

SOUTH MOUNTAIN FRIENDS MEETING

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

(QUAKERS)

Unprogrammed Worship in Ashland, Oregon

Eleventh Month 2020

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(Near Southern Oregon University)

A Coup is Possible: Prepare!

It's not unreasonable to be concerned that this fall we may see an undemocratic power grab—a coup. Even if we harbor some doubt of a coup's likelihood, preparing for the possibility appears to be in our best interest. We'll know it's a coup if the government stops counting votes, declares someone a winner who didn't get the most votes, or allows someone to stay in power who didn't win the election.

The best way to stop a coup is to never have one. The current diligent efforts to curtail voter repression, increase voter turnout, and uncover voter fraud may be enough. Preparation toward countering a coup is more than good insurance, as it can dissuade prospective power-grabbers from overriding our democracy.

The group Choose Democracy has created a simple means for preparing to defend democracy—endorsing the following vow. We can all choose democracy by going to the website <https://choosedemocracy.us/> and taking this pledge:

- 1. We will vote.**
- 2. We will refuse to accept election results until all the votes are counted.**
- 3. We will nonviolently take to the streets if a coup is attempted.**
- 4. If we need to, we will shut down this country to protect the integrity of the democratic process.**

The studies of successful resistance to power grabs indicate that large numbers of people were willing to participate in direct action, not unlike the recent massive mobilizations for Black Lives Matter, police accountability, immigrants' rights, and gun control. Political scientist Stephen Zunes emphasizes building alliances for safety, teamwork, and empathy. A recommended initial preparatory step is talking now with at least five people we know and trust about going out into the streets with us.

Zunes's research discerned that the most effective response to a coup is to unequivocally refuse to recognize illegitimate authority. Just as elections work because the public agrees to honor the results, coups only work if the public honors their demands. When the public refuses to accept the coup as legitimate, coups fall apart. The more public the refusal, the better, because it stimulates others to do likewise. Refusal looks like millions of people using nonviolent tools to delegitimize the coup by demonstrating, resisting orders, and shutting down the country until democracy prevails. In preparation, we can approach people we know in civil service and ask how they could non-comply with coup attempts. In this way, we are preparing both ourselves and others to be ready to act and to not act alone.

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SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

First-Hour Activity

9 to 10 am (new earlier time)

Discussions via Zoom

All are welcome. Full Zoom invitation in weekly e-news.

First-Hour Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85099502775?pwd=VmgxVFFzVkhYUkhRYkpNYmJ6TGZUdz09>

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85099502775?pwd=VmgxVFFzVkhYUkhRYkpNYmJ6TGZUdz09>

1 November

**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS ENDS
AT 2 AM SUN 1 NOV 2020**

Winnowing session on projects that support local Latinx fire refugees

8 November

Uprooting Racism: Worship sharing on a race-related video

15 November

Meeting for Business (9-10:30 am)

22 November

Worship sharing on "Holding the Light in Dark Times"

29 November

Peace & Social Concerns: Details to be Announced

Meeting for Worship

11 am to Noon

At Quaker Meeting House (space limited due to social distancing)

Or, join us by Zoom at:

<https://zoom.us/j/99810847118?pwd=R3poNVQxMFEyWFBMRVZFcTJYbDNYZz09>

<https://zoom.us/j/99810847118?pwd=R3poNVQxMFEyWFBMRVZFcTJYbDNYZz09>

A Coup is Possible: Prepare!

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Unlike long-range campaigns against fossil fuels or inadequate schools, coup resistance necessitates immediate responsiveness. Case studies suggest that coups are weakest in their first hours and days when plotters are most unsure of their potential success. As well, power grabs are typically organized in secret and launched suddenly. Most campaigns that defeat coups do so in days: The Soviet Union in 1991 took three days, France in 1961 took four days, and Bolivia in 1978 took 16 days.

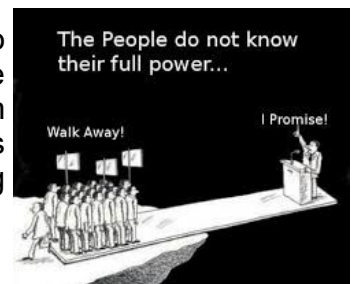
Nonviolent discipline has proven to be a worthy predictor of effectively stopping a power grab. A movement maximizes its chances of winning by training participants to remain nonviolent in the face of violence used against them. Training adds skills and builds courage, both well-suited for the times in which we live.

In struggle after struggle, a win for the people comes after the power grabbers try violence. When half a million people nonviolently protested in Bangkok in 1992, the army tried to stop the movement's growth with violence. In reaction to several activists' responding with projectiles and starting fires, the government upped the repression at the next large demonstration, including shooting into crowds of nonviolent demonstrators. Consequently, the movement grew—more boycotts, strikes, withdrawal of money from military-controlled banks—and other sectors of society joined in. The movement defeated the coup. Researchers concur that the more nonviolent the movement remains when confronted with violence, the more likely the movement will grow. More allies are stirred to act when we heighten the contrast between our tactics and the tactics of our opponent.

Anti-coup analyses encourage promoting shared democratic values instead of attacking a vilified leader or other individuals. Exalting democratic qualities can serve as an invitation to loyalists to the traditional way who may never join other movement causes. Asserting core values—such as democratically held elections where all votes count—contrasts with single points of action like a protest march upon Washington. Defying a coup calls for actions like mass strikes from youth and adults refusing to go to school or work until all votes are counted. For the many citizens who are uncertain about who to favor in a coup/anti-coup tug of war, it's noteworthy that people pick the side that promises maximum stability, respects democratic norms, and appears to be the safer bet. Efforts to expand our base means not making sweeping statements like, "The police won't help," which only serves to dehumanize potential defectors. Stopping a coup is contingent upon winning over this uncertain center, and, historically, the side which most resorts to violence—in actions or in words—tends to lose.

It's scary to be considering a possible Trump administration coup in the United States. Fear and doubt cause people to freeze up. Doubt is how coups succeed. If enough people become immobilized, then the masses will fall prey to whatever the plotters command.

Since fear-filled people are less likely to make good decisions, we need to focus on remaining calm and avoiding hyperbole. We can be a reliable source by double-checking rumors and spreading high quality facts. We can use our skills to ground ourselves: Breathing deeply; playing out scenarios without becoming captured by them; and remaining patient while reminding ourselves that final election results will not be available on election night.



Bob Morse gleaned from four articles which originally appeared at www.wagingnonviolence.org by George Lakey (author, organizer, professor, and member of Central Philadelphia Friends Meeting) and Daniel Hunter (author and trainer)

Advices & Queries on Civic Responsibility

We value the part we have in shaping the laws of our country. It is our task to see that these laws speak to and answer that of God, which we believe is in every person. Our aim is the building of a social order that works toward the expression of divine love. Our first allegiance remains with God.

Friends' responsibility toward civic authority requires integrity and discernment. The state commands respect and cooperation when it acts to maintain an orderly society with justice under law for all and to meet human needs. On the other hand, when government acts as a coercive agency, especially when resorting to violence, it may violate Quaker principles.

If, by divine leading, our attention is focused on a law contrary to divine law, we must proceed with care. Friends take prayerful counsel to find the right way forward. This involves testing our resistance to the state through discernment in the meeting community, possibly through a clearness or support committee. When the decision is to refuse obedience, we act openly and make the reasons for our actions clear. If the decision involves incurring legal penalties, Friends generally have suffered willingly and fearlessly for the sake of their convictions. If we are not personally involved in an action of civil disobedience, we strengthen the meeting community by supporting our fellow members with spiritual encouragement and, when necessary, with material aid. We care for those who suffer for conscience's sake.



What are we doing as individuals and as a meeting to carry our share of civic responsibility for our community, state, and nation?

How are we working for change in government when change is needed?

How do we discern between meeting our obligations to the state and society and opposing those contrary to Quaker principles?

What are we doing to uphold those acting under a concern aligned with Quaker belief?

Do we share our convictions in a spirit of loving concern?

In what ways do we care for those who are vulnerable or are in poverty in our communities?

Election

I voted.

I voted for the rainbow.

I voted for the cry of a loon.

I voted for my grandfather's bones
that feed beetles now.

I voted for a singing brook that sparkles
under a North Dakota bean field.

I voted for salty air through which the
whimbrel flies south along the shores
of two continents.

I voted for melting snow that returns
to the wellspring of darkness,
where the sky is born from the earth.

I voted for daemonic mushrooms in the loam,
and the old democracy of worms.

I voted for the wordless treaty that cannot
be broken by white men or brown,
because it is made of star semen,
thistle sap, hieroglyphs of the weevil in prairie oak.

I voted for the local, the small, the brim
that does not spill over, the abolition of waste,
the luxury of enough.

I voted for the commonwealth of the ancient forest,
a larva for every beak, a wing-tinted flower
for every moth's disguise, a well-fed
mammal's corpse for every colony of maggots.

I voted for open borders between death and birth.

I voted on the ballot of a fallen leaf of sycamore
that cannot be erased, for it becomes the dust and
rain, and then a tree again.

I voted for more fallow time to cultivate wild
flowers, more recess in schools to cultivate play,
more leisure, tax free, more space between days.

I voted to increase the profit
of evening silence
and the price
of a thrush song.

I voted for ten million stars
in your next inhalation.

—Alfred K LaMotte

**VOTING
IS AN ACT OF
LOVE**

Coaxing the Underground Railroad Out from Hiding

On Sunday 11 October, South Mountain Friends gathered virtually to view a film clip (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWx8NUk5-hA>). In the video Mariame Kaba posed the query *What might the Underground Railroad look like today?* Friends held a worship sharing. The following comments arose out of the silence:

Make space for refugees; make people safe wherever they are; provide temporary shelter for those in need.

We need to be open to what needs to be done at the moment. Although historically some folks had been involved in helping the Underground Railroad over time, many helpers had been tapped in the moment of need; opportunities were often thrust upon those who served.

Some offers to help our Hispanic neighbors have been initially met with distrust, understandably. Trust was developed by respecting Hispanic communities to identify their own leaders and by providing interpreters, computers, and training.

After the 2016 presidential election, the ACLU met with local law enforcement to explain the restrictions on ICE activities, to which our sheriff responded by making changes and then convening a meeting that included UNETE, which didn't initially trust the white participants. It would be helpful to reach out to UNETE as Quakers and let them know that we are an available resource.

The status of being a sanctuary city/county/state has played a role in preventing arrests as no tax dollars can be used to enforce the activities of ICE. With two Yearly Meetings spanning the three most western contiguous states, a modern Underground Railroad could be an interstate highway. Curiosity was expressed about how Multnomah Monthly Meeting has responded to the Portland street protesters.

There was a time when houses of worship were considered sanctuaries; we need to re-create safe, sacred spaces. Mariame Kaba spoke of the importance of trusting those who don't look like us; trust is needed on all sides. Alameda Fire refugees who are also undocumented immigrants are afraid to go to locations where free meals are being distributed, so the need for safe and trustworthy spaces is current. As difficult as is the situation for undocumented immigrants, we can easily overlook the many obstacles that legal immigrants face when attempting to gain citizenship.

The mixture of ages, races, and ethnicities among today's Black Lives Matters street protesters reflects the demographic mélange of yesterday's Underground Railroad.

Not all Quakers endorsed the Underground Railroad; some Friends worked toward legally abolishing slavery, while others promoted sending ex-slaves back to Africa; similarly, we could simultaneously support several present-day projects.

The Gandhi-led fight for India's independence from Britain was organized by those most targeted by colonialism's oppression.

We could look for guidance from the WWII underground which saved Jewish lives, as we are now living under the governance of fascists. We need to hold hands; we can't do this work alone.

Black people should be the organizers of Southern Oregon's Black movements, but with so many more whites in this area, whites might need to take on leadership roles.

Because of increased surveillance, we are now called to be more overt than covert. In some ways, the needs in our community are hidden, but our actions need to be out in the open, not hidden or underground.

The Alameda Fire has exacerbated our community's lack of affordable housing and increased the number of local homeless residents. Many Hispanic families now live in overcrowded situations. Our Meeting, in tandem with other faith communities, could help find spaces, even as we acknowledge that temporary housing doesn't solve the housing crisis.

Besides the local Hispanic population, Black people in our community also feel oppressed. Our Meeting had previously reached out to the Muslims in our region; perhaps it's time to reach out again.

In a recent podcast, Quaker activist and educator George Lakey instructed on how to prepare for a potential coup. Most importantly: Build coalitions!



—Bob Morse

Meeting for Business 18 October 2020

Friends Present: Bill Ashworth, Melody Ashworth, Beth Aspedon, Terri Brain, Ken Deveney, Andra Hollenbeck, Gizelle Luccio, Bob Morse, Javan Reid, Alex Reid, Jean Semrau, Adam Thompson

Centering Worship “We need to commit ourselves to radically changed lives, recognizing the costly implications, yet also knowing the joy, reverence, and deep love of God that inspires us. Spirit-filled lives that see every form of life as an expression of universal love enable us to move forward confidently, in faith and in hope. Yes, hope, in spite of all we know.” Doris Ferm 2006

Approval of minutes
2020.10.1 Friends approved the minutes for the 20 September 2020 Meeting for Business.

Treasurer

Both expenses and individual contributions continue to be low. We will need to increase contributions to maintain current budgeted amounts.

Peace & Social Concerns sent a letter to the editor of the *Ashland Tidings* in support of Measure 110.

Friendship & Hospitality continues to outreach to SMFM members and attenders.

Nominating expressed deep gratitude to everyone commencing service this month.

Co-Presiding Clerks’ Division of Duties and Committee Commitments

This year Andra will clerk Meetings for Business and serve as liaison to Peace & Social Concerns, Friendship & Hospitality, Circle of Light and Nominating committees. Bill will serve as liaison to Ministry & Counsel, Finance, Building & Grounds, Joint, Adult Education and Library committees. Bill and Andra will take turns serving as “clerk in the Meeting room” and “zoom clerk in the library” for Meetings for Worship.

Building & Grounds held another work party to rake leaves and make sure the ground cover is not flammable.

Ministry & Counsel is developing a “mutual care” survey in coordination with Friendship & Hospitality and Nominating committees. They are also planning a celebration to welcome Valeria Breiten as a new member. Finally, M&C is experimenting with new ways to better unify our worship experience during COVID.

2020.10.2 As of the 4th week of this tenth month, we will no longer be holding clerked Meetings for Worship in the park until circumstances warrant a change.

Homeless Outreach reported that OHRA will be leasing Calvin Hall from the First Presbyterian Church of Ashland to serve as this year’s Winter Shelter, providing guests with more space than last year’s shelter because of COVID concerns. Paid staff will serve as night hosts.

Circle of Friends coordinators are planning to convene small groups to address the grief of those impacted by the Alameda Fire. They have developed a project description and placed it on the SMFM website and will reduce it to one sentence for local resource lists with a link to the Circle of Friends webpage.

The Homeless Outreach Committee requested a winnowing session to seek Light on how else the Meeting might be of service to those who have lost their homes, particularly our Latinx neighbors.

Respectfully submitted,

Andra Hollenbeck, Co-Presiding Clerk
Alex Reid, Recording Clerk

Hope must be reinvented every day.



—James Baldwin

Co-Clerks’ Corner

Friends,

As Bill and I continue to navigate as co-clerks into an extraordinary and uncertain future, we have faith and hope that Meeting will continue to hold each other close in charity and love, be patient and kind with each other, and continue our search for a truth that serves us all. You will see in this month’s minutes the new division of duties and commitments to committees. Please contact either of us with questions, concerns, or business we may need to attend to. It may be messy and sometimes not pretty, but our service will always be with hope, faith, charity, and love.

Be well, Andra

The Rally That Never Happened

The Proud Boys, a white supremacist group, planned The Belly of the Beast rally to take place a block from my house. Apparently, that's where I live: The belly of the antifa beast.

Two hours before it was supposed to start, the park starts filling up with my neighbors. A drum line shows up. A brass band plays. The anarchists are giving away vegetables and nachos, and some artists are selling jewelry. Black leaders give speeches. We chant Breonna Taylor's name, and all the other names.

No right-wing rally ever coalesces. There was never room for a critical mass to congregate. A lost-looking man or two walks to the park, doesn't see their people, turns around. A right-wing vlogger trying to debate people is surrounded and walked to the edge of the park. Someone spotted with a handgun is chased through the park, to their car, by over 100 people. The ice cream truck music plays the whole time.

The usual guys sets their chess tables and start playing; the crowd of neighbors start to break up.

—excerpted from Scott Dodds, a Philadelphia Quaker

Music Project Seeks Pandemic Stories

Anima Mundi Productions and Resonance Ensemble, two arts nonprofits united by a common mission to address urgent social challenges through the musical arts, are partnering to create and record *Six Feet Apart: Stories of Resilience and Transformation*, an innovative virtually-presented choral oratorio that harnesses the power of music, poetry, and art to amplify diverse voices and foster collective healing in Oregon during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We want to hear your story. How has the pandemic impacted your life, your family, your work, your relationships, your wellbeing during these past months?

You can share your story with us as a written submission, a phone interview, or a photo, video, or piece of art or poetry. Stories can be in English or Spanish. No story is too big or small. There's no minimum length or required topic, so long as it pertains to your life since the pandemic arrived in March.

To learn more and share your story, please visit www.sixfeetapartstories.com or call me at 541-778-1211.

—Ethan Gans-Morse

Creeds and Quakers: What's Belief Got To Do With It?

Pendle Hill Pamphlet 377 by Robert Griswold

Quaker spiritual authority lies not in belief systems or creeds but in the direct communion between individual Friends and the Divine Spirit. All other forms of authority, “be they written words, steeple-houses, or a clerical hierarchy,” cannot replace this direct communication. While early Friends’ refusal to formulate a creed threatened existing religious practice and brought them great persecution, this historic witness against creeds is not fully appreciated by Friends today. The pamphlet’s author asserts that Friends too often hold Quaker testimonies as ideals, as ends in themselves, as the roots of our faith rather than as fruits of the Spirit. Without spiritual grounding, testimonies become creeds.

—Bob Morse

This Pendle Hill pamphlet is available in our Quaker library.



**You should sit in meditation
for 20 minutes every day,
unless you're too busy.**

**Then you should sit
for an hour.**

– Zen Proverb

Restoring The Right To Vote For All

Voting is fundamental to our democracy and is a right that should never be taken away. But in November, as many of us cast the most important votes of our lives, millions of Americans will once again be denied that right. Today nearly 5.2 million Americans are barred from exercising their right to vote because they have felony convictions. Most are Black and living in poverty.



Felony disenfranchisement remains the longest-standing form of voter suppression in the U.S.—and it's past time for us to end it once and for all.

Make no mistake: Felony disenfranchisement is a policy of white supremacy. Coupled with more than 40 years of mass incarceration, felony disenfranchisement has silenced the African American's political voice in ways that echo the "Black codes" of the 1860s and the Jim Crow laws of the 1950s. Today, one in 16 African American adults have lost their right to vote because of a felony conviction (a disenfranchisement rate that's nearly four times greater than that of all other Americans), according to [The Sentencing Project](#).

The injustice of felony disenfranchisement has penetrated the electoral process in all but two states in the U.S. Outside of Maine and Vermont and the District of Columbia, where people can vote from their prison cells, the denial of this fundamental right is devastating and far reaching. Political engagement is quashed, and political strength is decimated—resulting in intentional and perpetual powerlessness of people of color and the poor. This strategic incapacitation of people is driven by system racism, fuels continued poverty, and stymies notions of equal and human rights.

Not only does felony disenfranchisement contribute to the class and race bias in the electorate, it has generational impacts. As more and more African Americans and other people of color are disenfranchised, their children and grandchildren become less politically engaged and don't vote—and their communities continue to lose out on needed resources.

Until we restore the right to vote to all, our elections will be undemocratic—and the results illegitimate.

Over the past two years, several states have made progressive reforms to address felony disenfranchisement—the direct result of organizing and advocacy by people who have experienced incarceration, their families, advocates, and community organizations. That includes:

In August of this year, [Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds](#) signed an executive order restoring voting rights to tens of thousands of people who had completed felony sentences—ending Iowa's distinction as the last remaining state to bar people convicted of felonies from ever voting again.

[Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear](#) signed an executive order in December 2019 that could restore voting rights to upward of 140,000 people with felony convictions. The order also allows them to hold public office.

In Virginia, [Gov. Ralph Northam](#) is also using his executive powers to restore the right to vote to many Virginians.

These are important steps in the right direction. But we must keep working to restore voting rights for all—and ensure that no one is ever disenfranchised, regardless of their involvement with the criminal legal system.

We must also hold government accountable for implementing these reforms as intended. In Florida, for example, public officials continue to suppress the vote, despite the fact that voters approved a constitutional amendment in 2018 to restore voting rights to over a million people with felony convictions who had been subject to lifetime disenfranchisement. In 2019, Florida's governor signed into law the equivalent of a poll tax to disenfranchise them again, and legal challenges to the law hit a roadblock in July of this year [when the Supreme Court refused to intervene](#).

Here in New York City, more than a dozen young people have joined efforts to end felony disenfranchisement by taking part in AFSC's Liberation Academy. In partnership with Let NY Vote and Justice Aid, these young leaders are learning how to advocate against felony disenfranchisement and developing a social media campaign to register formerly incarcerated people to vote. They are also working on a short film for the Democracy 2020 Youth Film Challenge to encourage young people to vote.

As millions of people across this country continue their struggle to be recognized, I'm reminded of the words of my friend Larry White, who was formerly incarcerated and now works with AFSC's Healing Justice Program. At the age of 77, Larry voted for the first time—after more than 40 years of being disenfranchised. He told me, "I now matter, my opinion counts."

Let's end this injustice now.

—Lewis Webb, Jr, Healing Justice Program Coordinator, AFSC (American Friends Service Committee)

MEETING OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

Co-Clerk: Andra Hollenbeck 601-6421

Co-Clerk: Bill Ashworth 778-9470

Recording Clerk: Alex Reid 707-499-9146

Treasurer: Adam Thompson 201-8255

Weekly e-Bulletin Editor: Adam Thompson 201-8255

Newsletter Editor: Bob Morse 482-8449, Sylvie Weaver

Web Administrator: Bob Morse 482-8449

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

Art Coordinator: Becky Hale 601-3084

Uprooting Racism Coordinator: Bob Morse 482-8449

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

Joint Committee Representatives: Herb Rothschild, Valeria Breiten

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

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

Finance Committee: Jean Semrau, Fran Curtis, Treasurer *ex officio*

Buildings & Grounds: Merlin McDaniel, Raymond Scully, Hazel Ward, Terri Brain, Steve Wells

Nominating Committee: Valeria Breiten. Beth Aspedon

Friendship & Hospitality Committee: Crystal Bosbach, Cathy McDaniel, K Hering, Deedie Runkel

Greeters: Steve Radcliffe, Alex Reid, Javan Reid, Rochelle Webster, Karen Maleski, Deedie Runkel, Terri Brain

Peace & Social Concerns Committee: Herb Rothschild, Ken Deveney, Javan Reid, Pam Allister, Elizabeth Hallett

Library: Fran Curtis, Melody Ashworth, Steve Wells

Adult Education Committee: Jim Lobsenz, K Hering, Melody Ashworth

Homeless Outreach: Bob Morse, Alex Reid, Becky Hale, Terri Brain

Ministry & Counsel Committee: Gizelle Luccio 897-4458, Jim Phillips 482-2388, Steve Radcliffe 479-3487, Linda Spencer 865-3682, Co-Clerk *ex officio*

All area codes are 541 unless otherwise noted

South Mountain Friends Meeting

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