



# The Quaker Heron

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The newsletter of Patapsco Friends Meeting

## From the Editor

This issue of the *Heron* introduces a new section, called Quaker Beings. This section is meant to balance the intellectual theme of each issue with a down-to-earth look at how we are actually living in the world today as Quakers. What really happens in our day-to-day lives when we encounter a homeless person, ride on a bus, or plant a garden? How do we live out our spirituality in our daily lives? Where have we succeeded and where have we “failed?” Where are we on our personal spiritual journeys? How do we let people know through our actions who we are? I hope that in the future people will further share themselves, their struggles and their sense of community through this section.

On a personal note, I am pleased that the story of Jim Rose’s blackberry sorbet is included in the new section. When he brought his sorbet to simple lunch three summers ago, I was struck by the need to record this action, because somehow it seemed to define who we are. I think from that moment on I knew I would someday do a newsletter, and that Jim’s sorbet would find a place in it.

Thematically, this newsletter issue centers around the equality testimony. As usual, the layering together of different people’s thoughts on the same topic produces a very rich exchange of ideas. I am especially grateful that the responses in this issue run from the theoretical to the personal. In the personal lies a willingness to be vulnerable. A willingness to be vulnerable, to allow others in, is the beginning of equality, and what the

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## On Equality

by John Buck

It is difficult to see inequality as undesirable. I have a copy of the September 10, 1861 edition of the *Daily Dispatch*, a newspaper printed in Richmond, Virginia. My great grandfather, a soldier in the Civil War, somehow carried it home to Rhode Island at the end of his tour. On the front page appear several announcements of rewards for runaway slaves. Here’s an example: “Runaway - Ten Dollars Reward - The above reward will be paid for the capture and return of my Negro Woman, named POLLY, who left my house some three weeks since. She is between 50 and 60 years old, low and thick, with very thick lips, and swelled feet and ankles; supposed to be somewhere in the upper part of the city. — JOHN H. HILLYARD.” I feel my eyes tearing up for Polly now as I type. What shocks me most about Polly and John’s inequality is the air of normalcy about their relationship. Even Friends owned slaves for a while until such as John Woolman awoke them to its evils.

Equality for all humans is evidently not so “self-evident” as the Declaration of Independence asserts. The idea wasn’t even mentioned until 1381 when John Ball, an itinerant English preacher, argued for equality based on his assertion that, as all people are descended from Adam and Eve, no person can claim to be lord of another.

“When Adam delved and Eve span  
Who then was the gentleman?”

John Ball helped Wat Tyler lead 100,000 in a Peasant’s Revolt. The revolt ended when the mayor of London stabbed Tyler to death during pretended negotiations. Ball’s ideas were crushed until they re-emerged 400 years later during the English Revolution via John Lilburne, leader of the Levellers, and George Fox, leader of the Quakers. Oliver Cromwell crushed the Levellers but not before they proposed a constitution for England that 150 years later was the starting point for developing the American Constitution.

Lilburne’s concept of equality implies identicalness. We see this identicalness as we walk into the voting booth: your ballot looks just like my ballot. Fox spoke not for Lilburne’s equality but for equivalence, for different individuals having the same worth or significance, for treasuring the differences among human vessels who yet carry the same Light. Because the Light is the same in all, Fox argued, any value that sets one person above another is a false, unholy value.

Cromwell did not crush Fox, perhaps because Cromwell felt Fox’s ideas weren’t a new basis for governance. For example, when Friends had a majority of the Pennsylvania State legislature in the early 1700s, they voted like Levellers; they did not seek to find Sense of the Legislature. But, I believe that Cromwell was wrong, and that Friends of the 1700s missed an opportunity to show that he was wrong. It is time to correct their failure and to promote the exercise of power on the basis of equivalence.

Where should we start? It may surprise you that inequality, nay slavery, is still both legal and common in the United States, that persons are still bought and sold every day. Those persons are legal persons, corporations, with owners who can sell them at auction. I work for such a legal slave. What does that make me? A secondary slave? I

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# On Equality

have no enfranchisement in the corporation where I work. The corporation can ignore me. If I don't like the corporation's leader, I must, somewhat like Polly, vote with my feet. But, you say, the employment relationship is normal. Yes, I reply, but that does not make it desirable. John and Polly's relationship was once "normal." The employment relationship is an abomination that blots the Light between us. If you've ever had a boss, think how carefully you've sometimes picked your words around that person. Can you tell me that your unequal employment relationship does not inhibit the Truth?

Friends should first start in the workplace to expand society's use of equivalence because that is now where it is needed most. We do not have to be masters and servants to work together. To do complex work, we must have leaders, followers, and capital resources. But, leaders, followers, and providers of capital can sit together as equivalents to set the aims and modes of work, none ignoring the others. We do not have to share common beliefs about God to meet in the Light and develop limits and policies about our work and our ways of living together.

I am not talking about something as abstract as "employee ownership." Besides, that's not desirable anyway since ownership is ownership and must not be the basis of control. Rather, we must adopt the practice of every few weeks setting aside our day-to-day hierarchies and professional specialties and meeting respectfully together to make policy decisions about our work solely on the basis of our unique, individual arguments. We must change our incorporation papers to lay down ownership as the basis of control. Instead, the basis of power, real power, must be the more-or-less Truth that always emerges when we talk together as equivalent beings about our common aims.

Sound farfetched? Idealistic? Impractical? It's not.

*"Here there is no Greek or Jew,  
circumcised or uncircumcised,  
barbarian, Scythian, slave or free,  
but Christ is all and is in all."*

— *Colossians 3:11*

## Equality Before the Law

*by Bob Rhudy*

**M**y professional work for the past twenty-one years has centered on promoting equal justice for all persons regardless of income or other factors. Consequently, I am most comfortable sharing my thoughts about equality in regard to equal access to justice.

Our system of government is grounded in the premise that all persons are equal before the law. The second purpose stated in the U.S. Constitution is to "establish justice," while assuring "equal protection of the laws" in the Fourteenth Amendment. "Equal Justice Under Law" is chiseled over the entrance to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In Quaker terms, I view justice as one way of "answering that of God in every

one." Justice is a secular expression of such Biblical dictates as "Love thy neighbor as thyself," and "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Justice at its core is just relations between people.

Despite our public pronouncements, people are not accorded equality by our legal institutions. Wealth and other forms of status are accorded legal advantage.

Persons who cannot afford an attorney may fail to understand their rights, responsibilities, and remedies, and cannot gain access to court and other legal forums.

Blacks are far more likely to be arrested, charged with crimes, imprisoned, and given the death penalty than others in similar circumstances. In many other instances, justice works better for some persons than others.

While it is hard to define justice or describe how it feels, all of us can recall how an injustice feels. One has been wronged. It hurts, and the hurt continues. To suffer an injustice is to be denied respect as a person. When the injustice is not corrected, the injured person may lose self-respect, become angry at the source of the injustice, and resent the system that allowed the injustice to stand. Some persons suffer injustices continually.

Martin Luther King, Jr. stated that when a system is created to provide benefits, and some persons are excluded from the system, those persons will consciously or unconsciously undertake to destroy that system. Our system of justice does not provide equality before the law for many of our neighbors, with harmful consequences for us all.

While the fruits of injustice are apparent around the world, some countries have given greater attention to assuring equal justice for all than in the United States. We can take inspiration from their leadership. In our country and throughout the world, we should strive to assure equal justice for all persons as an expression of our common humanity and "that of God in every one."

## Inward Equality

by Jeanne Knight

Equality is often seen as an outward treatment of OTHERS. By this I mean, we strive to maintain equal treatment of others because “our belief in the universality of the Inner Light requires us to ‘walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone,’ “ as George Fox urged. [Faith and Practice, Fellowship and Community 11d With All Humanity] We do this without regard to one’s circumstances in race, gender, nationality or economic status. Those of us with less than iron-clad egos, however, struggle with self confidence issues. Everyone else may be equal but somehow I don’t come up to speed, we may think. It is easy to maintain focus on equality from afar but not as simple when it is up close and in our face.

I was reminded, rather bluntly recently, that self deprecation is not acceptable; it is behavior which is not supported by Quaker practice. Just the opposite, in fact. We should hold ourselves in the same light in which we hold others. We should love that which God created in ourselves. Each of us contains the Inner Light, That of God in Everyone, and the Seed.

This isn’t easy. We are thrust into circumstances where our acquaintances are PhDs, went to Ivy League schools, have more income, more beauty, more talent. The list is endless. They have the ability to maintain interests in complex issues and their comprehension of science, computers or world political events far surpasses that which is personally imaginable.

The blessed community can help us grow more confident in ourselves, as can a loving relationship. Working on the self through our God-given gifts by maintaining personal and vocational lives which are healthy is part of what we contribute to the community. At times I see in myself anger that turns to depression, depression that turns into anger, frustration, second guessing, mistrust, and disappointment. It is easier to judge myself in

*“After some farther conversation,  
I said, that Men having power too  
often misapplied it; that though we  
made slaves of the Negroes, and the  
Turks made slaves of the  
Christians, I believed that Liberty  
was the natural right of all men  
equally.”*

— *The Journal of John Woolman*

ways that would I do not and could not judge others. However, taking the self into a third-party light by prayer, self-training or by talking to others can help put a positive perspective on what may seem to be unsolvable dilemmas.

Everyone is different. The diversity of gifts and circumstance, though at times mysterious in its necessity, is important for the world to function.

We can keep in mind that our role in the community is similar to spokes in the wheel. Weakened spokes (individuals) don’t serve to strengthen the wheel but strong, well-attached spokes can assure that the wheel (community) is functional and spins evenly and in balance, getting us where we need to go on our spiritual paths. This analogy can be seen both in the microcosm of personal relationships and the macrocosm of our Meeting. Becoming our best self, a person with con-

fidence in our God-given gifts or talents, is our duty because each Friend is called upon to be a servant of God. [Faith and Practice 4, Use and Nurture Gifts] We are all equal spokes on the wheel, though we are not the same spokes on the wheel.

## Equality and Homosexuality

by Sherri Morgan

Support for the civil rights of gays and lesbians is an equality struggle which has spoken to me strongly over the past fifteen years. From the time of my first friendship with a lesbian woman it was immediately clear to me that it was just “wrong” for her to be excluded from the various protections and privileges of the law simply because her choices (to the extent that sexual orientation is a choice) about whom to love were different than mine. Growing up in a church that interpreted the Bible literally, I had some concern about whether homosexuality could be reconciled with Christianity. Putting a face on the question made all the difference. God could not intend for me to disregard my friend’s inherent worth as a person and her need to live in loving communion with others. Love dictates that I treat her, and every other person, with tender regard.

The Quaker belief in “that of God in every person” supports the legitimacy of civil rights for gays and lesbians. What a comfort to find a religious community that welcomes both gay and straight equally! My worship experience has been enriched time and time again by the courageous presence of lesbian women and gay men in the Quaker community who take the risk of trusting that there is room enough at God’s table for all.

Although there has been significant progress in this area, much remains to be accomplished. Gay bashing stands as one of the last socially acceptable forms of discrimination. The percentage of gays and lesbians who have experienced verbal

*"Imagine all the people*

*Sharing all the world.*

*You may say I'm a dreamer,*

*But I'm not the only one."*

— *John Lennon*

or physical harassment or attacks is dangerously high, as is the suicide rate among such adolescents.

Of course, the most important question is what will be our personal response to this pervasive form of intimidation. This is also the hardest question for any of us to answer. Among Friends there has been support within individual meetings for supporting gay and lesbian committed relationships. Several times in the last year I have had the occasion to respond to casual remarks by young people when they denigrated someone as "gay." I am saddened by the seeming consensus that such a term is in fact derogatory, as well as by the use of name calling. Unfortunately, this usage is not limited to non-Quakers.

Within our own spiritual community we can work to sensitize each other and our children to the needs and strengths of the gay population. One way I have quietly done this with my own son is to include in discussions about "family" the variety of configurations that can make up a family, including two women or two men as parents. In doing so, questions about marriage come up, which leads into more discussion about laws that prohibit same-sex marriage. Many organizations providing diversity education for youngsters have developed a wealth of age-appropriate material pertaining to gay families. This can be used in First Day school, retreats or other settings as teachers expand on the present-day evolution of the equality testimony.

Is this a topic on which there is complete consensus within Quakerism? No, but our call to truth-telling also demands that we honestly confront the questions raised by gay rights advocates and that we strive to objectively inform our children about the proportion of individuals in every community who are ridiculed and punished for their personal relationships. By discussing these concerns as a matter of course we will also create a safe haven for those youngsters within our midst who struggle with questions of their own emerging sexual identity. Lesbian and gay

youth often find that home and church are two places of refuge from which they are banned. Let us create a space where they are openly welcome.

## A Gathered Community

by *Jim Rose*

**I**t is so difficult to write about normative issues such as equality, justice, truth, just because they are so dependent on context. And context, or our perceptions of that context, is what wars are made of. Assertions of inequality or injustice are dependent on commonly held axioms or principles or convictions. Deny but one of those axioms, slightly distort an accepted principle, question a conviction and the assertions are revealed in a new light.

So instead of discussing assertions of equality, what if I focused on equality as an icon, a metaphor, as an example, an instance of icons in general. "All men are created equal." is not a conclusion of some

scientific investigation, it is not deduced from a set of more primitive assertions, nor is it inferred from our observations about the real world. It is, itself, an axiom upon which we have based our politics, our legal system, our national creed.

The Quaker insistence that there is that of God in everyone is a fundamental re-statement of the equality icon: it is axiomatic to Quaker tradition and Quaker theology. It is so firmly engrained in our traditions to appear as dogma. Indeed, to question this one axiom is, in my own mind, to question the essence of Quakerism.

This axiom of equality has little to do with the relationship among men. We are all unequal in our genetics, our talents and abilities, our culture, our awareness. That there is that of God in each of us is *not* a statement that we all have equal access to God, but that God has equal access to each of us.

Indeed, each person has a different perception of the light: each person comes from a different context, each person filters events through their own sieve wrought of the joys and pains of their whole lives. Yet underlying our individualistic interpretation of the Truth is the one and same light which has equal access to all of us.

Equality is not something which is owned or endowed, nor does that equality endow us with rights and privileges. To the contrary; the equal light shared by all puts on each of us the obligation to listen to that light by listening to everyone. While awareness is often fostered by revelation, knowledge of that spirit is learned by listening. As each of us are equally accessible by the Light, and each of us filter that light through our own accumulation of experiences, fears and hopes, what surfaces from any individual is a glimmering, fogged, distorted. But as that same Truth makes its way through many individual filters, a resonance is created and true clarity can be revealed.

Discernment and clarity have been explicit challenges for all Quakers. Revelation, a glimpse of the Light, must be

*“Not that he considered himself a better hunter than the others — such an idea does not exist in Guayaki psychology. Of course, each Indian would say with conviction: ‘Cho ro bretete. I am a great hunter.’ But he would never say, ‘I am the best hunter of all,’ and would be even less likely to say, ‘I am better than this man or that man.’ Although each Guayaki hunter feels he is really excellent, none would dream of comparing himself to the others, and each would admit with good grace that perfection is a quality that can be shared by everyone equally.”*

— *Pierre Clastres, Chronicle of the Guayaki Indians, p. 32*

recognized as something which I have already filtered through my personal sieve. I am obliged to seek clarity, to find how my truth resonates with the truth as seen by others. And there are few better places to seek that clarity than in a meeting where each of us ministers vocally from our own awareness of that same truth.

With that obligation to listen, to seek resonances of the light, arises a corresponding obligation I have to speak in meeting - or at least an obligation not to resist speaking from the light. For how am I to test the veracity of my vision without the benefit of the visions of others? Indeed, how can the resonance shine clearly without the contribution of many visions?

Speaking in meeting itself acquires obligations: to attend to what has already been spoken; to reflect on the import of those messages; to meld those words into my own context; to cast those meldings into the pool of light as I see it. And if the reflection of that casting can be expressed in words, they must be spoken. Only thus can the light itself be illuminated.

If that attention, sensitivity, and resonance is consistently sought at a meeting, if that attention results in repercussive sparkles of sympathetic illumination, I become immersed in a gathered meeting. A gathered meeting where messages spring from messages, where truth struggles to create a shining resonance that each of us can recognize as meaningful in our own context.

Imagine a gathered meeting grown large. Imagine a gathered community. That is equality at work.

## What's Equality Got To Do With It?

by Susan Rose

I have started many times to write about the Testimony of Equality and succeeded only in digging myself into a morass. I think “equality” is a notion that has rhetorical meaning, as in “All men are created equal,” which of course only applied to white, landholding men. We have only to look at our current political scene to see that the struggle for power is in part a struggle to define who is equal (see the debate over affirmative action or abortion). “In the world” we are patently unequal. And I’m still struggling with “there is that of God in everyone.” If you asked me, “Have you experienced God in another person?” I would have to answer, “I’m not sure. Probably not.” Ask me if I have experienced God I will tell you, and probably have told you, this:

My first encounter with God came when my father was mocking a ‘colored’ man to whom he had given a tuxedo just a few hours before. I was six or so at the time, and the feeling of the utter *wrongness* of my father’s behavior was stupefying. I have no idea how that feeling could have come to me, given my age and environment. I have always believed it came from God. My father died when I was twenty-one. My relationship with him had been difficult. I can well remember times when I hated him for his need to belittle, to psychologically hurt others. I had spent many long hours both before and after his death trying somehow to come to terms with the pain and anger he

caused me. Then one evening a couple of years after his death, in the middle of one of these meditations, I felt as if my hands were opened and my arms lifted up and I felt the pain and hate just float away and I *knew* they were gone for good. An interesting expression: gone for good. I exchanged hate for peace with my father. I have always believed that exchange was a gift of God.

So I would do a lot better with a testimony grounded in my experience, call it a Testimony of Devotion or of Delight, my witness to God in me, to my devotion to Jesus, who “has come to teach the people himself.” Or that we might, as John Woolman prays in his *Journal*, “delight in each others happiness.”

Hath he who gave me a being attended with many wants unknown to brute creatures given me a capacity superior to theirs? — and shown me that a moderate application to business is proper to my present condition, and that this, attended with his blessing, may supply all outward wants while they remain within the bounds he has fixed, and no imaginary wants proceeding from an evil spirit may have any place in me? Attend then — O my soul! — to this pure wisdom, as thy sure conductor through the manifold dangers in this world.

Does pride lead to vanity? Does vanity form imaginary wants? Do these wants prompt men to exert their power in requiring that of oth-

*"All the followers of the Way were together and had everything in common."*

— Acts 2: 44

ers which themselves would rather be excused from, was the same required of them?

Do those proceedings beget hard thoughts? Does hard thoughts when ripe become malice? Does malice when ripe become revengeful, and in the end inflict terrible pains on their fellow creatures and spread desolations in the world?

Does mankind walking in uprightness delight in each other's happiness? And do those creatures, capable of this attainment, by giving way to an evil spirit employ their wit

and strength to afflict and destroy one another? Remember then—O my soul!—the quietude of those in whom Christ governs, and in all thy proceedings feel after it.

Does he condescend to bless thee with his presence? To move and influence to action? To dwell in thee and walk in thee? Remember then thy station as a being sacred to God, accept of the strength freely offered thee, and take heed that no weakness in conforming to expensive, unwise, and hard-hearted customs, gendering to discord and

strife, be given way to. Does he claim my body as his temple and graciously grant that I may be sacred to him? Oh! that I may prize this favour and that my whole life may be conformable to this character.

Remember, O my soul, that the Prince of Peace is thy Lord, that he communicates his unmixed wisdom to his family, that they, living in perfect simplicity, may give no just cause of offense to any creature, but may walk as he walked.

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## Q u a k e r B e i n g s

*Quakerism in our daily lives*

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### **Blackberries and Basil: What to do with Nature's Bounty**

*by Susan Rose*

In the first summer of Patapsco Friends' life together, Scott Garrison and Sherri Morgan told us about their marvelous thornless blackberry patch. The previous owner of their home had planted rows of blackberries and Scott and Sherri invited us to consider what we could do with this bounty that was far greater than they could eat. So that first summer we followed the plan of the former owner: we picked the blackberries and took them to the Dutch Country Market on Route 29 where we sold them for wholesale to a Lancaster County fallen-away Mennonite

who sold them for retail to the many patrons of the market from Montgomery and Howard counties.

It didn't take long to learn that picking fruit for a living (or even to make a very small contribution to our Meeting) was a tedious and not very rewarding activity, and so by the next summer this commercial activity ceased. But the blackberries didn't. And Sherri and Scott continued to remind us of them. And we remembered the warm, sweet, tangy, moist taste of a perfectly ripe blackberry on our tongues. And we picked them. Here's what we did with our harvest.

**From Julia Child's Kitchen** by Julia Child, Third Paperback Printing, March 1984, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. [Page 541]

*Sorbet aux fraises ou aux framboises* [which is fresh strawberry or raspberry sher-

bet to you and me, but works with blueberries and blackberries. We know because we've only done this with blueberries and blackberries.]

The formula here is  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of sugar and 1 tablespoon of lemon juice for each cup of fruit puree.

About 1\_ quarts of fresh berries (to produce 3 cups of puree)

2 cups sugar

3 Tb fresh lemon juice

Put the berries through the finest blade of a vegetable mill, or force through a fine sieve, to eliminate all seeds; measure 3 cups into a metal bowl. Add the sugar and lemon. Set over a larger bowl filled with a tray of ice cubes, water to cover them, and 2 tablespoons of

*If you don't use an  
electric mixer for this  
and ignore the high refined-sugar*

salt. Beat the puree with a portable electric mixer or a wire whip for several minutes, and while it chills, the sugar should dissolve completely—beat until you cannot feel the faintest granule of it on your tongue. Mixture will be now thoroughly chilled and will freeze quite rapidly; cover, set at zero degrees or lower, and beat up once or twice during its freezing to break up ice crystals.

If you don't use an electric mixer for this and ignore the high refined-sugar content, you can feel quite worthy making this wonderful sherbet. It takes quite a bit of effort to force the blackberries through the mill and beat the puree. It is very tasty and keeps forever in your freezer (forget the environmental costs of producing electricity). In fact, months after making it I have unthawed it, heated it up, and used it as syrup on waffles!

Have lots of fresh basil? Tired of eating pesto? Try this with your blackberry sherbet:

From **Paula Wolfert's World of Food**, 1988, Harper & Row, Publishers [Page 328]

#### *Sweet Basil Cream*

5 medium-large sprigs fresh basil  
1 cup min 2 tablespoon heavy (whipping) cream  
1 teaspoon superfine sugar  
1 teaspoon arrowroot  
Lemon juice to taste

Take the basil leaves off the stalks and shred them coarse, then set them aside. Roughly chop the stalks and combine them with the cream and sugar in a medium saucepan. Bring the cream to a boil over

*content,  
you can feel quite worthy making  
this wonderful sherbet.*

moderate heat and simmer it slowly for 5 minutes. Strain the cream and discard the stalks. Return the cream to the pan; add the leaves and the arrowroot mixed with 1 tablespoon of cold water, until smooth. Whisk the cream over low heat until thick, but do not allow it to boil or overcook. Immediately cool the pan and its contents in a large bowl of ice water ... and keep stirring until cool. Puree the mixture in a food processor or blender, then strain through a fine sieve. Add drops of lemon juice to taste. [Serve at room temperature. Refrigerate to store. To serve, spoon some basil cream onto a plate. Place some sherbet on top. Eat.]

## **My Walk as a Quaker**

*by Sam Stayton*

**I**t is hard to say exactly how my life has changed since I began attending Meeting, which I believe was about three years ago. Attendance quickly became a habit. I am a creature of habit yet there must be some reason why I picked up the Quaker habit rather than some other. I think the weekly hour of meditation, reflection, and sharing of thoughts restores my mental life in some way or

another. I have always enjoyed meditating although it is usually in the manner of wandering thoughts rather than being focused on one idea or image. A Friend kindly loaned me a book about a monk, Brother Lawrence, who focused on the love of God during his entire waking hours. I doubt if I could do that for even one hour although perhaps some day I will try. Meeting would probably be the best place to do it.

I followed to some degree many of the Quaker values such as charity and simplicity before attending Meeting. I cannot say how I compared with others in adhering to these values. I think that my needs have become simpler but to a certain degree that may be because I retired this year. I certainly do not feel a need for as many clothes now. I have not put on a suit since retirement. I know I still need to work on the nonviolence value, in trying to cope with anger in my personal life and in forming my opinions about the role of our military in world affairs.

## **The Gift of Simplicity**

*by Diane Reynolds*

**W**hen I think of people who lived the simplicity testimony, I think of Martin Lennig. Martin was a member of our Meeting who died not too long ago. At one point I was wondering about the best way to get to New York City for a visit. I was considering taking the bus, but several people had told me not to do that, it was unsafe, etc. Martin assured me that the bus was safe, inexpensive, and convenient. He said he had taken it to New York City many, many times to visit his daughter, and had only once had a problem, when a young man would not move over to let him sit down. Due to Martin's upbeat reassurances, I happily took the bus to New York. And he was right—it is safe, comfortable and affordable. When I think of Martin, I think of his gift of simplicity.

Friend of the Issue

## Jerry Girbach: Making Connections

*Jerry and Sandy Girbach and their three children, Daniel, Elly, and Caitlin, are faithful attenders of our Meeting. At our Fall retreat, Jerry led a workshop on simplicity.*

A thread that runs through Jerry Girbach's life is valuing connections: with himself, with the community, and with family. Not surprisingly, Jerry was introduced to Quakerism through a connection: his first social work supervisor, Jean Christianson, from the Annapolis Meeting. Jean told Jerry he was a lot like a Quaker. "The rest," says Jerry "is history." In 1989 Jerry and Sandy were convinced, and formally became Quakers.

Like many Quakers, Jerry had an affinity for the Quaker lifestyle before being led to the Quakers. "Sandy and I have been Quakers since before we knew there was such a thing," he explains. For example, at their wedding 24 years ago, they wrote their own wedding vows and asked people to offer their thoughts during the ceremony, unknowingly following the pattern of a Quaker wedding.

Jerry grew up in Michigan, just outside of Ann Arbor, in a community of farmers and factory workers. His father died when Jerry, the youngest child of three, was 9. Jerry has lived in Boulder, Chicago, and El Paso.

Although raised in the United Methodist Church, Jerry has been exposed to many other protestant churches. An interest in martial arts brought him to Buddhism and Asian religions. He has a serious interest in Te Tao Ching, which he has been studying since the 70s.

The introspection offered by Quaker worship melds well with Taoism. Further, the Quaker idea of God within is meaningful to Jerry. "It meets my needs that I can talk to God and God can talk to me without any intercession, that God is not anthropomorphic. God is in me though God is in other things too. I also like that there's room for individuality in Quakerism. Christians have a difficult time thinking of God in different ways, but Quak-

erism opens itself to different experiences and different individuals. Quakerism is very experiential, which is truly the piece I love so much."

Jerry made an important connection with himself in 1975. "I took spring and summer of 75 off. I lived on my savings all summer and did all the things I wanted to do. I read books, I played in an acoustic group, I did some art, I swam, I partied. I had been meditating for a quite awhile and had gotten to a spot where I could just be present for the moment and do it without panicking about the rent money."

In the 1980s, Sandy and Jerry connected meaningfully with a troubled community when they became house parents for a runaway home for children and teens aged 11 to 18 in Montgomery County. They did that for 18 months, which broke the previous record of 16 months. "We made it into a successful program," says Jerry. "What made it work is that Sandy and I were seeing that of God in the children. You could see the love and pain of parents and kids, and how they couldn't get to the love part. "They became activists in the community, helping to move the home to Wheaton when the lease on its prior facility ended. During that time, *NewsWeek* magazine came and interviewed Sandy and Jerry for a story on runaways, so they got to see themselves recognized in a national publication.

Another connection Jerry made was with activists Phil Berrigan and Liz MacAllister. "I'd see them on TV and got very confused as to how they were non-violent when they destroyed property. I sought them out and learned from them." While he acknowledges their philosophy is difficult to explain briefly, Jerry notes that the Berrigans believe that weapons are not property because they do not promote life, and therefore have no right to exist.

Jerry introduced his mother-in-law to the Berrigans and MacAllister. Although she was already heavily involved in the peace movement in California, and had travelled to Honduras to spend time with children in refugee camps, now she made local connections. "It turned into a family thing—the in-laws got involved. My mother-in-law spends a lot of time with the Berrigans and now local Columbia activists."

Jerry currently works as supervisor and

trainer of social workers for Catholic Charities' Center for Family Services, a high intensity foster care program for mentally and emotionally ill children from 2 to 21. He brings his spirituality to work with him, finding it vital to connect with his clients' spiritual selves. Thus he lives out the Quaker ideal of infusing our everyday lives with God and finding that of God in every person, no matter what the circumstances.

## Book Review

*The Kingdoms of Edward Hicks*  
by Carolyn J. Weekley

Edward Hicks (1780-1849) painted sixty-two known *Peaceable Kingdom* paintings. An exhibition of many of these and other works of Hicks closed on the last day of 2000 in San Francisco. Happily, a beautiful book, *The Kingdoms of Edward Hicks*, reproduces the work of this extraordinary Quaker minister and sign painter. Happily, this book includes an analysis of these works in which Carolyn Weekley illuminates the profound influence of Quakerism on Edward Hicks' life and work.

In a sermon Edward Hicks gave in 1837 at Goose Creek Meeting (see page 233), he says:

Since I first took my seat in this meeting, my mind has been arrested by the unchangeable terms of salvation laid down by the Divine Savior: "If any man will come after me, let him deny *himself*, take up his daily cross, and follow me." ... It was in a view similar to this great testimony of Christ that the divinely inspired prophet Isaiah held forth this language when alluding to the fullness of the glorious gospel dispensation: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid;" "The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion



shall eat straw like the ox.”  
[See **Matthew** 16: 24 and  
**Isaiah** 11: 6, 7]

For Hicks this great vision, the Peaceable Kingdom, can be realized only when a person denies his material nature to live his spiritual nature. The wolf becomes the lamb, the lion eats straw like the ox. Hicks struggled with his own *self*. Trained as a sign painter, he was troubled by his attraction to ornament and to fine art; so troubled that he tried for a time, with abysmal results, to make a living by farming. Returning to sign painting, he seems to have sublimated his desire to be a fine artist, and to work out his own disquiet with the controversy that was tearing his beloved Society asunder, by producing one painting in sixty-two variations, variations on “the unchangeable terms of salvation laid down by the Divine Savior.” Carolyn Weeks explores how these paintings reflect Hicks’ Quaker faith and his intimate and painful involvement in the great schism that split the Society of Friends in America into two branches.

Reading this thoughtful and beautiful book gave me a deeper understanding of a remarkable Quaker, of Quakerism at a turning point in its history and of the extraordinary paintings that lead us into the Kingdoms of Edward Hicks.

Thanks to the kindness of Friends Ruth and Philip Butcher, a copy of this book is in our library.

— Susan Rose

## Peace and Social Justice Committee

The Peace and Social Justice Committee’s primary focus is on hunger issues. With that in mind, the committee will continue for the first 6 months in 2001 to prepare meals once a month for twelve homeless men at the Grassroots shelter. Different families in the Meeting will host the cooking in their kitchens or in the Hebron House kitchen, making an effort to keep Meeting children involved. The committee is looking into additional ways to interact with Grassroots, such as mentoring individuals, tutoring children, or holding a party.

Additional commitments from Friends will be needed for expanded involvement in Grassroots.

As another part of its hunger focus, the committee is collecting goods for Bread of Life, a special mission for truckers. A box decorated by the children is placed in the hallway each Sunday for collecting diapers, soap, and band aids. Once a month, Amrit Baruah takes these goods to Bread of Life.

According to Business meeting minutes, there is “general satisfaction that this committee is doing a great job.”

## Prison Project

by Diane Reynolds

I have been attending worship sharing services at Patuxent Institute for Men with a prison ministry group from the Sandy Spring Meeting. We meet with prisoners the first and third Monday evenings of the month. I have attended three times.

The prisoners have been warm and welcoming. The first evening, we discussed George Fox, the Light, and images of light that come into our minds. Images mentioned included the light from a volcano, the sun, candles, and a light saber. We talked about our jobs and a little bit about our dreams. At the end of the session we discussed the Christmas party. The men expressed a strong desire to light and hold candles during the party. Some Friends thought this would not be allowed but a few of the prisoners felt that since we were “clergy,” if we wanted to light candles we would be allowed to do so. From this conversation, I understood that to the prisoners we represent a power higher than the state which incarcerates them. Truly, the Light can not wholly be extinguished from prisons: in free societies, clergy are allowed into prisons, and in totalitarian societies, people of the Light are themselves IN the prisons. The Apostle Paul, George Fox, Ghandi, Nelson Mandela, the religious dissidents thrown into Nazi concentration camps, to name a few, all brought their lights with them into prison in unmistakable and transformative ways.

My next time spent at the prison was the Christmas party. With four guitars, an autoharp, bongos, Christmas sheet music, and lots of Pepperidge Farm cookies, ci-

der and sodas (but no candles), we did our best to make merry. A prisoner named Wilbur had created a homemade card for each of us, and the other prisoners signed a joint card for each of us. Some of the prisoners seemed a little sad, and I realized that Christmas might be an especially depressing time to be in prison. We sang Christmas carols and were entertained with renditions of Stairway to Heaven, Eric Clapton songs, and American Pie.

During my third visit, we discussed a song lyric about a pearl being formed from pain. The concept that good can come from suffering engendered a deep and worthwhile sharing. While none of us on the outside can understand what it is like to be in prison, everyone has suffered to some degree, so we had common ground.

### A Fragile Web

Peace is like gossamer—  
Vulnerable, yet indestructible:  
Tear it, and it will be rewoven.  
Peace does not despair.  
Begin to weave a web of peace:  
Start in the center  
And make peace with yourself  
And your God.  
Take the thread outwards  
And build peace within your  
family, your community  
—and in the circle of those you  
find it hard to like.  
Then stretch your concern  
Into all the world.  
Weave a web of peace and do not  
despair.  
Love is the warp in the fabric of  
life:  
Truth is the weft:  
Care and integrity together—  
Vulnerable  
But ultimately indestructible.  
Together they spell peace.

— Emma Byrne submitted this  
poem on peace, written by  
Kate Compston of the  
United Reformed Church:

# First Day School

4-6 year old class

by Sandy Girbach

Last September and October, the 4 - 6 year olds in my class explored Quakerism by learning about George Fox, and William Penn. We also talked about the children that held Meeting for Worship even though their parents were in prison. In October and November we talked about life in Jesus' day and looked at the lost parables which Jesus told: the lost lamb, the lost coin and the lost son. We also looked at the good samaritan story. During December we talked about the Christmas story by looking at angels and journeys. We ended December with a look at Kwanzaa.

6-7 year old class

by Diane Reynolds

Two of my class, Elly Girbach and Brian Palmer, graduated to the eight and older class in October. I was sorry to see them go. They always delighted me with what they had to say, and I could count on them to enjoy working on craft projects. I was pleased that Rachel and Calley Morrisey moved up to replace them, joining Philip Morgan Garrison and Seamus Dunn. Later on, we were joined by two newcomers, Elvin and Elena Danos

Although we had been working our way through a book called *Three Minute Bible Stories*, we took a break to prepare for our field trip to Atholthon Seventh Day Adventist Church. At the Church, we were given a warm welcome and a well-prepared tour of the children's rooms as well as the sanctuary. Our children had a chance to see a traditional church, complete with stained glass windows, an organ, altar and pews, and more importantly, an opportunity to understand that God meets people in different ways through different forms of worship. Special thanks go the Herzel family of the Adventist church for organizing our tour and for going to such a great effort to welcome us fully.

After our trip to the church, I realized I had lost my beige canvas bag with all

my First Day supplies, including my invaluable craft guide in *Three Minute Bible Stories*. I kept thinking the bag would turn up, but it never did, so I was on my own the last weeks of class.

Ramona Buck wrote a play for the children to perform at Christmas, and several Sundays were devoted to rehearsals. What a lot of children we had! I wrote a play for the Sunday of Christmas Eve called "The Birth of Jesus" that the children kindly performed in class despite being tired of plays!

Now my six-month tenure as First Day teacher is ended, so I would like share a few thoughts. This was my first encounter with teaching First Day school, as Roger had always willingly taken on that task in our family. I was a little anxious, as I do not feel teaching First Day School is my strength. However, preparation did not consume all my time and many of the craft projects were a success, despite my lack of background in crafts. A gift was finding how much I enjoyed the kids. I really liked them very much. I feel I know a part of our Meeting better than before. I hope I left the children with a few seeds planted—or at least kept them entertained for a time.

8 and up class

by Sherri Morgan

In the fall, the class of 8+ year-olds grew by several members, so that we now have a regular group of students even on weeks of low attendance. The class thrived on dramatizing almost any story they encountered, be it the story of Jonah, Native American tales, Jacob & Esau or the year-end Quaker play. We began a study of the Old Testament, tracing the family history of Abraham and Sarah and their descendants. The children worked on their own family trees as well. The holiday season was filled with rehearsals for the play, written by Ramona Buck, that showed how Quaker children ran the Meeting for Worship while their parents were jailed for their religious beliefs. The year's end included a lesson about Channakah and making personal changes for the coming year.

## Meeting for Healing

Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Healing is a time for Friends to pray together for each other and for those we love. In the Quaker tradition, those requesting healing will be held in the Light during a silent worship "to help transform that person's suffering into something beautiful." Out of the silence, Friends may be moved to ministry, such as spoken or sung messages related to the healing process, insight or empathy, or laying on of hands. We have had specially led meetings for healing for spiritual baby showers, cancer patients, and a baby in ICU.

All are invited to join the worship. The Meeting for Healing takes place the second Sunday of each month from 6-7:30 PM. If you interested and the time is not good, please let us know.

## Come Visit Us

We invite everyone to our Meeting for Worship, 10:30 Sunday morning. We offer First Day school for all children.

We meet at Mt. Hebron House. To travel to Mt. Hebron House from Columbia, take U.S. 29 north to Old Frederick Road, then go left on Old Frederick Road for a quarter mile, right on Mt. Hebron Drive, and left on Calvin Circle. Mt. Hebron House, a 19th century stone manor, is off Calvin Circle on the right side on the grounds of Mt. Hebron Presbyterian Church. Please park on the street.

# Children's Corner

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## Jonah and the Whale

By the 8+ class  
under the direction of Sherri Morgan

*Nicole Manzanera, who played Jonah, decided to make Jonah a woman. The children created puppets for the play, and performed for the younger children.*

**God (talking to Jonah):** "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and warn the people for I've seen how wicked they are acting."

**Narrator:** "But Jonah ran away from God."

**Jonah (to ship's captain):** "Do you have any more tickets to Tarshish?"

**Captain:** "Yes, come aboard."

**Narrator:** "The Lord sent out a great wind into the sea and there was a mighty storm on the sea so the ship was almost broken."

**Sailor:** "Help me Zeus! Help me Thor! Let's get rid of all the cargo so we don't sink!"

**Jonah (snoring):** "ZZZZZ."

**Captain (to Jonah):** "Why are you sleeping?! Wake up and call your God to

help us to we don't all die."

**Sailor:** "I'm going to roll the dice and see who is causing all this trouble (*shake, shake*). Jonah!"

**Captain (to Jonah):** "What is your job? Where did you come from? What country do you belong to?"

**Jonah:** "I am a Hebrew and I worship the God of heaven who made the sea and the land."

**Sailor:** Why did you run away from your God? What should we do with you?"

**Jonah:** "Pick me up and throw me into the sea and it will be calm again. It's my fault this storm is happening."

**Captain:** "God of Heaven, please don't punish us if we harm an innocent man." (*The captain throws Jonah overboard.*)

**Sailor:** "Please God accept our prayers."

**Narrator:** "The Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah." (*Whale swoops up to catch Jonah.*) "And Jonah was in the belly of the fish 3 days and 3

nights."

**Jonah:** "Dear God, forgive me for running away. I know you can hear me because you sent this fish to save me from drowning. I will follow your ways."

**God (to whale):** "Fish, return Jonah to the land." (*fish shakes*)

**Narrator:** "And the fish vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." (*the fish spits Jonah out*).

**God (to Jonah):** "Arise, go to Nineveh and preach to the people to change their ways."

**Narrator:** "Jonah traveled for 3 days to get to Nineveh."

**Jonah (to King of Nineveh):** "In 40 days your city will be destroyed."

**King:** "This will be my new law: Everyone in Nineveh must turn from evil and pray to God."

**Narrator:** "And God saw how they changed and did not destroy the city."

**THE END**

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## Emma Byrne, Howard County Volunteer of the Year

Many from the post-sixties generation, who grew up in an atmosphere of retreat from idealistic social causes, view political action with cynicism or a sense of futility. Emma Byrne from our Meeting is a superb counter balance to that attitude, a living example among us that striving for social justice can work, and that one person can make a difference.

This past November, Emma Byrne's contributions to society were recognized when she was chosen as Howard County

Volunteer of the Year. In her letter nominating Byrne, Friend Jean Leslie highlighted Emma's consistently high level of support for peace and social justice issues over the past 27 years in Howard County. Anyone who knows Emma Byrne knows that working for peace and social justice is not an afterthought but her life's main focus. This dedication to building peace began for her as a child growing up in Scotland, where she saw firsthand the devastating effects of World War I on the people around her.

Jean Leslie nominating letter quotes Vinny DeMarco, who worked with Emma on handgun control: "Probably the most amazing thing about Emma... is her incredible dedication and tenacity. She obviously feels to the bottom of her soul the importance of reducing violence in our society and believes fervently that one person *can* make a difference. Emma

is also very smart and knows how to direct her passion in a way that will have the most positive impact."

At a forum for Wilde Lake High School students on Healthcare for All, DeMarco credited Emma and Tom Byrne with almost single handedly being responsible for the handgun legislation in Maryland. At the Volunteers' awards ceremony in Annapolis, Emma was honored along with a volunteer from each of Maryland's other counties. When her turn came to go on stage, instead of speaking from her prepared notes, she spoke eloquently from her heart about the importance of peace in our society. Even among this extraordinary group of volunteers, Emma's words stood out and seemed to touch the audience deeply. We are fortunate to have Emma as a light among us and gratified that she was recognized for her efforts and inspiration.

*Editor from front page*

spiritual journey is all about.

The equality testimony shows how intertwined all the testimonies are. For example, as John Woolman clearly perceived, it is extremely difficult for a society to achieve equality without people first embracing simplicity of lifestyle, for one person's "more" is another's "less." It is difficult to have peace without equality, for injustice breeds bitterness. As Jesus showed through the footwashing and other acts, the health of a community can depend on reinterpreting traditionally unequal power relationships. To talk about equality is to talk about peace, simplicity, and community.

I hope this newsletter offers some equality by giving everyone in the community a chance to speak. I am thrilled that so many people respond to it thoughtfully and fully. As always, it is a joy to see it come to life.

— *Diane Reynolds*

## Calendar of Events

Meetings for Worship: Sundays, 10:30; First Day school same time; childcare provided to younger children

Meetings for Healing meet the second Sunday of the month at 6:30 PM at Hebron House

Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business meet fourth Sunday of the month after rise of meeting

**Quarterly Meeting: March 11, 2001** at Stony Run Meeting.

Our meeting will host Quarterly Meeting on **June 10, 2001.**

**Friends General Conference, June 30 - July 7, 2001,** Blacksburg, VA

**Baltimore Yearly Meeting, July 31 - August 5, 2001.**



***Patapsco Friends Meeting***

*Mt. Hebron House • 2331 Calvin Circle*

*Ellicott City, MD 21042*

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