

543 South Mountain Avenue Ashland, Oregon 97520 (541) 482-0814 <u>ashlandquakers@gmail.com</u> <u>www.ashlandquakers.org</u> (Near Southern Oregon University)

1st HOUR: Discussions & Meetings

2nd HOUR: Worship

Meeting for Worship:

11 am Sundays Childcare During Worship

First Hour & Rise of Meeting:

One-Time SWITCH 6th & 13th

<u>6 January</u> (Details on Page 5) **9:30 am:** <u>Winnowing Session on</u> <u>SMFM's hosting folks responsible</u> for the <u>Western Friend</u> journal

10:30 am: Circle of Light

13 January

9:30 am: Committee Meetings

10:30-11 am: Sing along with Lisa

Rise of Meeting: Fellowship over lunch; core meal provided by Crystal Bosbach. All are welcome to bring ancillary dishes or just themselves. (**M&C to meet during luncheon**)

20 January

8:30-10:30 am: Business Meeting

27 January

9:30 am: Writing as a Quaker Practice (Description on Page 5)

SOUTH MOUNTAIN FRIENDS MEETING

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

(QUAKERS) Unprogrammed Worship in Ashland, Oregon First Month 2019

A MINISTRY OF WITNESSING

On Wednesday 7 November, Lucy Edwards and Jim Phillips shared with a small group of gathered f/Friends about their loving service in Honduras. After a period of worship, Lucy opened the circle by singing a beautiful song that came to her a few years ago, soon after a Honduran friend was murdered. Lucy had been feeling anxiety and unrest (uncommon for her), and the song brought her peace. She has an absolutely beautiful voice, and her soul shone through her music.

Jim grew up in a friendly, safe, and diverse community. His family was Catholic, first- and second-generation immigrants plus a little Innu (Canadian First Nation) ancestry. He entered the Jesuit seminary where he first encountered priests who so devotedly served others that their lives were endangered. A Chilean priest he knew was threatened under the military dictatorship and had to be called to appear at the Vatican to get him out of Chile alive. Through the courageous example of others, Jim discovered a more authentic faith. Jim later worked for the American Friends Service Committee and Oxfam in Boston

Lucy and Jim met in 1984 when they both traveled Honduras to and Nicaragua on a three-week delegation with Witness for Peace. Lucy says that she and Jim fell "in like" on the trip, quipping there is nowhere better for building a connection then a war zone. A year



later, Jim and Lucy married and spent 18 months in Nicaragua as members of the Witness for Peace team during the Contra War. They moved to San Antonio, Texas, in 1988 and became involved with asylum issues, the Sanctuary Movement, and the devoted activists who tend to those who have crossed the border and are in need of help. Their son Noah was born there in 1991.

Continued on Page 2

A MINISTRY OF WITNESSING

Continued from Page 1

Following a coup in 2009, Honduras became a very dangerous place. Lucy was drawn back there when a Honduran Jesuit was under death threats. In May of 2010, she traveled there with Pam Shepherd, who was the minister at Ashland's UCC church at that time. Since 2010, Lucy has made several trips every year to accompany human rights defenders there. Lucy Edwards is a volunteer with PROAH, an international accompaniment project of the U.S. nonprofit Friendship Office of the Americas. Her work is sponsored locally by Peace House.



When Jim and Lucy are in Honduras, Lucy accompanies Bertha Oliva, director of the Committee of Families of the Disappeared and Detained, a major human rights organization in the country. Bertha, whose husband was disappeared in the early 1980s, has lived under almost constant threats for the past 37 years. The Committee of Families of the Disappeared and Detained (COFADEH) has a busy office where a constant flow of mourning families come to report that a loved one is missing or that they are being threatened or falsely accused by powerful individuals. When she is with Bertha, Lucy is always aware of her surroundings and who and how many people are present at any gatherings they attend. If anything happens, she will be able to report to friends in Washington, D.C., Ashland, and other parts of the U.S. that are part of an action network advocating for human rights. Jim spends time with Jesuit Father Ismael Moreno (Padre Melo), another well-known human rights leader, and his team at Radio Progreso and its affiliated research group, ERIC (Spanish acronym). Jim does informal research and interviews. Jim is also an expert witness in Honduran political asylum cases in U.S. immigration courts.

Danger is everywhere in Honduras. The military and the corrupt police perpetrate political and criminal violence against civilians with impunity. Gangs control many neighborhoods and towns, demanding extortion from business owners and forcing violent participation from local youth. Poverty is pervasive, guns are plentiful, and one can easily hire a killing for \$30 or \$50 from a poor young person. Drug trafficking— and the so-called war on drugs— also contributes to the unsafe environment. On a recent visit to Honduras, a bus driver with whom Lucy had traveled regularly was murdered while driving the same bus route. It appears he was killed by hit men of powerful corrupt interests extorting payments from the bus company.

Padre Melo once told Jim, "Here in Honduras we are engaged in a spiritual struggle." That statement resonates with Jim to this day. It contains the truth that this is not a issue of taking sides but working and praying for peace and empowerment for everyone living in this situation. While in Honduras, Lucy feels that she has a deep well of love and peace wherever she goes. In whatever circumstance she finds herself, she always "looks for the human being," no matter



what uniform they may be wearing. Bertha, Melo, and the many people that work with them to resist the violent destruction of their communities continue the work because without it, they would be giving up their own humanity—and forgetting the ones they have lost.

--Lisa Nichols

Photos provided by Lucy Edwards

HOMELESSNESS AS EYE-OPENING

Chris Collier, who just turned 25, is a man with a goal. He intends to become a professional video game player, or "gamer." Chris says that having a reserved bed each night at Ashland's winter homeless shelter moves him closer to realizing his dream of establishing his own video arcade.

Recently, I chatted with Chris at the shelter to capture his personal experience of being unhoused. I plan to interview a different shelter guest each month and share the resulting articles with the faith communities which sponsor our winter homeless shelter so that all our congregations can read in their newsletters about the human side of homelessness.



It was the older of Chris's two brothers who introduced him to video games when Chris was eleven. He immediately realized that he had found his niche. Rating his own skill level, Chris proclaims, "I'm good; I'm on top."

But it was a school assignment in his sophomore year of high school in Atlanta, Georgia, that aligned Chris with his destiny. When asked to research a place unknown to him, Chris chose Ashland, Oregon, a whopping two-thousand miles from his home town. After working in food service and movie houses for three years post-high school, he realized that he had a childhood friend that had already moved to Ashland. Three days later Chris was on a bus, traveling westward to his new home.

Chris readily found employment and replicated the diligent life he had led in Atlanta. Sixteen months later, Chris had saved enough to experience being out of debt for the first time in his life, and to him this felt like abundance. He set his sights on working another 4-6 months to acquire the necessary video-game gear

and set aside money for an additional three months of rent. "I had it all down," Chris said smiling. "The beauty of it was that everything I set out to achieve came to fruition." Chris admits to knowing himself and what he could get done. "Then the time comes when you know you can get into your craft. But you don't know what's going on around you that can become obstacles to reaching your goal."

As Chris entered "his zone" perfecting his Xbox performance, his housemates grew increasingly envious of his "playing all day" while they went off to work. "As it unfolded," Chris recalls, "I was getting dogged and feeling beaten down."

This was not unlike how Chris felt growing up with parents who didn't support his gaming and with his angry older brother who maintained continual harassment, conflicts, and arguments. Losing his emotional footing in Ashland prompted a return to Atlanta. Chris spent six months with the loving support of his "always happy" grandma and retained a hopeful glimmer of his goal and alternative Oregon life regardless of the negative influence of his other family members.

Despite his work ethic and extensive work history, upon returning to Ashland with no childhood friend to take him in, Chris fell into a depression which depleted his motivation. During a year of not working, he experienced a penetrating uncertainty that arose out of being penniless, having no bedroll, and never knowing where he'd sleep. "I was super lost," he explains, "but knew I could get back on track. I was consumed with feeling life was passing me by, but I still felt in control. I did a lot of thinking. I had to push myself through to the finish line."

Finally back to work a half year ago and currently working two jobs—recycling and carpentry, Chris acknowledges that his confidence is rising. He describes being homeless as "eye-opening," and adds, "I no longer live life blindly. I read self-help books, and I fill my mind with being gentle."

Chris credits living in the shelter and keeping himself on a schedule for his resurgence. "If I were outside right now, I'd be angry." With the stability of a consistent place to sleep, he can get up early, work out, go to work, then practice his gaming before the shelter opens again at 7:30 pm.

Chris recognizes the helpfulness of the shelter's new model. No longer first-come, first served, local homeless people are screened so that the newly-hired case manager is apprised of hurdles prohibiting shelter guests' achieving self-sufficiency. Reflecting on last year's shelter, Chris notes "there used to be a lot of miscellaneous people from other places and addictions. It was a traffic jam. Now the shelter is a well-oiled machine that flows."

--Bob Morse, Manager, Shelter Listening Project

CALLING IN ANGELS: BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

More times than not, when I have an urge to write a "fan" letter, I drift off into busyness and never get it sent. This time, I simply must tell about a hope-giving experience that, if I had the power, I would share with everyone I love and everyone I fear.

I am part of the Council of Elders, a volunteer organization in Josephine County that is committed to the promotion of civil discourse. We read about Better Angels (<u>www.betterangels.org</u>), a nation-wide organization that sprang up after the 2016 elections to reduce the polarization that we think threatens the very roots of American democracy. It is their workshop that has inspired my excitement and hope.

Better Angles sent two experienced facilitators to meet with the eight philosophically conservative "Reds" and eight philosophically liberal "Blues" that we recruited. We met for seven hours of sharing. First, we all agreed to basic ground rules of respect and fair air-time, speak for yourself (not a group), no arguing or haranguing. The Reds and Blues met separately to list the stereotypes we think the others have of us. Then we looked for the kernels of truth in that stereotype, things that make us unhappy and we wish weren't true. A sample from the Reds: "Blues think we're racist. We wince when white supremacists are seen as representing conservative values." Several Reds said they wish that Republicans weren't all assumed to be for Trump. The Blues regretted that they are seen as Communists when they defend the poor.

Socializing during lunch got us talking "normally," and we learned more about some of the others. Then in "fishbowls," each group by turn answered, "Why do you think your sides' policies are good for the country?" and "What concerns or reservations do you have about your side?" Deep differences within each team were revealed, more than between teams! Everyone was asked to respond to, if they wished, "What did you learn about how the other side sees themselves, and did you see something that you have in common?" For my part, I had not realized how small businesses have benefited from the Trump tax cuts. I noticed so clearly how each of us base our opinions on personal experiences and biases (narrow framing). We all seemed eager to clutch at a quick, decisive answer (self-confirmation and short-term satisfaction), to assume "truths," and to be over-confident in our ability to predict the future. I also see that we all love our country and want it to be better.

Each side had an opportunity to ask the other group questions of curiosity, not "gotcha" questions. I asked, "What issues might we work together to solve here in Josephine County?" Among the answers were forest fires, dangerous air quality, the housing crisis and homelessness, children's services, cannabis, and low graduation rate from our high schools. "How to" responses included getting better balance on City and County committees and forming neighborhood groups.

Suddenly, I was eager to invite some "Reds" to join the Council of Elders, realizing that our closeness, our ability to have fun, and our intimate trust and mutual care would not be compromised by the "other" and that our shared energy and diversity would further the good works we all desire! No wonder I'm excited! This is the American Experiment!

--Marybeth Webster

REGIONAL RETREAT FOR FRIENDS OF COLOR

5 pm Friday 5 April thru Sunday 7 April 2019

Ben Lomond Quaker Center, 1000 Hubbard Gulch Road, Ben Lomond, CA 95005

All Friends of Color from Pacific and North Pacific Yearly Meetings are invited to come and get to know Friends of Color from California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon and Washington. We will spend time together exploring our relationship with our Meetings and Quakerism. Our schedule will also provide time to hike the trails and walk the labyrinth.

Approach to Cost: Our weekend will be funded through the spiritual experiment that relies on us each doing our part to support our community. The approach is called "Pay-as-Led." The actual cost per person to cover the expenses for the weekend is \$290. You are welcome to pay less than that amount, or more. As well, NPYM can help with additional expenses, such as transportation. For more information, contact Vanessa Julye, Retreat Host <u>POCRetreat@gmail.com</u> or 267-908-3640; To register: Lucretia <u>lucretiamh@gmail.com</u>

Hosting Western Friend

Our meeting has been honored by a request from *Western Friend* to host its September 2019th board meeting. Not many people attend—just the nine board members plus the journal editor. Because the board is drawn from the 3 western yearly meetings, this would be a chance to interact with new-to-us Friends.

The decision about hosting will be made at our Meeting for Business in January. You can help SMFM make a wise decision in two ways:

- 1. Attend a winnowing session on the subject scheduled for first hour on the **first** (not the second) Sunday in January.
- 2. Indicate whether you are likely to be able to pitch in on such hosting duties as:
 - ⇒ Provide a bedroom in your home for the house on Saturday and Sunday mornings.
 - ⇒ Provide transportation from the airport on Friday afternoon and/or to the airport on Sunday afternoon.
 - \Rightarrow Attend a potluck in their honor on Saturday evening (with a dish).
 - \Rightarrow Serve on a small host committee.

Since the exact dates aren't yet known and you may not know your plans this far in advance, you need not regard saying "yes" as a firm commitment, only a willingness if the dates work for you. Our goal is to ascertain our capacity to be a good host. **BY SATURDAY 5 JANUARY**, please tell either Gabrielle Leslie at 541-944-0748 or <u>silverbreeeze@gmail.com</u>)

or Herb Rothschild at 541-531-2848 or (herbertrothschild6839@gmail.com)

what role(s) you are willing to assume. Thank you.

Writing as a Quaker Practice

Free Writing Friends will offer a spiritual writing opportunity for all who join us at 9:30 am Sunday 27 January. We welcome all to try the practice of entering the silence for 5 min., then writing for 5 min. from the "still small voice within," that Light which inspires Friends to speak in Meeting for Worship. Our Free Writing Friends group has met weekly for seven-plus years and look forward to sharing their deepening, and often en<u>light</u>ening, experiences. And here's the best news: Writing experience is not necessary! --Becky Hale

Advices & Queries on Participation in the Life of the Meeting

The life of the Meeting depends on varied gifts.

There are varieties of Gifts, but the same Spirit. There are varieties of service, but the same Lord. There are many forms of work, but all of them, in all men, are the work of the same God. In each of us the Spirit is manifested in one particular way, for some useful purpose. One man, through the Spirit, has the gift of wise speech, while another, by the power of the same Spirit, can put the deepest knowledge into words. Another, by the same spirit, is granted faith another, by the one Spirit, gifts of healing, and another miraculous powers; another has the gift of prophecy, and another the ability to distinguish true spirits from false; yet another has the gift of ecstatic utterance of different kinds, and another the ability to interpret it. But all these gifts are the work of one and the same Spirit, distributing them separately to each individual at will. (1 Corinthians 12:4 - 11)

The Meeting is enriched when all members and attenders participate actively. The working of the Holy Spirit in our lives is expressed through prophetic ministry, pastoral caring for each other, and the example provided by lives lived in the Light.

In the active life of the Meeting, an individual's leadings are tempered and strengthened by the corporate spirit. All members have the responsibility for participation in, and the financial support of, the Meeting.

Attenders are encouraged to become acquainted with Friends' ways and to apply for membership when it is evident that the Meeting has become their spiritual home.

When Meeting for Worship has a central place in one's life, regular and punctual attendance follows. We hold in the Light those who are unable to attend by reasons of infirmity, imprisonment, distance, or other stresses in their lives.

Do we each take an active part in the life of our Meeting?

How do we recognize the varied skills and spiritual gifts of our members and attenders? How do we nurture their use and growth?

In what ways are we bringing together members and attenders, young and old, in love and community? Do we visit one another in our homes and keep in touch with distant members?

How are strangers made to feel welcome in our midst? How do we encourage attenders to share in the Meeting activities and responsibilities and to consider membership when they are ready?

Meeting For Worship For Business: 16 December 2018

<u>Present</u>: Melody Ashworth (Clerk), Lisa Nichols (Recording Clerk), Kathleen Hering, Beth Aspedon, Anna Monders, Scott Plummer, Patricia Morrison, Gabrielle Leslie, Alex Reid, Bill Ashworth, Crystal Bosbach, Herb Rothschild, Ken Deveney, Bob Morse

Centering

Faith and Practice p. 43 Patricia Williams

Treasurer's Report

The donations to our Meeting have picked up, we are at now 32% of our annual budget.

Yearly Meeting has a new "Pay as Led" policy. It asks Monthly Meetings to uphold previous levels of financial support. SMFM has \$500 in its budget for sending f/Friends to Annual Session, so will now send that amount annually, whether or not friends have requested scholarships.

Adam Thompson, incoming Treasurer, suggests that the bookkeeping and check-writing positions should be separated, which is a best practice for nonprofits. This will be brought before Finance Committee. If anyone has an idea for the finance committee, please let them know directly.

Corresponding Clerk Ad Hoc Committee

The ad hoc Corresponding Clerk committee looked at Meeting and found some people already doing, and others willing to do, all the tasks required of the Corresponding Clerk position.

The ad hoc Corresponding Clerk committee, under the guidance of the Nominating Committee, asked Meeting that both its committee and the Corresponding Clerk role be laid down.

Meeting decided not to lay down the Corresponding Clerk role. Instead, Nominating Committee will hold the tasks this year and reflect on what is needed in its next cycle. It has also agreed to update job descriptions to reflect newly distributed tasks.

Peace & Social Concerns

Peace & Social Concerns reports that Senate has voted to stop supporting Saudi Arabia's bombing of Yemen. The committee thanks the Clerk for forwarding our Meeting's minute to both the President and our congressional representation in a timely fashion.

Peace and Social Concerns is distributing a survey to Meeting. It has also begun its annual process of sending donations on behalf of our Meeting.

Ministry & Counsel

The committee met for a half-day retreat, reflecting on individual gifts and Leadings of its members. Plans are in place to welcome Beth Aspedon for membership with a cookie reception on December 23rd. M&C has received a membership request from Kathleen Hering. Gabrielle and Maureen will serve as co-clerks for the committee this year.

Ministry & Counsel has been asked to review *Western Friend's* request to host its September board meeting. This commitment involves both Meeting's engagement with the board and the logistics of housing, feeding, and transporting nine Friends. Meeting will winnow about this on January 13th. Meanwhile, Herb will solicit and receive offers of hospitality and inform M&C of the result.

Adult Education

Adult Education is hosting a new monthly session for "new and used" friends on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. The committee is overflowing with ideas for both this and our regular 4th Sunday sessions. On Wednesday 16 January at 6:30, we will reflect on early Friends' history. On Sunday 27 January at 9:30, the first hour adult education session will be a Quaker writing experience led by Becky Hale and the Free Writing Friends. Sakre Edson has asked Adult Education for a 4th Sunday to discuss Western Friend. The committee feels Led in other directions and suggests a 2nd Sunday in May or June instead.

<u>Uprooting Racism Report &</u> Proposal

A worship sharing on Uprooting Racism was held on 9 December, reflected on a minute proposed by a Yearly Meeting committee of which Bob is a participant. Bob requests a winnowing session to gain a sense of how we as Friends and our Monthly Meeting might engage in actions that uproot racism. This is scheduled for Sunday 10 February.

Calendaring

On 13 January, our Grants Pass shuttle will come to Meeting, and Crystal will make the core meal for a lunch together.

Respectfully submitted, Melody Ashworth, Clerk Lisa Nichols, Recording Clerk

To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

--Nelson Mandela

SMFM CALENDAR January 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fr	Sat
ONE-TIME SWITCH: 1st hour on 6 & 13 January		1	2	3:30-5:30 pm Free Writing Friends	4	5
6 9:30 am Winnowing Session on Hosting Western Friend's Board Meeting in September 2019 (Description on Page 5)	7	8 7-9 pm Ashland Song Circle	9 6:30 to 8:30 pm Light Meditation Group	10 3:30-5:30 pm Free Writing Friends	11	12 I-4 pm Laundry Love Henry's Laundromat
13 9:30 am Committee Meetings 10:30-11 am Sing along with Lisa Rise of Meeting: Fellowship Over Food; Contribute Pot-luckily or Just Bring Your Presence; All are Welcome; M&C committee to meet during luncheon	14	15	16 6:30 to 7:30 pm Reflecting on Early Friends' History: A Discussion for New & Used f/Friends (Details Below)	17 3:30-5:30 pm Free Writing Friends	18	19
20 8:30-10:30 am Business Meeting	21 SMFM Newsletter Deadline	22	23 6:30 to 8:30 pm Light Meditation Group	24 3:30-5:30 pm Free Writing Friends	25	26
27 9:30 Writing as a Quaker Practice: (Description on Page 5)	28	29	30	3:30-5:30 pm Free Writing Friends		

ADULT ED INTRODUCES A New Monthly Series On 3RD Wednesday Evenings:

Deepening the Quaker Experience For New and Used f/Friends

From 6:30 to 7:30 pm Wednesday 16 January 2019 **REFLECTING ON EARLY FRIENDS' HISTORY**

Quaker Faith sprouted in a tumultuous religious and political time. What can we learn from the lives and experiences of early Friends? How can we find inspiration from their stories? Please join us for community and conversation. --Lisa, Becky, and Karen

MEETING OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

Clerk: Melody Ashworth 324-9824

Assistant Clerk: Anna Monders 488-5577

Recording Clerk: Lisa Nichols 488-5577

Treasurer: Herb Rothschild 531-2848

Newsletter Editor: Bob Morse 482-8449, assisted by Pam Johnson and Sylvie Weaver

Web Administrator: Scott Plummer 301-5840, Adam Thompson, Bill Ashworth; Web Page Contributors: Bob Morse & Pam Johnson

NPYM Coordinating Committee Contact: Sylvie Weaver 717-475-6940

Archivist: Pam Johnson 535-1940

Art/Music Coordinators: Becky Hale 601-3084; Lisa Nichols 488-5577, respectively

Children's Education & Spirituality: Ken Deveney (convener) 488-5506, Cathy McDaniel

Warming Shelter Committee: Alex Reid (clerk), Bob Morse, Steve Wells, Beth Aspedon, Heather Starbird, Denny Caraher

Please direct all Meeting-related electronic correspondence to ashlandquakers@gmail.com

Newsletter submissions are due to Bob Morse (morse@mind.net) Monday after Business Meeting

Finance Committee: Adam Thompson, Barbara Arias, Scott Plummer, Treasurer *ex officio*

Joint Committee Representitives: Herb Rothschild, Steve Wells

Buildings & Grounds: Steve Wells, Merlin McDaniel, Raymond Scully, Glenn Allister, Hazel Ward

Nominating Committee: Beth Aspedon, Adam Thompson, Alex Reid, Barbara Arrais, Jean Semrau

Friendship & Hospitality Committee: Patricia Morrison, Crystal Bosbach, Cathie McDaniel, Kathleen Hering Greeters: Steve Radcliffe, Sylvie Weaver, Alex Reid, Javan Reid, Bob Morse

Peace & Social Concerns Committee: Herb Rothschild (clerk), Ken Deveney, Javan Reid, Pam Allister

Library Elves: Jean Semrau, Steve Wells, Heather Starbird, Becky Hale

Adult Education Committee: Lisa Nichols (clerk), Becky Hale, Jim Phillips, Karen Roertgen

Ministry & Counsel Committee: Gabrielle Leslie (co-clerk) 488-0228, Maureen Graham (co-clerk) 326-9609, Rochelle Webster 201-8255, Brent Howell 841-8841, Cathy McDaniel 770-3318, Clerk/Assistant *ex officio*

All area codes are 541 unless otherwise noted

South Mountain Friends Meeting

543 South Mountain Avenue

Ashland, Oregon 97520