QUAKER NEWSLETTER
GAINESVILLE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

NINTH MONTH, 2012

Table of Contents

Please Hold in the Light ........................................1
WORDS TO CONTEMPLATE ......................................1
A WALK IN THE QUAKER WOODS .............................2
BOOK REVIEW ......................................................4
ANNOUNCEMENTS ..............................................5
CALENDAR of EVENTS ...........................................6
QUERIES & ADVICES ...........................................7

Quaker Meetinghouse
702 NW 38th St.
Gainesville, FL 32607
352-372-1070
www.GainesvilleQuakers.org

Clerk: Annie McPherson
Clerk@GainesvilleQuakers.org
Newsletter Editor: Jen Ambrose
Newsletter@GainesvilleQuakers.org

Please Hold in the Light . . .

Annie McPherson
Eleanor & Andy Merritt
Hap Taylor

Newsletter submissions are due on the Monday before the last Sunday of the month.

WORDS TO CONTEMPLATE

“‘No deal is worth more than your integrity . . . You walk away if it doesn’t feel right,’ he tells his associates. ‘If I tell the truth, there’s a wind at my back. That, I learned early. And that’s what I love about the Quaker [philosophy] – it’s not this dogmatic push; it’s finding the good in everyone.’” - Nick Segal, president of Partners Trust Real Estate Brokerage & Acquisitions, minister in The Movement of Spiritual Inner Awareness Church, graduate of George School, 1979.

~ GEORGIAN, August 2012, p. 4.

“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” – Micah 6:8, NIV
A WALK IN THE QUAKER WOODS
Explorations of the Meetinghouse Property
by Jean Larson with photographs by Bill Mitchell

August 19, 2012 -- This morning I arrived at the Meetinghouse before 9:30 am when singing is scheduled on third Sundays. After stashing my deviled egg offering for the Rise of Meeting social hour, I slipped outside to enjoy the fresh air and do a little weeding at the end of the ramp that leads to the front door. I observed fresh growth on the coonties planted by Bud. These enhance the landscape and discourage people from walking in a place where they might risk falling. I pulled up some sandmats, native plants in the Euphorbiaceae family which exude a sticky white sap that is irritating to the skin. (I try to remember to wear gloves when I pull it up). We have different growth patterns - if not different species of - sandmat. One type is likely the pillpod sandmat (Chamaesyce hirta), which ranges over much of Florida. The other species common in Florida are heartleaf sandmat (Chamaesyce cordifolia); spotted sandmat (Chamaesyce maculata), which grows very low to the ground with small leaves; and prostrate sandmat (Chamaesyce prostrata), also growing low to the ground and spread through much of the U.S., including Hawaii. Not long after I began working, Tim Ray arrived and we went in for singing.

After Meeting for Worship, Bill and I delayed our walk because of a rain shower, but eventually we set off down the drive. We followed a hose to the Meeting for Worship in Nature area where Bud was power washing
the benches and the table there. I had no idea that power washing them would make such a difference! It was heartening to see the renewal. Bill and I wandered up to where the ditch crosses into the Meetinghouse property and followed it down, fluffing river oats along the way. Then the drizzle intensified into a downpour. While there are times when a walk in the rain is an exhilarating experience, on this day we were not dressed for the occasion.

Yesterday I did a bit of weeding in the children's yard and noticed that the narrowleaf yellowtops (Flaveria linearis) along the back fence are getting ready to flower. I looked at the most recently planted flowers, including some sneezeweed (Helenium amarum?) that I rescued from a garden shop, where they were outgrowing their pots and looking a bit sad. The plants have perked up in the bed at the entrance to the Meetinghouse parking lot. I had planted some a couple of years back across the drive and they had reseeded themselves for a few years before sputtering out in one of our long dry spells. Behind the meetinghouse, Bill showed me two fruits on the passion vine (Passiflora incarnata). The edible fruit of this passion vine is called a maypop.

Last week, on Sunday, when Bill and I walked out to the woods he pointed out the flowers on the Fakahatchee grass (Tripsacum dactyloides) where the upper three quarters is male and the lower one quarter is female. Fakahatchee grass is distantly related to corn and is a good forage grass for cattle. As we walked further down the drive I pointed out that the painted leaf (Poinsettia cyathophora) had developed the red patches that give it its name. We wandered through the woods and at the end of our walk we found some mushrooms that looked like clothespin dolls. A week or so later, Bill took pictures that show these were like the giant mushrooms we saw the year before (Macrocybes titans). They were not yet as large as last year’s specimens, but there were more of them.

Last weekend I also weeded along the white fence outside the children's yard where some coral honeysuckle is planted and where the small sign announcing our meeting is attached to the fence. When I was done, the area was neat, attractive, and would be easy to mow without banging into the fence. I looked with satisfaction at what I had done and realized that work like this was more likely to be noticed when it was not done. Let us all take time to appreciate the work that goes into having a comfortable, attractive, and functional place to gather: a clean kitchen when we arrive for Meeting and set out our surprises, a functioning air conditioning system to keep the building a comfortable temperature, a library with interesting books to read and check out, a newly refurbished projector for film night, and a First Day room stocked with a variety of supplies for our growing children.

More photos from our “A Quaker Walk in the Woods” series can be found at www.gainesvillequakers.org.
BOOK REVIEW

Mind the Light: Learning to See With Spiritual Eyes by J. Brent Bill, c. 2006
by Sybil Ann Brennan

Mind the Light: Learning to See With Spiritual Eyes is the type of "how to" book with which our American society seems familiar. Applying the "how to" modality to Quaker practice makes this invaluable to folks new to Quakerism. The ability of the author, J. Brent Bill, to be clear and succinct in his presentation makes this a quick read of complicated ideas. The adventure presented in this book can be appreciated by seasoned Friends, while it helps newcomers to understanding the author's message.

The book has clear chapter titles such as "The Light Around Us: Seeing Creation," "The Light Within: Seeing Ourselves," "The Light Without: Seeing Others," and the "Light for the Journey: Seeing Our Path to God." There are paragraphs of prose, poetry and block-framed "Illuminating Moment(s)" filled with specific tasks. The latter include reminders to "relax your body" and "savor each thought."

J. Brent Bill is a Quaker minister. In this book he describes Quakers as "an incredibly diverse group of folks from all parts of the world. Friends are generally divided into two types - Programmed or Unprogrammed. A programmed Friends meeting is one where worship has preplanned speaking and music. The majority of Friends congregations in the United States are either programed or semi-programmed. Unprogrammed Friends meetings are the traditional 'silent' meetings with no paid pastor or order of worship. This age-old Friends way of worship is still practiced in many meetings . . ." (p136-137). We can all learn more about living Quakerism. Gainesville is a silent meeting!

The words on the book's cover have the reader learning "to see God's light both around and inside us." We are guided "to see with spiritual 'eyes' the connectedness between the inner life of the soul and the everyday life around us." In "Mind the Light: Learning to See With Spiritual Eyes" we accomplish the goal and come to know that the word "mind" means to pay attention to or heed in referring to the Light (p15).

J. Brent Bill, who has also written "Holy Silence: The Gift of Quaker Spirituality," delves into the practice of silence just as he has explored the mind the light terms here. This book was a recent gift to our collection and can be borrowed from the library.

~ Respectfully submitted by Sybil Ann Brennan
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Film Night

On September 14th, at 7 pm, we will be showing the movie *Harvest of Fire*. The Amish are a peaceful people. Yet, suddenly, an arsonist brings violence to their non-violent world. Has the sect been targeted for a series of hate crimes? FBI agent Sally Russell (Lolita Davidovich) is sent to investigate. She is “an English,” and not to be trusted. Annie Beiler (Patty Duke) is curious and willing to let Sally earn her trust. If the arsonist is to be brought to justice, two women from two distinct worlds must overcome the barriers that separate them. This takes patience, understanding and more than a little courage. Share the excitement of a mystery to be solved and the life-affirming joy of a friendship discovered.

First Day School Committee

It takes a village! Friends, please remember to sign up to be the "Story Teller" for First Day School. Someone will be in the room to manage the children’s needs - all you need to do is share something from your life. The children have so enjoyed this, hearing stories about Quakerism and Quaker values. This is an important tool for strengthening our community, and for raising Quaker children.

Friendly Lunch

Friendly Lunch meets on the first Tuesday of each month at the Meetinghouse at 11:30. Bring a lunch.

Friends Journal

In case you missed their email, the publishers of Friends Journal have reinvented their website, and in the process, have made all of their archives of older articles available for free, online, for a limited time. They are also very excited with the idea that their new redesign will help build a larger online Quaker community. Check it out: www.FriendsJournal.org

Library Committee

The Library Committee plans to continue meeting on the first First Day of the month, at 9:30AM, in the library. Note the exception of two meetings in September 2012 and none in October:

- September 2nd
- September 30th
- November 4th
- December 2nd
- January 6th

The library belongs to our Meeting - to you! Come and use it. Visitors are welcome to attend the Library Committee meetings.

~ Sybil Ann Brennan, Clerk of Library Committee
Ministry & Nurture Committee

So that we can better care for each other, please make sure your Emergency Contact information is up-to-date. Find the notebook in the library or see Sandy Lyon.

Newsletter & Website Committee

The electronic version of the Eighth Month newsletter promised links to the Friends General Conference workshops – but they didn’t work! (Thanks to Helen Hooley for letting us know). Working links have been added to a blog post on our website: www.gainesvillequakers.org/2012/08/report-on-fgc-gathering/

Peace & Social Concerns Committee

The Action Network is an organization of Gainesville’s faith groups. It is connected with People Improving Communities through Organization (PICO), a national community-organizing model and effort that advocates for the rights of poor, minority, and other marginalized citizens. PICO is launching a campaign to empower marginalized communities through lawful voter registration. If you are interested in volunteering with this effort, please see Tim Ray

CALENDAR of EVENTS

Online at www.GainesvilleQuakers.org/Calendar

Sun Sep 2, 2012
9:30am - 10:30am Library Committee Meeting
11am - Meeting for Worship; 11:15am - First Day School

Tue Sep 4, 2012
11:30am Friendly Lunch at the Meetinghouse

Sun Sep 9, 2012
11am - Meeting for Worship; 11:15am - First Day School
12:45pm - Meeting for Worship for Business

Fri Sep 14, 2012
7pm – Film Night at the Meetinghouse: “Harvest of Fire”

Sun Sep 16, 2012
9:30am - 10:30am Singing!
11am - Meeting for Worship; 11:15am - First Day School
12pm – Rise of Meeting Potluck

Sun Sep 23, 2012
9:30am - Peace & Social Concerns Committee Meeting in the Meetinghouse Library
11am - Meeting for Worship; 11:15am First Day School
12:30pm - 1:30pm Bible Study

Sun Sep 30, 2012
9:30am - 10:30am Library Committee Meeting
11am - Meeting for Worship; 11:15am - First Day School

Note: There will be no yoga classes at the Meetinghouse until further notice.
QUERIES & ADVICES

“WITNESS”

Queries:
Do our lives reflect Quaker testimonies?
Are we open and responsive to continuing revelation and do we incorporate it in our spiritual life?
Is our Quaker witness characterized by humility and a willingness to learn from others?
Do we recognize that the Spirit works in the world through us?
Does our witness lead us to the condition in which we “walk cheerfully over the earth answering that of God in everyone”?
Do we as a Meeting try to share in the religious life of our wider community, availing ourselves of opportunities for worship and service with other local religious groups?

Advices:
Strive to keep true to the testimonies of integrity and simplicity.
Try to keep before us the essential truths, and test our life by them.
Endeavor to make our lives consistent with the high principles we profess. This involves the often-difficult discernment not only between good and evil, but also between the better and the best.
Live adventurously. Let not failure discourage us.
Witness so that others can perceive the presence of God within us.
Be as good as people think you are.*

* Quotation from E. St. John (Jack) Catchpool

Gainesville Monthly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends
702 NW 38th Street
Gainesville, FL 32607