

Love and Connection June 2020



Photograph by Philip Capon

Crow
Andrea Miotto

The crow out my upper window
Swaying on his slender, brave branch,
as I sat thinking spiritual thoughts
Invaded my eyes and my heart.

So close I could look deep into the pool of
iridescence on its many-colored wings.
Black wings without bottom,
Flaming in the sun.

Crows, I had thought:
Cawing, communal, curious, crafty.
Vicious.

Courageous, this stern-faced watcher humbled
me,
And, humbled, I learned.
It was free.
Lonely.
Lovely.

The bough, uptilted, struggled gallantly to bear
up its guest,
Its budding green a striking contrast to the
Crow's dazzling black,
The dandy, he knew it and was proud.

The Crow gave me this gift
That he let me admire him and drink him in
Yellow beak to fanned tail, carefully displayed.
I didn't know I thirsted.

The crow brought nature to me;
I so rarely go to it.

That nature with the security of its own spirit
The tyranny of its own rules
The wildness of its own unexpected,
ungraspable harmony.

With a still small voice in the midst of the storm,
The agonizing beauty of tiny moments
suspended, pinned in time
Never static, sometimes still.

Beautiful because so true
Agony because so sudden and so short.

Whispering,
Cease thinking.
Listen!

Love Makes the World Go Round

Kent Allen Brewer

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861) wrote long ago..." How do I love thee? Let me count the ways."

There are indeed countless ways to love. I being an old romantic at heart think first of the women I've loved. I make no apology as this is just my nature. There have been true loves, fleeting loves, and countless infatuations touching on love throughout the many decades of my life. All brought exquisite lasting memories I wouldn't trade for the world. There are of course other loves in my life of equal if not of more importance. The love of family and country. The love of individual character, which guides our actions as we traverse the paths life leads us along.



Source: *The Creative Commons.*
Photographer unknown.

The love of beauty one sees in nature. Such love inspires me to preserve the essence found on our once-wild

and free planet. Love of our environment motivates me to restore as much as I'm able to restore of what we as a collective people continue to abuse and destroy.

The Quaker usage of the word SPICES reminds me on a personal level that love encompasses vast regions of my daily life. A love of duty and responsibility. Things which are so much greater than myself.

Simplicity...Peace...Integrity...Community...Equality...Stewardship.

Let's face it. Love is what life is meant to be all about. The joyful wag of a puppy's tail. The wonder of a single blade of grass as it dances in a gentle breeze. An act of kindness by a stranger. The bonds of friendship, which grow stronger with the passage of time. The love of



A wedding picture from Jim and Susannah, with Susannah's brother and family.

those dreams, hopes, and desires which fill our lives.

With all this going on, what is there to be afraid of when it comes to giving and accepting love in all its forms? Experience

love. Live love. Seek love out.

Love sure does make the world go around.

How the Pandemic Helped Me to Reconnect

Elizabeth Terney

I moved away from Patapsco Friends Meeting – to Indiana – in May of 2019. I managed to snag time on a couple Patapsco F/friends' schedules to catch up by phone, but I've been missing a lot of my friends. The pandemic, while devastating in many ways for many people, has provided me an opportunity for reconnection. My Quaker Friends have been my most frequent connection to the outside world during these trying months. The transition of old prayer groups and the addition of new social activities to Zoom have allowed me to attend from Indiana and see a lot of familiar faces and have delightful conversations and worship periods. I have missed those faces for a year, and I'm deeply grateful to see them again and to hear from friends lost to distance.

I'm always impressed by Patapsco Friends Meeting's welcoming spirit and supportive nature. I hope that new attendees experience the same extraordinary atmosphere of PFM and decide to join the community. I believe true connection is easy to find at PFM.

I look forward to connecting across space

throughout this pandemic, and perhaps beyond. I've managed to connect with a few additional PFM friends through phone, email, and text since this public health crisis began, and I hope to continue those

connections well into the future. If the dear reader would like to reconnect with me, my email address is eterney@gmail.com. I hope to hear from you.

To all my Patapsco friends, those I've seen online and those I've not, I miss you, I've cherished my time with you, and I wish you all the best of health.



Photograph by BYM Photographer, processed with an app called "Brushstroke"

Love and Connection in a Pandemic

Bethanne Kashkett

I'm learning that connection takes effort and innovation.

As a member of M&C, I take my role of Care Partner to heart. Checking in on my Care Partners and reaching out to the PFM community has been a grounding focus for me during the pandemic.

It's an act of love to actively love your friends and family through reaching out. Each day, I make sure I send a card, text or email. I try and share emails about uplifting experiences that are available. I think of this as spreading the Light!

In many ways my relationships feel closer and deeper than they were prior to the pandemic.

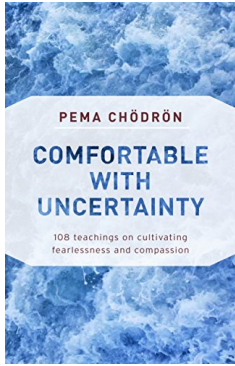
Kenny is my primary Care Partner! We have never spent so much time together!! That has been a blessing.

In this time of social distancing, he is the only person on the planet I'm allowed to hug! One new thing I'm doing is reading books with people. I've been in book groups— but this experience is different.

Kenny and I are reading Pema Chodron's book *Comfortable with Uncertainty* and Daniel and I are reading her book *Welcoming the Unwelcome*. Notice a theme?!

Patapsco Friends
Gather anew
Magic again

Jeff Soulen



We read out loud to each other, stopping to discuss different sections.

This has been a gift. It expands our conversations. It gives a new focus to my phone calls with Daniel.

Reading to each other is a very quiet, sweet pastime.

Then there's Zoom!

This time would be so much more difficult without Zoom.

But too much Zooming can be challenging too. Just like everything in life— finding the sweet spot can be tricky!

We have family Zoom visits weekly. With kids spread out in Maryland, California, Oregon and Costa Rica...This has become a necessity if we want to stay connected.

We check in and then often we play games! This is a new experience too. We had sporadic family calls before COVID, but now we have the time and opportunity to be consistent. Heads Up is our favorite game so far! Check it out!!



More than anything, I sense an urgency to make sure we say "I love you." We send care boxes through Amazon of popcorn, snacks and books

to our kids. Attempting to surprise them and hoping to make them smile. It's a small thing we can do at such a stressful time.

I see the opportunity in this "time out." The quiet.

The time to sew, read, meditate, walk, garden,

pursue spiritual practice and study.

The time to deepen connections with family and F(f)riends near and far. I see an opening to send out love and Light. To expand my circle, rather than contract.



Brenda Carr's kitchen has become a center for her community during the pandemic. Her daughter, Kat, is "baking her way through unemployment."

There's fear. It's present too.

But there is also love.

Actively reaching out in love does wonders for keeping fear in check!

Egad. The World is getting Smaller (Again)

Jim Rose

There have been historic events that have changed our culture and society in fundamental ways. Consider the impact that the railroad made in the nineteenth century. All of a sudden one can travel to the city in a matter of minutes rather than the hours it had taken previously. That development brought that city closer to you; in effect it shrunk the world and made your circle of influence geographically wider. And then came the airplane.

It is not only a question of geography. Marx and Engels have suggested that the world was getting smaller to the extent that old and local ways of doing things were giving way to more globalized processes. They would agree that there is a “compression of the world” such that people across the globe share many of the same things. Products you find in your local grocery store might have originated in China or Japan. In some sense we are “closer” to those economies today than we have ever been.



Source: Creative Commons. Artist unknown.

One of the wonders that the current pandemic has made evident is our newfound ability to zoom all over the world. Our connections have broadened from the nuclear family to the local community, from the megalopolis, to the whole world. On Easter Sunday my extended family had a meeting where we talked together about what was happening, who was doing what, and what the prospects were for each of us. That family ranged from California to Paris. Sure, the time zones were something to consider, but an early California time and a late Paris time were inconvenient, not impossible. The point is that we are connected in a way that our parents would have not have considered possible.

Our meetings for worship, which were local, almost provincial, affairs have now become more open and welcoming to members and attenders anywhere in the country! Indeed we have been able to open our worship to attenders from New York, from Indiana, from Colorado. Where is this opening leading us? What will be the limits of our Quaker meeting in

the long run? Or do we dispense with limits? If place is no longer a restriction, a limitation, what of importance defines us? Today, and tomorrow?

Gifts

Tony McCoy

Secretly, I would write poems as a child but I’d never share them with anyone. That is, until I joined the South Mountain Friends group in Hagerstown. I began sharing with my group poetry regarding some of the spiritual topics that we often discussed. I’d receive feedback concerning style and content, and I’d try again the following week. This gave me a sense of pride that propelled me to take my writing even further. I enrolled in college, which posed an even greater challenge to my writing, as the world of academia is quite a unique experience. I fared pretty well in the academic arena. As it



Source: Creative Commons. artist unknown

turns out my poetic prose often entertained my professors to the point of laughter. Fast forward to today, I’m on a new chapter in my life which involves me going home very soon, after serving the last fourteen years of my life in prison. Writing has been my savior. In an environment where expression is important I learned to express myself constructively, not only for me, but also for my personal ministry. I’ve written letters, legal documents, facility documents, poetry, and even made greeting cards for my fellow inmates.

So I thank my South Mountain family for caring about me enough to enable me to start caring about myself. I even submitted work to Pendle Hill, but to no avail. It was however, a good experience of trying to take something that I created to the next level. It has been a good lesson in how the love of others can spark the finality of you loving yourself, and the infinite conclusion of loving god first, and loving all that he or she has created.

Connecting through Plants

Tricia Valentine

To be persons in the full sense, we need to be in communion with other people and with God. As isolated individuals we may think we are independent and self-reliant, but our humanity is in fact crippled.

Norman Russell, *Fellow Workers with God: Orthodox Thinking on Theosis*

Forced to stay home, I have found myself spending several hours every day outside,



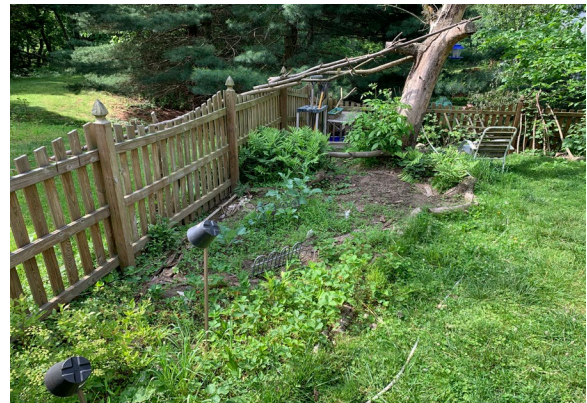
Iris, transformed by an app called "Brushstroke" Susannah Rose

playing with my plants, hands and fingers in the soil. Gardening has given me a sense of purpose and usefulness. By going outside to remove or relocate unwanted plants, plant new

flowers/vegetables, or trim shrubs, I feel the earth, sun, wind and rain; I contemplate God.

As I stayed in quarantine, outdoors, around my house, I noticed another benefit of tending for the earth. Neighbors would talk to me from the sidewalk or from their yard (our homes are grouped very close together). They would ask: "What are you doing?" "What plants did you just plant?" "Could I have some of those plants?" Suddenly, we, who were starved for connection with others, found ourselves sharing plants, talking about garden designs, what grows where, which nurseries and garden centers are open, and asking: "Is this plant native?"

Plants give us a topic of conversation outside of the dire dialogue we hear hourly on the news. Let's not talk about dying, let's discuss how to beautify our common area, our planting beds. One neighbor wanted some shrubs to plant where their tree had fallen. (I was able to divide and move my *Itea virginica*, Sweetspire.) Another neighbor needed plants for an abandoned flower bed. The neighbor on the other side of the pavilion wanted to trade ferns for Black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia hirta*). Discussions resulted in sharing books on native plants and trips to Sun Nursery to pick up orders that we had called in. As the weather warms, we realize we can sit outside and chat, placing the chairs 8 feet apart. We arranged an outdoor happy hour for 6, practicing social distancing, of course!



Brenda Carr's bountiful garden is also a memorial to "those we have lost."

The evenings are quiet, dull and lonely. In an effort to connect to distant grandchildren, I sent gardening videos, showing small fiddleheads that would turn into ferns, flower blossoms and how to plant carrots. I read stories and emailed the recordings to them. I sent care packages. We FaceTime.

In a literal sense I have touched no one for two months. No handshakes, hugs or kisses for neighbors, friends or relatives. Last Sunday, I pledged to my pregnant and anxious daughter-in-law that I had worn my face mask in public and not broken any social distancing rules. Consequently, I was allowed to hold hands with my young granddaughter.

Bird songs have replaced the noise of overhead airplanes. Air quality is improving. For those who have not been overwhelmed by economic loss or death, the act of staying at home can be transformative. We continue to reinvent connections and create human gatherings over the internet.

How much longer will this go on? There is no consensus. Yet, I offer that this transformation of society, caused by the smallest of organisms, may be important for the salvation of human beings.

Love Thy Neighbor

Dave Zeller

Love brings people together. It bonds couples in marriage. People who love one another are connected through caring about each other. We express our love through our actions toward each other. We as people of faith express an overall love of mankind and all people. I believe love brought down the Berlin wall in Germany years ago.

Love has a powerful influence. It binds people together for the sake of Good. Through that binding it connects us to other countries, beliefs

(religions), etc. Through this common connection we've seen our way through wars and back to times of peace.

It is my belief that through our love and common connection we have sustained all of humanity these vast centuries. An act of kindness goes a very long way. Love connects us all.



Acts of kindness are committed daily by people who do them out of love for their fellow human beings, and in so doing they are constantly connecting with each other. Love and the word "care" go hand in hand. Most people care about other people they come to have contact with. We all connect with each other through love and caring for each other so our daily acts of kindness help love and connection grow through expressions of care for each other. Just a simple thank you does wonders for us. I know for sure mankind cannot continue to exist without a sense of love, caring, and connection to one another.

The words "Love thy neighbor" are probably the most powerful words in the Bible, and without love there would be no forgiveness. If we were

to fail to be able to forgive, our ability to make connections would fail – and where would we all be then?

Love and Connection

Ramona Buck

One of the lessons I have learned in life is that I think we are all connected, even when we seem very different from each other, or are strangers, and even when we are upset with each other.

Once I was mediating a case when I worked at the Circuit Court for Prince George’s County. The participants in the mediation were an African American couple who were in conflict about the custody and time-sharing for their children. The man said to me, “I don’t know why you are the mediator in this case. What do you know about us? – We are black and you are white. You are very different from us. How can you work well with us?” I was actually rather shocked and I blurted out something about how I felt we had more in common than we had differences. He didn’t really agree with me – he just shook his head, but the two parties did



A Moroccan Berber poses with a tourist after carefully wrapping her scarf in preparation for a camel ride.

decide to go ahead with the mediation and they did reach agreement.

Afterwards, I continued to think about his assumption that I was very different from him. I think with regard to African Americans that probably what I don’t understand on a meaningful level is all the racism they encounter on a regular basis and the great stress that that causes. And there is no way that I could really understand that just by hearing about it. So, in that sense, he was right. But in another sense, I think we had many deeper things in common. We each have children and care deeply about them. We each want to make a positive difference in the world. He and I appreciate the people we know and care about and want good things for them. He and I both have a sense of the importance of personal honor and want to deal honorably with others. We both want to keep learning. And if we had gotten to know each other, I am sure there are many other things we would find we have in common and which would connect us.

In another instance which I have talked about before, I was riding to work on the DC Metro. It was very crowded and some people had to stand up. Then someone in the front of the car spoke up loudly, saying, “This young man is about to faint. Could someone give him a seat?” Quickly, a number of people stood up, and the guy who felt faint was able to sit down. Someone else said, “Should we tell the driver – can someone hit the emergency button?” A man near me said, in a helpful tone, “The button is near the front next to the front door.” Then someone else said, “I will get off with him at the next stop and get help for him.” In just a few minutes, the people in that car were a community, being supportive and reaching out to someone in need of help. The young man was alone – he had no friends with him on the ride. But quickly, he did have friends, and a couple of them got off with him at the next stop.

Maybe the key here is to keep the assumption in mind – that we are all connected. And maybe the next step is to try to get to know people on a deeper than superficial level in order to connect even more deeply – and, in some cases, to be able to reach the level of loving them.



March for Our Lives, Baltimore

Inspirational Mothers

Bill Mitchell

After reading Chris’s story about her mom (Resilience and the Great Connector, p. 12)) and remembering what a wonderful person she was, I started thinking about my mother. Like Chris’s mother, she faced a lot of hard times and worked very hard for her family.

My mother, Ann Leith Mitchell (1908 – 2003), was born and raised on a farm in Virginia. She had seven brothers, mostly older, and she was the only daughter. She worked hard to help her mother with this large farm family.

I want to talk about three incidents in her life that she reluctantly told us about.

The first happened when she was 9 years old. She was shot in the back of her right thigh by her younger brother who accidentally pulled the trigger when they were hunting for a rabbit. Her father rushed her to the local doctor who said he couldn’t do anything for her. Then he got someone to drive them to the hospital in Washington, D.C. My mom remembered the doctors and nurses looking at her leg and frowning. Then a surgeon came into the room and swept her up in his arms. He said, “I can fix that for you!”

After the surgery, she stayed in the hospital for almost a year. During that time, she had little contact with family because the trip from the farm took several hours. She was a favorite of the nurses, however, and was their lookout whenever needed. Also, there was a “Spanish Flu” outbreak while she was in the hospital (a worldwide flu pandemic from January 1918 to December 1920, sometimes called the Spanish Flu). Mom said she saw many children and young adults come into the hospital and some of them died. She remembered that the patients would be pushed out on the porch in their beds, especially those who were about to die.

One day in 1918 the nurses sat her up in the window so she could see a big parade in the streets of Washington. Germany had surrendered and it was the end of World War I. Soon after that, she was able to return home.

She recovered nicely, the limp went away, and a few years later she was sent to Morgantown, West Virginia to live with a brother’s family as the schools were better there. This is where the second incident happened. One day at school she became sick and developed a high fever. When the fever did not go down and she became delirious, they took her to the hospital. Word was sent home that she was sick and her father rushed to Morgantown the next day. She remembered regaining consciousness from time to time and always finding her father there

holding her hand. Finally, the fever broke and she returned home to rest and recover.



Source: Creative Commons. Photographer unknown.

Things were routine for several years. She was courted by a local farmer's son. They were married in 1928, when she was almost 20, and they moved into a cottage on his family farm. Tragedy struck when they had only been married about two and a half months. Her husband was trying to light a fire in the wood stove on a cold damp day. "Thing won't light!" he said. "I'm going to squirt a little coal oil on it." The next thing she heard was a scream as he accidentally inhaled the flame that flared up from the coal oil. He lay on the floor in agony while she rushed to get his father. They loaded him into the back seat of the car and she held him as they sped toward the doctor's home. Before they got there, his eyes rolled back and he stopped breathing. She told me, "He died in my arms before we could get him to the doctor." After that, things were like a whirlwind. She hardly remembered the funeral and returning to her home farm with her mother and father.

She was grieving and depressed for many months. She said later, "Finally I decided that I just had to get on with my life." Things began to return to normal after that. Her father Arthur was in poor health and she was able to help her mother care for him until his death. Mom then began seeing my father, Morris Mitchell. She knew him because he had played

baseball against her brothers. They were married in 1936 when she was 28 years old. They went through World War II with two small boys (me and my brother Bob). After the war they had another boy and a girl.

Over the years, Mom went through several medical problems/operations and was thankful for those in the medical profession. If questioned about the current coronavirus pandemic, she would probably say: "Listen to the medical experts and take care of yourself."

She was hard working and humble and I guess you would say she was resilient like Chris's mother. She died in 2003 at 95 years old. I would say my mom, as many of our moms, was an inspirational woman.

Connecting Long Distance

Johanna Som de Cerff

You are immigrants. You have come a long distance to this new place, one of you in 1947, one in 1951. It is a time when letters from home take a week or 10 days to arrive even by airmail. You are careful with resources, but it takes years to save enough to make a visit "home." Long-distance calling is expensive and only for matters such as serious illness or death. Your parents make one trip to visit you in the "New World." A few other relatives do the same in later years when finances are better, children are older, etc. You take your children to see their grandparents every few years. You and they get time with their aunts and uncles and cousins over two short weeks. These were when times were good, celebrating Christmas, the grandparents' 50th anniversary. You are lucky to have family and a home to visit.

Letters are written every week for many years. Photos are exchanged, documenting life in both places, sharing the milestones—birthdays, wedding, anniversaries, funerals. In later years, after the parents have passed on, the phone

calls with siblings and their spouses are affordable and more frequent. The brothers and sisters have more time now, but with aging are less prone to travel long distances. Photos come from the nieces and nephews of their children. Christmas cards (and sometimes photos) are sent and received.

And one by one, the siblings pass on. The calls, letters, and photos come less frequently. And then just from a niece or a nephew or two. The cards are kept for a year or two. The photos are put into a drawer and then a box. The box moves with you and then again.



Source: Creative Commons. Artist unknown.

In what would have been the 70th year of your married life, the box is opened, not by you, but by your eldest daughter, a daughter born in the New World. The memories come spilling forth from the mostly joyful faces, the pride of parents in their newborn children and their college graduations, the hospitality shared at gatherings of friends and family, sometimes by you and sometimes only in absentia. But the love that was shared by those present then and those who sent the photos shines through and connects with my heart even now, in my

present. I send an email to my cousin, the eldest daughter of my father's eldest brother. "Thank you," I say, for all those photos you sent that included us, in a little way, in the only way many times, in the lives of our faraway family.



Pictures from the box: photo from Johanna

Love and Connection—Trying Again

Bob Rhudy

I dimly remember, some time long ago, being asked, "Do you LOVE me," and answering something like, "Ugh, I know I LIKE you. I don't know what LOVE is."

I suspect I got a C- or so that afternoon.

So here we are, 65 or so years later, trying again. Love. And Connection, I surmise, to that who or which or what we may love.

With some thought, practice, and experience since that earlier time, I'll try again by lifting up a couple of ideas.

First, my favorite Japanese Zen master, Ikkyu, when asked repeatedly by a young student what was important, answered forcefully, "Attention! Attention! Attention!"

So, I think a very big piece of love and connection is Attention.

To my mate of many years. My children and grandchildren. The cat sleeping on my pillow. Our sun this morning. The tree in late afternoon. The bird outside our window. A person before me in the checkout line. That starving child on the other side of the world. The God that Jesus directed me to love.

With what part of our being? Well, I think Ikkyu expected total attention with all our parts all the time. He was a very demanding master from what I understand.

Sounds like he and Jesus would have gotten along pretty well, when Jesus directed us to “Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy mind, and all thy spirit.”

That requires a lot of attention, and a lot of practice.



Source: *The Creative Commons* (artist unknown)

So for my second idea I'm switching over to some of my Indian yoga teachers from 1,500 or so years ago who encouraged us to focus (give attention) to our “Seven Chakras,” from the base of our spine to the top of our crown, with Number Four being the Heart Chakra.

It seems to me that a lot of faiths and cultures have encouraged us to love from our heart and to use that energy to radiate our higher levels.

I have been learning to feel love in my heart and to attend to that feeling.

In conclusion, I encourage our giving attention to what we are connected to by love and particularly to lift that attention to our hearts.



Digital drawing by Susannah

Resilience and the Great Connector

Chris Mitchell

My mother died about four years ago at age 95. On Mothers' Day 2020, I wished I could talk to her about the coronavirus pandemic. During this strange, frightening time, I've heard newscasters use the word “resilience” when they are discussing nurses, doctors or even Covid19 patients.

My mother, Betty, wasn't a nurse or a doctor, but she was definitely resilient. When she and her closest sister, Milly, were preschoolers their mother contracted Tuberculosis. It was the early 1920s and they lived in Buffalo, N.Y. There was no treatment for TB at that time. While their mother was sick, Betty and Milly often stayed with their paternal grandmother, a German-speaking woman who ran a boarding house. At night, their grandmother would put them to bed upstairs. As she left the room, she

would noisily lock the door with a padlock, so they could not get out. Betty and Milly huddled in the bed crying. Years later, my mother told me that the lock on the door was probably meant to keep their grandmother's boarders out of the room ... but no one ever explained that to the little girls.

There were other stressors for Betty in that household. At the dinner table, her grandmother would look at Betty and say sternly with her German accent: "Put your fork in your right hand!" Betty was left-handed, but she did as she was told.

In November 1925, when Betty was 5 years old, her mother, Frances, died at age 41. Frances left behind a husband and five children. In addition to Betty and Milly there were three older siblings who were almost old enough to live on their own. Their oldest sister, Edna, age 20, took over the care of the house and family. That arrangement lasted for about two years, until Edna married Andy Klein and moved with him to Lackawanna, NY, just about three miles away.

After Edna's marriage, Betty and Milly went with their father to live with him at a friend's house. They both entered the first grade at that time. Betty's teachers noticed her left-handedness and they insisted that she write with her right hand. Betty liked her teachers. To make them happy, she taught herself how to write with her right hand. She became ambidextrous, using both hands with equal facility. Perhaps this was an early sign of her resilience.

In November 1928, when Betty was 8, her father had a "falling out" with the family with whom they lived. Having no place to keep two children, he took Betty and Milly to Lackawanna to stay with Edna and Andy, who by that time had a baby girl. He told his oldest daughter and son-in-law that he was just leaving the girls "until he found a place for them."



Chris's mother, Betty

In the months that followed, their father would sometimes stop for a visit at Edna and Andy's house, often with a well-dressed woman accompanying him. When Edna confronted him about paying a portion of the cost of school shoes and food for Betty and Milly, he responded with anger: "If you don't want the girls, I'll take them and drop them off at the orphanage!" Betty and Milly were in the back room listening to every word and holding on to each other.

But of course, Edna did not hand over her little sisters. Years later my mother would point out, with a wry smile, that she and Milly ended up living with Edna and Andy from 1928 until their own marriages – Milly's in 1941 and Betty's in 1944. It would turn out to be the best thing that ever happened to them. In Lackawanna, Edna and Andy would have five children of their own. By watching Edna and helping her with chores, Betty learned how to care for a baby, how to cook and bake, and the proper way to hang wash outside on the line.

By observing Andy Klein, Betty learned something even more useful – how to laugh at herself. Andy was a hard-working, good natured man, who loved his family. He was the kind of man who gave his children nicknames, like “Midge,” “Babe,” and “Buddy.” The dinner table at the Klein’s house was always noisy and filled with laughter. Often there was a family dog involved.



Laughter! Source: *The Creative Commons*. Photographer unknown.

But there were more dark times ahead. The Great Depression began in August 1929. It gripped the United States for almost nine years. Families all over the country struggled to put food on the table. Andy, a machinist, was lucky to work two or three days a week.

In the summer of 1940, Andy had the opportunity for a machinist’s job at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. He accepted the job and drove alone to D.C. For the next year he would drive back and forth to Lackawanna for short visits (a 10-hour drive each way). By July 1941 he had saved enough money to rent a home in Colmar Manor, Maryland, a D.C. suburb. Edna and the five children joined him there.

The family seemed to be splitting apart. Betty’s sister Milly had plans to get married in September 1941. Betty was working as a typist and she moved in with another family member. But that didn’t last long. In October 1941 Andy called her and asked if she would come to Maryland for a couple of weeks to help with the

children. Edna wasn’t feeling well, he said. Betty quickly packed up and headed for Maryland. She soon found out that Edna was not really sick. She was pregnant with her sixth child, who turned out to be a healthy baby boy. For Betty, that phone call from Andy was transforming. Maryland would be her home for the rest of her life.

As the impact of the Great Depression faded away, World War II began. Betty helped Edna with the children and, in December 1941, she landed a job as a long-distance operator for the C&P Telephone Company in Washington, D.C. The following spring, a friend and co-worker set her up on a blind date with a handsome Marine, who was stationed in Quantico, Virginia – Joe Gallant. The blind date went quite well. Betty and Joe were the perfect counterpoint for each other. Joe was serious and introverted. Betty was fun-loving and outgoing. Betty soon introduced Joe to Edna and Andy and he was welcomed into the Klein clan.



Telephone operator. Source: *The Creative Commons*.

By December 1942, the U.S. was fully engaged in World War II. Joe was transferred to a Marine detachment aboard a troop ship, the Monticello, that ferried soldiers from New York

Harbor to the battlefields of Europe. Along the way, the ship often dodged the torpedoes of German U-boats.

Like many couples in those war years, Betty and Joe wrote letters back and forth to each other. Occasionally, Joe was able to take leave. During one of those breaks, he took Betty to Chelsea, Massachusetts to meet his family: his parents, four younger sisters and a younger brother. Betty fell in love with the Gallants and they embraced her too.

By 1944 Betty and Joe were engaged. In August of that year, when the Monticello was in New York for repairs, Joe had a 10-day furlough, and they got married. Their wedding reception took place at the Klein's house. Joe's mom and two of his sisters came from Massachusetts for the celebration. After a brief honeymoon in New York, the newlyweds had to say goodbye to each other again. Joe went out to sea with the Marines and Betty returned to the Klein's house and her job at the phone company. Finally, 13 months later, the war ended. In September 1945, Joe took his discharge from the Marine Corps and the couple began their married life together.

Fast forward to 1957: Betty and Joe lived in Greenbelt, MD and had one child, Christine, who was 10 years old. It was never their intention to have just one child. They were both Catholics and everyone they knew seemed to have a houseful of kids. But the doctor told Betty that she had Endometriosis and that was why she could not have any more children. There was no treatment for that condition in the 1950s. Did my mother cry over that news? I'm sure she did. But she had already been through so many difficult times. Tears came easily ... and then she picked herself up and kept on going. Her husband, Joe, was a calm and supportive presence, a hard worker, and a great father.

But what would happen to their daughter, raised as an only child? Not to worry. Betty was

the ultimate "Great Connector." In good times and bad she always, always stayed in touch with extended family.

Every weekend Betty, Joe and Christine would drive to the Klein's house for dinner. Edna and Andy became like grandparents to Christine. Their two youngest children, Babe and Bud, became like her sister and brother. At Eastertime, the three kids would dye hard-boiled eggs on Betty's dining room table. When the Christmas season came along, they decorated sugar cookies. The children made a mess but Betty cleaned it up with few complaints. She seemed to be having a good time too.

In fact, Betty always brought fun to any gathering she was part of. Every Memorial Day, every Fourth of July, every Labor Day was a time for a big family cookout. In cooler weather there were gatherings in the basement of the Klein's house. If Betty and Josie (Edna's oldest daughter) were together, you could count on music and dancing. Sometimes the two of them would kick up their heels and do the polka.



Family cookout

Source: The Creative Commons. Artist Unknown

Betty's penchant for enjoying family was not confined to the state of Maryland. When our family of three visited the Buffalo area, Milly was there with her husband and three children. On summer vacations to visit my dad's parents

near Boston, we always spent afternoons at the beach. Everyone would be invited: aunts, uncles and lots and lots of cousins.

When I got married and had two daughters of my own, Betty and Joe became super-enthusiastic grandparents. Then, when Bill Mitchell came into my life, my mother connected with his family too. I remember when his two granddaughters were about 7 and 8 years old. My mom taught them a line-dance routine right there in our dining room. She was about 80 years old at the time.

So, what would my mother say about the coronavirus pandemic? I think she'd be happy to hear that we use Zoom, FaceTime, email, cell phones, and the good old US Postal Service to connect with family members and friends.

"You'll get through it," my Mom would say, "if you just stay connected ... and don't forget to laugh."

Simon and Sadie—A Love Story

Eileen Stanzione

In the early 2000s, my husband, Rich, and I inherited Sadie, a beautiful Boxer. Sadie was with our oldest son, Adam, for the first three years of her life and then came to live with us. Adam lived in a small place with several other roommates, and no longer could manage a large, energetic dog. Sadie had visited frequently, so we knew and loved her.

When Sadie came to us, we had another dog, Simon, who was a miniature, off-white poodle, who developed diabetes in his later years. After the diabetic diagnosis, I took him to the doctor weekly for what seemed like an endless time. After 4 or 5 months, and two shots of insulin a day, his diabetes stabilized and we grew accustomed to the routines of our lives, which now included two cats and two dogs. Initially, after the initial uproar of adopting yet another

pet, the animals and the people all fared well together.



A boxer and miniature poodle from the Creative Commons



Of great interest to us as observers, Simon and Sadie fell in love. Where one would go, the other would follow. They were an unlikely pair. When we took walks in our development, people called them the "odd couple." Simon was smallish with soft, curly hair, short stubby legs, and a wide girth. Sadie was tallish and strong; her brown hair was very short and would stick on your clothes like needles. Simon had short steps and had to almost run to keep up with Sadie, and Sadie had to restrain herself to keep pace with Simon. The dogs garnered so much attention when walking together, that Rich and I were almost irrelevant during our little parades through the neighborhood. Behind our home, we had a large, undeveloped piece of land, which was a playground for pets and kids. In the morning, I would take Simon and Sadie out, unleashed, to run around the field. They refused to go out, unless they could

be together. Once out in the field, they chased each other in total abandon and generally had the times of their lives. Once inside, they found their places to lie down and they would be at peace. I would go off to work, knowing that they had each other.



Source: *The Creative Commons. Photographer Unknown.*

One of our habits was to meditate together. When it was time to take my accustomed place on the well-used, green couch, I would yell into the next room, "Time to meditate!" With pure joy, they would run in and join me. Sadie would lie with head and paws in my lap and Simon would

circle round and round until he found a comfortable spot at the other end of the couch. They would sleep peacefully, while I meditated. Another absolute delight was their morning greeting. The dogs were not allowed upstairs and for whatever miraculous reason, they never violated the rule; the upstairs was the province of the cats and the humans. When I would awaken in the morning, and began to walk down the stairs, the dogs would appear, wagging their tails and smiling (really!). They greeted me at the bottom of the stairs, as if I had been gone for a month. I would scratch their heads and return their greetings with hellos and ready for breakfast?

Our happy times together came to an abrupt end, soon after Sadie's 8th birthday. Rich and I were in Panama taking a Spanish Immersion class. Mid-way into our time there, Adam called to say he had come home from work and found Simon lying comatose on the floor, with Sadie hovering above him. When Adam picked up Simon to take him to the animal hospital, Sadie became agitated and loudly barked in protest. There was nothing that could be done to console Sadie, as Adam had to leave. Sadly, the

vet could not save Simon; he "tried everything," but, in the end, he died after he had a seizure. When we came home from Panama a few days after Simon's death, Sadie was miserable despite everyone's efforts to distract her. She kept looking for Simon, and when we meditated, he whimpered on the couch looking at me as if to say, "What happened?" Within days, Sadie's skin broke out in a painful rash, she developed a UTI, and two weeks after Simon's death, Sadie could no longer walk. Once again, Rich, Adam, and I took him to the doctor, and he confirmed our thoughts. "It is time to put her down." The people she loved most in the world were with her when she died. She went peacefully and we left the doctor in tears.

Sadie died of a broken heart...and we have missed her and her best friend to this day. Sadie and Simon were our last dogs.

Spices in My Life

Rosemary Davis

We Quakers talk about SPICES as tenets by which to live. As I enter my fourth month in isolation due to the virus, I am pleased to be adding a great deal of spice to my life. Cooking is not my favorite pastime. When I bring food for simple meal, it is usually some "heat and eat" dish or salad from Costco.

Lucky for me, my 15-year-old next door neighbor has offered to become my personal gourmet chef for the summer. He has spent the past three months completing school work at home, playing the violin, and enhancing his culinary skills. Last Sunday I had a delicious frittata for brunch. This weekend I am looking forward to faro and sweet potato hash with herb sauce. He has sent me a menu of what he is preparing for the week for this family and I can select the dishes I want. In addition, he has composed a list of bakery goods and pastas he plans to offer to the neighbors—handmade

breads such as *fougasse* and *pane bianco*, words I can hardly pronounce.



Source: Creative Commons. Photographer Unknown

I have watched Matthew grow since he was a toddler, attended his brother's bar mitzvah, and enjoyed having his family as dear neighbors. I am so fortunate to have young people in my life, especially now as we have limited in person contacts with others. I feel truly blessed. (If anyone is interested in trying the delicacies I am enjoying, please let me know. I can pass his number along.)

Connecting Across...

Susannah Rose

My Grandmother Hills gave me an invaluable lesson in childhood about love and connection. We went to visit one of my father's sisters and her family. They had a little girl, less than two years old probably, who had an infection shortly after she was born that cost her her hearing, her sight, and some of her physical and mental faculties as well. She was not expected to live much longer. She was in a crib, separated from everyone, grinding her teeth, agitated, moving in a chaotic way that suggested restlessness and distress. She was the little elephant in the room.

People seemed intent on not looking at her, not going to her. I sensed that there was something sad, awkward, even embarrassing about her presence.

My grandmother entered the room and went straight to Julie. She put her hands on her in a loving and gentle way, spoke to her by name (even though she could not be heard), and stayed at her side letting her know she was there. Julie's entire body relaxed. She let herself be comforted. She almost seemed to smile.

The love Leola Hills felt for her grandchild did not see any barriers or limitations worth considering. I was privileged to witness the power of that loving connection.

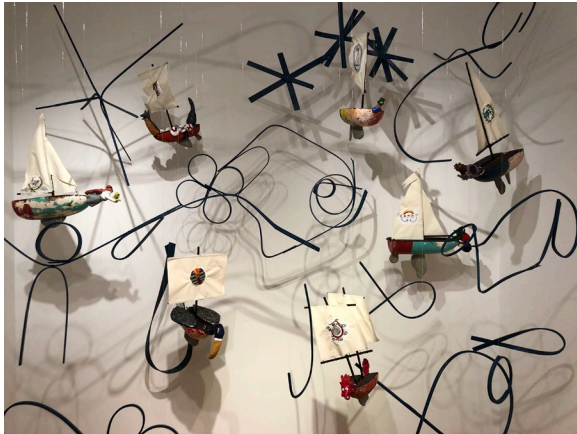


Source: Creative Commons. Photographer unknown.

But I still had to learn that connection doesn't mean understanding. It just means connection. Maybe a window has opened into the mystery of another human life. That's a privilege. Imagination – reading or hearing stories about people whose worlds and experiences are different from ours, for example – can be a bridge we cross to awaken our empathy with lives very different from ours.

Sadly, imagination can also be poisoned and become a source of projection, prejudice, and self-deceit. We need every single check and balance built into the human system. We need reason, effort, skilled listening, checking out what we think we are hearing, sensory input. We need to listen over time. And it's never enough. We can visit a country every year of our lives and think we know it well, yet much of it will remain unexplored.

There used to be, probably still are, training programs in “cultural competence.” But many people have raised the objection that this title makes the people who take them, mainly white people who consider themselves sensitive, seem like experts in someone else’s culture. Instead, they suggested, such courses should be called “cultural humility.”



7th graders at Appleton Village School in Maine explored world cultures and created symbolic ships representing a variety of cultures. They sculpted decorative figureheads and embroidered sails based on the unique symbolism of each culture. They thoughtfully included stars to help us all navigate. This is a small section of the entire project, which was exhibited at the Farnsworth Museum.

Some years ago, I spent about a year of my life over time in Uganda – my first experience with a really different culture. On each visit, over a period of three or four years, another veil fell from my eyes, something new was discovered. To give only one example, I think of a young woman I worked with, Robinah. Uganda had been a British territory and its professionals adopted British manners and ways of working. A visitor who proudly mastered a local language and used it in a professional meeting was called down in no uncertain terms: “Our national language is English.” With many tribes and languages, the professional world counted on its British heritage to provide common ground. The entire Ministry of Planning and Finance felt British to me, both in language and manner.

I worked closely with Robinah, my office mate, for months. I had encouraged the Ministry to

hire her so that they would have a Ugandan communications generalist in place to carry on the work I began after I left. I knew her professional self pretty well. It wasn’t until we were on a trip together that she showed more of who she was: her identity as a member of her tribe and resident of her village. As we drove, she sang for me. Song after song. Traditional songs rich with meaning were translated for me. She sang the song the village would sing to a young man coming of age. Songs of mourning, songs of celebration. She threw back her head and sang with abandon. The reserved woman I thought I knew was completely transformed.

She shared the story of the negotiation of her bride price – she was very proud to command such a high one - and made me laugh at the drawn-out negotiations for the bride price of her daughter, which culminated in both the bride price and a matching gift from the bride’s parents being given to the couple as a nest egg. Perhaps I would have judged this practice thoughtlessly before hearing her take on it. It was as if I’d been entertained in one small room of her life and had no idea of the vastness of the entire building.



Cattle on the road in a Ugandan village

In the pain of these times, I try to do the work of empathy and love and connection. I try to be useful, try to be a part of the rolling waves of justice, to “carry it on.” I read. I listen. But I can never truly take in what it’s like to be a parent

of a young man of color in America, or what it's like to feel fear when the police pull your car over, or what it would be like to have a family history that includes slavery or stories of disrespect, trauma, and injustice over generations. Empathy can take me only so far.

At a deep level, we are all the same. At a deep level, we are all different in ways we ourselves cannot fully understand.

But something within us can travel that distance and connect us, one to another. The energy of that connection has power. It fuels our authentic work in the world. We work, and we keep listening.



Masks illustrated by June B in First Day School