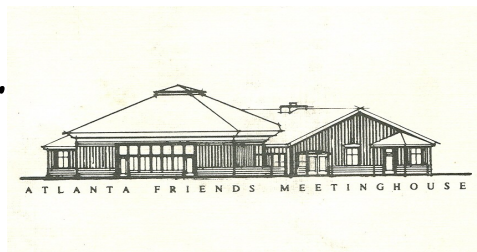


Atlanta Friends Meeting Newsletter

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

November 2013

Query: How do we foster the use and growth of the spiritual gifts of those in the Meeting? Do you express appreciation for the helpful messages given? How do you respond to the needs expressed in Meeting?

Henry D. Thoreau, excerpt from "Ktaadn" (1848) Reprinted in *The Maine Woods* (1864)

[This is a classic American account of a mystical experience. Does it still resonate? -- Eds.]

At length we reached an elevation sufficiently bare to afford a view of the summit, still distant and blue, almost as if retreating from us. . . . [F]earing that if we held the direct course to the summit, we should not find any water near our camping-ground, we gradually swerved to the west, till, at four o'clock, we struck again the torrent which I have mentioned, and here, in view of the summit, the weary party decided to camp that night.

While my companions were seeking a suitable spot for this purpose, I improved the little daylight that was left, in climbing the mountain alone. We were in a deep and narrow ravine, sloping up to the clouds, at an angle of nearly forty-five degrees, and hemmed in by walls of rock, which were at first covered with low trees, then with impenetrable thickets of scraggy birches and spruce-trees, and with moss, but at last bare of all vegetation but lichens, and almost continually draped in clouds. Following up the course of the torrent which occupied this, — and I mean to lay some emphasis on this word up, — pulling myself up by the side of perpendicular falls of twenty or thirty feet, by the roots of firs and birches, and then, perhaps, walking a level rod or two in the thin stream, for it took up the whole road, ascending by huge steps, as it were, a giant's stairway, down which a river flowed, I had soon cleared the trees, and paused on the successive shelves, to look back over the country. The torrent was from fifteen to thirty feet wide, without a tributary, and seemingly not diminishing in breadth as I advanced; but still it came rushing and roaring down, with a copious tide, over and amidst masses of bare rock, from the very clouds, as though a waterspout had just burst over the mountain. Leaving this at last, I began to work my way, scarcely less arduous than Satan's anciently through Chaos, up the nearest, though not the highest peak. At first scrambling on all fours over the tops of ancient black spruce-trees (*Abies nigra*), old as the flood, from two to ten or twelve feet in height, their tops flat and spreading, and their foliage blue, and nipt with cold, as if for centuries they had ceased growing upward against the bleak sky, the solid cold. I walked some good rods erect upon the tops of these trees, which were overgrown with moss and mountain-cranberries. It seemed that in the course of time they had filled up the intervals between the huge rocks, and the cold wind had uniformly levelled all over. Here the principle of vegetation was hard put to it. There was apparently a belt of this kind running quite round the mountain, though, perhaps, nowhere so remarkable as here. Once, slumping through, I looked down ten feet, into a dark and cavernous region, and saw the stem of a spruce, on whose top I stood, as on a mass of coarse basket-work, fully nine inches in diameter at the ground. These holes were bears' dens, and the bears were even then at home. This was the sort of garden I made my way over, for an eighth of a mile, at the risk, it is true, of treading on some of the plants, not seeing any path through it, — certainly the most treacherous and porous country I ever travelled.

". . . nigh foundered on he fares,
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half flying."

[This and the next quotation are from Milton's *Paradise Lost*.]

But nothing could exceed the toughness of the twigs, — not one snapped under my weight, for they had slowly grown. Having slumped, scrambled, rolled, bounced, and walked, by turns, over this scraggy country, I arrived upon a side-hill, or rather side-mountain, where rocks, gray, silent rocks, were the flocks and herds that pastured, chewing a rocky cud at sunset. They looked at me with hard gray eyes, without a bleat or a low. This brought me to the skirt of a cloud, and bounded my walk that night. But I had already seen that Maine country when I turned about, waving, flowing, rippling, down below.

When I returned to my companions, they had selected a camping-ground on the torrent's edge, and were resting on the ground; one was on the sick list, rolled in a blanket, on a damp shelf of rock. It was a savage and dreary scenery enough; so wildly rough, that they looked long to find a level and open space for the tent. We could not well camp higher, for want of fuel; and the trees here seemed so evergreen and sappy, that we almost doubted if they would acknowledge the influence of fire; but fire prevailed at last, and blazed here, too, like a good citizen of the world. Even at this height we met with frequent traces of moose, as well as of bears. As here was no cedar, we made our bed of coarser feathered spruce; but at any rate the feathers were plucked from the live tree. It was, perhaps, even a more grand and desolate place for a night's lodging than the summit would have been, being in the neighborhood of those wild trees, and of the torrent. Some more aerial and finer-spirited winds rushed and roared through the ravine all night, from time to time arousing our fire, and dispersing the embers about. It was as if we lay in the very nest of a young whirlwind. At midnight, one of my bedfellows, being startled in his dreams by the sudden blazing up to its top of a fir-tree, whose green boughs were dried by the heat, sprang up, with a cry, from his bed, thinking the world on fire, and drew the whole camp after him. . . .

. . . [The next morning,] my companions were [soon] lost to my sight behind the mountain ridge in my rear, which still seemed ever retreating before me, and I climbed alone over huge rocks, loosely poised, a mile or more, still edging toward the clouds; for though the day was clear elsewhere, the summit was concealed by mist. The mountain seemed a vast aggregation of loose rocks, as if some time it had rained rocks, and they lay as they fell on the mountain sides, nowhere fairly at rest, but leaning on each other, all rocking-stones, with cavities between, but scarcely any soil or smoother shelf. They were the raw materials of a planet dropped from an unseen quarry, which the vast chemistry of nature would anon work up, or work down, into the smiling and verdant plains and valleys of earth. This was an undone extremity of the globe; as in lignite, we see coal in the process of formation.

At length I entered within the skirts of the cloud which seemed forever drifting over the summit, and yet would never be gone, but was generated out of that pure air as fast as it flowed away; and when, a quarter of a mile farther, I reached the summit of the ridge, which those who have seen in clearer weather say is about five miles long, and contains a thousand acres of table-land, I was deep within the hostile ranks of clouds, and all objects were obscured by them. Now the wind would blow me out a yard of clear sunlight, wherein I stood; then a gray, dawning light was all it could accomplish, the cloud-line ever rising and falling with the wind's intensity. Sometimes it seemed as if the summit would be cleared in a few moments, and smile in sunshine: but what was gained on one side was lost on another. It was like sitting in a chimney and waiting for the smoke to blow away. It was, in fact, a cloud-factory, — these were the cloud-works, and the wind turned them off done from the cool, bare rocks. Occasionally, when the windy columns broke in to me, I caught sight of a dark, damp crag to the right or left; the mist driving ceaselessly between it and me. It reminded me of the creations of the old epic and dramatic poets, of Atlas, Vulcan, the Cyclops, and Prometheus. Such was Caucasus and the rock where Prometheus was bound. Æschylus had no doubt visited such scenery as this. It was vast, Titanic, and such as man never inhabits. Some part of the beholder, even some vital part, seems to escape through the loose grating of his ribs as he ascends. He is more lone than you can imagine. There is less of substantial thought and fair understanding in him, than in the plains where men inhabit. His reason is dispersed and shadowy, more thin and subtile, like the air. Vast, Titanic, inhuman Nature has

got him at disadvantage, caught him alone, and pilfers him of some of his divine faculty. She does not smile on him as in the plains. She seems to say sternly, why came ye here before your time? This ground is not prepared for you. Is it not enough that I smile in the valleys? I have never made this soil for thy feet, this air for thy breathing, these rocks for thy neighbors. I cannot pity nor fondle thee here, but forever relentlessly drive thee hence to where I am kind. Why seek me where I have not called thee, and then complain because you find me but a stepmother? Shouldst thou freeze or starve, or shudder thy life away, here is no shrine, nor altar, nor any access to my ear.

"Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy
With purpose to explore or to disturb
The secrets of your realm, but . . .
. as my way
Lies through your spacious empire up to light."

The tops of mountains are among the unfinished parts of the globe, whither it is a slight insult to the gods to climb and pry into their secrets, and try their effect on our humanity. Only daring and insolent men, perchance, go there. Simple races, as savages, do not climb mountains, — their tops are sacred and mysterious tracts never visited by them. Pomola is always angry with those who climb to the summit of Ktaadn. . . .

Perhaps I most fully realized that this was primeval, untamed, and forever untameable *Nature*, or whatever else men call it, while coming down this part of the mountain. We were passing over "Burnt Lands," burnt by lightning, perchance, though they showed no recent marks of fire, hardly so much as a charred stump, but looked rather like a natural pasture for the moose and deer, exceedingly wild and desolate, with occasional strips of timber crossing them, and low poplars springing up, and patches of blueberries here and there. I found myself traversing them familiarly, like some pasture run to waste, or partially reclaimed by man; but when I reflected what man, what brother or sister or kinsman of our race made it and claimed it, I expected the proprietor to rise up and dispute my passage. It is difficult to conceive of a region uninhabited by man. We habitually presume his presence and influence everywhere. And yet we have not seen pure Nature, unless we have seen her thus vast and dread and inhuman, though in the midst of cities. Nature was here something savage and awful, though beautiful. I looked with awe at the ground I trod on, to see what the Powers had made there, the form and fashion and material of their work. This was that Earth of which we have heard, made out of Chaos and Old Night. Here was no man's garden, but the unhandselled globe. It was not lawn, nor pasture, nor mead, nor woodland, nor lea, nor arable, nor waste-land. It was the fresh and natural surface of the planet Earth, as it was made for ever and ever, — to be the dwelling of man, we say, — so Nature made it, and man may use it if he can. Man was not to be associated with it. It was Matter, vast, terrific, — not his Mother Earth that we have heard of, not for him to tread on, or be buried in, — no, it were being too familiar even to let his bones lie there, — the home, this, of Necessity and Fate. There was there felt the presence of a force not bound to be kind to man. It was a place for heathenism and superstitious rites, — to be inhabited by men nearer of kin to the rocks and to wild animals than we. We walked over it with a certain awe, stopping, from time to time, to pick the blueberries which grew there, and had a smart and spicy taste. Perchance where our wild pines stand, and leaves lie on their forest floor, in Concord, there were once reapers, and husbandmen planted grain; but here not even the surface had been scarred by man, but it was a specimen of what God saw fit to make this world. What is it to be admitted to a museum, to see a myriad of particular things, compared with being shown some star's surface, some hard matter in its home! I stand in awe of my body, this matter to which I am bound has become so strange to me. I fear not spirits, ghosts, of which I am one, — *that* my body might, — but I fear bodies, I tremble to meet them. What is this Titan that has possession of me? Talk of mysteries! — Think of our life in nature, — daily to be shown matter, to come in contact with it, — rocks, trees, wind on our cheeks! The *solid* earth! the *actual* world! the *common sense*! *Contact! Contact! Who* are we? *where* are we?

Atlanta Friends Meeting
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
October 20, 2013
Recorded Pending Approval

Attendance: Micheal Allison, Don Bender, Mary Bosserman, Muireann Brennan, Steve Collins, Mary Ann Downey, Julia Ewen, Clive Gordon, Bill Holland, Sally Ferguson, Susan Firestone, Jenny Foster, Lynn Leuszler, Georgia Lord, Beth Martinson, Rick Martinson, Ronald Nuse, Nan O'Connor, Beth Ruddiman, Aaron Ruscetta, Erica Schoon, Peter Sederberg, Bert Skellie, Rebecca Sullivan, Myrna Trapp, Sarah Walton, David Foster (Clerk), Elizabeth Lamb (Recording Clerk) (28 Friends).

Clerk's Readings and Reflections: The clerk read a passage from an article by Deb Sawyer entitled "Creating a Nonviolent Society" published in Friends Journal March 15, 1987.

Query: Steve Collins presented the query: "Do we work for peace in the world? Do we nurture peace within ourselves? Do we seek consistently to carry out this testimony for peace in all our relationships, including family, community, and work life?"

Ministry and Worship Committee: On behalf of the Ministry and Worship Committee Bill Holland reported that Ministry and Worship recommends that Mary Bosserman be approved for membership. They brought this recommendation in ninth month and now ask the meeting for approval. Atlanta Friends Meeting approved.

Minute 10-20-13-01: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, we approve Mary Bosserman for membership in Atlanta Friends Meeting. We welcome Mary Bosserman to our community and look forward to growing together.

Finance, Administration, and Nominating Committees: The clerk summarized the request brought forward ninth month by the Finance Committee and the Administration Committee regarding the hiring of a part time bookkeeper for Atlanta Friends Meeting. On behalf of the Nominating Committee Beth Ruddiman brought forward a job description for this position. After discussion, concerned mainly with oversight of the position and methods of ensuring the security of the meeting's finances, Atlanta Friends Meeting approved the following minutes:

Minute 10-20-13-02: Atlanta Friends Meeting upon recommendation of the Administration Committee approves the position of bookkeeper. The Finance Committee is asked to report by the end of 2014 with an assessment and any recommendations about this position.

Minute 10-20-13-03: Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the revised job description for the bookkeeper. [A previous draft was printed in last month's letter -- Eds.]

Playground/Landscaping: Rick Martinson relayed that Jack Honderd reported that the City of Decatur has received the revised request for a permit and that the permit needed to begin work on the playground and landscaping project is expected to be granted within about a week.

Nominating Committee: On behalf of the Nominating Committee Beth Ruddiman brought forward the following names:

SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee representative: Caroline Noyes

Landscape Committee clerk: Myrna Trapp

Library Committee clerk: Cal Gough

Religious Education

High School lead teacher: Jonah McDonald

High School teachers: Aaron Ruscetta, Dana Goldman, Maggie Hasbrouck

Middle School lead teacher: Jennifer Dickie

Middle School teachers: Maggie Hasbrouck, Folami Adams
Upper Elementary teachers: Mary Jahnz, Gwen Davies
Lower Elementary teachers: Alison Mawle, Betsy Eggers, Beth Martinson,
Sue May, Laura MacNorlin
Preschool teachers: Kacy Brubaker, Angie Love

Treasurer: Peter Sederberg presented the Third Quarter financial reports, noting that we are running behind this time last year on contributions, but ahead on total income due to rental income.

SAYMA Representative: As AFM SAYMA representative Bill Holland brought forward a report on the Representative Meeting held September 28, 2013 in Nashville, TN. The SAYMA representative body meets two times a year to conduct the business of the yearly meeting between annual sessions. It provides a wonderful opportunity to encourage and facilitate communication among the meetings that comprise our far-flung yearly meeting.

The full set of minutes will be published shortly on the SAYMA website (sayma.org).

Several Atlanta Friends attended included Bill Holland, Aaron Ruscetta and Michael Kramer.

1. We approved the final 2014 Budget of \$83,525.
2. A variety of new policies were considered and approved. Policies on reimbursement of volunteer travel and cancellations of yearly meeting registrations were approved while several others were reviewed and will undergo additional work.
3. A number of additional nominations were approved. SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee asks that each meeting appoint a representative to the committee.
4. The 2014 Yearly Meeting Sessions will be held June 19-22, 2014 at Warren Wilson College. The theme for the 2014 Sessions will be "Leadings of Spirit: A Revolution in Practice."

Clerk's Items: The clerk appointed the following members to the Naming Committee: Lynn Leuszler, Folami Adams and Jim Tolmach.

The clerk reminded the meeting that the State of the Meeting report draft needs to be ready no later than January and invited committees to begin thinking about this now. He requested that individual committee reports be submitted by the end of twelfth month.

The clerk reminded the meeting that at business meeting earlier this year the meeting asked the Ad hoc Working Committee for the Minute on the Israeli-Palestine Conflict to convene a gathering of interested Friends to further consider the Swannanoa Valley Minute. That committee has met several since then and presented a forum on October 6, 2013 for any interested Friends. The clerk attended this forum and noted that there were more committee members present than Friends who were not part of the committee. He asked that at business meetings we consider whether we are willing to commit our time to attend when we ask a committee to prepare a forum.

Minutes of September 2013: The Minutes of September 2013 are corrected as follows: The name of the committee is changed from Administrative to Administration; under Clerk's Items, the spelling of Chandler is corrected to Candler; in the Playground/landscaping report the word "contractor" is changed to "Landscape Architect."

Minute 10-20-13-04: The Minutes of the September 2013 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business were approved as corrected.

Meeting closed with Silent Worship.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Lamb, Recording Clerk

David Foster, Clerk

“Quakers for Racial Equality” replaces “O.R.A.I.I.A.R.H”

Are you interested in working on undoing racism through personal change, making Atlanta Friends Meeting a more welcoming spiritual home for all, and addressing racism in our society? Come to Quakers For Racial Equality meetings on most 4th Sundays at 11:45 a.m. Everyone is welcome.

This new group replaces Our Roles As Individuals in America’s Racial History (ORAIARH) as the main group in the meeting working on racism at the personal, institutional, and societal levels. It will work in tandem with the Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting (CURAFM). Quakers for Racial Equality functions as a sub-group of Social Concerns and receives money allotted to anti-racism work from the Social Concerns budget. Growing out of discussions started in March 2013 by ORAIARH members, Quakers for Racial Equality (QRE) will carry on similar work along with new projects. At this time, we’d like to thank everyone who has worked with ORAIARH since its inception for sharing love, wisdom, and energy toward intentionally undoing racism in ourselves and in our communities.

Founded in 1997 by Adelaide Solomon Jordan, Bert Skellie, Karen Morris, and Susan Firestone, over the years ORAIARH has provided support for personal change and individual leadings about work against racism, numerous workshops, book discussions, film showings, guest speakers, library materials, queries for AFM committees, literature table, support for voter registration projects, and assistance with Friends’ outreach to people of color. This was all possible despite small numbers of active members. As we make the transition from ORAIARH to Quakers for Racial Equality, we are excited about the enthusiasm and energy of new members. The new name has already been useful for explaining our goals to people in both AFM and in the community. We welcome you to join us in working for racial equality.

* * * * *

Attendance at Meeting Increasing Since Quaker Quest Sessions

Attendance at Meeting has increased since we held the public Quaker Quest sessions, based on counts since July 2012.

Most of us agree that Quaker Quest had benefits for all who participated in the practice and public sessions. Hearing Quakers share in depth about their faith was a great way to connect and deepen our connections as a community.

We did not have specific goals related to increasing attendance. But those who planned the Quaker Quest program for the Meeting hoped to attract new members, and some of us were particularly hoping to increase our racial diversity. So how did we do? A few of us have been counting the number of adults in the room at rise of meeting since a few weeks before the first public sessions in fall of 2012. We started counting on July 29, 2012, and we have counted most weeks since then. As many of you may have probably noted, attendance is quite variable on Sunday mornings. The range since we started counting was a from a low of 65 to a high of 133. But overall, the average has moved up from about 90 to about 103, as of the end of September 2013. The average number of people of color has risen from about 12 to about 14. The percentage of people of color has remained steady at about 13%. So overall, attendance has been increasing, but racial diversity has not. For more details contact Bert Skellie to get a copy of the weekly attendance spreadsheet (bertskellie@gmail.com).

* * * * *

Calendar for Eleventh Month (November) 2013

Area Meetings for Worship

- Every First Day (Sunday), 10:00 a.m. -- Meetinghouse, with a smaller group in the Library.
Every First Day, 12:30 p.m. -- Carrollton Friends Worship Group.
St. Andrew's UMC Youth Center, 1106 Maple St.; Margaret Bray, 770-830-8705.
Every Second and Fourth First Day, 10:00 a.m. – Canton Friends Worship Group.
360 E. Marietta St.; 779-720-4669 or wrldpeas@mindspring.com.
Every Second First Day, 10:30 a.m. -- Macon Friends Worship Group.
Contact Diana Day, 478-227-8892; maconquakers.org.
First Fifth Day (Thursday) -- 12:10 p.m. AFSC office, 60 Walton St. NW, Atlanta.
Every Fifth Day (Thursday) (except 1st of the month), 12:10 p.m. – East Lake Commons,
Decatur. Contact Bert Skellie, 404-378-5883, bertskellie@gmail.com.
Sixth Day (Friday) (2nd week of August through May), 8:45 a.m. – Friends School of Atlanta.
Community Meeting Room, 862 Columbia Dr., Decatur, 404-373-8746.

Weekly Events at the Meetinghouse

- Every First Day (Sunday)
9:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education, Library
9:15 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

Clerk of the Meeting: David Foster, afmclerk1@gmail.com
Office Coordinator: Jonah McDonald, atlantaquakers@gmail.com

Treasurer: Peter Sederberg, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com
Ministry & Worship: Bill Holland, 404-692-2358
Finance: Paul Mangelsdorf, 770-677-4280
Social Concerns: Michael Allison, 770-832-3539
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Religious Education: Alison Mawle, 404-944-9142

Newsletter Editor: David Payne, atlquakerltr@gmail.com
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ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING
701 W HOWARD AVE
DECATUR GA 30030-2902

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING
701 West Howard Ave., Decatur, GA 30030
404-377-2474; atlanta.quaker.org
Office: MWF 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; atlantaquakers@gmail.com
Clerk: David Foster, afmclerk1@gmail.com
Treasurer: Peter Sederberg, 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 Nina Gooch at ninagooch@gmail.com or 404-371-9873. 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.

To receive the Newsletter via e-mail, 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; 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. To receive announcements relating directly to the life of the meeting, send the same note to afmannouncementssubscribe@yahoogroups.com.

**DEADLINE FOR 12TH MONTH NEWSLETTER:
NOVEMBER 23**

Readers are encouraged to submit letters, articles, notices and anything else of interest to Friends. Items should be sent directly to atlquakerltr@gmail.com **in plain text in the body of the email. Texts may be edited for length and format. Pictures should be in .jpg format.**