

Quaker ^{Tasmanian} Newsletter

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Walking on 'the Mountain' (kunanyi/ Mt Wellington) over summer, it was so dry that it looked as though the mosses might die, but recent rain revived them, and fungi fruiting bodies abounded.

This image is a close-up of a buzzy, a native plant (probably *Acaena novae-zelandiae*), which shows that the annoying can still be beautiful!

S. Headley

Tasmanian Quaker Newsletter

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

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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.

Testimony to the grace of God in the life of Rosemary Madge Brown

30.06.1925 – 18.07.2021

OUR LATE Friend, Rose Brown, was the youngest of Frank and Madge Edwards' six children.

Rose's father, Frank, attended the Hutchins School, then studied law and won a Rhodes Scholarship. He married Rose's mother, Madge on his return from England. Then he established himself as an Ulverstone based lawyer but also spent around 20 years as a Member of the Tasmanian Parliament. In addition Frank considered running for the Federal seat of Darwin (now Braddon) but stood aside for Enid Lyons .

Madge ran the Women's Forum in *The Advocate* newspaper and was active in the CWA as well as raising her six children and supporting her husband's careers. Madge was descended from Governor Sorell, the Archers and Anthony Fenn Kemp. She was largely raised by her grandmothers, her own mother having suffered from fragile mental and physical health and died at an early age. Madge attended both the Girls' High School (co-founded by Sarah Thompson Walker, one of the daughters of George Washington Walker and Sarah Benson Walker) and Collegiate; it was during these years that Madge and Frank first met.

Rose enjoyed a happy childhood attending primary school in Ulverstone and High School in Devonport. Rose recalled that the first of her five years at Devonport High School was especially happy because Eliza was there too. Eliza was her older sister, Elizabeth with whom she much later co-authored a book about their father. After school Rose worked for a while in both Melbourne and Sydney as a commercial artist with an advertising agency. Later she went on to study for a B.A. at the University of Tasmania, and over the years she taught English in a number of schools, including the Friends' School.

After the World War II, Rose met and married Lindsay Brown and they had a home built on Berriedale Bay near Frying Pan Island. It was a happy family home and they had four children: Nicolas, Sally, Craig and Simon, all of whom attended the Friends' School for some of their schooling.

The Browns' home was next door to Strathaven Nursing Home where Frank and Madge retired

in 1967. After Madge died in 1970, Frank continued to live there until poor health required him to give up his semi-independent living unit; then he moved into Rose and Lindsay's home. Frank died in early 1983.



Image: Sally Brown

It was shortly after that, that Rose and Lindsay joined the Religious Society of Friends. Rose had had an Anglican upbringing but prior to finding Friends, she and Lindsay would have described themselves as broadly Christian. They were welcomed into membership in August 1983. The Minute reads that their Visitors, Helen and Kenneth Brooks and Geraldine Brown, felt that Rosemary and Lindsay were in sympathy with Friends' testimonies. Certainly, Rose, supported by Lindsay, trusted in the promptings of truth and love in her heart and let her life speak.

At this time Rose was already involved with the Aboriginal Treaty Support Group where she met and became friends with Aunty Ida West, who actually moved to Strathaven, next door to Rose. Rose and Aunty Ida often walked to Frying Pan Island and would share a picnic. It must also have been a favourite place of the Mouheneener people who lived West of the Derwent River for thousands of years. Indeed middens lie under the topsoil for much of the island, and on the Northern edge you can see the midden layers including the remains of ancient camp fires. Frying Pan Island was a welcoming place and there was always shelter amongst its ancient rocks, sheoaks, bursaria, and native grasses ; however the island increasingly struggled with European weeds and a colony of rabbits.

Rose found support for her Aboriginal concerns in the Hobart Quaker Peace and Social Justice Committee. With the approach of Australia's bicentennial, this committee encouraged Rose

and Friend, Jennie Herrera, to prepare papers regarding Aboriginal Land Rights for Hobart Regional Meeting, which in turn urged them to send copies to all Meetings. Rose and Jennie were then asked to give a presentation at the January 1987 Yearly Meeting, which subsequently asked them to convene a short term committee known as the **1988 Committee**. They were to focus Friends' attitudes concerning participation in the observance of the Bicentennial celebrations in view of the Federal Government's lack of progress in granting Land Rights to Aboriginal people, and to provide Friends with continuing information. Other Regional Meetings were asked to appoint correspondents to the 1988 Committee. It was this work that led the Religious Society of Friends, in Australia, to take a stand and not play any official role in the Bicentennial celebrations because of the effect on Aboriginal people of the coming of white people to Australia.

After the Bicentennial, Rose continued to work for Quakers on Aboriginal concerns through the Tasmanian Council of Churches on its Justice and World Development Committee.

Rose's passion to help bring about justice for Aboriginal people actually went far beyond the 1988 Committee and the Tasmanian Council of Churches. She initiated adult education classes on Racism Awareness and Exploring Racism, and prepared kits that she made available for anyone to use. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom also supported her and took particular interest in her work with Aunty Ida to establish and work with the Glenorchy Reconciliation Group. The Glenorchy Reconciliation Group was particularly committed to educate the community to understand and respect cultural heritage. It began by caring for Frying Pan Island. The Reconciliation Group and Landcare continue to actively rehabilitate and conserve this space.

When Aunty Ida died, Rose took a special interest in contributing to the development of the Healing Garden at Wybelena in Aunty Ida's memory.

Rose was passionate about other concerns too: refugees, co-counselling, conservation and banning toy armaments. She wrote tirelessly to MPs and *The Mercury* newspaper, ensuring that her concerns were heard. Locally she worked with Eve Masterman (a Friend and close neighbour) to save the Berriedale Community Centre for the people.

Also, Rose helped Eve create the International Peace Forest (Peace Park) in Berriedale, 1991, with

the support of the Hobart Quaker Peace and Social Justice Committee. This initiative came from the 1986 Year of Peace; in Berriedale it involved working with the local council to have a piece of wasteland dedicated to the ongoing promotion and celebration of peace and cooperation. Hobart Friends continue to make at least one annual trip there to plant trees to commemorate the lives of Friends or others who have been closely associated with peace work.

In addition to her activism, Rose found time to enjoy singing. Both Rose and Lindsay sang with the Friends' Singers for many years.

Furthermore, Rose was a writer. She was a member of the Tasmanian branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers and she was involved with the Domain Writers and contributed to their anthology. Rose also wrote articles for *Tasmanian Ancestry*, the journal of the Tasmanian Family History Society Inc. Furthermore, together with Jennie Herrera, Rose gave generous help to bring to fruition Friend, Val Nichols' poems, publishing them as *A Sort of Therapy* (1989). Later they assisted Eve Masterman to collate and publish her *Poems* (1999). Rose added a delightful illustration of Berriedale Bay to Eve's publication.

Rose wrote two books of her own: *Madge's People* (2004), which was partly written with her mother, about her mother and her mother's forebears, relating them to the social conditions in Tasmania and beyond, from 1788 to the 21st century. Then Rose and her sister, Eliza, wrote about their father, *there's life in the old dog yet* (2009). These books were written with much empathy for all the characters who appeared and an appreciation of the fact that they were limited by the times in which they lived, in which we all live. Rose's observations were so typical of her kindness, generosity, grace, concern and most of all, love for others.

Rose recognised: we are not powerless. We are 'real people'. The very fact of being alive – conceived miraculously in the face of enormous biological odds- means we hold the present and the future in our hands, just as our predecessors did. We can add our own perceptions of truth to this gift. And I am optimistic enough to believe that if we do not recognise the mistakes we are bound to make, others will correct them for us sooner or later. (*Madge's People* p.208)

Rose walked cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone. She has left us an inspirational legacy in her belief in hope and truth.

Our Deepest Fear

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness
That most frightens us.

We ask ourselves
Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?
Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.
Your playing small
Does not serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking
So that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine,
As children do.
We were born to make manifest
The glory of God that is within us.
It's not just in some of us;
It's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine,
We unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.
As we're liberated from our own fear,
Our presence automatically liberates others.

Marianne Williamson

A tribute to Ian Lewis

Our Friend Ian Lewis died on Wednesday 9 March. Ian was the Professor of Paediatrics at the University of Tasmania and was well respected throughout the university as an academic leader. Here he shares some of his experiences during his time in Fiji.

ONE THING I have learned from working in places where the beliefs, culture and race differ from my own background is to hold back my ideas and views until I feel I have an understanding of the people I am expected to teach or treat.

Fiji was one such place. I taught there for two months in 1973 and I went back as the Head of the Fiji School of Medicine and also as a paediatrician in March 1989 until September 1991.

When I went to Fiji in 1973 I was the only teaching paediatrician in the country. I had to introduce an intense lecture and clinical programme to two years of students. It was the only paediatric teaching they would have received before they went to their final examination. I gave one lecture on a bus going to a rural clinic. I had never had that experience before or since ... This visit allowed me a glimpse of the country which was extremely helpful for me when I returned to lead School in March 1989.

The Fiji School of Medicine is unique not only because of its background in history but also because it trains not just doctors but also dentists, dental assistants, laboratory technicians, radiographers, pharmacists, dieticians, physiotherapists, health inspectors and environmental health officers. The history is also extraordinary. It was founded by a Dr William MacGregor in 1885 making it the fourth or fifth oldest school of medicine in Australia and the Pacific region. Dr MacGregor joined the Colonial Medical Service and in 1879 was appointed Chief Medical Officer in Fiji. At that time indentured Indian labourers were being shipped in, bringing diseases such as small pox, dysentery, and cholera. He founded the school to train vaccinators ...

When I arrived the medical school was only just surviving. With two recent coups it had lost a third of its staff. Two clinical years had been sent to the Papua New Guinea Medical School to finish their training. The Head of School had left and it was being run by a young Canadian surgeon in an acting role. The World Health Organisation had held a workshop made up of international experts to draw up a plan to rejuvenate the Fiji School. This plan was finalised as I took up my appointment. It meant swapping the existing curricular structure

and introducing a problem-based community-oriented course in two parts. Students would spend their first three years studying community health and structure based on health centres. They would graduate as primary care practitioners and they could either proceed to practice from primary health centres or go for a further two years and graduate as Bachelors of Medicine and Surgery. Problem-based medical courses are based on a course pioneered in Canada at McMaster University in 1970. Students are broken into groups of six to eight and are set a series of medical problems carefully designed to cover all fields of clinical medicine. Each group has a fortnight to work through the problems from its basic structural and functional defects to its management and outcome using library or computer data. Each group has a facilitator who guides but doesn't direct. School staff can be consulted but they do not lecture in the orthodox way. As a matter of interest there must be now at least 200 medical courses based on this concept worldwide. In Australia the Newcastle Medical Course is problem based.

Firstly I met the existing staff whom I found numbered about 20 and who came from ten different countries. They were used to working to Fiji time which meant up to half an hour from a scheduled start. I introduced Lewis time which allowed five minutes latitude at the most.

The medical students numbered only about 30 and while most were from Fiji, others came from Tonga and Samoa, the Cook Islands, Vanuatu and occasionally from elsewhere in the Pacific ... All the students at the School were on grants from their respective governments and I should add the health services in all these countries were based on community health centres. Hospitals were usually small and ill equipped by Western standards.

When I arrived, the medical school building and student residences were inadequate and outmoded. The major hospital in Suva is the Colonial War Memorial Hospital. It was inadequate and had no facilities for students. The Japanese agreed to build a new hospital to replace the Colonial War Memorial Hospital. The plans were submitted to the small Fijian Government committee of which I

was a member. The Fijians were naturally polite and grateful. I had to point out that it was a teaching hospital and that there were no tutorial rooms, that the outpatients area had no room for the hordes of patients seen daily in Fiji's hospitals. In the paediatric section there were no facilities for parents. The Japanese planners seemed surprised and taken aback by my criticisms but the plans were altered. Funding for the student accommodation and new medical school came mainly from New Zealand and Australia.

My activities and talks had not always pleased the Minister for Health and, when I was on one of my WHO inspired visits to Vanuatu in April 1991, I was

told that he had placed an announcement in the *Fiji Times* that the Assistant Head of School, (whom) I had recruited was now Head, and Professor Lewis was a consultant. It was a shock but the new Head was a well trained and very competent doctor who had been employed previously as a teacher in problem-based medical education. I gave in my resignation and left in September 1991. The Minister for Health gave me a farewell party and presented me with an inscribed yangona bowl and later visited me here in Hobart so peace has been restored.

If F/friends would like to read a fuller account of Ian's Fiji experiences, please contact Sally McGushin (03) 62789149.

A note about water – from Maree-rose Jones

DEAR FRIENDS, we all know water wears away a stone.

As Fox encouraged us to let our lives speak we decided to share news of recent community engagement by some of our members and attenders. Did you know Maxine Barry and Kay Allport and I have been active at LABOR Party fundraising functions recently? Maxine is our nominated TRM Quaker to the multi-faith network committed to action on climate change, Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (<https://www.arccc.org.au/>). She is also active locally in LEAN Labor Environment Action Network (see <https://www.lean.net.au/>). Maree-rose has been involved in a LABOR Education Policy Action Group at local level, advocating for an address to children's special needs within the Education system, particularly at primary and secondary level and especially in the State system. All three of us joyfully attended a fundraising quiz night for the Labor Party at the Bellerive Yacht Club. On a table of ten, insisting our team be called 'EARTH STEWARDS' a phrase which of course then had to be written up on a board for all to see, was mentioned every time the scores were read. 'EARTH STEWARDS' — simple! The ways we let our lives speak can be radical or they may be quiet, just as they can certainly be social and there is often a lot we can corporately and quietly achieve by simply 'joining in with others'.

We do note those moments of silent jaw dropping awe after worship when some people let slip who

they vote for. Our Quaker values require of us integrity, tolerance and to show care for community not just ourselves and own closest connections, but the greater community we live in. But in speaking, do we gently encourage one another to think carefully about what we do with our vote and examine climate policy supported by all candidates for Parliament? It may seem easier to just vote outright for a party that supports Green initiatives. But we ask, is it not incumbent upon us all to remind all our Members and Attenders – that means each other – and all politicians to be mindful of the need to Steward the Earth? All political parties. Sometimes we need to ask ourselves what does the independent candidate or party I vote for do about climate action? How does it support or curb or adapt the activities of industries that damage the environment? Not everyone finds it easy to 'let their lives speak' by being loud in actions and words, although it may seem that is where being a Quaker stems from. Sometimes, quite rationally, we worry that we can't be loud speakers or it doesn't suit our personality, or our work and professional profiles. But we can ask ourselves where is there gentle room for influence and how may we 'be patterns', as Fox asked, in our comings and goings locally. So, we three talked and decided to out ourselves, to 'Share and Tell' where we have been coming and going recently. Feel welcome to join us! It is but a way of trying to let our lives speak and be patterns as we walk cheerfully across the Earth.

Peter Underwood Peace and Justice lecture 2021

THIS YEAR the Friends' School's Clemes Friendly Conference explored the idea of Reconciliation with Australia's Indigenous community. The School's biennial Peter Underwood Peace and Justice lecture was an important focal point for the conference. This year the lecture was presented by Aunty Patsy Cameron, joined by Tim McCormack, in the Farrall Centre on 29 April.

Aunty Patsy, an Indigenous Elder, gave a very moving Aboriginal voice to the Black Line and George Augustus Robertson narrative that we learned in primary school history. The history that I learned when I was at school certainly tried to cast the Tasmanian Aborigines in a sympathetic light; for example we ridiculed the Black Line. We also learned of George Arthur's well meaning (we thought) if rather patronising attempts to befriend the indigenous population with his posters showing a white woman holding a black baby next to a black woman (in full European dress) holding a black baby, and depicting a white man being hanged after shooting a black man (not in European dress) as well as a black man being hanged after spearing a white man. I remember understanding that these were patronising attempts. However, we learned nothing of the trick or treaty story that Aunty Patsy tells. That is how Indigenous leaders were persuaded to evacuate their people to Flinders Island for a period of truce, after which they had been led to believe that they would be able to return to their home lands once the Government settled the white settlers. They never returned. The survivors were relocated to Oyster Cove some 15 years later. Aunty Patsy's history is moving and shaming.

Tim McCormack, also a very impassioned speaker, followed Aunty Patsy's narrative with a possible way forward to Reconciliation; firstly, acknowledging the injustice of the past and secondly finally recognising the Treaty to which the Aborigines thought they were agreeing when they moved to Wybelenna.

This year's Peter Underwood Peace and Justice lecture made for compelling listening. It provides



Image: The Friends' School

a most comprehensive account of the way we, as Europeans, have twisted our history with Tasmanian Aboriginal people. If we are to progress towards Reconciliation, we need to acknowledge that the history is flawed and that subsequent generations, including me, have perpetuated these misunderstandings. I commend the lecture to you as an excellent starting point. It is available at <https://www.friends.tas.edu.au/2021/05/19/the-peter-underwood-peace-justice-lecture/>

Reflections on a Forum: 'Coalition for Biological Reality'

Hobart Town Hall, Saturday 26/2/22

I HAD been invited by a friend at short notice, and imagined a debate type of event. This was not the case; the information presented was from a particular perspective. The 'Coalition for Biological Reality' group had brought together speakers with diverse approaches to the topic of "biological reality" – in opposition to the rising agitation for the rights of transgender people. Unable to stay for the whole presentation of two and a half hours, I collected the literature provided, to learn more.

Opened by Senator Claire Chandler, she outlined her defence of women-only sports and spaces. She referred to "cancel culture" and the difficulty of providing a public space and voice for the points of view we were about to hear. She referred to ugly threats to proponents of "biological reality", for their opposition to trans men entering women's spaces, services and sports, rights hard won and developed over a long time by feminists.

Alarm was expressed about the potential and actual harm done by men claiming to be women, in particular in claiming the right to share toilet and shower facilities with girls and women, with the potential threat from pedophiles, and for sexual assault and harassment.

A broader problem covered from a range of perspectives, was that of transgender choice coming to be seen as the answer to the discomfort and distress of young people struggling with confusion about their sexual orientation and body image. It was held that the transgender choice was becoming a go-to option overriding same sex attraction. "Social contagion" was described in detail by psychologist Dianna Kenny, supported by statistical research. Commentator Exulansic¹ held that linguistic changes were advancing along with cultural changes, that were likely to channel young people's choices in the transgender direction. Harms to their physical and mental health accompany hormone treatment and gender reassignment surgery. This could be seen as a new form of conversion therapy – instead of steering towards heterosexuality, steering toward gender change and eliminating homosexuality.

Some fact checking at home told me that alarmism was out of place in a number of areas.

It seems to me that a framework of opposition to transgender "rights" has been built on a series of objections that are either overblown, or susceptible of practical solutions. For example: the physical facilities for toilet and

bathroom privacy are not insuperably difficult to provide. If our society was committed to inclusivity, funding would be found. Trans men competing with women in sport was believed to confer an unfair advantage, as it was claimed that males transitioning after puberty enjoyed greater muscle strength and size. Home research did not bear out that trans women were conquering "regular" women in sport. I learned that criteria for competition in some sports rule out trans women automatically (Rugby is an example). It seems to me that each sport can come up with regulations to deal with this scenario if necessary.

I accept that self-identification of a biologically male in presenting to women-only facilities or services could be problematic. The threat of pedophile harm is real. Should not the onus be on such a self-proclaimed trans woman to provide evidence to back up their claim, in a similar way that people cannot suddenly claim to be Aboriginal, and demand associated benefits, without recognition by the Aboriginal community?

The harms of hormone treatment and surgery are real and severe, if the subject later regrets the changes. I agreed with the recommendations in this regard of the National Association of Practising Psychiatrists. This body urges first and foremost, before pharmaceutical or other medical interventions are considered, a holistic approach – especially to young people – suffering body dysphoria and inner turmoil about their sexual orientation. They recommend "a comprehensive bio-psycho-social assessment of the young individual and their family". This should certainly happen in an ideal world. Do we have the range of available, affordable services this assessment would necessitate? We know public mental health services are rundown and inadequate. Nevertheless, this is an urgent goal to pursue, in light of the distress we know is affecting this significant minority of young people in their formative years.

The material presented on "social contagion" I found particularly thought-provoking. Dr Dianna Kenny spoke of the contagious effect of suicide, rippling out into the community of peers who knew the person, or who learnt of a celebrity suicide. She presented statistics that related rates of self-identification as transsexual to celebrities doing so on social media, similarly to the contagion of suicide.

My thoughts on this need some detail. I have observed the gender difference separated by a wider and wider

1 <https://odysee.com/@Exulansic:d>

chasm over time, and I believe this is a factor not included, or accounted for in statistical studies of correlations.

I have raised two families: each one comprising a girl and a boy. There is a 20 year age difference between the eldest and the youngest. As a result I have some insights into the change over time of gender “performance” as reflected, for example, in children’s clothing and toys. My eldest son had an Action Man toy that was a great favourite. This toy had a range of superhero costumes. By the time son number 2 came along in the early 1980s, Action Man had a built-in, ugly and menacing aggressive expression, military clothing only, and enough military hardware to engage in a toy World War 3. I can say the same of the children and baby clothing aisles of major department aisles. The gender divide is stark. Headbands for our (bald) baby girls. An ocean of pink frilly garments. For boys, jeans with fake flies. And so on. When my older pair, born in the early 60s, were growing up, unisex clothing and toys were everywhere. My elder son, aged four, had a pair of bright orange corduroy trousers. Not the sole “hippie” child by any means!

It seems to me that the gender divide is so heavily policed in the popular media that resistance is extremely difficult. I became a secondary teacher in the late 1970s, working in that space for more than 30 years. Here I also saw changes over time, and not to the benefit of acceptance of diversity in sexual orientation. In 1974, the favourite theme for teasing and harassment among teenage boys was to cast doubt on the virtue of the victim’s mother: it was sufficient to say “Your Mum” to trigger fisticuffs. In my most recent experience, teenage boys use the word “gay” in a similar manner, and with even more wide ranging scope: meaning variously or in combination, stupidity or gaucheness, as much as it infers that the target is same sex attracted. And that this is highly undesirable and inferior, of course. The boy may have a high voice or vocal mannerisms. Might enjoy the company of girls as friends rather than potential sex objects. Might not have a sufficiently macho gait or stance. I recall teens I knew in 1974 whose lives would have been made hell, were they at a high school in 2014.

What I am thinking is that it may be more socially acceptable, in this age of the huge gender gap, for a boy who can’t identify with macho culture and is confused about his sexual orientation, to self-identify as a trans girl rather than coming out as gay. Especially as there is

scarcely a teenager who doesn’t experience body dysphoria, a problem that is becoming more and more severe as the imagery constantly before the eyes of young people is relentlessly stereotyped. No six-pack abs? Must be transgender. Similar issues are at play for girls, as the demand for labiaplasty among ever-younger teenage girls attests. They feel pressure to look like the porn stars their boyfriends admire. How much better – if gel nails, genital surgery, enormous eyelashes and fake breasts don’t appeal, and her body shape is not the ideal – to identify as a trans boy?

I share the concerns that lesbian and gay young people are going to be marginalised all over again, not fitting the cisgender stereotypes constantly bombarding them. I am certainly not advocating that LGB people start organising to exclude transsexual people. What I yearn for is a society that truly accepts the diversity of the human race. Where in “biological realism” does the person fit, born with both male and female sexual organs? In the past, gender assignment surgery on the infant! Hormonal difference, at the very least, plays out in different expressions of maleness and femaleness. It seems to me there has developed over recent decades less, not more acceptance of gender and sexual diversity. The “epidemic” of trans identification may reflect this. Although, the numbers in this epidemic are still very small.

The conflation of concerns – practical, medical and philosophical, turns this group of marginalised people into a threatening collective monster, in a way not helpful to understanding and support, let alone a more nuanced approach to legislation and school educational material. It should be noted that studies in Australia and the USA reveal that transgender identifying youth have even higher rates of suicidal ideation than gay and lesbian youth. Trans people have higher suicide rates than homosexual people (which are significantly higher than rates for heterosexual people). Trans women suffer higher rates of intimate (male) partner violence than “biological” women. Trans women in male prisons are routinely raped and traumatised. This tells me that we are by no means a society so converted to transgender rights that other rights (especially women’s) have been swept away. Certainly we have not become a society that is truly kind to, and accepting of difference!

Maxine Barry

It is Wonderful

It is wonderful to have been born
and lived a while,
to have felt the sun's warmth
and seen the moon and many stars,
to have enjoyed food and drink,
to have had a shelter and a warm bed.

It is wonderful
to have loved and to have been loved,
to have had the friendship of family and friends,
parents and children, teachers and students.

It is wonderful
to have enjoyed the arts, literature, gardening,
carpentry, cooking, hiking, camping, bicycling,
sailing, flying, making and teaching pottery.

It is wonderful
to have been helped and to have tried to help,
to have been forgiven and to have forgiven,
to have been commended when right
and to have been corrected when wrong.

It is wonderful
to have seen so many different animals,
flowers, trees, rivers, lakes, hills, plains,
valleys, mountains, buildings and ruins.

It is wonderful
to have taken some risks
and to have been lucky,
to have been aware of so many of my faults
and to have always sensibly forgiven myself.
All of this I appreciated
and although there must have been much
that I failed to appreciate,
it was always wonderful to have been born
and have my precious peep.

Peter Mavromatis
1922–2022

Testimony to the grace of God in the life of Megan Helen Schaffner

12TH MAY 1930, Pretoria – 15th December 2020
Hobart, Tasmania.

Megan met her husband Den when they were both involved in the Bloemfontein Repertory Society in 1954. They had three children, Nancy and Richard before they left South Africa in 1961 and Marion after they settled in Hobart.

In 1967 Megan taught at Hobart Teachers College, and later, having gained her Bachelor of Arts with the Education Department, teaching speech and drama. She taught creatively and with an infectious passion that helped to awaken the inner writer or actor in many Hobartians. After her retirement she continued to exercise those gifts by forming and participating in poetry and memoir writing groups. Throughout her life Megan was a beloved and wise mentor to many.

Growing up in South Africa, Megan became familiar with its landscapes as her father's work necessitated several moves. She loved the deserts and was equally delighted in the oceans. She studied botany and shared her enthusiasm with many companions on bush walks. She and Den continued their love of planet earth in Australia and spent many happy holidays exploring. New information and experiences gave her great joy, which, with her gift of words, she would share with friends and family. It was not just the visual beauty which moved

her, but also her love of science and she always tried to find out the how and why of things.

Megan was friendly and generous and a deeply interested listener. She could draw a coherent story out of many a confused and hesitant speaker over as many cups of coffee and hours as it took to do it. In Quaker terms, she possessed the gift of listening into being.

She was an ardent seeker and took part in several spiritual reflection and discussion groups. In Meeting for Worship her quiet, faithful presence was an anchor, her care and love tangible. She never became a member, but as a long-term attender she was deeply valued by the Hobart Quaker community.

For the most part Megan was a cheerful person, with a rebellious streak and a great sense of humour. She could be furious at injustice and would not hesitate to speak out or write a letter to point this out. On the other hand, her thoughtful kindness was clear in the greeting cards she would send, always including a carefully chosen verse or quotation, always exactly right for the particular person and situation.

Megan Schaffner lived life to the full and lived it well. In the words of one of her poems, she has now gone "into the light" of an "undiscover'd country".

We give thanks for the grace of God in the life of Megan Schaffner.

Dear Prime Minister,

AS AN Australian Quaker committed to the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change I am writing to request significantly more leadership from you and your government on stopping climate change as rapidly as possible and putting Australian people in the ethical and scientific lead in mitigating climate change globally.

This requires raising the profile of aid government work in this area through an open climate change policy, significantly and honestly reducing our national emissions elsewhere on our beautiful planet.

We need you to stop supporting coal and gas. We need you to invest our taxes in clean energy technology and infrastructure. Please work with the incredibly capable and committed people on your teams to implement these changes as soon as possible.

I have two children in their early twenties who are so devastated about your lack of strong leadership on climate change. We have so much in this country and yet are so focussed on our national interest and a handful of powerful vested interests in the mining and energy sectors.

You are a Christian. Don't bury our talents, supporting old and harmful technologies that are safe and comfortable now. Be bold, be a risk-taker and lead us into a clean future, where our children and grandchildren can live and love and grow in a sustainable world.

You are in my prayers!

Yours sincerely,

Gillian Edmiston

Tasmania Regional Meeting

Religious Society of Friends

Bottled water ... and more

I ACCEPTED the role of keeping up morning tea supplies to our Meeting House a few years ago. I was aware that decades ago, Nestle was the focus of a campaign against its promotion of breast milk substitute infant formula in less developed countries, and to women who could not afford it.

I had learnt of the campaign by WHO and UNICEF to control unethical and damaging promotions of this kind, for the sake of reducing infant mortality. I thought I should update my information upon taking up my responsibilities, and was saddened to learn that the promotion of breast milk substitutes continued under various disguises, and where regulation was poorly enforced. My latest update concerned India just last year. Nestle was not alone in this one; however the other companies don't provide widely used coffee and Milo!

In response to friends who still occasionally ask why we shun Nestle products for our morning cuppas, I have recently learned of another reason to continue our ban! Nestle bottled water abuses. The corporation has been depleting the already drought

affected water table in the Vittel area in France, monopolising water resources and even pumping illegally. As if that was not enough, the company has admitted to NINE illegal dumps in mineral water territory, potentially polluting the water supply, including the source of the mineral water it is extracting!

This admission came after media attention. Locals have been denouncing Nestle for decades.

The upshot of their campaign is that a leading whistleblower, Vittel local farmer Didier Thouvenin, is now being sued for trespass by Agrivair, a 'green' subsidiary of Nestle. This man first sounded the alarm about the toxic dumps in 2014. The dumps contain plastic and chemical waste.

Sum of Us has a petition currently protesting this legal action against M. Thouvenin, which I recommend to readers. In its post you can see images of the dump contents. Not an attractive image for the vendors of bottled water.

Maxine Barry



We were a small but doughty band who sat and held the COP26 gathering in the Light, for the hour or part thereof. It was windy but not really cold, for which we were grateful. The Peace Garden is a beautiful venue for such events. In this case, reminding us of the natural world and our connectedness to it, as we sat under the great tree with its young, glowing spring foliage.

Things I can do now I have a home

I can bang a pot.
I can stand to my full height,
shift my hips from left to right,
and bend my knees at will.
I can go through the front door five times
in five minutes
without needing to explain myself.
I can wash my underwear clean.
I can store half a cabbage,
a litre of milk and a bag of apples
in my grown-up fridge.
I can hang a picture without permission.
I can sleep between my own sheets.
I can leave a window open,
a door shut
and ignore anyone who knocks.
I can plant carrot seeds
and look forward to coleslaw.
I can roll around on the carpet.
I can talk to myself at length.
I can sing,
out loud.

Yvonne Joyce 2021

Book review

The Bloody Unknown: Stories from lutruwita/Tasmania

Edited by Josh Quigley and Madeleine Rojahn

THOSE OF us who have lived in Hobart over the last 25 years will have noticed the growing number of non-European faces, particularly refugees moving here to get their points for Australian residence. But how many of us have heard their stories?

Madeleine Rojahn is a Friends' School old scholar and journalism graduate who, with photographer Josh Quigley, interviewed 25 of the new arrivals and put together this remarkable book which is now in the Meeting House Library. Some of them may be known to us, especially those who came through Friends' School, although not all are from the south of the state. I had the good fortune to know two of them as students: Yingsel from Tibet who is doing a nursing course in Burnie, and Hanif who came here 'on a boat' from Afghanistan/Pakistan then did brilliantly in medical science. He hopes eventually to become doctor as when he was younger in Pakistan as a Hazara refugee, this was impossible – though his community was desperately in need of doctors.

The stories include those from Aboriginal people in Tasmania as well as an older generation of refugees from post-war Europe, including Madeleine's own grandfather.

Sometimes when I hear people shouting abuse at those of us who conduct a monthly Human Rights honk-a-thon in the city, I wish they could hear some of these stories though I fear that most are too deeply entrenched in their fears and anger to care, but if the 'middle ground' had the opportunity, it could sway the public opinion polls that still hold Liberal and Labor hostage on the issue of asylum seekers and continuing to hold so many refugees in detention without the rights that the rest of us continue to enjoy.

The book needs to be dipped into for the stories and photographs rather than read straight through, but at the end are some tasty recipes from different countries that you might like to try out if you have culinary interests too.

Peter D. Jones

Friends' Meetings in Tasmania

Sunday Zoom Meeting for worship at this link: <https://zoom.us/j/96868802082?pwd=TctUTm10bVQra1JxRTkvejBmVmZpdz09>

Meeting ID: 968 6880 2082

Passcode: 740317

Meeting is scheduled for 10.30 a.m. but the room opens and you can enter into the silence of Meeting from 10.15. Meeting runs for 30 minutes, worship sharing for 15 minutes and then gathering in groups for 'morning tea'. Please do come long and join us.

Hobart

Friends' Meeting House, 5 Boa Vista Rd, North Hobart (just off Argyle) Contact: 0432 159 606
Children's contact: Dawn, 0409 033 479;
JYF contact: Maree-rose, 0437 617 802.

Meeting for Worship every Sunday 10.00 a.m., 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.

North West Coast Recognised Meeting.

Contact: Sally O'Wheel, 6428 3019.

WORSHIPPING GROUPS

Southern Tasmania (formerly Huon)

Contact Ann: 6266 6439.

Kingborough

Contact: Flora Fox, 6267 2851 or 0413 667 555, email: cr.florafox@bigpond.com

South Hobart

Contact: 6223 4040 or 0408 273 994, Vivienne Luke and Des FitzGerald.

Launceston

The Red Dove (formerly Maggie's Café), Pilgrim Church complex, 34 Paterson St, Launceston

Contact: Julie Walpole, 0402 048 147.

Quaker Women's Lunch

Enquiries: katepnl@hotmail.com Contact: 0432 159 606



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PO Box 388
North Hobart TAS 7002