

**REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON PEACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE**  
**VIRGINIA BEACH FRIENDS MEETING FOR BUSINESS**

**Third Month 10th Day 2019**

**Notes from our P&SJ Meeting, Third Month, Third Day, 2019:**

Following rise of Meeting for Worship, Liana Fleming, Sally Gudas, Robert Kent, Ramonda King, April Megginson, Kate Rogers, Curtis Spear, Lewis and Mary Pelham White, and Tom Bertrand met as a Committee and discussed the following matters:

**1. Welcoming back Curtis, Liana, Robert, Sally, Kate:**

After a period of settling in, we welcomed back to our work Curtis, who during the morning Meeting for Worship had been moved to demonstrate the remarkable recovery of his many broken bones by doing a perfect yoga headstand; Liana and Robert, who had returned from San Diego where they witnessed the construction of a new wall along the border and Liana participated in demonstrations against that construction; Sally, who with her husband, Steve, is in the process of relocating to Norfolk while continuing to facilitate transportation of volunteers and individuals needing to travel across Virginia to immigration court; and Kate, who continues to focus on caretaking needs of her family. We felt blessed by their presence and their vocal witness about the issues that most concern them.

**2. Where is your passion?** We surveyed the various Quaker organizations, interfaith coalitions for justice, and issues that have been important to Virginia Beach Friends over the past several years. Tom asked for volunteers to be our committee's liaisons for the following.

- Ramallah Friends School (April)
- American Friends Service Committee
- Friends Committee on National Legislation (Tom B. and Mary Pelham)
- Quaker United Nations Office (Elizabeth)
- Coalitions: Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, Virginia Organizing (Nancy C)
- Norfolk Catholic Worker (Tom B & Whit)
- Steady Footsteps (Tom Elder)
- ISSUE: Environmental Protection, Quaker EarthCare Witness, Pipelines, Plastics (Faye, Mark, Rosalie, Lewis, Tom K.)
- ISSUE: Immigration and refugees (Tom B., Mary Pelham, Tom K., Barbara B., Sally G)
- ISSUE: Redistricting, Fighting Voter Suppression (Mary Pelham)
- ISSUE: UN Treaty to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (Whit, Tom B.)
- ISSUE: Racial Justice & Poor People's Campaign (April, Tom K., Tom B.)
- WE NEED SEVERAL FOLKS TO COORDINATE OUR LOBBYING VISITS with our state and federal representatives

3. **Update on Poor People's Campaign Environmental Justice rally in Buckingham County.** Curtis and Tom B reported on the February 26 rally at Buckingham County Middle School in Union Hill, protesting the high-pressure pumping station at Union Hill proposed as part of the \$7.5 billion Mountain Valley and Atlantic Coast pipelines being built by Dominion Power and Duke Power to convey fracked gas. Tom K, Tom B, Steve Baggarly, and Eli Oliver drove together to this rally, where they met up with Curtis and between 750 and 1000 other concerned folks. The Reverend Dr. William Barber and former Vice President Al Gore, as well as various citizens of Buckingham County, gave powerful testimonies. 3 ½ hour drive each way!
4. **Update on Norfolk City Jail protest** – Mary Pelham & Lewis White reported on the demonstration at Norfolk City Jail two weeks ago to draw attention to the Norfolk Sheriff's cooperation with U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement to house up to 1200 ICE detainees over the past few months. Barbara Battelle, Tom B. and Tom K also showed up for this rally. Sally Gudas reported on the appointment of Luis Oyola, new organizer of the Tidewater Solidarity Collective, a project out of the Legal Aid Justice Center in Richmond. She suggested that Luis will help energize local Latino organizing. There will be a follow-up community discussion about the Norfolk Jail partnership on March 17.
5. **Update on the VICPP Central Virginia Sanctuary Network (CVSN).** Sally Gudas gave us a first-hand report on the CVSN's efforts to provide transportation to immigration-case related appointments, such as ICE check-ins and immigration hearings in Northern Virginia. Tom B described how a recent drive to a deportation hearing in Arlington Immigration Court resulted in the release of a Virginia Beach man who had spent 6 months at the Farmville Detention Center and his reunion with wife and 2-year old daughter. Curtis described how the Little Flower Catholic Worker House has a practice of meeting buses carrying released detainees with needed food and supplies.
6. **Curtis Spear's account of his travels over the past months prior to his automobile accident on New Year's Eve.** Curtis spoke of his inspiring visit to Brian Stevenson's new Civil Rights Museum, Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, and other key sites of the Civil Rights Movement in Montgomery AL; then his visits to various churches, synagogues and Buddhist temples in Florida and northern Virginia (several members of our committee have been blessed by Curtis' texted reports on all these visits and cogitations); then his marching down the coast of Georgia with Steve Baggarly and others in the Kings Bay Plowshares Coalition to protest the U.S. Navy Trident submarine base at Kings Bay and the incarceration of the Plowshares Seven. Curtis was especially moving in his description of the Plowshares pre-trial hearings at the federal courthouse in Brunswick GA on December 7 and 19. In these hearing, the defendants cited the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in their defense. All persons present, from the audience, to the defendants, to the bailiffs, to the prosecutor, to the presiding US Magistrate, according to Curtis, were aware that these issues struck to the heart of the issue of justice in our nation. See <https://www.kingsbayplowshares7.org/impact/>
7. **Upcoming Events**
  - Friday, March 15, 11 am-12 noon, "No Nuclear War, No Trident, Sign the Treaty" vigil at main gate to Norfolk Naval Shipyard on Effingham St. just north of Portsmouth Blvd. From Steve Baggarly: "South Africa just signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the first ex-nuclear weapons state to do so. 22 have signed, 28 more to go

until the Treaty goes into effect. The US could take the lead and gather the 9 states with their fingers on the button to go in on the Treaty together. It would be precious time much better spent.”

- Sunday, March 17, 2:30 pm, “DE-ICE NORFOLK,” community discussion on Norfolk Jail partnership with ICE, at the Nordan Newby Library (Main Meeting Room), 1425 Norchester Avenue, Norfolk (coordinated by the Legal Aid Justice Center)
- Also ongoing is a vigil for peace on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays each month from 11:30-12:30 at the corner of Main St. and Warwick Blvd. in Newport News. (coordinated by the Norfolk Catholic Worker)

8. April 7, our regular monthly meeting of the Committee on Peace & Social Justice will focus on four matters:

- Steve Baggarly of the Norfolk Catholic Worker will be present to talk about the Hampton Roads Campaign to convince local municipalities to declare their support for the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Steve participated in a March 4 meeting at FCNL offices on Capitol Hill where FCNL’s Diane Randall conversed with Nobel Peace Prize Winner Beatrice Fihn of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. (NOTE: this replaces the previously anticipated pot-luck discussion on Fifth First Day of March, a day when Steve and Kim will need to be in Baltimore as their son Martin visits the Maryland Institute and College of Art, where he has been admitted).
- Kim Williams (Steve’s wife) has been invited to discuss her recent visit to Rome, Italy, as one of seven women representing the American Catholic Workers who participated in the papal convocation to address clergy sexual abuse.
- We will begin our review of “The World We Seek,” the foundational statement of legislative policy by the Friends Committee on National Legislation. The General Committee of FCNL (on which Tom B serves) has invited comments from Quakers around the country. The deadline for submission of comments is the end of April.
- We need to schedule an FCNL Meetup Session late in the spring.

Submitted to the Meeting for Business by Tom Bertrand, on behalf of the Committee