

FMW Newsletter 12.2015

 [Printer-friendly version](#)

[Queries & Advices](#)

[Minutes](#)

[Marriage & Family Relations](#)

[Anti-Harassment Taskforce](#)

[Minute on Sustainability](#)

[Black Lives Matter Banner](#)

[Young Adult Friends Annual Report](#)

[Financing Renovation](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Thinking About Race](#)

[Random Happenings](#)

[Poem](#)

[Comics](#)

Friends Meeting of Washington

Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

November 2015

Queries

Do you provide religious education, including study of the Bible and of Friends' history and practices, in your Meeting? Do you ensure that schools under the care of Friends exemplify Friends' principles? Do you support and strive to improve the public schools?

Advices

Education has long been important to Quakers. Friends feel that education is a lifetime effort to develop an open and informed mind and a seeking and sensitive spirit.

It became apparent to early Friends that some form of education would be necessary for leadership and ministry if the Society were to be effective in promoting Truth. In 1668 George Fox urged that schools be established for girls as well as boys. John Woolman, in 1758, cautioned Friends to "watch the spirit of children" and "nurture them in Gospel Love." And, in 1831, Joseph John Gurney exhorted, "We shall never thrive upon ignorance."

Friends are concerned to educate for individual growth, community responsibility, a knowledge of God's world and a sense of wonder at continuing revelation in this changing universe.

- Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Faith and Practice

Voices

There is a truth that lies beyond scientific theories and religious doctrines which are always being disproved and outmoded. Religion should welcome every discovery of science, which in rolling back the boundaries of the known world makes the miracle of creation that much more wonderful, that much more divine. Personal religion, like science, should always be rolling back the boundaries making new discoveries, discarding inadequate concepts, enlarging its vision.

- Bradford Smith, 1963

Welcome of Visitors

2015/11-1 Meeting for Business opened at 12:15 pm with 32 Friends present. One visitor, David Beavers, an attender, was greeted by the Meeting.

Clerk's Report

2015/11-2

The clerk reported that we are still looking for someone to write the memorial minute for deceased member William Lee.

The clerk gave an update on "action items" emerging from group discussions on safety and welcoming in our community as a whole. The Meeting has changed the code to the lockbox in front, changed the password to access the non-public portion of the website. We haven't implemented making periodic announcements at rise of meeting as to how to make problems known—we are still in the process of the devising this. We are trying to make newcomers more welcome, using the Quaker in the Corner

technique. We still are still seeking a method to train ourselves about working with people with difficult problems. We have included the co-conveners of the Young Adult Friends in the Committee of Clerks. We are asking Friends to greet new people at the rise of Meeting. We are also working on upgrading the sexual harassment policy. And there are other actions still to happen.

Gray Handley of Healing and Reconciliation Committee reported that the committee has held and is willing to hold additional meetings for listening as part of welcoming and providing security.

Pat Kutzner has been in the hospital with a bad infection but has made a good recovery and is now in a rehab hospital in New Mexico.

Our former member, Helen Horton, died last July. Ylene Larson has contact information for Friends who wish to express their sympathy.

The Hunger and Homelessness Task Force reported that \$1600 was raised at the simple meal fundraiser for the Shoe Box Project. They are still accepting donations with the hope of reaching their \$2000 goal. The project will be held on Dec. 12 for putting the boxes together and Dec. 13 for filling them.

The Religious Education Committee reported that the effort to obtain coats for Syrian refugees in Europe resulted in approximately 50 coats being donated to send overseas.

The Administrative Secretary discussed several of our short term tenants reflecting how our building supports our values.

Major items

Marriage and Family Relations Committee

2015/11-3

Jim Bell, clerk of Marriage and Family Relations Committee, presented its annual report, a copy of which is attached. There were two marriages under the care of the Meeting. There were also two workshops about relationships, which were well attended.

The Meeting ACCEPTED the report.

The marriage of Lydia Pecker and Carl Johnson on October 17, 2015 in the Meeting was accomplished in good order.

Membership committee

2015/11-4

Janet Dinsmore, co-clerk of the Membership committee, presented the application for membership of Neil Robert Froemming for its second reading.

The Meeting APPROVED the membership of Neil Robert Froemming.

Janet Dinsmore, clerk of the Membership committee, presented the application for membership of Scott Breeze for its second reading.

The Meeting APPROVED the membership of Scott Breeze.

Janet Dinsmore and others of the Membership committee presented the application for membership of Dante Nicholas Bucci for its first reading.

Dante is currently a sophomore at American University but spent time at Moorestown Friends School where he had perfect attendance at Meeting for Worship. Rather than doing his homework as many students did, he found a place of peace and reflection. He primarily attends the Wednesday Meeting for Worship at FMW. He understands and looks forward to his responsibility as a member including meeting for business. He said “it is vital that I engrain myself in the community through the Friends Meeting of Washington . . . The Religious Society of Friends has been good to me and it is time for me to return the favor.” While a fairly young man, he was found by the committee to be clear in his call.

The application will lie over for one month as is our custom.

Nominating Committee

2015/11-5

Harry Massey, clerk of Nominating Committee, presented the nomination of David Beavers (Attender) to the Capital Campaign Committee. He has some fundraising experience. He has only been here for a

short time, but he felt welcomed and wants to give to this community.

The Meeting APPROVED the appointment.

Ministry and Worship Committee

2015/11-6

Debby Churchman of Ministry and Worship Committee presented an update on the collection of harassment policies, a copy of which is attached. The committee recommends for the Meeting to create a Harassment Policy Task Force to consider the policies collected and draft a new policy.

A Friend expressed a need to heal and to offer our apologies to those who were hurt. She recommended that the policy be clear about the mechanics. An attender commented that there are sometimes false accusations of which we need to take care.

The Nominating Committee will seek members for the Taskforce from Healing and Reconciliation, Ministry and Worship Committees and others which should seek to report back by the April Meeting for Business.

A Friend noted that we have had traditional ways of dealing with problems and this appears to say that our methods were not adequate. If there are consequences then there needs to be adjudication. Why is the Healing & Reconciliation Committee not adequate? Does this mean our structure should change?

Another Friend noted that Healing & Reconciliation is not a long time process but eldering is. But change is part of our belief in continuing revelation. Change may make us sad but it is a necessary part of being alive.

Another Friend wants us to be clear what is hurt. If someone feels hurt they should be able to come to the Meeting and express that and that one doesn't have to assign blame but it needs to stop. This needs to be a safe place where people know to whom to turn and it will be acted on. If we are clear then it will become a safe environment.

A Friend noted that an important point was missed that the language we use to talk about this issue is important. The Friend feels that we should be looking at why Healing & Reconciliation failed.

An attender asked if we are in unity.

A Friend noted that there was a wider picture of fear and hope. She understands that there may be an opportunity for a Friend to stand aside.

A Friend noted that there were two issues. First, we went years in denial about what went on. We need to define that. Second, we need to consider sanctions, but we are not ready for sanctions. We are not talking about sanctions. We are talking about common sense and relationships and what is acceptable in community. The first part is where we failed.

A Friend spoke about what it means to be in unity he heard from a workshop. In this instance he doesn't feel we should be doing this, but the question is: What is the sense of the Meeting. He is in unity that that is the sense of the Meeting. There is a relief in understanding unity and letting go of the burden to decide.

The Meeting APPROVED the creation of the Taskforce with Nominating selecting the members.

Peace and Social Concerns

2015/11-7

Brian Lutenegger brought before the Meeting as requested by the July Meeting for Business a revised minute regarding Sustainability and Climate Action by Friends Meeting of Washington before the Meeting. The minute, a copy of which is attached, challenges Friends to work for both individual life style and external systematic change. The primary change from the earlier version is about the individuals' choices possible.

A Friend inquired about DC SUN and suggested it be deleted. Another Friend suggested that the shorter minute be the minute and the longer minute be more of an explanation. Minutes need to be able to last over time.

A Friend noted that even though these are important choices to make, we should be mindful of those who lives are disrupted by this such as the coal miners whose suicide rate has greatly increased.

It was noted that it should be Peace & Social Concerns rather than FMW forming the Sustainability and Climate Action Taskforce.

The Meeting APPROVED the shorter Minute as the Minute with the longer as explanation with the clarification about the formation of the Taskforce.

2015/11-8

Elaine Wilson, member of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee requested that the Meeting replace the “How does your life end the causes of war?” banner which hangs on the Meeting House with another one which reads: “Black Lives Matter: How does your life help end racial injustice?” They recommend that we rotate queries even as we do with our own queries within the Meeting. The banner was specifically designed to bring depth to the slogan and in parallel with the war banner. A copy of the recommendation is attached hereto.

A Friend wanted to hear the proposed schedule of rotation for the banners.

A Friend noted that you can only read the banner going north so recommends that we hang both banners since they are both important.

A Friend applauded the sentiment but thinks it is unlikely to end racial injustice. So she recommends we say “reduce.”

The Committee notes it emphasized how we HELP to end. Many of the goals we seek seem unattainable.

A Friend feels we don't need to choose the colors but we should be rotating since there are so many issues we support. He feels the word “Black Lives” should be “African-American lives” because “Black” emphasizes the caste system. He also felt we should include name “Friends Meeting of Washington” on the banner on the fence.

The clerk asked the Peace and Social Committee to take into consideration what was said today and make the decision. An attender from the committee said he is clear to let go of details and wants provide a banner that is consistent with other language of the Meeting.

A Friend noted that she had told others in the District community that we were likely to move ahead on this. They expressed their happiness with our going forward.

The Meeting APPROVED with appreciation the hanging of the banner with the Peace & Social Concerns Committee given the responsibility of timing and location.

Young Adult Friends

2015/11-9

Kate Oberg, co-convener of Young Adult Friends gave their annual report, a copy of which is attached. There are three conveners and a list-serve of 240 members but only about 50 are active. There are 15 YAF on committees in FMW. In particular they have provided the two chaplains at local universities. They had two conferences and are looking forward to Quaker 101 events.

The Treasurer noted that there is a perception that YAF members do not contribute financially to the Meeting. He wondered if there were discussions within YAF about financial support of the Meeting.

Kate Oberg noted that most of them gave time rather than money but at least some money is contributed in cash. This is a process and she said it will be brought up among YAF.

A Friend noted that the letter from increased funds asked for one more dollar from a monthly contribution or five more dollars would make a difference.

A Friend commented that only two people increased their contributions because of that.

A Friend noted that statistics show that many young people have no religious home and we need to reach out to them.

A Friend noted that people give when their heart is engaged.

A Friend remarked that the YAF have become integral to the Meeting and gave them thanks. We rejoice with YAF and with young Friends. This is a very good change and we should celebrate this.

The Meeting ACCEPTED the report with thanks.

Trustees

2015/11-10

Dan Dozier, clerk of the Trustees, brought a report on the renovation project, a copy of which is attached. Trustees, Capital Campaign Committee, and Finance and Stewardship met to discuss the news of a significant increase in the proposed cost of the renovation project from \$2.1 million to \$3.2 million. The Meeting will be asked sometime in the future for additional expenditures and possibly a change in some aspects of the project. District regulations and the usual surprises from the complexity of renovating an older building all added to the costs. The large increased cost of going ahead with the renovation was balanced with the cost of delaying it further or trying to do it in pieces.

A Friend suggested that the Meeting needs to agree to move forward in support of the concept of access so that the committees have the power to go forward with gathering. We need to agree to the concept of access.

A Friend asked that the figures and analysis need to be given well in advance of the next presentation.

A Friend recommended that Friends give questions to the clerk of Trustees as to what in particular they want addressed.

The Meeting APPROVED going forward with the project based on the concept of access.

Report on Baltimore Yearly Meeting Interim Meeting

2015/11-11

A Friend reported it was a great meeting.

Other business

Healing and Reconciliation

2015/11-12

David Etheridge gave an update on participation in a workshop on the Stephen Ministries. That workshop appeared to be more focused on pastoral care helping members in normal life crisis such as

the death of a spouse. It is based in mainline Christianity which may present a challenge in the FMW. The Quaker groups which are using this program are EFI or FUM and have paid ministers.

Healing and Reconciliation committee will consult with others and seek other options for our needs.

Hunger and Homelessness Taskforce

2015/11-13

As the Shoe Box Project will be on December 13 and the second Sunday of the month Twelfth Month Meeting for Business needs to be moved so as not to conflict.

The Meeting APPROVED moving Twelfth Month Meeting for Business to December 20.

The minutes were approved.

The Meeting closed at 2:50 pm with 20 Friends present to reconvene as way opens on December 20, 2015.

Marriage and Family Relations Annual Report,

November 2015

The committee worked with the couples Mike Hubbard and Ryan Ashworth for an April wedding, and Lydia Pecker and Carl Johnson for an October wedding. Both marriages were under the care of the meeting and were accomplished in good order.

The committee also sponsored two all day workshops facilitated by Jane Connor. The first was entitled "More than Friends" that was held in February and approximately 22 persons attended from area meetings including FMW participants. The second workshop was held in October and entitled "I Love you but..." that was attended by 23 persons from area meetings including participants from FMW.

The marriage timeline and procedures chart was updated and added to the committee's web page. F Clark was also registered with the city of Washington, DC to officially sign marriage licenses.

Recommendations on an anti-harassment policy for FMW

Blair Forlaw

Ministry and Worship has gathered sample anti-harassment policies that we believe can be helpful to FMW as we consider revisions to ours. I have attached the existing FMW policy (two documents), the policy used for FGC gatherings, and two from other, secular sources.

We note that:

- 1) The existing FMW policy includes many important principles that were clearly violated by the unwelcome advances and communications described in the Meetings for Listening that we convened in August and September
- 2) The other sample policies we gathered are more specific than FMW's current policy, and they are therefore likely more effective in clearly defining boundaries and consequences of harassing behavior
- 3) The FMW policy does not have any enforcement mechanism, and this is a huge weakness. "An anti-harassment policy with no monitoring and enforcement is worse than no policy at all," we feel.

We recommend the creation of a task force to consider these documents and draft a new/revised policy for the Meeting *as soon as possible*. We believe that this task force should include representatives of appropriate committees, representatives of the women (and men?) who received unwelcome advances and inappropriate communications, representatives of Young Adult Friends, and an attorney.

While we did not discuss the names of any potential committee representatives, we do recommend any or all of the following from among those most knowledgeable about reported harassing activities: Betsy Bramon, Liz Pomerleau, Zoe Plaughter.

I would like to emphasize our recommendation that the Meeting move quickly to put this process in place. Our responsiveness is essential to restoring confidence and trust.

Please let me know if there is anything else that we can do. Peace.

Minute regarding Sustainability and Climate Action by Friends Meeting of Washington (FMW)

The Friends Meeting of Washington of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) notes with deep concern the dramatic impacts of climate change around the world. The world's scientists have eliminated any doubt about the reality of climate change and the major contribution of human activity as its cause. The same scientists call for immediate and large-scale action on climate. We affirm the need for urgent action. Lacking a peaceful analogy, in the U.S. we need a societal redirection as quick and as large as we did for World War II.

A recent Worship Sharing at FMW took note of two types of actions concerned Friends might focus on: internally-focused, life-style or “sustainability” actions and externally, system-change, “climate actions.” It is clear that both are needed. If we only make personal changes, the larger social-political-economic system, driven by the fossil fuel industry and others profiting from the current system, will overwhelm our individual or FMW-focused efforts.

In the great Quaker tradition which always incorporated both these emphases, FMW and its Members have undertaken both types of action.

On the internal side, recognizing the impact our own religious community has on the planet, FMW has implemented numerous efforts over the past few years to reduce the ecological footprint of our property both as part of our regular maintenance and independently:

- Installation of more efficient heating and cooling equipment in all three of our buildings to replace radiators as well as the installation of programmable thermostats in each room to ensure that energy is not wasted when rooms are unoccupied.
- Conducting an energy audit to identify potential areas of energy savings throughout our property (many of which have been implemented)
- Sealing of leaks
- Switching to energy efficient LED lighting wherever possible and installing the most efficient fluorescent lighting where these bulb types remain

Further, FMW's upcoming renovation project may reduce the overall energy usage of our property. It will also make better use of green space on our campus including the addition of a green roof for efficient storm water management.

Members are advised to be aware of the impact of personal decisions on the environment, such as:]

- Purchases, large and small, many and few, frequent and infrequent;
- Transportation;
- Alternative utility resources, i.e. bulk purchases of solar panels in DC through DC SUN;
- Recognition of biodiversity, that people are only one species on the planet;
- Green construction or renovation choices such as bird friendly windows;
- Contribution that renters might make, even demand, in their housing;
- Life style changes, including family size.

On the external side, Members and Attenders of FMW have supported a wide range of climate action:

- Working with Friends Committee on National Legislation to support a national tax on carbon as advocated by Citizens Climate Lobby.
- Organizing education and demonstrations as part of Earth Quaker Action Team to get PNC bank to stop funding “mountain-top removal” coal mining in Appalachia as one form of “extreme extraction” of fossil fuels.
- Working with Sierra Club, DC Environmental Network, the Institute for Local Self Reliance, the Energy Justice Network, Chesapeake Climate Action Network and many other local groups to develop and continually improve a Sustainability Plan for the District.

- Marching and sometimes getting arrested with 350.org locally and in NYC in a call to reduce carbon emissions.
- Working with Divest DC to end investment by the District in the stocks of fossil fuel companies.
- Working with the National Institute for Peer Support to give potential climate activists a place to reflect on their role in all these efforts, to support each other as they take action to eliminate racism in the climate movement and to support climate justice work by communities of color.

We list all these organizations to give our Meeting a better sense of the local opportunities for both internal sustainability and external climate action.

FMW is currently forming an ad-hoc Sustainability and Climate Action Task Force that will look into these issues in more depth and recommend additional opportunities to reduce our Meeting's impact on the environment and increase our Meeting's involvement in these external actions needed to change the current carbon-based society.

SHORTER STATEMENT MINUTE (to be put back into longer statement or to stand alone.)

Minute regarding Sustainability and Climate Action by Friends Meeting of Washington (FMW)

In accordance with Quaker testimonies regarding care of the Earth, we encourage Friends to examine their personal ecological footprint and look for ways to incorporate energy efficiency practices into their own lives. We also encourage Friends to undertake the personal work which is required to face the enormity of this crisis and to take the external actions necessary to change the system which drives it. Finally, we also call on other Meetings both within and outside Baltimore Yearly Meeting to examine their property's sustainability practices and their Meetings commitment to climate action.

“BLACK LIVES MATTER” Banner

The goal of the presenting the banner is to catch the eye of passersby with the now iconic phrase “Black Lives Matter”. The query below the phrase is designed to be consistent with the current banner query on war--- and is designed to bring greater depth to the statement “Black Lives Matter”. It specifically invites the reader to look into their own life regarding how they are addressing racial injustice...

The Peace & Social Concerns Committee reviewed over a dozen variations to the designs below, along with a wide range of proposed verbage and language changes. It became clear that there was no perfect design, nor any design that could address all perspectives/concerns raised. Consistent with Quaker principles and the need to keep the message readable for passersby, the simplest designs are what now remains. The preference seemed to be for the design that had color...

There was extensive discussion regarding reactions to the “Black Lives Matter” phrase and how some protesters have presented themselves in the movement. Some of that discussion is summarized on the next page

Drafts Prepared by Victor Freeman

Black Lives Matter - Background

- **Black Lives Matter (BLM)** is an international activist movement that campaigns against violence toward black people. BLM regularly protests the shootings of black people at the hands of the police and police brutality. The movement began with the use of the hashtag, **#BlackLivesMatter**, on social media after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of African-American teen Trayvon Martin. The movement then received fresh impetus from the 2014 deaths of two African Americans: Michael Brown—that resulted in protests and unrest in Ferguson—and Eric Garner in New York City.
- Several other African Americans who died at the hands of police officers have had their deaths protested by the movement, including Tamir Rice, Eric Harris, Walter Scott, Jonathan Ferrell, Sandra Bland, Samuel DuBose and Freddie Gray. The overall Black Lives Matter movement, however, is a decentralized network and has no formal hierarchy or structure.
- Many have responded to the Black Lives Matter movement by countering that the phrase "All Lives Matter" would be a more proper title. Tim Scott said that All Lives Matter.
- Others have questioned and challenged the term All Lives Matter. On Real Time with Bill Maher, for example, Bill Maher expressed support of the "Black Lives Matter" phrase, arguing that "All Lives Matter" "implies that all lives are equally at risk, and they're not". Founders have responded to criticism of the movement's exclusivity, saying, "#BlackLivesMatter doesn't mean your life isn't important – it means that Black lives, which are seen without value within White supremacy, are important to your liberation." In a video interview with Laura Flanders, Garza discussed how "changing Black Lives Matter to All Lives Matter is a demonstration of how we don't actually understand structural racism in this country". She went on to discuss how other lives are valued more than black lives, which she strongly feels is wrong, and that to take blackness out of this equation is inappropriate.
- United States President Barack Obama spoke to the debate between Black Lives Matter and All Lives Matter. Obama said: "I think that the reason that the organizers used the phrase Black Lives Matter was not because they were suggesting that no one else's lives matter ... rather what they were suggesting was there is a specific problem that is happening in the African American community that's not happening in other communities." He went on, "and that is a legitimate issue that we've got to address."

SOURCE: Wikipedia

BLACK LIVES MATTER

*How does your life help
end racial injustice?*

YAF Annual Report

Young Adult Friends of Friends Meeting of Washington

November 2015

Leadership and Outreach

Last November Shannon Zimmerman fully passed on convenorship to three YAFs – Kate Oberg, Michael Huffington, and Josh Wilson. This has enabled YAF to hold even more events but perhaps less unity as conveners have often split their time to attend separate events. Gene Throwe, while no longer a Young Adult Friend formally, has acted a friendly supportive presence and continued as chaplain for American University. Josh Wilson is the chaplain for the Georgetown and George Washington University Quaker communities. These three groups meet on the campuses at least monthly, often more frequently.

Also, last November (2014) the YAFs started with FMW funding the FMW YAF meetup. This group, held on the commercial site Meetup.com has enabled the YAF community to have an outward presence. Not all YAF events are on the meetup, but this forum enables people in the DC area to find the YAF community without having to attend Meeting for Worship on Sundays first. There are currently 170 people on the meetup, but about 1/2 to 2/3 have never attended events. Still we think it is a worthwhile endeavor to have as those interested in Quakerism can easily find us.

The YAF listserv has continued to provide a forum for YAFs to convene outside of the meeting. The listserv has been used to disseminate information, hold discussions, and coordinate in-person gatherings. There are currently 248 members of the YAF listserv. Kate Oberg has been working to contact old members of the YAF community and have their emails removed.

Young Adult Friends and the wider meeting

Many YAFs have been active in Meeting wide events such helping staff the Quaker booth at the Capital Pride Festival. YAFs are active in the following committees: Library (Abby Thomsen and Gene Throwe, co-clerk), Ministry and Worship (Michael Huffington and Gene Throwe), Peace and Social Concerns (Michael DuVall, clerk and Brian Lutenegger), Personal Aid (Lydia Pecker), Property (Brian Lutenegger, Francisco del Pozo, and Justin Kwong), Religious Education (Carl Johnson), and Mary Jane Simpson (D.C.) Scholarship Fund (Abby Thomsen). Kate Oberg is on the Scholarship committee for Langley Hill Friends Meeting, and Josh Wilson is a staff member at William Penn House.

In February of 2015, YAF conveners were notified by the Healing and Reconciliation of an ongoing issue regarding communication among Young Adult Friends. The people involved were notified and an e-mail was sent out to each of the members of the listserv to acknowledge the situation and to clarify appropriate/inappropriate behavior amongst our members. Despite the best efforts of all members of Healing and Reconciliation one individual reacted negatively, deciding to eventually try to sue. While the eventual outcome resulted in this individual leaving the community, all feel sorrow over this individual's actions and the entire situation.

Social and Spiritual Activities

The Young Adult Friends continue to meet at least monthly basis for a shared meal and Meeting for Worship. Due to changes in YAF residences, many events are being held at the meetinghouse, although Friends in Petworth, Lydia Pecker and Carl Johnson, have shared their home on a regular basis for a new series of YAF social events, the Saucy Pasta Social.

The YAFs have continued holding monthly game nights every fourth evening of the month at FMW. This has been a highly successful activity, which attracts four to twelve participants each time and has provided a space for new YAFs to interact in a low key setting and where Friends can bring friends and introduce them to the Quakers.

In February of this year, thirteen YAFs attended a 1-day retreat planned by YAFS on spiritual practices, held at FMW. YAFs had the opportunity to discuss and share their own spiritual practices with each other.

In June of this year, sixteen YAFs participated in a camping trip, hike and worship in at the Friends Wilderness Center. This was a joint conference with BYM YAFs. Amrit Moore, Gobind Moore, Michael Huffington, and Josh Wilson put the event together.

Kate Oberg and Gene Throwe both attend BYM Yearly Meeting and visited with the Young Adult Friends in attendance. The FMW YAF group tends to be a little older than the BYM YAF group.

In August, eight YAFs visited the Gunpowder meeting and then went to Beaver dam for swimming and fellowship. Also in August, five YAFs went on a social rafting trip to Harper's Ferry.

In September, Gene Throwe attended the Quakers in Pastoral Care and Counseling Conference in Richmond, IN funded half by the YAFs and half by the Ministry and Worship Committee. The conference was hosted by the Earlham School of Religion and centered on creative prayer. All of the participants were hospice or hospital chaplains but he learned a lot and the others were fascinated by the idea of university chaplains as an outreach to young adults.

Overall, the Young Adult Friend Community seems to be strong, if constantly changing. There is a core group of around 20 young adults and each YAF event attracts 5-15 Friends. Many young Friends attend Meeting for Worship on a regular basis.

Faithfully submitted by Michael Huffington and Kate Oberg.

A meeting of Trustees, Capital Improvement Task Force (CITF), Capital Campaign Committee (CCC) and Finance & Stewardship Committee

November 1, 2015

Present:

Trustees: Jim Bell, John Scales, Tom Goodhue, Dan Dozier (clerking and recording), Martha Solt, Faith Williams, and Virginia Avanesyan. Mary Campbell joined later. **CITF:** Merry Pearlstein, Ylene

Larson, Neil Froemming, CJ Lewis, Ken Orvis **CCC:** Grant Thompson, David Etheridge, Justin Connor, Todd Harvey **F&S:** Jim Bell

We began with some moments of silence at about 10:15 AM.

Friends agreed on an agenda that was focused on discussing the construction costs, fundraising; and next steps.

A Friend suggested that uncertainty is the enemy of fundraising and the CCC is concerned that the Meeting has not fully developed a simple, trustworthy narrative about the project and costs, given the recent rise in cost estimates.

How did this happen and what can we do?

Friends discussed the fact that a trustworthy narrative is critical along with a sense of positive momentum and a clear understanding of what steps the Meeting will take. We need to know about where we are and where we are going with clarity, while being honest and transparent about all information related to the project.

The positives are that it appears that at least Friends here and probably the whole Meeting is committed to solving our problems.

We discussed the reasons for the increased costs estimates and why. We are disappointed with unreliability of both the earlier professional cost estimates and schedule forecasts from the A&E firm. We believe that there are several reasons for the increase in cost estimates including the failure of the earlier estimates to properly value major items like the cost of stone facing and the cost of shoring and sheeting; the cost of meeting the new storm water management standards established by the DC government; the cost of adding campus-wide fire protection required by the Fire Marshall; and additional work to address structural concerns in the QHCH infill section. For example, the previous estimate estimated \$60 thousand for “masonry”, while the new estimate puts that number at more than \$300 thousand, plus overhead, of which \$194 thousand is just for stone veneer, mostly for the elevator tower.

The current estimate is that the whole project may cost up to \$3.2 million, which includes about \$250 thousand construction contingency and more than \$100 thousand for permit and legal costs.

Monarch Construction, our preconstruction contractor, will this week receive the full construction document set from the architects and will begin soliciting competitive bids from multiple subcontractors. They will be working with us and the architects for the following four weeks to do value engineering and identify cost saving options and will then provide us with a revised and more reliable cost estimate in about 4 weeks after they receive the construction documents. The reality is, however, that we do not expect substantial cost reductions from this effort.

Friends discussed various options to manage the costs and whether the project could be staged — that is whether some significant aspects of the project could be postponed to a later date. After extensive discussion, the general sense seemed to be that it will probably not be possible to stage much of the project without a major increase in overall project costs.

We discussed three choices: 1) abandon the project; 2) redesign the project; 3) go forward with smaller changes.

We may be able to make some changes. The next cost estimate from Monarc will provide a clearer idea of what options we have and the costs and benefits of possible changes.

One option is to go forward, with modest changes, to accept the higher projected cost and try to identify an appropriate funding plan. We agreed that we cannot postpone making the financial decisions about the project. Once we submit permits, changing them is very costly. The question is, can we afford to build a project that costs \$3.2 million. Contributions, investment income from Friends Fiduciary, fundraising and rent are our sources of revenue. The first question we must answer is whether we can pay for a \$3.2 million project; whether undertaking a \$3.2 million project is reasonable for FMW. We know our sources of funds and we can consider how to raise the funds.

One Friend suggested that we should consider a professional fundraiser to advise us. Another suggested that he hoped that we consider the role of our four committees within the Meeting discernment. If we don't really believe in this, how can we ask the rest of the Meeting to support it? If we go forward with the project, we need to communicate that we believe in the project. We need to be transparent, clear and honest.

Friends all agreed that we intend to go forward with the project, making cost savings where reasonable and not abandon the project or fundamentally redesign it, subject to careful analysis of financial feasibility.

On funding issues the question of whether we can commit to a \$3.2 million project requires assumptions about our cash flow, including: 1) Meeting revenue, including contributions, event and long-term rentals; 2) Meeting operating expenses and capital expenditures; 3) Capital Campaign donations; 4) withdrawals from our investments and investment revenue; and 5) financing costs.

We reviewed the spreadsheets Neil prepared showing project costs, financing costs and revenue (copy attached) which, given certain assumptions, show several scenarios under which the Meeting could pay for the cost of the construction. All the scenarios involved major long-term borrowing, requiring about two decades to fully retire all the loans. That time might be shortened by faster fund-raising or increased rental or investment income.

Friends agreed to:

1. Go To Meeting for Business with an update on costs and status of the project in November;
2. Establish a project finance 'scrub' committee to gather and present information to MfB and the Construction Group;
3. Assuming the finance scrub committee and the Construction Group (of Trustees, F&S, Property and CCC) agree, request additional funds from MfB in January, 2016.

We agreed to establish a subcommittee of financing experts to scrub the numbers and advise us how to proceed. Members of this subcommittee may include: Merry Pearlstein, Neil Froemming, and Grant Thompson. Ed Husted has agreed to review the work of the group, but does not have time to participate in developing the work of the subcommittee to develop spreadsheets.

A Construction Group Subcommittee will meet by phone this week. The members of this Group include Neil, Ken, Grant, Dan, Merry, and Jim.

Grant discussed the work of the CCC. They had slowed over the summer. Fundraising at this Meeting is challenging — we have little information about our donors and we don't know each other very well. However, the Committee has developed a plan and thinks it workable. The CCC first wants to raise money via first donations, but 'charity loans' from Friends may also be a source of funding. It was noted that such loans in other situations have often ended up becoming gifts. CCC will put together a video and email presentation about the plan and the finances.

The meeting ended with a few moments of silence at about 1:00 PM.

(this ends the Minutes and Reports of the November 2015 Meeting for Business)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 2 – **Grate Patrol** Come help make sandwiches for our vulnerable neighbors, starting at 5:30 pm.

Dec. 5: Come to **So Others Might Eat** to prepare breakfast for our vulnerable neighbors. SOME is located at 71 O Street, NW. There is a small parking lot next to the building. All are welcome.

December 5 – 6 – Junior Young Friends Conference, Baltimore Monthly Meeting, Stony Run (Baltimore, MD) Please arrive at 10 am with sleeping bag, pad, pillow, change of clothes and toiletries. Please remember that the deadline to register and be guaranteed a slot is one week before the conference (November 28). Any one registering after that date will be placed on a waiting list and may not be able to attend. For more information, contact [Jocelyn Dowling, Youth Programs Manager](#). To register, [go to the JYF Registration page on the Yearly Meeting website](#).

Dec. 6: **William Penn House Potluck & Dialogue** Friends are invited to a potluck and Quaker dialogue at William Penn House on Sunday, Dec. 6, at 6:30 pm. Those who knew Tom Fox and his mission in Iraq will talk about their reflections on having known him and lessons learned. Bring a dish to share; family members and friends are always welcome. WPH is at 515 East Capitol St. SE.
202.543.5560

Dec. 12 and 13: The annual **Shoebox Project** will take place from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm both days. We will pack more than 1000 boxes with practical gifts for our vulnerable neighbors. Saturday is the day we put the boxes together, and on Sunday, we fill them, wrap them, and take them to shelters. All are welcome (and needed!). For more info, contact Steve Brooks at sbrooks@uab.edu

Dec. 20: Jean Smith will bring beautiful handcrafted items from Kenya, to sell in support of Friends there.

Dec. 24: Our annual Christmas Eve gathering will begin at 5:30 pm, with dinner served at 6:15. We will have singing before and after the meal, and end with a candlelight Meeting for Worship. Please bring your favorite Christmas dish—enough to feed at least 8. All are welcome.

December 25 – FMW Office closed

December 29 – **Annual Reflection Hike**, Friends Wilderness Center (Harpers Ferry, WV) Board member, Jonathon Glass will act as guide on this annual meditative hike. In the rich silence of the cold mountain air in the woods surrounding the Niles Cabin and its faithful, warming wood stove, take time out to ponder the joys and sorrows of the year almost past and welcome in the possibilities of the year yet to come. Come join us for fresh air, amazing vistas, fellowship and good food.

January 1, 2016 – FMW Office Closed

January 29 – 31, 2016 - **2016 Women's Retreat**, Pearlstone Center (Reisterstown, MD) The BYM Women's Retreat will be held in a new location in 2016: Pearlstone Retreat Center in Reisterstown, MD, is about 45 minutes west of Baltimore and an hour from Washington. The Pearlstone location offers a number of benefits, especially in relation to accessibility and safety (covered walkways, elevators, etc.), as well as comfortable accommodations, plenty of meeting rooms, and excellent food. Scholarships will be available. For more information, and to register online, go to <https://bym-rsforg.presencehost.net/events/yevents/women16.html>.

February 12 – 14 – **Young Friends Conference, Location to be announced.** Young Friends should plan to begin arriving at 7:00 pm on Friday. For information, check the Young Friends website (https://bym-rsforg.presencehost.net/what_we_do/yfs/yfcon.html) or contact Jocelyn Dowling. (301-774-7663) Please remember that the deadline to register and be guaranteed a slot is two weeks before the conference (January 28). Any one registering after that date will be placed on a waiting list and may not be able to attend.

PERSONAL AID Committee offers **financial assistance** for members or attenders to **participate in a workshop, conference or retreat** to deepen their spiritual life and enrich the life of our Meeting. Examples include (but are not limited to) Baltimore Yearly Meeting and Friends General Conference. A written or verbal request may be communicated to any member of the committee. Please make your request at least 2 months ahead of your chosen event. Contact Emilie Schmeidler at Emilie_10@yahoo.com

THINKING ABOUT RACE

(December 2015) – More from “Between the World and Me,” Ta-Nehisi Coates

Ta-Nehisi Coates' recent book, **Between the World and Me**, is written as a letter to his 15-year-old son. From pages 90-91:

“This need to be always on guard was an unmeasured expenditure of energy, the slow siphoning of the essence. It contributed to the fast breakdown of our bodies. So I feared not just the violence of this

world but the rules designed to protect you from it, the rules that would have you contort your body to address the block ["the street"], and contort again to be taken seriously by colleagues, and contort again so as not to give the police a reason. All my life I'd heard people tell their black boys and black girls to "be twice as good," which is to say "accept half as much." These words would be spoken with a veneer of religious nobility, as though they evidenced some unspoken quality, some undetected courage, when in fact all they evidenced was the gun to our head and the hand in our pocket. This is how we lose our softness. This is how they steal our right to smile."

This column is prepared by the BYM Working Group on Racism (WGR) and sent to the designated liaisons at each Monthly and Preparative Meeting for publication in their newsletter or other means of dissemination. The WGR meets most months on the third Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, usually at Bethesda Friends Meeting or Friends Meeting of Washington. If you would like to attend, on a regular or a drop-in basis, contact clerk David Etheridge, david.etheridge@verizon.net.

RANDOM HAPPENINGS

My new nomination for **Most Fun FMW Committee** is **Hospitality**. Here's an example: Folks on that committee leave notes on the white board in the kitchen listing things that need replacing. I send this off to the clerks. In November, the list included: white sugar, chamomile tea, napkins, aluminum foil, and plastic wrap. **Susan Griffin** thanked me for this, but said she'd prefer it in the form of a haiku to take with her to Rodman's. Sure, I told her. No problem. Her co-clerk, **Kate Steger**, should feel free to write it. And she did!

FMW Kitchen

Sugar, tea, napkins.

And don't forget foil, or else!

Someone will complain.

Meanwhile, I am doing the dreaded annual Directory Update. This is so horrible, and I am so bad at it, I don't even want to discuss it. There are only two upsides: (a) Our directory gets updated, and (b) I get to hear from all kinds of Friends who we rarely hear from. Friends like **Richard Weston**, who writes about his new retirement: "One of my colleagues surprised me by arranging for my congressman to make remarks in the Congressional Record (<https://www.congress.gov/crec/2014/02/27/CREC-2014-02-27-pt1-PgE268-5.pdf>) about my work at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and as a congressional staff member. Of course, they didn't know about my earlier seven years in Chicago with the American Friends Service Committee as regional peace education secretary and with the Illinois-Wisconsin Friends Committee on Legislation as executive secretary."

And this bit of gossip from **John Pepper**: "I am indeed officially married, and what's more, we're expecting a baby in January!"

And from **Brett McBride and Victor Malychev**, the excellent news that they are on a waiting list for a domestic adoption. !!!

And from our beloved former recording clerk, **Shannon Zimmerman**, the news that she will be returning to D.C. for a (sadly) brief visit the first week on January 2016. Yay!

We hold these Friends in joy. Meanwhile, we continue to hold in the Light our beloved Clerk, **Meg Greene**, as she takes on the difficult work of investigation and healing in Uganda. We also hold in the Light our dear Peace & Social Concerns Clerk, **Mike Duvall**, as he grieves his friend and former camper, who died suddenly in a rock climbing accident last month. And we hold the family of **Joan Gildemeister**, who recently died.

We feel for our beloved member, **Bertie Rossert**, whose family members in France are reeling from the Paris attacks. We are grateful to our member, **Michael Beer**, for carrying out a coat drive for the fleeing Syrian refugees.

- Debby