



# Western Quarterly News

*of the Religious Society Of Friends*

Western Quarterly Meeting Newsletter

Winter 2023

## FROM THE COORDINATOR

*I did a search of Quakers and Christmas in hopes of finding something short to share. This was the most delicious option. The others were short essays on why originally Quakers did not celebrate Christmas. I promise it will be my only tip of the hat to the non-Quaker company, Quaker Oats.*

## Ingredients

4 cups quick or old-fashioned rolled oats  
1/2 cup shredded coconut  
1/2 cup chopped pecans  
1/2 cup honey  
1/4 cup raw, unsalted sunflower seeds (optional)  
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter or margarine, melted  
2 teaspoons grated orange peel  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon salt (optional)  
One 6-ounce package dried cranberries (about 1-1/3 cups)

## Preparation

Heat oven to 350°F. Combine all ingredients except cranberries in large bowl; mix well. Spread evenly in 15 x 10-inch jelly roll pan. Bake 40 minutes or until golden brown, stirring every 10 minutes. Remove granola from oven; stir in cranberries. Cool completely in pan. Store tightly covered up to 2 weeks.

***For Gift Giving:** Spoon granola into airtight glass jars or empty oatmeal tubes. Ahead of time, paint designs on jars with paint markers or sponges and paint, cover oatmeal tubes with gift wrap, or decorate gift bags with holiday stickers.*

### In this Issue:

Quarterly Meeting at  
Centre Jan. 15, 2023

11th Query

Living near the end  
of life—Queries from  
Crosslands

The Meaning of  
Hockessin Friends  
Meeting to ME

Lancaster MM mi-  
nute

*Power of Good-  
ness—Kunta Hadji  
and Friends Peace  
Teams*

*Minutes*

### **Quarterly Meeting— 15 January, 2023**

At Centre Friends Meeting

311 Center Meeting Road and Adams Dam Road,  
Wilmington DE 19087

Hybrid available for adult program, worship, and business  
Children's program in-person only with Philadelphia Yearly  
Meeting Children's Staff

9:00 am—sign in and gathering in the School House

9:30 am Children's and Adult Programs in the School House

11:00 Meeting for Worship in the Meeting House

Fellowship and lunch

1:30pm Meeting for worship with attention to business in  
the school house

## 11th Query— Witnessing in the World: Education

### For the Meeting:

- What does our meeting do to support and improve public education?
- What help do we provide for the children and adults in our meeting to pursue their educational goals?
- What is our meeting's role in support for Friends' education? If our meeting is connected to a Friends school or schools, does this relationship nurture spiritual life and the manifestation of Friends principles?

- Do we enable children in our meeting to attend a Friends school? Does our meeting work with the family to consider all available means of support?

### For the Individual:

- *How do I show my concern for the improvement of public education in my community?*
- *Do I demonstrate my encouragement and support for Friends education through awareness and service?*

[General Queries](#) are taken from the newest version of PYM's [Faith and Practice](#), available online.

## Aging Concerns Spotlight—

### Living Near the End of Life: Queries for the Elderly

Printed in *Friends Journal* October 1, 2009

By Brigitte Alexander

*Brigitte is a resident at Crosslands. She attends the worship group there and is a member of Pittsburg MM. Her first meeting was Berlin MM, Germany in the 1930s.*

*We will use variations on these queries at the upcoming Quarterly Meeting.*



The queries available in all Faith and Practices are geared to the full range of life experience: family life, vocations, etc. At Crosslands we wanted some queries addressed to the two respects in which our worship group is distinct from other Friends meetings: 1) all of us are approaching the end of life, and 2) we live in a residential community.

The process of creating queries was familiar to us because one of us belongs to Pittsburgh Meeting, which, some time ago, created its own set of queries. (Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, to which Pittsburgh belongs, does not have a set of queries for its member meetings.)

A small group of Crosslands worshipers came together and, in the course of six months, produced three queries addressing the ways in which our group is unique, i.e. being old and living in community. We consider these queries a supplement to the general queries used by meetings:

*1. Do I accept death, like birth, as a normal part of life, even to be welcomed under certain circumstances?*

*Have I arranged the practical matters (regarding possessions, location of documents, burial, etc. that will arise when I die so my family is not unduly burdened?*

*Am I comfortable with the relationships I will leave behind?*

*II. Do I look upon the period of old age as an opportunity for reflection on my life and a time for growth and new learning?*

*Am I willing to talk with family and others about my life journey, my evolving beliefs, and my values regarding dying?*

*III. Do my interactions with other residents and staff reflect that of God within each of us?*

*Do I acknowledge the contributions others bring to the community?*

*Do I look for ways to make the lives of others pleasant or to be of service?*

*Am I able to keep a generous heart for those who may become more difficult as they age?*

*Can I accept help graciously when I and/or others feel in need?*

*When speaking about other people, do my words reflect respect?*

*In a troubling relationship, am I willing to talk with the other person, both to express myself and to listen, in the hope that the issues may be resolved?*

As a part of drafting the queries, we experienced how enriching it is to share our values and thoughts about the end of life. The worship group decided to form several small groups to respond to the first two queries and to give Friends the opportunity to explore their own attitudes and to hear others' experiences.

The process of writing queries on different topics can be used by any group, Quaker or not: a group of children in your meeting, a group of struggling parents, a group of people facing job loss. If you address the question, How do our basic Quaker values infuse the life in which we find ourselves? you may find it a consciousness-raising experience.

## ***At Quarterly Meeting at Centre Meeting, We will meet Sheila Sorkin –Aging Support Coordinator for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting!***

Sheila has years of professional experience in long term care include serving as Social Services Director in Home Health Care, Nursing and Rehab Center, as well as Director of Assisted Living Communities, an Independent Living facility.



Click [here](#) for the article welcoming Sheila to PhYM.

***Yearly Meeting Middle School and Children's staff will join us at  
Centre, January 15, 2023.***

***Kristin and Crystal will run a morning program for children, 9:30-10:45 and during meeting for worship.***

*Intergenerational programming and its value in building strong communities came up in several places this fall. Melinda Wenner Bradley, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Director of Programs, noted that often people who seek out and maintain lifelong relationships to faith communities do so for intergenerational community; they remember relationships and engagement with adults during their childhood years at a faith community.*

## ***The Meaning of Hockessin Friends Meeting to ME***

**by Charles Jackson**

It is only in the last years of my life that I have come to realize that the course of my life, based on the choices I made, was firmly grounded in the first years of my life in the Hockessin Friends Meeting. I started attending the Meeting's First Day School as a six-year-old in the summer of 1944 and continued a very regular attendance in First Day School and eventually in silent meeting for worship until the Fall of 1956 when I left Hockessin for college. Forty years later, in 1996, I returned to Delaware and resumed my activity in the Meeting.

Everyone in the Meeting in those early years, regardless of age, participated in First Day School, which followed silent meeting for worship. We held an Opening Exercise that mostly attended to business of the Meeting. The main meeting room then was divided by glass doors into three sections. Older Friends sat in one section, middle aged Friends in the middle, and young adult Friends in the third. Children scurried into the back room for their First Day School classes. We all gathered again into the meeting room for Closing Exercises often featuring a speaker or brief entertainment. Music, singing, and piano playing, were important elements of our weekly meeting.

I am now certain that the common activity involving all the members and attenders in the Meeting created in me a sense of equality and belonging that I have found beneficial in many other situations in my life.

In those First Day School years of my youth, I remember that we were always "doing" something. We stuffed Care packages and decorated trees with

mitten and clothing for the European children after World War II, especially for the Germans. We worked on projects refurbishing the Meetinghouse, such as laying bricks for walkways or helping to clear the burial ground.

We were told that we were Hicksite Friends, and once we went to Philadelphia's Arch Street Meeting to see the few remaining Orthodox Friends in their button free clothing, wide brimmed hats and bonnets. A few of us teenagers were sent to a weekend event for young Hicksite Friends in Cape May. I had no idea what a Hicksite was, but I was sure it was a lot more fun than being an Orthodox.

Most significantly, in the First Day School classes and in the gatherings of the Meeting as a whole, I now realize that I was learning that experience is the best teacher both in preparation for life and in living it. No book or Bible, no clergy or church, no creed or set of established beliefs were authorities to be unquestionably followed. These sources could be used for what Friends call "advices" for living, perhaps one of the reasons for our Quaker commitment to education at all ages and at all levels.

I must have wondered if there was an authority to which I could turn when I didn't know the answer or how to solve a personal problem. It was during one of the Closing Exercises, when I was a young teenager, I began to discover that authority. Around the years 1952/3, America was gripped by a fear of worldwide communism led by the nuclear-powered Soviet Union. Patriotic belief in and support for our national government under newly elected President, General Eisenhower, was deeply rooted.

A very few were willing to stand against any national law that strengthened our military. One such man was Charlie Walker. During World War II, most Quaker men served in the military where there was an automatic option for service as a conscientious objector for Friends. Charlie had refused to serve or even register for the draft. He spent years in prison. Charlie was standing directly in front of me for that First Day School Closing, and with passion he declared to me and the other boys that we did not have to obey the law and register for the draft at age 18. We were free to break the law if that power within each of us as Friends convinced

us that taking the life of another human being was wrong. We may go to prison and have our worldly reputations ruined, but we would come to understand that the power within us to make decisions that we believe are “rightly-ordered” as a Friend is the greatest power we could know in this lifetime.

Of course at 14, I heard the words but surely didn’t grasp the depth of the meaning. One message did sink in that day. I have a power within me, as each of us has, to make choices in life as long as I am willing to accept the consequences. There have been many decision points in my life where I did not use

my inner power. “I am not in agreement, but I will not stand in the way” as Quakers say in making decisions. But there have been a few times I decided to stand in the way and the course of my life was dramatically changed. One of those times was when I was drafted into the military. Shades of Charlie Walker.

Freedom. That is the meaning of being a Friend for me. Freedom to make decisions that may not follow commonly held beliefs or obey orders from sources outside my imperfect self. Freedom to be who I am; freedom simply to be.

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***The following minute was approved by Lancaster Monthly Meeting, Lancaster, PA. It was forwarded to meetings in neighboring Caln Quarter and shared with a few other area meetings.***

As Americans and Quakers, we are alarmed by the Christian Nationalism movement, which falsely asserts that the United States was founded as a specifically Christian nation; that it is necessary to be a Christian to be a true American; and that Christianity should thus be favored and actively supported by the state.

In truth, the right of freedom of conscience, assured by the separation of church and state, is enshrined in the First Amendment. The Christian Nationalism movement ultimately seeks to erase that boundary. This goal is now being overtly promoted by a number of current office holders and candidates for office. It is a grave threat to freedom of conscience, and threatens to incite strife between Americans of diverse religious, cultural, and ethnic heritages.

We affirm the right to the free, peaceful expression of religious conscience in all its diversity, and call upon Friends to seek common ground with our fellow citizens.

We therefore encourage Friends to inform themselves about the dangerous goals and methods of Christian Nationalism. We further ask that this Meeting, all Quakers, and all citizens, make clear to their government representatives — by phone, text, email, letter, and in the voting booth— our rejection of the divisive doctrine of Christian Nationalism.

Lancaster Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

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**[Power of Goodness](#)** is a story collection from Friends Peace Teams that grew out of an updating of stories from the collection, *Lighting Candles in the Dark*. ***Power of Goodness* stories come from the lives of real people when they rely on their inner power of goodness in difficult situations and the amazing results of doing so.**

## *Kunta-hadji*

*By Said Khamzat Nunuev, Set in Chechnya*

[To read the full version of this story, click here](#)

*“Do you desire to love Allah the Almighty? Then you must love righteousness.” “Tie a turban round your heart, before you tie it on your head.” ~ Kunta-hadji*

The most distinguished Chechen saint, Sheikh Kunta-hadji, was born about 1830 in the village of Isti Su. A Sufi and founder of the Murid Brotherhood, he is recognized

Cont’d p. 6



and revered throughout the Islamic world.

As a child, Kunta-hadji migrated with his parents to the village of Isklan Urt, in the

Alieva Zuliha, age 18



mountains at the heart of Chechen territory. While a young man, he began preaching and teaching.

In those days Chechens were worn down, driven to desperation, by war with Russia. Then they heard Kunta-hadji's message of peace, tranquillity,

concord, and unity, through faith and goodwill. Kunta-hadji's teachings saved the Chechens' soul from unimaginable miseries, in his day and in the days to follow.

Even as a child, Kunta-hadji questioned his elders: Why do people make war? Why kill each other? Why is there evil? Why doesn't God wipe out all vices? As he grew up, Kunta-hadji sought answers to his questions in the religious books of the Zhains and in Arabia from enlightened Sheikhs taught in Islam's best schools. He returned to Chechnya in the mid-1800s as a Sufi, a peace-loving form of Islam.

The War of the Caucasus raged in Chechnya and Dagestan. The Imam Shamil led the mountain peoples to resist Russia by armed force. But Kunta-hadji sought a peaceful resolution. He knew all-out resistance could lead to Chechens' annihilation. He sought to turn the highlanders towards peace.

The outcome of the controversy between Shamil and Kunta-hadji is clear. The Russians' overwhelming strength and cruel-

ty broke the mountain people's long resistance. Shamil became an honoured guest of the Russian Tsar and ended his days in the holy city of Mecca. Kunta-hadji, a lifelong preacher of reconciliation, peace, generosity, and justice, was arrested by order of Tsar Alexander II in winter 1864. He was imprisoned, and suffered the fate of a common criminal: loneliness, cold, and hunger. A few of his letters reached his family bearing witness to his trials, which he underwent with dignity and patience.

People of many faiths have called for humans to strive for goodness, compassion, and generosity, including the Russian Christian Leo Tolstoy, the Indian Hindu Mahatma Gandhi, and the Chechen Sufi Kunta-hadji. To this day Chechens remember his words: *Overcome evil with kindness and love. Overcome greed through generosity. Overcome falsehood by truth-telling. Overcome unbelief through faith.*

"Tie a turban round your heart  
Before you tie it on your head."

"Do you desire to love Allah the Almighty?  
Then you must love righteousness."

Kunta-hadji

***Friends Peace Teams will hold an in-person meeting at Westtown School, May 4-6. Friends are welcome to attend any part or all of the meeting to learn more.***

***Contact Deb Wood if you are interested in a Power of Goodness or Toward Right Relationship workshop or to hear the work of peace workers around the world.***

## **DRAFT Minutes - Western Quarterly Meeting 16 October, 2022**

at Kennett Friends Meeting

1:00 pm - hybrid

Present: Ariana Langford and Shelley Hastings (N), Dave Nuttall (E-everywhere!), Nancy Pratt and Karen Halstead (NG), Doug Myers, Mark Myers, Bob Frye, Leona Provinski, and Margaret Walton (LG), Terry Cannon (MC), Stan Glowiak (C), Birgette Alexander (Cr), and Deb Wood, co-ordinator

Regrets: Mary Sproat (WG), Dick Logan (H)

**Responses to the 7th query:** Grounding for Transformed Lives: Peace and Alternatives to Violence

*New Garden* - We are a small and close knit meeting. We care for and about each and every one of us. Therefore, we tend to ignore our differences and focus on that with which we agree. Patience and time often help those with whom we disagree to see greater truth and understanding. Honesty and integrity are two qualities with which we all agree. The times that we are presently living in give us all pause, and we are hopeful that honesty and integrity will prevail.

*West Grove* - Constructive use of authority seems to be missing in our country presently, as the government is not adhering to the will of the people. Trying to get back to a sense of normalcy after COVID has been difficult; businesses are closing. We are becoming a “me” society - what is in it for me? People are not asking what they can do for the country, to paraphrase John F. Kennedy’s famous speech. For sustainability, people don’t know where food comes from and depend too much on imports from other countries.

*Mill Creek* - We communicate about our differences and try to show love and understanding. We show tolerance for our differences and enjoy and appreciate those differences as they challenge us to grow and understand different points of view and spiritual beliefs. Although we are a small meeting, our members do have diverse spiritual beliefs.

We try to educate and support each other and share our individual leadings, but we recognize that we could do more to address the root causes of violence. We proposed that each of us identify a program or non-profit organization,

consistent with our Quaker testimonies, for our meeting to consider for additional support, participation, and/or action.

*London Grove* - *shared a response.*

### **Monthly Meeting (MM) updates**

*Centre* - is having a retreat at Pendle Hill first weekend in Dec; donation to Habitat for Humanity in Wilmington which we sent especially to support for older members of the community

*Mill Creek* - busy in personal/family lives with healing and work

*London Grove* - has decided to lay down the plant sale; they will restart their simple meal at the end of the month; there was a wonderful program by Ben James “Climate Change: Some Good News” and they highly recommend it.

*Crosslands Worship Group* - steadfast worshippers and the time together always provides sustenance

*Newark* - it is likely they will move back to Newark Center for Creative Learning for Sunday worship this coming first day; we do an instant collection in response to human and natural disasters to help meet needs when its most urgent, for the recent hurricane we sent money to a special food kitchen

*West Grove* - needs someone to audit books.

*Additionally*— The Blackburn family is having a reunion. Bob Frye invites Friends to be in touch with him if they are connected to the Blackburn family to get plans for the reunion.

### **Update on Youth Applicant** – coordinator

We have a three person hiring committee in addition to the coordinator. Shelley Hastings, Karen Halstead, and Teal Rickerman. We’ve reviewed the cover letter and resume and need to discuss and plan together moving forward with an interview.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PhYM) will continue to offer the services of Youth Staff to support quarterly and monthly meetings. We could continue to use that when a host meeting does not have a children’s program.

Friends saw potential advantages to having a coordinator if we find a good match. Suggestions included using PhYM at quarterly meetings and having a youth coordinator do monthly or bi-weekly gatherings with youth in the evening. It was suggested to ask about travel reimbursement needs if the candidate comes from a distance.

Cont’d p. 8

### **Financial Report - fiscal year 2022**

Our treasurer, Ariana Langford, provided us with a report on FY 2022. Ariana took us through the summary and highlights for the year. There were no questions on the reports.

Friends did have a few questions about the deficit budgets. For many years Western Quarter has had deficit budgets with the actual end of year deficit being lower than expected. The deficits exist due to covenant income from monthly meetings staying the same or decreasing while costs go up. It is important to note there are two unrestricted reserve funds, one with Friends Fiduciary and one with Citadel, so Western Quarter is not in fear of running short on funds in the near future.

Friends affirmed that the key question is how much does Western Quarter need to keep in reserve from monthly meeting covenants.

Auditing update - Bob Frye is working on forming this group. Nancy Pratt is willing to be involved. Friends suggested a few more names and Bob planned to reach out to these Friends. Ariana will also reach out to a possible auditor.

A Friend lifted up that education grants may be one way to support and attract families.

Friends expressed gratitude and appreciation for the work of our treasurer.

### **Nominating -**

Margaret Walton noted that we are in search of several positions for Western Quarter. Names for people to serve on Nominating Committee and the following roles are welcome: assistant clerk/clerk, and treasurer.

Shelley Hastings, Karen Halstead, and Wayne Thompson have agreed to serve.

Friends suggested an email to clerks seeking names of young and active members of meetings be sent.

### **Historic Properties -**

Deb Wood shared that the group has begun to focus on burial grounds at the historic meetings. The report from the Property Committee focused on historic meeting houses and their conditions, and noted the number of burial grounds.

Our burial grounds questions include the location

of burials in the grounds, financial reserves for maintaining the grounds, whether plot maps exist, if grounds are still actively having burials or sales, and if still active are sales restricted in any way, for example, there is a family connection to the meeting.

We will likely need to go through minutes and records at Friends Historical Library to find some of the information.

There is interest in this group for information on green burials and a workshop for property clerks and committees. Deb has begun some research on this for the upcoming newsletter. Perhaps it could be an upcoming Quarterly Meeting program. Lars Farmer of Kennett Meeting is someone we hope can be a resource for green burials.

### **Aging Concerns/Healthy Habits-**

Shelley Hastings reported that feedback for Dr. Ost's program at the last quarterly meeting was positive.

The next program opportunity may be at Centre Meeting in January 2023. Friend tonya thames taylor has made four videos. We have shown two and they have generated fruitful conversation and sharings. We could use these in a worship sharing format as a program. Two other presentation ideas of interest to the committee are a reprise of estate planning, and green burials which could overlap with property committee interests.

We could generate interest by presenting some of the topics as ways to be more inclusive for friends with temporary or changing physical needs. We brainstormed the following topics: healthy aging, balance, physical exercise, fall prevention, maintaining physical and spiritual fitness, a discussion and sharing on the experience of aging.

We can also lift up queries from Kennett (or Kendal) MM on aging in an upcoming newsletter.

Since the committee meeting in 9th month, Centre has formed a committee to work on plans for quarterly meeting on 15 January, and an Aging Concerns/Healthy Habits topic may be a program topic.

Respectfully submitted, Deb Wood, coordinator

**To read the complete Minutes, and the Minutes from the WQM Support Committee Meetings, please visit our Business Resources page online: <http://westernquarterquakers.org/business-meeting-info/>**