

December 2013 Newsletter

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FRIENDS MEETING OF WASHINGTON

MONTHLY MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH A CONCERN FOR BUSINESS

November 10, 2013

Advices

“To turn all we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives”: this, in the words of John Woolman, is the meaning of Quaker stewardship.

And this applies to all that we have and are, as individuals, as members of groups, and as inhabitants of the earth. As individuals, we need to be careful to use our time, our various abilities, our strength, our money, our material possessions, and other resources in a spirit of love, aware that we hold these gifts in trust and are responsible to use them in the Light. Investment of assets and consumption of resources require our careful stewardship. As Friends, we can direct our investments toward socially desirable ends, avoiding speculation and activities wasteful or harmful to others. Seek to participate constructively and without greed in the economic life of the community.

Queries

Do we regard our resources as gifts from God, to be held in trust and shared according to the Light we are given?

What are we doing as individuals and as a meeting to nurture our gifts?

How do we encourage the members of the larger community to be careful stewards of their gifts?

Voices

Of the interest of the public in our estates: Hardly anything is given us for ourselves, but the public may claim a share with us. But of all we call ours, we are most accountable to God and the public for our estates: In this we are but stewards, and to hoard up all to ourselves is great injustice as well as ingratitude. –John Woolman

In reading those short last essays of John Woolman, little treatises on economics, I have been struck by his intuition that wrong roads were being taken by his contemporaries, upon which we their descendants should find our direction almost irreversibly fixed. Unrighteous use of other human beings, unrighteous use of one's own powers, irresponsible use and waste of land and other natural resources - he touches on them all. It is evident that he was convinced that the spiritual life of men and women is deeply conditioned by their economic life. --Mildred Binns Young

To “stretch beyond one's compass” grasping at shadows, and encumbering oneself with more than is needed for simple, wholesome living, is at variance with all our best traditions. –Caroline E. Stephen

2013/11-1 Opening The meeting opened with silent worship at 12:25 PM. David Etheridge served as Presiding Clerk and Hayden Wetzel as Recording Clerk. The clerks read a Query from Baltimore Yearly Meeting's draft Faith and Practice, and appropriate advices and other readings. 22 Friends and visitors were present; Gillian Griffith and Brian Lutenegger attended for the first time.

2013/11-2 Personal Announcements The Clerk announced the deaths of our member Miles Wedeman, and our attenders Jean Miller (the Meeting's long-time librarian) and Thurla McCash. Upcoming activities were announced.

2013/11-3 Council of Churches Request Regarding DC Statehood Susan Meehan, the Meeting's representative to the Council of Churches of Greater Washington, reported the request of the Council for this Meeting's support of its efforts to promote statehood for the District of Columbia, and separately her request that the Friends Committee on National Legislation be urged to make this one of its core advocacy issues. Friends spoke on the advantages and disadvantages of a statehood

campaign. Friends **approved** endorsing Friend Susan taking our support for this issue to the Council, and laid over the question of FCNL support.

2013/11-4 Membership of Roger Stone Hayden Wetzel, co-clerk of the Membership Committee, reported that the committee has tried unsuccessfully to contact our member Roger Stone (a joint member with Bethesda Friends Meeting), who has long been out of contact with both meetings, and asked Friends who might know how to reach him to inform the committee.

2013/11-5 Correction to Memorial Minute for Samuel John Atlee Friends **approved** several changes to the memorial minute for our deceased member Samuel John Atlee, based on information received from the family.

2013/11-6 Reprogramming of Property Committee Funds Friends **approved** allowing the Property Committee to use \$12,000 from other Committee funds to pay for the services of our property manager for a further six months. The Finance and Stewardship Committee has endorsed this plan.

2013/11-7 Annual Report of Trustees Daniel Dozier, interim clerk of the Trustees, reported that the Meeting's finances have been audited (on our three-year cycle) by McQuade Brennan and found to be accurate. The increased paid use of our buildings has put the Meeting's finances in good condition, even though undesignated donations continue to decline. He emphasized that the Meeting's renovation and enlargement plan is well underway and that Trustees feel confident in its success. He also declared their belief that the improved condition and planned upgrade to our facility reflect the basic strength of the Meeting community. The report is attached.

2013/910-8 Hunger and Homelessness Task Force C. J. Lewis, co-convenor of the Hunger and Homelessness Task Force, gave the group's annual report (attached), which described the on-going programs of the Task Force. Only the SOME breakfast normally requires funding. All programs proceed steadily but there is always a need for new volunteers. The annual Shoebox Project is planned again for this year, although on a smaller scale due to decreased funding from our traditional sources, the international development and financing banks. Given this situation, the Shoebox Project faces either continued diminishment or fundraising from other sources.

2013/11-9 Nominations to Nominating Committee David Etheridge, clerk of the Search Committee, reported the nomination to the Meeting's Nominating Committee, of Merry Pearlstein (for a second term, January 2014-December 2016) and Molly Tully (a new appointment, November 2013-November 2016). Friends **approved** these appointments.

2013/11-10 Search Committee Annual Report David Etheridge presented the annual report of the committee, noting that with approval of today's nominations the Nominating Committee will be at its full complement of members.

2013/11-11 Resignation from Trustees Merry Pearlstein, of the Nominating Committee, reported the resignation of Maurice Boyd from Trustees. Friends **accepted** the resignation.

2013/11-12 Staff Annual Report Debby Churchman, the Meeting's Administrative Secretary, presented the annual staff report (attached). For the purposes of this report, only the activities of the Administrative Secretary are covered, other Meeting employees falling under other reports. Prime duties include constant record-keeping, communications within and without the Meeting, and facilitating Meeting procedures, events and building-use management. Friend Debby underlined the plethora of activities and leadings at this meeting, and thanked the members who have helped her in various ways. Friends expressed their admiration for the Friend's good work, which one described as "transformative".

2013/11-13 Minutes Friends **approved** the minutes.

2013/11-14 Closing The meeting ended at 1:50 PM with 17 Friends present, with silent worship.

Attachments: [Trustees annual report](#); Staff annual report

Staff Report, November 2013

Our staff consists of 1 full-time plus 2 part-time people (e.g. Debby full time, and Ken and Windy part-time), plus a contracted Bookkeeper (Laurie Wilner) who comes most Tuesdays and a support staff of lots and lots and lots of Friendly Office Presences and Child Care Workers. Debby reports to Personnel, Ken reports to the Property Committee, and Windy reports to Religious Education. The FoPs report to Debby, and the Child Care Workers report to Windy; numerous contractors report to Ken. This would be a good place to put in a funny-looking graphic, if only I had the talent to create one. Windy and Ken give separate reports at other times of the year, so this will largely focus on my job.

My official title is **Administrative Secretary and Events Management**, with the job effort split 60/40 on each aspect. I've been in this job officially for a year now, and it's been a trip. There is quite a lot of variety to the job, with different people, committees, and situations needing attention, often simultaneously.

The immediate problem when I started was to **clean up the records and get them in some sort of order**. I was tremendously helped in this by the IT Committee, especially Steve Brooks, who worked with me to do a **Directory update**, as well as the Membership Committee, who coped with my endless questions about why we still had so-and-so on the books. Hayden Wetzel organized countless stray electronic files into something quite searchable, and Neil Froemming figured out how to get FMW's records into a secure place in the Cloud.

A lot of my job is **communication on numerous platforms**

- » **Website (www.quakersdc.org)**- I've added content to the website, and am looking forward to working with IT on a redesign.
- » **Facebook (www.facebook.com/FriendsMeetingOfWashington)** Kathy Brandt and I created an FMW Facebook page, plunging us into the 21st century. We get 600 to 3000 views/week.
- » **Listservs**- I help to manage the main one and the Forum, though Neil is the real manager
- » **Bulletin Boards**- There are two; I'm decluttering
- » **Email**- The IT committee changed these, so I now respond to five different addresses
- » **Phone**- The IT committee got us new ones which are portable. Thank God.
- » **In Person**- We get 3-5 random visitors per week, plus countless attenders at our various classes and events. I developed a little tour, as well as numerous brochures which describe our faith and our building

» **Photo Board**— I started a section of current photos to reflect the many Meeting activities/individuals and what they're up to.

Using one or more of these platforms, I spend a fair amount of time informing the whole meeting or specific parts about upcoming events or concerns, and often get to **serve as a connector** between F/friends with similar concerns or experience, as well as serving as visitors' first impression of what a Quaker is like. Hmmm.

I discovered a long-buried **Resource Directory** containing any number of advices, minutes, policies and suggestions for carrying out the work of the Meeting. I've spent a few hours each week for the last six months trying to update this Directory and where possible put these documents on our website so committees can find them. Hayden and I also went through **piles of files** on the back of the office door and in the vault, and dealt with them accordingly. And I updated the **FOP Book** for the main office.

At least 40% of my job is supposed to be devoted to **Events Management**—the desire on the part of the Meeting to have its building well-used and fairly compensated for such use. I created a page for us on 8 different online listings—from Yelp and Craigslist to Wedding Wire and DC Space Finder. Jenifer Morris continues to provide stunning photos of the available event space for our website and other venues, and many wedding couples have provided reviews for Yelp and elsewhere. But the major source of venue renters is still word of mouth, and I am grateful for each of you for chatting us up.

Neil Froemming worked up the [attached chart](#) which gives a snapshot of where we are in terms of event rentals, at least through September. Those numbers seem to be growing—we have 500 separate events/classes/weddings/retreats/workshops on our books right now for FY 2014. The backbone for all this is an organization called FluentCity which provides language classes to mostly 20-somethings wanting to practice their language skills; they hold 3 to 5 classes per evening at FMW Monday through Thursday each week. And needless to say, it is our **fabulous FoPs** who really make this all possible—Andrew Hall, Malachy Kilbride, Matthew Graville, Mike Hubbard, Patty Murphy, and Tom Libbert.

Special thanks go to the Property Committee, Ken Orvis, Ron Washington, and Jon DeWitt who have responded with grace to my constant naggings to bring the campus up to rentable condition, and have given extra special attention to the Terrace Room and the main office. I'm **hoping** that the Meeting will keep going with this and turn the **Terrace Room** into a **place for brides to prepare** for their weddings, and the **back garden** into a place for receptions. I'm also hoping that the Meeting will reconsider its **alcohol policy**, which may allow us to serve as a venue for more fundraisers and wedding receptions.

I spend most of my day adding to and staring at the FMW calendar, and noticing the **sheer, dazzling vibrancy of our Meeting**. The paid events support the true purpose of the building, which is to serve as a gathering space for those practicing the faith of the Religious Society of Friends. And boy, do we—every Sunday there are four worship services and an additional 2 to 8 committee meetings, small group gatherings, workshops, lectures, films, study groups, and local and national events. We seem to be **renewing our commitment to serve as a national meeting**, lending our space for regional and national Quaker events, from the Young Friends and Young Adult Friends Conferences that are coming here this month and next, to Baltimore Yearly Meeting's study groups, and to AFSC's special events around Bayard Rustin, U.S. Foreign Policy, North Korea, and an upcoming teen film festival. FMW F/friends are bringing to the Meeting their concern for the environment, torture, Right Sharing of World Resources, U.S. incarceration, hunger, homelessness, spiritual study, fibre arts, singing, psychology, and the ongoing needs of the Meeting as tended to by committees.

And a word should be said about how much **fun** it is to work for the Meeting, and not just because I get to hang out all day with my friends. There's a lot of camaraderie among the staff, for one thing. And we are all so extremely well supported by volunteers—there's always someone we can turn to when we need advice or extra help. A big thank you to you for whatever you've done for your Meeting this year. We are all grateful.

(here ends the Minutes and Reports from Meeting for Business)

UPCOMING EVENTS – DECEMBER 2013

There will be **Singing** in the Meeting Room at 10:00 am on **Sunday, Dec. 1**. All voices are welcome.

“Love Lost in Translation: A Fresh Approach to Homosexuality and the Bible,” William Penn House, **Sunday, Dec. 1** from 6:30 to 8:00 at their monthly potluck. Please bring a dish to share. For more info, go to www.williampennhouse.org

The **Grate Patrol** will pack and deliver bag lunches and soup to people living on the street on **Wednesday, Dec. 4**. Soup or chili is made in the afternoon. At 5:30 PM we start making sandwiches and packing the lunch bags. At 7 PM, we load the van and one or two people go out on delivery for about an hour. You're welcome to help out with any or all of these things. Call Steve Brooks 240-328-5439 or email sbrooks@uab.edu for more information.

Come to **S.O.M.E.** on **Saturday, Dec. 7** at 6:15 AM and be prepared to flip pancakes and help prepare breakfast for our vulnerable neighbors. The kitchen is at 70 “o” St. NW, adjacent to a parking lot. For more information and to sign up, contact Betsy Bramon at betsy.bramon@gmail.com

BYM Junior Young Friends Conference, Dec. 7 & 8, Goose Creek Meeting. For more information, contact Alison Duncan (301-774-7663).

Sunday, Dec. 8, 9:15 am Meeting house. *What's going on in the Amazon with native communities and conservation efforts?* Come to a **lecture and slide show** by Dr. Campbell Plowden, executive director of the Center for Amazon Community and Ecology. **11:45 am**, Assembly Room, **fabulous Amazon crafts for sale** to benefit Dr. Plowden's work to find positive alternatives to deforestation.

Saturday, Dec. 14 and Sunday, Dec. 15 is our annual **Shoebox Project** in which we pack and deliver more than 1000 shoeboxes full of practical gifts for our vulnerable neighbors. The shoeboxes are constructed on Saturday and filled and delivered on Sunday. You are welcome at both events. For more information, contact Steve Brooks at sbrooks@uab.edu

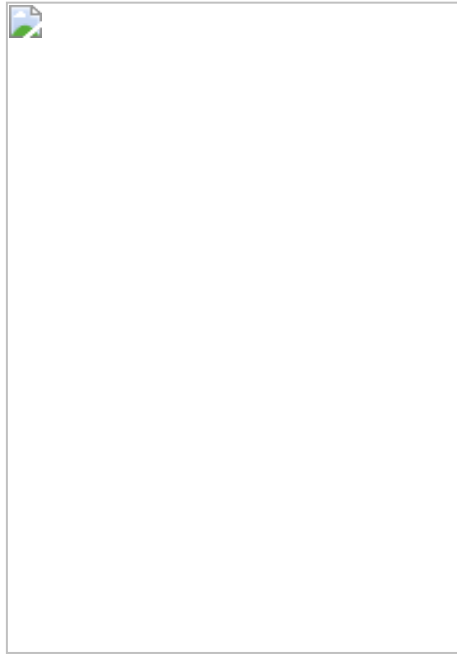
Quaker Winter Solstice Event, on **Saturday, Dec. 14** from 10:00 to 5:00 at the **FriendsWilderness Center**. Drawing on Friends Wilderness Center's commitment to meditative connection to nature and our 'inner landscape,' and a week ahead of the Winter Solstice, this program will explore the spiritual dimensions of gathering darkness and approaching light at the turn of the season with candles, songs, and selected readings and stories. Contact Sheila Bach (304-728-4820 or snbach@earthlink.net) for reservations.

The **Baltimore Yearly Meeting Young Adult Friends Conference** is happening at our Meetinghouse from Dec. 20 to 22. For more information, contact Gene Throwe at gthrowe@gmail.com

Our **Annual Christmas Eve Potluck & Worship** is happening on Dec. 24 from 5:30 to 8:30 pm. Mary Campbell is bringing a turkey; please bring your favorite side dish or dessert to share. There will be good food, good music, and good fellowship, as well as candlelight worship. For more information, contact the Mary at mcampscomp@aol.com

Reflection Hike, Friday, Dec. 27, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, A simple walk, part in silence, will be led by FWC Board member Lisa Payne to reflect on the passing of the year and the year to come. Contact Sheila Bach (304-728-4820 or snbach@earthlink.net) for reservations. Try our new directions to Niles Cabin using MapQuest. All FWC programs are offered free of charge, but we suggest a donation of \$10.00 or more. For more information about **FriendsWilderness Center**, see their website. (www.friendswilderness.org)





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhsvqbCIaAs>

THINKING ABOUT RACE(submitted by Elizabeth DuVerlie):

From Report Card to Criminal Record: The Impact of Policing Oakland Youth

As in many cities across the country, Oakland's law enforcement agencies and schools are facing a serious problem. Black children are disproportionately criminalized and arrested in the name of safety. Through the years, this deeply flawed approach to policing has continued to feed this crisis, and has prevented positive change from taking hold. We are investing too much in a system that relies too heavily on law enforcement to solve non-criminal problems, and it is not working. Over-policing our youth does not increase their chances for educational success, nor does it guarantee their safety on our streets or in our schools. In fact, it has the reverse effect. In Oakland, we have failed to invest in systems that create safe and supportive environments for youth. This underinvestment, coupled with over-policing students and school-aged youth, is sending too many of our young people down a pipeline to prison.



.... The same system of discriminatory policing that has targeted people of color in our communities for years is seeping into our schools, derailing the lives and futures of too many young people. It doesn't have to be this way. There are research-based alternatives to policing, like Restorative Justice, Positive Behavior Interventions and Support and reinvesting in caring, competent school counselors, mental health professionals, and community mentors who can engage students and their parents. These alternatives create more welcoming environments that are conducive to learning and to keeping students safe.

The full 36-page report by the Black Organizing Project, Public Counsel, and the ACLU of Northern California, August 2013, can be found at www.publiccounsel.org.

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.

FROM THE VAULT

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

"Suggestions for Ushers"

Ushers check on the physical arrangements, such as lighting, windows and doors; see to the quiet and orderly seating of those attending; give a Friendly greeting to those coming to Meeting; and answer pre-Meeting inquiries from new attenders. The pleasant and Friendly carrying out of these duties helps immeasurably in setting a Friendly tone at the very outset, minimizes disturbance by late arrivals, and contributes to an initial appreciation of the unprogrammed form of Meeting for Worship by newcomers.

Ordinarily ushers will want to wear name tags.

A friendly greeting, nod, wave or smile will cheer both old-timers and new attenders. Whatever the form of greeting, it should be kept simple, natural and simple for you. Be alert to those who are hesitant and who may appreciate some guidance as to when it will be all right to go in, or where to sit. Such people are often newcomers. They may also appreciate leaflets and other information.j

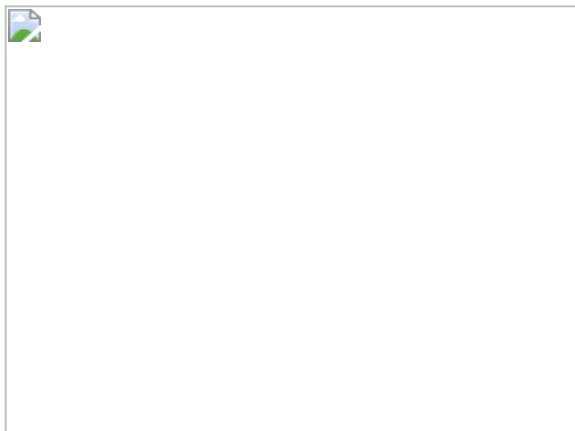
Keep aware of the location of empty seats so you can indicate them quickly and quietly to late comers. After 11 AM the hall door to the Meeting Room is closed. After that time, as feasible, it is suggested to late comers that they should use the outside doors facing Florida Avenue or Phelps Place.

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The Meeting's Ushers Committee papers cover 1950-80s in our files (now at Swarthmore) but it had been laid down by the time I came here in 1985. This paper is undated.

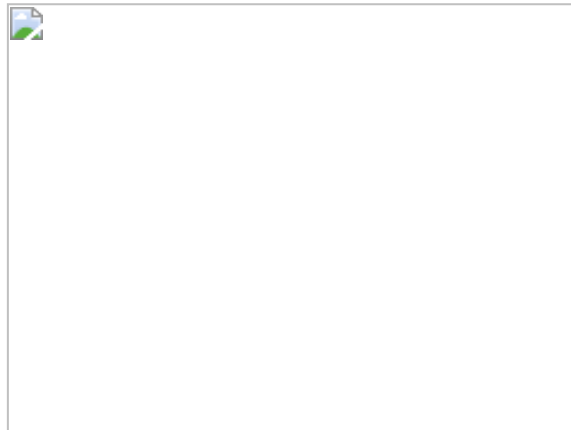
Hayden Wetzel
FMW Historian

RANDOM HAPPENINGS



Garden Day, Nov. 2013

FMW may have set some kind of record with the number of events scheduled of a Sunday last month—a full exultation of offerings that ranged from Chuck Kleymeyer talking about his Quaker retelling of the Jesus story to Linda Lewis from AFSC speaking of her experience in North Korea, from a simple meal to support the Right Sharing of World Resources to a film about U.S. supported torture, from the very moving sharing of two friends about their spiritual journeys to a workshop on the taking of minutes in a Quaker meeting—all on top of the usual bevy of committee meetings, fibre parties, singing and chanting, and small groups delving into spiritual and social justice issues. What a vibrant Meeting this is!



The Catoctin Kitchen

And a widely traveled one as well. The office gets letters and emails from Friends visiting Mozambique and Panama and Japan, from Australia and Ghana and Vietnam, and even from beautiful downtown

Biloxi, Mississippi. Maybe we should start an airborne worship group...

FMW is playing host to two groups of young people this month. The teens **Young Friends Conference** is happening Nov. 29-Dec. 1 at the Meetinghouse, and then the **Young Adults Conference** will take place Dec. 20-22. If you notice any extra energy in the FMW vibe, that's why. Wonderful to see young F/friends!

Special thanks this month to **Robin Appleberry and Anita Drever**, for stepping into the breach and pulling off the well-received Catoctin weekend, to **Gene Throwe**, for volunteering for *both* young friends' conferences, to **Dan Dozier and Montague Kern**, for bringing Chuck Kleymeyer back to FMW to discuss his book, to **Dan and Martha, Mary and Bill, and Elise and Mark** for their work on the garden, to **Steve Coleman**, for his excellent efforts to reason with the District's tax assessors, to **C.J. Lewis and Steve Brooks**, for gearing up for the Shoebox Project, to **Louise Levathes**, for so graciously introducing AFSC's program on North Korea, to **Martha Solt** for the extraordinary work she's doing rehabilitating the Quaker House Living Room, to **Michael Beer and his bees** for providing "locally grown" honey—and donating the earnings from their sale to FMW, to **Oliva James and Patty Murphy** for organizing the Thanksgiving event, to the **First Day School students** for creating a "fire" for the Assembly Room, and to **Steve Friedman** for bringing his chungu and playing it at that event, and to **all the members of the Nominating Committee** for pulling rabbits out of hats and presenting us with a slate of committee members for 2014 (also, to **everyone who accepted a committee assignment**; may your arms soon untwist). Thank you, Friends!