

# April 2012 Newsletter

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## FRIENDS MEETING OF WASHINGTON MONTHLY MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH A CONCERN FOR BUSINESS March 11, 2012

**3/12.1 Opening** The Meeting opened at 12:10 pm with a period of silent worship. David Etheridge served as Clerk, Meg Greene as Alternate Clerk and Debby Churchman as Recording Clerk. The clerks read Advices, Queries and Voices concerning Social Concerns, which have been proposed by the Faith and Practice Revision Committee of Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

### Advices

Our testimonies are not the heart of our faith but are the fruits of our religious convictions. Our actions in the world arise from our love of that light in every person. We regard no person as our enemy. While we often oppose specific actions and abuses of power, we seek to address the goodness and truth in each individual.

Friends are aware that our tasks are founded on witness, not results; that our testimony to the world is the substance of our truth. We assert the transforming power of love and nonviolence as a challenge to injustice and violence and as an instrument for reconciliation.

While faith without works is dead, Friends are convinced that works without faith are futile. We understand that sheer activism is often spawned from an egocentric center. Friends are mindful of the spiritual ground of their outward works and are attentive to the spiritual dangers of benevolent works.

### Queries

*How have I expressed my faith in action? How are my actions grounded in my faith?*

*Is my sense of justice based in love?*

*Do I endeavor to face the pain of the world and match it with forgiveness?*

*Do I make an idol of that which I am forced to defend?*

*How do I avoid demonizing those who march against my concern?*

## **Voices**

True godliness don't turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it, and excites their endeavor to mend it: not hide their candle under a bushel, but set it upon a table in a candlestick . – William Penn, 1682

The great social movements of our time may well be part of our calling. The ideals of peace and justice and equality which are part of our religious tradition are often the focus of debate. But we cannot simply immerse ourselves in these activities. We need to develop our own unique social witness, in obedience to God. We need to listen to the gentle whispers which will tell us how we can bring our lives into greater harmony with heaven. –Deborah Haines, 1978

Meister Eckhart says that we can only spend in good works what we earn in contemplation, and that is undoubtedly a valuable admonition to those of us serving Quaker institutions, but it is probably equally the case that what is earned in contemplation cannot be saved up indefinitely but must be spent regularly in service to others. –Paul A. Lacey, 1988

The love of God that we have experienced demands that we express our answering love for God in the form of loving others. We begin to understand Jesus' admonition: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." This is the basis for ethical behavior and the only motivation for reform that does not grow weary in well doing, the only passion for social action that does not pall and wane. –John R. Yungblut, 1983

It is said that one should never attempt the works of charity unless the motion springs from love in the heart. But God can lead us by more ways than one. Some he makes ready before he sends them out; others he sends out that they may be made ready. –Mildred Binns Young, 1961

Yet, in the last analysis, obedience to the Light is the only satisfying course [to pursue a social concern]. Approval is not the criterion. Results are not the criteria. We may never be able to say to our critics and detractors, "The results show that our work was important and rightly ordered." –Dorothy H. Hutchinson, 1996

**3/12.2 Welcome of Visitors** - Approximately 33 friends were present. All had attended at least one Meeting for Business before.

**3/12.3 Clerks' Report** – We received a minute of appreciation from the Executive Committee of Friends General Conference for our hospitality when they met at Sidwell Friends School recently. On March 17, the Garden Committee will be greening the campus; all are welcome. Also on March 17, Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Interim Meeting will be held in Charlottesville, VA. On March 18, a special called Worship Sharing on Inclusivity and Community will be held in the Meeting room. Deborah Haines, Clerk of Alexandria Friends Meeting, will clerk this meeting.

## **MAJOR ITEMS**

**3/12.4 Recommendation from Trustees on payment of property tax** Steve Coleman of Trustees presented a recommendation that we use the unrestricted bequest funds to pay the property tax, due April 1<sup>st</sup>. We have received pro bono legal counsel, from Fried Frank, who have determined that an appeal would be unlikely to succeed. The bill is for \$15,197.40, which is about 14% of current annual space revenue. The Property committee is seeking advice concerning our property assessment, to see if it is equitable. We have asked that the City restore our tax exemption for parts of the property that are no longer occupied by the Peace Tax Fund. If we want to keep from paying taxes, we could decide to make the space available to no one but FMW, or to organizations that are Quaker run, or to charitable organizations focused on DC residents. The current occupants are focused on international nonprofit work. There is a tax cost of about \$10 per square foot per year for such organizations. Next year, that will amount to about 20% of total space revenue. The tax currently applies to about 7% of our property (slightly less, if you deduct the tax applicable to the space no longer used by the Peace Tax Fund.) Friends APPROVED using the unrestricted bequest funds to pay the property tax.

A Friend thanked Trustees for their faithful work.

**3/12.5 Recommendation from the Nominating Committee** Beth Cogswell of the Nominating Committee presented the committee's report concerning membership requirements for certain committee service. The committee conducted two discernment meetings and a survey in response to concerns about membership and committee participation and clerkship raised at a Meeting for Business. While the Nominating Committee supports membership requirements for committees with fiduciary or legal responsibilities, it also seeks to involve attenders who have a demonstrated commitment to FMW and the Quaker process, and whose skills make them especially suited to specific committee service. They therefore seek approval to nominate Attenders as committee clerks in cases where they are the most qualified candidates.

A Friend questioned which committees have fiduciary and legal responsibilities. That question needs to be researched. This request is laid over. Next month, Nominating will let us know which specific committee clerks would be affected by this recommendation.

A Friend asked that specific language be written and circulated before Meeting for Business so we will know exactly which committee clerks would have to be members and which would not.

**3/12.6 Draft Spiritual State of the Meeting Report**– Gray Handley of Ministry & Worship presented the first draft of the Spiritual State of the Meeting report (see attached). The report was created largely from results of an electronic survey to which 56 individuals responded. The full survey results, when printed out, ran to 58 pages. The queries were based on queries from Baltimore Yearly Meeting. The report will lie over for a month, as is our custom. Further comments and reflections can be sent to the committee.

A member of the committee points out that two recent challenges involving inclusivity have brought up a number of feelings and searching comments that are reflected in the survey. Gray said that these challenges have raised a number of issues that have been here all along and have allowed us to face them more directly and go deeper in considering how we might live our faith. A Friend asked that this conclusion be included in this report.

A Friend says that she is almost speechless over the lack of respect shown by some at this Meeting for the work of committees. She believes this is a startling change from prior years, and thinks that it harkens back to a time in our history in which we struggled with the inclusion of gays and lesbians. She also says she understands the stated need of parents for respite, and asks the Meeting to consider setting up a child care system so that parents can turn them over to a place of safety and then gain the

respite of Meeting for Worship. She thinks it would be better if we brought the young people in during the last 20 minutes of Meeting for Worship instead of the first 20 minutes.

A Friend asked that questions raised during this discussion--Are we living our faith? And are we truly stewards of the faith that we profess?--be made explicit in the report.

## **MILESTONES**

### **3/12.7 Membership Committee**

1. Hayden Wetzel presented the committee's recommendation for Membership of Patrick Marchman. He has attended since November 2010. He has worked with the committee to strengthen his understanding of Quaker faith and practice. This request lies over for a month as is our custom.
2. Recommendation to drop Associate Members from Membership. Gerri Williams presented these names. This recommendation will lie over for a month, as is our custom.
  - Hanna McDade
  - Jesse McDade
  - Robert Mays
  - Melissa Jones
3. Transfer of Membership: Gerri Williams presented a request for a transfer of membership by Alexandra Bosbeer to Friends World Committee on Consultation. Friends APPROVED this transfer.

**3/12.8 Membership Committee Annual Report** – Gerri Williams presented the attached report for 2011. Gerri thanked Harry Massey for his good clerkship of the Membership Committee. This is a Meeting with a lot of flux—with seven new members this year. Molly Tully has vigorously sought contact with members with whom we have been out of touch. Hayden Wetzel has followed up with numerous associate members who are 25 years or older to help them discern if they would like to seek membership at FMW. The committee is grateful to the whole Meeting, especially those who have served as Welcomers. The committee is grateful for the opportunity to meet people at this point in their spiritual lives, and to share their own spiritual journey.

## **REPORTS, UPDATES AND OTHER BUSINESS**

**3/12.9 Report from Property Manager and Property Committee**– Steve Brooks of the Property Committee presented the attached report. The property manager is helping to set up the paradigm for how the Property Committee communicates with the wider Meeting, as well as addressing numerous property issues.

A Friend asked about the Decatur Place sidewalk. The City has filled a large crack with rough asphalt. The Property committee is working through a Council member to register a complaint.

A staff member spoke to how much work our new property manager has accomplished in the short time he's been here. He's personally performed a number of small tasks and helped to organize efforts to address larger ones. A Friend spoke of his truly staggering accomplishments, and of the good and extensive work of the Property Committee. Steve Brooks said that the presence of a property manager has made the committee's work much more sustainable.

**3/12.10 Update from the Capital Improvements Task Force**– Neil Froemming reported that the committee has decided to switch architects. The new architect, Evan Lippincott of Potomac, MD, did the renovation at Langley Hill and the construction of Annapolis Friends Meeting and a

meetinghouse in Maine. The communications with this architect are flowing much more smoothly. The previous architect is graciously turning over all of the work they have so far accomplished to the new architect. The cost of this transfer will probably be around \$2,000. The committee expects new designs to emerge in the next three to six months. The committee has lost three of its ten members over the last year. The Task Force would like the property manager to be considered an ex-officio member of the Task Force.

**3/12.11 Search Committee** – David Etheridge presented the committee’s recommendations, as follows:

- Ylene Larsen as Nominating Committee member through December 2014
- Beth Cogswell as Clerk of the Nominating Committee for 2012

Friends APPROVED these recommendations.

**3/12.12** The meeting adjourned at 1:50, to reconvene as way opens on April 8 at noon.

**Attachments:**

Nominating Committee Report

Draft Spiritual State of the Meeting Report

Spiritual State of the Meeting Survey Response Graphs

Membership Committee Annual Report

Property Manager Report

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

REQUIRING MEMBERSHIP FOR SERVING AS COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND CLERKS

DISCERNMENT REPORT

March 11, 2012

(A more complete report can be obtained upon request)

In 2011, the Nominating Committee (NC) conducted a survey on the listserv and held two discernment meetings to discuss the requirements for membership to serve on committees and to serve as clerks of committees. These meetings were in response to concerns about membership raised at Meeting for Business. Members were asked the following questions:

1. What do you think are the positive and/or negative effects, for the Meeting of the requirement that certain committees be open only to Friends Meeting of Washington (FMW) members?
2. What about the requirement that clerks of standing committees be members? Consider its positive and/or negative effects for the Meeting.

3. In thinking about the work of particular committees what might be the positive and/or negative effects of the requirement that clerks be members?
4. Does this requirement have an impact on members and/or nonmembers and their relationship to the Meeting? Do you think it likely that the membership requirement encourages nonmembers to become members? Or might it dissuade them from becoming more active and make it less likely that they will join FMW?
5. Are there circumstances in which a particular nonmember might be preferred over an FMW member? What weight should we give to the commitment that a member of the Meeting has made in joining FMW? If joining FMW is a sign of commitment to the meeting, how do we expect those who are already members to demonstrate their commitment?
6. In the event that no qualified FMW member is willing to serve, would it be better to leave a clerkship unfilled than to nominate a qualified nonmember? In the case of committees requiring membership, would it be better to ask the committee to operate with fewer members than to nominate a qualified nonmember?
7. What changes, if any, would you like to see to the present system? Should current restrictions be tightened? Should they be relaxed?

## BACKGROUND

Some years ago, waivers were routinely granted, based on the recommendations of NC. In the summer/fall of 2011 this practice came under scrutiny, by members of the community, resulting in the member-wide query about the requirements of committee membership and clerking, mentioned above.

The handbook identifies 126 positions on standing committees, to which can be added 10 positions on Healing and Reconciliation. December 2010 data showed 75 people filling these 136 positions.

In addition, three new committees have been established: Capital Improvement Task Force (nine members), Capital Campaign Task Force (four members), and Information Technology Committee (five members). This brings the total number of positions to be filled to 154.

In 2010 Nominating Committee conducted two surveys. The first was to determine the pool of potential committee members of members and attenders listed in the directory. A spreadsheet was created with the names of members and attenders listed in the directory. It was determined that of our directory listing of 752 members and attenders, 222 names were familiar to at least one member of NC and 114 people were known by a majority (3) of the NC members. We concluded, therefore, that of the 752 names in the directory, approximately 120 are available for committee work.

In the second survey, NC contacted Finance and Stewardship to determine the financial contributions of members and attenders. FMW had (December, 2010) 359 donor households of which 157 were attenders. The median financial gift for members was \$480, for attenders, it was \$270. 19.8% of members do not contribute financially to the Meeting. It is heartening that though many are not available for the work of the Meeting, many more contribute to its financial security.

In recruiting new members NC looks for a good fit in terms of experience, temperament and interest. Often nonmembers are as qualified as members, and in some cases, particularly drawn or enthusiastic about service on particular committees. NC does not hesitate to request a waiver, as permitted in the Handbook, when there is an outstanding nonmember available to serve in a position and no equally qualified and committed member.

Committees that require membership are Marriage and Family Relations, Membership, Ministry and Worship, Personnel, and Records and Handbook. Clerks of all committees are required to be members.

## REORGANIZING FMW'S COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

NC contacted other meetings in our area to determine how they dealt with the problems faced by FMW. Answers show that various ways of reorganizing have been tried. In addition to this information, some suggestions that arose from Nominating Committee's survey are included below.

1. Abolish all current committees and begin again;
2. Let each committee determine what it can do given the membership they have;
3. Let each committee participate in a "classified ad" system, where short-term tasks are accomplished by recruited persons;
4. Trust the NC, appointed by the Search Committee, to fill vacant positions with qualified, committed individuals;
5. Create a limited number of one-year memberships on committee's positions for persons interested in service, but unable to commit to three-year terms.

## COMMENTS FROM SURVEY AND DISCERNMENT MEETINGS ON REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND CLERKS (paraphrased and randomly chosen)

- I personally do not believe that it is a good thing to press people into taking such an important step such as becoming a member of the meeting in order to serve on a committee or as clerk of a committee.
- NC always considers a nominee's appropriateness for a committee, as well as getting approval of the committee clerk.
- Some committees, particularly those with fiduciary or legal responsibilities, may need members who are members, but why all the rest?
- Should committees with legal responsibilities require members to be lawyers?
- Distinguishing between members and nonmembers is not inclusive.
- Though I was attracted to Society of Friends by the Quaker process and values, I was put off by the list of requirements (belief in supreme being and certain testimonies, particularly the Peace Testimony). Now the fact that it has become an issue makes me want to be a member less.
- The Religious Society of Friends sees membership as a work in progress.
- Many attenders learn by getting involved.
- It is counterproductive to have a two-tier system.
- I trust that NC is composed of seasoned Friends and will nominate seasoned attenders.
- Membership is important in some committee assignments, those where knowledge of Quaker precepts is involved.

- I am a clerk who received a waiver. I showed my commitment to the meeting by participating, volunteering and making regular financial contributions. My decision to apply for membership was a personal and spiritual one.
- Would it be worthwhile to explore with seasoned attenders what keeps them from taking the step to membership?
- I needed the time (15 years) it took and the participation in committee work to decide to become a member.
- I've yet to see an FMW committee for which an FMW member was appropriate and an attender was inappropriate.
- The meeting should not treat people differently because they are members or not.
- If we can't find members for our committees, maybe we have too many.
- It is not clear why some committees require Meeting membership and some do not.
- We should either clean up the membership requirements or get rid of them.
- I would like to see more education on such topics as eldering and letting go of ego in the service of unity, as well as defining what unity is.
- Committee service has been my laboratory for learning about Friends.
- There are members who display no commitment to the Meeting and attenders who display a great deal. At the same time it seems almost indecent to have some committees (undefined) staffed by nonmembers of the Meeting.
- There are some occasions where waivers are appropriate and somewhere they are not.
- If we don't reserve clerkships and appointments to some committees for members, we lose an incentive for nonmembers to join.
- Equality is a central testimony for the Society of Friends – there are no Us and Them.
- The process of membership should serve a purpose, not be the purpose. What does membership mean? We need a clear understanding of membership before we use it as a tool.
- Waivers allow the system flexibility, keeping it from getting stuck
- Should we consider whether the committee system is bogging us down? Are there other ways of serving?
- The handbook calls for more members than committees need.
- We need weighty Friends. Do we allow them to be weighty?
- A nonmember could be a committee clerk when a member is not available.
- A committee can have no clerk and take care of itself.



- We need a primer on Quaker process and people on every committee who are familiar with Quaker process.
- Should our handbook be written in the light of “My mom doesn’t have any rules, she has principles.”

Though there were strong voices opposing relaxing the membership requirements for committee members and clerks at Meeting for Business, the opinions expressed in the discernment meetings and the survey were predominantly supportive of relaxing or redefining requirements.

## **Friends Meeting of Washington      Spiritual State of the Meeting (SSoM) – 2011**

**“The movement between community and solitariness is woven into the fabric of who we are...because our faith commitment joins us to other pilgrims on the way, we are challenged to live the new life together...willing to listen to one another”. *Heart Whispers***

During January and February of 2012, 56 members, attenders, sojourners and others ( 58% of whom were members) provided heartfelt comments on the spiritual state of our Meeting. These comments were made partly in response to queries posed by Baltimore Yearly Meeting. And, they were provided at a time of challenge for FMW, when we had been asked if we could welcome a newcomer with a troubling past into our community for worship. As our meeting has struggled with this request many have seen an opportunity to directly express our faith. Through our collective response we are learning much about our core spiritual strengths and our weaknesses as we are all still seekers.

**“I felt blessed, lifted, energized by the vitality of the meeting community. Exciting renovation projects were underway, the meeting appeared to be attracting a range of new worshippers, the messages reflected goodwill and a genuine search for the Divine”.**

**“The Meeting [is] a haven and support network for values and spirituality that I rarely find outside.”**

Many Friends and Attenders say FMW allows them to quiet their minds; to see blessings, hear messages, be guided and feel love. Eighty percent of those providing comments noted that Meetings for Worship (including those attentive to business) and personal interactions with one another are our primary supports for spiritual growth. Over half of respondents also found Study Groups, First Day School, Spiritual Growth Groups, Coffee Hour and Committee work spiritually rewarding. Many have a special connection to FMW work days, special service events, Young Adult Friends and Friendly 8s as groupings that nurture the spirit. The Evening Worship Group, which has met on First Days for 15 years, customarily “feels the living spirit of our Lord during worship” and in interactions following silent worship.

**“We are engaged as a Meeting in seeking the way. Every option involves change for someone; perhaps by seeking opportunities for the Meeting Community to support each other and embrace change in the spirit of living into our testimony of equality, a Way will open.”**

While FMW has made progress welcoming visitors, “feeling gathered for worship”, and assisting some with physical limitations, many feel our focus has been too internal and our progress toward universal access too halting. Some families with young children feel FMW should provide more support to allow them to be more engaged in the spiritual life of the Meeting and to feel that FMW is more of a spiritual

respite. There are many yearnings for more trust, goodwill and kindness toward one another so we can listen and hear with a caring spirit. Concerns remain that vocal ministry is too often not a reflection of Spirit-led revelation. Friends struggle to embrace the testimony of inclusion as it concerns others with physical or mental challenges and sometimes Friends are troubled by accommodations, such as changes in seating, that feel disruptive or behaviors that wound or confuse. Many long for deeper understanding of Quaker ideals and testimonies and a personal and communal commitment to living these testimonies within our Meeting and in the world at large.

**FMW is: “A large and affectionate family, often dysfunctional like a family”; “scrappy, a bit disjointed, full of seekers [and} centered Friends”; “struggling to create community in an urban setting in which much of the population is transient”; “eclectic, energetic, needy, with streaks of heaven”; “a wonderful example of community in the company of Friends.”**

While ours is a large and ever-changing meeting where many feel centered and at home, some feel excluded and perceive internal groupings that can feel cliquish. Others deeply appreciate and trust the fellowship and nurturing provided by fellow Members and Attenders. Some are concerned that Friends approach FMW as “consumers” rather than supporters and others feel inadequately supported by the Meeting. Many Members and Attenders feel overburdened by committee service and the pace of Meeting decision-making. There are serious concerns that Meeting seemed unable to fully utilize Quaker deliberative process in a trusting, Spirit-led way to welcome the troubled newcomer seeking a spiritual base. And in that situation, others felt inadequately included in the process of discernment. Many noted, however, that this event also revealed how powerfully the Spirit moves among us to help us grow in unexpected directions and to reveal where our community needs to give its attention as it struggles to build and be a truly loving and trustworthy community. In addressing this and other challenges 60% of our Members and Attenders felt we responded well while 40% felt our response was mixed or poor.

**When people speak at Meeting for Worship, sometimes I feel transported out of myself...it helps me be closer to all life”**

**“I see Spirit manifested in tenderness between Friends; willingness to labor faithfully with people who appear difficult.”**

As we consider what we want from our Meeting, Friends and Attenders seek the “reaffirmation of our faith and practice”. We are inspired by what has been accomplished by our community’s commitment to revitalize our buildings and gardens even before we undertake major renovations. We are encouraged by the growing number of young Friends and families drawn to Quaker practice and FMW, and we are invigorated by the re-establishment of our Peace and Social Concerns Committee and by our spirit-led support for the Occupy Movement. In all this and more we see what our faith can deliver as we nurture the Light within and work together in trust and harmony.

And yet, we still aspire to “listen with openness and attention”, to respond to “our need for more unity with urgency”, “to concentrate on spiritual development” and, to speak to one another “with kindness in our hearts”. In concrete terms, we see the coming year as one of renewal and renovation both spiritually and within our historic campus. With faith that we will be led by the Light within toward more inclusiveness, inter-generational interaction and openness to multiple differences we strive to strengthen our bonds with each other and with the greater world by truly living our faith. There is an abiding sense of love toward our Meeting and a deep sense that it has yet untapped potential - **“With enough participation and guidance there is nothing we cannot accomplish”**.

**Membership Committee**  
**Friends Meeting of Washington**

**March 11, 2012**

Our Meeting Handbook calls for members of the Religious Society of Friends to be seekers of the truth as a member of Friends Meeting of Washington and the wider body of the Society of Friends. In this seeking, new members are asked to:

- Seek more fully to understand the testimonies of the Religious Society of Friend and to express them in everyday living within the family, the community, the nation and the world.
- Use the queries frequently as a means of examining and directing oneself.
- Cultivate a quality of spirit and an approach to social problems based on principles of Friends.
- Develop an increasing understanding of religious truth through reading appropriate books and religious periodicals.
- Attend regularly the Meeting for Worship and the Meeting for Business in a spirit of devotion and love, seeking to participate in the life of the Meeting accordance with Divine Guidance.
- Accept an appointment on Meeting committees and to serve faithfully on them.
- Be aware of Friends projects and participate in them as there is opportunity to do so.
- Contribute generously to the financial support of the local Meeting and its commitments.

The Membership Committee has been enriched during 2011 with the addition of new member Joan Gildemeister.

In 2011, the Meeting welcomed seven new Friends to our Meeting. A reception for new members was accomplished on October 30, 2011, and was well attended by many members and attenders of the Meeting.

After the Meeting for Business approves a new member, at least two members of the Meeting are asked to serve as host to welcome the new member. This helps to bring the new member into the community. As we seek volunteers from outside of the Membership Committee to serve as Welcomers, we will continue coordinate the welcoming of all new members.

Becoming a member in FMW is a process. In an effort to prepare the new applicant to fulfill their responsibilities as members, clearness committees, appointed by the Membership Committee, provide the applicant with information about the FMW committees they indicate they might like to join. They also ask whether the applicant has started to support the Meeting financially. Some applicants are requested to participate in aspects of the Meeting, (e.g. attend a Meeting for Business, Inquirer's Class, etc) if they have not already done so.

Guidelines for Membership – The Meeting has available on the handout rack in the downstairs hallway a number of handouts that explain reviewing the membership process in an effort to assist prospective members as they write their letters of application. The Committee updated these handouts

over the last few years and is currently reviewing and updating other documents to ensure they are helpful to new members.

As part of our responsibility to the Meeting, the Committee has continued two special projects this year:

- Contacting Out of Touch Members - Under the leadership of Molly Tully, with participation by other Meeting members, contacted members we have not heard from in several years. This has been a great experience as we reach out to our membership, learn how the Meeting community can be of better service and encourage them to attend Meeting for Worship.
- Membership Decisions by Adult Associate Members - With Hayden Wetzel providing the leadership, the Committee has continued reaching out to Associate members who joined as children and may be ready to change their status to regular members of the Meeting. The Committee hopes to be helpful in assisting Associate members in making this decision.

The FMW handbook asks children who were brought into membership in the Meeting as Associate Members by their parents to decide for themselves if they wish to become full members of the Meeting when they reach the age of 25. Parents are encouraged to prepare their children to make the decision whether they wish to request to convert their membership from associate to regular before they reach the age of 25. If the adult child wishes to remain in the Religious Society of Friends, but does not live near FMW, nor plans to return to the Washington area (as in the case of college students, Peace Corps volunteers, etc.), the Committee encourages them to transfer their membership to a meeting near where they live.

The Membership Committee is uniquely privileged to share the often deeply profound statements of faith and spiritual practice by applicants for membership. Not only are applicants' letters overwhelmingly heartfelt and moving, they provide a rich basis for later intimate discussions. Time and again, we have come away enriched by our meetings with those who apply and challenged to explore our own commitments more.

As a Committee, we are only part of the membership process. All members are important in helping each of us grow in our faith. We appreciate the Meeting's support for our work and for our new members.

Submitted by: Jean M. Capps and Gerri Williams, Co-clerks

Maurice Boyd Daniel Dozier Molly Tully

Joan Gildemeister Andrew Lightman Hayden Wetzel

### **Membership Committee Report List for 2011**

New Members/Date Approved by MfB/ Welcomers

1. Michael North 4-11/(Welcome not yet accomplished)
2. Ray Allard 5-11/ (Hayden Wetzel, Tom Libbert and Joe Izzo)
3. Martha Wilcox 10-11 (NA – Friend Wilcox is living abroad for several years)
4. Mark Meinke 7-11/ (Debby Churchman and Harry Massey)

5. Glenn Parkinson 10-11/(Welcome not yet accomplished)
6. Susan Griffin 6-11/(Molly, F.T. Clark, Janet Dinsmore, Christine Lynn)
7. Kathy Lipp-Farr 10-11/ (Welcome not yet accomplished)

Associate Members/ Date Approved by MfB

1. Nathan Gale, Thomas Gale (Martha Wilcox) 10-11
2. Anna Maher, Liam Parkinson (Glenn Parkinson) 11-11
3. Alexander Moss Avanesyan (Virginia and Suren Avanesyan) 11-11
4. Olivia Gayle Harvey and Nathaniel Dunham Harvey (Margaret Greenlee and Todd Harvey) 9-11

Resignations/Accepted by MfB

1. Susan Rice 9-11
2. Elaine Newcome French 9-11

Transfers In/Approved by MfB

1. Elisabeth Johnson 12-11
2. Olivia James 11-11
3. Rachel Shaw 12-11
4. Kevin Camp 4-11

Transfers Out/Accepted by MfB

1. Richey Sharrett 12-11
2. Monica Jacobe 7-11
3. Evelyn Jadin 11-11
4. Martin Doherty 9-11
5. Beverly Reader 9-11
6. Patricia Kutzner 9-11
7. Stephen McDonnell 9-11

8. Peter Guerrero 4-11
9. Dennis Hartzell 7-11
10. Erik Edgerton 2-11

### **Report from Property Manager and Property Committee 3-11-2012**

Since hiring, the efforts of the interim Property Manager and Property Committee collaboration have fallen into five broad areas:

- 1. Learning the FMW ropes:** PM has worked with FMW staff and Property Committee members to become familiar with FMW accounting, purchasing, filing, contracting, space-sharing practices, and routine maintenance tasks.
- 2. Assuming responsibility for event handling:** We have been fine-tuning space-rental rates and policies for events, PM has learned existing calendaring and hosting practices, and we are collaborating on developing new systems.
- 3. Developing relations with space partners:** PM has worked with space-partner contacts to address concerns immediately, maintain effective communications, and improve space utility.
- 4. Focusing on safety and inspections:** We have inspected and tested fire systems, hosted a safety-oriented insurance inspection, and hosted a water-infiltration analysis; we have contracted for a study of affordable upgrade options for FMW safety and security systems.
- 5. Continuing management of maintenance and upgrade tasks (partial list):**
  - Safety: We continue to address issues flagged during inspections. We have attached loose railings, hung fire extinguishers, capped a gas tap, and gotten recalcitrant smoke detectors going.
  - Quaker House second-floor remodeling: Plastered, painted, and upgraded plumbing, toilet, and sink in restroom. Plastered, painted, replaced counter and sink, installed disposal, upgraded electric in kitchen. Remodeled and repaired southwest office. Remodeled and expanded Living Room closet.
  - Carriage House first-floor remodeling: Partially demolished former boys' restroom to remodel into kitchenette. Partly remodeled former girls' restroom into unisex restroom.
  - Quaker House first-floor remodeling: Demolished termite-damaged walls; removed ceiling plaster; demolished antiquated electric; simplified plumbing; drilled and treated for termites; partially simplified and upgraded telecom systems. Removed cabinets in former storage room; addressed sewer gas leak. Readied an area for office use by The Hunger Project.
  - Meeting House restrooms: Refurbished first-floor women's restroom; repaired door; removed old pipes; upgraded light fixture; also standardized paper towel, soap, drinking-cup systems across FMW campus to simplify inventory issues and maintenance. Completed some similar work in men's.
  - Meeting Room: Repaired plaster and repainted; researched acoustics; also researched care of flooring and benches.

- Meeting House third floor: Rewired for telephone and internet as first step in refurbishing for office and program use.
- Outdoor lighting: Replaced lighting in Quaker House alleyway with energy-efficient LED fixtures controlled by a photo-switch; performed maintenance on some Meeting House exterior lights.
- Outdoor water drainage: Addressed numerous maintenance issues during a workday; cleaned gutters, performed minor roof repairs; upgraded Quaker House dormer roof coating; inspected outdoor drain functionality during rainstorms.

## FMW NEWSLETTER

April 2012

### Spring Events

#### William Penn House

The William Penn House, a Quaker Center on Capitol Hill, hosts monthly potluck dinners on a scheduled Sunday evening at 6:30 p.m. There is a topic, speaker, and open discussion afterwards. The potluck starts at 6:30 p.m. and the presentation will begin at 7:30 p.m. All are welcome to the potlucks- bring a dish to share! In addition to monthly potlucks, the William Penn House provides low cost accommodations and Quaker center programs and seminars. Join the weekly **Yoga class** at the William Penn House on Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. All ages and all skill levels are welcome. There is a \$15 charge per class. Daily at 7:30 a.m. to 8 a.m. a Meeting for Worship is held. On Sundays, with the exception of the first Sunday of the month, Capitol Hill Friends meet from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

For more information contact The William Penn House. It is located at 515 East Capitol St. SE Washington, DC 20003, (202) 543-5560.

On Sunday, **April 1** the program for the potluck will be “Buddha’s Brain,” presented by Joe Izzo, a member of the Friends Meeting of Washington. Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and other great teachers were all born with a brain built essentially like anyone else’s. Then they used their minds to change their brains in ways that changed history. With the new breakthroughs in neuroscience, combined with insights from thousands of years of contemplative practice, you, too, can shape your own brain for greater happiness, love, and wisdom.

Written with neurologist Richard Mendius, M.D., and with a Foreword by Daniel Siegel, M.D. and a Preface by Jack Kornfield, Ph.D., *Buddha’s Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love, and Wisdom* joins modern science with ancient teachings to show you how to have greater emotional balance in turbulent times, as well as healthier relationships, more effective actions, and greater peace of mind.

Joe Izzo is a member of the Friends Meeting of Washington and a therapist at Whitman-Walker Health Center. Joe brings his religious and psychological training to guide us in the discussion of this Universalist study of our religious founders. Using examples in the book, Joe will present a guided meditation.

A special potluck will be held on Sunday, **April 15** with Michael Long, editor of *I Must Resist: Bayard Rustin's Life in Letters*, which was released in March. 2012 is the centennial of the birth of

Bayard Rustin, often called the "lost prophet" of the civil rights movement. A master strategist and tireless activist, he is best remembered as the organizer of the 1963 March on Washington, one of the largest nonviolent protests ever held in the U.S. He brought Gandhi's protest techniques to the American civil rights movement and played a deeply influential role in the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., helping to mold him into an international symbol of nonviolence.

Michael Long is an associate professor of religious studies and peace and conflict studies at Elizabethtown College and is the author or editor of several books on civil rights, religion, and politics in mid-century America, including *Marshalling Justice: The Early Civil Rights Letters of Thurgood Marshall* and *First Class Citizenship: The Civil Rights Letters of Jackie Robinson*. He holds a Ph.D. from Emory University in Atlanta and resides in Highland Park, Pennsylvania. Copies of this book will be available for purchase after the potluck.

On Saturday, **May 5** from 9 a.m. to noon there will be a special program on "A Quaker Struggle." George Fox advised us to "walk cheerfully over the earth answering that of God in everyone." For many Friends this is one reason that they participate in prison ministry. Prison ministry has been an important Quaker leading throughout the history of Quakers. Prison outreach is a ministry for many meetings. They see this as an important witness and an example of how we let our lives speak. Many inmates' lives have been enriched by these humble and sincere Friends. They do not screen out who is welcome, but welcome all who seek to follow their quest to hear that small voice and to give them hope for a future. But what happens when the former inmate accepts our invitation to worship with us, to be a part of our community, to live a life of integrity and simplicity and to be equal in the eyes of God? How do they transition to freedom; how do we accept them into our lives, which includes our children? How do we witness our faith while we keep our children safe? Join us as we explore the Quaker faith in a country that has the highest incarceration rate on Earth. The program will include:

"That of God in Everyone" with Betsy Meyer, Sandy Spring & BYM Clerk

"Quakers and Prison Visitation" with Jim Rose, Patapsco and David Connell, Sidwell Friends

"Our Kids and How Do We Keep them Safe" with Parents of Friends Meeting of Washington

"Ad Hoc Committee on Sex Offenders", with Carlota Joyner, Ian Tasker and Greg Tobin of Frederick

"Can a Sex Offender Rejoin Society" by Janet Dinsmore, Friends Meeting of Washington

"Reflections, with Bill Mims, Langley Hill

We will offer child care and snacks. The program will be held at Friends Meeting of Washington, 2111 Florida Ave, Washington, DC. The cost is \$20 per person. For more information or to register contact Byron Sandford (202) 543-5560.

### **FMW Adult Study Group**

The Adult Study Group will meet on Sunday, **April 8** and **April 22**, at 9:15 a.m. in the North Room. The topic will be *Quakers and the Civil War.*, including Walt Whitman and the Civil War and the Civil War diary of Cyrus Pringle. It is not mandatory to attend every group session if a F/friend is interested in participating in the Adult Study Group. For more information contact John Scales.

### **Occupy DC Workshops**

The FMW Task Force to Support the Occupation(s) Movement is pleased to announce that we will be hosting some of the events associated with the National Occupation of DC (NOW DC). On March 30 many people who've participated in and supported the occupation movement will come to DC for what is considered the next stage in the movement addressing the problems with our economic system,



corporate personhood, access to the healthcare system and affordable health care, the many years of war and occupation the US has been involved in, and a host of many other issues. The task force is grateful to our meeting in offering space for this important event and sees it as a wonderful contribution by Friends Meeting of Washington to this movement working for economic justice, equality, and peace. Part of the work of NOW DC will be done at Friends Meeting of Washington on the following dates: **April 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12 and 13**. On these days there will be a series of workshops and forums open to everyone. The FMW task force working with the occupy movement invites Friends to attend and participate. All welcome! For more information on all of the events with NOW DC go to [www.nowdc.org](http://www.nowdc.org) or contact Malachy Kilbirde of FMW's occupy task force.

### **BYM Working Group on Racism Workshop on Privilege**

What is this thing called "privilege?" Elizabeth DuVerlie (Stony Run) and Gail Thomas (Bethesda) invite you to a workshop on this topic Saturday **April 21**, 10 - 11:30 a.m. at Friends Meeting Washington. Both members of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Working Group on Racism, Elizabeth and Gail learned about a similar workshop created by Northern Yearly Meeting to complement their Yearly Meeting's theme: "From Othering to Loving." Apparently it was wildly successful, so we want to try it here too! We will meet in the Quaker House Living Room. Come join us. Contact David Etheridge with questions.

The regular meeting of the Working Group will follow. Feel free to leave at the break or stay and learn what our committee is about.

### **Wedding of Brett McBride and Victor Malychev**

The wedding of Brett McBride and Victor Malychev will be held on Saturday, **April 21** at 10 a.m. in the Meeting Room. There will be a cake and cookie reception after meeting for worship the following day, Sunday, **April 22**.

### **Friends Wilderness Center**

Friends Wilderness Center will be having a spring Work Day on Saturday, **April 21**. Call Sheila Bach at 304-728-4820 to RSVP and get directions.

### **Inquirers' Class**

FMW's Spring 2012 Inquirers' Class will meet Monday evenings 7 - 8:30 PM in the Parlor, **April 23** through **May 21**. All welcome for any, some, or all Mondays. Questions? Contact Gerri Williams or Michael Cronin or call the FMW Office at (202) 483-3310.

### **School for Friends Children's Fair**

School for Friends invites you to help celebrate its annual Children's Fair Saturday **May 5** from 10 - 4 at Church of the Pilgrims, 22nd and P St NW. Admission \$5 per person, \$10 per family to see the booths, the Balloon Woman, face painting, a DC Fire Truck, and more. Food for sale for those who want to buy lunch. SfF is designing T Shirts celebrating its thirtieth anniversary.

### **Young Adult Friends Retreat**

Save the date! The Young Adult Friends group (age 18-35) will be going on a camping trip and retreat in Shenandoah National Park from **June 1-3**. Some Friends will drive out on Friday evening and others will join the group on Saturday morning. Details are still being finalized, but cost is expected to be about \$50/person; financial assistance may be available. Contact Catherine Vanderwaart for more information.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Friends General Conference**

Registration for the 2012 Friends General Conference Gathering of Friends, which will be held on July 1-7 in Kingston, RI, opens on **April 4**. The theme this year is "All God's Critters Got a Place in the Choir." A limited number of registration booklets is available on the table in the downstairs hallway at the meeting house. Registration and details about sessions, workshops, fees, and accommodations are available online at [www.fgcquaker.org/gathering](http://www.fgcquaker.org/gathering).

### **Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camping Program**

Registration is now open for Baltimore Yearly Meeting's summer camps for children and teens. Brochures are available on the meeting bulletin board and more information is available at [www.bymcamps.org](http://www.bymcamps.org).

### **Baltimore Yearly Meeting Women's Retreat**

Under the care of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, an annual women's retreat has been held for nearly 20 years, usually the last weekend in January. Organization of the gathering is rotated among monthly meetings. FMW women attending last month's retreat volunteered to manage the program for 2013. Are there any women who might like to join us in planning the event? Should that be you, contact Robinne Gray, Mary Campbell, Debby Churchman, Martha Solt, Jean Capps, Tara Tappert, Susan Griffin, or Jean Harmon. We will meet sometime-yet-to-be-determined in April.

### **Out and About**

Our member Don Weightman visited Washington from Philadelphia in mid-February and stayed with Hayden Wetzel. He reports that he is comfortably settled in the city very near his sister but has not yet found a meeting as satisfying as 9 O'Clock Worship at FMW. He is looking for a job but has an

assured source of income so that there is no overriding urgency. He sends his best wishes to all friends at our Meeting.

### **From the Vault – An Aborted Transfer**

A monthly series of edited extracts from the historical material of the Friends Meeting of Washington.

Wilmington Friends Meeting

14 September 2000

Dear Clerk:

This is a very difficult letter to write, as it is stating that we are unwilling to accept a transfer of membership from your meeting. The situation is complicated, so please bear with me.

In 1991 we received a certificate of transfer from your meeting on behalf of XXX, whom we did not know. Accordingly our Meeting set up a welcoming committee to meet with him. XXX didn't show up. Repeated attempts to meet with him have failed. He eventually said he didn't want the transfer to proceed.

After receipt of this letter we appointed a clearness committee. After several meetings it became obvious that XXX is active in a local Unitarian Church and is unwilling to commit to a real involvement in our Meeting, e. g. he was unwilling to commit to a reasonable level of attendance at Meeting for Worship, some level of participation in Meeting for Business, and in service. In fact, we learned that he is a member of the Unitarian Church! We told him we felt the Meeting would not accept him as a member unless he resigned from the Unitarian Church and showed some level of commitment to our Meeting. He was unwilling to do these things, although he continues to state that he wants to be "a full member of Meeting!"

Therefore, I must regretfully inform you, 9 years late, that Wilmington Monthly Meeting has declined to accept this transfer. Whether you can put him back on your books is of course a matter for your Meeting to decide.

Sincerely,

ERK

Clerk

[We have had a very few other instances of FMW members' transfers being turned back by the recipient meeting -- HW]

Fun Factoid: In June 1982 our meeting held three marriages under our care -- apparently our record. None of the couples still attend FMW.

### **Thinking About Race- “*What would a racially just society look like?*”**

Tim Wise, a white-anti-racist activist, responded to the question “*What would a racially just society look like?*” during an interview. His answer: “It’s hard to know, because I’ve never seen one. I imagine one indication would be when I could look around a neighborhood and not be able to tell--by virtue of which businesses were there and which were not, and what the houses looked like--who lived

there. Because right now I can recognize signs of economic deprivation and apartheid and racial inequity almost immediately. When I can no longer do that, I will know things have changed.”

(This interview, by David Cook, appeared in the magazine *The Sun*, July 2009, Issue 403.)

The Baltimore Yearly Meeting Working Group on Racism meets most months on the third Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, 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.