



## *The Friendly News*

<p><b>San Antonio Quakers</b></p> <p><b>7052 N. Vandiver (at Eisenhower)</b>  <b>San Antonio, Texas 78209</b></p>	<p><b>Message Phone: 210.945.8456</b></p> <p><b>Website: <a href="http://www.sanantonioquakers.org">www.sanantonioquakers.org</a></b></p> <p><b>Facebook: @saquakers</b></p>
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We were saddened to learn of the passing of our Friend **James Mize** on June 26, 2024. His beautiful obituary is at <https://www.ashevilleareaalternative.com/obituary/James-Mize>. Information about his memorial service will be available soon.

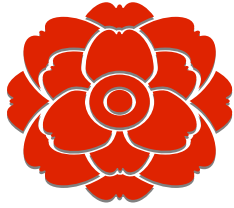
### July Forums

July 14 – A Visit with Cuban Quakers

In June, Val returned to Cuba (after nearly 25 years from her last visit) to continue work developing the Alternatives to Violence Project among Cuban Quakers.

July 28 – Where Are We as a Meeting?

Earlier in the year, the Meeting agreed that it would hold a series of forums around its human and financial resources. On July 28, Bill Wilkinson will lead an interactive forum to perform a situational analysis of where we are as a Meeting. The forum will consider the internal strengths and weaknesses of the Meeting as well as external factors that may be affecting the Meeting. Everyone is highly encouraged to attend.



**JULY** Do you gently and patiently accept the social consequences of speaking the truth?

We have built our Meeting House on Payaya People's land.

*Here are the direct links for our weekly activities.*

- **Sunday Meetings for Worship**  
10-11 am, in-person in Meetinghouse & Zoom.  
**Children's Program 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays**  
[CLICK HERE](#) to join by Zoom  
ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
- **Sunday Forums: 11:30-12:30**  
[CLICK HERE](#) to join by Zoom  
ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
- **Friday Meeting for Worship – Fridays 8-8:30 am**  
[CLICK HERE](#) to join by Zoom –  
ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
- **1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Potluck Lunch; Children's Program**
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday "Meeting for Weeding"**
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Children's Program Meeting for Worship with Attention To Business - Join by Zoom** – ID # 976 0522 6497; passcode: 194077
- **For ALL Zoom Meetings: by telephone at +1 346 248 7799, then enter ID#**

### Special Events

**JULY 7** Young Friends 10-11; Potluck  
**14** Forum: A Visit with Cuban Quakers 11:30  
**21** Young Friends 10-11; Meeting for Business 11:30  
**28** Forum: Where Are We as a Meeting? 11:30

**Weekly Tasks** - Friends are reminded that they can sign up to help with weekly tasks either on the board at Meeting each week or online at <https://sanantonioquakers.org/task-signup/> If you're new to a task, you may want to sign up with a Friend who has already done that task or speak to Denise.

**The Property Committee** has posted in the community room a list of property-related tasks that need to be done. Friends are encouraged to add tasks to the list as you spot things that need attention. Friends are also most welcome to volunteer to do any of these tasks! Please talk to any member of the property committee if you can help.

**Meeting Communications** - If you have any Meeting news that needs to be publicized (forums, other events, personal news you wish to share, etc.), please email [communications@saquakers.org](mailto:communications@saquakers.org).

**Silence for Healing** - Friends in several different areas of the US have committed to sitting in silence individually for about 10-15 minutes each day at 12:00 noon Central Time to hold Friends in need of healing in the Light. Anyone is welcome to participate on an individual basis (no group online or in-person meeting).

**American Friends Service Committee** calls all Friends Meetings to join a large and growing interfaith coalition which seeks to dismantle Israeli apartheid. They ask that institutions and corporations stop supporting Israeli's violations of Palestine rights. South Central Yearly Meeting and Live Oak Friends Meeting, among others, have signed on. [As of Feb, 2024]

### **Quakers Fast for Peace in Gaza and Israel** by Sharlee DiMenichi

Quakers for Peace in Palestine and Israel, a group of at least 17 Friends from the United States, Ireland, and Venezuela, fasted and participated in virtual worship sharing on April 8 to express solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, according to participant Claire Cohen. The event coincided with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, during which believers fast from dawn to sunset.

### **San Antonio's Rise in Homelessness Affects Our Meeting**

By Jim Spickard

In late May, the non-profit agency that runs San Antonio's annual homeless counts announced a 7% rise in San Antonio's homeless population. This certainly fits our experience at the Quaker Meetinghouse. We had more overnight 'visitors' this last spring than in previous years, and they have left more mess for us to clean up. Numbers have always waxed and waned, but this year's surge was larger than before.

You can find details about the situation and our response in our Business Meeting Minutes (<https://sanantonioquakers.org/minutes/>) and in the May Report of our Ad-Hoc Committee on Homelessness (<https://t.ly/kPvQV>). Our measures seem to be making the Meetinghouse less attractive to uninvited visitors while reducing the burden of clean-up, which has been largely carried by a few members.

It is, however, worth commenting on San Antonio's wider situation—particularly because at least some of the recent news reports (e.g. <https://tinyt.io/B2KD>) give a misleading picture of the issue.

First: numbers. All cities in the U.S. must count their unhoused populations each January, to be eligible for federal homeless assistance. This is supposed to measure progress in housing unhoused people. Different cities use different counting methods, some of which are better designed than others. (I have written about this in the final chapter of my 2017 book, Basic Research Design, which I have posted on the Meeting website: [https://t.ly/5\\_EYa](https://t.ly/5_EYa)).

Put simply, San Antonio's counting technique is sub-par. It counts sheltered people well, but it is almost guaranteed to miss a large portion of people living on the street. The reported 7% rise is almost entirely among the sheltered population. Claims of year-over-year progress are based on this bad data. Add in the fact that the increased number of police sweeps of downtown and underpass homeless encampments has driven more unhoused people into neighborhoods such as ours, and this spring's surge is no surprise.

Second, some background. San Antonio has an award-winning program to aid homeless people, centered at Haven for Hope on the city's near West Side. This site combines both indoor and outdoor shelter with a large number of services designed to help unhoused people leave the streets. I have written about that program and about San Antonio's changing attitudes toward its homeless population in a chapter in the 2021 book *Land of Stark Contrasts: Faith-Based Responses to Homelessness in the United States* (posted at [https://t.ly/7\\_wiN](https://t.ly/7_wiN)). Two paragraphs from the beginning summarize San Antonio's underlying problem:

Two decades ago, Anthony Marcus noted that “the social problems that drove men and women to beg for change or just pass idle days in public could have been understood [...] in a variety of [...] ways.” People could have noticed a lack of affordable housing, in which case providing housing would have been an obvious answer. People might have focused on an employment crisis, which would have recommended public works jobs. The situation could equally have been read as a crisis of public health, or of education, or indeed as a combination of all of these (which is surely the case).

However, none of this happened. Instead, the dominant discourse presented homelessness as a crisis of individuals. It focused on their addictions, their mental health, their disabilities, their work difficulties, their fractiousness, their lack of skills, or their personal bad luck. The result was a series of individual solutions: drug rehab, A.A., mental health programs, medical care, job skills training, résumé writing, or helping unhoused people fill out applications for public assistance. Though these all aided individuals, none addressed the systemic problems that increased homelessness in the first place. As Vincent Lyon-Callo pointed out in his case study of a homeless shelter in Northampton, Massachusetts, training individuals to write applications for jobs that do not exist can distract even shelter workers from identifying sources of housing that are readily available.

More recently (and positively), City, County, and private foundations have supported an activist-initiated project to provide housing to long-term homeless seniors with disabilities. Towne Twin Village is a ‘housing first’ program that provides housing and support services without demanding that people first solve their personal problems

(<https://tiny1.io/B2g1>). The village opened to its first residents about a year ago. Friends toured shortly after it opened and were impressed by its vision. Both Towne Twin and the Catholic Worker (its chief activist sponsor) are among the groups that FMSA supports financially.

We seek to be kind to the unhoused people who visit our Meetinghouse, but we cannot care for them and cannot allow “camping, loitering, toileting, bathing, fires, or any other activity that poses a safety risk or disrupts the peaceful use of Meeting property”. This and the other Meeting-approved policy statements can be found on the last page of the Ad-Hoc Committee’s report (at <https://t.ly/kPvQV>).

***Please send your photos and news to newsletter@saquakers.org***