

CHESTNUT HILL FRIENDS MEETING BULLETIN

July 16, 2009

The bulletin informs the Chestnut Hill Monthly Meeting community of news and events as a supplement to the monthly newsletter. This interim communication focuses on time-sensitive information, usually semi-monthly.

CHESTNUT HILL FRIENDS COMMUNITY

Moo-vie Nights

CANCELLED August 14 for *Steep*.

Quakerism 101

Last of six Sunday evenings to be held July 19 6:15-8:00pm

Topic: The Facing Bench: Friends Ministry and Business

Each session will be led by a member of CHFM. To register for the class or for questions or suggestions, please email Jorge or Sue at Amigo.Jorge@aol.com or SusanBettsNJ@comcast.net. For the curriculum and reading list, please go to <http://www.austinquakers.org/q101/index.php?page=home>

From Adult RE Comm., Jorge Arauz, Sue Betts, helped by Ruth Pauley, Laura Melly and Jean Warrington.

*Meeting Office *

Viv is generally in the office on Mondays and Thursdays, 10:30am – 4:30pm. She will not be in the office on July 30, Aug 3, and 6. The on-line calendar reflects this and other scheduling information.

<http://www.quaker.org/chestnuthill/e-calendar.htm>

OUR MEMBERS

Wonderful article about Christine Olinger in Chestnut Hill Local can be found at

<http://chestnuthilllocal.com/issues/2009.07.09/news4.html>

Helping Friends: Meals for Jim Cox and Family

A devoted group of Friends have been providing meals to Jim Cox and his family for the last three to four months. It's has been such a tremendous success and a help to the Cox family that we decided to continue it through the summer months. We'll be providing meals on Wednesdays and Saturdays from July through September. We are looking for more Friends who feel led to join our devoted group. If we have a total of 9 volunteers, the commitment for each volunteer will be no more than one to three meals. All Friends who are interested in joining the effort, please contact me ASAP, Betsy Wallace at kenbetsw2@verizon.net.

WIDER QUAKER COMMUNITY

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Summer Sessions July 29th - August 2nd, 2009. Deadline to register children and for early program registration is July 10th. All info is at <http://www.pym.org/annualsessions>

The Kin-Dom of God: Living into the Covenant Pendle Hill is holding a speaker series this summer which has some awesome speakers, including Shane Claiborne and Will O'Brien. Jeff Perkins hopes to attend nearly all, which are held Thursday evenings from June 18 to July 23. He would like to coordinate carpool rides for those from Meeting wishing to attend. If you're able to provide a ride, please e-mail him with the particulars (which dates you will attend and number of spaces available in your car) along with your contact info (phone numbers). Alternately, you can grab Jeff after Meeting.

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For more info on the speaker series go to: <http://www.pendlehill.org/news/124-the-kin-dom-of-god-living-into-the-covenant> jeffery_perkins@comcast.net phone: 215-248-1375

FGC Committee with Ministry on Racism hospitality: CHFM will host the FGC Committee with Ministry on Racism meeting to be held in our meetinghouse on the weekend of September 25-27, possibly beginning on Thursday the 24th. We need people to offer housing for those coming from out of town, to help with food, and to help with transportation for those arriving from a distance. To help contact Ellen Deacon at 215-247-0670 or ellen.deacon@gmail.com

Letter from Friends Hospice

I want to thank all of you who have sent us greetings, wishes, prayers and thoughts – both directly and otherwise. As you know we have been waiting for long-term funding decisions which would help us determine our future. Those decisions are now in and they are firmly – mixed. We received precisely half the amount we had been seeking.

Our board has met twice over the last 4 days and reviewed our status in detail, stepped away, returned to worship together and discern. It is our decision that the call for Friends Hospice's work is present and continuing and so we shall continue. The people we are caring for deserve to have support that enables them to have the best quality of life possible, regardless of their circumstances.

We have had to make some hard decisions and we will need the support of our community. We have laid-off the second member of our staff in 2 months. This makes it harder to do the excellent care we provide. We will need the help of some new volunteers and will be looking for a few per diem staff members to provide relief for and assist our hard working team. We need:

- 3 to 4 office volunteers to provide relief in answering phones, assist with mail, care documents and other office activities
- Volunteer hospice nurses and social workers for occasional relief of team staff
- An experienced hospice social worker – volunteer or per diem to cover a small group (2-4 people) while their social worker is away
- Non-professional hospice volunteers who are interested in supporting our families – we need to train volunteers now for care in the later part of the year

We also still need funds. We need to raise about \$12,000 in the next three months. Right now we cannot increase the number of people we are serving due to the limits of our current staffing. If your meeting has not made a contribution to our work, please ask them to consider doing so. If you have made a donation yourself, please inform others of our work and need. If you have not and can, please assist us with a donation.

As I walk through neighborhoods in North Philadelphia – places many Friends will never see – I am greeted by the smiles of our family members. They are glad we are there to provide support, expertise, and services. Please support us as we continue doing the best we can to answer God's call. -**TylaAnn Burger, Executive Director Friends Hospice**

OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

Bring in your **food donations** for the food cupboard at Germantown Crisis Ministry on third First Days July 19, August 16

Common Cause event: Reformers from around the country gather in Philadelphia to share ideas and lay the foundation for a democracy that is of, by, and for the people. Join us on July 21 as Common Cause honors some of the champions for good government from around the country, including Pennsylvania's own State Rep. Kathy Manderino.

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What: Common Cause Honors Champions of State Government Reform

When: Tuesday, July 21, 5:00-6:30pm

Where: Law offices of Swift Kohn & Graff, One South Broad St., Suite 2100, Philadelphia, PA

Tickets: [Click here to RSVP or make a donation](#)

In Pennsylvania, Common Cause is leading the fight for reforms that will help clean up our state's culture of political corruption, including a limit on campaign contributions, and stronger ethics laws for Philadelphia. Your participation in this effort is welcome and necessary if we are to take our government back from the special interests who shape public policy with massive campaign contributions -- from insurance and pharmaceutical companies opposed to national health care reform, to [the casinos whose lavish campaign contributions have fueled the expansion of legalized gambling](#) in Pennsylvania. Please RSVP at <http://www.commoncause.org/NCSL2009>, and feel free to forward this invitation to friends or colleagues who may be interested in attending as well. – from Lynn Mather

Finding Our Ground: Living with Reverence for Creation

At Lake Absegami in the New Jersey Pine Barrens October 2-4, 2009

Join Brad Sheeks and Patricia McBee for a retreat in the pine barrens. We will allow ourselves to tune to the rhythm of the trees, the breeze, and the water—to renew our awareness that we are part of nature's flow—to sit quietly with our soul which is the solid ground upon which we stand.

The retreat will provide ample time for solitary walks on wooded trails and paddling on the lake as well as journaling in response to selected writings, and sharing our stories as we gather in front of the fireplace. Grounded in the natural world, we will open ourselves to living with greater reverence and harmony in a suffering world.

We have reserved two rustic cabins with two bunks in each of three partitioned areas, full bath with hot showers, and a full kitchen. Also, participants can choose to tent on sites a short walk from the cabins. We will share hearty, simple food. The retreat will be limited to twelve people.

Brad Sheeks & Patricia McBee are members of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, where Patricia has a minute of ministry of concern for the environment. For many years, they have co-lead couple enrichment retreats sponsored by Friends General Conference. For further information contact Brad at 215-349-6959 or bsheeks@juno.com

2nd Annual Philly Bike Ride for Pain Relief

Sarah Whitman is organizing a charity bike ride on Sept 12 to raise money for a pain education and research charity. If anyone has a business or organization which would like to be a sponsor, please contact her by June 21. Great publicity; bottom-line-friendly options! Registration forms for riders will be available starting in July, as well as donation opportunities.

PERSONAL

Cat-sitting in exchange for housing I am in search of someone/someones to stay in my West Mt. Airy home for six weeks, from the beginning of November til approximately December 15. The house is a charming row house - 5 minute walk from Carpenter Lane R8 stop. Easy walk to Weaver's Way Food Co op, and the Wissahickon creek. There's a great deck in the back, and off street parking. (It is possible that we might work out a shorter or longer term, regular housemate agreement for before the period of time I am away, until my return.) I would ask payment for heat. In exchange for rent, I ask you keep the place clean, make sure the pipes don't freeze, and take care of my cat. That would include food/water/treats, daily litter scooping, and medication for a chronic urinary tract condition. If you may be interested, email Martha Kemper mlk11@psu.edu

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Studio Space Wanted. Todd Kimmell seeks studio space for his work with historic imagery. Wants dry space to rent or to use in a barter arrangement. Perhaps the second floor of a large garage, a large basement, or other area within a large home. Todd is willing to clean out and prepare a space, so current condition should not deter anyone from considering the possibilities. Todd B. Kimmell 267-269-1606 www.kimmelldurant.com

STANDARD REMINDERS

Please help center Meeting for Worship: Friends are invited to arrive early for meeting for worship to help the meeting settle and provide a more meaningful worship experience for children and adults alike.

On-line calendar for Chestnut Hill Monthly Meeting can be viewed at <http://www.quaker.org/chestnuthill/e-calendar.htm> Please submit updates to calendar@chestnuthillquakers.org

Bulletin announcements Please submit copy-ready announcements to secretary@chestnuthillquakers.org or 215-247-3553 by Noon on Thursdays

Leaving the Meetinghouse.

Whenever you are the last one to leave the meetinghouse, you must turn off lights and lock doors. You can lock the meetinghouse and leave even if you not have a key. If you find yourself being the last to leave the meetinghouse but do not have a key, lock the other doors from the inside. Then, leave the building through the door beside the "office." This door can be opened from the inside but is always locked from the outside. Please check the door from the outside as you leave to be sure that the door is tightly closed.

Please leave the meetinghouse at least as orderly as you found it. The meetinghouse is used by several groups throughout the week. In order to respect their needs as well as ours, please move furniture back to the way it was when you moved it for your use and put all trash to the large can in the kitchen. If the large can is full, please take the trash to the dumpster across the driveway.

If you or your children remove things from the RE closet or the bookcases, please return them. If you use dishes in the kitchen, please wash, dry and put them away.

Stuff Left Around the Meetinghouse

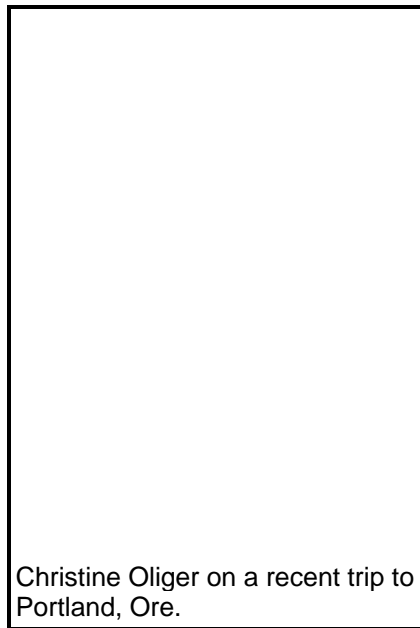
"Stuff" has begun to appear in the meetinghouse. The property committee is charged with keeping the meetinghouse orderly and uses the tag sale to dispose of things (coats, furniture, dishes) that have no purpose. Please talk to someone from the property committee if you need to leave something in the meetinghouse and please label it (including a date when it will be removed) so that we won't think it was intended for the tag sale.

Assistive listening devices: A "hearing helper" system amplifies spoken messages in meeting. These devices can also be used for people in the gathering room who wish to hear spoken messages in the worship room. Contact a member of Worship and Ministry if you want to learn more.

Thursday, July 9, 2009

ALS a new challenge for peace activist

by Jennifer Katz.



Christine Oliger on a recent trip to Portland, Ore.

<http://chestnuthilllocal.com/issues/2009.07.09/news4.html>

Christine Oliger was the first woman in her family to go to college. She majored in economics at Douglas College at Rutgers University, but a senior-year visit from a Peace Corps representative and a weak job market changed her path, taking her to Senegal and ultimately Chestnut Hill, and providing guidance for an unforeseen challenge. Last year, Oliger was diagnosed with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

ALS or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord. In 2007, Oliger was running the National Havurah Committee office in Mt. Airy. In the fall she noticed that she could not keep her flip-flop on her left foot. By December she was having trouble walking long distances.

Oliger went to her doctor, who noticed she was having what is known in ALS terms as "foot drop" which is an ankle weakness that causes your foot to hang down when you are trying to walk. After months of tests, she was diagnosed in April 2008.

When we met for this interview, Oliger was walking with a walker, which she needs to get from her sofa to the door just 10 feet away. She and her husband of 10 years, Dion Lerman, moved from their house in Mt. Airy to a first-floor apartment in a carriage house on East Mermaid Lane.

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It is difficult for Oliger to speak about the illness, which will eventually take her life. She has had to lean on her husband, an environmental health educator, her fellow Quakers (she is a member of the Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting, which is across the street from her apartment) and friends, who have organized a group – the Friends of Christine Oliger — to raise money to offset some of the expenses not covered by insurance.

With Oliger's family dispersed around the country, she and her husband have had to accept the help of friends and acquaintances. Chris Robinson met Oliger protesting the Iraq war at the top of the hill in Chestnut Hill on Wednesday nights. When her symptoms started, she stopped going to the protests. Months went by before the two ran into each other at the grocery store. Oliger said it was awkward.

“I was walking with a cane at that point, and so he asked what was going on,” she said. “You never know how much to tell people.”

She ended up telling Robinson about her diagnosis and he offered to help with fundraising.

“I've been overwhelmed by the amount of work and help they've given,” said Oliger referring to the group that bears her name.

The Friends of Christine Oliger set up a Web site and started getting the word out. On July 12, the friends group is holding a benefit concert with musician Kenn Kweder at Walk A Crooked Mile Bookstore at the Mt. Airy train station. The proceeds will be used to purchase a wheelchair-accessible ramp. The ramp will cost about \$2,200.

There is no treatment or cure for ALS, although Oliger is involved in a study that is trying to reproduce results from a study in Italy. For Oliger the uncertainty is both scary and comforting.

“You can know what to expect as far as progression,” she said. “But you just don't know when you are going to hit those points.”

According to Oliger, ALS symptoms can also plateau at any time and for long periods of time. Unfortunately there is no way to know if that is going to happen. In the meantime Oliger spends her days working with committees from the Friends Meeting or rearranging her life to accommodate her new challenges. On the day we met, Oliger was busy making arrangements to get a new powered wheel chair. She is also working on fitting out a van she and her husband bought to make it wheelchair accessible and having a ramp installed to her front door.

Oliger, who was raised Protestant, first encountered Quakers working at what was then the Bucks County Peace Center.

“They had an amazing sense of grace and willingness to listen to everyone,” she said.

She started attending meetings in Bucks County. She met Lerman when he was leading workshops for people considering participating in civil disobedience. She took his workshop and learned that he needed people to lead more workshops. She signed up.

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Oliger began her work with nonprofits and nonviolence after college. She entered the Peace Corps and was sent to Senegal.

“I always wanted to go to Africa, and the job market wasn’t good so I went,” she said of her decision to enter the corps.

Although Oliger, 43, would come back from Senegal early because of illness, she was profoundly influenced by her experience.

“I wanted to do something that would make a difference,” she said.

She went to work for the Bucks County Peace Center (now the Peace Center) a nonprofit aimed at reducing violence and conflict in schools, homes and communities.

“I found that these organizations that seek to change the world need money to do so,” she said. “So I started working on fundraising.”

Oliger said when she entered the nonprofit world she found a community of people who were dedicated and energized by the work they were doing.

“I met amazing people who had passion for their jobs,” she said.

Now that she is home, working on projects that relate to her illness, Oliger is reaping the rewards of years of contributing to others. One of the tenets of Quakerism that captured her spirit more than 17 years ago is the simple idea that everyone has a contribution to make.

These days Oliger can no longer go grocery shopping alone. She mentioned this to one of her friends and committee members. There is now a list of helpers and a schedule being created to take Oliger to the store when she needs to do her shopping.

For more information on ALS, visit www.alsa.org, or to find out more about the benefit concert visit www.friendsofchristine.com.