

THE LIVING LIGHT

For the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.

Ephesians 5:9

Volume 63, Number 05

Whittier First Friends Church

Fifth Month, 2024

Fond Farewell to Bob and Sabron Newton

On Sunday, April 21, the Monthly Meeting approved this Minute of Community to honor Bob and Sabron Newton as they embark on their next life chapter: "Whittier First Friends Church, a Quaker Meeting, affirms with love our ties to Bob and Sabron Newton as they begin their next adventure. We are all walking and hiking beside you." By the time this edition is published, the Newtons will have moved to their new home at Friends House in Sandy Spring, Maryland. Bob responded, "Words cannot describe our relationship with, and gratitude for, First Friends Church." With gratitude for their past 36 years at First Friends, Bob presented a beloved family heirloom to the meeting of a hand-drawn portrait of John Greenleaf Whittier which had been passed down from Sabron's father, Willard Reynolds, a life-long Friends pastor.

Then the meeting presented the Newtons with a couple of items to remember us by. Russ gave a framed jigsaw puzzle which Bob and Russ had worked on at a past New Year's Eve game night - a mid-20th century black-and-white photo of a portion of the Chicago elevated train. Loletta presented a handmade booklet of photos of all the local wildflowers with loving notes and messages



from individual Friends. And most practically, the Meeting gifted them a new tablet with speakers so Bob and Sabron can stay connected with our meeting from across the continent. Their son, Ben, had already confirmed that he would ensure they would be able to attend worship by Zoom the following Sunday.

Bob and Sabron are looking forward to attending Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting which is also the site of Baltimore yearly meeting - founded by George Fox in the 1600's. The current meeting house was built in 1720. They opted for this location to be closer to son Ben

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Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

Dear Friends, I love to hear news from our Friends for the Friendly Fare in *The Living Light*. I love to receive emails with news from our Friends for the Friendly Fare in *The Living Light*. I love to share news from our Friends for the Friendly Fare in *The Living Light*. You get the idea. I love news from you all, and I love to share it.

Friends Celebrate: The family celebrated **Carol**



Langley's 98th birthday recently with lunch at the North Woods Inn in Arcadia. Pictured with Carol are siblings **Jim, Bill, Barbara** (and her husband **Glenn**.) Carol still resides at Park Marino

in Pasadena. It's always nice seeing friends visiting at Meeting for Worship. Easter "visitors" included **Robert Sturr, Jeanette Kelly, Dennis & Linda Upton, Kathy Marin, and Stacy & Adam Day** with **Anabelle** and **Adrian**.

School and Work: **Landon Caringella** was voted "Most Likely to Succeed" by the Benton Middle School eighth grade class. His great grandpa **Milton Wright** lent him a tie for the yearbook photo.

Anathea Woirhaye has now completed her thesis defense in the history department at The University of Redlands, for which she received departmental honors and the Armacost Library Undergraduate Research Award. Her research pointed to a British museum's exhibit misrepresentation and discussed the consequences of such actions. After graduation, she



will be heading off to an internship at the Metropolitan Museum of Art doing what is a dream in historic costuming there. Anathea declined



her acceptance to Oxford University this term but plans to reapply after the internship. It has been a tough choice.

Elyse Woirhaye's Prom skirt came to life as they designed, dyed, and sewed it all on their own for the Troy High School Prom Night. Here they are with their date, Hunter.



Friends Travel: **Elinore Petoletti** traveled to Arkansas to experience the recent total solar eclipse. She shared that the weather was perfect for viewing the eclipse. The trip included other sights including the Clinton Presidential Library, Hot Springs National Park, and several museums. One of her traveling companions was **Florence Buchanan**. Here they are at the Schultz Museum.



Friends Sharing News: Help to keep the Friendly Fare going. Make my day, and Email me a quick note and tell me your news. Send to Lea at lealouw@gmail.com, or deliver to me at church on Sunday. See you next month!

Loletta's Lines



There is a lot going on in May. There is May Day, Cinco de Mayo, Whittier Founder's Day, Mother's Day, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, and Memorial Day, to name a few secular and liturgical celebrations. But I particularly like Truffle Day, Chocolate Swirl Parfait Day,

and May the 4th. (For those who aren't familiar with Star Wars - that's a play on, "May the force be with you.") Of course, every day is a Saint's Day on the Roman Catholic Church calendar, and you can find holy day observations from all the other world religions. If you want, you can find someone to celebrate with every day of the month!

Long ago, Quakers adopted the tradition of numbering the days of the week and months because they didn't want to use the names that honored Greek gods. Individual meetings and Friends do their own things, but traditionally Quakers don't see any day as different from the rest - including birthdays, Christmas, and Easter. None are more, or less, important. Quakers aren't curmudgeons. We don't object to celebrations and fun, and certainly not to things that help develop our relationship with God. It is just that we seek to keep things simple and reduce things that might get in the way of our relationship with God. We seek to remove distractions and keep only those things that are necessary, important, or essential to our relationship with the Divine and each other. We understand God resides with, and in, everyone and everything, that Jesus has and does come to teach us himself, and that the Spirit is present leading us in each moment. Every moment, day, and month belong to God. It is all an opportunity to engage in abundant gratitude for God's presence, love, and the multitude of blessings in our lives. So much to celebrate! Happy May!

Russ' Reflections

CONNECTIONS



While Quakers do not ascribe to the notion of the Trinity and the Body of Christ in the same way as other Christians do, we do embrace the idea of community, with all of the practices that build good relationships with others.

Our testimonies, particularly Integrity and Equality, mesh together with Community and give us direction for ways to interact with each other. The notion of the Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - implies relationship. In John 3:1-17, Jesus speaks of being born of the Spirit, and that God gave the Son to bring eternal life. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul refers to the church as the "body of Christ," and expounds further about gifts for ministry.

We make connections when we come together for worship, teaching/learning, and fellowship. We are connected when we work together in committees. We are connected when we share a meal. We connect when we sing together. We also connect when we touch. I recently read an article in a music journal, "Tightly Held" by Michael Burk, in which he writes about the isolation we experienced during the pandemic and how the lack of touch (handshakes, hugs) has contributed to the combative environment we experience these days. Though we are already linked in the embrace of God, we are needy of physical touch; physical presence and handshakes and hugs will help strengthen the church, the body of Christ.

On May 26, the Friends Choir will present a musical service about Connections. Woven into the fabric of the music will be ideas about Welcome, Unity, Equality, Common Ground, Love, Compassion, and Justice. This will be the final Sunday with our Section Leaders until Fall. Come explore Connections with us.



News from Whittier Friends School



It's that time again - time for the Whittier Friends School Spring Event on Sat. May 4, at 5 pm in Fellowship Hall! This year's event will feature a silent auction, taco vendor, and a performance

by the students: "To Tell the Truth: A Patriotic Game Show.". All are invited, so don't miss this opportunity to support our school. For information about auction donations or advanced purchase discounted tickets, email Cassie at Cassie.wfs@gmail.com



Earlier this year, some Whittier Friends School students read a story called "Creature Constitution" about animals living in Independence Hall in the 1700s, who had a

hard time getting along. These animals watched the Founding Fathers of our nation put together a constitution to settle their challenges, so they made their own constitution, too. In the month of April, Whittier Friends School students got to visit the Independence Hall replica in Buena Park! Besides seeing where this story took place, the visit gave our children a chance to hear and see a re-creation of the important convention where the American colonist representatives discussed and ultimately decided to seek independence from England. Though the re-creation of that important meeting is simple, relying on an audio recording and simple lights indicating which invisible person is speaking, students were fascinated to watch this historic moment inside of "the room where it happened" (or at least, a life-size model of that room!). The visit also gave us a chance to see a life-size model of the Liberty Bell. Since the original important artifacts of our country's history (which are all the way over in Philadelphia) are too far away for us to see in person, it was meaningful to be able to see the replicas.

We continue enrollment for the elementary 2024-2025 school year, as well as our Elementary Summer Enrichment Program, which will occur from June 24 through August 8. Weekly summer enrichment themes will include such topics as Ocean, Zoo, and Fairy Tales. Families can sign up for whichever weeks they are interested in attending. Payments received by June 7 will have a discount. You can find information about our enrollment processes for summer or fall on our website, whittierfriendsschool.org, or by emailing Cassie.wfs@gmail.com. As always, you can follow Whittier Friends School's adventures on Facebook: facebook.com/whittierfriendsschool Instagram: instagram.com/whittierfriendsschool and visit our wish list: amzn.to/2QK8Yp8

Remembering Donna Wright (continued from last month)

Donna Wright, longtime member of First Friends, lived February 11, 1935 - February 21, 2024, but her legacy lives on. Here is a reflection from one of her granddaughters, Cassie Caringella, daughter of Dan Wright, oldest child of Donna Wright:

I spent days trying to put into words just how much my grandma Donna meant to me, and just how much I will miss her.

I spent so much time at her house, as a child on sleepovers when my parents were out of town, and almost daily after school. And then, as an adult, I have spent close to ten years either living in her house or living next door to her. My grandma's constant presence gave me so many gifts, and she influenced me in so many little ways, such as the way I tie knots when sewing or my habit of making broth from chicken bones. I wash dishes like her (but not with her impressive frequency!) and love playing card games like her (but no one wins like her!). Maybe someday I'll be able to make cookies like her.

My grandma was creative, and she could make something beautiful out of all kinds of media, whether it was flowers, fabric, or even her array of colorful dish soaps along her kitchen window in rainbow order. I'll always think of her when I see beautiful flowers, an especially pretty quilt, or a rainbow.

My grandma never missed an opportunity to tell me she was proud of me. She'd even be there cheering me on as I fumbled through the process of getting three kids and myself into the car so that we could get to school and work on time. Later, when she wasn't quite able to



get herself outside to wish us a good day, I still knew she'd be watching us, and that our bustle of activity to and from the car gave her joy. (I also knew that I better keep my patience and not yell at my kids to hurry up, because grandma was watching!). She was so proud of the mom and wife that I was, and she was so proud of the way Steven worked hard for our family. And I know it pleased her to see how much love we have for our kids.

So many pictures of my grandma show her side-by-side with my grandpa Milt, and their partnership is as iconic to me as salt and pepper. Peanut butter and jelly. Burt and Ernie. Grandma and Grandpa. On old car rides, at family gatherings, during games of dominoes, completing jigsaw puzzles, at church picnics, during good times and bad, Grandma and Grandpa were partners. My grandma, above all, was love. She really knew how to love and how to be loved, and she showed that she loved people with her gentle spirit, her peaceful demeanor, her surprising sense of humor (often at the expense of her grandson/my husband), and her steadfast devotion. The hole in our hearts from her absence is gaping. I know that we all hold her in our hearts, and that will have to be enough, until we can be with her again. My biggest comforts are that she is no longer in pain, and that she is once again with her beloved sons and other loved ones who went before her. We love you, Grandma.

A Trip to Laos on All Friends Fellowship Night

At All Friends Fellowship Night on April 10, following an abundant and sumptuous potluck dinner organized by Mary Marshburn and the fellowship committee, Kathy Marin shared her trip to the Republic of Laos with Overseas Adventure



Tours. She explained she really likes this tour company due to the opportunities to meet and visit with local residents and entrepreneurs for an authentic experience. Her narrative was accompanied by an extensive slideshow as well as examples of handmade items she brought home from the trip.

Among the highlights of her trip was a visit to Luang Prabang, the former royal capital. With its fusion of traditional and European colonial styles, its many Buddhist temples, and its lovely natural spaces, this town, nestled in the mountains and bisected by the Mekong, is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Although Laos is a communist country, religion there is important. Almost 70% of the Lao people consider themselves Buddhist, and most ethnic mountainous groups practice animism. An inspirational moment for Kathy was the early morning alms-giving to the Buddhist monks. As the monks filed by, her group sitting by the side of the road joined local residents in placing a small amount of rice in each monk's pail. This has been a tradition since the 1400's, and the food provided feeds the monks their two daily meals. The rest of the day, monks spend chanting, in meditation, studying, and performing daily tasks.

The group traveled to Tin Keo, a village in

the mountains near Luang Prabang, where they visited an elementary school and a silk making center sponsored by Grand Circle Foundation. They spent some time with a shaman from the Hmong part of the village. Most of the ethnic population living in the mountains are animists, and shamans act as healers. He showed them some of the items he uses to cure people, ritualistic dances, as well as traditional instruments. They also took note of the spirit houses, which are miniature temples erected at the entrance of public and private buildings throughout Southeast Asia where offerings of rice, water, candles, flowers, and incense ensure that the spirits are happy!

The group spent a day on the Mekong River in a traditional wooden boat. They visited a village where they got to join the village women and make traditional rice and river weed snacks! Cruising further down the river, they enjoyed a visit to the Pak Ou Caves that are located on the underside of some cliffs that contain thousands of Buddhas.

Kathy shared information about Big Brother Mouse. This organization was started because, until recently, there were very few books, and virtually no children's books in the Lao language. With the help of an American publisher, this group has published many children's and young adult books, opened schools, and set up a place for people from ages 6 to adult to come daily and practice their English with volunteers.

The tour group also took the new, Chinese sponsored, high speed train to the capital, Vientiane, where they visited a rehabilitation center for victims of unexploded bombs and ordnance. They learned that during the Vietnam War, the United States dropped over 2,000,000 tons of ordnance. This continues to pose a problem for the rural population today. Kathy also shared about the training and use of Hero Rats in Cambodia, and recently in Laos, to help locate this unexploded ordnance.

continued from page 1 - Farewell to Bob & Sabron



Make plans now to gather around the open mic for some music, dancing, poetry, stories, and friendly jokes on Saturday, May 25, for Peace Cafe. Our featured artists, Jo Nita and Friends, will keep the program rolling with harmonious chords and playful banter. Invite your family and friends to this fun and entertaining event to raise funds for our Peace Day coming this summer!

Doors to the Fellowship Hall will open at 5:00 pm and close down at 9:30 pm. Food will be plentiful and delicious, crafts tables will be set up, and Quaker information will be available. There is no charge for admission, but donations are gratefully accepted. So, come along for a night out, and know that you are welcome to have a table and/or offer your talent at the microphone, too! Contact Marilyn Fant or Jo Nita Beede for more information.

and his family who live in nearby Columbia, Maryland. The Newton's daughter, Miriam, lives with her family in Minneapolis.

Bob stated that he was originally drawn to Friends through the testimony of simplicity, and "got Sabron in the deal." Sabron attended Olney Friends High School and Earlham College, and worked as a librarian at the University of Chicago and the University of Illinois. Bob earned his Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate degrees in geology from UCLA. He and Sabron met while he worked in Chicago, and after raising their children, Bob wanted to return to California. They chose to reside in Whittier, specifically because it was a Quaker community, where they joined First Friends. Bob worked in research at UCLA for 26 years before retiring.

The Newton's have been an integral part of the First Friends family. Bob hiked frequently in the local hills, and he especially loved sharing his knowledge of the outdoors with the youth of Whittier Friends School and Peace Camp. The Newtons will be greatly missed, and the send-off was bittersweet. Bob said, "We love you and want to stay in touch with you." Please keep them in your prayers and hold them in the Light as they "hike" off to their next great adventure.



The next All Friends Fellowship Night (AFFN) is Wednesday, May 8, in Fellowship Hall. A potluck dinner at 6 pm will be followed by a **presentation from our Monday afternoon Writers Group that meets in Fellowship Hall**. They will present stories of selected memoirs from their own lives. Please join us and invite your friends and family for an evening of food and fellowship. Bring a main dish, side dish, salad, or dessert to share and your own plates and utensils. We look forward to seeing you then!

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Please remember in
prayer those Friends
unable to worship
with us regularly.

Barbara Cote
Kathy Hood
Kathy Robison
Ami Troedsson
Shirley Votaw

If we've missed your birthday, we apologize
(and happy birthday)! We work hard to keep our
birthday calendar up-to-date, so please let us know if
we're forgetting anyone. Thank you!