

FMW Newsletter, 8.2016

 [Printer-friendly version](#)

[Queries & Advices](#)

[Minutes](#)

[Bethesda FM Report](#)

[Alcohol Policy](#)

[Spiritual State of the Meeting](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Random Happenings](#)

[Comics](#)

Friends Meeting of Washington

Minutes

Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

July 2016

Queries

Do you respect that of God in every person? Do you search yourself for and strive to eliminate prejudices such as those related to race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation and economic condition? In what ways do you accept and appreciate differences among your friends and associates? Do you avoid exploiting or manipulating others to accomplish ends, however worthy?

Advices

[BYM's Working Group on Racism was] the "gadfly" at first. Now, this year, our concerns are at the center of Yearly Meeting. What does our concern have to do with the future of the culture and of Friends? Whites are not the majority within the Religious Society of Friends. Whites will not be the majority in the US of the future. What does this mean and where are we going? What will we do?

When the Working Group started out, we asked, "How do we get more racial diversity in our meetings?" Now we focus on, "How do we change ourselves?" and "What does it mean to be white?" We believe that, as we gain a greater sense of racial identity (our own), as we come to perceive

ourselves as having a race, rather than being the norm against which others are seen, we will increase our potential to relate to others' racial identity, and greater participation by people of color will be a by-product of this work, rather than its goal. – BYM Working Group on Racism

Voices

We are all human before we are of one race or another, and it is on this common ground of being human that we live truly and on which we meet.

– Martin Buber

The duty of the Society of Friends is to be the voice of the oppressed but [also] to be conscious that we ourselves are part of that oppression. Uncomfortably we stand with one foot in the kingdom of this world and with the other in the Eternal Kingdom. Seldom can we keep the inward and outward working of love in balance, let alone the consciousness of living both in time and in eternity, in timelessness. Let us not be beguiled into thinking that political action is all that is asked of us, nor that our personal relationship with God excuses us from actively confronting the evil in this world. The political and social struggles must be waged, but a person is more and needs more than politics, else we are in danger of gaining the whole world but losing our souls.

- Eva I Pinthus, 1987

2016/7-1 Welcome of Visitors

Meeting for Business opened at 12:15 pm with 25 Friends present. Friends welcomed Doug Smith member of Bethesda Friends Meeting as a visitor to our Meeting for Business.

Clerk's Report

- The clerks were introduced.
- Al Scott's Memorial Meeting was held on Saturday July 2, 2016.
- Dianne McDougall's father died. Please hold Diane and her family in the Light.
- Doug Smith from Bethesda Friends Meeting reported about Sidwell Friends School's planned consolidation at the Washington Rehabilitation Center and its implications for BFM and possibly FMW. Residents of the Rehab Center have brought an action to require an opportunity to buy the property first under D.C. tenancy law. If Sidwell does move and sell their campus in Bethesda, BFM, which has met there for many years, will need to decide how to go forward. Sidwell has invited BFM to move with them into the District of Columbia. BFM recognizes that a move into the District would change the relationship between BFM and other Friends' Meetings. BFM is still in discernment but they hope to find clearness in the Fall of 2016. Currently, BFM gives approximately 1/3 of its budget away to organizations doing good works as they are unencumbered with real property. Please hold Bethesda Friends Meeting in the Light as they go through this change. A copy of FAQs on this matter is attached.

Major items

2016/7-2 Marriage and Family Relations Committee

Ann Herzog, clerk of Marriage and Family Relations Committee, brought the second reading of the request of Jane Connor (attender) and Robert McMahon for marriage under the care of the Meeting. The wedding will take place at the River Road Unitarian Universalist Church on September 23, 2016.

Friends **APPROVED** the request for marriage under our care.

2016/7-3 Property Committee

Some months ago the Property Committee brought forward a proposal for a trial period of altering FMW's alcohol policy to provide for limited and controlled use of alcohol at rental events on the Meeting grounds. The Meeting has spoken about this over several months in Meeting for Business, on-line and at two threshing sessions. Much of the discussion focused on the moral issues.

Property Committee brought forward a detailed proposal of how the trial period will work, a copy of which is attached.

A Friend noted that sometimes the Meeting moves on without one Friend but that is part of being a community. Later we will find if the Meeting was mistaken or the individual who stood aside was mistaken. That, too, is part of being a community. Another Friend lifted up an earlier suggestion of taking some of the money gained from the change in policy to an organization dealing with the consequences of alcohol consumption. A Friend asked how the ban on serving minors or inebriated individuals would be enforced. It was noted that this is a requirement of licensing and insurance. A Friend suggested that our discussions are not ripe for a decision.

A Friend noted that 12-step programs will not accept outside funds. The Meeting Secretary suggested that we could provide free or inexpensive space for an alcoholic support group during the day since they cannot afford our prices. A Friend wondered what process there would be for evaluating the change in policy. A committee should be charged with the responsibility **for** that process and its review. A co-clerk of the Property Committee suggested that they could provide periodic reports to the Meeting about the process.

The clerk suggested that matter could be held over to incorporate some of the points that were raised.

A Friend noted that we will not meet until September and expressed a concern about timing.

Friends **APPROVED** the proposed policy for a trial period of up to one year with the conditions added in Meeting discussion today:

- That we inform those who serve alcohol at events that there is an offset fee to be given to an organization such that supports alcoholics or provides free or inexpensive space to such an organization; and
- To put in place a system of evaluation of how implementation of this policy is proceeding.

J.E. McNeil stood aside.

2016/7-4 Nominating Committee

Todd Harvey, clerk of Nominating Committee brought forward the following nominations:

Elise Storck (M), Capital Campaign

Michael Cronin (M), School for Friends Board (3 year term)

Bob Meehan (M), Treasurer (1 year term)

Michael North (M), Asst. Treasurer (1 year term)

Justin Connor (M), Asst. Treasurer (1 year term)

Sarah Radomsky (A), Hospitality (1 year term)

Dante Bucci (M), Capital Campaign

Friends **APPROVED**.

Todd Harvey also brought forward the resignation of Nate Vernon from Finance and Stewardship Committee.

Friends **ACCEPTED** his resignation.

2016/7-5 Ministry and Worship Committee

Gene Throwe, clerk of Ministry and Worship, presented the Spiritual State of the Meeting for a second reading, an improved copy of which is attached.

A Friend noted that Friends have always had a disproportionate influence regardless of numbers so we probably will in future as well. A Friend noted that this report reflects the voices of the Meeting rather than the committee. A Friend suggested that the report be modified to include the statement on our disproportionate influence.

Gene Throwe sees this as a call to help us enrich the ministry we have here. Friends noted that we should be challenged by the report and stand up to say it is up to us to make a difference.

After some discussion it was decided to include the following language in the report: "The Meeting sees this pessimistic outlook as a challenge for our future as Friends have had a disproportional influence in the past."

Friends **APPROVED** the Spiritual State of the Meeting as improved.

2016/7-6 Records and Handbook Committee

Beth Cogswell, clerk of Records and Handbook Committee, brought forward changes which were suggested by the clerks of the Meeting, a copy of which are attached.

Friends **APPROVED** the changes.

2016/7-7 Peace and Social Concerns Committee

Mike Duvall, clerk of Peace and Social concerns, brought forward a proposal to create a Taskforce on Race under the care of Peace & Social Concerns Committee with David Etheridge and Debby Churchman in leadership to look for ways to address the issues raised as part of the queries and advices for today's meeting including an audit and recommendations.

Friends **APPROVED** the formation of the Taskforce on Race under the care of Peace & Social Concerns.

2016/7-8 Membership Committee

Janet Dinsmore, clerk of Membership Committee, brought forward the second reading of the request for membership of Zoe Plaughter.

Friends **APPROVED**.

Janet Dinsmore also brought forward the request for transfer of Virginia (Gini) Stevens's membership to Multnomah Meeting.

Friends **APPROVED** the request for transfer.

2016/7-9 Other business

David Etheridge, reported from Interim Meeting held in Lexington VA on June 19. There will be an open forum at annual sessions about *Faith & Practice*. Baltimore Yearly Meeting has hired a new general secretary, Ned Stowe, a member of Sandy Spring Meeting. Ned was formerly with Friends Committee on National Legislation. Marcy Seitel was approved as Clerk of Interim Meeting. The Women's Retreat was the largest one ever and the camps are fully enrolled. Friends are asked to write to campers who will write back.

Friends noted that today is Joe Johnson's 85th birthday and wished him well on this occasion. We noted that because of inaccessibility problems in the Meetinghouse, Joe had to be wheeled through Meeting for Business to get to his party in the parlor.

Friends **APPROVED** the minutes as improved.

The Meeting closed at 2:10 pm with approximately 24 persons in attendance to reconvene as Way opens on September 11, 2016.

ATTACHMENTS

Bethesda Friends Meeting

Ad Hoc Committee on Opportunities for Our Future (AHCOOF)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: What are Sidwell Friends School's plans?

A: Sidwell Friends School (SFS) is purchasing the Washington Home at the corner of Upton and 37th Street in the District of Columbia, and plans to sell the Lower School campus in Bethesda, and relocate the Lower School to the DC campus. Information about SFS plans can be found at: http://www.sidwell.edu/about_sfs/one-campus/index.aspx

Q: What is the timeline for the move?

A: Sidwell Friends is still trying to determine the best possible timeline for a transition to the Upton Street campus and has begun preparing a master plan and preliminary timeline. The projected timeline the school is working toward is moving the Lower School to the District for the 2019-2020 school year. One condition of the sale of the Lower School would be a lease-back from the purchaser through the date of the move of the lower school. BFM can remain at the Bethesda campus until the lower school is moved.

Q: What is the process for BFM and timeline to make a location decision?

A: The decision will be made in one or more called Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business. We hope to make the decision by the fall of 2016. An ad hoc committee on Opportunities for Our Future has been appointed to gather information and organize the process, which will include a combination of information sessions, threshing sessions, worship sharing and other activities. Information about the charge and timeline for the ad hoc committee can be found at: http://www.bethesdafriends.org/oof_charge.aspx

Q: What opportunities will I have to ask questions and express my views? How can I get additional information?

A: Any or all of the following:

- Go to the BFM web site and click the link "Opportunities for Our Future." http://www.bethesdafriends.org/ahc_oof.aspx It has many useful documents and links, including a way to provide input.
- Attend Meeting for Business for regular updates and/or attend scheduled meetings on this topic. See the newsletter for dates, times and locations.
- Contact any of the members of the ad hoc committee: Marion Ballard, Alex Bell, Peirce Hammond, Susan Kaul, Gail Kohanek, Jabez McClelland, Doug Smith, Ralph Steinhardt, and Amy Lear White (see the directory for their contact information).
- Minutes of ad hoc committee meetings, notes from information and threshing sessions, and other documents are available from members of the ad hoc committee.

Q: Is there an option for Bethesda Friends Meeting to join SFS in making this move?

A: Yes. The Head of School and the Clerk of the Board of Trustees have invited BFM to move to the DC campus and expressed their hope that we will accept. Members of the ad hoc committee met with the architects and SFS staff to learn about their plans and to share initial thoughts.

Q: Is there an option to remain in our current location?

A: If another school purchases the Bethesda campus, the ad hoc committee plans to contact the purchaser to discuss the possibility of renting space.

Q: What other options are being considered?

A: The ad hoc committee is gathering information about options for renting space or purchasing a building. Perhaps the most interesting option identified so far is an opportunity to rent space in a new community services center being built by another church in Bethesda. The committee is in the process of exploring other options, including additional locations suggested by people in the BFM community. Contact members of the ad hoc committee for specifics.

Q: Where do people in the Bethesda Friends Meeting community live? Are we assuming that just one location will be selected? Could this divide our Meeting?

A: We are distributed fairly evenly around the current SFS Lower School. A map of the addresses of those listed in the directory is posted here: http://www.bethesdafriends.org/ahc_oof.aspx#docs. Our current goal is to find unity around a single location that works for the BFM community as a whole. That said, BFM is a community not a location, and we could select a primary physical location with worship groups meeting in other locations under the care of the Meeting and as part of the BFM community.

Q: What are the cost implications of renting space for a meeting house?

A: We are in the process of gathering cost information, but rental options are almost certainly going to be more expensive than the \$8,000 annual donation we give to SFS now. Rent of \$30,000 annually is the estimate we are currently using, but it is very rough. Many have observed that we currently are able to devote a considerable portion of our budget to charitable giving because our costs for space are so low. Thus, one important consideration is whether those in the BFM community are willing to increase their donations to the Meeting and/or reduce the Meeting's charitable giving to others.

Q: Can BFM afford to buy our own building?

A: Only if we conduct a capital campaign to raise a very large share of the purchase cost. Based on our current annual revenues, it is estimated that BFM could borrow about \$400,000 on a mortgage. So, for example, if a building were to cost \$1.5 million, we would have to raise \$1.1 million in an up-front capital campaign. Owning a building would also entail increased operating expenses. Therefore, we are estimating increased annual expenses of around \$60,000 to cover operating costs and mortgage payments. Our current budget for all expenses and donations is \$120,000. An increase in annual costs for space of this size would require either substantially increased annual contributions from meeting members and attenders, or substantial reductions in our discretionary donations to other organizations, or both.

Q: Is BFM in contact with other Friends meetings in the area?

A: Yes, both to learn from their experiences and to discuss implications for our good relationships. For instance, the clerk of Friends Meeting of Washington (FMW) and the Presiding Clerk of Baltimore Yearly Meeting each attended our October Meeting for Business when the SFS Head of School came to discuss their plans with us. We are in contact with Annapolis Meeting, and they have offered to share with us their experience building a meeting house. A follow up with them and outreach to other meetings is being planned.

FMW Property Committee

Request to Meeting for Worship with Concern for Business for

Trial Relaxation of the Alcohol Policy for Celebratory Events

Friends Meeting of Washington's website notes that ours is an alcohol-free environment, although it is unclear whether MfB ever formally considered or acted upon the question of whether to allow alcohol on our campus. Our community has changed since this policy was established. Many Friends in our congregation enjoy alcohol in moderation, and the Meeting occasionally misses opportunities to host memorial meetings, wedding receptions and other celebrations because of our stance on alcohol.

The Property Committee has considered the issue over the past several years and is in unity in this request that the Meeting consider a one year trial period in which beer, wine and champagne may be served in discrete locations to discrete groups under controlled conditions.^[1] We would expect hosts to be sensitive to their guests' needs, recognizing that alcohol is not appropriate for all.

Property's motivations in bringing this request include our desires to:

- Properly reflect who we are, and support members, attenders and others, in celebrating important life events.
- Better support like-minded non-profit groups and causes who share and promote our values.
- Improve stewardship of our property; we own three aging, historic buildings which require extraordinary maintenance to keep them functional and attractive.

In weighing this request, it is our hope that Friends will prayerfully consider the following:

- Does FMW's current alcohol policy reflect my values?
- Are my feelings about our meetinghouse reflective of George Fox's warning against the creation and veneration of steeple houses and his position on the use of alcohol?
- Do I trust our committee structure and meeting staff to safeguard my values?
- Do I do my share to support the meeting financially?

[1] Suggested general conditions/requirements, which have been reviewed and approved by our Event Manager/Administrative Secretary, include:

Booking at the discretion of Event Manager/Administrative Secretary

Serving of wine, champagne and beer only

Limit events to wedding receptions, memorial meetings and fund-raisers where partying and alcohol are *not* the main point.

Either a portable caterer's license or a one-day liquor license, as required by law, with exact times and locations of alcohol service.

A liability license listing FMW as an insured party.

A damage deposit of at least \$1,000, in advance.

No serving of alcohol to anyone already inebriated or under age 21.

A signed contract to follow ABC laws, noise ordinance, etc.

A signed, post-event checklist with clear clean-up requirements to retrieve deposit

A signed advance schedule of all deliveries and event times.

Delivery and pick-up of liquor on the day of the event (no overnight storage).

FMW representatives empowered to evict anyone or terminate events in case of violations.

Friends Meeting of Washington

Spiritual State of the Meeting 2016

REPORT – June 12, 2016

Background

The idea for a new approach to the Spiritual State of the Meeting (SSOM) survey in 2016 originated in events of 2015. The SSOM report adopted in the spring of that year identified a tension in Friends Meeting of Washington between “long-timers” in the Meeting who had been attending ten years or more, and relative “newcomers” who are often unsure of “how things work and how they can fit in.”

Awareness of this tension was heightened in mid-2015 when incidents of inappropriate behavior and harassment on the part of one Friend came to the attention of the broader Meeting. These incidents, which had been ongoing for some time, were thought to evidence problems in communication and problem-solving between older and young adult Friends. One dimension of this challenge was the fact that, in addition to personal communication, digital and social media had been used as a tool for the troubling behavior.

In response, in their October 2015 annual report, the Committee on Ministry and Worship recommended the creation of a Futures Task Force to identify ways to better bridge the generational gap and make recommendations to carry the Meeting into a future that is more diverse, digital, and dynamic than any Quakers have ever experienced before.

Process

Members of Ministry and Worship designed a 15-question closed-ended survey intended to lay the groundwork for a more substantive discussion about the Meeting in the Future. M&W made the survey available to members and attenders of FMW online via Survey Monkey. Hard copies were also available. A total of 91 people responded to the survey – a richer number than in recent previous years.

Once the initial survey results had been tallied, and following the custom of 2015, M&W convened a series of 5 (??) focus groups in order to gain additional perspective from Friends on some of the findings. These focus groups included Friends of all ages and were extremely helpful in expanding our understanding.

One of the most important messages from the focus groups is that Friends would like to have ongoing opportunities to dialogue about issues such as the ones that emerged from the SSoM survey. They feel that regular (monthly, semi-monthly?) opportunities to get together for substantive conversations will be much more beneficial to the Meeting's spiritual health than a once-a-year survey that is presented, discussed, adopted, and then put on the shelf.

Summary

The Friends Meeting of Washington survey and focus groups illuminated a community that is remarkably diverse, but also grounded in a shared understanding of several key principles and testimonies. This draft report presents six themes that illustrate this diversity and commonality.

- 1. Integrity and equality are foundational Quaker testimonies.**
- 2. Stewardship will be increasingly important in the future.**
- 3. Many in the Meeting do not expect that Friends will have a great impact in the world of the future.**
- 4. Our inspiration comes from many sources – well beyond traditional Quaker works.**
- 5. Our spiritual practices focus inward and outward.**
- 6. The Society of Friends – and FMW -- face external and internal challenges to growth.**

Preceding each theme in the body of this report is a quotation cited in the survey or focus groups. Following each theme is a query that may be used for further dialogue and illumination.

 Text Box: "There is that of God in everyone." Nine of every ten of us agree.

Themes

**Integrity
and**

equality are foundational Quaker testimonies.


When asked to weigh each of six Quaker testimonies, more Friends selected "integrity" and "equality" as important than any other. We asked Friends to elaborate in our focus groups. They emphasized that integrity and equality are not necessarily higher in rank than the other testimonies; rather they are foundational. They underpin everything we believe and do. They keep us grounded. One Friend pointed out that we are Seekers of Truth, and integrity is a by-product of living in the Truth.

A majority of those responding to the survey indicated that the Quaker testimony on "simplicity" was less important. And yet, simplicity was cited as being "very difficult to implement" by more of us than any of the other testimonies. It also received the "worst" rating in terms of how the world we live in respects our principles.

Queries:

What does "equality" mean in an interconnected global community with members of so many races, ethnicities, languages, cultural backgrounds, sexualities and gender identities, abilities / disabilities, income levels, ages? What does it mean in the community that is our Meeting?

In this world, have we given up on “simplicity,” or do we need to spend some time as a community redefining it in today’s context? How can we (should we?) let our lives speak?

 Text Box: “The best recreation is to do good.” Four of ten of us agree. An equal number say “probably.”

Stewardship will be increasingly important in the future.

More than two-thirds of us indicated on the survey that the Quaker testimony of “stewardship” is not very important. And yet, an equal share of us believes that stewardship will become more important in the future. None of the other testimonies was considered to be increasing in importance by as many of us as was stewardship.

In the focus groups, Friends emphasized that stewardship is important in terms of the environment, but it also means taking care of the Meeting – financially, spiritually, and by nurturing and mentoring others.

Queries: What does “stewardship” mean in today’s world of finite resources (energy, land, clean water, food, money, time, talent, more)? What aspects will become more important in the future? Will we be challenged most directly at the personal, Meeting, community, national, or global level?

 Text Box: “I believe in the light of Love.” Three of every four of us agree.

**Many in
the
Meeting do
not expect**

that Friends will have a great impact in the world of the future.


The survey asked whether Quakers as a group will have an “important” impact, a “little” impact, or “no” impact on each of testimonies in the next ten years. Across all testimonies, the vast weight of responses was in the “a little” impact category. Friends were most likely to believe that we will have an impact on peace and equality over the next ten years – although this was true for fewer than one-third of us. When asked to assess the future influence of Quakers on all six testimonies, approximately one of seven of us said “I don’t know.”

In the focus groups, Friends pointed out that “largely silent meetings are not always nourishing.” Our Meeting is a place we can go to in order to restore “our connection with our values.” There are people in the Meeting who exemplify these core values; they let their lives speak? “What happened to the FMW of 1968 and radical activism?” The Meeting sees this pessimistic outlook as a challenge for our future as Friends have had a disproportional influence in the past.

Query: Do our responses to this question indicate a lack of confidence? Lack of inspiration? Too many things on our plates? Or do Quakers choose to let our lives speak through activism in organizations and causes outside the Meeting?

Our inspiration comes from many sources – well beyond traditional Quaker works.

Friends find spiritual inspiration and nourishment from many different sources. When asked what is “central to our lives,” more of us selected the teachings of Jesus, Mysticism, and Christianity than any

Text Box: “There is more to spiritual life than complying with the rules and practices of a church.” More of us agree with this statement than with any other on the survey.

other source. The teachings of Jesus were also cited as being “inspirational” to more than half of us – following the

source of inspiration selected by an even greater number of Friends: the teachings of Buddha. Other sources of inspiration included Taoism and Judaism.

More than three-quarters of us “mostly disagree” with Fundamentalist and Evangelical Christianity – a more negative rating than was received by any other spiritual resource.

One-third or more of us indicated that we simply do not know much about Hinduism, Islam, Taoism, or the teachings of Moses.

Query: Are these various perspectives in tension in our community? Are there ways we can ensure they enhance our communal spiritual experience?

Text Box: “I am seeking continuous revelation.” Almost seven of every ten of us agree.

Our spiritual practices focus inward and outward.

Friends were asked how we enhance our spiritual lives. The responses were quite diverse and reflected an emphasis on both inward and outward expressions of faith. Half or more of all Friends said that we provide service to others; read philosophy, ethics, or spiritual writings; meditate regularly; meet socially with friends; study social issues; and pray. Fewer Friends participate in activities customary within other denominations, such as studying the Bible, fasting, or seeking to attract others to our faith.

In the focus groups conducted after the survey, examples of faith in action provided by Young Adult Friends were the most animated and wide-ranging. Young Friends illustrated their views with personal examples related to how we work, what we buy, what we eat, what we own, how we live, how we view global and national events, how we tap into talents, how we relate to one another.

Query: Do we foster and nourish an ongoing exchange of spiritual experiences and perspectives between older and younger Friends? Are there things we could do more or better?

Text Box: “Those who are guided by the light of God are one.” Three of every ten of us agree, but four of ten said “No” or “I don’t know.”

The Society of Friends – and FMW -- faces external and internal challenges to growth.

We asked why there are so few Quakers compared to other faith groups, and Friends answered both broadly and specifically. Half or more of us feel that people in general are growing more secular in their thinking, people who enjoy silence are not good at marketing themselves to others, and many people still have a stereotypical image of Quakers.

A significant number of us also referenced two concerns about our own meeting, which have come up repeatedly in previous surveys and discussions. One such issue involves vocal ministry that is jarring and spiritually unsettling – or as one Friend put it, “intempestive” – and that discourages newcomers from ever coming back.

Another issue is that “meetings are so tolerant that they tolerate bad behavior and harassment.” One Friend in a focus group said that “we live in denial, and don’t want to hear about these things.” Another challenged that “we need to equip ourselves better with communication and integrity.”

Query: These challenges have come up in different forms, but repeatedly, in SSoM surveys of recent years. What do we need to do differently to address them, or are we content to live with them as they are?

Recommendations

 Text Box: “Opting out is not a neutral choice.” “We have to make imperfect decisions in an imperfect world.” Observations from the Young Adult Friends Focus Group

Summary

We encourage Friends Meeting of Washington to use the results of the SSoM

process to stimulate ongoing dialogue about ways in which individual Quakers and our Meeting can let our lives speak in the dynamic future that already surrounds us. Those who participated in our focus groups asked for regular opportunities to get together and discuss the issues that emerged. We believe that this is a very good idea, which will be enriched by the full participation of both long-time members and new-comers, and by those of all ages. Perhaps the queries presented in this report can provide starting points. There are many more, for sure.

RECORDS & HANDBOOK

Meeting for Business

July 17, 2016

To: Meeting for Business

Re: Edits to FMW Handbook

1. Section 10, p. 30, last line should read:

Representatives to Related Organizations, as listed in Section 12.1 (p. 38-39) are to give information in writing, to the Presiding Clerk, in time for the Clerk to present a summary to the Meeting for Business.

2. Section 12.1, page 38, Annual Committee Reports

Insert names of committees, as shown in attached table.

3. Section 10, p. 31

Eliminate May and July report listings of Related Organizations.

The following committees no longer exist or are inactive and are not listed.

- Senior Center Committee
- Ad Hoc Committee for Special Events

Month	Annual Committee Reports	Regular Agenda Items
May	Presiding Clerk’s Summary of representatives to Related Organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Neighborhood Commission • Council of Churches of Greater Washington • National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund • Rught Sharing of World Resources 	
July	Presiding Clerk’s Summary of representatives to Related Organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends Nonprofit Housing • Garden Committee 	

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Wolcott-Lucy Foster Educational Fund Committee • School for Friends • William Penn House |
|---|

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 1 – 7 – Annual Session 2016, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Hood College (Frederick, MD) Some of us come to feel at home with Friends through worship first, some through social activism, and some through community. As we continue on our path with Friends, we inevitably encounter the other two and perhaps integrate all three into our Quaker experience. What has your experience been? Have you discovered how all three of these interact with each other as essential elements of the Quaker way? Join us at Annual Session this year to share in our exploration of this question. This year, the theme of our annual session is *Discernment and Action in Spiritual Community*. Through a truly exciting variety of plenaries, workshops, interest groups, Junior Yearly Meeting, through fellowship at meals, worship sharing, and other times, and also through our business sessions, we will have an opportunity to live out all three of these core elements of our faith. Registration is now open. Go to <http://www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession/> for all of the information and online registration. Register by June 27 to get the lower rates!

Aug. 3: **Grate Patrol** Help prepare sandwiches to take out on the Salvation Army truck to feed our vulnerable neighbors. Come to the Meeting House at 5:30 pm. For more information, contact sbrooks@uab.edu

Aug. 6: Come to **So Others Might Eat** at 6:15 a.m. and make breakfast for our vulnerable neighbors. 70 “O” St. NW. For more information, contact Betsy.Bramon@gmail.com

August 12 – 14 – Fellowship of Friends of African Descent 2016 Gathering, Arch Street Friends Meeting (Philadelphia, PA) *Recharge, Renew, and Rejoice!* This year’s theme invites us to take time for ourselves and Recharge; calls us to Renew our commitment to social justice; and offers the opportunity to Rejoice in the Fellowship of Friends. We hope to see you there! Registration is now open! (www.fofad.org/2016registration.html) Fellowship of Friends of African Descent was formed out of a desire that Black Quakers know each other. The Fellowship mission statement was adopted by the organization in 1991: To publish and respond to the concerns of Friends of African descent within the Religious Society of Friends. To provide for the nurture of Friends of African descent, their families and friends. To address and respond to issues affecting people of African descent in their communities worldwide.

Sept. 2-4: **Spiritual Formation Program Fall Retreat**, Priest Field Pastoral Center (Kearneysville, WV) Do you yearn for spiritual deepening? Are you longing for growth in a community of seekers who support one another on our individual journeys? Have you felt a nudge to greater intentionality in your spiritual practice? If so, the Spiritual Formation Program is for you. Join us for

our Fall Retreat at the beautiful Priest Field center. Enjoy comfortable accommodations, good fellowship with Friends from your own and other Meetings, time for individual reflection and deep listening, and beautiful walks along the many nature trails. Registration for the retreat will open soon. For full information, go to <https://bym-rsfi-org.presencehost.net/events/spiritform/>

Sept. 10: **Clerks of Committees Workshop**, Location to be announced. The Yearly Meeting will host a workshop for Clerks of Committees, beginning at 10am to 3pm. This will provide an opportunity to learn about the ways in which BYM office can help you, but also to talk together about the ways in which committee life can be spiritually nourishing – and get work done! Current, former, and maybe-in-the-future clerks are welcome.

RANDOM HAPPENINGS



Once again, despite our best efforts to be in the world but not of it, Friends Meeting of Washington is being pulled into the 21st century—this time, by a new virtual game called **Pokemon Go!** As I understand it (and I really don't), this is a phone app which sends players scurrying all over the city looking for Poke Stops in which to receive, um, virtual stuff and to Gyms in which to engage others with that virtual stuff. Whatever.

Nearly every church in D.C. includes at least one Poke Stop; our Meeting House includes three. **Mackenzie Morgan** felt a great leading (if that is the word I am looking for here) for FMW to engage with this new audience of folks coming to our site. Um, okay. I got Ministry & Worship involved, in the sense that I dragged **Gene Throwe** over here to talk with Mackenzie, and together we came up with a marketing plan. Then we needed signage. The main character in this game is a prepubescent dragon-looking figure named Pikachu, heavy on adorable. I asked if we could put a Quaker hat on him. Mackenzie did so with her computer magic. By then, we'd dragged **Josh Wilson** into this clearness committee. He thought the hat looked too Jewish, and also thought Pikachu needed a beard, and as long as we were at it, shouldn't there be a female version as well? Pretty soon, he'd created Mr. and Mrs. Quakachu.

I did worry when I read reports that some people are using this game to lure people into being robbed, and some institutions (notably the Holocaust Museum) are upset by the existence of Poke Stops at their place. I also wondered how violent the game is. The Quaker players I spoke with all thought it was like a new sport they were enjoying, and pointed out that it was getting them outdoors and

interacting in a friendly way with their community. I figured it's a tool that can probably be used for good or evil; let's try for the good.

By this time, we'd discovered that the **Melchior** triplets, as well as our Clerk's son, **Julian**, are big players. The triplets' Mom, **Mary Melchior**, used to design virtual games—who knew? With minimal arm-twisting, these splendid young men all agreed to help us with outreach. Our big plan is to use something called Lures on Sunday at rise of Meeting, and offer Pokemon players access to cold water, restrooms, and a charging station. We'll see what happens. Way opens.

In more serious news, I just got back from the **Gathering of Friends General Conference** in beautiful downtown St. Joseph, Minnesota. I took a workshop on deepening our Meetings and came back with pages of suggestions of things various Meetings have done to address common issues, from committee structure to calendar management to clerking to managing community disruptions. I've been sharing these with the various committees for their consideration.

The Gathering was heavily engaged in conversations, instigated by Friends of Color, around what they perceived as institutionalized white privilege within Friends General Conference. Then we were rocked mid-week by the horrible news of police killings in Baton Rouge and nearby St. Paul, Minnesota.

I came back convinced that instead of pointing to the mote in FGC's eye, it would be well for Friends Meeting of Washington to take a good, hard look at what may be the beam in our own eye. I'm part of a group, led by David Etheridge, reading through Waking Up White by Debby Irving and coming (slowly) to grips with our own white privilege. I asked if we could do some kind of internal audit of FMW for overt/covert evidence of such privilege here in our structures, words, pictures, etc. David pointed out that Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Diversity Project has asked all Meetings to do just that, so we're on track. I brought this to our Peace & Social Concerns Committee, which is willing to form us into a taskforce and take us under their care. We passed this through the Meeting for Business, which approved. We will be conducting this audit over the next several months, and will bring our results and suggestions back to Peace & Social Concerns for them to consider. Stay tuned.

Our hearts go out to **Diane McDougall** and her family for the recent loss of her father, Roscoe Brown, the former Tuskegee Airman. Our hearts are also with **Martha Solt** who has recently endured several rounds of chemotherapy for her non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. In August, she will undergo a stem cell replacement, which requires several weeks in an isolation ward. Holding her and her family in the Light. Also, **Bob Meehan** is getting a knee replaced at Sibley Hospital, and promises to return soon, ready to run. And **Joe Johnson** recently celebrated his 85th birthday with a cake made by daughter **Mary**, and surrounded by friends and family in the Meeting House Parlor.

We lurch forward.

- Debby