

THE GAZETTE

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

West Falmouth Religious Society of Friends

JANUARY 2022



Happy New Year!

Contents

Upcoming Events	2-6
Readers Write	7-12
What We're Reading	13-15



Rufus Jones, 1920, On beauty –

Perhaps more wonderful still is the way in which beauty breaks through. It breaks through not only at a few highly organized points, it breaks through almost everywhere. Even the minutest things reveal it as well as do the sublimest things, like the stars. Whatever one sees through the microscope, a bit of mould for example, is charged with beauty. Everything from a dewdrop to Mount Shasta is the bearer of beauty. And yet beauty has no function, no utility. Its value is intrinsic, not extrinsic. It is its own excuse for being. It greases no wheels, it bakes no puddings. It is a gift of sheer grace, a gratuitous largesse. It must imply behind things a Spirit that enjoys beauty for its own sake and that floods the world everywhere with it. Wherever it can break through, it does break through, and our joy in it shows that we are in some sense kindred to the giver and revealer of it.

London Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. *Christian faith and practice in the experience of the Society of Friends*, London, England: Headley Brothers Ltd, 1961, entry 136.

Officers

Fran Lightsom, clerk

(508-548-9186;

fran.lightsom@gmail.com)

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

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

Cynthia Rankin, clerk

(508-360-7536)

Sunny Davidson, co-clerk

**West Falmouth Meeting for
Worship with Attention to
Business**

Usually 4th Sunday

January 2 (in lieu of December 26),

January 23

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

January Birthdays

Joyce Johnson, 6

John Davidson, 7

Heidi Blocher, 14



Upcoming Events

New England Yearly Meeting

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/>.

Caminando con la Biblia/Walking with the Bible – January 22, February 26, and March 26 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. via Zoom.

In this monthly bilingual series Peter Blood-Patterson will welcome different Friends as guest leaders. We will have a chance to hear what role the Bible plays in these Friends' lives and to hear what approaches to the Bible they find most helpful. We will also read and discuss a piece of Scripture that is meaningful for them. Friends are welcome to attend single sessions or the whole series. Learn more and register at <https://bhfh.org/caminando-con-la-biblia/>.

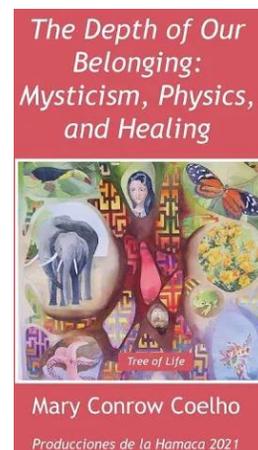
Reflecting on Our Collective Well-Being: Earth and Racial Justice Interconnectivity – Saturday, **January 22** from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Join others in exploring the deep interconnections between earth and racial justice – often treated as separate issues with separate calls for action. Gail Melix and LJ Boswell will facilitate. Register for this Zoom conversation at <https://lu.ma/BHFH-Earth-Racial-Justice>.

The Radical Quaker Spiritual Journey – January 30 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. with Marcelle Martin.

In this free webinar, Quaker author Marcelle Martin will share what she has learned from studying the experiences of both the first Quakers and contemporary Friends, describing ten elements of the Quaker spiritual journey important both then and now.

The webinar can stand alone or serve as the introduction to an 8-week online study group, *Our Life is Love*, which will follow on subsequent Sundays, from February 6 to March 27. Learn more and register for the webinar at <https://lu.ma/25e7gzzm>.

Book Discussion: Join a 3-part discussion of *The Depth of Our Belonging: Mysticism, Physics and Healing* by Mary Coelho (Cambridge, MA, Friends Meeting). Shelley Tanenbaum will facilitate joined by Mary Coelho. The group will meet via Zoom **January 11, January 25, and February 8** at 8:00 p.m. There is no cost, but advance registration is required. Participants are strongly encouraged to read the book beforehand. Learn more and register at <https://secure.quakerearthcare.org/civcrm/event/info>.



Events in the Quarter

Work Party -- Sunday, **January 9** -- after worship at the **New Bedford** meeting. No lunch together this time due to virus surge, but this is an opportunity for socially distanced fellowship with a small group of Friends. Masks and hand sanitizer provided. Please, vaccinated Friends only.

West Falmouth

Weekly Sunday Worship continues to be held via Zoom at 10:00 a.m.

Quaker Women – Quaker Women will gather via Zoom on Monday, **January 3** and on Wednesday, **January 19** at 7:00 p.m. The topic for **January 3** is “Things to Celebrate.” At this point no in-person gathering at Atria has been scheduled for January. Zoom contact is Abigail at asajyoung@gmail.com. In-person contact is Molly at mollycornell@comcast.net.

Peace and Social Order – Sunday, **January 9** at 12:00 noon via Zoom. Gray Cox, co-founder and Clerk of The Quaker Institute for the Future, will speak on *The Quaker Institute for the Future: Origins, Current Practices + Possible Futures for a Quaker ‘Think Tank.’* See flyer attached to this mailing for registration and live stream information.

New Year’s Eve Meeting for Worship Sandwich Monthly Meeting

Friends had planned to gathering at East Sandwich Meetinghouse on **New Year’s Eve** for worship. Sadly, the rapidly-worsening level of COVID infection in Barnstable County has made this unsafe so no in-person meeting for worship will be held.

Instead, West Falmouth will host a virtual gathering for Sandwich Monthly Meeting. The Zoom meeting will be opened at 6:45 p.m., worship will begin at 7:00 p.m., and we will have breakout rooms for socializing following worship. The link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86823367066?pwd=TTfkK1YwRjcwLzkra2xGeVNZN1lzUT09>.

West Falmouth Meeting Threshing Session

At our November meeting for business, Friends agreed that we should "hold a threshing session, with as many voices as possible, to help design a way of worshiping as a complete group in the future."

A threshing session is a traditional Quaker gathering for the purpose of allowing all Friends to express their opinions and feelings, without pressure to discern a decision.

Larry, Rita, Clyde, and Fran are planning the session, which is scheduled for Sunday, January 16 at 12:00 noon via Zoom.

At the session, we will encourage everyone to speak, and everyone to listen to each other, using these three queries:

- What does meeting for worship mean to you?
- What is needed to best support meeting for worship for you?
- What would interfere with meeting for worship for you?

All members and attenders are encouraged to participate. If you have concerns about the session, or if you are be unable to participate at the scheduled time during January, please contact any of the planners.



Also of Interest

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/>.

Candlelight Meeting for Worship with Care for the New Year -- December 31 from 11:00 p.m. to midnight via Zoom. No registration required. For the link go to <https://pendlehill.org/events/candlelight-meeting-for-worship-2021/>.

A First Monday Lecture with Jan Phillips – *Evolutionary Creativity: Bridging Creativity, Spirituality and Social Action* via Zoom, Monday, **January 3** from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. Free to the public, registration required. Learn more and register at <https://pendlehill.org/events/evolutionary-creativity-bridging-creativity-spirituality-and-social-action/>.

Online Reading Group – Wednesday, **January 12** from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., the group will discuss Bill Taber’s pamphlet, *Four Doors in Meeting for Worship* (PHP #306). This essay describes four doors as thresholds into the heart of worship. For information on purchasing the pamphlet and registering for the discussion see <https://pendlehill.org/product/four-doors-meeting-worship/>.

The Work That Reconnects: Discovering Strategies for Going Forth – Friday, **January 28** – Sunday, **January 30**, in-person weekend with Lynne Iser and Rabbi Mordechai Liebling facilitating a transformational group process based on the work of Joanna Macy, environmental author, activist, and Buddhist scholar. Registration from 4:00 -6:00 p.m. on the 28th; program ends with lunch on the 30th. Fee ranges from \$375 to \$495. *All guests visiting Pendle Hill are required to provide proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 or proof of negative results from a PCR test taken within 72 hours of arrival on campus.* Online registration and further information at <https://pendlehill.org/learn/workshops-courses-events/event-registration-the-work-that-reconnects-01-28-30-22/>.

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Witness Wednesdays, Silent reflection, together in community from 5:15 – 6:15 p.m. Register at:

January 5 - <https://fcnl.actionkit.com/event/witness-wednesday-virtual-events/2508/>.

January 12 - <https://fcnl.actionkit.com/event/witness-wednesday-virtual-events/2509/>.

January 19 – Special silent reflection: Holding Bridget Moix in the Light. <https://fcnl.actionkit.com/event/witness-wednesday-virtual-events/2510/>.

January 26 - <https://fcnl.actionkit.com/event/witness-wednesday-virtual-events/2511/>.

Read an excerpt from Diane Randall’s address during November’s Annual Meeting and Quaker Public Policy Institute -- *On Becoming: The Evolution of FCNL*. “That we are a Quaker organization operating from the spirit of love and that we remain open to Divine revelation means that we will never be finished.” See <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/2021-12/becoming-evolution-fcnl>.





**American Friends
Service Committee**

Quaker values in action

Quaker Action for a Just World

Read AFSC’s statement ***Remembering Archbishop Desmond Tutu***. The article includes reminiscences of AFSC’s connections with Tutu, the South African social rights activist who played a pivotal role in helping to end apartheid. A wonderful photo from AFSC archives capturing Desmond Tutu’s amazing smile is included. See <https://www.afsc.org/blogs/news-and-commentary/remembering-archbishop-desmond-tutu>.

Advocating for investments in our communities -- In West Virginia, community members and groups are urging Senator Manchin to preserve the child tax credit and support the Build Back Better Act. Learn more about their efforts from AFSC staff. See <https://www.afsc.org/blogs/news-and-commentary/advocating-investments-our-communities>.

Read ***A Quaker Statement on Migration***, developed by American Friends Service Committee, Britain Yearly Meeting, Friends Committee for National Legislation, Quaker Council for European Affairs, and Quaker United Nations Office. See <https://www.afsc.org/newsroom/a-quaker-statement-migration>.

Victory: Ending ICE Detention in New Jersey – “After years of organizing and advocacy, New Jersey took a major step in upholding the rights and dignity of immigrant community members. The three counties that have detained thousands of immigrants for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) decided to end those relationships. Immigration enforcement is down 70% in the state. In addition, the state passed a strong anti-detention law. And by 2023, New Jersey will have ended ICE detention completely.” Read more at <https://www.afsc.org/blogs/news-and-commentary/victory-ending-ice-detention-new-jersey>.



Readers Write

A Meditation on Making Cutting Boards

John Gates



Buddha Wood

Really exotic wood

hard to find, intriguing shades and patterns, how much of each?

Putting the pieces of the puzzle together

what order do these go in? this is like a jigsaw puzzle with different textures and shades. what will they look like glued together? how will this strip jump out next to other strips? how to place the exotic and less exotic woods, how to place the different tree types. the parts of the puzzle are a woodshop dream. imagination. buddha wood. buddha would.

Planing the cutting board

removing layers so the different boards are the same level and a woodworker sees symmetry and a person using the cutting board sees what? beautiful pieces bonded for the eye to enjoy, the edges curving, the curving edges.

And Zen

I am peaceful, calm, centered, heart lifted by making something for other people to enjoy and by woodworking shop time – son and father time together.



Reflections on December 21, 2021
National Homelessness Persons Memorial Service

Alan Burt
East Sandwich Preparative Meeting

Although the service on December 21 has passed, this memorial service can be done again, alone at home, or in any other place or way. Our prayers are so important, so sacred and so heard – truly a gift in the giving.

Following are the first names of those who experienced homelessness this past year on the streets of Cape Cod. Along with considerable worry, depression, fear and desperation in all who were homeless, some of them suffered beyond their ability to survive and passed away.

Read each name aloud, ring a bell, and follow with a sacred pause of several seconds.

Although we did not know these people in life, we can know them now in death as we enter into several minutes of prayerful silence. In a mysterious and sacred way let us connect with them, know them, and wish them love, peace and joy in their voyage into eternity with God. Let us ask them to remember us and to welcome us when it is time for us to join them.

Andrew	Beverly	Brian
Caitlyn	Cheryl	Caroline
Catherine	Christian	Christopher
Daniel	David	Diane
Douglas	Eric	Ernest
Gary	Halston	Holly
James	Jeffrey	John
Joseph	Kara	Kevin
Marie	Marvin	Max
Melody	Michael	Paul
Renee	Richard	Robert
Robin	Russell	Scott
Sean	Sharee	Stephanie
Steven	William	



Reflections from my 19th annual sleep-out on December 21, 2021

Alan Burt

The sleep-out is for those who feel called to demonstrate, in this way, that we understand, that we deeply care. It is a long and prayerful night of remembrance. This year I was blessed to sleep out with four others: Lewis, Cassandra, Paul and Joe. We arrived at separate times, and each of us carefully picked our spot to set up our tents. We shared our concerns about whether or not it was going to rain and how cold it was going to be. It seemed fitting for us to have these thoughts, feelings and conversations as they reflected what the homeless experience each night.

At one point while alone I was chopping wood for the fire and I cut my finger. It wasn't a bad cut, but it hurt. I muttered, "I'm hurt and there's no one around to help me?" I was immediately aware I was experiencing what so many of the homeless experience --a sense of being abandoned, hurt and alone. In those few moments I realized I was no longer in the world that I knew, and it was early evening. I thought of Ebenezer Scrooge and like him, I feared what was to come. Yet inside I knew that come the morning I too would feel a heightened sense of joy and compassion for others and for life itself. Still, I feared the darkness and the cold that was descending upon me.

Unlike last year when I slept out alone, I felt so grateful to have my companions. Each of us found comfort in sharing our concerns, helping each other prepare for the night, having some soup and watching a movie together before turning in for the night. And I loved how we laughed and sort of played together as we shared this serious and sacred night.

Lewis brought the movie, "Brother Son, Sister Moon," which is about the early life of Saint Francis of Assisi. Each time I watch this movie, I find I see more in it. This time, I was struck by both the sadness Francis felt as he came to know and feel what the homeless felt, and the subsequent joy he discovered from this experience.

As I sat there, glancing at each of my camping companions, I thought about the kidding and laughing we had done while setting up our tents. This led me to an enhanced sense of happiness as I saw in each of them the sadness, the seriousness and the joy in living life. And from all of this, I was left with the most meaningful message -- live life so as to take your love and compassion seriously while joyfully helping others the best you can along the way. I thought again of my grandmother's parting words, "Once you realize that the glass in your life is overflowing, all you want to do for the rest of your life is to share this blessing with others."



A blazing fire for our circle of prayers during the homeless memorial.

I'll end with one last reflection from this long, cold, and meaningful night. Earlier in the day, I had taken a young homeless man to an appointment and, for some reason, felt called to let him know that I was sleeping out that night with some others. I then wondered why I would share this with someone who has been sleeping outside for months. I felt stupid for having said this. He did not respond at all, just sat there staring forward as he usually does, since he is exhausted and very depressed.

In those moments I was reminded of the honor and blessing of having become an important part of this young man's life. He knows he can call me any time for anything. Sometimes he sends a message just to make sure my number hasn't changed. I also thought of how he had shared that he has no friends and sleeps in the woods each night in desperation and isolation. I was left feeling hurt for him, feeling I had not done enough for him.

He texted me at 8 p.m. that night. Although I didn't read his message until the next morning, he'd advised me to "tell your friends that if the clouds open up they might get to see some meteor showers." After I left the meeting house the next morning, I went to pick him up again for another appointment. As he was entering the car he said, "It's too bad it was so cloudy, but tell them to keep looking as the meteor showers can still be seen." On hearing his words, I felt such a powerful sense of love and compassion. He was not alone last night because he was thinking of us. And we were not alone either. I reflected further, and came to see the meteor showers he spoke of as really being showers of love and compassion falling down upon the earth to protect, help and guide us . . . even when the clouds seem to get in the way.

I'll end here by expressing my deep sense of gratitude for those who have joined in helping the homeless of Cape Cod -- those who raised funds for this specific night for Christmas presents for the homeless (see photo below) and those who have donated to the homeless gift card initiative (since last month's issue of *The Gazette* I have been able to give out more than \$500.00 in Stop and Shop gift cards).

Donations can be made through the non-profit Peace Abbey Foundation, 16 Lavender St., Millis, MA 02054. Please put *homeless gift card initiative* on the memo line of your check. You can also donate through <https://www.peaceabbey.org/>. Your donations will be matched. You are welcome to call me if you want to know more (508-648-2246).

Winter has just begun, and our homeless neighbors are in need of our loving compassion. As the cold weather comes, let us be the loving hands of God serving those suffering in our midst.



These gifts for the homeless were delivered the next day.

Meditation on Gun Violence

Nan Garrett-Logan

Take some time. Read aloud the names on the following list. Each name is different. Each person was unique. Each died from a gunshot in Massachusetts this year.* Each person left a circle of friends and family who were changed by their death. The list is incomplete. It probably does not include as many names of people who died by suicide using a gun. And then consider that the Massachusetts death rate is one of the lowest in the country. And then work to decrease the number in the year to come.

Dion Reid
Eric Christensen
Damian Alicea-Diaz
Josef Guillen
Reymon Delacruz-Batista
Joseph Fillio
Steven J. Malloy
Jeffrey Groulx
Charleen Figueroa
Anthony Harden

Noel Jimenez
Jay'Quawne Ward
Daquelle Matthews
Antonio Rufo-Sanon
Lindsay Smith
Richard Lorman
Officer Michael Ridge
DeShaun Wright
Rosa Hicks
Nelito Lopes

Asa St Louis
Eric Hargrett
Aaron Sutton
Eugene Sutton Jr.
Stedman Tucker
Wesley Lindor
Craig McDonald, Jr.
Michael Stanton, Jr.
Luiz M. Perlera
Lal Kishor Mahaseth

Nelson F. Coelho
Nathaniel Fabian
Timmy Chan
Officer Robert Otis
Christopher Gomes
Kevin Sherpa
Diamante Nicholson
Tayne Perkins
Kiara Torres
Arthur Miles

Saquon Moore
Liedson Monteiro-Terry
Dianne Silveira
Edmund Silveira
Shamel Winston Atkins
Gregory Cooper
Maxwell Gervais
Antonni Diaz
Luis Vazquez
Erin Fitzgibbons

Brian Butle,
Stephanie Gerard
Edgar Matthews
Indrick Rubin
Aisha Shepard
Naurik Michel-Brown
Alfonso Richards
Miguel Sanchez
Tamon Byrd
Haliendrew Flores

Derermell Robinson
Alicia Heywood
Akil Jackson
Robert Favreau
Edson Moreno
Marquis Simmons
Myles King
Joseph Housley
Erin Fitzgibbon
Brian Butler

Joshua Smith
David Green
Ramona Cooper
Nathan Allen
Jamie A. Dickinson
Jesse A. Brooks
Stacy Coleman
Ira Grayson
Genesis Arias-Santos
Fermin Baez



Matthew Donaghu,
Billy Cushing
Andrew Homen
Adilson Neves
Daquan Blanchard
Abushante Jennings
Arthur Waters
Ivanildo Barros
Nickoyan Wallace
Peter Schifone

Adam Walker
Levar Foster
Oscar Bolding, Jr.
Keith Jordan
Miguel Sanjurjo
Jovaughn Antonio Mills
Jeremy Holmes
Dana Mazyck
Joseph Pauline
Anthony Rosario

Malique Smith
Adrian Corniel-Delacruz
Edward Javier
Franklin Mane
Zachary Richardson
Carlos Cruz
Angel Ortiz-Santos
Kamari-Khalil Lyles
Joel Rodriguez
Brialee Garcia

Reginald Dessasure
Phet Gouvongvong
Lemond Grady
Edward Jennings
Delois Brown
Camry Stark
Xavier Louis-Jacques
Eric Leach
Benjamin Martinez
Angel Nieves

Jawad Muhamed
Tyrone Phet
Robert Crochiere
Fernando Massey
Quamel Batchelor
Brandon Williams
Nalijah Andrade
Messiah Leggett
Kenny Jenlies
Brandon Williams

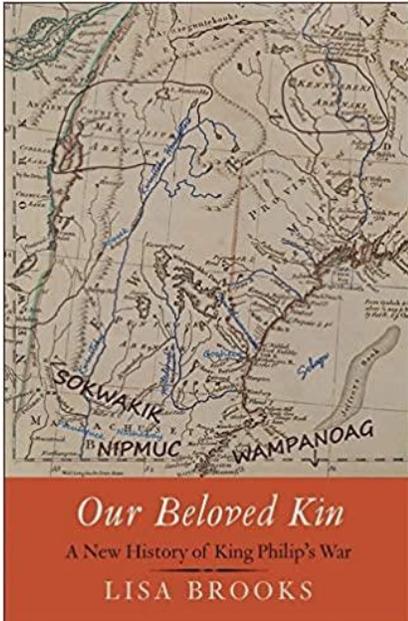
Darren Gillespie
Eric Small
Tasjahnaya Dance
Albert Brown
Damian Anderson
Christopher Strickland
Norman Dias
Akeem Polimis
Juan Nazario
Lance Norwood

*For information on how this list was compiled see <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/>.



What We're Reading

Fran Lightsom: *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War* by Lisa Brooks.



Our Beloved Kin uses information from 17th-century sources to develop a series of narratives that balance, and sometimes contradict, the story of King Philip's War that is commonly told as Massachusetts history. I found this book very informative, especially about the Wampanoag, Narragansett, Nipmuk, and Wabanaki cultures, their adaptability in dealing with the invasion of English settlers, and the actions that the settlers were willing to take. Knowledge of the new version of the story is beginning to provoke a transformation in me, so I would like to talk with other Friends about the book.

Our Beloved Kin is long and sometimes difficult to read. I suggest you try out a copy from the public library and make use of the accompanying website, <https://ourbelovedkin.com/awikhigan/index>. I hope to schedule a book discussion in late February. Contact Fran Lightsom if you are interested.

Brooks, L. *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.

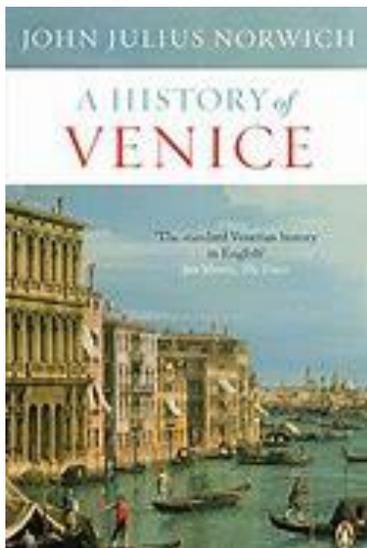
John Davidson: *The History of Venice* by John Julius Norwich.

I do not like cruise ships or tour buses, and not wishing to contribute to global warming by getting on a Europe-bound plane which will emit tons of carbon, I have decided to visit Italy this month vicariously by reading and researching the history of Venice. How could a city grow rich on the basis of trade and very occasional warfare, acquiring a vast storehouse of artistic treasures over ten centuries? The art of diplomacy was founded by the Venetians, who did not wish to participate in hatred of the Islamic world back when the Saracens presented a threat to Southern Italy in the tenth century, and instead developed extensive trading relationships stretching from Cairo to Córdoba. As they never had a standing army or even a regular method of recruiting one, the Venetians had to rely on sophisticated diplomacy to protect their interests as their city-state was outclassed by rising empires and nation-states after the fifteenth century.

A study of the history by John Julius Norwich allows the traveler equipped with his book and a computer to use the photos available of churches, mosaics, paintings, and architecture to explore places which they may not be able to visit. The formidable level of detail of this history, connected as it is by the author to each church or palace in Venice and the historical record, provides a useful tool for excavating as much information as might be wanted. The life of each of the 118 doges receives at least one sentence and some get many pages, providing continuity over the centuries, and as the author attempts a narrative over thirteen hundred years, the visual record of the art and architecture can be retrieved to offer support. For example, when the author mentions the cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta it is easy to find

photos on the internet of the Byzantine wall mosaics which the footnote at the bottom of page 11 references.

At the outset, refugees from Roman cities following the barbarian invasions of the fifth and sixth centuries set out to live in the lagoons and marshes where the city was to be built. As conditions on the mainland deteriorated, the island communities grew by driving wood pilings into the sand and building upon that foundation. (pg. 5) The Venetians remained subjects of the Roman Empire, but apparently rebelled when Byzantine Emperor Leo III in the year 726 ordered the destruction of all icons throughout his dominions, creating a crisis following the election of a leader called a dux or doge in Venice and leading to the Empire's disintegration on the Italian mainland (p. 13).



One learns that the pala d' oro, the amazing tenth century Byzantine altarpiece from St. Mark's cathedral, comes from a period in which the history of Venice closely resembles a bad Mafia movie, involving attacks and plots by Venetian families against Venetians. Doge Pietro Orseolo, the only doge to be canonized because he left his job and family to go live in a monastery, ordered the altarpiece from Byzantium (see p. 44). Venice continued to grow in trade and naval power and, by the time St. Mark's cathedral was consecrated in 1094, it was well-established as a city-state.

The doge Pietro Orseolo II (grandson of his above-mentioned namesake) negotiated treaties with Islamic leaders across the Arab world from Spain to Barbary, as commerce was always preferable to bloodshed, and more profitable too (p. 51). He managed to protect the Republic against the two main threats it faced-- the Slavs and the Saracens to the south. Norwich is kind enough to give us both the Italian names and the current Slavic names of the various islands and cities along the Dalmatian coast to avoid confusion since they were claimed by both Venice and their local inhabitants. John the Deacon accompanied Emperor Otto on his military-diplomatic trip down the coast to Ragusa (now Dubrovnik) in roughly 1000 to make territorial claims for Venice, and conquer a few cities (p. 53-55). As I discovered when I visited Dubrovnik, the inhabitants of that city now claim their city was never owned by Venice, contrary to John the Deacon's statement of Venetian claims.

The Venetians took a self-interested approach toward the various Crusades, and came out wealthier. Venice never saw the twin necessities of defense and commerce as altogether separate and thus viewed the Crusades as an opportunity for profit. The various victories of the Venetians were later recorded as paintings in the Sala dello Scrutinio of the Doge's Palace, where you can find out which doge died fighting beneath the walls of Zara (now Zadar in Croatia), should you ever become obsessed with Venetian history (see p. 86). Norwich cannot defend the terrible damage done by the Venetians to Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade, but the looted artifacts contributed to the city and its myth-- after all, tourists never questioned where the art came from until recent times.

The story of Marco Polo is retold (pp.177-179), but the mysterious alliance between Venice and the Mongol Golden Horde is never explained by Norwich, probably because the explanation is obvious: intent on trade, the Venetians were happy to cooperate with any rulers, however brutal, allowing caravans across the deserts through Persia and Central Asia. They were not sentimentalists, nor were they preoccupied with human rights -- it was trade with China that interested them (just as Senator Mitch

McConnell does not question the Chinese shipping origin of his wife Elaine Chao's fortune, which is reported to be well over 35 million dollars).

On the Italian mainland, famous mercenary soldiers (condottiere) such as Gattamalata and Bartolomeo Colleoni managed to carve out a land empire for Venice stretching across northern Italy in the fifteenth century (see pp. 313-324). It repeatedly came under threat due to the city-state's lack of a regular army, as when the French King Charles VIII invaded Italy at the end of that century (p. 370), and the various mercenary soldiers (who frequently switched sides between city states during wars) were no match for the French army, which was willing to kill the enemy with cannons.

After the discovery of America and the Portuguese sea route to India the golden age of Venice was over, as trade in spices and other valuable goods no longer was centered on the Mediterranean, and the rise of the Ottoman Empire presented an ever-growing threat. Its resources outclassed Venice in terms of manpower and economic strength. Norwich describes in detail the various battles the Venetians fought for Crete against their Turkish foes, eventually losing the island but finally regaining some ground around the Aegean during the late seventeenth century when the Ottoman Empire gradually declined (see pp. 342-344, 466-468, 543).

The author develops his argument that "Venice was born schismatic," meaning it was involved in a dispute with the Roman papacy from the outset (p. 11), and traces this through a series of instances of theological arguments and political power disagreements over the centuries with the Papal state. Due to its independent maneuverings and the toleration of Jews and Protestants as merchants, Venice repeatedly fell under the Papal interdict, a ban which prohibited all funerals, baptisms or other sacraments. In the last interdict of 1607, Venice's instinctive tendency towards religious toleration was unacceptable to Rome, and by defending its right to appoint its own church officials, Venetian Paolo Sarpi stood off this final onslaught of the Papacy (see pp. 512-520).

Napoleon had no use for the frivolity and carnival atmosphere of Venice, and rapidly took over the city-state following his invasion of the Italian peninsula. He rudely stole and carted off to Paris various art works, many of which are still in the Louvre, and brought to an end the existence of Venice as an independent republic almost without a fight (see pp. 610-626).

As I visited Venice more than four decades ago for one week, my memories are faded, but I am saddened by the thought that so much culture and history will probably disappear under the waves due to melting icecaps. Each overcrowded cruise ship packed with day-tourists is helping to pile the city under mountains of trash and, by contributing to global warming, to push it under the waves. Although the pandemic has reduced the overcrowding, it has also made international travel less pleasant and predictable than before. But it is still possible to travel in time and space without cost through the use of a good history book like that of John Julius Norwich, supplemented by a few internet searches. This is an experience I would recommend to any Quaker, and a good use of the internet.

Norwich, J.J. *A History of Venice*. London: Allen Lane, 1982. Originally published in Great Britain in two volumes. First Vintage Books Edition, May 1989, is quoted here.



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