From the Editor:

Words to live by: I’m starting off our new meeting year with Barack Obama’s words of support for the Affordable Care Act:

Every once in a while a moment comes where you have a chance to vindicate all those best hopes that you had about yourself, about this country, where you have a chance to make good on those promises that you made. And this is the time to make true on that promise. We are not bound to win, but we are bound to be true. We are not bound to succeed, but we are bound to let whatever light we have shine.

-Greg Barnes, Editor

.O’s Ministry of Love
A Profile
By .O, Lola Georg, and Greg Barnes

.O at City Hall

Many of our meeting members have a ministry of love; Friend .O is among our members testifying to the healing powers of love. Grounding her Quaker ministry are Biblical texts focused on love.

Matthew 22: 35-39

35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” 37 Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’[a] 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’[b] 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

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Romans 13:10
10 Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

1 John 4:16
16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

To the best of her ability, .O lives into the ministry of “Love and Respect Transforms.” Often in her practice that means working with organizations modeling alternatives to violence, trusting in the transformative power of love that can be invited out in all relationships. One of these organizations is Philly Thrive. She notes that Philly Thrive has become a large organization with many what are called “Thrive Circles” working in small groups or in collaboration on several projects. One circle focuses on support for the Green New Deal. Obviously there is the need for a tech circle to support communication within the organization. Another circle has set up a food distribution program in collaboration with the organization Young Chances. Still another circle, which arose out of the Coronavirus pandemic, provides community care, including laundry services, pharmacy delivery, personal protective equipment (PPE’s), and emotional support.

More recently (on Wednesday, August 12, 2020), .O was invited into a meeting with the CEO of Hilco, the corporation that purchased the South Philadelphia oil refinery. She faithfully followed her ministry to support way for the transformative power of love to be inspired into action. After formalities were shared she opened the meeting with a grounding exercise rooted in breathing and invoking stillness. The breathing together and the corporate stillness created a soothing space where a possibility existed to build trust, within and among the community members present. This space and moment in time invited the power of the people to share their power in transformative healing ways (for more information on previous transformative healing around the oil refinery, please see the Sunday New York Times Magazine of August 2, 2020: “Pollution is killing Black Americans. This Community Fought Back”).

.O believes God is relational. She states “It is through each of us, in every moment that the ability to support calling in the beloved community is enacted. We can choose to be the facilitators of a deep call and need for healing, where so much harm has been normalized. Now is the time to imagine and co-create a life-affirming culture where the diversity of life can joyfully thrive.

Remembering Amy Kawabe Kurkjian
(1923-2020)

By Becky Birtha and Stephanie Judson

Part 1

Amy Kawabe Kurkjian was born on February 15, 1923 in Honomu, Oahu in the then-territory of Hawaii, the third of five children. She told of her paternal Grandmother Oishi, a tough character said to be descended from Samurai. Amy may have inherited some of her characteristics.

When she was 5 the family traveled by ship to Southern California for better educational opportunities. From childhood and into her teen years, Amy chafed under the expected subservience of Japanese females to males in the family, particularly her father. She also chafed at the attitude of Christians toward Buddhists. Amy’s immediate family was Christian, but her extended family members were Buddhists.

Amy was 18 when the U.S. Naval base at Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japanese forces in 1941 and the country entered the Second World War. Japanese Americans in Southern California were
regarded as the enemy. Amy’s boss at the beauty school where she worked part time told her she was no longer welcome there. Two physician uncles and a sister who was a nurse were fired from the LA County hospital. The banks froze their assets so that they could not withdraw money to buy groceries.

In early 1942, Japanese Americans had the option of voluntarily moving to other parts of the country. Amy’s father and two of his brothers moved their families to Utah. Some family members were drafted or volunteered for the service. Much of the family, including Amy’s mother, worked in the sugar beet fields.

Amy wrote “I learned to respect the farm hands who do all the hard work that produces our food. They earn over and over the small amount of money they are paid. Unions are absolutely necessary to protect their rights!!!” After the war, the family was able to return to California.

When Amy married Ernie Kurkjian in 1945, a conscientious objector and Quaker from Delaware County, she was cast out of the Kawabe family for disobeying her father and marrying a “hakujin”—a white person. Against her father’s wishes, Amy and her mother remained in touch. Amy rejoined the family after her father’s death.

Ernie and Amy bought a house at 2106 Spring Street in Philadelphia in 1963, Amy’s home for 54 years. She always walked to the meetinghouse and entered through the doors from the courtyard.

Amy worked for the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors. Another position she held was at the Friends Council on Education—"cranky mimeograph machine and all.” Ernie was employed as the director of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting bookstore. Amy’s only pregnancy ended sadly in a difficult miscarriage. Ernie Kurkjian died from a heart attack in February, 1971.

After Ernie’s death Amy pursued higher education, graduating from Temple in 1976 and being awarded Phi Beta Kappa. She earned a Master of Arts in Religion and Consciousness from John F. Kennedy University in the San Francisco Bay area in 1984. While on the West Coast, she reunited with her family and her Japanese heritage, studying shiatsu, brush painting, and calligraphy, in addition to her academic work.

Amy was an avid reader. Her home had hundreds of books, 33 rpm classical recordings, and a large collection of VHS tapes of Star Trek. She knitted and crocheted and made many of her own clothes. For years she coordinated the project of making quilt squares at Philadelphia Yearly Meetings.

Until 2017, Amy lived independently in her own home. She was interviewed by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom October 3, 1987; the transcript of that interview is in their archives at Stanford University. At age 80, Amy began an autobiography, which describes her childhood and teen years. At the age of 94, she moved to Chandler Hall in Newtown, PA. There Pat McBee, who had agreed to serve as her power of attorney, could advocate for her care.

On her 97th birthday, Amy declared that 97 was “TOO OLD!” She died quietly five weeks later on March 23, 2020.

New Book by a Meeting Member

*Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique*, by Sa’ed Atshan. Stanford University Press

From Ramallah to New York, Tel Aviv to Porto Alegre, people around the world celebrate a formidable, transnational Palestinian LGBTQ social movement. Solidarity with Palestinians has become a salient domain of global queer politics. Yet LGBTQ Palestinians, even as they fight patriarchy and imperialism, are themselves subjected to an "empire of critique" from Israeli and Palestinian institutions, Western academics, journalists and filmmakers, and even fellow activists. Such global criticism has limited growth and led to an emphasis...
within the movement on anti-imperialism over the struggle against homophobia.

With this book, Sa'ed Atshan asks how transnational progressive social movements can balance struggles for liberation along more than one axis. He explores critical junctures in the history of Palestinian LGBTQ activism, revealing the queer Palestinian spirit of agency, defiance, and creativity, in the face of daunting pressures and forces working to constrict it. *Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique* explores the necessity of connecting the struggles for Palestinian freedom with the struggle against homophobia.

About the author: **Sa'ed Atshan** is Assistant Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies at Swarthmore College. He is the coauthor of *The Moral Triangle: Germans, Israelis, Palestinians* (2020).

**Jeff Keith’s Comments on Sa’ed Atshan’s New Book about Queer Palestinians**

I bought this book for the Yearly Meeting Library on behalf of our CPMM Library Committee. I read it and loved it! Since the subject was rather unfamiliar to me, I will offer just brief comments.

Author Sa’ed Atshan (a member of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting) gives us a lot of detail about the struggle for liberation by LGBTQ Palestinians, faced by two severe forms of oppression. A major concept to keep in mind is what is called “pinkwashing,” which is the praising of Israel for being such a liberal place while not discussing the occupation of Palestinian territories.

My favorite chapter is Chapter Four, in which the author lets his fellow queer Palestinians speak for themselves and gives us the names of a lot of people.
drunk. I must admit my first experiences of Quakerism were odd.

News: You met an American woman and ended up in the United States?

GG: During a Meeting in England I met Lucy Duncan, newly appointed as manager of the FGC bookstore, and showed her some of the hidden beauties of the Surrey countryside. A series of E-mails followed and it became quite a romance. The original plan was for me to become student at Pendle Hill for a year and then marry, but the US Government got in the way and it was quite a struggle to get to America at all.

We were eventually married at London Grove Meeting when an FGC event was nearby and many folks could attend.

News: Now tell us about your career change.

GG: I certainly never expected to either live in America for almost twenty years or to look after a cemetery.

While I was looking for other work I volunteered at Quakerbooks of FGC and when Lucy fell pregnant with Simon I was her maternity cover and then we job-shared.

Also at that time we heard about the Burial Ground and helped to move 2 friends in on one weekend. Within a few weeks, they had separated, and left, so a new manager was required. As we were living in a one-bedroom flat, having a house with a country estate attached was very attractive. I applied for the 12-hour-a-week job and was lucky enough to get it. So I would be working 3 days a week in a bookshop and 12 hours in the burial ground.

There was a Manual on how to conduct burials and the guy who dug graves and the company that set up the graveside equipment in our early burials were all used to dealing with inexperienced folks; even so it was a steep and frightening learning curve.

News: What is a special problem you have faced?

GG: Many of our burials are especially tragic because they are folks dying too young or needlessly because they are so disadvantaged.

News: How has Quakerism informed your work at the burial ground?

GG: I do strive to live up to the Quaker testimonies. I try and treat everyone equally while recognizing that I do have all those inbuilt sorts of racism/classism it’s hard to get over or even notice. I am very conscious that I am a representative of Quakerism to many people who don’t know anything about it. It is extraordinarily hard to explain "it" to some people if they ask.

News: What should Friends know about Muslim burials? Note: As of July 16, there have been 1363 Muslim burials at the burial ground.

GG: A Muslim burial is very simple indeed, it should happen as soon after death as possible. The body is washed and wrapped in 3 sheets.

Our graves are all neatly hand-dug, with a coffin-sized niche at the bottom where the body is placed and then covered with plywood so no earth touches it.

Only men attend the grave and they fill the grave in themselves, leaving a mound that eventually settles flat in about 4 years, during which we try to maintain and weed it.

Usually the burial is quick, but some African Muslims have very long sermons and prayers after the burial.

A Muslim believes as soon as the last person leaves the grave, three Angel's come to ask 3 questions of the dead person to determine his fate in the afterlife.
There should be no crying or displays of emotion at the grave.

A Muslim grave should be plain and unadorned, all that should be brought to it are prayers (doua).

**News:** What’s next for you on your return to England?

**GG:** I am engaged to an old young lady friend I went out with for 10 or 12 years. She also works in the Quaker bookshop in London now, but all our plans are up in the air.

She lives in Peterborough, which has a large Muslim population and huge cemetery. Maybe I’ll take up gravedigging there for a while…

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**ARE QUAKERISM 101 PROGRAM**

**By Steve Davison**

Adult Religious Education committee is sponsoring a Quakerism 101 course this fall and winter, in answer to interest expressed in a meeting for business this spring. Here is a link to the course's page on our website.

**A primer**

The course is a 7-session primer on the history, faith, and practice of the Religious Society of Friends that we hope will be especially useful to our newer members and attenders, and a useful refresher for members who have been around awhile.

**A study course**

Quakerism 101 is a study course, a more in-depth immersion in the Quaker way than our usual RE programs. Our goal is to share the basics of the Quaker tradition in its historical arc from our founding to today through readings, presentations, and discussion.

In October and November, we are offering two sessions back to back on Saturdays, in order to build momentum and community in the course. The opening session in September and two more in January and February will take place in our usual ARE place in the meeting calendar, the fourth Sunday of the month after rise of meeting for worship.

We will provide a reading list for each of the sessions, which we hope participants will use to prepare for the sessions. The reading lists will include substantive material that would require some commitment to read in time, as well as shorter resources on each session's subject. Much of this material will be digital, but some would have to be bought or taken out from the library.

The sessions will include a little more presentation than is usual in our programs, but still lots of time for discussion to bring the tradition into our own time, community, and experience.

**Course Outline**

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<th>TIME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quaker History</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Sep 27</td>
<td>1–3 pm</td>
<td>Greg Barnes, Steve Davison</td>
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<td>Quaker Spirituality, Theology, and the Bible</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Oct 24</td>
<td>10–12 am</td>
<td>George Schaefer, TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quaker Worship</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Oct 24</td>
<td>1–3 pm</td>
<td>George Schaefer, TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quaker Ministry</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Nov 21</td>
<td>10–12 am</td>
<td>Laurent Hahn, TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quaker Witness &amp; the Testimonies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quaker Discernment &amp; Decision Making</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Jan 24</td>
<td>10–12 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quaker Community</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Feb 28</td>
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**Reading Lists**

Click the following links to see the reading list for:

**Session 1 : Quaker History**
CALENDAR—SEPTEMBER 2020

MEETING FOR WORSHIP:
Virtual Meeting will be held First Day (Sunday) at 11:00 am via the Zoom App. For login info, please contact the meeting office at office@cpmm.org

FIRST DAY SCHOOL CLASSES ARE SUSPENDED FOR THE INDEFINITE FUTURE

The entire September in person calendar is suspended, including: committee meetings, ongoing groups; Chat n Chew; Adult Religious Education Classes, etc... These will all take place virtually using the Zoom app. There will most likely be a virtual Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business this month, please check the Weekly Bulletin. For information on group and committee activities, contact the appropriate clerks. For other information, please visit the CPMM website at www.cpmm.org or contact the office at office@cpmm.org