

THE GAZETTE

**Sandwich Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
APRIL 2026**

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Consider the Lilies

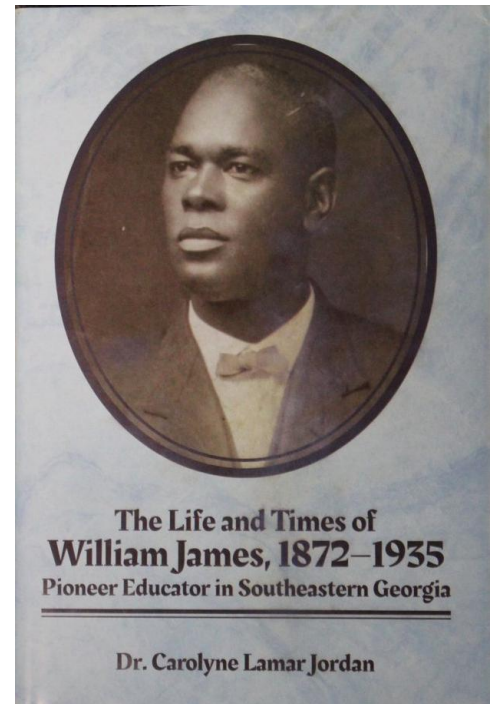
Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.



Quakers in the News

Carolyn Lamar Jordan – Congratulations to Carolyn on the recent publication of her book *The Life & Times of William James (1872–1935): Pioneer Educator in Southeastern Georgia*. Carolyn began work on this book about her grandfather in 1990. Published by the Bulloch County Historical Society, the book was launched at the Society's February 23 meeting attended by members, guests, and visiting descendants of William James.

Born near Bartow, Georgia in 1872, William James, one of five siblings, was a graduate of Atlanta Baptist College, now Morehouse College. He became one of Southeast Georgia's pioneering African American educators during the post-Reconstruction era, when access to quality education for Black students required extraordinary perseverance. At age 35 he moved to Statesboro, GA where he started a school in a church. Today, a Bulloch County school as well as the school district's administration complex are named in his honor. The original school was endowed by a Quaker, Emily Howland, an educator committed to educational opportunity who became deeply interested in supporting James' work. Carolyn's presentation at the Society's meeting highlighted the correspondence between Howland and William James. The strong influence of this benefactor on her grandfather's work inspired Carolyn to become a Quaker some fifty-six years ago.



A grant from New England Yearly Meeting's Obadiah Brown Benevolent fund enabled editing and preparation of the book's numerous photographs. The most recent article about the book launch can be found at <https://www.griceconnect.com/local-news/granddaughter-of-influential-local-educator-william-james-introduces-book-on-his-life-at-bchs-11943840>.

Erica H. Adams -- There's still time to see the exhibition *Inside the Artist Studio: Exploring the Creative Life* at the Brickbottom Gallery in Somerville, **April 3, 4, and 5**. Erica is one of 54 artists participating in the exhibition. Shown is the painting *Abiogenesis*, one of her mixed media panel paintings inspired by Cape Cod's geology and climate change. *Abiogenesis* (2016) exemplifies her intentionally volatile and experimental mixtures of common materials -- uncommon to painting -- that here define a fusion of Nature with Culture. Gallery hours from 12 noon – 5:00 p.m. See <https://brickbottom.org/our-exhibitions/inside-the-artist-studio-exploring-the-creative-life>.



Abiogenesis ©2016, Erica H. Adams,
Mixed Media on Panel: 12 x 12
inches.

Our Own Hadal Zone

THE HADAL ZONE (NAMED AFTER THE REALM OF HADES, THE UNDERWORLD IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY), ALSO KNOWN AS THE HADOPELAGIC ZONE, IS THE DEEPEST REGION OF THE OCEAN—LYING WITHIN OCEANIC TRENCHES.

We gasp at unimaginable depths now, illusions of normalcy crushed by gravid pelagic pressure.

Beneath the Abyss

The actual Hadal Zone deeper than Everest
beneath the sea where sound distortion must be
middle Jovian
Saturnian
Uranian
far into those gas giant atmospheric
stews no less crushing
how might we cipher
projection into
those giants to reach equivalence to
this depth
this pressure
this black
uniform cold
right here on Earth
this place estranged

And now we want to mine this strangeness—
would we not be better served scraping asteroids
than further ruining our own planet
knowing nothing more about these depths
than remote guessing can tell us?

The toads of avarice on the loose
petitioning to foul
the furthest reaches inward
feeble UN structures
no match for petitions
drawn by best \$1000/hr billable
lawyers The Greed can hire
thinly veiled Might Makes Right

BUT IT DOESN'T

not for our precious systems
life supports not even yet known
in any meaningful way
it doesn't
all to feed our need for
rare earth the stuff of iPhones

Perhaps this is my own new Hadal Zone
sitting in my chair
being old doing nothing
to stop them
too little too late to do much
much more than
sit in anguish using words
to cast into the cogs of that
Grasping Greed Gorgon
of
Conrad's Heart of Darkness
of
Conrad's The Horror The Horror

BILL HOLCOMBE

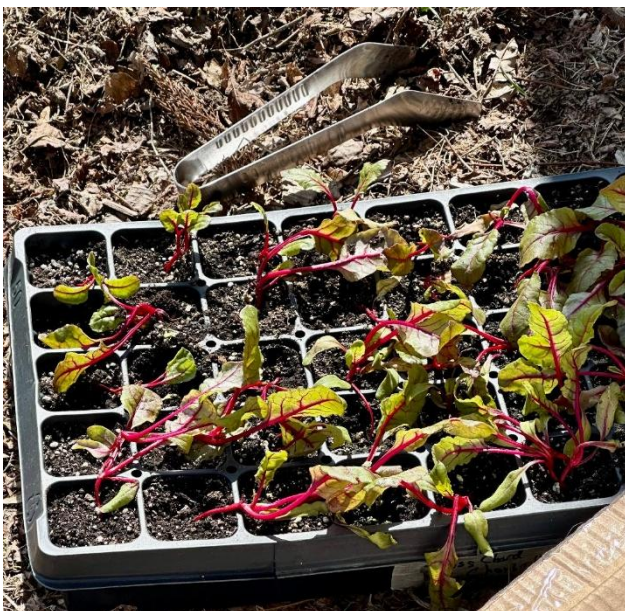
MARCH 2026

The above will be hung as a 3' x 4' poster at the entrance to the current Cape Cod Cultural Center exhibition *Resilient Sea* in South Yarmouth. **Through April 25** with an opening reception on Friday, **April 10** from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. The poster features a poem by **Bill Holcombe**, an earlier version of which appeared in the July 2023 *Gazette*.

Photos

West Falmouth Friendship Gardens

On a brisk Saturday day in March, gardeners kicked off the spring season! Photos by Erica H. Adams, **March 14, 2026.**





Readers Write

Friendship Gardens Spring Update

Steve Gates



West Falmouth Friendship Garden, March 14, 2026. Photo: Erica H. Adams.

It's spring! And with the beginning of spring, our garden season for Friendship Gardens of Cape Cod goes into high gear. We've already put in the first round of crops in the West Falmouth Garden. Friends braved the cold on Saturday, March 14 to plant lettuce, kale, bok choy, radishes, and onions. All of the crops except the radishes are under row covers in order to keep them a bit warmer. Amazingly, these crops, once "hardened off", can survive temperatures down to about 20° F. The East Sandwich garden will be planted soon.

The big news of the season is our new garden at the Berry Patch Community Garden on the Tony Andrews farm in East Falmouth. We've rented 8 10' x 10' plots to create "Friendship Garden #3", with the 300 sq. ft. garden in West Falmouth and the 96 sq. ft. garden in East Sandwich as the two earlier gardens. The Berry Patch garden will enable us to expand our efforts at the Falmouth Service Center, our local food pantry, to two days a week, instead of just one. And we will be trying a new idea: give away some of our plots to FSC clients so that they can start growing their own food (we'll give them the plot, the plants, and mentoring). Stay tuned to see how it all turns out!

Benjamin Lay Vegan Gathering Point

Lewis Randa

As Quakers, we are called to remove the occasion of war and cruelty; therefore, what we eat is part of that ministry. Each kinder choice we make for animals can become a small, living prayer for a more peaceful world - a profound way of holding all living creatures in the Light.

In the spirit of eighteenth-century Quaker Benjamin Lay, I offer this reflection. After fifty years as an engaged Quaker and over thirty as a vegan with my wife Meg, I've found it both possible and affirming to live without creating the occasion for exploitation and killing of animals for food or clothing. This practice has brought unexpected spiritual clarity and broadened my witness to nonviolence as a Friend.

My discharge from the military as a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War taught me many things, not the least of which is that refusing to bear arms against fellow humans leads to an expanded conception of and commitment to peace. Without question, the same impulse toward

violence that fuels armed conflict and war also manifests in the systemic cruelty we inflict on food production animals in the endless search for efficiency and profit. These two expressions of cruelty go hand in hand.

Recognizing this has strengthened my understanding of the Friends Peace Testimony. I believe that as Quakers we should not only refrain from the use of violence to settle disputes between humans, but should extend nonviolence to all creatures with whom we share the earth.



1750 portrait of Benjamin Lay by William Williams.

Our shared hospitality following Meeting for Worship offers a glimpse into how we view animals in relation to peacemaking. Foods that entail no animal exploitation, suffering, or death express our commitment to peaceful living. Those derived from animal exploitation, on the other hand, stand in stark opposition to our peace testimony.

Today, billions of animals suffer annually, unseen victims of industrial-level factory farms, a system that conditions us not to notice and, thus, not to care. I share this, not to blame or condemn, but to invite fellow Friends and others into a gentler, more inclusive way of peacemaking, one that refuses to look away from such violence and cruelty.

From this concern, a Spirit-led initiative has emerged to weave cruelty-free practices into our Quaker testimonies of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, and Stewardship. This initiative honors that of God in every living being.

The Benjamin Lay Vegan Gathering Point will meet periodically throughout the year at The Peace Abbey Foundation in Plymouth, in person and via Zoom. This expanding circle of Friends and friends of Friends will gather informally to learn, share, grow, and explore how our daily food choices might more fully reflect Friends Peace Testimony. Our aim is not persuasion, but to encourage faithfulness to the Inward Light as we seek more peaceful, nonviolent ways of living.

Benjamin Lay understood that Friends Peace Testimony loses its moral force, agency, and authority when Quakers, through indifference, turn a blind eye toward defenseless creatures that are treated with a level of brutality that should shock the human conscience, but hasn't. The same insight that made slavery unbearable to Benjamin Lay and early Friends should help us see that the suffering we cause animals is unbearable and repugnant today, and to respond with Quakerly resolve to practice nonviolence in our food choices and beyond.

For further reflection, I invite you to view the brief "Quaker Speak" video on Benjamin Lay and listen for how the Spirit may be guiding us today. May we, together, make Benjamin Lay an enduring part of who we are.

Invitation: Friends who feel a quiet stirring to explore this path are warmly invited to connect. Thank you for taking the time to read this reflection and to view the video *Benjamin Lay: The Radical Abolitionist Who Challenged the World* (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sv5o14dhWUA>).

Reflections on My Brother's Passing

Alan Burt

My brother Tom died recently, and I feel led to share some reflections on this loss. Tom and I were different in a number of ways but over the years we came to accept and even honor our differences. We came to realize that the glue that bound us flowed from the spiritual gifts we received from our parents, grandparents, and loved ones who likewise received them from their ancestors.

Our visits came to be mostly about just enjoying the times we would have together, the checking in, talking over the various decisions we were making, and just trying to live the best we could. We shared the difficult times as well as the easy ones and, most importantly, what we were learning from our experiences and how we were trying to move into something more beautiful and spiritual.

During the past ten years Tom's health worsened to the point that he largely became chairbound. Although he would share aspects of his suffering, I never felt he was complaining, bitter, or lessened by it.

Interestingly, we never spoke about how his failing health seemed connected to our grandfather's suffering, who was on crutches since his mid-forties because of rheumatoid arthritis. As I think about this now though, I can't help but believe that Tom had made this connection and, like our grandfather who raised us, Tom found a way to turn from his own suffering toward his gratitude, joy, and purpose in life, especially the joy he got from seeing his daughter married to a wonderful man, and holding and loving his grandchild, if only for two years. Like Grampa, Tom was ready to die and has blessed me and his loved ones with his own parting spiritual gifts.

Democracy of the Spirit

from the beginning, friends,
before countries were,
we have been a democracy of the Spirit,
and however frail our political structures
to protect it may seem,
this democracy is who we are,
who we are made to be,
as Jesus came to teach us,
this democracy of the Spirit will never end,
democracy of humanity,
democracy of all species,
democracy of all life,
democracy of the earth,
democracy of creation,
democracy of beauty,
democracy of kindness,
democracy of compassion,
democracy of wonder,
democracy of goodness,
democracy of truth,
democracy of hope;

friends, whoever, wherever you are,
(and you are all my friends),
I am with you in this democracy of love, of
joy,
this democracy of the Spirit that has no end,
Aho! and amen.

Ken Jacobsen

March 7, 2023

The Light Within (a secret poem)

There is a Godly reason
however simply, coolly felt, that's a tsunami
evolving out of silence and with such
longing, behavior must change – that
is the Light Within – an origami
ghost of a ghost, unfolds into life, a slow
half-grasped, unlooked for understanding that
twists like a DNA spiral, a necessary itch
written in silent words without wording,
in no external fact and now no Magi
to shower gifts, protect the other cheek – a still
heavenly stubbornness, a calm affectionate
insight, now outlook, now embrace, an earth
neighborly; such pain to love and no choice but to
love it.

Eric H. Edwards



Tinnitus

How tiresome this litany of
things going wrong with my body
now comes this buzzing ringing
sometimes high-pitched
silly sound like a low grade
auditory death ray
from some so-bad-it's-good
sci-fi movie from 1950s
guys in cheesy space suits
holding their ears then
falling down writhing dying.

Sometimes very few times
walking in some quiet place
I consider my own private
constant background noise
as friend as cousin to the
Beginning of our Universe
analogous to the low low grade
buzz those Bell scientists with
slide rules & pocket protectors
1950 something in Holmdel, NJ
not far from where I grew up
pointing their crudely built horns
at the heavens & lo every direction
they tried yielded the same
.003% background noise
they puzzled over this till
someone proposed this could
be a teensy weensy bit of energy
left over from the Big Bang
Lo & Behold after trying
multiple theories re-tested

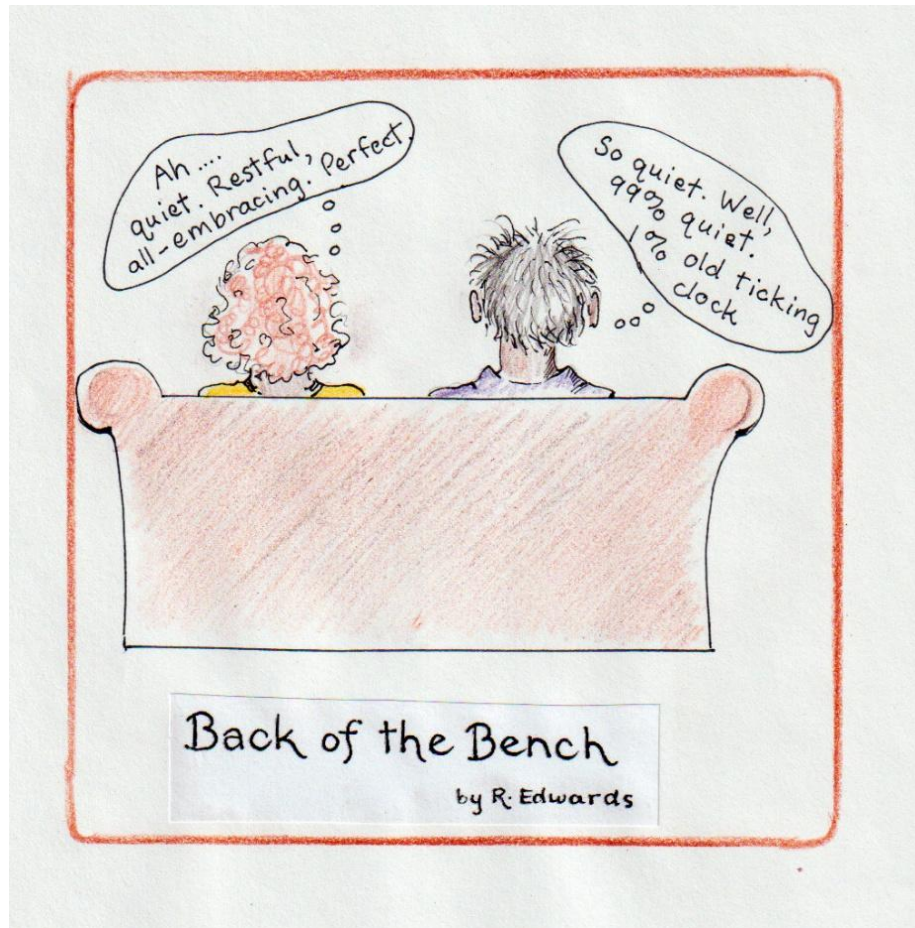
this turned out to be proven by
someone using
math beyond our imaginations
beyond mine anyway....

So maybe that's where my tinnitus
comes from I'd like to think so
so much more profound esoteric
cosmic microwave background
cooled remnant of the Big Bang
that fills the entire Universe
with its average temperature
of "about" 2.725 Kelvin
above Absolute Zero
(that's pretty darn cold, gang)
rather than some
mundane combination of
old age, medication & high blood
pressure.

Bonus Indulgent Vocab CODA:

As death rids me not only of this
constant quotidian annoyance
so too utility bills, out of sequence
traffic lights, telemarketers
mimicking my cell number—
as some eschatological reversal of
the Big Bang my own private
teleology—means toward end
bound up in suffering
& end of suffering—final &
finally, might I be rid of those
dad blamed 17-year cicadas
lounging ing ing ing in my head.

Special Section on Quaker Humor



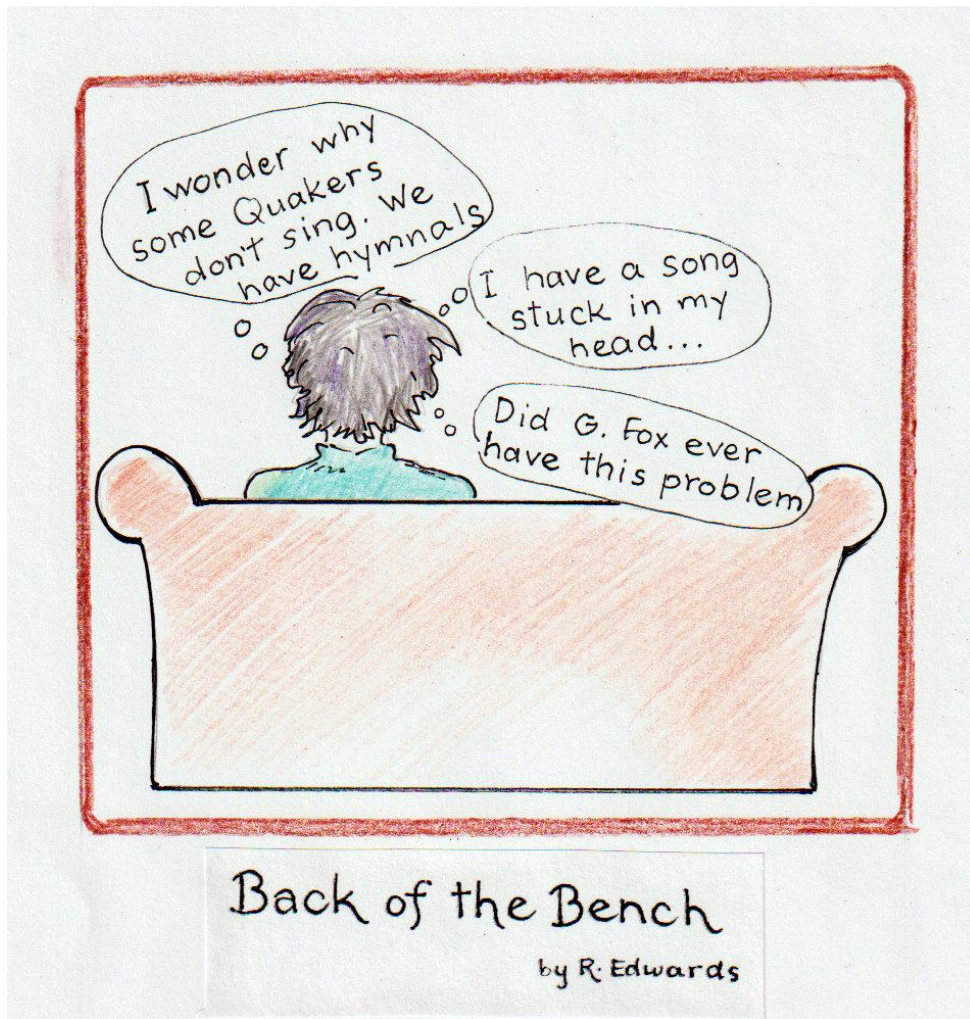
Quaker Jokes

Theresa Packard

These jokes have no definitive source that I find. They appear in many places and in multiple versions.

- * A young man was invited to dinner at a Quaker household. He told a friend, "I'm a bit nervous about this. I don't know anything about Quakers. The next day his friend asked him how it went. "Just fine! There was an awkward silence before dinner, but I told a joke and we got through it!"

- * How many Quakers does it take to change a lightbulb?
None. They have Inner Light.
- * Why don't Quakers sing hymns?
Because they have to read ahead to see if they agree with the lyrics.
- * A Dover Friend once said to folks who got mixed up about the difference between Quakers and Shakers, "Shakers make furniture, Quakers make trouble."
- * A teacher asked her class to bring in the symbols of their respective faiths and to talk about them. The first child stood and said "this is a cross, the symbol of my faith." The next child stood and showed a star of David and they went on until one small boy stood up and finished with "I am a Quaker, and this is a casserole, the symbol of our faith."
- * How many Quakers does it take to change a lightbulb?
Thirty-three: One to raise a concern at Preparative Meeting that the lightbulb is no longer working. Ten at preparative meeting to set up a lightbulb replacement ad hoc committee to send a report to the Business meeting. Three to work on the committee that then edits and reports back to the Monthly meeting that the light bulb will be changed. One person to change the bulb. One person to write an article for the MM newsletter about changing the bulb. One to write a letter to the Friend who raised the initial concern saying that the decision about changing the lightbulb had not been in Right Ordering.



Let's Talk, However Briefly, About the Comma

Rita O'Donnell

A recent East Sandwich Meeting for Business involved a discussion of the old East Sandwich burial grounds and the amount of land presently available for the burial of Friends. The answer was "not much." This led to a discussion of possible interment alternatives, among them, the scattering of ashes. At this point, Paul Denoncourt, who was sitting behind me, leaned forward and whispered, "the answer, my Friend, ..."

I found this hilarious, eventually recovered and, as the editor, got to thinking about punctuation (but, then, maybe that's just me). To take but one example (and, obviously, there are others), over the years, I've come to believe that many of us do not have a rock-solid understanding of the comma. My impression (of

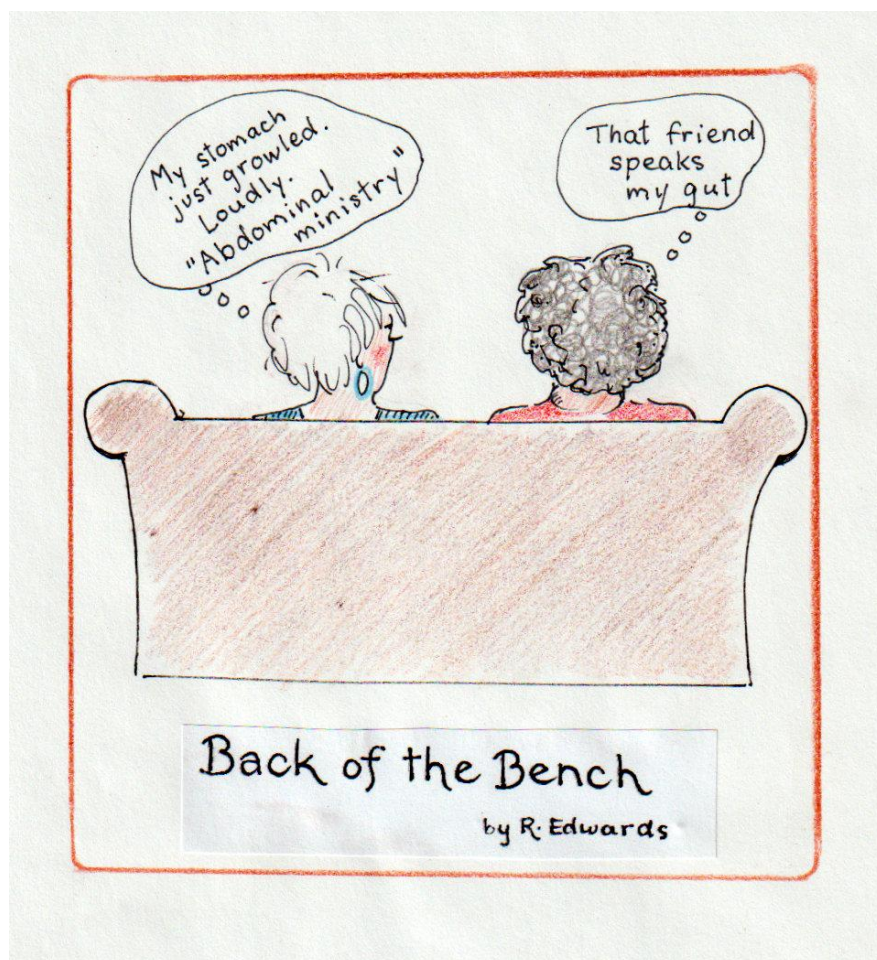
course, others may differ and, really, you know, that's fine, who am I to judge, cast the first stone, etc.) where was I? What I wanted to say was that, in my experience, writers, often, not always, but often, will finish their piece and then say, okay, I'm almost done now and, by the way, good job but, before I finish, I probably need to add a comma or several.

As the editor, I then work, assiduously, I might add and, I hope, without being overly self-referential, to take **out** those extra commas because although, admittedly, there are always exceptions, in general, I think the comma is **overused**. However, sometimes, inarguably and, frankly, in my opinion, regrettably, you **really do need to have one**.

Consider: "The answer, my Friend, is blowin' in the wind"

versus

"The answer, my Friend is blowin' in the wind."



Clerks*

Sandwich Monthly Meeting Fran Lightsom
Capecodquakers.org

East Sandwich Preparative Meeting Barbara
Goodman
Sandwichquakers.org

West Falmouth Preparative Meeting
Molly Cornell and Cynthia Rankin
Westfalmouthquakers.com

Yarmouth Preparative Meeting Pat Harvey
Yarmouthquakers.org



Back cover photo by Erica H. Adams, West Falmouth Friendship Garden, March 14, 2026.

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