

# FMW Newsletter November 2015

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**Friends Meeting of Washington**

**Minutes**

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

**October 2015**

**Queries**

Do you endeavor to live "in virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars"? Do you work to make your peace testimony a reality in your life and in your world? Do you weigh your day-to-day activities for their effect on peace-keeping, conflict resolution and the elimination of violence? Are you working toward eliminating aggression at all levels, from the personal to the international?

## **Advices**

Friends need to wage peace boldly and positively. The promotion of peaceful methods of conflict resolution, of international exchanges, of peace education and research, of world law and world-wide standards of human rights all are positive ways.

- BYM Faith and Practice

## **Voices**

*Testimony of a Friend who participated in the vigil, inspired and sustained by women, against the cruise missile base at Greenham Common in the 1980s.*

I stood at the fence one night in September, feet rooted to the muddy ground, hands deep in my pockets, watching through the wire that flat ravaged land that is now never dark, never quiet, imagining through the fence a field of bracken and scrub, a field of flowers, a field of corn, a field of children playing. Red police car, blue lights flashing, 'What are you doing, then, love? Not cutting the fence are you?' 'No, just praying at it.' A soldier with a dog walks up and down inside, suspicious, watching me watching him. 'Good evening.' 'Good evening.' I wait, not knowing what I'm waiting for. The kingdoms of the Lord? A hundred yards to my left, women cut the wire, roll away the stone, and walk through into the tomb. No angels greet them; no resurrection yet.

Yet still [we] witness to that possibility, the possibility that something may be accomplished which in our own strength we cannot do. Women waiting, watching, just being there, behaving as if peace were possible, living our dream of the future now. 'Why do you come here? Why do you keep coming?' – a soldier near Emerald camp on an earlier visit – 'It's no use, there's nothing you can do, what do you women think you can do by coming here? The missiles are here, you won't change anything, why do you come?' We come to watch, we come to witness, we come with our hands full of ribbon and wool, flowers and photos of loved ones, hands full of poems and statements and prayers, hands full of hope and the knowledge that such hope is impossible to rational minds. I come to be with the women who live here, the dykes, the dropouts, the mothers and grandmothers, angels with countenances like lightning, I come to talk with the police, the soldiers, men who might be gardeners standing by the tomb; I come to meet the Christ in them.

- A member of the Quaker Women's Group, 1986, from Quaker Faith and Practice, Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain

### **2015/10-1 Welcome of Visitors**

Meeting for Business opened at 12:15 pm with 25 persons present.

### **2015/10-2 Clerk's report**

The clerk shared the various steps the Meeting is taking to address safety and welcoming in the Meeting. A number of specific suggestions have come from recent meetings and she is willing to discuss them with anyone interested. We have changed the security code on the door and the online code for downloading the Meeting directory. A number of us will be taking a course on community pastoral care and challenges. The first steps of considering extending our policy on harassment beyond that of an employee policy have begun.

The clerk reported that she attended Bethesda Monthly Meeting's most recent meeting for business to listen to some of their discernment of how to respond to the anticipated consolidated campus in Washington, DC for Sidwell Friends School. As most Friends are aware, Bethesda MM shares space at the Sidwell Friends School in Bethesda at this time. Bethesda MM wants to discuss their options with us as a community because at least one of the options they are considering—moving into the District with Sidwell Friends School—could have a fairly direct impact on our community.

The clerk read a number of notes from groups which have used our space in recent months. The Meeting was glad to hear that our staff and volunteers have made so many feel welcome in our space.

Dan Dozier, alternate clerk, reported on the continuing issue in relation of the Meeting community and Kevin Camp. Although the legal case has been dismissed with prejudice (meaning it cannot be brought again) he continues to contact people in our community and we must decide as individuals how to respond to the emails—except: If

emails have any kind of a threatening element our attorney, David Kendall requests that they be forwarded to him with a copy to the alternate clerk.

## **Major items**

### ***2015/10-3 Safety and Welcoming Guidelines***

Kim Acquaviva, a member of the ad hoc group shepherding this process, presented the Guidelines as they were last presented to the Meeting last month. She suggested that as this represents the continuing revelation of many people in our community that we leave additional tweaking to the future. We should be proud of having reached this point.

The Safety and Welcoming Guidelines were APPROVED.

### ***2015/10-4 Membership***

Judy Hubbard a member of the Committee presented a Request for Transfer by Marika M. Cutler, transferring to Bethesda Friends Meeting.

The request for transfer was ACCEPTED.

Judy also presented the following requests for membership:

Anita Drever-Orvis for the second reading.

The Meeting APPROVED Anita Drever-Orvis's membership.

Marcia Reecer presented Neil Robert Froemming's application for the first reading. Neil wrote that he has been attending since 1996 but during that time the Meeting seems to require members to hold a belief in a supreme being—a belief about which he remains confused. But he has seen the spirit of “Love is the first motion” and in spite of his joy in being an “other” he chooses to apply. He has a concern about membership requirements, which he feels create division.

Janet Dinsmore presented Scott Breeze's application for the first reading. Scott wrote that conviction came to him in Federal prison where he had been for many years and where he had read and studied Quaker history and beliefs. He established the first Quaker worship group in the Marianna Prison in Florida in spite of opposition from prison chaplains. The worship group continues today worshiping with the Tallahassee Friends Meeting. He reminded us of his coming to the Meeting in 2011 and the controversy around it. After much consultation with Lloyd Lee Wilson he adopted the plain life that some Friends continue today which is both a reminder to him of his commitments and an opportunity to share them with other. He noted that the Light that evil may try to smother continues to burn within us even if it is only an ember so that all may be redeemed.

These two requests for membership will lie over for one month as is our custom.

**2015/10-5 Nominating Committee** - Harry Massey, clerk of the Nominating Committee, presented the following nomination:

Steve Brooks (Member) Personal Aid Committee until 2017.

The Meeting APPROVED the nomination.

Harry Massey thanked everyone who participated in the Committee Fair. It resulted in at least eight suggestions for committee members.

**2015/10-6 Committee of Clerks** – Dan Dozier, Alternate Clerk, reported for the Committee of Clerks about the request for the Conveners of Young Adult Friends to be included in the Committee of Clerks.

A Friend noted that Young Adult Friends are not mentioned in the Handbook as anything more than an interest group. The Committee of clerks is involved in personnel matters and now meets quarterly. They should be mentioned more formally in the handbook.

Another Friend suggested that the e-mailing lists should be merged.

Another Friend asked to clarify if both co-conveners will be appointed to the committee of clerks. Both will. She also noted that many Young Adult Friends members are not members of the Meeting, which is generally a requirement for clerks.

It was noted that some clerks are not members as they have been waived in their position.

Another Friend noted that some clerks, as non-standing committee clerks, have been added in spite of the fact that the handbook states the Committee of Clerks cannot co-op members.

Another Friend noted as a co-opted member she does not participate in official business but did participate in other discussions.

We need to find ways to help us feel that we are one community.

A Friend suggested that the Young Adult Friends should be consulted as to whether the e-list serves should be merged. Another Friend noted that one of the impetuses to reaching out to Young Adult Friends was our realization that communication between

Young Adult Friends and the Meeting at large was not strong enough for issues to be raised in a timely manner.

It was suggested that status of the Young Adult Friends should be clarified in the handbook and that we should potentially remove the non-coopting language from the handbook, should consider Young Adult Friends inclusion in the Committee of Clerks, and should communicate with Young Adult Friends about the potential merger of the lists.

A Friend noted this is one of the many occasions where we are looking at ourselves as the “Meeting” and the “other” which is troubling.

Another Friend expressed that these are different issues and he expressed his strong concern that we were confusing the issues.

Another Friend suggested that the co-conveners be allowed to meet with the Committee of Clerks while agreeing not to participate in any official matters until the Young Adult Friends and the Committee of Clerks status are clarified.

The Meeting APPROVED inviting the conveners of the Young Adult Friends to future Committee of Clerks meetings with the understanding that they will not participate in official matters until everything is clarified. The Handbook Committee will bring to the meeting language after working with the Committee of Clerks and Young Adult Friends.

### ***2015/10-7 Finance & Stewardship annual report***

Byron Sandford, clerk of Finance and Stewardship Committee, gave the committee’s annual report, a copy of which is attached hereto. He noted that this is the committee that provides leadership to our community’s fundraising, budgeting and stewardship. The committee has been using the newsletter as a forum to make clear all of the things the finances of the Meeting supports. The Committee endeavors to make sure all of our finances are as transparent as is practicable. He noted that our primary sources of income are rental income and contributions with a strong supporting role played by our investments. Although the Meeting managed to raise \$24,000 more than expenses last fiscal year, the committee is cognoscente of the upcoming costs of the remodel and

therefore put \$12,000 in the reserves and \$12,000 towards the Capital Campaign to reduce our cost of borrowing for the construction—something the Finance and Stewardship Committee feels is important to the long range health of the Meeting's finances.

He reminded us that if we value our spiritual home and life as much as our secular life each of us should make sure we are doing our share to support it financially as well as with our time. He asked if we were evaluating our giving in relation to inflation.

A Friend asked if the committee asked the tenants and short-term users to contribute to the building fund. A member of the capital campaign fund stated that as way opens some have been approached but noted that many of these are nonprofits with tight budgets and must use their money for specific things of which our building is probably not one. Another Friend recommended that we make this a relationship building opportunity with the people who come here and the people in the neighborhood. Perhaps we should consider the people in the organizations rather than the organizations themselves.

The Meeting ACCEPTED the report.

### ***2015/10-8 Ministry and Worship***

Blair Forlaw, clerk of Ministry and Worship, gave the committee's annual report, a copy of which is attached hereto. They noted that they worked particularly well together, sharing in accordance with their individual gifts, talents and interests, with no one left out. They felt they have accomplished a lot.

In particular they noted that they had revised the method for gathering information for the annual Spiritual State of Meeting report which they felt reached a broader number of Friends. They noted the tensions of our great diversity, which are also opportunities for growth. One of the most troubling findings was that 46% of the responders—who were among the most active in the meeting—do not contribute financially to the meeting. They led Friends in gatherings of Friends sharing their Spiritual Journeys, which have been well received. They are in the process of revising and evaluating the opening script to Meeting for Worship, looking for ways to assure that worship will be spirit lead. And they are looking at providing more activities and readings for those new to Friends on the webpage and at the Meeting.



**2015/10-9** The committee met with the two Quaker Chaplains who are at local colleges who stated that others are needed. The committee noted that they have drafted a more formal process for the approval of Quaker Chaplains to serve at area colleges and universities. Currently two Quaker chaplains have made themselves available to students at local colleges to help make the link with the Meeting and the committee encourages more. The process that they suggested is that prospective chaplains make themselves known to the committee which will appoint a clearness committee perhaps with Religious Education committee members as well and once clearness is found the committee could approve it and could bring it to the meeting for approval.

A Friend stated that it should come to Meeting for Business for final approval.

Friends APPROVED this process with the addition of bringing it to the Meeting for Business for approval.

The Ministry and Worship Committee is to work with the Handbook committee to draft the process and bring it to the meeting for business to be included in the handbook.

**2015/10-10** After several meetings for listening the lack of safe process for bringing harassment concerns to the Meeting's attention has become apparent. The committee has agreed to gather sample anti-harassment policies, to share with whatever entity will be overseeing the drafting of a new policy that goes beyond the staff anti-harassment policy.

The committee commends and encourages Young Adult Friends in their plans to convene a meeting on inclusion in the Meeting in the coming months.

The committee recommends and encourages FMW to convene a time-limited "Futures Taskforce" that will take a thorough and careful look at our current structures, level of inclusion and participation and policies, and help the Meeting address the question: Is what we now have working for us, and are we prepared for the realities of the 21st Century?

The Meeting ACCEPTED the report. The committee was asked to bring more detail on the Futures Taskforce.

### **2015/10-11 Search Committee**

Meg Greene, Clerk, brought forward the nominations of Steve Coleman and Arne Paulson to be on the Search Committee, which has the task of nominating the members and clerk of the Nominating Committee. They serve for one-year terms.

The Meeting APPROVED the nominations.

### **2015/10-12 Hospitality annual report**

Susan Griffin, clerk of Hospitality Committee, gave the committee's annual report, a copy of which is attached hereto. Community grows when we can offer a sense of home to others while remembering what it is to be a newcomer ourselves. Susan reminded us of the value of the after Meeting fellowship and other times and thanked all of the many hands beyond the committee who contribute to making the Meeting a welcoming place.

Kate Steger, a member of Hospitality Committee, noted that we need more, different people to contribute to soups and wanted to ask Young Adult Friends to provide it once in a while. Please do not bring plastic forks and knives to the Meeting.

The Meeting ACCEPTED the report.

### **2015/10-13 Milestones**

The death of Member William Lee was reported. The clerk requested for member of FMW community who knew him to draft a memorial minute. Clerks will inquire for someone who knew him to draft the minute.

## **Other business**

### **2015/10-14 Friends United Meeting**

J.E. McNeil, Meeting Liaison to Friends United Meeting, reported that FUM has begun a new collaborative project between Friends Church Peace Team (FCPT), the FUM Africa Ministries Office and the AVP Kenya Trust. This 18-month project, which is funded by the American Friends Service Committee's "Kenya Peaceful Youth and Communities Programme," will introduce Help Increase the Peace Project (HIPP) into Kenyan secondary schools. HIPP is the youth version of Alternatives to Violence (AVP), and it will function as an extra-curricular "peace club" to complement the classroom-based peace curriculum developed several years ago by FUM. The AFSC funding will also support FCPT to work with Samburu Friends Mission in developing a peace program in the embattled Baragoi region of Samburu County.

She also noted that Friend Jean Smith of Kiamosi Friends Meeting in Kenya will be at the Meeting on December 20<sup>th</sup> again this year to provide us with the opportunity to help support Aids Widows in Kenya through purchases of the bags, toys, jewelry and clothing they create.

The minutes were approved as improved.

The meeting at 2:35 pm with 15 Friends present to reconvene on November 8, 2015 as way opens.

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## **Friends Meeting of Washington Guidelines for Safety and Welcoming of Individuals Who Raise Concerns about the Safety of Children**

*September 2015*

## **Background**

Quakers are convinced that there is that of God, or something of the Divine Spirit or Light, in everyone. This belief is manifested in the testimonies of Integrity, Equality, Community, Simplicity, and Peace, which generally lead us to welcome Friends and strangers to our Meeting community and worship without further inquiry. In the case of persons who may be perceived to pose a threat to our children, we need to find ways to know them better and understand their situations well enough to manage possible dangers and our own fears and concerns.

These guidelines grow out of established Quaker structures and practices for corporate oversight and discernment that can be adapted to maintain the security of our children and honor our values as a Religious Society of Friends community. They complement the Child Safety Policy adopted by the Meeting at our Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business in October 2013. The guiding principle of that policy is ***that no child will be alone with an adult who is not his or her parent or guardian while he or she is on Meeting property or engaged in a Meeting activity.***

## **Guidelines**

Individuals of concern may fall along a broad spectrum ranging from those who have been convicted and ultimately released to the community to those whose actions raise concerns for the first time. These guidelines are intended to address all such concerns as they become known to us. When community members become aware of individuals of concern, they are expected to contact the Clerks of the Meeting or the Clerk of the Child Safety Committee. The Clerks and Committee of Clerks will respond promptly to each case by assessing the reasonableness of the concern and, if appropriate, by identifying a Safety and Welcoming Discernment Group (“SWDG”) of 4 or more members. This ad hoc group should include, but not be limited to, members of the Child Safety, Religious Education, Personal Aid, and Healing & Reconciliation Committees. The Committee of Clerks will select individuals with an eye toward the Meeting’s dual concerns for safety and welcoming. The Committee of Clerks and SWDG members must agree to honor and protect the individuals’ privacy within the confines of the law.

The SWDG will meet with the individual to explore his or her needs and the community’s expectations. The SWDG is responsible for getting to know the individual well enough to evaluate concerns raised by his or her participation in the FMW community, form a plan for managing those concerns, and assist in putting that plan into effect. It will inquire into details of the individual’s history of child sexual abuse, views regarding that history, treatment experience, legal status and aspirations for his or her role and level of participation in the FMW community. During the discernment process, the individual may attend Meeting events when children are present if escorted by a member of the SWDG or another responsible adult in the FMW community appointed by the SWDG.

The SWDG will work with the individual to decide on the terms of that person's participation in FMW activities. Those terms may range from total exclusion from the community to unrestricted inclusion under the terms of the current Child Safety Policy. Most such individuals will be expected to agree to avoid direct interaction with children at the Meeting and refrain from volunteering for or participating in First Day School activities. The process and the agreement will be tailored to the individual and may include specific procedures (e.g., identifying a subset of the SWDG to serve as a support group for the individual, having an escort at meeting events at which children are expected to be present, and so on). The procedures and limits may be adjusted or terminated with the mutual agreement of the SWDG and the individual. If the SWDG is unable to achieve agreement with or cooperation from the individual concerning procedures and limits, it may, in consultation with the Clerk, ask the Meeting to take steps outside of this process to protect the community, including restricting the individual's participation in Meeting activities.

If desired by the individual or recommended by the SWDG to protect the children of the Meeting and as protection from unwarranted accusation, members of a support group will provide an escort, or the SWDG will identify other responsible adults from the FMW community, to accompany the individual at Meeting events at which children are expected to be present. All decisions of the SWDG will be recorded in writing and reported to the Committee of Clerks and the Trustees of Friends Meeting of Washington.

### **Community Responsibilities**

Members and Attenders share responsibility for ensuring the safety of our children and welcoming newcomers to our community. Parents are asked to talk with their children about child sexual abuse, safety and safe conduct at Meeting activities. The Child Safety Committee will provide assistance to any parents who seek support on how to speak with their children about this issue. Affirming our belief in the Light in each individual, the community invites and expects individuals who may have difficulty managing feelings of sexual attraction to children to reach out to a member of the Committee of Clerks. Each of us is called upon to work in concert to make our community the joyous, safe and welcoming haven we want it to be.

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### **Finance and Stewardship Annual Report, September 2015**

**The Finance & Stewardship Committee** supports the Meeting through fund raising, accounts management, budgeting, support and interaction with committees and ad hoc groups, and longer-term planning. It attempts to translate into dollars and cents the spirit of the Meeting's temporal activities and to mobilize the needed funding.

The Committee identifies the general operating costs, committee projected expenses, and appropriate support for organizations and projects beyond the Meeting that are in keeping with Meeting policies and leadings. Annually, the Committee recommends to Meeting for Business an operating budget to meet these needs.

Through a periodic newsletter, we try to highlight the activities and programs of the meeting. We had a particularly favorable response to our last newsletter in June of \$6,500 in additional contributions of \$5,500 for operations and \$1,000 for the capital campaign. In addition, the newsletter resulted in two persons signing up for making automatic monthly contributions.

Our two major sources of income are rental income and contributions, which were both around \$220,000 in fiscal year 2015. The third source of income was \$80,000 from our investments with Friends Fiduciary.

Our income last year was \$24,000 greater than expenses with approximately \$12,000 allocated to property reserves and \$12,000 allocated to the capital campaign. One of the main reasons for the favorable situation was the result of Members of FMW working closely with the D.C. tax department to greatly reduce our property tax. Before negotiation, the tax was scheduled to be \$15,000 but the actual tax was only \$3,000.

The Committee has worked closely with the Trustees and other committees of the meeting to develop a sound approach to finance the planned construction. The construction will be paid for through a combination of investment income, Capital Campaign contributions, and a mortgage.

Do we value our spiritual home and life as much as we do our secular world: our automobile(s), our internet and television? Every year, we each should evaluate our annual giving and ask ourselves: Has our giving to the Meeting kept pace with inflation? Do we have a Cost of Living Index for our charitable giving? Has our giving increased as our personal income has increased? If we are not giving to Meeting, have we considered giving this year? And if not why not?

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## Ministry and Worship Committee, Annual Report to Friends Meeting of Washington

### 2015

During 2015, members of Ministry and Worship were: Debby Churchman, Blair Forlaw, Marsha Holliday, Michael Huffington, Marcia Reecer, Greg Robb, Bertie Rossert, Gene Throwe, and Hayden Wetzel.

Members of Ministry and Worship worked together well, with all members engaged in accordance with her / his gifts, talents, interests, and availability. No one sat on the sidelines. Our 2015 accomplishments are summarized below.

Early in the year, we redesigned the annual process for gathering Meeting input into **the Spiritual State of the Meeting** report. We implemented the new process through an online survey that was completed by 75 Friends and through six focus groups. We evaluated and considered the findings and presented them to the Meeting in a report, which was received in March and approved in April. The report was forwarded to Baltimore Yearly Meeting after it was approved by FMW.

We organized and convened ten one-hour gatherings in which Friends shared their **Spiritual Journeys**. Two Friends presented at each of the programs, which were held from 9:15 am until 10:15 am on the fourth Sunday of every month except July and December. The Spiritual Journeys series has been well received by FMW, and will be continued in 2016.

To address concerns raised about the quality of vocal ministry, we reworked the **recommended opening script** that is used by those sitting Head of Meeting during 10:30 am worship in the main Meeting room. The revised script includes a selection of advices that remind Friends of the importance of Spirit-led listening and ministry. Use of these advices will be evaluated at the end of 2015. We also revised the schedule for sitting HOM to more equitably distribute responsibilities.

We initiated a response to the need for more active welcoming of newcomers and guests with an initiative called “**Welcome to the Quaker Experience.**” This initiative

includes activities and printed materials under the headings Greeting, Learning, and Journeying. The activities and materials were formally introduced to the Meeting in September and October.

We met with our current **Quaker Chaplains** to hear about the services they are providing to students at American, George Washington, and Georgetown Universities. We agreed to repeat this meeting annually. We drafted a proposed process that will enable the Meeting to approve future chaplains to serve at other colleges and universities in the area. Recommendations will be presented to the Meeting in October.

We supported FMW's role in organizing and providing a Quaker presence at **2015 Pride** events.

We worked with our Meeting clerks and members of the Healing and Reconciliation committee to develop a process for listening to those in our community who were hurt and frightened by inappropriate and unwelcome advances from a former member of the Meeting. We convened and clerked **two Meetings for Listening** for this purpose. We will assist the Meeting in following up to the recommendations from these Meetings, so that those who have been hurt may heal and such occurrences may be prevented in the future.

- *Respectfully submitted to Meeting for Business, October 11, 2015.*

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## **Hospitality Committee Annual Report—a Welcoming Presence**

When I first started coming to Friends Meeting of Washington, I was struck by two things that were particularly different from my experience growing up in a Catholic parish: the sacred silence, and post worship hospitality. Both provided a space to be together, one for gathered worship and the other for making connection and community.

We have quite a dedicated and enthusiastic committee, and, happily, a crew of mighty helpers who volunteer on a regular basis, and pitch in when asked!

- Pam Callard
- Kathy Lipp Farr
- Susan Griffin



- Gregory Robb
- Jorge Sanchez
- Kate Steger

Bill Strein, Clerk Emeritus, volunteers regularly for the third Sunday and is a sturdy replacement for the committee members who have a schedule conflict. Bill was also the impetus behind transforming our modus operandi from get-the-job-done-well, which we still do!, to WELCOME. This means that we organize contributions each week, set-up, clean-up, and when other parts of our meeting family, such as First Day School, want to join us in the kitchen, we enjoy and accommodate their presence in the kitchen.

Patty Murphy is an experienced kitchen-hand who responds readily to the committee's entreaties for help and will often just poke her head in kitchen and see if we look bedraggled. Tom Libbert is another veteran from the committee who never fails to provide the extra set of arms/hands to get ready or clean up.

Kate Steger, Co-Clerk, is the absolutely magnificent at organizing, cleaning, and, my favorite—throwing stuff away!!!I cannot say enough about Pam, Kathy, Greg and Jorge who have all signed up for regular service and provide hospitality cheerfully and efficiently. We all have provided good suggestions about improving and enhancing our service and, though it took a few tries, we now have a percolator that works!

GT Hunt and Bruce Kellogg regularly make coffee for the early crowd and Alex Matthews pitches in with enthusiasm, composts our coffee grounds, and washes tablecloths and dish towels!

Of course, it would not be Hospitality witho the remarkable offerings provided—Kate's help with Souper Sunday with her Partner-in-Arms Jorge! The Fruit & Nut loaf—our perennial favorite. ALL OF THOSE COOKIES From Susan Bien! Peanut butter! Trail mix! Cheese!

Did I mention COOKIES?

We would love a couple of extra regular hands-on-deck so if you want to get your hands dirty in the service of others and get first samples of all of the treats I described, volunteer for Hospitality.

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*(This ends the Minutes and Reports for the October 2015 Meeting for Business)*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct. 30 – Nov. 1: Inquirers' Weekend, Pendle Hill. Ground yourself in the basics of Quaker faith and practice with Quaker historian Emma Lapsansky-Werner and Quaker publisher Chris Mohr. Experience worship, discussion, sharing, and questions with fellow seekers and experienced Quaker leaders. [www.pendlehill.org](http://www.pendlehill.org)

Nov. 1: William Penn House Potluck & Quaker Dialogue, 6:30 pm. **David Connell** will speak on **Mindfulness, Stress Management and Prison Ministry**. David Connell has been teaching a stress management class at the Arlington County Jail as part of the Offender AID and Restoration (OAR) program. The underlying principle of the stress management class is that we should all have a choice about how we are going to react to any situation or in what mood we are in. Many of us are not able to exercise this choice because we do not have an accurate understanding of how our mind and ego work. David will talk about the educational and experiential curriculum that helps participants understand stress and stressors, and how the mind, body and ego function and interact together because this is where the rubber hits the road when it comes to understanding and changing our mental and physical response to stress. Concurrent with this work until June, 2015, David was the Service Learning Coordinator at Sidwell Friends School as well as a vital link to Washington/William Penn Quaker Workcamps

Nov. 7-8: JYF Con, at location TBA. Contact Jossie Dowling, [YouthPrograms@bym-rsf.org](mailto:YouthPrograms@bym-rsf.org), 301-774-7663

Nov. 12-13: FCNL's Quaker Public Policy Institute and Lobby Day. Friends are asking Congress to pivot to peace: shift resources away from the failed militarism and war fighting strategies that have defined our foreign policy for too long and invest more in peacebuilding programs. Spend Thursday learning how to lobby Congress for peaceful foreign policy, then put your skills into practice during the Friday lobby day. (registration fee: \$50) For more information, see the FCNL website: [fcnl.org/lobbyday](http://fcnl.org/lobbyday) Last year, we were over 430 strong as we lobbied for diplomacy with Iran—and it worked. The success of the Iran deal is a testament to the power of the pro-peace, pro-diplomacy movement. You made a difference. Join us as we continue our Quaker witness and lobby to build a pathway to peace. More info at [www.fcnl.org/annualmeeting](http://www.fcnl.org/annualmeeting)

Nov. 14: Poetry to Warm the Soul, Friends Wilderness Center. This program will be facilitated by FWC Board member, Hayden Mathews, and is intended to be in essence a sort of 'poetry potluck.' Bring your own poems or poems that have special meaning for you to share as we gather around the wood stove. There are so many more poems and prose excerpts available to us today in print or digital form that we are only able to access a tiny portion of this treasure trove on our own. In this gathering you can benefit from the poetic explorations of others and hear their 'Best of the best' selections. If you

have any questions concerning any of our programs, please email Sheila at [snbach@earthlink.net](mailto:snbach@earthlink.net) or call 304.728.4820

**Nov. 20-22: Clerking Workshop**, Pendle Hill. Join master teacher Arthur Larrabee and clerks of Quaker meetings and committees for this annual must-attend for incoming clerks. New and experienced clerks come together to consider the role of presiding clerk. You will come away with new energy, enthusiasm, and skills for serving your community. [www.pendlehill.org](http://www.pendlehill.org)

**Nov. 28: Cold Turkey Hike**, Friends Wilderness Center. Ditch the football and the annual March of the Lemmings to the shopping malls to join the Benson Family on a hike of the trails around FWC where you can get in the Holiday spirit and work off a few calories from your Thanksgiving feast. A perfect Friends' way to begin the Solstice season. If you have any questions concerning any of our programs, please email Sheila at [snbach@earthlink.net](mailto:snbach@earthlink.net) or call 304.728.4820.

**January 29th to 31st: BYM Women's Retreat** The BYM Women's Retreat will be held in a new location in 2016: Pearlstone Retreat Center in Reisterstown MD. It is about an hour from Washington. The center offers a number of benefits, including accessibility and safety (covered walkways, elevators, etc.), comfortable accommodations, plenty of meeting rooms, and excellent food. If you are wondering why the shift is away from the Skycroft Conference Center, where the retreat has been held since 2010, costs there increased by 35%, prompting the search for a new location. If you have never been to the Women's Retreat, ask anyone who has. It is a totally great weekend. For details, see: <http://bymwomensretreat.org>

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**THINKING ABOUT RACE** (November 2015) – *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Ta-Nehisi Coates' recent book, *Between the World and Me*, is written as a letter to his 15-year-old son. In an allusion to the fact that "race" is a social construct, he refers to white people as those "who believe themselves to be white," and also refers to them as "Dreamers."

“Part of me thinks that your very vulnerability brings you closer to the meaning of life, just as for others, the quest to believe oneself white divides them from it. .... You have been cast into a race in which the wind is always at your face and the hounds are always at your heels. And to varying degrees this is true of all life. The difference is that you do not have the privilege of living in ignorance of this essential fact.” (p. 107)

This column is prepared by the Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) Working Group on Racism (WGR) and sent to the designated liaisons at each local Meeting for publication in the Meeting newsletter or other means of dissemination. The WGR usually meets on the third Saturday of each month from 10:00 am to 1 pm at Meetings in the Washington and Baltimore areas. In August we meet at BYM Annual Sessions. We do not meet at all in July or December. This month we will meet at Sandy Spring Friends Meeting. 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).

*Editors' Note: Some students came to visit us recently from Longwood University, a four-year public coeducational liberal arts university located in Farmville, Virginia. They met with David Etheridge to discuss Quakerism and social justice. Here are David's notes from that meeting.*

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## **VISITORS FROM LONGWOOD**

I had heard of Longwood because Sabrina had found me a new book from the Mary Riley Library about the school closure in Prince Edward County, VA. Longwood had been all white when the closures happened, but I did a computer search because I was curious whether my contact Jordan Bynum was black or white. It turns out Jordan is black, but more surprising to me was that she is a woman. The search did not help me with the pronunciation of her first name—I guessed it might be the southern Juhrdan, but actually it is Joardan. Both leaders were black women and about a third of the group was black. There was one Asian and the rest white.

I gave them a brief description of some of the distinctive features of Quakerism—that of the Divine in every human (with the corollaries that all are equal and should not be killed), expecting to hear from the Divine as a goal of worship, the idea that we have no lay people and no creed (but lots of different beliefs). They asked about Quaker views about the Bible and the divinity of Jesus. I told them that since we have no creed views on both vary widely. I mentioned that I lead a Bible study, but relatively few people attend it. I explained that I had been raised reading the Bible in the Church of Christ, but many others who came from other Christian denominations had such negative experiences that they did not want to have anything to do with the Bible. I explained that George Fox thought that Christ had come to teach His people Himself and could speak to our condition—suggesting both that Jesus is divine (not just a rabbi) and the second coming has already happened, but some members of our congregation have difficulty with God—much less Jesus. I also explained that while some Quakers go to

divinity schools and Barclay wrote the *Apology* initially in Latin as a systematic explanation of Quaker theology, many Quakers focus on direct experience and have little use for theology.

I was asked about the bad attitude of some of us to paying ministers. I explained the historical context in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in England when everyone was being taxed to pay for someone who had been to Oxford or Cambridge to be their priest. I also explained the idea that an education in theology was not considered a substitute for a direct relationship with the Divine.

Someone asked about Quaker attitudes about divorce and I told them people who are divorced can be married under the care of the Meeting. I mentioned my own situation where I was married to under the care of the Meeting to Sabrina even though she had been divorced. Of course we were also married in the Catholic Church because she had obtained an annulment. I explained that although we had two weddings, sometimes pastors from other religions will have a negotiated role in a wedding under the care of the Meeting. I also gave a brief description of a Quaker wedding and the wedding certificate.

I explained the Quaker practice of reaching unity as opposed to voting on issues and how our discernment could be lengthy on topics like same gender marriage, welcoming people with a history of child sexual abuse and renovation of our facilities.

I told them that the AFSC had an office in Farmville where Longwood is located during the school closures and part of their job was providing homes around the country for Black Farmville students so they could get an education. I explained that the AFSC had done similar work when Japanese Americans were concentrated in camps during WWII and that at least one Japanese family that had been helped during WWII provided a home for a Farmville student. I also told them there was until very recently a small Quaker community in Prince Edward County and are still congregations in Roanoke, Lynchburg and Charlottesville (I forgot to mention Floyd)—as well as many congregations in northern North Carolina.

I told them briefly the history of Quakers in Southside Virginia who had initially enslaved people, but later decided against it. Their decision was so unpopular with their neighbors that most of them moved to Ohio or Indiana. I noted that there is a Quaker Memorial Presbyterian Church in Lynchburg that is so named because that congregation now owns and takes care of a Quaker meetinghouse that was abandoned during the migration. One member of the Longwood group said she had seen the name of that church on a sign and wondered about it.

I also told them quite briefly of my own leading to work on racial issues—including *The New Jim Crow* and *Waking Up White* book discussion groups and the *Cracking the Codes* the day before. A faculty member indicated she was familiar with these.

Unfortunately, I remembered that *Waking Up White* was to start at 9:15 a.m., but forgot that the Longwood group was planning to attend the 9 a.m. Meeting for Worship until

about 7 minutes after 9 a.m. When I did realize it, I guided them to the door to the stairs at Quaker House and asked them to climb the stairs quietly. I am assuming they at least doubled the size of group worshipping there.

David

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## **RANDOM HAPPENINGS**

Meg Greene encouraged me to share outsider perspectives on FMW, and has asked for quotes. Here are some:

- “ (from Cultural Vistas): We've really enjoyed our time on Friday. The setup, location was great and very well organized.
- “ (from the Chemistry Dept. of George Washington University): The weather held out, and everyone had the poster sessions outside. They also really loved being able to do the group photo in the garden, since it's so pretty. Thank you for all of your help!
- “ (from Pathfinder Coaching): We felt welcomed with a home-like hospitality. Reserving the space for the date and time we needed couldn't have been easier. What could have been a major headache turned into a very pleasant experience thanks to you. The space had everything we needed - tables, chairs, tripod with a white board, kitchen. The ambiance of the room was warm and conducive for the conversation and training we were conducting. The fact that we could have the space an hour before we actually started our workshop helped us tremendously. Overall, there was a sense of generosity and genuine care.
- “ (from Enroll America): We have used the Quaker House for a number of our organizational retreats. It is a wonderful space with an AMAZING outdoor garden, kitchen, a main room and smaller breakout rooms. Perfect for a day of team-building, reflection, and planning. The staff is incredibly helpful and friendly to boot! We will definitely be returning to the Quaker House when we need an off-site meeting space.

Non-profits seem to love us—we're in a great location, we're comparatively inexpensive, we're neither slick nor corporate, and we have this fabulous backyard where they love to take breaks. It's a win-win—these groups are meeting to strategize things like establishing a living wage or ensuring universal access to health care or getting in touch with their cultural roots or addressing climate change issues. These are mostly things that Quakers would be doing, if we had time to do one more thing. By offering an inexpensive space, we are in effect underwriting these efforts and adding our tiny umph to their more strategic umph in an effort to seek and pursue peace. So, go team!

- Debby