

# Puente de Amigos Newsletter

## Summer 2013

### Cuban Quaker Institute of Peace Holds First Session

"Now begins the second week of the Cuban Quaker Institute of Peace. Steve Angell, a professor and historian from the US, offered an intensive course about Quaker processes in the provisional campus of Gibara. A score of students received and still receive this valuable information at first hand.

Another of the courses in this first session was Conflict Resolution taught by professor Kirenia Criado Pérez, leader of the monthly meeting in Havana. I offer the words of inauguration for this academic center that was dreamed of, and has now

stopped being a dream and become a palpable and tangible reality.

Today Benigno Sánchez-Eppler will approach the life and assumptions of Woolman, taking as his base the translation which will be published in future by Benigno together with Susan Furry and a group of authors. From now on this and so many other of their texts are a valuable contribution to Spanish-speakers' knowledge of world Quakerism."

Update on Facebook from Jorge Luis Pena, January 2013

*(continued on page 2)*

#### In This Issue

- Cuban Quaker Institute of Peace (page 1-3)
- Cuban Friends visit New England (page 1)
- YAF Trip to Cuba (page 4-5)
- Fabio Avello (page 6)
- Cuba Yearly Meeting Epistle (page 7)
- Puente de Amigos Info (page 6, 8)



*Thanks to FWCC Section of the Americas, Cuban Friends Kenya Casanova, Puerto Padre and Yanet Velazquez, Holguin visited New England in March, following the FWCC meeting in Indiana. They visited Putney, Hartford, Dover, Wellesley and Beacon Hill MMs. Seen here with Jay Smith, Beth Collea, and Roland Stern at mid-year gathering in Portland.*



*We were blessed to have Cuban Friends Dennis Bauta, Banes and Miledys Batista, Holguin (here with Cynthia Ganung and Sam Baily) be with us at Sessions 2012 and visit Amesbury, Hanover, Burlington, Dartmouth/Smith Neck and Monadnock MMs.*

**WORK FOR PEACE (PEACE INSTITUTE OPENING WORDS)**

--Among all crises, none is as grave as that of identity, because it is associated with other limitations which change us into irrational creatures. If we don't know who we are, said Lincoln, it will be difficult to discern where we are going, and it will be even harder to judge what to do and how to do it.

--For a long time the Cuban Quaker Church has had a concern about identity. Everything that has been done up to now is due to this concept.

--With its beginnings in England in the seventeenth century, with recognizable marks of the culture of the US, and with a message which was brought to Cuba in the beginning of the twentieth century along with the well-known relations between a colony and an imperial power, the Quaker church creates and recreates an identity beginning from this mixture, and takes on common elements of the evangelical tradition with its doctrine, music, and customs. With concrete efforts for unity, and a clear distinction between union and blending, the Friends move on with the motive of contributing from an inclusive perspective, which this church has discerned as its mission.

--Based on this purpose, Friends have tried at various times in history to have their own academic center, in order to join a strong educational tradition which was part of the initial witness, more important and better organized than the dimension of evangelism, perhaps from a more integrated stance, more obedient to what God requires of his church in the society of those times: to teach the people.

--And so we try to draw forth the vigor of new generations of workers.

--The words of Philip to the eunuch are still alive today: "Do you understand what you are reading?" (Acts 8:30)

--To help understand what we read in a Latinamerican context full of conflict, the Cuban Quaker Peace Institute is born.

--What until today was just a plan is born today, so that we can bring what is learned here to other lands



--To do what Philip did, what Christ did in Emmaus: make connections between history and the lives and dreams of those on the path, and so obey the Lord: the Institute is born.

--To change the life of those who have been challenged, and convert them to builders of the kingdom: the Institute is born.

--To depart from comfortable Samaria and be moved by the spirit into the desert. To wait there for what will happen, whatever destiny brings: the Institute is born.

--To offer tools of peace to a human race that can't live in harmony with its neighbor: this is the inspiration of the Institute.

--Never before today were Friends able to begin such an extensive educational project which has the tools at hand, for the sake of a better understanding of the social work of the Church.

--When we began to rebuild the ruined Quaker buildings in

Holguín we still didn't know how useful that space would be for this Center, which today is beginning with its provisional campus in Gibara.

--The living accommodations are already more than sufficient.

--The academic level of students and professors is remarkable.

--The bibliography which we will use is up-to-date, relying in large part on first-hand articles and books not yet in print which you can read in Spanish, thanks to a challenging labor of translation, interpretation and publication.

--All that remains is the commitment and effort of this group of students which will work in a collaborative way, not only to acquire new knowledge about Quakerism, but also about peace-building.

--We believe we live in God's time, and that God will give us blessings, since He loves the peacemakers.

--If it has been hard to dot the i's of organizational material, today I am bold to present to you the three i's of success in all human works:

--Identity, Information, and Inclusion in society. These three pillars will constantly direct our path. If the base of one of these three is missing, the fall will be great.

--Without identity, we would be talking puppets in a dark corner of a theater.

--Without information, we would be broken vessels, unable to hold or give water; useless vessels, in spite of the place we might occupy.

--Without inclusion in society, we would suffer the confusion of those who tried to build the tower of Babel. In a blind intention to reach God, we would forget the  
*(continued on next page)*

*(continued from previous page)*

neighbors with whom barriers to communication had been formed.

--Let us be worthy of the Rabbi of Galilee.

--Who came in the name of "I am." (I do not know any better statement of identity, although it may appear to us an enigma. "I am the one who always is," said the Lord.)

--Jesus brought the law of love, all the information humanity needs.

--And to communicate it, he became like all people on earth in their immediate historical context.

Inclusion.

--Today we can ask ourselves, Why do we aim at peace? Because without peace it is impossible to build the kingdom, and because the world continues with its fruitless search for peace; and nations need war to provide themselves with security.

--We live in a society of much uncertainty, which lacks hopeful discourse in the midst of an extensive economic crisis which encourages violence; we lost our identity when we took on that of a broken world. Who are we? Where are we going? What should we do?

--Even if social and economic conditions were not so precarious, there would be reasons to build peace. On the other hand there are prosperous nations

which also don't seek peace, and become potential threats to the world. It is one thing to feel peace, and another to be at peace. To be at peace is just a circumstance, to feel peace includes the inner responsibility to protect and promote it.

--Jesus invites us to another way to sow peace, not the way the world gives it. "Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." (John 14:27)

--No one can promote peace if within they are at war with themselves, if there are divisions at home, if at night the spouses sleep separately. No one can speak of peace if they can't communicate with their children and neighbors. Silence is also a violent answer when stress attacks us.

--John Paul II said, the peace of the heart is the heart of peace. Every attempt must begin with us. It is not a commission, it is a quality. It isn't a label, it is a mark that God has made on our heart. It is the fruit of the spirit and the only recourse which humanity has to attain salvation.

--May God finish His work, and maintain our enthusiasm and our faith. May God bless the Cuban Quaker Institute of Peace which is born today. Amen.

*(Jorge Luis Pena, Gibara, January 7, 2013)*

**BENIGNO SANCHEZ-EPPLER TRAVELS TO CUBAN QUAKER INSTITUTE OF PEACE**

Cuba Yearly Meeting endorsement of Benigno's travel letter:

*" Thank you for sending Benigno to us, with his wonderful ministry and charisma. His time among us has been outstanding, ministering not only in our Peace Institute but also in our monthly meeting. In the Institute he took us by the hand with Woolman to explore and experience a true spirituality which was translated into fruits of justice. This has been a gift from God, a rain of blessings for our students and teachers. With profound skill he helped us become deeply acquainted with this Quaker "saint" and invited us to 'transform hearts'. He carries with him our gratitude and loving greetings, in the love of the Divine Teacher. In peace, Ramon Gonzalez-Longoria, Director of the Peace Institute, January 2013"*

**Cuban Quaker Peace Institute -Info shared by Yanet Velasquez and Kenya Casanova**

Three 2-week sessions/year (January, May, September) with a 3-4 year repeating cycle so students can acquire all the coursework without necessarily being full-time students as very few people can even get one week off/year to study. About 20 students, both men and women. Currently all students are Cuban Quakers but future goal is to include other Spanish speaking Quakers as well as other Cubans. Currently relying on some US faculty but goal is to have all Cuban faculty. The institute's structure, courses, and governance will evolve over time as more experience is gained.

Retrete (near Banes) was approved as a new monthly meeting and is ready to have a NEYM sister meeting! For more information, contact the Puente co-chairs at [puente@neym.org](mailto:puente@neym.org).

Resource: new website- [www.raicescuaqueras.org](http://www.raicescuaqueras.org) Spanish translations of Quaker writings by Susan Furry and Benigno Sanchez-Eppler



**YOUNG ADULT FRIENDS VISIT CUBA**

*Quando el pueblo de Dios oran,  
Sucedan cosas.  
Sucedan cosas,  
Maravillosas.*

*When the people of God pray,  
Things happen.  
Things happen,  
Marvellous things.*

Dear Friends,

In February 2011, the Young Friends of Cuba Yearly Meeting (ages 14-40) wrote a letter expressing a desire that they had long held: that they be visited by young adult Friends with a leading in the ministry from New England Yearly Meeting. With the blessing of New England Yearly Meeting’s Young Adult Friends community, Permanent Board, Puente de Amigos committee, and their respective monthly meetings, six young adult Friends responded to this request and traveled to Cuba from August 9th to 23rd, 2012.



*Will, Ben, Honor, Andrew, Noah, Alma (in front) at Cuban YAFs camp, Gibara*

We spent the first week at the annual Cuba Yearly Meeting Young Friends *campamento*, a gathering for worship, community, and reflection that in some ways mirrors NEYM YAF Midwinter retreat. The *campamento*, hosted at the yearly meeting’s conference center in Gibara, is the only chance these Friends have to be together each year, as distance and travel costs prohibit even most intervisitation between groups of Friends in nearby meetings. Over one hundred Friends attended this gathering, and together we explored the theme, “My Heart Serving God.” In periods of worship, song, reflection, revelry, and fellowship, we shared with one another what serving God means to us, what this looks like in our daily lives, and where we hope to grow in faithfulness. Cuban Friends generously invited us to lead sessions on waiting worship and the history of Quakerism, two topics that are not as well understood there as here.

We learned a great deal about Cuba and about the vitality of the Quaker movement there. We were particularly struck by their work in establishing a new Commission on Ecology and Peace, and by the similarities to the work being done by our own Young Adult Friends Climate Working Group (YAF CWG) on living with integrity in our connection to the earth and our use and care of its resources. We were inspired and challenged by the clarity and commitment

that Cuban young adults demonstrated in their faithful witness. As we began to form relationships with Cuban Friends, we could palpably sense our shared thirst for the Divine. We discovered together the strength of the Puente de Amigos (Bridge of Friendship) that has existed between NEYM and Cuba Yearly Meeting for the past 21 years.



*Banes visit - Noah, Honor & Alma with Heredio Santos (retired pastor)*

The exploration of God’s role in our lives continued as we moved into the next phase of our trip. We were housed and hosted at Holguin Friends Church, and took daily trips from there to worship with and get to know Friends at Puerto Padre, Banes, Vista Alegre, Retrete, and Velasco monthly meetings. At each meeting we visited we were joyfully greeted by those we had already met at the *campamento*, and graciously welcomed by those we did not yet know. We continued to hear from Friends about God’s movement in their communities, and we too continued to explore what serving God means to us as individuals and as a group.

*(continued on next page)*

*(continued from previous page)*

Part of this exploration included a growing understanding of what *ministry* means, and the different forms it might take. One of us, who was born the same year that Puente was formed, was led to preach at Banés Monthly Meeting about the importance of Puente to her life and her family and its impact on her experience of Quakerism. While her role in ministry was most visible as she spoke, we know that our shared contributions in midwifing this message and supporting her in its delivery were vital ministry as well. Indeed, many times on this trip we were called to diverse kinds of work: to prepare for it, to do it, and to be open to the possibility that the work might matter greatly, even when we weren't sure exactly what we were doing or why we were doing it. Through responding to these calls to serve, we developed a growing comfort with the unknown and mysterious aspects that come along with trying to live a led life. We continue to hold that experience in our daily lives.

This trip was a milestone for many of us in our spiritual development. Our experience of Cuban forms of worship and ways of being Quaker helped us own our own experience of Quakerism, and invited us to consider the ways in which our forms of worship may or may not speak to us. We find ourselves wary of strict formats of worship - whether we call them "programmed" or "unprogrammed" - that don't allow for adaptation as the way in which we experience God's guidance changes. Throughout our time with Cuban Young Friends, in worship, prayer, conversations, and singing, we experienced a sense that our generation (both in New England and in Cuba) is rediscovering and reclaiming the Quaker tradition - as well as seeking a deeper knowledge of what it means to be transformed by the power of Love.

As our time together drew to a close, we climbed to the top of a mountain overlooking the city of Holguin. We met in worship as a group of Cuban and New England young adult Friends, sensing a leading to deepen our connections through further intervisitation, delegations, and exchanges. In

meetings for discernment that followed, several concrete possibilities emerged. More than this, there is a shared sense of something new unfolding, perhaps an invitation to shared work together, as a next step in the life of this Bridge of Love.



*NEYM YAFs and Cuban YAFs, overlooking Holguin*

We recognize that this work is not ours alone, but is instead work being given to our communities as a whole. Indeed, we feel that our work as a delegation is complete, and that the next step will involve the formation of committees or groups to carry this work forward, which will likely include some of us who traveled. If you sense you may be called to help carry it, we hope you will let us know. (Please contact Ben Guaraldi at [ben@bluesock.org](mailto:ben@bluesock.org).)

In the Light,  
Ben Guaraldi  
Will Jennings  
Noah Baker Merrill  
Alma Sanchez-Eppler  
Andrew Thompson  
Honor Woodrow

*Y jubilosos lloraran  
con gozo rebosando  
de cerca y lejos se uniran  
he de seguir cantando.*

*And jubilant cries will meet the ear,  
their abundant joy still ringing,  
when friends rejoice both far and near,  
how can I keep from singing?*

**FABIO AVELLO (1927-2013)**

*Fabio Avello was a faithful leader of Puerto Padre Friends Meeting and an enthusiastic supporter of our Bridge of Love and his meeting's sister relationship with Wellesley Friends Meeting. In 1997 he fulfilled a long time dream to visit New England Friends and attend Sessions. Fabio was cherished by New England Friends who knew him.*

"We are very sad that Fabio has left this earth but his loving spirit stays with us. We will always remember his enthusiastic support for our Bridge of Love and joy in our bonds as Friends over the years. Even during the times that he was ill, Fabio always asked about everyone in our family and prayed for people in our Meeting. Cynthia and Roland" (message sent on behalf of Puente de Amigos)

*(Words below by Jorge Luis Pena, translated by Benigno Sánchez-Eppler and Susan Furry)*

We called Fabio Moriviví (dying yet alive). He had more than a few experiences of hospitals and convalescences. And he always came back to be with us in his accustomed place: the Church. He was always joyful, paying careful attention to whoever was bringing a message, no matter how young and inexperienced, always seeking to encourage them. Fabio was the youngest and the eldest of all our family.

His proven faithfulness and dedication still inspires those who knew him as a good man in every respect. He came from Chaparra. For many years he was treasurer, monthly meeting clerk, later ministry and counsel clerk. His service to the community was never long in coming.

He was always caring to the sick; always on time on Sundays, always faithful in sharing with his sister Josefa Cantón the lessons he had studied in that morning's Bible School. Even fainting, he was there in the pews, during suppers, during interdenominational gatherings, because

the church was his permanent commitment, his first love. We recommended him to the yearly meeting as a minister more than a few times, but we couldn't overcome his humility and he never accepted because he didn't feel worthy of that recognition, pointing out his deficiencies as a preacher. But he didn't need to be recorded; we all knew it anyway, because his life always was the most beautiful sermon, the most inspiring word, the testimony of a life totally given to God. No matter how justified they were, Fabio always explained his absences to the church. I will never forget his joy in Gibara at the yearly meeting centenary; his joyful hugs when the bells rang.

Fabio was one of those who lived one day at a time, and God gave him the miracle day by day, despite his delicate health. He had the rare quality of being intimate and dearly loved, of mingling with everyone. We younger Friends held him in deep respect as a hometown prophet. We will continue calling him Moriviví, because we won't stop seeing him, even though in this moment the separation is painful. I have no doubt that heaven received him with open arms. We will miss him, grateful for having known him as an inspired example who will always be in our midst.



*Fabio Avello and Marybeth Toomey, Puerto Padre, April 2012*

**HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN PUENTE**

- Attend gatherings with Cuban Friends (usually in August)
- Help host Cuban visitors (providing hospitality, translation, transportation, etc.)
- Attend Puente de Amigos committee meetings and special programs
- Invite NEYM Friends who have visited Cuba to talk at your Meeting
- Read *A Bridge of Love* by Heredio Santos, the inspiration for our relationship with Cuba Yearly Meeting (pamphlet available from committee)
- Subscribe to this newsletter (free of charge)
- Contribute financially to the work of Puente (check to NEYM, note for Puente)
- Consider whether you are called to visit Cuban Friends as a NEYM representative.
- For more information contact Cynthia Ganung or Sam Baily at [Puente@neym.org](mailto:Puente@neym.org).



**Epistle of the 86<sup>th</sup> General Session of the Yearly Meeting of Quaker Friends in Cuba**

Queridos Amigos del mundo: Reciban el amor y la paz que sólo en la unidad del Espíritu se puede alcanzar, cuando el Dios de todos, que está sobre todos nos convoca a este encuentro fraternal en la Villa Blanca de Cuba, con la seguridad de que estamos unidos por “Un mismo Dios y una misma luz.”, tema que nos ha guiado durante toda nuestra reunión.

En medio de nuestra diversidad somos llamados a trabajar mano a mano, por el crecimiento de la verdad que libera, nutre y fortifica nuestra fe. Fundamentada en el hecho de ver el rostro de Dios dibujado en cada ser humano que amamos.

Los estudios, predicaciones, reflexiones, devocionales y los tiempos de reunión se orientaron a la búsqueda de la claridad para edificar nuestras iglesias, conservando lo que nos identifica como cuáqueros cubanos, de lo cual nos sentimos gozosos.

Son motivos de alegría el nombramiento en nuestra Junta Anual, del nuevo pastor Julián Alfonso Martínez y el reconocimiento de los dones ministeriales de Lucila Fernández Quintana, al igual que la oportunidad de servir de los herman@s Ramón González-Longoria Escalona como presidente del Comité Mundial y Kenya Casanova Sales, como miembro del Comité Ejecutivo de la Sección de las Américas, por lo cual damos gracias a Dios.

También es de regocijo la inauguración y funcionamiento del Instituto Cubano Cuáquero de Paz (ICCP) como centro de reflexión y fuente de sabiduría, que nos brinda las herramientas necesarias para la transformación de conflictos, la creación de una cultura de paz en medio de nuestro contexto, y sobre la base de un espíritu cuáquero; agradeciendo tanto a los profesores cubanos, como extranjeros por su tiempo, y su conocimiento.

En nuestra Asamblea sentimos la ausencia de la representación de otras Juntas Anuales con los que tradicionalmente compartimos experiencias.

Hoy la Junta Anual de los Amigos Cuáqueros en Cuba, nos sentimos comprometidos a ser “sal y luz” en medio de este mundo quebrantado.

En el Amor y la Verdad, Junta Anual de Los Amigos Cuáqueros en Cuba.

Dear Friends in all the world: May you feel the love and the peace which can only be attained in the unity of the Spirit, felt when the God of all, who is over all, gathers us to this meeting of brothers and sisters in Gibara, the “White Town” of Cuba, with the conviction that we are united by “One and the same God, one and the same light,” which was the theme which guided us during all our.

In the midst of our diversity we are called to work hand in hand for the growth of the truth which frees, nourishes, and strengthens our faith. It is founded in the fact of seeing the face of God portrayed in each human being we love. Times of study, preaching, reflection, worship, and business were all focused on the search for clarity to build up our churches, conserving what distinguishes as Cuban Quakers, which gives us much joy.

Among the reasons for rejoicing were the appointment of a new pastor in our yearly meeting, Julián Alfonso Martínez, the recognition of gifts in ministry of Lucila Fernández Quintana, and also the opportunities for service given to brother Ramón González-Longoria Escalona as Clerk of the Friends World Committee and to sister Kenya Casanova Sales as a member of the Executive Committee of FWCC Section of the Americas. We give thanks to God for all this.

Another cause for joy is the opening and work of the Cuban Quaker Institute of Peace (ICCP) as a center for study and a fount of wisdom, which offers us the tools needed for the transformation of conflicts, for the creation of a culture of peace in the midst of our social context, and about the basis of the Quaker spirit. We thank both the Cuban teachers and those from abroad for their time and their knowledge.

In our assembly we feel the absence of representatives from other yearly meetings, with whom we have traditionally shared experiences. In our day, the Yearly Meeting of Quaker Friends in Cuba feel ourselves committed to be “salt and light” in the midst of this broken world.

In Love and Truth, Yearly Meeting of Quaker Friends in Cuba

## What is Puente de Amigos?



*Cuban Friends Kenya Casanova and Yanet Velazquez at the Puente Retreat, March 2013 at Wellesley Meeting (with members of the Puente Committee).*

Our sister relationship with Cuba Yearly Meeting is an important part of the religious life of New England Yearly Meeting, a ministry to which we feel

corporately called. Cuban Quakers are our dear sisters and brothers, despite differences in culture, language, political and economic systems. Puente de Amigos (Bridge of Friends) Committee was formed in 1991 to foster this spiritual relationship, based on mutual respect and equality. Its primary task is to arrange for exchanges of religious visitors between the two yearly meetings. Please let us know if you are interested in being part of our sister relationship with Cuban Friends. Send us a note via email to [Puente@neym.org](mailto:Puente@neym.org) or by mail to the address listed on the right.

Please contribute to Puente de Amigos to support our work with Cuban Quakers.

Make checks out to New England Yearly Meeting and send them to:

Roland Stern  
86 Barrett Street  
Needham, MA  
02492-1551

**New England Yearly Meeting of Friends**  
**901 Pleasant Street**  
**Worcester, MA 01601-1908**