

FMW Newsletter, August 2017

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Friends Meeting of Washington

Meeting for Worship with Concern for Business

16 July 2017

Minutes

The Meeting opened at 12:20 p.m. with a period of worship sharing with 30 individuals present.

Query for Worship Sharing:

Do we welcome diversity of languages, expressions of culture and expressions of faith in our Meeting and in our wider communities?

A worshipper reflected that we can exclude others unconsciously when we assume knowledge or experience that is not widely shared; another observed that we do accept a diversity of expressions of faith but must ensure that our use of language is flexible enough to accept a variety of stances toward religious expression.

Welcome of Visitor:

The Clerk welcomed Ji Won Park as a visitor.

Clerk's Report:

Thanks were offered to all Friends who supported and/or participated in the interfaith 23-hour vigil concerning the Senate's healthcare bill. Thanks to the efforts of these Friends, the Meeting was able to supply 60 meals for the vigilers, as well as overnight accommodations and breakfast to many. The Friends Committee on National Legislation urges us to keep up the pressure against this bill, which slashes Medicaid dollars and gives a large tax cut to the wealthiest taxpayers.

Gratitude was expressed to Energy Arts, an organization that rented our Meeting campus to hold a two-week-long qi gong training. Friends were able to worship outdoors twice under the tent the organization rented for their use (such tents cost \$3,000 per day to rent).

We hosted a meeting for worship with a concern for Jim Clay, who is retiring from his position as Director of School for Friends. Many current and former SfF families attended, expressing gratitude to Jim for his vision and hard work on behalf of hundreds of children. The School was founded by members of this Meeting and was originally housed on our campus. Jim will be much missed.

Our Black Lives Matter banner has been slashed. We have ordered a replacement.

Updates:

Sanctuary Task Force – Jim Bell for the Sanctuary Task Force

The Sanctuary Task Force has arranged for an immigration lawyer, Matt Handley, Director of Litigation, Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, to speak with us on August 20 after the rise of Meeting. Matt works with Washington lawyers to identify those who will assist with pro bono cases. All are welcome and urged to attend, especially since our Meeting is considering providing sanctuary. Jim suggested that we invite persons from other congregations to attend the presentation.

The committee is providing support to Albert Mgubwe, an LGBT activist who needs the money to fund a work permit application while he applies for asylum. The committee understands that the application for the work permit costs approximately \$400 dollars. Jim suggests that Albert pay a part of the cost, while the Meeting provides for the remainder. To that end, the Taskforce plans to do some fundraising.

A Friend shared that Whitman Walker Health Services provides pro bono services to LGBT or HIV positive individuals from countries that persecute them.

The Metropolitan African Episcopal Methodist Church is doing exciting work among African immigrants. The Sanctuary Task Force is hoping to work with them.

Renovation Construction – Virginia Avanesyan for Trustees

The Clerk of Trustees signed the mortgage documentation with Sandy Springs Bank on June 26.

The Meeting has applied for the various permits necessary for the proposed construction permits. As an administrative matter, the District of Columbia divides approval among various divisions of the permitting agency. Many parts of our application have been approved; when all have been approved, the required permits will be issued and construction can move forward.

Capital Campaign - Neil Froemming for the Capital Campaign Committee

Contributions are continuing to come in for the renovation; Friends are asked to continue and expand their commitments to the project. The interim goal of raising at least \$1,000,000 has been achieved. Fundraising continues.

Major Items:

Membership - Janet Dinsmore for the Membership Committee

Leonard Eoussa's application for membership in the Meeting was presented a second time. Friends approved Leonard's membership in Friends Meeting of Washington with enthusiasm.

Harassment Policy - Greg Robb for the Ministry & Worship Committee

The committee is continuing to consider the proposed Harassment Policy and is not yet ready to bring a final proposal to Meeting for Business. Members are invited to provide comments to the Committee as it works on the draft.

Scholarship Funds

The Clerk asked for guidance concerning two scholarship funds established and administered by our Meeting. One of the funds – the Mary Jane Simpson Scholarship Fund, designed to provide financial assistance and other support to graduates of District of Columbia public schools attending college – is active and has a leadership that has ensured that its work continues. The other fund – the Mary Wolcott-Lucy Foster Scholarship Fund, established to provide assistance to young people from the Meeting community attending Quaker schools – has not been active in recent years; there has been no specific fundraising for the Fund, applications have neither been solicited nor received, and no individual or group within the Meeting has stepped forward to provide leadership.

Some have asked whether the inactive fund should be laid down and funds (if any) be added to the active fund. Friends expressed the need to have more information before making a decision. Further discussion will lie over to a future Meeting for Worship with Concern for Business with a report by the Clerk at the September Meeting.

Alcohol Policy Renewal – Merry Pearlstein for the Property Committee

Merry Pearlstein reminded us that at the July, 2016 Meeting for Worship with Concern for Business we approved on a temporary basis an alcohol consumption/service policy for events hosted by renters held on our property. By its terms, the policy must now be either renewed or revised.

Friends agreed to extend the existing Alcohol Policy for two months until Meeting for Business in September and requested that the Property Committee make a full presentation at that time.

Solar Panel Installation – Neil Froemming

The Historical Review Board has raised no objections to the installation of solar photovoltaic panels on the western-facing roof of the Meeting House. The plans we submitted to the Board call for 88 panels which, when in place, would result in significant saving in utility costs and reduce our impact upon the environment. The solar panel addition was greeted with excitement and a sense of approval among

those in attendance. MfB approved the individuals involved in the solar panel plan to continue working on the plan within committee structure, then, work with committees to make sure the steps fit the construction timeline. If Trustees, Finance & Stewardship, and the Property Committee are in unity with going forward with this plan, Meeting for Business gives them permission to do so without having to come back for further authorization. A Friend expressed hope that the decision would proceed as quickly as possible to permit savings to begin accruing.

Other Business:

Membership -- Friends accepted the annual report of the Membership Committee.

Presiding Clerk's Report on Various Related Organizations – Friends accepted the report on Friends Non-Profit Housing, the National Campaign for Peace Tax Fund, and the Garden Committee.

Ministry & Worship Annual Report – Friends accepted the M&W annual report.

Religious Education Annual Report – Friends accepted the report of the Religious Education Committee. Friends expressed particular thanks for Michael Beer and Makai Kellogg for their leadership in providing excellent care of our children.

Healing & Reconciliation Annual Report – Friends accepted the report.

BYM Interim Meeting - A Friend reported that Interim Meeting was wonderful and enthusiastically suggests we attend BYM annual session. Michael Beer volunteers to report back on Annual Sessions.

Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business closed at 2:05 p.m. with 17 individuals present. We will reconvene as way opens on 9/10/2017.

Harassment Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Friends Meeting of Washington is a safe space for all members and attenders. We strive as a community, to support the targets of harassment; to shed a light on and prevent or stop harassing behavior; and to protect the spiritual safety and integrity of our Meeting.

Friends Meeting of Washington recognizes that while one of our tasks as Friends is to care for and radically honor the Light of God in all people, this does not exempt us from being a community where harassment can and does occur. Harassment based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, skin color, cognitive or physical disability, mental illness, physical appearance, body size, or religion is contrary to the faith and practice of the Religious Society of Friends.

Harassment is hurtful, unwanted behavior imposed on a person that is destructive to one's spirit. It often involves the exercise of formal or informal power by the perpetrator over the target. The key words are *unwanted behavior* by the *perpetrator* toward the *target*.

Harassment may take the form of, but is not limited to: verbal comments, intimidation, stalking, email, text, physical contact or sexual attention. It may occur in public and private contexts, including online communications. At FMW this may include Meeting for Worship, coffee hour and other social events, committee meetings, religious education/spiritual formation groups, Young Adult Friend events, and private and group communication between members and attenders of the Meeting.

We recognize the specific physical or psychological impact harassment may have on the target. It also damages the safety and spiritual integrity of our community as a whole. As such, every member and attender of the FMW community has an equal responsibility for preventing, calling out, and stopping harassing behavior.

What to do if you experience or witness harassment

If you witness or experience harassment at FMW, please tell someone, anyone. All members and attenders are responsible for caring for each other.

Clerks of Meeting, Ministry and Worship Committee, Healing and Reconciliation Committee, in consultation with each other, are responsible for handling complaints of harassment. If someone tells you about harassment, please contact the clerk of one of these committees.

Annual Report to the Meeting

July, 2017

Friend's Non-Profit Housing Corporation, Inc. (FNPH)

FNPH is the owner of Friendly Gardens, an 84 unit affordable housing complex located in Lyttonsville, Maryland near the path of the hopefully soon-to-be-built Purple Line. Constructed in about 1971 by Quakers from FMW and the Bethesda Meeting, Friendly Gardens (FG) offers very modestly priced apartment units for families and individuals. Rents range from about \$700/month for the most heavily subsidized two bedroom apartments to about \$950/month for a4 bedroom units. That Friendly Gardens offers 4 bedroom apartments speaks to the intent to create apartments for families and others who need 4 bedrooms.

FNPH has been undertaking substantial changes over the past several years. We engaged a new facilities manager who, working with the Board, has surveyed the incomes of our residents to better help the Board focus rent subsidies to those who most need it. After paying off the HUD-subsidized mortgage in 2011 and thus no longer being subject to HUD regulations, the Board has restated its policy that FG intended to provide affordable housing for residents with what can be termed extremely low, very low, and low incomes. Drawing from HUD guidelines, these were defined as households earning 30, 40, and 50 percent of the "area median income (AMI)." In 2016, in Montgomery County, the AMI was \$106,800. With considerable help from our property manager, the Board established new, higher, rents, phased in over a three-year period. Even with rent increases, all FG rents for 2-,

and 3-, and 4-bedroom units are below 30 percent of household incomes at each of these income levels.

Further, we have completely refreshed and renovated all 84 units by upgrading appliances, the floors, windows and painting where necessary. While the effort was substantial and costly, we believe we improved our facility without reducing the availability of subsidized apartments at very low rents.

Future plans include consideration of the impact of the Purple Line, which will provide efficient public transportation inside the beltway to our residents, and the effect of the recent re-zoning of the Lyttonsville area by the Montgomery County Planning Board and County Council. The Board intends to increase the availability of affordable housing inside the beltway to the extent we have the opportunity and can afford to do so.

In July 2016, the Board chose new officers. These are:

- President, Richard Mounts
- Vice President, Dan Dozier
- Secretary, Kate Steger
- Treasurer, Laurie Wilner

Ralph Hofmeister, a very long serving member of the Board, has resigned. All of the Board members are enormously grateful for the very tangible contributions he made as a Board member. Currently, the FNPH Board has nine members with a valuable mix of backgrounds, including architecture, finance, housing development, property management, social services, and law. If anyone might be interested in working with us, they could contact FMW members Kate Steger, Willy Wilson or me for more information.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Dozier

Garden Committee

July 2017

We don't have committee meetings, we have work days and invite anyone & everyone to come out. During the warm months, Terra Landscaping does the grass cutting & general removal activities - where most of our budget is spent.

We have basically had a static or unchanged budget for at least 10 years (pretty amazing with no increase) and we need to maintain that level. As we await the destruction & new construction, we will have some changes and may need to assess as changes come.

Ministry and Worship Committee

Annual report 2017

July 10, 2017

Our committee has been focused mainly on making the 10:30 “large” meeting a more “gathered” or “centered” meeting. We want to deepen both the silence and the vocal ministry. We expect this to continue to be our primary focus over the next year.

One way to make our meeting more spiritual is to improve its social life. In that vein, we surveyed friends in January to discuss barriers to greater participation in the life of the meeting. The committee continues to follow through on our findings presented in our recent report on the spiritual state of the meeting.

Our committee has embraced several initiatives, most notably the Pastoral Care workshops. Pastoral care can be helpful for individuals and families in need but also the community as a whole. We are discussing ways to revive eldering, which, among other benefits, we see as a tool to nurture the vocal ministry in the 10:30 “large” meeting.

To further our goal to educate the meeting on Quaker practice, we have held well-attended monthly discussions for seekers wanting to explore “what it means to be a Quaker.”

To help to deepen our Meetings for Worship and help Friends to grow their spiritual practices, we have been conducting a monthly Spiritual Deepening training, based on materials from Friends General Conference.

During last year’s holiday season, we held a “meeting with a special concern for loss” and we will do so again this year.

We worked on a proposed harassment policy now being considered by the meeting. This area will continue to receive our special attention. One question before us is how to provide a space for victims of past harassment to come forward and share their stories.

We’ve had a busy year. Some of our plans have been put aside until we can find friends to help run them. For instance, we want to hold a series of discussions with individual FMW friends to discuss

how they bring their Quaker values to their work life. This project needs a coordinator.

If you have an interest, please approach one of the committee members. Join our committee. See the world.

Report of the Religious Education Committee for June 2016-June 2017

Committee members: Kim Acquaviva, Michael Beer (Youth Program Coordinator and *ex officio* committee member), Betsy Bramon, Anita Drever (Clerk), Nicole Else-Quest, Carrie Mitchell^[1]

The Religious Education committee tends to the spiritual lives of the children in our Meeting. We oversee programming and care for children ages six months through seventeen years. The following describes our work during the period from June 2016 through June 2017:

Makai Kellogg, School for Friends teacher and lifetime FMW member, heads our **nursery**, which provides for care for children ages 0-4 during Meeting for Worship, Meeting for Business, RE meetings and special events. Makai ensures there are two staff from a rotating team of caregivers present each week in the nursery. Makai also tends to the needs of FMW's collection of toys—wiping them down, making sure their quarters are kept tidy and replacing them when they make the transition from well-worn to shabby. Makai and many of her team have been with FMW for years—older children love to stop by the nursery and give the staff hugs on their way into and out of Meeting. There are around a half-dozen children each week in the nursery during Meeting for Worship.

Michael Beer, FMW's youth coordinator, completed a second successful year overseeing our **First Day school and youth programs**. Family volunteers are awed by Michael's ability to generate new, fun, spirit-led activities for the kids. In addition, Michael has started or continued several First Day School traditions—Quoins for Coins, a milestone celebration at the end of the year, birthday treat making once a month, Quaker camp alumni presentations—that are giving our programming more and more of a regular rhythm. Michael coordinates the family volunteers ensuring two adults are present each week. We had about 30 adults lead or facilitate sessions this year.

Younger elementary attendance is vigorous—there are often over a dozen 4-6 years olds in First Day School. We also have a solid cadre of 7-11 year old First Day school attenders, a half dozen of whom are typically present on any given Sunday.

The Junior Young Friends group (AKA “Tweens and Teens”) were given the opportunity at the end of last year to design their own curriculum for this '16-'17. Some things worked out splendidly—they've had great discussions among themselves and with Meeting members and attenders and others who've volunteered to lead discussions on weighty topics. They've also gone on urban hikes, played ukulele, and done a variety of service activities. Because our Junior Young Friends group spans a broad range of ages and life stages we've tried to have two groups when possible, however limited volunteers and capricious attendance has made this difficult to do on a regular basis.

The Religious Education committee also supports monthly family potlucks during the hour before Meeting, sponsors speakers such as Mary Fillmore who talked to us about the anti-Nazi resistance in

Amsterdam, provides scholarships to over a half dozen FMW kids to attend Quaker camps, and members of RE organize retreats at Camp Catoctin and the Friends Wilderness Center for the entire Meeting. Thanks to the generosity of Friends Faith Williams and Debby Churchman, RE was able to hold a Worship Sharing for families shortly after the election. RE is deeply grateful to the Meeting for their continued support of our work.

Healing and Reconciliation Committee

Annual Report—16th 7th, 2017

Historically, within Friends Meeting of Washington the Healing and Reconciliation Committee was conceived and maintained with the goal of providing a means of resolving interpersonal difficulties in Meeting. In larger context, this period of time in Friends' history and the history of FMW coincided with a very minimalist sense of a need for governance within Friends and within this Meeting.

The design of the Committee reflected that sense in that its approach takes as an article of faith that individuals who find themselves in conflict are inherently well intentioned, possessed of powerful tools of self-reflection and empathy, and capable of self-directed adjustment. The task of the Committee is to act as a catalyst—to provide useful opportunity and loving guidance to facilitate individuals' coming together through their own volition in pursuit of honoring *That of God* in themselves and each other.

This past year has been a time of deep reflection on the part of Committee and its members on how, first, that approach as conceived has brought some successes but also some failures. The community of FMW is large and draws from a population of diverse backgrounds and a wide range of mental and emotional circumstances and abilities and interpersonal outlooks. In the recent past the Healing and Reconciliation Committee has more than once found itself ill prepared to handle some concerns that, for want of a better place, have come to Committee. This poses an issue because as a direct result individuals have been hurt, and so has the FMW community.

So, second, we have been reflecting on how governance among Friends, especially within Friends Meeting of Washington, should be framed. The wish for minimalist governance in FMW still runs deep. Friends are reluctant to grant or to assume authority over others—to take on or to assign the traditional Quaker task of *eldering*—yet under certain difficult circumstances Friends in the Meeting wish something to be done. When that happens, people have turned to Healing and Reconciliation Committee as an available avenue, yet Committee was never conceived with the intent of its being a body of authority, nor is it prepared to be; and Meeting has maintained clarity on that intent over time. Partly in response, Clerks and others have chosen to begin addressing certain concerns.

Thus, coming into 2017 Healing and Reconciliation Committee finds itself in the process of working with Meeting and with Clerks and others to seek discernment on, not merely the working and intent of Committee, but on governance among Friends writ large. We as a committee neither seek authority nor wish to acquire a role of authority, yet we find that Friends have an expectation that Committee's role is to ensure our society runs without conflict and that difficulties are avoided or resolved, in the absence of tools for making that happen. We are not positive that the Healing and Reconciliation Committee should even continue at all or as originally conceived. With each other and with Meeting we seek to discern what our Friends Meeting of Washington community needs and wants.

2017 Membership Committee Report

Members: Janet Dinsmore, clerk, Marcia Reecer, Gray Handley, Joe Izzo, Rob Farr, Judy Hubbard

The duties of the Membership Committee remain largely the same year-to-year, with the consistent privileges of reviewing often deeply moving letters from individuals seeking membership, and meeting with them to discuss spiritual journeys leading them to apply. The variety of paths applicants have taken to bring them to us is a regular source of inspiration and wonder.

This past year, the Committee again attempted to contact Friends who have been absent from Meeting activities as well as 14 Associate Members who are over 25 years of age but have not expressed interest in becoming full members. Neither attempt bore fruit, unfortunately. Former “Associate Members” are now listed in the Directory as Family Members and we hope (as do most of their parents) they will seek membership in a Quaker meeting at some time in the future. The Committee will continue to reach out to members who have been absent for some time or are non-residents to determine their current interest in retaining membership.

During 2016, FMW welcomed the following new members and transfers, and in March 2017, the Committee held a reception to honor each:

- Gene Throwe
- Greg Robb
- Tara Tappert (transfer)
- Chris Wickham
- Mary Melchior
- Elaine Wilson (transfer)
- Zoe Plaugher

Transfers to other Meetings in 2016 include Pamela Lebeaux and Virginia Stevens. To date in 2017, Nicole Else-Quest, her children, and Leonard Eoussa have joined FMW. We are delighted with their addition and now preparing for a clearance interview with an applicant now stationed in Beijing, China.

Timely welcomes of new members have sometimes proved a problem. The Committee would be pleased to have the names of any member/attender interested in serving as a welcomer by arranging a get-together at a restaurant or home, or by planning another activity that introduces the new member to more FMW folks. We plan to re-introduce a practice of providing a letter to welcomers detailing

expectations and ensuring new members are offered Quaker literature as part of their new membership.

We are again grateful for Debby Churchman's help and suggestions on a variety of membership matters, and to the Task Force on Racial Inclusion and Justice whose provocative queries we have included in meeting discussions.

Submitted by Janet Dinsmore, clerk.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Aug. 2: Help make sandwiches for the **Grate Patrol** to take to our vulnerable neighbors, starting at 5:30 pm. For more information, contact Steve Brooks at sbrooks@uab.edu

Aug. 2: **Refugee Crisis in Europe and the Quaker Response** Michael Luick-Thrams, a German Friend, will speak to us about Friends in Europe. 7:00 pm in the Parlor.

Aug. 5: Help make breakfast for our vulnerable neighbors. Convene at 6:15 am at **So Others Might Eat**. For more information, contact Tim Schleicher at timothy.c.schleicher@gmail.com

August 6 – The Underground Railroad in Loudoun County, Goose Creek Friends Meeting (Lincoln, VA) Dr. Glenn Crothers, author of *Quakers Living in the Lion's Mouth, The Society of Friends in Northern Virginia, 1730-1865*, will be visiting the 200 year old Goose Creek Meeting House. He will be speaking on the role of Loudoun County's Friends in the abolitionist movement and in helping freedom seekers escape slavery. Eric Larson of the Loudoun County Courthouse will also be on hand with copies of documents related to the trials of two of the area's leading Quaker abolitionists – Samuel Janney and Yardley Taylor. Following the lecture we will go over to "Springdale," the one-time home of Samuel Janney. The house was used as a girl's boarding school and as a hospital during the Civil War. The home is also rumored to be a stop on the Underground Railroad, and contains secret passages and hiding places. Guests will also be able to visit the 1815 Oakdale School and the Goose Creek burying ground. For more information, see their website at www.mosbyheritagearea.org/events.

August 18 - 20 - Quaker Religious Education Collaborative Gathering, Quaker Hill (Richmond, IN) Join the Quaker Religious Education Collaborative for their 4th Annual Gathering. There will be a panel discussion on *What is the Role of the Bible in Quaker Religious Education?* Workshops, interest groups, and 2 nights of singing and music with Annie Patterson. For more information, including registration, go to www.quakers4re.org. The Quaker Religious Education Collaborative is a grassroots network of Friends holding a sense of stewardship for life-long Quaker Faith formation.

Aug. 20: Matt Handley, Director of Litigation, Washington Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights and Urban Affairs (WLC), will speak at rise of Meeting about **the legal issues surrounding hosting an**

undocumented immigrant on our campus.

Aug. 25-27: Gathering of Friends of African Descent, Chestnut Hill Meeting House (Philadelphia, PA) The theme this year is “The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Us” and is taken from... Isaiah 61.1 and Luke 4:18. Come testify to the movement of the Spirit in our midst and the work of the Spirit in our communities. A number of us are offering home hospitality for those who want to visit in homes. Registration will open soon, and you can find an overview of the program and other details at <http://www.fofad.org/2017-gathering.html>

September 8 – 10 - Spiritual Formation Program Fall Retreat, Priestfield Pastoral Center (Kearneysville, WV) *Save the date!* The BYM Spiritual Formation Program's Fall Retreat will happen on September 8-10 at the [Priestfield Pastoral Retreat Center](#). Open to all regardless of prior or planned participation in an existing Spiritual Formation program, the retreat is a time to explore and deepen our practice of living and worshipping in spiritual community. Registration for the retreat will open in mid-July. For full information, go to <https://bym-rsf1-org.presencehost.net/events/spiritform/>

September 16 -- Retreat for Clerks of BYM Committees and Working Groups Langley Hill Friends Meeting (McLean, VA) The clerks of BYM Committees and Working Groups— past, present, and future – are invited to gather for a day of worship and preparation for the new committee year. We will have time to worship, share information about the role and tasks of a clerk, and especially to share our knowledge and wisdom with each other. Please bring questions you’d like to explore, and insights about committee life and clerking to share. We will look at some of the nuts and bolts of clerking a BYM committee, including such different things as recognizing and nurturing gifts of committee members, as well as using internet and computer technology to connect with one another, and working with BYM staff. We will discuss and discern how to nurture our committees to keep them spiritually centered and vital as we serve our Yearly Meeting and local Meetings. The retreat will begin with hospitality at 9:45am and run until 4pm.

September 29 – October 1 – Catocin Quaker Camp 60th Anniversary Catocin Quaker Camp (Thurmont, MD) Mark your calendars! More details will be added as we get closer to the weekend!

RANDOM HAPPENINGS

We had a visit recently from three lovely Ethiopian people looking to do a church planting and wanting to rent our Assembly Room on a weekly basis for their bible study class, with the idea of adding a Sunday afternoon worship service in the Fall. We talked rooms and options and prices and came to a tentative agreement, and then they started describing these services and their beliefs. At first I thought this might inject a little diversity into the Meeting House, what with the music and the praising of Jesus, etc., not to mention the speaking in tongues. But then I asked about their beliefs about gay people. They assured me that gay people were not outside the love of God, as long as they took Jesus into their hearts and accepted Him and allowed Him to change them.

Gah.

So I said no. Not a good fit. I just couldn't do it--didn't think it would be fair to the generations here who struggled through AIDS and through that lengthy lengthy discussion around marriage. Instead, I

printed out a list of low-cost event rental space from the Washington Peace Center website and gave it to them. We parted friends--they really were lovely, lovely people. I feel kinda bad. We lost money. Forgive me, I just couldn't do it.

This incident has me in something of a reverie. I wonder about how such very nice, kind people can have such terrible values—something they are undoubtedly wondering about me. I wonder about my own judgements, how can I test them? How can I be sure I'm on the right path? I wonder about the barriers we put up that may be keeping diverse cultures and viewpoints away. I wonder about the cost of living our values. What do we pay? What do we gain?

- Debby

[1] There are additional committee members on the books who haven't attended a meeting yet. We will continue to warmly and wishfully encourage them to join us.