

THE GAZETTE

"a news-sheet, a periodical publication giving an account of current events"

West Falmouth Religious Society of Friends

FEBRUARY 2021



The Hill We Climb (excerpt)

Amanda Gorman

"When day comes, we step out of the shade,
Aflame and unafraid.
The new dawn blooms as we free it,
For there is always light,
If only we're brave enough to see it,
If only we're brave enough to be it."

From Gorman's 2021 Inaugural poem as National Youth Poet Laureate

I Dream a World*

Langston Hughes (1902–1967)

"I dream a world where man
No other man will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn
I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom's way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.
A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head
And joy, like a pearl,
Attends the needs of all mankind-
Of such I dream, my world!"

*In the public domain. For some interesting observations on the poem's influence on Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream Speech* see ["https://theconversation.com/langston-hughes-hidden-influence-on-mlk-91736](https://theconversation.com/langston-hughes-hidden-influence-on-mlk-91736).



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Officers

Fran Lightsom, clerk

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Molly Cornell, recording clerk

Clyde Tyndale, treasurer

Regular Events

Adult Discussion Group

Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

Peace and Social Order

2nd Sunday at 12:00 p.m.

Erica Adams, convener

Growth and Learning

3rd Sunday at 12:00 p.m.

Sunny Davidson, convener

Empathy Practice (NVC)

Usually 1st Saturday 9:30–11:45

Brenda Nolan, convener

Restorative Circle Practice

Usually 1st Saturday 1:00-3:00

Brenda Nolan, convener

Ministry & Counsel

Carolyne Jordan, convener

(508-564-4744)

West Falmouth Meeting for

Worship with Attention to

Business

Usually 4th Sunday

(January 24, February 28)

Note: Due to COVID, many of these events are on hold. Check with committee conveners to be sure.

Upcoming Events

New England Yearly Meeting

Listening for Life – This four-part series bringing together young adults and Quaker mentors will meet Thursdays, **February 25**, and **March 4, 18 and 11** from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Young adults, especially those under 30, and seasoned Friends are invited to apply by February 7th. For further information and application see <https://neym.org/events-calendar/2021/02/-partners-spirit-discernment-series>.

Beacon Hill Friends House – Simple Morning Meditation

Practice – Held via Zoom **Monday through Friday** from 8:00 – 8:30 a.m. The meditation is 15 minutes long, and begins and ends with a brief introduction to the practice. Orientation for newcomers begins at 8:00 a.m. and practice begins at 8:10. Join once or join regularly! The meditation is free and open to the public. See <https://bhfh.org/virtualprograms/simple-morning-meditation-practice-5/>.

Beacon Hill Friends House --Responding to the Call: Healing

from the Sin of Separation. A multi-part course run from **January 12 – February 23.** *Registration has closed but*, if you have questions or would still like to register, you are encouraged to email Jen Higgins-Newman at program@bhfh.org.

Expanding New England Quakers' Capacity for Noticing Patterns of

Oppression and Faithfulness – This two-part interactive workshop will meet virtually on **February 13 and 20** from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon. For further information and to register see <https://neym.org/events-calendar/2021/02/expanding-new-england-quakers-capacity-noticing-patterns-oppression-and>.

Walking with the Bible – A monthly series cosponsored by

Woolman Hill and Beacon Hill Friends House. Sundays, **February 14** and **March 14** from 4:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. At each session Peter Blood-Patterson will welcome a different Friend as guest leader and we will have a chance to hear what role the Bible plays in each of these Friends' lives. We will hear from Katie Breslin (February), an Earlham School of Religion student, who most recently led FCNL's Young Adult Friends program and Regina Renee Ward (March), who led Bible half hours at the 2017 FGC Gathering and is active in the Fellowship of Friends of African Descent. All are welcome. See <https://neym.org/events-calendar/2021/02/walking-bible>.

Quaker Earthcare Witness in partnership with Friends General Conference is hosting monthly online worship sharing. Learn more and register here for any or all of the upcoming five sessions: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZArdyhrzwjHd3WkD1z2zBoyqzj5SZEtUG>.

Midweek Meditation on Quaker Quotes – Wednesday, **February 24** at 8:00 p.m. Brian Drayton (Souhegan, NH, Friends Meeting) is offering one-hour midweek opportunities for Zoom-based worship-sharing and conversation, approximately once a month on a Wednesday, until spring. Open to all, but limited to 20 at a time. Friends are asked to RSVP to receive a Zoom link for that month's session, along with the reading—a short quotation from a Friend modern or ancient. Attendees will be asked to read the selection beforehand and reflect in private on four short questions. Each gathering will open with quick greetings all around, then a brief introduction to the quotation, followed by 15 minutes of open conversation about the text. The rest of the time will be spent in worship-sharing. The aim will be for the conversation to be slow, spacious, and centered. The final 5 minutes will be silent, before we depart from our miniature retreat. For further information and to RSVP see <https://neym.org/events-calendar/2021/01/midweek-meditation-quaker-quotes>.

Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change: Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples –Saturday, **March 13**, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. In this two-hour participatory workshop, sponsored by Friends Peace Teams, we will hear the story of the colonization of this land in the words of Indigenous leaders, Euro-American leaders, and Western historians. We will take part in the story through experiential exercises and share our responses and reflections in small groups. Together, we will explore steps we can take to build relationships with Native peoples based on truth, respect, and justice. Register at <https://friendspeace-teams.org/trr-2021-03-13-workshop/>. Next available workshop is March 13. February workshops are full.

Sandwich Monthly Meeting

Sandwich Monthly Meeting for Business will be held Sunday, **February 7**.

West Falmouth

Weekly Sunday Worship continues to be held via Zoom. We invite Friends from Yarmouth and East Sandwich to join us. An e-mail with the specifics on connecting to this virtual format will be sent a day or so before. The Zoom meeting opens at 9:30 a.m. Starting at 9:50, we settle into worship.

Quaker Women – We are meeting weekly via Zoom on **Thursdays** at 7 p.m.

Also of Interest

Weekly Taizé service. Thursday evenings in **February** (4, 11, 18, 25) at 7:00 p.m. This is a style of worship that comes out of an ecumenical monastic order in central France with a strong devotion to peace and justice through prayer and meditation. The service will include recorded chants, spoken prayers and readings, and about twenty minutes of traditional Quaker silent waiting worship. See <https://neym.org/events-calendar/2020/12/weekly-taize-service-online>.





**American Friends
Service Committee**

Quaker values in action

AFSC News and Updates –

Making Real the Promise of Democracy -- Read AFSC's statement on white supremacy, violence, and the January 6th storming of the Capitol. <https://www.afsc.org/newsroom/making-real-promise-democracy-face-armed-insurrection>

For the first time in seventeen years, *ederal death penalty executions* resumed in the summer of 2020. Since then, the Justice Department has executed at least 11 people in the name of the state—more than any other time in the past 70 years. Three people have been executed in January 2021 alone, most recently Dustin Higgs, a 48-year-old black man on January 16. Encourage Congress to act now to stop federal executions for good and end this immoral and discriminatory policy. For information on why we should all support the call to end federal executions see <https://www.afsc.org/blogs/news-and-commentary/its-time-to-stop-federal-executions-and-repeal-death-penalty>. Find additional information at <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/>.



**Friends Committee on
National Legislation**

A Quaker Lobby in the Public Interest

FCNL Virtual Events –

Witness Wednesdays, Silent reflection, together, in community. 5:15 – 6:15 p.m. Registration required.

February 3 – See <https://act.fcnl.org/event/witness-wednesday-virtual-events/2014/>.

February 10 – See <https://act.fcnl.org/event/witness-wednesday-virtual-events/2015/>.

February 17 – See <https://act.fcnl.org/event/witness-wednesday-virtual-events/2016/>.

February 24 – See <https://act.fcnl.org/event/witness-wednesday-virtual-events/2017/>.

Thursdays with Friends, A discussion of current events and their impact.

February 11, 4:00 – 4:30 p.m. -- Register at <https://act.fcnl.org/event/thursdays-with-friends/2035/>.

HUNGER WARD: Yemen Film Screening and Panel Discussion, February 4, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. FCNL has teamed up with Spin Film for a special screening of HUNGER WARD—a powerful, new documentary that



provides an unflinching look at the human-caused famine in Yemen. Learn more and register at <https://www.fcnl.org/yemenfilm>.

FCNL News and Updates –

Read Diane Randall’s statement on behalf of FCNL on *why it is necessary to impeach Donald Trump*: <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/2021-01/impeach-trump>.

Read FCNL’s statement on recommended actions for the *first one hundred days of the Biden administration*: <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/2021-01/first-100-days-fcnls-recommendations-biden-administration>.

Pendle Hill Events --

Daily worship via Zoom from 8:30 – 9:10 a.m. See <https://pendlehill.org/explore/worship/join-us-online-for-worship-in-the-barn/>.

First Monday Lecture: A Celebration of Disciplined Listening with Mike and Marsha Green, Monday, **February 1**, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. via Zoom. Free and open to the public, but registration required. See <https://pendlehill.org/events/a-celebration-of-disciplined-listening-learnings-from-couple-enrichment-at-home-and-in-the-meeting/>.

Online Reading Group – This monthly online reading group, free and open to all, focuses on a mix of Pendle Hill Pamphlets and other Quaker materials. In February the reading group will discuss *Gospel Order: A Quaker Understanding of Faithful Church Community* (PHP #297) by Sandra L. Cronk. Wednesday, **February 13** from 6:30 -- 8:00 p.m. via Zoom. Register at <https://pendlehill.org/learn/-workshops-courses-events/event-registration-february-reading-group-02-10-21/>.

The Inner Guide vs. the Inner Critic: The Journey from Judgment to Love. Three evenings in March with Christine Wolff, **March 1, 3, and 5** from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Learn more and register at <https://pendlehill.org/events/the-inner-guide-vs-the-inner-critic-the-journey-from-judgment-to-love/>.



As we travelled we came near a very great hill, called Pendle Hill, and I was moved of the Lord to go up to the top of it ... When I was come to the top, I saw the sea bordering upon Lancashire. From the top of this hill the Lord let me see in what places he had a great people to be gathered.”

George Fox: An Autobiography (Rufus M. Jones, ed.)
CHAPTER VI: A New Era Begins -- 1652. See <http://www.gutenberg.org/files-/43031/43031-h/43031-h.htm>.

Black History Month: Nearby Events, Activities and Resources

Woods Hole
Black HISTORY MONTH

2021 Theme
The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity.
All 2021 Activities will be held virtually.

Celebrating 40 years of Black History Month Celebrations in Woods Hole!

Thursday, Feb 4 at Noon ET
40 YEARS OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH IN WOODS HOLE: THE JOURNEY AND THE FUTURE
Moderated by *Ambrose Jearld, Jr.*
LOOKING BACK AT THE WOODS HOLE BLACK HISTORY MONTH JOURNEY AND LOOKING TO ITS FUTURE

Tuesday, Feb 9 at Noon ET
'IN THE EYE OF THE STORM', AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. WALTER MASSEY
Interviewed by **MINDY TODD**

Wednesday, Feb 17 at Noon ET
'A BEAUTIFUL RESISTANCE' PANEL DISCUSSION

PLEASE WATCH THE VIDEOS ON OUR WEBSITE TO PREPARE FOR THE PANEL DISCUSSION

Visit our website to register & learn more about these events, access a read and watch list, and participate in the Virtual Harambee!

www.woodsholediversity.org/bhm-2021/

WOODS HOLE UNIVERSITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Come and join the **Woods Hole** community in its annual celebration of Black History Month, this year being the 40th anniversary of this festive event in Woods Hole. The Woods Hole Black History Month events will focus on this year's national theme of "The Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity." All activities will be virtual and free, but advance registration is required (See <https://www.woodsholediversity.org/bhm-2021/>). A highlight will be a virtual Harambee (a Swahili verb meaning "pull together") in which all are invited to try one of the delicious recipes listed and share a photo of that meal, or to submit a recipe and photo. See <https://www.woodsholediversity.org/virtual-harambee/>.

Sponsored by the New Bedford Historical Society

Sunday February 9th -- 20th Anniversary of the Frederick Douglass Read-a-thon

of The Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, written by Himself (1845).
First Unitarian Church (71 Eighth Street, New Bedford), 2:00 -6:00 p.m.

New Bedford Underground Railroad Walking Tour: http://nbhistoricalsociety.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Underground-railroad-Walking-Tour_nebe.pdf

Websites on Slavery and the Underground Railroad:
<http://www.nbhistoricalsociety.org/UGRRWebsites.pdf>

Behind the Mansions: http://nbhistoricalsociety.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/NPS_mansions.pdf

Also of Interest:

Impact of Unresolved Trauma on American Indian Health Equity – Zoom seminar with Dr. Donald Warne, Wednesday, **February 3**, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. Dr. Warne is a member of the *Oglala Lakota* tribe from Pine Ridge, South Dakota and comes from a long line of traditional healers and medicine men. He received his MD from Stanford University School of Medicine and his MPH from Harvard School of Public Health. For further information and the Zoom link see <https://ghsm.hms.harvard.edu/ghsm-events/department-seminars/impact-unresolved-trauma-american-indian-health-equity>.

From **Nan Garrett-Logan**-- *Gun violence prevention work* has been eclipsed by the ravages of COVID-19 but, as you and I know, although this virus may well be solved with a vaccine, the work of gun violence prevention will continue to be necessary. Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) has two short articles of interest on the current gun situation in the U.S. The first is on the proliferation of semiautomatic weapons easily available over the internet without background or licensing checks. See <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/2020-07/rise-ghost-guns-and-what-it-means-gun-violence-prevention>. The second provides a statistical overview on the danger of guns in homes and the increase in gun purchases and licenses during this COVID-19 year. See <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/2020-12/guns-dont-make-us-safer-yet-weve-already-seen-record-amounts-gun-purchases-year>.

COVID-19

Barnstable County COVID-19 **Helpline**: 774-330-3001

For current information on vaccine distribution on Cape Cod (recording) or to speak with a Medical Reserve Corps volunteer Monday through Friday (8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) to get answers to questions regarding COVID-19 general information, testing sites, vaccine rollout information and more.

For information on COVID-19 **testing** on Cape Cod see

<https://www.barnstablecountyhealth.org/falmouth-and-hyannis-covid-19-test-sites>

Vaccine: Phase 2 of the vaccine rollout begins February 1.

Listed in order of priority:

- Individuals age 75+
- Individuals age 65+, individuals with 2+ comorbidities
(only those conditions listed as *at increased risk* for severe illness)
- Other workers
- Individuals with one comorbid condition

For further details see

" <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/when-can-i-get-the-covid-19-vaccine>.

For a recent local update see Goers, K. (2021, January 29). State announces vaccination phase two while lacking available doses: frustrations run high. *The Falmouth Enterprise*. <https://www.capenews.net/coronavirus/>.



Readers Write

Last Year's News Can Tell Us Something about Today

Lewis M. Randa



Photo credit: Meg Randa, February 5, 2020.

Tuesday, January 12: As I approach my January 14th pretrial court date at Framingham, MA District Court for acts of peaceful, civil disobedience of nearly a year ago, I am struck by the irony of this moment.

While the world watched in shock and horror last week as conspiracy theories metastasized into an attack on and desecration of the U.S. Capitol by Trump supporters, I found myself dealing with my own charges of disturbing the peace in Sherborn, MA last February when I was arrested for protesting the Senate's impeachment acquittal of Donald Trump.

I expect that in the eyes of many, I am as suspect as the anarchists who took over the U.S. Capitol, although I only stopped traffic on Main Street momentarily to declare publicly, with my body, that President Donald Trump was a clear and present danger to our country and the world.

So now I must go to Court to justify my actions. There was then, and even more now, sufficient evidence to justify that point of view and action. One would think that what took place within the halls of Congress this past week by citizen-terrorists is all the evidence required for me to be acquitted. Fast forward one year from my arrest in February 2020 and the U.S. Capitol Building has been trashed, five people are dead and our democratic ideals have been tarnished beyond measure while our adversaries gloat over the mayhem this President has unleashed. Clearly, democracy can unwittingly be its own worst enemy. As I prepare my defense, articles for a *second* impeachment are being drafted by Congress for Incitement of Insurrection. This very fact, one would think, is all the vindication I would need: we shall see.

Due to the pandemic my trial date was postponed to this coming Thursday, only to coincide with another attempt to remove Trump from office, either through the 25th Amendment, or through Impeachment. Neither is likely to succeed, for tyranny, like an infectious disease, travels through the system and attacks the weakest organs first. Who would have thought our legislative bodies that deal with the counting of Electoral College votes or impeachment would be so susceptible, so defenseless against the undermining of governance that Trump intended?

In an effort to put my upcoming trial in perspective, it is important to note that it takes place against the backdrop of previous, similar actions I've taken that have landed me in jail, intentionally, for nonviolent protests— namely when Trump was inaugurated on January 20, 2017, and again that same year on August 27 when I led a demonstration at the Soldier Systems Center in Natick, MA to call upon the

military to Refuse the Order to Launch. Like so many others, I feared Trump might use nuclear weapons against North Korea — and now, just this week, ten past Secretaries of Defense signed a letter to Trump demanding that he not involve the military in his grievances over the election, and by extension, informed the military to “refuse the order to launch.” These generals, too, knew the necessity to disarm this dangerous and deranged leader of our nation. I never regretted that protest because it was nonviolent and intended to add my voice to the clarion call that Trump was a menace to decency and democracy and must be removed.

Yet, my reason for writing has more to do with those who assaulted their way into the Capitol Building than the unhinged Commander in Chief who brought it about. As I’ve stated, I am no stranger to taking actions that result in arrest and subsequent appearance before a magistrate. And in this I have something in common with those who took drastic actions at our nation’s Capital.

I know now what it feels like to have one’s philosophy hijacked. As a Quaker pacifist, I don’t take violating the law lightly and feel that those who have employed nonviolent, civil disobedience in their lives have a certain responsibility to do their part in healing America. I would propose that we have a moral responsibility to make ourselves available to those who perpetrated these acts of sedition, while they are still in prison, in an effort to assist in their rehabilitation. At the very least, each of the perpetrators should, in my opinion, have assigned to their rehabilitation program a committed, nonviolent peaceful protestor to serve as their guide, for they will eventually be released back to society.

Quakers have long worked in prisons, in fact helped establish penitentiaries (a place to do penance), so it seems we have before us as Quakers yet another calling. This may appear naïve, but so is the notion of a peaceful transfer of power and the very idea of a functioning democracy.

What we saw unfold in D.C. was anything but a thoughtful, well-executed plan to win hearts and minds; rather, it was an attempt to destroy the very fabric of our democracy. That this violent mob viewed their actions as an honorable protest makes it all the more egregious. Their action, in my opinion, turned out the way it did because it lacked the essential guardrails of mutual respect and shared values required to keep it civil — so what took place was inevitable. Hearts filled with hate never bring about social change that is beneficial to society, on this we can all agree.

Those who study and practice Gandhian nonviolent direct action know that the failure to inform those whom you are protesting against of your motives, leaves those motives open to subversion by mob rule. Perhaps havoc is what they wanted — or was it just the net result of what happens when there is no regard for norms or decorum or decency?

What took place in Washington was not a protest, because it was meant to destroy, not build -- it sought to express disrespect for the basic principles of democracy and sadly, it manifested deep-seated hatred, not mutual regard for needed social change.

What the protesters-turned-domestic-terrorists did was to *desecrate the transformative, moral authority of protesting*. No longer was the protest used as a vehicle of disapproval or objection, it became the antithesis of this. It left no room to address disagreements, conflict, misunderstanding -- no inroads to a solution, only degradation, conflict, and enemy-building. It might have begun as a protest, but it quickly

degenerated into yet another day in the history of violence in America leaving clouds of hate that will cast a shadow over the potential of American greatness.

I am proud to have notified the Sherborn Police of my intentions beforehand so they would respond, as they did, in such a way that no harm would be done, either to the officers, the public, myself or, perhaps most importantly, the reputation and viability of nonviolent protests, which for me is the highest form of citizenship.

Protesting in America and throughout the world has a checkered history to be sure, but my prayer remains that those who observed the rioting mob at the U.S. Capitol don't confuse that with protesting. While it is true that protests can become violent, it is well to remember that, at its best, the act of protest itself sheds healing light on the very issue the protest is addressing.



Calling in to my teleconference pretrial hearing on the steps of the Framingham District Courthouse where I have been arraigned three times for nonviolent civil disobedience protesting Donald Trump.

Photo credit: Alan Burt, January 14, 2021

Yesterday's news can tell us something about today. And what it tells us surely mirrors who we think we are, and what we want to become as a people and as a nation. To quote Robert Kennedy, "Let us dedicate ourselves to what the Greeks wrote so many years ago: to tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world."* Honorable, peaceful protests do just that.

Update: At the January 14th pretrial hearing, the District Attorney recommended dismissal. I objected, requesting a bench trial, a "trial by judge," versus Giuliani's "trial by combat" at the U.S. Capitol. I can't accept the charge of "disturbing the peace" even though it's just a legal term. But much more importantly, I want to explain to the Judge how seriously I, as a Quaker and member of the peace movement, take the principles of nonviolence. There has never been a more important and opportune moment in my lifetime to bear witness to the moral authority of peaceful civil disobedience. My trial is scheduled for April 8, 2021.

*From Kennedy's statement on the assassination of Martin Luther King; see <https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/the-kennedy-family/robert-f-kennedy/robert-f-kennedy-speeches/statement-on-assassination-of-martin-luther-king-jr-indianapolis-indiana-april-4-1968>.

An Update on Life during a Pandemic

Lee Hamilton

Last April I was asked to write about my experience in dealing with the virus; my article, *Sheltering in Place, Living Alone and Struggling*, appeared in the May 2020 Gazette. Who would have thought that almost a year later we would be experiencing a major surge of the virus with a mutated, even more contagious, form spreading across the country? The last time I checked, Barnstable County had ten towns in the red zone (high number of cases); my town of Yarmouth is included in this list.

When this all started and the Governor declared a state of emergency, I was barely leaving the house. However, out of necessity, I started going to the supermarket. Given this current surge, I am becoming increasingly fearful of venturing out and will now order curbside grocery pickup and will switch my prescriptions to a place that will either deliver or provide drive by pick-up. Usually dump runs have been relatively safe (and one of my exciting excursions when we were in lockdown) as most, but not all, wear masks, and social distance. That is, except for my last experience when a man decided not to wait for me to empty my mixed paper and came right beside me and did not seem to understand why I got angry. (Yes, Quakers, I'm afraid I got angry).

After getting my car jump-started for the fourth time, I finally purchased a new battery, but if I have not used the car for a few days, I must remember to use my automatic car starter to let it run. I realize this is not good for the environment and it is against the law in Massachusetts to let your car idle, but

My Joys:

Early morning worship with Allen's Neck Friends – while I do not get there every day (it is available Monday through Saturday), I am very grateful and feel rewarded when I do attend. I never would have imagined I could get so much out of a Zoom worship. As Peter Crysdale wished to keep the participation manageable, please send requests to me and I will convey this to Peter. I do not often get to the WF worship but will try again as Friends have reported wonderful meetings with very meaningful messages.

The Inauguration for the Biden- Harris administration gave me joy and brought me to tears. The selection of the Vice President, presenters at this event and cabinet appointees, truly reflects the diversity of this country. After four years of Trump, concluding with the January riot at the Capital Building, a truly very scary insurrection, it was just wonderful to watch this celebration of a new administration. I hope and pray that Biden and Harris can accomplish their goals given that there continue to be obstructionists and, sad to say, Trump supporters in Congress.

The other day I put aside the things I should have been doing and took a drive to the National Seashore and stood on Coast Guard Beach listening to the waves slapping and moving back as they got closer to my boots. Even though I get Facebook posting from the National Seashore, there is nothing like being there in person. My sister, the in-lander and true lover of the National Seashore beaches, says she cannot understand why I do not do this more often.

I did get that large consulting project (Community Assessment Report) completed (all 118 pages with additional lengthy appendices and a nine-page list of references). The agency submitted the report to the Department of Housing and Community Development just before Christmas. We are waiting to hear back, and hopefully the report will be approved. The Strategic Plan section will be due in early July, but I usually play a much smaller role in this component.

I am feeling very hopeful about 2021. The Biden-Harris administration offers a return to sanity and I'm doing my best to recover from the horrors of the past four years. I continue to have much to be grateful for -- my loving son, a faith community that at times offers me solace, secure housing, and the ability to work remotely (my usual procedure but now excludes any face-to-face meetings). But until COVID-19 is under control, we cannot return to normal (whatever the new normal will be). I miss my dear friend, Peggy Eastman. Although I send notes, the last time I saw her was late September when I was blessed to be included in a small gathering on the grounds of the nursing home to celebrate her 89th birthday. I was hoping I might be able to visit her in 2021 but, alas, it is not to be. Our beloved Margaret (Peggy) Eastman passed away in the early morning on January 27. As I mourn Peggy's death, I also celebrate her life, so well-lived, and give thanks for the deep and loving friendship I had with her.



Aquinnah -- water color by Esteban Hernández.
The gray in the distance is Cape Cod.

Buying Local – Really Local

This is the twelfth article in a series about the Climate Crisis.

Chances are you've read the phrase "buy local," particularly as it applies to food. The usual translation of this is to buy from a local farmers' market (e.g., the one in Falmouth). The food is generally considered to be fresher, is often organically-grown, and doesn't have to be trucked long distances to get to you. So, it's "green" and great tasting.

As a life-long gardener, however, I've been attracted the last couple of years to trying to grow the food in my back yard, in an organic or regenerative garden. And not surprisingly, food picked and eaten immediately is even fresher and better tasting.

But what about vegetables in the winter? A few hardy vegetables such as kale can make it through the winter, and you can extend the season by using cold frames and heavy row covers. However, plants grow very little during the winter months because of the short daylight hours. So, I got to thinking about growing vegetables inside during the winter. I already had a fluorescent-lighted growing stand where I started my seeds in the spring. Why not use it during the winter?

So, this year, with more time at home because of COVID, I started three trays of vegetables – one of lettuce, one of other leafy vegetables (kale, Swiss chard, arugula), and one of radishes. All of these require relatively low levels of light, so they're easier to grow indoors than plants that require full sunlight to fruit.

So far, I've only harvested the lettuce and radishes – and they are amazing! I pick only what we need that meal, wash briefly, and refrigerate the lettuce briefly to make it more crisp. The lettuce is really tasty, and the radishes have the sharpest flavor of any I've ever grown. I grew the latter in a mixture that was half compost, which may have helped. I use some electricity (180W, 12 hours/day), so it's not guilt-free.

One of the reasons that food is a major source of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is that, at least in the U.S., about half of all vegetables are lost to spoilage between the farm and the table. But there is almost no spoilage when you grow inside, because you harvest only what you can eat.

My indoor garden is in my office, and every day, as I Zoom or write, my meditation is to stare at the growing vegetables. In addition to being great tasting, they are also beautiful. And they transport me to summer every time I gaze upon them. What could be better?

Steve Gates



Lettuce in my office. January 27, 2021.



Photo credit: Bernie Nolan, January 28, 2021.

**Next Gazette Deadline
Monday, February 22**

The Gazette is a publication of West Falmouth Preparative Meeting
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Alta Mae's Amaryllis -- January 17, 2021
Photo credit: Steve Gates