

# FMW Newsletter, January 2018

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## Friends Meeting of Washington

### Minutes

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

December 17, 2017

Meeting for Business opened at 12:25 pm with 19 Friends and attenders present. There were no first time attenders to meeting for worship with a concern for business.

**Query for Worship Sharing:** *What gifts do you bring to the Meeting and to each other? What gifts do you receive?*

### Clerk's Report

#### In Memoriam:

- Long-time member **Donna Hartman** has died after a struggle with Alzheimer's. Donna lived in Moscow, where her husband served as Ambassador during a particularly difficult time in the

Cold War, and later lived in Paris, where she introduced the concept of Simplicity in diplomatic circles. The memorial service will be in February at Sidwell Friends School, details will follow.

- Former attendee **Virginia Harris** died in October. Her daughter reports that the memorial service will be held by Valley Friends where Virginia was a member.

### Community Service Updates:

- **Shoebox Project Update:** Last weekend we managed to fill, wrap, and deliver 1,008 boxes of gifts for vulnerable men, women, and children at the shelters in DC. This is our 25th year of engaging in this activity.
- **Activism Update:** We recently housed and provided meeting space to the Seed Project, a group based on the United Farm Workers that is in town asking Congress to pass a clean version of the Dream Act. A number of people from the Project were arrested as they conducted a peaceful demonstration on Capitol Hill and are now in jail in DC, refusing to leave until the bill's passage is assured. They may be spending the holidays inside. More information will be provided to the Meeting as it becomes available.

## **Major Business**

### Construction Update: Neil Froemming

Overall, things are moving along. Contract negotiation begins in January; we expect to be breaking ground in February. Below are a series of updates on events occurring during the last month:

- Three holly trees have been removed to protect the oak tree, three furnaces have been installed (replacing antiquated compressors). New roof shingles have been installed to be placed underneath new solar panels.
- Permits will be ready for construction, including those required for transportation and water. These are for managing parking, traffic, and stormwater.
- We increased the limit we can borrow on the mortgage to \$3.5 million.
- Engineers have finished our stormwater management plan.
- Request for proposals for contractors to bid on the renovation were sent out to two competing contractors.
- We hired a structural engineer to advise us concerning structural cracking issues in the foundation of Carriage House.
- An arborist will be engaged to oversee plans for the protection of the trees in both the front and side of our property at Decatur Place. A proposal for arborist contractors to bid on this has also gone out.

A member of the Hospitality Committee requested more information about how construction might affect the assembly room space where we gather for coffee and snacks after rise of Meeting on Sunday mornings. Froemming replied that during construction we won't be able to use the assembly room as we do now because during construction, there will be a lack of emergency egress in that space. The kitchen will remain fully available; we will have to be flexible with the use of alternative spaces within the Meeting House for coffee (e.g., the Terrace Room and Decatur Place Room). Fortunately, due to good planning, Decatur Place room improvements were completed in anticipation of providing alternative spaces during full renovation. Because of these constraints, Hospitality Committee will consider if it will need to scale back some of the full aspects of their food offerings after meeting.

#### Capital Campaign: Mary Pearlstein

- The Capital Campaign Committee is currently without a clerk.

#### Nominating Committee: Todd Harvey

- Todd expressed gratitude for the opportunity to interact with and get to know our active community, emphasizing that it is a joy working through and confirming the annual slate of clerks and co-clerks each year. He presented the [attached list](#) of nominees.
- A Friend noted that the FMW Handbook sets out requirements that committee clerks be members of the Meeting rather than attenders. For some committees, the handbook also allows FMW to seek waivers for regular attenders to become clerks or co-clerks, which FMW does routinely. The Friend asked that the Task Force on Committee Structure of the Meeting examine whether the guidance contained in the Handbook needs revision. The Friend's concern is for FMW to formalize its actual practices so they are fully reflected in the handbook. Harvey clarified that the current distinction has been to provide exception to those coming into clerkship versus those returning to clerkship. Friends accepted the report with gratitude.

#### Search Committee: Michael Beer

- Megan Telfair has been nominated for a three year membership on the for Nominating Committee.

#### FCNL Annual report: Elaine Wilson

- Elaine presented the annual report, including impact of recent lobbying, programs, staff updates and more. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.
- The new welcome center is the home of our former member and active peace activist, Betty Morris.
- Friends accepted the report with gratitude.

### Membership Committee: Janet Dinsmore

- Dinsmore provided the second presentation for membership for each of the following three individuals, whose membership was proposed last month. Friends approved membership for each of them:
  - Jesse Finkel (currently stationed at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing)
  - Monique Russell
  - Rashid Darden

### Marriage and Family Relations Committee: Gray Handley

- Handley presented the annual report. A Friend shared gratitude for the anniversary celebration of the Meehan's marriage.
- Friends accepted the report.

### Update on 10:30 Sunday Terrace Room Meeting for Worship: Greg Robb

- Greg Robb, clerk of the Ministry and Worship Committee, provided an update on this meeting, extending an invitation to all friends to attend this worship opportunity. It is currently under the care of G.T. Hunt.
- The meeting was originally established to provide a space for any friend needing to share regular or multiple messages during meeting for worship. It has become a rich, smaller group worship sharing experience; everyone is invited to attend.
- Friends commended the M&W Committee for opening a door to offering a compassionate and grounded place to welcome people who desire more verbal ministry in their worship experience. It seems to offer us a flexible and welcoming way forward, while also protecting those who have felt overwhelmed by regular vocal ministry in the past. It demonstrates that we are actively engaging in these challenges and forging new opportunities for spiritual growth for all our members and attenders.
- One Friend encourages more outreach to individuals to attend and worship with others.
- This Terrace Room Meeting for Worship is experimenting with being ready to receive people who are clearly carrying heavy burdens and who need a place to work through those burdens in a worship setting that will not disturb others.
- A Friend shared that while he had at first felt discomfort with this separate meeting for worship, seeing it as exclusionary, he has had a change of heart, now understanding it as a meeting that has a welcoming space for challenging topics and individuals.

### Update on the Personnel Committee and Property Committee Policy: Merry Perlstein

Perlstein provided an update from information shared at last month's meeting regarding disruptive behavior at Meeting during the week.

- The Property and the Personnel Committee formalized a written policy that directs members and attenders to respect the privacy of groups and individuals renting our space and to refrain from imposing on the time of staff members. Members of the staff are authorized and directed to ask persons violating these policies to leave the Meeting's property. A copy of the policy is attached to these minutes.

Note: A Friend expressed the hope that actions taken by the Meeting would be easily accessible. This will prevent "reinvention of the wheel" if situations that have been dealt with in the past should recur.

Friends APPROVED the minutes.

The regular quarterly meeting of the Committee of Clerks, which is scheduled for December 31 this year, has been cancelled. Enjoy your New Year Celebrations!

The Meeting closed at 1:55 PM with approximately 18 persons in attendance to reconvene as way opens on the second Sunday of the Month, January 15, 2018.

FCNL Report for Friends Meeting of Washington December 2017

Prepared by Elaine S. Wilson

### **Annual Meeting and Lobby Days**

The annual meeting was held November 2 to 5. Speakers included Sister Simone Campbell, the executive director of NETWORK, Congressman Keith Ellison, and C. Wess Daniels, director of Friends Center and Quaker Studies at Guilford College.

Friends from around the country lobbied their Senators and Congresspeople to reject more money for war and cuts to security at home. FMW attender Phil Sedlak from our Peace and Social Concerns Committee attended and lobbied staff of Eleanor Holmes Norton's office.

Phil says,

One lesson learned which rang loud and clear was that approaching and talking with Congressional representatives and their aides, as well as emails to them, DOES count and means something with policy implications.

I also discovered that ALL Congressional members keep a log of visits by constituents and that members of all parties are influenced by NUMBERS of visits and emails by and from constituents.

A third lesson learned was that THOROUGH and blanket coverage (visits to AS MANY members of Congress AS POSSIBLE) paid off synergistically (2+2=5).

A general conclusion that informal discussions with several aides revealed was that the "descending" on their offices by FCNL teams meant that "these people are serious" and want to be taken seriously!

I hope to be there next year and perhaps we can get a larger contingent of FMW attenders and members, especially those who are VA and MD voters.

## **Advocacy Corps**

This past week while serving breakfast to the group of young Dreamers who came and spent the night at the Meetinghouse, I met a young woman named Itzel Perez who is a Dreamer born in Puebla, Mexico, who was organizing with them. She is a member of the FCNL Advocacy Corps in New Jersey, a group that is paid a small monthly stipend to do grassroots organizing in various locales throughout the country. This woman was very impressive, speaking eloquently about her work and her understanding of the systemic roots of racism and the challenges to confronting the causes of war and global warming. Meeting her completely persuaded me that my donations to the capital campaign to support this program are well used. You can read more about the program and find a biography of Itzel Perez at <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/fcnl-joins-partners-speaking-out-for-dreamers-1172>.

## **Staff and Board**

The staff of 46 has a number of new hires; you can read all about them on the website.

As many of you know, David Culp, long-serving Legislative Secretary for Nuclear Disarmament and Pentagon Spending died suddenly last February. I was fortunate to attend the moving memorial meeting hosted by FCNL at which many former program associates and colleagues and several

congresspersons spoke. You can find a link to a memorial page on their website.  
<https://davidculpmemories.wordpress.com/2017/02/10/memories-of-david/>

FCNL has hired a new Legislative Secretary Anthony Weir. While I have not met him, I hear very good things, among them that he brings a longstanding concern for the issue and experience with it to the job.

They are hiring: Currently looking for a Domestic Policy Assistant among other positions.

Our own member Bridget Moix is now the Clerk of the Executive Committee of FCNL, which is a big responsibility. We hope to provide her needed support with a support committee from the Meeting, consisting of Martha Solt, Grant Thompson, and myself.

## **Close of Capital Campaign**

The capital campaign “The World We Seek, Now Is The Time” ended this summer and was a success, exceeding its goal of \$15 million raised over a 5-year period. The campaign was held to fund the new Quaker Welcome Center, The Advocacy Corps, The Friend in Washington Program, and to put the whole lobbying effort on a surer footing. Over 1,500 people made donations to the campaign and over 200 people volunteered to help with the campaign effort.

## **Opening of New Quaker Welcome Center**

The new Quaker Welcome Center has opened at 205 C Street NE, just around the corner from the main building on 2nd St NE. This green building houses a Meeting Space and a conference room on the first floor and two residential floors one of which has an apartment dedicated to housing the Friend in Washington.

The Meeting space is conceived as a place where bipartisan dialogue is especially welcomed. Many events can be hosted that were otherwise difficult for FCNL to manage because of limited space.

One opportunity is Witness Wednesdays. Each Wednesday morning from 9 to 11 am the space will be used for lobby training. Friends from around the country are invited to come and be trained and go across the street to lobby their congressperson. There will also be regular Wednesday evening Silent Reflection from 5:15 to 6 pm. I think this means not quite Worship but close to it!

## **Current Lobbying issues—Contact your Legislator**

RECLAIM act. This is a bipartisan bill that can jumpstart economies in coal mining communities.

Trump administration decision to move the US embassy to Jerusalem.

Tax Bill

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Friends Meeting of Washington

Marriage and Family Relations Committee

Annual Report – 2017

This has been a fairly quiet year for the Marriage and Family Relations Committee. There were five members of the committee, of which three Friends were actively engaged. The committee met approximately four times during the year.

Sarah Radomsky and Sasha Rindisbacher were married under the care of the Meeting following Quaker custom and practice. It was a joyful occasion. FMW also “hosted” (and, in one case, provided a Clearness Committee for) several other marriages and ceremonies of commitment on our Meeting House Campus. In addition, dear Friends Bob and Susan Meagan convened a Spirit and love-filled gathering to celebrate their continuing life together. The Committee also provided a Clearness Committee for a Friend whose marriage was ending.

The Committee updated the list of Friends legally authorized by the District of Columbia Government to sign marriage certificates. The list now includes Friends: James Bell, Deborah Churchman, Jane Edgerton, Susan Griffin, Gray Handley, Elizabeth Pomerleau, and Hayden Wetzel.

On several occasions, the Committee discussed sponsoring and organizing community workshops focused on family relations and life transitions – such as retirement, children entering early adulthood, marriage/partnering, divorce, working in harmony with Quaker values, and negotiating life



after the completion of education. One such workshop, focused on retirement, is being planned for early in 2018 and will feature a Friend who has recently written a book on the subject. While eager to convene such workshops, the Committee found it challenging to find the time to plan them and would welcome others to assist with this as way opens.

As did other FMW Committees, the Committee discussed several issues where the Meeting sought clearness. These included consideration of the draft FMW Harassment Policy, FMW actions on racial awareness, and the Ministry and Worship Committee's efforts to address longstanding concerns about welcoming while also limiting hurtful behavior in Meetings for Worship.

The Committee looks forward to next year with the expectation that it will be asked to assist with more joyful events and challenging issues.

#### Conduct of Friends at Meetinghouse during Business Hours

Friends are reminded that groups renting spaces at FMW for private events expect and are entitled to privacy at their events. Persons interacting with these groups should be limited to Meeting staff, including Event Hosts. Other Meeting members and attenders are expected not to enter those spaces or to engage with guests during those events (responding politely to simple requests such as directions to the restroom being the obvious exception). Friends are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at all times when they are on campus. Any individual who causes a disturbance, particularly when a private event is in session, will be asked to leave.

Only office staff may answer the FMW phone. If the phone rings and no staff is available, the call will go to voicemail and be picked up later by a staff member.

Friends are asked to be considerate of Meeting resources, including staff members' time. Staff members are empowered to limit time spent responding to any individual's needs, as appropriate; if necessary, they are authorized to request that any person demanding excessive attention leave the premises.

Property Committee & Personnel Committee, November 2017

(This ends the Minutes and Reports from Meeting for Business, December 2017)

UPCOMING EVENTS

## January 1:– **FMW Office Closed**

Jan. 3: Help make sandwiches for the **Grate Patrol** to take to our vulnerable neighbors, starting at 5:00 pm. For more information, contact Steve Brooks at [sbrooks@uab.edu](mailto:sbrooks@uab.edu)

Jan. 6: Help make breakfast for our vulnerable neighbors. Convene at 6:15 am at **So Others Might Eat**. For more information, contact Tim Schleicher at [timothy.c.schleicher@gmail.com](mailto:timothy.c.schleicher@gmail.com)

January 10 – **Start the New Year with Discover SSFS, Sandy Spring Friends School (Sandy Spring, MD)** Do you know a family who has been meaning to come and explore all that we have to offer here at Sandy Spring Friends School? Please encourage them to start their New Year by attending our Discover SSFS Information Session and Tour on Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup> from 8:15-11:00am. A Financial Aid Q&A will follow in Scott House. If possible, we request that they [RSVP](#).

January 15: **BYM Camp Enrollment Opens** for returning campers (new campers must wait until February 1). Camps are residential for children ages 9 to 17. Anyone may apply online. Spaces are available first come, first serve so please register as soon as you can if you need a particular session. For details: Jane Megginson (717.481.4870) or [www.bymcamps.org](http://www.bymcamps.org)

January 18: **Windborne Concert, “Singing for Our Lives,”** 6:30 pm in the Meeting Room. This concert is sponsored by a number of groups, including the Peace & Social Concerns Committee. Suggested donation is \$10. <https://youtu.be/a#3s21wgcAE>

## January 20 – 21 – **Junior Young Friends Conference, Herndon Friends Meeting (Herndon, VA)**

Please arrive at 10am with sleeping bag, pad, pillow, change of clothes and toiletries. Please remember that the deadline to register and be guaranteed a slot is one week before the conference (January 5). Any one registering after that date will be placed on a waiting list and may not be able to attend. For more information, contact Jocelyn Dowling, Youth Programs Manager. To register, go to the JYF Registration page on the Yearly Meeting website. ([www.bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/jyfs/jyregister.html](http://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/jyfs/jyregister.html))

January 26 – 28 – **BYM Women’s Retreat, Pearlstone Retreat Center (Reisterstown, MD)** *Leaning into our Light on Gender, Race & Sexuality*. [Registration for the 2018 Women’s Retreat is now open!](#) The Women's Retreat is open to women age 14 and up (14-17 year olds must have a sponsor on-site). The registration includes opportunities for leading a workshop or facilitating worship-sharing. Scholarship support is available and may be requested when you

register. **Registration closes on January 5, 2018.** To register, go to <https://www.bym-rsf.org/events/ymevents/women18.html>.

**January 27:** On **National Holocaust Memorial Day**, we will hold an event from 6:30 to 8:30 pm in the Meeting Room. We are looking for people who would like to voice their experiences, contemplations, and reflections on the Holocaust, or contribute (their own, or one that they relate to) an essay, poem, a music or dance piece to the evening. For more information and to volunteer, please contact Christina Sloat, [christina.m.sloat@gmail.com](mailto:christina.m.sloat@gmail.com)

**February 9 to 11: Dayspring Silent Retreat** The purpose of silent retreat is the deepening of communion with God, with other persons, and with oneself. The point is to “make space for...a time of waiting in silence, in solitude, to hear the voice of the One Who Speaks in everything that is, and who, most of all, speaks in the depths of our own being” (Thomas Merton). The retreat is at Dayspring in Germantown MD, and sharing the warmth of spiritual community in the heart of winter, amid nature’s beauty, is a great blessing! It is a wonderful opportunity for spiritual refreshment. For more info: Jean Christianson at [jschristianson@gmail.com](mailto:jschristianson@gmail.com)

**February 10 – Forum on Fostering Diversity at Quaker Camps, Baltimore Monthly Meeting, Stony Run (Baltimore, MD)** Friends from Baltimore area meetings will be gathering on February 10th for an in-depth discussion of how the BYM Camping Program is working to make racial and economic diversity a lasting reality at our Quaker camps. The main presenter is Dyresha Harris, a Quaker of color and current co-director of Catocin Quaker Camp. Dyresha can speak from her own experience as a young camper. She will also give us a solid understanding of progress made and needs still to be met in accomplishing greater diversity through the STRIDE program. Others with camping program experience over the years are invited to join in sharing what has worked and what needs further work to ensure that our camps expand their mission with effective work towards growing diverse leadership and inclusivity. The evening will start with a 6pm potluck, followed by an open discussion of this arm of BYM that has for many decades been an incubator for young friends’ faith and vibrant commitment to Quakerism. Come with your questions. Please bring something to share at the potluck, if convenient. We will provide the basics. Childcare will be provided, if Martha Barss is notified in advance by Wednesday, February 7th. ([martha.barss@gmail.com](mailto:martha.barss@gmail.com))

**February 16 – 18 – Young Friends Conference, Sandy Spring Friends Meeting (Sandy Spring, MD)**

Young Friends should plan to begin arriving at 7:00 pm on Friday. For information, check the Young Friends website ([www.bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/yfs/yfcon.html](http://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/yfs/yfcon.html)) or contact [Jocelyn Dowling](mailto:Jocelyn Dowling). (301-774-7663) Remember that the deadline to register at the discounted rate and be guaranteed a slot is two weeks before the conference (February 2). Any one registering after that date may be placed on a waiting list.

**February 23 – 25 – Playing in the Light: Godly Play/Faith & Play Training for Quakers**

**Sandy Spring Friends Meeting (Sandy Spring, MD)** This powerful way of being with children can transform your First Day program for children, and nurture your own spiritual life. Learn and practice skills to help children explore the existential limits of their lives through wonder, play, and core stories from the Bible and Quaker faith and practice. The program will begin at 6pm on Friday. For more details and to register, go to <https://goo.gl/forms/pLpW9oKm3v9GR9GS2>.

### **Thinking About Race** – (January 2018) *Tears we Cannot Stop*

Professor and author Michael Eric Dyson, in *Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America* (2017), in preaching mode, addresses the reader directly as “Beloved.” Excerpts from Chapter 5 “Our Own Worst Enemy.”

“Beloved, why is it that every time black folk talk about how poorly the cops treat us you say that we should focus instead on how we slaughter each other in the streets every day? ... You do not bring this up because you’re genuinely concerned. You want to win points in debates. You want to avoid any responsibility for how traumatized our communities are. You want to hide from the horror of cops mowing us down like we’re animals. (p. 143)

“Beloved, what you see happening among us is not best understood as black-on-black crime. Rather it is neighbor-to-neighbor crime. ... You are right, however, about those proportions. Ninety-three percent of black folk who are killed are killed by other black folk. But 84 percent of white folks who are killed are killed by other with folk. ... Where’s the white-on-white crime rhetoric? Where are the rants against white folk ruining white culture with their murderous ways?

“White folk commit the bulk of the crimes in our nation. And, beloved, it might surprise you that white folk commit the most violent crimes too. ... White folk consistently lead all other groups in aggravated assault, larceny, illegal weapons possession, arson, and vandalism. [Other statistics follow.] The white-on-white mayhem is profound, yet no one speaks of it in racial terms.” (pp. 148-149)

*This column is prepared by the BYM Working Group on Racism (WGR) and sent to the designated liaison at each Monthly and Preparative Meeting. The BYM WGR meets most months on the third Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Locations vary to allow access to more Friends. If you would like to attend, on a regular or a drop-in basis, contact clerk David Etheridge, [david.etheridge@verizon.net](mailto:david.etheridge@verizon.net).*

## Announcement from Library Committee

We would like anyone who has read a "Quaker-related" book that has made an impact to submit a review to the Library Committee. We would like to display it on the shelves of our Library on second floor. This would be similar to the "Staff Picks" that you see at commercial bookstores and might point folks to a good read.

## RANDOM HAPPENINGS

We begin the new year with Janus—the Roman god with two faces, one looking forward and the other looking back. In many ways, 2017 seemed egregiously awful, and overly filled with drama and actions that directly or indirectly worked against social justice. But it was also a time when our little Quaker hearts expanded, and we relearned as a community how to step up and do our part. We hosted at least one group of people attending a major protest every single month, Friends. Every. Single. Month. We got good at it, knowing who to ask to stay overnight, who would be willing to donate food, what was needed. And we were blessed by this work, over and over—by the presence of these activists, and by our own willingness to do our part.

Last month, as Christmas approached, we were asked to provide space for a group of Dreamers to plan yet another action in the Senate office buildings, pleading for a clean Dream Act before deportations started kicking in for them. These are people who came to the United States with their parents as young children and grew up here in our community, attended our schools, and are now ready and willing to make a contribution to our society. At this time, the U.S. government has decided to remove all protections and subject them to deportations back to countries they don't remember and where they no longer have any connections. Polls show that the vast majority of voters are in favor of protecting these young people and offering them a clear path to citizenship, but Congress is avoiding giving it to them.

The group met in the Assembly Room. They looked tired, I thought. I put out coffee and granola bars (thanks, Steve Brooks, for those!), and left them alone. Later, I wandered through the room in search of a second cup of coffee for the morning. They were sitting in a circle, going around the room to say their name, whether or not they were documented, and what action they would be willing to take—so they could plan that day's event.

As I walked through, I heard a young woman say her name was \_\_\_\_\_. "I am not documented," she said, 'and I will do whatever it takes.'" I felt like I was in the presence of such courage, *such* courage. It felt holy.

I know it's not much—our Assembly Room, our granola bars—but they needed the space to do their work. And of course, it had no immediate effect. But isn't this what we're called to do, Friends? To bear witness, to provide support, to comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable?

And now we begin a new year, one that is likely to be full of even more change. Our longed-for renovation starts soon. We will need to be flexible and open as we figure out how to meet in the construction zone, and how to provide support to the efforts so dear to our hearts. Way will open.

- Debby