

Worcester Friends Meeting

Religious Society of Friends (Quaker)

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April - May 2013

QUERIES

Do I make my work, whatever it may be, an avenue for doing good?

Do I have more trust in money or in God?

Do I prize my time as a gift from God?

Am I living by values that will help create a better, more sustainable future for the world?

Selected from www.OreadFriends.org (Oread Friends Meeting, Lawrence, KS)

Musings from Members

by Clarence Burley

Seeking the Mystic Heart

At six thirty in the evening, the meditation room at the Boundless Way Zen Temple was filled with chairs instead of the customary cushions. They were expecting visitors who were unused to the customary posture for Buddhist meditation. I had been advised to arrive early in order to find a parking place for my car. I was happy to find a parking place for my old bones also, as the room rapidly filled with guests for a gathering described as *Seeking the Mystic Heart: Buddhist/Christian Dialogue and Practice*.

Our Friend Mike True arrived; there were several acquaintances from St. Luke's Episcopal Church and not a few men and women with clerical collars. Some extra chairs were brought in to seat the nearly fifty guests as Warren Hicks, the rector of St. Luke's, and the Zen teachers, David Rynick and Melissa Blacker, settled into the facing chairs. These hosts welcomed us and, after a period of silence, each shared a bit of their spiritual journeys and how they had come to find and value meditation.

We were then asked to spend a period of silence recalling some past moment that was especially significant in each one's spiritual life. When the Zen gong sounded, David invited us to buddy up with someone we were meeting for the first time. One member was to report

briefly his recollection to the other and, at the gong, to reverse the roles of reporter and listener. The listeners were carefully instructed to just listen, to form no judgments nor to consider any response, to be as remote as possible while still listening.

This attender spoke for the first time to another person of his experience as a ten year old kid coming home from the movies after watching *The March of Time* program *Inside Nazi Germany*. This boy had suddenly understood that there was a spirit in him: that this spirit of whoever he was might have been born in Germany and enrolled in the rigors and indoctrinations of the Hitler Youth. He knew suddenly how fortunate he was to have been born in the United States where he could enjoy the freedoms of his middle class American youth. This understanding that there was a spiritual component of his human nature stayed with the boy and formed the ground of whatever spiritual growth he has since had.

Judging by the dialogue period that followed, this mutual sharing affected many of the practicers as deeply as it did this attender. The discussion would have gone on all night had not the hosts called it off after a period of silence at nine o'clock as promised. Hearty thanks to Boundless Way and St. Luke's for this interfaith forum.

Dismas House

Our Meeting has been involved with the Dismas House for many years. Some Worcester Friends share supper with the residents on Richards Street once a month. If you would like to participate in this ministry, contact Paul Gallagher.

Several years ago, Dismas House opened the Dismas Family Farm, a holistic, rehabilitative and vocational reentry model, on a working farm in Oakham, which serves former prisoners and their families. Fresh eggs and pork are available for purchase at the farm.

During the past winter at the Dismas Family Farm, residents explored their artistic sides. In the past, the wood shop produced excellent items such as the Adirondack chairs, birdhouses, bat-houses, and Christmas ornaments. This year residents branched out with artistic projects of their own design. One such man in the community creates framed three-dimensional pictures. Another constructs hanging plant holders made of wooden polyominoes as well as an art deco style clock.

<http://dismashouse.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/art-3-600x800.jpg>



A man in the Dismas community creates framed three-dimensional pictures.

Exploring the Unwritten Rules of Meeting for Worship

This was the topic of a weekend workshop at Woolman Hill, led by Debbie Humphries (Hartford Monthly Meeting) and Kathleen Wooten (Lawrence Monthly Meeting) on February 15th -17th . Worcester Friend Mary Chenaille was one of the 21 workshop attendees who took advantage of this intriguing and challenging workshop, the topic of which we in unprogrammed meetings often revisit.

Mary reports, “The first thing we found out is that there are no rules.” Friends have traditions in their mystical meetings for worship. For example, in most Meetings, worshippers sit in a circle rather than in straight rows. In one of the experiential exercises, chairs were arranged in a circle and then in rows. Friends talked about the differences in the way the physical space effected their worship and feelings of inclusion.

Participants met in small groups to reflect and share about where messages come from and what leads a person to speak in meeting. They described the feelings they experienced prior to speaking. Mary described her experience worshipping with this group as “mystical and moving, with deep offerings”.

The workshop leaders challenged participants to formulate a message in ten words or less. Although a difficult task, the resulting messages were thoughtful, carefully and concisely delivered, with a visionary flavor.

Quaker charades, laughingly enjoyed by the group, were not a high point for Mary. The popular old parlor game focused on Quaker sayings, personalities, books, etc. One of the more difficult charades was Mary Pennington.

Debbie and Kathleen’s hopes for this workshop were to encourage, strengthen and deepen spiritual practices. Mary Chenaille found the workshop was beneficial for her, and she loved spending the weekend with Friends. “The food was good, and the company was made up of new friends and familiar faces from previous Woolman Hill retreats.” Mary says that she finds Woolman Hill retreats a great way to deepen friendships – especially through small group exercises. “It’s a wonderful way to expand my deeper knowledge of New England Friends.”

Upcoming Retreats At Woolman Hill

Journey Toward An Undivided Life

May 2-5 and October 24-27 with Valerie Brown

Her work and writing point toward powerful transformation through mindful awareness, and her passion is for creating greater trust among people. She is a certified Kundalini yoga teacher and was ordained by Thich Nhat Hanh. She is a member of Solebury Monthly Meeting (Quakers).

Based on the work of Parker J. Palmer, the Circle of Trust® Two-Part Retreat Series explores issues of transition, vocation, life passion, purpose, meaning, and direction, and underlying life patterns, to live in alignment with one's deepest values.



Cracked Open Series: Experiments In Holy Conversation: Connecting With The Spirit Through Prayer, Listening And Expectant Worship

Betsy Blake and Sadie Forsythe May 31-June 2, 2013

More information is available at <http://woolmanhill.org/upcomingprograms/>

Midyear Gathering

The theme of the mid-year NEYM was *Let the Living Waters Flow: Friends Serving God's Purposes*. Karen Sargent and Mary Chanaille attended this gathering held on March 23rd at the Portland Friends Meeting-house. Mary and Karen enjoyed Friday night hospitality of a Portland Friend.

The gathering was part of a global intervisitation program organized around this theme by the Friends World Committee for Consultation. It was facilitated by John Fitzgerald and Simon Lamb of Richhill Preparative Meeting, Ireland Yearly Meeting. They led and inspired conversations about bringing a vital spiritual Quaker ministry into the world. Their intention was to reach Friends who seek the challenge of sharing a concrete, transformative experience of the Inward Christ within a liberal yearly meeting.

John and Simon's program mixed presentations, exploration in small groups, and large group activities. The following text is taken from an oral report from Mary Chanaille:

Following a 15 minute worship, Simon Lamb told the story of the Samaritan woman at the well which can be found in John c. 4. It was this story that the gathering was based on; especially John c. 4 v. 7-8, where



Jesus tells the woman 7... let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. (from NIV) Jesus's conversation with the woman is radical because she is a Samaritan and a woman.

Small groups were given Queries about where/when Friends had felt the experience of God's love, the metaphorical living waters (after tasting the living waters, one will never thirst again). Friends wrote their responses on blue and green Post-Its which were placed on the wall and created a river, symbolizing the living waters.

John Fitzgerald spoke about transformation, leadings and clearness; finding one's way and being able to follow the living waters in everyday life. It was stressed that our Quaker ways are enriched by worship, and we can find the living waters in our everyday lives. The participants met again for worship, breaking up into small groups again with thought provoking queries for ¾ of an hour, and then returning to the large group once again for worship.

The food was excellent, with "good vegetarian fare". The interest-tables promoted good conversation, and our Worcester Friends were back home by 8:30 PM.

We were pleased that **Noah Baker-Merrill**, New England Yearly Meeting Secretary, visited our Meeting on February 17. We talked about the relationship of NEYM to the Monthly Meetings, and the Quaker message. Our Meeting appreciates having the NEYM offices in the Meetinghouse. Friends look forward to Sessions in early August. Intervisitation, or worshipping with other Meetings is an integral part of our Quaker heritage. Quite a few Worcester Friends are active on Yearly Meeting committees.

The Poyntons send E-mail from North Carolina

We have settled in quite well and are enjoying our life here. There is contra dancing at the Grange Hall a half mile away and we went for the first time Sat. night. Quite a contra dance community here. We've been attending Friendship Meeting which is unprogrammed.

Betty and Brian



The Peace and Social Concerns Committee



Malcolm Barnard writes to Jim McGovern about immigration, the focus topic for March, while his mother, Kathrine looks on.

The Peace and Social Concerns Committee encourages Friends to contact Legislators about social issues that promote Quaker values of peace, equality, and economic justice. On the first Sunday of each month, materials will be available for letter writing. Information from the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Institute will provide a focus topic, and Friends may choose to write on a topic of their own choice.

Founded in 1943 by members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), FCNL has worked for more than 65 years to change federal policy to advance social and economic justice, peace, and good government.

Service Projects

Friends, remember our on-going service projects: white socks and second Sundays for the homeless people who meet with Worcester Fellowship on the Worcester Common each Sunday; small containers of shampoo, soap, etc. that Barbara Sullivan carries to homeless people in Fitchburg; Stoneyfield Yogart containers that Sandra Kocher sends in for Abby's House.

Ben & Jerry's: Peace, Love & Occupation Don't Mix!

Ben & Jerry's produces delicious ice cream and champions "Peace" and "Love." But it also makes ice cream in Israel and sells it in Jewish-only settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Its franchise's party-carts also cater privately to Israeli settlers! The company's respected Social Mission commits it to:

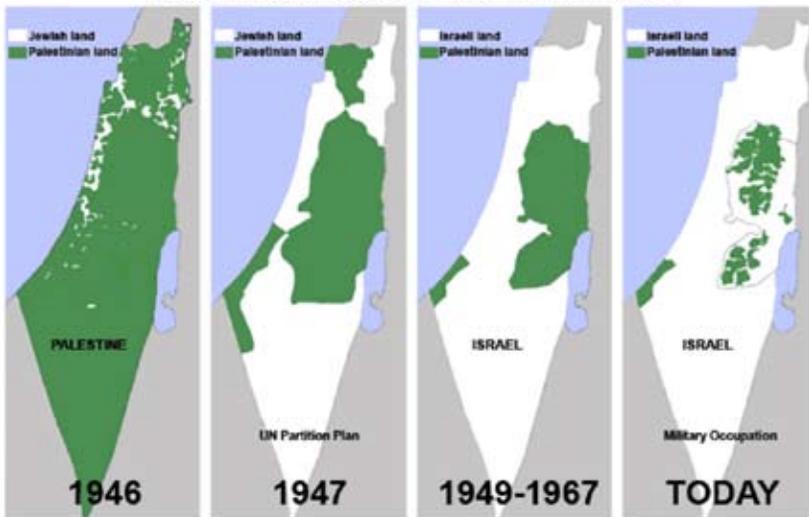
"...meet human needs and eliminate injustices in our local, national and international communities by integrating these concerns into our day-to-day business activities. ...seek and support nonviolent ways to achieve peace and justice. ...show a deep respect for human beings inside and outside our company and for the communities in which they live."

Vermonters for a Just Peace (VTJP) in Palestine/Israel has engaged the company since 2011, but sadly, it is still "business as usual". So VTJP is launching an international campaign to convince Ben & Jerry's to end commercial complicity with Israel's occupation and illegal settlements.

You can learn more about Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine / Israel at <http://www.vtjp.org/>

Friends will find information about the group, and quite a few informational and up-to date videos. You might feel moved to contact Ben & Jerry's to encourage them to stop making ice cream in Israel and selling it to groups that discriminate against Palestinians. Some Friends might want to participate in the boycott of Ben & Jerry's ice cream and encourage others to do likewise. Ben & Jerry's consumer services phone number is 802-846-1500. Their address is Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Inc., 30 Community Drive, South Burlington, VT 05403-6828

Palestinian Loss of Land Since 1946



Peace, Love & Occupation don't mix! Making ice cream in Israel and selling it in Jewish-only settlements on occupied Palestinian land violates Ben & Jerry's Social Mission to meet human needs and to fight injustice in the world.

Friends may recall that our Meeting was planning to host Reverend Dr. Peter Makari on February 10, 2013. A SNOW STORM unfortunately interfered with his arrival, and the event was postponed and is to be rescheduled.

Dr. Makari is the United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ Executive for the Middle East and Europe of

the Common Global Ministries Board. In preparation for his visit, three weekly studies groups were held to on "Call to Action: US Response to the Kairos Palestine Document ." The third meeting of the studies group was held at the Worcester Friends Meeting.

HOW TO AVOID DECISIONS

(I found this treasure on a yellowed scrap of paper in my files. - Editor)

Profess not to have the answer. That lets you out of having any.

Say that we must not move too rapidly. This avoids the necessity of getting started.

For every proposal, set up any opposite and conclude that the middle ground (no motion whatsoever) represents the wisest course of action.

Say that the problem cannot be separated from other problems. Therefore, it can't be solved until all the other problems have been solved.

Ask what is meant by the question. By the time it is clarified, it will be time to go home.

Discover that there are all kinds of inherent dangers in any specific formulation of conclusions: having your statement in the hands of the wrong people or of committing the organization too deeply.

Appoint a committee.

Wait until an expert can be consulted.

State in conclusion that you have clarified your thinking. This completely obscures the fact that nothing has been done.

Point out how the deepest minds have struggled with the same problem. This implies that it gives you credit even to have thought of it.

In closing, thank the problem. It has stimulated discussion, contributed to our growth, opened up new vistas, shown us the way, challenged our inventiveness.

- American Friends Service Committee

SUNFLOWER DREAMS

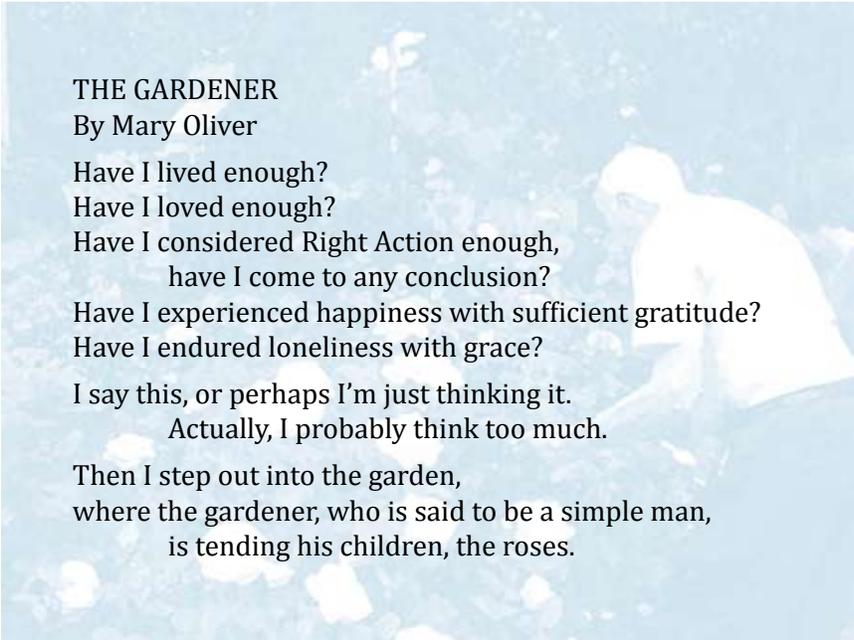
By Sandra Kocher



In winter's depth
on icy-edged days
down around zero
I dream
of planting summer's garden
wholly, entirely
with SUNFLOWERS
Tall, bold discs greeting the sun
in all their diversity
fringed, single, double, wild
edible ornamental
deep gold to bronze
high as corn, sunny as rainbow light
warm as summer's heat

THE GARDENER

By Mary Oliver



Have I lived enough?
Have I loved enough?
Have I considered Right Action enough,
have I come to any conclusion?
Have I experienced happiness with sufficient gratitude?
Have I endured loneliness with grace?
I say this, or perhaps I'm just thinking it.
Actually, I probably think too much.
Then I step out into the garden,
where the gardener, who is said to be a simple man,
is tending his children, the roses.

Pennies For Peace

The First Day School Kids decided to collect pennies again this year, and contribute to the Central Asian Institute. The Central Asia Institute (CAI) was co-founded by Greg Mortenson in 1996 and is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization with the mission to empower communities of Central Asia through literacy and education, especially for girls, promote peace through education, and convey the importance of these activities globally.

CAI has two purposes—to establish and support education in remote mountain communities of Central Asia and to educate the public about the importance of these educational activities.

On March 4th, the children made a field trip to the bank, to deposit \$281.55. They enjoyed estimating the total amount collected throughout the year, and are thankful for everyone's generous contributions to the penny jar throughout the past year.



The First Day School children and adult Friends prepare to take the money to the bank.

Awakening The Dreamer Symposium to be Held in Honor of Earth Day



Celebrate Earth Day a couple of days in advance on Saturday, April 20th by attending the *Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream* symposium in Worcester. The public dialogue, centered around exploring a new global vision built on environment sustainability, spiritual fulfillment and social justice, will take place at Friends Meetinghouse at 901 Pleasant Street. All proceeds from the event go to benefit the Pachamama Alliance and Quaker Earthcare Witness.

Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream seeks to foster an awakened global citizenry who understand the urgency of our times and respond to the invitation

to care for all creatures and the Earth. Through videos, discussions, and silence, the session will attempt to reach deeply into heart and mind to explore whether the dream of the modern industrial world is really the one we have longed for.

“One of the best parts of the symposium is that it leaves people hopeful and inspired, realizing they’re part of something much larger than themselves or the community -- a worldwide movement of humans who visualize a better future and are actively working towards it.”

The Public is Encouraged to Participate

Volunteer representatives of ATD will be facilitating the discussion. This will include: Reb MacKenzie, who is active in Quaker Earthcare Ministry and a member of Quaker City Unity Friends Meeting in Unity, NH; Tom Thompson, who works at the EcoTarium in Worcester and is an environmental activist and poet from Lancaster, MA; Mary Anne Cleary, who is the New England Coordinator for the Pachamama Alliance from Clinton, MA; and Event Coordinator, David Legg, energy efficiency consultant and photographer from Auburn, MASpace being limited, those who wish to participate are encouraged to pre-register by clicking [here](#). Check in at 9:30. Lunch will be provided. The event is free with donation of \$20 (Free for students age 15 to 25). For more information visit <http://www.pachamama.org/workshops/about>.

Contact DLeggEnergy@gmail.com or 508.320.2497 for help with; registration, ride sharing, rides from bustrain station, or overnight hospitality.

Worcester Friends Meeting

Meeting for Business

April 14, 2013

Present: Clarence Burley, Betty Jones, Katherine Barnard, Mark Sullivan, Barbara Sullivan, Aaron Shaulich, Mary Chenaille, Phil Stone, Daran Barnard, Jill Tetreault, Katy Green, Geoff Knowlton, Victoria Belisle, Jessica Seem, Matthew Shorten, Karen Sargent, clerk.

04-14-2013-1 Meeting began with a period of silence and a reading, 'The Sower', by Rodger Stevens.

04-14-2013-2 Ministry and Counsel proposes a statement on Friends Worship from Friends General Conference be framed and hung in the front hallway. Friends approve.

04-14-2013-3 Friends approve petitioning the City Council for an additional sign to the meeting house along the route from Rte 290. It is suggested that the city traffic engineer be consulted regarding placement as he had raised objections to the last request. Phil Stone will contact him.

04-14-2013-4 A threshing session will be held on the 3rd First Day of September to discuss concerns about policies of Friends Uniting Meeting regarding unmarried staff in relationships that are living together. (NEYM is a member of both FUM and FGC.)

04-14-2013-5 The treasurer reports that income is slightly ahead due to increased donations from members/attenders.

04-14-2013-6 The process to convert direct giving to Vanco is proceeding.

04-14-2013-7 Building and Grounds notes that floor refinishing will begin April 22 and end May 3. It will be done in 2 stages. Help will be needed after meeting next First Day to move the contents of the meeting room, and on the following Saturday to return them. Help is needed to sort library books. The front door will be locked until completion and entrance will be through the back door. Our tenants are aware of these plans.

04-14-2013-8 Market Day will be held June 1. Seven vendors have responded that they will be present. Rhubarb has been donated, and pie making will be scheduled; donations of books, plants and baked goods will be needed as will workers that day.

04-14-2013-9 The "Awakening the Dreamer" workshop will be held next Saturday at the meeting house 9-3.

04-14-2013-10 Peace & Social Concerns/Outreach reported the 'Penny Poll Tax ' was not held as there were no handouts available.

04-14-2013-11 There was a discussion on a request from the National Religious Campaign Against Torture to sign on to a petition. The meeting asks P, SC & Outreach to bring more information to the May meeting.

04-14-2013-12 Trustees is considering different surveys of Friends cemetery, those interested should contact Clarence Burley.

04-14-2013-13 Gifts & Leadings has met and determined names for new committee areas– Spiritual, Peace & Social Concerns, Practical. This committee was unclear as to whether to attach all members/attenders to a group and asks the meeting for guidance. A suggestion was made that each committee have a core group who recruit others for specific projects. There would be a hope that each person's participation would evolve. Friends ask the group consider suggestions and come back to business meeting with recommendations.

04-14-2013-14 There was intergenerational worship on Easter Sunday.

04-14-2013-15 There has been interest expressed in starting a midweek meeting for worship. It is proposed to start on Wednesday May 8 at 7 pm at the meeting house. Friends approve.

04-14-2013-16 Opportunity having been given for questions & concerns, meeting ended with a period of silence, purposing to meet again fifth month twelfth, or at the call of the clerk.

Submitted in the Light,

Barbara Sullivan, recording clerk

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Clerk: Karen Sargent

Recording Clerk: Barbara Sullivan

Treasurer: Mark Sullivan

Recorder and Correspondence: Clarence Burley

Newsletter Editor: Katie Green

Unprogrammed Meeting for Worship every First Day at 11 AM

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, Second Sunday at 9 AM

Meeting for worship: Wednesday, May 8, 7 PM at the Worcester Meetinghouse

Briarwood: 3rd Friday, 3:30 PM

Overlook: 1st Wednesday

THIRD SUNDAY: BIBLE STUDY WITH GEOFF KNOWLTON: 9:30 APRIL 21

SAVE THE DATE: MARKET DAY WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, JUNE 1st

Please send contributions for the May-June Newsletter to info@worcesterfriendsmeeting.org with Newsletter in the subject line by May 5.