

# FMW Newsletter, December 2014

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**Friends Meeting of Washington**

**Order of Worship**

**Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business**

**November 2014**

**Queries**

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

**Advices**

Friends have supported public education from its inception, recognizing that Truth prospers best among a populace that is "led out" from illiteracy and ignorance. In local Meetings we share responsibility with our communities for public education. Through involvement as teachers, school administrators, parents or interested citizens, Meeting members can work to improve the programs of public schools. Opposition, for example, to overemphasis on competition, to military exercises in schools, or to overly lax or overly severe discipline can be a prelude to positive suggestions of alternatives. We should continue to use our influence as citizens to elevate the standards of the public schools, recognizing that the crux of education is how the school system treats the individual. The Quaker ideal is to develop each child's spiritual strength as well as intellectual and practical skills.

- Faith and Practice, 1988

## **Voices**

There is a truth that lies beyond scientific theories and religious doctrines, which are always being disproved and outmoded. Religion should welcome every discovery of science, which in rolling back the boundaries of the known world makes the miracle of creation that much more wonderful, that much more divine. Personal religion, like science, should always be rolling back the boundaries making new discoveries, discarding inadequate concepts, enlarging its vision. - Bradford Smith, 1963

## **2014/11-1 Welcome of Visitors**

Meeting for Business opened with 30 visitors present. Friends welcomed Keith Curtis, Clerk of the Friends Wilderness Center, and Jay Harris as first time attenders to Meeting for Business.

## **2014/11-2 Clerk's Report**

This Meeting for Business was led by Alternate Clerk, Dan Dozier.

## **Major items**

### **2014/11-3 Child Safety Committee- Marsha Holliday**

The Child Safety Committee requested to become a standing committee of Friends Meeting of Washington. The Committee would report annually to MfB, and the Clerk of the Child Safety Committee would be a member of the Committee of Clerks. This would

increase communication between the Child Safety Committee with other Committees and create stronger relationships with the Meeting as a whole.

A Friend wondered if Child Safety is still the principal concern of the Child Safety Committee or if that focus has shifted to education, child safety against child sex offenders, or elsewhere. It was clarified that the Child Safety Committee is hoping to focus on all aspects of child safety including the different types of physical, emotional, and psychological abuse that children may encounter.

A Friend mentioned that many of the objectives of the Child Safety Committee could be achieved without the Committee becoming a standing committee. Additionally, the Meeting is unable to fulfill the committee roles that it already has. Currently, the Child Safety Committee is fully staffed; however, this may not always be the case. The opposing concern is that the Child Safety Committee will not have the weight that it needs if it is not a Standing Committee.

A Friend requested that the Committee clarify the criteria for membership and suggested that the Religious Education Coordinators' participation in the committee be written into their job description. Another Friend noted that potential committee members need not be parents but have a strong commitment to the protection of children in the community. Another Friend noted that membership of the Committee should have a staggered turnover.

A Friend reiterated the importance for the strong support of the Meeting for parents, which is shown by the existence of the Child Safety Committee.

The Request by the Child Safety Committee to become a Standing Committee was **approved**.

#### **2014/11-4 Friends Wilderness Center** – Keith Curtis, Clerk of the Friends Wilderness Center

The Friends Wilderness Centers requested to be included in the FMW annual budget.

The Wilderness Center has a variety of programs and is reaching out for financial support from all Meetings in BYM to allow for sustainable planning. The Wilderness Center has worked with Catocin in the past and is working on doing more outreach to them.

The Clerk noted that they have recommended that this request be deferred to Finance and Stewardship Committee, as they are responsible for budget decisions.

A Friend suggested a strategic look at the future of the Wilderness Center. The MfB decided to defer this issue to the Finance and Stewardship Committee and has asked the Committee to provide the MfB with a recommendation as to the feasibility of financially supporting the Wilderness Center.

### **2014/11-5 Library Committee- Faith Williams**

The Library Committee has requested to cancel the proposed change to Handbook, which would eliminate the position of Librarian. Friends **approved** this request.

### **2014/11-6 Membership Committee - Hayden Wetzel**

First presentation for membership of John 'Jay' Harris. As is our practice, this request will lay over until next month.

## **Milestones**

### **Other business**

#### **2014/11-7 Nominating– Merry Pearlstein**

The resignation of Steve Brooks from the Capital Improvement Task Force. Friends **accepted** this resignation.

The resignation of Anne Harper from Ministry and Worship. She has moved to Pendle Hill. Friends **accepted** this resignation.

Both resignations were accepted with great appreciation toward the Friends for their service.

#### **2014/11-8 Finance and Stewardship Committee – Byron Sanford**

The annual appeal letter has been sent out.

#### **2014/11-9 Trustees – Daniel Dozier**

The Trustees report has been postponed to either December or January.

**2014/11-10 Ministry & Worship annual report– Debby Churchman**

Ministry and Worship will be sending out the new Spiritual State of the Meeting survey in about a month. They have been convening Spiritual Journeys on a monthly basis and this program will be carried over to next year.

A welcome team will be convened to make the Meeting more welcoming to newcomers and visitors and engaging more people.

The Committee is now looking at the issue of vocal ministry. They have created queries, which they will bring to MfB next month.

Friends **accepted** this report with one Friend standing aside with regard to the issue of whether the Meeting simply receives reports such as this or acts to accept such reports.

**2014/11-11A** conversation was held as to the purpose of accepting reports and the utility of this process.

**2014/11-12 Search Committee annual report– Debby Churchman**

Steve Coleman will be joining the Search Committee. The Search Committee this year successfully identified a new clerk for the Nominating Committee. Friends **accepted** this report with one friend standing aside.

**2014/11-13 Announcement**

Langley Hill has approved contributing a full scholarship to the Mary Jane Simpson Fund.

**2014/11-14** Friends expressed their gratitude to Recording Clerk, Shannon Zimmerman, for her service.

**2014/11-15 Minutes**, Friends **approved** the minutes.

**2014/11-16** The Meeting closed with approximately 23 members in attendance.

**WHY THE CHILD SAFETY COMMITTEE SHOULD BE A STANDING COMMITTEE OF FRIENDS MEETING OF WASHINGTON**

Today we ask that our Meeting designate the Child Safety Committee as a Standing Committee of Friends Meeting of Washington. Until now, the Child Safety Committee has been a “Special Committee of Meeting.” However, we have been doing all of the tasks and functions of a Standing Committee of Meeting, except reporting annually to Meeting for Business. As a Standing Committee, the Child Safety Committee would have clearly designated responsibilities and authorities, and would report annually to Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business.

The safety, protection, education, and integration into the community of our children are concerns of the entire Meeting and affect the work of every Committee of FMW. As a Standing Committee, the Clerk of the CSC would be on the Committee of Clerks and could more readily share concerns for child safety with the other Committees and could more regularly hear the concerns of the other Committees regarding child safety.

In our Proposal, you will see the current wording from the FMW Handbook describing the Child Safety Committee and our proposed wording. We ask for this change at this time because a new Committee and a new Clerk will begin its work in January, and we would like to pass onto that Committee a more current definition of the work it will do and a more substantive relationship with Meeting for Business.

Thank you for considering our request!

## **PROPOSAL**

From: The Child Safety Committee

RE: To become a Standing Committee of Friends Meeting of Washington

Date: 11/9/14

### **Current wording in FMW Handbook:**

The Child Safety Committee is concerned with physical arrangements and Meeting rules for the safe and appropriate care and oversight of children and teens when at Friends Meeting of Washington or while involved in an activity under the sponsorship of the Meeting. The objective is to reduce the risk of child abuse. The Committee not only frames rules for this purpose but also informs and trains adults about them. It consults with the Property Committee regarding policies for the use of Meeting property by

outside groups and maintains contact with Baltimore Yearly Meeting regarding matters related to child safety.

Committee:	Child Safety Committee
Number of members:	4
Membership:	M, S
Term:	3 years
Nominated by:	Nominating Ctte.
Co-opt permitted	yes
Ex officio members:	none

**Proposed wording for the FMW Handbook:**

The Child Safety Committee of Friends Meeting of Washington is composed of five or six members, two of which, the Coordinator of Youth Programs and a representative from the Religious Education Committee, are ex-officio members.

As a Standing Committee of Friends Meeting of Washington, the Child Safety Committee would:

- Serve as the primary Committee at Friends Meeting of Washington to address actual or possible child safety concerns
- In addition to the annual report, review, write, and edit the child safety policies and guidelines, which are submitted for approval to Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business.
- Provide support and training to all persons at Friends Meeting of Washington involved in children's activities requiring the implementation of the Child Safety Policy
- Provide educational programs about child safety for all ages
- Consult with the Property Committee regarding policies for the use of Meeting property by outside groups
- Maintain contact with Baltimore Yearly Meeting regarding matters related to child safety

Committee:	Child Safety Committee
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Number of Members:	5 to 6
Term:	3 years
Nominated by:	Nominating Committee
Membership: members	Members, Attenders, Sojourners, Corresponding
Co-opt permitted:	Yes
Ex officio members:	Yes: the Coordinator of Youth Programs and a representative from the Religious Education Committee

### **Library Committee request**

The Library Committee finds that the position of Librarian to the Meeting would be useful to help the Committee fulfill its tasks. When the Committee asked for it to be written out of the Handbook, the position had been vacant for many years, so we did not think it necessary. We would like to ask that it be reinstated.

### **Ministry and Worship Committee, Annual Report,**

#### **Friends Meeting of Washington, 2014**

During 2014, members of Ministry and Worship were: Debby Churchman, Blair Forlaw, Gray Handley, Anne Harper, and Gene Throwe. Our small number left us stretched very thin. We will lose two of our members in the new year. We appreciate the encouragement and support that Nominating Committee has extended to us as we seek additional members for 2015.

Ministry and Worship worked together well to complete a number of tasks during 2014, and initiated others that will carry over into 2015. These are summarized below.



We organized and oversaw the **2014 Spiritual State of the Meeting Survey**. Summarized the results in a written report, which was shared with a small gathering of Friends, the committee of clerks, and Meeting for Business, prior to being submitted to Baltimore Yearly Meeting on time in April.

We organized and convened ten one-hour gatherings in which Friends shared their **Spiritual Journeys**. Two Friends presented at each of the programs, which were held from 9:15 am until 10:15 am on designated Sundays in January, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, and November. The Spiritual Journeys series has been well received by FMW, and will be continued in 2015.

We revised and updated printed materials and electronic communication for committees, groups, and individuals **sitting Head of Meeting** in the main meeting room at 10:30 am on First Days.

We developed and approved a **proposal for a Welcome Team**, which is envisioned as a subcommittee to Ministry and Worship. It will include volunteers from M&W, as well as other Meeting members and attenders who have an interest in participating. The goal is to ensure that all visitors and guests to the Meeting receive a warm, personal welcome and have regular opportunities to learn about the Religious Society of Friends. We hope to convene this subcommittee early in 2015.

We hosted an afternoon workshop called "**Bringing Our Differences into the Light**," which was led by Michael Cronin and Deborah Haines. This workshop was patterned after an event at Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Approximately 24 FMW Friends attended, representing a healthy diversity of age, gender, and regular worship service attended. It helped us hone our active listening skills, understand the difference between dialogue and debate, and enhanced our awareness and appreciation of similarities and differences among us.

We convened an Oversight Committee or process in preparation for **Memorial Meetings** for two FMW members. The meeting for Marney Akins was held in May and for Susan Ellis in November.

In response to concerns and suggestions raised by Friends, we drafted “**Queries on the Sharing of Vocal Ministry and Friendly Communication.**” As the time of this annual report, the queries are still being seasoned in committee. They will be shared with the larger FMW community by the end of 2014.

## **Search Committee Annual Report, 2014**

The Search Committee is appointed from October to October of each year to select the members and Clerk of the Nominating Committee. In 2013-2014, the members were Arne Paulson, Judy Hubbard, and ex officio members Debby Churchman and Meg Greene. For 2014-2015, Judy Hubbard rotated off, and Arne Paulson agreed to remain a member for another year. The Clerk of the Meeting identified Steve Coleman to join the committee, and his nomination was approved at October Meeting for Business.

With gratitude for the recently completed years of service of Beth Cogswell as Clerk of the Nominating Committee, the Search Committee offered up the nomination of Harry Massey as her replacement. His nomination was approved at October Meeting for Business.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

The **Grate Patrol** will prepare sandwiches and soup to take out to the city’s vulnerable people on **Wednesday, Dec. 3** starting at 5:30. For more information, contact Steve Brooks at [sbrooks@uab.edu](mailto:sbrooks@uab.edu)

The **JYF con** (for 6th to 8th graders) of the year will be at Patuxent Friends Meeting on **Dec. 6 & 7**. Please arrive at 10 am with sleeping bag, pad, pillow, change of clothes and toiletries. The theme for this and all weekends during the 2014-15 school year will be 'Sense of Self'. For information, contact Alison Duncan. (301-774-7663) Please remember that the deadline to register and be guaranteed a slot is one week before the conference (November 28). Any one registering after that date will be placed on a waiting list and may not be able to attend. For more information, contact Alison Duncan, Youth Programs Manager, [youthprograms@bym-rsf.org](mailto:youthprograms@bym-rsf.org), 301-774-7663

Come to **So Others Might Eat** on **Saturday, Dec. 6** from 6:15 to 8:15 and help make breakfast for our vulnerable neighbors. For more information, contact Betsy Bramon at [betsy.bramon@gmail.com](mailto:betsy.bramon@gmail.com)

There will be a **Meeting for Singing** on Sunday, Dec. 7, at 10:00 am in the Meeting Room. All voices are welcome.

On **Sunday, Dec. 7**, Bill Wilson (Patapsco) will present the monthly **Potluck and Dialog** at the **William Penn House**. The meal will begin at 6:30 pm and the program at 7:30. Many feel Congress has become influenced by more than 'the will of the people' in modern times. How does this alter our representative democracy and affect decisions? How does this reflect back on the electorate? Is everyone across the political spectrum – left, middle, and right - impacted? What are the root causes? What can realistically be done to correct the situation? What efforts are being made toward a solution? How do we as Quakers influence the dialogue and provide a forum that seeks solutions? Can we build bridges that can span these differences? For more information, see the William Penn House website. ([williampennhouse.org/potlucks](http://williampennhouse.org/potlucks))



The annual **Shoebbox Project** will take place on **Saturday, Dec. 13** and **Sunday, Dec. 14**. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, we will put together the cardboard boxes and roll the socks and t-shirts. On Sunday, we will fill the boxes with practical items for our vulnerable neighbors, and take the boxes to the

shelters. Everyone is welcome (and needed!). For more info, contact Steve Brooks at [sbrooks@uab.edu](mailto:sbrooks@uab.edu)

Because of the timing of the Shoebox Project, this month's **Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business** has been changed to **Sunday, Dec. 21, 2014**. Come see Quaker process in action.

There will be a **Christmas Eve potluck and meeting for worship** on December 24, 2014, starting at 6:00. Please bring plenty to share. For more information, contact the office at [admin@quakersdc.org](mailto:admin@quakersdc.org)

The **FMW Office** will be closed on Dec. 25 & 26, as well as January 1.

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## **9 O'Clock Meeting for Worship**

9 O'Clock Meeting has had several bits of interesting news lately:

-- We were visited by about 8 to 10 friends from nearby First Baptist Church, members who join regularly for quiet prayer and wanted to experience Friends worship. It was a pleasure for us all to greet such nice neighbors.

-- For the last few years 9 O'Clock Friends have resumed their age-old custom of following worship with breakfast and conversation at a nearby cafe. Well, our usual place, Cosi at R and Connecticut, closed and we were left homeless. (This exact same situation killed the breakfast tradition so many years ago and severely stunted the worship group for a while.) After several test breakfasts we have landed on a new venue -- the Panera on the south side of the Circle. We decided this yesterday after trying the place out. You will find us there about 10:15 downstairs.

-- We also will be evicted from the Parlor for construction in the winter and are looking forward to meeting in the QH Living Room. We will probably work out some sort of hand-off with the 10:30 group there.

- Hayden Wetzel

**Thinking About Race** (December 2014) – “Misteaching History” (Prepared by the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Working Group on Racism)

“... we’ve paid great attention to Nelson Mandela’s call for forgiveness and reconciliation between South Africa’s former white rulers and its exploited black majority. But we’ve paid less attention to the condition that Mandela insisted must underlie reconciliation -- truth. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission that Mandela established, and that Bishop Desmond Tutu chaired, was designed to contribute to cleansing wounds of the country’s racist history by exposing it to a disinfecting bright light.

“In [this] issue of the *School Administrator*, I write that [we do a much worse job of facing up to our racial history](#) in the United States, leading us to make less progress than necessary in remedying racial inequality. We have many celebrations of the civil rights movement and its heroes, but we do very little to explain to young people why that movement was so necessary. [On Dec. 9, 2013] the *New York Times* [described how the Alabama Historical Association has placed many commemorative markers](#) around Montgomery to commemorate civil rights heroes like Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks, but declined -- because of “the potential for controversy” -- to call attention to the city’s slave markets and their role in the spread of slavery before the Civil War. Throughout our nation, this fear of confronting the past makes it more difficult to address and remedy the ongoing existence of urban ghettos, the persistence of the black-white achievement gap, and the continued under-representation of African Americans in higher education and better-paying jobs.”

Richard Rothstein, in the December 2013 issue of *School Administrator*, “Misteaching History on Racial Segregation - Ignoring purposeful discriminatory government policies of the past contributes to the ongoing achievement gap”

The BYM Working Group on Racism meets most months on the third Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, usually at Bethesda Friends Meeting or Friends Meeting of Washington. If you would like to attend, on a regular or a drop-in basis, contact clerk David Etheridge, [david.etheridge@verizon.net](mailto:david.etheridge@verizon.net).

## **RANDOM HAPPENINGS**

Last month started out weirdly, and gave me a new bar by which to judge the difficulty of a given day. On Oct. 31, I received a call from my dentist, who informed me that he’d found two more teeth in my mouth that he hadn’t yet drilled, and happened to have an opening that day, wouldn’t I like to come in? So of course I wanted to go (not). I did. He drilled, and then decided that what was needed was a root canal, which he inflicted. Ugh.

Coming back from that, I walked through the wafting gas leak on Decatur Place. This had been leaking for a while, with the gas company showing up periodically and promising things. That day, they dropped by to say that they might need to shut off our gas, did we mind?, but couldn’t really say for how long. I pointed out that we need, you

know, heat. The temperature was dropping. They said they'd let us know, and then rearranged the cones on the street.

It being Halloween, Ken took off mid-afternoon to watch his son in the Sidwell Friends Halloween Parade. He didn't actually get to watch this—he was too busy circling the block looking for a place to park amid all the other Sidwell parents coming to witness this important event. Meanwhile, I got a phone call from an alert neighbor, who said she was sorry to have to tell us this but there was a dead deer in the garden. Um, what? I went out to the garden, and saw the deer. It was dead, by golly. It looked like it had been hit by a car and then wandered into our garden to lie down under a bush and hide. I texted Ken, who was not excited to hear this, but said he'd come back eventually. Then I called Mark Haskell, clerk of the Garden Committee, who came over to look at the deer. He confirmed that it was dead. We pondered its deadness for a while, trying to discern next steps. Ron Washington stopped by, looked at the deer, and asked me if I wanted him to cut it up for venison. I nixed this, and went inside to call animal control.

Finally got them (you don't wanna know), and they said, So, it's in your garden? Yes, I said, a little testily. Well, they said, we can't pick it up if it's on your property. Why don't you haul it out to the sidewalk?

Let me review this, I said. It's nightfall. It's Halloween. The streets are filling up with trick-or-treaters. And you want me to haul a dead deer out to the sidewalk? They said—and I am quoting here—"yep."

By this time, Ken had come back, like Sisyphus (or Job), and he and Ron loaded the deer onto a tarp and hauled it out of the gate and onto the grass on Phelps Place (will someone please give them hardship pay for this?). I put up signage everywhere telling folks that animal control had been called, so they didn't think that Quakers sacrifice deer on Halloween and then dump them on the street. The animal folks eventually showed up on Saturday.

And now, any day that doesn't actually include a root canal, a gas leak, and a dead deer—or any one of those things separately—counts as a good day in my book.

And there were many good days in November—we got to host events for Jobs with Justice (working on the living wage in D.C.), Amnesty International teen training, the Rainforest Action Alliance, a group of D.C. public social workers doing self-care, a group of divorce lawyers learning about the bio-neurology of conflict management, Women for Women (women's empowerment in war-torn countries), the Washington Humane Society, the Sunday Assembly of D.C. (a humanist group. Think: drumming), and a young girl's birthday party with a Frozen theme. All of this helps keep the doors open so Friends can hold our five weekly worship meetings, our umpteen committee meetings, our various study and book groups, our four feeding programs, and in November, a wonderful Thanksgiving potluck and worship experience. This campus of ours is well, well, *well* used, Friends.

- Debby