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(Near Southern Oregon University)

SOUTH MOUNTAIN FRIENDS MEETING

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

Twelfth Month 2021

Cleanliness is Next to Humanness

Laundry Love began in 2003 with T-Bone, aka Eric, a houseless gentleman living in Ventura, California. Upon being asked, "How can we come alongside your life in a meaningful way?" he offered this honest and practical response: "If I had clean clothes, I think people would treat me like a human being." Laundry Love is now a national nonprofit with chapters scattered throughout the US.

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

First-Hour Activity

9 to 10 am

Discussions via Zoom

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

5 December Uprooting Racism: Worship Sharing on Black-on-Black Violence (See p. 4)

12 December Winnowing Session: How Are Quakers Led to Engage in Faith-Based Climate Action? (See p. 3)

19 December Meeting for Business (9-10:30 am)

26 December Adult Education: Jim Lobsenz to accompany himself on the guitar as he sings songs of peace and songs of the season—on Zoom. Friends will be invited to mute their mics while raising their voices in song. Lyrics will be provided.

Meeting for Worship

11 am to Noon

At The Quaker Meeting House
or by Zoom at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7477317797?pwd=SW1sd3pTZjhlbGRmUWpOY3pZaUFDdz09>



In the summer of 2015, Ashland United Church of Christ's newly formed Local Justice and Witness Committee was searching for a meaningful way for the congregation to support the community. At the suggestion of the United Way Director, Dee Anne Everson, the committee, of which I was the co-chair, researched then started a Laundry Love chapter. We approached Nick Baida, owner of Henry's Laundromat. Fortunately, Nick was familiar with Laundry Love because volunteers at his Grants Pass laundromat were already offering Laundry Love services. Launched the following October, Ashland's Laundry Love was immediately a big hit.

Volunteers started raising funds by putting out a donation jar in the UCC fellowship hall. Soon, however, it became necessary to raise \$500 each month (\$6,000 a year) to meet the need. Our fundraising expanded to seeking grants from the national UCC and United Way, as well as contributions from local businesses, other congregations (including Quakers), and individuals. Most years, Laundry Love volunteers put on a benefit concert featuring Lisa Spencer and Karen Wennlund, always a standing-room-only event.

The two paintings on page 1 and 2 hang in Henry's Laundromat and were painted by Faye Cummings.

Continued on Page 2

Cleanliness is Next to Humanness

Continued from Page 1

Initially, we held Laundry Love one Saturday each month, with 4 to 6 volunteers supplying laundry products and quarters for the machines to 60-70 people so that they could wash and dry their clothing and bedding. We offered a big, hot dinner and our guests reciprocated with music. I nostalgically remember cold winter nights when all of us warm, well-fed people laughed and sang, with piles of clean laundry all around, steaming up the frosty windows, and making a joyful noise. It's the closest I've come so far to a Messianic Banquet!



Eventually, the laundromat owner declared this service model too disruptive, and we really couldn't blame him. Beginning then, right up until April 2020 when COVID again changed our practices, we sent 2 volunteers to the laundromat each Tuesday and Thursday the first three weeks of the month to serve 8-12 Laundry Love guests each time. We still served coffee, tea, and snacks and offered books and art supplies to the children. We continued providing clean sweatpants and sweatshirts for those who needed to wash everything they owned, but we made far less noise and less impacted other customers. Still, I recall a happy young man giving us red-aproned volunteers a wink and saying as he exited, "You guys have a good vibe going on here!"

We stopped volunteer services in April 2020, due to COVID, but we were fortunate not to have to stop Laundry Love altogether. Donations have continued coming in, and a kind-hearted staff person at Henry's has been offering quarters to those in need during our absence. Options for Helping Residents of Ashland's generous sharing of the financial resources they received during COVID and the voucher system they created to disburse these funds to Laundry Love guests greatly helped over the past two years—especially with the increase in Laundry Love guests when numerous local residents lost their homes to the Alameda Fire.

Eleven seasoned Laundry Love volunteers (including Quakers) look forward to resuming our work and fundraising, hopefully in January, or as soon as we've all had booster shots and the COVID numbers in Jackson County no longer feel threatening.



Since its inception, Laundry Love has been generously supported by caring and by financial contributions from our Quaker Meeting which the volunteers—and especially the guests—have greatly appreciated. A change at Ashland UCC has resulted in their only holding our Laundry Love funds until 1 January 2022. Thus, we are in conversation with OHRA to see if they can provide low-cost bookkeeping for us. There are details to work through, but Laundry Love fits within OHRA's mission, and their board and staff seem willing—even welcoming!

—Alex Reid

(Cartoon Contributed by Becky Hale)

How Are Quakers Called to Engage In Faith-Based Climate Action?

Winnowing Session on Harmony with Creation: 9 am Sunday 12 December on Zoom

In October, South Mountain Friends led an interfaith climate action in alignment with faith-based communities around the globe. Our collective intention was to create a spiritual container in which world leaders gathering at the UN Conference on Climate Change in Scotland in early November would replace vacuous promises with definitive action. Clergy who joined us as we gathered outside the County Courthouse for silent worship requested being notified when we Quakers initiate additional actions. Before we could convene a planning meeting with these clergy, we need to discern what we Quakers mean when we imagine additional faith-based climate events. Consultation from our Peace & Social Concerns Committee led to the idea of **turning to our *Faith & Practice* and exploring together the part of the Testimony of Stewardship call Harmony with Creation as the basis of our winnowing.** —Bob Morse

Healing of the Earth is central to all our Quaker concerns.... No peace without a planet.... No justice without a planet.... Those who care about the Earth must feel its woundedness as our own . —Elizabeth Watson, 1991

Advices & Queries on Harmony with Creation

Rejoice in the majesty of nature. Pray that the Presence will lead us to our rightful place in the creation.

We are each part of the intricate web of life; each choice to act or not to act can have profound consequences. We live in such a complex world that we can do considerable damage without knowing it. Choices that are beneficial in one direction may be harmful in another.

We take care to conserve and protect the whole of life. Both scientific inquiry and spiritual reflection lead us to deeper understanding of the interconnected, constantly changing systems in which we live.

The essence of the Divine Light can be found in our connection to the natural world. Our collective experience of this deep interconnectedness with all nature helps us understand the connection between ecological and cultural diversity, know the Earth as teacher, and value inspiration from a range of faith traditions.

We face the difficult challenge to change our manner of living to come into harmony with creation. As we support each other's efforts to use no more than our fair share, we guard against waste and resist the temptations of convenience and the inertia of the status quo. We help each other look for ways to counter attitudes of human arrogance, domination, and greed which threaten Earth's equilibrium.

**God calls Friends today
... to look into our hearts
and examine our
relationship with the rest
of Creation, and to
recognize that our
neighbor includes the
entire Earth community.
We, too, are being asked
to give up habits and
things which have made
our lives seem easier, just
as slaves appeared to
make life easier for their
owners. —Lisa Gould,
1994**



*In what ways do we seek harmony with Creation?
How does science help us live within It respectfully?*

*In what ways do we honor all living things?
Do we seek the holiness inherent in the order of nature,
the wildness of wilderness, and the richness of the world?*

*How do our daily habits and choices reflect our respect
for the web of life?*

What will the impact of our current choices be on the lives of future generations?

How do we educate ourselves and others about living in harmony with the earth?

What can we do to make the community of life whole?



Understanding Violence Among Members of the Black Community

Non-violence is one of our core Quaker values. Addressing violence is part of our calling and may be a key element in understanding and uprooting racism—especially violence perpetrated by Black people in Black neighborhoods.

People of color do not have dependable protection of the law from the violence they suffer from their own. Domestic violence is rife, as is playground and street violence. Crime pervades society from top to bottom, but just as embezzlement is largely confined to white collar environments, drive-by shootings are confined to what we used to call ghettos. People of color flee these environments if they can, and rightly so, but Black flight has left such areas with social infrastructures weaker than the days when all Blacks were confined to a few areas of the city.



We mustn't underestimate the political importance of white perception of violence in predominantly Black neighborhoods. Even as we understand how that violence is the consequence of white oppression, until it abates, it is an enormous obstacle to creating a just society. It is also a terrible burden on the lives of those who actually live with it.

Uprooting Racism: Worship Sharing on Black-on-Black Violence

9 am Sunday 5 December on Zoom



We will begin with viewing parts of a video interview with Dr Cosey-Gay on *The Social Roots of Violence in Black Communities*. Franklin N. Cosey-Gay is the Executive Director of the Chicago Center for Youth Violence Prevention housed at the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration. His program of research examines the nature of community violence and what factors increase risk or serve to protect positive outcomes among urban youth from marginalized communities.

How did we get here? Cosey-Gay describes a history that's older than our country which stigmatizes Black people, contains them, and disrupts their lives. This pattern began in West Africa with viewing sovereign citizens as property that could be kidnaped, contained on ships, and cut off from their cultural, familial, and linguistic roots. This system persisted through the years of chattel slavery and Jim Crow laws. Redlining perpetuated the degrading of the social fabric which was further destroyed by the hyper-incarceration of Black bodies. This system of dehumanizing, containing, and destroying persists, resulting in hurt people hurting people.

What's the fix? Cosey-Gay speaks of a three-pronged approach: Investing early by helping young children in schools, doing street outreach to help young adults return to a nurturing social structure, and supporting community-based organizations by developing trust-filled relationships.

—Herb Rothschild and Bob Morse

All the fear in the world doesn't prevent death.



It prevents life.
—Lenore Skenazy



Friends Journal

And now, for something completely different.

The November issue of *Friends Journal* is in the mail now to members, and it's live now online.

This issue—also our annual Books issue—is a bit of an experiment. In collaboration with guest editors Annalee Flower Horne and Hilary B. Bisenieks, we are excited to present a slate of Quaker speculative and science fiction stories.



I'll let them explain:

Speculative fiction—a “supergenre” that includes traditional science fiction alongside other “what if” stories such as fantasy and alternate history—is a way of examining things by changing their context. When x changes, what happens to y? What are the constants in the equation?

When you are a nerd about speculative fiction and about Quakerism, as we are, it seems natural to use one to examine the other: if we are in this world but not of this world, then who are we when we are not in this world but a world that has been reimagined in some way? What remains true no matter what shifts around us?

Download the PDF version: <https://www.friendsjournal.org/private/FJ-2021-11.PDF>

Read the issue online: <https://www.friendsjournal.org/issue-category/2021/speculative-fiction-sci-fi/>

Friends Journal is free to all online, thanks to the generosity sustaining members. Sustainers can make a contribution of any amount today to extend their membership—or to send the *Journal* to a loved one as a gift: <https://www.friendsjournal.org/donate>. This ministry would not be possible without sustainers. All readers are welcome to become sustaining members. Thanks!

“Our mission is to communicate Quaker experience in order to connect and deepen spiritual lives.”

Yours in peace,

Gabriel Ehri
Executive Director

(Contributed by Fran Curtis, South Mountain Librarian)

Spirit-Led Creative and Inspiring Groups

FREE WRITING FRIENDS has been gathering weekly for over a decade. Our practice is to wait in silence, listen and take notes from the still small voice, then to share our writing with each other. We have all been enriched spiritually, grown in compassion, love, and trust. We meet 3 to 5 pm Mondays at the Meeting House and are always open to any Friend or attender so led to join us.

Might you be interested in co-creating a weekly **INSPIRATIONAL READING GROUP** for young and old, seasoned Friends, attenders and spiritual seekers to share spiritual information that inspires you? As we know, there are many eclectic sources of inspiration we are each drawn to. Some are attracted to Quaker, Buddhist, Indigenous, Course in Miracles, or spiritual teachers of various persuasions. Participants could each take turns sharing a chapter, reprint, or recording that is spiritually meaningful to them, to listen to or read together, and share our current spiritual lives in a compassionate accepting circle. Please call me if you'd like to help co-create such a circle.

Becky Hale (541-601-3084)

“While white supremacy culture affects us all, harms us all, and is toxic to us all, it does not affect, harm, and violate us in the same way. White supremacy targets and violates BIPOC people and communities with the intent to destroy them directly; white supremacy targets and violates white people with a persistent invitation to collude that will inevitably destroy their humanity.”

—Tema Okun,
Race Equity Author and Activist

Meeting for Business 21 November 21

Friends Present: Bill Ashworth, Melody Ashworth, Crystal Bosbach, Terri Brain, Valeria Breiten, Ken Deveney, Maureen Graham, Becky Hale, K Hering, Andra Hollenbeck, Bob Morse, Alex Reid, Herb Rothschild, Nancy Spear, Adam Thompson

Quotation for Reflection “There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.” —Margaret J. Wheatley

Minutes

2021.11.1 Friends approved minutes for the 3 October 2021 Called Meeting for Worship for Business and the 17 October 2021 Meeting for Worship for Business.

Treasurer October contributions were strong so that even with the additional costs for the retreat, revenues exceeded expenditures, leaving us with a healthy checking account balance.

Nominating

2021.11.2 The Meeting approved Valeria Breiten’s stepping down as clerk of Nominating and serving on M&C for a 1-year term, Maureen Graham’s serving as clerk of Nominating for this year, and Jean Semrau’s assisting M&C on an ad hoc basis to meet Pastoral Care needs.

Bill Ashworth volunteered to serve as archivist, indexing past minutes with special attention to policies.

Joint Committee With the increase expected in room rentals, Joint Committee was able to develop a balanced budget for the current fiscal year.

2021.11.3 Friends agreed to provide \$1,000 to Joint Committee, the Meeting’s share for what the committee currently owes, and to set aside another \$1,000 for them in case rentals do not meet expectations.

The question of whether to purchase an air purifier strong enough to filter out viruses was referred to M&C for reflection since this purchase would provide care for the Meeting and was not included in the Joint Committee budget.

Ministry & Counsel Ken Deveney will ask Jean Semrau to represent SMFM at the Yearly Meeting's Ministry & Counsel Committee Meeting on Zoom, 5 December.

2021.11.4 The Meeting approved a Winnowing Session on the intersection of Faith and Climate Action for 1st Hour December 12 in which we will ponder the Advices and Queries on Harmony with Creation.

A question was raised: “Can we lead others in climate action while continuing to use fossil fuels at the meeting house?” The Joint Committee will take the lead on addressing how to make our building green.

2021.11.5 The Meeting also approved starting an ongoing peer-led group to read together inspirational writings from multiple faith perspectives.

Becky Hale and other Friends were empowered to plan details for M&C review.

Peace & Social Concerns is reaching out to the Interfaith Social Justice Coalition about climate work and to both SOCAN and Rogue Climate about bringing a faith-based component to their campaigns and actions.

They will be reviewing an interfaith tool kit from *Cool Congregations: A Religious Response to Global Warming* to find out what congregations need to do internally to be certified as “cool.”

The committee approved donations of \$100 each to AFSC, FCNL, Right Sharing of the World’s Resources, Friends Peace Teams, and Friendly Water for the World.

Friendship & Hospitality In addition to providing outside snacks and beverages after Worship, F&H now offers masks to attenders who come to Meeting without one. Nine people enjoyed becoming better acquainted at the recent outdoor brown bag luncheon. With approval and appreciation from the Meeting, the committee is beginning a project to display a photo and brief description of each Meeting participant.

The Presiding Clerk announced all Committee Clerks will be invited to meet prior to the next Meeting for Business to review the agenda and priorities.

Respectfully submitted,
Andra Hollenbeck, Presiding Clerk
Alex Reid, Recording Clerk

BEING HUMAN by Naima Penniman

(Contributed by Anya Kumara)

I wonder if the sun debates
dawn
some mornings
not wanting to rise
out of bed
from under the down-feather
horizon

if the sky grows tired
of being everywhere at once
adapting to the mood
swings of the weather

if clouds drift off
trying to hold themselves
together
make deals with gravity
to loiter a little longer

I wonder if rain is scared
of falling
if it has trouble
letting go

if snowflakes get sick
of being perfect all the time
each one
trying to be one-of-a-kind

I wonder if stars wish
upon themselves before they die
if they need to teach their young
how to shine

I wonder if shadows long
to just-for-once feel the sun
if they get lost in the shuffle
not knowing where they're from

I wonder if sunrise
and sunset
respect each other
even though they've never met

if volcanoes get stressed
if storms have regrets
if compost believes in life
after death



Make this image come alive and watch Naima performing this poem:
[Being Human by Naima Penniman - YouTube](#)

I wonder if breath ever thinks of
suicide
if the wind just wants to sit
still sometimes
and watch the world pass by

if smoke was born
knowing how to rise
if rainbows get shy back stage
not sure if their colors match
right

I wonder if lightning sets an
alarm clock
to know when to crack
if rivers ever stop
and think of turning back

if streams meet the wrong sea
and their whole lives run off-
track
I wonder if the snow
wants to be black

if the soil thinks she's too dark
if butterflies want to cover up
their marks
if rocks are self-conscious of
their weight
if mountains are insecure of
their strength

I wonder if waves get
discouraged
crawling up the sand
only to be pulled back again
to where they began

if land feels stepped upon
if sand feels insignificant
if trees need to question their
lovers
to know where they stand

if branches waver at the
crossroads
unsure of which way to grow
if the leaves understand they're
replaceable
and still dance when the wind
blows

I wonder
where the moon goes
when she is in hiding
I want to find her there

and watch the ocean
spin from a distance
listen to her
stir in her sleep

effort give way to existence



and Belonging

*From the 14 November worship discussion on inclusivity and belonging,
I gleaned the following queries for further pondering.*

How can we expand the field of who feels a sense of belonging in our Meeting?

When we imagine what people/groups we'd like to be attracting to our Meeting, how might we consider commonalities more than differences?

How motivated is our Meeting to attract new people?

What would it take for our Meeting to more consciously shine its Light into the world?

Regarding inclusivity, what is Spirit guiding us to do?

Before or as we move forward, might we need to grieve all that's been lost vis-à-vis COVID, climate change, etc.?

How might we provide a clearer pathway to participation for new attendees?

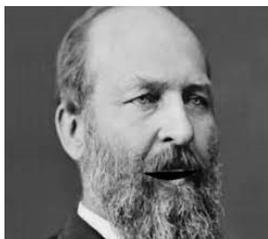
In what ways are we sufficiently appreciating all who come to Meeting?

In what ways are we being a solid, silent center of peace in a violent world?

In what ways is Meeting a refuge for each of us and for our community?

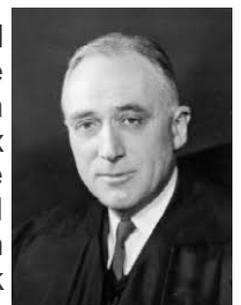
—Bob Morse

Justice Redeemed



In 1896, the US Supreme Court ruled 7-1 against Plessy in the case of Plessy v. Ferguson, upholding the "separate but equal" doctrine that segregated and disenfranchised African Americans for decades. As an activist engaged with the civil rights group "Citizens' Committee to Test the Constitutionality of the Separate Car Act," Homer Plessy, a 30 year-old man of mixed race, chose to sit in the whites-only section of a Louisiana train. His refusing to move led to his anticipated arrest.

The lone dissenter Justice John Marshall Harlan, wrote: "In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law. The humblest is the peer of the most powerful. The law regards man as man and takes no account of his surroundings or his color when his civil rights as guaranteed by the supreme law of the land are involved." Nearly six decades later, when the Supreme Court finally overruled Plessy v. Ferguson in the case of Brown v. Board of Education, many people, even in white America, agreed that Harlan had been right all along. "This is an instance in which the voice crying in the wilderness finally becomes the expression of a people's will," wrote the New York Times editorial board.



In recent years, descendants of Plessy and Ferguson have bonded together to amplify Plessy's legacy. On 12 November 21, the Louisiana Board of Pardons voted to clear Plessy's record.

—Herb Rothschild, Contributor, and Bob Morse, Collator

The American Friends Service Committee's Key Issues

Advancing Peace-Building

Peace and security can never be achieved through violence. AFSC works to build societies that divest from militarism, organized political violence and state violence—and invest in alternatives that enable sustainable peace, open civic space, and prioritize human dignity and rights. Not only does AFSC implement peacebuilding and humanitarian service programs in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East, but it also works to transform militarized approaches to conflict and violence with peaceful, people-centered solutions globally. Click to read about [CAMPAIGNS AND PROGRAMS](#).



Humane Migration Responses



AFSC works for a world where migrants, refugees, and internally displaced people have the power to determine where they live and the opportunity to thrive in society. AFSC works to address both the economic and political drivers of migration in multiple countries as well as to support migrants and refugees, whether they are in transit or settled in new communities. These efforts include legal services, training, human rights monitoring, humanitarian relief, and immigrant-led organizing and advocacy for just immigration policies. Click to read about [CAMPAIGNS AND PROGRAMS](#).

Healing, Not Punitive, Justice

To build a more just, peaceful society, we must promote healing—instead of punishment—in the US criminal legal system. The United States currently has the highest incarceration rate of any country in the world, disproportionately impacting poor people and people of color. AFSC advocates for human-centered alternatives to policing and incarceration, better reintegration after prison, an end to prison privatization, more humane conditions of confinement, and ultimately, the abolition of prisons, jails, and detention centers. Click to read about [CAMPAIGNS AND PROGRAMS](#).



Just Economies

Economies should work for all people and our planet and promote thriving communities—based on solidarity across class, gender, race, and ethnicity. But today, governments worldwide spend billions of dollars on war, policing, incarceration, and violent systems of repression, while communities have inadequate access to food, housing, health care, and education.

AFSC works to support just economic priorities and policies, challenges growing inequality and the corporate abuse of human rights, and advocates for increased access to basic resources. It also provides tools to help people and institutions make socially responsible investments, including divesting from mass incarceration, surveillance, military occupations, and border militarization. Click to read about [CAMPAIGNS AND PROGRAMS](#).



MEETING OFFICERS

Clerk: Andra Hollenbeck 601-6421

Recording Clerk: Alex Reid 707-499-9146

Corresponding Clerk: Beth Aspedon 778-1564

Treasurer: 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

Experiment with Light: Gizelle Luccio 897-4458

Circle of Light: Crystal Bosbach 930-4222

Joint Committee Representatives: Herb Rothschild 531-2848, Valeria Breiten 480-688-7442

All area codes are 541 unless otherwise noted

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*

MEETING COMMITTEES

Ministry & Counsel: **Valeria Breiten** 480-688-7442, Jim Phillips 482-2388, Steve Radcliffe 479-3487, Melody Ashworth 324-9824, Ken Deveney 488-5506, Clerk *ex officio*

Children's Education & Spirituality: **Ken Deveney**, Cathy McDaniel, Melody Ashworth

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

Buildings & Grounds: **Merlin McDaniel**, Raymond Scully, Terri Brain

Nominating: **Maureen Graham**, Valeria Breiten, Terri Brain

Friendship & Hospitality: **Crystal Bosbach**, K Hering, Cathy McDaniel

Greeters: Steve Radcliffe, Rochelle Webster, Karen Maleski

Peace & Social Concerns: **Herb Rothschild**, Ken Deveney, Javan Reid, Elizabeth Hallett, Jim Lobsenz

Library: **Fran Curtis**, Linda Spencer

Adult Education: **K Hering**, Jamie McLeod-Skinner, Jim Lobsenz, Melody Ashworth

Homeless Outreach: **Alex Reid**, Bob Morse, Becky Hale

*Names in **bold** indicate committee convener or clerk*

South Mountain Friends Meeting

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Ashland, Oregon 97520