

# ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER



## May 2015

### **If You Want Peace, Work for a Stable Environment**

***By Henry Slack, Green Friends***

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Quakers have been known for centuries for their peace testimony. Unfortunately, peace in the world is threatened by the rapid pace of global warming in the world.

For example, Syria has been in a drought for several years. This has driven farmers to the cities, looking for work and food. This feeds into dissatisfaction and social unrest. Similarly, as Bangladesh is flooded from rising sea levels, the conflicts with India are likely to increase.

Besides farmers, the world's fisheries are threatened not only by overfishing but by increased acidification of the ocean waters, because CO2 in the air makes the water more acidic. This will change species in ways we cannot predict. Poor fisherman may no longer be able to feed their families.

In the US, rising seas already flood areas near Miami, FL and Norfolk, VA. When climate refugees are poor, moving is as unaffordable as staying. When they move, their young people are unhappy and easier targets for recruiters from military and terrorist groups.

If people want less of something, raising taxes on it will make it less attractive. A carbon tax has long been considered a fair way to reduce consumption; the people causing more of the problem pay more. A carbon fee and dividend is like a tax, but government returns all the money evenly to households, so the poorest people who've caused less of a problem end up with more than enough money to pay for higher utility costs and greater efficiency.

This conservative free-enterprise solution is promoted by George Shultz (Secretary of State under Reagan) and the Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL), to which I belong. CCL works to build the political will for action on climate (and thus, more peace in the world).

Atlanta Meeting of the Religious  
Society of Friends (Quakers)  
All are welcome

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

### QUERY

*Do we live in harmony with nature? Do we seek to minimize our consumption of the Earth's resources? Do we walk gently over the earth, seeing that of God in all of Nature?*

- Tampa Monthly Meeting

For more information, go to <http://citizensclimatelobby.org/carbon-fee-and-dividend/> or see me or other Green Friends at Meeting. Green Friends meet on First Firstdays during potluck in Classrooms A & B.

## **New Options Available in Family Litigation**

***Submitted by Georgia Lord***

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There are new options available for families facing such situations as divorce/separation, custody disputes, disagreement regarding support payments, or difference of opinion regarding the division of an estate. Some of these options seem “Friendlier” in their approach so I wanted to let the Atlanta Friends Meeting community know about them.

### **Collaborative Law**

The concept underlying our litigation system is one of two sides battling it out. Each party hires a lawyer/gladiator and presses for the most he or she can get. Each seizes every lawful advantage available. The judge or jury watches each side present its case and then decides what the outcome will be. Litigation may drag out for months or even years as the parties wait for a court date.

An alternative approach is becoming increasingly popular, particularly for family disputes: collaborative law. With collaborative law, the parties and their lawyers focus on reaching a solution that works for everyone involved. The process is non-adversarial and respectful. Using the advice of their counsel and other helpful professionals, the parties decide upon the result themselves rather than having a judge or jury choose one for them. They freely disclose all relevant information to each other rather than spending their funds hunting for each other’s information and fighting over whether it should be produced. The parties use their energy and resources to craft a plan for their future rather than spending them on refueling the litigation battle.

How does the process work? In a divorce, for instance, each party selects an attorney who has received special training in the collaborative law approach. Often, they also use a financial expert to help them find a way to divide their assets, real estate equity, and debts in such a way that their taxes are minimized and both are left in a financially sustainable situation for the long term. If the couple has children and disagrees regarding custody, they may also use a child specialist to advise them on a plan that will work best for their children. The couple, their attorneys, and the other professional advisors they select often encounter difficult problems and serious disagreements but work together as a team to figure out solutions. They only go to court after everyone agrees upon a plan, and the court process at that point is very expedited and simple.

Is a collaborative law approach right for every case? No. For the process to work, both parties must be willing to work in good faith to find a solution. They must also be willing to disclose all relevant information to each other.

During the six years I worked at a Family Court, I saw many cases in which parties paid a high cost for their litigation “battle” – both in terms of money spent for attorneys and in terms of the emotional toll the process took on them and their children. When I returned to private practice a few months ago I was delighted to learn that this more constructive approach has become increasingly popular. You can learn more about the collaborative approach on my website (<http://georgialordlaw.com/areas-of-practice/collaborative-law/>) or at [www.collaborativepractice.com](http://www.collaborativepractice.com).

### **Alternatives for Nontraditional Families**

At the present, the State of Georgia refuses to recognize marriages between persons of the same gender. Georgia's courts are not permitted to conduct divorce proceedings between same-gender couples, even if the couple was legally married in another state. A couple may have shared children, made promises to each other regarding future support, and entwined their property with each other, but Georgia courts are not permitted to apply the same rules to their separation as those that would be applied if their marriage were legally recognized.

There are some cases pending before the U.S. Supreme Court that raise these issues and, hopefully, the Court's decisions will correct the current injustice. In the meantime, however, many families need an alternative means to resolve a dispute. One potential solution is provided by organizations that provide mediation and arbitration services. For example, the organization, "Just Family Solutions" provides such services to a diverse range of families, utilizing the same principles of family law and equity that a court would apply to a legally married couple. The attorneys who organized "Just Family Solutions" say that, "[while we acknowledge] the distinctiveness of each family, we believe the principles of family law and equity should be applied equally to all families, thus ensuring that every family is treated with dignity and respect." They can be reached at [404-444-8331](tel:404-444-8331).

### **Forum May 31 – Vocal Ministry: Speaking Out of the Silence**

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The purpose of vocal ministry in meeting for worship as described by Isaac Pennington is to bring people "to the knowledge of things beyond what words can utter." Join us for a forum offered by the Ministry and Worship committee on May 31, 11:45-12:45, to explore the purpose, preparation, speaking and receiving of vocal ministry.

### **Parenting Classes Offered in June**

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One of the greatest joys in being a parent is being with other parents, sharing the joys and challenges of raising children! A 4-session class is being sponsored by Religious Education and taught by 4 parents who attended a similar class (in the same room!) over 20 years ago! We'll use the same, classic book, "Parent Effectiveness Training" by Thomas Gordon. Space is limited, so register NOW.

Dates/Time: Sundays, June 7, 14, 21, & 28, 2015, 2-4 pm  
Location: Atlanta Friends Meetinghouse  
Cost: \$30 per family plus purchase of a P.E.T. book  
Limited to: 10 families who attend AFM  
Based on: Parent Effectiveness Training by Thomas Gordon (book)  
Conveners: Sally Ferguson & Jim Tolmach, Betsy Eggers & Jack Honderd  
Sponsored by: AFM Religious Education Committee

Child Care to be provided, if reserved 2 weeks prior to 1st class. Note: All children MUST have up-to-date forms on-file in the nursery to be considered for childcare. Please contact Camille Jackson if your child's information is not on-file and complete the forms she requires prior to coming to class.

REGISTRATION IS LIMITED. Submit your registration form and \$30 fee (check to "Atlanta Friends Meeting, memo P.E.T. class) to the AFM Office to register.

### **Forum June 28 – Housing and Care Options As We Age**

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There may come a time when you or a loved one need help with some of the tasks of everyday living – or perhaps a time when you would just prefer to have some help. What options may be available to you? What are the pros and cons of each? What types of financial costs may be involved? Please join us to

receive specific information regarding both at-home and group care options. The program will include speakers as well as group discussion. Presented by Care and Counsel Committee. Please contact Georgia Lord for further information, or to make suggestions.

## **Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business – April 19, 2015**

### **Recorded pending approval**

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**Attendance:** Mike Aland, Cathy Amanti, Paul M. A. Baker, Katie Braun, Rebecca Burley, Steve Collins, Linnis Cook, Cade Curtis, Jennifer Dickie, Mary Ann Downey, Betsy Eggers, Julia Ewen, Sally Ferguson, Susan Firestone, Jenny Foster, Clive Gordon, Carol Gray, Roland Heath, Bill Holland, Jack Honderd, Kathy Johnson, Lynn Leuszler, Georgia Lord, Caroline Morris, Karen terHorst Morris, Ronald Nuse, Erica Schoon, Kelly Singer, Brittney Thornbury, Jim Tolmach, Myrna Trapp, Sarah Walton, Nan O'Connor (Clerk), Elizabeth Lamb (Recording Clerk) (34 Friends).

**Clerk's Reflections:** The clerk shared her reflections on all of the behind-the-scenes work that is done by Meeting members and attenders to keep the building and the programs running. She then shared the thought that since we can not possibly do everything that we envision, we need to discern how to best use the resources we have.

**Query:** Jenny Foster presented the query: "How do we center our lives in the awareness of God the Spirit, so that all things may take their rightful places? Do we try to exist fully in the present moment, when we are more likely to act out of a centered place?"

### **Discernment Items**

**Ministry and Worship Committee:** On behalf of the Ministry and Worship Committee Bill Holland brought forward the following minute of appreciation, which was approved.

- **Minute 04-19-2015-01:** *We thank our Burundi friends for their faithful process in writing the letter to the meeting. We are grateful for their presence in the meeting and their many gifts, and we unite with them in seeking worship opportunities that serve all.*

**Nominating Committee:** On behalf of the Nominating Committee Carol Gray brought forward the revised description for the position of Assistant Clerk.

- **Minute 04-19-2015-02:**

Membership: The Assistant Clerk must be a member of the Atlanta Friends Meeting.

Term: The Assistant Clerk serves a two-year term. The Assistant Clerk *may* be considered for the position of Clerk, and prepares for this possibility.

Duties:

1. Acts as Clerk in the absence or incapacity of the Clerk;
2. Assists the Clerk by attending committee meetings and other functions as needed;
3. Serves as a member of the Administration Committee;
4. Regularly attends Meeting for Worship and Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, and may be asked to preside at the Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business if the Clerk needs to step aside;
5. Assists the Clerk in maintaining contact with the Meeting committee clerks throughout the year and works with them to draft the annual State of the Meeting Report;
6. May be appointed by the Clerk to attend SAYMA Yearly Meeting and other gatherings for Friends and to represent the Meeting at ecumenical functions;

7. Serves as an officer of the Atlanta Friends Meeting Corporation and attends the meeting of the Corporation held in January of each year;
8. Receives instruction in the Clerk's role from the current Clerk and other sources.

Skills: Experience clerking or facilitating decision making processes would be helpful.

The above position description was approved.

SAYMA: As SAYMA Representative Bill Holland proposed that Atlanta Friends Meeting invite the SAYMA Representative Body to hold their fall meeting in Atlanta on September 12, 2015. He reported that he had consulted with the SAYMA clerk, the clerk of the Hospitality Committee and the meeting calendar and that all were in agreement.

- **Minute 04-19-2015-03:** *Atlanta Friends Meeting welcomes SAYMA Representation Body to hold the fall meeting at our meetinghouse on September 12, 2015. We look forward to opportunities for fellowship and hospitality.*

### Reports:

**Ministry and Worship Committee:** On behalf of the Ministry and Worship Committee Bill Holland reported that the marriage of Nylgia and Kelly Callaway-Singer under the care of Atlanta Meeting was held on Saturday, April 11, 2015 at the meetinghouse. It was a joyful occasion and well attended by meeting family and friends.

Bill also reported that Ministry and Worship has received a request from Becca Burley and Brittany Thornbury to be married under the care of the meeting. A clearness committee has met with them and found them clear. This recommendation will be brought back in May for discernment. Bill then read their thoughtful and heartfelt letter requesting marriage.

**Finance Committee:** On behalf of the Finance Committee treasurer Lynn Leuszler reported that this first quarter was better financially than the first quarter last year, but that we are still slightly behind the budgeted amount. We have spent a lot recently on much needed building improvements. He reminded the meeting that contributions can be made by credit card or through the website for anyone desiring to use those methods.

**Administration Committee:** On behalf of the Administration Committee Karen Morris brought forward the following minute regarding the Friend in Residence, which the meeting approved.

- **Minute 04-19-2015-04:** *On the recommendation of the Administration Committee Atlanta Friends Meeting offers Erica Schoon an extension of her term as Friend in Residence (FiR) of up to six months as a transition period for her and the Meeting. The purpose is to provide time for Erica to study her options and for the Meeting to finish revisions to the FiR job description and manual and to begin and complete the Search Committee process to name a Resident. The end of the extension will be the end of February, 2016.*

On behalf of the Administration Committee Steve Collins then reported that work in the library is moving along and that a Search Committee for the next Friend in Residence is forming. Anyone interested in serving on the committee should see Steve or Karen. The Administration Committee would like to have one or two more members on the Search Committee.

**Nominating Committee:** On behalf of the Nominating Committee Carol Gray brought forward Rebecca Sullivan to serve on the Ministry and Worship Committee. Her name will be brought for discernment next month.

Carol next presented revisions to the description of the Hospitality Committee. The following statement of purpose is added: "Purpose: This committee assures that items are available in the Meetinghouse kitchen for the weekly coffee time at the rise of Meeting for Worship and other events. It also arranges hospitality for out-of-town guests of the Meeting including accommodations, meals and transportation." Item 5 is revised to read "Buys and stocks supplies for the Meetinghouse kitchen including coffee, teabags, honey, apple juice, boxed milk, sugar, dry creamer and artificial sweetener." Item 6 is deleted. The revised description will be brought forward next month for discernment.

**Religious Education Committee:** On behalf of the Religious Education Committee Jennifer Dickie shared several stories from the children's First Day classes. She then reported that the new structure using the Godly Play curriculum is working well for the 3-year-olds through 4<sup>th</sup> graders. The structure allows more Friends to be involved as teachers and as doorkeepers, thus permitting more adults and children to get to know each other while reducing the burden for each participant. Each class has four teachers, with each teacher teaching one day a month and being able to attend worship the other days. The upper grades class (5<sup>th</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> graders) also has four teachers working together to plan curriculum. The high school class is taught by one person, with support from several other Friends. The summer program has developed over the last several years. AFM committees and Quaker organizations have the opportunity to share their work with the young people by each taking one First Day to teach children 5 to 10 years old about their group. The 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders join together during the summer. RE would like to remind committee clerks to contact Jennifer Dickie or Elizabeth Tolmach to let them know which week their committees would like to teach. There are twelve First Days available, from May 24 through August 12, 2015.

Jennifer then reported that May 17, 2015 will be our annual Meeting for Worship with Attention to Youth. During this semi-programmed meeting teachers and children will be introduced to the community and books will be presented to children moving on to the next class.

Alison Mawle and Jennifer Dickie will be presenting a workshop at SAYMA sharing the AFM model for teaching religious education, including using Godly Play. This will provide an opportunity for other Meetings to consider whether this would be a good model for them to use.

**SAYMA:** Bill Holland reported that Yearly Meeting programs are available in the foyer. Please pick one up and look through the wonderful workshops being offered. SAYMA would like to send representatives, especially young people, to the FWCC meeting in Peru during the summer of 2016.

**Clerk's Item:** The clerk reported that she has sent a letter to the Evangelical Friends Church – Eastern Region regarding the proposal made by the Burundi Friends to start a church. She has not yet received a response and will follow up if one is not received within a few weeks.

**Minutes of March 2015:**

It was noted that Katy Braun's name was misspelled in the report from Ministry and Worship.

- **Minute 04-19-2015-05:** *The Minutes of the March 2015 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business were approved with the above correction.*

Meeting closed with Silent Worship.

Respectfully submitted by: Elizabeth Lamb, Recording Clerk; and Mary Ann Downing, Acting Clerk.



**Please Hold in The Light:**

Laurel Muff,  
sister of Cynthia Berg

*Those wishing to have requests for Holding included in this monthly newsletter may give the names to a member of Care & Counsel. Beth-Ann Buitekant is the point person for May.*



**Atlanta Friends Meeting Contacts**

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**Calendar for Fifth Month (May) 2015**

**Area Meetings for Worship**

Every First Day (Sunday)	10:00 a.m. – Meetinghouse, with a smaller group in the Library.
Every Third First Day	12:30 p.m. – Carrollton Friends Worship Group. St. Andrew's UMC Youth Center, 1106 Maple St.; contact Jean Hudson, <a href="mailto:judson30116@yahoo.com">judson30116@yahoo.com</a> or 678-378-3368; <a href="http://carrolltonfriends.org">carrolltonfriends.org</a> .
Every Second First Day	10:30 a.m. – Macon Friends Worship Group. Contact Diana Day, 478-227-8892; <a href="http://maconquakers.org">maconquakers.org</a>
Every Fifth Day (Thursday)	12:10 p.m. – East Lake Commons, Decatur. Contact Bert Skellie at <a href="mailto:bertskellie@gmail.com">bertskellie@gmail.com</a> or 404-680-4799.
Sixth Day (Friday)	(Mid-August through May), 9:00 a.m. – Friends School of Atlanta. Community Meeting Room, 862 Columbia Dr., Decatur, 404-373-8746.
<i>Currently on hiatus</i>	Canton Friends Worship Group. Contact Roy Taylor at 770-720-4669 or <a href="mailto:wrlldpeas@mindspring.com">wrlldpeas@mindspring.com</a> .

**Weekly Events at the Meetinghouse**

Every First Day (Sunday)	9:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education, Library 9:30 a.m. Singing, Classroom A/B 10:00 a.m. Meeting for Worship
Every Second-Fifth Day (Monday-Thursday)	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Smart Toddlers, Nursery playground
Every Third Day (Tuesday)	7:00 p.m. Silent Meditation, Library
Every Fourth Day (Wednesday)	7:00 p.m. Mid-Week Worship, Library
Every Fifth Day (Thursday)	7:30 p.m. Bible Study, Library

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING  
701 W. Howard Ave.  
Decatur, GA 30030-2902

### ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

Office: MWF 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; 404-377-2474

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Treasurer: Lynn Leuszler, [afmtreasurer1@gmail.com](mailto:afmtreasurer1@gmail.com)

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 and contact information to Emily Lawson at [elawson7@gmail.com](mailto:elawson7@gmail.com) or 404-200-8479. Please indicate if you want to be in the directory, receive the newsletter by mail, or both.

Contributions to the Atlanta Friends Meeting may 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!

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

Readers are encouraged to submit letters, articles, notices and anything else of interest to Friends. Items should be sent directly to [atlquakerltr@gmail.com](mailto:atlquakerltr@gmail.com) in plain text (Word, not PDF). Pictures should be in .jpg format. Submissions may be edited for length and format.

#### **THE DEADLINE FOR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS IS THE 20<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF EACH PRECEDING MONTH.**

To receive the Newsletter via e-mail, send a blank e-mail to [afmnewsletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto: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; hit reply and you will be added to the list at no charge. To receive general announcements and to participate in discussion, follow the same instructions, but address the note to [afmdiscussion-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:afmdiscussion-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). To receive announcements relating directly to the life of the meeting, send the same note to [afmannouncements-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:afmannouncements-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).