

Santa Cruz Monthly Meeting

Religious Society of Friends

Newsletter for the Fourth Month of 2024

Clerk: Alice Coulombe (ahcoulombe@gmail.com)
Meeting for Worship: Sundays at 10:30
Meeting for Worship for the Purpose of Business: Second Sunday at 12:30, in person and hybrid
Calendar clerk: Mimi Edgar (mimiedgar@baymoon.com)
Newsletter editor: Nancy Wood (nwood100@gmail.com)

First Day Schedule

10:30 a.m., Meeting for Worship. First First Day of the month, hybrid worship (Zoom and in-person together). All other First Days, separate Zoom and in-person meetings with Zoom link sent weekly by email.

12:30 p.m., Second First Day. Meeting for Business in person with Zoom available.

Every Third First Day, 9:30 a.m. Advices & Queries worship sharing. In person at the Meetinghouse.

9:45 a.m. Hymn singing. In person in the worship room. Contact Alice Coulombe (ahcoulombe@gmail.com) for the schedule.

Meeting Calendar

Every Monday, 9:15 a.m. Quaker hike. Contact Mimi Edgar (mimiedgar@baymoon.com).

Every Tuesday, 10 a.m. All men are invited to meet for coffee and conversation at The Abbey.

1st, 4th, and 5th Wednesdays, Faith Community Shelter at the Meetinghouse. To help out, contact Noreen Winkler (noreen@cruzio.com).

Wednesday, May 15 at 7:30 p.m. Come to the Meetinghouse to hear from the local chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby. Learn about their work at the Federal, State, and Local level, and ways that you can make a difference.

College Park Quarterly Meeting, May 17-19 in person at Quaker Center and on Zoom. Join Friends from College Park Quarterly for the 254th session. See page 2 for more information.

Quaker Center Calendar

Every morning, 7:30 a.m. Quaker Center [online Meeting for Worship](#).

Every Wednesday, 10 a.m. Quaker Center [online worship sharing](#).

Quaker Center Camp (in person). For decades, Quaker Center has offered a unique overnight summer camp experience for children and young people. Camp at Quaker Center is an unforgettable experience of friendship, service, art, and fun. Quaker Center Camp is a collaboration between the Ben Lomond Quaker Center and the Youth Programs of Pacific Yearly Meeting. There are two sessions:

- June 16-22 for rising 5th to 7th graders
- June 23-30 for rising 8th to 10th graders

Family Work Camp (in person). July 30-August 4. Family Work Camp is a joyous celebration of community, collective labor, Spirit, and fun. For decades, FWC has been a special favorite for parents, grandparents, teens, and children. All skill levels are welcome.

Quaker Center at 75 (in person). August 30-September 2. Join staff and F/friends on this diamond date to reflect on Quaker Center's extraordinary history, and to look ahead to the next glorious 75 years. This will be an extended weekend of celebration, events, and activities, as well as a recommitment to Quaker Center's core mission of nurturing the spiritual growth and faithfulness of our community and beyond.

For more information on these and other Quaker Center programs, see:

<http://www.quakercenter.org/programs/>

Action Minutes from Meeting for Business, 4/14/2024

Minute #1, 4/14/24: Santa Cruz Friends Meeting approves the narrative portion of the March minutes for Business Meeting.

Minute #2, 4/14/24: Santa Cruz Friends Meetings approves the 2024 State of the Meeting Report.

Note: May's Meeting for Business will be held on the third Sunday, May 19, since Mother's Day is on May 12th.

Faith and Practice, Advices & Queries: Simplicity

"Life is meant to be lived from a Center, a divine Center...a life of unhurried peace and power. It is simple. It is serene. It takes no time, but it occupies all our time." ~Thomas R. Kelly, Testament of Devotion, 1941.

A life centered in God will be directed toward keeping communication with God open and unencumbered. Simplicity is best achieved through a right ordering of priorities, maintaining humility of spirit, avoiding self-indulgence, resisting the accumulation of unnecessary possessions, and avoiding over-busy lives.

Elise Boulding writes in My Part in the Quaker Adventure, *"Simplicity, beauty, and happiness go together if they are a by-product of a concern for something more important than ourselves."*

- Do I center my life in an awareness of God's presence so that all things take their rightful place?
- Do I live simply, and promote the right sharing of the world's bounty?
- Do I keep my life uncluttered with things and activities, avoiding commitments beyond my strength and light?
- How do I maintain simplicity, moderation, and honesty in my speech, my manner of living, and my daily work?
- Do I recognize when I have enough?
- *Is the life in our Meeting so ordered that it helps us to simplify our lives?*

College Park Quarterly Meeting

May 17-19 in person at Quaker Center. A hybrid component will be available. The theme of the gathering is: What Unites Us?

A year ago our focus was on the divisions among Friends and how to overcome them. Now we will explicitly examine what we have in common—across large and small Meetings, new and experienced, old and young Friends. There are clues to our connectedness in our State of the Meeting reports: We all value the experience of Quaker worship. We all want Quakerism in Northern California and Nevada to survive and thrive. Let us strive for unity in our plans for thriving into the future.

Schedule with concurrent Children's & Teen programs

- Friday, 4-9 p.m.: Registration, dinner, worship, and introduction. (No Zoom on Friday.)
- Saturday, all day hybrid activities: three meals, Bible study, two plenaries, worship-sharing, interest groups, singing.
- Sunday, 6:30 a.m-2 p.m., all day hybrid activities: two meals, Bible study, worship, final plenary, singing, clean-up.

College Park Quarterly Meeting (*cont'd*)

Plenary Topics

- State of the Meeting reports
- First-hand reports on issues in our Monthly Meetings
- Quaker Center status report

Interest Group Topics

- Priorities for Future recommendations
- Relationships between Friends Meetings and local Indigenous people
- Exchanging personal stories of spiritual experiences

A New Path to Quaker Membership?

What is your condition friend? For some of us, membership in a monthly meeting doesn't make sense. Some of us don't live close enough to any Monthly Meeting to truly be a contributing partner in its worship and work. A few may not wish to be part of the Monthly Meeting that is closest, while others are in a transitory part of life without firm roots in any one community, state, or even country.

If any of the above applies to you, and you feel the Religious Society of Friends is the spiritual community you wish to formally be part of, there may soon be a path to becoming a 'Member at Large' with Pacific Yearly Meeting (PacYM). PacYM is actively seeking contact with all who are interested in becoming a Member at Large. But to move forward, they must first determine the level of interest to know its long-term viability. For more information, read the full Membership Subcommittee report that follows.

Membership Subcommittee Report

The Membership Subcommittee, under the care of Nurture and Counsel, was formed in response to recommendations from the recently laid down *Friendly Contact Team*. Those of us who volunteered to serve on the committee (Alan Edgar, Mimi Edgar, David Forbes, Leoma Scott, Rochelle Sjolseth, and Jane Yett) had no way to know how rich and rewarding an experience it would become.

Our work began by reviewing "*The Meaning of Membership*" in **Faith and Practice** pg 142 & 143:

"Membership establishes a commitment between the individual and the Religious Society of Friends within the framework of a particular Monthly Meeting. Membership implies that, for each member, the Religious Society of Friends provides the most promising home for spiritual enlightenment and growth. It commits a person to the daily pursuit of truth after the manner of Friends, and commits the Meeting to support the member in that pursuit. Membership represents the outward recognition of unity with other members of the Religious Society of Friends and a commitment to cherish and share in the living tradition.

Ever since early Friends rejected the distinction between clergy and laity, responsibility for the full range of Meeting activities has rested with the membership. Members are expected to take an active role in corporate worship, to share in the work and service of the Society, and to live in harmony with its basic beliefs and practices. This means participating in Meeting for Worship, Meeting for Business, and committee work, and giving time, skills, and financial support to Meeting activities such as religious education, pastoral care, and witness to the broader community.

Membership Subcommittee Report (cont'd)

Membership in a Monthly Meeting also confers Membership in Quarterly and Yearly Meetings and the Religious Society of Friends. The strength of these bodies depends on the active involvement of members. Membership in a Monthly Meeting extends one's joys and obligations to include the wider family of Friends around the world."

We then asked ourselves, 'Do we as a Meeting, meet our obligations to our members? Do people who no longer worship or work with us know they are missed? Are these people suffering? What is their condition and what if anything can be done to bring them back among us? Do all know they can join us by zoom if not in person? Are they aware that as members they too have obligations and opportunities to serve Spirit within our meeting? Have they found a spiritual home elsewhere? Do they know we think of them?'

We then tried to determine the members who've been missing for a year or more. (Moving forward we recommend this process be undertaken every 3 months, but with the upset in attendance during the pandemic, a one-year time frame felt most suitable.) Once compiled, we each volunteered to call two or more of the 17 members on our list. The result is very rewarding.

Have you noticed that we are seeing some of the people we've been missing? We hope they are as happy to see us as we are them! Most conversations we had were warm, welcoming, and overdue. Covid had a lot to do with both our not fully knowing who was missing, and their own change of weekend habits. It was a very trying time for all and we are very happy to see our Meeting being restored. **Welcome Home!**

Sadly, we have two members who may not be able to return to us due to chronic illness, age related debilities, and/or distance. They are the wonderful and dear Nancy Andreasen and Peggy Mastrude. We were able to speak with them or a family member (including Nancy's loving daughter and former member of SCMM, Francine Nurske.) It was great to share memories, get updates, let them know we miss them, and assure them we will always hold them in the Light with our love.

There are also three people we haven't been able to reach; either because they have changed their contact information without updating us, or may be choosing not to respond. We plan to continue looking for ways to reach all three for a few more weeks; but if unsuccessful will give their names to Nurture and Counsel and Meeting to deliberate what happens next.

Among those we spoke with, three expressed concerns about returning, primarily due to one or more past problems/conflicts from which they felt hurt or ignored by our Meeting. All three were once very connected to our Meeting, sharing their gifts and time in valuable ways. We do hope they will all choose to return, or at least meet with a Clearness Committee to ascertain their best path forward. Whatever they choose, we are grateful for their honesty in talking with us, the many ways they contributed to our Meeting in past years, and will continue to hope and pray they remain well and are spiritually nourished.

We also researched the possibility of a "**Member at Large**" designation. This could provide a path for those who identify with Quakerism but are not settled in any one location, or live too far from our meeting to be regularly involved as well as an avenue for members who decide not to return to Santa Cruz Meeting.

We were happy to discover that both PYM and NYYM have created a path for 'at large membership' in their Yearly Meetings, and that our own PacYM has been evaluating whether or not to do the same. Valerie Nuttman, (thank you!) provided us with the name of the best contact person at PacYM.

We have spoken with Gail Eastwood, who confirmed PacYM is considering offering both Membership at large and a virtual monthly worship. They first seek to understand how many people are truly interested in these options in order to determine long term viability. She welcomes and requests, that anyone who would become an active member if that option is offered, to please contact her at: eastwood@asis.com.

Membership Subcommittee Report (*cont'd*)

We believe our work is nearing its end, so anticipate that our next report to Nurture and Counsel and Meeting will be our last. Until then, we continue meeting, working to reach those we haven't heard from, and plan to check back in with those we have.

Jewels and Tools

Indivisible Santa Cruz County is holding their biggest fundraising event for 2024 at the Radius Gallery on Saturday, May 4th to raise money for Northeast Arizona Native Democrats (NEAZ).

NEAZ was critical to electing Democrats to statewide offices in Arizona in 2022 and turning Arizona Blue in the 2020 Presidential election. This is a unique opportunity to purchase jewelry and household tools and to support Democrats in Arizona. You'll find a wide variety of costume, vintage, and fine jewelry as well as quality tools.

Saturday, May 4, 2024, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at the Radius Gallery, 1050 River Street #127, Santa Cruz.

Young Adult Wilderness Programs

These trips are designed to bring people together in the outdoors through creating a Quakerly space filled with fun and joy. The trips are for 18-35 year olds; families are invited to our camp outs. Trips are led by experienced backpackers who have professional experience leading groups outdoors. Expect a welcoming community of fellow adventurers who wish to connect both lightheartedly and with depth.

First timers welcome. No gear? NO PROBLEM! Packs, bags, and pads are available, and all meals are provided. To learn more and sign up, click [here](#).

Youth v Gov

Youth v Gov is young people around the world who are suing their governments for actions causing and worsening the climate crisis. Youth v Gov is a legal campaign, a hashtag, and a film. The documentary film ***YOUTH v GOV*** follows the story of *Juliana vs. United States*. In 2015, Kelsey Juliana and 20 co-plaintiffs, aged 7 to 15 (now 15 to 26), filed a ground-breaking lawsuit against the U.S. government, igniting many others both in the U.S. and abroad. Represented by the legal non-profit Our Children's Trust, the Juliana 21 asserted that the U.S. government has willfully acted over six decades to create the climate crisis, thus endangering their constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property, as well as essential public trust resources.

The heart and soul of this story are the young activists themselves, with their varied environmental plights, their growth, their talents, and charisma. Hailing from across the country, the Juliana 21 encompass cultural, economic, racial, and geographic diversity, with many from marginalized communities. Their diversity speaks not only to the universal impacts of climate change, but to the inclusion required if we are to build a better, more just future together.

Youth v Gov (cont'd)

Their unrelenting passion to fight for climate justice makes us yearn for their success—which would not only make history but change the future ...*our* future.

The documentary is about two hours long and is available on Netflix. It is also screening tonight (Friday, April 26) at 155 River Street in Santa Cruz. Click [here](#) for more information.

Update on the Land Transfer to the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe

As of this writing, the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe's [GoFundMe](#) effort has raised over \$2,000,000 for Homeland Return. Over 3,200 people and organizations have donated. The Tribe posted an update on the GoFundMe website on April 17:

“CHIRP and the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe would like to offer deep gratitude and thanks to our supporters, allies, and community who have come together within the span of less than 12 weeks to showcase the collective power of individuals and community in uniting behind a meaningful cause. This remarkable achievement and ongoing support clearly illustrates our community's commitment to healing historical injustices, Indigenous land rematriation, and cultural revitalization.

Through the generous contributions of supporters worldwide, the total funds raised have passed the \$2 million mark!”

It is wonderful and affirming that Quakers have been part of this collective process. We are still hearing from Quakers and Quaker Meetings and Friends Churches who are making donations. If you're reading this newsletter and have been on the fence about making a donation, there's still time! You can send a check or donate online. All details are on the [GoFundMe](#) page.

We've decided to postpone our final report until May, as the Phase 2 fundraising campaign to raise funds for an operating endowment is still underway. The campaign closes in early May. ~ Nancy and Hans

George Fox's 400th Birthday

Did you know that 2024 marks the 400th anniversary of the birth of George Fox? Celebrations are taking place throughout 2024. Many of these events can be joined online, from around the world.

You can explore these events on Friends World Committee for Consultation website, by clicking [here](#). These celebrations are focused primarily on George Fox, but some events explore other early Quakers, including William Penn.

One virtual event in particular might draw your attention. On Wednesday, May 29, J. William Frost, the Howard M. and Charles F. Jenkins Professor Emeritus of Quaker History and Research and Director Emeritus of the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College, will be giving a lecture titled “William Penn: Enigmatic Quaker, Founding Father.”

Within the Society of Friends, George Fox is a towering figure often cited as the founder of the faith. But to outsiders, in the 17th century and today, William Penn is the archetypal Quaker. For the 400th Anniversary of George Fox's birth, J. William Frost will present a virtual talk on William Penn that excavates his life as a deeply religious man who experienced personal triumph and success as well as tragedy and failure, as well as his connections to George Fox.

George Fox's 400th Birthday (cont'd)

While many recognize William Penn as the founder of Pennsylvania and a defender of religious liberty, much less is known about Penn as a man of faith. Frost's forthcoming book, *William Penn: A Radical, Conservative Quaker* (Penn State University Press, November 2024) examines Penn as a deeply religious man whose contradictions reflect, at least in part, his turbulent times. This intriguing history fills significant gaps in writings about Penn—particularly concerning Penn's faith and its intersection with his work as a statesman and politician.

For more information, and to register for this online event, go to: [Friends Historical Association Spring Outing](#)

The Woodbrooke Center in the UK is also offering online courses on George Fox that explore the legacy and influence of George Fox on the Quaker movement today. Sessions include:

- George Fox on Spirituality, Community, Witness, and Hope
- George Fox: A Feminist Quaker Perspective
- George Fox: The Quaker Peace Testimony
- George Fox: An Ecological Quaker Perspective

For more information go to: [George Fox at 400](#)

Quaker Center Quote of the Week

A phrase much loved by Quakers and used frequently by George Fox (1624-1691), the great preacher of the early years, is that there is “that of God” in everyone. I have pondered over the meaning of that phrase ever since I joined Quakers... [It] seems to me that [the phrase has] something to do with a creative power working in our lives to bring us to fulfillment, to an awareness of our worth, to a love for others and for God. For a Quaker, religion is not an external activity, concerning a special “holy” part of the self. It is an openness to the world in the here and now with the whole self. ~ Harvey Gillman, [A Light that is Shining](#) (1997)

Queries:

- What does the phrase ‘there is “that of God” in everyone’ mean to you?
- What part or parts of Harvey Gillman’s interpretation of this phrase particularly resonate with you?

Reflections on Earth Day

The following is an excerpt from a Woodbrooke Center blog post by Kim Harrison called “Earth Day and Ecological Homecoming”. Click [here](#) to see the full post.

“The sense of ecological homecoming that we can feel in nature is beyond just “nature connection”, ecological homecoming is about realizing that we ARE nature; simply part of the spirit that flows through all things. The idea of the “ecological unconscious” bridges philosophy, theology, and spirituality. Indeed, it is an ancient concept present in most nature-based cultures.

Reflections on Earth Day (cont'd)

Everything is so intrinsically interconnected in ways that cannot always be fully understood. Sometimes we can gain understanding by deepening our awareness through sensory awakening activities... Yet sometimes there is an element of mystery that leaves the door open to imagination, creativity and joy. This mystery is like a siren calling us out into the natural world again and again, it fascinates us with the endless curiosities out there to inspire and enliven us.

Through core nature connection routines..., we [can come] out of our heads and down into our bodies using our senses, arriving into fuller presence and, crucially, into our hearts. We [can reconnect] with what we love, and what we truly are.

If we choose to prioritize connection, the interconnectedness of all things can help nourish and sustain us in the face of difficult times ahead, and also in what we choose to do about it. Our love is what lies at the heart of our motivations for climate witness, and is at the root of our many emotions around the climate crisis. Remembering that there is beauty in the world and there is something worth striving to protect offers us something to hold on to through difficult times.

22nd April each year is Earth Day; the global event to diversify, educate, and activate the environmental movement worldwide. Earth Day offers a chance to mark the importance of the environment around us and stand together to protect it. Whether or not we are Quaker, Earth Day is an example of how many of us strive to live through embodying deeply held values of equality, sustainability, and peace. These are integral to earth care and living in 'right-relationship' with 'all-that-is-and-will-be', as land-based societies have done for millennia and continue to do so in some small pockets of the wild.

When we come together, grounded in ecological homecoming, there is hope for what we can achieve in how we can live in 'right-relationship' with the earth, as part of nature."

Earth Day Quotes

"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature—the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter." ~ Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*

"Let the rain kiss you. Let the rain beat upon your head with silver liquid drops. Let the rain sing you a lullaby." ~ Langston Hughes, "April Rain Song"

"If every day were Earth Day we wouldn't be in the mess we're in." ~ Neil deGrasse Tyson

"Look at a tree, a flower, a plant. Let your awareness rest upon it. How still they are, how deeply rooted in Being. Allow nature to teach you stillness." ~ Eckhart Tolle

