

FRIENDS IN SAN ANTONIO

7052 North Vandiver at Eisenhower

December 2011

The Danger of Quaker Smugness

The Life of Faith requires that we have vision, that we be attentive, and obedient to revelation. It requires that we have a sense of the potential for God's work to take place in and through us – the capacity to apprehend the ideals which we can grow to embody and personify in our lives. It also requires an awareness that much of what we must do to live fully in faith has been revealed and is to be heeded – a commitment to being mindful of what Friends have long called Truth and right order in our lives. . .

In some places one sees Friends who with some justification have taken pride in their Quaker heritage, but who are now content merely to abide comfortably in their familiarity with other members of the meeting and their versions of the Quakerly way of doing things. One finds Friends basking in the reputation of Quakers as good people, and resting on their or their ancestors' laurels. . .

Our religious life becomes little more than a maintenance project where we strive to uphold lifeless forms of an ancient and honorable, but increasingly empty, tradition. . .

We must be cognizant of how much God has already shown us and our ancestors about what it means to be in harmony with divine purpose. These revelations are available to us in the Bible, in the journals of our Quaker forebears, in the devotional literature and in the rich and varied record of human history. . . It is the challenge to become a people with a vision. . . so that Truth might flourish in our lives for the benefit of all. It is the challenge to become the people God wishes us to be.

Thomas H. Jeavons, 1987, quoted in the Santa Cruz Meeting Newsletter.

It's Our Job

George Lakey, writing in *FJ* about benefits of conflict, speaks of conflict "heating things up," so that solutions inconceivable during peace and quiet, can be achieved. He speaks of Franklin Roosevelt, approached by Quakers saying "You need to do this . . . and that," saying, "I agree with nine out of ten of your points, but politically I can't do any of them now. But I do so wish you would go out and create a movement that would be so strong and turbulent and so forceful that I would have to deliver on these points."

Then he says that, meeting with a union in Canada, an aboriginal woman came and looked him in the eye and said, "George, why have your people abandoned your president?" We had elected Obama and then headed for the door, refusing to create movements that would "force" him to do what he wants to do. We went into dependency modes like six-year-olds who say, "Please, Daddy, do this and that for us," instead of being the young adults and the teenagers and full adults who can demand things through nonviolent struggle.

So, Thomas Jeavons and George Lakey exhort us. We think we have no Friends who rest on their Quaker ancestors' laurels, but, on the reputation of "Quakers as good people?" What do our lives say about Quakers? More to the point, what are we called to do, within the Meeting, and in the wider community and beyond?



Personal News

Ruth celebrated her 95th birthday in November, with much appreciation for her voluntary work in San Antonio and her work for this Meeting. She was the first San Antonio Peace Laureate two years ago.

Ken and Janet reached their diamond wedding anniversary without any diamonds. Jane, their daughter, complained about her dishwasher, but her husband couldn't fix it and bought a new one. So, the day before Thanksgiving, with 13 coming to dinner, there it was, with the old one, sitting on the dining room floor. We have not inquired further.

Marian's daughter, Susan, has been in hospital but is now released. Her health is not good but she is in good spirits and rises above all her health challenges. Colette's granddaughter, Dayana, came to meeting in her decorated wheelchair. She has more surgery to come but is very positive and still has a very sweet smile.

Karl had a new art show for the ArteReyes Gallery entitled the Postmodern Animal that encompassed several years of work. The work includes paintings, drawings, quilts, mixed media, sculpture, artist-proof prints and illustrated books. After the show he'll be posting the new work to his website at: www.karlfrey.com

Mollie has been suffering from a neurological problem which has made her feel dizzy and made it difficult even to get down stairs from her apartment and then to get up them again. So she has not been able to come to meeting. She may receive surgery but it's not certain yet. We'll keep in touch.

Business Meeting

Meeting for Business commenced with words of Patricia McBee, "Quaker Spiritual Discipline for Hard Times," *Friends Journal*, 2003:

"Our work in the world is strengthened when it is nourished in the Quaker community. The teachings of those who have gone before lift up a standard for us to strive toward. Courageous and faithful people in our own meetings become models and mentors. Our meetings for worship call us to retire and attend to discerning guidance for our lives. Our meetings for business are a laboratory for learning to put our own wills on the Cross and to keep low and be teachable."

Gary gave the annual report of the Ministry and Oversight Committee. While much of its work is confidential, it has held forums once each month, chosen queries to be read at meeting for worship. Committee members will be getting in touch with members individually to inquire if or how meeting satisfies their spiritual needs.

Janet presented the initial report of the Nominating Committee. Most positions are filled but filling the Religious Education Committee is a current problem. This led to prolonged discussion on whether Adult and Children's Education should be separated and what the content of children's Quaker education should be, with concern that there are very few children. This makes for difficulties in knowing how many, and who, will be at meeting on any given Sunday. The clerk stressed the importance for families of education in Quaker values and principles for their children.

Ken presented the Treasurer's report and a draft budget for 2012, asking for committee input on their portion of the budget. The 2012 budget is reduced on the assumption that donations are

likely to be lower. Website costs, Sinking Fund, and Quarterly Meeting lines from this year's budget are much less but Casa costs are likely to be more. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to hope, barring unexpected negative contingencies, that we shall complete 2012 with adequate funds. The final budget will be approved at the December meeting for business.

The main feature of the Treasurer's monthly report lay in the need for increased donations during November and December to meet expenses and cover the current deficit.

Following inquiries phoned in, the question was raised as to whether the limits on the rental uses of our space may be changed..

Meeting closed in silence.

Miscellany

So, Friends, needing to attract more men to Meeting, we must, in our ministry . . . "reference such topics as tools and gadgets, hunting and fishing and epic battles from history and modern times." This suggestion for churches is from Abe Levy's article in the Express-News, "Author: Megachurches have men figured out," quoting David Murrow's book *Why Men Hate Going to Church*. So, Friends, if you are so led, let's have more masculine, not emasculated, ministry. Something about swordfish in the Gulf or MacArthur's "I shall return," (or was it "we?") or hitting your thumb with a hammer, like that. Man stuff. And no more frilly curtains in the library. Books about football and stuff.

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J. Edgar Hoover was not a relative of Friend Herbert so far as we know. But in the film "J. Edgar" his mother is a Friend, Judi Dench.

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The protesters in Egypt followed Gene Sharp's model in bringing Mubarak down from his office. He had noted that if the dictator had the support of the army it would be very hard to displace him. The army did not support him, but it continues to hold a privileged place in Egypt, running factories which would be privately owned elsewhere. It now controls the outcome of the protests early this year. But Sharp also warned protesters that they would need to remain alert after the dictator had gone to prevent someone else taking his place. We shall continue to watch with interest and concern to see how the new protests fare.

Gene Sharp is one of Foreign Policy magazine's 100 top world intellectuals for his place in guiding the Arab Spring. Along with him is Srdja Popovic, who led the Serbian Center for Applied Nonviolent Action in the overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic. A documentary, *Bringing Down a Dictator*, is based on this.

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Charles Peguy, a French poet, wrote, "Tout commence en mystique et finit en politique", everything begins in mysticism and ends in politics. Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business? Yes, the mystical must become practical.

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You can see an opera about nonviolence in New York - "Satyagraha," by Philip Glass. But hone up your language skills. The words are in Sanskrit.

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A letter to the *NYT* in November had an amusing, or disturbing, depending on how you look at it, letter about New York. A man took a taxicab which then had to pass the UN building. As they got nearer, traffic began to build up, with the cab driver cursing and blaming some two-bit dictator for his problems with traffic. Nearer again, and he was in a jam, Finally, in frustration, he blurted out, "I hate world peace!"

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The American Friends Service Committee was formed in 1917 so that “young Quakers of draft age could contribute in a constructive way, consistent with their religious values....

At a training camp on the grounds of Haverford College approximately one hundred conscientious objectors learned to be medics, drivers, mechanics, and builders, and they received other training that might prove useful in a war zone.” *Quaker Action*, Summer 2011.

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**Snoring a Little Bit**

Still need a Christmas present? Here’s a British Quaker card game, taking 20-35 minutes:

You represent Little Snoring Quaker Meeting’s nominations committee. In fact, local membership has declined so much that you now represent the entire meeting. Unfortunately for you, Little Snoring still has over forty nominated positions, and it’s your job to find names to fill them. Can you persuade the committee to nominate someone else instead? Or will you be the first to explode from overwork, resign your membership and write an angry letter to *The Friend*?

The creators are Sally & Tom Nicholls.

But we can’t find it in a bookstore yet. We hope we’ll find out before December. Little Snoring is a fictitious rural meeting, in a humorous book, of very typical English Quaker folks.

But, interestingly, there is actually a village called Little Snoring in Norfolk, not far, of course, from Great Snoring.

## **The Meetinghouse**

The meetinghouse and grounds were abuzz with activities on November 12. About 20 people were there, clearing, cleaning, washing, repairing, and then eating pizza from Carol’s son, George’s, parlor. Thankyou, George, it made a good friendly end to the morning’s work. We mulched, trimmed the century plant’s 20-foot-high flower stalk, cleared and repaired the fence, weeded, trimmed dead vines from the pergola, washed the windows, spread new granite chips, cleared up the storeroom, and even did some dumpster-diving at the end for a lost pair of glasses. And James found the reason for the water around the A/C – a broken pipe concealed by insulation. That water has been there for years, every summer. We even had a volunteer from Celebration Circle, which meets there every week.\

## **Poverty and Health**

Five years ago, in an article we have read again, Anirudh Krishna wrote in *Foreign Policy* of his cross-national research into poverty. He polled 25,000 households in Uganda, India, Kenya, Peru, and N. Carolina. In it he discovered that the number of people dropping into poverty tended to exceed the number rising out of it. And the cause of this, reported by respondents, was mostly ill health, inaccessible medical facilities and high healthcare costs. Ill health and indebtedness, often caused by medical expenses sent tens of thousands into poverty, many previously affluent.

Economic growth in such countries does not automatically bring better or cheaper healthcare, as we must surely realize. But he cites Japan as a distinct exception. Soon after WWII Japanese officials realized this relationship. Universal healthcare was implemented in the 1950s. At 4% then, Japan’s poverty rate was among the lowest in the world. Each country has its own measure of poverty, of course, but Krishna must have used a common standard in comparing countries.

## **Gingerbread Pumpkin Scones**

Here is a Quaker (?) Recipe from Pendle Hill for 12 scones, claimed, presumably with typical Quaker exaggeration, to be delicious - and very tender!

Combine the following dry ingredients:

3 cups flour  
2 tablespoons sugar  
1 tablespoon baking powder  
1 tablespoon grated or ground ginger  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
½ teaspoon allspice  
½ teaspoon salt

Have ready:

½ cup (one stick) butter, softened  
1 cup pumpkin puree  
¾ cup yogurt  
2 eggs, lightly beaten  
1/3 cup molasses

Preheat the oven to 350°.

Cut the butter into the dry ingredients with a pastry cutter or two knives. Mix in the remaining ingredients, stirring only until thoroughly blended. With an ice cream scoop, drop scoopsfuls onto a greased baking sheet. Bake 20 minutes, until golden.

Hot off the press from the Quaker Kitchen.

## **The Irish Famine**

After Ireland became Christian in the 5th century, monks devoted themselves to the collection and study of the ancient Latin documents. After the Goths overran Europe, destroying most of these, Ireland was the only civilized Christian nation in Western Europe. Irish clerics traveled through Europe restoring the ancient manuscripts..

In 1066, William's Normans conquered England and in 1235, Ireland, installing feudal Norman lords. England ruled Ireland for the next seven centuries, reducing it to penury. In 1845 a Royal Commission reported that Irish laborers had as their only food the potato, drinking only water, having inadequate housing and bedding and owning little more than "their pig and a manure heap."

At that time of the Irish Famine Friends did what they could, raising two hundred pounds, operating soup kitchens, distributing rice. They traveled to the most remote places on the island where others wouldn't go, but in 1849 they left. They emphasized that Governmental resources were needed as private charity could no longer cope, and that the system of land ownership needed complete reformation. These Quaker efforts are still remembered in Ireland because of their genuineness, without strings attached.

The Choctaws of Oklahoma raised an amazing \$710 dollars for aid to Ireland. They had experienced starvation themselves not long before. (*The Potato Famine in Ireland, 1845-1849*, Hugh Doherty.)

## **The G7+**

Have you heard of the G7+? It is an independent forum of fragile and conflict-affected countries and regions that have united to form one collective voice on the global stage. It hopes to become engaged in global dialogue in which g7+ countries have been excluded, to change the way international actors engage with and in fragile and conflict-affected nations and encourage better international partnerships by influencing global policy.

It held its inaugural meeting in 2010 at the first International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, held in Dili, Timor-Leste, a nation of about 2m persons carved in 2002 out of Indonesia after 25 years of war. It was a Portuguese colony for 400 years.

Little progress has been made in deterring the consequences of fragility and conflict and of donor aid and assistance on the peoples of these countries, which have 54% higher malnutrition, 20% higher child mortality, and 18% lower primary education compared to other developing countries and regions. Other members appear to be Congo, the Solomon Islands, Burundi, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Nepal, Afghanistan and the Central African Republic.

The G7 is a coalition of the major industrial democracies. Hence the plus.

## **Bricklayer's Lament**

This renowned monologue (you may know it) was told, in his very fruity British voice, by Friend Gerard Hoffnung at the Oxford Union, in 1958. ([www.monologues.co.uk](http://www.monologues.co.uk)) It is a letter from a bricklayer in Golders Green to the firm for whom he works. He had been working on a building damaged by a hurricane:

Respected Sir,

When I got to the top of the building, I found that the hurricane had knocked some bricks off the top. See? So I rigged up a beam, with a pulley, at the top of the building and hoisted up a couple of barrels full of bricks.

(Pause) When I had fixed the building, there was a lot of bricks left over. . . I hoisted the barrel back up again and secured the line at the bottom and then went up and filled the barrel with the extra bricks. Then, I went to the bottom and cast off the line . . .

(Pause) Unfortunately . . . the barrel of bricks was heavier than I was . . . and before I knew what was happening, the barrel started down, jerking me off the ground. I decided to hang on! . . .

(Pause) Halfway up, I met the barrel coming down ... and received a severe blow. . . on the shoulder (giggle). I then continued to the top, banging me head against the beam . . . and getting my fingers jammed in the pulley!

(Pause) When the barrel hit the ground, it burst its bottom ... allowing all the bricks . . . to spill out. I was now heavier than the barrel . . . and so started down again at high speed!

(Pause) Halfway down ... I met the barrel coming up . . . and received severe injury to my shins!

(Pause) When I hit the ground ... I landed on the bricks, getting several painful cuts from the sharp edges! At this point I must have lost my presence of mind. . . because I let go of the line! . . .

(Pause) The barrel . . . the barrel then came down . . . giving me a very heavy blow . . . and putting me in hospital!

I respectfully request 'sick leave'.

To hear him, go to [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZUJLO6IMhI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZUJLO6IMhI)

Sarah Cuthbertson said, “. . .nobody could tell 'em like Hoffnung did, in those rich, fruity tones . . .”

He was born in Germany to a Jewish family but educated in English high schools after 1938. He joined Friends in 1955 and was active in their prisoner visiting scheme while having decidedly liberal opinions on nuclear disarmament, race relations, homosexuality, and the treatment of animals. He was a cartoonist, tuba player, broadcaster and public speaker, and he organized three uproarious “Hoffnung Music Festivals” in London, parodies of symphony concerts. In these Malcolm Arnold provided an overture scored for a vacuum cleaner, William Walton conducted a

one-note excerpt from his oratorio *Belshazzar's Feast*, and Franz Reizenstein wrote "The Piano Concerto to end all Piano Concertos". Hoffnung died young, at only 34, yet he is still remembered.  
Not your typical Quaker?

## **Thanksgiving Prayer**

oh God of mercy, heal those  
who are hurting and broken,  
who feel they have little  
to be thankful for.

For those of us  
who are less wounded,  
help us remember our blessings:

the sometimes contentious support  
of our friends, neighbors, and family;

a land of freedom  
struggling to get safely through  
the darkness that suffering can make;

a land of abundance –  
console those who feel left out;

the support of mother earth,  
who is stronger  
than our abuse of her;

your love and forgiveness;

and the many things,  
material and intangible, that we take for granted.

Help us feel your light, love,  
power, and peace;

guide us  
as we struggle  
on this rocky road  
Amen

Mark H

## **Love**

These quotations are taken from *God's BIG Instruction Book*, Juliet Mabey:

And now these three remain, faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.  
Paul, 1 Corinthians 13, 13.

Treat people in such a way and live amongst them in such a manner that if you die they will weep over you; alive they crave for your company.  
Islam: Nahjul Balgha, Saying 9

But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.  
Jesus: Matthew 5:44

We will think of the man who speaks ill of us with thoughts of love, and in our thoughts of love shall we dwell. And from that abode of love we will fill the whole world with far-reaching, wide-spreading, boundless love.  
Buddhism: Majjhima Nikaya

Know thou of a certainty that love is the secret of God's holy dispensation, the manifestation of the All-Merciful, the fountain of spiritual outpourings.  
Baha'ism: Abdul Baha

## **AFSC in 2010**

Last year AFSC worked in Zimbabwe with 1,200 of the most vulnerable households, offering them job-training, affordable start-up loans, and management skills. In Mozambique it handed over to a partner there a program it had started in similar paths to self-reliance and sound livelihoods. In Haiti,, after helping to provide medical help, cooking kits, shelter, and food, it provided training and equipment to protect people against robbery, rape, and other violence. It also trained people in the use of cholera prevention and set up tents as hubs for information and community meetings.

It continued to rotate the "Eyes Wide Open" display, illustrated the cost of war in various cities, developed a new display, "Windows and Mirrors," showing art of the realities of war in Afghanistan, helped prisoners in Maryland learn skills to express anger nonviolently, and organized a soccer day in Dayton for African refugees. It hosted a three-day regional conference for delegates from Burundi, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ghana, and Benin to study ways of avoiding election violence, and held a Healing and Rebuilding our Communities workshop in Burundi.

AFSC organized a high school garden in a decayed playground, began the Popular Achievement Program in Gaza to develop young people's leadership skills in improving their communities. Two maps showed it having had programs in 28 US states and 17 different countries.

It could do more, of course, with more funds. Its expenses in 2010 were \$32m, down from \$44m in 2009.

## **Quaker Humor**

Daniel Trotter was a weighty Friend who often observed that "There is nothing but trouble this side of the grave."

One day at a Friend's funeral, he stood to speak by the freshly dug mound just as a curious sailor poked his head into the cemetery to see what was afoot. Trotter gazed down into the hole and

said, following his habit, "There is nothing but trouble this side of the grave."

"Well, in that case," said the sailor, helpfully, "come on over here to this side, there's no trouble over here."

A long-time old Friend who was cautious regarding the Quaker testimony of truth-telling, was asked how his wife, who had been ill, was faring.

"I think I may say" he said, "that she is as much well as she sometimes is."

## Calendar, December, 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.

- 4. Sunday ..... Potluck lunch at 11.30. Book, DVD, etc., Exchange**
- 8. Thursday ..... Midweek Meeting, 6.30, meetingroom.**
- 11. Sunday ..... Forum –Spiritual Quaker Process: William Taber's pamphlet,  
Four Doors to Meeting for Worship.**
- 18, Sunday..... Meeting for Business.**
- 21, Wednesday ..... Midweek Meeting, 6.30, Julia's house.**
- 24, Saturday ..... Candlelight Meeting for Worship, 6.00 p.m., followed at 7.30 b  
Tamales and beans.**
- 25, Sunday ..... Forum – None. Christmas Day!**

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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