

FRIENDS IN SAN ANTONIO

7052 North Vandiver at Eisenhower

April 2011

FCNL's priorities for the 112th Congress:

Under the Perennial FCNL headings, it will be pressing in Washington for:

- I. In seeking a world free of war and the threat of war, promoting and supporting:
 - peaceful prevention and resolution of deadly conflict;
 - United Nations and multilateral problem solving;
 - respect for human rights, and international law;
 - nuclear disarmament;
 - bans on nuclear testing, cluster munitions, and landmines;
 - demilitarization of U.S. foreign policy and aid programs;
 - reductions in the overall military budget;
 - multilateral aid, civilian peacebuilding, and diplomacy;
 - U.S. moral and legal obligations for reconstruction in Iraq;
 - resolution of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and enforced isolation of Gaza.

- II. In seeking a society with equity and justice for all, promoting and supporting:
 - curbing the undue influence of money and corporate power;
 - immigration reform that respects the rights and dignity of all immigrants; compassion for families; practical pathways to legal residency and citizenship; recognizing contributions of foreign workers; effective application of wage, hour, and workplace safety laws for all workers;
 - civilian governmental agencies to manage U.S. borders;
 - the tribal sovereignty of indigenous peoples;
 - the well-being of all Native Americans.

- III. In seeking a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled, promoting and supporting:
 - common good through a living wage;
 - job creation (especially "green" jobs);
 - access to retraining and good public education;
 - affordable health care for all.

- IV. In seeking an earth restored, promoting and supporting:
 - countering global climate change;
 - assisting threatened human populations;

development of sustainable energy sources;
reductions in U.S. greenhouse gas emissions;
compliance with multilateral environmental agreements.

(Much abbreviated from Friends Committee on National Legislation's 2011 report.)



Friends Schools

"When tensions rise at a Quaker meeting, the room is immediately brought to silence." This was the first sentence in an item on the front page of the *New York Times*. The article dealt with a problem of Friends schools. By being of high quality they attract good pupils, often from wealthy parents. Sidwell School in Washington is the prime example – Sasha and Malia Obama go there, as do Joe Biden's grandchildren and as did Chelsea Clinton. Amy Carter went to public school.

Quaker critics of Friends Seminary in Manhattan say that it no longer represents Quaker values of simplicity, openness, and equality, having become a school for rich kids. The headmaster argues otherwise. The problem is old. Quakers exemplified people who aimed to do good and did well. Quaker merchants, with standards of quality, honesty, and small profit, did very well and their kids' kids ultimately became rich kids.

But Friends Seminary shares a building with the Meeting, which owns the school and is responsible for its governance and expenses. To avoid the latter, separation is being considered, whereby the school would become the tenant of the Meeting premises. Quarterly Meeting is trying to sort out an agreement, as with Brooklyn Friends School.

This is not the first time Friends Seminary has figured in the *Times*. In 1998, an article described teenagers (most were not Quakers) there, meeting silently in the Friends Meeting House in Rutherford Place, where, "When the silence falls, it's so powerful, it hits you like a truck."

Why, we wonder, has the school figured so prominently in the *Times*? Apart, that is, from the richness of the kids' parents?

Personal News

Ruth's honor. Jim and Meredith have returned from New Zealand (Aotearoa), spending time in Australia on the way..

Pam was voted Outstanding Senior in the Adrian College Music Department by the music department faculty. "She's keeping it very quiet at school, doesn't want to seem braggy, but doesn't mean we can't" – Denise. Bill and Denise went to Michigan for her senior clarinet recital.

Jocelyn brought four Bethel College friends to meeting in March. After meeting they spent the afternoon downtown, doing the "tourist thing." Then off to the coast for two days. Denise says, "Yes, they are staying with us, so a full house. I love it! They are all Mennonite, BTW, so share a lot of values with Quakers. In fact one of the guys is the son of two Mennonite pastors. They're great kids." Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas is the oldest Mennonite college in North America.

Colette has been working hard organizing a jumble sale. At the time of writing volunteers are helping her in the casa. There is a good collection of jumble, originally in a jumble, now sorted out and displayed and about to be priced. So, not jumble any more?

A small group of Friends got together at Buns and Barrels to congratulate Jen on completion of her Ph.D. in English. Her work analyzed a writing workshop that provided opportunities for survivors of Rwanda's 1994 genocide against the Tutsi to grieve and write about their traumatic experiences. The analysis of the accounts can be used for further trauma writing workshops, and for use of the method by mental health experts. Amy was there and the group also celebrated completion of her Ph.D. in philosophy.

Jeff Hipp was at meeting in March. His parents are moving from Austin to Boston, where he now has new work. Maria's family had bad bouts of flu in March, but they are now over it.

Business Meeting

Meeting for Business commenced with reading extracts from Britain YM F&P's advice for Meeting for Business:

"Give your whole attention to the matter before the meeting. If you want to speak, try to sum up whatever you have to say in as few words as possible. Speak simply and audibly A pause after each contribution will enable what has been said to find its right place in the mind of the meeting. . . . Speak to the meeting as a whole. . . Do not repeat views already expressed.

Listen as patiently as you can to all other points of view. . . Promote the spirit of friendship in the meeting so that Friends may speak their minds freely, confident that they will not be misinterpreted or misunderstood."

Meeting approved that the clerk assume the responsibilities of clerk of Religious Education until a new clerk is appointed. The Naming committee's nominations of Janet, Sharon, and David, to the Nominating Committee were approved, to take effect immediately.

Gary, for M&O, reported that the committee continues to be concerned about the difficulty of filling committee appointments, and that these should not be burdensome to Friends. The small-group format of forum tested recently had been favorably accepted.

The substitution in the State of the Meeting Report of "waiting worship" for "unprogramed worship" was approved. Julia has graciously invited Friends to hold midweek meeting at her home on the third Wednesday of each month. Any Friend wishing to arrange a midweek meeting in the meetinghouse is free to do so [check calendar.]

Due to a problem with her arm, Carol was unable to type a treasurer's report this month and will present it next month. The Casa has been tested for lead and asbestos and none was found. The Crop Walk raised \$1535 this year, including \$250 donated from P&SC budget. Donations of new socks and underwear for the Catholic Worker House are welcomed.

Meeting agreed to place the Guidance on the spirit and practice of the Meeting for Business, from Eden Grace, on the piano for new attenders to read.

Meeting closed with silence.

FCNL on Afghanistan

Untangling the US engagement in Afghanistan begins with an end to the US military occupation. This necessary step, however, is not sufficient. The United States also needs to remain engaged in the reconstruction of the country through the provision of development and humanitarian aid de-linked from military activities; through engagement with Afghanistan's neighbors to promote regional security; and through support of constitutional reform and the brokering of political reconciliation among all Afghan groups including the Taliban.

– Friends Committee on National Legislation, Jan/Feb 2011

I Shall Not Hate

"Izzeldin Abuelaish, known simply as the 'Gaza doctor', is a Palestinian physician with a degree from Harvard who was born and raised in a refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, 'who has devoted his life to medicine and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians' (*New York Times*). Dr. Abuelaish has been crossing lines in the sand that divide Israelis and Palestinians for most of his life — as a physician who treats patients on both sides of the line, as a humanitarian who sees the need for improved health and education for women as the way forward in the Middle East, and,

most recently as a father whose daughters were killed by Israeli bombs in Gaza.

His response to this tragedy made news and won him humanitarian awards around the world. Instead of seeking revenge or sinking into hatred, Abuelaish calls for the people in the region to start talking to each other. His deepest hope is that his daughters will be the last sacrifice on the road to peace between Palestinians and Israelis. His new book, *I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctor's Journey*, has received high reviews. He currently lives in Toronto, serving as associate professor of public Health at the University of Toronto.

"This story is a necessary lesson against hatred and revenge."

Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

The Satellite Sentinel Project

The actor George Clooney has started a cutting-edge human rights project, the Satellite Sentinel Project. It provides satellite photographs and field reports to help prevent a deadly civil war in Sudan. It has monitored the border between North and South Sudan to detect preparations for war. The satellite photographs give evidence of attacks and of bombed and razed villages.

UNOSAT (the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Program) analyzes the photographs. Reports are accessible to the public at www.satsentinel.org. The Harvard Humanitarian Initiative collected on-the-ground reports from aid groups, a Washington-based anti-genocide group provided field reports, and policy analysis, and a Hollywood human rights group, Not On Our Watch, publicized the findings. Clooney and this group provided the funds.

Actors Don Cheadle, Matt Damon, Brad Pitt, David Pressman and Jerry Weintraub are involved. The United States can monitor potential trouble spots. But Clooney and the others hoped that to bring extra pressure on governments to take action to prevent violence.

"We want to let potential perpetrators of genocide and other war crimes know that the world is watching," said Clooney.

Extracted from Andrew Meldrum, *GlobalPost*, 28 December

This cooperative enterprise will be available for other sensitive global areas. Clooney wants to be a celebrity statesman, saying that celebrity is more than about selling things. People fearing death for themselves and their families need to have audible voices and he is in a position to provide this.

Institute of Peace

Congress voted to close the US Institute of Peace in February. General Zinni, in the *NY Times*, says that it cost less than one hundredth of one percent of the Pentagon budget but it surely does more with less than any other agency. It has fielded officials in danger zones to avert violent conflict. South of Baghdad it mediated between Sunni sheiks and Shiite civil authorities, consolidating security, restoring services and the rule of law, improving the economy, and reducing violence. In Afghanistan, it mediates issues including refugees, and water and property rights. It has resolved 18 tribal disputes, most involving the abuse of women, and run 30 training programs for lawyers, mullahs, community leaders, government officials, and tribal councils.

It conducted eight conflict resolution workshops for Abyei in Sudan, a current hot spot after Southern Sudan's vote for independence. It is not surprising that much of its work is done in Iraq and Afghanistan, but the work should be expanded, not closed down.

Nonviolent Protest

We were, at the beginning of March, seeing the protestors in Tunisia and Egypt protesting against the old elite. This was foreseen by Gene Sharp, in *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, who

advises protestors to prepare beforehand to establish a new government. This should be done quickly but not just the old one with new personnel. A void could produce chaos and plans should be ready to avoid a coup. Members of the old regime may seize the opportunity to impose a new autocracy. Civilian officials, leaders and the population must resist with non-cooperation, using their newfound ability, using the same means which ousted the old dictatorship to starve a new one.

A new constitutional basis for a durable democracy is needed, in easily understood language, with a separation of powers, preferably federal, and with restrictions on police and military powers. "Familiarity with nonviolent struggle will provide ways to defend democracy, civil liberties, minority rights, and prerogatives of regional, state, and local governments and nongovernmental institutions." Political defiance may then be developed as a means of national defense.

According to Sasha Abramsky of *The Nation*, Libyan protestors had not prepared advance plans to take advantage of Ghadaffi's weaknesses. Events then developed too quickly for them to adapt.

Undoubtedly authoritarian leaders are now avid readers of his book.

Miscellany

Nonviolence has erupted onto the international stage with its deliberate adoption by Tunisians and Egyptians. The *NY Times* notes that a couple of young Egyptian men were so taken with it that during a confrontation in which rocks were thrown, they were heard to say that because of this, they had lost. The *Times* described pacifist sufi Islam as the Muslim version of Quakers.

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Do you know what a "quakie" is? It is a Quaking Aspen; its leaves are pale underneath and the tree seems to shimmer when they flutter in the breeze. It's native farther north – they grow in Friends Lake Cooperative Community, at Chelsea, near Ann Arbor Michigan.

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"From cereal to oatmeal to granola bars, the quality of Quaker is in everything we make." Guess where those words came from. Why aren't people beating a path to our doors? Could it be because our quality is not as great as it was when Quaker Oats chose "Quaker" as its label because of the quality associated with Quakers?

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". . . heard on a BBC Radio 5 live commentary of a football match in Scotland: The commentator, struggling for words to describe a centre forward who had been involved in an incident with an opposition player, came out with: 'He could . . . he could start a fight in a Quaker Meeting.'" *The Friend*

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"[In] my opinion, any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should 'have his head examined'..." Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

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An Englishman reported in 1998 that he had seen some strange object – a space craft? -- hovering above his garden. The next morning he found that he had gone through some unexplained time. Was he abducted into some space-time aberration overnight? No, said the official to whom he reported this, this was the night the clocks were turned back. From *NYT*.

Reviewing Claire Dederer's book on yoga, Janet Maslin says, "It's clear from the start that she will be transformed and find a sensible, spiritual, nonsappy, way to become a devotee. . ." Is our spirituality "nonsappy?"

## **Rough Crossings**

In February, Public Television presented a film, *Rough Crossings*, by Simon Schama about a forgotten episode in the history of African-Americans, the journey of over a thousand to found Freetown in Sierra Leone. He focused on Tom Peters' flight from America during the War of Independence, David George's similar flight to become a Baptist pastor, and the Sierra Leone Company's appointment of John Clarkson, Thomas Clarkson's younger brother, to go to Nova Scotia to organize ex-slaves there to make the journey to Sierra Leone. Over 1,000 came, in 15 ships, promised land and freedom. Storms and sickness took them. Clarkson seemed to die but miraculously recovered at the point of being buried at sea. When they arrived no preparations had been made for them, there was no land, and Clarkson found that he was now expected to stay there and govern. A group of British company men were idle and useless and even Clarkson's confreres succumbed to alcohol. Tom Peters threatened rebellion but died as Clarkson prepared to confront it. He managed to overcome problems and finally went home to England to marry his love and prepare to return. While there he was told he was dismissed and another took his position. The Company had expected docile workers who obeyed orders.

John Clarkson became a minor country businessman and Freetown languished. Schama summed up by saying that the venture was a failure but should be remembered for the heroic efforts of those who sought to bring it to fruition.

## **Guitar Evening**

*voice singing*  
*from the inside out*  
*rhythm of guitar*  
*ripple of notes*  
*flow and feel of song*  
*the walls blur*  
*the evening fades to mood*  
Mark

## **Two Cybergatherings**

These provide alternative, or perhaps complementary, Quaker commitments.

Here is a Quaker blogspot: [www.quakerquaker.org/](http://www.quakerquaker.org/) A community of Quakers exploring Primitive Christianity Revived: plain witness, ministry, beliefs. Quaker blogs, photos, videos & gatherings. There are responses from Australia, China, Norway, Sweden, and currently these pieces: The power of ordinary people; Finding a way as a modern Plain; Quaker Outreach to Christian Seekers; Non-violent Street Smarts; Post-Evangelical Friends?; Quakerism and Judaism; Angry public conversation and learning to bless; Responding to Violence against Those in Public Life; Heraldng peace. You can find in this blogspot, and correspond with, individual Friends of all persuasions, Conservative, Evangelical, Christian, liberal, plain, etc., in many countries

Then the Quaker Universalist Fellowship is a gathering of Friends who work to foster understanding among people from the diverse spiritual cultures which flourish in our globalized human community. The Fellowship draws inspiration for its work from such traditional and respected statements of Quaker faith as are represented by the following:

“Walk cheerfully over the earth answering to that of God in everyone.” – George Fox

“The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious, and devout souls are everywhere of one religion, and when death takes off the mask, they will know one another though the diverse liveries they wear here make them strangers.” – William Penn

The work of the Quaker Universalist Fellowship expresses Friends’ belief that there is a spirit of universal love in every person, and that a compassion-centered life is available to people of all faiths and backgrounds.

You can learn more about it at <http://quakeruniversalist.wordpress.com/>

## Catholic Worker House

Erin spoke with some people at the Catholic Worker House about the situation they are in regarding actions by the City of San Antonio to revoke their occupancy license, and also the trouble being stirred up by their neighbors who have been complaining about the presence of homeless people. The Workers are quite unconcerned by all these things as they go about their day-to-day business. Their biggest concern at the moment is that they have run out of donations of clean underwear and socks to give out. Donations of these items, as well as coffee (and creamers, sugar, etc.) are always especially welcome. Friends are also encouraged to stop by to volunteer. The House is open every day except Thursdays, and volunteers can help with the coffee ministry, or in the donation closet by sorting clothes. There is also a community garden and other activities that volunteers are needed to assist with.

## Persecution of Quakers in Colonial New England

Cotton Mather said that the Quakers were in the habit of alluding to the Bible as the Word of the Devil. Such charges, from passionate and uncritical enemies, are worthless except as they serve to explain the bitter prejudice with which the Quakers were regarded. They remind one of the silly accusation brought against Wyclif two centuries earlier, that he taught his disciples that God ought to obey the Devil; and they are not altogether unlike the assumptions of some modern theologians who take it for granted that any writer who accepts the Darwinian theory must be a materialist.

But worthless as Mather’s statements are, in describing the views of the Quakers, they are valuable as indicating the temper in which these disturbers of the Puritan theocracy were regarded. In accusing them of rejecting the Bible and making a law unto themselves, Mather simply put on record a general belief which he shared. Nor can it be doubted that the demeanor of the Quaker enthusiasts was sometimes such as to seem to warrant the belief that their anarchical doctrines entailed, as a natural consequence, disorderly and disreputable conduct.

In those days all manifestations of dissent were apt to be violent, and the persecution which they encountered was likely to call forth strange and unseemly vagaries. When we remember how the Quakers, in their scorn of earthly magistrates and princes, would hoot at the governor as he walked up the street; how they used to rush into church on Sundays and interrupt the sermon with untimely remarks; how Thomas Newhouse once came into the Old South Meeting-House with a glass bottle in each hand, and, holding them up before the astonished congregation, knocked them together and smashed them, with the remark, “Thus will the Lord break you all in pieces”; how Lydia Wardwell and Deborah Wilson ran about the streets in the primitive costume of Eve before the fall, and called their conduct “testifying before the Lord”; we can hardly wonder that people should have been reminded of the wretched scenes enacted at Munster by the Anabaptists of the preceding century.

Excerpted with permission from *The Beginnings of New England*, [1892] edited, Dainial MacÁdhaimh © 2005 .

## Right Sharing Year in Review

It's winter. It's a time for farmers and gardeners to review the past growing season and plan for the next. The seed catalogs have already arrived, and a few brave sprouts are showing in the pots on the windowsill. It's a good time to stop and take a look at the last year at Right Sharing as well, and to begin making plans for the next.

Mary Lee Comer's visit to Kenya last summer with women from the United Society of Friends Women International has opened the way for us to work more closely with that organization. Virtually all of our project partners in Kenya are local USFWI groups, so this move has exciting potential for all of us.

Are you on Facebook? Right Sharing is, and we invite you to become "facebook friends" with us. Right Sharing is also a cause you can support via Facebook. We also have a new website, a blog and an e-newsletter.

Electronic communications are a great opportunity for spreading the word about Right Sharing more widely, but personal connections among our supporters are still essential. Friends can give each other much needed support in living our testimony of simplicity, sharing our material abundance with others who have less, and in strengthening our own spiritual lives through these disciplines. I invite all our readers to find or found local support groups to help us answer God's call to the right sharing of world resources.

*Mary Eagleson, Clerk*

## April Calendar, 2011

Meeting for Worship is held on Sunday at 10 a.m., followed by refreshments and a Forum discussion at 11.30, usually lasting until about 12.45. Children are invited to join worship for the first fifteen minutes, after which they may go to join with the Young Friends program. Child care is available during Forum.

**3 Sunday ..... Potluck lunch at 11.30. Clerks' Meeting.**

**10 Sunday..... Forum –Spiritual Quaker Process: Queries and Small-Group Problem Solving.**

**17, Sunday..... Meeting for Business.**

**20, Wednesday. .... Midweek Meeting, Julia's house, 6.30**

**24, Sunday ..... No Forum – South Central Yearly Meeting.**

Each Thursday, at 4-5 pm, a silent peace vigil is held at the corners of S. Flores and Commerce, one block west of Main Plaza near City Hall.

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