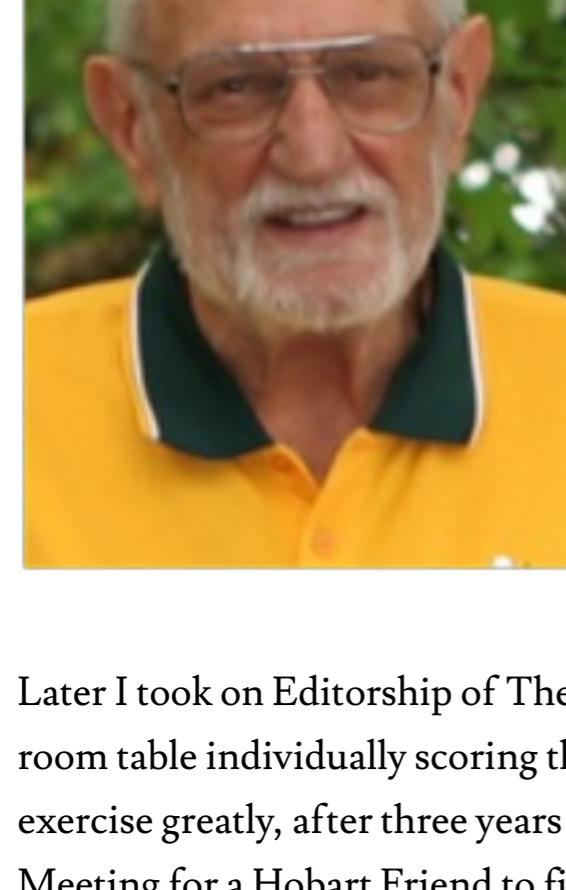


Know thy Friend

May 31, 2020 / 0 Comments / in 2006 June 2020 / by David Swain

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David Evans South Australia and Northern Territory Regional Meeting



Now aged 84 for both of us, it is 50 + years since Topsy and I moved to Tasmania, sent by my employer to work at the Commonwealth Pathology Laboratory in Hobart. After 10 years of moving from here to there I said to Topsy as we were travelling on the Empress of Tasmania from Sydney to Hobart, "travelling with you is staying home". We thought we would stay if we liked it.

We had married at Holy Trinity Anglican Church in 1960 after a long engagement whilst finishing my studies. A year later we left Adelaide, returning after 41 years in 2002 to be near senior grandchildren. SANTRM welcomed us and we attend Eastern Suburbs Local Meeting where I am currently Clerk of the Meeting. The 50-year membership of the Religious Society of Friends has been great for both of us. We took our three children, Susan (9), Rowena (7) and John (5) to the Hobart Meeting to see what Quakers were like, and we were more than pleasantly surprised. My feelings were that I liked the meditation, the freedom to speak, the tolerance for differing opinion, and especially good positive people to associate with.

Later I took on Editorship of The Australian Friend following on from Ross Cooper. Our committee would sit around the dining room table individually scoring the contributions as In, Out, or Possible, and later I would put it together. Although enjoying the exercise greatly, after three years I decided to hand over, and, being conscious of proper Quaker procedure, asked around the local Meeting for a Hobart Friend to fill the void. No response. So I referred my wish to AYM Nominations. At YM that year Margaret Hodgkin came up to Topsy and asked if she would agree to be editor. Topsy said yes, and the committee carried on for another four years.

Quakers have given me the chance to integrate my work, enthusiasms, concerns and pleasures with religion. A side issue of my work in Hobart was to develop a special interest in Sexually Transmitted Diseases. The laboratory started HIV/AIDS testing in Tasmania and I was given the opportunity to do a study tour visiting research centres in Europe including Belgium where African AIDS was discovered. Later going to conferences in Africa, I went armed with Quaker contacts which always paid off in local orientation. As Chairman of the AIDS Advisory Committee, I became spokesperson for STD related issues in Tasmania. There is a reference in Hansard of me getting upset debating with the then Minister for Health at an AMA meeting over the need for Gay Law Reform. Later, volunteering with Pathologists Overseas, I was given the opportunity to work for short periods in Nepal. Once again work and Quakerism combined, meeting up with our Nepalese Friend Pradip Lamichhane who has been a visitor at AYM.

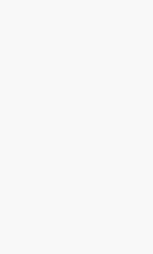
Although writing up various work-related papers, opportunity to do formal research in my field did not come. However, retirement is different. I can sponsor myself, and I studied Humanities with the Peace Unit at The University of New England. The theme chosen was domestic violence towards eloping couples in India and Nepal. This has led me to become involved with the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) which is currently publishing my contribution at a recent conference in Ahmedabad, India. A wonderful happening for me is that my small book *Marriage for Peace* is being published by The Friends Girls School in Sohagpur, India. A current concern of mine is possible working visas for those in long term refugee camps, like Dolo Addo on the Somali/Ethiopian border.

I love to share interests. However I tend to bore people asking if they know about GO, Real Tennis, and Barbershop Singing (more [here](#)). Retirement suits my mental frame. A piece of advice given me by a 100-year-old man in our Retirement Village was, "Keep on keeping on".

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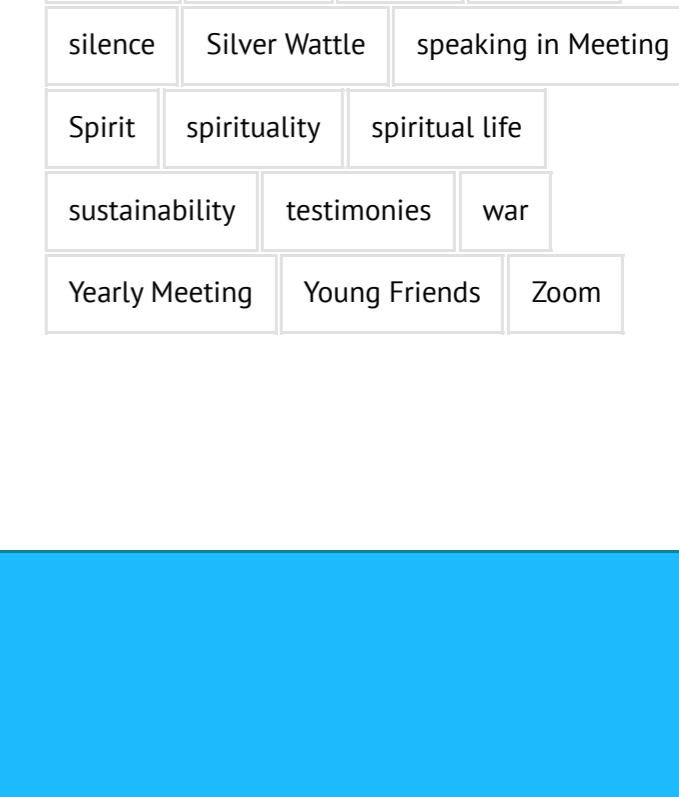
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