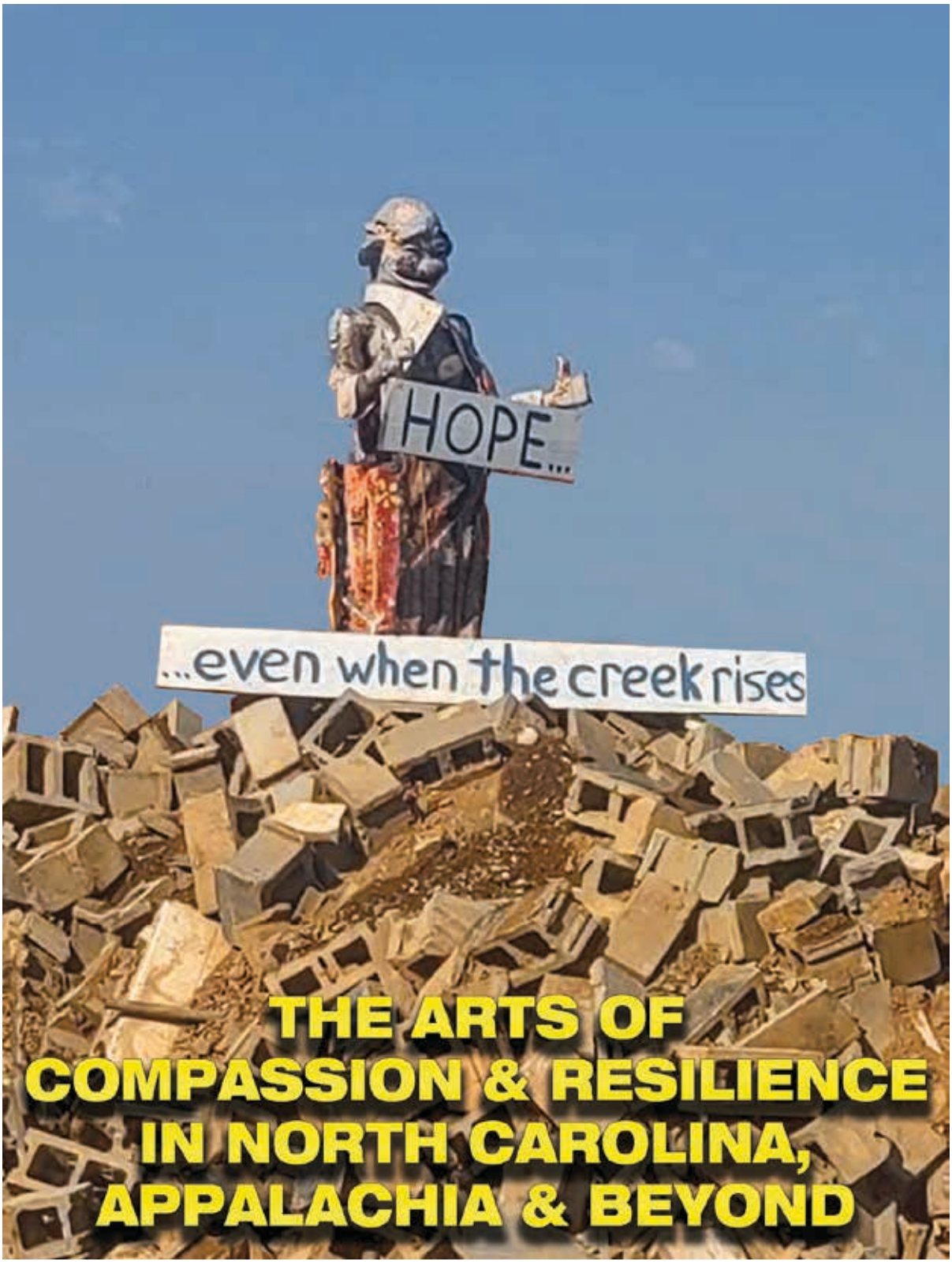
FQA

Types and Shadows



THE ARTS OF COMPASSION & RESILIENCE IN NORTH CAROLINA, APPALACHIA & BEYOND

Issue ***#102*** Winter 2025

Journal of the *Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts*

FQA *Types and Shadows*

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Cover Photo: Rubble and statue along the the side of a road in the River Arts District of Asheville, NC. Source unknown.

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From the Editor

I don't know about thee, Friend, but from my vantage point, 2024 has been a year of disaster upon calamity, followed by near-misses, debacles and tragedies, with the horizon ahead looking definitely uncertain, ominous and gloomy.

When I stumbled on the cover photo, an impromptu cry of hope amid the debris of one of the year's worst natural cataclysms, it seemed more than simply a makeshift marker amid the floods in western North Carolina after Hurricane Helene in September. This event was mentioned in our last issue; but its impact is still unfolding even now, three months afterward.

The Asheville pillar on the cover, created from and amid the debris of Asheville, North Carolina's River Arts District, which was a thriving, booming place until a few days before, struck us as having more than local significance: it was a stubborn sign that art and creativity, like life, can be dogged, defiant and – despite being temporarily bogged down in rubble and splattered with toxic mud – indomitable.

The same goes for Quakers and creativity.

The community around Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting in Black Mountain, North Carolina, just east of Asheville, is learning about coping with disaster. On September 26, 2024, its meetinghouse, about 22 years old, was perched quietly at the intersection of Flat Creek and the Swannanoa River, at the center of a not untypical round of worship, committee and service sessions.

Forty-eight hours later, the two rivers were spilling out its windows and doors, back toward their still-swollen banks, leaving damage and thick coatings of toxic sludge on almost everything inside.

Cleanup is ongoing three months later; the building still stands, but its fate is essentially sealed. Meanwhile the meeting continues.

A friend of Friends, ***Dawn Beasom Purdom*** lives nearby with her family. She volunteered to update us on the aftermath of the epic floods, and her report and some photos are inside.

Hurricane Helene was but one kind of natural disaster that struck in North America: wildfires, tornadoes, punishing heat waves and droughts afflicted other regions.

Alongside these physical torments, there were plenty of social and culture disturbances.

Featured Quaker Artist

A Friend familiar in these pages, ***Jennifer Elam***, now of Berea, Kentucky, has for years been struggling with these cultural upheavals, outward and inward.

Jennifer Elam

One outcome, begun in 2017, came to fruition this past summer: a book, ***Hillbilly Rising***.

It's part memoir, part polemic, part a mix of art, healing and prayer, and part *cri de cœur* in the face of often terrifying times.

An active visual artist, Jennifer's book is generously illustrated.

These contributions tell us of resilience as well as trauma. This is part of the work of arts in our time. Hope is not always, or merely "pretty." It can embody, and encourage re-creation in the face of desolation.

We need its encouragement, especially now.

Chuck Fager

A Quiet Creek, a Friendly River, And Then . . .

[Since 2003], the Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting-house [has been] tucked into a quiet neighborhood in the heart of Black Mountain, North Carolina.

The meetinghouse--before Helene

On September 27, 2024 all that changed when Hurricane Helene brought 30 inches of rain and strong winds. The resulting 1000-year flood ravaged Western North Carolina and severely damaged the meetinghouse.

The raging rivers ate away at the bank, leaving the small building within a few feet of its edge. The flood waters rose several feet inside the building, spreading thick toxic mud and ruining most everything that was within. The property and surrounding properties were also littered with debris and fallen trees from farther upriver.

Other properties adjoining the meetinghouse have aready been bulldozed.

The meetinghouse after the September 27, 2024 flood

Even in the aftermath of the deluge, you can see that this meetinghouse was set in a beautiful spot. However, the location is no longer safe to occupy.

The members were already concerned about their proximity to the river, and the meetinghouse had recently been assessed to see how to make it safer. Unfortunately, the potential measures were not viable and may not have been enough in any case to prevent the flood's damage.

Swannanoa Friends are currently waiting to see if the property will qualify for a joint FEMA/state partnership that would purchase the property for the assessed value the day before the storm. The land would then become property of the state, which would keep it undeveloped and would allow it to be returned to its natural state. NC would then likely turn it over to the town of Black Mountain to maintain and possibly use as a greenway in accordance with FEMA guidelines.

Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting

There have been many applications for this program, and it will likely be spring before they hear if their property will get an offer. Then they will move forward with a decision on what steps to take next.

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If the meeting is not approved for the grant program, they will likely be left with the financial and physical burden of demolishing the building and clearing the land themselves.

Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting

In the meantime, Friends are worshiping in nearby churches which have graciously opened their doors to the Meeting. They are currently gathering at St. James Episcopal Church, and on Zoom.

I spoke to Chris DeBeer of Swannanoa Friends about the experience, and he expressed the Meeting's thanks for all the support and kindness from the surrounding local and church communities, as well as all those who have reached out online. They have experienced -- as so many of us living here in Western North Carolina -- the kindness of strangers and the coming together of our community.

I live in neighboring Asheville just blocks from Biltmore Village in which the Swannanoa river crested at 26-plus feet covering buildings and leaving behind more than a foot of toxic mud on all surfaces. My home thankfully escaped serious damage, but it will take a great deal of time, money and careful planning throughout the region to recover from Helene's devastation. Progress is being made each and every day, but the enormity of the destruction and the vastness of the land affected is like nothing Appalachia has ever seen in recorded history.

The destruction stretches along rivers, streams and creeks for hundreds of miles. It will take years to make decisions for the future and find our new normal.

Meanwhile, life in Western North Carolina is still very complicated as 2024 meets 2025. Hundreds of roads and dozens of bridges are still closed due to damage or total loss. This is causing havoc between detours and heavy traffic for many to travel just a few miles from their homes.

[A recent update – New damage to I-40

The worst disruption of truck and passenger traffic in western North Carolina, including Black Mountain, to and from Tennessee and parts of Virginia came on Interstates 40 and 26, chunks of which were collapsed by Helene's floods. Repairs on the twisting, steep roadbeds could take years, though optimistic forecasts predicted one-lane slow traffic on the interstates could resume by January 1 2025.

Photo from The Mountaineer, Waynesville NC

But then on December 22, more rains collapsed another chunk of I-40 near the NC-Tennessee border, and washed away the upbeat repair forecasts as well.]

Public running water did not return to the city of Asheville until mid-October, and even then it was non-potable (no good for cooking or drinking). Many homes also may have lead and copper in their pipes which was released by post-flood chemical use, so many residents are waiting for copper and lead kits to test the water in their homes. That leaves many of us still using bottled water to cook and drink.

There are so many displaced and homeless people here this winter and thousands who have lost everything they owned. Thousands more have also lost jobs, and a large migration is underway of people leaving – some maybe forever. Despite all the hardship, there is a real sense of community and a general belief that we will come out stronger from this devastation and build back better and safer. We are so thankful for the kindnesses which have blessed us in these past months.

Dawn Beasom Purdom

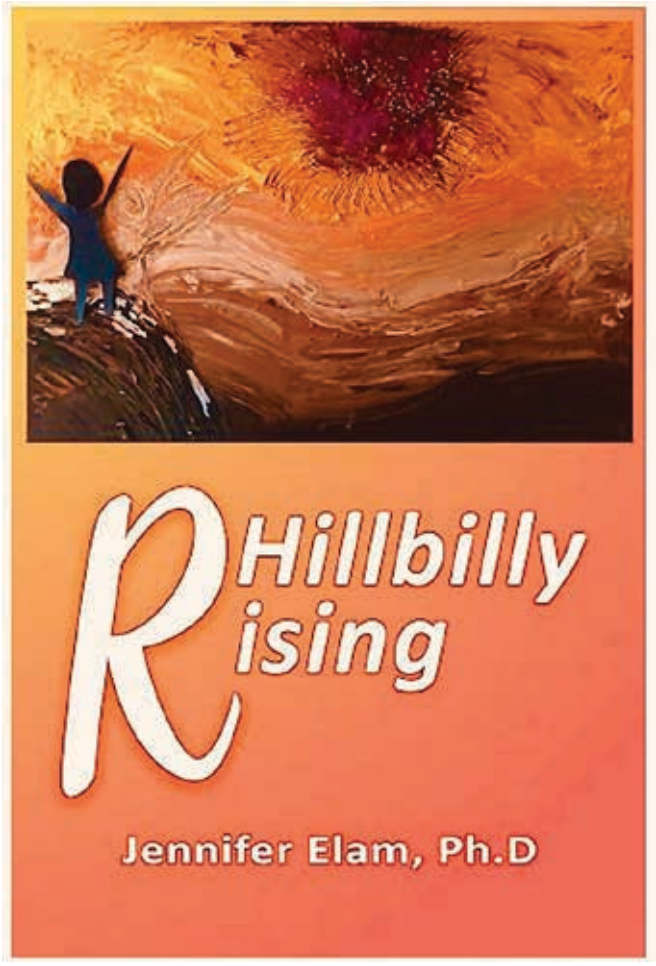
Featured Quaker Artist

Jennifer Elam

Hillbilly Rising, a Sampler

[lightly edited excerpts]

"Congratulations, JD Vance! Thank you for energizing me in 2017 to write this book. When I read your book, ***Hillbilly Elegy***, I started writing and could not stop until I wrote ***Hillbilly Rising***. We have a lot in common in our backgrounds, but some differences in our hopes for Appalachia. I want risings, not an elegy.



JD, you brought attention to Appalachia and I am grateful for that. Appalachia has been one of the most invisibly oppressed parts of the country and now it is visible. While there is attention, we need to be heard. We need to get resources to help people, especially food, homes, good jobs, education, safety, health, and appreciation of the music and dance.

We need basics so that Appalachian people can live their dreams. And for those of us with any part Appalachian, we need to appreciate it!
Yet the story is a bit more complex than what you write.... There is also some Appalachian history you forgot to consider in characterizing us all as dumb, lazy and drug addicted.

Now, about 'up by your bootstraps.' I heard that phrase a lot in my young life. I noticed that physically that is an impossible act. I was able to do it metaphorically, only with a lot of support, just like you. There is a fine line between condemning and inspiring someone with that bootstrap concept....

Elam Family Photo

Jennifer Elam in 1950s

And about those stereotypes of Appalachians as dumb, lazy, and drug addicted, I must say that in my family, I have family members with the highest IQs I have come across and as a psychologist, I have done a LOT of IQ testing. Everyone worked from early morning till late, 'most every day of our lives. Drugs were not allowed, though we did experiment behind our parents' backs....

In the next generation, drugs have caused more problems, as they have across the globe — both legal and illegal drugs. I just want the reader to notice that your stereotypes are not the major Appalachian characteristics that I have known, JD. Deep faith, hard work, loyalty, family care, survival skills, knowing how to fix anything … those are the strengths I have seen, in addition to trauma and very hard lives...."

I was born in August 1952. When I was two, my daddy took our little family and left the family farm that had been in the family since the 1790s....

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My parents tried to buy a farm in Waddy, Kentucky, deep in the country east of Louisville. My dad sold juice for the Home Juice Company in addition to the farming. We were really poor; but my dad always said, "We are NOT poor. We just don't have money."

Elam Family Photo

Mama and Me

Mama and I gathered black walnuts or pop bottles on the side of the road regularly. We could sell the walnuts and return the pop bottles to collect the deposits that were paid on the bottles. We used the money for food. Many times, we got enough money to buy a loaf of bread, a pound of bologna, and a little cake to cut into four pieces, my favorite meal.... Most of the time when on the farm, we went barefooted. But we always had one pair of shoes to wear when we went out to school or church or visiting family. Those are the three times we left the farm....

I was in 2nd grade when we moved there, and we stayed until half-way through my 5th grade year. We went to church and my 5th grade teacher, Mrs. Easter, played the piano at church. That church was the Graefenburg Methodist Church. My sister Paula and I sang in church. I don't know how I did that since I did not talk and cannot carry a tune .... I gave my life to God in that little church at age 7; that meant a life of service. I have been faithful to that commitment, though service to God has meant different things along the way.

My daddy held his Appalachian heritage dear, and held it for me when I couldn't. He wanted so much for me; he wanted me to have what I wanted: to go to college, travel the world, and realize my deepest heart's desires. So, all my life, when I encountered the bias, the discrimination, the loss of perceived IQ points as soon as I opened my mouth with my Southern/Appalachian accent, I just declared that such a reaction was the other person's problem and it had nothing to do with me.

Elam Family Photo

Daddy Elam

Even so, I spent much of my life outside Appalachia, assimilating into whatever culture I found myself. I took on whatever accent I needed, talked and behaved in ways I needed to in order to fit in as long as it did not go against my values. I wanted more for my life than was possible as a hillbilly. To do that, though, I unconsciously turned my back on my heritage as well as a piece of my own soul.

Home has been an elusive concept for me.... Although I have always felt a deep sense of belonging in the universe and a deep faith in my standing and place with God, I have lived in many physical spaces on this earth and traveled the world widely.

More than place, "home" has come in moments: as a child in Sunday School, early life with family, in school, times of growing and learning, times with friends and lovers, sitting in silence among Quakers, but less so in a place.... Although home was elusive, most of my life, I have been grounded in family, then in Quakers.

I have spent my whole life dealing with hillbilly stereotypes, especially in trying to get educated and have a career despite them. Somehow, I knew that embracing my Appalachian heritage was oxymoronic with my deep desire for college and career that had been calling me from a deep place since I was about six years old and knew I wanted to be a teacher. I focused on my goals.

In doing that, I unconsciously concealed my Appalachian heritage. I heard my daddy encouraging my dreams of college.... My Nana also encouraged me and I lived with her when I started college in Dayton, Ohio. I worked hard, cleaning tables in the cafeteria and waitressing all through college, even into graduate school.

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Now, my Appalachian heritage identity crisis demands reckoning. I feel called to better understand that heritage and its meaning for me. I had a conversation with Silas House, an Appalachian writer, telling him about my identity crisis. He said, "Jennifer, it sounds like you feel guilty." I felt the truth deeply, and quickly responded, "No, not guilt, it's loss.". . .

While a PhD student at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill from 1986-1990, a friend, Dr. Glenn, said to me one day, "Jennifer, YOU are a Quaker." Well, knowing just about nothing about Quakers, I had no idea what that meant, but I soon learned. After I graduated from the University of North Carolina, I was offered a one year teaching position at Eastern Kentucky University. I was so excited that I remember lying on the floor and stomping my feet, pounding my fists, and squealing in excitement.

After my one year of teaching at EKU, I moved to Berea and became a school psychologist in the Scott County schools, supervising University of Kentucky interns learning to work in Early Intervention, my specialty. As always, I enjoyed the teaching part most!

I also helped to start a contra dance group called the Oh! Contraire Dance Association that continues to this day. Dancing was a big part of my life – all kinds of dancing. But I loved Appalachian clogging the best. Those old-time fiddles and banjos playing are still the closest thing to Heaven that I know. Is that my hillbilly heritage coming through again?

In 1991 my neighbor across the street invited me to Quaker (Friends) meeting. I remembered what Dr. Glenn had said and accepted the invitation. Once in the meeting, I felt at home in a way that I had not felt in any faith community in my life. I WAS a Quaker; the silence appealed to me. The social justice appealed to me. The contemplative spirituality fit.

I did not just find Quakers; I fell in love with Quakers. In 1993, Parker Palmer, a well-known author, was the Lilly professor at Berea College and joined Berea Friends Meeting (Quakers). I did not know he was famous as a writer in the fields of education, community, leadership, spirituality, and social change, or I would never have had the nerve to approach him, but he "spoke to my condition" as Quakers would say. I asked him many times to help me understand Quakers, and he did....

He suggested that I go to Pendle Hill in Pennsylvania; at the time it was called a "Quaker Center for Study and Contemplation." PH is now called a "Quaker Study, Retreat and Conference Center" and is essentially the world center for Quakerism. I was planning a trip to the New Jersey shore for a dance weekend and decided to stop by Pendle Hill and check it out. A few days after I got home, they offered me a summer internship and my life was about to change profoundly once again. . . .

Photo by Chuck Fager

Most surprising of all during my time at Pendle Hill, arts and spirituality became a focus for me; not just as a fun exercise with children but creativity as a core spiritual connection with the Divine – though children often know more about that connection than adults can know.

Like me, many adults learned at a young age that art was for "talented" people and that is not me/us. (At Pendle Hill, with arts and spirituality teacher Sally Palmer, I unlearned that lesson to learn instead the lessons about the importance of creativity and spirituality.) I had learned in second grade that I could not draw the flower like the teacher wanted, so I was not talented and was not an artist. I then pursued academics, but something was always missing....

Sally believed that creativity was for everyone....

Photo by Jennifer Elam

Circle of Life
Artwork by Jennifer Elam ©2024

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In 2012, my daddy got sick, the first of four periods of time during which he needed extended care. Being close to my parents my whole life and early on internalizing the rock-solid commitment to family, it seemed quite natural that I would care for them. I spent four weeks in the hospital with him. I kept hearing a calling to care for my parents in their aging and also heard that it would be hard. I was on sabbatical and had career intentions that had to change. I said, "yes" to this call, but had no idea how hard the hard parts would become nor what all was waiting for me.

Photo by jennifer Elam

Looking through the barn door

During the six years I cared for my parents, four times my dad had to be in the hospital and/or rehab for four weeks to three months. I remember on one occasion, early on, I was in his room when the doctor came in. They had rotating doctors so a different person would come every two days or so (and that is a story for another day. How in the heck do you have rotating doctors and give good care? The answer is, you don't....)

In the fall of 2015 and into 2016, Daddy got colon cancer with major complications. This time it was four months in the hospital and in rehab. He began supervising the farming rather than doing it himself and I managed his business.

I must confess again that when I finished reading JD Vance's ***Hillbilly Elegy*** in 2017, I cussed. Forgive me, God. But then, when I saw how that book was being used, I cussed more, a lot more. I had to ask forgiveness many times for cussing related to that book. Now, don't get me wrong, the part that is JD's experience is just JD's story. But the use of that book to embolden stereotypes raised my ire, hugely.

As I have said, many of my early experiences were somewhat similar to JD's. We left Kentucky on what they call the "hillbilly highway" because my parents could not make a living. I had many negative experiences along the way of biases and discrimination toward me as a "hillbilly." So, I wondered, why in God's name, would anyone want to embolden those stereotypes of Appalachian people?

In December of 2017, I got a call that Daddy was unable to swallow. After a month of intensive hospital and hospice care, in January of 2018, he died from complications.

Mama and Daddy had been living for each other for the last four years of their lives. She died six days after him. Had they lived three more months, until Daddy's 92nd birthday, they would have been married 70 years....

My family's farm is a small rickety old beef cattle farm amidst what has become miles of gorgeous and perfectly groomed horse farms. Hobby farms they are called. The regulations in that part of Kentucky are so intense that we can find no way to make a living or even to break even on the farm....

I walked through the pastures of the farm with my nephew as I had with his older brother, and we all three felt the depth of feeling. We agreed that walking through those fields, we had a feeling of connection in the depths of our bones and DNA that we did not feel anywhere else in the world.

There is an Adena mound on the farm [built long ago by an unknown native group] that was one of five lookouts that lie in a circle in north Fayette County, Kentucky. I named my part of the farm *The Native Heritage Farm*. I asked my nephew if he would come out to the mound and pray with me. He did. I told him that I knew that in his tradition prayers are spoken out loud and asked if he might like to say a prayer. He prayed. Amazingly, his prayer, that of a very young man and my family's next generation, paralleled the prayer I had prayed silently. I was in the Presence of Spirit.

I looked out over the pastures. I looked further. One can see for miles in all directions from the mound. And I could now see the incredible beauty that others

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had told me was there. I prayed for this moment of intergenerational healing to become the new reality for this piece of land. Tears come even now as I write this and remember. May the healing penetrate every cell of my body, every piece of dirt, every blade of grass on that land and bring more new life.

I am getting ideas about what to do with that farm. I need a lot of help to implement them.

During the years we took care of my parents ... our country became increasingly divided to a violent degree. My parents' household became a microcosm of that violence. I was targeted by people I had loved as much as life itself. I was labeled as "evil" for my religion, my politics, and my educated ways. The radio played pastors saying in impassioned tones, "Root out that evil and any level of aggression is justified." I was accused of being a baby killer and as evil for supporting those "Faggots that have brought the wrath of God on our country." I could not believe my ears and could not believe that members of my family had become a part of that kind of Christianity: hate in the name of Jesus. At the time of the major aggressions, I had no idea what was going on.

By the time of the 2016 presidential election, I was getting a clue. After the election, I was numb for a week. I had thought that what I was experiencing was just a small group of Christians in one part of Kentucky who had lost their way. At the time of the election, I kept saying over and over, "Dear God, there are so many others that will experience the hate and aggression that I have experienced. Please don't let that happen." But it was happening in so many ways!

...As a psychologist, my career enveloped my life for decades. I loved families and children and lived for learning how to help children do well in school, and help families learn to care for their children's needs better. My identity was closely tied to being a helping professional. My spirituality and my relationship with God have always been important to me. I read my Bible every night from about age 12 to 46, seven times cover-to-cover in addition to all the other readings. Until I was a teen, I loved going to church with my mother. We were very close and Jesus was at the center of our relationship.

Then, in college, even though I still felt close to my mother and Jesus, I did not like the church anymore. I did not attend church from about age 18 to 39. Then, I fell in love with Quakers and was immersed in Quakerism for over 30 years. Now, I am wondering if I am still a Quaker. My identity seems to be changing as my relationship with Quakerism changes.

Something seems to be calling me. I wonder what that is. Interfaith ministry are the words that keep coming. I got a certificate in Interfaith Leadership through Interfaith Philadelphia/Interfaith America in August of 2023. Creativity, especially in writing, art, and dance/movement keep calling me as well as a calling to work with trauma.

The current workshop I teach, "Mediating Trauma through Creative Expression" calls me. Writings and art on intergenerational trauma, intergenerational healing, and intergenerational joy are also calling me. Rhythms call me to my porch every morning to dance with God as the sun rises. Learning and growing have always been important. Across all the years, learning and growing happened with lots of hard as well as wonderful learning experiences.

Trauma has been a theme in my life. Something really difficult happens, I do a lot of work to get through that experience and then something amazing happens that would not have happened if the trauma had not been there. That has been a bedrock of my faith....

...Although most of my life I have encountered bias and difficult situations, in recent years, I have gotten caught in the crossfires of extreme views of those close to me, calling my politics and religion evil. I have felt keenly the presence of my ancestors as I have done de-polarization work. I felt a need to talk to Great Grandma Frances because she is the source for native American heritage in my family. Conflict came about because some think that as a white person, I have desecrated the land on my family farm. Great Grandma Frances would know, so I asked, then listened to what came to me. Great Grandma supports me! I am standing in my strength today. That is because I can see just beyond the depths of hurt and sadness and see the many gifts in being hated. I never experienced being significantly hated until I was 62 years old.

I recognize the absolute privilege in that statement. I am far from perfect and so have pissed people off, offended people, been disliked, and more, but never hated or targeted with hate crimes until ten years ago. I need to take in the privilege in that and I hope you can, too. So many are hated for who they are or are perceived to be, from the time they are born. I can now empathize better than ever before with those who are hated and treated in discriminatory ways, and that is a gift....

In 2020, I was living in Pennsylvania as I had been for 25 years. When the pandemic hit, I realized I needed to move back to Kentucky in order to settle my parents' estates....

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I spent a year by myself most of the time. What could be better? Me and God. I love me and I love God. I spent my time developing my next ministry: 1) a performance team built around my story of praying on the Adena mound on my family farm, and 2) a workshop called "Mediating Trauma through Creative Expression." The whole world seemed to be traumatized at this point in history. These developments brought together my profession and my love of music, dance, my own writing, art and poetry, and my social justice work.

I felt the love of God more keenly than any other time in my life....

Then, quite unexpectedly, I was verbally and emotionally attacked 4 times and never knew when the 5th might come. I felt unsafe where I lived. I had not experienced that before. I ended up in major trauma. The loyalty I was taught to show for family and faith community left me unprepared for the polarization that has happened in both my family and faith community.

On the table, the attacks came because I had prayed on an Adena mound on my family farm and according to some I had desecrated the land because I am white. To me that was as bizarre as anything ever. I remembered that when I was eight, my grandmother, Mammaw, while standing next to the big Warm Morning stove in her bedroom said to me, "You have Indian blood, but don't tell anybody." My "Indian blood" was a source of shame.

Was she proud or ashamed? I don't know but I know I was immediately committed to honoring that part of me. I spent many hours of my life studying about native people and grew to love that part of my heritage. I could look at the pictures of my Great Grandma Frances and see where that "Indian blood" came from. So, one day, I had to have a conversation with my great grandma. I told her the story. She told me that I have every right to pray on the mound and was supportive of me. She eased my pain a bit.

Caught in the crossfires of a conflict that actually had little to do with me, again. The personal becomes the universal; the universal becomes the personal, again. The macro of the country's polarization in politics, this time the politics of racial injustice and the micro of my life dancing again, in hell.

My performance team and business were waylaid. My story of Intergenerational Trauma and Intergenerational Healing was disrupted, at least for that performance team and business....

[In the summer of 2024] I sought input and support for my other new book, called ***Dancing Through the Fires***, a personal narrative about using co-creativity to re-vision trauma, for me and others....

Next, a change of plans. I had a plan to go to the Old Time Week at the Swannanoa Gathering in North Carolina. I love Appalachian music and dance as much as anything in the world. But, then a moment changed that plan: JD Vance was nominated to be Vice-President (And now he's elected.)

I did not go to North Carolina, knowing that it was time to finish and publish my ***Hillbilly Rising*** manuscript, this book that had been waiting for about five years for the right moment....

The seeds of my Appalachian upbringing are rooted in Radical Love for humanity, and are now blossoming in their little containers for spring starts. They are being fed, watered and provided sunshine, though sometimes storms arise. They seek ground in which to be planted.

Someone asked me recently if I have addictions. I said, "Yes, hard work and faithfulness to my callings as best as I can discern them." I can fully embrace my heritage but still have healing to do from being attacked in the most harmful discrimination I have experienced in my life.

My calling now is to further the Intergenerational Healing from the Intergenerational Trauma and move to more Intergenerational Joy in my one precious life and with those around me. I keep hearing, "these are the best days of my life." My calling is to find my place in the world, once again, grieving huge losses and finding where I am to be grounded in life, as a whole self, beyond the single stories, the single identities that keep us from thriving as whole people. Part of me is Appalachian. I embrace that and there is so much more of me, and of you. Let's embrace those parts that are discriminated against and oppressed then move on to embrace our wholeness, together....

In the meantime, I will keep on dancin' a lot! My calling is to make sure this hillbilly that has risen again and again keeps on rising! Care to join me?

Photo: Jennifer Elam

My favorite: Cloggin to the Old Time Band with a Little Person for a Partner.

My hope is that in viewing a few pieces of my life, you can know in your heart that the stereotypes Appalachian people face may have some basis in reality, but there is so much more to honor about Appalachian people as we dance through those storms toward a place where our whole selves can shine, together....

Jennifer Elam

***Hillbilly Rising* – Order online here:**
https://tinyurl.com/2d8na7em

Quaker Arts News

Lego & Wooden Meetings For Worship

Note: Friend Gary Sandman is based in south-west Virginia. But his eye for art wanders the globe, and regularly he sends out examples of what he finds. Such as:

A Lego Meeting for Worship has been created by a young Friend of Community Meeting in Cincinnati. Brightly colored figures sit in a large rectangle, a gray brick mat underneath, a green window seat and yellow fireplace in the foreground and back-ground. On the right children and parents head off to First Day School.

A Lego Zoom Meeting for Worship has been constructed by a Friend of Edinburgh Meeting. A Lego in-person Edinburgh Meeting for Worship has also been built.

Lego, the largest toy manufacturer in the world, was founded in 1932 in Denmark. The name Lego derives from the Danish phrase “leg godt”, which means "play well".
In 1949 they began producing small interlocking plastic bricks, and in 1978 they started making plastic minifigs (small figures).

A wooden Meeting for Worship has been assembled by the Faith & Play Group, which creates lessons for First Day School. Plain wood figures perch in front of an open doorway.

Faith & Play began in 2005 as a joint effort of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and Friends General Conference. They encourage Friends to use story-telling and to make their own materials.

I was delighted to come across the Lego Meetings for Worship. The mix of people and animals at Community Meeting is especially charming. (I spotted a crab, pig, flamingo and Mickey Mouse). In its own way the unadorned Faith & Play Meeting for Worship is also quite appealing.

Very Zen.

Gary Sandman

Community Meeting for Worship

Edinburgh Meeting for Worship

Faith & Play Meeting for Worship

Types and Shadows, Journal of
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FQA Statement of Purpose

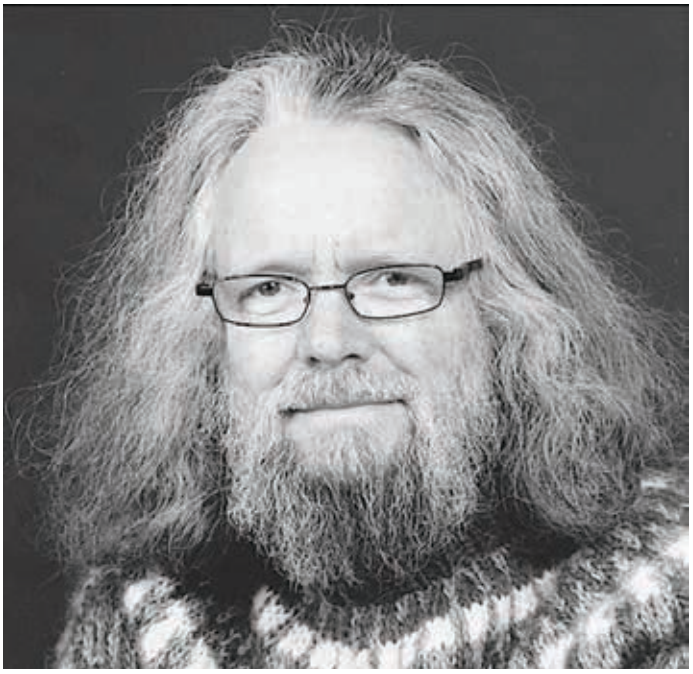
To nurture and showcase the literary, visual, musical and performing arts within the Religious Society of Friends, for purposes of Quaker expression, ministry, witness and outreach. To these ends we will offer spiritual, practical and financial support as way opens.

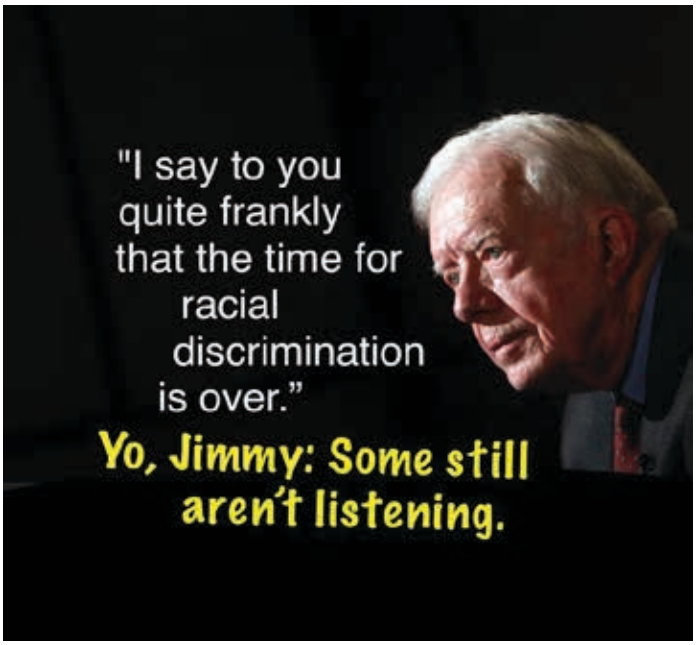
In this issue...

Hope & Art In Flood Recovery ~ Friends & Legos ~ An Appalachian Quaker Identity Crisis

In Memoriam...

Quaker poet Henry Taylor, featured in our last issue (#101), died in October, about the time that issue was sent out.
A Pulitzer Prize winner, he was 82.





A special note: Jimmy Carter was not a Quaker, but among so many other things, he modeled what Quakers call a Testimony of Simplicity: He focused on doing whatever good he could, modestly yet on a world scale, with all his skill and wisdom, shunning needless pomp or self-promotion. He said and wrote much; he accomplished so much more.

His life still speaks, to us and others.