

FRIENDS IN SAN ANTONIO

7052 North Vandiver at Eisenhower

January 2012

Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities

Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC) is a specialised workshop for trauma, developed in 2003 by AVP facilitators in Rwanda and Burundi. This report of four basic HROC workshops on Mt. Elgon held in October and November 2011 was written by Eunice Okwemba, Erustas Chesondi and Peter Serete and compiled by Peter Serete.

What started as a conflict over land between the Soy and the Dorobo sub-clans of the Sabaot, spiraled out of control in 2006. We found that the Sabaot Land Defence Force (SLDF) began their insurgency in 2006 in response to alleged injustices committed during a land distribution scheme. [But, later] the armed militia would emerge from their caves in the forest and strike terror in the hearts of the men, women and children. They spared no one, not even women as old as their grandmothers. The militias were coming to them at night and demanding food, money, their husbands and even their sons. When the women didn't comply, their houses would be burned, their food stores destroyed and livestock stolen. The SLDF would not let them continue to work on their farms. Their husbands would be maimed and sometimes killed and burnt.

These are responses to the workshops by participants:

- *I experience rapid heartbeat especially in the nights when my dogs bark.*
- *Our husbands are now drinking excessively alcohol from our neighboring country, Uganda.*
- *Sometimes our children find trouble in resting and sleeping.*
- *We stay in fear because our father has never come back for the last two years.*
- *Three men and one woman have committed suicide in Kipsigon.*
- *The daughter of my sister, whose husband is in this training, was raped by the militia men to save the life of her husband but she has never told the husband. She is even afraid to go for HIV test. I could not have shared this in the training because the husband is around.*
- *Dealing with anger has been a great help to me because how to handle anger has been a big problem. I use to keep it in me, which I have learnt that it can turn to be like a volcanic eruption.*
- *When they took my father, they told us that we won't see him again. Many of the men and women that were taken have never been seen. We don't know if they are alive or dead.*
- *I never trust anyone after I lost my brother who was killed and burnt into a lump of ash. I had a lot of anger when I remember him, but now I am free after being taught about the importance of accepting the loss, being willing to grieve, mourn, and use my anger constructively.*
- *On the trust walk, my partner held me compassionately and that reminded me of my family*

that has been in the tree of mistrust and now I have decided to bear the fruits of trust; to win their trust back and helping each of them on building trust again in the journey of healing.

- *I have felt a difference in my heart when I share and attending this HROC workshop.*
- *My house was destroyed by the people whom I know and I never thought I would ever meet them again. I decided not to greet them and now that I have been given land and I had HROC training, I have no option to carry on with my grudge.*
- *I had decided not to continue doing any development at home because I lost many things during the Militia Operations. I don't know where to start. HROC has all what it takes to be my hope and courage. Many are still out there with the mind I had. We should try also reaching them through this training.*
- *Many organizations (NGOs) have come with different peace building programs with sitting allowance without the aspect of healing - this training was unique like a mirror that sees our inner image.*
- *If this is a healing training, members of the community out here are asking, "why is it that you have not invited all of them?". . . Friends Church Peace Team has come to the ground and we feel reached and listened to. This one training will not have reached all of our people who are traumatized. Friends Church Peace Team should continue with this program for healing to be realized.*
- *I had never thought I would ever share my pain. I feel stronger to forgive those who killed my husband - some died, some were arrested, and some are alive. I met them but I have never talked to them. It may not be easy for me to meet them all, but since I have shared, I forgive them.*
- *I was beaten by soldiers during the operation. My wife went away with one of the administration police who worked in this police post. I was left with children, and as you all know, I am HIV positive. I came to pass time in this training because of my frustrations. Little did I know my healing would be found here. After listening to everyone, I feel different.*
- *I never knew I also have trauma - the trauma had made me useless. This organization should train us and others again for us to heal.*
- *Our vote of thanks goes to the sponsors of this unique program that has healed me and taught me to talk about my pain in safe environment where confidentiality was observed and I was listened to by people who care and have more pain and trauma like me.*

Peace, Dave Zarembka

To contribute , send to AGLI, 1001 Park Avenue, St Louis, MO 63104 USA 314/647-1287
Webpage: www.aglifpt.org



Personal News

A surprising message from Leilah, who found the piece about Friend Gerard Hoffnung's humor in last month's newsletter : "Thank you, thank you for an early Christmas gift! My father had a cassette recording of "The Bricklayer's Lament" in the 1980's, which he lost. With no memory of the monologist or the actual title of the piece, we thought it gone forever. When I played it for our family last night via You Tube, delighted surprise was followed by unrestrained laughter. Thanks again!"

The economic downturn hits our members. John has been laid off from his work at the UT Health Science Center as a linear accelerator engineer and is renting two rooms in his house to

supplement his unemployment pay. At this time it's still uncertain how long this pay will continue. If you know of a reputable seeker after a room, please let John know. He is looking for non-smoking roommates; no pets; and he lives 2 miles from UT Health Science Center and St Marys University.

And . . . the Texas Rainwater Catchment Association has invited him to give a presentation to its annual conference in San Marcos in April! What a peculiar and paradoxical world.

We had a delightful and spiritual meeting on Christmas Eve, meeting for worship being followed by tamales, beans, desserts, and . . . much else! Most of us were there, with visitors and with Neil, Pam, Jocelyn, and Meredith, whom we welcomed warmly. Scott, Joe, and Hank were there. Charles, a visiting Friend from out of town on Christmas Day, was sorry he had not known of our candlelight meeting. William and Thomas O B (and Jen? And Jack?) decorated the meeting-room with candles but the weather prevented their doing the pathway.

Henry's daughter Catherine (Katherine? Kathryn?) came to Meeting with him. She is in grad studies in Medieval History at Columbia and hopes to become either a teacher or a museum curator. Marian told her that Carol's daughter is a curator in a Pittsburgh museum. And we saw Mollie again last month. She was much better. Val will be returning to her AVP in Central America in January. Little Bridget is such a friendly little girl, smiling broadly at everyone. Pam is going to South Africa for a month. We'll look forward to hearing about it. Then she will return to Ann Arbor; she has distributed applications for Music grad school widely and is optimistic.

James made a proposal to HEB asking for donation of 100 \$20 gift cards as "part of what I called the Family Holiday Meal Program. I received just a week before the holiday break 50 \$20 gift cards (worth \$1000). I gave them to 30 of the most needy families and gave the rest to the counselors at 5 other schools in Somerset ISD. The timing worked out very good for everyone."

We have New Year's greetings from Eric Myers and Rose Medellin, married in meeting 15 years ago, now in San Francisco with four children, Miriam (now in High School), Santiago, Ezra, and little Levi (throw Levi into the mix, they say, and it's a zoo!) Eric is a union attorney and Rose works at home and as a volunteer.

Business Meeting

We will bring information about the December Meeting for Business next month.

Miscellany

Such a sad phrase in the report of bombing at a Shiite mosque in Afghanistan – "five infants were . . . declared dead on arrival"

A Saudi prince has suggested that his country, Sunni, sandwiched between Israel, Jewish, and Iran, Shiite, might consider producing nuclear weapons. Old Protestant-Catholic rivalries have almost died out but religious hostilities still pervade the world.

One of the term papers Ken wrote as a grad student was based on his observations of Pakistan, Indonesia, and Kelantan, the NE state in Malaysia, controlled by an Islamic party. He concluded that the three governments were unclear about what they needed in an Islamic state. They had done almost nothing except taking some symbolic measures. It took another 20 years for Ayatollah Khomeini to show what he meant by an Islamic society, albeit Shiite. The question still persists.

Tom Friedman suggests, in the NYT, that the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists, Islamic parties in Egypt and at odds with each other, still have to do this.

We have received a letter inquiring as to our interest in a new marketing channel. It is for professionals involved with all aspects of funeral planning that are "interested in capturing the bereavement market." Free enterprise innovation at work.

Do you know what Mandaean are? They are an ethno-religious group who have lived in Iraq; there is now a group in San Antonio. They are gnostics. Among other things they believe in a supreme formless Entity, dualism: a cosmic Father and Mother, and 'mysteries', i.e. sacraments to aid and purify the soul. But those initiated into these are enjoined to great secrecy. They abjure any violence and have no sacralized center of worship. They have their own language, consider Noah to be their direct ancestor, trace their beliefs back to Adam and regard John the Baptist as one of their greatest teachers, while considering Moses and Abraham to be false prophets.

What courage those Egyptian women showed in demonstrating to protest soldiers beating, stripping and kicking previous female demonstrators in Tahrir Square.

Andrew Bacevich, in *Global Public Square Blog*, says, "With all remaining prudential, normative, and constitutional barriers to the use of force having now been set aside, war has become a normal condition, something that the great majority of Americans accept without complaint. War is US." (See Rabbi Lerner's observation Andrew Bacevich, *Global Public Square Blog*, below.)

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament, says that U.S. defense spending in 2010 was just under \$700 billion, about 43 percent of the world total. The US had an 81 percent rise in military spending since 2001, compared to 32.5 percent for the rest of the world. U.S. military spending is greater than that of the next 14 countries combined. You can find the institute at www.sipri.org.

The revised Meeting Directory will be given out in the New Year. If anyone wishes to be off it – or on it, please let us know. And we need to amend the Meeting Handbook soon, after committees have been able to take a good look at it.

We had a spirited and well-attended Forum in December, taking up Bill Taber's book, "Four Doors to Meeting for Worship."

We're pleased to see that North Central News, in its Dec. 29 issue, published an article by Jim Cason, of Friends Committee on National Legislation. It was titled "Cut the Pentagon's Budget, Make the America safer." The paper picked it up from OtherWords ([www. Other Words .org](http://www.OtherWords.org)).

Religion and Politics

We see that GOP "hopefuls" in Iowa are using religious imagery and language to appeal to conservative caucus-goers. Is this appropriate? How should church and state be separated? In Illinois there was a Quaker state representative. Would it be appropriate for her to make known her Quaker roots and membership? What of Quaker values and principles? Quakers do not believe that religion and daily life are separate and her daily life was in the legislature. FCNL works with Congress to advance Quaker values in legislation. What part, we wonder, did Lon Burnam's Friendship play in his election to the Texas House? We would expect him to personify Quaker ideals in politics even if, as he said at Quarterly Meeting, he has first to be elected in order to anything useful.

An ad advocates votes for Ron Paul because he is a Christian, that's the kind of guy he is. Would it be wrong to say this of a Quaker? Do we, consciously or unconsciously, draw a line between us and conservative Christians, that line making our values promotable in this way?

Peace

A Friend from elsewhere sends us these:

* I like to believe that people in the long run are going to do more to promote peace than our governments. Indeed, I think that people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of the way and let them have it.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

* Peace is not an absence of war, it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence,

confidence, justice.

Baruch Spinoza

* If man does find the solution for world peace it will be the most revolutionary reversal of his record we have ever known.

George C. Marshall

* I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.

Martin Luther King

And from FCNL this:

* "Though the Iraq war was launched and dragged on for far too long, its end has come sooner than it would have without an organized movement pressing for policy change."

FCNL's lead Foreign Policy lobbyist, Bridget Moix

. . . . And War

In a letter to the *NYTimes*, Sayre Sheldon warns of how war keeps morphing into different forms as new technologies emerge - unmanned drones, cyberwar, or biological weapons. But also because of differing conditions, rising seas and temperatures, loss of habitation, and diminishing resources [such as oil, water, or arable land.]

It Pays to be Wealthy

Unlike past centuries, Friends are rarely rich. And we have a concern for the poor, sick, and powerless everywhere. It is therefore of concern to us when the wealthy are able to increase their wealth and power at the expense of the poor. One of the recent examples of this seems extremely clear.

The Obama administration, wishing to spur economic development, grants immigration visas, under a 1990 law, to aliens who bring cash for "EB-5 program" investment in construction projects in areas of high unemployment. In Manhattan a 34-story high-rise is going up in a very wealthy area, 20% of the cost being met by such cash. To achieve this, officials have classified the area as one of high unemployment by the "selective use of census statistics." This means combining the wealthy area with another, nearby (in gerrymandering terms) of high unemployment. It seems clear, though unsaid in news reports, that officials bow to the wealthy.

LaFrontera

Austin Tan Cerca LaFrontera, the last remaining program of AFSC in the Texas office recently considered its year. The Women and Fair Trade sale was successful even though the Dignity and Justice Malquiladora from the frontier was unable to bring any new products due to problems. Jolom Mayaetik coop weavers from Chiapas presented a UT event and had an interview on KOOP radio's People United program. In addition there was a Translingual Poetry Concert, and a John Ross Award for Independent Journalism.

For the year ahead it is hoping to raise \$35,000 for its programs and is discussing how.

The next delegations to the frontier to meet with maquiladora women are in early January and March. Call Judith now for reservations (494-8377). The March delegation will travel only on the U.S. side of the Rio Grande Valley area to examine the impact of border militarization on immigration, the environment, the detention industry, and social impacts of these issues in the community.

Clearly the work of the Austin office of AFSC is continuing without AFSC support, depending heavily on volunteers.

Will Congress Disrupt Diplomacy with Iran?

“The United States has paid a serious price by not maintaining diplomatic contact with Iran for more than four decades. Iran's actions have been irksome, but the inability to even talk with Iranian officials has deepened misunderstanding.” FCNL

11.7.1941

“Pearl Harbor Day. Jim Turner, who managed the building of or meetinghouse, was there. He joined the navy soon after as an engineer, having lost his connection with Friends. Not his father's wish, I'm sure. He returned to Friends here in San Antonio. But, in England, I remember that day, so I could share some of Jim's reaction. It reminded me of my hometown, Plymouth, being heavily bombed. I wrote a poem a few years ago, with personal remembrances:

Old Streets

Some nights,
I find I'm wandering
through streets no more existent
since 1941,
streets now nameless,
but known by what they held.

The covered market, where
you could buy anything from socks to chickens.
The pet shop where they sold
goldfish, “from sixpence,”
to which I asked, “Up or down?”
My mother laughed.

The Odeon, where the mighty Wurlitzer
rose from the floor of the stage
at intermission.
The chemist's shop where
an effeminate young man served my grandmother.
“Such a shame,” she said,
“They never should have done it,
he was such a nice young man,”
when he committed suicide six months
after being drafted.

Sellick's pasty shop
where we ate pasties in the dark
booths downstairs.
The open air market at the other

end of Woolworth's,
where an arcade ran
between Yeo's and Spooner's
department stores,
towards the Guildhall,
great hall where, at ten, I played piano
in competitions,
and, earlier, played a rock
in a kindergarten play.

The Palladium, makeshift cinema,
where the tin roof thundered during torrents.
Charles Church, whose changes
rang our way to Norley,
humble chapel,
on Sundays.

Streets which disappeared
in 1941, with fire
and high explosives.
After school one day,
I rode through ruined, empty streets,
scarred by hot falling steel,
and lost my bearings.

But,
at nighttime,
they're still there."

Ken

FCNL's Concern

The United States incarcerates a higher share of its population than any nation in the world--while the U.S. comprises 5 percent of the world's population, we hold almost 25 percent of the world's reported prisoners. Maybe we don't have enough tools. Maybe we don't have enough imagination. Whatever the reason, we in the United States seem to be somewhat bewildered about finding and applying effective solutions to major societal problems. We have a one-size-fits-all solution: more force.

We must address this problem by focusing on rehabilitation instead of harsher punishments. The cost of our prison system is not only a moral and existential one but also a fiscal one. Keeping one person in a federal or state prison costs \$29,000 a year.

African American and Hispanic males are over-represented in the prison population; black men are twelve times more likely to be sent to prison for a drug offense than white men. For the people living on the southern border of the United States, their communities are looking more and more like a war zone rather than a border.

The hardest part is changing the basic assumption that force is the answer to making our society safer and more orderly. The good news is that many people agree that the system is broken and are looking for ways to fix it.

And FGC:

“I am amazed and inspired by what we create together each day... a more spiritually vital Religious Society of Friends:

Through Quaker Quest, we lift up the need to reach out to seekers and we share with meetings the tools to help articulate our faith clearly to each other and to the broader communities in which we live.

Traveling Ministries, Ministry on Racism, and Youth Ministries create a synergistic web of ministries that help deepen meetings and support the creation of multi-racial, inter-generational communities.

Quaker Press and Quaker Books provide a "ministry of the word" that greatly enriches our personal and corporate spiritual journeys.

The FGC Gathering creates a physical space each year to experience the blessed community and to grow in faith.”

Barry Crossno, General Secretary

Friends General Conference seems very far from us. It meets once a year in “The Gathering,” when Friends from all over the country come together for several days, in workshops and at talks in a very rewarding experience.

Rabbi Michael Lerner

He says, in his book, *Embracing Israel/Palestine* that “my claim that the path to peace requires a transformation of consciousness, and that Israel and Palestine not only could live together in peace but that there is no peace and justice for Israel without peace and justice for Palestine, so the best way to be pro-Israel is to be pro-Palestine, and the best way to be pro-Palestine is to also be pro-Israel” Challenged by interviewer Michael Krasny on the NPR affiliate KQED's Forum, to defend one part of this, “ I argued that the majority of both Israelis and Palestinians actually want peace but cannot believe that the other side wants it too. It is this depressive paranoid certainty that ‘the other’ wants to destroy us that has been a central part of what keeps Israelis and Palestinians from finding the path to their common interests, just as it is a similar paranoid and pathogenic fantasy that keeps the US population willing to finance an inflated military which keeps [it] in an [un]ending state of hyper-alertness and makes it a ready tool for imperial ambitions of the wealthy. I also presented my psychological assessment of both sides and my view that consciousness transformation, though difficult, is both possible and absolutely necessary, both in Israel /Palestine and in the U.S.”

(Our insertions there to make the sense we feel he means.) Rabbi Lerner edits the journal *Tikkun* (to heal, repair and transform the world) which you can receive by e-mail – go to www.tikkun.org.

Decisions, Decisions . . .

Chuck Fager thinks Quakers are funny. He asks, “How many Quakers does it take to change a light bulb? Why, the entire meeting, of course. One Friend can install it – but only after a committee has thoughtfully proposed this solution, and the Meeting has weightily considered whether it wouldn't be bearing a truer testimony to the Inner Light, not to mention Quaker simplicity, by installing a newer energy-saving alternative, or, else, by learning to get along without it.

And, in another case, in the midst of a tangled and difficult discussion, a Friends Meeting felt pulled toward a controversial decision, even though many obstacles could be foreseen. One member summed up their situation this way: “I think we just have to go forward and hope that way

will open ahead of us at least as fast as it closes behind us.”

In another similar comment, “Clerking a Quaker Meeting,’ one veteran Australian Friend remarked, “can be like taking ninety five kangaroos out for a walk all at the same time.”

From Chuck Fager, *Quakers Are Funny*, with apologies for additions.

Calendar, January, 2012

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.

- 1. Sunday Potluck lunch at 11.30.**
- 5. Thursday Midweek Meeting, 6.30, meetingroom.**
- 7. Sunday Forum – Considering the State of the Meeting Report to SCYM.**
- 14, Sunday..... Meeting for Business.**
- 21, Sunday Forum – Simple Burial: Funeral Consumers’ Alliance.**
- 29, Sunday Forum – Jilani Chaudri, the Effect of 9-11 on San Antonio Muslims.**

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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