

FRIENDS JOURNAL

Thought
and
Life
Today



*Neighbors East and West—
This Time Iran*

The Eye of God

*A Case for Eldering
and Discipline*



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Finding Truth through Relationships

Early in my adult spiritual journey, I was introduced to the thinking of Martin Buber and his influential book, *I and Thou*. I remember being struck with the (to me) unique perspective that reality lies somewhere between you and me, that in dialog is the essence of what is real. Standing too much to either side of the equation (within myself or focusing too much on you) creates unbalance and results in self-absorption or objectification. It's been more than 40 years since I read Buber, and I've likely done him an injustice, but I'd like to expand a bit on these observations.

We in the U.S. are acculturated to think of ourselves primarily as individuals. Many of our pioneer forebears were "rugged individualists" who struck out across oceans, forests, and plains to establish this country, built on courage and hard work. At least that's how the pioneer myth goes. In my more than 60 years, courageous individualism has been seen as a foremost attribute of what it means to be a U.S. citizen—and pioneering has taken us to the moon and back, pushing boundaries in every direction.

These things are well and good—in their place. Being willing to strike out to new lands and experiences for the sake of religious ideals or to found a better way of life, unfettered by the constraints of oppressive social systems, is a deep primary value in our culture, and a deep longing of the human heart.

However rugged individualism only goes so far. Eventually, time and population growth require that we not flee what oppresses us, but that we face it and enter into dialog. The world has evolved and the geographic cure is not really a permanent one, nor does it render the inner transformations that make co-existence, tolerance, respect, and community possible. If we are to find peace—and survival for our species—we must face and transform ourselves, learning to value community at least as much as individualism, with genuine appreciation for the diversity and the learning community offers.

In this issue, I find a thread that speaks to these concerns. In "A Case for Eldering and Discipline" (p.10), Herb Lape makes an excellent argument for reinstituting formal discipline in our monthly meetings, as a way of strengthening our communities and holding ourselves accountable to our fellow Friends. This is an examination of accountability and humble submission to group sensibilities at its best. "On the cutting Edge: The Peace Activism of Earle Reynolds" (p.12) by Kristin Grabarek offers a biographical profile of a man who "forfeited a sought-after occupation, prestige among his colleagues, and an affluent lifestyle" for the sake of his fellow human beings, having had the opportunity to closely study the effects of radiation on the development of children exposed to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Reynolds was willing to sacrifice himself for the sake of others. Sam and Ruth Neff, in "Neighbors East & West—This Time Iran" (p.22), describe in detail a trip taken to Iran to help debunk the common media image of Iranians as "dangerous and hostile." Their personal attempt to reach out to the "other" and to find common ground is inspiring and necessary work as we move forward in an increasingly complex and interconnected global society.

Building community, finding great value and pleasure in differences, learning to modify our own behaviors to meet the needs of the greater good for all—these are values worth exploring—and essential for the present and future.

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Cover: Laira Fonner,
during a Neighbors East
and West trip, with two new
friends in Abyaneh, Iran.
Photo courtesy of Sam and
Ruth Neff

Photo by Dean C.T. Bratis



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Slavery still exists

Recent dialogue about slavery in the pages of FRIENDS JOURNAL compels me to draw attention to the international abolition movement. I have been thinking about this since reading Danielle Short's excellent article on immigration ("Immigration and Friends Testimonies," *FJ* May 2008). She highlighted the need for us to demonstrate, through the way we welcome immigrants, a view of human beings as equals.

Furthermore, she outlined the need to consider the global economy and the ways that economic inequality contribute to the need for migration to begin with. Sadly, in the U.S. and across the globe, discrimination and greed lead many people in positions of power to treat others as lesser—and even as property. As one example, David Morse's article on the crisis in Darfur ("Facing Evil: Genocide in Darfur," *FJ* Sept. 2005) drew connections between scarce resources, historic ethnic prejudices, and slavery. An online resource on the modern abolition movement is <www.notforsalecampaign.org>. I also would like to draw Friends' attention to two books on modern economic slavery: *Nobodies* by John Bowe (2007) and *A Crime So Monstrous* by Benjamin Skinner (2008).

Lisa Rand
Bechtelsville, Pa.

Nuclear power and global warming

What is most glaring in the responses in the Forum to Karen Streer's article supporting expansion of nuclear power ("A

Friend's Path to Nuclear Power," *FJ* Oct. 2008) is that none of them acknowledged climate change, which was central to her argument. We no longer have the luxury of ignoring the elephant in the room. The Climate Beast has awakened, and the outcome, if we don't do everything in our power to both mitigate and adapt to its effects, will render concern about radiation levels moot. It does not help that the JOURNAL tends to frame such issues as if it were a debate with clear winners and losers. The issues are much more complex than that in modern society, and this one is a classic example. It's not a matter of either/or but both/and, when it comes to low carbon-emitting energy sources. The enemy is burning fossil fuels, not harnessing the Earth's own geothermal processes.

As far as the lead response article is concerned ("Another View on Nuclear Power," by Ace Hoffman and Janette D. Sherman, Viewpoint, *FJ* Jan.), juxtaposing two statements by the authors should be sufficient to undercut the thrust of a highly charged emotional argument. *Low-level radiation deaths may be hard to quantify* is followed in the very next paragraph with the unsupportable statement, regarding Chernobyl, of *a million dead already worldwide*. Don't get me wrong, Chernobyl was a terrible accident, and it could happen again, since this hugely flawed design is still in use throughout the states of the former Soviet Union. But reactor safety in the U.S. has vastly improved since Three Mile Island, where the containment vessel did its job, and the new generation of reactors will be even safer.

The option that I've studied that seems safest and ultimately cheapest, since it doesn't

require the prohibitive level of insurance that our current reactors do, is a thorium-powered reactor. Thorium is plentiful, the reaction cannot go critical, and its waste products are far more benign than those of Uranium-235. Moreover, a U.S. company has successfully tested a thorium-powered insert in Moscow for the Chernobyl reactor, which can be fueled by the large stockpile of plutonium held by Russia, solving three problems at once (renders the plutonium unusable for weaponry, avoids mining for thorium or uranium, and renders the Chernobyl-style reactor accident-proof).

Friends, let's put this whole argument in realistic terms. We need some way to provide virtually carbon-free baseload power while we ramp up the renewable sources of energy. CCS (carbon capture and storage) from coal plants, which is the only acceptable way we could ethically continue to use coal, is a long way off, if not unattainable. Solar thermal units such as the one now in operation in Spain would eventually be an excellent replacement for nuclear plants, and, after several decades of developing capacity, can supplement nuclear power. But right now, costly as building new nuclear plants is, solar thermal is still costlier, by about a third. And the political reality is that we have a new administration committed to *both* rapid development of renewables *and* what Obama called "safe nuclear"—referring to a new generation of reactors and working out the waste problem (that's another whole territory too complex to address in this letter).

Ultimately, all statements about *ahimsa*, doing no harm, are relative. I would have to say that our goal needs to be to *do the least harm*, for "no harm" is virtually impossible for human beings living in the 21st century. Least harm in terms of Gaia *and* continued civilized existence is a mix of energy sources that brings carbon emissions as close to neutral as possible. If we manage to make it that far, then by the latter third of the century, global carbon emissions need to be a net zero. The moral issue is not nuclear power, but how we care for the web of Creation. It is stewardship in an era when our numbers are overwhelming Gaia, multiplied by an extravagant lifestyle (look at the freezer and the clothes dryer, air conditioning and electric heat, the car and multiple-car families). We live in a world deeply, perhaps fatally, compromised by our industrial choices. Let us deeply examine those choices, of which we are mostly unaware, before pointing a finger at any one of them absent its context.

Robert McGahey
Celo, N.C.

Reminder: Special Issue for Fall 2009

Friends Witness in Our Everyday Lives (October 2009)

Friends are continually involved with non-Friends and with lifestyles that are incongruent to varying degrees with Quaker testimony—in our educational institutions, in the workplace, in recreation, in personal relationships, through organizations, and in the political arena. What particular challenges do we face, and how well do we meet them, as we strive to keep our outward lives in harmony with our faith? How are we learning and growing through these encounters?

We request completed submissions by May 15, 2009.

If you are interested in contributing material on this topic, 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. Please note that FRIENDS JOURNAL's general Submission Guidelines are posted at <www.friendsjournal.org>.

We need a public investigation of 9/11

I appreciated Steve Chase's thoughtful article about the controversies surrounding what happened on 9/11 ("Sifting through the Rubble: the 9/11 Controversies," *FJ* August 2008). I agree it is important to know what led to the events of that fateful day and that many troubling questions remain unanswered. *Friends Bulletin* (the official publication of Western unprogrammed Friends) ran a series of responses to David Griffin's first book, *The New Pearl Harbor: Disturbing Questions about the Bush Administration and 9/11* (2004), not long after it was published. David Griffin, a leading exponent of process theology, received his PhD at Claremont Graduate School and maintained close ties with the Claremont community through his mentor, John Cobb. Griffin is known and highly respected by Claremont Friends and his efforts to get at the truth about 9/11 were deeply appreciated.

I don't feel that Friends "slavishly accept the Bush administration's explanation for 9/11," as Steve suggests. Most Friends I know are deeply skeptical about anything that the Bush administration has said or done.

Since the publication of Griffin's book, the deceptive practices of the Bush administration have been revealed to be pervasive. Incontrovertible evidence

has been uncovered revealing that the administration lied about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, about torture, about domestic spying, and about many other matters.

When I think of 9/11 and the Bush administration, I am reminded of the words of "Big Daddy" in Tennessee Williams' play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*: "There ain't nothin' more powerful than the odor of mendacity. . . . You can smell it. It smells like death."

The smell of mendacity (and death) has permeated Washington for so long that we have become used to it, the way that Angelinos are used to the smog. Mendacity has become the norm in U.S. political life.

That's why I don't think it is enough for Friends simply to "study the matter." Given the government's secretive methods, it is impossible for private citizens to know for certain what really happened behind locked doors. And even if we somehow found the truth, so what? Many books have been written revealing the Bush administration's lies and nothing has come of such exposés.

We in this country need and deserve a public investigation of what has happened in the White House over the past eight years. As Steve Chase pointed out, the 9/11 Commission had a limited mandate and was not interested in finding out who was responsible for 9/11. Nor did it have the authority to investigate the events that followed this tragic event.

In light of these grave and persisting

doubts about whether government officials were complicit in 9/11, we need a credible governmental commission to be appointed—perhaps akin to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission—with the power to subpoena witnesses and demand documents that are now being locked away so that the truth can never be known.

I realize it appears unlikely for such a commission to be appointed under the current political climate. Even though President Obama is committed to "change" and to holding Washington to a higher moral standard, it is tempting to "put the past behind us" and forge ahead (or muddle through) with half-truths, if not downright lies.

But unless we know the truth about the past, we cannot have a realistic foreign policy guiding our nation into the future. More importantly, from a religious standpoint, without the truth (and without faith in the truthfulness of our leaders), we can never be free. As citizens, and as Friends, we need to demand that our government do its job and investigate activities that in the private sector would be considered fraudulent and criminal.

Anthony Manousos
Santa Monica, Calif.

Climate change is permanent

I can empathize with readers who are dismayed by the idea of giving up their long-held opposition to nuclear power. I, too, demonstrated at Diablo Canyon. My mother was arrested at Seabrook, and my father spent the last ten years of his life documenting the damaging effects of ionizing radiation in nuclear test zones.

But times change. I am grateful to Karen Street ("A Friend's Path to Nuclear Power," *FJ* Oct. 2008) for launching me on a month of reading and research. I now understand the ways in which nuclear power has been made safer than it was in the 1960s. I now understand how nuclear power plants may be less damaging to human welfare than the coal-fueled power plants now burgeoning in India and China.

Fast-moving climate change may now be a greater hazard than nuclear power and nuclear waste. The threat of climate change seems to require the careful development of nuclear and renewable sources of power.

Climate change also requires redoubled personal efforts on the part of Friends and other ordinary people. Replacing light bulbs and driving a Prius is not enough. I hope *FRIENDS JOURNAL* will soon publish an article on why we need to stop flying.

Elizabeth Boardman
San Francisco, Calif.

The values underlying economics

I want to thank Keith Helmuth for his deeply insightful and spiritually grounded piece "The Quaker Peace Testimony,

Economics, and the Common Good" (*FJ* Dec. 2008). We Quakers, who are so good at stubbornly imagining and standing for the possibility of peace despite a pervasive worldview that war is inevitable, seem singularly lacking in awareness and vision when it comes to economics.

Yet economic systems are built on deeply value-laden assumptions. What is wealth? What has value? What increases well-being? Can there be private ownership of common natural resources, of ideas? Is more better than less? Is greed the core human motivator? Is debt unforgivable? The answers to these questions in our current economic system are held to as a religious creed, and those answers run counter to many of our own deeply held spiritual beliefs.

We would do well to be bold about naming our current economic "religion" as

Continued on page 45

THE EYE OF GOD

by Dean C.T. Bratis

I have been fortunate enough to have encountered God several times in my life. This speaks less about my holiness, I suspect, than it does about simple luck.

I have always been receptive to such encounters. I am a seeker of signs, because like so many I am often lost. In a world that seems to continue to spiral out of control, God's very existence is often brought into question. Especially at times like that it is important to remember our encounters. Unless we preserve them somehow, they will disappear. That could leave us flailing aimlessly, unmoored, lost in despair or resignation or even disconsolate grief.

There are two encounters with the Divine that come immediately and vividly to my mind.

The first of these occurred on a warm summer day. My wife and I were driv-

ing through the open farmlands of Amish country with our convertible top down. It is always such a beautiful drive that has us marveling at God's wonderful creation. We were returning from dinner at one of our favorite restaurants, filled with food, enjoying spending time together, and having a wonderful conversation. I sometimes marvel at how much we still have to talk about even after 45 years.

It was a perfect day. Or so it seemed.

I was lost in the moment with my favorite person in the world. That's not an excuse for my lapse; only an explanation, as flimsy as that seems.

In an instant, a flash appeared in front of me. I had no time to react. I was not prepared; I had not paid enough attention.

There was a sudden blur of brown and teal that was followed by an awful thud. It is the kind of sound that resonates deep down into a person's soul. I knew something terrible had happened and I was responsible.

I looked into the rearview mirror in hopes that I was wrong, or at the very least that I could go back and fix things. Maybe I could rescue a creature that had been as oblivious to its surroundings as I.

But it became quickly apparent that death had come rapidly to a Mallard duck. It had been obliterated at my hands. There was nothing I could do.

I gazed with a fixed stare at the fading image in my mirror. To my horror, it only got worse. There were three ducklings moving out from the tall grass on the side of the road. They were totally bewildered; I could see that even from a distance.

So I had not only killed a female

**I UNDERSTAND
PAUL'S EXPERIENCE
ON HIS WAY TO
DAMASCUS A BIT
BETTER NOW.
I UNDERSTAND
HOW A DIVINE
LIGHT COULD
BLIND HIM AND
KNOCK HIM
BACKWARDS.**

Mallard but had also doomed her babies. I had really killed four of God's creatures, since the fate of those ducklings was clearly sealed.

I did the only thing I could do: I drove on. I was engulfed in a numbness rarely encountered in my life. Neither of us spoke another word all the way home.

As this experience settled into my consciousness over the next few days I realized that I had disturbed the universe. I had disturbed God's harmony of life. It filled me with an uneasiness that I could not shake. It repeatedly surfaced into my consciousness, unbidden and unexpected.

Then, into this sense of imbalance, appeared my very young cat, Jake. He follows me everywhere. He follows when I walk outside, almost like a little boy might. Often, as I let him out, he pivots and turns back towards the door as if to

Photos by Dean C.T. Bratis



Dean C.T. Bratis, a member of Uwchlan Meeting in Downingtown, Pa., taught Biology and Genetics at Delaware County Community College in Media, Pa., from 1970 to 1999. After a brief retirement he has resumed teaching, now at Villanova University.

ask me to accompany him. Not only does he tag along but at the end of the day he comes when I call so that we can both go into the house together. He's really a very sweet cat.

This should not be confused with his basic feline nature. Jake is strong, muscular, and a skilled assassin. He has deposited an untold number of animals at my door. Mouse, rabbit, mole, or bird; none stand a chance against this determined hunter. He is serious and efficient at carrying out his genetic heritage. I once knelt down and looked at him just to see what other animals saw. It was a menacing view.

That is why what I am about to describe seemed out of character. It was to be, I concluded, God's way of leading me through my self-imposed Mallard darkness.

It was late afternoon when the work of the day was done. This is usually a time that brings with it a sense of accomplishment and mellowness. But on this day the memories of mallards were still vivid in my mind. Then Jake came up onto the deck with another of his gifts in tow. This time it was a baby rabbit that he carried up the steps. It was still very much alive, but hopelessly locked in those strong jaws.

At first this seemed no different than dozens of other scenarios that had played out many times before but it was unlike the rest. I missed it at first, since I was tired and preoccupied with the mallards, but in short order the strangeness of this particular gift became clear.

Jake brought the baby rabbit just outside the door and set it down next to him. It stayed quiet for a moment but then tried getting up and running off, but it was no match for Jake's speed and agility. The cat went after it in a blur.

It was like child's play really. Each time Jake retrieved it with a swift but gentle grasp on the scruff of its neck and he would bring it back to the same spot and lie down beside it. He would stay put with this

terrified, trembling, but very-much-alive rabbit lying right beside him. Each time he brought it to the door, a few feet away, not to me.

This scenario played out several times until it dawned on me. He wanted me to open the door and let him into the house.

I hesitated for fear that I might incur my wife's displeasure for letting a live rabbit loose inside. But in the end, I decided to do it. I simply opened the door and let him in. Much to my surprise, he left the rabbit outside and walked into the house without even a backward glance.

I scooped up the baby and with a quiet, reassuring voice stroked it gently on its back. I then placed it under a large shrub just beyond the tree line.

There it was: God, in the form of a cat, giving me a chance to redeem myself for the Mallard murders. This time God had done it by taming, for a moment, a skilled and proficient killer. The

wonderful paw of the Divine had reached down and healed my soul. I was overwhelmed and thankful for the opportunity to rebalance the scales of life.

Since then, the mallards have faded from my memory, although I must confess I do drive much more carefully now.

The second and most vivid encounter I have had with the Divine occurred at the Philadelphia Zoo. It was there, in early summer, when I looked directly into the eye of God.

It was one of the best birthday gifts my wife had ever given me, taking me to the zoo that day. It was to be my day, she said. We would stay as long as I wanted, and moreover, I could move at whatever pace I chose. I had recently become the proud owner of a single lens reflex camera and wanted to test it out.

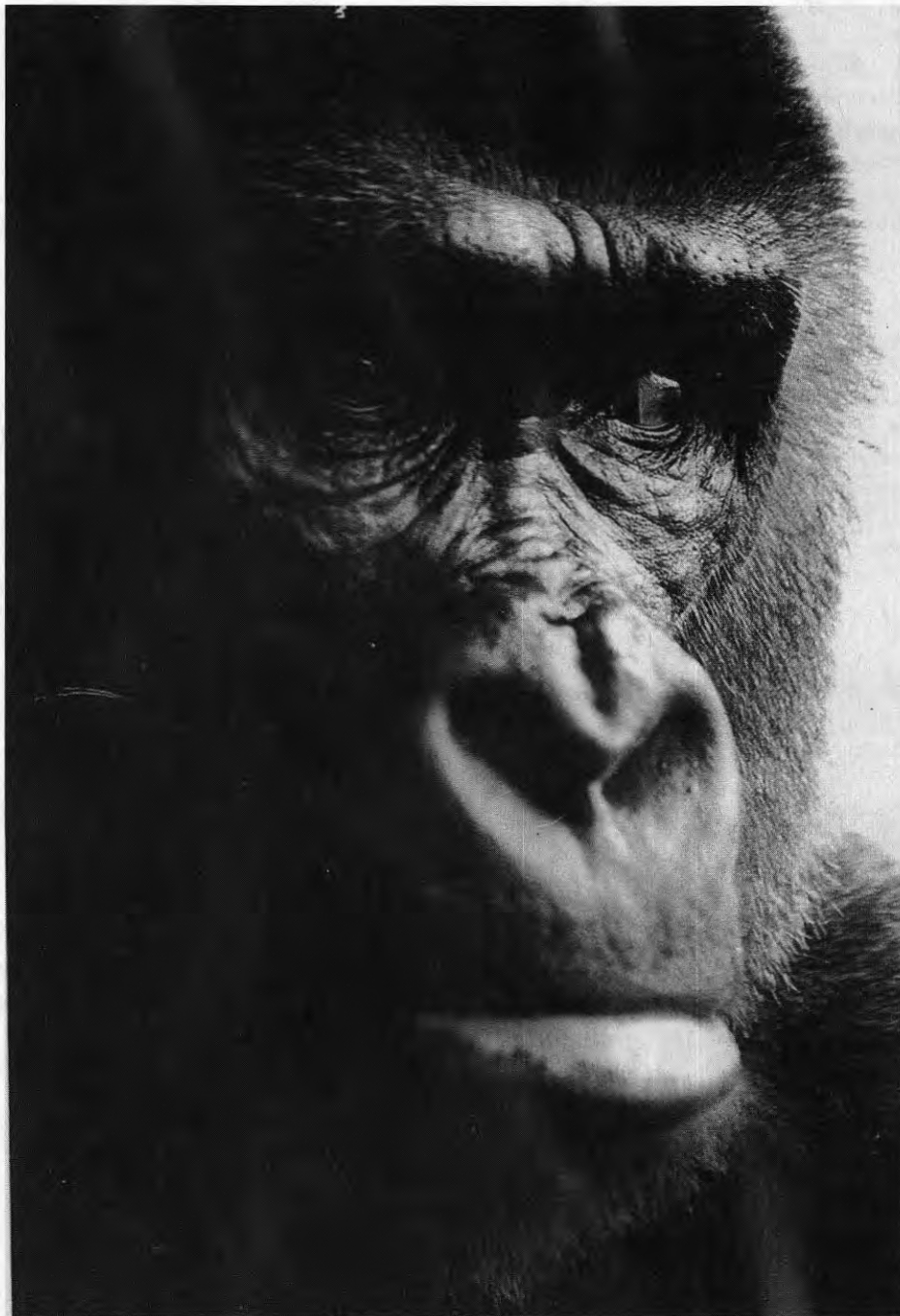
There are not many opportunities like that in my busy life. The day was wonderful. There were orangutans, rhinos, and tigers. We spent hours with the tigers until I got a wonderful picture of a young male crossing the moat with water dripping from the tip of his paw. I was able to frame it so it appeared that I had taken the picture in the wild. My son has it in his office—a gift from me for his birthday.

We waited for a long time at the hippopotamus enclosure, too. My wife was ready to move on but she was patient with me. Eventually it paid off. The keeper came in with a bushel full of apples. The hippo immediately opened his huge, yawning mouth. I was able to get a wonderful picture of all those apples tumbling down a hippopotamus gullet.

We eventually came to my favorite zoo residents, the gorillas. As I sat before them I marveled, as I always do, at the power of the adult males. When full grown these primates are as strong as ten men, and yet they can hold a baby in their massive hands ever so gently.

We have, in recent years, seen into the soul of gorillas. I think of days not too long ago when these wonderful creatures were introduced to sign





language. As a consequence we relate to them on a totally different level. We didn't know how close our kinship was until we taught them to speak a language.

While teaching American sign language to Koko, a female gorilla, researchers were astonished by how human she seemed. Perhaps, they thought, she even considered herself to be human. So to test this idea they gave her a mirror and asked her to tell them what she saw. Koko gently took the mirror, looked into it and calmly gave the sign for mighty fine gorilla. This revolutionized how we see these primate cousins of ours. Mighty fine gorilla indeed! What a clear statement of self-awareness

that only a handful of humans could echo. I do not think I have ever looked into a mirror and called myself a mighty fine human; although I have often wanted to.

I sat there watching them, lost in my own thoughts. I was hoping to capture some of my wonder on film. I knew it would take time, so I was prepared to be patient.

It was a small gorilla family we had set out to observe. They had been put into newly refurbished quarters since there had been a devastating fire at the zoo that killed many animals. It was a painful time for so many of us who loved them. But that was put aside now

as the throngs of people crowded to see the new facilities and this new group of primates.

This family was headed by a young silverback male. He was new at this but was establishing cohesiveness pretty effectively according to most reports I had read. My task on this day was to follow this family for as long as it took to get some really good photographs. We were there for several hours. During that

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time I moved around and so did they. I snapped a large number of pictures, hoping to get a few good ones.

However the silverback eluded me. Try as I might, I could not get any good pictures of him and he was the one I really wanted. I paced from one end of the enclosure to the other. I tried every angle that I could think of, but to no avail.

When I moved closer, he moved away. I went to the right and he would move to the left. The other gorillas were much more cooperative. On some occasions it even seemed as if they stopped and posed for me, but not the silverback.

He was unaware of my presence, I thought. He was too taken up with the daunting task of providing cohesiveness and leadership for his new family. Such a terrible onus for one so young, I assumed. But I was wrong. If I had thought about it, it would have been obvious. Looking back I see he was very aware of my presence and that I had been tracking him all afternoon. It is in the nature of his job to be aware of

Finally, the opportunity arose for me to get some really good pictures; he was coming indoors. I knew of a perfect place where I would be only a few feet away from him. I rushed to the spot and waited with camera cocked for this wonderful creature to pass in front of me. I had one eye looking through the lens and the other eye over the camera awaiting his arrival. It was difficult to take pictures from that vantage point because of the reflection from the thick piece of glass that separated us in order to protect them from human airborne diseases. I moved back and forth to reduce those reflections. And then he was about to pass directly in front of me. I watched as his powerful arms crossed one over the other as is typical of a brachiator. He paced for a bit and then moved quickly and purposefully across that short distance that would afford me my best view.

I don't know what I expected, exactly. I just wanted to be as close to him as possible. What happened next took only a split second, but it somehow captured eternity. As he passed by me, without even breaking his stride, he turned over his left shoulder and looked directly into my eyes. He didn't have to search for where I was; he knew. In one instant his eyes were fixed on where his next step would take him, and in the next they were searing deeply into my soul.

I am sure we have all experienced a look that stopped us in our tracks. In fact, I always prided myself as a young father on being able to give my children what they call a stare. But my stare had no meaning here. I was nothing. His look, in contrast, was so powerful that it took my breath away and sent me reeling backwards. With that look he conveyed in a split-second that he was the dominant one; kind, benevolent, caring, and providing, but clearly in charge.

It was a very special thing. I experienced such a blend of emotions that they were not easily separated and discerned. It took a while to understand their full breadth. I wanted to surrender myself to him with the certainty that in that surrender he would care for me. There was no choice really. It was a visceral response, one that never even reached my consciousness.

I wanted to give myself up and allow him to rescue me from the sadness of the world. It would be a place where I would not have to struggle with decisions. They would be made for me; all I had to do was submit to him and follow his lead.

It happened in an instant, and then he was gone. But in that instant I had looked into the eyes of God.

It was all there; everything I thought God was. There was power. There was benevolence. There was resignation. I knew that he would lead me and care for me. He was almighty and that was indisputable.

As a Quaker I believe in that of God in everyone, but as a biologist I believe that God can be found in all creatures. On that day, in that place, and in those eyes I saw God.

I understand Paul's experience on his way to Damascus a bit better now. I understand how a divine light could blind him and knock him backwards, because I saw some of that light in those gorilla eyes.

rendered blind and mute. The experience, in this diluted form, was quite enough for me.

Somehow I managed to click off several pictures; in self-defense or perhaps it was just sheer reflex. Although none of my photographs fully captured the eternal eye that seared my soul on that day, there is a hint of it in some of my pictures.

I blew up a particularly favorite picture of mine and tacked it near the doorway of my office as a reminder of the day I saw the eternal eye of God in the face of a gorilla. Each day as I walk in, I stop, look at it, and simply nod. □

KITTEN TEA MUSIC

First, sit down.

The kitten is warm and silky underhand.

A soft wild music, with the flavor

of sand dunes and oases, and fountains running

through tamarisk trees, ripples behind

the roar of the dishwasher,

behind the roar of my monkey mind and its

pickpockety preoccupations,

I am a mountain under clouds, I am

a wanderer in the forest with my heart

locked up inside my suitcase, inside a painted egg.

I am a kitten, breakable, flexible,

soft whiskered, playing with my tail.

I am a dream no one has

dreamed before, a mote of bright dust

in the web of time, a glimmering shard

of consciousness, waiting my turn by the road

for a glimpse of God, as the unknowable rides by

in the guise of a great, star-skinned horse.

I am the tea, dimly fragrant, tasting of oases.

Putting this fragrance into my mouth, I become

the far-off place, a sun-shot hillside among white

sheds, where it was grown—tiny leaves like eyelids

to keep us awake, our eyes open, to the horses

thundering by, the music, the whiskers, the candle,

the dust of hope, shame, willingness,

the heart beating fast inside its egg.

—Tina Tau McMahon

Tina Tau McMahon lives in Portland, Oreg.

A CASE FOR ELDERING AND DISCIPLINE



by Herb Lape

Modern Friends are often uncomfortable with the term *eldering*. It conjures up negative images of scolding old men wagging their fingers in narrow, legalistic judgment of behavior. In the classic Quaker movie *Friendly Persuasion*, there's a scene that sums up this modern sentiment. The young son of the lead family abruptly stands in meeting for worship and shouts the message, "God is love," only to receive a scowl of censure from a cranky elder on the facing bench. The boy covers his eyes to retreat from the uncomfortable and persisting glare. The tension is relieved only when the understanding father, played by Gary Cooper, pats his son on the knee in a gesture of fatherly love and assurance. In the 18th and 19th centuries, elders of this portrayed variety instituted a tightening of discipline that led to the disownment of numerous Friends for a long list of infractions. Given this history, we are understandably much more comfortable with a nurturing pat on the knee than an evil eye of discipline.

However, true eldering is not about discipline alone; it is also about the fatherly or motherly pat on the knee. Good elders identify and support gifts in the ministry, care for the sick and those in need, pray for healing, and perform a host of other warm, supportive activities that nurture the spiritual vitality

of the meeting. But elders have always understood that spiritual vitality and growth require both discipline and nurture. Conflict in particular is seldom resolved without some appropriate form of discipline.

Today, individual Friends are seldom disciplined for any infraction of what former Friends would have called "right order"—that is, conduct in keeping with religious teachings. Instead of discipline, we trust in counseling and conflict resolution with its emphasis on mediation. We hope for a "win-win situation" where everyone is happy. If individuals are troubling the peace of meeting, we seek to counsel them into good behavior with the equivalent of Gary Cooper's pat on the knee. While this can be effective if the offending party is open to counsel, it can involve many lengthy sessions that often prove fruitless since there are no consequences to ignoring the counsel.

In our reactions against this excess of legalistic finger wagging, have we gone too far in the other direction and abdicated responsible, moderate discipline and legitimate authority?

I have been involved with Quakers for many years at the local, yearly meeting, and national level. It has been my experience that we can do a better job of dealing with conflict if we recover our tradition of discipline by appropriate bodies within monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings. I've seen the positive fruit of recovering a comprehensive eldering tradition of both nurture and discipline in my monthly and yearly meeting.

As with any meeting, we have had

situations where individual behavior has caused considerable conflict in the meeting. Families and individuals have transferred memberships to escape the discomfort, or have simply left Friends behind to seek, ironically, a more "peaceful" faith community. The offenses were typical: chronic lateness to meeting and entering in a loud and noisy fashion, using meeting for worship to debate controversial matters, or criticize the meeting for failing to do one thing or another, refusal to recognize the authority of the clerk to run an orderly business meeting, and the usual instances of tale bearing, detraction, and lack of care for the reputations of others, especially those with whom Friends are in conflict.

Historically, our meeting community, like others, has been very tolerant and patient with conflict-prone individuals, hoping that positive nurturing would encourage offenders towards more productive behavior. Several years ago, continued disruptive behavior on the part of several individuals produced such a conflict that several people stormed out of business meeting in disgust. Our Ministry and Oversight Committee realized that our approach had to change or we were going to lose valued members. An ad for an FGC Traveling Ministries program on dealing with disruptive members in the meeting miraculously appeared at that moment, so we sent a member to learn. Prior to this, several members of our Ministry and Oversight Committee had been study-

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ing Quaker traditions of eldering and had already begun tentatively to try eldering discipline.

With the encouragement of tradition and contemporaries (the FGC program confirmed our own tentative efforts in the direction of discipline), we became more confident in our efforts to elder disruptive behavior, and we have developed a pattern. With the first instance

IN OUR REACTIONS AGAINST LEGALISTIC FINGER WAGGING, HAVE WE GONE TOO FAR IN THE OTHER DIRECTION AND ABDICATED RESPONSIBLE, MODERATE DISCIPLINE AND LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY?

of complaints, we encourage Friends to be tolerant of initial troubling behavior, especially among new attenders and the young, preferring the pat on the knee and belief that continued exposure to Friends practice will educate without the need for direct speaking. We plan strategies to help engage disruptive individuals to use their gifts in positive ways through service. If, however, the disruptive behavior continues and threatens the peace of the meeting, we assign a member of Ministry and Oversight to speak directly to the individual or individuals about our practice and how their behavior is falling short of the ideal and producing unhealthy conflict. We offer counsel and help to encourage change.

On the occasions where the behavior continues despite these efforts, we write a formal letter outlining the behavior that must change. We reiterate our commitment to speak with the individuals

any time we witness continued behavior that does not adhere to our sense of right order. If necessary, we might follow up this letter with a meeting of two or three "elders" from Ministry and Oversight with the person causing concern. Then one of our members is assigned to be the oversight elder with instructions to speak immediately to the individual if the offending behavior reoccurs. Our monthly Ministry and Oversight Committee regularly reviews how things are going with particular conflicts and modifies our actions accordingly. It has been our practice to begin with small, private actions and avoid group meetings that can end with contentious debates about whether the behavior in question is Quakerly and the discipline legitimate. Elderling is not a judgment of innocence or guilt. It is simply a statement that the behavior in question is producing major conflict in the meeting that threatens our communal health.

It would be nice to report a storybook ending to our discipline efforts, but, as expected, individuals have responded differently to discipline. Some have responded well, respected the needs of the community, and modified their behavior. Others have maintained that we are attempting to crush their prophetic witness to Truth and have withdrawn from active participation. Individuals are free to choose their responses. We can't force them to see things our way, but we can insist that certain practices that have promoted communal peace over the years be respected. The weight of meeting opinion has been very appreciative of our efforts to defend communal boundaries of good practice, and our meeting has been growing.

At the same time, we have also taken actions that embraced the nurturing and supportive aspect of eldering. Ministry and Oversight followed the advice of an FUM pamphlet, *Becoming the Meeting that God Has Called You to Be*, by telephoning all members and active attenders to see how we were meeting their needs. These calls have enabled us to be more supportive of individuals in the meeting. We have received many more requests for clearness committees, prayer sessions for healing, requests for pastoral support for the sick, and the

like. But these calls have also given us an opportunity to hear first hand the frustrations that some individuals have about individual behavior and messages in our meetings for worship and business. In the past, these folks might have left, figuring that there was no avenue for expressing their concerns or that no one would take action. Through these phone calls, we have initiated education sessions for vocal ministry, but have not assumed that this would be enough. We have also "elderled" individuals who continued to fall short of our best practice.

It would be wonderful if mediation, counseling, and positive nurture worked all the time to produce "win-win situations," but it has been our experience and our tradition that we all need discipline on occasion. We are all fallible human beings who make mistakes, causing hurt and conflict.

It has also been our experience that Quaker communities that fail to exert discipline in an open way through properly recognized channels will slip into unofficial discipline through tale-bearing, back-biting, and shunning of offending individuals. When meetings fail to openly discipline through approved channels, a passive-aggressive approach to discipline is all too common among us.

Let me emphasize again that eldering is also about spiritual nurture—recognizing and supporting gifts in the ministry, visiting the sick, setting up clearness committees, prayer sessions for healing, and many other activities. But in the depths of our being we know that there is no spiritual growth without some form of discipline. Yes, we do have to be very careful that we don't go too far and slip into the legalistic finger-wagging excesses of our past, but I believe that recovering a tradition of moderate eldering will help us become more vibrant and spiritually alive communities of faith. I don't think that most people are looking for warm, fuzzy faith communities. I think they want to be part of real communities that wrestle with conflicting testimonies and are unafraid of exercising legitimate authority to settle conflicts in time-honored practices. I believe that our own meeting has become more vibrant and spiritually alive, at least in part through the practice of eldering that has embraced discipline as well as nurturing. □

ON THE CUTTING EDGE:

THE PEACE ACTIVISM OF EARLE REYNOLDS

by Kristin Grabarek

In U.S. history, where articulating a desire for peace is too often accepted as sufficient opposition to war, one man's life stands as a sharp contrast to the futility of speaking without acting. This man, intolerant of a world eager to accept violence as a solution, responded by taking action to do what he thought would prevent the destruction of innocent lives. In so acting, he was forced to choose between personal comfort and conviction. He forfeited a sought-after occupation, prestige among his colleagues, and an affluent lifestyle. With pointed action, he advanced his desire for peace past rhetoric. He publicized the negative effects of nuclear radiation exposure, sailed his yacht through an active nuclear testing zone, hand-delivered medical supplies to North Vietnam during the Vietnam War, and assisted in founding peace institutions worldwide.

Earle Reynolds was the son of circus performers—an entire family of trapeze artists, to be exact. He was born in 1910 in Iowa, where he spent quality time during his early years with those whom he referred to as the “fat lady” and the “man with no arms.” The Great Depression saw Reynolds, well-acquainted with artistic entertainment, writing and acting with a theater company in Mississippi, relatively close to where his family had relocated. The stage was not Reynolds’ only interest, though; he completed both an undergraduate and a master’s degree in Anthropology at University of Chicago and, by 1944, finished a doctorate in the same field at University of Wisconsin.

Reynolds accepted a position as an associate professor of Anthropology at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, immediately after graduating. He



Earle Reynolds (right) at a lawyer's office with a Coast Guard officer.

taught while occupying the chair of the Department of Human Growth in the Fels Research Institute for the Study of Human Development, a post that led to his being selected by the National Academy of Science to go to Hiroshima as part of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC). The ABCC was created in 1946 by President Harry Truman to research the long-term medical effects of exposure to radiation. As a staff anthropologist funded by the Atomic Energy Commission (also created in 1946 to oversee the development and use of nuclear energy for military and civilian purposes), Reynolds evaluated the effects of radiation on the development of children exposed to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Reynolds later presented the results of these three years of investigation in a paper delivered in Mexico City at an annual meeting of the American Anthropology Association. This paper was largely a result of his developing desire

for world peace. In it he politely declared several truths he had discovered as reason for serious concern over the effects of nuclear radiation, truths his audience might rather he left unmentioned. From his research, Reynolds concluded that exposure to nuclear radiation presented irreversible physical dangers, especially to children—and consequently to the future of humankind. To date, there had been no conclusive proof published that mutations were caused by exposure to nuclear radiation; Reynolds boldly made that supposition, stating that failure to take the measures to prevent this “might give us the dubious honor of locking the biggest barn on Earth after the theft of the world’s largest horse.” He stated his opinion that politics and ethics had mixed into the discourse on the effects of nuclear radiation, and that he hoped that someday reports would once again be scientific, rather than biased in favor of dispelling public alarm over the negative effects of radiation. He pointed out that for the previous 13 years, the Atomic Energy Commission had devoted \$125 billion to research the effects of nuclear radiation, though the reports of that research were virtually nonexistent, and what reports were available contained inconsistencies.

Reynolds proved himself ahead of his time in more than one section of the report. For example, he stated that, according to a United Nations report, radioactive waste from power plants posed no immediate threat to humanity; but he warned the methods of disposal might only prolong rather than prevent an eventual crisis due to exposure. Furthermore, the radiation from nuclear testing posed an immediate threat to humanity. And the greater threat of the tests, Reynolds declared, was their purpose to ensure such an excellent quality of nuclear weaponry so as to surely guarantee successful mass killing of human beings. Reynolds chillingly told his au-

Photo used with permission of the Peace Resource Center, Wilmington College

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A nuclear bomb explodes, with ships posted nearby, at the Bikini Islands test site, circa 1961

REYNOLDS CHILLINGLY TOLD HIS AUDIENCE THAT THEY WOULD ALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISASTROUS EFFECTS OF NUCLEAR RADIATION.

dience that they would all be responsible for the disastrous effects of nuclear radiation, warning that humankind could alter its species beyond recognition through exposure to nuclear radiation. Some would suggest that it was too late, he admitted—that the destruction of humanity was inevitable at the moment the first nuclear bomb detonated. But he believed it was not too late. He made three suggestions: that his audience educate themselves on the effects of nuclear radiation, that they accept the realistic possibilities of living in a nuclear age, and that they remove the temptation to enter into nuclear warfare by doing away with nuclear weapons.

With his years of research in Hiroshima coming to a close, Reynolds turned his attention to a yacht he had designed and the building of which he had overseen. The 50-foot *Phoenix* of Hiroshima was completed by the fall of 1956, and Reynolds set sail for Honolulu, Hawaii. He planned to fulfill his childhood dream to sail around the world, accompanied by his wife, Barbara; sons, Tim and Ted; daughter, Jessica; and friend and crewman Nick Mikami. Upon reaching Honolulu that October,

Tim left the others to their adventure, having his own plans to go on to college. Nearly two years later, the *Phoenix* returned to the Honolulu harbor, having journeyed more than 50,000 miles.

The yacht docked in the Honolulu harbor beside another, the *Golden Rule*. Unbeknownst to the Reynolds family, the five Quaker activists that made up the crew of the *Golden Rule* had recently been arrested and were soon to serve six-month jail terms. Through quickly formed friendships, the crew imparted their story to the Reynolds.

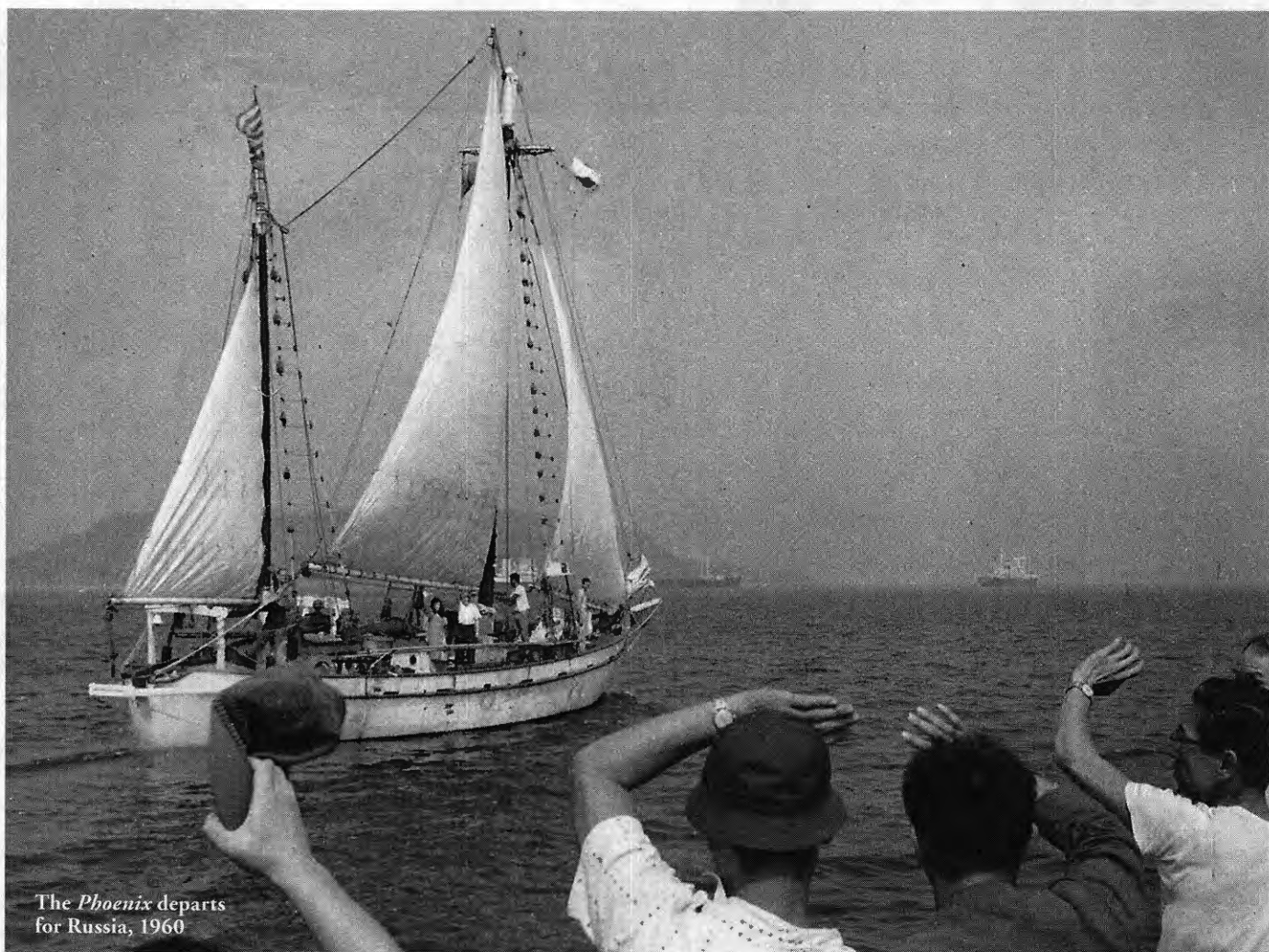
In protest of the dangers of nuclear fallout, the crew of the *Golden Rule* had set sail on a well-publicized voyage straight into a restricted nuclear testing zone in the Pacific Ocean. The voyage was sponsored by the Committee on Non-violent Action. The crew was arrested just a few miles outside of Honolulu.

Compelled by these criminals' passion and commitment, Reynolds began a personal research project on the dangers of nuclear fallout, a comparative study that was an extension of his previous firsthand research in Japan. Assisted by his family, Reynolds compiled government reports, Congressional hear-

ings, and any other reliable sources he could find on the subject of nuclear testing, extensively furthering his previous work on the subject of nuclear radiation. When he compared the *Report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiations* to reports from the Atomic Energy Commission, he concluded, based on inconsistencies in the official evidence he had investigated, that the fallout from nuclear testing was undoubtedly and seriously dangerous. Reynolds also rejected the Cold War argument that bomb tests were necessary to frighten the Soviet Union out of attacking the United States.

After learning about the plight of the *Golden Rule*, Reynolds contemplated peaceful protest by cruising through a nuclear testing zone aboard his yacht. Still, he could not ignore the risks. Though he thought the law prohibiting entrance into the testing zone was illegal, doing so was a felony under U.S. law, carrying a penalty of two years in jail and a \$5,000 fine. Additionally, there were Barbara, Ted, Jessica, and Nick to consider. But the four agreed to join Reynolds on the yacht's voyage back to Hiroshima, regardless of whether its

www.shiftingbaselines.org/blog/archives/000024



The *Phoenix* departs for Russia, 1960

course would be steered through the testing zone. For Reynolds, the reason was simple. Through his own scientific knowledge, he concluded, "anything that would stop nuclear testing is bound ultimately to be of benefit to mankind."

Backed by no organization, without any sort of funding or support, the Reynolds family accepted the severe test of their conviction by pointing the *Phoenix* toward the Bikini Islands. After 19 days, on June 30, 1958, the Coast Guard interrupted their voyage. Undeterred by their policing escort, the Reynolds glided straight into the testing zone the next day.

Sixty-five miles into the zone by that night, the Reynolds had put themselves in serious danger of radiation disease should a nuclear bomb be detonated. The effects could include skin diseases, blood diseases, and stomach ulcers, not to mention more serious long-term physical complications. Aware of their precarious position, the Reynolds nonetheless spent that night in the heart of the nuclear testing zone and well within reach of possible nuclear fallout.

In the early morning the Coast Guard boarded the *Phoenix*, arresting Dr. Reynolds and ordering the crew to sail out of the zone to nearby Kwajalein, just outside the Pacific Proving Ground, as the test area was dubbed. Minutes after leaving the testing zone, the sky behind the Reynolds turned orange with the detonation of a nuclear bomb. The testing sequence the Reynolds' had chosen to drop in on was the largest to date—Operation Hardtack I, a series of 35 detonations of nuclear devices in and around the Bikini and Enewetak Atolls and Johnson Island.

The *Phoenix* reached Kwajalein on July 4 and Reynolds was formally charged with the felony of violating the restriction placed on the testing area. He was returned to Honolulu to await trial, separated from his wife, sons, and daughter.

Within two years, Reynolds had gone from holding a significant position with a prestigious U.S. government agency to being a convicted felon without a job and isolated from his family. He had known the risk, made his point anyway, and paid the heavy conse-

quences for his peaceful activism.

Reynolds described his Honolulu trial with eloquent humor in his autobiography. It was a monkey trial, during which he was represented by a bumbling counsel. Reynolds was sentenced to two years in prison. He appealed the decision, which was overturned in San Francisco late in 1960. The San Francisco court ruled that the AEC prohibition Reynolds had violated was not lawful, as Reynolds had believed, and therefore concluded that he was guilty only of "trespassing," if anything.

Reynolds' peaceful protest and its fallout significantly expanded his philosophical and faith-based values. Prior to making the acquaintance of the five Quakers aboard the *Golden Rule*, Reynolds had not affiliated himself with any particular religion. Yet in speaking with them and with further investigation into the foundation of their convictions, Reynolds determined that the faith of Friends harmonized with his personal standards and values. During his trial he dedicated himself to Quakerism, remaining staunchly loyal to it for the

olds applied and was accepted into membership in Honolulu (Hawaii) Meeting. (He eventually joined Santa Cruz Meeting in California.) He experienced serious doubts that he would be accepted. "I'll probably make the world's worst Quaker," he stated good-humoredly. Simultaneously, Reynolds' infamous 1958 protest launched his new career as an antinuclear activist, promoting peace by making known the dangers of radiation.

With fresh dedication and a clear sense of purpose, Reynolds set off again for Japan in 1960, this time to teach English as a means of supporting his family. For the following three years, Reynolds continued his antinuclear protest by writing reports on the effects of radiation and embarking on numerous peace missions.

Reynolds did not abandon direct protest. He twice attempted to sail through Soviet nuclear testing zones. In the fall of 1961 he aimed the *Phoenix* at Siberia, where the Soviet navy promptly turned him back. He brought a cargo of hundreds of letters asking for peace; author-

MINUTES AFTER THE REYNOLDS FAMILY LEFT THE TESTING ZONE, THE SKY TURNED ORANGE WITH THE DETONATION OF A NUCLEAR BOMB.

ities refused to deliver them to the Soviet government. The following year, Reynolds' presence was requested aboard *Everyman III*, setting off in peaceful protest from London, destined for Leningrad. Armed soldiers stopped *Everyman* at sea, boarded, and politely tied the crew with ropes as a gesture of Soviet authority. After untying himself and returning to his own ketch, Reynolds spent the entire next year on a worldwide peace tour, speaking at and visiting various peace centers for study. In 1962 he assisted in founding the Hiroshima Institute of Peace Science; in 1964 he assisted in setting up a peace studies program at Friends World Col-

Shortly thereafter, the United States became involved in a civil conflict between North and South Vietnam. Reynolds responded to the Vietnam War by arranging for medical supplies to be sent to both Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, and to North Vietnam in March 1967.

Reynolds embarked on this controversial voyage to the soil of the United States' declared enemy with his crew on the *Phoenix*. The intention was to deliver one ton of medical supplies to the North Vietnamese cities of Hanoi and Haiphong in the effort of using peaceful and lucid action to oppose the war in Vietnam.

Reynolds' antiwar action was supported by A Quaker Action Group (AQAG), which had been founded less than a year earlier by pacifist and radical activist Lawrence Scott. The group's first attempt to oppose the war had been to mail relief packages into North Vietnam; they were halted by the United States Postal Service, which refused to deliver the packages. The group then collected funds to donate to both the North and South Vietnamese Red Cross organizations, which the United States Treasury promptly seized. Then AQAG decided to sail with Reynolds to see that medical supplies reached the North Vietnamese citizens who had been injured in the bombing by U.S. troops. AQAG selected Reynolds because of his profound commitment to peaceful activism. The voyage was successful in delivering medical supplies to North Vietnam. These otherwise inaccessible medical supplies continued to be delivered to North Vietnam in the same fashion by American Friends Service Committee for years afterward.

Reynolds' sea voyages as a peace activist ceased shortly thereafter. He had taken a position as caretaker for a Quaker center nestled in the Quaker community of Ben Lomond, in the mountains of Santa Cruz County, California, in hopes of making the center a major conference center. AFSC had reluctantly accepted the gift of this property in the 1950s; previously the organization had not owned property. Reynolds was the first to implement regular youth-oriented programs at the center, which now functions as an important part of the Western Friends community.

tour, sailing from Portland, Oregon, to Monterey, California, to advocate peace in ten cities in between. Afterward, Reynolds continued his mission for peace. He founded the Peace Resource Center (PRC) at University of California, Santa Cruz, in 1975. The PRC provided access to peace-related research and enabled students to obtain degrees and careers in peace studies. Reynolds retired in 1985, but his strong conviction refused to allow him to be inactive; he continued guest lecturing at peace symposiums and participated in antinuclear demonstrations, particularly protesting nuclear research in Nevada. He died in southern California in 1998.

Reynolds defined his life as being "on the cutting edge," explaining, "the weight of the axe is behind it, but it's the cutting edge that's doing the job." This proverbial axe is a two-part equation for activism: the cutting edge has little effect without the force of the axe, but the force of the axe can make little more than a blunt impact without the cutting edge.

Certainly one could charge that Earle Reynolds did not actually halt nuclear testing by navigating his yacht through the Bikini Islands test zone, and that the Vietnam War did not end when he turned up in North Vietnam with medical supplies. However, he demonstrated his willingness to risk the effects of radiation in hopes of keeping later generations from living with nuclear fallout. Because of Reynolds, North Vietnamese citizens suffering the wrath of a war with which they were all but unassociated had their wounds tended and the chance to physically heal from the devastation. He single-handedly proved that not all people in the United States were turning their heads away from the orange skies over the homes of Pacific islanders. With each dressing of a North Vietnamese citizen's wound, he achieved a 100-percent successful peace mission for each of those individuals. His activism, on a person-to-person level, was undeniably successful.

The force behind the axe is surely the profound rhetoric issued by self-declared concerned citizens. But it is necessary to have the cutting edge to lead that rhetoric. Would it not be a shame, then, to allow the axe to dull so that it is only rhetoric, unable to do the job? □

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

by Lydia Caros

I was asked to present my spiritual journey at an adult forum after meeting for worship. My instructions were that I should explain what I believe and how I came to believe it. I started organizing my thoughts and getting them written out a couple months ahead of time, but I worried about it until the date of my presentation. Aside from feeling nervous about sharing such an intimate topic with a public group, I was very conscious of not wanting to alienate Friends, knowing that we come from such a variety of beliefs.

I made myself miserable about this for several days until one morning I remembered my favorite story about John Woolman. In 1763, Woolman visited the Native Americans in Wyalusing, about 100 miles north of Philadelphia. He held meetings for worship with them, with the help of interpreters, none of whom knew both English and the

Delaware language very well. During a meeting one evening, he said he felt his "mind covered with the spirit of prayer," and he asked the interpreters to stop. He then shared vocal ministry without interpreters for the rest of the meeting. Afterwards an interpreter said that one of the Native Americans had commented, "I love to feel where the words come from." Remembering this story helped me to relax about what and how I was going to speak to the group, because no matter how I described my spiritual experiences, I could trust that each person would be able to discern the spirit of my words.

What I believe

I believe that we are all spiritual beings in human bodies, and that all living things are spiritual beings in their bodies as well. I believe that the universe is full of God, and that God is within us all. I believe that the God-energy of the universe is creative and supportive. When we are connected to that Energy, we grow and learn in Spir-

it, and that is the purpose of our lives.

The key is being able to connect to and receive that Energy, and I think of it as similar to how a cell phone or laptop or even a lamp needs a connection to its source of energy. We can make this connection with meditation, prayer, and moments of quiet listening. It can also happen spontaneously during the day or during an encounter of some kind, or we can just have the connection going all the time, as a general state of mind. It's hard for humans to maintain that constant connection, but I'm convinced that animals, trees, and plants are connected most of the time. The more we connect, the more we can grow in Spirit.

I believe that it takes a very long time to learn all we need to learn in our individual spiritual development; in fact, I'm not sure it can be done in one lifetime. Since all of the created world—down to smallest cell—is made of complex, highly-organized systems, it doesn't make sense to me that we would randomly have varying times on Earth and die before we could develop to our

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ple lives in which we get a chance to continue our learning, like grades in school, until we have learned what we need to know on this plane of existence. Once we have achieved that level of development, maybe we become part of the Creative Energy in the Universe, and perhaps we help others in their journeys from our spiritual plane. Whether I'm right or not about what happens after death doesn't concern me; it just makes sense for me while I am on this Earth.

I trust completely that there is a good purpose to all that has been created. And I am convinced that Love, as described in the Sermon on the Mount and in other sacred writings, is the most powerful force in the universe.

I believe we are each given our own path and our own gifts to discover and to share. We can't create the path for others, nor should we judge another's path. But we can help each other on our journeys. That is the gift and the challenge of community.

Home

I grew up in Nashua, N.H., in a home that wasn't overtly religious; my father didn't attend church at all, but my mother and sister and I attended a Methodist church and Sunday school regularly until I was in the sixth or seventh grade. My grandfather and my uncle were Methodist ministers, and going to church was the norm for my mother's family. We didn't really talk about religion at home, but I do remember that my mother encouraged me to say my prayers and told me that God always listened. I accepted this without question.

When I was in first grade I asked my mother why God was a "He" and why all the prayers refer to "He" and "Man." My mother explained to me, in a matter-of-fact way, that in these special cases, the "He" and "Man" meant both man and woman and that it is meant for everyone. I was perfectly happy with that explanation for a good 15 years.

God

I was always very interested in God. As soon as I was given my own Bible (fourth grade), I spent a lot of time reading it, without any prodding from

did get a sense of God being "active" in the lives of the people I was reading about, and I was comfortable with the idea that God would also be active in my life somehow. I had often felt God's presence when I was outside in my backyard or exploring the nearby fields and brooks. Even when I was very young, I believed that animals were particularly close to God, as though they had a special connection. I felt that trees were also a direct contact. I had a more difficult time feeling that presence in church, with the women's hats and perfumes and prescribed prayers and Sunday school activities. In my mind that was clearly people stuff: talking about God, rather than feeling God's presence. I wrote to the minister when I was about 12 and told him so. After that I did not return to the Methodist church.

I did, however, keep searching for information and understanding about God. I continued to read the Bible, especially the four Gospels. I also read about various world religions, and I kept finding the same thing everywhere: that God was in the center of all of them, and that everything humans had created to worship God was just that—a human way to explain and communicate with God. I was comfortable with the idea that there are multiple ways to do this.

Turning-Point Experiences

I had two important experiences in 1968 (I was 15) that impacted the direction of my life. One was a sort of mystical experience, and the other had to do with the Merv Griffin Show.

My early teen years were pretty rocky. My parents split up when I was about 11 or 12. My father disappeared from my life and my mother had to work two jobs so I was left to fend for myself—at least that was my perception at the time. The next few years were tough for me, and I felt lost and unhappy. I started skipping school and was planning to quit high school. I had no real plans for what I would do with my life. One afternoon I was having a crisis about something that I can't even remember now, but I know that I was on the brink of real despair. I went out to my backyard and fell to my knees, crying. After

was—but no one was there. I could feel those arms around me and with that sensation came a peace and comfort I had never felt before. There was no question in my mind that the "arms," the peace, and the comfort were from God. It was a simple thing, but it was profound for me, and its impact has never left me.

Looking back, I can see that my life changed direction soon after this experience. I decided to finish high school and to go to college. I had regained a sense of direction and hope about my life.

That same year, I was watching TV before supper one day (I watched a lot of television growing up.) It was a variety program called the Merv Griffin Show. On this particular day Merv Griffin had Joan Baez on as his guest. In his interview with her, she talked about a book she had written and referred to topics such as Gandhi, nonviolence, and anti-war activities. I hadn't heard of Joan Baez, and I didn't know anything about these issues, but I was immediately struck by this interview and I was convinced that it was very important that I learn what she was talking about. I bought her book that same week and soon started an earnest study of Gandhi's life and writings, and I began to focus on nonviolence and to learn about what the United States was doing in Vietnam. The Merv Griffin Show started me on some of the most important issues of my life. Television can be an important part of one's spiritual journey!

Nature as a Spiritual Teacher

Being in nature had always been comforting to me, and it became an important spiritual teacher during my teen years. Except in the most severe winter weather, I walked to school every day along a dirt path away from the main road. The path followed the route of Salmon Brook, which was an extensive waterway that flowed through my hometown. The brook was more of a marshland in certain areas along the path. I walked along the "swamps," as I called them, every day. I often stopped there after school to sit at some of my favorite spots and to "listen" by the water. I loved being near the birds, turtles,

seasonal changes in the animals and the plants. The swamps became a very important place for me to be—a place where I could think, pray, write, cry, sing, or just enjoy the beauty of the place. The wildlife around me seemed to be filled with Spirit and I felt connected with all of it. I am convinced that my time in the swamps got me through my teen years. It was there that I learned to be quiet and to listen.



Service

My last two years of high school, after coming out of my early teen confusion, were productive and positive. Along with being more focused in school, I was very strongly drawn to working to help others. It wasn't something I thought about and decided I should do—I felt led, actually *pulled* in this direction. I remember writing essays about poverty and social injustice in our society for my social studies class. I volunteered for a year as a tutor for a first grader who lived in poverty. I spent Saturdays volunteering at the local orphanage, where 12 children lived. I also supported a little girl in Japan for two years through the Christian Children's Fund with money I earned from part-time jobs. I was passionate about finding ways to provide hands-on support or service for those in need, especially children.

Quakers

I was introduced to Quakerism in my American History textbook. Each year, there was a section in which Quakers were mentioned. It always struck me that Quakers were special—they were the only people to treat the Native Americans fairly, and they believed in creating a society that took away the occasion for war. In my junior year of high school, I decided to follow up on that, and I read everything I could find about Quakers. I decided that Quakerism was the closest thing I had found to what I believed in. I chose and was accepted at a Quaker college: Wilmington College, in Wilmington, Ohio.

My college years (1971–1975) were a time of continued focus on Quakerism and on the war in Vietnam, which continued through my college years. I spent hours every day reading about the war and watching Watergate unfold. I did an independent study on war tax resistance and took courses that focused on Nonviolence, Gandhi, George Fox, and John Woolman. I attended meeting regularly.

During my second year of college, I decided that I wanted to be a physician. This might sound like a reasonable idea at face value, but for me it was a huge, bizarre leap. I was absolutely not a science/math person. I was a philosophy, religion, and music person. Biology was an exception; that did make sense to me. In fact, learning about the intricate, organized systems in living things reaffirmed my spiritual beliefs. But chemistry, physics, and math were not compatible with how my mind worked. I prayed about this, and I listened a lot before I decided. But I was clear, finally, that being a physician—if I could actually do it—was the best way for me to give service to others. To this day I have no idea how I passed those courses. I remember looking out the library windows on many days while I was studying, praying for the emotional strength to continue. There is no earthly reason that I managed to succeed. I am not kidding.

India

The summer before my senior year in college, I had the opportunity to go to India with a university group. It was my first visit outside the United States, and the experience of so much poverty and need, alongside so much beauty and history, was life-changing. Our group traveled to multiple cities and villages in the northern half of the country and we studied Indian history, religion, and politics for six weeks. It was a wonderful experience. After the student group left, I stayed and took a train to a Gandhian ashram. I spent two weeks reading, praying, fasting, and sharing in the daily work with others living or visiting there. I almost didn't come home.

It was my trip to India, along with

developing world. That was my life plan—to finish my medical training and go to Asia or South America to work.

Catholic Worker

Years later, the next big focus for my spiritual growth was getting involved in the Catholic Worker movement. I had read about Dorothy Day and started to connect with a local CW House in Des Moines, Iowa, where I was living. I eventually moved in as a staff member during my internship year in pediatrics. I learned a little about living in community from this group, and I participated as much as I could (when I wasn't at the hospital) in preparing meals, attending Mass, welcoming "guests" in the middle of the night, and participating in nonviolent protests. It was with CW that I was arrested the first time, and several times after that. It was a very exciting place to live—Daniel Berrigan, Martin Sheen, and Daniel Ellsberg visited there and spent time at the house. Nonviolent protest, service to the poor, community living, and my medical training, all fit together nicely during this time.

I learned about Catholicism by reading Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton and briefly considered joining the Catholic Church. Through Merton I became very interested in contemplative prayer. I started reading the works of the mystics. I spent time in quiet every morning. During this period I was a member of Des Moines Valley Meeting. I still attended meeting, but I was so busy with all that was going on in the hospital and at the CW house that I wasn't giving enough time to really be involved with the Friends community there.

Minnesota and the Third World

I moved to Rochester, Minn., to finish the last two years of my pediatrics residency. I attended meeting there occasionally. During the first year in Rochester, I met an elderly Greek couple in the laundromat one day. The couple owned it and the adjoining shoe repair shop. The woman reminded me of my great-grandmother on my father's side (with whom I was very close when I

er and the couple became a loving support for me while I was struggling through residency. I started to feel a pull towards the Greek Church, primarily as a connection to my Greek heritage and helped by my longing for a sense of family away from home.

While I was in Rochester, I happened to be at a small gathering where I had the opportunity to meet and have a conversation with Cesar Chavez, who was visiting from California. He asked me about my plans, and I told him about wanting to work in the Third World. He paused for a moment, and I will never forget the serious look on his face when he said, "There is a Third World here in the United States as well."

When my medical training was finished, before I could actually go anywhere, I owed three years of service here in the States, to repay a scholarship. I chose to work with Native Americans for those three years. I moved to Minneapolis in 1983 and started working as a pediatrician at an inner-city Native American health center. Getting to know families and children in the Native community was a wonderful experience, and I learned a lot about Native people, healing and healthcare, and about myself. I find myself working in the same neighborhood 25 years later.

Beginning at the Catholic Worker and continuing to the present, I've tried to be involved in activities that support peace and social justice. I see these as an important expression of spirituality. Whether it is nonviolent protests, war tax resistance, contributions to activist organizations, or writing letters to Congress, it's important for me to be trying to do something. Before I had children I spent a lot of time in nonviolent protests and various peace-related travels. When my children were growing up I was more limited in what I

where my energies can best be used during this part of my life.

I attended Minneapolis Meeting a few times when I first moved here, but my Greek heritage was still pulling me, so I joined the Greek Orthodox Church and tried to become part of that community. Although I met many wonderful people there, the liturgy was difficult for me. I could connect to the spirituality beneath all the words, but

years, and irregularly for a few more. Then I just stayed home on Sunday mornings for the next several years.

Personal Worship and Community

One of the most important practices in my adult life has been spending time for quiet every morning—spiritual reading for about 15 minutes, then quiet "listening" for 15-30 minutes. It doesn't feel like a discipline; it's something I love to do. It has gotten me through some very rough times and it is my time to "connect" with the Spirit before the day starts. I enjoy reading spiritual material, often returning to John Woolman's *Journal* and various other Quaker writings, along with the mystics and works from Buddhist and Hindu writers.

Although I've been happy with my personal spiritual practice, a few years ago I found myself feeling a pull to return to Quaker meeting. I started to notice the Twin Cities meeting-house when I drove by. I attended a conference in Washington, D.C., and coincidentally found myself in front of the Friends meetinghouse there. The inner messages to return to Friends kept coming.

Except for the year I lived at the Catholic Worker when I was in my 20s, I have always been on a path by myself in terms of spiritual growth. I have come to a time in my life where I want to worship with and be part of a spiritual community. I attended meeting at Twin Cities Meeting for the first time about two years ago and I found what I was looking for. I am still growing and learning, and many members have already taught me a lot as I get to know more about the meeting and the individuals who are part of it. Joining this community completes my current story. I look forward to years of sharing the rest of my spiritual journey with Friends. □

EYES OPEN IN QUAKER MEETING

Dear Siddhartha, I cannot close my eyes to worship, meditate, pray. God knows I try but God puts me to sleep. As a child I fell backwards off benches disrupting the corporate silence. Now I lean sideways toward my neighbor who will wake me if I snore.

Did you close your own eyes during the years beneath the fig tree—or did you gaze, sated and glad, at the sky, at your brother the goat, at the trembling weed?

This morning in meeting, Anna spoke of her Catholic girlhood, her love of the mystery of the God incarnate, her eagerness to be an altar "boy," the priest's incomprehensible no.

Today she will teach Lily's class about Lucretia Mott, Quaker suffragette. I look at her husband and daughter watching

the words speaking themselves through her beautiful mouth. When she sits down, Lily edges closer and touches her arm as though she had become new. Sunlight looks through the high green glass behind her and the clear windows on both sides are singing with winter trees.

We are here.

If I were blind, I would open wider all the other eyes of my body to this world.

—Maryhelen Snyder

Maryhelen Snyder lives in Vienna, Va.

But We Are Friends...

by Zachary Moon

Zachary Moon first performed this piece at FGC Gathering in Amherst (2004). It is meant to be spoken out loud.

Extend your ear, Mother of the circle, of all creation
Behold your peculiar people, now madly talking around your blessed revelation
How beautiful our process, how simple and pure
If only, yes then, wait minute that, are you sure?
That this is what you intended when you sent your Spirit out?
Some days I'm just not so sure what it's all about

Behold how we go along, picking and choosing with care
But consider the Cross, the prison cell; this is not our history to share?
Peace—check, Simplicity—yes, well relatively, Integrity—sounds good to me
But when does all this just shroud us in the comfortable blanket of complacency?

All of this sounds good on paper, so let's minute that: umpteen dash one
What else could we do, well out of time today, let's be silent now we're done
And yes the quiet is good sometimes, but so is preaching from the trees
Forgive me if all this minuting seems a little like a tease
When was it that we grew so allergic to authentic confrontation?
Not that long ago we broke up false worship with righteous indignation

What do we have left if we lose our tongue to preach?
Look out, it's First Day school, these beautiful young faces, and us with little to teach
Maybe we could begin by speaking of the living water that springs from a rock
But if we did that we might have to let go of a worship-style governed by a clock
Our young people may well demand some changes to our style and pace
Perhaps more dangerously, they often are calling us to be faithful, face to face
Is this why we separate ourselves, telling them that they're not ready?
Better to keep them out if we hope to keep this little boat steady

And I keep thinking about that boat and this here storming
All these wars and injustices swarming
And there He comes, walking out across the water, the raging storm all around
But we look away, hoping for something that makes sense by way of dry ground
Surrounded now we try desperately to cover our head
But He calls out: Get up and get out of this boat, leave your fear and your dread
He called then, as He calls now: Step away from the boat
Then again, He'd probably understand our position better if we minuted that we can't float

It's just too much to take in, that She will provide,
So we just keep to the clock, and keep sitting here side by side
But I kept on reading, this time skipping a few chapters back
And here's another story of God's people complaining of what they lack
A captured people scared to be faithful, the story reads the same
Then and now, Pharaoh's slaves—frightened, divided, and tame

But the message is clear—She will give us the manna we need
Plenty to go around, if we choose this feed
But how would we know, that yes, now we had enough
When all our consideration revolves around our stuff
Locked into that liberal narrative that says you can straddle both sides of the line
Loving your brothers and sisters on one side, and on the other keeping all that is mine
You could look at all this and say it is our luxury or benefit to choose
Or you could see that it is those with everything who have everything to lose

This is the eye of the needle standing before us
And from every corner, the rebellious house sings its chorus
In our language, our mind-think, our TV
“Not now, not this, not me”

But the blood is on our hands—this is our stain
You cannot be neutral on a moving train
But oh, when we hop off—the possibilities we might see
Perhaps then we would hear the Truth in Her child’s decree

No longer are you servants, passive and incomplete
Now called Friends, from this moment from this seat
Stand up, quake as you rise
The Power lies inside of you, Love is the prize
Bearing, believing, hoping, enduring—all
This is the still, small voice of Her child’s call

Stand out, speak up, step off the curb
Away from the way of life that has built ‘burb after ‘burb
Let us begin as that change without the burden of guilt or doubt
She is calling to us again, Pharaoh’s slaves—Exodus out!
Out into the desert, out into Her care
Faith is a choice and I for one am dog-tired of despair

Here I am Lord, there are some of us yet, willing to risk it all, to suffer, and take a chance,
Willing to hear, willing to be transformed, willing to do the time, willing to advance
In the name of the Covenant, in the name of Beloved Community, in Her blessed name,
These feet were made for walking, get up and walk, cured by Truth, behold the lame,
How freed from Cain’s mark, released from our task of domination and toil,
The desert may bloom, a new harvest bursting forth from rich soil.

I raise this prayer up to the sky and up through each of you
It is up to us now, in our hands, to know what to do
He dared to call us his Friends in John’s Gospel 15:15
Will we take on this responsibility and be baptized in the prophetic stream?
The servant pleads “Not now, not this, not me”
But we are Friends, now and forever—let’s get free!



Dan Shirley

*Zachary Moon is a member of
Strawberry Creek (Calif.) Meeting.*

This Time Iran

by Sam and Ruth Neff

In 1986 a group mostly of Quakers from Richmond, Indiana, were walking together through the Kremlin on their last night in the Soviet Union before flying home. They came upon the idea of forming an organization to promote people-to-people contact with those countries that our government has labeled as enemies. The organization was given the name Neighbors East and West (NEW), and for the next four years it sponsored trips to the Soviet Union, sought and established a sister-city relation with the Russian city of Serpukhov, and organized an exhibition of Russian Art and Culture that traveled around the counties of eastern Indiana and western Ohio.

With the exception of the Sister City program, most of these activities ended with the fall of the Soviet Union in the early '90s. The founders of NEW realized that there were other "enemies" in the world, and they sponsored seven trips to Cuba before the George W. Bush administration made such trips impossible in 2003.

In May 2008, my wife and I returned with a Neighbors East and West delegation of 20 people who had just completed a two-week visit to Iran. The purpose of this trip was to encounter ordinary people in Iran on a personal basis and attempt to establish personal bridges between the citizens of Iran and the United States at a time when the two governments were engaging in threats rather than negotiation.

To assemble this group, NEW had to spread its nets widely. Iran is both distant and unknown, and the information available here presents that country

Sam Neff is a retired Physics professor who taught for 30 years at Earlham College. Ruth Neff is a nurse-clinical specialist. They are members of Clear Creek Meeting in Richmond, Ind.



Photos courtesy of Sam and Ruth Neff

as dangerous and hostile. Travel to Iran seems to take some courage, or perhaps just a better understanding of the nature of the country and its citizens.

The travelers came from Washington state, California, North Carolina, Indiana, and many places in between. Of the 20, 6 were Quakers, 5 were Unitarians, and the rest represented other faiths. They ranged in age from 26 to 86.

As is usual in NEW excursions, participants found personal contacts easy to attain and always rewarding, while government action often was complicated and hard to understand.

For Ruth and me, the trip included extended stays in Tehran and Esfahan, with brief visits to the cities of Qom and Kashan as well as an overnight stay in the small village of Abyaneh. Others in our group also visited Shiraz and the ancient Persian capitol of Persepolis.

We arrived at the Tehran airport at 2 AM, as our third day of travel began. Our passports held visas that were barely dry, having arrived at our homes just



two days earlier, and some sleepy and apologetic border police fingerprinted us and took our passports away for a while before they let us into the customs area. Our bags were not opened, and from that point on we did not encounter any negative treatment—in fact, we became warmly welcomed guests.

A few hours later, Ruth and I awoke in Tehran, a huge, bustling city of more than 12 million at the foot of the Alborz Mountains. It is comparable to Los Angeles, with its heavy and chaotic traffic,

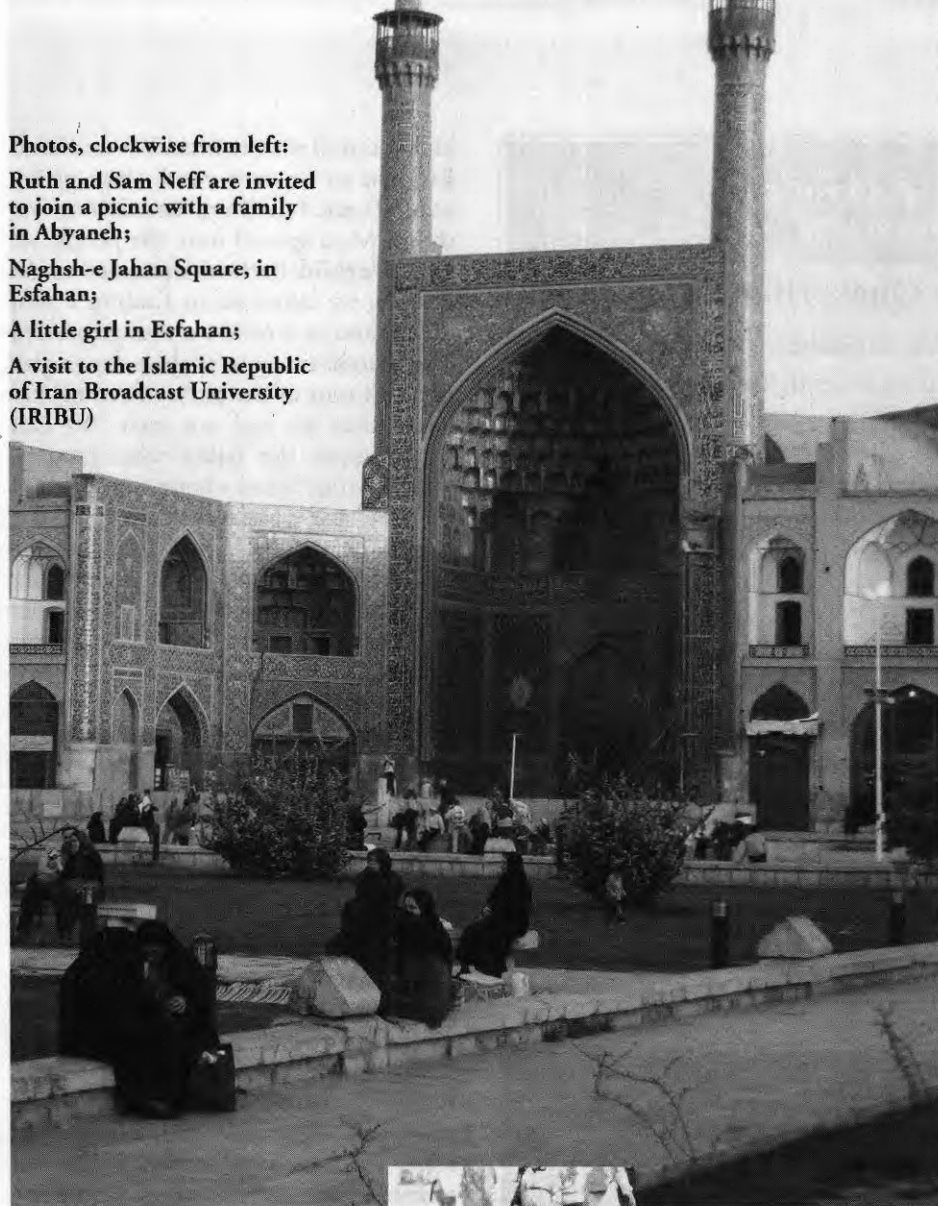
Photos, clockwise from left:

Ruth and Sam Neff are invited to join a picnic with a family in Abyaneh;

Naghsh-e Jahan Square, in Esfahan;

A little girl in Esfahan;

A visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcast University (IRIBU)



accompanying smog, and apparent lack of a civic plan. It does give the feeling of a modern city, with wide streets, an efficient metro, and an atmosphere of organization.

Though the city could be confusing, we were helped many times by men (often in suits) and women (often in black chadors) who would show us the way to the bank, the metro, or the post office, which we would not otherwise have been able to find. We visited three museums, traveled a short way into the mountains, and walked through the Tehran Bazaar. Mostly we recovered from the long flights and rapid time-zone changes we had just endured.

In the midst of a brutal desert 250 miles south of Tehran, we found the growing city of Kashan. We wound our way through half-built neighborhoods



of apartment buildings, departing from our bus in front of a rather nondescript wall and gate. Inside the gate we suddenly found ourselves in a beautiful garden of flowing water and fountains, built in the mid-19th century. While our guide tried hard to explain the history of this site, we were soon intermingling with Iranian

high school and university students: the boys wearing T-shirts and jeans and the girls often in uniform and always with their heads covered. They were all similar in their eagerness to meet us and to use their newly learned English. Always their first words to us were "Welcome to Iran!"

Our most elderly traveler, Al Inglis of Richmond, Indiana, often would enter-

tain on his e-flat harmonica. Another of our travelers, Bob Mullin of St. Paul, always had a frisbee handy when the situation called for it. We also carried with us pictures and letters from people of all ages back home who wished to make contact with others like themselves in Iran. What proved most useful was a picture book assembled by a Brownie troop in Montana. It usually provided a way to introduce ourselves and show a more personal view of the United States.

We enjoyed other historic parts of Kashan, and then we traveled to the mountain village of Abyaneh, where we spent the evening and most of the next day investigating its tiny streets, wide enough for only one donkey at a time. Bob introduced frisbee throwing to the eight students of the local elementary school, and he left the disc as a present to the school. Others in the group sampled the hand crafts and dried fruit available in the shops along the way.

At noon, Ruth and I were walking through a small park a little way from the village. We passed a family sitting comfortably on a carpet, laying out a picnic. When they saw us, they immediately invited us to join them, made room for us, and offered us a variety of nuts, fruit, and sweets. We had no choice but to (creakily) sit down with them, share what little we had, and enjoy a conversation of fractured English with a little Farsi added. This kind of encounter was repeated over and over.

We traveled on to Esfahan, which is described by visitors as "half the world." On the outside Esfahan is a desert city with low buildings and dusty streets. On the inside it is a jewel. Its predominant feature is Naghsh-e Jahan Square, 500 by 300 meters, with the large Imam Mosque at one end and several remarkable buildings along the sides. Joining all the buildings together are the arcades of the Bozorg (big) Bazaar, containing the work of skillful Persian craftsmen. Scattered here and there are shops containing the finest oriental carpets in the world—and probably the finest carpet salespeople as well.

But Esfahan is more than a large square. Leading to the Zayenda River is the Chahar Bagh Abbasi Boulevard, a shopping and walking street unique for its beauty and business. The river itself is flanked by miles of carefully kept parks and crossed by seven bridges, each an

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architectural masterpiece. Yet we found Esfahan to be even more than parks, magnificent buildings, and interesting shops. Most special were the people we met. We think back with pleasure to the evening we asked about finding a post office, and as a result, a young married couple took time out of their day to give us a full tour of the parts of central Esfahan that we had not seen. We can think about the baker who gave us freshly baked bread whenever we passed his shop, and when we tried to pay for it he gave us back more in change than we had given him. And we can remember the young man who took me all over Tehran to show me a Santur, the ancient ancestor of the hammered dulcimer. When we crossed the street he would guide me carefully and always position himself to block oncoming traffic.

We returned to Tehran for our last three days and managed to become comfortable with the metro and with the unwritten rules that govern the traffic there. We were able to make even more new friends and were invited into two different homes for a meal or afternoon tea. We were given a tour of one of Tehran's universities, and we visited Linda and David Kusse-Wolfe, former Earlham School of Religion students who were finishing a year of study in Iran. We were regularly recognized as tourists, and when Iranians found out our nationality they became interested, excited, and hospitable, all at once. For us it was one of the few times as travelers when we have been happy rather than embarrassed to have been identified as U.S. tourists.

When we returned to the United States we were amazed to encounter very strong negative attitudes toward Iran at all levels, promoted by a remarkable ignorance of the country. Iran seems to be some sort of threat to us—our natural enemy, about which presidential candidates use phrases and words like “bomb, bomb, bomb” or “obliterate.”

Not only does it make no sense to us, it also hurts us deeply that the friendly and decent people who were so helpful to us can be so easily categorized as our collective enemy. We are hoping that other U.S. citizens can travel to Iran and experience it firsthand. Perhaps together we can recognize that beautiful lives are more significant than political rhetoric. □

My Inaugural Journey

by Laura Ward Holliday

My journey to the National Mall on inaugural day began many years ago. As a little black girl growing up in the South, I started to remember and vivid memories flooded my thoughts as I pulled on long johns, thermal socks, and three layers of clothing a little after 4:00 a.m. on that historical Tuesday, January 20, 2009.

As I fought sleepiness and tried to forget that the temperature was in single digits outside, my thoughts were filled with mental pictures of the past. Shortly, I would brave the cold to board a train for the District of Columbia, which was opened only to pedestrian traffic within a two-square-mile boundary surrounding the city. Mental pictures of so called separate but equal schools, where only "black" teachers and classmates attended and where books were second and third generation because they had been in "white" schools before they were passed on to us raced through my mind as frames in a long forgotten movie.

As I opened the front door to walk to the bus stop, I looked up at a silvery crescent moon in a dark blue sky, whose very essence radiated a sense that something very special was imminent. I was reminded of the segregated world I grew up in from my neighborhood, my church, to the buses where I was relegated to the colored section behind the back steps and door. I remembered the few seats for black riders and where we stood even though there were plenty of available seats in the "whites only" section of the bus. I remembered the day in high school, boarding a bus with a fair-skinned friend named Wayne. We paid our fare and as we walked to the back of the bus to sit in the "colored" section, the bus driver abruptly stopped the bus. He yelled out and ordered Wayne to the front of bus. Wayne, insisting that he was black, refused. As the incident escalated, we got off the bus, called my father who came immediately from our house from a short distance away to pick us up. A crowd had gathered which included a policeman. I witnessed my father being verbally abused by that policeman and almost taken to jail for trying to protect us. I remembered the gripping fear I felt in that moment and it far surpassed the blistering cold I now felt while climbing up the hill to the bus stop.

I looked down at my freezing hands

enveloped in a pair of black leather gloves and remembered the dainty little white gloves my mother insisted that I wear as a proper little girl going downtown on Saturdays to see a movie in a segregated theatre where "blacks" sat in the balcony. Afterwards, I would go to Kress store and happily sit in the "colored" section where I sipped my chocolate malt.

When I reached the train, I noticed women boarding, making their way to destinations and remembered the women in my neighborhood that worked as domestics, owned the latest Cadillac automobiles but could not drive them to work because the white women they worked for would fire them if they knew their colored workers owned cars like that.

I boarded the train and as I sat there, I observed the faces, black, white, brown; nationalities from all over the world, most of whom were smiling, laughing, and chatting excitedly. The majority was headed to the mall and in that moment I recalled earlier demonstrations I had participated in during the women's movement for equal rights. I remembered struggling to answer questions posed by my feminist "white" sisters as to why there were not more black women participating in the demonstrations. I explained that it was not due to a lack of interest but the time of day the demonstrations were held. Most of them were working in their "white" sisters' homes and attending to their children. I also remembered having to defend my "black" sisters at other times when they were not present at parent-teacher meetings that were scheduled in the middle of the day, and explaining that the only reason I was able to be there was because I worked for myself.

As I reached the first transfer point, I joined a mass of humanity, which moved in waves toward the turnstile. Putting the ticket in and moving towards the escalators in the metro station reminded me of the days I rode the rails with my father who worked for Southern Pacific Railway. During the summers when school recessed, I would ride on the Sunset Limited train between my hometown and Los Angeles. Even on the trains, because of the color of my skin, I had to sit in the colored section of the dining car and not sleep in a formal Pullman porter car even though my father and his friends who worked on the train saw to it that indeed I slept in one when available. I was very near the age of the little black girls who were putting on their

lovely little dresses to participate in a ceremony with their father who would see that they too would sleep comfortably in a better world.

As I approached the mall, the moon was still in the darkened sky and I remembered the Civil Rights marches, King, Malcolm, Stoke, Angela, the Panthers. The helicopters overhead, 1.8 million people stretched from the capitol building built by the toil and labor of slaves to the Lincoln memorial. My mind went back to a township in South Africa called Kyalisha. I had passed it on my way from the airport into downtown Capetown in 1994. I was there to witness another historical event, the election of Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa. Even though on African soil, I knew firsthand the arduous journey from apartheid to the oath for I had seen it through the eyes of a little black girl growing up in the U.S. I saw an elderly black woman being pushed in a wheelchair onto the mall and that scene triggered the memory of a 110-year-old woman in Kyalisha being pushed in a wheelchair to cast her vote for the first time in her life for Mandela.

And here I was at the crack of dawn, with millions of people standing together in freezing cold, the sound of screaming ambulances with red flashing lights; sharpshooters on buildings; young and old; black, white, and other. I saw a sea of expectant faces, their eyes trained on a building erected by slave labor to see Barack Hussein Obama, a child of Africa and of the U.S., take the oath of office as the 44th President of the United States of America.

I, that little black girl now looking through the eyes of an old woman, heard the whispers of that ancestor who survived the journey in chains from Africa to this sacred moment of NOW. That part of the African soul of the man who raised his hand to take that oath and that part of the African soul of that little black girl became ONE. Through a mutual eye, both the man and the little black girl, now a woman, saw that universal quilt made of many different colored threads, lengths, and stitches of which they are a part. Both of them secretly and quietly taking a vow to never forget this sacred moment and promised themselves, a nation, and the world they would continue on this journey to Wholeness. □

Laura Ward Holliday is a member of Live Oak Meeting in Houston, Tex.

"No Greater Degradation": Jonathan Dymond on the Moral Costs of War

by Chip Poston

Few Friends know the name of Jonathan Dymond (1790–1828), who labored in obscurity, manufacturing linen drapes in Exeter, England. In his spare time, Dymond authored a series of essays on moral principles in a small room adjoining his shop. He died of tuberculosis at the age of 31. So unknown was he that Haverford scholar Rufus Jones once described him as being "almost without biography."

Dymond's best-remembered piece of writing is his "Essay on War." (I first encountered it in Jessamyn West's *Quaker Reader*, although the "Essay on War" may be read in its entirety at the website: <www.qhpress.org/texts/dymond/>.) Its publication in 1823 followed a long series of conflicts in defense of the British Empire. Considering it was written over 185 years ago, it is astonishingly prescient, suggesting numerous parallels to the ongoing war in Iraq.

Five significant themes emerge in Dymond's writing:

- **War involves the wholesale destruction of human life.** "By the slaughter of a war," wrote Dymond, "there are thousands who weep in unpitied and unnoticed secrecy, whom the world does not see. . . . To these the conquest of a kingdom is of little importance." As of this writing, more than 4,200 U.S. soldiers have died in Iraq and at least 30,000 have been wounded. Estimates of the Iraqi dead range from 90,000 to over 500,000; millions more become refugees. Once the ideological justifications are stripped away, a terrible reality remains: war results in the death and maiming of thousands of God's precious children, the majority of whom are young or civilians.
- **War destroys the nation's moral sensibilities.** Dymond cites Erasmus: "War does more harm to the morals of men than even to their property and persons." War, argues Dymond, "requires the relinquishment of our moral agency; . . . it requires us to do what is opposed to our consciences, and what we know to be wrong." War requires unquestioning obedience—of soldiers to officers and of citizens to their leaders. Yet it is precisely the freedom—and responsibility—of moral choice that ultimately make us human. "To what situation is a rational and responsible being reduced," asks Dymond, "who commits actions, good or bad, at the word of another? I can conceive of no greater

degradation." Revenge and retaliation are the opposites of civility, yet these are the values exalted in a culture of war.

- **Wars are usually fought for political interests.** Dymond describes those who begin wars without fully measuring their consequences as "half-seeing politicians." In every society, there are those who have a vested interest in war—usually, the wealthy and powerful. "There will always be many whose income depends on its continuance," he wrote, "because it fills their pockets." Is it purely accidental that the U.S. invasion of oil-rich Iraq was authored by George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice, and other members of the Bush Administration who have long-standing ties to the oil industry? Or that Dick Cheney's 433,333 stock options from Haliburton—the world's largest oil services company—increased in value 3,281 percent in 2005 alone?
 - **War squanders the nation's precious resources.** Dymond wrote, "The great question ought to be . . . whether the nation will gain as much by the war as they will lose by taxation and its other calamities." As the war costs surpass \$1 trillion (Nobel prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz suggests the final costs may be closer to \$3 trillion), we now know that Iraq never posed a threat to the United States. Our national debt exceeds \$10.6 trillion, and even the interest on it exceeds \$400 billion per year. Every additional dollar spent on war mires our children and grandchildren even more deeply in debt. At the same time, our healthcare, education, and infrastructure systems are literally falling apart. If our nation is to avoid economic collapse, we need to stop acting like a world empire and return to being a nation.
 - **Perpetual war destroys the fabric of our communities.** Dymond cites C. J. Fox, who wrote, "It is in my mind no small misfortune to live at a period when scenes of horror and blood are frequent. . . . One of the most evil consequences of War is, that it tends to render the heart . . . callous to the feelings and sentiments of humanity." Dymond compares the influence of war upon the community to that of "a continual and noxious vapor: we neither regard nor perceive it, but it secretly undermines the moral health."
- "Slaughter and devastation are sufficiently terrible," he wrote, "but . . . it is the depravation of Principle which forms the mass of its

mischief." What would he think of our recent national arguments about the morality of waterboarding, warrantless wiretapping, and extrajudicial imprisonment?

Tens of thousands of soldiers have returned from Iraq with deep psychic wounds, yet only a minority seek treatment. What will become of them—and of us, their neighbors? Our children are growing up on a diet of endless war, regularly assaulted by propaganda, fear, and images of horrific violence. What does it teach our young people when citizens overwhelmingly oppose a war, yet continue to pay taxes for it and to vote for politicians (of both parties) who fund it? How have we become so desensitized, so easily accustomed to the "normalcy" of ourselves as military occupiers of Islamic nations?

As fresh political winds begin to blow in our society, what is the best course of action? Here, too, Dymond offers a clear prescription for action. "A people have the power of prevention, and they ought to exercise it," he wrote. "The power of preventing war consists in the power of refusing to take part in it. This is the mode of opposing political evil, which Christianity permits and, in truth, requires." □

Chip Poston, a member of Newtown (Pa.) Meeting, teaches Religious Studies at George School.

Why the World Needs Quaker Meeting

by David Hahn

Sometimes we hated it. Passing through the large white doors of the Assembly Hall, our restive, unruly class somehow transforms into an orderly single-file line. The late October sun streams through the windows under the vaulted ceiling. The air is dry and sweet-smelling from all the wood. The old floor feels almost soft under our feet. We find seats on one of the long oak benches, which are hard enough to be an offense to many students' buttocks. Because of our vim and vigor we sit spaced three to a bench, making it more of a challenge to get ourselves into

trouble by “communicating” with a neighbor. The hall is filled, the stage holds our headmaster; a few faculty members; and four or five students. Get ready, get set, be silent!

The scraping of feet, the clearing of throats, and the fidgeting into a less uncomfortable position gradually tapers down. With bodies thus constrained, minds begin to work. The thoughts of the many participants might be going in the following directions: try to see if each toe can move individually inside its sneaker, work out mentally two to the 14th power, see if your fingers can tap your knee in three beats while your toe beats a solid four, how I can get (fill in name here) to laugh, can I sleep with my eyes open, these pants are too short, if I fart I will die, it's beautiful outside—I could be playing frisbee golf right now. . . .

The creak of a chair and a voice abruptly halts the mental flow. It is often a faculty member who speaks first at meeting, not to lecture but to say a certain something that has emerged from beneath the stew that inhabits our brains at any given moment. This time it might have been Mr. Scattergood. A warm and open teacher, I had always liked his name, which seemed to be taken directly from the pages of Hawthorne, in whose stories names imply characteristics. One could say he “scatters good things,” broadcasting content. He probably never spoke these exact words, but any speech emerging from the silence hits the ear at once distantly and intimately:

“Peace is smelling flowers and eating hot dogs. War is losing a loved one and living in darkness.”

The armless wooden chair confirms the return of its occupant. The room becomes even more quiet. Now is when the minds begin to change.

A hundred thoughts race in a hundred different directions: What kind of flowers? Daisies? Lilacs? Like: “When lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed?” I ran over Mrs. Wilson's flowers with the lawnmower last summer, and I must admit they smelled good! I could sure use a hot dog right now. I used to like ketchup but now I like mustard. Relish; mmm, that's what I call giving peace a chance! Darkness. Like what, a power outage? That storm last year took out the power and we ran out of matches so we had to touch a rolled-up paper towel to the stove burner to light the candles. I was sad when Maddie had to be put down. She was a great dog and a good friend. But a real loved one? I was too young when Grandma died. War, no one wants. Weapons. What is that stuff they use, napalm? Jellied gasoline. They napalmed the village of that screaming, naked girl running toward us in that *Life* magazine photo. My God, what are we doing!

Outside the world rolls on. Our planet is

increasingly burdened with over-crowding, animal species dying out, and chemicals released from fossil fuels. We people stare at screens: computers, TVs, and phones; listen to iPods, stroll with dogs and babies, ear buds in place. The tumultuous whirl of visual and mental stimuli puts us into a soothing state of having fewer thoughts and fewer ideas. We do not think thoughts from reflection, but those thoughts that arise come from incursions into our lives. We—and I include myself—are practicing a pattern of terminal avoidance. The result is less connection with the human community. Without active and participatory reflection, the screen becomes an option over a human face, war becomes an option over peace, and riches become a more attractive option over good instruction.

The world desperately needs Quaker meeting. Group meditation and thoughtful

reflection can help to change our minds and reconnect with the community of humans. Quaker meeting facilitates a sensitivity to deeper levels of consciousness and opens a way to interact harmoniously with the world, and even outwardly express personal perspectives. A world summit featuring a meeting like Quaker meeting would certainly open more dialogue, help find more solutions.

I know there is a Light within all of us, and I am pretty sure there are certain things all we humans agree on, yet which we are not currently equipped to see. We simply need to find the space where minds begin to change. It all begins with the silence.

David Hahn, a composer, lives in Seattle, Wash. He wrote this essay while reminiscing about his school days at William Penn Charter School in Philadelphia.

An Easter Epiphany

by Iris C. Ingram



Good Friday morning wading on the beach, Gulf waves are formidable. After several days of a very high wind, shells are washing in from great depths. At my feet lies a large broken shell. It resembles some of the prehistoric shells in my collection. I pick up the shell and emerging from its underside is a small eight-legged creature—such beautiful, delicate legs all coming from a dark ebony center. I am transfixed looking at this little creature's body for all there is—just a pulsing center. This steady pulse—this heart—is beating to the very same rhythm as my own. The same life is in us both—evidence of God in us. This pulsing center is a living engine that humans can only simulate.

As the little creature cleverly manipulates its eight legs to emerge from the shell, I see the uncountable number of tiny eggs totally lining the shell's inner surface. This little lady is a sister to me. We have the same heartbeat—the very same breath of God. When her heart stops beating, her body will disintegrate. Mine will also. Her eggs will take care of themselves, and some of them may manage to mature like their mother—as have mine. I think of Life, the one Life that is contained in everything, from creatures that can only be seen through the strongest of microscopes to all the planets, stars, and galaxies and much beyond our vision or understanding.

It is Easter. I think of Sacrifice and what

Fran Palmeri

Christian churches have done with this concept. From the time I became conscious of my self, I have felt imprisoned. A living creature consciously imprisoned within a very vulnerable shell of flesh and bones and pulsing organs. I felt very much afraid—too much to think about. For ten years I stayed with this fear. Finally I confided in a friend. He assured me that this is true of every person—we are more than our bodies. I still did not feel at ease and for many years did everything to release this idea. Wordsworth's words comforted me: "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting. The soul that rises in us, Our Life's star, hath had elsewhere its setting and cometh from afar; not in entire forgetfulness and not in utter nakedness, but trailing clouds of glory do we come from God who is our home."

On Easter weekend, Jesus and his crucifixion are in our hearts and minds—his Sacrifice. Has our God, our Creator, made a sacrifice by confining divine Life within the myriad forms we see and those we do not see? I have never understood the general Christian belief that God sacrificed God's own son to save humankind from sin. Even the biblical Abraham was not required to kill his son Isaac to placate a vengeful God: A substitute for Isaac was provided.

Jesus was a man. He knew the limitations of a physical body. It is evident that he also knew God as an all-loving and spiritual parent, one that could be called upon for help and for healing on a physical level. After his experience with the Light at his baptism, I believe he may have become one with his Father-God. It was an at-one-ment. He became an itinerant teacher who wanted others to know how they, too, might have this ineffable experience of being at one with God—and the way to achieve this. The Christian Church has built a complicated system around all of this, connecting it to Old Testament teaching and bringing in stories from earlier religions. Jesus could have gone away and avoided the horror of crucifixion, but from the time of his baptism, he was committed to doing what he believed was God's will. We are told that in his prayers he begged for this final step to be taken from him. It was not to be and he suffered as any human would suffer. He knew that the masses had chosen him for the Christ—a political leader expected by the Jewish people to free them from Roman rule. When asked if he were the Christ, his reply was, "Thou sayest." In death, he provided a different idea of who the Christ



might be and also showed that physical death is an acceptable and unavoidable part of God's plan for creation. Did Jesus realize that his crucifixion would be a symbol—symbolic of Life-God choosing to be sacrificed in physical form?

To carry this thought further we not only see that physical life is a sacrifice, but to maintain life in the body we are dependent upon the sacrifice and destruction of the many little lives in our food and bodily structures that are continually being replaced. Whether vegan or carnivore, we require the death of other lives for our physical life, and other lives require our sacrifice. Jesus not only demonstrated that all physical life is a sacrifice, but in his own life he showed and taught that to experience God's kingdom we must also sacrifice—give over—our physical, mental, and spiritual selves to a Higher Will. This is hard teaching. It is no wonder that the Christian Church grew around the idea that Jesus did the sacrificing for us. Jesus gave his physical life that we might know the truth that our physical life is not only a sacrifice, but also an opportunity. An opportunity to experience a different sort of relationship not only with our planet Earth, but also with our creator, God. The life that Jesus himself was experiencing and demonstrating. The life in physical form, fragile and temporary, but also joyous and meaningful. In spite of all its trappings, I am profoundly grateful for the preservation of the Gospel story. The Apostles and early Church Fathers gave inspired and poetic expression in their words and lives to keep this wonder alive for 2,000 years.

This Easter epiphany gives another meaning to the symbolism of the orthodox communion service: the bread and wine, the flesh and blood. Our whole life in all its parts is a sacrifice. Our God in physical form is a constant living sacrifice—as are we all. From the time I held this little sea creature—this very small octopus—in my hand and saw its pulsing heart, pulsing to the very same rhythm and count as my own, I have seen life in physical form with greater awareness. God imma-

nent, everywhere. This setting of sea and sand and sky is God's expression of incredible beauty. Sacrifice may seem too harsh a term given its biblical meaning. I think of it also as the limitations God used to demonstrate the beauty of Earth and the Universe. Through such limitations, we see with the poet Keats that life in all its myriad forms is Beauty—that "Beauty is Truth, Truth

Beauty. That is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know."

All around me I see the living expression of God's sacrifice. God placing an infinite number of limitations upon God. Is God perfect life without limitations? Without the acceptance of my own limitations, it is certain that I should not still be inhabiting a 94-year-old body. The sacrifice is in the living within and subsequently releasing the structures, the containments. We all take part in God's sacrifice. Not only Jesus, but also the other two men on their crosses beside him. This was truly symbolic. Through such limitations, God has demonstrated beauty beyond imagining. The life of Jesus is a demonstration of a love and commitment that we can only hope and pray to experience and to follow.

It is as if God took a chance in choosing to be confined in numberless structures; but choosing to be expressed in infinite ways provides these myriad forms of life an opportunity to display and experience love and beauty. In addition, God has provided us with free will. God experiences with us our spiritual growth, but more often our selfish rejection of divine will. Jesus showed us that in following God's will, we cannot escape the learning process inherent in being human. While on the Cross, still filled with love and compassion, he prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." We are all in this together, loving and suffering at the hands of one another. Jesus' whole teaching was that we must love and feel compassion for each other. He knew that it is together that we grow. Is it possible that we cannot be perfect in God until all are made perfect?

As a motherless child, I sensed that life in a body was a sacrifice, a frightening limitation, but gradually I grew to realize it is an amazing opportunity. At one with my Soul, I am now, with Wordsworth, ready to embark on that journey back home—to God. □

Iris C. Ingram is a member of Sarasota (Fla.) Meeting.

A Civil War Story

by Dyckman Vermilye

“Hello, my name is Kendra, and I was given your name as someone who is a member of the Quaker group here in Taos. I teach the third grade at the Yaxche School, and we have been studying the Civil War. Would you be available to talk to us about pacifism?”

Third grade? How old would they be? Would they be squirming? Attentive? Unmanageable? I had no answers to those questions but, hey, how often would I get a chance like that?

“When would you want me and for how long?”

“Could you come this Friday at 9:00 AM?”

“I’ll be there.”

I figured that if the kids entered school when they were about five, then they were probably between nine and eleven years old. I had no memory of my own children at that age. Since I now live in Plaza de Retiro there wasn’t anyone that age in my social circle. But I had the rest of the week to let the prospect and the substance of the session roll around in my mind. Nothing really took shape.

As I was dressing on Friday morning the penny dropped. Instead of putting on my shoes, I called my wife and asked her to sit beside me while I talked out an idea. I got more confident as she approved the thoughts that had developed in me.

And so I left for the short walk to the Yaxche School and walked into the third grade room. It was a space, not a room. Like elementary school classrooms today, this was equipped with all sorts of interesting things: globes and maps, paints and bulletin boards, anything and everything that might serve as a magnet for an inquiring third-grade mind.

Kendra was not what I expected: she was a young mother with her newest infant strapped to her chest while a second child, probably two years old, played quietly with toys around her feet and in another part of the space.

And there was the class! Ten of them, all sitting on the floor or slouched against the wall. All mute. Almost intimidating! I tried to introduce myself as “Dyck,” the short name that is used by almost everyone I know. I even said that I had people who called me “Grandpa.” But, no, I was “Mr. Vermilye, a Quaker.” And so I started to speak.

“I want to tell you a story. Remember, this is just a story.

“Last week in the *Taos News* there was an article that you may not have noticed. It said

that the mayor had driven down Salazar Road and passed that big empty field at the south-end. You know where that is?”

Kendra said, “You know. That’s where the hot air balloons are launched.” Heads nodded.

“Well,” I continued, “the mayor noticed that the prairie dogs had begun to clean out their burrows and were piling little mounds of dirt all over the field. He thought that was unsightly and the holes that the prairie dogs left could be dangerous if anyone was to walk out there or if a horse got a leg caught in one of the tunnels. He spoke to the town council and they agreed that it was a bad place, and bad for tourists to see. Something had to be done.

“So the council and the mayor decided that all third graders in Taos had to go to their nearest Police Station and register. Give their names, where they lived and their parents’ names. And they were to be given a small plastic bag with pellets in it. They were to go to the Salazar Road field and drop a pellet in every prairie dog hole they could find. The pellets were poisonous and would kill the prairie dogs living in the tunnels underground.

“What do you think of that?”

There wasn’t a rush to comment but then one hand went up.

“I wouldn’t do it.”

“Why not?”

“I wouldn’t want to kill a prairie dog.”

The class interaction was actually pretty limited and echoed the first concern about killing prairie dogs. I was not there to be a conscientious objector counselor, but told them that sometimes it was possible in some countries to apply for what I said was alternative service. “It was once called the Civilian Conservation Corps and was like what I understand the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps to be like today.”

A hand shot up. “My daddy started that.”

I said that a famous U.S. poet had volunteered for alternative service during the Civil War. His name was Walt Whitman. During his alternative service he worked in field hospitals and helped doctors who were treating severely wounded soldiers who had had legs blown off. They would probably learn more about Whitman later in school since he was a famous poet. I told them that I remembered the Civilian Conservation Corps had been paid just what I had been paid when I was a soldier: “a dollar a day once a month.” I tried to help them see the humor in that but I think I failed.

Who knows in what other ways I failed? No more than half the class spoke while I was with them and I have no idea whether any spoke later. And, I suppose, it is also fair for me to ask myself, “In what way did I succeed?” I thought killing prairie dogs or not killing prairie dogs would be an easier concept for ten-year-old kids to think about than the Holocaust or the consequences of Hiroshima. And I thought that maybe one or more of them would have had a burr put under their saddle which they will find irksome and thought-provoking as they grow. As a Quaker I could only hope so.

As it turned out, Kendra encouraged them to write to me. It helped me decide that my session was not a complete failure. I got some wonderful acknowledgements:

“Thank you for telling us about Quakers.” “I liked hearing the story. I learned that it’s sometimes hard to be a quaker.” “I learned that you didn’t need to fight in war. You could be a conscience objection and what I liked the most was the story you told us first.” “I learned that when you are a boy but don’t want to fight in war you are making a conscience objection. What I really liked most was talking about the prairie dogs.”

And I loved being introduced to a school-teacher who could bring her newborn to class in a chest cradle! □

Dyckman Vermilye attends Clearlight Worship Group, under the care of Santa Fe (N.Mex.) Meeting.

The Ministry of Prison Visitation

by Amy Runge Gaffney

The first time I visited the Federal Correctional Institution in Dublin, California, one of the prisoners asked me why I visit people in prison. I didn’t have an answer ready at the time, but I’ve thought a lot about it since then. I can truthfully say that I experience prisoner visitation and support as something God calls me to; that it seems to be something I can do to express gratitude to God for my own healing; that

sometimes it's the only thing that pulls me back into life.

For in a real way, when I visit prisoners I am also visiting myself. Whatever I bring to them, I simultaneously bring to the part of me familiar with alienation and despair. Whatever I bring to them, I also bring to the part of me that needs to know there are others who will remember and reach out to the isolated and forgotten. For whatever faith and compassion, kindness and trust I bring to them, I also need—and am often given in return.

While what I can give to the people I visit is strictly limited, it is also limitless. I cannot bring them gifts, answer their letters, find them legal aid, or rescue them from penury. I can only bring them myself, my presence, my willingness to listen and to love. Happily, they often give me themselves in return. As devotional writer and priest Henri Nouwen observed: "The many ways in which we express our humanity are the true gifts we have to offer each other."

Thus, being a visitor helps me escape the prison of my own self-absorption. Self-absorption, self-destructiveness, self-hatred, self-blame, blaming others—these are all prisons with which most of us are at least somewhat familiar. These are all "places" we can feel locked into, where we are apart from others or even in despair. Thus we all have experiences of being imprisoned, of needing release. They are a part of the common ground of our humanity. Yet these shared experiences, when acknowledged, are also a soil from which empathy and compassion, and hence true community, can grow.

There is yet another way in which doing prisoner visitation and support is also something we do for ourselves. We often suffer from feelings of powerlessness in the face of the world's suffering. More often than not, we simply don't know what we can do. Or we are afraid to do what we might do, and so we try to ignore the suffering, deny its reality, or blame its victims: "If only they (or I) had done such and such, this wouldn't have happened." That may be true. Yet we are all responsible for how we choose to respond to our own suffering, or to that of others. When we choose to act self-destructively, or seek to destroy others, we are bound, if unhindered, to destroy ourselves. However, when we try to address the world's (our own) deep need in life-supportive ways, we are apt to find ourselves inexplicably glad. Frederick Buechner wrote, "The place God calls us to is the place where our own deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." Our deepest hunger is for communion—to be met, to be fed, to be one. Prisoner visitation and support is one such way we can find community rooted in the ground of

our common humanity. Prisoner visitation and support can help release us from the prisons of ourselves, and make us deeply glad. □

Amy Runge Gaffney, a longtime friend, is now a member of Faith Lutheran Church in Chico, Calif. She is a visitor with Prisoner Visitation and Support; see <www.prisonervisitation.org>.

Meditation as Centering Prayer

by Keith R. Maddock

Waiting for prisoners to be brought to the chapel from their cell units can be a test of patience on those days when it is difficult for the guards to locate the people on their lists. But I have found it can also be an opportunity to compose myself and meditate on my expectations for the program. Normally I arrive minimally prepared—that is to say, with only a few resources to serve as fire starters for discussion. To arrive overloaded with ideas before I actually know who the participants will be often proves to be self-defeating.

Sometimes I distribute flyers containing a New Zealand version of the Quaker Peace Testimony. I still like that one because of its clear and life-affirming sentiments. Asking one of the early arrivals to read it aloud helps to capture the attention of the group and engage them in some light conversation while anticipating late arrivals. After everyone arrives, I introduce myself and the mandate of the Quaker program, which is to provide a forum for discussion on spirituality and restorative justice—two themes which are of immediate interest to prisoners—as well as an opportunity for silent worship.

The latter objective is appealing to the men, who have often chosen to participate in this particular program to get away from the noise and distraction of their units. But at what point I introduce worship depends on the number of participants and the level of ambient noise in the background (loud voices in the corridors, clanging doors, alerts, and other programs in adjacent rooms, for example). Sometimes a lively discussion about restorative (as opposed to punitive) justice can prepare the ground for a more centered experience. At other times, a few minutes of silent

or guided meditation can help bring the group to a place where a more open sharing of experiences and insights becomes possible.

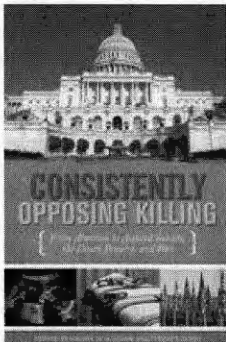
A preparatory exercise can be introduced directly by asking the men to share a few minutes of silence. It may be an awkward request to make, but I have usually found them willing to comply if only to humor the facilitator. This short, unguided and often unexpected interruption of their daily activity often has a calming effect. After a few minutes, I ask them what the silence meant to them—if anything. And I have learned never to underestimate the depth of their responses to this simple direct query.

When silent worship seems to fit in more comfortably after a lively discussion, I try a little more meditative technique—to explore how we can collectively experience inner peace through worship. To begin, I ask them to try dismissing all distractions from their minds by focusing on breath: inhaling slowly, holding the breath for increasingly longer intervals, and then letting it out gently. As they continue to focus on their own breathing, I may suggest that they expand their attention to become aware of the breathing of the others in the room, and to try breathing in harmony with them. After another interval, a brief reflection may be in order. As air passes into and through the body, we may also become aware of how the air we breathe passes from person to person. We experience what it means to be interconnected—both physically and spiritually.

At the conclusion of this exercise, which may take as long as a quarter of an hour if not rushed, a short spiritual reading may help the participants distill some essence of the experience to take away with them. At this point, an invitation can also be extended to the participants to share Bible verses, impromptu prayers, or simply appreciative remarks before dispersing. They take their leave of me with warm handshakes and good will, having shared in an experience of centering prayer. □

Keith R. Maddock is a member of Toronto (Ont.) Meeting.

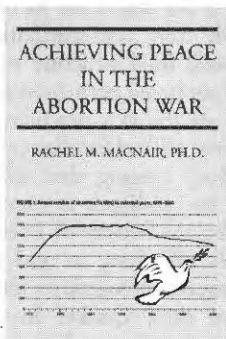
A Lively Concern: Books to Shed Light on Peace-Oriented Abortion Opposition



Consistently Opposing Killing:

From Abortion to Assisted Suicide, the Death Penalty and War
edited by Rachel M. MacNair & Stephen Zunes,
published by Praeger 2008

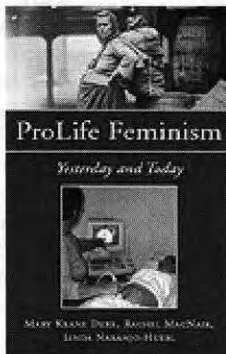
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Achieving Peace in the Abortion War

by Rachel M. MacNair
published by Feminism & Nonviolence Studies Association
with iUniverse, 2009

Applying the principles of peace psychology to current abortion practice in the United States, especially as applied to the medical staff who carry out abortions.



ProLife Feminism: Yesterday and Today

edited by Mary Krane Derr, Linda Naranjo Huebl, & Rachel MacNair
published by Feminism & Nonviolence Studies Association
with Xlibris, 2006

With short essays from Yesterday (18th century to 1950s) and Today (1960s on), this book provides intellectual heft to the case for historical and current pro-life feminism.

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Through Flaming Sword: The Life and Legacy of George Fox

By Arthur O. Roberts. Barclay Press, 2008.
128 pages. \$16/softcover.

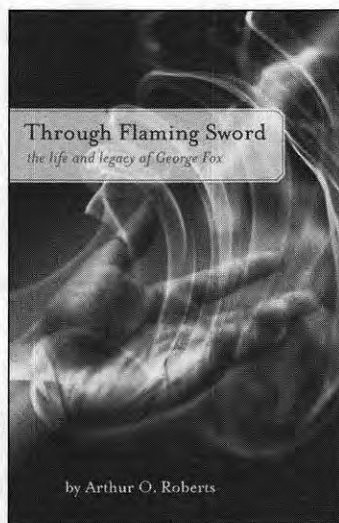
This book, reissued by Barclay Press as a 50th anniversary edition, remains as relevant today as it was when it was written in 1959. The second half in particular is destined to infuriate many liberal Quakers or, at the least, primed to start a conversation. It describes Roberts' argument that Fox's Christian message has been diluted and distorted by followers who filtered his words through the lens of Enlightenment thought. Further, according to the theology of both Fox and follower Robert Barclay, "humankind does not have a divine spark which is 'theirs' simply because they are human—salvation would then be by his own effort—but humankind is enlightened by Christ, the divine Word who became flesh and was crucified for the sins of the world." In other words, yes, the Light is universally available, but the Light is Jesus alone. Roberts reads this as an attack by early Quakers on Calvinism and the doctrine of election rather than an attack on Christianity.

Roberts contends that the experiential emphasis of Quakerism, along with a move away from grounding in Scripture, drew some Quakers towards a vague mysticism. By the 19th Century, this led to a faith vulnerable to "rationalism, Unitarianism, and subjectivism," in which "Christ within" became for some only a term for inner feelings."

In the 20th century, the influence of Rufus Jones further watered down Quakerism, Roberts argues, by equating the perfect "divine spark" within Christ to the imperfect divine spark that all people possess. Roberts references Philadelphia Quaker Louis Benson, who wrote that the initial prophetic message of Quakerism "had been lost through twisting the meaning of 'inward light' into a 'connotation of a rational and ethical principle which is divine,'" rather than a divine power that operates in humans but is not itself human.

What strikes this reader about Roberts' clear, readable, and well-argued book is that exactly the same issues that separated Quakers in 1959 still divide us in 2009—and that these issues can be traced back to Fox, a man who in equal measures loved Jesus as the risen Lord, and despised the established church as distorter and abuser of Christ's teachings.

For many Quakers, Fox, not Jesus, is the origin point for the faith. What do our beliefs about Fox tell us about ourselves? Does our own rejection of the hypocrisy of our faith group of origin lead us to the rebel Fox, who



rejected the church? Does our yearning for an authentic, primitive Christianity lead us to the Christian Fox who was willing to lay his life down for Jesus? And what does it say about Quakers as a whole that, in 50 years, we have not been able to move towards reconciliation of our differences—or at least a better articulation of the issues that divide us?

—Diane Reynolds

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

The Love of Impermanent Things: A Threshold Ecology

By Mary Rose O'Reilley. Milkweed, 2006. 320 pages. \$22/hardcover.

"I don't believe in God . . . but I wake up every morning praying." Reading that sentence in *The Love of Impermanent Things*, I knew I had met someone whose peculiar spiritual longing resonated powerfully with my own. Mary Rose O'Reilley refuses to write the sort of spiritual autobiography that maps a clean trajectory up and out of unbelief, "counting none but the sunny moments, as the old sundials advise." Instead she chooses to plumb "the things that make our human journey human." Her faith is a lot more complicated than poster-child believers insist, and that complexity makes this spiritual memoir a beautiful invitation to join the author in negotiating what she calls the labyrinthine traces of divine doings in this world.

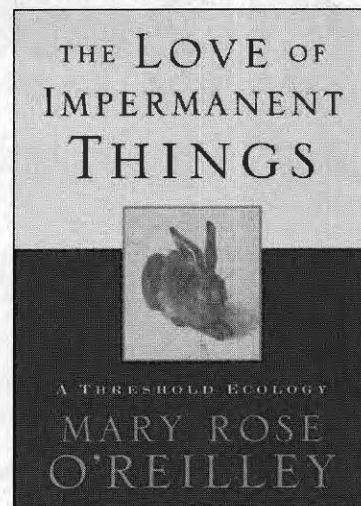
The Love of Impermanent Things animates, in a delicate, recursive manner, various chapters in O'Reilley's life: her origins in a Minnesota Catholic Air Force family; her work in a wildlife rehabilitation center; her artist's residency at the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology in Oregon; her mother's illness and death; a divorce; a relationship that wanes and flows.

These life events provide a narrative rigging for the memoir, but the plot is not the point. What really holds the book together is O'Reilley's seeking, her reaching after the right words to probe superficial layers of experience and move toward the spiritual center of things, like getting the dropper of nourishment into a rescued rabbit's mouth and not its nose.

Stylistically, this memoir flows from thought to situation to image to reflection. This conscious disordering countermands the often pat and blowsy meditations that populate the shelves of the "Spirituality" section at the local Barnes & Noble. *The Love of Impermanent Things* rips you open and refuses to repair what has been torn away. O'Reilley's meditations move the way I try to center in meeting for worship, fleeing from thought to thought like a bee drunk on its own honey. Moving deftly from one meditation to the next, the book's fluid structure eschews the false guise of supposed permanence.

O'Reilley writes as a practicing Quaker, and her journey will feel familiar to many who know the deep longing that inhabits our silence. But her audience is much broader than the Religious Society of Friends, and I find it deeply refreshing to read reflections that neither sound apologetic for the purported oddity of their Quaker leanings, nor assume a limited audience of insiders.

There's also a refreshing realism that hugs the shoreline of this memoir, tending its edges well. O'Reilley notes, "Life becomes sacred when we soften to it. It is not, in the technical sense, miraculous. It just is." When she bristles at the platitudes spooned toward her at the rehab facility to which her dying mother has been sentenced, you sense how deeply she values plain speech. When she notes how veterinarians make the elimination of suffering their highest standard of care (rather than the postponement of death), one sees her clear-headedness in action.



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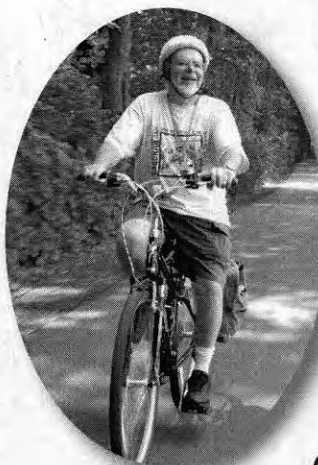
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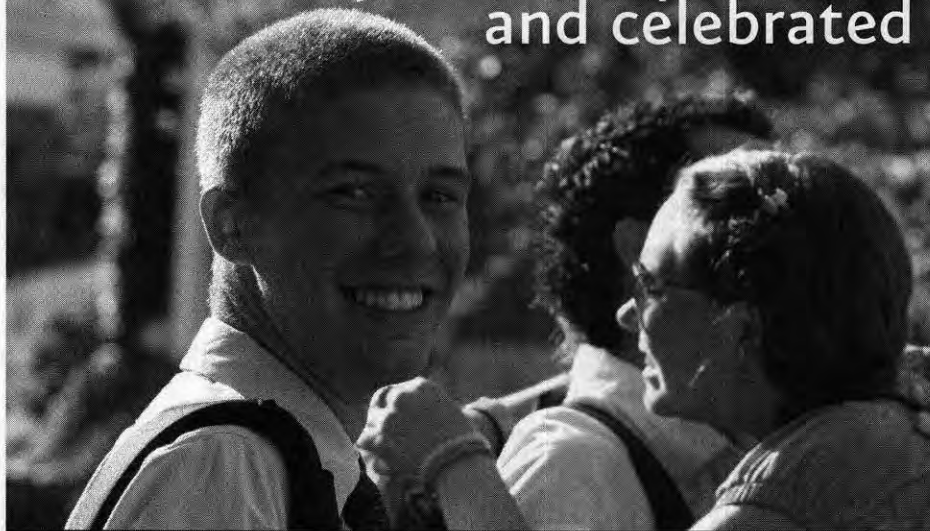
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O'Reilly acknowledges a longing for the comfort of religious certainty, but she never succumbs to the pat or perfected, the banality of surety and platitude. And she refuses, as well, to turn that very longing into a kind of good. Much of what she writes about is the "process of seeking the heart's true home—which may be as elemental as landscape." The spiritual topography she traces in this unflinchingly honest and superbly crafted book dips and ascends, like a ridge-line trail, in potent and important ways.

—James W. Hood

James W. Hood teaches 19th-century British literature at Guilford College and is a member of Friendship Meeting, North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative).

Standing in the Light: My Life as a Pantheist

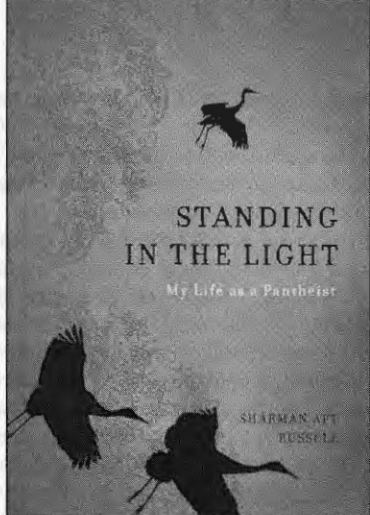
By Sharman Apt Russell. Basic Books, 2008.
306 pages. \$25/hardcover.

The word "religion" is from the Latin *re-ligare*, meaning "to tie back." I'd like to believe that religion ties us all together. But "back" can include negative connotations, such as being tied back to beliefs set in stone millennia ago. "Spirituality," on the other hand, is from the Latin *spiritus*, for breath, and carries denotations of wind, free flow. Etymologically, at least, spirituality is a far cry from religion.

In *Standing in the Light*, Sharman Apt Russell offers pantheism as a form of spirituality that might appeal to the nonreligious. Pantheism, from the Greek, means "all God" or "God in all." More precisely, it equates God with creation and the natural world, which is thus sacred—"the Mind and Body of God," as Russell rephrases Spinoza. The book's title comes from the author's Quaker experiences, and she adds to the metaphor of light beautifully as a scientist: "We all come from light. We are transformed by light. Most of us learned about photosynthesis in grade school. It is a subject we might have better studied in church."

Pantheism celebrates relationships within the natural world: how each entity in creation is linked with and depends upon every other one, how we are all parts of one whole. At the end of the book, Russell, who holds a degree in conservation from Berkeley, speaks of the need to turn toward holistic science and away from traditional science, which studies smaller and smaller parts of the whole in isolation. She reminds us that Quakers, witnessing to the Light without being tied to doctrine, can stand for the primary importance of spirituality in a world of conflicts among religions and between religion and science.

The author traces the history of pantheism through such groups and individuals as Hera-



ditus, Stoics, Epicurus, Buddhists, Taoists, Marcus Aurelius, Spinoza, Walt Whitman, Virginia Woolf, and many more. This rather diffuse and impressionistic history is intermingled with autobiographical experiences, further diluting the discussion. At times, I became impatient with such eclecticism.

Russell gives us a beautiful quote from German philosopher Friedrich Schelling: "Nature is visible Spirit; Spirit is invisible Nature," but she's also part of a bird-banding team, and she registers no qualms about trapping the birds in nets, where some of them die of fright. That doesn't strike me as a very respectful way to treat the Mind and Body of God. Is Russell intentionally sacrificing consistency and displaying all her indecisions and paradoxes so that we might come to appreciate through her the problems of living spiritually in this rational and material world? Perhaps this is what it is to be spiritual without an unthinking dependence on science or religion.

—Gale Swiontowski

Gale Swiontowski, a Quaker attender, recently retired from her position as professor of English at Fordham University to write about the relations between literature and spirituality.

Where Should I Stand? A Field Guide for Monthly Meeting Clerks

By Elizabeth Boardman. Quaker Books, 2008. 128 pages. \$12.50/softcover.

When she was asked to serve as clerk of San Francisco Meeting, Elizabeth Boardman was unable to find a text to provide insight into questions. Thankfully, she kept a journal of her time as clerk, which allowed her to write *Where Should I Stand?*—the book she wished she'd been able to read. Because of her foresight, Boardman is able to share with frank freshness some of her early uncertainties and questions, along with her later thinking and reflections.

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Woven throughout her description of the practical aspects of clerking—Do I have to read and write all this stuff?—are her concern for the individuals in her meeting and her steady focus on listening to Spirit for guidance.

Drawing on a full-time job in business administration and decades in unprogrammed Friends meetings, Boardman focused on efficiency. This, she felt, would create more space and time for Friends to focus on what was most important: making way for the Divine to speak to and through the body. Boardman's deep love for her meeting and her commitment to Quaker process shine throughout the book. No question strikes her as too petty—Should I dress differently now? Where should I stand to give announcements? She gives the same thoughtful care in her consideration of these as she does to the big questions—How do I handle meeting for business? How do I help sustain the faith community?

In order to broaden and deepen the conversation, Boardman draws on the insights of 17 other clerks from a wide range of Friends meetings, mostly in Northern California. The book thus provides a many-faceted introduction to the joys and challenges of clerking today.

Along with a useful index, Boardman includes some of her meeting's "best practices" for meeting for business, minute-taking, and memorial meetings. She also includes excerpts from other sources; a concise list of clerking workshops, Internet, and print resources; and an invitation to continue the conversation on her blog, <<http://whereshouldistand.blogspot.com>>.

There is much practical information in the pages of this compact book, and the author's conversational style and gentle humor make it an enjoyable read. It will be of interest not only to current and future clerks, but also to any Friends who want to become more active in their meetings.


—Janet Hough


Janet Hough is a member of Chappaqua (N.Y.) Meeting, and has been a member of a variety of unprogrammed meetings on three continents during the past 45 years.

Restorative Justice across the East and the West

By Katherine van Wormer. Casa Verde Publishing, 2008. 275 pages. \$58/hardcover.

In *Restorative Justice Across the East and the West*, Katherine van Wormer brings together a varied group of authors to "propose restorative justice as a bridge between East and West, as a force that can transcend cultural and religious differences" and to consider the value of restorative justice to social work practice. She has taken on a necessary, though ambitious,



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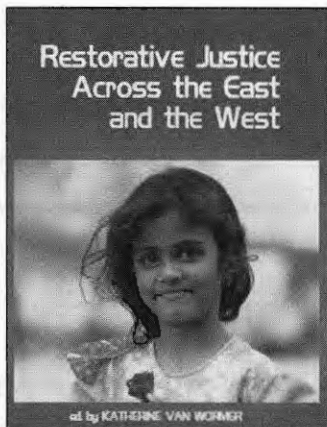
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task in the 15 chapters in this collection, which analyze, at the micro, community, and "beyond the macro" levels, themes ranging from school to society and from domestic violence to civil conflict to environmentalism. With its wide scope and global focus, the book offers a glimpse of the potential and limitations of restorative justice from different cultural perspectives and contexts.

Several chapters stand out for their comprehensive knowledge, depth of analysis, and compelling themes. David Androff offers an up-to-date history, description, and analysis of the Timor Leste Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CAVR) and the Community Reconciliation Process (CRP). His analysis, based on practical, "on-the-ground" realities, concludes that Timor Leste had the "choice to work in the mud—to proceed, however slowly, in a creaking under-resourced wagon, carrying the almost overwhelming weight of complicated historical conflict saturated in highly charged inflammable emotion." This accessible chapter offers an analysis that focuses on pragmatic application, rather than lofty, philosophical hopes for the philosophy.

Vanmala Hiranandani, drawing on Gandhian approaches, calls on restorative justice to address global social and structural injustices and to promote the accountability of the West for the creation and sustenance of civil and international conflicts worldwide. She warns that "the benevolence of restorative justice and its inherent value of forgiveness can mask structural injustices that have become deeply entrenched in international relations." This lesson is particularly relevant for Western practitioners who work internationally.

Fred Besthorn suggests that restorative justice challenges the environmental movement to "listen to the Earth's voice and the voice of the Earth's non-human inhabitants." In doing so, he offers a compelling vision in which the Earth is the victim of human offenses.

The author's ambitious goal in bringing together these essays might have been more thoroughly achieved had there been fewer, more focused and developed chapters. However, *Restorative Justice Across the East and the West* includes several gems of wisdom that are

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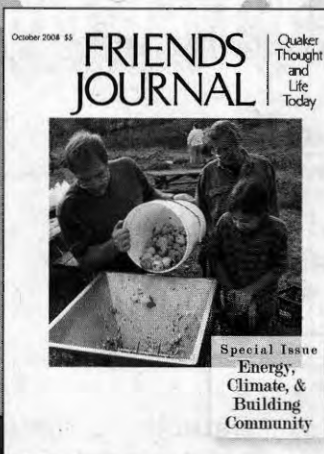
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—Barb Toews

Barb Toews, a restorative justice practitioner, trainer, and educator, lives in Lancaster, Pa.

Way Opens: A Spiritual Journey

By Patricia Wild. Warwick House Publishing, 2008. 198 pages. \$15/softcover.

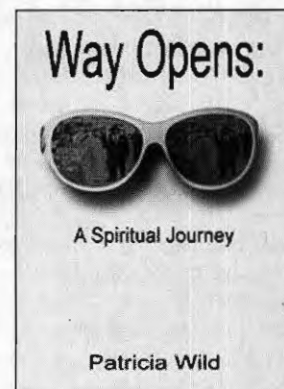
In 1962, two black students—Lynda Woodruff and Owen Cardwell—entered the previously all-white E.C. Glass High School in Lynchburg, Virginia. Seventeen-year-old Patricia Wild, who also attended Glass, made little of the day. Only later in her life, as she became a Quaker and awakened to racial injustice, did she look back and wonder how it had been for the black students.

Way Opens is the engrossing personal narrative of Wild's search for her former classmates. She finds Dr. Lynda Woodruff at North Georgia State University, working as a professor of Physical Therapy. Woodruff in turn leads her to Reverend Owen Cardwell, a Baptist minister in Richmond, Virginia. In the process of getting to know them, Wild becomes conscious of her own racism, along with that of her family and friends back in the '60s. Since many of her older readers will have experienced a similar late awakening to unconscious racism, this lively journal will have wide appeal.

I enjoyed this memoir, which will speak to the condition of many. However, I was troubled by Wild's lack of research into the efforts by Friends to combat racism in Virginia while she was a student there—especially the school closings in Lowndes County and the AFSC's project to bring black students to stay with Quaker families in order to continue their education.

—Margaret Hope Bacon

Margaret Hope Bacon is a member of Central Philadelphia (Pa.) Meeting and regularly attends Crossland Friends Worship Group.



West Richmond (Ind.) Meeting and Richmond First Friends Church, along with other churches and service organizations in the Richmond area, are setting up a clearing house called "Open Arms," where resources and needs can be brought together for those in need. It is a faith-based coalition serving their area in the name of God, with the intent that needs are met and that lives are transformed. Open Arms will receive need requests either in person at an office in downtown Richmond or over the phone. Volunteers will then check the validity of requests and refer people to the appropriate resources. Each church or participating organization will have one representative on the board, will support Open Arms financially or in kind, and will help recruit volunteers to staff the clearinghouse. First Friends Church has agreed to pay the salary for a part-time coordinator for up to two years. —*Indiana Yearly Meeting*

On January 22, Central African Quakers issued a declaration in Bujumbura, Burundi, regarding the critical situation in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), as follows:

"We, members of Quaker Peace Network-Central Africa, gathered for a conference in Bujumbura, Burundi, from January 19 to 23, 2009, are deeply concerned by the current situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). After exchanging information with colleagues in the region, we were devastated by their accounts of the conditions currently facing the population of eastern DRC:

- The war continues to rage.
- Massacres of innocent populations, especially women and children, are committed day by day.
- Rapes of young girls, mothers, and old women are commonplace.
- The population continues to pour into Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps and flee the country. Deaths pile up in the IDP camps (five to six deaths a day in Bulengo).
- Hunger, malnutrition, and lack of shelter affect all.
- Villages are burned in their entirety.
- Kidnapping and forced military enrollment of young, especially children.
- Torture, including castration, is inflicted on those who refuse to join armed groups.

Considering that an agreement signed on January 16 between the Congolese and Rwandan governments to pursue the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and the Interahamwe

(armed groups, some of whose members are accused of perpetrating the 1994 genocide in Rwanda) will surely exacerbate the situation and cause more deaths and displacement, there is a major risk of activating conflicts in the countries of the subregion.

Despite this terrifying and alarming situation, the Quakers of the region, especially those in the eastern province of North Kivu, have not ceased providing emotional and material assistance to the victims. An able team of Quakers are undertaking a series of initiatives in Goma, North Kivu: establishing support groups for survivors of rape, distributing clothes, food, and soap, and holding dialogues through Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) and Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC) workshops. Yet despite the laudable intervention of Quakers in the region, the situation remains far from manageable. Deaths continue to pile up, numbers of displaced grow at an unbelievable rate, such that their needs become even more overwhelming.

For more information, visit <www.aglionline.org>. For questions regarding this declaration, contact Adrien Niyongabo, Director, HROC Burundi, at <adniyo@hotmail.com>. For questions regarding Quaker work in the DRC, contact Pastor Levy Munyemana, Change Agent Peace Program Director in Goma, at <leviyfcgoma@yahoo.fr>, or Anna Crumley-Effinger at <anna.crumleyeffinger@gmail.com>, who works on Quaker advocacy related to the DRC. —*Quaker Peace Network, Afrique Centrale*

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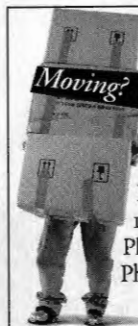
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Deaths

Bell—Elaine Ethel Conyers Bell, 88, on November 10, 2008, in Sandy Spring, Md. Elaine was born on August 7, 1920, in Ipswich, England, to Ethel and Arthur Conyers. She started working with the Religious Society of Friends during World War II and volunteered with Friends Ambulance Unit in 1944. She was one of just four women who traveled to China to dispense medical supplies to combatants and civilians. In China, she worked as an administrative assistant to the group's leader, Colin W. Bell. After a year and a half in China, Elaine returned to England with Colin, and the two were married in 1946. They then went to Philadelphia to join American Friends Service Committee. Elaine volunteered for AFSC until she gave birth to their daughter, Jennifer, in 1948. Soon after, Colin and Elaine moved to Geneva, Switzerland, as co-directors of Quaker International, an organization working with the newly formed United Nations. During this time two sons were born, Alister in 1950 and Graham in 1952. In Geneva, Elaine worked with the Geneva Women's International Forum. In 1954, the family returned to Philadelphia for Colin to take a position as associate executive secretary of AFSC. Elaine was a leader of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, teacher and program coordinator at Swarthmore Meeting's First-day school, leader of the Swarthmore Mother's Club, chair of the School Program Committee, and chair of the AFSC International Centers Committee. She became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1966, though she never entirely lost her accent or love of England. After Colin retired in 1968, Elaine and he became resident directors of Davis House, a Quaker international guesthouse in Washington, D.C. They both enjoyed the constant flow of international visitors. In 1971 they moved to Pendle Hill, where Elaine worked with the Pendle Hill bookstore and pamphlet operation. In 1973, they became co-directors of Friends Center in Honolulu, Hawaii. Elaine loved Hawaii and established friendships there that gave her much joy for the remainder of her life; she traveled back frequently in her later years. In 1976 she and Colin settled on a 169-acre farm in Kent's Store, Va. Elaine loved life among farm animals, but also remained active off the farm. She worked as a receptionist at the Louisa Medical Center in Castleton, Va., and for dentists in Mineral, Va. Active in Charlottesville (Va.) Meeting, she also served on the board of the local public library, helped establish the Fluvanna, Va., Golden Circle group, and supported the SPCA, being honored as Fluvanna County SPCA's Volunteer of the Year in 2002. She enjoyed sharing her Quaker experience with students and staff at Tandem Friends School, including her own grandchildren, Nathan and Laurel Bell. After Colin's death in 1988, Elaine continued to enjoy rural life. In 2004 she moved to Friends House in Sandy Spring, Md. She loved the community atmosphere and reveled in the amount of worthwhile program content available to residents. The community sensed this and asked her to co-chair the Program Committee. A key element of Elaine's life was her passion for flowers and plants. She was a lifelong gardener and she enjoyed tending to her many houseplants. Elaine died peacefully, surrounded by family, after just one week of ill-

ness. She was preceded in death by her husband, Colin, in 1988. She is survived by her daughter, Jennifer Bell Newton (Tom); her son, Alister W. Bell (Joan); her son, Graham W. Bell; and her grandchildren, Nathan W. Bell and Laurel C. Bell. A second celebration of her life will be held on May 10, 2009, at 2:00 p.m., at the family farm in Kent's Store, Va.

Evans—William Elkinton Evans, 92, on December 29, 2008, in State College, Pa. Bill was born on September 27, 1916, in Philadelphia, Pa., to Anna Rhoads Elkinton and Francis Algernon Evans. He was a graduate of Germantown Friends School, Haverford College, and University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. After interning at Pennsylvania Hospital he took a residency in Internal Medicine at Delaware County Hospital and Pennsylvania Hospital. As a youth, he spent summers in Mount Desert Island, Maine, where a cottage by the ocean had been built in 1925 for his grandmother, Rachel Cope Evans. Bill was a founding member of the Cumberland Clinic Foundation, established in 1949. During a 40-year medical practice in Internal Medicine with the Cumberland Clinic in Crossville, Tenn., he also pursued advanced studies in cardiology and diabetes. In 1953 he married Lucretia Way Wood, of Philadelphia. In their early years in Tennessee, Bill and Lu helped start West Knoxville Meeting, the Southern Appalachian Association of Friends (which became the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association), and Crossville Meeting. He and his identical twin brother, Jonathan Evans, bought and operated a farm where they raised their families. Bill was a longtime member of the boards of directors of the Cumberland Clinic Foundation and the Cumberland Medical Center. Throughout his life he supported Quaker schools and organizations working for peace, justice, and the protection of the environment. In 1989, he was presented the annual Haverford Award for service to society. Bill and Lu moved to Foxdale Village in State College, Pa., in 1991, returning frequently for visits to their home in Crossville. They also spent several months each summer on Mount Desert Island. Near the end of his life, Bill expressed acceptance of his death and faith that those of us who remain will carry on to make a world of peace, justice, and love. He loved poetry. A lifelong member of the Religious Society of Friends, Bill was a member of State College (Pa.) Meeting. He was preceded in death by his brother, Jonathan Evans, in 1969. He is survived by his wife, Lucretia Wood Evans; his son, Jonathan Wood Evans (Melissa Graf-Evans); three daughters, Cynthia Evans Trueblood (Peter Martin Trueblood), Rebecca Evans Marvil (Joshua Dallas Marvil), and Deborah Susanne Evans (Ronald Claude Schaaf); eight grandchildren, Rachel Graf Evans, Hannah Graf Evans, Jeremy Graf Evans, Eliza Evans Schaaf, Wilder Evans Schaaf, Isaac Evans Schaaf, Cayla Evans Marvil, and Matthew Evans Trueblood; two brothers, Arthur Evans and Joseph Morris Evans (Anne Tall Evans); and a sister-in-law, Elizabeth Evans Halverstadt. Additional services will be held in Crossville, Tenn., on Saturday, April 11; and on Mount Desert Island, Me., on Sunday, July 5.

Jensen—Esther Fowler Jones Jensen, 99, on November 7, 2008, at the Oaknoll Retirement Residence



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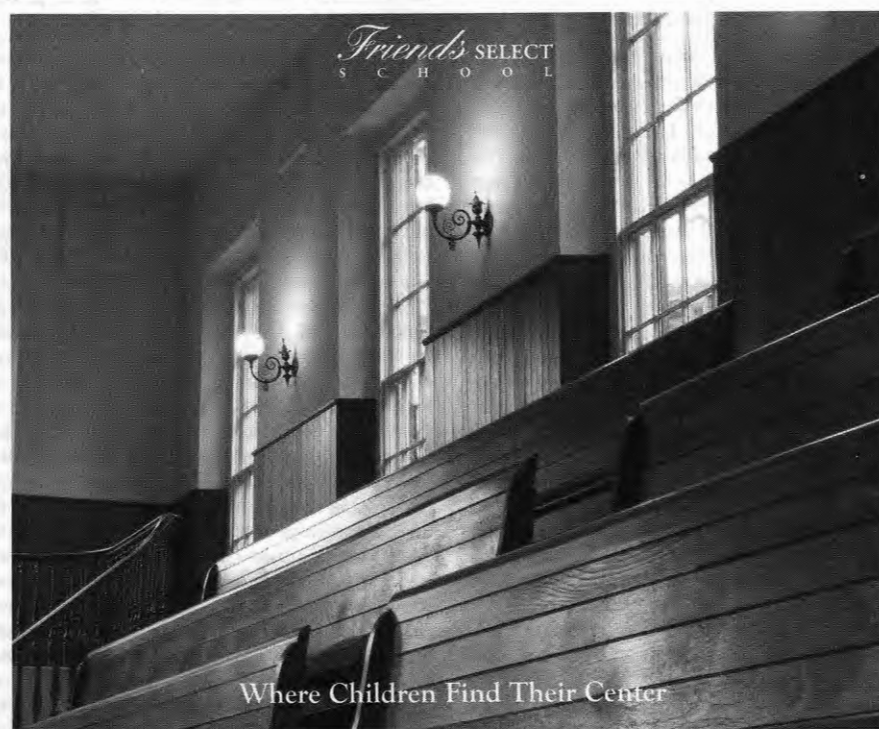
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in Iowa City, Iowa. Esther was born on June 8, 1909, in Atlantic City, N.J., the second of eight children of Jessie Blackburn and Howard Townsend Jones. When she was 14 months old, her father became a teacher at Scattergood Friends School and the family moved to Iowa. They lived at Scattergood for about a year, and then settled on a farm nearby. A lifelong Quaker, Esther attended the West Branch public schools and graduated in 1927 from Westtown School, a Friends boarding school near Philadelphia. She later graduated from Cedar Rapids Business College and worked for a time in Cedar Rapids and Iowa City. When she returned to Iowa after Westtown, she met her future husband, a Danish immigrant who had come to work for her father. She and Oswald E. Jensen were married in 1930, in a Quaker ceremony on the Jones farm. After they got married they farmed together for 42 years until her husband's death in 1972, all but one of those years on a farm about a mile from where she had grown up. After Oswald's death, Esther continued to live alone on the farm until 1986, when she moved to Oaknoll. She was a member of West Branch (Iowa) Meeting and Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative). She was a former member of the Scattergood School Committee and was a member of the Centertal (Iowa) Woman's Club for more than 70 years. Esther was preceded in death by her husband, Oswald Jensen; three brothers; and two sisters. She is survived by her son, Dwight Jensen (Patricia); her daughter, Virginia Gritton (Earl); six grandchildren, Kimberly Jensen, Julia Schwarz, Dirk Jensen, Allison Gritton, Bruce Gritton, and Scott Gritton; two sisters, Ruth Newlin and Elinor Cloe; and nine great-grandchildren.

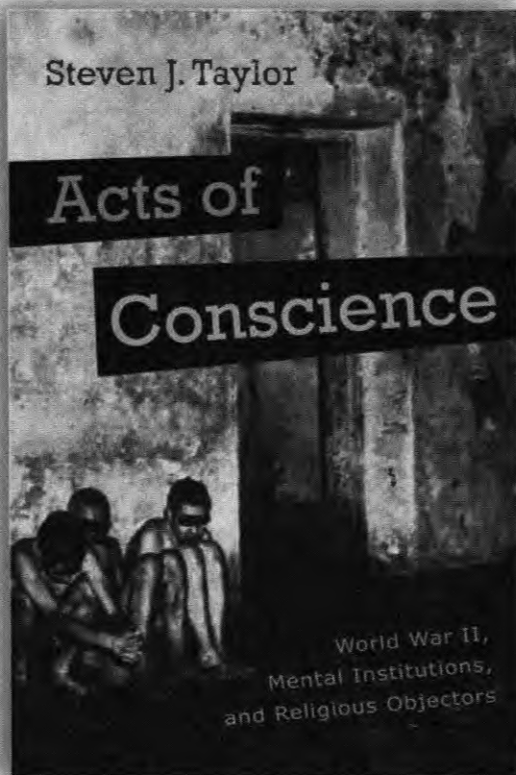
Laughlin—*Lois Lucile Wood Laughlin*, 83, on November 1, 2008, at home in Iowa City, Iowa, from brain cancer. Lois was born on May 24, 1925, in Berkeley, Calif., to Anna Lucile Kersey and Herbert Ross Wood. Her mother died in 1937, and in 1939, her father sent her to live for the school year with his brother and wife in New Providence, Iowa. There she met Donald Laughlin; they kept in touch and married in 1945. After she earned a BA in History and Education and a teaching certificate in 1946 from Whittier College, Lois and Don moved to West Branch, Iowa, where she taught English, drama, typing, physical education, and folk dancing at Scattergood School (now Scattergood Friends School), as well as serving as school librarian. In 1949, when Don was sentenced to 18 months in prison for non-registration for the draft, she moved into the Boys' Dorm to serve as dorm sponsor, taking her infant son, David, with her. She and Don coordinated Saturday evening entertainment; provided hayrides, picnic meals, sports and recreation programs, games, and camping trips; and arranged student and faculty evenings out. In 1970, Lois earned an MA in Library Science from University of Iowa, and she served as high school librarian in Tipton, Iowa, from 1968 to 1974. Following that, she worked at the Registration Center at University of Iowa for ten years. During the summer of her 50th year she rode with her 13-year-old son, Roger, on the *Des Moines Register's* Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa. A lifelong Friend, Lois joined West Branch Meeting, where she served for a time as clerk. She also worked for Friends Committee on National Legislation, focusing on

social justice issues. When she was 60, she traveled to Nicaragua as a delegate for Witness for Peace, a group opposing U.S. support of the contras in Central America. Lois actively opposed the Iowa death penalty, testifying in 1993 and 1997 before the Iowa State Senate. She wrote editorials opposing state-sanctioned killing and urging diplomacy to settle disagreements between nations. She loved language and the written word, chairing an Iowa group that published *Friendly Woman*. She read widely and thought deeply about living, being, and dying. A prolific but unpublished writer, Lois donated most of her thousands of pages of letters, poems, essays, stories, and journals to Iowa Women's Archives at University of Iowa. One of her poems, entitled "October Morning," was a 1998 runner up in the National Poetry Month contest sponsored by the Davenport Public Library. She served terms as both president and treasurer of the Tipton branch of American Association of University Women (AAUW). She served on the Scattergood Friends School Committee (Board), the Iowa City Peer Counseling program, and the Cookson Retirement Home Resident Advocate Committee in West Branch. Lois was preceded in death by two daughters, Janet Cook and Ruth Laughlin. She leaves behind her husband, Don Laughlin; two daughters, Naomi Laughlin-Richard (Scott) and Martha Laughlin (Kate Warner); two sons, David Laughlin (Brenda) and Roger Laughlin (Connie); a son-in-law, Don Cook; seven grandchildren, Reader Laughlin Warner, Heidi Lehigh Laughlin, Tanya Lara Laughlin, Darren Cook, Erin Laughlin, Katie Laughlin, and Tyler Laughlin; seven great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

Mullin—*Mary Morrisett Mullin*, 93, on January 16, 2009, at Friends Fellowship Community in Richmond, Ind. Mary was born in Columbus, Ohio, on April 29, 1915, to Irving and Anna Rogers Morrisett. She grew up in Dayton, Ohio, and graduated from Denison University. After college, Mary worked for AFSC as a college secretary in New England and California, recruiting college students for AFSC projects and workcamps. She was active in the Emergency Peace Campaign in Philadelphia, where she met James P. Mullin of Brookville, Ind. They married in 1941 and settled in 1946 in Brookville, where they raised four daughters. A member of Clear Creek Meeting in Richmond, Ind., Mary was a longtime member of the Women's Club in Brookville and the Franklin County Historical Society. She led Girl Scouts for 17 years, was president of the Indiana Historical Society, and served on the executive committee of the Dayton Region of AFSC and on the Board of Trustees of Earlham College. In addition to her work as a homemaker, Mary worked as a tax accountant in James' law practice. After her four children grew up, Mary traveled widely with her husband, expanded her gardening interests, and became an enthusiastic quilter. She designed many of the more than 200 quilts she made. An avid reader and computer user, she read the *New York Times* daily on the Internet. In an email to her grandchildren in December 2008, she told them that she was contemplating an exploration of the vast universe free of a frail body. Mary was preceded in death by her husband, James Mullin; her parents; one granddaughter, Elizabeth Stromquist; and

four siblings, Irving Morrisett, Edie Morrisett, Alice Rhodes, and Ann Davidon. She is survived by her four children, Ann Stromquist (Shel), Beth Mullin (Brad Whitfield), Marty Mullin (Tom Cooney), and Becky Lough (Bob); eight grandchildren, Chris and Matt Stromquist, Nathan and Matt Whitfield, Brendan and Meghan Cooney, Gabe and Dan Lough; two sisters, Virginia Thornberry, Echo Davis (Perry); a brother, Jim Morrisett; numerous nieces and nephews; and many good friends.

Powelson—*John P. (Jack) Powelson*, 88, on January 1, 2009, after a brief illness. Jack was born on September 3, 1920, in New York City, to Mary S. and John A. Powelson. He grew up in Syracuse, N.Y., where his father founded the Powelson Business Institute (now part of Bryant & Stratton College). When he was 12, his father died, having lost everything in the economic crash of 1929. His mother worked as a nurse to finance education for him and his siblings, and he won scholarships to Manilus Pebble Hill School in DeWitt, N.Y., and Andover. Jack's experience at these schools was troubled. During his time at Andover he was a socialist and a pacifist. After Andover he went to Harvard, where he found a more congenial atmosphere, and where he debated his fellow students regarding the prospects of a war to stop Hitler. He wanted to be an accountant, like his father, but Harvard College offered no courses in accounting. After he graduated from Harvard, he received an MBA from the Wharton School at University of Pennsylvania and went to work in New York for the accounting firm where his father had worked. While there, he was called up for Civilian Public Service camp, but was classified as IV-F (not meeting fitness standards). One day, as he was doing an audit in New York City, he got an offer to teach at Wharton, and he began there in 1944, but left to earn a PhD from Harvard in Economics. His study of Economics led him to give up his belief in socialism, but he remained a pacifist for the rest of his life. When World War II ended, he was awarded a teaching fellowship at Harvard to help handle the sudden increase in enrollment. For the next several summers he served on the faculty of AFSC summer institutes in international affairs, where he called square dances, gave lectures in economics, and led the singing. He also taught accounting for a year at University of Buffalo. He led student groups traveling to Europe by ship for the Experiment in International Living, lecturing on the economics of postwar Europe, teaching the Irish how to play baseball with a table tennis paddle and tennis ball, and putting out the ship's newspaper. In a tent camp in Paris in 1948, he met his future wife, Robin, who was about to spend several years in Quaker service. He spent the next year in Paris living with a French family, learning French, and writing his doctoral dissertation on France. Then his accounting firm, Price Waterhouse, sent him to Frankfurt, Germany, for three months. In Germany he taught folk dancing in an AFSC neighborhood house, lived with a Quaker family in a half-bombed-out building, started learning German, and made friends that he would still have at the end of his life. In 1953, at an AFSC reunion at Westtown School, he and Robin re-met and were married five months later. He began to feel a concern that unprogrammed Quakers had turned their



Steven J. Taylor

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faith from a personal religion into a political religion. He wrote several articles for *Friends Journal*, *Quaker Life*, and *Friends Bulletin* on this theme, and traveled around the country, as well as to New Zealand and Australia, to speak at yearly meetings. Quakers generally ignored or rejected these views, even though mainstream economists accepted them. Despite his frequent political differences with Quakers, however, he still embraced what he saw as the fundamentals of unprogrammed Quakerism. So he began to write an electronic journal, *The Classic Liberal Quaker* (later renamed *The Quaker Economist*), to communicate some of the basic ideas of economics to Quakers. The initial responses from readers were negative, but as the years passed he broadened its scope and gained an international readership. He also became a research economist at the International Monetary Fund. While there, he wrote his first book, *Economic Accounting*, which led to his teaching a course on economic development for U.S. foreign aid officers at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. One of these officers invited him to Bolivia as economic advisor. From then until his retirement, he divided his time between university teaching and foreign assignments in Bolivia, Kenya, the Philippines, and Mexico (all with Robin and children), as well as brief stints lecturing in Africa, China, and all the Latin American countries except Cuba. After teaching at University of Pittsburgh, he went to University of Colorado, where he taught for 39 years and happily retired. Jack was preceded in death by his daughter, Cynthia Powelson, and his brother, Stephen Powelson. He is survived by his wife, Alice Robin Powelson; two daughters, Judith Powelson and Carolyn Campbell (Thomas); two sons, Kenneth Powelson and Lawrence Powelson (Wallis Bolz); two grandchildren, Carl Powelson and Abram Powelson; a sister, Louise Dudley (Robert); a sister-in-law, Esther Powelson; and six nieces and nephews, Stephen Dudley, Rebecca Allison, Anne Jeziorski, Stephen Powelson, Sally Kirby, and John Powelson.

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idolatry, and to hold out for rightly ordered values around the economy as fiercely as we hold out for the Peace Testimony. One approach, suggested by theologian Walter Wink, is to see all our institutions as having an original divine vocation, i.e. the vocation of political systems is to allow people to work together in larger groups, and the vocation of economic systems is to distribute the goods necessary for life and increase overall well-being. Our job, then, becomes calling these institutions back to their divine vocation.

Who better than Quakers? Whar better time than now?

Pamela Haines
Philadelphia, Pa.

Sitting at Jesus' table

Merry Sanford, in the February issue, speaks for me with her article's title: "I am who I am." I am so deeply grateful for her authentic voice expressing all of her spiritual ways of being in the world. She also speaks for us, the Religious Society of Friends, in saying that there is room at the table for many perspectives on God and spirituality. It is only the diminishing of these perspectives that threatens our unity. I recognize that Jesus was communitarian, inviting all to sit at the table. Let us remember that we have been called into one family and to keep our minds and hearts open to the myriad expression of God's love among us.

Maurine Pyle
Libertyville, Ill.

On begging

I recently received the January FRIENDS JOURNAL and was grateful for the article by Mark Judkins Helpsmeet, "Beggars to God." I have lived in Asian cities—Nanking in 1949, Bangkok in the '50s, and visited Sri Lanka for Peace Brigades. Mark's article was very good, thoughtful, and faced the issues well.

Jan de Voogd
Sydney, Australia

Thanks for another perspective on war taxes

My compliments to all concerned for the finest work on war taxes I have yet seen in the pages of your journal ("What's the Quaker Testimony on War Taxes," by Peter Phillips, *FJ* Feb.). Sorry to say, many of the past compositions struck me as little more

than mild diatribes on how to outwit the supposedly craven, irresponsible stooges of the IRS. In the contacts I have had with IRS personnel, I have found them to be knowledgeable, intelligent, and most helpful.

Phillips' article takes us back to colonial Pennsylvania. I recall reading once about a small settlement situated on the extreme western frontier of the English colonial establishment. This was in the time just prior to the French and Indian War. The area was rife with bands of marauding French mercenary soldiers and Native Americans. Many in the settlement felt strongly that due military precautions should be taken—armaments acquired, patrols dispatched, and outposts established and maintained. The strong Quaker elements within the settlement effectively vetoed and overruled any and all such preparations. Before a year was out, every man, woman, and child in the place had been brutally massacred. The settlement was no more.

I cannot say or recall with certainty whether this story is fact or fiction. What does it matter? Either way, an important lesson is driven home eloquently and powerfully: military preparations sometimes must be made—tasks carried out. Fact or fancy, it is poignantly clear in either case that the Quaker moral compass was sadly in need of adjustment.

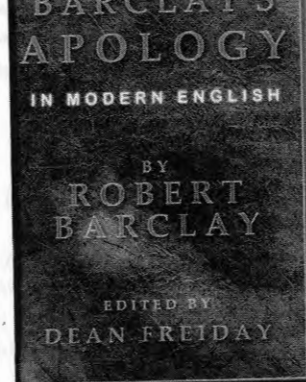
As Phillips tells us, when Quakers either cannot or will not perform the tasks, someone else will have to. There is yet another ramification: the task may not get done at all; and the consequences may be dreadful.

Dennis P. Roberts
Spokane, Wash.

Is war tax refusal self-righteous or rightly ordered?

We can be grateful to Friend Peter Phillips ("What Is the Quaker Testimony on 'War Taxes'?" *FJ* Feb.) for lifting up thoughtful queries that Quakers and pacifists in general should heed when contemplating a religious witness to refuse federal income taxes that support U.S. war-making. We are not talking about a minor portion of our taxes; about *half* of Congress' discretionary appropriations currently fund the vast military outlays of the government, not to mention the *additional* billions in "supplemental" funding for the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan. Looking dispassionately at this payout of our public treasure by Congress, we must conclude that we live in a

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warfare state. Hence the concept of war taxes comes forcefully to mind.

Admittedly, no line item in the federal treasury is labeled "taxes for war." Both the military as well as the nonmilitary portions are often concealed "in the mixture," as Friend Phillips helpfully details. We can also agree that any percentages extracted from the federal budget for one or another category will likely be debatable. Given these complications encountered on the way to fashioning a straightforward faith-based financial witness against U.S. war-making, just let us suppose a conscientious taxpayer, engaging in open civil disobedience,

- refuses to render 100 percent of her/his federal income tax to the Internal Revenue Service (say "no" to war).
- carefully calculates the tax liability and redistributes the entire sum to recipients engaged in building up civil society in peaceful ways, thus excluding any personal benefit. Includes list of recipients/amounts and a "letter of conscience" along with tax return—a transparent witness (say "yes" to peace).
- declares to IRS that he/she recognizes a moral responsibility to contribute to the general welfare by paying one's fair share of taxes—hence this "alternative service" for the tax (taking personal responsibility).
- clarifies to IRS that the full tax would gladly be paid, *provided* the government would assure the taxpayer that it would be spent exclusively for *nonmilitary* purposes, as defined by Congress, which is the legislative architecture of the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill, still pending in Congress (*support legal relief for this dilemma of conscience*).

Such a witness would surmount many of the objections and confusions voiced by Peter Phillips.

(In the interest of full disclosure, I need to state that I have experimented along this path consistently since 1958. Only in the last several years has IRS had any success in its collection efforts, seizing 15 percent of each monthly Social Security payment.)

Now, some may say that this approach to conscientious stewardship of our taxes is simplistic, unrealistic, or self-righteous (and I invite ongoing discernment)—but hear me out.

Many if not most Quakers ground their faith in the Peace Testimony, which categorically rejects all war with outward weapons, avowing the indwelling Light of God in every person. How then can U.S. Quakers and other religious pacifists rest easy when, in their name, the bulk of their

federal income tax is poured into the engines of war? It behooves us to affirm a new *Faith and Practice* Advice on how our taxes should be spent: "First, do no harm."

Despite the potential financial risks, as well as other negative—and indeed positive—consequences attending open war tax refusal, are we not called out by our faith to stand up to Caesar without fear, squarely facing the overwhelming militarism of the United States government, and proclaiming through our *practices* our utter rejection of war? War tax refusal is one faithful response, among many.

Yes, by all means let us follow, as Peter Phillips enjoins us, Emanuel Kant's categorical imperative: "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." Universal war tax refusal would likely usher in the abolition of war!

Should we not couple our conscientious objection to all war with a compelling holy obedience that serves to protect and honor the sacred lives of all human beings?

I humbly, faithfully, and tenderly rest my case.

Robin Harper
Wallingford, Pa.

We stand on their shoulders

Less than a week ago my new *Smithsonian* magazine arrived, and I turned to an article on the Freedom Riders being arrested in Jackson, Mississippi, in the 1960s. In it were mug shot pictures of the young felons and then their pictures today. And there they were: a young Russ and Mary Jorgensen, age 40, and then today at 91 and 92!

I was so pleased I had to call them to say how blessed we felt to have been even a small part of their lives. Mary told me that they most recently went to Livermore to protest and there they met Barbara Graves. Mary said that she was sure Russ was going to get arrested, but that she was tired and had tentatively decided not to this time. Barbara encouraged her; so hand in hand, they got arrested together.

They were thrown into a holding tank prior to being brought up before the judge. Imagine her surprise when she found the jail filled with Quakers, many of them lifelong Friends from different parts of their yearly meeting!

As we watched the terribly moving inauguration of Barack Obama, I was led to reflect that the interfaith history of protests during the Civil Rights era and continuing

protests against nuclear weapons, war, torture (the list goes on), were made by those saints on whose shoulders Obama stands. He never would have been elected had it not been for the Russ and Mary Jorgensens, Barbara Graveses, and countless others who paved the way by offering up their bodies to help clog the jails of injustice and oppression.

What a happy surprise to discover in that dungeon a horde of fellow rabble rousers who call themselves Quaker! Quite an enlightening history for the Obama girls to learn about in their new Quaker school.

(Russ and Mary Jorgensen, long time Quaker activists, are currently retired in Nevada City, Calif. Russ worked much of his life for AFSC and he and Mary were recruited to be the new field directors of the Tanzania unit of the AFSC-Voluntary International Service Assignments (VISA) program upon the sudden death of the field director, Orlow Kent. Barbara Graves was the international director of the VISA program. She immediately flew to Tanzania and became the acting field director while the Jorgensens were recruited and then trained for their task. Now she is also retired and lives in Mill Valley, Calif.)

Harold Confer
Washington, D.C.

William Penn lager beer?

I was recently in the Festival Foods Grocery Store No. 2714 in Marshfield, Wisconsin, and discovered a new product using the name of the Society of Friends. William Penn Colonial Style Lager is a beer produced for GJS Sales, Inc., brewed under contract by the Commonwealth Brewery of La Crosse, Wisconsin.

The aged-parchment styled cardboard six-pack has the name "William Penn" emblazoned across the front, and a portrait of the famous Friend above a banner that reads "Society of Friends." On each bottle is a short paragraph describing the beer, and explaining that it is "a true American Champion of purity and character, to be enjoyed honestly and responsibly amongst Friends." Underneath is a short motto that reads "An Individual's Conscience is the Ultimate Authority."

I spoke to the store manager, and explained to him that I, in fact, actually was a Friend, a member of the Religious Society of Friends, like William Penn, but that I was still alive and kicking today. I also explained that I was displeased to see the name of my church on a six-pack of beer sold in his store.

FRIENDS JOURNAL April 2009

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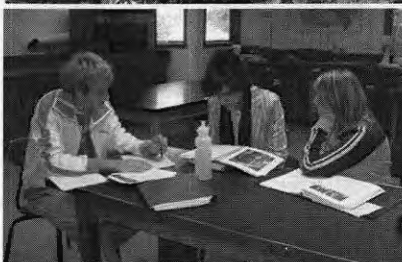
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He was quite surprised to discover that the Society still existed, and that it wasn't a social club or a drinking society, as the name "Friends" might imply. This is a common discovery among the general public, and one that the name of our Society doesn't help in this century of lower Scriptural knowledge.

To remind us all, the name "Friends" is derived from the Gospel of John:

John 15:14. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

John 15:15. *Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

When I explained to the Festival Foods store manager that I had a problem with the brewery using the name of my church to market its beer, I pointed out that the Religious Society of Friends has been on record for 200 years as a public opponent of alcohol consumption in the United States. I explained that the Religious Society of Friends began as a branch of Christianity, like the Roman Catholic Church, with a history that included hundreds of years of responsible social activism. Using the name "Religious Society of Friends" on a label implied that first, the beer was in some way associated with my church. Second, it also implied that my religion was some sort of social club, like the Elks or a Moose lodge, in which "Friends" enjoyed beer "honestly and responsibly."

What was especially troubling to me was the motto that read "An Individual's Conscience is the Ultimate Authority." As Conservative Friends, we believe in the Inward Light of Jesus Christ as our ultimate authority, and that it informs our consciences. As our guide, we identify the Inward Light to be Jesus Christ himself. I explained that to followers of my tradition, the use of "Society of Friends" and a distorted version of a fundamental point of our theology to market a product that the Society discourages was frankly beyond both common courtesy and religious respect. This point of view won't necessarily be shared by non-Christian branches of the Society of Friends, but the testimony against abuse of alcohol is more or less universal.

Our own Book of Discipline of Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends explains it this way: Advice 11: *In view of the evils arising from the use of tobacco and intoxicating drinks, we urge all to abstain from using them, from offering them to others, and from having any part in their production, manufacture, or sale. Do not let the claims of "good fellowship" or the fear of seeming peculiar*



Religious Society of Friends are in opposition, and to use the name of the church to market a product the church opposes is not only incorrect but is frankly offensive. The confusion of the ordinary noun "friend," meaning congenial companion, with "Friend," meaning a member of our church, is encouraged by the use of the capitalized term under Penn's portrait and in the blurb where drinking the lager is recommended "among Friends."

I eventually was able to contact GJS Sales, Inc., of La Crosse,

Wisconsin, the group actually in charge of producing William Penn Colonial Style Lager. I spoke to Jim Sorensen, who was quite courteous and explained that he hadn't known that the Society of Friends was actually a religious organization. Jim explained that his

understanding of the Society of Friends was that it was not so much a church as it was a social organization, one in which Sunday worship might accompany day-long community activities in which drinking might be included.

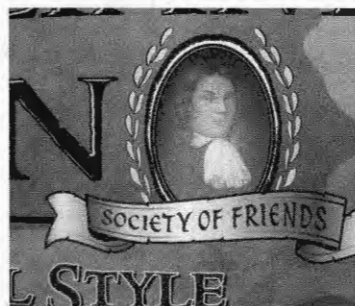
Jim explained that he in no way intended to offend anyone's religious beliefs, and that he would revisit the packaging and evaluate it after I was able to send him background information about the Religious Society of Friends and our corporate testimony against alcohol. I've recently done that, and am waiting to hear from him. Jim explained that currently there was sufficient packaging material for about a year of production.

If you would like to see the name of the Society of Friends removed from the six pack and bottle labels, it is never too early to express your opinion. Contact the organizations involved in marketing William Penn Colonial Style Lager at these addresses:

GJS Sales, Inc., <rjnbeveragegroup@yahoo.com> (This group is responsible for the beer, and contracts its production to various breweries.)

Festival Foods, <<http://www.festfoods.com/index.php/>> Marshfield, Wis. Store No. 2714. (There is a "Contact Us" page on their navbar.)

—Kevin Roberts
Belmont, Ohio



prevent you from standing by principles which you have conscientiously adopted.

And later, under "Temperance": *It is well known that the use of alcoholic drinks affects the mind and body harmfully and is a factor in a great number of crimes. We urge total abstinence from the use or handling of any intoxicants, not only on the ground that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, but also on the principle set forth by the Apostle, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Cor. 8:13).*

We wish to stress also that this applies not only to the use of alcoholic beverages but to narcotics, tobacco, or anything that is harmful to the individual.

It's important to note that William Penn himself was an occasional brewer, at a time when beer was commonly drunk instead of water. Beer in the 17th century was an acceptable substitute for the often-contaminated drinking water of the time, and was served either full strength or diluted. So the association with William Penn and beer is a true one. Of lesser truth value is the association of William Penn—a loyal Englishman—with notions of U.S. independence and liberty. The packaging also prominently features another motto that reads "Virtue, Liberty, & Independence," wrapped around the Liberty Bell that wasn't cast until 50 years after Penn's colony was founded.

But whether or not GJS Sales, Inc. is justified in associating Penn with its beer, it seems very clear that the association of the beer with the Religious Society of Friends is similar to associating the Roman Catholic Church with the marketing of birth control. Alcohol and the historic testimonies of the

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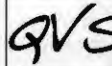
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May 3–7: **Mixed Blessings: The Legacy of William Penn**, with Paul Buckley

May 8–10: **Living in Intentional Community, Quaker Style**, with Peggy O'Neill, Don Miller, and Janet Forte

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Frankford Friends School: coed; Pre-K to grade 8; serving center city, Northeast, and most areas of Philadelphia. We provide children with an affordable yet challenging academic program in a small, nurturing environment. Frankford Friends School, 1500 Orthodox Street, Philadelphia, PA 19124. (215) 533-5368.

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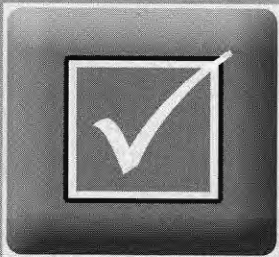
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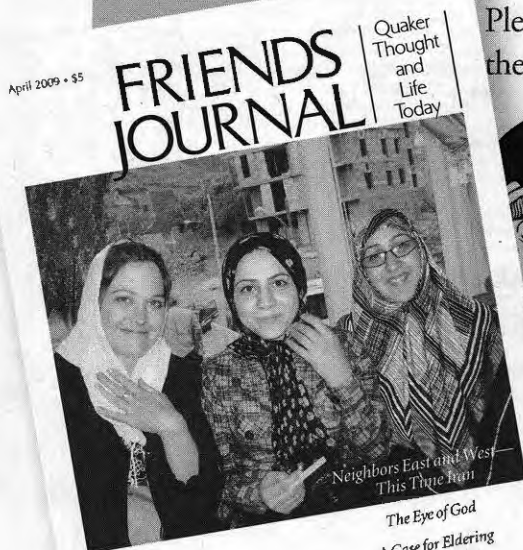
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