



Las Cruces Friends Meeting Newsletter July 2014

Friendly Words: Since our Spiritual Practice sessions are on vacation I am taking a quote from Rob Pierson's article in the current May/June Western Friend.

A return by Quakers to businesses that deal in tangible goods – or the development of some new type of Quaker industry – might well serve the needs of our world today. I know many engineers who feel trapped in pursuits that they don't find spiritually fulfilling. They make the items we ask for, yet as a society we ask for cheap trinkets and expensive grenades. Many engineers would happily work for less money if their work had more meaning for them. Our world needs transformative businesses that serve real needs. Friends are well positioned to help heal the rifts between science and faith, business and religion, and to help build the Kingdom in a practical sense.



From Miki Web in Vermont

Calendar

Friday July 4th – Timer Meeting – a chance to share with others at the home of the Browns
1:30 PM *(If you need a ride or directions contact Vickie Aldrich)*

Sunday July 6th – Peace Social and Environmental Concerns will meet after Meeting for Worship

Sunday July 13th - Potluck following Meeting for Worship

Friday June 18th – Timer Meeting – a chance to share with others at the home of the Browns at 1:30 PM *(If you need a ride or directions contact Vickie Aldrich)*

Sunday July 20th – Meeting for worship *(note: there is no business meeting this month)*

Sunday July 27th – Meeting for Worship



El Paso Friends walking in the Gay Pride Parade

A handcrafts and discussion group now meets one hour before the meditation session on Tuesday late afternoons at the Quaker Meetinghouse.

The meditation group is precisely one half hour, from 5:00 to 5:30, at the Meetinghouse. The discussion group, "Handwork/ Heartwork," in which attenders talk while they sew, knit, do needlework orjust rest, meets at 4 o'clock, not so precisely. Everyone is welcome, and the subjects are wide-ranging.

Up Coming Events

HIROSHIMA DAY MEMORIAL EVENT

From Gila Friends:

We enthusiastically welcome Las Cruces Friends and El Paso Friends to join us at 12:30 at Gough Park on Pope Street in Silver City, NM on August 3, 2014. We bring some extra chairs, but encourage folks to bring some of their own chairs. We'll send a flyer along as soon as we can!

Women's Retreat: save the date

Women's retreat will be held the weekend of October 10 - 12th at camp Pinon outside of Albuquerque, NM

From Rachel: Keeping cool in Arizona



Julius, Luc and I are doing well. We are moving to ASU family housing at the beginning of August and would appreciate being held in the light for a smooth transition. I miss everyone!
Rachel

From Erica:

A Trip to El Paso for Vietnamese Food after Rise of Meeting (which means the end).

I became a "member" of The Religious Society of Friends about three years ago. There is no real difference between membership and attendee status. I'll never be a birth-rite nor think that

this matters. I had an interesting Clearness to make this commitment. I thought about people to invite in my inner circle from whom I am comfortable seeking spiritual guidance. I thought of some

women that were spiritual people- who I often seek/sought insight from in the past. I got advice of passions and preparations and let M&O (Ministry and Oversight) determine who would be my "committee". It went well.

I read a little into Faith and Practice. I asked myself some questions and wrote down the answers- in preparation for this process. I really asked myself why I wanted to become a member. Quaker's aren't that "into" declarations of faith; unless they are. So, much like the reflection of the outer world I asked, "Why do I need to break the silence and put a name on something?" I break silence all the time. I break my silence to express myself in fear of my existence falling into the void of indifference.

I picked Quakers because they were closer than the *vipassana* place in the Mimbres. Something felt wrong about driving an hour and a half to sit in silence for an hour, ecologically speaking. Silence is silence and communities of silence have more similarities to other traditions of silence than they do to talk ministry. Mystics are hopeful despite the Suffering. I want to be hopeful. I want to be the kind of person who is able to commit to community. To see that which is God(dess) in others. I want to believe that

God(dess) can sneak out of me if I'm not paying attention or trying to control or understand him/her. I want to be able to summons God(dess) when I lack strength, faith and practice.

I spend Sunday after Sunday after Sunday for almost a half-decade now- imagining what brought these other people to the Religious Society of Friends. There's only about ten of us, so it doesn't get that difficult to make this commitment. Then again you would be surprised...sometimes after a two hour Meeting for worship with an interest in business I am less than Friendly. It took me years to figure out that it is process. I'm not sure I fully grasp the full intent of the practice. It can feel awfully tedious. For me, Unity is about quieting my heart and my passions to make room for listening to other people's passions and then deciding if I agree with an idea; not the way that it was presented or the individual who presented it but what do I really feel conviction about in decision making. I can't count the time that ten minutes after I get home I realized that I really didn't care about that "thing" when I was so adamant in my thinking. How little do I "season" any decision? I would have to admit not frequently enough. So I come back again and again. After time Friends become friends.

I am uniquely responsible to this group. I liked being Recording Clerk (don't tell anyone; it gave me something to "do" during meeting for business). I think about maybe being the designated person who sits in silence and prays for Clerk with no input- that will be very hard for me. It would be a practice in engaged disengagement. I'll have a clearness committee before I make that commitment. It was nice to move into my current responsibilities: M&O, Library Committee and some IMYM and NM regional commitments. The last two end-up connecting me with some three hundred people that I could share my soul with any given summer.

I think about a lot of things. What makes me a Quaker-my presentation of my Self to the outside world (I could be benefitted by acting more in the manner of Friends)? How do I create my Self as a Friend-who I want to be in communion with my Friends and my interface with silence? Who am I as a friend- when the pretense evaporates (mostly only seen by my roommate's cat, the ghost of past lovers and sometimes when I'm alone and brave and really able to be present with my Self- the silence and the noise). I don't always have a solid answer, I'm trying to learn not to need one.

For me the answer shifts over time. Initially and intermittently it was/is because I was/am desperate for friends. Often it is because I needed the hour of committed silence- It really is easier when there are other people. For a while it was because I felt like I could stop crying long enough to sit for meeting for worship- only to discover that I also felt safe enough to just go home when I realized I was unable to stop my self-pity/genuine grief to get through one hour of silence. Now I find I do cry through meeting for worship. I have felt sobs in my Friends, I have heard tenderness in their testimonies, and I gain insight and enlightenment when I listen to advice from Friends. It's ultimately about making a commitment for just one hour a week -I can try to find love in my heart despite the Suffering both real and perceived. I am learning to forgive my Self if I can't make True Silence and just churn my own sour words over and over. Sometimes just saying my name with sincerity and conviction at rise of meeting is what I have to offer my community. There are moments when I'm in the back of my Peace-nik Friends' car driving for a Meeting for Worship with El Paso Friends and a promise of Vietnamese food in West Texas and I realize, I am happy and honored to be included. It's

not signing my name in the book like in *The Crucibles*, although that sounded like fun until the whole trails

Local Friends at Inter Mountain Yearly Meeting

and burning bit. But yeah, it still feels right to be a Friend.



the Contra Band



Act I



Act II

Spiritual Formation Committee June, 2014

The Spiritual Formation Committee held its seventh group worship session of the series on Quaker Testimonies on June 22, 2014. This session represented equality, the last in the series on Quaker Testimonies. Review of the Quaker witness on equality included the early revelations of George Fox on "that of God in everyone." Historical manifestations of this testimony were reviewed and included highlights of the Quaker response to inequality and injustice in the world. Queries on Equality were shared, as well as individual sculpting creations with Play-Doh.

This worship event represented a special joint Spiritual Practice session with both Las Cruces and El Paso Friends in attendance.

Follow up evaluation of the 2013-14 series on Quaker Testimonies will be provided in the near future, prior to selecting the topic for the Fall offering of the Spiritual Practice worship sessions. Members/Attendees are encouraged to offer suggestions for future activities for consideration during the planning process.

The Spiritual Formation Committee will take a brief summer break and reconvene in August.

QUERIES ON EQUALITY

1. Am I alert to practices here and throughout the world, which discriminate against people on the basis of who or what they are or because of their beliefs?
2. Am I open to new light, from whatever source it may come?
3. Do I examine myself for aspects of prejudice that may be buried, including beliefs that seem to justify biases based on race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, class, and feelings of inferiority or superiority?
4. What am I doing to help overcome the contemporary effects of past and present oppression?
5. Am I teaching my children, and do I show through my way of living, that love of God includes affirming the equality of people, treating others with dignity and respect, and seeking to recognize and address that of God within every person?
6. Do I make my home a place of friendliness, joy, and peace, where my family and visitors feel God's presence?

