

NELSON RECOGNISED MEETING NEWSLETTER

Quakers - the Religious Society of Friends – Aotearoa New Zealand Te Hahi Tuhauwiri

August 2020

Spiritual Thought

“Gratitude: We are taught to say prayers of thanks but a sense of gratitude goes beyond words into feelings of reverence and awe....Gratitude can help us to be humble....it opens the heart and changes the point of view.”

Jan Marsh, Simple Gifts.

News of and for Friends

Kristine has returned from a month in her caravan in an East Brighton caravan park close to her 26-year-old son. She divided her time between visiting her son and online study of Psychology through the Open Polytech. Whilst rejoicing in Aotearoa’s Covid-free status Kristin worries for her Melbourne based mother.

Patricia is still embroidering bees for the third roundel of the embroidery project and looking forward to finishing the Crown – she says this will put a bit of ‘zing’ into it.

Lizi is busy writing snippets of information to explain the many details of the Quaker Embroideries. At present she is writing the explanations for the colonisation / decolonisation panel. This information will be clickable on the panels when they are uploaded to the quakers-in-nelson website.

Peter is devoting time to the Nelson Tasman Climate Forum as a roving support person, attending as many meetings as possible. Specifically, he is working on the creation of the Forum website. Peter recently created the new Welcome video for the national Quaker website quakers.nz and is currently creating 1 – 2-minute videos from Friends explaining “Why I became a Quaker” for the same website.

Christine has also been busy with the Climate Forum Peace, Conflict and Reconciliation sub-group. The Group spent Saturday workshopping a strategic plan for the internal functioning of the Forum to ensure it and its manifold actions are supported in the long term by sound relationship building and conflict resolving processes.

James is relieved to be discharged after a week in hospital with a clean bill of health. He is writing a book of his philosophy of all things.

Rona is glad that her friend Alan who died last Monday is released from his illness. Alan had connections with Friends in Invercargill and with the Buddhist Whangapeka Retreat.

Clive is in training for the Wellington Half Marathon on 30 August. He also ran it last year.

Raewyn continues her role as a Street Aunty in Bridge Street, the entertainment /clubbing part of Nelson, offering support to those in need of it.

Jan enjoyed a week in Wellington this month visiting family and minding her 5-month-old grandson. She feels lucky to be able to do so.

Diary of Events

Sunday August 16th 2pm Fairfield House VanDieman St. Nelson, free public presentation: What will the End of Life Choice Act mean to you are your loved ones? Speaker Suzi Austen.

Tuesday August 18th 10:00am – 12:00pm online. Nelson Tasman Climate Forum hui. More information on the Nelson Tasman Climate Forum website.

Wednesday August 19th 7pm at Phillida's home: Home Discussion Group: Te Wheke: A celebration of Infinite wisdom. The second of three evenings to discuss "Te Wheke: A celebration of Infinite wisdom" by Rangimarie Pere. This short book, by a major Maori spiritual teacher explains basic Maori concepts and expounds their spiritual meaning. "Te Wheke" draws attention away from the warrior and towards the importance of Mother energy in Maori values and teaching.

Wednesday August 26th 7pm – 9pm at the Blue Room, 175 Tasman Street: Discussion on the two referendums accompanying the election in September on the end of life choice act and decriminalisation of marijuana. The Blue Room is around the rear of Jim's house and across the wooden deck. Friends and friends of Friends welcome.

Sunday August 30th 10.30am – 2.30pm Family Service Centre Motueka: Top of the South Meeting for Friends in Golden Bay, Nelson, and Blenheim. If you can't get to Jim's and/or want to meet up with distant Friends, then join this discussion on the referendums accompanying the election. More details below.

Wednesday September 2nd 7pm Quaker Meeting House 30 Nile St. Nelson: Becoming Friends, Sharing Spiritual Journeys. All Welcome.

News from Business Meeting

Premises:

The drains have been fixed! Hallelujah.

Use of Zoom:

We met a week before our Business Meeting to talk to each other about our reactions to Meetings for Worship being open to Zoom attenders. At our Business Meeting on Sunday August 2nd the decision was made to discontinue with Zoom in Meeting for Worship. Hosts of the Home Discussion Groups are free to choose to include Zoom attenders but that needs to be communicated to Friends ahead of time.

And some National News: Quakers in Aotearoa to be given a Peacebuilders Award

The Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at Dunedin University has decided "to present the Quakers with a Peacebuilder's Award for all the wonderful work your organisation does in the area of peace, including the funding you provide for our students."

This will involve the presentation of a certificate at the Centre in Dunedin followed by morning tea on Friday 11 September. Dunedin Friends and local QPSANZ representatives will be present for the presentation and the YM Clerk will attend to accept the award on behalf of Yearly Meeting.

Respect the Silence

by Jan Marsh for Pastoral Care Committee

As I settle into Meeting, grateful thoughts go out to those Friends who come early on a Sunday morning: some check the mail and put the kettles on, some turn on heaters and arrange the chairs, some bring flowers or biscuits for morning tea, but others, equally important, sit quietly and allow the silence to develop so that as we fill the room our meeting will centre and deepen.

Of course, circumstances don't always allow us to be early and it is better to come to Meeting even a little late than not at all. But if you find you are coming in late, do respect the silence and enter as quietly as possible. If someone is giving ministry, it's usual to wait in the doorway until that Friend has finished. Silence is the well we come to Meeting to draw sustenance from.

Creating a short video for the national website

We have room for many more short videos of just 1 - 2 minutes about you and Quakers: e.g. "I became a Quaker because... Or "One reason I am a Quaker

is..." or "The reason I joined Quakers is....". Peter is willing to create your video with you. You can contact him at petermkemp@gmail.com

The quakers.nz database will be the information source for the next printed book listing members, attenders, and meetings, so please make sure your name has been entered. If in doubt contact Elizabeth (elizdooley@hotmail.com or 021 213 0719) to check your entry.

John M has also created a Google.doc for all Nelson Friends including those who don't want to be listed nationally on the website. If you want to check you are on our local list, please contact John on 027 361 7023. If you don't want to be on any internet-based list but do want to receive emails & newsletters, please make sure John Liell has you on his list.

A Summer Day

Mary Oliver

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean -
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down -
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

The most famous lines of this poem are the last two: they're taped to mirrors and pinned to cork boards and framed in embroidery and on and on - and sure enough, they're lines worth remembering. But the heart of the poem is a couple of lines earlier: "Tell me, what else should I have done?" What else, that is, besides "falling down in the grass, being idle and blessed, strolling through the fields all day." At its heart, this poem is a little revolution, a provocative question mark beside the conventional answers to the query, *what makes for a day well*

lived? How should I spend this "summer day"? This summer day, I mean - the one we're in right now. The one we'll live in tomorrow.

Oliver's potentially life-changing proposition is that we very well may need to rethink what a "productive day" looks like. It may look a lot less like a day tied to screens and email and housework and errands and getting things done, and a lot more like the simple, astonishing affair of getting to know a grasshopper. This grasshopper, I mean. And if we remember that not everyone today has the opportunity to take a day in the fields to be "idle and blessed," then this poem may redouble our efforts to build a world in which everyone - everyone! - has the occasional time and space to stroll through the fields, "wild and precious," holding out a little sugar in our hand. <https://www.saltproject.org>

ZOOM: Friend of the Meeting - or Foe?

By Lawrence C.

During New Zealand's early, severe, and successful Level 4 lockdown, we were largely confined to home, and it was not possible to meet at the Meeting House. Instead, a number of us used Zoom to connect as best we could, for half an hour on a Sunday morning. It was good to see some familiar faces, even if only on a small screen.

When the Meeting House reopened after lockdown, I was among a cautious few who remained at home for a couple of weeks, using Zoom to join in. Clearly there were a few technical limitations to what one could see or hear, but generally things seemed ok.

It wasn't until the third week, when I attended Meeting in person, that I realised that things were actually not as ok as I'd thought. Zoom was running from a laptop sitting on a chair, and like an infant cuckoo in the nest, was already making its needs known. It needed Wi-Fi, not previously available in the Meeting House, but now obtained from our tenant's flat; it had a limited angle of sound pick-up and of view. There was talk of buying an omnidirectional microphone, to be placed on the table with the flowers and Bible...

For me, the most disturbing part of the proceedings came when people rose to give ministry. To break the silence of meeting for worship is not something done lightly: one considers, is this for me? Or is it for another in the meeting? If so, it is better to remain silent. Only when the inner urge to speak can no longer be resisted, does one rise to break the silence. At this point those gathered might expect to hear the first perhaps halting words of ministry: but no! In our Zoom-led meeting, we hear first another voice, directing the speaker to the appropriate place for them to speak, in order that they be heard and seen by the machine. 'Distraction' is hardly an adequate word.

And it grows. Next, a giant TV screen appears in the meeting room, upon which to see the few distant Zoom participants. I recall that in the past, earnest discussions were held about the advisability of having a few simple pictures on the plain walls of the room; and I wonder what happened to Simplicity?

There are two arguments for continuing with Zoom in the meeting. One is to give access to sick or distant members who are unable to come in person; the other is to advertise the meeting to non-Quakers, as a form of outreach, the idea being that people might be reluctant to come at first in person, but could gain an idea by attending first via Zoom.

I would respond to these arguments by saying that for sick and distant Friends, we have always had ways of coping, either by providing transport where needed, or by holding a special meeting where the Friend is located. Zoom is not needed for this.

The outreach idea may have some merit, although I don't know of anyone who has entered the Society of Friends by this route. What I would say, though, is that this approach has a clear downside. A number of Friends have told me that if Zoom were to continue in the meeting, they would not wish to come. Some spoke of the sense of being "spied upon" by the equipment. Others, self-deprecatingly, say that their concerns are "irrational", but nevertheless their feelings are clearly strong.

For me, the possibility of extending outreach is completely outweighed by the prospect of losing actual current Friends. Even one, thrown out of the nest, would be too many. So, I'm glad that our recent Business Meeting concluded that Zoom would not be used in future. It's a small win for Simplicity.

Deadline for next Newsletter

Our Newsletter is a way to share our lives – to help build our Quaker community. Thanks to everyone who has sent contributions. Please consider sending in your news, a book review, a quote that speaks to you.... Send newsletter items to Elizabeth at elizdooley@hotmail.com The cut-off date for items for the September newsletter is Friday, September 4th, 2020.

On-line resources: our own website: quakers-in-nelson.org.nz; our Facebook page: Quakers in Nelson; and the national website: quakers.nz

From Quakers in Britain, <https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/examining-quaker-privilege-and-commitment-to-an-equal-world?fbclid=IwAR1-tZhcIfzJm8W8y9NmxcmLV98BKXa5S1ohIAYDFzHPhwzxWsScpndMyzs>

Examining Quaker privilege and commitment to an equal world

Juliet Prager reflects on how Quakers have been exploring privilege and the work Quakers still need to do to understand and demonstrate that Black Lives Matter.



And closer to home, a broadcast from [Jacinta Ruru on bringing Tikanga Māori into legal education](#)

https://www.rnz.co.nz/audio/player?audio_id=2018743028 approx. 33 minutes.

Our Programme: below is a reminder of the different activities each month.

<p>First Week of the Month: Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 10.00–11.00am Wednesday: Becoming Friends, 7.00 pm – 8.45pm (Alternate Even Months) Sunday: Business Meeting 12.00 pm</p> <p>Second Week of the Month: Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 10.00–11.00am</p> <p>Third Week of the Month: Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 10.00–11.00am Wednesday: Home Discussions, 7.00 pm – 9.00pm</p> <p>Fourth Week of the Month: Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 10.00–11.00am</p> <p><i>Children are welcome at all Meetings for Worship. Activities will be provided for them.</i></p>
