

# January 2013 Newsletter

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## FRIENDS MEETING OF WASHINGTON

### ORDER OF WORSHIP

#### MONTHLY MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH A CONCERN FOR BUSINESS

**December 9, 2012**

**12/12.1 Opening** The Meeting opened at 12:15 pm with a period of silent worship. David Etheridge served as Clerk, Meg Greene as Alternate Clerk, and Debby Churchman as Recording Clerk. The clerks read Advices, Queries and Voices concerning Nurturing Family Life which have been proposed by the Faith and Practice Revision Committee of Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

#### **Advices**

Our Meetings and communities are composed of persons who live in many kinds of home situations. Making a home must embrace with tender regard the needs, abilities and unique contributions of each family member. We sense God's love at work on earth in the eyes of our children, in the loving expression among adults, and in the concern we have for the well-being of all in the Meeting family.

As we strive to create the peaceable kingdom at home we need to be particularly careful about anger and its expression. Stressful situations need to be addressed openly and lovingly. Participation of all family members in discussions and decisions regarding joint family possessions and activities helps children develop judgment not only in their personal decisions and the decision-making process, but also in assessing the worth of those possessions or activities.

Meetings should be aware of stresses encountered by families whose members have special needs because of physical or mental illness, developmental disability, or handicap. These families may require extra loving support and sensitivity to their needs. We need to be mindful of those who live alone, for frequently the Meeting community *is* their family. We need to be aware of circumstances such as illness or unusual stress, in which those living alone may require assistance or companionship.

#### **Queries**

In what ways do you make your home a place of affection where God's presence is felt?

Do you allow time for family worship and spiritual exploration, taking care to include both the very young and very old?

How do you take care that commitments outside the home do not encroach upon the time and loving attention the family needs for its health and well-being?

How does the Meeting support families of all kinds in their attempts to improve communication, family life, and the rearing of children in an atmosphere of love?

Can you keep a sense of humor and avoid taking yourself too seriously?

## **Voices**

In the busy years of home life the family members are upheld and strengthened by their dependence upon God and upon one another.... Homemaking is a Quaker service in its own right. It should be recognized as such and a proper balance preserved, so that other activities— even the claims of Quaker service in other fields—are not allowed to hinder its growth. – New England Yearly Meeting, 1986

A Quaker home seeks to bind its family members together. Such a home cultivates recognition of authority while at the same time allowing each member appropriate freedom to develop fully. Conflict in a family is natural. When lovingly and constructively dealt with, it is an opportunity for growth and sometimes also an affirmation of individual leadings. The natural give-and-take with one's peers begins at home. Learning to handle disagreements in a calm and fair manner prepares the way for solving differences in school, the neighborhood, and the larger society. – Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 2002

Love reaches further than words, and we experience the Spirit long before any words. The family is a precious spiritual community, and we rejoice and are nourished in homes full of friendliness, refreshment, and peace, where God becomes real to those who live there and all who visit. We joyfully acknowledge the sustaining, enriching presence of loving unions among us, and we want the meeting's strength to undergird these covenants. –New York Yearly Meeting, 1998

There is something quite special about relationship with one's grandchildren, perhaps most of all in early childhood, when one slips into the Garden of Eden with them for a spell. I don't even want to analyze what is so happy-making about this two-way relationship, although I constantly dwell upon it as one of the remarkable bonus joys of these later years of life. It is an experience that I have tasted for more than twenty years now, with six very different variations on the same theme. –Ruth Fawell, 1987

**12.12-2 - Welcome of Visitors-** Approximately 37 friends were present. The Meeting welcomed

Associate Member Noura Connor from Washington, D.C., Windy Cooler of Adelphi Friends Meeting, and Debra Rogler from Washington, DC.

**12.12.-3 Clerks' Report** – David Etheridge, Clerk, reported the following:

- a. He asked the Meeting to hold Helen Horton in the Light as she mourns the death of her son-in-law.
- b. Cavan Capps is home and undergoing outpatient physical therapy. He had a corrective procedure done at Washington Hospital Center this past week that supposedly will prevent future strokes like the one he suffered. Cavan and Jean thank everyone for their concern and their prayers.

- c. Grant Thompson informs the Meeting that everyone has received a letter kicking off the capital campaign but should not expect to be contacted immediately. He would like to hear from Friends who would be interested in joining them in their fundraising efforts.
- d. The Shoebox Project will be held next weekend on Saturday and Sunday, starting at 9:00 a.m. A Meeting for Healing will be held on Sat. Dec. 22.
- e. Jim Bell, Clerk of Finance and Stewardship, informs the Meeting that contributions through October are \$13,000 below budget. Fortunately, expenses are also somewhat lower than expected, but we are still projecting a deficit.
- f. Trustees will report next month.
- g. There will be a Christmas Eve shared potluck supper starting at 6:30 and worship at 7:45; it is expected to end by 9:00 pm.

## MAJOR ITEMS

**12.12-4 Order of Worship**– Debby Churchman, Clerk of Ministry & Worship, reported on the committee’s three-month experiment with changing the order of worship.

Ministry and Worship has received a great deal of feedback and has come to unity on three recommendations:

1. The committee recommends that children continue to go to First Day School at 10:30 am and join the Meeting at 11:15, sitting with their parents, and then report upon their activities at rise of Meeting. After the following discussion, Friends APPROVED this proposal.
  - a. Friends raised the possibility of continuing the arrangement as an experiment, with guidance to the children on their behavior
  - b. It was suggested that children stay with their parents and not be permitted to sit alone on the raised benches.
  - c. A Friend suggested that we be more accepting of the children; this is part of including families in our Meeting.
  - d. We welcome children as people like everyone else. How can we support these children in being a part of our Meeting? Let’s make a special effort to welcome children by having the heads of Meeting speak warmly to them.
  - e. A parent spoke of the good experience for children that has emerged from the opportunity to join a gathered Meeting for Worship. Please help us guide the behavior of our children.
2. The committee proposed that everyone who comes to Meeting be welcomed as they arrive, that the Greeter close the interior door to the Meeting Room at roughly 10:30, and that a sign be placed on all the doors saying:

“If you arrive between 10:30 and 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, please be aware that Meeting for Worship is in progress. We welcome you to enter into the silence.”

After the following discussion, Friends APPROVED this proposal.

- a. Friends like this idea very much and also expressed appreciation for the Ministry and Worship Committee's work.
  - b. One Friend expressed concern that people not enter the room when someone is speaking; the sign on the doors can request that people wait until there is silence.
  - c. One Friend suggested having a doorkeeper remain at the door throughout.
  - d. Friends shared the idea that interruptions are in the eye of the mind. There is an important distinction between quiet (in our auditory environment) and silence (from within).
3. The Ministry and Worship Committee will be asking the Property Committee to consider putting carpet on the stairs and in the hall near the door and adding a rocking chair to the Meeting Room. In addition, the Ministry and Worship Committee is asking the Capital Improvements Task Force to consider creating an anteroom for sniffing adults and crying babies.

**12.12-5 Property Committee** – Steve Coleman, co-clerk of the Property Committee, asks that we extend the Property Manager's Contract for the next six months. Ken Orvis has been extremely proactive and added value across the campus. The committee is keen on developing more sustainable systems. We are still playing catch-up on deferred maintenance, safety, making it a more welcoming community. The contract calls for about 27 hours per week. Friends APPROVED.

## MILESTONES

**12.12-6 Membership Committee**– Jean Capps, Co-Clerk of the Membership Committee, presented the following:

1. Second reading of the request for the Transfer into the Meeting of Ken Orvis. Friends APPROVED
2. Second reading of the request for Transfer into the Meeting of Blair Forlaw. Friends APPROVED.
3. Resignation from membership of James Stickler. Friends ACCEPTED.
4. Resignation from membership of James North Ramey. Friends ACCEPTED

Jean asks that Friends let the Meeting know if they have moved or changed contact information, or if they know of others who have moved or changed their contact information.

**12.12-7 Nominating Committee**– Beth Cogswell, Clerk of Nominating, presented the committee's annual report (see attached) as well as a number of nominations. The committee includes Beth, Merry Pearlstein, Ylene Larsen, Arne Paulson, Meg Greene, and Elisabeth Johnson—a very hardworking committee. The committee has discovered that while standing committees often seem full, some of them have many phantom members who don't show up or do the work. They believe that some of the numbers of people required for a committee are inflated. They will be recommending smaller numbers of committee members. In exchange for creating smaller committees, it is their hope to develop lists of people who can serve as resources to the various committees (e.g. serving as Welcomers, etc.). Beth says they would like to develop a list of committees that have a need for extra workers, such as Hospitality workers, Welcomers, etc. These would be workers rather than those who make policy.

The committee suggests that two committees be laid down: the Senior Center Advisory Committee and Ad Hoc Committee for Special Events. Friends APPROVED laying down the Senior Center Advisory Committee. The Nominating Committee has been unable to reach Charmaine Gilbreath to ask about the Ad Hoc Committee for Special Events, which organizes the Christmas Eve gathering as well as other, non-committee-sponsored events at the Meetinghouse. This recommendation will lie over until Friend Charmaine can be consulted.

The committee presented the following:

### RESIGNATIONS

Debby Churchman from the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, the Ministry and Worship Committee and as Recording Clerk for the Meeting. Friends ACCEPTED these resignations.

### NOMINATIONSfor Committee Membership

The committee recommended Joe Izzo (M) for the Membership Committee. Carol Phelps strongly objected to Joe serving on this committee. Friends APPROVED Joe Izzo on Membership. Carol asked that her objection be recorded.

The committee recommended Susan Griffin (M) for the Hospitality Committee for a term through 2015. Friends APPROVED.

The committee recommended Ed Husted (M) for Finance and Stewardship Committee for a term through 2015 Friends approved.

The committee recommended Buck Marks (A) for the Finance and Stewardship Committee for a term through 2015. Friends APPROVED.

The committee recommended Barbara Monahan for Records and Handbook. Barbara is a Quaker and member of another meeting, and cannot switch membership at the present time. A Friend suggested she might want to request Sojourner status. This recommendation is held over for a month, as is our custom when a waiver of the requirement that an appointee be a member of the Meeting is requested.

Friends shared the following remarks regarding the Nominating Committee:

- a. A Friend learned that there are at least three Meeting email lists, and we need to make sure that everyone is getting all the information.
- b. A Friend shared a conversation he had at the Work Day on Saturday that there is a collective wisdom that the Meeting has in clerking skills which should be shared with the Committee of Clerks. Could Nominating provide such assistance? It may also prevent that sense of isolation. Beth says that Nominating Committee is considering asking for quarterly meetings of the Committee of Clerks for greater sharing of information across the Meeting.
- c. Jean Capps, speaking for the Membership Committee, says that committee membership is part of the price that we should be willing to pay as members, because we don't have clergy. She is distressed about the number of members of this Meeting who don't serve on any committees. We have no mechanism for asking all members to serve regularly. She also is distressed that people aren't rotating off of some committees and onto others.
- d. A Young Adult member says he has spoken with other YAFs, many of whom are not yet willing to serve on a committee. He is in support of providing shorter opportunities for service.

e. Beth says she also hopes that older, retired Friends will be led to come back to committee work.

The committee recommended, and the Meeting APPROVED, the following nominations for Clerks for 2013:

OFFICERS OF THE MEETING

Clerk	David Etheridge
Alternate Clerk	Meg Greene

STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance and Stewardship	Jim Bell	
	Healing and Reconciliation Merry Pearlstein	Gray Handley,
Hospitality	Alex Mathews, Frank Weiss	
Library	Michael North	
	Membership Gerri Williams	Jean Meyer Capps,
Nominating	Beth Cogswell	
Peace and Social Concerns	Mark Cannon	
Personal Aid	Janet Dinsmore	
Personnel	Michael Cronin	
Property	Steve Brooks, Steve Coleman	
Records and Handbook	Todd Harvey	
Religious Education	Justin Connor	
Child Safety	Marsha Holliday, Giovanni Sella	
Garden Committee	Mark Haskell	
Mary Jane Simpson	Anne Kendall	
Mary Wolcott-Lucy Foster	Bruce Kellogg	
Educational Fund		
	Capital Improvement Task Force Froemming, Merry Pearlstein	Neil

Hunger and Homelessness Task Force

Steve Brooks, CJ Lewis, co-clerks

Capital Campaign Committee

Grant Thompson

Information Technology Committee

Neil Froemming

## REPORTS

**12.12-8 Marriage and Family Relations Committee**– Susan Griffin, Clerk of Marriage & Family Relations, presented the committee’s annual report (see attached). She says it is a joyful committee, and that they have a need for more members. One of the roles of the committee is to inform the couple that a marriage at FMW means being in a relationship with the Meeting. Two couples were married under the care of the Meeting this year, and another couple from our Meeting married in the manner of Friends with support from the committee.

A Friend thanked Susan for her profound weightiness in taking the committee through some tough times this year.

**12.12-9 Committee of Clerks**– Meg Greene, Alternate Clerk, reported as follows: The committee heard a minute from the Personnel Committee regarding the hiring of an Administrative Secretary and Events Manager. Personnel recommended that the Meeting hire Debby Churchman. The committee of clerks affirmed this recommendation. The Personnel Committee informed the Committee of Clerks that several very well-qualified people applied, and that they were grateful for all who went through the application and interview process.

A Friend thanked Debby for taking on this role.

A Friend asks how long this contract is for. This question will lay over for a month until we can find out the answer from the Personnel Committee.

**12.12-10 School for Friends**– The annual report is attached.

## UPDATES

**12.12-11 Healing & Reconciliation**– Merry Pearlstein presented the results of a recent survey about FMW and Children, Youth and Families (see attached).

Jean Capps asked about members who have left over the Child Sex Offender issue. Merry says that Healing & Reconciliation has reached out to many individuals who have expressed concern about this issue over the past several months.

**12.12-12 Property Committee**– Steve Coleman, Co-Clerk of the Property Committee, reported on the Work Day held yesterday. Ten people came and did a lot of work. Property has also started an Events Taskforce to assist staff with making the campus more welcoming to people wanting to hold weddings and other events here. If you have held a wedding or other event here, please go on Yelp and Wedding Wire and rate our space. This will help increase our presence on the Internet, and may result in increased revenue. We want to bring more people and revenue into the life of the Meeting. We’re upgrading many spaces on the campus.

A Friend suggests that all of the lights in the Meetingroom be lit during Meeting for Worship. Friends who are hard of hearing can’t hear as well in the dark, because they miss information gained by a

certain amount of lip-reading and gestures. Susan Griffin, who organizes Friendly Office Presences, will include this information in their packet.

**12.12-13 Capital Improvements Task Force**– Neil Froemming, Clerk of the CITF, said that they recently received permission to spend \$50,000 in design. The architects have been designing, barraging us with new details about the plan. Their latest design proposes a lower, easier to maintain flat roof in the main lobby. They also suggest that the glass corridor have a simpler flat roof. All of these suggestions are under discernment. The task force is down to four members, and is hoping to pick up two new members.

**12.12-14 Adjournment** With approximately 24 Friends present, the meeting adjourned at 2:03 p.m. to reconvene as way opens on Sunday, January 13, 2012 at noon.

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

### **2012 ANNUAL REPORT**

**December 9, 2012**

The Nominating Committee consists of five very committed, though busy, members. They are Merry Pearlstein, Meg Greene, Arne Paulson, Elizabeth Johnson, Ylene Larson, and myself, Beth Cogswell. Our members are also working on other committees as so many FMW members and attenders are. This does give us a broad picture of the needs of many committees, and serves us well in addressing problems and filling vacancies.

We have responded to committee membership needs as they were presented to us during the year. We also conducted a very successful Committee Fair in October.

This fall, we have conducted surveys of all the committees. We asked about the accomplishments of the committees over the past year. The overwhelming sense Nominating Committee members felt is one of pride, even awe, at the accomplishments of the committees.

We also asked clerks if there were goals that went unmet due to lack of person power or time. In some cases the answers were yes, but mostly the responses were that active members were attempting to meet their goals, despite the burdens placed on few people.

Next we talked about committee membership: how many members were fully committed, how many were sporadically committed, and how many were “phantom” members, on the books, but not participating in the work of the committee. The answers affirmed a suspicion that Nominating Committee had come to, after previous years’ assessments of numbers of committee positions vs. numbers of active FMW members and attenders.

We have determined that the numbers of members suggested in our handbook for committees are inflated. Committees do not need a full cadre of members, in many cases 11-12 members, but instead a group of people who will regularly and reliably attend to the goals and support the activities of the committee, within the committees own, self defined structure. That could mean fewer face to face meetings and some virtual meetings to involve young parents and YAFs. In some cases this could mean a support system of members and attenders who would fill in the ranks for some of the tasks, without being full committee members. Two examples are hospitality workers and new member welcomers.



Therefore, we are looking for committee members that will be active on committees. We are contacting all committee members to determine their ability to commit or recommit to the work of their committee. We are also expressing this goal to nominees so they are well placed and ready to support their committee.

Finally, based on feedback from members, we are recommending laying down of two committees: Senior Center Advisory Committee and the Ad Hoc Committee for Special Events.

If we are able to accomplish this goal then we expect to present to the Meeting for Business a revised numbers of members for each committee.

## **Report from Marriage & Family Relations Committee 2012**

Submitted by Susan Griffin, Clerk

It is hard to imagine more gratifying service than working with couples that are part of Friends Meeting of Washington and wish to commit their lives to each other and connect their lives to our community through Marriage under our care.

During our initial conversations with any couple wishing to be married under our care, we explain the deep meaning of that request.

Our clearness process for marriage or commitment reflects our essential belief about the way in which Friends test the religious call of two persons into a lifelong relationship, as well as our belief about the meaning of spiritual commitment within a faith community. Early Friends were clear that marriage was essentially a religious covenant. They saw this as quite different from marriage as a legal or social relationship; when a choice was necessary, they chose to have their marriages considered illegal rather than modify their religious witness.

So early Friends held the witness that no person had the legal (magistrate) or spiritual (priest) authority to "pronounce" two people married. Marriage was accomplished when a meeting witnessed two people exchanging vows, confirming a call to lifelong commitment.

However, the call to commitment is not limited to two individuals. It involves the meeting as well, since the couple's spiritual leading occurs in the context of a faith community, and is tested in that community as any other leading would be. The question for the couple is, "Are we called to a covenant relationship with each other?" The question for the meeting is, "Are we clear to take this marriage-- this whole relationship--under our care?" (The question is not, "Are we clear to take the wedding or ceremony under our care?") The clarity reached when a meeting takes a marriage under its care is a double clarity--the couple and the meeting.

### A. Marriage

-- From *Grounded in God: Care and Nurture in Friends Meeting*,

Patricia McBee, Ed.

During 2012 our committee has been honored to work with Elizabeth Kendall and Sasan Sabet; Brett McBride and Victor Malychev; and Betsy Bramon and Tom Yonkers—Married in the Manner of Friends in Missouri, with Clearness Committee from FMW—a number of whom attended the wedding

in Missouri. As we end 2012, we have just received another request for Marriage under our care from Danielle Spruance, an attender, and James Sinclair.

Each of the couples have spoken to us about the path that brought them together; their conversations about the families of their birth and the family they wish to form together; the recognition of the challenges ahead; some shared their hopes for children; all have a shared vision for their life together, and a commitment to support each other's individual pursuits. Each couple has shared their joy at finding their life partner.

As many committees do, we are challenged by carving out time from busy lives to commit to this joyful service. This continues to challenge our work. In addition, it is sometimes difficult to convey to the couple the understanding that their commitment for Marriage Under our Care is a commitment to the meeting and ours to them, not simply having a "Quaker Ceremony" and that "clearness" is a process, not a rubber stamp.

Our committee has been saddened and concerned about the divide appearing in our community initiated by the participation in worship by a convicted sex offender and offered a minute to the Business Meeting regarding our wish for reconciliation, understanding, and loving regard for all members and attenders of Friends Meeting of Washington.

#### Minute from Marriage & Family Relations Committee

We recognize our meeting community is unsettled and divided by recent events. It is clear that all of us want the best for each member and attender: children, adults, and all in between. With that as our common ground, how can we do anything but succeed in bringing each of us, and our meeting, to our fullest potential?

Let us all work to let go of blame and judgment, listen to each other with open hearts, and continue to strengthen our spiritual community.

#### **School for Friends Highlights – 2011 - 2012**

school for friends[SfF] sustains its excellence as a nationally accredited preschool offering full and half day educational programs for 52 two-to-four-year-olds, Monday - Friday from 8 am to 6 pm year-round.

SfF is a Quaker school and is a member of the Friends Council on Education. "The School for Friends educational curriculum reflects the Quaker values of cooperation, equality, and nonviolence." [See <http://schoolforfriends.org/>]

#### strategic planning initiative

In November 2010 the Board and the school's Director, Jim Clay, conducted its ninth three-year strategic planning session. In January 2011, the Board adopted five priorities, for implementation by January 2014. School for Friends will begin its next three-year strategic planning cycle with a two-day retreat in the fall of 2013.

The SfF strategic plan has devoted particular attention to three of its 2011-2014 priorities: 1) fundraising; 2) succession planning; 3) planning for expansion. A new succession plan is now in place. Two grants are supporting technical assistance to Director Jim Clay, who is successfully conducting one meeting per month with donors who are able to make gifts in support of SfF expansion.

#### staff and teacher development

Jim Clay has been named to serve on committees of two national educational organizations, the Friends Council on Education [FCE] and the National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC]. In 2012 teacher Makai Kellog went on her second service learning project in the Dominican Republic. In 2012 Jim Clay and two teachers were among the 10,000 attending NAEYC's annual conference held this year in Atlanta; NAEYC has 90,000 members worldwide. Jim attended a gathering at Pendle Hill where 47 Heads of Friends Schools shared a new resource manual on Quakerism in Friends Schools and discussed managing emergencies.

#### board governance

At a Board retreat held in September 2012, the SfF Board discussed changes in practices and governance, including adding a profile for Board members; clarifying procedures for nominations to the Board; and modifying by-laws to allow more Board members.

Director Jim Clay and a few Board members attended three "webinars," sessions of "Trustees U," on governance of Boards, sponsored by the Friends Council on Education.

#### history, operations, philosophy, and affiliations of school for friends

The School for Friends was co-founded in 1981 by members of FMW and neighbors who supported Quaker teaching and education.

SfF has four classrooms for up to fifty-two 2 to 4 year-olds, located at the Church of the Pilgrims, 2201 P St NW, two blocks from FMW. The SfF rents approximately 3400 ft<sup>2</sup> of space for classrooms, offices, indoor activities, meeting rooms, and storage.

More than 50% of the families with children in the School identify themselves a people of color (African American, Latino, Asian American, American Indian). Approximately 20% of students receive financial aid. The School enjoys strong parental involvement and close teacher-parent relationships.

A Quaker school promoting Quaker values, SfF "provides a loving, caring, and supportive educational environment for children." The curriculum reflects the Quaker values of cooperation, equality, and nonviolence.

All children have a moment of silence at circle time, and the pre-kindergarten classroom at Quaker House does so in the FMW Meeting room twice a month. The SfF curriculum for three- and four-year olds includes the Quaker pillar of "service" by having children in all classes complete a community service project.

#### school for friends accreditation and affiliation

SfF is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and has met the naeyc Academy's criteria for high quality early childhood programs. In 2007, School for Friends was awarded accreditation through 2012. Director Jim Clay began preparation for the next cycle of accreditation in the fall of 2011.

SfF is a member of the Friends Council on Education [founded 1931]. The Council celebrates four centuries of Friends education and promotes the theory and practice of Quaker education.

"The Council has 81 member schools in 21 states with 20,600 students, 4,560 faculty and staff and 1,190 trustees/board members. It includes 14 nursery schools, 37 elementary schools, 19 preschools, 10 secondary schools [7-12 and 9-12] and eight boarding schools. Five new schools have applied for membership." [<http://www.friendscouncil.org/>]

School for Friends is also a founding member of Washington, DC-area Friends Schools located in Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

### **Healing & Reconciliation Committee Children, Youth and Families Survey**

In September, the Healing & Reconciliation Committee sent out a survey concerning FMW's relationship with children, youth, and families. About 40 people took the survey, 67% of who have no children currently living in their home. The first two questions were about demographics. Here is a summary of results of the remaining questions:

#### **Question 3. What do you like about this Meeting's relationship with children, youth and families?**

A majority of those commenting were happy about what they saw as a positive relationship between children and families and the Meeting.

A number expressed gratitude for the presence of children at Meeting for Worship and during the coffee hour. One Friend said "I always sit near the entrance so that I may shake the hands of children as they leave." Another spoke about the "life and vitality [children] bring to the Meeting experience" as well as the "sense of hope for the future of FMW." Others spoke with pleasure about the interaction between children and other members of the community. One praised "the care & compassion shown to children by many adults in the Meeting."

Other Friends saw a distance between children and families and other members of the Meeting. One said the active interest in children is limited to a "strong subset of members"; another spoke of the separation families and children feel from the rest of the Meeting. One parent believes the Meeting considers children "a burden" although another Friend finds the Meeting to be "more child-oriented than 10 years ago." Yet another fears that the "renewed health/resurgence of FDS in recent years [may be] illusory and/or waning now. "

#### **Question 4. Are you satisfied with the facilities available to the First Day School program? If not, what changes would you like to make?**

Many praised the recent improvements in the spaces available to the First Day School. One Friend commented that "The Property Committee has done an inspiring job of turning storage spaces into multi-use areas that are welcoming to kids."

Many also had specific suggestions about additional changes to the play area (e.g., a new swing set or play structure and additional landscaping) and to the indoor spaces (e.g., improvements to the Children's Library, redesigned spaces for children, more windows.)

One who praised the new North Room believes that a standard curriculum that can be used by regular teachers and volunteers alike is a critical need.

Several said that FMW's facilities for children "compare favorably" with those at other Friends Meetings.

One Friend called for us to invite School for Friends back to our campus to be part of the First Day School rehabilitation.

### **Question 5. Do you think FMW should commit additional financial resources to the First Day School program?**

Relatively few Friends offered comments on this question. However, of those who did respond, many said they favor appointing an FDS coordinator on a full- or part-time basis.

Some questioned whether the Meeting can afford additional resources. Others said that the Meeting's willingness should depend on the need or they indicated that they have "no opinion."

### **Question 6. Do you think any group at FMW is given priority over any other?**

The great majority do not believe this to be the case.

One Friend found a disregard of families and children that manifests itself both in lack of resources for FDS and in carelessness about policies governing sex offenders.

Others believe that apparent inequities are not intentional but result from the nature of Quaker worship and the committee structure that characterizes Friends Meetings. Two Friends noted that the people who are longstanding members of the community are likely to wield the greatest influence. One said, "Those who have a lot of free time to serve on multiple committees are accorded weight in charting the direction of the Meeting." Another spoke about the effect of our form of worship: "It is quietist and not child friendly, and this is one reason we have so many white hairs...and why FDS throughout Quakerdom struggles."

Another observed, tartly, "I think we generally neglect everyone equally."

### **Question 7. How does our welcome and care towards all ages and activity levels reflect our Quaker values?**

More respondents think that we fail to reflect our Quaker values than think we are successful. However there is wide agreement that the issues of welcome and care are central to our spiritual life as Friends.

Some focus on the need to offer welcome and care to a group they believe is being neglected, like young children.

Many Friends agree that the problem is not that we fail to welcome a particular group. The failure extends to the handicapped and the elderly as well as to children and newcomers. One Friend said we are "insensitive to the needs of most people who do not fit the healthy adult 'norm'." Another worries that in our desire to welcome all, we "tend to do a poor job of really seeing and welcoming those already in our midst."

A fair number think we are doing a good job. One said that "for a small group of busy people, a lot of welcoming happens." Another noted that a Meeting as large as ours faces special challenges: "It takes vision to bring people together to live the community testimony." One hopes that way will open so "we can embrace our testimony of equality."

### **Question 8. If you are a First Day School parent, what volunteer efforts would you like to see offered by the rest of the Meeting?**

Parents offered many suggestions. First and foremost, they would like real help from the Meeting community. This might take the form of volunteers to teach in the First Day School and monitors to assist in watching children during the coffee hour play time. One parent would like the

Meeting to be interested enough in First Day School children to know their names and to "help guide and elder [them] when need be." Another would like all FDS teachers to be non parents and would also like volunteers to devote time and resources to updating the Children's Library. Other suggestions included "help with planning, staffing, and coordination" and sessions for young people led by seasoned Quakers.

Another parent wishes that the Meeting would come to a clearer recognition that FDS is an important part of the Meeting's work and would offer real appreciation to those who carry it out.

Other parents want the Meeting to recognize that child sex offenders are a serious problem that must be acknowledged and dealt with.

**Question 9. If you are not a First Day School parent, what would you be willing to do to support the First Day School?**

Friends were interested in offering help on an occasional basis--for example as substitute teachers or helpers in the effort to refurbish FDS spaces. Some observed that they already contribute time and money to supporting FDS.

**Here end the Minutes and Reports for the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business,**

**December 9, 2012**

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Start the New Year with Peace!** On **Tuesday, January 1**, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm, Peace & Social Concerns will provide an opportunity to explore the **Peace Testimony**, following a curriculum provided by Britain Yearly Meeting. All are welcome.

**GMO-Free Dinner and Discussion**, on **Thursday, January 3**, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, Peace & Social Concerns is supporting this annual dinner of the Organic Consumers' Association. Free. All are welcome. RSVP to Alexis at [alexis@organicconsumers.org](mailto:alexis@organicconsumers.org)

Join women from across BYM as we joyfully explore habits and practices that nourish and enlarge our lives and our communities, at the **BYM Women's Retreat for 2013** at **Skycroft Conference Center in Middletown, Maryland, January 25-27**. The registration deadline for this restorative event is January 4th, 2013. Please register on line at: [www.bymwomensretreat.org](http://www.bymwomensretreat.org).

Friends are invited to a **fund raising luncheon** hosted by the **Mary Jane Simpson Scholarship Committee, in honor of Barbara Nnoka** on **Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup>**. We urge friends to join us at the rise of meeting for a delicious meal. If you would like to contribute food, please contact Bill Strein. We would love to see all of you for fellowship and support of this important cause.

A presentation by FMW Member **Mary Campbell** will be held at William Penn House on **Sunday, January 13**. A potluck starts at 6:30 pm; Mary's talk about her spiritual journey begins around 7:00 pm.

**Inquirer's Class**– On four Monday evenings beginning **January 28** at 7:00 pm, Michael Cronin will convene an Inquirer's Class for those wanting to know more about the faith and practice of the Religious Society of Friends. All are welcome. For more information, contact Michael at [mcronin943@gmail.com](mailto:mcronin943@gmail.com)

**BYM Working Group on Racism** will meet on **January 19** at Bethesda Friends Meeting and begin with a two-hour workshop exploring various types of privilege. For more information, contact David Etheridge at 301.320.3470.

**Quaker LGBTQ Midwinter Meeting**– this national meeting will be gathered over Presidents' Weekend (**February 15 – 18**) at the Bryn Mawr Mountain Conference Center in Honesdale, PA. For more information contact Justin Connor at [justinconnor@gmail.com](mailto:justinconnor@gmail.com)

**Peacemakers Dinner**– The William Penn House will be holding their annual dinner honoring the Peacemakers in our midst on **Sunday, February 24**, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Busboys and Poets, 14<sup>th</sup> and V Streets, NW. Cost is \$50.

### RANDOM HAPPENINGS

The following things happened in December, without most Friends knowing about them. I thought they might be worth sharing.

- A young man stopped by to donate some items and tell us about his reading of George Fox. He came to agree with Friend Fox's position on war, he said, while serving in Iraq. The most important thing, he said, was valuing the silence so that we can hear God.
- A neighbor called wanting to know if the Meeting was going to hold a moment of silence in honor of those killed in Newtown, CT. She said that many churches were holding this moment and then ringing bells for each one killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School. We informed her that, although we have no bells, we have plenty of silence, so come on over. She did so, arriving at the same time as the Kellys, our cleaning staff. We all had about 15 minutes of worship, which ended by holding hands and giving each other tissues because we were all weeping.
- A lone beer turned up the refrigerator, which generated much comment and a number of creative suggestions on how to dispose of it, including a photo which I am not going to print. Numerous Friends turned down the request to remove the beer. Some asked whether it would be better to dispose of the beer or use it, following the principle of not wasting resources. Finally, a Friend who will not be named took it away. She says she'll use it to make bread.
- Lizzie Williams, who has grown up in this Meeting and now does child care on Sundays, developed a beautiful singing tribute to the people of Newtown, CT with her friend, Sita. The tribute went on Youtube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5SwDnbAMcA>) and was almost picked up by ABC News. Lizzie performed this song for the Meeting at the Christmas potluck, to everyone's delight.

- Maurine Moon Wilcoxon, age 92, sent a poem to be read on January 17<sup>th</sup>, which is the 72<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Thomas Kelly's death. Friend Kelly was a Quaker mystic; you may have read his Testament of Devotion. Maurine is a poet who provided the Meeting with a wonderful chuckle on Election Day. Her poem about Thomas Kelly is on the bulletin board in the Assembly Room.
- Hayden Wetzel brought two visiting Russians to see the Meetinghouse on Christmas Eve day, and picked up 10 paperclips to use to hang stockings for a family of five Yemeni's who were coming for Christmas. I shared this resource gladly. Hayden has recently torn through the office files and made them into a thing of order and beauty, and we are all grateful.
- In addition to the four meetings for worship held each week, the Meetinghouse hosted 17 committee meetings, weekly groups for Buddhists and for Muslims, a Spiritual Formation group and a Spiritual Journey group, a called meeting to consider the revised Faith & Practice, a planning meeting for the BYM Women's Retreat, a workday, a meeting for healing, a fibre party, a discussion of Buddha's Brain, a memorial meeting for a Friend from England, a gathering for Democracy for Vietnam on International Human Rights Day, a visit with Jean Smith who is working with AIDS widows and orphans in Kenya, a monthly worship and potluck, a Christmas Eve event, an additional worship on Christmas Day, and the two-day act of extreme generosity known as the Shoebox Project.
- Also, during the month numerous volunteers stopped by to work on historical documents and membership records, and to try to unsnarl the various snarls that happen in the office. Many thanks to Neil for his work on the printers and his ongoing consultation on the website, email, and phone service, to Steve Brooks for crawling under Laurie's desk to figure out why her computer was beeping, to Faith Williams for gently slashing and burning the Children's Library to make it more manageable and for subsequently being able to find the Christmas Carol books for Christmas Eve, to Steve Coleman for inspiring us to deconstruct the office and make it more spacious by eliminating one of the *four* desks, to Judy Hubbard for cleaning the fridge and de-gunking the dishwasher, to Pam Callard for transporting food donations to Martha's Table, to Michael Beer for raising bees and selling honey for the benefit of the Meeting, to Bob Meehan for signing checks and then coming back the next day to sign one more AND for making six zillion loaves of Treasure Bread to sell for the benefit of the Personal Aid Committee, to Heather Carter for carrying—on the bus—four huge bags of donated shoes to Soles2Souls, to Tom Libbert, Frank Weiss and Pam who provided expert hospitality on Christmas Eve, to Ylene Larsen who made hundreds of cookies for the FDS students to decorate, and to individuals too numerous to mention who made the Shoebox Project possible, well-run, and fun.

What will January be like here at FMW?

- Debby