

Peace and Social Concerns Annual Report 2013

I have had the privilege of serving as clerk of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee since October 2012.

Over the past year, we experimented with the **Dime A Gallon Fund**, the Meeting's self-imposed carbon tax for fossil fuel used by the number of people meeting at Mount Toby. With a donation jar and regular reminders we attempted to recoup the \$250 contribution made earlier to Quaker Earthcare Witness. The committee has decided to discontinue the experiment, having nearly reached the monetary goal and, more importantly, having increased awareness of our meeting's carbon footprint. We are encouraged by the numbers of cyclists and carpoolers seen coming to and fro.

We continued the **letter writing campaigns**, a practice begun in 2007. Topics have included opposition to torture by medical professionals, closing Guantanamo, cutting the Pentagon budget, opposing the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline, increasing gun control, ending the use of drones, and addressing climate chaos. Background information for letter writing—which happens at Mount Toby on the second Sunday but can be done at home anytime—is on the “Action” section of our website (<http://www.mounttobyfriends.org/action>).

In the wider connection of social activism, we have **representation** with the Interfaith Opportunities Network (Nan D), the local program committee of the American Friends Service Committee (Adele SP) and Friends Committee on National Legislation (Beth A.) We participated in the ten year review of the legislative priorities for FCNL.

Since May, a discussion group about the impact of **race and class** on the Meeting and wider community has been offered on a monthly basis. This conversation arose after a Friend voiced a concern about language used in the Meeting for Business in December 2012. The committee and many people in the Meeting have joined this concern. A packet of conversation starters and reading materials has been made available in the library.

Our committee recommended two new **organizations** for funding this year: Cambodian Water Fund and Centro de Amigos Para La Paz. Our review of a previously funded organization, Right Sharing of World Resources, led to a lively conversation about men's rights. RSWR was ultimately reapproved by Meeting for Business.

The committee's **film series** made a strong showing this year with the following films: “How to Start a Revolution,” “Joan Baez: How Sweet the Sound,” “Pete Seeger: the Power of Song,” “Bidder 70,” and “Amandla: Revolution in Four Part Harmony.” The season finale included a potluck dinner and singing by members of the Amandla Chorus.

We cosponsored a **performance** about Peace Pilgrim by Pat Lamanna.

We kept **silence and pondered**, too:

- We asked how we know when peace is present.
- We considered when it is right to disturb the peace.
- After the Newtown tragedy, we wondered how to fruitfully communicate with gun advocates.
- We looked at the dynamic tension between action and reflection.

As an example of **personal activism**—or what you might call “where the rubber hits the road”—we celebrated the success of one member who reduced her automobile travel to less than 6,000 miles and increased her bicycle travel to more than 2,000 miles.

Looking forward, the committee is on a campaign to participate in the **SourceToSea** river cleanup that happens in the fall. We hope to involve the whole Meeting, especially our younger Friends.

Committee meetings happen 7-9pm on the 4th Monday of the month. Everyone is welcome.

—Andy G, Peace and Social Concerns Clerk