
Types and Shadows

The Journal of the Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts

Issue # 48

Summer 2011

Saying “Thank You” to all the Sandras

by Trevor Barton

Foothills Friends Fellowship (N.C.)

Every school day just after 2 p.m., Sandra pushes her cart into my classroom to clean the bathroom and empty the trash cans. She is the school custodian and my students love her. When students hear her squeaky wheels in the hallway outside our door, they listen for her kind giggle as she enters the room. "Ms. Sandra! Ms. Sandra! Can I help you empty the trash? Can I help you?" they yell out with their hands waving in the air.

She responds, "Jennifer, you look so cute today! How you doin' VicTOR? Francisco, baby, you look like you're doing a good job for Mr. Barton. You come on over and help me today. Anna, honey, that's okay, you can help me tomorrow." She knows all of my students by name.

So I asked Sandra what I had been wondering for a while. "What do you like best about working at our school?" She put her hands on her hips and said, "It's the kids! I only take home about \$20,000 a year, so it's not the money. I have to work second shift, so I don't like the hours. And people see me as just a janitor, so I don't like the way I'm treated sometimes. But I love the kids."

She does love our students. Last Friday, one of our second-graders was having a tough day. He hated teachers, he said. At lunch when a teacher asked him to pick up trash he'd left at the table, he threw his tray onto the floor, stomped over to the corner and refused to budge. It was Sandra who helped put him back together again. "Now, you know you can't act that way. I know your momma," she said in her precise, slow, southern drawl. "I'm gonna put her number in my cell phone and call her and tell her you're not actin' right." Soon, she had him cleaning up his tray and washing the table where his class had been sitting.

One day, I saw her give an extra milk to a student. "Sometimes, I buy my lunch and sit beside a child I know is hungry," she told me. "Then I can say, 'You can have some of this if you want it, or, 'You can have some of that.' Children can't learn if they're hungry."

When she leaves my classroom, she walks across the hall. "Hello A," I hear her say. "Look at those new glasses on you. They make you look so handsome." She knows all of the names and stories of the students in that class, too.

"Mr. Barton," she said to me during a quiet moment after school, "I know 'bout these children because I come from where they come... Are you feelin' me? Sometimes, they need somebody to talk to them who understands them."

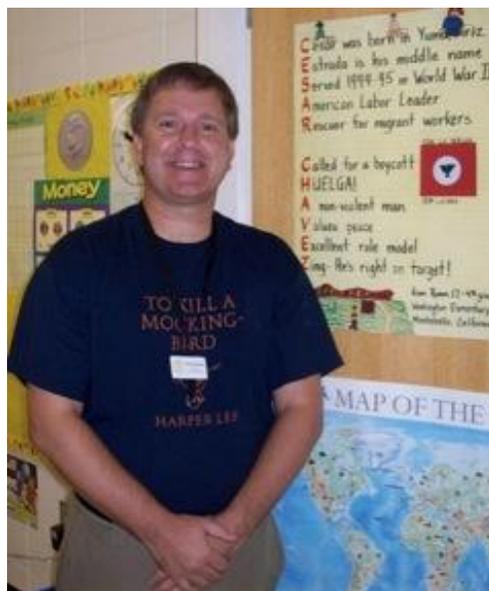
I see the way Sandra loves our students, the way she knows their names. How she talks to them and helps them. I just want Sandra to know that someone noticed. I told her, "I'm glad you're at our school and I'm thankful for you."

Here's to all the Sandras in our schools!

This story first appeared on the Teaching Tolerance website.

FQA Featured Artist: Trevor Barton

Trevor Barton is a writer and an elementary school teacher in Greenville, S.C. He is married to Robin Gardener Barton and they have two boys, eleven-year-old Bakary and seven-year-old Zeke. He lived in a homeless shelter and served as a friend to folks living in the Clarksdale housing projects in Louisville, KY. He served as the director of a small mission on 'the wrong side of the tracks' in the small southern town of Springfield, TN. Trevor and Robin lived in Mali, West Africa, for three years and served as storytellers and literacy teachers in a rural village in the mountains along the border with Guinea. All of the people in all of these places helped him see and touch the world in a more human way. He is a member of the Foothills Friends Fellowship.



FQA HAPPENINGS

by Maria Cattell, Clerk of FQA



Thanks so much to Elke Muller for her years of editing *Types & Shadows*. I'll miss working with her when it comes time to write the next Clerk's Column! Elke continues to serve on the FQA Board and to be our membership care person. Thanks a bunch, Elke!

But then—welcome to our new editor, Blair Seitz! Blair has some interesting ideas for *T&S*, which are already bearing fruit in this issue (see the interview with Trevor Barton). I look forward to working with him. Most welcome, Blair!

Like all editors, Blair wants to hear from *you*—and you, and you! Send him your artwork (poems, stories, articles, photographs) and your ideas for *T&S*. For example:

- Your personal experiences as an artist and artistic plans (see article on Maura Williams).
- Your memories of Quakers in the arts in times past (see letter from Ruth Bowman).
- Art activities in your meeting.
- An idea for a column or feature you would like to see in *T&S*.
- Organize an artists' dinner in your area (see below).

Or how about organizing a local or regional chapter of FQA, as has just happened at Intermountain Yearly Meeting (see the report in the Winter 2011 issue)? We're really excited about this, as local chapters have long been a dream of your board. We are willing to offer advice from our experience organizing art shows and conferences. But it's up to those on the scene to launch a chapter and organize events which will give Quaker artists more visibility and draw them into community with each other where they live.

SAVE THE DATE!! Thursday, September 15, 2011—Artists' Dinner at Arch Street Meetinghouse in Philadelphia. We will enjoy a meal together and then a presentation by Keith Calmes, guitarist, teacher, recording artist. You may have heard Keith playing "background" music at our art conferences and elsewhere. But this time he'll be very much in the foreground. So save the date, and join us!



My summer at Lily Lake, Cape May Point, NJ

Photographs (c) Blair Seitz



Clockwise from top left: 1) Green Heron, 2) Adolescent Great Blue Heron, 3) Great Egret prepares for flight, 4) Great Egret in flight, 5) Great Egret catches fish, 6) Great Egret dives for fish.



**Featured FQA Artist at Pendle Hill
A Quaker Retreat and Study Center
July 4 to September 30, 2011**

Maura Williams

"Dear Pendle Hill"

Featured are thirty photographs taken from 2008 to 2010 on the Pendle Hill campus with different seasons and times of day represented.

Maura lives in Lansdowne, PA -- five miles from Pendle Hill and has been enriched by a number of workshops and photographic opportunities at Pendle Hill since the year 2000. She has also attended numerous FQA Conferences over the years.

She is an attender at Lansdowne Monthly Meeting and is a member of the Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts (FQA) and the Delaware County Camera Club.

Maura will participate this September at the Ninth Annual Lansdowne Arts Festival and will be Artist of the Week at the Lansdowne Farmer's Market in October.

Here is the link to Blog and "Dear Pendle Hill exhibit":

<http://pendlehill.org/blog/667-dear-pendle-hill-photographs-by-maura-williams>

Artist Reception: Tuesday, Sept 13, 2011 from 7 to 9 pm -- slide show and artist talk from 7:30 to 8:30 pm

Exhibit Location: The Barn at Pendle Hill
338 Plush Mill Road Wallingford, PA 19086



The Barn in Winter by Maura Williams

Trevor Barton responds to Types and Shadows

- an interview with Blair Seitz

T&S: When did you discover your artistic skills? How did that occur?

TB: When I was six years old, my Mom held my hand to walk me out the door to my first day of first grade. I stopped at the threshold and said, "I want to go to school so I can learn to read and write!" I discovered my artistic skills by reading and writing stories with my heart and hands.

My Grandpa was one of the last of the 'farmer/storytellers' who were a part of the first half of the 20th Century in the American south. I walked with him along the rows of tomatoes, corn, and beans and listened to his stories. I learned to love stories and to tell stories by spending time with him. I also learned how to grow a pretty good tomato!

T&S: Where do you find your inspiration?

TB: Bartolome de las Casas, who was a missionary, priest and defender of the oppressed during the European conquest of the Americas, said, "God has a very fresh and living memory of the smallest and most forgotten." I look for the small and forgotten ones around me and listen to their stories. Children growing up in Clarendon County, S.C. at the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement, a little boy living in an inner-city housing project, a sixty-year-old man having the mind and heart of a six-year-old, a Latino woman cleaning a suburban house...they are the inspiration for big, memorable stories.

T&S: How do you find time to do your art?

TB: I am an elementary school teacher and the Daddy of two boys. I practice my art as a farmer farms his or her land. The 180 days of school are the plowing, planting, growing and weeding times for my writing. Summer is the harvesting time for my stories. My favorite times to write are at dawn and dusk. I try to write two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening.

T&S: Do you have venues to show or publish your art? Do you sell your art?

TB: I am a blogger for the Teaching Tolerance website of the Southern Poverty Law Center. TT provides a space for me to share stories with people who care about diversity, equal opportunity and respect for differences in schools and in the world.

Our weekly newspaper, The Greenville Journal, has an "In My Own Words" section and they kindly publish my writing there. I also send out my work to literary journals and wait patiently for their replies. I'm thankful for Types and Shadows for publishing my work!

T&S: Do you have an artists' group, coop, friends or a partner that you work with? Please explain how this works.

TB: I created a group on Facebook called Brother Juniper, named for the selfless friend of St. Francis whose stories are told in *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* and a wonderful children's book by

Diane Gibfried and Meilo So titled, *Brother Juniper*. There are around 135 members in the group who read and critique my work and share their own work. It's a helpful community of people who help me grow as a writer.

T&S: What does "being creative" mean for you?

TB: I have a poster of Albert Einstein at the door of my classroom with his wonderful quote, "imagination is more important than knowledge." when I write fiction, I create best when I learn all I can about places and plant characters there and use my imagination to help them grow. When I write non-fiction, I try to follow the steps of writers like Alex Kotlowitz and Tracy Kidder, great writers who use stories to open windows into the lives of people and places.

T&S: As an artist, what have been your most satisfying moments?

As a writer, my most satisfying moments come as I play with words and sentences and discover a way to show the humanity of people. An American photographer once said, "It is one thing to photograph people. It is another to make others care about them by revealing the core of their humanness." I am most satisfied when I write a story in a way that reveals another persons' humanness.

T&S: What role does your art play in your life?

TB: I like the idea that art is life and life is art. The great writer Edwidge Danticat has written a wonderful book, *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work*, which paints a picture of this idea. As an artist, I write to share the world around me and to attempt to build the world into a more human place for all people. ~~

Farewell and Welcome!

Dear Quaker Artists,

I have been the editor of *Types and Shadows* for a number of years and have thoroughly enjoyed it. Your shared stories, poems, articles, letters, and photographs have been a real blessing to me and, I hope, to our readership. However, as with all good things, my time has come to pass the editorship to another member of FQA.

Blair Seitz, a member of FQA since 1997, a photographer and writer, member of Seaville (NJ), Monthly Meeting (now living in West Reading, PA) and a member of the Board of FQA, has accepted the position of Editor beginning with the winter 2011 issue. Blair, photographer of 21 books, leases photographs from his website, www.blairseitz.com.

Please send your articles, news, poems, letters, and artwork to Blair at blair@blairseitz.com.

Thank you very much. My very best wishes,
Elke Muller

NEWS FROM OUR ARTISTS & ART COMMUNITIES

Letter to the Editor from Ruth Bowman, Portland (ME) Friends Meeting

Dear Elke,

I have been a member of FQA for some years, perhaps from its beginnings, apparently one of a few in northern New England, and want to thank you for your work and urge you to keep going strong! I enjoy the newsletter, but most of the activities are far away from here, in the Philadelphia-New Jersey area, it seems.

As I am now 95 years of age, I feel qualified to remind Friends that not so long ago, participation in the arts was frowned upon by strict Quakers who felt it drained away spiritual energy - with Edward Hicks getting by because ostensibly he was a practical sign painter. I used to hear that members would be "read out of Meeting" for owning a piano, and when I first visited Haverford College with my new husband (Class of 1938) and asked to see the art gallery, found there was only a little room (down in the utility area near sports) where a few pieces of exciting student work hung. I wonder what was happening then at Bryn Mawr and Swarthmore and when art history courses first appeared in the Haverford catalogs.

Here in Maine, I have tried to share my enthusiasm for Quakers in the Arts and in our own library space at Portland Meeting we have enjoyed a few small shows of member's artwork, group and solo, but the momentum disappeared somewhere. I believe New England Yearly Meeting has a Lemonade Gallery which adds to those days together, I am sure.

Best to forget those prudent, strict days of yore and keep letting in the light!

Best wishes and thank you for your continuing good work.

Ruth Bowman

The Minnie Jane Quaker Artist Scholarship is available to a Quaker pursuing a creative project in fine arts, crafts, performing arts, creative writing, music composition, or another artistic pursuit that is compatible with Pendle Hill's physical facilities and impact on the resident community. The scholarship is available until filled. Contact Darlene Walker for more information at dwalker@pendlehill.org or (610) 566-4507 or (800) 742-3150, ext. 122. Visit <http://pendlehill.us/residentprogram/overview> for more information about Pendle Hill's Resident Program.

The following FQA members currently serve on the Board of the Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts:

- * Maria Cattell, Clerk
mgcattell@aol.com
- * Carol Sexton, Assistant Clerk
CSexton@pendlehill.org
- * Doris Pulone, Treasurer
dpulone@comcast.net
- * Elke Muller, Membership Care
maureenelke@verizon.net
- * Chuck Fager
chuckfager@aol.com
- * Blair Seitz, Editor *Types & Shadows*
blair@blairseitz.com

If you are interested in taking a more active role in FQA, please send an e-mail to Maria Cattell at: mgcattell@aol.com

Send a story, poem, photo or other artwork to Blair Seitz at: blair@blairseitz.com or to the FQA address below.

If you have an arts conference, play, gallery opening, et cetera, send the information to me for publication in our journal, *Types & Shadows*

Please note: Entries will not be returned and will be published at the Editor's discretion

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

Join FQA!

\$25 per year for individuals;

\$50 per year for groups.

Send membership dues & your postal address to:

FQA c/o PYM

1515 Cherry Street

Philadelphia, PA 19102

Please make checks out to Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts. Thank you.

The *Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts* is an arts ministry of Trenton Monthly Meeting and is under the care of Trenton Monthly Meeting.

If you wish to receive *Types and Shadows* online, please let Elke know at maureenelke@verizon.net

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