perched high above I-95, which is cut 35 feet below the granite park floor in a ceilingless tunnel through Old City. Above the granite, there is a central statue. In a perimeter around the park is a low wall with names inscribed on it. As I visualized the wall and the names, the beating of my heart filled my neck, chest, and arms.

Behind my heartbeat and before the park wall, ground lights shone up in the city night of my memory and fought off the overhead street lighting parachuting down into the night. The battle of the lights was set to the sounds of flashing cars and truck tires whining in trails on

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the interstate below. The Delaware River, more than a quarter mile wide, was silently gliding by, 80 yards to the east.

On the wall, bathed in twin shadows of opposing lights, are the names of the men and women from Philadelphia who died as soldiers in the Vietnam War. As memories filled my meeting morning mind, I literally felt myself being lifted off the seat. I fought and returned my full weight to the bench.

In a palpable meetinghouse silence, I recalled how, whenever I go to that park, I think of a day in October 1974: my 20th birthday. For my birthday that year, well before my Quaker days, the U.S. Army gave me orders to leave for Headquarters, Saigon, South Vietnam. I received them in my hospital bed at Fort Eustis, Va.; I had just had my appendix removed.

On the occasion of the triplet events of my birthday, appendectomy, and orders for Saigon, I think I weighed 160 pounds. Because of the removal of my appendix, I was never sent to Vietnam. I have never since considered the appendix as a parenthetical or devolved organ.

Somewhere deep inside and beneath the spirit fog of the meeting room holding me, I briefly found a piece of the story of how I'd landed in the hospital. Past the memory and the brief internal chuckle it brought, I sat on the bench in the thickness of meeting wondering still, as I do each time I go to the park, why those men and women had died.

I felt my eyes filling. Breathing viscous air, I tried to center and settle in better.

A second message came out of the silence. The voice offered knowledge of a composer who had written a piece entitled "Quaker Meeting." The voice said it began with great tumult, speaking to my condition. My eyes stayed closed.

And on his saying "tumult," the tumult within me seemed to move from within me to setting upon me, then both. I became engulfed in it. As I rolled pell-mell within it, my heart turned to the young men and women now dying in Iraq. I saw myself at 20, an expert rifleman, M-16 in hand. In the melee within, I tied this wondering to the first message offered in meeting: the precious value of our children. Somewhere outside of me, the message went on.

Free-associating, I sped down paths at once long forgotten and far off in the future. I wondered if perhaps the Iraq



**If we are to value our young
and hold them in the Light,
I have learned that it matters
what powers the Light.**

War memorial should be overlooking I-95 instead of the Vietnam Memorial since the Iraq War seems to be over oil. Which, I wondered, is a better monument to greed: the World Trade Center Towers—or the pit where they once were? And then I sped on to thinking of the refineries lining the Schuylkill River and the Delaware Bay, making Philadelphia the third- or fourth-largest refining center in the United States.

My heart lost constructive frame and I cynically imagined a memorial at each refinery in the U.S. Again, I wiggled in my seat, trying to settle down, trying to stop the freight train carrying me from thought to memory to emotion to ideal at a breakneck breathless pace that almost hurt. Time passed. My mind slowed. I found air. The message was continuing.

The voice said the composition called "Quaker Meeting" finally mellowed out and became serene. From a deeply quiet place inside me, a gold light moved, filling the space behind my eyelids. My heart rate went up. And I saw my own use of oil in the past eight days. The silence roiled like storm clouds on wind, which dropped their load between the benches, soaking me in my own guilt. Soaked and pelted from above, from under the bench, a hand seemed to push me, telling me to speak, but I fought again, gluing myself to my bench. I began to sweat and shake.

Within that shaking, I realized that in two days I had driven 1,400 miles and had another 600 to drive. Two thousand

miles at 25 miles per gallon. Shaking, I calculated. That's 80 gallons of gasoline. At eight pounds a gallon, that's 640 pounds of fuel. I was dumbfounded. The relentless human calculator continued. This is equal to about four times my body weight the day I received my orders for Vietnam. I wondered if my 640 pounds of fuel had cost 640 pounds of human lives. How could I even think about a long-distance romance?

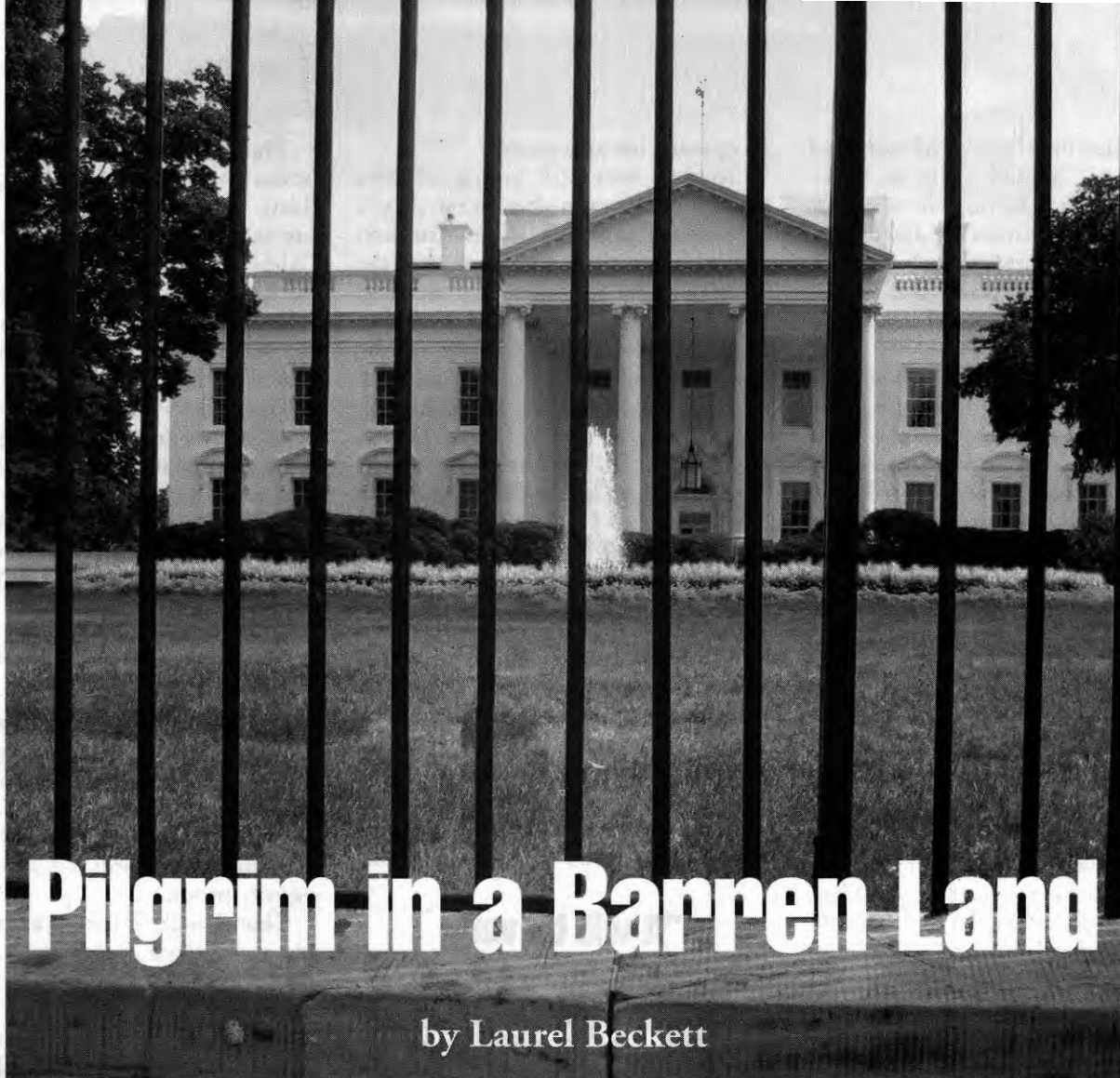
I was overcome with a sense of loss. Tears came. So much for serenity. A clearing in the meetinghouse storm seemed to pull its weight from over me. I gave in to the hand that seemed to be pushing me to speak. As I gave in and allowed myself to rise, a neighbor's hand reached for me. The hand she took was drenched. Meeting had ended.

At the rise of meeting I went to the bathroom, not wanting human contact. I was exhausted. Following the meeting, I was preoccupied with what had occurred. Somehow, that afternoon I switched into automatic mode and dealt with business. Even after that session I felt a bone-deep tiredness. When I left, I drove a short distance and then slept.

I returned home, visited the park again, and decided a long-distance relationship was not in keeping with the teaching the meeting or the park had offered me. In the year following the initial writing of this piece, my two vehicles both self-destructed. Eventually I

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Pilgrim in a Barren Land

by Laurel Beckett

After midnight, even on an unseasonably mild November evening, the late-working staffers have gone home and the tourists are back in their hotels. Pennsylvania Avenue outside the White House is left to the police; to the peace camper, asleep in his tent in Lafayette Park; and to the homeless man, writing steadily in his notebook. And to me, one Friend, walking back and forth all night in a vigil for peace. The words of the traditional Welsh hymn, printed in Friends General Conference's *Worship in Song: A Friends Hymnal*, spoke to me that night:

Guide me, O, thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim in this barren land.

Laurel Beckett, a member of Davis (Calif.) Meeting, is a professor and head of the Division of Biostatistics in the Dept. of Public Health Sciences at University of California, Davis, School of Medicine.

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A powerful hand had surely been holding me and guiding me to that vigil in 2006 for some time. In October 2004, *The Lancet*, one of the top general-circulation medical journals, published an article estimating that almost 100,000 excess deaths had occurred in Iraq since the start of the war some 18 months before. My areas of professional expertise are in biostatistics, epidemiology, and population-based studies, and

I believed these researchers had done a competent professional study under extremely difficult conditions. I don't know which upset me more: how few people had heard of this report, or how few of those believed it or cared about its findings. I organized a panel discussion for students and

faculty at University of California, Davis, and the seminar had the best attendance and liveliest discussion of any in years; people stayed for an hour afterwards. But I grew increasingly frustrated as the war went on, violence grew, and U.S. and British leaders kept repeating that conditions were improving, victory was at hand, and that we had to stay the course. Then *The Lancet* published a second article. The same research group found that the total of excess deaths had grown to 655,000, around 600,000 of those by violence. That's about the population of Boston. How could we dismiss the deaths of more than half a million people as "collateral damage"? What could I do?

An image came to me of an all-night walking vigil at the White House. But it was so far from my home in California—except, perhaps, for that upcoming National Institutes of Health study section usually in Bethesda, just a Metro ride from the White House. Then the NIH officer in charge of the study

section called me about travel and hotel reservations. "Should I fly to Baltimore," I asked? "Oh, no," she said; this time we would be meeting downtown. "It will be very convenient," she said, "only two blocks from the White House!" *Hmm, I wondered, could God be trying to tell me something?*

I was skeptical about the whole idea, though. I tried to set it aside, but my Guide had other ways to speak to me. I complimented a Friend for the beautiful flowers he'd arranged for another Friend who was in hospice care. "I heard this voice asking me to do them today so she could enjoy them, to not wait until her memorial," he told me. He went on to tell me how he'd tried to ignore the voice because he was busy, but he remembered a query just the day before on obedience. He felt so much better, he said, once he realized he needed to obey.

The next week I was in Chicago and attended Oak Park Meeting. The first woman who spoke during worship felt moved to talk about Jonah and how resistant he was to going where God had told him to go. Okay, I said to myself, *maybe I'd better think about this seriously and ask for a clearness committee when I get back.*

Time was short, but with the help of Friend Marilee, who shared my story with Worship and Ministry/Oversight, a group of four Friends came to my house that Friday evening. They asked some hard questions: What did I plan to do? What would I do if people talked to me? Was I prepared to be arrested? Who would I have for support? How was I preparing? Many of their questions had not occurred to me, but the answers came as we sat together in silence. They had much practical advice, lent me books, gave my plan their blessing, and promised to hold me in the Light. I shared my plan with our meeting that Sunday and left for D.C. knowing I had the caring support of many Friends.

Our study section absorbed my attention all day. I had dinner with my sister, who lived nearby; walked back to my hotel; and changed into my walking clothes: a dark sweatshirt with silver lettering saying "Walk in the Light" on the front and "Peace is the Way" on the back, and a pair of old but comfy running shoes. Then I was off to the White House to walk mindfully and pray for

an opening towards peace.

Tourists were still taking pictures along the fence even after 10 PM; people in business suits left offices late and walked by on their way home, and the night cleaning staff were just arriving. "Let the way open," I prayed. I tried to imagine flowers springing up in my footsteps, and seeds floating out like dandelion fluff and being borne through the fence to waft into the White House, to be nurtured by prayers for peace. Sometimes I walked in silence, trying to open myself to God, and sometimes I sang softly:

Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow.

And while I walked and watched the White House through the fence, the police were watching me. The White House is layered and festooned with guards and barriers. The tall wrought-iron fence has guardhouses and double and triple gates, and the street is guarded by double rows of waist-high con-

**"It will be very
convenient," she said,
"only two blocks from
the White House!" Hmm,
I wondered, could God
be trying to tell me
something?**

crete bollards with still more guardhouses and police. Police stand in the street, walk up and down, drive through or park in their cars and vans, and ride around the block on street bicycles that look like they belong on small-town bike paths, not downtown D.C. streets. You can see the snipers on the roof sometimes, against the night sky, when they stand up to stretch.

Three police came over, after an hour or so, to ask what I was doing. "We noticed you walking back and forth," one said.

"Yes, I'm walking tonight on a prayer vigil. I'm a Quaker, here to pray for peace."

They nodded politely. One said, "Oh, yes, my in-laws are Quakers, I know about them."

They wondered how long I might be out walking. Perhaps all night, I told them. "It might not be safe out here late at night," they warned. "This isn't California."

"I've lived in New York and Boston and Chicago," I answered. "And in all my years, the only people who've ever caused me any grief were white guys in business suits with faculty appointments in schools of medicine or engineering. If you see one walking by, let me know; otherwise, I'm trusting that I'm supposed to be here and I will be fine walking and praying." The words to another hymn from *Worship in Song* rang in my mind:

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside.

"Well, if you see anything that's a problem, let us know," they requested. I said I would, though in fact the worst problem I could see on Pennsylvania Avenue was that the White House was surrounded by guards like a maximum-security prison.

That thought led me to a little epiphany as I walked back and forth: I was outside the prison bars and I could walk freely.

I had struggled for six years to see the Light within George W. Bush. I believed intellectually that it was there, but I so despised his policies, his wars, his trashing of science and healthcare, the corruption of his appointees, the lust for power that seemed to drive those who surrounded him that I could hardly stand to hear his voice on NPR. But outside the White House, for the first time, I was moved to see a real person. He was inside; lights went on upstairs and then went off. I could smell the fabric softener from some basement laundry room. And I realized that even if he wanted to come out and walk on the other side of the fence from me, under those great trees with their golden leaves falling on the sidewalk where I was walking and on the lawn inside, he couldn't. He'd have to ask permission, get the Secret Service organized, and probably would be told he couldn't stroll in the garden on this beautiful, calm evening. No wonder, I thought, that he spent a third of his Presidency back home in Crawford. I had a sense of warmth and caring, for the first time, for someone who liked to get out in his yard just as much

Jeff Goldman



**I walked on, thinking
now of George W. Bush
and the Light within him,
inside the White House,
and tried to envision
those seeds of peace
reaching him through
the bars, past the
guards, and through
the windows.**

as I do, and who was shouldering a burden he probably couldn't have begun to imagine, and who was locked behind walls, gates, and guards.

So I walked on, thinking now of George W. Bush and the Light within him, inside the White House, and tried to envision those seeds of peace reaching him through the bars, past the guards, and through the windows while he was sleeping. But where would those seeds find a place to grow?

The seeds of peace need a little crack in that smooth façade, I thought, and then I saw the opening. That very day, the foundations of the Administration had been shaken by the news that the Democrats would control not just the House but the Senate, too. *Friend George W. Bush,* I thought, *Thee has been handed a great gift!* I don't suppose George W. Bush saw the 2006 election results as a gift, but how else could he have such an opening for a way toward peace?

Deep in the night, I walked back and forth. I held in the Light the image of the seeds of peace, finding a place for

up foundations, nurtured by the prayers of friends and Friends and people around the world who believe there truly is a better way. The sky lightened, the first joggers appeared, then the dog-walkers, and then early-to-work administration staffers in their dark suits. I walked around the White House one last time. Before I left, I stopped to chat with the man who has been camped across the street from the White House by Lafayette Park in a vigil for peace for more than 20 years. He told me how George W. Bush occasionally goes to church on the other side of Lafayette Park. "First they tow all the cars away," he explained, "and there are police and military guards stationed the whole way. There are snipers on the roofs. They use a motorcade of 17 or 23 cars." I don't suppose that routine allows much chance for the silence Friends cherish to open ourselves to the Light. But I believed inside those lighted windows upstairs in the White House, George W. Bush was hoping that night for an opening, a way out of the prison of war. What could we as Friends do to help?

I believed we needed to care tenderly for the Light in George W. Bush. My struggles to do this were utterly futile before my walk. I am thankful beyond measure for the grace that lifted the burden of contempt and loathing that I carried before.

Second, I believed we needed to speak truth to power, more than ever. And I believe we still do. There is no way to peace; peace is the way. We need to call for people of peace to be brought into the White House, Congressional, and public discourse on how to find our way out of the crisis of war. We need to speak out and write letters and lend our support to those who are trying to bring peacemakers to the fore. We need to sow and cultivate those seeds of peace as widely as possible.

And finally, I believe that we as Friends must heed the promptings of the Light. We are blessed to have a tradition that teaches us, and a community that supports us. We may not know where our walk will lead us, but we need to have faith when we are being led. □

Divine Infusion

On death row gurneys
and cancer-care chairs,
IVs drip constantly;
"this one shall die . . .
certainly
for dastardly deeds"
"this one shall live . . .
maybe"
Who is patient?
Who is prisoner?
And Who is pardoner?
Oh, Divine Judge
and Forgiver
of my shortcomings,
drip bags of mercy
rivers of grace
into my veins;
Infuse me
with your Light
And Love

Samuel Mahaffy

Samuel Mahaffy is a member and elder of Spokane (Wash.) Meeting. This is from a collection of poems written while undergoing IV treatment for advanced cancer. On the day he wrote this poem, a young man on death row in California was put to death.

Two Quaker Families in Suchitoto

by Robert Broz and Frank Cummings

Suchitoto, a small Salvadoran town and municipality (similar to a U.S. county), was virtually emptied during a decade-long internal civil war that included numerous massacres. Since the Peace Accords of 1992, Suchitoto has become the poster city for Salvadoran tourism, environmental protection, community social development, and artistic and cultural expression. It is also unique in being home to our two Quaker families, the Brozes and Cummingses, whose separate paths to Suchitoto began during the war in the 1980s, with roots in Palo Alto (Calif.) and Atlanta (Ga.) meetings respectively. Here, we relate our families' journeys and work, and how we see Quaker values expressed in a country still seeking peace across its many divisions.

Robert Broz:

I was born in California to Perry and Carmen Broz, who were members of Palo Alto (Calif.) Meeting. I fondly remember the younger Friends who provided my first contact with Quaker values and history in First-day school. My sophomore and junior years of high school at John Woolman School in Grass Valley, California, changed my life forever. As I am sure many of my classmates would admit, life in the '70s at Woolman was something many did not recover from. For many years after my time at John Woolman, I held Quaker values but did not practice them. Jamie Newton, a lifelong Quaker and close family friend, tells me reassuringly, "Perhaps all those years you think of as lost were part of the path that brought you where you are today."

Robert Broz, an attendee at Palo Alto (Calif.) Meeting, has been project director of the meeting's El Salvador Project since 2002. Frank Cummings, an attendee at Atlanta (Ga.) Meeting, is a retired professor of Chemistry.

So where am I today, and how did I find myself in El Salvador? Considering these questions has made me more aware of how I feel about my life.

My mother left El Salvador in 1942 as an immigrant hoping to study economics, with the dream of returning as a young professional to improve her country. As a young woman she studied at the normal school for teacher training in El Salvador. In her early 20s, she moved to the United States and lived in San Francisco for some years with Hortensia, a woman who had married into the upper class of El Salvador and informally adopted my mother. Volunteer service with American Friends Service Committee in Mexico drew my mother

to Quaker values, and to study at Haverford. It was my mother who brought our family to Quakerism, convincing my father to attend meeting in San Francisco; then in Phoenix, Arizona; and finally in Palo Alto, California.

My mother's mission to return to El Salvador to make a positive change was delayed by 36 years of education, raising four sons, and a teaching career. After her retirement in 1986, she traveled to El Salvador with an international group sponsored by the Share Foundation to accompany peasant families returning from refugee camps to reclaim their land and rebuild their homes. This was the first civilian effort to repopulate an area within a free-fire zone, from which the *campesinos* had been chased out by the military with campaigns of terror that included massacre. Just a couple of miles from their community of El Barrio, the group was detained by the National Guard. After three days of negotiating, a Spanish priest was allowed to continue with the Salvadorans to assure that they would not be killed or "disappeared," although Carmen Broz and the rest of

the internationals were deported.

In 1989, my mother returned to find El Salvador devastated. Within days, she was doing service work in rural areas. In 1991, Palo Alto Friends formed a support group and began to seek donations. Soon, Carmen had initiated projects with Quaker support in 14 communities, offering daycare centers and medical checkups, providing notebooks and uniforms to enable poor children to attend school, and obtaining desks and chalkboards for schools that met in empty buildings or outdoors under trees.

In 1992, my father passed away, my marriage ended in divorce, and, most importantly, I almost instantly stopped 17 years of what I now refer to as "life abuse." In late 1994, I packed my bags and flew to El Salvador. Within the first two weeks I fell in love with the country: its people, the pace of life, the food, the climate, and seeing children with nothing but a stick and a rock playing, enjoying life, and being happier than most kids I had known in the United States. My mother once said, "Simplicity in a developing country is not an option; it is a way of life."

Since my arrival, I have been fortunate enough to work for groups and projects directly related to or managed by Quakers. From 1997 to 2004, I was employed by a group of AFSC volunteers who had worked in El Salvador in 1954 and had known my mother from their time together working with AFSC in Mexico in 1952. Working as an advisor for the agricultural cooperative of Santa Anita led me to move to nearby Suchitoto in 2000. As my work with The Friends of Santa Anita and Cuscatlán (LADSAC is the acronym in Spanish) was ending, my mother decided to return to the United States. Our committee in Palo Alto asked if I would take over local management of the projects I had become familiar with over the years: driving for my mother, helping with the budget and financial statements, and running the projects while she was in the United States (two to

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Left: Frank Cummings works with a first-grade English class, 2004

Below: Carol and Frank Cummings in Suchitoto, 2005

El Sitio situated lakeside, a ten-minute launch ride from a little Suchitoto port. To Carol's surprise, that ten-minute journey took her from the government-held town to a rebel-held area. She stayed in a makeshift house of black plastic walls and aluminum sheet roof with the sister of a woman who had sojourned in Quaker House in Atlanta prior to obtaining political asylum in Holland. Soon Atlanta Meeting joined El Sitio in a sister community relationship fostered by annual visits of the Cummingses from 1992 to 2001. Carol and I were accompanied several times

three months each year from 1996 to 2002).

Today the "El Salvador Projects" of Palo Alto Meeting work with four communities in El Salvador. Although we still provide some teacher salaries and scholarships to junior high and high school students, almost 80 percent of our budget is used to finance a zero-interest university student loan program. Since 1999, we have supported 62 students in many fields, including education, nursing, and law. Although my work as project director is part-time, I stay busy, sometimes acting as a career counselor or a friend to a distraught university student in addition to my more formal duties. This diversity in my life and work is as much of a challenge as it is satisfying. Having a part-time job also allows me to participate in other aspects of life in Suchitoto, where my Quaker values find expression in education, politics, and business.

Frank Cummings:

My wife, Carol, and I began attending Atlanta (Ga.) Meeting when I started teaching at Atlanta University in 1967. With the Central American wars intensifying in the early 1980s, Carol



worked with a small group that helped the meeting to declare itself a sanctuary for Central American refugees in March 1985 as part of the nationwide Sanctuary Movement. The meeting helped numerous refugees over the next decade, and our home became both a way station for refugees and a hotel for visiting speakers. In February 1991, during the conflict, Carol came to El Salvador as part of a delegation that visited the community of El Sitio Cenicero, just after refugees returned from UN camps in Honduras formed it. The town of Suchitoto is close to a hydroelectric lake, with

Two Quaker families in a small town in El Salvador—is it a coincidence, or have we been brought together for other reasons?

by meeting members and by our eldest son, Andrew, who began working with a Salvadoran think tank, FUNDE, in San Salvador in 1993, a year after his graduation from Swarthmore College.

Accompanying the people of El Sitio set deep roots in our family. With each visit we learned more about their life as they built new houses and a school, struggled to educate their children, and eked out a living raising corn and sesame. They started economic projects that often failed, but always maintained a sense of hope and community. So, in the late '90s, when we realized that Quaker prudence allowed us the option of early retirement, we decided to live in Central America to use our talents as the way opened. It took a few years for this to come to fruition, but finally, in May 2001, with our goods sold, stored, or packed into two foot-



Left: CRC/Atlanta Friends Meeting scholarship students, 2008



Below: The first CRC/Atlanta Friends Meeting graduate, Otilio Martir Ayala Sosa of El Sitio, with a brother, 2009

lockers and various suitcases, we took a flight to El Salvador with the fleeting sense that we were jumping off a cliff.

In reality, our years of working with Central Americans, the numerous visits, Spanish study in Guatemala, and the presence of Andrew and his family in El Salvador meant the cliff was not so high. Returning to visit the United States, we were startled to hear our friends say, "Aren't you brave!" We didn't feel so, but we understood that if there was bravery, it was in deciding to downsize our material lives to be able to do the work we actually wanted to do.

In November 2001, we moved to Suchitoto, not wanting to live in the capital and wanting to be close to El Sitio. After a year of observing life in Suchitoto, we decided to focus on opening opportunities for youth in the urban area in art, education, and limited small business development, there being virtually no youth work in the city. We found a key ally in the local Parish priest, Padre Salomón, whom we had first met when I asked if he could mount an exhibit of photos I had taken of Holy

Week activities. While hanging the exhibition in a parish space, I commented to the padre, "You know we are not Catholic." A bit startled, he noted that he had seen us attending mass. It was not uncommon to hear negative references to the "separated brothers" in the priest's homilies, or to hear him referred to in deprecating terms in the town's many evangelical services. As outsiders, we were able to bridge one of the town's major divisions.

We soon broached the idea of using a large room in the parish center as a youth space. This idea resonated with his hopes, and our mutual goals initiated a close and fruitful effort, the Youth Space Initiative. It opened a room for young people to play ping-pong, use computers, and study. It organized a wide gamut of activities such as print making; open mic evenings for dance, poetry, and music performances; and tournaments of women's soccer and ping-pong. The most popular events were several competitions of local break dance groups, despite the police suspicions that incurred with their formation.

The padre, a progressive Baptist minister, and I met weekly to plan activities and discuss events. It was not unusual to hear snatches from these conversations in the padre's homilies. Over four years, these meetings developed a level of "social capital," or mutual trust, that is scarce in Salvadoran society, which still retains a great deal of polarization across several divides: urban/rural, religious, and political. While Quakers don't use the sociological language of social capital, we accomplish much with

few people because our way of acting, derived from the Testimony of Simplicity, engenders mutual trust.

Carol joined the municipal environmental committee and other neighborhood committees and helped out in the kindergarten in a small school near our house. She used her flute to teach the kids songs and filled bottle caps with paint for art lessons. Students, folks in El Sitio, and whoever came to visit enjoyed her famous oatmeal chocolate chip cookies. She died suddenly during Holy Week of 2006. At that traumatic time, the tenderness of the neighborhood committee, neighbors, and friends taught our family much about the value of community and how much people appreciated her quiet willingness to help unselfishly.

I took up tutoring eighth and ninth graders, plus teaching a weekly intensive English class for a select group of ninth graders in a large public school, thus getting to know a whole generation of Suchitoto youth. This close contact led us to establish a small program of high school scholarships and then, naturally, a few university scholarships. When the padre asked for support for some parish students, I responded that I preferred not to give support directly to individuals but wanted instead to work through an established group that offered transparency in selection and finances. A week later, the padre had not only created a committee, but also convinced the extensive group of parish lay workers to give 25 cents a week each toward a scholarship fund. The Parish Scholarship Committee, now in its fifth year, helps 22 students without regard for religion. It is unique in receiving support from poor, mainly rural Salvadorans, as well as from our family. Separately, Atlanta Meeting members funded a scholarship loan program for rural youth patterned on the Palo Alto program, and our family continues helping students who studied English in our house. These efforts, along with the Palo Alto program, now provide some \$50,000 a year in scholarships or loans to over 60 stu-

dents. The wealth, however, is in the close relation with the students—listening, working through problems, encouraging, and sometimes commiserating.

I maintain the connection between El Sitio and Atlanta Meeting, which continues to provide seed funds for economic project loans and youth development efforts.

Joint Statement

When we first met, we were surprised to learn that our meetings had been working for years in communities two miles apart. After Carol's death, we, Frank and Robert, became closer friends. We meet for worship occasionally, especially when other Friends visit. We were founding members of the local language school and of the Art Center for Peace, where we have been trained as teachers for the Alternatives to Violence Project, the trainings being partially co-financed by our programs and meetings.

But our principal cooperation has been in expanding and strengthening the university scholarship and loan programs. To help convince youth that university education is possible, we organized an annual University Fair in 2007. A third, expanded fair took place in June 2009. We have increased outreach to the five high schools, arranged for aptitude tests, collected information on graduates, and shared that information widely. We are slowly making progress toward convincing the municipal government of the need for educational support. Given the limited work available in Suchitoto, there are two options for youth: to make the dangerous and socially disintegrating trip north to the United States, or get a higher education. Surprisingly, the financial cost is about the same.

Two Quaker-supported projects in the small town of Suchitoto, El Salvador—is it a coincidence, or have we been brought together for other reasons? We are two families of Friends working to change a country where education has historically not been an option for the majority. We find ourselves living in a small town that could be a model for all developing countries. We work by convincing members of the local population, one by one—politicians, school principals, nongovernmental organizations, the old and the young—that through active participation we can all make a difference. We question the system. We work with others to try to provide solutions, each of us living a life of simplicity and service to build community. □

Morning at the Table

As part of the world slips into darkness, toward a time
to sink down into the power and the life,
into that which goes on, the house here is quiet.

We begin where we are: at a thrift shop table
that I love, surrounded by books, a bottle of ink,
small paintings I made and do not understand.

I sip my coffee, and a woman in Guatemala
cannot sleep from the aching song her bones
and muscles and skin have started to hum.

In my dream, I shuffled through carpeted,
cubicked hallways. Each handshake
was a smiling betrayal, eye confronting eye,

when identity peels away
like calendar pages *flip, flip, flip*
leaving something behind, something forever gone.

My cup is empty. The day soars out before me
like a hillside of coffee trees
blushing with ripe beans and the indignity

of work, the dignity of service:
the difference between them
made clear by how I proceed.

Edward A. Dougherty

*Edward A. Dougherty
lives in Corning, N.Y.*

Humility

It's probably less
A spell cast by your weaknesses

Than straining with the rest
To glimpse their best.

Peter Meister

*Peter Meister lives in
New Hope, Alab. This
poem and "If You Love
Me" (FJ Aug. p. 22)
are from the
manuscript Selected
Poems of Jesus.*

Violence on the Playground:

by Hannah C. Logan Morris

I am standing in the hallway after the students have left, towering over a six-year-old boy who is squeezing showy tears from his eyes to wring even just a little pity from his uncle, his other teacher, or me. My co-teacher and I have explained to the uncle—the adult from this boy's family that we see most often—why we "made that phone call." How the little boy threw things, picked on other students, purposefully stepped on their work as he walked by, refused to sit down and complete the assignment he had been given, and smirked when he was punished.

"You don't have any reason to be crying now," the uncle says. "Not now. Maybe later you'll have something to cry about," and he gives the child a stare that clearly reads, "You know you're gonna *get it* when we get home."

I don't even wince at his implied threat of violence. I have heard too many children come into school talking about the "whooping" they got the previous night, or the one they're going to get if they don't follow such-and-such a rule. I've seen too many parents—and teachers—put a finger in a child's face and yell threats of what will happen if they don't shape up.

I have become complicit in this style of discipline over the course of the year. Even if I am not the one shouting, the one wagging my finger, the one swinging back that belt, I am part of the larger system of violence and intimidation that cycles through these children's lives.

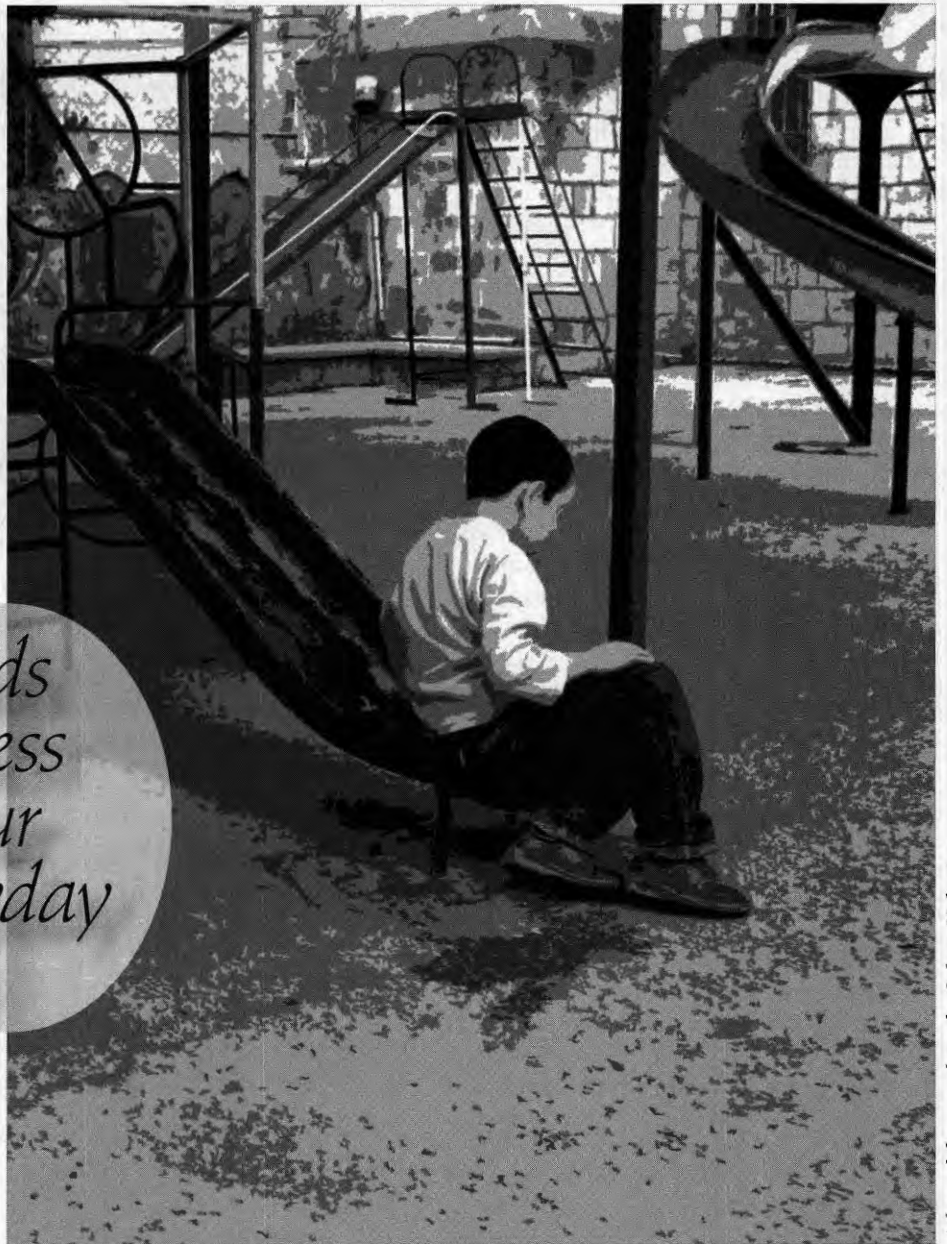
I didn't start my first year teaching at a public school this way. Faced with the loud, threatening, bullying culture of discipline, I steeled myself to be one of

the few examples of calm and soft-spoken positive discipline on staff. I picked this cause to be *my* cause—to make positive change in a situation where I believed violence was inherent. I thought at least I could help change this neighborhood's school, where soldiers and ROTC teenagers in uniform walk into the cafeteria and are thronged like rock stars by excited, clamoring children.

My original optimism was fueled

early in the year by a conversation with my principal about discipline. We talked about positive discipline strategies for an hour, and she listened, really *listened*, to my confusion and concerns. She challenged my assumptions about race and socioeconomic class, giving examples of the different parents, grandparents, and family members who come down to the school every day to defend their children from frustrated teachers who have lost

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Adapted from a photo by Selma Yalazi

Hannah C. Logan Morris is a member of Friendship Meeting in Greensboro, N.C., where she is a public school teacher.

An Everyday Struggle

control. Many even come just to check in. She promised that the discipline climate of the school was one of the major areas she wanted to address this year, her first year at this school as well.

I returned to the classroom and embarked on an ambitious, colorful reward system with my co-teacher. We again reminded the children of our behavior expectations, and after the students were gone, we reminded each other of

Sometimes I know my co-workers perceive this as weakness, giving the child too many chances to choose the right thing to do, the right way to act. Maybe the children take advantage of me, knowing that if they do something wrong, *all* they have to do at the first broken rule of the day is talk to me and recognize that what they are doing is harmful to themselves, the other students, or the learning environment. But

ready over. The day was almost over. The temptation to put off their punishment was strong—until tomorrow—no, wait, Monday—no wait, there's no school on Monday, so Tuesday, then.

I didn't have time for this. They were not even "my" students. I didn't have the time these three nine-year-old boys needed to get to the root of their problem, whatever it was, and work through it. I didn't have time to teach them all the nonviolent coping skills they need for this world.

I glanced around one more time at the unsuccessful substitute teacher and at the fourth-graders having their own quietly mean war of words and loyalties—a whole other issue I didn't have time for—and I squatted down on the grass with the boys and put my hands up until they shut up so we could at least *try*.

And then in the back and forth of my speed-mediation session, one of the boys said, "But my momma told me when someone hits me, I should hit him back."

This is where I get stuck.

I have taken to praying on the playground. It is the only time when I get to stand off by myself for a few minutes and ask God to help me look for a Light in everyone and to remember that these are children. When a four-foot-tall ball of yelling fury gets up in my face, trying to argue with me over some perceived injustice, I forget that this girl might only be ten years old. When a tiny brow furrows so deep the eyes close and the voice becomes pinched and unwilling, I forget that the boy is barely eight.

Why do these children carry so much anger? And how has the violence in their lives shaped their response?

When I told the boys' regular teacher about the fight days later, she said, "Oh, and I'm sure the mother *did* tell him that! Welcome to being a teacher! You

"But my momma told me when someone hits me, I should hit him back."

how we as teachers should respond calmly and fairly.

But as the year has gone on, as our "Rewards Wall" has fallen into disuse, and as the promised Discipline Committee was never convened, I have become desensitized to the yelling, the fighting, the threats, and the reported beatings at home.

Being a pacifist is so much more to me than opposing war. Through the experiences of my life, the word "peace" has come to imply both inward and outward peacefulness. Like a teacher or parent counting to ten before responding to an errant child, if I do not find that peaceful center of myself where God dwells, I cannot create a peaceful environment in the classroom. I relish the eerie silence that falls when, as I am working with a group of students and if they are talking out and not paying attention, I become silent, maybe close my eyes, and listen as they begin to notice the stillness and whisper urgently to the ones still not focused, "She's *waiting*!"

Every day to me is a fresh start for each student. No matter what the offense of the day before, I try to remember to meet that of God in each child.

what I return to—in meetings for worship, in my prayers at home, in conversations with close friends and mentors—is that connecting with that of God in everyone, approaching everyone as if they were God, takes an incredible amount of *strength*. Choosing to teach from this position does not show weakness of discipline.

On Friday, I stopped three third-grade boys from fighting on the playground. "Sit down!" I barked, pointing to the grass in front of me. Two of them sat immediately, and the third whined and danced in front of me like a puppy. "Sit!" I repeated, and he jumped down onto the ground on his stomach but didn't stop trying to explain himself out of it. I looked around. Their teacher was absent and their substitute was distracted, yelling ineffectively and rounding up the other children to go inside.

I sighed. I could do what most of the teachers do and point at them, get in their faces with a growl of, "You've got silent lunch!" But I see every day, from the number of children sitting at silent lunch, that this punishment doesn't work.

My other options for consequences were slim for these boys. Recess was al-

Continued on page 44



SMALL STEPS

Toward a More Peaceable Community

by David Zarembka

Friends have many opportunities each day to witness to our belief that there is that of God in everyone. The reason for this is that U.S. society is based on the premise that there is something wrong with people.

When I lived in Pittsburgh, Pa., I became interested in the Seneca Indians, who had formerly lived in the area. I met a Quaker who taught at a school on the Seneca Reservation in Salamanca, N.Y. I asked him how the Seneca students were doing in school. He replied, "Badly." I asked why. He said that school is all about punishment and rewards, but the Seneca never punish their children. The Seneca students do not take well to the school's basic premise, and therefore do not do well there.

The premise of punishment is widespread in our culture. Our whole prison system is based on it, and one out of a hundred adults is currently in prison. The welfare system is overtly bureaucratic because people are worried that someone might be cheating. Business is based on the assumption that profit is the most important goal. Go into a bank and try to cash a check—you are treated like a criminal suspect. Need I mention the trials of air travel these days?

You may argue that this is all necessary, but surely this is not the peaceable community we are hoping for. If we all

abide in a world of continued suspicion, are we really Quakers?

If, as a Quaker, you realize you are completely "out of sync" with the mores of society, you have a choice. You can act contrary to the norm, even if people are a little bit surprised. Do you greet everyone with suspicion, or with a smile? Do you relate mechanically or as a fellow human with the people at the check-out counter when they are

"only doing their job"? Do you treat children as if they were born in sin, or do you look for that of God in them? I find that many Quakers do simple, small deeds daily that direct us towards the peaceable community. Here I outline some I have done in my life.

For 20 years I fixed houses for a living, mostly for Quak-

ers and their friends. I would stand up in meeting and say, "Who would like to have their house fixed?" and I would have enough work for a long time. But home repair is an occupation fraught with all kinds of problems, conflicts, short cuts, and outright fraud. These issues aren't always easy to resolve.

Once, an elderly couple who had a nice house, in which each room had a door opening onto their garden, asked me to change their locks to keyed locks on the inside. This is a fire danger because if there were a fire in the house, people would not be able to get out. Was it worse to be robbed, or to die in a fire? I explained this to them, but they insisted they wanted the locks changed. I complied, but afterwards I regretted it because if someone had died in a fire, I would have felt like an accomplice.

Naturally, in that line of work there are miscommunications, including the cost of the job. I decided that when there was a dispute where the client ex-

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David Zarembka is the coordinator of the African Great Lakes Initiative of Friends Peace Teams. He and his Kenyan wife, Gladys Kamonya, are members of Bethesda (Md.) Meeting, sojourning at Lumakanda Friends Church in western Kenya.

wanted to give me between X and Y. In every case where I did this, the client voluntarily split the difference.

I preferred to be paid by the hour because I thought this was fair to both the client and myself. Of course they had to trust that I wasn't going to sit down and watch the soaps while they were at work and add this to their bill. But I never returned to clients who had their maids time me and didn't want to pay for the

letting a clerk at a home supply store give out my name to people who needed repair work. I got three clients this way, and two of them were very difficult. (I remember my few difficult clients much more than my many satisfied customers.) I asked the clerk to stop giving out my name.

Part of being a Quaker is speaking truth to power. In Pittsburgh in the early 1970s, the school system had just

my daughter, joy, is my wife. People who see that we have the same last name, who are told she is my daughter, still wonder how we are related. There's a brave new world out there, with such people in it.

Living simply in the United States is against the norm—although it may be getting easier with the economic crash. When I bought my first house, I didn't have a car loan, so I had difficulty get-



time I spent going to the home supply store, buying materials for the job.

Another problem I had, particularly at the beginning, was that I was being unfair to myself. I tried to bend over backwards to be fair to the client, but if something then went wrong, I would earn less than I expected. Once I did a big job (by the hour) for a Quaker client for \$20,000, including materials and labor. She then told me a few months later that, due to this work, the value of their house had increased by \$100,000. So I raised my hourly rate by \$5. My son still thought I was charging about half of what I should have charged. What is fair when you are setting your own wage?

Fellow Quakers who trusted me were

I think every conscientious Quaker has his or her own witness to the goodness of the world around us.

opened a new, integrated middle school near my house. As I walked by the school, I noticed that the physical education softball game was divided by race: one team was all white and the other side all black. So I called the principal. The next day, one team was all white with one black player and the other team was all black with one white player. Oh well, I tried.

Another time I saw a group of boys from a private school ganging up and beating another student. A few minutes later, when I

got home, I called the principal of that school, who said he would run out to see what was happening.

The U.S. census is coming up soon. I don't believe in the racial classifications they have on the census, so I cross out the section on race, indicating that I refuse to respond. According to the fine print, this could get me a \$500 fine, but I have never been questioned.

There are many times when my wife, Gladys Kamonya, a Kenyan, is assumed to be my maid or my mom's caregiver. I always respond to such cases matter-of-factly and with no animosity: "That's my wife, not my maid." This, of course, leads to much apologizing, which I take graciously because I think people ought

ting a mortgage because I didn't have a good credit rating. Of course, when my children were teenagers they were the most critical of my simplicity. As I drove around in my old van, they would duck to hide so their friends didn't know their dad drove such a jalopy. My daughter said to me, "Dad, the trouble with you is that you are always happy with what you've got." I took it as a compliment.

Also while in Pittsburgh, we lived near the meetinghouse and had a couple of extra bedrooms on our third floor. We would sometimes house people. Once in 1976, a young couple, the wife pregnant, contacted the meeting that they needed a place to sleep for the night. That winter it was bitterly cold, and the couple had decided to flee to Florida from Minneapolis when the temperature got to minus 40 degrees. The next morning I gave them \$20 to buy gas and bid them Godspeed on their way to Florida.

I don't bring up all these rather minor good deeds to brag but because I am trying to cover the major Friends testimonies here. I think every conscientious Quaker has his or her own witness to the goodness of the world around us. Quakers, in our own ways and circumstances, are attempting to do something for the common good. Although most of these are small things that never hit the headlines—even of FRIENDS JOURNAL—they are the small actions that point us towards the Peaceable Community. □

Illustrations by Bonnie Acker

Queries for the Elderly

by Brigitte Alexander

Crosslands is one of a number of Quaker retirement communities in the Philadelphia area. In existence for over 30 years, Crosslands has a Friends worship group attended every Sunday by approximately 40 people, ages 70 to 100. Like most meetings, we have the custom of reading a query once a month.

The queries available in all Faith and Practices are geared to the full range of life experience: family life, vocations, etc. At Crosslands we wanted some queries addressed to the two respects in which our worship group is distinct from other Friends meetings: 1) all of us are approaching the end of life, and 2) we live in a residential community.

The process of creating queries was familiar to us because one of us belongs to Pittsburgh Meeting, which, some time ago, created its own set of queries. (Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, to which Pittsburgh belongs, does not have a set of queries for its member meetings.)

A small group of Crosslands worshipers came together and, in the course of six months, produced three queries addressing the ways in which our group is unique, i.e. being old and living in community. We consider these queries a supplement to the general queries used by meetings:

Brigitte Alexander was first exposed to Quakerism in Berlin (Germany) Meeting in the 1930s. She has been a member of Pittsburgh (Pa.) Meeting since 1968, and she worships with a small group at Parkersville (Pa.) Meeting and at Crosslands Worship Group. Trained as a city planner, she worked in Boston. After a hiatus while raising children, she managed a small foundation in children's mental health in Pittsburgh.

- I. Do I accept death, like birth, as a normal part of life, even to be welcomed under certain circumstances?**

Have I arranged the practical matters (regarding possessions, location of documents, burial, etc.) that will arise when I die so my family is not unduly burdened?

Am I comfortable with the relationships I will leave behind?

- II. Do I look upon the period of old age as an opportunity for reflection on my life and a time for growth and new learning?**

Am I willing to talk with family and others about my life journey, my evolving beliefs, and my values regarding dying?

- III. Do my interactions with other residents and staff reflect that of God within each of us?**

Do I acknowledge the contributions others bring to the community?

Do I look for ways to make the lives of others pleasant or to be of service?

Am I able to keep a generous heart for those who may become more difficult as they age?

Can I accept help graciously when I and/or others feel in need?

When speaking about other people, do my words reflect respect?

In a troubling relationship, am I willing to talk with the other person, both to express myself and to listen, in the hope that the issues may be resolved?

As a part of drafting the queries, we experienced how enriching it is to share our values and thoughts about the end of life. The worship group decided to form several small groups to respond to the first two queries and to give Friends the opportunity to explore their own attitudes and to hear others' experiences.

The process of writing queries on different topics can be used by any group, Quaker or not: a group of children in your meeting, a group of struggling parents, a group of people facing job loss. If you address the question, *How do our basic Quaker values infuse the life in which we find ourselves?* you may find it a consciousness-raising experience. □

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Sitting Closer to the Front

by Peter Lang

I remember vividly the year I moved from my home near Cincinnati, Ohio, to New Jersey to start my career as an instructor at the Seeing Eye School in Morristown. It was 1964, I was 21 years old, and I was very excited about learning how to train dogs to guide the blind. I also began attending a local church, often sitting in the last pew, from where I observed that the older folks (those with the gray hair) sat nearer the front of the sanctuary, while the younger people (those with the most hair) seemed to congregate in the

I did not realize how much my thoughts were filled with my responsibilities until I retired.

back. Forty-five years later, I have joined the “gray hair club,” have a little less of it, and find myself sitting on benches closer to the front. I mean this literally, unfortunately, since my hearing is not what it used to be. But more importantly, my meaning is metaphorical and, for me, spiritual. Let me explain.

During my 43 years at the Seeing Eye School as instructor and training manager, I worked long days and felt so utterly responsible to the people and animals under my care (not to mention my young family with three children) that I found it difficult to make time for personal spiritual growth and centering myself in the Light. I did not realize how much my thoughts were filled with my responsibilities until I retired. I now understand that God was always there for me and that it was I who was not always there for God. Perhaps I was sitting a bit too far in the back.

Since my retirement in September 2007, friends have asked me how I like retirement after such a busy, fulfilling career. I find

Peter Lang is a member of Chatham-Summit (N.J.) Meeting. This article first appeared in the March 2009 issue of Spark, the New York Yearly Meeting newsletter, and is reprinted with permission.

myself replying that the greatest gift I have received is *time*. Not just one hour tacked onto another, but time spent intentionally, joyfully, and in pursuit of deepening my family relationships and spiritual life. Without the responsibilities of work, way has opened for me to experience the presence of God and the Light Within in everyday life. Even the simplest family pleasures or duties take on—or, more correctly, *reveal*—their spiritual dimension. My wife, Jane, and I purposely keep our afternoons open so we can meet our 11-year-old granddaughter, Miranda, at the bus stop if her mother is running late. I now experience this time with family as a precious, spirit-nurturing gift.

One of my most intentional—and joyful—daily activities since retiring is a walk after breakfast. I usually walk about three miles in our small town, stopping at a beautiful pond with a waterfall for reflection and prayer. Some of my deepest moments and insights have come to me during this time, and I often feel that I am walking with God. It is encouraging to know that as I am growing older, I am still growing spiritually. Moving up a few benches, perhaps.

Meeting for worship was always an oasis for me during my busy career, but now, in retirement, its capacity to nourish my spiritual growth is greater than I ever expected. Worship and waiting have led me to action: delving into the works of Quaker “giants,” visiting among Friends meetings in the area, and sharing my experience of the Light—all of which have found loving support and guidance among Friends. Most recently, I have begun developing a program about Thomas Kelly’s *A Testament of Devotion* and how it has affected my life and career at the Seeing Eye. It was Kelly’s spiritual classic that first brought me to Quakerism in 1966 and led me to become a member of



Praying

Like GPS or Google Street View I let God

find me first.

Ash blonde, beige raincoat or blue sweatshirt,

pedaling along the Neckar, or looking up from a page.

More rarely underground or in a plane.

Then I test out the names God goes by sometimes pausing for more clues like blossoms twitching or muscles loosening.

After that I look at my hands or out the window and try not to speak.

Kathleen Putnam

Kathleen Putnam lives in Heidelberg, Germany.



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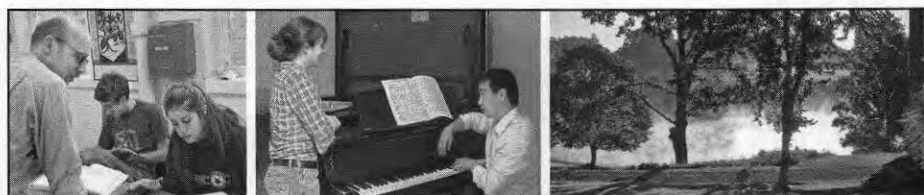
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Summit Meeting in 1971. Last February, I shared my spiritual journey with Thomas Kelly for the first time at Quakertown Meeting in Quakertown, N.J.

And did I mention gratitude? I have time now not only to express it more, but to actually *feel* its positive power. Gratitude for my loving family. Gratitude for my work: the dedicated staff at the Seeing Eye, the inspiration of the many blind students I have met over the years, and not least of all, the example of the amazing dogs—thousands and thousands of them—who have become devoted, loyal life companions. Gratitude for the nourishment that I have received in the Holy Silence of meeting for worship, and for my anchor committee during this time of personal transition. Gratitude for the *gift of gratitude*! I know that God's presence has touched my life in many ways. I am aware of it, and thankful for it, now more than ever.

I see now that, for me, aging is the process of moving closer to the front, sitting closer to the Light. I look forward to more precious family time, walking with God every day, growing in the Spirit, and sharing the message of the Light with everyone—no matter where he or she may be sitting. □

Elegy for Lenny

Lord, visit us in our demise,
as the sun fades
and the road strays
slowly out of sight.

Come meet us at the
crossroads
of everything we leave behind
and all that we might find,
through every cross and
comfort
on our journey out of time.

Bill Charland

*Bill Charland lives in Silver City,
N.Mex.*

Being Still

by Richard Eastman

"Be still and know that I am God."

Ps. 46:10

A few hundred yards off the Appalachian Trail in Maine there is a promontory overlooking a lake. On the far side is a clear view of Mt. Katahdin. In the evening, as the wind dies down and the lake becomes still, the sunset glow on Mt. Katahdin is reflected by the lake. The stillness of a beaver pond includes the sound of the water trickling over the sticks and mud of the dam. The call of the loon is heard more clearly in the stillness that surrounds it. Otters at play only emphasize the serenity of the evening.

The stillness of the meeting includes the sounds of an occasional fire siren, the rain outside the window, the air conditioner next door starting up, the movement of worshippers adjusting to their chairs, and late-comers entering the room. The meeting stillness includes the delight of a baby experimenting with sound in the presence of so many big people who are quiet for a change. The parents need not be anxious for the meeting's stillness is disturbed not a whit.

In the small hours of yesterday morning, I heard the cry of a coyote rise into the stillness of the night, hover there and fade back into the stillness. It was a part of the quiet, which was undisturbed even as the coyote howled twice more before I went back to sleep.

In meeting, a voice rises out of the quiet, hovers, and returns to the stillness. Often, the speaking is the stillness continued. A yellow jacket once flew through the open window, to the consternation of some worshippers, who began to brush the insect to keep it away. As I continued to worship, I felt the tiniest breeze on my middle finger. I looked down to see the yellow jacket poised there. I was feeling the breeze from its wings. A gift.

Our grandson has a pet black rabbit that he keeps with the chickens so it will have company. One of the evening chores is to place the rabbit in its cage after it has been at large in the chicken yard. Trying to catch the rabbit doesn't work; it's much too quick and agile. Being still with a quiet demeanor and gentle voice works wonders. The rabbit hops over, licks at one's ankles, and is willing to be picked up.

As I become still in meeting, I become aware of God's presence. The presence has been there all the time, but stilling one's

mind allows awareness to come into existence. The grace of God awaits us and asks only that we accept it. Note that being still does not require any action; in fact effort causes it to disappear as the wind causes the mirror surface of the lake to vanish. Some are able to be still at the center in the midst of very active and busy lives. In their presence, we see our troubles differently and gain some of their serenity. My Quaker grandparents were such people.

For many years I thought our unprogrammed meetings for worship were based on silence. Now, I experience them as based on being still. As a youngster, keeping the body quiet was a major achievement. My attention on the honeybees flying about the window helped. In later years, the body became quiet quite easily, but that thinking machine, the mind, kept busy. Stillness was elusive.

As I settle into meeting, I notice what is disturbing my stillness and release it. Then there arises clarity as an idea, which takes shape as a message. Sometimes the message is for me and I pay attention. Occasionally, the message is to be shared with the meeting; if I am accurate in my discernment, my stillness continues as before. Silence is the outward characteristic of the meeting for worship. Being still is the inner reality we share with each other as we worship together in God's presence. □

Richard Eastman is a member of Yellow Springs (Ohio) Meeting.

Clerking: Better and Worse Than I Imagined

by David E. Drake

For the last two years, I have had the good fortune to serve as clerk of our meeting. It was a role I assumed reluctantly and expectantly. I was never let down on either front.

It is better and worse than I might ever have imagined. The nuts and bolts are easy and straightforward: the clerk sorts the mail in the clerk's box at the top of the stairs into folders for the various committee conveners. The mail that is left over is for the clerk to deal with—in some cases responding to letters, in others passing on thank-you notes at business meetings from our donations. The clerk facilitates the meetings

for business—with or without worship, depending on who you are talking to. I send out a request for agenda items the week before each meeting for business.

But there's more. Because our members and attenders come mostly from numerous Protestant denominations and the Catholic faith, expectations of the clerk can be quite varied. Some see the person as a spiritual leader, others as a mere administrator. Some want your beliefs to mirror their own, while others see you as free to explore your own path, even if it is quite different from their own.

When crises develop, as they will with the number of individuals and families in our meeting, the clerk is often on top of the list of those to notify. Some will want your advice and involvement, while others simply want you to be aware of what has happened. I'm sure that with my professional work (family psychiatrist) as a known entity in the meeting, I have probably been called on more frequently to give advice where interpersonal conflicts arise.

Facilitating meeting for business is more of a challenge than it might appear. To attempt to allow time for silence, for settling in, still seems like something foreign to these meetings when the topics become hot and opinions flare. The meetings can range from the very boring and mundane to times where new insights and approaches can emerge from time spent quietly. I am forever inspired by one member's experience at a conference on clerking, when she spoke of coming to disagreements and discussions with your mind open to having your opinions altered.

The experience of clerking is life changing. It has allowed me to insert new leadership in groups in which I am a part—not to control, but to initiate discussion and to make sure minority viewpoints are heard. Recently, I did this automatically in a group of physicians with whom I share responsibilities where there had been concerns about how well we were working together. In starting the discussion, I automatically turned to one of my colleagues who appeared to have concerns but wasn't expressing them. I knew then that my Quaker training in the meeting for business was something of great value that I will bring with me to other venues, in addition to our own meeting.

In February of 2007, I sent out this email to multiple Friends across the country:

Dear Friends—as a clerk who is stepping down this year at the end of the usual term, I am putting together some suggestions, advice, and experience from Friends who have served as clerks of their respective meetings on what they would offer up to a new clerk. I'll be



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submitting this piece to FRIENDS JOURNAL, which has expressed interest in anything to do with clerking!

I wondered if you could share your own advice for a future clerk—what might they need to know as they take on this position? What caveats might you have? What was helpful to you in this position?

I am thankful to those who responded:

Some think that the clerk is the spiritual leader of the meeting, like a minister. Each one in the meeting shares that responsibility.

The clerk is sometimes asked to represent the meeting in the wider community. Do so with the best of your abilities.

Each person who takes on this responsibility can really grow in their capacity to handle the business and sense the wishes of the meeting.

Don't be afraid to say yes if this opportunity presents itself.

Andrea Holveck

Des Moines Valley (Iowa) Meeting

I'm concluding, from my years of observation, that good clerks have a particular talent for what they are called to do and require little monitoring and instruction, and will be quick to learn.

Also, a good clerk must be prepared to give special time and attention to meeting affairs and activities and be able to connect with active members. Impatience and/or a quick temper in business meetings are not helpful, yet the clerk is the only one who can control excessive verbosity, loss of focus, or wandering from the agenda.

Finally, a good clerk has a good supply of just plain common sense.

Wilmer Tjossem

Des Moines Valley (Iowa) Meeting

1. Be sure to take an Art Larrabee training in clerking.

2. Get yourself a support committee or at least meet with the recording clerk ahead of time in a worshipful, unhurried way to consider the agenda, the people of the meeting, etc.

3. Welcome clerking from the floor. Everyone in a meeting can suggest going into silence, for instance.

4. By having clerks stay no more than two or three years in the job, there are likely to be many experienced clerks to be helpful during and between meetings.

5. Remember Who is in charge, so just rest in God's love. If you can't come to unity right away you can almost always let it go until the next meeting (but do follow up on unfinished business).

Sally Campbell

Morningside Meeting, New York, N.Y.

October 2009 FRIENDS JOURNAL

I've been clerk of Ames Meeting for too long. Blame the nominating committees, but it's hard to find people who have time and commitment. Especially for those like me who have been clerk too long, refusing to over-function is central to keeping centered. In my meeting, there are more good ideas than commitment to carry them through. Let it be the members' meeting, not the clerk's meeting.

Deb Fink
Ames (Iowa) Meeting

And here's my own advice for the future clerk:

1. When interpersonal conflicts arise, don't think you know what's going on and definitely don't take sides, try as some members/attenders will to get you to do so. In many cases, the best and most difficult choice can be to take no action—but just to listen. Referral to outside professionals can often be of assistance.

2. Be present. Be involved and aware of the goings-on of Ministry and Oversight (really the barometer of how well the meeting is functioning); Friends House Board; our neighbors the AFSC; and keep connected to the conveners of all the committees. Attend meeting on a regular basis to hear the messages and to hear what people are discussing over refreshments.

3. Seek and take advice and experience from others who have served as clerk (and there are many in our meeting) when you sense you are stuck—this can happen during meeting for business or in other affairs that arise, such as disputes between members/attenders and in their personal relationships.

4. Attend a clerking conference at Pendle Hill during your first year of clerking. Allow a few months to go by for you to get a sense of what it is all about and then attend one.

5. The meeting will teach you how to clerk, if only you will listen. Basically our members and attenders want you to succeed and will support you, even when you make mistakes. When stuck during a meeting for business, admit the same, and experience will flow to you from those present—sometimes out of the silence.

6. Make yourself accessible by phone and email during the week and on weekends.

7. Remember that you are now working with Friends. You don't have to be the leader who takes charge. You are not the pastor. Whenever possible, delegate responsibilities to the proper committee. You can overwhelm yourself if you don't.

8. Keep a sense of humor. Friends can take themselves way too seriously. Don't be afraid to poke fun at yourself. Those present will appreciate it.

After much thought, I decided not to seek a third year as clerk. I notified our nominating committee so that they could begin the process of thinking about a replacement and allow those who may consider this position the opportunity to give it some thought.

It has been better and more difficult than I imagined. I am glad I have served. I look forward to other opportunities now that space will open.

I hope that many of you who have not done so in the past will now consider this opportunity. The role has helped to clarify some of my own thoughts regarding my sense of spirituality. I appreciate the friendships and connections I have made as a result. It is one way to grow personally and to help enrich the life of our community as well. □

David Drake is clerk of Des Moines Valley (Iowa) Meeting.

Quaker Baptism

by David Zarembka

A few years ago I was sitting on the sofa in George and Theresa Walumoli's living room listening to a group of young Quaker missionaries passionately and energetically discussing why Quakers do not baptize. It seems that some of the local Quakers in Bududa, Uganda, on the slopes of Mt. Elgon, baptize. I don't need to repeat their concerns because what they said about baptism is what most unprogrammed Quakers would say in the United States. These missionaries were from the home church of my wife, Gladys Kamonya, in Nairobi, Friends Church—Ofafa.

I sat smugly listening to them. For I have already been baptized twice! The second time was when I was about 11 years old—in order to be confirmed in the Episcopal church my parents sent me to, I had to be baptized. So one Sunday after service I was taken to the font at the back of the church, the priest said some prayers, sprinkled some drops of water on my head, and that was that. It wasn't until I was in my 30s that I learned that I had already been baptized. My aunt, Laura Kilian, was a devout Catholic who played the organ at St. Stanislaus Catholic Church in St. Louis until the day before she died of a heart attack. She was my babysitter when I was young. She was worried that my brother and I, if we died, would not go to heaven because we were not baptized. So

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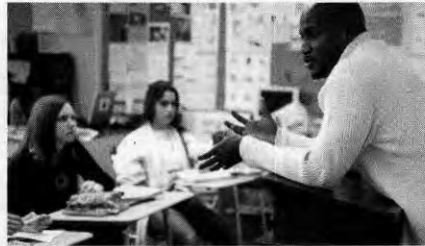
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one day when I was about a year old and she was babysitting us, she took my brother and me to the bathroom, said some prayers, and sprinkled some water from the sink on our heads. It seems that in extraordinary circumstances, which my aunt clearly considered this to be, it was correct for a lay woman to baptize someone.

Then last fall I was at Kagarama Church in Kigali, Rwanda. After two-plus hours of mostly entertainment from the many choirs (children, teenager, orphans, adult, youth singing group, and a guest choir), a guest preacher gave the sermon. He had that jump-up-and-down, loud (as if God cannot hear well), demonstrative style that I dislike, but I have been to enough silent meetings to hear the sermons (as my wife, a programmed Friend, calls them) given in all kinds of styles to know that the style should not interfere with my attempts to understand the words of God that are being presented. In this case, he was talking about Job, who had lost wife, children, cows (important to the Rwandans), and everything and still praised God. His message was that those in the church, regardless of what they had lost, should still praise God.

I could never give this sermon, even in my rational, quiet style. I know the stories of too many Friends, both at the church that day or at other Quaker churches, to be able to do this. The Bible doesn't say how Job lost everything, but the stories I have heard would make me doubt that God even existed. Was this rationale comforting to those who had lost so much? I don't know—I am too far from their shoes to be able to empathize.

I had been to one of the African Great Lakes Initiative's Healing and Rebuilding Our Community workshops, where Fidele had seen the killer of her oldest son for the first time since the genocide in 1994. He stood up and admitted that he had killed someone's family member in the workshop and asked to be forgiven. She responded with a long, emotional description of her eldest son who had just graduated from high school and was given a scholarship to go to college because he was good at traditional arts. He had been killed only a block away from where we were holding the workshop. In the end she forgave him, but asked him never to do that kind of thing again, and to make sure that his friends didn't either. She also had lost her husband and all four other children and who knows how many other relatives during the genocide. I thought she ought to get the last chapter in the Book of Job!

Then I was surprised to hear that there would be a baptism after the service of a young woman who looked about 25. I was

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all eyes. I was told that a person was only baptized if requested—in other words it was not mandatory. How would Quakers baptize? I hadn't really thought about this, but we went behind the church to a baptism pool which I had never noticed. Ah yes, the Quakers would have to baptize like John the Baptist did—total submersion. I was also told that the pool was so nice that other nearby churches used it for their baptisms.

I was surprised to see that Innocent Rwabuhiri, the treasurer of Rwanda Yearly Meeting and my co-worker as coordinator of the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) in Rwanda, was the one who would do the baptizing. He got into the pool with the young woman, said a short prayer, and dunked her backwards as I expect John the Baptist did to Jesus.

Did it make her feel better? I suspect it did. The genocide in 1994 was a horror for everyone—victims, perpetrators, and bystanders alike. Something to mark a separation between those days when God deserted Rwanda from the hope and possibilities of these days is important, a sign of a new life.

Do Quakers baptize? Yes, some do, and I am not here to judge the wounded hearts of others. □

David Zarembka is a member of Bethesda (Md.) Meeting, sojourning at Lumakanda Friends Church in western Kenya.

Writing Personal Queries

by Mark S. Cary

We Friends have queries instead of creeds. Creeds are statements of beliefs. Queries are questions asking to what degree we are wrestling with and following our beliefs. Traveling among Friends for the Friends World Committee for Consultation a decade ago, I realized that different groups of Friends have different sets of queries with different interpretations. I also noticed that the short and concise queries of yesteryear were becoming longer—the queries for my yearly meeting are now 2,545 words. I find them too complex for my daily life. Thus, it seemed rightly ordered to work on a set of short, personal queries drawn from Friends tradition, but suited to my own background and weaknesses.

Islam has the five pillars. Buddhists have the eightfold way. I have seven queries.

1. God. *Do you place God, not yourself, in*

the center of the universe, praying for help and guidance, and loving the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and strength?

This query is not the majority view among Friends in my yearly meeting. When we surveyed over 500 Friends in 10 meetings in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for the "Making New Friends" project, only 4 in 10 Friends said they believed in a God to whom one can pray in expectation of receiving an answer. But for me, the query is central.

2. Truth. *Do you keep to the Truth, living in simplicity and avoiding detrimental practices and amusements?*

"Keep to the simplicity of the Truth" is a line from the older Advices (see <www.pym.org> for the advices from 1695). To me, Truth with a capital "T" is the testimony from which the others derive. Our testimony on truth telling is legendary. Herbert Hoover was looking out the window of a train. "Those sheep have been shorn," said a passenger. "Well, on this side certainly," Hoover replied. Truth is simplicity. For example, gambling is an illusion of potential riches and not Truth, and we are to avoid both gambling and other untruths. I remind myself of this query each day, as my job in medical statistics is to search for truth amongst the noise.

3. Talent. *Are you a good steward of your time and talents and of God's creation?*

God gave me what talent I have to do the best that I can. God has given different talents to different people. It is not for me to compare myself to others, but to use what I have as best I can. We don't like to read the end to the Parable of the Talents (Matt 21: 14-30), but the servant who does not make good use of his one talent does not end well.

4. Creative. *Do you seek creative and peaceful solutions to conflicts and challenges, knowing that both sides usually have some measure of the Truth, thus seeking to lead others and yourself to Truth through Love?*

I prefer the word "creative" to "peace." Peace for me is too often a passive "letting the bully win." The hard part is finding the creative solution to difficult situations in which the parties disagree.

5. Kind. *Are you kind to others in large and small matters, seeking to draw out that of God in family, friends, and co-workers?*

Our Religious Society took our name from John 15:12-17, where Jesus said, "You are my friends if you follow my commandments." The passage ends with, "This is my commandment, that you love one another." Perhaps I should name the query "love," but I have found it too easy to feel I "love" someone and then be unkind. Jesus said that we would be judged as we judge (Luke

6:37). I have to remind myself to be kind, as I often fail, lapsing into harsh satire or calling people fools (Matthew 5:22).

6. Cheerful. *Do you remain cheerful, letting failure not discourage you, for in God all things are possible?*

I am prone to negative rumination. But, I believe that if I heed these queries I will follow George Fox's advice in his letter to those in the ministry—"Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you go, so that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them. Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one" (see <www.trac-tassociation.org> for the full text). How hard is it to live this way? "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

7. Clearness. *Are you part of a fellowship of others who love God and can provide guidance and help?*

Like many Friends, I am a willful individualist. Why else would I want my own personal queries? Early Friends had to distinguish themselves from the Ranters, a religious movement that used similar language, but which encouraged an "anything goes" approach to their leadings. One test Friends used was consistency with the others in a Spirit-led group (see Hugh Barbour's pamphlet at <www.tractassociation.org> for details). I started these queries when the Men's Prayer Group at Middletown Meeting encouraged me to think long and hard about what was important to me in Quakerism, for I had been complaining a bit too much.

One can ask—should every Friend use the same queries all approved by a central committee? Is what I have done rightly ordered? I do not know the answer to that question. Perhaps I am wrong to have personal queries, but these queries are helping me. I printed them on a small card that I keep at hand in my calendar book. I use that card as a bookmark. Even seven queries are hard to remember, so I have a mnemonic—"God's truth and talent lead me to creative, kind, and cheerful clearness." I can remember one sentence. Because I wrestled with these queries, they have meaning for me, and they are a living document that can evolve. The text of your queries is between you and God with guidance from a community of Friends. □

Mark S. Cary is a member of Middletown Meeting in Lima, Pa., and works as a biostatistician in the Medical School of University of Pennsylvania.

Living Gently in a Violent World: The Prophetic Witness of Weakness

By Stanley Hauerwas and Jean Vanier. IVP Books, 2008. 117 pages. \$15/paperback.

I opened this slim volume expecting another how-to book or academic discussion about peacemaking. What I found instead was an exploration of a theme similar to the baseline for the Hebrew prophets' judgment of the morality of a nation: How do you treat the powerless? The orphan? The widow? Those who have no ability to pay you back?

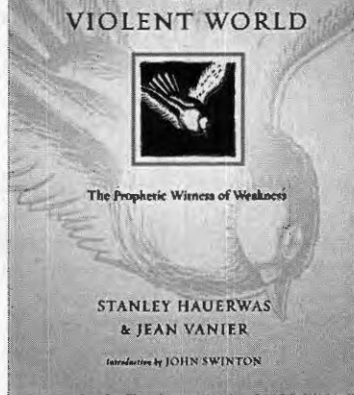
This book is not so much a defense of communal living as a challenge to learn from Jean Vanier's L'Arche (French for "The Ark") communities, which enable people without disabilities to share their lives in communities of faith and friendship with the disabled (the authors do not shy away from the term), who are among our society's orphans and widows. While many other authors have argued that peacemaking needs to be supported by community, this book suggests that the way we approach peacemaking can helpfully be informed by communities like L'Arche.

Ostensibly, L'Arche provides care for disabled people—some so severely affected that they have been abandoned even by their families. As Vanier describes them, they are also demonstration plots for the nature of Christianity: "Christianity is true," he says, "by demonstrating what community would look like if the Gospel were true." Co-author Stanley Hauerwas is more focused on using the example of the L'Arche communities and the wisdom of Vanier to engage theology, philosophy, and politics in conversation.

I must admit that this book was difficult to read. Vanier's style is very stream-of-consciousness; he appears to make the same points over and over again. By contrast, Hauerwas' writing, that of a trained theologian and academic, may at times cause the fog to descend on those not schooled in the fine art of argumentative discourse.

But I fear that there is one more reason this book gave me pause, embarrassing for me to admit: I've spent my whole professional life teaching in elite Quaker schools; and I've not been in institutions such as L'Arche where, as Hauerwas points out, people do not have the freedom to "be held responsible only for those things we freely choose when we know what we are doing."

As the authors see it, lessons learned from those "less free" are simple: Seek what



matters most—love; slow down; be hope in a world where there is no solution; see the "other" not as an enemy to be defeated, but as a wound to be healed.

I believe the book has value for Friends, although activist Quakers may be taken aback by its call for slowing down and not judging success by outcomes. We Quakers have been schooled to seek solutions, to "speak truth to power," and to do it all now. We are busy, important, engaged people, and we don't often have much time for "the least of these"—unless we can leverage them to make a political point. Meanwhile, L'Arche puts forward a different kind of peace movement: one where the "other" is someone who can teach us to listen, to be, to love, to be gentle, and—importantly—to stop going so fast.

—Max L. Carter

Max L. Carter is director of the Friends Center and campus ministry coordinator at Guilford College.

The Quaking Meeting: Transforming Our Selves, Our Meetings, and the More-than-Human World

By Helen Gould. Australia Yearly Meeting, 2009. 69 pages. \$9.95/pamphlet.

What happens in meeting for worship, individually and communally? Whether you're already having this discussion in your Quaker community or wishing you could, this new pamphlet can provide language and ideas for talking about an experience that is often hard to put to words. Helen Gould, an Australian Friend and anthropologist who leads Light Groups in many meetings in Australia, shares abundant examples from her own spiritual disciplines, including details about how she centers down and opens her heart for the Spirit. Imagine the rich dialogue we could have if we all shared so deeply about our individual

practice and our sense of how the Spirit moves in us!

Gould, who writes about how Quakers today might open ourselves to the power of the Holy Spirit as experienced by first-generation Friends, emphasizes the importance of individual practice. The implication is that what we do on our own can help prepare us for unprogrammed worship in community, or it can hinder us. Gould shares a list of things that help in her spiritual practices: spiritual companions, valuing being as well as doing, allowing ample time for practice, being physically comfortable, and immersion in nature. I found her thoughts on perseverance especially insightful: "If we are 'hooked' on busyness, then our withdrawal symptoms will include boredom. By making a firm determination to stay with the practice despite the boredom, I have learned much about myself." She also has profound insights about our relationship with food, and how that can help or hinder our ability to be present to God.

Gould also explores communal worship, noting that "each worshipping individual, whether or not they speak, is actually bringing an offering to the meeting for worship, which affects the meeting as a whole." Key, she says, is letting go of our own agendas when we come to worship, and she makes a vital distinction between "vocal ministry" (which deepens worship) and "vocal offerings" (which do not).

Although some of the writing is unfocused and hard to follow, there is much to recommend in this pamphlet. It goes a long way in providing a framework for reflection and for sharing our spiritual experiences in rich and rewarding dialogue.

—Mary Kay Glazer

Mary Kay Glazer, a graduate of the School of the Spirit's Spiritual Nurture program, worships at Ticonderoga (N.Y.) Worship Group and Middlebury (Vt.) Meeting. She is about to complete the Shalem Institute's Spiritual Guidance program.

The Blue Parakeet: Rethinking How You Read the Bible

By Scot McKnight. Zondervan, 2008. 229 pages. \$18.99/hardcover.

How do we read the Bible? This question has concerned Quakers since the 17th century, when early Friends rejected authorities or "professors" who told them how to think in favor of their own reading of Scripture in the light of the Holy Spirit.

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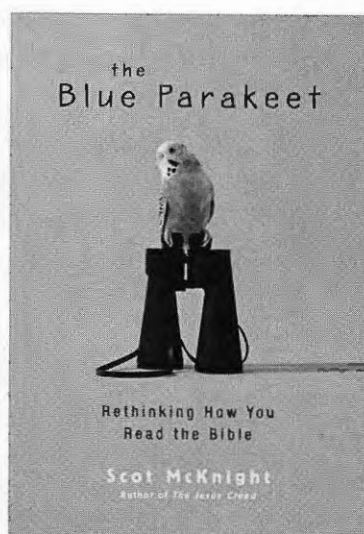
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Today, amid a flood of competing information and the twisting of Scripture for political purposes, the question of how we interpret the Bible is no less pressing. Scot McKnight addresses this issue as a biblical scholar and leader in the Emerging Church conversation (its offshoot in Quakerism is called Convergence). McKnight, known for his *beliefnet.com* blog "The Jesus Creed" and the book that inspired it, argues that we should read the Bible without ignoring what he calls its "blue parakeets"—passages that disturb us because they don't fit with our pet theories and interpretations.

The metaphor grew from McKnight's observations of birds in his Chicago neighborhood. When a captive blue parakeet got loose and started using his feeders, the local birds first were frightened, then decided to ignore the parakeet, as his existence did not compute with them. McKnight argues that we do the same with the Bible, treating passages that unsettle us or don't "fit" by acting as if they don't exist or explaining them away. Instead of dismissing these passages, McKnight contends, we need to confront them.

For example, people on either side of the death penalty debate face blue parakeet Bible passages. For those opposing capital punishment, these include Old Testament calls for killing witches (Exod. 22:18), idolators (Exod. 22:20), blasphemers (Lev. 24:13), and Sabbath-breakers (Num. 15:32-36). On the other hand, Cain is not put to death for killing his brother, Jesus protects the woman caught in adultery from the death penalty, and Jesus calls for his followers to turn the other cheek.

The Blue Parakeet proposes strategies for incorporating the awkward parts of the Bible within the context of a larger story and understanding what the stories mean within a 21st-century framework. As for other postmoderns, narrative looms large for McKnight, as it offers a complexity that is lost when its stories are reduced to principles, laws, and rules. He also leads the reader through a test case, challenging the way

some Christian groups ignore, dismiss, or rationalize blue parakeet passages that attest to women's fitness to lead in religious settings.

McKnight is not a Quaker. Yet the egalitarianism of his beliefs represents a strand of Christianity compatible with core Quaker thought. He excels at distilling current Bible scholarship into accessible and practical form. With its clear, simple language, *The Blue Parakeet* is reminiscent of Quaker Brent Bill's *The Sacred Compass* (Paraclete Press, 2008), a book about discerning and following leadings. Similarly, for those who wish to grapple with the Bible in all its complexity, *The Blue Parakeet* offers a clear path through the confusion.

—Diane Reynolds

Diane Reynolds, a freelance journalist, is a member of Patapsco Meeting in Ellicott City, Md., and attends Stillwater Meeting in Barnesville, Ohio.

Hands at Work: Portraits and Profiles of People Who Work with Their Hands

Stories by Iris Graville, photography by Summer Moon Scriver. Heron Moon Press, 2009. 145 pages. \$34/hardcover.

Hands at Work is a large-format book of lovely black-and-white photographs and stories. As I read, it became for me an extended meditation. St. Teresa of Avila said in the 14th century, "God has no hands but our hands to do his work." Storyteller Iris Graville and photographer Summer Moon Scriver have crafted a deep and thoughtful look into the lives and spirits of people who use their hands in manual work today, doing what St. Teresa would have called God's work.

Part of the magic of this book is in the interplay between photos and stories. The larger-than-life photographs of hands reflect fine texture, composition, line, and light. And the personal stories make the photos come to life. I found myself glanc-

ing back and forth between photos and text, hands and stories, trying to see what each set of hands revealed about their owners, and vice versa. The result is both fascinating and inspirational.

The work we do with our hands conveys a subtle expression of self and soul. Hands are tools, as well as expressions of individual artistry or craft. This book holds the view that manual work is not just a means to material benefit, but also a way to pursue the Platonic ideals of truth, beauty, and love.

All of the 23 individuals portrayed work with their hands, mostly as artisans or laborers. They are fishermen, sculptors, puppeteers, textile artists, musicians, therapists, and more.

"I use my hands," says the boatbuilder. "I like the doing part. . . . People are losing the ability to make things for themselves. . . . We're missing out on that incredible creative process that engages the mind and translates to the hands."

"My hands are authentic, kind of rugged, not fancy," says the weaver. "They work hard. They're really my good friends. I love them and the work they do."

"I've had old hands—a lot of wrinkles, prominent veins, stained fingernails—for a lot of years," says the baker. "I use my hands to love people and comfort them."

"I live in my hands," says the potter. "It's as core as you get."

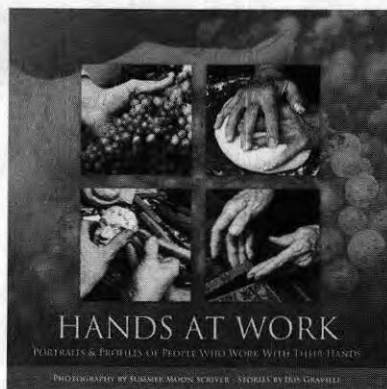
Initially I had reservations about the book. The stories all reflect white, mostly middle-class workers (no surprise, really, since it was created on Lopez Island in Washington state). We see no black ditch-diggers, no Chinese sweatshop seamstresses; no indication of the underside of manual labor as the work of the poor and downtrodden. However, the stories speak for themselves, and the common thread that ties them together—the value and beauty of manual labor and artistry—was, in the end, more than enough to satisfy me.

It takes a special courage and commitment to self-publish a book. Iris Graville's careful storytelling, Summer Moon Scriver's striking photography, and Robert Lanphear's gorgeous design come together in this compelling book, published by Graville's own publishing company, Heron Moon Press. Their dedication and skill allow us to gain insight and inspiration, and glimpses of the Spirit working through many hands.

It is a work of art and inspiration, to be read slowly and savored.

—Diana Roose

Diana Roose is a member of Oberlin (Ohio) Meeting and author of Teach Us to Live: Stories from Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

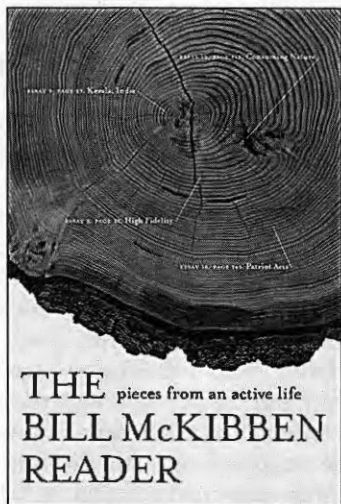


Also of Interest

Friends in Deed: 50 Years of Quaker Service Australia

By Heather Saville. *Australia Yearly Meeting, 2009.* 337 pages. \$21/paperback.

Friends in Deed traces the 50-year history of Quaker Service Australia, which covers projects such as bicultural education for Australian aboriginal communities, permaculture training in Vietnam and Cambodia, and HIV/AIDS and sustainable agriculture training in Uganda. Capturing the struggles of people who live their beliefs and the evolution of development thinking over five decades, former Quaker Service Australia convener Heather Saville sheds light on many of the difficult questions that confront NGOs today.



The Bill McKibben Reader: Pieces from an Active Life.

By Bill McKibben. *Henry Holt, 2008.* 442 pages. \$18/paperback.

This collection of essays from a prolific author and noted contributor to the *New Yorker*, *Rolling Stone*, *Harper's*, *Mother Jones*, and others covers a wide range of subject matter—from the struggle of a small town in upstate New York to decide whether to use pesticides against an annual invasion of black flies, to the economic impact of aging baby boomers, to the relationship between Evangelicals and environmentalism. But readers may find themselves willing to follow this deeply compassionate, human, and reasoned voice wherever it takes them.

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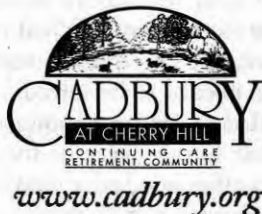
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was said and meet the Board, but not
speak or represent us (yet).

At the meeting, my dad spoke com-
prehensively and concisely to each of
the district's concerns and misunder-
standings, trying to explain Quaker
ideals and beliefs. He then offered to
answer questions. A portion of the
Board was not so focused on the merits
of our request, but rather on whether or
not a "floodgate" of requests would open
up if we were granted exemption. As far
as we know, we are and were the only
practicing school-aged Quakers in the
district, and no other religions were
identifying religious concerns with the
policy, so opening a floodgate did not
seem to be a likely problem.

In a subsequent executive session
meeting, the Board officially denied our
request. The lawyers began to help us by
drafting material for a legal suit, al-
though we were very strong in our desire
not to file one. We wanted to cooperate
with the district, persuade with reason,
and not rabble-rouse in the community.
The lawyers at the Juvenile Law Center
were very respectful of our desired ap-
proach, even though they thought it
would make for an interesting and ex-
citing hearing if it went to court.

By the spring of 2008, the informa-
tion a suit would contain was ready and
the lawyers presented it to the attorney
for the district rather than the suggested
approach of filing suit. The district's
lawyer immediately saw the need for an
exemption for us, not because he finally
understood our religious convictions,
but because he "understood the sincerity
of our request." He did, however,
want to place a number of restrictions
on the exemption that was offered to us.
It went back and forth between the dis-
trict's lawyer and the lawyers helping us,
but we could not reach an agreement
that both of us were satisfied with on
what, if any, restrictions would come
with our exemption. We had reached a
stalemate, yet the district realized the
situation needed to be solved.

My dad made an appointment and
our whole family went to the superin-
tendent's office and had a good hour-long
discussion with him about our need. He
came to further understand our point of
view. We had several more conversa-

tions, and he subsequently spoke with
and convinced the School Board to grant
us an exemption on terms we could ac-
cept. It took two years, with my broth-
ers and me out of programs, but we fi-
nally obtained the exemption—and just
in time for the start of baseball season!

My family and I believe in basic free-
doms as well as religious rights. We are
also very persistent and willing to sacri-
fice to resist policies that we don't feel
are spiritually consistent. (Thomas Swain
described my dad's approach as "tender-
ly tenacious.") In resisting this policy,
although my brothers and I were not al-
lowed to participate in the activities we
wished to, we did gain other opportuni-
ties in a strange way. For instance, al-
though I was denied participation in
the school's student government, to
which I had been elected, I was accept-
ed for positions on the advisory boards
of our State representative and U.S. con-
gressman. We also became friendly with
Thomas Swain and Arthur Larrabee of
PYM, Jay Marshall of Earlham School
of Religion, the superintendent, School
Board members, and the lawyers from
the Juvenile Law Center and Hangle, Y.
Aronchick, Segal, & Pudlin, both in
Philadelphia, who volunteered signifi-
cant effort and considerable expertise at
a point when things felt near impossi-
ble. The negotiations with the school
district were also instrumental in help-
ing me realize that I had an interest in
law and possibly in becoming a lawyer,
while the twists and turns and alterna-
tive styles in negotiating helped me un-
derstand different ways to accomplish a
goal. In the end, it took my family two
years of going around with the school
district and the school district's lawyer,
but we did eventually gain an exemp-
tion, mainly through perseverance and
friendly persuasion. □

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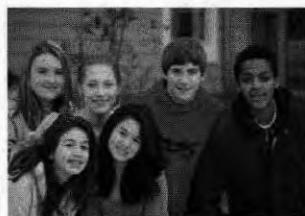


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continued from page 11

through several editions, are S. I. Hayakawa's *Language in Thought and Action* (updated by Alan R. Hayakawa) and Monroe Beardsley's *Thinking Straight*. A promising recent book is Jamie Whyte's *Crimes Against Logic: Exposing the Bogus Arguments of Politicians, Priests, Journalists, and Other Serial Offenders*.

Most of all, Friends must be clear about our own messages—for the example set, as well as for our own guidance. In using language, Friends should aim for the ideal of integrity expressed by Jesus, who taught that feelings, thoughts, words, and actions should be consistent and should form a moral continuum.

With no priests and few rituals or ceremonies, Friends must rely on language much more than other religious groups. The concepts of Quakerism as expressed in language are sometimes vague or metaphorical, and have grown out of historical contexts. Over time, these concepts can easily decay into catchwords and clichés, and so they must be subtly reinterpreted with new circumstances. Friends are challenged to reinvent our religion each time we think, speak, or write. That is why it is appropriate to continue to publish new pamphlets defining concepts like "Inward Light" and "leadings." For the same reason, Friends need refresher courses like those provided in pamphlets, at gatherings, and at Quaker study centers.

Not everyone can rise to these creative challenges of language use, but a greater concern for creativity might help. While Friends have been creative in the practical sciences and business, we have historically reflected a Puritan suspicion of the arts as being frivolous and licentious, dealing in falsehoods, and allied with evil. But Friends can learn by studying the lives of creative people such as artists, musicians, actors, and dancers. One easily accessible book is Twyla Tharp's *The Creative Habit: Learn It and Use It for Life*.

As a former teacher of literature, I have often wished that Friends had a

more distinguished record of accomplishment in fiction and poetry. A few names stand out, but too many Friends' efforts in these endeavors are, at best, disappointingly mediocre—as if the authors thought skills in tract writing could carry over to fiction and poetry. Journal writing is another story, providing a tradition that Friends might build on. A fine example of a novel that uses the journal form is Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*.

Simply reading fiction and poetry can be enlightening. Fiction encourages identification with and empathy for inspiring characters, enlarges our imaginations, and widens our sympathies for other people and ways. Poetry by nature pursues honest, heartfelt expression that might serve as a model for Friends. Reading fiction and poetry can encourage our own creative expression, too.

I also wish Friends would exhibit a sense of humor more often. I think that Friends are perceived in the everyday world as being humorless, and some Friends even seem to see humor as incompatible with weighty subject matter. Yet the most profound Friends I have known have had delightful senses of humor.

Humor does require some linguistic sophistication and judgment, since it is a strong tool, can be misunderstood, and should not be used for personal attacks. But humor can also be used non-violently in self-defense. Used effectively, humor can lighten up awkward or tense situations by implicitly acknowledging that none of us is perfect. Laughing, after all, is good for our health. Humor is also a way of instructing without preaching. It can be used to expose muddled or deceptive thinking by pushing it to a ridiculous extreme.

When Friends witness via language in everyday life, we need to maintain the directness, simplicity, and purity of mind of the Houyhnhnms, the rational horse-like creatures in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, who thought it absurd to defeat the purpose of language by using it to lie or cheat. At the same time, Friends need to emulate Swift, a great language stylist, satirist, and esteemed cleric, in his skill, skepticism, and shrewdness. □

CLEAN COAL

October 2009 FRIENDS JOURNAL

A Sign in My Window

continued from page 12

conscience. It is radical and separate from mainstream religious culture. It embodies an attitude of humility, simplicity, and pacifism.

And there's more. When I put a sign in my window, it sends a message that I not only value peace, but also value my neighbors, and I hope they realize that I embrace a kind of peace with them. If I want to advance the cause of Christ through a sign, for instance, then I had better refrain from conflict that may disturb the neighborhood harmony or do anything too confrontational, such as playing loud music or painting the house in an outlandish color. I cannot isolate myself from my neighbors' needs. The sign means I will be reminded to help someone who needs a sidewalk shoveled, a drive to the doctor, or a kind word in the face of tragedy. "Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up." (Rom. 15:2)

The people in my neighborhood know me as the old guy on the bicycle who greets them as he passes, calling out a word of encouragement or a humorous remark. I hope they see me as someone who affirms their lives here in this place, and I often stop to chat and exchange ideas on lawn care or pet poop removal. When Pam rides with me, it becomes more than just a workout; it's a way to get to know people.

This testimony goes beyond my neighborhood, of course. It is a reminder of my responsibility to my world community. Believing it to be God's will, I extend my service to help those in need in other neighborhoods—the poor, the hungry, the widows and the orphans. I promote peace by taking a stand against environmental destruction in the name of war or economics. I promote peace by protesting policies that may destroy neighborhoods and families, or that may exploit people because of race or ethnic background.

A sign reading "Quakers for peace" may also encourage questions, and I am glad to respond. I want people to know that I honor God and humans in uplifting and practical ways. Yes, I want people to know who I am and what I believe. It's not a secret, and I hope *all* of my neighbors understand this, including the ones close by. □

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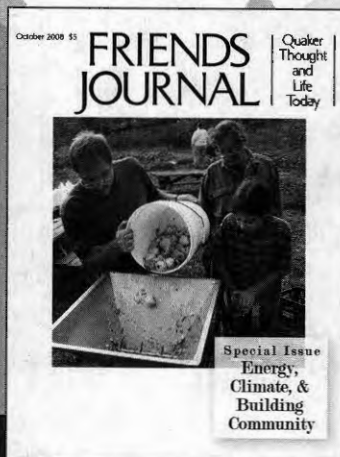
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FRIENDS JOURNAL

Violence on the Playground

continued from page 25

know what I tell them? I tell them that they can do that at home, but at school there are different rules."

And that is what I ended up telling that little boy—after controlling my own sudden violent and desperate urge to physically shake that message out of his head, replace it with my own, and repair the damage already done. The poor kids got a lecture from me about how much trouble they will get into down the road with that kind of retaliatory thinking. What do you do when someone hits you? *Walk away.* I made them repeat it three times.

But it is hard for me to accept that there may be situations in these children's lives—*children's* lives—where they *do* need to hit back in order to survive.

All my life my elders—family, mentors, spiritual teachers—have prodded me to live out the adage of "each one teach one." Live by example and reach out to those around you, hoping you can impact even just *one* other. Because I am such a sensitive person, it is easy for me to get overwhelmed with trying to change the world all at once. This is why teaching as a calling suits me so well. Every day I get to work towards shaping the lives, characters, values, and minds of children who will hopefully grow up to remember that teacher who told them long ago not to hit back.

But it is easy to lose sight of my future impact on these children when so many acts of violence fill the day. If it rains and I don't get to take the kids outside, will I remember to speak to that of God in each student and colleague? If an incident happens early in the day that wears my patience thin, will I respond peacefully when the next one comes?

As the school year draws to a close and the children become stressed with standardized testing and frenzied with a nearing summer, it becomes imperative for me to remember these Quaker principles. I am not perfect in my patience. I have struggled to find a healthy outlet for my own anger in the face of what I see as so much injustice in the world. I struggle daily as a teacher to see beyond the misbehaviors of these children to the Light waiting to be recognized within. □

took the hint and chose not to replace them. I now live as a telecommuter, walker, and city commuter until I am to do differently. What started in that Chapel Hill silence continued again in that park and called me to this act.

And now, a year later, the Delaware River glides past Philadelphia's children of the '60s and '70s: ghosts in transparent olive drab, marine green, and navy blue, themselves gliding fitfully above engraved gray granite bearing their names. They are unhappy with being remembered in the shadowed wash of oil-fired light.

Children still die for oil, perhaps due to the same kind of resistance I practiced on the bench that day. Yet, according to the first message that day, we are to value our young and hold them in the Light. I have learned that depends on what powers the Light.

You'll recall that the second message, about someone who had composed a piece entitled "Quaker Meeting," said it began with great tumult and finally mellowed out and became serene. It

sounds a lot like seeking and clearness committee work. Those in the park sometimes serve as one of my clearness committees, posing questions that help me clarify. This is one long-distance relationship that seems to work.

The message I got that was never given that day was that some long-distance relationships can work. On that Sunday, the kids who were once my peers and had died as I lay short an appendix came the long distance from the noise of a park above a Philadelphia interstate to the quiet of a North Carolina meetinghouse bench. They asked me if, while making my daily choices, I could remember them and my son's peers who are in Iraq now, and, sadly, those who are yet to go.

I am clear now that I am to help Philadelphia's ghost children of the '60s and '70s end their haunting, fitful granite-top glide in a nighttime park bathed in a light that perpetuates death. I am clear they are not to lie in the shadow of oil-fired light, killing more children. This is why they traveled that distance

to see me.

Maybe I'll stay walking and writing until the light watching over them comes from a renewable source. Maybe I can find a way to finance wind shares for them or include solar panels in the park. I have begun these processes.

What they had wanted me to share in a message that First Day, I have written here on another First Day. After I failed to speak, it eventually became clear I was to tell the whole story, and then to give up my vehicles and walk. For how long, I don't know. It is the first time in 33 years I have been without a vehicle.

It is simply time to walk; cheerfully.

Postscript: In the summer of 2005, two months after first writing this piece, while walking and without a vehicle, I met my life partner. She was nine blocks away from my home and I knew the minute I met her. It took her a bit longer. A clearness committee including war dead from the park helped to convince her. She is now a Friend. □



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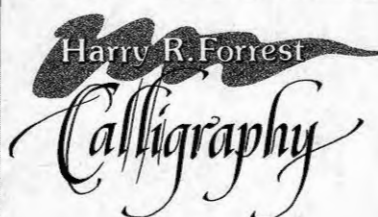
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Deaths

Candee—*Benjamin Leroy Candee Jr.*, 87, on January 10, 2009, in Shaker Heights, Ohio, of an aneurysm. Ben was born on May 24, 1921, in Syracuse, N.Y. He became a pacifist early in his life, influenced by a minister of the Congregational church to which he belonged and by his attendance at an AFSC workcamp in Delano, Calif., in 1940, during his sophomore year at Cornell University. He graduated from Cornell in 1941 and taught mathematics briefly before registering for the draft as a conscientious objector. Ben completed an MS in Educational Guidance at Syracuse University, where influence by Norman Whitney, a professor there and leader of the Peace Council in Syracuse, reinforced his pacifism. He volunteered at the Peace Council and was instrumental along with others in setting up a Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) chapter in Syracuse, enlisting a number of African American students from the university. When he was drafted, he was sent at first to a CPS forestry camp in Gorham, N.H., and then to Byberry State Hospital in Philadelphia to serve as an attendant. His participation in a hepatitis experiment sponsored by University of Pennsylvania led to his hospitalization. After his release from the hospital, he and a number of other men assigned to Byberry, disillusioned because they were not paid for their work and were refused jobs as regular employees, walked out, notifying the Attorney General of their action. During the interval before his arrest for this, Ben worked on cattle boats sponsored by the Brethren, taking animals to Poland and other European countries. Eventually he was arrested and served several months in Danbury Federal Prison, where he led hunger strikes against the racial segregation of the inmates, making a point of sitting with black inmates in violation of the prison rules. After he was released, Ben spent a year in the Merchant Marines, and then worked in Gaza, volunteering on a kibbutz and working for UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and AFSC. He participated in early sit-ins in the South for CORE. Influenced by Rogerian psychology, Ben completed his PhD in Psychology at University of Nebraska in Lincoln and joined the Cleveland Public Schools in 1954 as a school psychologist, becoming supervisor of psychological services there a few years later. He retired in 1987, but continued to champion the cause of peace and racial brotherhood until his death. Ben is survived by his wife, Jean Carey Candee; one daughter, Amy Candee; two sons, Bill Candee and Phil Candee; two grandchildren; and his sister, Eleanor Candee Cain.

Clarkson—*Elizabeth Rachael Hutton Clarkson*, 93, on December 17, 2008, in Ithaca, N.Y. Elizabeth was born on June 16, 1915, in Barnesville, Ohio, to Ellen Rachael Cope and Wetherhill Hutton, who were teachers at what is now Olney Friends School. Following her graduation from Earlham College, Elizabeth taught school briefly in Tennessee, later serving an internship as assistant to director of Pendle Hill Howard Brinton, living with the Brinton family in what is now the Brinton House on the Pendle

Hill campus. It was at Pendle Hill that she met her future husband, George Clarkson, a graduate student at Haverford College. They were married in 1941 in Winona, Ohio, and enjoyed a full and happy 67 years together. She and George traveled through the United Kingdom as he pursued his doctorate in Religion at University of Wales. After several moves around New York for George's education and work as a Methodist minister, in 1969 they settled south of Ithaca in their beloved home they called Ash Grove, requesting membership in Poplar Ridge (N.Y.) Meeting, where George was appointed pastor in 1978. Friends learned that if one of them were appointed to a committee, both would attend the meetings of that committee—one of the many ways two became one in their marriage. A lifelong Friend, Elizabeth was unsentimental about Quaker traditions and past history and was often humorously critical of Friends ways. Special targets of her displeasure were practices that, although cloaked in Friends testimonies of simplicity or integrity, resulted in the judgment and exclusion of others. She expressed grateful relief that today's Religious Society of Friends is more open and friendly than the one of her upbringing. Though she seldom spoke in meeting for worship, her understated and often humorous afterthoughts frequently warmed the hearts and stimulated the minds of those present. Elizabeth was as active in her husband's work as minister, college chaplain, professor, and study-abroad advisor as he was, although often behind the scenes. A longtime friend said after her death that even though George was the meeting pastor, Elizabeth, too, was a spiritual minister, in what she said and did to reach out to people. Friends and even casual acquaintances enjoyed her wit and sense of fun and knew that she would speak her mind and could disagree without being disagreeable. She was a devoted and loving mother of three daughters who placed cordless phones throughout the house, in her later years Elizabeth relied on these to maintain her many friendships. Elizabeth is survived by her husband, George Clarkson; three daughters, Ellen Emery, Evelyn Zumaya, and Kathleen Clarkson; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Harris—*Rosemary Crist Harris*, 93, on January 1, 2009, in Bellingham, Wash. Rosemary was born on December 2, 1915, in Washington, Ind., to Mary Von Kronenberg and John Anthony Crist, and grew up in Cumberland, Md., where her father was a chiropractor. After graduating from Lincoln Chiropractic College in 1940, she began to practice in Cumberland with her father, who was killed in 1942 by an explosion caused by a gas leak in the building where they lived and worked. Rosemary discovered the Religious Society of Friends in St. Louis, Mo., in 1942, and in that year she joined an AFSC year-round workcamp in Indianapolis, Ind., where she met Howard Harris, and they were married in 1943. They began their married life, after a 600-mile honeymoon bicycle trip in New England, in a small cottage at Scattergood Friends School, near West Branch, Iowa, where

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Fedelma McKenna: Fedelma is applying what she has learned from community training in Alternatives to Violence Programs in the U.S. (as well as experiences in Guatemala and Columbia) and to hopefully contribute to the innovative and vibrant cross-cultural peace building and conflict resolution among the people of Palestine's West Bank.

Abbey Pratt Harrington: Abbey is researching the life of Barbara Reynolds, founder of the Peace Resource Center in Japan. Abbey will interview Hiroshima maidens and others who were part of the peace movement and who knew Barbara.



Lauren Bauman: Lauren plans to research a number of programs, both Quaker and non Quaker, that provide short-term service programs with the goal understanding the organizational structure, best practices and methods of service education. Ultimately, she would like to use this information to develop more short-term service programs specifically for Quakers.



Katie Terrell: Katie is involved in research of FUM history to learn more about the creation of Quaker Life magazine as a merger of The American Friend and The Christian Worker. The results of her research will be published in a 2010 commemorative issue of Quaker Life celebrating its 50 years of existence as a vital part of FUM.



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they cared for the unoccupied buildings of the school for several months. Through the next 23 years they lived in Connecticut, where they attended Hartford Theological Seminary, and in Kansas, Iowa, Ohio, New York, Michigan, and California, finally settling in Bellingham, Wash., where Howard taught anthropology at Western Washington University. Rosemary was a member of Bellingham Meeting. Her primary interests were child rearing, nutrition, and education, and after home schooling her children and studying and exploring many aspects of education, she established Rufus Jones School in Bellingham, which she directed for 25 years. Rosemary is remembered by her relatives and her many friends as one who channeled God's love to everyone she knew, especially to those she served as teacher, midwife, or personal spiritual guide. After suffering a stroke in November 2007, Rosemary was bedridden for 13 months, but she lived during this period with her usual fortitude and steadfast cheerfulness. She often expressed her thankfulness for her children's care during this time. Rosemary is survived by her husband of 65 years, Howard Harris; four sons, David Harris, Timothy Harris (Ellen), Stanley Harris (Karen), and Stephen Harris (Margaret); two daughters, Heather Ezre (Andrew) and Holly Harris; 13 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; three brothers, John Crist (Marge), Charles Crist (Ruth), and Joseph Crist; one sister, Mary Louise Boyer (Max); and many nieces and nephews.

Matlack—*Elizabeth Hendrickson Matlack*, 99, on February 2, 2009, at Medford Leas in Medford, N.J. Elizabeth was born on August 29, 1909, in Philadelphia, Pa., and lived her early life on the family dairy farm in Crosswicks, N.J., where she walked to the one-room school. She graduated from Westtown School in 1927 and went on to Connecticut College for Women, graduating with a major in Mathematics in 1931. In 1932 she married Robert W. Matlack, a Westtown School classmate, and after honeymooning in the Greenlaw Cottage on Lake Megunticook in Camden, Me., they settled in Moorestown, N.J. Elizabeth worked as a volunteer with several community and Quaker groups, including Burlington County Hospital, Visiting Nurse Association, Red Cross blood drives, Cub Scouts, and a Quaker sewing group. Informally over the years she quietly helped many friends and families with care, dinners, driving, and an empathetic ear, living a life of service to her family, her friends, and her community with a selflessness and quiet competence. During her more than 50 years of living in Moorestown she raised three sons, Louis, James, and Richard, and traveled frequently to Crosswicks to care for her aging parents on the family farm. During these years, she and a group of ten other mothers formed a book club that met monthly. Elizabeth was the family historian for her parents' families, the Hendricksons, Thornes, and Middletons, as well as the Matlacks and other south Jersey Quaker families. She had a knack for recalling names, relationships, and dates and collected and preserved

many historic family records, either passing them down in the family or donating them to Swarthmore College or the Burlington County Historical Society. She understood that she was the last of her line and felt a strong obligation to preserve and share these family legacies. She and Robert remained Moorestown residents until 1988, when they moved to Medford Leas, a Quaker retirement community. There Elizabeth continued her service to others in the Thrift Shop. Her life was characterized by her deep yet quiet religious faith and her gracious manner to everyone. Her life bridged the period from her father selling milk by the ladle from a horse-drawn wagon in nearby Trenton to 21st-century digital voice mail. Elizabeth is survived by her three sons, Louis, James, and Richard Matlack; their spouses; nine grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren.

Waterman—Elizabeth Ann Lyzenga Waterman, 34, on March 10, 2009, in Boston, Mass., from complications of lupus. Elizabeth was born on August 7, 1974, in Ann Arbor, Mich., to Ann and David Lyzenga. During her childhood, her family attended the Christian Reformed Church, and while at Bryn Mawr College she began attending Friends meetings, becoming a convinced member of Haverford (Pa.) Meeting in 1996. She graduated with a BA in English in 1996 and earned a Master's in Divinity from Earlham School of Religion in 2000. At ESR, she led the Richmond Young Friends in programmed as well as unprogrammed meetings. She worked at Camp Woodbrooke in Wisconsin during the summers. In 2000, responding to a clearly felt calling, Elizabeth moved to Rindge, N.H., to teach writing, literature, and geometry at The Meeting School. Her students knew her as a good listener who was patient, comforting, and understanding of their mistakes. An accomplished cook, she became the first kitchen coordinator for the school. She transferred her membership to Monadnock (N.H.) Meeting in 2003. Elizabeth and her future husband, Craig Waterman, met as faculty members at the school and were married in 2004 under the care of Monadnock Meeting. They adopted a son, Elijah, in 2007. Elizabeth and Craig's marriage was deepened by both laughter and pain. During her last illness, she wrote, "It's scary how wonderful it is to be married. . . . I just really lucked out. My self from the first two-thirds of my life would be surprised." An intelligent and feisty advocate of a strong community and high academic standards, she guided the school's educational program, while she kept a cozy, quirky, and even nerdy atmosphere in her home, designing the quilts and knitted things she made rather than following patterns. Elizabeth loved choral singing. She was a discerning and vital recording clerk of the Faculty Meeting, and a clear, analytical, and consistent curriculum coordinator and registrar. In the mystical side to her faith, she listened attentively to the Inward Guide for leadings, viewing her life decisions, including going to Earlham, working at The Meeting School, marrying, and adopting as callings from God. She also led and preached at



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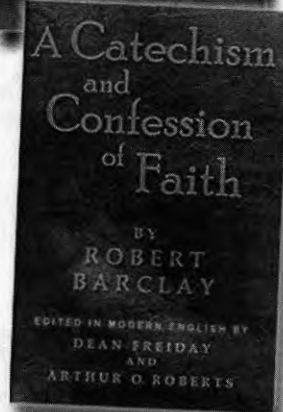
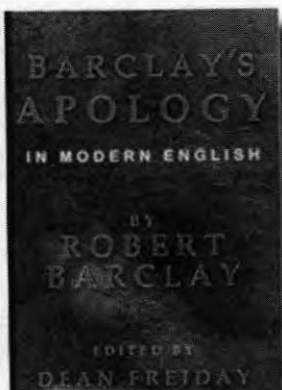
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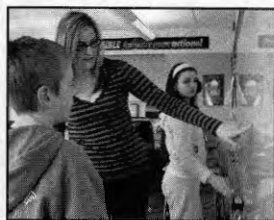


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programmed and semi-programmed meetings for worship. She volunteered for FGC's Junior Gathering and led Bible presentations at FGC's Young Quakers programs, using her gift for explaining Bible stories to unprogrammed teens in her quiet, impish, but serious way; she spoke about Jesus in a way that made him accessible to them. She was both earnest and humorous, both gentle and fierce. Elizabeth is survived by her husband, Craig Waterman; her son, Elijah Waterman; her mother, Ann Lyzenga; her father, David Lyzenga; her brother, Andrew Lyzenga; and her sister, Megan Lyzenga.

Wheeler—Grace Russell Wheeler, 80, on March 26, 2008, in Bryn Mawr, Pa., of chronic pulmonary obstructive disease. Grace was born on May 17, 1927, in Philadelphia, Pa. Encouraged by her father to think independently, Grace enrolled at Bennington College at 17, where she developed her creative and practical side. Grace and her sister, who had come to Bennington with her, did chores in the college gardens and farm, learning how to pluck a chicken, harvest crops, and bring a meal to the table. Grace graduated from Bennington in 1948 with a major in Political Economy. Soon after, the governor of New Jersey appointed her to the state's planning commission, and she became active in Republican politics in Burlington County. She often said that campaigning door to door, conducting opinion polls, and observing local political leaders wrangle over funding initiatives were great lessons in solving real-world problems. She began her career in market research at Alderson and Sessions, working there until 1954, when she married Philip Price Sharples. She and Philip lived in Bryn Mawr, where they raised their children, Martha, Grace, and Russell. As a young mother, Grace enrolled in graduate school at Temple University, earning an MBA in 1968. Grace helped found what later became Gladwyne Montessori School. Philip and Grace divorced in 1976, and Grace returned to work, conducting market research for Jackson Laboratories, the U.S. Information Service, the Franklin Institute, Widener University, the Please Touch Museum, and the World Affairs Council. Affiliated with Haverford (Pa.) Meeting, she joined the board of directors of Arcadia University and William Penn Charter School, where her work became an important part of her life, and she served as clerk of the Board of Overseers from 1975 to 1985. During the time the school made the decision to admit girls, something Grace advocated. In 1980 Grace married Alexander Bowman Wheeler. An intellectual who was also deeply concerned about the surrounding environment, Grace took responsibility for the land she lived on, restoring the bank of the stream that ran through her property. She researched the creek's history and development, including the grist mills, from the time of the Lenape Indians to the present. Grace remained active in the Bennington College community, Penn Charter School, and environmental conservation. She worked with the Natural Lands Trust, which she had been a member of for 45 years, to set up a conservation easement on her land. Grace was preceded in

death by her husband, Alexander Bowman Wheeler, in 1991. She is survived by two daughters, Grace Sharples Cook and Martha Sharples, one son, Russell Sharples; one stepdaughter, Alexandra Wheeler; two stepsons, Philip Sharples and Warwick Wheeler; her former husband, Philip Price Sharples; 11 grandchildren; and one sister.

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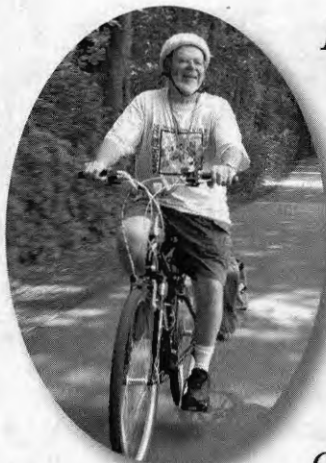
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long-standing Quaker call to revive "primitive Christianity" doesn't mean focusing on such creedal beliefs about Jesus, but focusing instead on "the way, the truth, and the life" embodied in the faith and practice of Jesus, a faith and practice that is deeply rooted in the radical, prophetic, and mystical stream within Judaism.

Anyway, I just wanted to make this one correction to David's "factual corrections" to my article, while at the same time appreciating and supporting his main points, which I think are both insightful and important.

Steve Chase
Keene, N.H.

Some queries on bottled water

Drink for thirsty people, rain at the end of a drought, a place of peace ("He leadeth me beside the still waters"), and baptism come to mind when one thinks of water as a blessing. So I read Chuck Fager's article, "The Top Ten Reasons (Plus Three) Why Bottled Water Is a Blessing" (FJ July), with disappointment.

The article has little to do with an actual blessing, nor does it seem to represent Quaker thought or life. It is not the first time the JOURNAL has strayed from its mission by publishing a technical discussion or argument more suitable for a professional or trade publication. Articles on nuclear power come to mind, including the one in the same issue. The JOURNAL's editorial staff is not equipped to separate technical fact from wishful thinking.

Fager presents 12 distinct arguments for bottled water. Six are technical. He is not an expert on water technology. For the most part his technical arguments are incorrect or undecidable. Four of his arguments are rhetorical. Two can be said to relate obliquely to Quaker testimonies on simplicity and environmental stewardship, though they are not consistent with those testimonies as I understand them.

A thoughtful article explaining in what sense bottled water is a blessing and how its use supports or is consistent with Quaker testimonies and values would be of greater interest to this Friend than technical points and rhetorical flourish. Quakers are experts in respect to their own values and testimonies as well in describing how they carry these into the world.

Perhaps a few queries would be helpful. How and when may water be considered a "blessing?" Is there any special characteristic

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of bottled water that makes it more apt to be a blessing than water delivered by other means?

How does using bottled water allow one to devote more time and energy to matters of the Spirit?

Is it just for wealthy people to use drinking water for washing cars and watering lawns when there is not enough potable water to meet the basic needs of the world's poorest people?

Is it just for wealthy people to spend \$2 a bottle for water when they could drink tap water and donate the money to international water development work?

What are Friends called to do to make safe drinking water available and affordable to all of God's people?

Do symbolic acts, such as refusing to drink bottled water, or protesting wasteful uses of tap water, have a role in raising awareness of the world's water shortages?

In respect to environmental stewardship, is there a difference between consuming a single-serving bottle of water as compared to a soft drink or juice? Should Friends strive to minimize use of all single-serving beverages?

How might John Woolman advise contemporary Friends regarding use of bottled water?

When reading scientific articles I appreciate logical exposition based on empirical evidence. In FRIENDS JOURNAL, I'd rather find Spirit-led words coming from the heart.

Charles P. Schade
Charleston, W.Va.

Note: It is certainly risky for a usually non-technical publication like FRIENDS JOURNAL to venture into specialized subjects, but when they intersect with deep moral issues, to avoid them completely seems irresponsible. As in the paraphrased words of French Premier Georges Clemenceau during World War I, "War is too important to be left to the generals," we are sometimes challenged to become "literate" in new areas. —Eds.

Dismantling straw men

I have tremendous respect for Chuck Fager, but his article, "The Top Ten Reasons (Plus Three) Why Bottled Water Is a Blessing" (FJ July), begs response. It is highly unusual to read such a large number of "straw man" arguments in one brief essay. Specifically:

He says we shouldn't object to plastic water bottles, because plastic is safer than

glass. Well, that's true, but it's a false choice. It assumes that we're going to be drinking bottled water out of something.

Bottled water is a lifesaver in natural disasters. True again, and it should be available for that purpose, but in order to be available in disasters, it doesn't need to be sold by the billions of bottles in convenience stores, and served when safe tap water is readily available.

Bottled water has a substantial shelf life. But then, so does tap water.

Bottled water is realistically priced, preparing us for paying the real costs of water in the future. This is interesting, but it doesn't hold water. The actual cost of the water in the bottles is minimal. The price we pay is mainly for handling, bottling, storage, transportation, advertising, refrigeration, and profit. When we buy bottled water in lieu of safe tap water, we are choosing to pay all of those costs in addition to our taxpayer subsidies for tap water.

Bottles are an excellent advertising medium in that it gets your message into the hands of lots of people. Just please be aware of the negative environmental costs of your choice of media, and of the fact that many people may associate your message with the negative consequences of bottled water.

Water will soon be available in compostable bottles. Okay, that removes one of the negatives, but it doesn't do anything about all of the other costs—bottling, handling, storage, transportation, advertising, refrigeration, and profit.

Bottled water is wonderfully safe. And so is tap water, usually.

Bottled water is better for us than caffeinated soda, sweetened fruit drinks, or beer. Hmmm, I wonder why Chuck omitted tap water from that list. I don't want to eliminate water from the options that people have, and I will sometimes buy a bottle of water if I need something to drink, but more often I will take water from home, or from a drinking fountain.

Bottled water has a better safety record than tap water. Granted, if your local tap water is not safe, then buy bottles. But then don't forget to lobby for safe tap water. One danger of bottled water is that we will ignore the need for safe tap water if we can easily buy it in bottles.

Bottled water is fully portable. But then, so is tap water in my personal bottle.

Bottled water is convenient. I submit that it's very often not as convenient as tap water, which is usually within a few steps or else in my personal water bottle.

Bottled water is not evil; it has its place when safe drinking is not available. Perhaps the "self-appointed eco-elders" who confronted Chuck were overreacting. However, it is not wise to choose a product with a large carbon footprint and lots of unnecessary costs when a much more eco-friendly and simpler alternative is readily available.

Joseph Ossmann
Carmichael, Calif.

A call for Spirit-led choices

We agree that water is a blessing, but we find the reasons for bottled water in Chuck Fager's article misleading and illogical. Bottled water may be very useful in a disaster, but this is not an argument in favor of plastic water bottles in daily use. Even though some water supplies may be polluted, there are many better solutions than using plastic water bottles. There are plenty of excellent advertising media without plastic water bottles. We too see water as much more healthful than soda, but do not feel this justifies the plastic bottle.

At every juncture in our lives, we must make choices that reflect our best understanding of our values, information available, and movement of the Spirit. There are surely times when going and buying a case of bottled water for a yearly meeting event is the best thing to do (we can remember one such time.)

So Friend Chuck Fager, we encourage thee to drink from thy plastic water bottle as long as thou canst.

Penny Thron-Weber
and Katya Thronweber
Denver, Colo.

Wrestling with contention

Friends' integrity is prized. If certain early Friends said that something was true, the assertion would be accepted without reservation.

I've read estimates written by antinuclear activists that perhaps 400,000 people died from the Chernobyl accident. The Soviet government at the time admitted only that 56 workers died. I'm left in a quandary when in Karen Street's article, "The Nuclear Energy Debate among Friends: Another Round" (FJ July), she gives partial credence to the Soviet government's number: "50–60 people died during or since the accident, with up to 4,000 deaths possible."

I don't trust the Soviet government's pronouncement at all. A city of 50,000

people next to the nuclear energy station was forcibly abandoned in hours, after a full day of citizen exposure to radiation. I've seen pictures on the Internet of kitchens with memos and family photos still on the wall after 20 years of stillness. Also, just after the disaster, stories circulated of relocated children quietly disappearing from classrooms one by one, apparently thyroid cancer victims to be hidden.

The hallmark of Friends' integrity is wrestling within oneself with others' opinions and trying to discern their inner motives. Evidence of such personal wrestling is typically seen throughout each issue of FRIENDS JOURNAL.

We live in an age of highly coordinated misinformation. Some right-wing coordinated political attacks have been crude; for example, some have painted President Obama as a Muslim. Pertaining to the nuclear power debate, I've seen Internet reports that the nuclear industry allegedly hired an ad agency to coordinate a campaign to win tens of billions of federal dollars for themselves. Perpetually attacking the credibility of all antinuclear messengers is a major goal of theirs.

I must reject Karen Street's microscopic Chernobyl death count as nuclear industry boilerplate that she copied. I didn't see indications of personal wrestling with a known, extreme discrepancy. This in turn colors my trust in her many other nonstandard assertions. However, Karen is sincere in wanting the inhibition of global warming. As a scientist, she explores options. I happen to explore different options.

Paul Klinkman
Providence, R.I.

What is the Source?

One Quaker belief I didn't see in the article "Christ-Centeredness and Quaker Identity" by R. Scot Miller (*FJ* July) is any reference to continuing revelation.

Early Friends did not know about the Gnostic Gospels. They did not know about the Dead Sea Scrolls. Early Friends did see Jesus as God personified.

There are several books out now that debunk the entire life of Jesus. None of the stories about Jesus were written down until about 100 years after his birth. The books in the Bible were decided in political terms, not religious. The Bible has been rewritten and reinterpreted so many times that putting any kind of faith in the words of the Bible is being irresponsible to the Truth.

The Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and many of the miracles probably never happened.

To those who need to believe that Jesus was God incarnate, I say, carry that sword as long as you need it.

For me, Jesus was a great teacher. The Source for me is not the Bible, not Jesus Christ, but the God within.

Gary Miller
Roseville, Calif.

On the validity of testimony

I was disappointed with the article by R. Scot Miller, "Christ-Centeredness and Quaker Identity" (*FJ* July). I understand his fear that Quakers may become irrelevant or lose our identity when we deny our history and traditions. However, I believe that our testimonies are valid with or without a historically Christ-centered basis. My understanding of Quaker beliefs is that they come from our experience. Some Friends in my meeting have not had an experience of Christ in their lives, but do have an ongoing relationship with God. Does this make them unworthy to be a member of a Friends meeting? My understanding of nonviolence is that it works when I am open to having God work through me. It is also the only way of resolving conflicts that leads to lasting peace. If I adhere to the Peace Testimony because I feel I should believe that is the way God wants me to respond to conflict, I may not have a solid foundation on which to act in a conflict situation. I would suggest that R. Scot Miller read Pendle Hill pamphlet #402 by Margery Post Abbott, *Christianity and the Inner Life; Twenty-First Century Reflections on the Words of Early Friends*.

Thanks for the articles in the August issue on forgiveness and sex offenders. I believe that Friends have an obligation to recognize that our criminal "justice" system in the U.S. is based upon punishment and retribution rather than healing the community. Restorative justice begins to address this, but will have limited influence until the basic assumption about the purpose of law enforcement changes.

Deborah Wood
Sleepy Hollow, N.Y.



Outrageous forgiveness

Regarding Jonathan Kooker's article, "Forgiveness: An Amish Lesson for the Rest of Us?" (*FJ* Aug.): For most of us out here in the real world, the second most outrageous thing about the Nickel Mines outrage is the peculiar testimony of the Amish. It is most discomfiting to us when any valid legal demand is nailed to a cross. It just makes a mockery of the powers of law and order. One wonders: where did they get these radical notions? A long time ago I knew a Quaker who had a similarly peculiar testimony.

David L. Koehler
South Bend, Ind.

A lesson from the Amish

When I was eight years old, I spent Saturday afternoons at the local movie theater. The obvious value of the matinee was that it got me out of the house. In retrospect, I see that I was being indoctrinated in a manner that I did not recognize at the time. All of the matinee movies that I watched were Westerns made in the 1950s. The stories had a relentless theme: a real man knows how to fight and is willing, if necessary, to kill in the name of justice.

In each movie, there is a group of underdogs, usually townspeople trying to establish a civilized life on the frontier. They are being intimidated by a man who has hired thugs to bully them. The motivating force is a deed to grazing land, mineral rights, water rights, or the like. A mythic stranger, a solitary man, wanders into town. He is not intimidated and is quite able to fight back. He is a retired gunfighter, a disillusioned soldier, or a frontier sheriff who has had enough of enforcing the law. He's a tough guy who sides with the underdogs, although he is reluctant to get involved. A soft-spoken

man, he acts only after being repeatedly provoked. The tension in the story derives from waiting for the inevitable showdown. How far are they going to push him and get away with it? Insulted again and again, the stranger refuses to retaliate. Eventually, the bad guys cross the line by threatening the safety of the people whom he has come to care about. They keep asking for a fight. Eventually, he gives them one—far more than they had bargained for. Because he has been pushed to the limit, his reaction seems justified. In the movie *The Apaloosa*, Marlon Brando sheepishly explains to the sheriff about the man he has just shot dead: “He didn’t give me no selection.”

It is not necessary to describe how the plot of these movies evolves; modern versions of this very American story are so pervasive as to be immediately recognizable. What is important is that we understand how deeply the myth of “redemptive violence”—our sense of entitlement to meet violence with violence—is woven into our culture. We are a very violent people who fail to recognize this truth about ourselves. To the degree that we do recognize it, we tend to think that it is mostly a good thing. Men in the U.S.—that is, those who are “real” men—are obligated to fight for what is right, at all costs, even when the cost is not apparent (and it rarely is).

This explains why the news media were astonished—even outraged—that the Amish were so quick to forgive the man who killed several girls in an Amish schoolhouse in Pennsylvania. Schoolhouse shootings have become a commonplace, but forgiveness? The man had even intended to abuse the girls sexually before he killed them.

What few people know about the Amish is that they are given to ask themselves, “If you cannot forgive, how can you be forgiven?” (They mean forgiven by God.) These people do not focus on retribution. They expect justice from the civil authorities; the judgment of souls they leave to God. They would be poor candidates for a lynch mob. They are profoundly different from most people in the United States in that respect.

The funeral of the man who killed the Amish schoolgirls was attended by members of the Amish community. An elderly Amish man bent down to the boys who were with him and was overheard to say, “We must not think evil of this man.” He seemed to be warning

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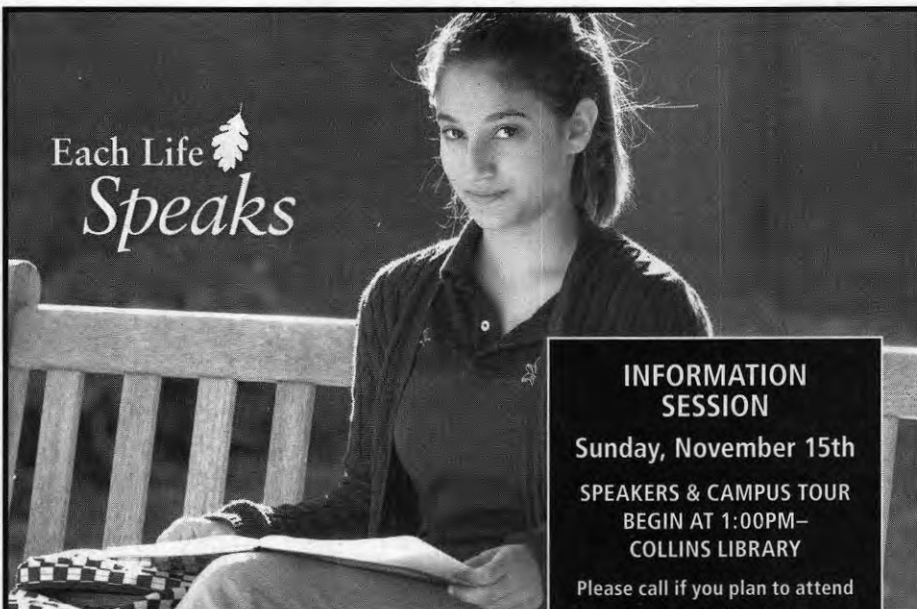
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them not to be seduced by their pain; to avoid returning evil with evil. Their lesson was the opposite of the one that I learned at the Saturday matinees. He was setting them free.

The phrase "redemptive violence" was coined by theologian Walter Wink. His brief article, "Facing the Myth of Redemptive Violence" can be read online at <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/cpt/article_060823wink.shtml>.

A book in response to the killings written by three local scholars trusted by the Amish community, Donald B. Kraybill, Steven M. Nolt, and David L. Weaver-Zercher, is *Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy* (2007).

David Hopkinson
Bellingham, Wash.

Hearing another's mind on healthcare reform

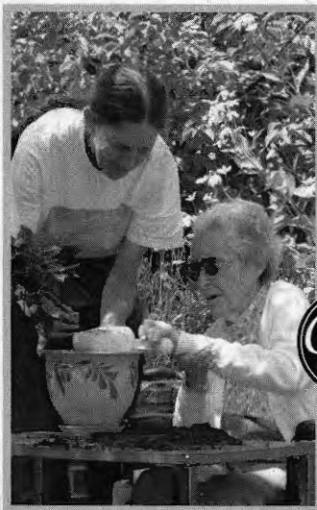
As a person who has invested most of her professional life in the field of healthcare administration, I find myself dismayed, disappointed, and incredibly saddened by the debacle being created around the healthcare reform issue. Though I am not totally in favor of the currently proposed healthcare reform bill, I was encouraged and excited for our country to actually begin to grapple with these complex and critical issues. Tragically, the issue has become politicized and polarized to the point that dialogue and creative problem-solving seem impossible.

How have we become a nation of people so driven and burdened by fear that we seem incapable of listening with our whole heart to other views and ideas? Our nation has not always been thus. We have a legacy of strength against adversity, of courage and remarkable bravery, of original thinking, of creativity and radical idealism. From such a heritage, how have we become such paupers of original thought, calcified by our own fear and indecision?

In 1946, an amazing visionary and statesman, Arthur Morgan, wrote in his "Philosophy of Community—Is Democracy 'Losing Her Voice?'" the following:

When modern democracy began to emerge, it was to some extent a revival of the ancient democracy [seen in indigenous cultures], and to some extent it was a substitute for armed combat in the form of voting and majority rule. During the revival of democracy there was much discussion as to whether voting was not contrary to the spirit

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of democracy.

In American democracy both these elements are present. We have tended to emphasize the formal part—voting, parliamentary methods and majority rule. We have tended to give less attention to the process of full, free discussion and the general achievement of consensus or full agreement. Yet always full and free discussion is the more important part. Lacking that, voting may only be a process of recording opinions planted in the mass mind by biased propaganda.

The preservation of American democracy depends on free, full discussion of public issues by all the ancient and modern means.

Are we, each of us, endeavoring to assure a “free, full discussion of public issues?” Are we carefully reading materials from varying sources? Are we engaging our friends and family in lively and respectful debate—listening to others as carefully as we defend our positions? Are our leaders being truthful and engaging us and each other in a full discussion of the issues? Are our leaders listening to each other? To us? To others who have critical information to share on the issues? Are we allowing ourselves to be motivated by fear, by anger, by distrust? Are we capable of setting aside the fear, the bitterness, the distrust—and listening with our hearts and our minds?

With such a rich heritage and history, I have hope that we can turn this crisis into an opportunity for healing, for working side by side to achieve common goals. I believe this country can once again rise to the challenge of bridging differences, healing and forgiving wounds, and above all, resolving this crisis through cooperation, respectful and compassionate listening, strong and ethical leadership, and hope in the basic goodness of our citizens, our leaders, and our intentions.

I came across this verse of the traditional American Shaker tune “Simple Gifts,” and it speaks a simple and profound truth that perhaps it’s time we all heard, at the core of our being: “Tis a gift to be knowing, Tis a gift to be kind; Tis a gift to wait to hear another’s mind. That when we speak our feelings we might come out true, Tis a gift for me and a gift for you.”

Susan Mason-Bouterse
Burnsville, N.C.

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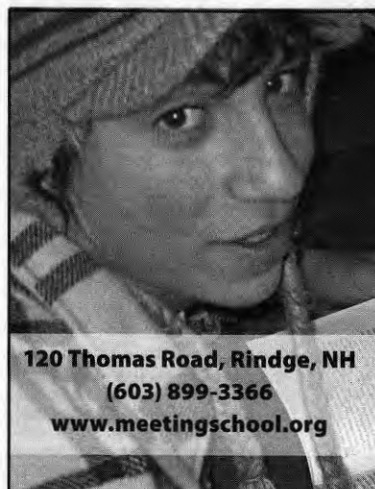


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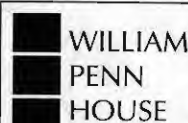
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November 27-29: **Prepare Ye the Way: An Advent Journey toward Love**, with Ken and Katharine Jacobsen
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A master's degree or doctorate is preferred, in addition to 7-10 years of both administrative and teaching experience in secondary or higher education. Familiarity with the tenets and practices of the Religious Society of Friends is highly desirable. The position is available July 1, 2010. Salary and benefits are highly competitive. Candidates should send a resume, cover letter, statement of educational philosophy and the contact information for three references to:

Human Resources Director
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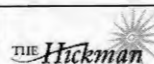
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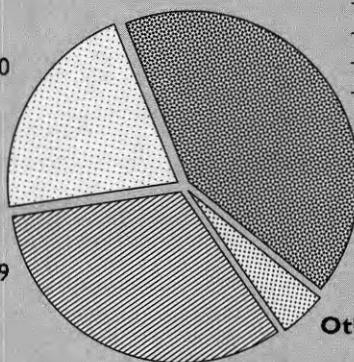
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