

# FA PEACE WEEK EDITION

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**One of our Peace Week queries asks:** How can we, through collective action, grow into a peaceful community? What is the individual's responsibility in supporting the work of the larger group? These questions do not assume answers; rather, they invite deep student reflection. This edition is dedicated to student voice. Their contributions reflect the courage to name and examine shared concerns, to look to the past for mentors who modeled peaceful change and transformation, and to uplift culture, religion, and tradition as pathways to clarity and connection. For me, our student body continues to be our north star.

## STUDENT VOICES



### BEARING WITNESS:

*A cornerstone  
of Quaker practice,  
which means  
to actively testify  
one's belief*

### ***E Pluribus Unum* by Sahana Gupta '27**

We are in a country that is divided.  
In classrooms, students are divided.

We are told we have the freedom to speak,  
the freedom to choose  
We learn to place our hands on our hearts at five years old.

Reciting words before we even understand the weight they carry,  
but daily we watch those freedoms fade.  
Our constitutional – no, our God given rights– stripped away piece by piece

Neighbors turn into strangers  
friends turn their backs  
because a vote, a headline, a flag  
becomes reason enough to build a wall between us

We pledge liberty and justice for all  
Yet many wait for liberty to free them  
Many wait for justice to finally serve them  
Many wait for equality to stop passing their door

We are divided by race  
divided by wealth  
divided by belief  
divided by the stories we are taught,  
divided by the ones we are told to forget.

*(Please continue reading on next page..).*



### WALKING IN THE

**LIGHT TOGETHER:**  
*The Quaker tradition  
of living in community  
with one another*

### **Chace Edwards '27**

**Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy** shines as a beacon of peaceful resilience, fueled by his unwavering commitment to nonviolent resistance. Martin Luther King Jr. lived in a racially segregated society in mid-twentieth-century America. Dr. King Jr. believed in universal human dignity, equal rights, and justice for all, achieved through nonviolent resistance inspired by his Christian faith and Mahatma Gandhi. He focused on dismantling racial injustice, poverty, and militarism to create a community where people are judged by character, not color. He championed peaceful protest, civil disobedience, and a moral revolution of values to end segregation and economic inequality.

Despite fierce opposition, he was successful in his quest to rectify systematic injustice—framing it as a fight for civil rights and a universal quest for justice and human dignity. It was through nonviolent resistance that Dr. King exposed brutality and powerfully articulated a vision of a “beloved community” through rhetoric rooted in faith. Tactics such as courageous sit-ins and marches helped spark legislative changes like the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination. Martin’s visionary speeches for a more unified country ignited hope that still endures today, as he peacefully and courageously transformed hardship into dreams for a brighter future.

## ***E Pluribus Unum* by Sahana Gupta (cont.)**

This division did not arise from nowhere  
It is sewn into the cloth of the stars and stripes  
stitched through the cotton of our clothes  
a pattern we are not taught to unmake  
a pattern we are encouraged to ignore  
And those seams are not mended  
They are splitting in real time  
threads snapping  
fabric thinning

Yet instead of repairing what tears open  
We reach for another patch  
a square of red, white, and blue  
pressed over a hole  
the kind that looks less like wear  
and more like a wound  
a round, violent absence  
shot straight through the cloth

A wound marked by the blood  
of those who sacrificed  
those who fought  
those who gave their lives  
for the freedoms and natural rights that this country claims to be built on  
Those we ignore gave the very blood that dyed that fabric red

But it was never the sacrifice alone that held this cloth together  
It was the countless threads, the overlooked pieces of fabric  
the people whose stories we refuse to name  
the hands and histories  
woven quietly into the fabric

Our failure to acknowledge them weakens the broad stripes and bright stars.  
Our failure widens the tears in the fabric lets the cloth tear wider  
Our failure drains the color from what once held meaning

The patch hides the bleeding edge  
but not the truth  
It covers the damage  
but does nothing to mend it  
We stare at the fabric  
and pretend the words stitched across it still hold:

E pluribus unum  
We know these words:  
out of many one  
Yet, how can we become one when we refuse to look at the wound in the flag  
or at the histories pressed into its threads?

How can we claim unity  
If voices are weighed differently  
If some truths echo loudly  
and others are buried in the dark?

Unity does not come from acting as if the cloth is whole  
Unity begins when we stop patching and start stitching,  
when we face the tear for what it is  
and reach for every thread  
even the ones this country tries to cut away

Only then can the many ever hope to become one.

## **PATHWAYS TO PEACE:**

*The Quaker tradition of seeking peace through Spiritual connections*

### **Aleena Zaidi '27**

**There are many people who believe peace** is unattainable in this world. "There's no point in fighting for it. Abandon the effort now," they say. But what of the numerous lives that are molded by historical conflict yet don't have a voice in this matter? If those of us who do have the ability to speak out



lose faith in a peaceful future, there is no one else at their defense. In the religion of Islam, we greet one another with the common salutation of "As Salaam Alaykum," meaning "peace be upon you." In reply, one says "Walaykum Salaam," meaning "and upon you be peace." This common interaction symbolizes the role peace plays in Islam, despite many prejudices that have been socially normalized. It is crucial that we remember everyone who faces daily struggles from this absence of universal peace, and having hope and

faith to believe that universal peace is attainable. We owe it to the voiceless to continue to advocate for the establishment of worldwide peace. Many lives depend on our commitment and those who are able to do so must diligently work towards greater peace for all.



### **Ronan Edgarov '27 & Harlan Nathel '27**

**As members of the Jewish Cultural Alliance**, we believe hope is one of the most important foundations of peace. Hope is not passive, it is the decision to believe and work toward the idea that change is still possible, even in difficult or uncertain times. Jonathan Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom and later Baron Sacks, proved this idea when he wrote, "Optimism and hope are not the same. Optimism is the belief that the world is changing for the better; hope is the belief that, together, we can make the world better. Optimism is a passive virtue, hope an active one." The clear distinction matters because it shows that hope is not about waiting for things to get better. Instead, it's about taking responsibility for creating improvement and change. This concept is shown in the Hebrew word for hope, *tikvah*. It's seen throughout Jewish prayers, rituals, and the Israeli national anthem. *Tikvah* represents comfort and a communal responsibility to persevere and endure. When communities are full of hope, people are more willing to speak openly and aim for stability. In this way, hope functions as a guiding principle that keeps people striving for peace and focused on creating a better future.



**NAMING:**  
*The Quaker tradition of plainly acknowledging a hard truth*

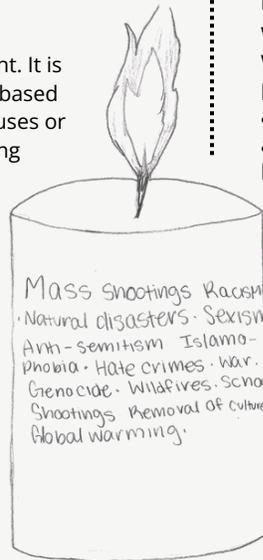
**Dylan Leon '26**

**Immigration debates** today often focus on legal status and political talking points. What gets lost in those conversations are the people affected by the decisions being made. In reality, there are many reasons people leave their countries. Some leave in pursuit of a better life. Others leave because political corruption makes their homes unsafe. Still others leave because their lives are directly at risk. These conversations are especially relevant now, as immigration enforcement and public safety have become central topics in national debate and political campaigns.

There is a common narrative that immigrants are criminals. Chimamanda Adichie coined the phrase “The Danger of the Singular Story” to explain how portraying groups of people as one-dimensional perpetuates bias and prejudice. Many immigrants who come to the United States are trying to improve their lives and those of their families. Their stories are not so different from earlier immigrant experiences. Many Americans are able to live stable, successful lives because of the sacrifices their parents or ancestors made when they immigrated to this country. Remembering that history matters. Immigration should be approached with empathy and perspective, not fear.

This issue cannot be framed as a simple legal argument. It is also about due process and dignity. Detaining people based on profiling and arresting individuals outside courthouses or during legal proceedings, especially those actively trying to resolve their status, weakens our legal system. If we want safer, stronger communities, we must come together and welcome those acting in good faith, rather than shaming and criminalizing people before they have had the opportunity to use their voices to defend their position. Their stories should be heard. If we want a stronger society, we should reward effort, honesty, and contribution rather than reducing people to labels.

**Blake Tassie '28**



**THE THIRD WAY:**  
*The Quaker tradition of avoiding binary thinking and moving towards a principled alternative*

**Shreya Kedia '27**

**Imagine a heated discussion** where two students approach a conversation about a controversial global issue from opposite perspectives. One student jumps in quickly, sharing strong opinions shaped by familiar influences. The room shifts as the conversation accelerates. Another student approaches the same moment differently. They listen first, ask a clarifying question, and then contribute context from a credible article they read earlier that day. Rather than closing the conversation, they open it. Both students care deeply about the issue. What differs is not passion but approach. One prioritizes immediacy, while the other practices intention. This contrast reflects personal agency in action—not whether to speak, but how to engage.

So pause and consider: when faced with disagreement, how do I decide whether to react or to reflect? Fractures in society often stem from ignorance. While ignorance is commonly mistaken for a “lack of intelligence,” it more often grows from fear, misinformation, and unexamined social norms. Each of us has a choice in how we respond to these influences and how we engage with differing views. Through personal agency—by questioning assumptions, listening with intention, and engaging thoughtfully—we can help bridge divides and contribute to a more peaceful and inclusive world.



Activism is often associated with bold, visible leadership, such as the Quaker voices of the Grimké Sisters or Susan B. Anthony. Yet meaningful change does not come only from grand gestures.

**Peacebuilding begins with everyday choices.**



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