

Tasmanian Quaker Newsletter

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When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.

I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world
but walk slowly, and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, "Stay awhile."
The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, "It's simple," they say,
"and you too have come
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled
with light, and to shine."

Mary Oliver

Tasmanian Quaker Newsletter

Tasmania Regional Meeting
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia

New mailing address for Yearly Meeting: Australia Yearly Meeting
PO Box 4035
Carlingford North NSW 2118

Contributions: Copy for TQN should be sent to the editor, Yvonne Joyce (rmtasnews@quakersaustralia.info).

To be added to the mailing list, send an email to Jenny Seaton: jendel5@bigpond.com



The image adopted as the logo for Quakers in Australia represents the Aurora Australis, a natural phenomenon of the southern hemisphere, associated with Antarctica, a fragile and magnificent part of the planet. The Aurora Australis is considered an appropriate logo because of its association with:

• pure light, the centrality of the Light for Quakers

- beauty, a quality many associate with God or the Spirit within
- nature, a permanent reminder of everyone's responsibility to care for the world
- the colour blue, used by the UN
- the ephemeral and intangible, a reminder that language is inadequate to describe God, the truth or the Spirit within.

weetapoona

IN OCTOBER Friends enjoyed a weekend to Bruny Island to stay at weetapoona, which belongs to the Tasmanian Indigenous Land Council. Bruny Island was home to the Nuenone people. Maxine Barry arranged for us to meet Rodney Dillon, a descendant of Fanny Cochrane Smith from the Northeast of the state. Rodney met us at the ferry terminal on Bruny and took us back to the accommodation, which is in a beautiful spot overlooking the water and beach. The morning commenced with morning tea and a talk by Rodney informing us about developments in reconciliation and describing the way of life of the Aboriginal people of that area. He illustrated his talk with a legend.

We were then taken to a beach to look at remnants of tools used by the Aboriginal people over 200 years ago. We also went to look at the ruins of an Anglican church, for which the bricks would have been made by convicts. It is interesting to compare the two cultures and how varied their spiritual lives were.

Accommodation at weetapoona is available to groups such as ours, JYFs and such like sympathetic and interested parties.



Photo: Ruth Raward

Ruth Raward



Photo: Ruth Raward



Photo: Kerstin Reimers



Photo: Kerstin Reimers



Photo: Ruth Raward

International Morning Star Flag Raising Day

NORTH WEST Coast Friends have formed a Friends of West Papua North West group.

Recently, at the launch of a book about the massacre on Byak Island, the group felt compelled to carry the issue forward. They held the first meeting on 12th November at which five members attended.

They North West Coast Friends felt burdened with the knowledge that just to Australia's north atrocities are occurring. The West Papuan people have been colonised by Indonesia. The West Papuan people have never had the opportunity to freely and fairly determine their future. What makes that particularly painful for us is the knowledge that the Australian government actively prevented a genuine plebiscite in 1969 and today, fifty years later, the government actively supports the Indonesian police and military who continue to violently occupy West Papua.

North West Coast Friends draw parallels with the British colonisation of Aboriginal Australia. "The same violent pattern is being played out today just a short distance from Australian shores", they said.

"If we mean we are sorry for the history of white Australia, we need to take action to support the people of West Papua."



North West Coast Friends recognising International Morning Star Flag Raising Day on December 1

On 1st December the group recognised International Morning Flag Raising Day in Devonport. The Friends raised a flag at midday at the Market Square, and in doing so they were very aware that West Papuans faced the death penalty should they do they same.

This was the Friends' first public action but in 2020 they hope to carry the message to others in north west Tasmania.

If you would like to be involved, or to be kept up to date with the group, please email Sally at sowheel@gmail.com or Patrick at pmtm@bigpond.com

Snippets from the Quaker Community Co-ordinator December 2019

AS THE school year moves closer to the end of term, I have had the joy of attending many culminating assemblies. These are very special as many students demonstrate their learning in music, dance, poetry, language and drama. If you have flexible time I really urge members of TRM to attend these next year. Dates and times are always posted in the school's weekly newsletters which are available on line.

During the last month, Gatherings have included 'Barriers we have between us', the Peace Testimony, Remembrance Day, 'If I had wings', Gifts, giving and 'how to receive'.

Thinking about the barriers between us, there are currently nine physical walls built between countries around the world ranging in length from 11kms to 3,145kms. That is eighteen countries for whom freedom is restricted. When I looked at the national anthems of these countries I found many of them talk about being free and yet, ironically, these countries have built or are building walls to stop others who are fleeing persecution or troubled times.

USA has an inscription at the bottom of the Statue of Liberty that says, "Give me your tired, your poor, / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, / The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. / Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me" Yet, they have the biggest wall of all.

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Living the Change – a workshop of Religions for Peace, Hobart

MY JOTTINGS and subjective impressions ...

We were set questions to ponder deeply and share reflections from our faith traditions:

How can my faith bring about the inner transformation needed to sustain my outward behaviour change?

In my inner world there may be fear, anger, grief, greed, unresolved trauma. With the help of my faith how might these be transformed or replaced? Which aspects of my faith can help me?

What can I transform in my outward behaviour?

I noted some of the inspiring reflections but won't attempt to connect them with the speaker's faith tradition, which was not always evident to me.

- The practice of gratitude: praying with awareness and not by rote.
 - Persistence in the face of disapproval and even persecution, inspired by the Gospel and example of Jesus, seeking the good in all people, and trusting in the strength shared in my faith community
 - Rather than replacing angry and vengeful feelings that have been disenfranchised, doing great harm, feel them and be honest, express them safely with the support of prayer and the awareness of the closeness of God, repenting of any harm discharging this pain on others.
 - In quiet, rediscover childlike wonder in the universe, the sacredness of all things.
 - Be aware and present, working continuously on reaching higher consciousness. In its attainment one becomes nonviolent and aware of the truths throughout all religions.
 - Recurring nightmares were overcome by meditation. Time spent in nature brings feelings of great peace.
 - The lack of balance of the inner and outer is seen in the individual and in the world.
- God is everywhere and in the laws of nature, God is justice, one spirit within us and in the universe. Seeking self-satisfaction moves us away from God's perfection and the guru within. Go within to seek God, which will bring alignment with truth, peace and a sense of right direction.
 - Meditative practice brings feelings of deep peace and benevolence, a shedding of blaming and complaining. This enables cooperative work for good.
 - Take note of the sensations attendant on eating your food and its physical effects—especially meat, and beneficial sensations of quitting it. Dance!
 - Science enjoins us to act, and quickly. Like Gandhi we need to be the change we want to see.
 - In daily meditative practices we aim for union and expand our consciousness to all life forms in the universe and respond to assist.
 - Overcoming the Self, our individual consciousness has outer manifestations, just as the fish swims in water. Personal change has power in the outer world.
 - Believers are required to share their plenty with the poor, who have a right to it. As a wealthy nation Australia has an obligation to help its poorer neighbours.
 - Climate change may be the catalyst that brings forth change to cooperative activity

The program was developed by Greenfaith in the USA and has been disseminated by Australian Religious Response to Climate Change, with which Quakers Australia is affiliated. It is a practical and entertaining way of learning how each of us can contribute to reducing the damage.

Find out more about Living the Change at: <https://www.arrcc.org.au/>

Maxine Barry



How Indigenous Death Rituals Illuminate the Web of Life

OUR STRICTLY human heavens and hells have only recently been abstracted from the sensuous world that surrounds us, from this more-than-human realm that abounds in its own winged intelligences and cloven-hoofed powers. For almost all oral cultures, the enveloping and sensuous earth remains the dwelling place of both the living and the dead. The “body” — whether human or otherwise — is not yet a mechanical object in such cultures, but is a magical entity, the mind’s own sensuous aspect, and at death the body’s decomposition into soil, worms, and dust can only signify the gradual reintegration of one’s ancestors and elders into the living landscape, from which all, too, are born.

Each indigenous culture elaborates this recognition of metamorphosis in its own fashion, taking its clues from the particular terrain in which it is situated. Often the invisible atmosphere that animates the visible world — the subtle presence that circulates both within us and between all things — retains within itself the spirit or breath of the dead person until the time when that breath will enter and animate another visible body — a bird, or a deer, or a field of wild grain. Some cultures may burn, or “cremate,” the body in order to more completely return the person, as smoke, to the swirling air, while that which departs as flame is offered to the sun and stars, and that which lingers as ash is fed to the dense earth. Still other cultures may dismember the body, leaving certain parts in precise locations where they will likely be found by condors, or where they will be consumed by mountain lions or by wolves, thus hastening the re-incarnation of that person into a particular animal realm within the landscape. Such examples illustrate simply that death, in tribal



Photo: Julian Dutton on Unsplash

cultures, initiates a metamorphosis wherein the person’s presence does not “vanish” from the sensible world (where would it go?) but rather remains as an animating force within the vastness of the landscape, whether subtly, in the wind, or more visibly, in animal form, or even as the eruptive, ever to be appeased, wrath of the volcano.

“Ancestor worship,” in its myriad forms, then, is ultimately another mode of attentiveness to nonhuman nature; it signifies not so much an awe or reverence of human powers, but rather a reverence for those forms that awareness takes when it is not in human form, when the familiar human embodiment dies and decays to become part of the encompassing cosmos.

This cycling of the human back into the larger world ensures that the other forms of experience that we encounter — whether ants, or willow trees, or clouds — are never absolutely alien to ourselves. Despite the obvious differences in shape, and ability, and style of being, they remain at least distantly familiar, even familial. It is, paradoxically, this perceived kinship or consanguinity that renders the difference, or otherness, so eerily potent.

David Abram in Spell of the Sensuous 1996

Thanks to www.brainpickings.org

pulingina to lutruwita (Tasmania) Place Name Map

2019 is the International Year of Indigenous Languages and to mark the occasion the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre has recently published an interactive map of the Aboriginal names of over 180 places in lutruwita (Tasmania). Names are shown in palawa kani, the language of Tasmania Aborigines.

For example:

wukaluwikiwayna – Maria Island

tiralina – Eaglehawk
Neck

pataway – Burnie

yingina – Great Lake

You can access more information and explore the map at: <https://tacinc.com.au/pulingina-to-lutruwita-tasmania-place-names-map/>



Tasmanian
Aboriginal
Centre

Snippets: continued from p.3

Australia also has an anthem which states we have, “boundless plains to share” and yet we have restrictive policies (and, yes, these involve complex issues) but we exclude people fleeing difficult times. Border walls are the ultimate indication of communication failure between countries.

We too, as individuals, put up barriers that make it difficult for us to communicate; sometimes these barriers involves different cultures, different languages, difficult emotional states, difficulty in compromising or just having a bad day!

Yoyo Ma, celebrated cellist, instigated the ‘Bach project’ where he played his music around the world to explore and celebrate how culture makes us stronger and to promote communication. Yoyo Ma does not like the walls that countries build and so he played in the shadow of the US-Mexican border and hoped his performance would make a statement about global unity and hoped it would urge listeners to build bridges not walls.

I am always impressed by the amount of service Friends School students undertake, much of which is about diminishing the barriers between people. Students then shared some of their experiences gained through this involvement.

In the lead up to Remembrance Day we thought about the Peace testimony and how we apply this in our own lives. During Remembrance week explanations were given for the three poppies and we considered what symbols are used to demonstrate peace and why it is important to think about the symbols we use.

We have had Gatherings centred around the hypothetical ‘If I had wings’. This is sometimes used as a metaphor for achievement or reaching for higher ideals. Poetry was shared and children related their thoughts to the SPICES and the things they would do if they had wings.

Coming into the Christmas season, we have been thinking about giving and how this is good for us: it makes us feel happy; generous people have better health; giving promotes co-operation and healthy community relationships. Gifts elicit gratitude and this is integral to happiness, health and social bonds.

And finally, we considered how giving is contagious. People who receive, are more likely to give to others, and this may not involve the giving of material goods but gifts can come in the form of time, friendship or shared skills.

School Gatherings have considered how for us, Christmas is really the season for ‘getting’. Students were asked to consider whether they are the person who asks for a big random list of things or whether they consider what they really would like and why. It was put to the students that being able to get things just because we want them is a privilege and something that is actually unusual for most people in the world, and so it is important to be thoughtful about things we ask for.

We have dwelled on how we should ‘receive’ and considered the idea of being gracious and appreciative and accepting with kindness, realising the thoughtfulness and time that people have put into thinking about us.

Students were asked to think about something unexpected they may have received and how this made them feel. After silence a grade 6 boy stood and said, “An unexpected gift this year has been the way you have presented ideas to us and I feel it is something we should express our gratitude for”. Any teacher will tell you, you cannot receive a greater gift from a student.

It really has been an unexpected gift for me to hold the position of Quaker Community Co-ordinator this year. To have gained an understanding of the complexity of how the whole school operates, to see first-hand the incredible talent of School staff, the huge effort that goes into organisational structures, and the depth of Quakerism exhibited within the Friends’ school has been a privilege. Quakerism is thought about; structures, activities and actions are guided by it; and, Quaker values are put into practise in the Friends’ school on a daily basis. It is something that is truly wonderful. It has really been a privilege to work in an organisation that tries so hard to reflect these values on a daily basis to the broader community. I thank the school community for their incredible support.

*Karen Wilson
December 2019*

The Sound of Silence: a Quaker rewriting

FRIENDS OF Janice Blakeney know she has an interest in poetry – especially if it emerges as a tribute or re-write in Quaker terms of famous works. She admits to an Irish heritage and that makes her a keen storyteller. She likewise harbours a sense of whimsy and rejoices in finding subtle ways to show that Quakers can be humorous!

So, when Members of the Devonport Meeting were discussing singing in local choral societies, she had to ask, “What sort of songs would a Quaker choir sing?” The answer? Simon and Garfunkel’s ‘The Sound of Silence’ 1965. Here Janice takes up the challenge of rewriting the classic tune from a Quaker perspective. (Younger readers might like to familiarise themselves with the folksy rock tune by searching online before reading on.)

Song for a Quaker Choir

By Tasmanian Friend Janice Blakeney – with apologies to Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel

The Sound Of Silence - Revisited

Come to Meeting with the Friends,
All are welcome to attend,
Share a vision of peace and wisdom
Seek in silence stillness keeping
Finding solace that in quiet each one claims
Within the Sound of Silence.

If in life I seem alone,
Here are Friends to walk along,
Within the circle of the Meeting,
No one lacks a cheerful greeting,
Together silent worship leads the way,
Day by day,
Amidst the Sound of Silence.

In each encounter we can find,
That of God in everyone,
People of every nomination,
Are all equal in affection,
Singing songs that every voice can share,
Loud and clear,
No more the Sound of Silence.

Friends, say I, each one knows,
That in silence worship grows,
Hear the spirit softly teaching,
Take the time to go on listening,
Inspiration comes like a whisper to the soul
A light within,
In the glow of Silence.

Quakers do not bow to pray,
Neither have they priests to pay,
Silent worship fills our seeking,
Ministry a gift worth keeping,
No words of a prophet are etched upon our walls,
Unity calls,
Dwelling in the Sound of Silence.

Would you like to go on a Quaker study tour to North Korea?

IN 2018 Sejin Pak (SANTRM) led a group on a one-week trip to North Korea. Sejin is planning a return trip in 2020, if sufficient people are interested. The visit will be either in spring (May or June) or autumn (Sept or Oct).

Sejin has a concern about peace in the Korean peninsula and would like to introduce Quakers to this largely unknown country.

The cost of the trip is expected to be approximately \$US2,500, plus air fares to a departure point in China. A party of at least 12 is required.

Travel in North Korea is tightly controlled but safe.



For further information, visit the Australia North Korea Peace Support Group website or email CDPRK@quakersaustralia.info

Friends' Meetings in Tasmania

Hobart

Friends' Meeting House, 5 Boa Vista Rd, North Hobart (just off Argyle) Contact: 0432 159 606

Meeting for Worship every Sunday 10.00 a.m.

Children's Meeting every Sunday 10.00 a.m.; Junior Young Friends (High School age) 1st and 3rd Sundays 10.00 a.m.; Children's contact: Dawn, 0409 033 479; JYF contact: Maree-rose 0437 617 802.

Hobart Meeting House, Thursday mornings in school term 7.45 – 8.20 a.m.

Regional Meeting for Worship for Business

1st Sunday of the month at 11:30 a.m., Friends' Meeting House, Hobart.

No MfWfB in January 2019.

Devonport

Devonport Community Centre, 10 Morris Avenue, Devonport, Sunday 10.30 a.m. Contact: Sally O'Wheel, 6428 3019.

WORSHIPPING GROUPS

Southern Tasmania (formerly Huon)

Meet at 10.30 a.m. on the third Sunday at the CWA, Huonville, December–February. Contact Ann: 6266 6439.

Kingborough

At the homes of Friends Feb. to Nov., 4th Sunday 10.30 a.m. Contact: Peter Wilde, 03 6229 5017, wildepetbar@bigpond.com

South Hobart

3/14A Wentworth St, South Hobart
Third Sunday of each month at 10.30 a.m.
6223 4040 or 0408 273 994, Vivienne Luke and Des FitzGerald.

Launceston

Maggie's Place, 34 Paterson St, 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays, 10.00 a.m. Contact: Julie Walpole, 0402 048 147.

Quaker Women's Lunch

Each second Thursday of the month at Macquarie Food Store, 356 Macquarie St., South Hobart, 12 p.m.–2 p.m., upstairs. Enquiries: katepnl@hotmail.com



TASMANIA REGIONAL MEETING
PO Box 388
North Hobart TAS 7002