

Atlanta Friends Meeting Newsletter



Meeting for Worship
Each First Day (Sunday)
10:00 - 11:00 a.m.
701 W. Howard Ave.
Decatur, GA 30030

November 2010

Query: Do you cherish your F(f)riendships, so that they grow in depth, understanding and mutual respect? Philip Gulley

Lobbying for the START Treaty

Sarah Bell (Legislative Correspondent)

Sue May

Tyler Stephens (Legislative Assistant)

David Culp (FCNL)

Sept. 29, 2010 Office of Sen. Saxby Chambliss



Social Concerns "Gathering- 9/26/10"

Question: How many Quakers does it take to change a lightbulb? Answer: Several, but good luck finding one -- they're probably out doing Social Concerns projects

Coming together to paint the big picture of Atlanta Friends Meeting Social Concerns activities was the purpose of the 9/26 "Gathering." Friends assembled after Meeting to take a holistic look at AFM outreach, ranging from refugee support to environmental education -- plus everything in-between.

A dozen eye-opening presentations later, it was clear that many individuals and groups feel deeply led across a broad spectrum of causes. "I'm pretty active in the meeting, but I probably only knew about 30% of the activities going on," said Betsy Eggers.

Sometimes it's a single spark that leads to years of connection and commitment. In 1991, Carol and Fred Cummings helped introduce AFM to a refugee resettlement village in El Salvador. This opportunity grew out of the Meeting support of refugees from the El Salvador civil war (1980-1992), a war that had been fought in the context of the larger Cold War. Twenty years later, we continue to have a sister relationship with El Sitio Cenicero. Friends support scholarships, alternatives to violence training, rural tourism and other community projects. Of course, the list of projects cannot begin to describe the deep friendships that have developed over the years.

Bert Skellie shared his keen sense of justice as he noted his recent activities. Bert has devoted much effort to advocate for poor people who often lack representation. He has also participated in the struggle to retain decent services at Grady Hospital and demonstrated at the Capitol for the annual "Poor People's Day." Through his tireless efforts, Bert has been a centrifugal force for many Atlanta Friends becoming involved in Social Concerns leadings.

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Announcements

CELEBRATE THE PENDERGRASTS - November 21 For years, Nan and Britt Pendergrasts' beautiful flower arrangements from plants in their garden and woods have graced our meetingroom on First Days. Now with an exquisite book, *Neighborhood Naturalist*, you can savor in your own home Nan's stories and Britt's photos of the plants and wildlife they have loved and appreciated so much. Reading the book is like having delightful visits with them as they recall their pleasures in all of nature, month by month, in the woodlands of their home and neighborhood.

On November 21 please join in celebrating the faithful contributions of Nan and Britt to the Atlanta Friends Meeting, their love of Nature, and the publication of *Neighborhood Naturalist*. They will be available after the rise of meeting to sign copies of the book, which may be purchased for \$25 each, and will donate all profits from sales to Quaker causes. This is a book that can become a worthy gift for someone special or your own treasure, as one reviewer has written, to be "read slowly and savored, month by month, flower by flower, creature by creature."

Adult Religious Education in November

Myrna Trapp will offer her spiritual journey on Nov 7. During the rest of November, we will read and discuss the book, *Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in Challenging Times*, by Paul Loeb. *Soul of a Citizen* is "the handbook for budding social activists, veteran organizers and anybody who wants to make a change in the world around them." Topics include: Making our Lives Count, We Don't have to be Saints, and Coping with Burnout. Copies of the book are available from Bill Holland and the class meets in the library every Sunday from 9:00-0:50. All are welcome.

A Special Invitation from Adult Religious Education
On the first Sunday of each month in the adult religious education class we offer the opportunity for members and attenders to share their story of the spiritual journey that brought them to meeting. This is a great way for the presenter to reflect on the turning points in your life and for the listeners to learn the unique journeys we have each taken. If you would like to offer your story please contact Mary Ann Downey at 404-892-2358 or

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madowney@mindspring.com.

Questions that might help to guide the story of your spiritual journey include:

What were your early experiences with religion and lessons about God?

How did that concept of God/religion change and grow as you began to understand these early lessons?

What special life turning points brought you closer to or away from God?

What influence did education, career, marriage, children have on your faith and practice.

How did you learn about Friends? What led you to this meeting?

How has this meeting supported your spiritual journey?

What do you believe now?

The Middle School Young Friends will be hosting a **Holiday Bazaar** again this year. Following Meeting for Worship on December 12. If you would like to reserve a table for a first day school class or as an individual please contact any middle school young friend or Jennifer Dickie (michaeljen@bellsouth.net, 404-313-8770). Look for more information in the announcement sheets.

"When Christianity unites with nationalism, an especially deadly religion results."

F. Warren Wilson quoted in *Men of Peace* 2010, p20 In AFM library

To be present to another, to be a true friend, means to be forever on call, forever open, forever willing to be involved in the friend's troubles. Douglas Steere *On Being Present Where You Are*

Idealized Meeting for Worship

Gathered, covered, merged, united in community, wrapped in the Spirit, connected, melded, compassionate, with agape.

(Social Concerns continued)

Kathy Johnson is another active Friend who has provided leadership at AFM for various causes, including international peace and justice. She is no stranger to substantive lobbying efforts to create real change on tough issues. As she noted in her presentation, Kathy was a catalyst to help launch Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition and she then helped nurture its growth for years. While she is spending more time today on the potentially catastrophic issue of global climate change, her roots in social concerns run deep.

Given the centrality of African-American Civil Rights to the development and growth of Atlanta Friends Meeting, it is no surprise that fighting racism continues to be an important mission. Presented by Karen Morris and Susan Firestone, the group “Our Role As Individuals In America’s Racial History (O-H for short) is active in many ways: raising consciousness, being a listening ear, developing external racial justice projects and other activities to work toward Martin Luther King’s vision.

Priscilla Padron has been involved in immigration issues for several years. She shared her experiences working with Georgia Detention Watch, which documents a grim picture of families adrift in a harsh system calibrated to treat immigration offenders as common criminals.

Priscilla detailed how concerned people are working to make the detainees more visible; after all, to be invisible in a criminal justice system means the potential for enormous abuse. She also noted that a private company administers all four detention centers, thus it has political as well as financial clout (it is an active state lobbyist).

Then there is Green Friends. A kinder, gentler issue you might think. Solar and wind power, recycling -- hardly the stuff of life and death. But in fact (as the recent Green Friends Study Group underlined) if we don’t come together as a nation (planet) to solve the relentless build-up of carbon in our atmosphere, the ensuing effects of global warming will perhaps make us nostalgic for the relatively self-contained peace and social concerns of the prior century.

Dan May and Pat Willams outlined the many projects that Green Friends has initiated: education, working to make the Meeting House “greener” and efficient (audits, LED lighting, solar projects, etc.), and outreach including 350.org as well as meeting with GA Senator Johnny Isakson’s office to advocate support for legislation that uses market-based controls to lower carbon emissions. AFM is hardly alone among faith organizations working for sustainability; in fact, Dan May serves on the interfaith group GIPL (Georgia Interfaith Power and Light). Further, John Roberts and Kathy Johnson have developed relationships with City of Decatur staff who are responsible for environmental issues.

“We are not a committee!” states the Refugee Support Group members. Well, maybe so, but this Friendly 8 group’s fellowship has led to some valuable support for those trying to get their new lives on solid ground with all the accompanying cultural and language issues, as presenter Betsy Eggers explained. Aware of issues in the broader Atlanta refugee community, this “non-committee” has shown wonderful commitment to our own Burundi Quaker families. Whether it is scheduling transportation, navigating the health services maze, job training or just shared community, this group’s accomplishments are certainly an outstanding example of faith *in practice*.

Our Clerk, Georgia Lord, works in the justice system and it is therefore not surprising that she has a good sense of the many individuals in prisons who have little or no representation. “Advocate for Inmates? Really?” Georgia queried, “Why in the world would you want to do that?”

Georgia explained that despite their serious crimes, these inmates can suffer abuses ranging from petty to sadistic, for example denial of basic medical and dental care. Punishment should not mean degradation and loss of one’s basic humanity, a position upheld by Quakers who have worked hands-on for prison reform over the centuries.

Georgia Lord highlighted her work in these areas and noted the efforts of the Southern Center for Human Rights and the Georgia Justice Project.

(Continued next page)

She pointed out that each additional person who gets involved can make an exponential difference in outcomes, to help create a more fair and intelligent penal system in Georgia.

Julia Ewen, who has years of working in the community for social justice and interfaith understanding, also spoke of new opportunities to get involved in prison outreach. One program is run by the Catholics, called “Thresholds,” which offers training (required for prison work) and a detailed, solid program of engagement and support. Another new innovative program has been developed by Friends and is entitled, “The Angel Within.” Julia reiterated her willingness to help anyone interested in prison outreach find an excellent, supportive program.

Everything is digital today and would you expect Social Concerns to be immune? Aaron Ruscetta’s passion has been protecting the new-found freedoms of the Internet and digital technology from the eternal energies of corporations looking to fence in these areas for profit. Aaron works with like-minded folks who want to stop the “Commons” from becoming the “Enclosures.” Whether it is free speech, open software, privacy or related issues, Aaron and his colleagues at the Electronic Frontier Foundation are working hard to make sure that the 21st century does not become, well...1984.

With the noticeable energy and mutual support demonstrated by the well-attended “Gathering” on September 26th, there was perhaps a realization, a slight epiphany. Leadings, passions and interests may vary, but there is a common element shared by all Quakers: the idea that we can and should make a commitment, and that we are indeed changed by those we help.

Reported by John Roberts

When you are able to create a lonely place in the middle of your actions and concerns, your successes and failures slowly can lose some of their power over you. For then your love for this world can merge with a compassionate understanding of its illusions. Then your serious engagement can merge with an unmasking smile. Then your concern for others can be motivated more by their needs than your own. In short, then you can care. Let us therefore live out lives to the fullest but let us not forget to once in a while get up long before dawn to leave the house and go to a lonely place. Henri J. M. Nouwen *Out of Solitude Three Meditations on the Christian Life*, 1974

Spiritual Journey

“I had distilled [my spiritual journey] to four words: connection and flow, love and gratitude. Connect with God, self and others. Move in the mystical flow of life relying on Spirit to lead and guide.

Ultimately live in a spirit of love and gratitude.” Sheri Snively, *A Quaker Chaplain’s View of the War in Iraq* p 117

in silence, i find truth

with eyes open

expecting nothing

i see beauty

with eyes closed

i sometimes feel

the presence

in silence, i find truth

© Roland Heath

Roland Heath

Atlanta Friends Meeting
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
10th Month 15, 2010
Recorded Pending Approval

Laura Norlin presented the query: Do you find time for meditation, prayer, and worship? Do you seek spiritual guidance in making decisions and in times of stress?

In attendance were: Mike Aland, Don Bender, Muireann Brennan, Mark Bryans, Lili Crymes, Betsy Eggers, Julia Ewen, Judith Greenberg, Suzan Kenworthy, Tom Kenworthy, Lynn Leuszler, Sally MacEwen, Beth Martinson, Susan May, Steve McLaughlin, Karen terHorst Morris, Al Natanagara, Laura Norlin, Margie Rece, Meredith Reynolds, John Roberts, Marthajane Robinson, Aaron Ruschetta, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Myrna Trapp, Perry Treadwell, Cecilia Wutka, Mark Wutka, Caroline Noyes (Recording Clerk), Georgia Lord (Clerk). (31 Friends)

Ministry & Worship: On behalf of Ministry & Worship, Mark Wutka presented a Travel Minute for Laura Norlin regarding her participation in the Consultation for Young Adult Friends on Cross Branch Intervisitation. The event will be hosted by Friends United Meeting at the Quaker Hill Conference Center near Richmond, Indiana. The Intervisitation conference will bring together Young Adult Friends from Friends General Conference and Friends United Meeting to learn more about each other and to explore common concerns, including whether there should be a formal intervisitation process among the various branches of Quakerism for Young Adult Friends.

Minute 10-10-01: Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the traveling minute for Laura Norlin's participation in the Consultation for Young Adult Friends on Cross Branch Intervisitation.

Beth Martinson presented a Minute of Appreciation for the ministry of Jay Marshall who led the Quakerism 201: Finding our Way Once We've Discovered the Path retreat on September 11, 2010: Atlanta Friends Meeting is deeply appreciative of the ministry Jay Marshall provided us by leading the retreat Quakerism 201: Finding Our Way Once We've Discovered the Path held at the meetinghouse September 11, 2010. Thirty Friends from both Atlanta and Savannah Meetings participated during the day and many found the interchange and opportunity for reflection to be rich and stimulating of our further development. Jay helped us sort out the challenges of religious language for our diverse meeting. We anticipate this retreat will bear many fruits. Jay's personal reflection on his spiritual journey on First Day provided new appreciation and resonated with many of us. Jay's witness to a life of faithful attention to the leadings of the Spirit and willingness to embrace new openings spoke to the condition of many Atlanta Friends. We thank Jay for his tender service to our meeting and look forward to future opportunities.

Minute 10-10-02: Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the Minute of Appreciation for Jay Marshall for his facilitation of the Quakerism 201 retreat on September 11, 2010

Suzan Kenworthy reported that Ministry & Worship approved a \$300 honorarium for Jay Marshall.

Mark Wutka reported on his and Ceal's fifth visit to the Annual Conference of the North Carolina Yearly Meeting Conservative held at Guilford College. The theme of the Meeting was Quakers and the Arts, and about 20% of the attenders were not from that Yearly Meeting. Mark led a bible study discussion on spiritual warfare.

Treasurer's Report: Meredith Reynolds presented the quarterly report for the 3rd quarter, ending September 2010. We are currently running a deficit of \$19,632. We are about 75% of the way through the year but have received only about half the amount of contributions budgeted for the year. In recent past years contributions have also been less than the amount budgeted but we did not run a deficit because our expenditures ran below budget. That is not happening this year: our expenses are about on target with our budget, so unless contributions increase we will have to draw on reserve funds to cover our deficit. Meredith

also noted that the Finance Committee is looking for a Friend who is able to help with this year's audit.

SAYMA Faith & Practice: Georgia Lord provided copy for the changes to the SAYMA Faith & Practice. Bill Holland will be clerking a Threshing Session where these changes will be discussed, the date of which is to be determined.

Clerk's Items: Georgia Lord invited Friends to share gifts they see among others in the community. There were numerous gifts identified among Friends, all of which represent a willingness among Friends to step up when needed, provide a joyful caring presence, while providing spiritual grounding, patient Eldering, and excellent programming. As one Friend noted, the beauty and evolving nature of the walk up the front path expresses what people put into this Meeting.

Approval of Minutes of Ninth Month Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Minute 10-10-03: Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the minutes of Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business of Ninth Month with no corrections.

Meeting closed with silent worship.

Respectfully Submitted,

Georgia Lord, Clerk

Caroline Noyes, Recording Clerk

Giving and Receiving: FGC in our Quaker lives.

For over 100 years the Friends General Conference has been, and still is, an influence in the life of Quakers and in their (our) meetings. Atlanta Friends budgets \$1000 for its contribution to FGC. What does AFM get in return?

This last week AFM and SAYMA were represented at the Central Committee meeting by Ceal Wutka, Maia, Stoph and Graham Hallward, Tom Kenworthy and Perry Treadwell. We learned how the new structure of FGC will begin its Ministry as the retiring General Secretary explained: more nimble and responsive. The new Communications Committee dramatized how Quakers would be more available and transparent using the electronic media already available and programs providing both internal and external information.

Quaker Quest has been highly successful and will be enhanced with new personnel. Godly/Faithful Play will be continued. Quaker Press will not only publish its own imprint but assist authors in their own publications. Quaker Books will continue to provide outstanding titles (just look at the recent additions to AFM library). Traveling Ministry (which Mary Ann Downey serves) continues its contact with smaller and non-affiliated meetings. The concept continues that "FGC is more than the Gathering" which, by the way, will be at Grinnell College, Iowa, this year July 3-9.

A final push put FGC's budget in the black this year. Nevertheless, cutting costs and personnel will make the organization cleaner and greener this fiscal year which began this month. FGC uses several sources of funding including yearly and monthly meetings as well as individual donations. Keep informed by FGC activities by finding www.FGCQuaker.org and explore!

Calender for 11th Month 2010

Area Meetings for Worship

Every First Day, 10:00 a.m. – In the Meeting Room and a small meeting in the Library

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Every First Day, 12:30 p.m. — Carrollton Friends Worship Group, St. Andrew United Methodist Youth Center, 1106 Maple St, Carrollton, lessell.bray@gmail.com or 770-830-8705.

Every 2nd and 4th First Day, 10:00 a.m. — Canton Friends Worship Group, 360 E. Marietta St, Canton, 12:00 p.m. Contact Marty Bray for more information: 770-830-8705 or lessell.bray@ gmail.com

Every Fifth Day, 12:10 p.m.— First Thursdays at AFSC office, 60 Walton ST. NW, Atlanta, 10303 Every other Thursday at East Lake Commons, 404-378-5883 or berts-kellie@gmail.com.

Every Sixth Day, 8:45 a.m.— Friends School of Atlanta, 862 Columbia Drive, Decatur, GA 30030, 404-373-8746. Beginning again August 13.

Mon-Fri Morning Worship, 8:30 – 9:00: In the library at Atlanta Friends Meetinghouse. Contact Jonah McDonald, 404-377-2474, afmquakers@hotmail.com

Weekly Events

Every First Day (Sunday)

9:00 Adult Religious Education

9:15 Singing, Classroom A/B

10:00 Meetings for Worship

Every Week Day (Monday – Friday)

8:30-9:00 Morning Silent Worship, Library

Every Second-Fifth Day (Monday-Thursday)

8:30-12:30 Smart Toddlers, Nursery playground

Every Third Day (Tuesday)

7:30pm Silent Meditation, Meeting Room

7:30pm Bible Study, Library

Every Fourth Day (Wednesday)

7:00-8:30 Mid-Week Semi-Programmed Worship Mt. Rm

Other Events

11/3, Fourth Day, (Wednesday)

6:45-9:45 Administration Committee, Library

11/4, Fifth Day, (Thursday)

7:30-9:00 Meeting for Peace Jr High Rm

11/7, First Day, (Sunday) Potluck

11:30-2:00 Green Friends, A&B

11/10, Fourth Day (Wednesday)

7:30-9:30 ORAIARH, library

11/13, Seventh Day (Saturday)

9:00-3:30 CURAFM + ORAIARH joint meeting

11/14, First Day, (Sunday)

11:45-2:00 Finance, Library

11:30-2:00 Care and Counsel, Jr. Teen Rm.

11:45-2:00 Ministry & Worship, A&B

11:45-2:00 Religious Ed, Nursery

11/18, Deadline for 12th Month newsletter

11/18, Newcomers Dinner, place to be announced

11/20, Seventh Day (Saturday)

4:00....Junior Young Friends Overnight

11/21, First Day (Sunday)

8:30am – 10:00am Gathered Meeting Retreat Committee, Jr. High Room

11:00-12:00 Book Signing for Nan & Britt Pendergrast, Greeting Room

11:45 Meeting for Worship with attention to business

11/28, First Day (Sunday)

11:45-1:15 CUR-AFM, Jr High Room

Please confirm unique events by checking the announcements sheets and or contacting the

Atlanta Friends Meeting
701 West Howard Avenue
Decatur, GA 30030-2902
Phone: 404-377-2474

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING
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Georgia Lord 770-934-7523: Georgia_Lord@mindspring.com
Treasurer: Meredith Reynolds, 404-683-3096: afmtreasurer@yahoo.com
Newsletter Editor, 404-325-1504, perryt@bellsouth.net
Office: Hours M-W-F 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; E-mail address: afmquakers@hotmail.com

NAMETAGS: If you would like to have a permanent nametag made, leave a request in one of the baskets on the front table. Indicate whether you prefer one that hangs around the neck or that pins. When Carol Gray has made one for you, it will be placed in the black file box on the greeting table.

If you would like to be included in the AFM database and receive the Newsletter by mail and/or appear in future AFM Directories, please send your name, address phone, e-mail address, etc to Nina Gooch by e-mail at ninagooch@gmail.com or by phone 404-371-9873. Please indicate if you want to be in the directory, receive the newsletter by mail, or both. This also applies to any change in existing database information, e.g. change of address.

To receive AFM newsletter notices via e-mail, simply send a blank e-mail to afmnewsletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com from the address where you want to receive the newsletter. You will receive a note back from Yahoo asking you to confirm your subscription; simply hit reply and you will be added to the list. There is no subscription fee for the newsletter.

To receive general announcements and participate in discussion, follow the same instructions only address the note to afmdiscussion-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. To receive announcements relating directly to the life of the meeting, send the same note to afmannouncements-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Contributions to the Atlanta Friends Meeting can be placed in the slot marked "Contributions" in the greeting area of the Meetinghouse, or mailed to the Treasurer at the above address. Thank you!

DEADLINE FOR 11TH Month newsletter: 10th Month 19
Readers are encouraged to submit letters, articles, poetry, calendar notices and anything else of interest to Friends. Items should be sent directly to: Perry Treadwell perryt@bellsouth.net 404-325-1504 preferably in plain text in the body of the email.

This newsletter is a publication of the Atlanta Friends Meeting. Views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Atlanta Friends Meeting