

QUAKER NEWSLETTER

GAINESVILLE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

<http://www.afn.org/~quakers/>

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NEWSLETTER, TWELFTH MONTH, 2007

JEAN LARSON, CLERK

Editor: Catherine Puckett

Queries and Advice for the Twelfth Month: Peace Testimony and Non-Violence

Query: Do we work for peace in the world? *Do we nurture peace within ourselves?* Do we “live in the virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars”? *Do we seek consistently to carry out this testimony for peace in all our relationships, including family, community, and work life?* Do we as individuals and as members of Meeting seek to take part in the ministry of reconciliation between individuals, groups and nations? *Do we faithfully maintain our peace testimony?* Do we reject military training, preparation for war, and participation in war as inconsistent with the spirit of Christ’s teachings? *Do we as a Meeting take a stand and do all we can to remove the causes of war and violence?*

Advice: War is contrary to the life and teaching of Jesus. Seek through God’s power and grace to overcome in our hearts the emotions that lie at the root of conflict. Strive for non-violent approaches to conflicts in all aspects of our lives. Every human being is a beloved child of God, and has that Divine spark which claims our reverence. War is a denial of this truth. Friends’ peace testimony is the positive exercise of good will calling us to lend our influence to all that strengthens the growth of international friendships and understanding. Cultivate an active spirit of love and peace.

“The first step to peace is to stand still in the Light...”

— George Fox,

From To all that would know the way to the kingdom, pamphlet, 1653

MEETING NEWS AND NOTES

Reflections on First Day School: I had a delightful time last First Day with the younger children: Hannah, Lex, Christy, Chloe, Holly, Hoyt, and Bronwyn. The children were such a pleasure, expressing themselves in thoughtful and caring ways, working and playing cooperatively, engaging with a story or other things that interested them. They were quieter than most groups of children with whom I have spent time. I was impressed with their awareness of themselves and of each other.

I spend most of my days with groups of children in our public schools. My experience there is quite different. I recognized that "our" children are such a pleasure because their needs are met; they are treated with loving respect in their families and taught to treat others the same; they are valued, appreciated, and cared for with

affection and tenderness. They are a pleasure and a treasure. When I spend time with them, I have great hope for our world and our future. (*Jeannie B.*)

December 16 Earthcare Witness Committee (includes children)

Quakerism 101: Everyone is invited to participate in this Philadelphia Yearly Meeting course of study held every second Sunday (**Dec. 9, Jan. 13**) at 9:15 a.m. in the meetinghouse library. We are about to study “The Meeting for Worship.” Readings for this unit (likely to take at least two months) include: *Encounter with Silence*, by John Punshon, pp. 22-28, 58-65, 74-91; “The Gathered Meeting,” by Thomas Kelly; *Friends for 300 (or 350) Years*, by Howard Brinton, chapters 4 and 5. There are still a few copies of *Friends for 300 Years* available in the meeting’s library to be checked out. I have the first set of pages from *Encounter with Silence* available as a handout. “The Gathered Meeting” is a pamphlet that the meeting hands out. Participants are encouraged to purchase their own books if they can, because these will be readings with passages you may wish to mark in some way to better find for contemplation. The books can be purchased at quakerbooks.org. Participants are asked to have a notebook to function as a personal, spiritual journal in which to record your thoughts and questions. Questions for Reflection for this unit include: What is meaningful in Meeting for Worship? What do you “do,” or what happens to you spiritually? What personal experiences have been positive? What has been negative? (*Connie R*)

Quaker Study Program: There will be no study program in December. (*Connie R*)

Nonviolent Communications: Everyone is invited to the Nonviolent Communication (NVC) study and practice group, which will meet at the meetinghouse on **Dec. 12**. We use Marshall Rosenberg’s book, *Nonviolent Communication, a Language of Life*, which is available at Barnes and Noble, Amazon.com, and The Center for Nonviolent Communication, www.cnvc.org. Some familiarity with his book, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language for Life*, is recommended. For questions or more information, contact Jeannie (*Jeannie B*)

Meeting for Worship in Nature meets 9:30 a.m. **Dec. 16**. Follow the path around the south side of the retaining pond by the grassy parking area, and then south into the bower. Bring something upon which to sit.

Pendle Hill Programs:

Recording: Spiritual Discipline and Communal Gift led by Mario Cavallini January 11-13.

Building and Holding Space for Young Friends February 8-10.

Praying with Francis of Assisi and George Fox led by Marcelle Martin February 1-3.

Prayer: No Strings Attached led by Chris Ravndal February 22-24

John’s Gospel: A New Translation for Quakers and Other Contemplatives led by Chris Ravndal February 18-22

Befriending Paul led by Chris Ravndal February 25-29.

These programs are held at Wallingford, Penn. Weekends are \$275 or \$330. Week-long programs are \$540 or \$635. Matching scholarships are available. Southeastern Yearly Meeting has funds available. (800) 742-3150 ext. 3, registrar@pendlehill.org, www.pendlehill.org.

Reflection: Considering the controversy Friends General Conference is having with Friends United Meeting about homosexuality, I think it is interesting that our attitude is not new. (Our yearly meeting belongs to FGC.) From the pamphlet by Friends General Conference in 1963 is this quote: “The word “homosexuality” does not denote a course of conduct, but a state of affairs, the state of loving one’s own, not the opposite sex; it is a state of affairs in nature. One should no more deplore “homosexuality” than left-handedness.” (*Betty O*)

Movie Night: Michael Moore's "Sicko" was shown at the meetinghouse. Because of the holidays, there will be no family movie night in December – to resume in January. Here is a write-up on the inaugural Family Movie Night: We had a successful event despite the inclement weather. Our attendees were Dick B and Shanna J along with Ella and Nate; Catherine and Cecilia, Jim M, and Jean L ("Geen!!" as Laura wrote on the little sign-up sheet she made and dutifully filled out - she knows her own sister's name is spelled J-E-A-N - maybe she thinks it is only "Jean" if a "Louise" comes after?:)) We watched "The Jungle Book" which was enjoyed by all. Laura's sign-up sheet also said "We love all of you" at the top - which is surely true! Looking forward to the next time. (*John and Carrie W*)

Meeting News

Nancy A has earned National Board Teacher Certification. Congratulations, Nancy!

Louise S, 95, died peacefully at the home of Don and Janee S in Wendell, Mass., on Nov. 15. Louise was an active Quaker from the early 1940's when she joined Cheltenham Friends Meeting in Pennsylvania. In August of 1960 the meeting received a letter from that meeting "...commending the Stone family to our Meeting." Louise served on Ministry and Oversight Committee, and later "chaired" the new House Committee, formed when the original meetinghouse was acquired. This work included planning and working on conversions to make the residential building into a meetinghouse, complete with converting the garage, painting the interior and staining newly acquired benches. (There weren't enough chairs.) Under her clerkship, the committee located and purchased, at cost, 16 of the original metal and black plastic chairs we still use in our social room. When Laura W's membership was transferred here, Louise served on her "Welcoming Committee." In the early years of Southeastern Yearly Meeting, Louise was among those who worked to establish a Representative Meeting to provide "a better means of handling important matters when the Yearly Meeting is not in session." In 1964 she became clerk of First Day School. She was actively involved with a few other Quakers and Unitarians in forming a "Simple Burial Society" for Alachua County modeled on others around the country. She participated on several wedding committees. In November 1973 Louise and Willard laid down their membership and joined the Unitarian Universalist Church. We enjoyed knowing Louise and were always glad to see her when Don and Janee came to visit and would bring her to worship with us. (*Connie R*)

From Friend Scott L: Dear Friends: I am currently one of two Chaplains working at the North Florida Regional Medical Center (NFRMC). As such, I provide pastoral care to patients and their loved ones who are in the hospital and are dealing with issues related to illness, grief, and death. Illness and hospitalization can often be difficult experiences, and the presence of a chaplain can help you draw on your own faith traditions and teachings for comfort and guidance as you walk through dark valleys. If you, or a loved one, are admitted to NFRMC, I encourage you to inform your nurse that you would like to see a Chaplain (you also can ask specifically for me, if you so choose). We make our visits largely based on referrals, so it is important to make this request known if you would like spiritual support while in the hospital. Also, you can contact me at NFRMC by calling 352.333.4009. (*Scott*)

And long-time member Wendy S writes from Avon, Minn.: I have no Friends Meeting for 90 miles and feel a close affinity to the Meeting of my childhood (Gainesville Meeting) where people such as Jim & Laura W, Jean C, Betty O, and Morrie T made me feel welcome and encouraged me to be active religiously and politically. I have recently taught an Intro Freshman Symposium on Issues of War and Peace. I have also just finished a nine-painting series on Afghanistan and do what I can to act on my Religious Society of Friends inspired conscience. (Blog site: walkestinthelight.blogspot.com). The newsletter and my connection to Gainesville Friends Meeting help me lead a more mindful life. (*Wendy S*)

Hold in the Light: Phil K, Tak H, Gene B, George N, and Gregory R.

Strengthening Body and Soul:

As we approach "cold and flu" Fall and Winter we need to focus on having balanced meals. Hospitality Committee reviewed the after Worship Coffee & Surprises as it is now. It seems that it has evolved into a more substantial "mini meal" and has tended to have food value that is more carbs than protein, more sugar and salt, and less protein.

We note that Meeting House is used on First Days for programs, committee meetings, and we are aware that members need to stay for longer spans of time,. We wonder if the incentive to stay and attend more functions may increase if the hunger factor increases. With these observations in mind, the committee wishes to propose:

That members bringing food could increase the portion size to include more servings.

To color-code by stickers to food offerings to denote what food values it includes (generally not specifically). The committee would provide stickers such as "protein-enriched, low-sugar, sugar-free, wheat-free, low-salt, and vegetarian" so partakers can feel comfortable about their choices.[Look for these label stickers fastened to the refrigerator].

To avoid overloading the limited refrigerator and cabinet storage, the committee asks that when food is brought the provider adheres to this adage: "If you bring it, arrange for the leftovers to go home or be given to someone to take and the containers go with it."

The committee members, wanting to encourage by example, have assigned ourselves to provide each First Day "mini-meal" with a vegetarian or meat-based soup, an increased-protein casserole, bread, and salad to kick off this balanced-meal idea. We hope others will feel free to follow the lead and join in.

And yes, your conclusion is correct. This means more substantial food each First Day but our Third (week of the month) First-Day Potluck remains the same! (*Sybil Ann B and Hospitality Committee*)

What the Light Teaches

*"I break open stars and find nothing and again
nothing, and then a
word in a foreign tongue." --Elisabeth Borchers*

I
Countless times this river has been bruised by our
bodies;
liquid fossils of light.

We shed our ghost skins in the current;
then climb the bank, heavy and human.

The river is a loose tongue,
a folk song. At night we go down to listen.
Stars like sparks from a bonfire.
We take off what we are,
and step into the moon.

- Anne Michaels

Half-Yearly Meeting: George N, Catherine P, Cecilia H, and Nicole D attended half-yearly meeting from the Gainesville Friends Meeting. For Catherine, Cecilia, and Nicole, it was our first Half-Yearly Meeting, but I believe we all plan to make this a yearly tradition. It was a time of respite, companionship, reflection, joy, and thanks. The meeting is held at Wekiwa Springs State Park, which offers an abundance of trails to hike (or gallivant and frolic, as the youth called it when they went on the trails), rivers to canoe (or to get dumped into) and swim, animals to see (turkey, deer, sandhill cranes), wildflowers to appreciate (blazing stars), and always the hope of seeing a black bear in the distance. Some of the activities included a Thankfulness tree, which was hung with cut-out leaves on which we had written what we were thankful for; yoga in the morning; canoeing and swimming; and, as always, eating meals together. This year, the meeting participants planned, prepared, cooked, and cleaned up before and after all meals. These times in the kitchen (yes, even doing dishes for so many) became a time of bonding, of getting to know each other while scraping glued icing off of plates (George's scrumptious cupcakes) or deboning turkeys. One night we heard a talk with slides on looking out from our planet Earth to the universe beyond. Such incomparable beauty! Another night we had a talent show, where we heard stories, songs, and did a rave dance (Nicole D. led intrepid Friends in a rave-dance game). The youth, as always, came together like magnets, the long-time attenders of half-yearly meeting showing the newer ones the ropes and lakes and trails. Most nights, many of us gathered around a campfire for songs and quiet talk. (Catherine Puckett)



**If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, "thank you," that would suffice.
-- Meister Eckhart**

In the Woods: Around the Meetinghouse

In early to mid November we had our first frost, and it is cooler now, though the weather has been quite mild. Hurricane season is coming to an end with no major events in Florida, and none of the extra rain that could help us in this time of low water tables. The lawn by the First Day School room looked so parched this month that I watered it; it has been months since I watered any part of the lawn. Karen A has weeded an area around our peace pole and dug in some chicken manure to improve the soil. She plans to let it lie fallow before adding fresh planting to this area.

For Earthcare Witness this month, I led a brief walk to show off some of the wildflowers blooming near the meetinghouse. First we admired the firebush (*Hamelia patens*) and the golden dewdrop planted by Traci. Then we looked at a variety of wildflowers planted across the walkway including meadow beauty (*Rhexia mariana*), the flower chosen for the name of the local native plant society, which has four fragile purple-petaled blooms. Across the drive, we looked at the frog fruit (*Phyla nodiflora*), which I started with some plants bought at a local nursery, and have been supplementing with cuttings I rooted. The collection is developing into a nice groundcover and has the bonus that it is a host plant for the common buckeye and phaon crescent butterflies. My first attempt was prompted by Gary A pulling some stems to clear the curb below the front door to the meetinghouse, which I stuck in the watering can and was delighted to find had grown roots.

Next we wandered through the front retention pond, admiring some blue curls (*Trichostema dichotomum*) that are probably a bonus from the wild ageratum or mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) from Claudia L, which I planted there. Both are still blooming with lovely blue and bluish purple flowers. Surprisingly, the cardinal flowers (*Lobelia cardinalis*) are (two of the five plants) still blooming. We concluded a visit in the retention

pond with a look at the patch of iris that we look forward to blooming in the spring and with a brief look at the ferns planted at the back of the retention pond.

Then we walked through the front parking area to see the newly planted coralbean (*Erythrina herbacea*) and the *Ageratina juncanda* (Wunderlin calls it hammock snakeroot) growing next to it. We also visited the passion vine (*Passiflora incarnata*) and observed a caterpillar for the Gulf fritillary butterfly munching away. Now most of the *Ageratina* flowers have gone to seed and the passion vine has lost its leaves for the winter.

Gary A helped me plant some additions to the corner in the children's yard where Bill had removed some non-native hairy indigo (we have a native indigo growing on the slope behind the worship room). We planted Atlantic St. Johns wort (*Hypericum reductum*) and some muhly grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris* species). We also planted some bitterweed or bitter sneezeweed (*Helenium amarum*) near the yellow anise by the front parking area. I put in a dwarf pawpaw (*Asimina pygmaea*) from Bart H near the back retention basin where it will receive the moisture it needs. It has lost its leaves, and we will have to wait for spring to see if it is succeeding in its new home.

Watering the newly planted individuals, I have been enjoying the garden on a daily basis. Looking prettier than ever along the fence in the children's yard is the spotted beebalm (*Monarda punctata*), some of whose leaves have rosy tints on white now whereas they were only white before. With the cooler and drier weather, the grass has slowed its growth, leaves have fallen from many laurel oaks, the leaflets on the bald cypress are browning in preparation for dropping, the hophornbeam tree by the entrance to the woods at the end of the drive is sporting golden leaves, and the hollies have lovely red berries. Florida fall has subtle beauty now on view. (Jean L)

DECEMBER 2007 GFM CALENDAR

All 1 st -Days	11 a.m.	Meeting for Worship, Gainesville Friends Meetinghouse, 702 NW 38 th St, Gainesville, Fla.
All 1 st -Days	11:15 a.m.	First-Day School
Dec. 8	5-8 p.m.	Christmas Party
Dec. 8	10-11:30 a.m.	Solutions to Violence: Compassionate Communication for Peace II (LoraKim J) – at Westminster Presbyterian
Dec. 9	9:15 a.m.	Quakerism 101
Dec. 9	12:45 p.m.	Meeting for Worship for Business
Dec. 10	5 p.m.	School Committee
Dec. 10	7 p.m.	Yoga with Gary
Dec. 12	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Nonviolent Communication Group (<i>see newsletter</i>)
Dec. 16	9:30 a.m.	Meeting for Worship in Nature
Dec. 16	12:30 p.m.	Meeting Potluck – please bring a dish to share
Dec. 16	After potluck	Quaker EarthCare Witness Committee meeting
Dec. 17	7 p.m.	Yoga with Gary
Dec. 21	8 p.m.	Winter Solstice Concert -- Vets for Peace at UU Fellowship
Dec. 23	9:30 a.m.	Peace and Social Concerns Committee
Dec. 23	12:45 p.m.	Bible Study
Dec. 30		Fifth Sunday
Jan. 6	9:30 a.m.	Library and Meetinghouse Committees
Jan. 8	11:45 a.m.	Friendly Lunch at Books, Inc.

Unless noted, meetings are at the GF Meetinghouse.

Let Evening Come by Jane Kenyon

Let the light of late afternoon
shine through chinks in the barn, moving
up the bales as the sun moves down.

Let the cricket take up chafing
as a woman takes up her needles
and her yarn. Let evening come.

Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned
in long grass. Let the stars appear
and the moon disclose her silver horn.

Let the fox go back to its sandy den.
Let the wind die down. Let the shed
go black inside. Let evening come.

To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop
in the oats, to air in the lung
let evening come

Let it come, as it will, and don't
be afraid. God does not leave us
comfortless, so let evening come.