

FMW Newsletter September 2015

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UPCOMING EVENTS

September 2: The **Grate Patrol** will prepare sandwiches and soup to take out to the city's vulnerable people starting at 5:30. For more information, contact Steve Brooks at sbrooks@uab.edu

September 5: Come to **SOME** and help make breakfast for our vulnerable neighbors. Starts at 6:15 a.m. For more info, contact Betsy at betsy.bramon@gmail.com



Sunday September 13: First Day School Opening: We will have a schedule of programs for Pre-k, early elementary, upper elementary, tweens and teens. We welcome people, particularly non-parents to help coordinate various age groups...or just facilitate occasional sessions. Our practice of an intergenerational monthly gathering will continue. The RE committee welcomes feedback on the idea of a special program on Quaker parenting and opportunities for parents to get to know each other better, and share parenting challenges and successes. To ensure a safer environment for our children, we will need to have child safety/security trainings and background checks. Be prepared to set aside a little time

for that. Details will soon be forthcoming. Finally, this is a great time of year to invite those family friends of yours to try out FMW as a great spiritual community. Rather than feel shy about it, remember there are many parents (and kids) who are hungry for a spiritual community but are in despair or just too busy to figure out where to start. A warm invitation to people could be exactly what they want and need.

Give Refuge to the Stranger, William Penn House Potluck, 6:00 to 9:30 pm, 515 East Capitol Street SE, Washington, DC 20003, Tel: (202) 543-5560 Linda Rabben (Adelphi Friends Meeting) will

discuss her book, [Give Refuge to the Stranger: The Past, Present and Future of Sanctuary](#) for the September William Penn House potluck. Linda will walk us through the long histories of sanctuary as a religious institution and asylum as a secular legal institution. The monthly potluck is on a Sunday of each month at 6:30pm, and the program starts at 7:30. This is an opportunity for fellowship among Quakers, attenders and fellow seekers. Bring a dish to share; family members, neighbors and friends are always welcome.

September 17 - 20: Quakers in Pastoral Care and Counseling Conference, Quaker Hill Conference Center (Richmond, IN) Quakers in Pastoral Care & Counseling is celebrating its 25th annual conference and you're invited to attend. QPCC is an organization of Friends and others who are called into ministry in the areas of pastoral care, counseling, and chaplaincy. We share a commitment to taking our Quaker practice seriously and grounding our work in our faith. This year's conference is entitled "Prayer and Connection: A Practice Retreat" and will be led by Jennie Isbell, a Quaker spiritual director, workshop facilitator, and co-author of *Finding God in the Verbs: Crafting a Fresh Language of Prayer*. For more information and to register, go to www.qpcc.us.

September 18 - 20: BYM Fall Family Camp Weekend

Family Camp Weekends at Baltimore Yearly Meeting camps offer us all (individuals as well as families) a chance to come and enjoy the beautiful camps at a special time of year for a day or for the weekend. A program coordinator will plan camp-type activities for Saturday and Sunday morning, as well as Saturday afternoon and evening. These may include things like playing in the creek, a crafts project, or hiking. There will also be plenty of work projects to do! These offer people with all kinds of skills the opportunity to participate in meaningful and satisfying work. In addition, participants will enjoy meals together, time to explore, and an evening camp fire. You may come for the day or spend the night on Saturday. Camp will also be open on Friday night but there will be no dinner served on Friday. Other meals are provided. To pay for some of the supplies and staff, participants are asked to contribute \$25 to \$50 per person, according to your ability to pay. Please send an e-mail to davidhunter@bymrsf.org if you plan to attend, with the names and ages of all members of your party, when you will be arriving and departing, and any dietary restrictions you may have. For details: <http://bymcamps.org/family-camp-weekends-Fall-2015> In addition to the camp weekend at Opequon, there will be another one at **Shiloh** from **October 9 to 11**, and a third one at **Catoctin** from **October 23 to 25**.

September 24: Rally for Moral Action on Climate

Moral Action on Climate (MAC) is organizing a rally on the National Mall on Thursday,

September 24, from 11:00 a.m. to noon. People will be gathering on the Mall between 4th and 7th Streets NW, as early as 7:00 a.m. (some may have been there overnight as part of a vigil) to hear the Pope's address at 9:20 a.m. A program of additional speakers is being planned following the

Pope's address starting at approximately 11:00 a.m. The Pope's recent encyclical on the environment and climate change is an inspiring statement and a landmark development. We have the opportunity to support his call for urgent action to address the climate crisis and create a new future of economic equality, social justice, and environmental equity. For details: www.moralactiononclimate.org/

September 26: Friends Wilderness Center Event

On Saturday, September 26, at 10:00 a.m., Carlen Emanuel, a Certified Forester with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, will lead a guided hike from the Niles Cabin along the FWC trails using a variety of fundanas (bandanas with lots of nature lore designed in them) to get participants looking at what they pass and to take a closer look at nature. In addition to being a lovely hike, it will also have the flavor of a scavenger hunt. Carlen plans to use Discover Nature, Walk in the Woods, Tree Quest, Wild Bird Bingo, and Biodiversity Bingo Fundanas; if your family has others, feel free to bring them along as well. If you wish (not required for this program), you can purchase a variety of fundanas from Sheila before or after the hike for \$7 each. This walk is fine for beginners and children age 6 and up with accompanying adult. Wear good closed toe shoes (i.e., no flip flops and sandals) and bring water, insect repellent, and a hiking staff or two if desired. A forecast or presence of heavy rain cancels this event, but light rain does not. Bring a sack lunch and whatever beverages you require. The center is less than two hours from Washington on a 1,400-acre tract of land which backs up to the Appalachian Trail in West Virginia. A \$10 donation for programs is suggested. This helps maintain the property and facilities. For details: www.friendswilderness.org It is very helpful to make reservations: Sheila Bach (304-728-4820, snbach@earthlink.net)



October 2-4: FMW Catoctin Weekend: Join us for an unprogrammed weekend, when we share meals and fellowship in the lodge; we enjoy canoeing and hiking; we toast s'mores on Saturday night; and we worship on Sunday morning at a warm spot in the sunshine. Cabins are available (most have tin roofs, screen walls and a half dozen bare bunk beds), or bring your tent; come for one day or stay for all three. Cost is \$20 per adult staying overnight, \$10 for adult day-trippers, and free for all children, payable to FMW. All meals are pot lucks, we therefore ask you to contribute a dish or two to the communal meals each day. For more information, contact Anita, anita.drever@gmail.com

October 3: The FMW Marriage and Family Relations Committee at FMW is sponsoring a workshop titled: **“We Love Each Other But,...”** in the Assembly Room from 10:00 AM to 3:30 PM. The workshop is open to all area Meetings. The workshop will be facilitated by Jane Connor, a certified trainer in nonviolent communication. A lunch (pizza, salad, and fruit juice) will be provided for \$7/person. Persons are welcome to bring their own lunch if they wish. There is no charge for the workshop. For more information, contact Jim Bell, kellybell21@comcast.net or tele: 301 263 9894.

This workshop will provide both a theoretical context and practical skills to increase our ability to connect with the loving spirit or inner light of all people. Special attention will be given to improving relationships with family members and friends whom we find especially challenging to relate to. Much of the material will be drawn from the process known as Nonviolent Communication, also known as Compassionate Communication (see www.cnvc.org) which is being actively shared on six continents and which dovetails nicely with Quaker principles. Participants will have the opportunity to adapt the material to their own specific issues and concerns.

Intended Audience: Adults and mature teens who wish to have closer and more rewarding relationships with family members or other persons whom they care about deeply

Jane Connor is a certified trainer of Nonviolent Communication and the co-author of the leading textbook in the field, *Connecting across Differences: How to Connect with Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere* (see amazon.com).

October 9 to 12: Silent Retreat for Friends

Is your spirit in need of nourishment and refreshment? Join members of Annapolis Friends

Meeting for a Silent Retreat. This retreat has never been full, so please join us. We will keep the silence from Friday evening until after worship on Monday, enjoying the beauty of God's creation in meadows and woods, reading, walking, resting, praying, finding our own rhythms, and listening for the "still, small voice" at Dayspring Retreat Center in Germantown, MD. The cost of the retreat is \$290, and the deadline for registrations is October 3. For details, contact facilitator Jean Christianson (<mailto:jschristianson@gmail.com>, 410- 544-1912). If Dayspring is new to you, check their web site (www.dayspringretreat.org) to get a sense of it. There is also a YouTube piece online created at an October BYM retreat.

October 10: Growing Our Meetings Workshop

Baltimore Yearly Meeting has arranged for Friends General Conference to provide a one-day

"Growing Our Meetings" workshop at Valley Friends Meeting in Dayton, VA, on Saturday,

October 10. According to the FGC website ([http://www.fgcquaker.org/services/grow-our-m](http://www.fgcquaker.org/services/grow-our-meetings-workshop)

[eetings-workshop](http://www.fgcquaker.org/services/grow-our-meetings-workshop)), the workshop will focus on the ways that Friends can invite Spirit into our efforts around three dimensions of meeting growth: inreach, outreach, and inclusion.

The workshop incorporates training and experiential activities, worship sharing, discussions,

discernment and planning, and opportunities for collaboration among meetings and

building networks of support. Each meeting's team will leave with a plan for adding growth and vitality. The fee for the workshop is \$100 per Meeting for a team of two to three Friends and includes a resource toolkit for each participant, lunch, and dinner. Friends are encouraged to offer food to help Valley Meeting as it hosts the event.

October 17: BYM Interim Meeting

FMW is part of a larger grouping of 52 Quaker congregations in Maryland, Virginia, and parts of Pennsylvania called Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Three times a year people from the Meetings gather for fellowship, committee meetings, and a general business meeting. It is a wonderful opportunity to get to know Friends from other Meetings. You can be a part of important decision making. Goose Creek Friends Meeting, (18204 Lincoln Road, Lincoln VA 20160), is hosting the Tenth Month Interim Meeting on Saturday, October 17. Friends will begin gathering at 10:00 a.m. Lunch will be provided. Business Meeting in the afternoon will be followed by dinner at the rise of Meeting. Check www.bym-rsf.org for more information.

November 12 to 15: FCNL Annual Meeting

Save the dates for the Friends Committee on National Legislation's Annual Meeting from Thursday, November 12, to Sunday, November 15. You can register now at:

www.fcnl.org/annualmeeting The first day's focus will be on lobbying Congress to build a pathway to peace. It is a wonderful opportunity to connect with Friends from around the country who care passionately about the issues of the day.

January 29 to 31: 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 Pearlstone 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/>

THINKING ABOUT RACE (September 2015) – Anne Braden, Civil Rights Activist

“I never knew anybody who really got active because of guilt. Everybody white that I know that's got involved in this struggle got into it because they glimpsed a different world to live in... Human beings

have always been able to envision something better... All through history there have been people who have envisioned something better in the most dire situations. That's what you want to be a part of." Anne Braden, quoted in the Facebook page, "The Other Tennessee," (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Other-Tennessee/464461963762234>).

The Other Tennessee is part of a regional online campaign of Southerners stepping up against hate and racism in response to both Black liberation movement on the move and the presence of hate groups in our towns and cities. We're building on and expanding the white anti-racist tradition in the South. See the coalition's full statement at <http://surjnashville.org/get-involved/the-other-tennessee/>"

This column is prepared by the BYM Working Group on Racism (WGR) and sent to the designated liaisons at each Monthly and Preparative Meeting for publication in their newsletter or other means of dissemination. The WGR meets most months on the third Saturday, except July & August, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, usually at Meetings in the Washington and Baltimore areas . If you would like to attend, on a regular or a drop-in basis, contact clerk David Etheridge, david.etheridge@verizon.net.

Editor's Note: The following blog was originally published on quietistquaker.wordpress.com by Janaki Spickard-Keeler and is used here with the author's permission:

How do I stay in community with someone who has hurt me? Addressing conflict in a Quaker manner

[August 7, 2015 ~ quietistquaker](#)

Let's start with the facts. In 2008, a young man in my meeting attempted to attach himself to me. Realizing quickly the profundity of his emotional neediness and complete lack of boundaries, I took steps to distance and protect myself immediately. He was persistent: texts, calls, emails, and Facebook messages that continued even after I left the meeting specifically to avoid him.

I have been asked, "Did he stalk you?" It's a harder question to answer than you might think. There were no verbal threats, nor do I think he meant his actions maliciously. But his way of interacting *was* threatening, and it made me feel profoundly unsafe. Ignoring both my verbal and nonverbal communication, he repeatedly violated every boundary I set with him. He was oblivious to my discomfort, and didn't seem to understand [why it is a major red flag for a woman when a man ignores when she says no](#).

Avoiding this individual eventually meant leaving Quakerism altogether for me. He was active in Young Adult Friends circles, making them an unsafe space for me. I became a very avid Buddhist for a number of years. Eventually, after some very explicit words, the young man finally left me alone.

Quakerism will out: eventually my spiritual path led me back to Friends. And eventually, I began to hear from other young women who'd had similar run-ins with him. Several had left the Religious Society of Friends as I had; others simply left his meeting. In 2013, a group of us approached Pastoral Care at the meeting we had left. An elder professed sorrow at our stories. Something would be done, we were assured.

The next month, the young man was named clerk of Ministry & Worship. We didn't hear from Pastoral Care again.

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Life went on. After a few years I moved away and was sojourning at a new yearly meeting. For the first time, it felt safe to be with other Young Adult Friends, since he wouldn't be there.

Last year, I attended a YAF conference. I turned around and there he was: my stalker. I tried to act normal. I even managed some normal-sounding small talk with him. All week, I was on guard, ready to go to the conference organizers at the first sign of his pushing the boundaries I'd set several years before.

He didn't.

Maybe he'd grown up some in the past six years. Maybe we could manage to peacefully coexist. I started to think a lot about what it means to be in community with someone who has hurt me. We are both of us young adults with strong leadings toward service in the Religious Society of Friends; I realized there was no way I'd be able to avoid him. Inevitably, we'll end up on a committee or board of directors together sometime over the next 40 or 50 years.

I'm a Quaker, and one of my practices is to try and see that of God in other people. I find much to appreciate in him: he has a passion for justice and a concern for carrying Quakerism into the world as a force of healing. But what if I can see that of God in somebody and would still strongly prefer that my former stalker continue to stay far away from me? *How can I be in community with someone who makes me feel unsafe?*

Quaker meetings deal with this sort of issue all the time. A friend told me about sharing a meeting with her ex-husband. "What does it mean to be in community with someone I have to sue every once in a while for child support?"

For me, the operative question became: *How do I address this conflict in a Quaker way?*

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In May of this year, the young man decided to sue his meeting for emotional distress, and for the allegations against him made by me and several other women.

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Matthew 18 asks us to deal directly with the person we're having the conflict with. Yet, when you're dealing with someone who thinks it reasonable to utilize the nuclear option – a \$50,000 lawsuit – over this very option, you can understand my hesitancy. I am hesitant even to post this essay, and have resisted doing so for weeks in spite of ever-more-insistent nudges from Spirit.

I tried another one of my practices: I tried to see things from his point of view. He alleges that the meeting handled the matter poorly. A point we can agree on, though for totally opposite reasons! But I do wonder if a better option even exists. I was not part of the meeting anymore. Quakers practice precludes writing people out of the meeting for bad behavior unless it's a meeting-wide decision, and he'd driven off the people who might have asked the meeting to make that decision. And would it have been the right decision? Doesn't everybody need a spiritual community? I found another one, and he kept his, and for a time the conflict was muted, even if bad feelings lingered.

If not the meeting, what Quaker body could offer to help work this matter out? There have been calls for stronger eldership across the liberal branches of Quakerism; possibly intervention by skilled elders

could have been productive. But I haven't been at his meeting for years now. For all I know, there are elders there already, and his response to being eldred was to sue.

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For the first month after the lawsuit, I was angry. He was the one who got to keep the meeting! And now he was suing them??

Next fear set in. He was looking for a new meeting. What if he chose my home meeting? I'm sojourning in another yearly meeting, but I'm still a member of a meeting in his region and it's my spiritual home. What if he invades my spiritual home? I found myself getting very territorial, gearing myself up for a fight. "I won't let him!" I declared to a friend.

She cautioned me. In her experience, meetings react badly to anger, and my instinct to fight was hardly Quakerly. When difficult people, particularly those with personality disorders like [BPD](#), join meetings, they stir up a lot of hostility. But from the meeting's point of view, it's the angry and upset people who have the problem, not the person causing the hostility. I was reminded of the ways in which white Quakers often demand that Friends of color present their criticism of racism in the Religious Society of Friends without expressing any of their anger about the racism. We dismiss angry people. We equate anger with violence and distance ourselves from the violence.

Feminist friends tell me that I should not feel any obligation to engage equitably in a conflict with someone who has hurt me. They tell me I should leave it alone; there is no way to have an even playing field in the conflict, and I'm liable just to be hurt further.

But still I wonder: *what is the Quaker way to address this issue?* How do I live in community with this person, now and in the future? Is it possible for the two of us to arrive at a shared Truth when we see the situation from 180-degrees, diametrically opposed positions?

And if there isn't a Quaker way to address these sorts of conflicts... whither the Religious Society of Friends? This sort of thing is not unique. There are difficult people in every meeting. *If we can't manage to make peace with the difficult people in our meetings, how can we hope that Quakerism will have a lasting impact on the wider world?*

The only thing I know to do is to continue to wrestle with the conflict, and continue to seek guidance from Spirit. It's an unsatisfactory solution.

I am interested in hearing from Friends about how they have come to terms with difficult people in their meetings. What was your journey, either corporately or personally? What has worked for you? Do you have any Light to shine on my particular situation? How do you share community with people who push all your buttons, or have caused you pain?

RANDOM HAPPENINGS

After one of the hottest summers on record, we have finally arrived at September, hooray! It's been a time of change. We're happy to welcome back **Riley Robinson**, our former Administrative Secretary who went on to serve so well and ably as General Secretary to Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Unable to break out of the Work for Quakers mindset, he has now switched over to the Friends Committee on National Legislation, which may mean that we get to see him a lot more often. Sorry, BYM. Yay, us!



The **Avanesyans** are back from a family trip to Costa Rica, where it's reported they visited the Quakers in Monteverde. Quakers from Fairhope Friends Meeting, some of whom had served prison sentences for conscientious objection, went to Costa Rica in the 1940s to practice peace. There, they bought land in the beautiful Monteverde mountains, and supported their dairy farming neighbors by starting a cooperative cheese factory, which is still going. They're also helping to preserve this ecologically diverse area from development, and providing a school to promote local education. Welcome back, Avanesyans!

Many Friends from FMW attended Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Annual Sessions in August, either in person or in spirit. **J.E. McNeil** fell into the latter category—she was largely featured in a script she helped write for the “coffee house” in which the Supreme Court Justices read from the brief she wrote on behalf of Friends Meetings in Virginia in favor of marriage equality. And not just read—they also sang the words to the tunes of South Pacific. (J.E. is being

played by the person sleeping in this photo, next page.) It was some enchanted evening.



Some Friends expressed their creative sides:



Rob Farr at Metro Washington Radio Club Market



Mark Haskell, chef at 14th & U St

Our plucky bikers, **Betsy Bramon** and **Zoe Plaughter**, completed their 560 miles in 9 days, up over and down the Blue Ridge Mountains from Manassas, VA to Asheville, NC. Amazing, doughnut-powered trip. Zoe is returning this month to grad school at Catholic University to complete her social work degree. Holding her and her ridiculous schedule in the Light.



Also holding in the Light:

- Our dear Friend **Grant Thompson**, whose wife, **Sharon**, has recently been diagnosed with cancer.
- The **Kellogg Family**, as they grieve for Bruce's brother, Jonathan. Jonathan's obit is on the bulletin board near the rest rooms.

- Both **Kennedy Smith** and **Juliet Isele** lost their beloved cats in August; holding them both in the Light

Finally, and not really finally, a little update on the ever-receding construction project: They now expect, or at least hope, to break ground in February. I asked Neil Froemming if this is like one of those fraction problems where you appear to be getting closer to the next whole number but you never really arrive, but he thinks we really may actually for real start in February. And not a minute too soon, I say. Let's add the construction project to that which needs holding in the Light. Way will open.

- Debby