

NEWSLETTER

ASHEVILLE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Eighth Month 2003

Forty Summers Ago: Bayard Rustin and the March for Jobs and Justice

More than anyone else, Bayard Rustin brought the message of Gandhi to the United States. He insinuated nonviolence into the heart of the Black freedom struggle. He presided over the transformation of direct action tactics from the cherished possession of a few initiates to its embrace by millions of Americans. He resurrected mass peaceful protest from the graveyard in which the cold war anti-communism had buried it and made it once again a vibrant expression of citizen rights in a free society.

Rustin was inspirational to the countless thousands who knew him. He wished more than anything else to remake the world around him. He wanted to shift the balance between white supremacy and racial justice, between violence and cooperation in the conduct of nations, between the wealth and power of the few and the poverty and powerlessness of the many. He believed that the most antagonistic human relationships – between a white sheriff and a black sharecropper, between the European colonizer and the Africans he lorded over, between the filthy rich and the struggling poor – could be transformed. He believed that ordinary individuals could make a vast difference in the world, and he communicated this conviction widely.

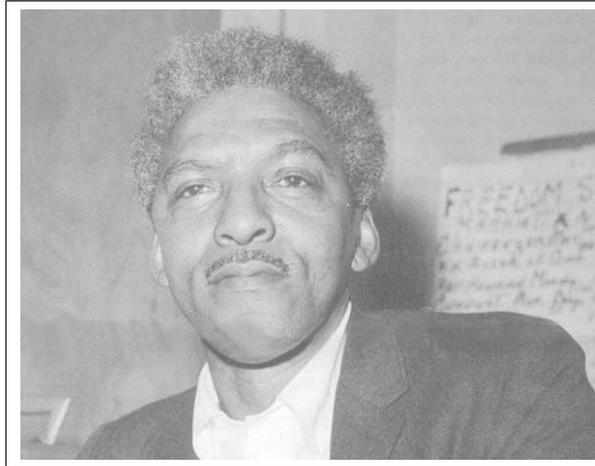
Rustin was also wildly controversial in his lifetime. He had been a member of the Young Communists League in the 1930s. He refused the call to defend his country after the United States has been attacked at Pearl Harbor, resulting in his imprisonment. Segregationists, of whom there were many, and the anti-Communists, of whom there were even more, always had ammunition to fire in Rustin's direction. Rustin repeatedly found himself the target of the FBI, local police, conservative journalists, State Department officials, and anyone else beating the drums of the patriotic fervor during the cold war decades.

Rustin had ways to counter these vulnerabilities. His Quaker beliefs were a legitimate explanation for his pacifism. He publicly broke with and repeatedly repudiated the Communist Party. His pacifist friends and his associates in the black freedom movement applauded his integrity and

courage, and they stood by him when cold warriors and the defenders of the racial status quo launched attacks on him.

1963 was a year full of death and tragedy. Blacks in Birmingham faced dogs and fire hoses as they non-violently battled police chief Eugene "Bull" O'Connor. NAACP field secretary Medgar Evers was gunned down in the driveway of his home in Jackson, MS, and riots broke out in Cambridge, MD. A century after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, Blacks still lived under a brutal system of segregation, treated as second-class citizens without basic human and civil rights.

There was, however, a brilliant moment of hope during that time. August 28 was the day that transformed America. It was the culmination of years of boycotts and demonstrations, of freedom rides and sit-ins, of protest and struggle, of sacrifice and suffering. On that day, people of all races stood together as a united front for a single cause. It was called the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, yet it was so much more to so many. It was an extraordinary day that left and even more extraordinary legacy. And today, 40 years later, it's still remembered



as the most significant political demonstration in U.S. history.

When organizers set August 28 as the date, they had less than two months to make it happen. Those eight weeks were the busiest of Rustin's life. He had to build an organization out of nothing. He had to assemble a staff and shape them into a team able to perform under intense pressure. He had to craft a coalition that would hang together despite organizational competition, personal animosities, and often antagonistic politics. He had to maneuver through the mine field of an opposition that ranged from liberals who were counseling moderation to segregationists out to sabotage the event. And he had to do all this while staying enough out of the public eye so that the liabilities he carried

Rememering Rustin (continued)

would not undermine his work.

For staff, Rustin turned to many of the young men and women whom he had mentored. Tom Kahn served as his personal assistant, making his phone calls, setting up meetings, drafting his correspondence, and reminding him each day of the details that needed attention. Rustin assigned Rachelle Horowitz, whose reliability he could depend on, to the job of transportation coordinator, a task that mushroomed as the numbers expected in Washington grew and grew. He made Norman Hill, whose services CORE lent to the venture, the director of the field staff. Hill traveled the country, drumming up support in city after city, firing up the local organizers. Each of the "Big Six" organizations provided a staff member or paid for one. Courtland Cox, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Ernest Green, Joyce Ladner, and other activists lived and breathed the March on Washington that summer. The mostly young group felt a deep loyalty to Rustin. One visitor to the office was taken with "his dedication and his capacity to communicate vision... his raw energy for long hours of hard work" that his staff willingly emulated.

Rustin had conceived the Washington event as a militant one, with activities ranging from lobbying and rallies to marches and sit-ins. He and Randolph had also seen the march as a vehicle to raise demands for economic justice. Building a coalition meant that, slowly, the purpose shifted and the scope shrank. By early August, when Rustin printed a second manual to guide organizers, there were no plans to lobby, no demonstrations other than one large march and rally, and no calls for civil disobedience.

To some on Rustin's staff, each of these constraints provoked great lament. Horowitz remembered wails of dismay whenever Rustin reported a new concession. SNCC's representative argued that "just the fact of 200,000 people being in the capital... would be demonstration enough." Rustin, whose whole history was one of civil disobedience and active non-violence, agreed. The march would still, he assured his staff, be an event of historic significance with immensely positive consequences for the Black freedom struggle.

Afterwards at the White House, President Kennedy congratulated them on the success of the event. As the crowds evaporated quickly, a crew of volunteers swept through the Mall and left it as clean as it had been at dawn. Rustin lingered behind, marveling at what had just happened.

Rustin remembered "electricity in the air. Everyone who was there knew that the event was a landmark." It had lived up to his expectations as "one of the great days in American history" and, he might have added, perhaps the greatest of his life.

Article excerpted from July/August issue of Crisis magazine, submitted by Ursula Scott. Original articles "A Time to March" by Juan Williams and "Invisible Man" by John D'Emilio edited by Lynora Bierce.

Meeting House Phone
(828) 258-0974

Clerk of the Meeting
Evan Richardson

Recording Clerk
Margaret Farmer

Treasurer

Newsletter Committee
Steve Livingston (ed.),
Margaret Farmer, George Gjelfriend,
George Oldham, Bob Payne

The Asheville Friends Meeting *Newsletter* is published monthly. Friends are welcome to contribute letters, book reviews, announcements, articles, and quotations. Please submit copy via email to

newsletter@ashevillefriends.org

Hard copy is acceptable. Deadline is third First Day.

The Asheville Friends Meeting is located at 227 Edgewood Road, between Merrimon Avenue and the University of North Carolina campus. Friends meet for singing at 9:40 and for worship at 10:00 a.m. every First Day. First Day School begins at 10:00. Friends meet to conduct business on the second First Day at 11:30 a.m. On other First Days, the hour following meeting for worship is used for adult education or for fellowship.

From Russia With Masha

Dear Friends,

Irina, Masha/Maria and I are home together at last.

At the last minute neither my friend nor my mother could travel with us on this trip. (My mother broke out in shingles the day before we were to leave – she is still tired but at last doing better.) Therefore, Irina and I made the trip together. It was a very difficult trip. Irina is now and forever my hero for the way she handled working through her emotional difficulties of having to see inside orphanages again while also having to go to all of the bureaucratic hoops we needed to do for the adoption.

It was exhausting, but once we were finally able to have Masha with us, things began to improve. Masha is happy healthy, and fine, and to see her come out of the orphanage and into our arms was a healing for Irina and a joy for our family.

For your support and holding in the Light, I thank you.

Blessings to you,
Lindsay

MINUTES

OF THE MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS EIGHTH MONTH, TENTH DAY 2003

CLERK: EVAN RICHARDSON
RECORDING CLERK: MARGARET FARMER

Opening of Meeting

1. The Meeting opened at 11:45 a.m. with worship.
2. Eighteen Friends attended: Sharon Bigger, Alice Brown, Karen Cernek, Margaret Farmer, George Gjelfriend, Kristi Gjelfriend, Martha Huggins, Margaret Kosco, Steve Livingston, Susan Mitchell, Philip Neal, Jeanette Reid, Evan Richardson, Eda Smith, Gerald Smith, Sarah Jane Thomas, and John Wykle.

Introductions

Margaret Kosco is attending Meeting again.

News of Ourselves

1. Trina Farmer returned to Guilford College yesterday; she will serve as a counselor to the incoming Freshmen in the Quaker Leadership Scholars Program this week.
2. Susan Mitchell shared that Greg's plant is closing; he will be looking for work and the family may need to relocate. Lauren is still traveling on behalf of FWCC.
3. Kristi and George Gjelfriend just returned from the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC, where George worked with storytellers, and Kristi made a jacket without a pattern.

Naming Committee

1. Steve Livingston reported from the July 30 meeting of himself, Elizabeth Roebing, and David Clements.
2. There was a perceived need for an active Nominating Committee. Work focused on discerning what kind of gifts were on the existing committee and what gifts would complement the committee. They have a pool of names but have only one name to offer at this time: Karen

Cernek.

3. **Friends approved Karen Cernek to serve on the Nominating Committee.**

Request from Trina Farmer

1. Trina requested scholarship support of \$500 for tuition at Guilford. This amount will be matched by the Quaker Leadership Scholars Program.
2. **Friends approved \$500 scholarship support for Trina Farmer.**

Followup on "What We Seek"

1. The clerk read the review of the small group discussions from last month's minutes.
2. It was proposed that we attend today to the first two categories: Community Building and Spiritual Growth.

Community Building:

3. The group has identified the areas where we need a more intentional process; especially staying in touch with one another and encouraging acts of ministry. There needs to be enough structure that people won't fall through the cracks. A caregivers program is instituted in some meetings. 4-5 members of the meeting are identified as caregivers and contact individuals; everyone in the meeting is assigned a caregiver. This would be one way to ensure that no one is left behind. We have so many coming and going, it would be hard to be sure everyone was covered.
4. The greatest energy sink is to come up with a great idea and not find a sponsor for it. We should not discuss any idea in detail unless someone comes forward as a sponsor for it.
5. Personal friendships should also be encouraged and nurtured, despite any structure that we might adopt.
6. Susan Mitchell stepped forward to volunteer to organize Friendly Eights.
7. If Care and Counsel had a member at each Friendly Eights group, and traveling members from Nominating, to interface the committee members with the discussion and to be sure we know each other better.
8. Our committees have low numbers; we all need to get involved. We should not put all our business of until the end of these discussions at Meeting for Busi-

Contributions

Contributions to the Asheville Friends Meeting are welcomed. Gifts may be placed in the small wooden box marked "contributions" which is located in the entry way, or mailed to

Asheville Friends Meeting
227 Edgewood Road
Asheville, NC 28804

BUSINESS MEETING

[Spiritual Enrichment, Finance]

ness.

9. One Friend shared that “The reason our young folk come to Meeting to be with our Friends. Why do the older folk come here to Meeting: is it Worship? Is it that we are friends as well? What do we have in common? My Quaker F/friends share a lot about spirituality, but I can share this with others as well. What we have in common is Quaker practice; their practice resonates with me. We do the work with joy in the sharing, that creates this bond. There is a great movement of energy that opens and sustains us when we share Quaker practice.”

10. Sarah Jane Thomas volunteered to clean up the front and back hallways of the Meetinghouse.

11. One Friend spoke to the depth that singing before Meeting has added to Worship. Other Friends affirmed this.

12. A Friend asked about the status of the phone tree.

13. A Friends shared that “some of our committees have low numbers: just two or three people. It is important that we care for each other in a structured way, but I am not a leader. Perhaps we could rotate responsibility. I don’t know how to get this going. I ask everyone to be part of the solution.”

14. The clerk reflected that it is our sense that we need to structure this and that we may not at this time have the leadership. MW & CC have met and will be meeting together while our numbers are low. It may be our direction to sit with these reports and help steer a course for our structure. We would like people in each Friendly Eights group to reflect on their gifts and leadings. We will continue to use Meeting for Business a place for sharing about these categories.

15. A Friend suggested that George Gjelfriend ask what committees we serve on, how we are nurturing and being nourished by Meeting, as he continues his Tidbits.

16. One Friend suggested that we continue this rich sharing on the other three categories.

17. The clerk affirmed that we are honoring Susan Mitchell in her offer to organize Friendly Eights; we are honoring George Gjelfriend in his outreach to Friends, and we are honoring Sarah Jane Thomas in her offer to clean personal belongings out of our hallways. Ministry and Worship, Care and Counsel will use the review of these

categories as a guideline for their work. We ask the Newsletter to take two committees/month and let everyone know what is involved, by way of encouraging recruitment.

18. A Friend observed that there is a growing sense that we need to attend to the work of our meeting as we continue to work. We are now asking our committees to continue their work.

Spiritual Enrichment

1. The report was submitted by David Clements.

2. “Margaret Farmer will be in touch with Vanessa Julye, who will be visiting our Meeting October 31-November 2 to lead a dialogue about racism. Watch for more notices.

4. “The Committee is in the process of planning for future retreats and workshops, and would like to hear from Meeting what particular topics and speakers are of interest. We will be distributing a questionnaire, and will be happy to hear any comments from Friends.”

5. **Friends accepted the report.**

Finance

1. The report was submitted by David Clements.

2. “The Finance Committee has set up a system with the Self-Help Credit Union that will allow Friends to make contributions each month by having them automatically deducted from their bank accounts. This will begin in October.

3. “We thank Susan Williams for her dedicated work as Treasurer. Susan will be leaving Asheville for Boston. We have asked David Clements, the former Treasurer and current Assistant Treasurer, to function as Treasurer for the time being. There is a conflict of interest between David’s roles as Clerk of the Finance Committee and acting Treasurer, since the Treasurer should be supervised and directed by the Finance Committee. We encourage any Friends who are so led to approach the Nominating Committee about serving as Treasurer or on the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee would be happy to have visitors at our meetings. Next Meeting 4 p.m., September 3, at the Meeting House.”

4. **Friends accepted the report.**

Review of Minutes from 7th Month

1. Sarah Jane Thomas had not requested release from the Music Committee; she will continue to serve.

*The deeper that sorrow carves into your being
the more joy you can contain.
Is not the cup that holds your wine
the very cup that was burned in the potter’s oven?*

Kahlil Gibran



Wesley Clements is seven years old and in the third grade at the Rainbow Mountain School. His favorite thing about school is soccer, and he remembers fondly when he played goalie and blocked the fourth graders

and middle-schoolers. His least favorite thing about school is stuck-up girls. He recently saved up his money to buy a Gameboy. His favorite movie is *Pokemon 2000*, and the last book he read on his own was *The Magic Tree House*. He speaks knowledgeably about the Harry Potter books and opines that Harry runs the risk of dying in book seven.

Casey Rhoades is attending Guilford College (with roommate **Trina Farmer**) where she is majoring in Psychology and Quaker Religious Studies. She is particularly excited by QLSP (Quaker Leadership Scholars Program) which helps members of the community learn about Friends. She enjoys swimming and is currently working as a lifeguard at a summer camp. The last book she read was *Downsize This* by Michael Moore.

Sharon Bigger is looking forward to participating with the Playback Theater Company which specializes in improvising people's life stories. She went to a workshop this past spring and they invited her to join. She also works for a non-profit Spanish language newspaper that serves the Latin community in a number of ways including publishing reader contributions and disseminating health news. She enjoys singing and dancing and in her spare time, she is a nurse.



Tidbits:

Amelia Wallace recently returned from a visit to cousins in Knoxville, where they went to the zoo. The high points of that were: guinea pigs named Chuck and Ed, two types of white rhinos (with and without fuzzy ears) and a red panda which was exceptionally cute. She also got to play in the petting zoo where hand-washing facilities are provided after interacting with the goats.



Give us your News!

If you see Friend George Gjelfriend approaching you with notebook in hand, don't panic! Instead, please tell him what is going on in your life that you might wish to share and celebrate with our community. It's so valuable for us all to know one another better, and Friends find these "Tidbits" provide a vehicle for doing that, and encourage us to hold one another's journeys in our hearts.

Many thanks to George for his diligence, perseverance, and punctuality as he provides the material for this column month after month.

Frank Roberts is reconstructing his maternal great-grandfather's 170-year-old house, working from over 200 photographs to try and get it as close to the original as possible. He's getting some help from a neighbor who is a structural engineer and from the Historical Preservation Society, e.g. free labor. He asks that we hold him in the light, and he'll keep us posted.

Margaret Kosco a professional Horticulturist, has been living in Asheville for 13 years and attending meeting off and on for the past seven. She enjoys shape-note singing

and is in a group which performs Appalachian ballads and sea chanties. She also enjoys kayaking and biking.

Susan Mitchell and her sister are going to a number of small villages in Poland from whence came her ancestors back when it was known as West Prussia. They leave after Labor Day.



Peter Buck has a new job as a counselor at Southwestern Community College. He's also starting a 1 1/2 year training program named *Interplay*, a system of improvisational dance to celebrate the body/spirit which will be used in churches and therapy.

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the more joy you can contain.
Is not the cup that holds your wine
the very cup that was burned in the potter's oven?*

--Kahlil Gibran

Offering News of Asheville Friends



Stephanie Gosset recently returned from a trip visiting family in Ohio and spending a week at a youth “thing” at Pendle Hill. There they did many “camp things”, including a talent show where she and a friend read a poem they had written. They also

spent two days at a demolitions work camp in Philadelphia where they got to knock things down.

Angie Luknight celebrated her adoption day at the meeting about nine years ago. Now she’s a poised, attractive 14-year-old about to enter ninth grade, visiting us while her mother takes a trip to Iceland. Angie enjoys solo singing almost anything and especially country and religious music. She is also a cross-country runner.

Lydia Hearne is helping her family repair her grandmother’s roof. She is also caring for three adorable Chow puppies. Her father brought home the abandoned mother, and the next thing anyone knew... By the time this newsletter comes out, they’ll be ready for adoption. Any takers?

Diane Rhoades is seeking less linear ways of praying, and that has led her to dancing her prayers. It is more kinetic and she feels the energy from her fingertips connecting to the universe. She feels that dancing her prayers is the perfect way to establish a relationship to her spirituality.

Barbara Esther spends a good deal of her time rendering personal care to her 89 year old mother-in-law. She is also finishing up a mammoth applesauce-making project, using early Transparents which are very tender and must be tended to immediately if they have fallen.



Karen Cernek and her partner are looking into training guide dogs. They both love animals, especially dogs, and this seems like a really good thing to do.



Ron Stewart has been attending meeting off and on for eight years. He and his girlfriend recently separated, and now has the time to come more often. He is a Qualified Mental Health Professional working with all different types of mentally ill folks. He moved to this from drug rehabilitation, which he found hard and unsatisfying. He enjoys camping out.

Steve Livingston played the role of Gower in the Montford Park Players’ production of Shakespeare’s *Pericles*. His character initially comes out of the grave to narrate the story and grows progressively younger. Steve said he made quite a hit when he eventually appeared with spiked hair and covered with glitter. He also designed and produced the 2 hour 20 minute sound track, including music and sound effects.



George and Kristi Gjelfriend are back from a week at the John C. Campbell folk school where he took storytelling and she took jacket quilt-making without a pattern.



ERRATUM:

Phil Neal asks that the record be corrected to read: He joined the Friends at Swarthmore Meeting while attending Haverford College.

*Smiling is very important.
If we are not able to smile, then the world will not have peace.
It is not by going out for a demonstration against nuclear missiles
that we can bring about peace.
It is with our capacity of smiling, breathing, and being peace
that we can make peace.*

Thich Nhat Hanh

Asheville Friends Meeting

Weekly Meeting for Worship: First Day singing at 9:40, regular worship at 10 a.m. 227 Edgewood Road, Asheville (258-0974).

Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business takes place on 9/14, beginning as promptly as possible. As agreed upon in our sixth month meeting, we will continue to have a break with a full meal around 1 p.m. Last month we allowed for that time to be devoted to fellowship.

Sandwich Sunday: Loaves, fishes, and fellowship after Meeting for Worship on fourth First Day (9/28). Your presence is encouraged, there's always plenty of food!

Midweek Worship and Sharing: each Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. 30 minutes of silent meeting reflecting on peace, followed by 30 minutes of worship sharing, then a stone soup meal.

Other Nearby Meetings

Swannanoa Valley Monthly Meeting: each First Day at 9:30 a.m., Black Mountain Arts Center.

Boone Monthly Meeting: each First Day at 10 a.m., at the home of John and Judy Geary, 175 Edgewood Drive.

Brevard Monthly Meeting: each First Day at 11 a.m. at the Sharing House, corner of Oakdale and Duckworth.

Celo Monthly Meeting: each First Day at 10:45 a.m., 445 Hannah Branch Road.

Clemson Worship Group: each First Day at 9 a.m., Clemson Unitarian Church.

**Are you looking for me? I am in the next seat
My shoulder is against yours.
You will not find me in the stupas, not in Indian
shrine
rooms, nor in synagogues, nor in cathedrals;
not in masses, nor kirtans, not in legs winding
around your own neck, nor in eating nothing but
vegetables.
When you really look for me, you will see me
instantly –
you will find me in the tiniest house of time.
Kabir says: Student, tell me, what is God?
God is the breath inside the breath.**

*Kabir died about five hundred years ago.
He was a Muslim mystic, well remembered
even today for his simple life and
extraordinary devotional fervor.
He reputedly lived for more than a hundred years.*

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address correction requested