

JULY NEWSLETTER



Spotlight on... Camp Fire Club & Andrew Young!

When I introduce myself as the leader of a Camp Fire club, I find that most people have either never heard of Camp Fire, or remember it by its original name "Campfire Girls". I can relate to them. Growing up in San Antonio, everyone knew what it meant to be a Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Brownie, or Girl Scout, but no one knew what Camp

Fire was. Although Camp Fire USA began in 1910 as Campfire Girls, today it has evolved into a co-ed, secular, inclusive youth service organization for boys and girls from three to eighteen years of age.

Camp Fire clubs have been active at First UU Church of Austin for many years. With the help and advice of veteran First UU Camp Fire leaders, I started the "Mighty Platypi" Camp Fire club in 2007. At the time most of our kids were between three and five years old. Today our club is still going strong thanks to the hard work and dedication of the many families involved. Our kids are now mostly in the six to eight year old range, and we're getting ready to begin our fourth year together this fall.



Camp Fire was the catalyst that brought me to First UU. Without it I may not have found this wonderful religious community. However, as I've grown in my UU faith, I've realized how much Camp Fire has taught my daughter and I about what it means to be a UU. Taking part in Camp Fire has given us a chance to put into practice the seven principles that we hold dear as Unitarian Universalists.

Camp Fire clubs teach kids to be compassionate in their relationships with both adults and other kids. Democratic decisions, conflict resolution, and



appreciation for the feelings of the other person are all stressed in the program. The children are taught that all people are equal and that they should focus on their similarities instead of their differences. They are given the freedom to express themselves and are encouraged to listen with an open mind to what others have to say.

Camp Fire badges also cover topics such as sports and games, arts and crafts, citizenship, science and technology, both physical and emotional health, and properly caring for our natural environment.

Although clubs are largely parent run at first, as the kids progress and get older

they take on more roles within the group and gain experience in the democratic process, project planning, and group dynamics. Camp Fire clubs also take on service projects in the community and learn the

importance of community involvement and social action. This year, for instance, our club planned a towel and blanket drive for the Austin Humane Society.



However, it is in its focus on the environment that Camp Fire really shines. In an age where many kids have never even seen the stars at night, Camp Fire provides a way for kids to really experience nature first hand. The seventh principle - respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part - can be a hard concept for children to understand when they're sitting in a church classroom, but Camp Fire gives children a chance to explore

nature for themselves. Our club goes camping at least once every three months and the kids learn essential outdoor skills as well as how to care for and protect the environment. These experiences are reinforced by badges such as "Wise Old Willie" which teach environmental activism and low impact camping.

In conclusion, I would highly suggest Camp Fire USA to all the UU families in Austin. Not only are the programs fun, but they teach strong ethical and moral values that mesh well with our UU principles. I hope that this article will encourage you to check out the Camp Fire programs that are available at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin for yourself. More information is available on the church website.





IN THE INTERIM

by Janet E. Newman, Interim Minister

Dear Friends,

Where did the time go? Wasn't it only yesterday when we met each other and began to plan our ministry together? Now you will go through the process again with Rev. Ed Brock, your Interim Minister for 2010 -11. Here is a characterization of Interim Ministry by my good friend and colleague, Rev. Heather Lynn Hanson.

"A Tribute to the Goat."

The goat is a reminder of the traits good interim ministers display.
 To be quick on their feet, keep their balance, Traverse rocky slopes,
 Seek the high grounds and the long view,
 Survive on a wide variety of forage,
 Stand their ground and butt heads when necessary,
 Get along with the sheep, but think independently of the flock.
 Be alert for predators and warn of danger,
 Provide nourishment and warmth when treated well,
 And be prepared, if necessary, to be a scape goat
 With the sins of the community tied to their horns
 As they depart into the wilderness...

As I told you in my report to the May meeting of the congregation, I am very pleased with the way we worked together this year. Your transition period could have been filled with bleakness, low morale, and poor spirit. Instead, I found you to be willing and capable, eager to make the most of this time in transition, and ready to embrace the challenges of change. Given all that, there is much that remains to be done, and Rev. Ed Brock and the Transition Team will guide you through it. I will watch you from afar and take great pride in your transformation as a congregation. These words by Rolf Gates provide help for us, Interim Minister and congregation, in our parting.

*So we show up,
 Burn brightly in the moment
 Live passionately,
 Hold nothing back .
 And when the moment is over;
 When our work is done,
 We step back And let go.*

May we all show up, burn brightly, live passionately – and then step back and let go when our work is over. It has been an honor to serve as your Interim Minister. All Blessings, Janet Newman

Office Transitions

We welcome Jamie Schroeder as our new bookkeeper – her years of high-level experience including accounting, human resources, and communication skills will be put to great use in our office! Please introduce yourself to her when you are next in the office and welcome her aboard.

Thanks to Sandra King for her time here, creating processes, training us to meet deadlines, and completing years-overdue tasks! We wish her well on her next professional journey.



Our new Bookkeeper,
 Jamie Schroeder



Sunday Worship

The time for the Sunday morning Worship Service is 10 a.m.



July 4: Service at 10 a.m. only. "A Government By the People" Rev. Mark Skrabacz. With the recent polls declaring our population's dissatisfaction and distrust of our government, one wonders at whom to point the finger. As the old saying goes, be careful who you point at, because there are three fingers pointing back at you. Is our government not a reflection of our social consciousness? Aren't "we, the people" the authors of our own destiny? On this anniversary of our country's Independence, Mark brings us a message designed to inspire and encourage our participation in the governance of our country...and an understanding of just who is responsible.

July 11: Service at 10 a.m. only. "Tiger Woods and the Beer Cart Girl." Rev. Timothy Tutt Okay, you read that title and you think you know what my sermon's going to be, right? Given the recent Sports news you could make some reasonable assumptions. And that's exactly the point of my sermon, our assumptions aren't always reasonable. Sometimes they're flat wrong, and sometimes they're downright hurtful. But "Tiger Woods and the Beer Cart Girl" has more appeal as a sermon title than "An Examination of Naaman and the Servant Girl in the Book of II Kings." Rev. Timothy Tutt is the Pastor of United Christian Church of Austin -- an Open and Affirming congregation affiliated with the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Tim has served that church since June 2001. He is active in interreligious and social justice affairs, having served on the Board of Austin Area Interreligious Ministries for six years and currently serving on the board of Texas Impact. Tim's spouse, Amy is the Austin CROP Walk Coordinator. They have two elementary-aged children in the Pflugerville schools. Rev. Tutt has preached at First UU twice before.

July 18: Service at 10 a.m. only. The Board of Trustees will conduct the service on July 18th. At the service we will introduce our new mission and also introduce our next Interim Minister, the Rev. Ed Brock.

July 25: Service at 10 a.m. only. "What Do Fundamentalists Know About Religion That Unitarians Have Forgotten (and Need to Relearn)?" Gary Bennet. One of the sadder truths of the last half century has been the decline of Liberal Protestant denominations in the US, while Fundamentalists seem to thrive; resurgent Fundamentalism is an uncomfortable reality among other world religions as well. We will try to explore why, and what we can learn from traditional religion about how to prosper and make a difference. Gary Bennett is a UU since 1970 and a member of FUUCA since 2005.

A Covenant of Healthy Relations

As religious community, we promise:

- To nurture the spiritual growth of people of all ages in our church.
- To keep communications with one another direct, honest, and respectful in a spirit of compassion, love and trust.
- To support our church with generous gifts of time, talent, and money in gratitude for the fellowship, joy and inspiration we receive.
- To be present with others through life's inevitable transitions.
- To make our church a safe place to express our deepest fears and our greatest joys.
- To forgive ourselves and others when we fall short of expectations, showing good humor and the optimism required for moving forward and calling ourselves back into covenant.
- To engage with the larger world to justice and peace.

We acknowledge and commit ourselves to the work of sustaining our beloved community, welcoming all in good faith and ministering to each other.

Thus do we covenant with one another.

Settled Minister Search is Underway & in Capable, Caring Hands



Lynda West, Gary Bennett, Jill Wiggins, Michael Kersey, Maria Nehring, Dale Whiteaker-Lewis, Jill Smith, John Franks, Sharon Moore

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am delighted to report that the Settled Minister Search Committee is up and running. The nine members were introduced and invested at the congregational meeting on May 16. They are Gary Bennett, John Franks, Michael Kersey, Sharon Moore, Maria Nehring, Jill Smith, Lynda West, Dale Whiteaker-Lewis, and Jill Wiggins.

I can say unequivocally that they are capable, widely experienced, attentive, good-hearted, and dedicated to the well-being of our First UU Austin church community. They were selected because they are known and respected by the congregation, have demonstrated compassion, energy and commitment to serving the needs of our community, and their cumulative experience represents the wide-ranging areas of our church.

The Search Committee is charged with discovering who we are today and what we value for our future as a spiritual community; this is a three step process. The first step is gathering the information: hundreds of hours of conversations, meetings and reading and listening to sermons ahead of them. The UUA activities and timeline design call for an information-gathering period over the next several months, during which the committee will talk with the congregation about what qualities you believe are most important in our next settled minister. This information will be collected through surveys, interviews, and group meetings. The second step is to translate this information into a packet that accurately communicates our values and vision and then make it available to prospective candidates and the congregation. The names of all prospective candidates and the deliberations surrounding their candidacy will be held absolutely confidential by the Search committee. The final step is finding and proposing a candidate for senior minister—an individual who is compatible with the congregation and who can help us realize our vision and aspirations. This year-long process is expected to climax in late spring, when the Search Committee presents their selected candidate to the congregation.

To make their work as transparent as possible, the committee will communicate with you, the congregation, regularly through the monthly newsletter, web-page, Sunday announcements, one-on-one conversations, special events, and other avenues. They will staff a booth in the gallery on Sunday when members can respond to your questions and comments. Search Committee members now have distinctive name badges to help you readily recognize those you might not already know.

Please join me and the First UU Austin Board of Trustees in welcoming and offering your support and assistance to these hardworking members of our community. We wish them well. *Michael West, Board Member*

No Sitting in the Shade

"Gardens are not made by singing "Oh, how beautiful," and sitting in the shade." Mark Barkan thought enough of Rudyard Kipling to include these words in his own memorial service on June 12.



The annual fall Canvass is moving from the planning to the action stage. This Canvass envisions many Canvassers. You will soon learn how to accept your opportunity to volunteer. It will be easy.

No experience necessary: all you need is a love of our Church, and a willingness to participate.

You will get to singing how beautiful it is, and you will not want to be sitting in the shade.

Stay tuned: more later. *Bill Edwards, Chair of Stewardship Committee*

Seniors' Luncheon

No senior lunch in July and August...

back in September, same time, same place, same delicious food and company.

Have a great summer!

October Play Auditions & Summer Bargains



Action never stops with Paradox Players!

Auditions for our October show *Incorruptible* will be July 12 and 13 at 7:00 in Howson Hall. Roles are open for five men and three women, ages 20 to 70. Rehearsals start in mid August. Directed by Gary Payne, this madcap dark comedy is set in a French monastery 1250 AD. Please contact Gary at 441-4720 for more information or to schedule an audition.

Summer is our time to take stock of our stock, and find homes for our expanding inventory. Best bargain of the summer - let Paradox Players expand your literary taste, your wardrobe, your interior décor! We will "lend" you a wonderful library of plays, just for storing them. You want to add pizzazz to your closet? You can "borrow" costumes from Paradox, and lend them back when needed. Or how about a boost to your interior décor, furniture beyond your wildest dreams? Paradox will lend you antiques tables, upholstered chairs, dining chairs. All you need to do is lend them back for 6 weeks if needed, and then you will see your own pieces starring in a Paradox production. Please contact Ann Edwards at annann@austin.rr.com if you'd like to play a role in storing theater craft.



Readers' Theater is on vacation till September 13, while we research more scripts to read aloud at our meetings. Watch this column for announcements of the next season of meetings, on the second Mondays of the month.

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin

Have you sipped *Three Cups of Tea*?

July 2010

NEWSLETTER

If you've now read *Three Cups of Tea* and are itching to talk about it, you'll have your chance on Sunday, August 22. That's when RE and Social Action will host a potluck luncheon and discussion in Howson Hall at 11:30. Sandwich fixings and beverages will be provided - we ask that you bring bread, salad or dessert to share.



Don't know yet what this *Three Cups of Tea* is all about? Well, your church invites you to join us this summer as we read the book *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson. Our goal is to have EVERYONE in the congregation read this amazing book! Why, do you ask? Well, our children and youth this summer will be participating in a social action project called *Pennies for Peace*, helping to build schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan. That program was developed by Greg Mortenson, and his amazing journey from climbing K2 to building over 150 schools is what the book *Three Cups of Tea* is about. So, similar to the City of Austin's "Mayor's Book Club", we would like everyone to read *Three Cups of Tea* - for fellowship, for understanding, and for support and encouragement to our children and youth.



The book will be available for purchase at the Social Action table in the Gallery on Sundays throughout the summer. We will also have several copies in the church library for you to check out.

See you on August 22nd! Sincerely, Corinna Whiteaker-Lewis Co-chair, Social Action Committee

Catching up with Jack Harris-Bonham!

What's up with our former intern/interim minister Jack? Over a recent phone chat, he wanted to let everyone know that he is doing quite well and sends us all warm greetings. He spent two years living in Denver and working with special needs kids in the public school system. However, this past Easter Sunday he was called to serve the First Christian Church "Disciples of Christ" of Hamilton, Montana. Hamilton, population 10,000, is nestled in the



Bitterroot Valley, south of Missoula, close by the Idaho border. He reports "If I look out my back porch, I can see the Sapphire Mountains, and if I look out the front I see the Bitterroot Mountain range. I feel like I've been here my whole life. It's wonderful." He's fully settled in with his dog, a border terrier named Delphi and he's already seeing church membership increase each week. He remains grateful for his time at First UU, and thanks us again for giving him the gift of ordination. If you'd like to reach Jack, his phone number is 406-381-5517, or write to him at 106 Daniel Court, Hamilton, MT 59840

Sunday July 11th Special Offering for Capital Area Food Bank.



On the second Sunday, July 11, we will donate our special charitable offering to the Capital Area Food Bank. CAFB has been serving Travis county and the surrounding 20 counties since 1981. We voted to include them in our special collections. Try to imagine what it would be like to be hungry and not have food in your house for yourself or your children. For those in need, the food bank supplies food and help to 350 partner sites which distributed 2 million pounds of food last year. They also advocate to end hunger.

There is always a need for volunteers at the Food Bank which is located at 8201 S. Congress Ave. (282-2111) <austinfoodbank.org> Let's be very generous with our donation to this very important local organization. No one should ever go hungry! Barbara Denny

SWUUSI 2010 - A Multigenerational Summer Camp Experience

The Southwestern Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute is happening Aug. 1st - 6th, the second straight year at Western Hills Guest Ranch, Sequoyah State Park, Waggoner, OK. This facility resembles the one at Lake Texoma that was home to SWUUSI for many years. The best way to get information about it is to talk to people who have gone and go back regularly, including Margaret Borden, Melanie Walter-Mahoney, Pete and Kim Akenhead, Marcus Barnes, and Mary Jane Ford. They have mentioned as reasons for going: the people, community, stimulating theme speakers, workshops, inspiring worship services, good music and music making, evening entertainment, and the beauty of the lake shore. A lot is offered for a relatively low price to make an economical family or single person's vacation.

This year the theme talk is "Swimming in the Deep End" by District Executive, Rev. Susan Smith and Connie Goodbread, CRE, a Faith Development Consultant. Sunset talks by the lake are by Rev. Aaron White of Dallas. Artist in Residence is Nick Page of Boston, who will lead the SWUUSI choir through a performance Thursday night, and will present his "New Epiphany Revival Show" on Monday. There is early morning yoga, bird watching, and water aerobics each full day.



Pool Party for the Sharing Suppers and Couples Club

The Couples Club and the Sharing Suppers group are joining forces and planning a pool party in July. Sharon and Brian Moore are very generously opening their home to both groups. Everyone should bring a favorite pot luck dish and your own beverage. The fun will begin at 6:30 on Saturday, July 24th.

There is a special sign-up sheet on the bulletin board outside office #8. You may also e-mail Linda Buehlmann@ sbcglobal.net or call her at 323-5334. We will limit the party to 50 people so don't delay. Sign up today and get ready for all the fun.



*Brent Baldwin
Music Director*

MUSIC MATTERS

While the Children's Choir is on summer break, Danielle Solan, Primary Choir Director, will be casting musical spells with your children at Hogwarts' camp, July 26th-30th! All camp attendees will have the opportunity to work with Ms. Danielle and to participate in a musical offering during the worship service on August 1st, so plan to attend. Campers will receive more details during camp week. In the meantime, we are preparing for an exciting 2010-2011 Children's Choir season. If you have any questions, please contact Chris Heidel, Children's Choir Coordinator at chris@chrisandtoby.com.

Children's Choir Magic!



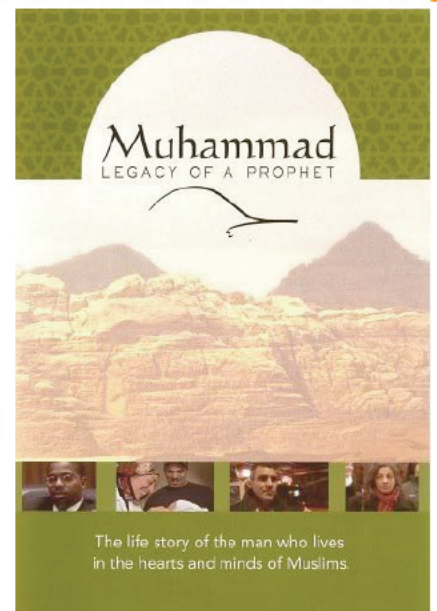
July Spiritual Movie Night

Continuing with a theme of movies about religious figures (June is Buddha), the July Spirituality Movie Night will be on "Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet," a PBS documentary. I'll pick some similar spiritual fare for August and am open for suggestions. The movie night is July 16 at 7 p.m.

The movie tells the story of a seventh century prophet who, in 23 years, changed world history and continues to shape the lives of more than 1.2 billion people. You can read more about the movie here: <http://www.pbs.org/muhammad/>

We will, as usual, discuss not only what we think of the film but also what thoughts the movie sparks about Islam and spirituality.

I will also show a children's movie so there will be childcare for kids over age 5. For more information contact me, Scott, at Scott@austinuu.org



Children's Religious Education

Summer Curricula and Pennies for Peace

June 6th we started our Summer Curricula, and so far, everything has been running smoothly. The Pre-K class is learning about our church and the UU religion through the "Chalice Children" curriculum. They have been immersed in painting projects, games, and coloring activities every Sunday morning.

Grades K-12 are learning how they can make a positive impact on both a global and local scale through the "Pennies for Peace" curriculum. As part of this curriculum, the RE Department has set out jars with "Pennies for Peace" stickers on them – that the kids helped decorate. Please put your spare pennies in these jars! At the end of the summer we'll count up all the change and then write a check to the "Pennies for Peace Foundation." The proceeds will go to help fund children's schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan.



Painting Update

The Painting Committee has decided on our color palette! We've picked twelve colors total to use in the rooms and in the hallway. Each room will have about four pastel or light colors to keep color continuity between the rooms. If you're interested in seeing the color schematics, drop by the RE Office on Sunday. We've also decided to use a VOC-Free paint. That means we are using a paint that contains no Volatile Organic Compounds. The Envirosafe semi-gloss coating that we picked will have fewer odors than normal paints and will dry faster.

We still need volunteers! We'll be painting some of the weekends in July and August and we don't have enough volunteers signed up.

We still need painting supplies! We're asking for donations of paintbrushes, drop-clothes, paint rollers, paint trays, edging tools, painting tape, scrub-brushes, buckets and whatever other supplies you have sitting around collecting dust! If you're interested in volunteering to paint or in donating painting supplies, please e-mail me at Beth@austinuu.org.

Volunteer Opportunities

We have many volunteer opportunities to help you give back the eight hours you committed to when you registered your child with the church.

Sunday RE Assistant Teachers help out the RE Teachers by engaging the kids, handing out supplies and participating in the lesson. Come sit in with the classes and enrich your Sunday spirituality in a different way from the service.

Sunday RE Classroom Clean-Up Volunteers will be asked to help pick-up the classroom after class time. This gives the teacher more time to spend with the class.

Weekday Volunteers will help out in the RE Office with organizational tasks, or by running errands. This is a great way to get involved if you don't have time to help out on Sundays.

Coming up next month... Get to know the Nursery Childcare Workers

Pick up your Summer RE Curriculum Pamphlet or Calendar of RE Dates to Remember outside the RE Office!

If you want more information on volunteering to be a Sunday Teacher's Assistant or a Sunday RE Classroom Clean-Up Volunteer, please e-mail me at Beth@austinuu.org.



Report from Hogwarts

Camp begins on July 26th, when about 60 children start a fun week of activities inspired both by the stories of Hogwarts and UU principles. We welcome volunteers to help in various ways both before and during the camp. Church members will enjoy a taste of Hogwarts on Sunday, August 1, both during the service and during the extended coffee hour afterwards.



June was a month of transitions for the high school graduates.



On June 11, YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) had its annual year-end lock-in. Elections were held. Shannon Mahoney, as a graduating senior, stepped down as co-dean, and Milenko Loncar is new co-dean. Patrick Balaguer will continue as co-dean. Buddy Wilkes was elected director of social action. On June 13th high school seniors bridged out of the non-adult part of religious education: Natalie Houchen, Shannon Mahoney, Aaron Osmer, Lauren Tothoro and Sierra Tothoro. After each spoke they were walked across the

symbolic bridge to where the Young Adult group welcomed them.

The comments were moving, inspiring, reflective and stirring. They noted they have been attending religious education here their entire life. Each spoke about their plans for next year. Natalie will be attending Northwestern as part of its theater program, Aaron will be attending University of Texas in San Antonio. Shannon is taking a year off, a gap year, as she explores her options and opportunities. Lauren will attend NYU in its acting program while Sierra will attend Mason Gross-Rutgers in the theater program. Rachel Loncar and Michael Matthis also graduated, but did not go through the bridging ceremony.

I want to end this monthly report with a part of Aaron's comments to the congregation:

"...I don't think this church is quite done with me. With any luck, I'll be back in Austin in another year, and there's no getting rid of me then. This church is as much my home as Austin is. So before I leave, I want you to promise me one thing. When I'm back next year, I want to find this church to be better than it already is. I want the youth this coming year to have even more opportunities than I had, and to love this church even more than I do. And I want you to treat each other as if you were all still youth, finding new experiences, and running the church not on the usual bills and pledges and cynicism and politics, but on the hope and energy of something completely new.

Every day is a new day, every sunrise is a new sun, and next year,
this church will be a new church, for better or for worse.

So make it for better." -Aaron Osmer

First Unitarian Universalist

Church of Austin

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One Church. Many Beliefs.

Interim Minister

Rev. Dr. Janet Newman ext 304

Executive Director:

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Director of Religious Education:

Lara Douglass ext 305

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Bits and Pieces of Interest!

Harvest the Power, Integrity, session 7, July 21st. Harvest the Power, a twelve month UU leadership development curriculum, will continue with session seven. It will be facilitated by Cyndi Loudon in the Gallery from 7 - 9PM. All are welcome. Sign up at the Adult RE table in the Gallery on Sundays. Please join us for Meet and Eat in Howson Hall at 6PM prior to class.

Next Interweave Get-Together Thursday July 15 Interweave is the First UU group for lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered folks and their friends and allies. Visitors are always welcome. The next get-together will be Thursday July 15th, 7:00-8:00 PM. The front room is reserved for us at Genuine Joe's Coffeehouse, 2001 West Anderson Lane. For more info or if you have any questions or ideas, please contact Peter at didit@austin.rr.com or at 374-9688.

Singalong Saturday, July 24: This month's Singalong will be held on the fourth Saturday, July 24th, from 7:30 to 10:30 at the Friend's Meeting House on 3701 E. MLK Blvd. Please bring snacks and finger foods, musical instruments, and copies of songs you want to sing with the group. Copies of "Rise Up Singing" will be available. Please do not bring alcohol, since this is not a custom of the Quakers. For more information contact Larry Vaughn 469-0029 or email lavest@sbcglobal.net. If you want to add somebody to the email list, contact Mary Jane Ford at mjjaneford@grandecom.net.