

February 2011 Newsletter

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Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

Minutes – January 9, 2011

1/11-1 Opening The Meeting opened at noon with a period of silent worship. David Etheridge served as Presiding Clerk, Meg Greene, Alternate Clerk, and Debby Churchman, Recording Clerk. Sabrina McCarthy joined the clerks on the facing bench holding the Meeting in the Light. The clerks read Advices, Queries and Voices concerning simplicity which have been proposed by the Faith and Practice Revision Committee of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Friends sang, “Tis a Gift to be Simple.”

Advices

How are we to honor the testimony of simplicity in our modern world? To many of us, our culture seems so “busy” and so complex, so full of disturbing news and distractions, that we are sometimes overwhelmed. Our time is often overcommitted, and our wants are manipulated to make us desire what we do not need. Our consumption of goods as a nation is out of control. In our world, the word “simplicity” may be quickly followed by guilt and then by a sense of frustration, or even despair.

We need to think of simplicity not as an impossible demand, but an invitation to a more peaceful and fulfilling Spirit-led life. Simplicity flows from a well-ordered life. It is less a matter of doing without, than a spiritual quality that simplifies our lives by putting first things first. A simple way of life, freely chosen, is a source of strength, joy, and comfort.

The testimony of simplicity is like a bell that calls us to awareness of the Center. It challenges us to ask “what matters?” It reminds us that much of what worries us and stresses us is not all that important. It asks us to recognize the burdens we carry needlessly and lay them down: our anxiety about our appearance, our struggle to afford what we do not need, comparisons between our lifestyle and the lifestyles of others, squabbles born of tension and stress, worries that leave us exhausted and unable to find time for what matters in our lives.

Simplicity is not about an antique form of dress or speech. It is a reminder that today—as surely as hundreds of years ago—we can choose to allow God to order our lives.

Queries

What in my present life most distracts me from God?

What am I ready to release so that I can give my attention to what matters most?

How do the ways in which I choose to use my time, my possessions, my money, and my energy reflect my most deeply held values?

How do the ways in which we choose to use our community’s resources reflect our most deeply held values?

How do we support one another in our search for a simpler life?

Voices

My mind through the power of Truth was in a good degree weaned from the desire of outward greatness, and I was learning to be content with real conveniences that were not costly; so that a way of life free from much Entanglements appeared best for me, though the income was small. I had several offers of business that appeared profitable, but saw not my way clear to accept of them, as believing the business proposed would be attended with more outward care & cumber than was required of me to engage in. There was a care on my mind so to pass my time, as to things outward, that nothing might hinder me from the most steady attention to the voice of the True Shepherd.

–John Woolman

I wish I might emphasize how a life becomes simplified when dominated by faithfulness to a few concerns. Too many of us have too many irons in the fire. We get distracted by the intellectual claim to our interest in a thousand and one good things, and before we know it we are pulled and hauled breathlessly along by an over-burdened program of good committees and good undertakings. I am persuaded that this fevered life of church workers is not wholesome. Undertakings get plastered on from the outside because we can't turn down a friend. Acceptance of service on a weighty committee should really depend upon an answering imperative within us, not merely upon a rational calculation of the factors involved. The concern-oriented life is ordered and organized from within. And we learn to say No as well as Yes by attending to the guidance of inner responsibility. Quaker simplicity needs to be expressed not merely in dress and architecture and the height of tombstones but also in the

structure of a relatively simplified and coordinated life-program of social responsibilities. And I am persuaded that concerns introduce that simplification, and along with it that intensification which we need in opposition to the hurried, superficial tendencies of our age. –Thomas Kelly

'Tis a gift to be simple, 'tis a gift to be free
'Tis a gift to come down where we ought to be
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
We will be in the valley of love and delight.

When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend we will not be ashamed;
To turn and turn will be our delight
Till by turning, turning we come 'round right.

-Shaker spiritual

1/11-2 Attendance Approximately 30 Friends were present.

1/11-3 Clerks' report

Presiding Clerk David Etheridge announced that Friend Winnie Walker-Jones died on December 27, 2010. A memorial service will be held at Friends House in Sandy Spring, Maryland on February 12, 2011 at 2:00 pm. (Please note at the time the NL was published to time has been changed to Noon). David also announced that Friend Malachy Kilbride's brother, Barney, died on January 6, 2011.

1/11-4 Spiritual State of the Meeting Worship Sharing Ministry & Worship Clerk

Faith Williams presented a questionnaire developed by the committee to discern the Spiritual State of the Meeting. Friends considered these questions from BYM:

- How does the Spirit prosper among you? How does your Meeting ensure that ministry is nurtured, and that members and attenders feel valued and cared for?
- What supports the life of the Spirit in your Meeting community? What challenges and troubles are you facing? In what ways is the Meeting less than you would wish it to be?

How is the presence of Spirit manifested in your lives individually and as a Meeting community?

David led the Meeting in worship around these questions. A Friend noted the challenge of impatience and a desire to have things happen Now. She asks that we consistently seek the will of God rather than our own. Another Friend noted a spirit of rebirth and vitality in the community. She expressed a desire to see the two 10:30 meetings for worship combined. A Friend expressed confusion over what is the spiritual state of the meeting. Are we a community or just a group of individuals? A Friend spoke in favor of keeping the two 10:30 meetings for worship separated because they each have a different flavor, which speak to her condition at different times. A Friend spoke of the support she and her husband have felt within a couples group at FMW. She also mentioned a tension at the Meeting between some theist and non-theist Friends. She expressed a desire for more time for fellowship.

1/11-5 Creation of Communications Committee Neil Froemming, a member of the Ad Hoc Communications Committee, presented a proposal to formally establish the communications committee as a special committee of the Meeting. The committee would have oversight of the use of information technology at FMW. (see attached handbook description). Friends discussed whether this should be a standing committee, a special committee, or a working group. A Friend suggested that the

name Information Technology Committee would be more specific and accurate. Montague Kern, speaking for Records and Handbook, spoke in favor of naming this a special committee. Many friends noted the importance of not just the technology, but the content of our communications. Steve Brooks, speaking for the committee, noted that they facilitate the content but do not generate it. Friends APPROVED naming this the Information Technology committee. Friends APPROVED the structure outlined in the proposed handbook description to make this a special committee.

Friends APPROVED asking The Ministry and Worship, the Records and Handbook and the Information Technology committees to work together to determine who will generate and edit the content of communications, and how non-staff Friends can and should interact with FMW's computers and databases, and come back with recommendations to Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business.

A Friend expressed concern after the lengthy discussion that such discussions are unnecessarily lengthened by bringing in extraneous issues that could be better discussed elsewhere in a number of channels, both before and outside of Meeting for Business. She is also concerned by the lack of love and trust expressed in the communications at these meetings.

1/11-6 Request for Transfer of Membership - Hayden Wetzel, member of the Membership Committee, presented a request to transfer the membership of Erik Edgerton from Goldsboro (NC) Friends Meeting to FMW. The request was held over for one month, as is our custom.

1/11-7 Report from the Nominating Committee Marcia Reecer, Interim Clerk of the Nominating Committee, presented the following nominations:

1. Nomination of Chris Klemek to the Religious Education Committee for a term ending in December 2013. Friends APPROVED
2. Maurice Boyd for liaison to the Friends Committee on National Legislation. Friends APPROVED
3. Nomination of Michael North as Clerk of the Library Committee for 2011 (waiver needed)

Friends considered the question of whether and under what circumstances Friends should waive approving Friends as clerks who are not members of the Meeting. Some Friends expressed a desire to stick to the rules of the handbook regarding membership; others spoke of expressing a welcoming spirit to Friends willing to serve, and evaluating nominees based on their knowledge of the principles of Quaker faith and practice. Friends did not have unity about granting the waiver.

1/11-8 Annual Report of the Membership Committee Hayden Wetzel presented the annual report of the Membership Committee (see attached).

1/11-9 Annual Recorders Report Tom Cooke, Recorder for the Meeting, presented the Recorders Report for 2010 (attached). One reason we show a loss of 23 members is due to the Membership Committee's contacting associate members over the age of 25 to see if they wanted to become full members or drop their membership. Ten associate members asked to drop.

1/11-10 Update of Finance and Stewardship Committee Loie Clark, Clerk of the Finance and Stewardship Committee, will give a December update by next week. Contributions are coming in close to budget, which means they have not increased or decreased since last year. Expenses are running under budget because we have an empty personnel position.

1/11-11 Update from the Property Committee Neil Froemming from the Property Committee reported an update on Sticks and Bricks (see attached). Next work day is Saturday, Feb. 5.

1/11-12 Update from the Capital Improvements Task Force Steve Brooks, member of the Capital Improvements Task Force, reported that the group has met twice and discussed how to communicate its work to the meeting as a whole. They will have monthly updates to Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business. The committee has appointed the following committee members to serve as liaisons to other committees.

Liaisons:

Merry Pearlstein to M&W

Neil Froemming to F&S

Judy Hubbard to Garden and Trustees

Byron Sandford and Robinne Gray to Capital Campaign committee

Byron Sandford to the Personnel Committee

1/11-13 Minutes– The minutes were read and APPROVED.

1/11-14 AdjournmentWith approximately 27 Friends present, the meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m., to reconvene as way opens on Sunday, **February 13, 2011** at 11:45 a.m.

ATTACHMENTS:

- [Proposal to Establish Communications Committee](#)
- [Membership Committee Annual Report](#)
- [Sticks and Bricks](#)
- [Recorder's Report](#)

Proposal To Establish Communications Committee

January 2011

Last April, the Meeting Clerk reported to Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, that an ad hoc group of Friends had been working on developing and maintaining the new Meeting website. This group has since been working with staff on the website and other Meeting communications and technological issues.

This is a proposal by that group that it be established as a formal special committee of the Meeting, with functions and responsibilities as outlined below, in order to insure continuity of those functions and provide a focus for communications issues.

We believe that it would be helpful to the Meeting to have such a committee, to address the following issues:

- An informal survey of other monthly meeting websites suggests that maintaining continuity and consistency is a serious problem. Many websites appear to reflect bursts of volunteer enthusiasm, followed by periods of inactivity and neglect. To avoid this, it will be helpful to have an ongoing committee with the responsibility for paying attention to our website.
- Meeting Friends and committees need to know who to go to when they want to post materials to the website or make suggestions for its improvement.
- The Meeting staff makes extensive use of computer hardware, software, and related technology and benefits greatly from volunteer technical support provided by various Friends. Assigning this function to a committee will help ensure continuity of (and recognition of) this necessary work.
- From time to time, questions of communications policy come up involving such things as database maintenance, newsletter distribution, and e-mail list servers. In seeking guidance on some of these issues, we found that they don't seem to have a home in any particular Meeting committee. It will be useful to have a committee to discuss such issues, make decisions, receive complaints or concerns, bring issues to Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, etc.

The following is a proposed description of the new committee:

FMW Communications Committee

Draft Handbook Description

Under Special Committees:

The Communications Committee, in conference with staff, develops policies for and assists in the use of information technology, such as websites, databases, e-mail, and list servers, and develops policies for creation and distribution of electronic and print communications, such as newsletters, announcements, and directories.

The Committee is responsible for managing and maintaining the Friends Meeting of Washington website, assisting the Meeting community, officers, and committees with page design, creation, editing, posting, revision, and organizing services, establishing style and content rules where appropriate.

Members:5 to 8 (including ex officio)

Membership:M,S,Q,A

Term:Indefinite

Nominated:Nominating Committee

Co-opt:Yes

Ex Officio:Administrative Secretary, Assistant Secretary

May

Reports to Clerk in:

Dick Bellin, Steve Brooks, Neil Froemming (clerk),

Initial Membership:Marcia Reecer

Annual Report

Membership Committee

Friends Meeting of Washington

January 9, 2011

In 2010, the Membership Committee completed its review of forms used by persons considering joining the Meeting. It was determined the forms needed to be revised to reflect a better understanding of what membership in Friends Meeting of Washington means and provide more information about the application process.. We concluded that membership in the Religious Society of Friends and the Friends Meeting of Washington begins when we:

- Seek to experience the Divine in one's life, recognize that there is that of God in others, and wish to pursue this spiritual journey within the Friends Meeting of Washington community.
- Know and approve of the aspirations of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) as set forth in the queries of Baltimore Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice.
- Participate in Friends Meeting of Washington meetings for worship and for business as well as Meeting committees.
- Share constructively in the life of the Meeting, including providing regular financial support for and service to Friends Meeting of Washington.

Although the revision process is finished, the Committee welcomes questions about the documents. At the present, we have opened a dialogue with several attenders who are considering membership and still have questions about the membership process to guide their lives in the Meeting.

During this process, we learned that our continuing membership must also consider these questions while being open to other views.

New Members and Welcomers

We were pleased to assist Steve Coleman as he began the membership process and that he is now a member of the Meeting.

In 2010, the Meeting welcomed the following new Friends to our Meeting:

- Justine Kalas Reeves welcomed by Leslie Jadin and Steve Williams
- Margot Greenlee welcomed by Bill Foskett and Margaret Greene.
- Kimberly Crichton welcomed by Janet Dinsmore, Marcia Reecer and Sara Satterthwaite

As we seek volunteers to serve as welcomers, we will continue coordinate the welcoming of all new members.

The Committee has also begun meeting with members who transfer into our meeting. The purpose of this new effort is to get to know the new member and to learn more about his/her faith experience.

Special Projects

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

- Contacting Out of Touch Members - Under the leadership of Molly Tully, the Committee with participation by other Meeting members, contacted members we have not heard from in several years.
- Transitioning Associate Members to Regular Members - With Hayden Wetzal providing the leadership, the Committee has begun reaching out to associate members who joined as children and may be ready to change their status to regular members of the Meeting.

Membership on Meeting Committees

During the year, the Committee has considered the role members play in providing leadership to the Meeting. We recognize that membership in the meeting is only part of a Spirit-led process. But we believe that membership provides the opportunity for deepen our faith, as well as leadership and service to the Meeting.

The Committee has noted the number of attenders who have been appointed to be clerks of committees as well as members of committees where the Meeting Handbook requires them to be members of the Religious Society of Friends. We are concerned that the Meeting has given waivers of the membership requirements in these cases. We would like to work with the Nominating Committee to reduce the occasions where these waivers are needed. We would like the Meeting to encourage these attenders to begin the membership process. We stand ready to assist them as they consider joining the meeting. We are willing to work with the Meeting as a whole to ensure that members are serving the meeting. During the membership process, prospective members are asked about their plans for future support to the Meeting, both with service and financial contributions during the membership process.

We are thankful for the service of Elise Storck and Janet Dinsmore on the Committee as they move on to other areas in the meeting. We welcome Gerri Williams as a new Committee member.

Submitted by

Jean Capps, Elise Storck, Harry Massey (Co-Clerk), Janet Dinsmore, Hayden Wetzal, Monica Jacobe (Co-Clerk), Molly Tully

Sticks and Bricks

January 2011

Property Committee Update

In the last month saw continued progress on several ongoing projects:

Northeast Room

The renovation of the Northeast Room on the Meeting House ground floor was completed in time for the room to be useful to the Shoebox Project work. The Property Committee is discussing how the Meeting might use that new space, beginning with the question of alternative storage locations for tables, chairs, files, supplies, formerly stored in that room.

Quaker House North Wing

Work is nearing completion on renovating the three unused rooms on the second floor of the north wing of Quaker House. Patching, new paint, new flooring, plumbing work are done or nearing completion, and there is now a new bypass corridor from the "Committee Room" to the hall at the top of the west stairs.

Promundo, our new space sharing partner, is expected to begin occupancy of that space later this month.

Carriage House Renovation

Also in progress is work to ready the space on the ground floor of Carriage House for occupancy by Tostan.

Renovations to the ceiling have begun and planning continues for partitioning and renovation of the former Classroom space.

Capital Improvement Task Force Update

The new Task Force met twice in December and has established a tentative schedule for meeting at least twice a month.

Our meetings so far have focused on orientation and organization, defining our task and considering how we should proceed, with a particular focus on establishing and maintaining good liaison with Meeting standing committees and with the Meeting community as a whole.

Recorder's Report 2010

The figures: By year to year count these are the figures for the Meeting's membership as of December 31, 2010.

The figures: there are a total of 347 Members and 66 Associate Members, for a total of 413 Members. The total is divided into 276 Resident members (including Members for whom we have no address) and 137 non-resident members.

Changes: In 2010 the Meeting's count increased by 4 new members. There were no new Associate Members in 2010. (This is a gain of 4 new members).

Losses: 3 members died; 1 member resigned; 6 (including one Associate) members transferred out to other Quaker Meetings; and 13 members were terminated. (a loss of 23 total).

Sojourners: There are 6 official Sojourners on record at FMW. There is one FMW member who is an official Sojourner at another Meeting.

February 2011

Winter Events

Property Committee Workday

On Saturday, **February 5**, the Property Committee is sponsoring a work day from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friends are urged to participate for a few hours or all day. All skill levels are needed and no special expertise is needed. An afternoon clean-up crew would be especially welcomed. Participating in all or part of the work day is a great way to meet FMW community members and developing friendships in the community. Lunch will be provided. For more information contact Co-clerks Martha Solt or Steve Brooks.

FMW Adult Study Group.

The Adult Discussion Group will meet on Sunday, **February 6**, and Sunday, **February 20**, at 9:15 a.m. The Group meets in a corner of the Assembly Room. The Group will continue to discuss Quaker leaders. Please watch the Sunday Announcements or speak to John Scales about the group and discussion topics. It is not mandatory to attend every group meeting if a F/friend is interested in participating.

FMW's Senior Center for February

Programs of slides or talks are held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month in the Decatur Place Room at 1:30 p.m. On Wednesday, **February 9**, Carol Coffee will present a slide show on *Hungary and Poland*. On Wednesday, **February 23**, Maurice Boyd will present a program on *Celebrate Carnival* (as Marti Gras is March 8) by listening to samba and bossa nova music of Brazil, with the music of Antonio Carlos Jobim featured. Come and find out what is a "Carioca".

Memorial Meeting for Winnie Walker-Jones

Winnie Walker-Jones, a member of FMW and a former Meeting Clerk died on December 27, 2010. A Memorial Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, **February 12**, at Noon at Friends House in Sandy Spring, Maryland. (Please note the scheduled time has been changed to Noon.).

Memorial Meeting for Joan Oehser

On January 18, 2011, long time FMW member Joan Oehser died at Friends Nursing Home. A Memorial Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, **February 26**, 2011 at 11 a.m. at FMW.

William Penn House

William Penn House, a Quaker Center on Capitol Hill, hosts monthly potluck dinners with a speaker and discussion afterwards. In addition to monthly potlucks the William Penn House provides low cost accommodations and Quaker centered programs and seminars. On Sunday, **February 13**, Janet Riley will present stories about her work on an international children's project, ***Power of Goodness***, which is presently focused in war torn Chechnya. The ***Power of Goodness*** project is an ongoing creation of the Friends International Library. People from Chechnya, Russia, Britain, Canada and the United States work on this project.

Power of Goodness: Stories of Non-Violence and Reconciliation is a multi-language book of stories showing love and kindness in action that grew out of a wish to help children of the world learn ways of peace. The vision is that young readers of *Power of Goodness* will be inspired to act with courage and bring good into the lives around them.

After the success of the Russian version and the first addition of the Chechen version of *Power of Goodness*, the Friends International Library committee partnered with Peacebuilding UK to expand the project. Together, we are presently developing a teacher's manual to expand the project and are developing a teacher's manual to accompany the book. Workshops focused on using the story collection and manual as a resource will be conducted for Chechen teachers by Chechen psychologists from Peacebuilding UK who are experienced in facilitating workshops focusing on peace education and human rights. All participating teachers will have enough donated copies of the second Chechen edition of *Power of Goodness* for their prospective school communities.

The long range vision of the Friends International Library (FIL) committee includes many versions in many languages of *Power of Goodness* for countries/cultures in many parts of the world where the messages in the stories will be a force for reconciliation and peace.

Janet Riley is a member of the Sandy Spring Friends Meeting and Executive Secretary of Friends International Library.

William Penn House is located at 515 East Capitol Street, SE Washington, DC 20003. It is an alcohol and tobacco free facility.

Living Our Queries

Please join Friends as we discover how the monthly queries, advices and voices connect with our daily spiritual experiences. The group meets the fourth Sunday of each month at 9:15 a.m. in the Quaker House Living Room. Participating in this monthly discussion can lead both long time Friends to a "deeper understanding" of the queries, and help newcomers better understand Quakers, our practices, our beliefs and our spiritual lives. The next session of ***Living Our Queries***, is on **February 27**, and the queries to be discussed are "Meeting for Worship".

Summer Camp and Scholarships

As we live in warm sweaters and never leave home without gloves, it is hard to believe that summer is around the corner. But, now is the time to make plans for summer camp. There are several local Quaker camps that provide summer Quaker camping experiences for our children, including Catoctin, Opequon, Shiloh, Teen Adventure, Summer at Sandy Spring, and Sidwell Friends School Camps. Now is the time to make plans, and if a scholarship is needed, applications can be accepted until rise of Meeting, Sunday, **March 6**. For more information about summer camps contact Kathy or Robb Lipp-Farr. For scholarship information contact Tracy Hart, the Clerk of Religious Education by email. Scholarships are available to any child of an active FMW member or attender and they are not "needs-

based”. When applying, please include: the parents’ name; names of child(ren) going to camp, what camp they are going to, and all appropriate contact information. (Email address, phone numbers, etc). Due to the demand for these scholarships, RE welcomes anonymous donations, which have been so open-heartedly been donated in the past.

Book Discussion Group Forming to Discuss “*Buddha’s Brain: Happiness, Love and Wisdom*”

Many F/friends are interested in forming a book discussion group around Dr. Rick Hansen’s book “*Buddha’s Brain: Happiness, Love and Wisdom*”. The first group meeting for all that are interested will be held on Sunday, **February 20** at Noon at FMW. (The meeting space is TBA). The excerpt below has inspired many F/friends to express interest in the discussion group:

It’s a remarkable fact that the people who have gone the very deepest into the mind—the sages and saints of every religious tradition—all say essentially the same thing: Your fundamental nature is pure, conscious, peaceful, radiant, loving and wise, and it is joined in mysterious ways with the ultimate underpinnings of reality, by whatever name we give That. Although your true nature may be hidden momentarily by stress and worry, anger and unfulfilled longings, it still continues to exist. (Pg 15).

Announcements

Two Renowned Folk Singers Featured at Spring Friends Coffee House

A Coffee House featuring folk music by award-winning Tom Neilson and Azalea City Recordings artist Jesse Palidofsky of Tacoma Park will be held on Saturday, **February 5** from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the Sandy Springs Friends Community House, 17715 Meeting House Road, Sandy Spring, Maryland.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the new educational facility to be built on the historic 250-year-old Sandy Spring Friends Meeting campus.

Neilson, known for combining his musical talent with activism, has been recognized as “the Jon Stewart of folk music”. He has performed his own songs in appearances with Caesar Chavez, Noam Chomsky, Amy Goodman, Ray McGovern, Cynthia McKinney, Ralph Nadar, Cindy Sheehan and Howard Zinn.

Admission is \$25 per person, \$40 per family (other contributions also accepted). Refreshments will be available. For more information, Google the Sandy Spring web site or call (301)774-9792 or (301)774-3636 for reservations.

FriendsWilderness Center

On Saturday, **February 5**, come join Friends Wilderness Poet Ron Weber plus other poets and poetry lovers for a winter day of reading and discussing poetry around the wood stove at Niles Cabin. The general theme will be nature poetry and the human spirit, new signs of life, changing seasons, or nearly any other topic. Bring your own poetry to read.

Friends will gather at 10:00 a.m. in Niles Cabin at the Friends Wilderness Center in Jefferson County, West Virginia. Poetry listeners are valued as much as poetry readers and writers. If you wish, come early for a self-guided walk in the woods. Lunch (\$7) is available for Friends who reserve in advance. Please call Sheila Bach at (304)728-4820 to RSVP.

On Saturday, **February 26**, the star-gazing program that was postponed from January 29, will be held. Dinner (\$10) will be at 6:00 p.m. and star-gazing will start at 7 p.m. For more information or to RSVP contact Shelia Bach at (304)728-4820.

Baltimore Yearly Young Friends Conference

Young Friends are holding a conference at Langley Hill Friends Meeting from Friday, **February 11** at 7 p.m. through Sunday morning, **February 13, 2011**. In recognition of Valentine's Day, the theme will be "**Love**". For more information contact Alison Duncan at Baltimore Yearly Meeting (301)774-7663.

FMW Office Closed

The FMW Office will be closed on Monday, **February 21** in observance of President's Day

From the FMW Vault: Permission to Marry

Friends- Sorting the Meeting's historic papers I keep finding interesting items- some very moving, some just fun- that ought to be shared with the whole FMW community. I begin here a monthly series of extracts from our files, edited as needs be, that illustrate the various facets of our Meeting's past. For those wanting to know more, the current file name is given at the end as a type of source reference.

—Hayden Wetzel, Meeting Historian.

Nov. 14, 1963

Dear Friends of Washington,

We have given our permission to the marriage planned between our son, NEC and JBR. We feel that they have given much serious thought to the matter and believe that they are ready to make this important step in their lives.

Sincerely,
FLC and EBC

(The Meeting required permission to both sets of parents to approve requested marriages until shortly after this letter was written. One family objected to a proposed union and the Marriage and Family Relations Committee dropped the procedure shortly afterward.)

File: Committees: Marriage and Family Relations/Marr Requests 1960's.

Thinking about Race

According to a carefully researched book published in 2010 by Michelle Alexander, the rates of use and traffic in illegal drugs are roughly equal among white, blacks and Latinos, yet by 2004 three-fourths of all persons imprisoned in the US for drug offenses were blacks or Latinos. Since, in most jurisdictions, it is legal to deny voting rights and employment to persons convicted of serious drug offenses, she argues that the mass incarceration of blacks and Latinos has created a new caste system from which our society makes it very difficult to escape even when they are no longer incarcerated.

In addition to her meticulous scholarship, her work has added credibility because it was written with the involvement of a person with considerable experience in the area who disagrees with her conclusions. In the acknowledgments she writes:

My husband, Carter Stewart, has been my rock. Without ever once uttering a word of complaint, he has read and reread drafts and rearranged his schedule countless times to care for our children, so that I could make progress with my writing. As a federal prosecutor, he does not share my views about the criminal justice system, but his different worldview has not, even for a moment, compromised his ability to support me, lovingly, at every turn in my efforts to share my truth.

The book is: “***The New Jim Crow—Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness***” (New York: The New Press, 2010). NOTE: Friends who wish to comment on this or any other “Thinking about Race” items may do so at <http://racism.bym-rsf.net>. The BYM Web Manager has set this up a BYM Working Group on Racism blog. In order to leave comments you need to register first. You can do that by sending an email to the web manager at Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

Sitting Head of Meeting

This is a list of the dates committees are “Sitting Head of Meeting”:

Feb. 6 - F & S
Feb. 13 - Records and Handbook
Feb. 20 - Property
Feb. 27- Religious Education
March 6 - Library
March 13 - Ministry and Worship
March 20 - Hospitality
March 27 - Nominating
April 3 - Personal Aid
April 10 - Trustees
April 17 - Young Adult Friends
April 24 - Religious Education
May 1 - Peace and Social Concerns
May 8 - F & S
May 15 - Property
May 22 - Ministry and Worship
May 29 - Marriage and Family Relations
June 5 - Personnel
June 12 - Religious Education

June 19 - Library

June 26 - Membership

This list is made by the Clerk of Ministry and Worship, Faith Williams. For more information, or questions, contact her at (202)459-6805.