

# THE GAZETTE

*“a news-sheet, a periodical publication giving an account of current events”*

**Sandwich Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends**

**MAY 2024**



## ***Wherever You Are, Stop What You're Doing***

“... The world lies before you, a lavish garden. However hobbled by waste, however fouled by graft and tainted by deception, it will always take your breath away.

We were never cast out of Eden. We merely turned from it and shut our eyes. To return and be welcomed, cleansed and redeemed, we are only obliged to look.”

*Renkl, M. The Comfort of Crows: A Backyard Year.* New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau, 2023, p. xvi.

## ***Contents***

<b><i>Upcoming Events</i></b> . . . .	<b>2-8</b>
<b><i>Member Passing</i></b> . . . . .	<b>8</b>
<b><i>Readers Write</i></b> . . . . .	<b>9-19</b>
<b><i>What We're Reading</i></b> . .	<b>20-22</b>

## **Upcoming Events**

### **New England Yearly Meeting**

**International Meeting for Worship** – Join Friends around the world for a one-hour international Meeting for Worship. Daily from noon to 1:00 p.m. Learn more at <https://neym.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Meeting%20Details.pdf>.

### **Sandwich Quarterly Meeting**

**Meeting for business** – Saturday, **July 27** at New Bedford. Meet for coffee and greetings at 9:30 a.m.

**New Bedford – Work party** after worship followed by lunch – Sunday, **May 12** and **June 9** and every second Sunday.

**Allens Neck Clambake** –Thursday, **August 15**. Save the date!

### **Sandwich Monthly Meeting**

**Meeting for Business**, Sunday, **June 2** at Yarmouth.

**East Sandwich** – Join us as we welcome our five new members at a potluck on Sunday, **May 19** following worship. All are welcome.

**West Falmouth -- Peace & Social Order** Second Sunday forums continue on a quarterly basis with the next being on **June 9** at 12:30 p.m. when **Christine Smith**, the Marion Institute’s Southcoast Food Policy Council Program Manager, will speak on the ways our food choices affect our communities. Find further information on the next page of this issue. Christine Smith’s 2023 Second Sunday presentation can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=MkP5cG-mhjk&feature=youtu.be>.

**American Friends Service Committee** – See <https://afsc.org/>.

**Meeting for Worship with Attention to Peace in Palestine and Israel** every **Thursday** 5:30 p.m. See <https://afsc.org/events/meeting-worship-attention-peace-palestine-israel>.

**Action Hour for a Ceasefire Now** -- Join ASFC staff every **Friday** at 12 p.m. to hear updates from Gaza. Then, take action with us as we contact our elected officials and call for an immediate cease-fire and humanitarian access to Gaza. Our elected officials need to keep hearing from us. See <https://afsc.org/events/action-hour-cease-fire-now>.

**Quaker Spring** -- Gather with Friends from over 20 Yearly Meetings -- from **June 14 - 18** at Woolman Hill Retreat Center in Deerfield, MA. Portions of the gathering will be hybrid via Zoom. Learn more and register at <https://www.quakerspring.org/>. Contact Fran Lightsom ([fran.lightsom@gmail.com](mailto:fran.lightsom@gmail.com)) if you have questions for someone who has participated in Quaker Spring before.

# Small Bites, Big Impact: Unleashing the Power of Food

June 9th, 2024 ● 12:30pm on zoom



Are you ready to journey towards a healthier community and lifestyle? With a deep passion for all things food and social justice, **Christine Smith, The Marion Institute's Southcoast Food Policy Council Program Manager**, will take you on an eye-opening exploration of the relationship between our choice of food and the impact on our community. You will have a deeper understanding of the problems surrounding our current food system in our area and innovative solutions that you can readily implement today.

**REGISTER: [bit.ly/FoodSystemJune9](https://bit.ly/FoodSystemJune9)**

You will receive the zoom link once you have registered.



Christine Smith began her social justice career as a missionary in Taiwan with the Society of St. Columban, then worked with Catholic Charities in Maryland and Idaho and Catholic Relief Services. She educated the public on social justice issues, enhanced partnership relationships, supported community organizing efforts, planned conferences, and advocated on State and Congressional bills. Christine has a BA in History from St. Mary's College of MD and an MA in Religious Studies from St. Mary's Ecumenical Institute of Theology in Baltimore. She enjoys hiking, bicycling, traveling, and relaxing on the beach.

West Falmouth Quakers



MARION INSTITUTE  
SOUTHCOAST FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

**Pendle Hill**– See <https://pendlehill.org/>.

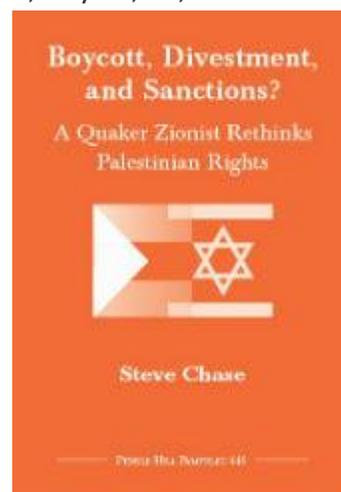
**First Monday Lecture with Todd Drake** – *Graffiti as Witness: The Art and Activism of a Quaker Pirate*. **May 6**, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. On campus and via Zoom. Join Friend Todd Drake as he shares his lifelong journey and witness as a visual artist and social justice activist. Learn more and register at <https://pendlehill.org/events/graffiti-as-witness-the-art-and-activism-of-a-quaker-pirate/>.

**First Monday Lecture with Emily Provance** -- *Election Violence Prevention: In the Virtue of that Life and Power that Takes Away the Occasion of All Wars*. **June 3**, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. Learn more and register at <https://pendlehill.org/events/election-violence-prevention-in-the-virtue-of-that-life-and-power-that-takes-away-the-occasion-of-all-wars/>.

**Quaker Institute: Living Our Testimonies in “The Fierce Urgency of Now”** -- **May 2 - 5, 2024**. An on-campus gathering to explore how we can meet this political moment as Friends, individually and collectively. “*We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history there is such a thing as being too late.*” — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1967. Learn more and register at <https://pendlehill.org/events/pendle-hill-quaker-institute-living-our-testimonies-in-the-fierce-urgency-of-now/>.

**Illuminate Summer Speaker Series** – *Psalms: Entering God’s Presence*. June 10, 24, July 15, 29, and August 12, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. A collaboration between Barclay Press and Pendle Hill. Learn more and register at <https://pendlehill.org/events/illuminate-summer-speaker-series-2024/>.

**Pendle Hill’s Reading Group** – In May we will discuss Steve Chase’s *Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions? A Quaker Zionist Rethinks Palestinian Rights* (PHP #445), the only Pendle Hill pamphlet on Israel/Palestine. **May 15** from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Learn more and register at <https://pendlehill.org/events/pendle-hills-reading-group-may-2024/>.



**News from some other Quaker organizations can be found at the following links:**

**Quaker Earthcare Witness:** <https://quakerearthcare.org/>

**Quaker United Nations Organization:** <https://quono.org/>

**Friends Committee on National Legislation:** <https://fcnl.org/>

**Friends World Committee on Consultation:** <https://www.fwccamericas.org>

**Friends General Conference:** <https://www.fgcquaker.org>

## Also of Interest

The **Unitarian Universalist** congregation in East Falmouth is offering a yearlong educational series on ***The History and Culture of the Wampanoag Tribe***. The next presentation by Mashpee Wampanoag Chief Earl Mills Jr. and author Paula Peters, entitled *Mashpee Nine*, is on **May 18**. The **June 29** presentation *Mashpee Land Suit* will feature Chief Mills and attorney Ann Gilmore in a discussion of the 1976 Land Suit Wampanoag Tribe vs. Town of Mashpee. Both are at the UU Meetinghouse in East Falmouth from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Learn more and find the full program for the year at <https://www.linkcapecod.org/upcoming-and-past-events>.



Alan and Bill greeted visitors and parked cars at the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Government Center.



Responding to a request from Paula Peters of the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, the Faith Community Environmental Network found volunteers to assist with the Native Land Conservancy's *Honor the Earth Fair* at tribal headquarters on April 20<sup>th</sup>, a cold and rainy Saturday. Volunteers, including a rich group of Quakers, pitched in to help with parking, greeting, cooking, carrying materials, and staffing a back room/volunteer organization space.

The event featured a varied assortment of exhibitors from Cape-based environmental groups, drumming with Native American singers and dancers, an Indigenous-led Nature Walk in the elements, Cultural Craft vendors, and was capped off with a Taste of the Earth cooking challenge featuring Elspeth Hay of WCAI in which chefs prepared dishes consisting entirely of plant-based foods.



### ***Black Lives Matter: Falmouth Kneel at Noon***

Silent vigil for 9 minutes 29 seconds in support of Black lives, weekly on **Sundays** at **noon** on the Falmouth Village Green.

## ***An Invitation from Lewis Randa***

Dear Friends,

With a steadfast belief in the power and moral authority of nonviolence, I extend a heartfelt invitation to Cape Cod Friends to participate in the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of The Pacifist Memorial located at 2 North Main Street in Sherborn.

The ceremony is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. on Saturday, **June 1st** with the presentation of the 2024 Courage of Conscience Award. This year we will have the privilege of honoring Barry Levy, M.D. (activist and author of numerous books on the public health effects of war), and the choral group *Music with Heart* for their decades-long service in prisons, shelters, hospitals, and residential facilities.

Bronze plaques in tribute to Bayard Rustin and Fred Rogers as well as a special memorial In Honor of War Correspondents worldwide will be unveiled. The ceremony will conclude with the placement of a commemorative sign detailing the history and evolution of Stonewalk over the decades. We anticipate many Cape Cod Stonewalkers will be coming so carpooling is a consideration.

This event is significant for another reason: representatives from different Quaker meetings in Massachusetts will be in attendance as transferring the stewardship of the Peace Memorial to Quaker Meetings is being considered. Given that this initiative is still in the planning phase, we specifically encourage members of Cape Cod meetings to attend.

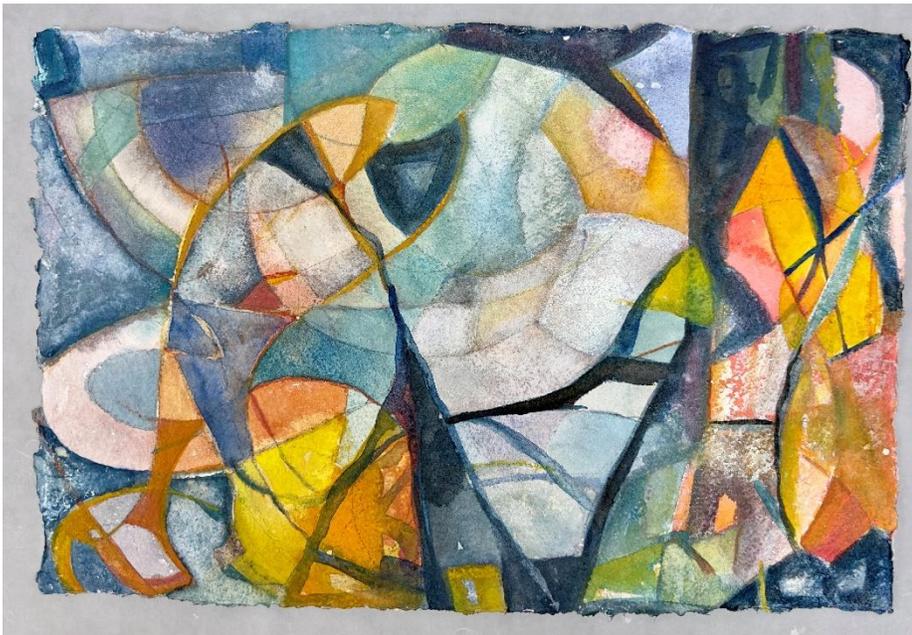
We look forward to seeing you there!



Bronze statue of Gandhi at the Pacifist Memorial in Sherborn. Photo: L. Randa, March 2024.

**Erica H. Adams** is in two exhibits this summer. Her **solo exhibit** of abstract watercolors runs from **July 4 – 28** at Colo Colo Gallery in New Bedford (127 Rodney French Boulevard) with an opening reception Saturday, **July 13** from 3 – 5 p.m. Hours: Thursday - Sunday 1-5 pm; Wednesday by appointment. (508-642-6026).

A **group exhibit** about immigration -- "*Roots of Passage*" -- runs from **July 12 – August 17** at Atlantic Works Gallery, an artist collaborative in East Boston (80 Border Street). Erica, a new member, presents "*Daffy Does Poland: Duck Soup - What Jewish Problem?*" a watercolor-collage made in 2000 at an artist's residency in Poland, a reflection on her Jewish grandmother's 1912 immigration from Danzig (now Gdansk) to New York City. Opening reception: **July 17** from 4 - 7 p.m. Hours: Fridays and Saturdays 2 - 6 p.m.



*Proteus* © 2024, Erica H. Adams, Watercolor and Carbon on Shizen Paper: 12 x 18 inches.

**Nan Garrett-Logan** shares efforts promoting peace and addressing gun violence. **Grandmothers Against Gun Violence** rallies are at the Hyannis airport rotary on the **14th** of every month from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

On **Mothers' Day, May 12**, walk with the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute in the Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan neighborhoods and donate to support the work of the Institute. This year's theme is "Cultivating Cycles of Peace." Not walking? Register to donate \$35 or more at <https://www.mothersdaywalk4peace.org/Account/Register>.

*Extreme Risk Protection Orders: An Evidence-Based Policy That Saves Lives*. For a summary of recent research see <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2023-02/research-on-extreme-risk-protection-orders.pdf>.

### **Visit with Sally Fritz**

Come visit with Sally Fritz as she prepares to leave Falmouth for her new home close to family in New York state early next month.

The gathering will take place at the home of Molly Cornell on Saturday, **May 4th** from 4 - 6 p.m. Light refreshments will be served.

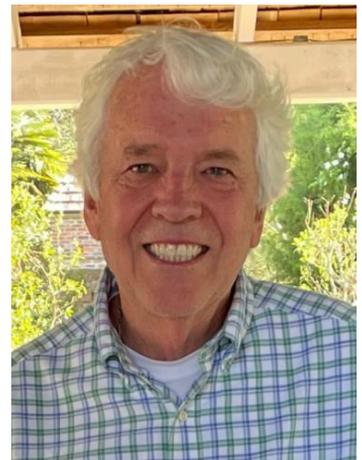
Stop by to share the joy of giving Sally a warm send-off on her journey!

**Editor's Note:** Sally is well known for her concern for and work on peace. In thinking about Sally's departure, I was reminded of two brief *Gazette* pieces from several years ago that make this point. They are reprinted on the next page from the March 2018 and May 2018 issues of *The Gazette*.



### **Death of Jack Randolph Harelson**

Friends were greatly saddened by the death of Randy Harelson on March 5. A longtime summer attender at East Sandwich Meeting, Randy was instrumental in obtaining a Community Preservation Act grant from the town of Sandwich in 2021 for the restoration of the East Sandwich Meetinghouse. The grant made possible a new red cedar shingle roof, and the repair of the original windows, trim, and exterior doors. Randy was also active in the Spring Hill History Day activities in Sandwich. His home, which he shared with his life partner Richard Gibbs, was one of the Spring Hill Day tour sites last year. A memorial meeting for worship will be held at a later date.



## **Readers Write**

### ***A View from 28A***

*Rita O'Donnell*

The man who cuts my hair owns a small, one-person shop in West Falmouth. I have been going there a long time.

Over the years we have come to like each other a lot. We're relaxed together, share similar politics and talk about a wide variety of things.

At a recent appointment, without knowing anything about my religious views, my friend spontaneously offered that he has been driving up and down 28A, to and from work, for years. He told me he goes by the Quaker meeting house twice daily and thinks the old building is beautiful. He noted that often, "there is a woman writing 'peace' on the blackboard." He went on to observe that the blackboard had recently changed from 'peace' to 'equality.'



My friend has marched for both women's rights and for gay rights, and the Quaker testimony of equality speaks to him at a deeper level than the peace testimony.

He said he still likes to see "peace," but thought the message of equality was extremely important right now, and that he was both surprised and very pleased to see it on the blackboard.

Then he paused, the snip, snip, snip of the scissors silenced for a moment. And he asked, "Is the peace lady okay with this?"

### ***A View from 28A: Part II***

*Sally Fritz*

. . . The story continues.

Recently, I found myself in the old West Falmouth Post Office, now a one-man hair salon, getting an overdue haircut. "How did you find me?" the owner asked. "Well," I stumbled, intent on preserving my secret identity, "I used to see your sign at the edge of the road, and, uh...." As he snipped away, we covered a range of topics, among them dogs and cats, his upcoming birthday and people in my neighborhood whose hair he cuts.

Finally, I stood up, improved, and told him I wanted to introduce my real self. As we shook hands, I confessed, "I am the Peace Lady."

His reaction was instant. "GET OUTTA HERE! YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!" He backed up a step, looked at me and said, "I can't believe this! It's a birthday present for my birthday tomorrow!" More smiling and shaking of hands.

He calmed down. I made another appointment. Next time, I'll tell him we have other things we can put on the blackboard besides Peace and Equality, like Community and Integrity and ....

## *Lectio Divina Sessions Before Worship*

*Sunny Davidson*

A number of us in West Falmouth meet for an hour before Sunday worship in Lectio Divina sessions. Lectio Divina means reading scripture in a prescribed manner that goes back before the practice in medieval Benedictine monasteries. During one hour, a group rereads the same passage from the New Testament after twice quietly meditating on it. Then each member chooses a phrase that seems important as life progresses and, at the end, says how this reading could affect the next week's activities. We listen carefully to each other.

This seems Quakerly because of the long silences between readings, and the lack of conversation about anyone's comments. As we in West Falmouth are using this practice before Meeting, we have an important opportunity to revisit our Christian roots. We also might gain some encouragement from a slight awareness of the spiritual lives of our companions.

Last week we read, from the Gospel of John, "I am the Good Shepherd. I am the gate of the sheepfold. Anyone who enters through me will go freely in and out, and will be sure of finding pasture." No one objected to being compared to sheep, and one or another left for worship with affectionate readiness for the longer silence in the presence of the Spirit. All are welcome to join us.

In meeting for worship  
you may expect  
the entire world  
to be made better,  
and you may feel  
that has happened  
even as you rise  
from worship understanding  
nothing much outwardly  
is different.

*Eric H. Edwards*  
*Quaker Minims*, Hatchville, MA:  
One Bird Books, 2024, p. 34.

The opening line from Shakespeare's Hamlet -- "To be or not to be, that is the question" -- is one of the most famous passages in English literature. I am one of many who have used these words, not so much in reference to the play, but in my own questioning of who am I and, hence, what must I do with my life before I die. Over the past couple of decades, identifying myself as a Quaker has helped me immensely to answer this dominating and sometimes, elusive question. I am concluding that I feel most alive, real, and purposeful when I think, feel, and say, "I am a Quaker." But I also realize it's more than my merely saying and feeling "I am a Quaker."

Here, I must emphasize the profound influence on me from Quakers, past and present, at East Sandwich Preparative Meeting. Twenty years ago, when I was struggling in my homeless outreach ministry (The Overnights of Hospitality Program), I was deeply touched when Friends asked, "How can we help and when can we begin?" I knew right from the start that the hearts of these Quakers not only welcomed the homeless into their meeting house, but they also offered me what I desperately needed, a spiritual home. Over the years, I have been blessed by mutually supportive friendships not only in my meeting but also within our three local preparative meetings, as well as within the Quarterly and Yearly Meetings. In addition to the profound meaning and value of sitting in silent worship together, I have been uplifted in my faith and practice by being involved in the various ministries from our three preparative meetings.

Recently in my role as the Chair of the Cape & Islands Citizens Advisory Board of the Department of Mental Health, I organized an advocacy trip to the Massachusetts State House. We invited all our legislators to attend. For those who couldn't attend, we gave out packets of our advocacy information about the crisis areas of need in housing, education, and fair pay for direct care workers. We were well received and are now hopeful that our requests will help to pass the necessary bills we support.

On our way home, a couple of advisory board members questioned whether our advocacy effort would make a difference. I could have easily asked the same question but, thankfully, I was in a moment of clarity and purpose. I said, "We need to have faith in our actions here. We know that we cannot know the results of our advocacy today. There are 7,000 other bills also addressing areas of need. Nevertheless, if we stay strong in our faith, knowing that our loving actions today did make a difference, we will be empowered to continue and to explore other ways to improve the lives of others. Otherwise, we risk feeling a diminished sense of meaning and purpose, and subsequently might withdraw somewhat from other initiatives in the future."

As I walked by the 9-foot statue of Mary Dyer in front of the State House, I read the inscription again; that 4 Quakers were hung on Boston Common because of their Faith and Practice. As I read this, I could sense their presence around me. I then realized that many Quakers over the centuries had not seen the fruits of their labor, but instead suffered or died for it. I then smiled, realizing that they had all had a profound impact upon the Quaker Faith and the world itself. Every Sunday morning, I bring into my silent worship, my gratitude for Quakers, past and present, who have stayed steadfast, no matter the cost.

I continue to be very inspired by the members in our three preparative meetings. I dearly love to hear how they are led in the service of others, to see "that of God in everyone," as George Fox described it. I would love to talk to others who are interested in learning more about the Citizens Advisory Board of Cape Cod. I would also love for all of us to share ways in which we need to take care of ourselves and widen our circles

of compassion and care for others. For some, silent worship fills this need, for others, action in the world does this. Although I continue to feel a bit self-conscious when I share my stories, it is my hope that in doing so, I am honoring the call of Faith and Practice in all of us. I believe that our stories of loving others need to be told because these are “New Testament Stories.” These are stories of the Light that guides our lives and our choice of who “To Be or Not to Be.”



Statue of Mary Dyer by Sylvia Shaw Judson at the Statehouse. Inscription reads: “Mary Dyer – Quaker – Witness for religious freedom – Hanged on Boston Common 1660 – ‘My life not availeth me in comparison to the liberty of the truth.’”

## ***A Quaker Hiker***

*Paul Denoncourt*

“The mountains are calling, and I must go.”<sup>1</sup> --John Muir

Regular readers of *The Gazette* may recall a series of articles I wrote in 2022 covering my successful 2200-mile through-hike of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.), the profoundly spiritual -- almost mystical--experience it was, and the difficulty I had re-entering the “real world.” You may also recall that I subsequently set the intention of hiking the John Muir Trail. The JMT is known within the backpacking community as the most beautiful yet challenging hiking trail in the continental U.S. It is, therefore, quite popular. The number of hikers allowed on-trail is strictly limited by a permit lottery run weekly by the National Park Service. Unfortunately, an applicant’s odds of being drawn in the lottery is abysmally low: approximately 3% according to the Recreation.gov website. Some hikers take years to get a permit. Nevertheless, I applied and then turned the odds problem over to Spirit, to whom I turned over numerous problems on the A.T. and who always came through. After all, low odds are not a problem for Divinity, right? As an act of faith, I did not consider an alternative adventure. Then I waited.

The JMT runs 210 miles in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California between Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks. It is all above 8,000 feet of elevation with the southern terminus on the 14,500-foot summit of Mt. Whitney, the highest peak in the continental U.S. Altitude sickness -- which I have had before -- is a concern. The days above tree line can be scorchingly hot, and the nights can be subfreezing. The terrain is rated highly difficult, but not technical. On average the snow does not clear until the end of June and can return by the end of September. This leaves a nine-week window to start and finish the hike between the snows, for which there are nine weekly lotteries performed five months ahead of time. I entered each one.

My application failed to be drawn on week 1, week 2, week 3, .... My last *Gazette* article in March 2024 reported failure on week 7. I confessed that I was starting to worry; yet I still had faith. Faith and worry coexisted in a sort of quantum superposition, as if I were a spiritual Schrodinger’s Cat. In hindsight, being both human and having That of God within, it kind of made sense; my human self was anxious while That of God supplied the faith. It revealed that I still have a lot of work to do to transcend the duality of Ego Consciousness and abide within the nonduality of Unity Consciousness (The Kingdom of God).

Then, came week 8, and ...

I GOT IT!!!! More precisely, Spirit came through and got it for us both! And just in time, too. I was so excited as well as grateful.

My permit is very precise. I am assigned the start date of August 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Tuolumne Meadows trailhead on the Tioga Road in Yosemite. There are two trailheads, the other being the floor of Yosemite Valley; I would have been fine with either. I must pick up my permit in person with a photo ID and start hiking by 11 a.m. that day or I lose my permit. Even if I am there in line to get my permit and 11 a.m. occurs, I lose my permit.

<sup>1</sup> Badè, W.F. *The Life and Letters of John Muir*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, 1923, Chapter 10.

What an absurd wilderness bureaucracy! I must be off trail by September 20 which gives me four weeks to finish. Fortunately, most people do it in three.

I will turn 69 years-old on-trail. Because of my age, the terrain, the altitude, and the remote setting, I am not doing this alone. A hiking buddy I met on the A.T. is hiking with me. He is half my age, a very experienced backpacker, a former army medic, but not a Quaker. My permit allows for a party of two.

I hope to feel close to God once again amid the majestic peaks we shall traverse, as I did on the A.T. Ralph Waldo Emerson said it best when he penned, "Nature is too thin a screen, the glory of the One breaks in everywhere."<sup>2</sup>

But first, the logistical planning. I will cover this more in my next installment once we have fleshed it out further, but in general, we intend to fly to Reno, NV, then take the bus to Mammoth Lakes, CA -- elevation of 7,880 feet -- where we will stay for three days to acclimatize to the altitude. But before we depart, we will each see a physician for a check-up and for a prescription for Acetazolamide, a medication which, when taken over those three days and after a month of daily iron supplements, will enhance the acclimatization process. Meanwhile, we need to go through our gear, replace worn-out items, and purchase additional gear specific for this alpine environment. Also, we must figure out a way to get home again after the trek without knowing when, exactly, we will finish. There is a lot to do! Stay tuned.

"My profession is to be always on the alert to find God in nature ...."<sup>3</sup>  
-- Henry David Thoreau



Garnet Lake on the John Muir Trail in the Ansel Adams Wilderness of Inyo National Forest

<sup>2</sup> Emerson, R.W. "The Preacher," in *Lectures and Biographical Sketches*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884, pp. 214-215. See <https://archive.org/details/lecturesbiograph00emer/page/n7/mode/2up>.

<sup>3</sup> Thoreau, H.D. "Chapter VII: September 1851" in *Journal II: 1850 – September 15, 1851*, p.472. See <https://www.walden.org/work/journal-ii-1850-september-15-1851/>

## Friendship Gardens of Falmouth Project Launches!

Steve Gates



The project to aid food-insecure individuals in Falmouth (and beyond) that grew out of the West Falmouth Peace and Social Order committee has matured now into a formal project of The Peace Abbey and has its first plants and seeds in the ground.

Thanks to a donation of \$3,000 by the West Falmouth Preparative Meeting and lots of hard work by Friends, the garden behind Quaker House has been transformed into the first Friendship Garden, a place where we can grow vegetables to give away, mentor individuals who will be receiving the raised bed gardens we will be building later this year, and build community. Already, several individuals have donated money for the raised bed portion of the project.

We began by weeding the garden, adding 3 new beds plus 2 new raised beds, and adding wood chips (free from the town dump) in the pathways. Paths around the new raised beds were made more accessible by forming them into a hard earthen surface. Most of this preparative work was done by a contractor and one Friend. Each bed was improved with compost donated by a Friend, by purchased soil, or by composted manure.



So on April 10, when a group of 15 Friends arrived for the first working session, the beds were almost ready for planting. After a potluck dinner, everyone pitched in to plant the cold-weather crops like potatoes, onions and lettuce, as well as do further work on the various beds. At our second working session, on April 17, also attended by 15 Friends, we added a 3-minute “tips and questions” period during which participants can share their gardening expertise or ask questions about things they want to get advice about (see box on page 18). Lewis Randa, the director of The Peace Abbey and Erica H. Adams, clerk of the W. Falmouth Peace & Social Order committee, were thanked for their roles in the birth and growth of FGF. At our third meeting, we were pleased to have Alan Burt from East Sandwich PM join us as we put in more crops and further improved the garden.



As we move into warmer weather, we'll be planting summer vegetables like tomatoes and eggplants, as well as some flowering "companion plants" that make the garden a more hospitable place for beneficial insects and humans alike. We'll also be adding an automated watering system to reduce the effort required to maintain the garden.

We encourage Friends and others from the community to participate as we "grow" this small project. We meet each Wednesday at the Quaker House Garden from 5 to 7 p.m. Please join us as you are able!

Should you wish to contribute financially in any amount to this project, please see Steve Gates or send a check to Lewis Randa, Director, The Peace Abbey, 8 Town Square, Plymouth, MA 02360 noting "Friendship Gardens" on the memo line.



Photos pages 15-16 by R. O'Donnell, April 10, 17 and 24, 2024.

Photos on this page by Erica H. Adams except lower left photo which is by Lewis Randa. All on April 17, 2024.





### **3 Minute Gardening Tip or Question**

Each week we plan to have a “3-minute tip or question” from one of the attendees. So far, these have included a tutorial on reading a soil test report by Steve and a guide to edible flowers from Russ. If you’re interested in the latter, Russ referred us to <https://www.ruralsprout.com/edimentals/>.



Nasturtiums



Photos: R. O'Donnell, April 24, 2024.

### ***Rooting for the Cold***

Everyone complains about the winter this winter 2015  
yahoos in the locker room even those who should know better  
and this winter has been a relentless one breaking putative records  
for cold and snow in February after a mild start.

I root for the winter to cover our little world with snow  
to freeze the invasive bugs that eat native trees  
to cull the populations of birds and small mammals  
improving the gene pool.

To prolong the albedo effect and postpone the inevitable  
by smallish counter-measure feedback loops  
lessening release of methane and more carbon and  
God Knows What Else into our atmosphere.

To kill off viruses which do better when the world  
gets a little warmer to threaten our (over) population  
tho please don't kill off any specific humans I know  
especially starting with my kids my wife my friends and me.

And something less specific—I miss winter. The winters  
in the 60s and 70s truly cold and we got through them.  
Hard for me to believe the daily news reports  
that this current cold really breaks records any way.

And I realize our part of the planet only 1 or 2% of  
all land area in being colder and snowier than normal that  
the rest of the planet keeps on breaking heat records month after  
month after month after month after year after year after year.....

I know I know I know I know—so in the life beyond my short time left  
on this lovely slice of our hardy little planet not too much will go too  
wrong to us relatively rich folk but in the long run I so fear for all that I've  
known all that I cannot even imagine in the recesses of the Amazon.

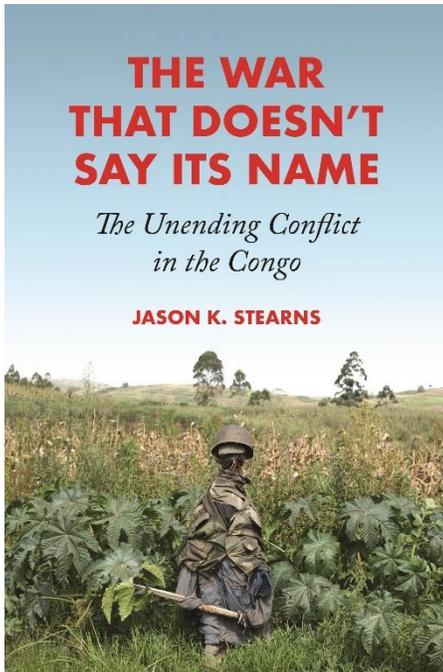
Everything will change on balance for the worse  
I fear most of us other than the very very rich  
who will migrate to the North or even into space away from Earth  
life will become unimaginably Apocalyptic.

***Bill Holcombe***  
2015

## What We're Reading

John Davidson: *The War that Doesn't Say Its Name: The Unending Conflict in the Congo* by Jason K. Stearns.

The recent news stories about war crimes in Gaza and Ukraine should bring us to ask whether these events are extraordinary or part of a larger continuing global pattern. For example, some of us have wondered why violence in the Congo has continued, despite decades of international intervention. Well into its third



decade, the military conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been dubbed a forever war -- a perpetual cycle of civil unrest and local feuds over power and identity. Millions have died in one of the worst humanitarian calamities of our time, but the map of Eastern Congo is strewn with multicolored dots and blobs, each representing more than 180 armed militias under independent command, each carrying out its own warlord-directed activities, each leader behaving like an independent entrepreneur.

*The War that Doesn't Say its Name* investigates the later stage of this conflict over the last two decades, asking why the peace deal of 2003 -- accompanied by the largest UN peace-keeping mission in the world, and tens of billions of international aid -- has failed to stop the violence. Jason Stearns, a professor at Simon Fraser University who has worked on this issue for over these two decades and conducted extensive on location interviews, argues that the fighting has become an end in itself, carried forward in substantial part through the apathy and complicity of local and international actors. While wading through a dizzying array of

French acronyms for armed groups, the reader is likely to become confused, but the basic patterns become clear enough by the end of the book.

Stearns shows that regardless of the suffering, there has emerged a narrow military bourgeoisie of commanders and politicians for whom continuing the conflict is a source of survival and profit. I concluded that war crimes happen in this context almost casually, as if by accident, in that there is very little supervision of the over one hundred independent micro-armies as they seek revenge upon their perceived ethnic enemies. Large numbers of automatic weapons were left behind in Eastern Congo after the national Congolese armies of Mobutu and Laurent Kabila fell apart and were demobilized. It was easy to recruit unemployed and dispossessed males and equally easy to find cheap automatic rifles. The lack of a strong state, and the absence of a functioning legal system make the region ideal for endless wars to control natural resource flows manipulated by mining interests. Stearns argues that the conflict should not be seen as merely strategic and instrumental but above all as systemic, exceeding the intentions of any individual actors and forging habits and norms (p. 95). War has become a social condition, an outcome that may not have

been the intended objective of any of the protagonists but that has produced its own actors, cultures and interests.

Revenge is an important motive for committing war crimes, and this behavior continues cycles of violence. The Congolese ethnic militia known as Raia Mutomboki got its start when the organization was founded to fight against Tutsi and Hutu domination of the Eastern Congo (p. 179). Hutus and Tutsis are Rwandan tribes that spread into Congo in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and are perceived as outside invaders by many of the local tribes. “In an initial operation in January 2012 in the forest of Mangaa, the Raia Mutomboki destroyed an entire FDLR (*Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation du Rwanda*) village and massacred its inhabitants. On their return to Kalonge, the Raia Mutomboki fell into an ambush and their two leaders were killed. This immediately boosted recruitment into their ranks in Bunyakiri, the home of the two leaders. Mobilization was fueled by a vicious- or, as local leaders had it, a virtuous- cycle: Raia Mutomboki attacks inflicted considerable losses on the FDLR, which prompted retaliation, fueled further mobilization (p. 178).” By later in 2012, the Raia Mutomboki were active over a large area. Thus atrocity leads to hatred, and war fuels war. Atrocity breeds atrocity in the rich world as well as in a poor backward state such as Congo, as it did for example between Hamas and Israel or Russia and Ukraine.

What was probably the bloodiest chapter in Raia Mutomboki history unfolded in southern Masisi between April and September 2012, as the battle between the Raia Mutomboki and the FDLR (*Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation du Rwanda*) moved into areas inhabited by a large Congolese Hutu population. Here, the Raia Mutomboki’s tactics, accentuated by long-standing communal tensions, resulted in the massacre of over two hundred people. A report by the UN’s Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the most reliable investigation of the violence in southern Masisi during this time, suggests that this probably underestimates the number of deaths (p. 179). The point is that this massacre happened just in the course of ongoing warfare, and attracted relatively little attention.

One of the few incidents from this apparently endless conflict to appear in international newspapers was the trial of Thomas Lubanga at the International Criminal Court in 2011, at which it became clear that the UPC (*Union des patriotes Congolese*) was not set up based on local roots, and one of the witnesses complained that Hema youth who had been sent away for training did not return to defend their villages as expected.<sup>1</sup> Thus, while Lubanga and other UPC (*Union des patriotes Congolese*) leaders continued to claim to protect the Hema community, rhetoric that was easy to justify given the widespread massacres at the time, they increasingly acted for individual material gain and catered increasingly to their foreign allies (p. 217). Although Congolese nationalism is mentioned in the book, apparently tribalism is a much stronger glue than the concept of the Congolese nation, a weak state if ever there were one, its borders having been created by the Belgians over a century ago.

In contrast to these events, I would like to mention a more celebrated recent atrocity, that at a suburban town called Bucha outside Kyiv in Ukraine. Two years ago, in early March, the Russian officers in the 234<sup>th</sup> Air Assault Regiment discovered that the Ukrainians did not welcome them into Kyiv with flowers and St. George’s ribbons, as they had been told to expect, and were instead putting up a stiff resistance.<sup>2</sup> The unit (under the direct personal supervision of Lieutenant Commander Artyom Gorodilov) responded by shooting

<sup>1</sup> ICC, *Prosecutor vs. Thomas Lubango Dyilo* (witness transcript filed during trial phase), ICC-01/04-01/06-T-246 (2011), 36.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Hlou, Y., et al. (2022, December 22). Caught on Camera, Traced by Phone -- the Russian Military Unit that Killed Dozens in Bucha. *The New York Times*.

several dozen women, children, and noncombatants, and much of the evidence was recorded on videotape through overhead surveillance cameras. The Russian paratroopers were apparently tired, disoriented, and not far from what was supposed to be a great victory at Kyiv, only to find that their propaganda had misled them and the Ukrainians had been occasionally shooting back. Proportionality under the Geneva conventions and the right of civilians to live in their homes were the last things on their minds. They had an objective to achieve according to a tight deadline, and certainly Putin would not be averse to a few war crimes along the way in order to send a message to the West. A heavily publicized series of atrocities took place as the elite paratrooper unit stormed through the center of Bucha and their commander walked among the soldiers as they shot civilians, in contrast to the much more obscure but equally tragic massacres in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

How are war crimes in Europe different from those in Africa? In each case you have an elite making money off of war, a military bourgeoisie to use Stearns' expression, and the occasional massacres which happen along the way are the byproduct of soldiers who believe that they can shoot civilians without facing any consequences. This is in part due to ethnic identity, as "we are Russians, our enemies are tools of the evil USA," or "we are Hema, they are Rwandan Tutsi," as amplified through the filter of cultivated hatred for an ethnic other. The only difference to be noted is that NATO is directly involved in stopping the Russians from taking over Ukraine, while the conflict in the Congo has long since disappeared from most newspapers. I would recommend this book to any Quaker who might be interested in Africa and conflict issues.

Stearns, J.K. *The War that Doesn't Say Its Name: The Unending Conflict in the Congo*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021.

### ***A Note from the Editor***

With this issue *The Gazette* comes under the care of Sandwich Monthly Meeting. As such I am looking forward to broader coverage of the three preparative meetings. A central purpose of *The Gazette* is to bring us into community with our fellow Quakers regardless of the "point of entry" – social justice, peace activism, art, poetry, photography, spirituality, spirituality through a connection with the natural world, etc. I hope you will consider contributing whatever your personal "point of entry."

Thank you. -- Rita O'Donnell

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