

FMW Newsletter, February 2015

 [Printer-friendly version](#)

[Minutes](#)

[Records & Handbook](#)

[Larry Bott](#)

[Wilderness Ctr](#)

[CITF Update](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Thinking About Race](#)

[Random Happenings](#)

Friends Meeting of Washington

Order of Worship

Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

January 2015

Queries

Are meetings for worship held in expectant waiting for Divine guidance? Are Friends encouraged to share spiritual insights? Are special gifts of ministry recognized and encouraged?

Do you come to meeting with heart and mind prepared? Are you careful not to disturb the spirit of the meeting by late arrival or in other ways?

Advices

Waiting upon the Holy Spirit in silent expectation and prayer is the basis of our meeting for worship. Vocal ministry should arise out of a sense of being inwardly moved to share a message aloud. Sometimes a message is not ripe yet, or comes clearly but is meant only for the person receiving it, not for the group. Some Friends are led to speak frequently, and others only rarely; yet the timid or brief message of one who seldom speaks may be as moving and helpful as that of a more practiced speaker. The experienced speaker should be watchful not to speak too often or at undue length. No Friend should come to meeting for worship with an intention to speak or not to speak.

The most satisfactory vocal ministry arises out of a leading that is felt in the silence so strongly that it cannot be ignored. It should be delivered with as few words as possible, yet as many as necessary. Vocal prayer offered on behalf of the gathered meeting can also bring us into closer harmony with God.

– Faith and Practice, BYM

Voices

With diligence meet together, and with diligence wait to feel the Lord God to arise, to scatter and expel all that which is the cause of leanness and barrenness upon any soul; for it is the Lord must do it, and he will be waited upon in sincerity and fervency of Spirit; . . . and let none be hasty to utter words, though manifest in the light in which ye wait upon the Lord; but still wait in silence, to know the power working in you to bring forth the words, in the ministration of the eternal word of life to answer the life in all.

- Stephen Crisp, 1663

Our way of worship is not just an historical accident; it is a corollary from our conviction concerning the universal Light of Christ. Believing that in every worshiper, regardless of age, learning, sex, or any other human label, the promptness of God's spirit are at work, Friends meet together in entirely unprogrammed meetings, worship in silent prayer, opening themselves [to the Spirit]. . . .In such corporate worship. . . .we are led into a depth of communion with God and with one another that is deeply meaningful and spiritually refreshing.

- L. Hugh Doncaster

2015/1-1 Welcome of Visitors

Meeting for Business opened with 16 present. Friends welcomed Elaine Wilson, a member of Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting as first time attender to Meeting for Business.

2015/1-2 Appointment of Temporary Recording Clerk.

Friends **APPROVED** J.E. McNeil to serve as our recording clerk for first month meeting for worship with a concern for business.

2015/1-3 Clerk's Report

Additional items to the meeting agenda are reports from Nominating and Finance & Stewardship Committees.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting embraces the Unity with Nature Committee's request for each Local Meeting to discern on climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation. It is hoped that with this engagement will come a culture wide determination to creatively adapt to protect the renewable abundance of life in our environment. This requires us to stretch beyond our comfort zone. The Unity with Nature Committee asks us to: Consider the sustainability queries at: http://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/committees/nature/sustainability.html. To meet this request, there will be a worship sharing (the date to be set) on the queries we are to consider. Friends are also asked to consider contributing to [BYM Friends' Listening Post on Sustainability on Facebook](#)

There will be a panel discussion at the Meeting House on January 15 as part of a national AFSC effort to focus on Black Lives Matter. The Peace and Social Concerns Committee is live-streaming the national panel at 5:30; serving people a simple meal at 6:00, and having a panel discussion focusing on DC starting at 7:00. This is an important gathering for Friends and others concerned with white privilege and the treatment of minorities, especially by the judicial system.

The Coins for Quoins campaign, a First Day School project to raise money for the capital campaign, is ongoing; please bring in your spare change including foreign currency.

The Barbara Nnoka Memorial Scholarship Lunch is scheduled for February 1st to raise money for the Meeting's Mary Jane Simpson Scholarships for DC school graduates.

The Marriage & Family Relations committee is holding a singles night (More than Just Friends!) on Feb. 7th in the assembly room. Please let members of the committee if you think you might attend, and let others know.

Jim Clay, Director of School for Friends, will be holding his parenting classes for parents with young children at the school at Church of the Pilgrims starting Feb. 12th and running it weekly.

Draft safety and welcoming guidelines will be presented in February for consideration.

Major items

2015/1-4 Todd Harvey, clerk of Records and Handbook, made a semi-annual update on changes to the Handbook. The Handbook is living representation of the Meeting. There are changes to the look of the Handbook online to make it easier to read and be used. It is Todd Harvey's last report in the capacity of clerk of Records and Handbooks and Friends thanked him for his service.

The changes, which are attached, were **APPROVED**.

2015/1-5 Milestones

Grant Thompson, member of the Meeting, read the Memorial minute for Larry Bott, which is attached. Molly Tully sent a message to make sure that Friends know how much she appreciated LB's help with her husband. It was **APPROVED** as improved. Thanks were given to Grant for drafting a moving minute.

Major items

2015/1-6 Harry Massey, clerk of Nominating Committee, reported.

Friends **APPROVED** the following for terms beginning in January 2015:

Brad Green (attender) to be appointed to the IT committee for a three-year term.

Chris Connolly (attender) to be appointed to the Peace and Social Concerns Committee for a three-year term.

J.E. McNeil (member) to be Recording Clerk for a one-year term.

2015/1-7 Update from Finance & Stewardship about Friends Wilderness Center.

Byron Sandford, clerk of Finance & Stewardship, reported it has considered the request to add the Friends Wilderness Center in the Meeting budget as the Meeting for Business requested. A copy of its recommendations is attached.

The committee recommends a one-time contribution of \$500 this fiscal year of 2014-2015 and for the matter to be considered with the budget for the coming fiscal year and that the Center recruits a meeting member or attender to serve on its board and report back as do all other Quaker organizations which we consistently support. At that time the Finance & Stewardship committee will consider whether the support will be ongoing.

A Friend who had been on the Center board reminded Friends that one of the Meeting's members helped create and support it. Another Friend noted that Young Adult Friends, having recently become aware of this resource, intend to use it.

Friends **APPROVED** the Finance & Stewardship recommendation.

Other business

2015/1-8 Neil Froemming, member of the Capital Improvement Task Force, gave an update on the progress of the renovations. A copy of the report is attached.

Time in construction is always uncertain, but efforts are made to keep the project moving forward as expeditiously as possible. The District has 600 pages of storm water management rules, which have created some delays as the Meeting meets with the District. So far we have spent about \$144,000. We have completed an agreement with the government of

Costa Rica whose embassy abuts our property in which they will pay for part of the water runoff work, which will extend under their property.

A Friend raised the issue of grants in the District for storm water runoff. The Friend also recommended an AIA contract with contractors which provides for holdbacks until the project is completely done. The Civil engineers are just starting on the storm water runoff study and the committee will look into grants. The contract we have is an AIA with the architects and will be with the contractors. Dan Dozier, alternate clerk and Trustee noted he was spending time and effort to become aware of laws and practices in this area. A Friend recommended that we need to know and to be known by our elected officials of the District and create relationships with them. A Friend expressed his joy at the project and how the Meeting has come alive.

Grant Thompson, member of the Capital Campaign Committee, noted that we can either pay for this project through contributions or through debt and that debt costs more.

2015/1-9 Elaine Wilson, an attender volunteering with FCNL, gave a report on FCNL. When she moved to DC from Michigan and realized what a hole there was without having voting representatives in the Congress, so she began volunteering with FCNL. She reported that FCNL had a record attendance at its annual lobby day from more than 200 congressional districts about diplomacy with Iran. The speakers at the annual sessions, including Parker Palmer, were inspiring.

FCNL also has a capital campaign to expand into property on C St, which they purchased from FMW member Betty Morris upon her death. FNCL suffered in 2008 financially, but now has a record number of employees although many of them are for one year. Space is at a premium. She noted many of the staff are very young and she was impressed about the mentoring involved.

A Friend suggested that we minute Betty Morris's contribution. Byron Sandford, executive director of William Penn House, noted that FCNL's executive director Diane Randall was speaking there tonight. He also noted that the lobby day was originally founded in conjunction with William Penn House.

2015/1-10 Friends **APPROVED** the minutes.

2015/1-11 The Meeting closed with approximately 21 members in attendance to reconvene as way opens on 8th day Second month 2015.

ATTACHMENTS

FMW Records & Handbook Committee Semi-Annual Report

2015-01-11

Two changes were made to the Handbook during Meetings for Business between July and December 2014. They were:

2014/11-3: The Child Safety Committee became a standing committee with a revised committee description. Both changes are now noted in the Handbook.

2014/11-5: The Library Committee rescinded a request to lay down the position of Librarian, approved by Meeting for Business in May 2014, and the old description was restored to the Handbook.

The latest edition of the Handbook, located on the FMW website, features a revised layout and numbered sections to ease use of the document.

Memorial Minute

Lawrence Milton Bott

February 18, 1924 – August 7, 2011

Larry Bott's membership in Friends Meeting of Washington was approved on March 11, 1990, as a transfer from Langley Hill Friends Meeting. In 2002, Larry moved to Altamonte Springs, Florida for what were said to be health reasons. Larry died on August 7, 2011. He is survived by his wife, Shu-Ying Chen, and his three children, Ross Alan Bott, Steven Eric Bott, and Alethea May Bott Blanton.

Larry Bott held a degree from Stanford University and a doctorate from Howard University. He specialized in organizational development, working for the federal government regulation of civilian aviation. He was a World War II veteran (serving, we believe, in the Navy) and shared stories of shipboard life with a few friends, at least once expressing the wish that his ashes might be scattered into the sea from a ship like the one on which he served. A man of extraordinary skills, friends variously described him as a brilliant cook, a skilled gardener, an architect, an electrician, a carpenter, and always as a student of the human condition.

During his time at Friends Meeting of Washington, Larry served as Alternate Clerk of Ministry & Worship Committee, a member of Personnel Committee, a teacher in First Day School, an instructor in our Inquirers' Classes, organizer of an important retreat held in 1990, and on a development sub-committee of Finance & Property Committee. Members of Ministry & Worship Committee recall in particular meetings held in the tea house he had built in a wooded area behind his Vienna, Virginia home, highlighted by dinners he cooked and served on china, with silver implements and cloth napkins. For Inquirers Classes, Larry was a master of the Socratic Method; those attending realized that they were there to learn, not simply to receive pre-digested doctrine neatly packaged into a printed brochure.

Despite his committee service, he wrote to the presiding clerk in 1992, expressing his unease at the usual manner that Friends deal with issues—that is, by assigning problems to committees. Instead, Larry urged that Friends needed to ask searching questions about the physical, personal, psychological, and spiritual conditions that have historically sustained Quaker involvement in secular life.

His personal kindness was legendary. During the 1990s, he became a companion to Molly Tully's husband, Andrew Tully, whose brilliant career was eroded in the end by severe Alzheimer's disease. Once a week, Larry would sit with Andy, freeing Molly to get out of the house. That experience led Molly, with Larry's assistance, to form Friends Club, a group for men with Alzheimer's that met for many years at Friends Meeting of Washington before moving to Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church in Bethesda. That group at various times included Sargent Shriver and the husband of Sandra Day O'Connor.

Similarly, Larry's capacity for intense friendship was unparalleled. Ask those of us who were lucky enough to be a part of a small group – even a group of two – with him, and they will report his intensity, his depth of caring, his capacity to take on tasks or burdens for a friend. His greatest gift was a willingness to share candidly his own struggles and joys. He never made a secret of his belief that he fell short of his own expectations. Friends worried that his high standards for himself led him to a dark view of his own success as a human being.

Larry always looked to the work of Henry Burton Sharman as his most important spiritual guide. Sharman informed Larry's generous and open understanding of traditional Christianity.

Larry referred to the Meeting for Worship that historically met at 10:00 a.m. in Quaker House Living Room as "my primary spiritual community." Indeed, it is in connection with that Meeting for Worship, established "with a special welcome to gays, lesbians, transgenders, and others," that Larry Bott made his deepest impact.

Some may forget how deeply homophobic a city Washington, DC was in those years. Federal jobs were closed to openly gay men and women; police routinely raided gay clubs, having alerted television stations in advance so that desperately frightened men, their hands cuffed behind their backs to prevent being able to shield their identity from broadcast on the 6 o'clock news, were led off to face loss of jobs, friends, and family support. Yet sexual minorities shared the need felt by the majority for a spiritual home. Even there, virtually all faiths rejected them, labeling them as damaged or as sinners.

Even Quakers, who were accepting in principle—reflecting our belief that there was that of God in everyone—dealt with gays and lesbians somewhat in the fashion of a prim aunt, saying in effect, “Can’t we talk about something more pleasant?”

Faced with near universal rejection, LGBTQ Friends began meeting at Washington’s small, down-at-the-heels, out-of-the-way Gay Community Center in the 1400 block of Church Street, NW. Larry Bott became a regular attender, friendly though reserved about sharing anything of his personal life or circumstances. In time, the group decided to move to Friends Meeting of Washington, which, after an extended, sometimes painful process of discernment, agreed to welcome them. Sadly, Larry felt he dared not follow them, fearing exposure if he were to worship with a group known to include gays. Happily, over time, he felt more comfortable and returned to worship at Quaker House Living Room. Once out, he was in! Larry could be counted on to put his considerable skills and intellect in service of activities of the group – whether it was the AIDS Quilt’s visits, the AIDS Coffee House, talking with frightened, sad young people, Larry was there.

A close friend who watched and cared for Larry Bott had this to say of him:

Larry was a keenly sensitive man whose willingness to struggle personally gave him deep insights to bring to bear on behalf of the wider Meeting. Larry’s capacity to feel, nearly immobilized by emotions and his occasional stubborn streak, would be outmatched by his deep compassion time after time. More often than not appearing in a faded denim jacket, Larry would “show up and do,” helping community appear in the midst of confusion; here and there his efforts would move a small mountain or two. As he freed himself from being a Washington bureaucrat, Larry put to work the skills and values he had used with success in his previous life—listening with an open mind, expressing serious opinions in measured terms, and suggesting innovative solutions. These did not circumscribe his ability to make fun of himself, nor did it impede his willingness to seek advice from others. Larry was able to look back at his life as the apparently straight man who appeared to have it all and not be overly impressed with himself. More veiled was his struggle with depression, accentuated by his sense of having let his wife and family down by not being able to be the person he believed that they expected. Sometimes members of the Meeting were able to knit Larry into community in a way that helped him balance his seeming disharmonies.

To know Larry Bott was to be admitted to a charmed circle where one observed a man of extraordinarily talents, compassion, and intellect who too often allowed self-doubts to rob himself of the satisfaction that he so richly deserved.

Finance and Stewardship Report on Friends Wilderness Center

January 11, 2015

The Finance and Stewardship Committee was asked to make a recommendation on the budget request to support the Friends Wilderness Center. The committee presents the following.

1. The Friends Meeting of Washington has a long history of supporting Quaker and non-Quaker organization through our annual budget.
2. At present those include:
 - a. Friends Committee on National Legislation
 - b. Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camping Program
 - c. American Friends Service Committee—DC
 - d. William Penn House
3. It is the understanding of the committee that a member or attender of FMW represents FMW to the organization and makes an annual report to the meeting for business. If that is not the case, then we recommend that it is.
4. The committee was concerned that no one stepped forward in support of this budget request.

F&S recommends the following.

- FMW supports the Center for this fiscal year.
- That the Center recruits a member or attender from FMW to serve on their board.

- That this individual makes a report to Meeting for Business in June.
- At that time we would decide if this is an ongoing budget item.
- F&S recommends that FMW supports the Friends Wilderness Center this fiscal year with a contribution of \$500.

Capital Improvement Task Force Update

January 10, 2015

The architects and engineers are continuing work on the Construction Documents phase of the design project, and we hope they will be completed and permit applications filed, by next Business Meeting. Spending on the design contract is about 2/3 complete.

We had been saying that we might break ground as early as February. Civil engineers are now telling us that the 600 pages of new D.C. storm water management rules will require some extra work on the storm water management plan, and that approval of that plan, once we file it, is likely to take 3 to 6 months. So we are now saying we might break ground as early as May.

Meeting approved project spending of up to \$2.1 million. That includes survey, design, fundraising, permits, insurance, and construction. We have so far spent about \$140K.

We reached an agreement with the government of Costa Rica to work with them to put a trench drain on their property and pass their storm water overflow through the planned big new storm water line on our property. The Embassy will pay for their portion of this work. We hope this will keep the water from coming under the wall and flooding our back garden and kitchen, as it now sometimes does.

We are discussing with the architects the possibility of widening the proposed new second floor corridor, to enclose some or most of the Carriage House deck with glass, to provide additional gathering space outside Quaker House Living Room. This could provide a breakout and reception and food service space for the increasing number of small weddings, retreats, and other events that use the Living Room. The Historical Preservation Review Board, which has approved our current plan unanimously, would have to approve this modification.

We are currently meeting with contractors to work out details of fire prevention sprinkler systems in the new space and access and security systems for all the new doors.

In preparation for the renovation, Property Committee has completed the conversion of Quaker House and Carriage House heating and cooling systems. The old system was a very old hot water system with a boiler and more than thirty radiators and a collection of window air conditioners. The new system uses split system heat pumps to provide local zoned heating and cooling, with a local thermostat for each of 19 offices and meeting spaces. It can be easily expanded to heat and cool the new elevator lobby and corridors.

We are working with electricians and Pepco to upgrade Meeting House electrical service to provide power for the new spaces and elevator.

The Capital Improvement Task Force anticipates that it will continue to function and work with the architects until the design contract work is complete, at the end of the construction phase.

(this ends the Minutes & Reports from the January 2015 Meeting for Business)

UPCOMING EVENTS

There will be **singing** in the Meeting Room on **Sunday, Feb. 1**, starting at 10:00 a.m. All voices welcome.

Also on **Sunday, Feb. 1**, please come with an empty stomach and a full purse to the **Barbara Nnoka Memorial Lunch** in support of the **Mary Jane Simpson Scholarship** program. This program provides scholarship support to

D.C. public school graduates going to college.

The **Grate Patrol** will prepare sandwiches and soup to take out to the city's vulnerable people on **Wednesday, Feb. 4** starting at 5:30. For more information, contact Steve Brooks at sbrooks@uab.edu



Silent Retreat, Dayspring Retreat Center, Germantown, MD., **Feb. 6-8**: Is your spirit in need of nourishment and refreshment? Come to the Silent Retreat at Dayspring for Friends. Members of Annapolis Friends Meeting will be given priority in registration, and Friends from Baltimore Yearly Meeting are invited to join them. The Retreat has never been full, so please join us! We will keep the silence from Friday evening until after worship on Sunday, enjoying the beauty of God's creation in meadows and woods, reading, walking, resting, praying, finding our own rhythms, listening for the Still Small Voice at Dayspring Retreat Center in Germantown, MD. For more information, contact facilitator Jean Christianson of Annapolis Friends Meeting. (410-544-1912)

Come to **So Others Might Eat** on **Saturday, Feb. 7** from 6:15 to 8:15 a.m. and help make breakfast for our vulnerable neighbors. For more information, contact Betsy Bramon at betsy.bramon@gmail.com

QUAKERS PARTY...The Marriage and Family Relations Committee invites **all singles** at Friends Meeting of Washington and nearby meetings to attend a social event for singles: **More than Friends**, at FMW assembly room on **Saturday February 7th, 2015** from 7 to 10 PM. Fun, games, refreshments and possibly finding your match. **All ages, genders and orientations are welcome.** No reservations are required but for planning please let us know if you are coming by RSVP to fmwmarriage@gmail.com. Any questions please contact: Tim Olabi at fmwmarriage@gmail.com or cell phone 202 276 7271.



...LIKE IT'S 1699!

You are invited to attend a **potluck and Quaker dialogue** at 6:30 PM on **February 8, 2015** at the William Penn House. Our Program this First Day is presented by Jean-Louis Peta Ikambana Of the American Friends Service Committee On An **Update on Race, Violence, and Policing** and other DC Area AFSC Projects. William Penn House is at 515 East Capitol Street SE, Washington, DC 20003



School for Friends is sponsoring a five-session course for parents of two to four year olds beginning February 12.

The course will be led by Jim Clay, director of Sff. He is a parent and an experienced early childhood educator and has contributed to courses and written on various aspects of parenting and family life.

Those attending will take part in group discussions in an open and relaxed atmosphere. The course will be scheduled on Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 9 to enable all parents to attend.

The five sessions will run February 12, 19, 26 & March 12, & 19 – there is no class on March 5. All sessions will be held in Quaker House on the Friends Meeting of Washington campus, 2121 Decatur Pl., N.W. (Decatur Pl. at Florida Ave.).

Those wishing to attend may enroll by calling Jim at Sff 202-328-1789 or emailing him at jimclay@schoolforfriends.org.

The course will cost \$125 for the series; if the cost is a barrier or you are on financial aid at Sff, please let Jim know. Unfortunately there is no child care available. Detailed schedule of the sessions will be available in advance for those enrolled.

On the **weekend of February 13**, there will be a **Young Friends Conference** for high school aged Quakes at Homewood Friends Meeting, 3107 North Charles Street, Baltimore. Young Friends should arrive beginning at 7:00 p.m.

on Friday. For details: youthsec@bym-rsf.org, 301-

774-7663, or yf.bym-rsf.net The deadline to register and be guaranteed a slot is two weeks

before the conference (January 30). Anyone registering after that date will be placed on a

waiting list and may not be able to attend. Future dates of YF conferences are: April 24 to 26, May 22 to 25 (Memorial Day weekend), and August 4 to 9 at Frostburg State College, MD.



Washington Friends Conference on Religion and Psychology, Feb. 20-22, Bishop Claggett Center in Adamstown, MD. We will be meeting in the beautiful countryside just outside of Frederick MD. The plenary speaker will be Stephen Pothoff, Associate Professor of Religion and Psychology at Wilmington College. The Title is "Dreaming Back to Right Relationship with Mother Earth: Healing the Body, Healing the Spirits, Healing the Earth". He will "share selections of dreams from three distinct historical and cultural contexts in an effort to explore how the natural world as dreamed, envisioned and lived facilitates healing of the mind, body, spirit and Earth as a whole." Stephen is a life-long Friend from Greensboro, NC. At Wilmington, he teaches a course on Dreams and World Mythology and has lead dream groups. As always, there will be excellent Interest Groups. Please contact Walter Brown with any questions. (202-882-1764 or carolewalter@aol.com)

Creating the Peaceable Kingdom Dinner Join the William Penn House as they honor the Peacemakers in our midst. These are the people who do their work out of the limelight, simply following their own leading and proceeding as the way opens. This year the honoree will be RonDell Pooler, a living example of overcoming adversity and odds. His work with Washington Parks and People inspires all who have the good fortune to work with him. The dinner will begin at 6:00 p.m. on **Sunday, February 22**, at William Penn House (515 East Capitol Street, SE), and RSVPs are being accepted now at info@williampennhouse.org and 202-543-5560. The cost is \$50.

THINKING ABOUT RACE (February 2015) – Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform

The Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform, MAJR (www.ma4jr.org), is promoting 8 bills in the 2015 MD General Assembly, bringing together legislation under one umbrella from varied organizations: Annapolis Friends Peace and Justice Center, Job Opportunity Task Force, MD Restorative Justice Initiative, Uniform Laws Commission. Alliance partners include interfaith groups, churches, Quaker meetings, and criminal justice reform organizations such as: Committee of Concerned Citizens, Maryland CURE, Out for Justice, People for Change, Friend of a Friend, Interfaith Action for Human Rights, and the Community Conferencing Center.

The following are MAJR legislative initiatives in 2015:

- Alternatives to incarceration (mediation, restorative justice, diversion)
- Screening of low-risk offenders for more effective corrections
- Prisoners' employment and rehabilitation resources
- Pre-release support for jobs and re-entry services at detention centers
- Employer incentives for post-release job placement
- Awareness of collateral consequences re: guilty pleas
- Second Chance--shielding records for misdemeanors
- Parole Board final decisions for "lifers with parole"

This column is prepared by the BYM Working Group on Racism (WGR) and sent to the designated liaisons at each Monthly and Preparative Meeting for publication in their newsletter or other means of dissemination. The WGR 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.

RANDOM HAPPENINGS

In our continuing effort to provide up-to-the-minute Quaker gossip, your Administrative Secretary has dug out the following:

Hayden Wetzelis back from the trip he took with his son and daughter-in-law to Vietnam. He promises photos, eventually. Keep asking. Meanwhile, intrepid traveler **Michael North** has returned from Argentina, and posted many gorgeous photos on his Facebook page. I like.



Some less understandable travels: **Robin Appleberry and Ken Forsberg** took their family to Minnesota. In January. When it was colder than Mars. **Nicole Else-Quest** had a similar leading to take her family to Wisconsin. Um, why?

We heard from beloved Friend **Shannon Zimmerman**, who left for Australia to get a Ph.D. She writes: "I have made it safely to Brisbane and have spent the last week in a hostel while I explored the city and enrolled at University. I found a place to live in a quirky bohemian suburb called the West End that is only a 7 min ferry ride across the river to my campus. I will be moving in today. Thankfully the summer heat has broken so I won't be moving in 95+ degrees.

The Campus is beautiful and I have encountered lots of interesting Australian wildlife as I have explored. There are 3 foot water dragons (massive lizards) who will come sun themselves next to you if you sit near the lake, territorial brush turkeys (a lot like American turkeys but black and red) which will chase you if they think you are getting too close to their nests, and Ibis's (mini cranes with long curved beaks) which will snatch your lunch right out of your hand if you are not paying attention. There are also wild parrots that live in most of the trees.

Both of my advisors seem great and I am looking forward to working with them. I have gotten set up at university and now have a desk and a key. I guess I just need to figure out what I actually have to do to get the PhD. I see a lot of reading in my future."

The **Peace & Social Concerns Committee**, following a leading of **Jean-Louis (Peta) Ikambana** at AFSC-DC, managed to pull together a well-received event last month on Race, Violence, and Policing. This included a live-streaming of AFSC's national conference, a fantastic simple meal created by **Elaine Wilson, Beth Cogswell, Emilie Schmeidler, Meg Greene**, and me, and an interesting panel moderated by our own **Steve Coleman**. Peta talked former ACLU lawyer Johnny Barnes into coming. **Susan Meehan** invited a couple of members of the Police Complaint Board (although the police themselves declined the invitation), and **Josh Wilson** brought community activist Janey Boyd. The event was well attended by Quakers and others from many parts of the city, and generated a lot of buzz. Peace & Social Concerns plans to stay focused on this issue; please join them if you're interested. Contact **Mike Duvall** at moduvall@gmail.com

Meanwhile, **David Etheridge's** new book group, studying Debbie Irving's book [Waking Up White](#), got off to a vigorous start. If you're looking for a more personal place to do some intentional reflection around your own attitudes towards race, this may be just for you. Contact David at david.etheridge@verizon.net

We are holding **Beth Cogswell** in the Light, as she deals with her mother's illness. We are also holding **Al Scott** in the Light, as he copes with his medical condition.

Many thanks to **Emilie Schmeidler** and other Fibre Party artists for producing homemade caps for kids. Former member **Cynthia Terrell** is taking these to the shelters in D.C. which house children, to help the kids stay warm this winter. She writes on MLK Day: "Feeling grateful for the bounty of hand-knitted hats from Friends Meeting of Washington Friends - a fitting way to celebrate MLK."

Virginia Avanesyan, who has done such an incredible job as our Youth Programs Coordinator, will be stepping down from that role in the summer, just because she is starting some stupid full-time job with actual benefits and a decent salary. Go figure. She thinks there are many in the FMW community with the skills and knowledge to take on the



Coordinator position. Is she talking about you? If so, please consider applying for the position, and write to **Kim Acquaviva** at kdacqua@gmail.com

Attender **David Shive** has run across a series of letters the late, great **Voltaire** wrote concerning the Quakers. We are leaning on him to provide a translation. He claims they're delightful.

In the "Brother, can you spare a Euro?" department, the eager and creative **First Day School students** held a successful Coin-i-val last month to collect spare change in support of our ongoing Capital Campaign. First, they toured the FMW campus, counting all of their stairs and imagining the difficulties of negotiating our spaces

from a wheelchair. **Janet Parker** spoke with them about her wheelchair experience (and how they might best interact with her service dog, **Chocolate Delight**). Then the kids brainstormed different games they could conduct that would help F/friends part from their coins—and put them into practice. We have no tally yet, but are already feeling the love.

Here it comes: the **Ministry & Worship** committee will soon be gathering information for our annual **Spiritual State of the Meeting report**. This year, the committee will make a two-pronged effort—one of them a very quick online survey, and the other a set of in-depth focus groups examining how we as individuals and as a corporate meeting are moving spiritually. These yearly reflections are useful to us as a Meeting, but also useful to us as individuals as we pursue a more self-reflective path. Your input is needed. For more information, contact **Blair Forlaw** at bforlaw@aol.com

Here it comes, part deux: At the **February Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business**, we will be looking at the long-anticipated **child safety and welcoming guidelines**. Many committees and individuals have provided input to shape these guidelines; now is the time for the Meeting for Business to hold them in the Light and consider way forward.

Here it comes, part 3: **Finance & Stewardship** is putting together the **FY2015/16 budget**. They are being really polite about nudging clerks to get them numbers. You want money for your committee next year? Now's the time to say so.

And also: Beloved Friend **Kevin Camp** is organizing a "friendly sixes" program to put folks together in groups of six for the sole purpose of eating dinner and getting to know one another. How devious is that? He hopes to pair up older and younger friends in these groups; meanwhile, Virginia Avanesyan is organizing something similar for groups of parents to get to know and support one another. This could lead to...community. Thanks, Kevin. If you want to get in on one of these, contact him at cabaretic@gmail.com

After more than 20 years of good work, our talented cleaning crew is retiring. Many thanks to **Alice and Bill Kelly and their assistant, Mr. Price**.

