
Spring 2006
Interchange
Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

FROM THE CLERK

Waiting for Tom Fox

In the past few months, the Yearly Meeting, individual Friends, and several monthly meetings have been traumatized by the abduction in Iraq of our Friend Tom Fox, a member of Langley Hill Friends Meeting.

Tom's courage and faithfulness have inspired us. Throughout the Yearly Meeting, Friends have engaged in vigils, interfaith prayer services, media outreach, and other actions on an ongoing basis. For example, at Friends House every night after dinner Friends gather for a Meeting for Worship for Tom and all in Iraq. When at home, the members of Midlothian Meeting light candles to hold Tom in the Light. Other meetings have ongoing weekly prayer vigils.

But we need to acknowledge that there has been trauma too. Individual Friends can find themselves immobilized, unable to get on with their lives, and waiting, always waiting, for news of Tom and praying, always praying, for his safe return.

One Friend, a first-time attender at Yearly Meeting session this past August, spent an intense week working with Tom, as both were Friendly Adult Presences with our Young Friends community. After his abduction, although she had only met Tom this one time, she found herself constantly checking news reports for news of Tom.

This trauma has left some of us anxious, grieving for the injury inflicted on our Friend and on our communities. As individuals, we respond differently to grief. Some are angry; others numb. Some work hard to keep feelings at bay; others act out anger and distress. Friends may cycle through

these feelings and other Friends may be puzzled by the intense reactions in our community. For some, including me, past traumas become resurrected, and we need to deal with these past traumas as well as the current situation. To recognize and honor the inevitability of experiencing this trauma through our own past experiences is neither self-indulgent nor histrionic. We need to examine our own complex feelings in order to move forward as a faith community, united in clarity, faith, and love.

There is no doubt in my mind that Tom was well prepared for the work he was called to do with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Iraq. He and his support committee had discussed what to do in the event of his possible abduction. The rest of us, however, were woefully unprepared, except as we live in faith and trust in the Spirit. We never imagined that we'd find our Friend the subject of international news. How do we recognize and heal from this trauma, while continuing to hold our Friend in prayer?

Identifying and facing our feelings is an important first step in healing from trauma. In Parker Palmer's pamphlet, *Leading from Within*, he writes, "There are things that you can do that constitute *inner* work that are as real and as important as any outer project or task." He goes on to say, "... while inner work is a deeply personal matter, it's not necessarily a *private* matter. There are ways to be together in community to help each other with that *inner* work." I believe we need to talk with each other about our feelings.

In his pamphlet, *The Dance between Hope and Fear: Healing from Trauma*, John Calvi describes three important ingredients for healing from

trauma: a commitment to joy, a commitment to self-awareness, and a commitment to self-discipline. Regarding the latter, he writes, "Each of us has things that keep us strong. It's very important that we know what they are and we use them; that we make a daily practice of using them."

Friends want to act. There is a strong desire within the Yearly Meeting to *do something*. How do we determine what it is that we are led to do? Tom's example suggests that we follow the process of clearness, becoming clear about what it is we are called to do, supporting one another in community, and upholding our witness against war. We are called, I believe, simultaneously to hold Tom and Iraq in the Light, while taking care of ourselves and our community, honoring the differences in our needs, feelings, and experiences. If we do not have any clear leadings beyond that, then we can continue to wait in the Light actively and faithfully for our path to be shown to us.

Tom's abduction, while a traumatic experience for us, has also brought healing gifts and it is important to name and recognize these too. Tom's example of clarity and willingness to serve is a gift that has inspired and challenged us. We have all had the opportunity to live our faith by holding Tom in

Be patterns, be examples in every country, place, or nation that you visit, so that your bearing and life might communicate with all people. Then you'll happily walk across the earth to evoke that of God in everybody. So that you will be seen as a blessing in their eyes and you will receive a blessing from that of God within them. – George Fox, from Tom Fox's website

prayer, while he strengthens us in holding up alternatives to war. Nonviolent Iraqis, Palestinians, and American Muslims have been able to get their message out to the American public. The public has had the opportunity to learn more about Quakers, pacifism, and Christian Peacemaker Teams. Interfaith relations have been strengthened in some communities. Langley Hill Friends have felt the push to consider Quakers' roles in the outside world; there is a similar opportunity for the Yearly Meeting as a whole. The final gift, very evident to me, is how the Yearly Meeting has united in concern for Tom, Jim, Norman, and Harmeet.

I ask your continued prayers for these CPT members and those holding them in Iraq, for Tom's family, for Tom's support committee, and for Langley Hill Friends as they continue to discern what they are called to do. Please also hold Hopewell Centre Meeting and Alexandria Meeting in the Light as Tom has many Friends in these meetings. Please hold Young Friends, Opequon campers and staff, Junior Young Friends, and Friendly Adult Presences in the Light as Tom touched these communities in a deep way. And I ask your prayers for the Yearly Meeting, that we too will discern what we are called to do.

I have known Tom for fifteen years and many memories of him surfaced in the first few days after his abduction. The memory that returns most often is of him laughing and having fun in the creek at Wilson College during Yearly Meeting, waist-deep in the water, playing with the children. I believe this image keeps coming to reassure me that, although Tom is waist-deep once again, he is still in the Living Water that preserves and carries all of us. And I believe that he feels our loving prayers.

In Faith and Friendship,
Lauri Perman
Presiding clerk
(State College)

Both pamphlets are available from the Pendle Hill Bookstore; the Calvi pamphlet is also available from FGC Quakerbooks."

From the Editor

This issue of the Interchange brings many articles about our beloved Tom Fox. Most of the articles are in this special section, but you will find other mention of Tom throughout this issue. As the editor, I have had the rather intense job of reading and copyediting these submissions. I am awestruck by the power of our love, and by how Quakers have come together in a dark time. We continue to hold Tom in the Light.

We have included all minutes on Tom from Monthly Meetings that we have received, and would like to include additional ones in the next Interchange. Please submit to Betsy Proch, toodance@erols.com by April 3 for the May Interchange, preferably in Word format. Thank you.



Web sites

News about Tom Fox and CPT

<http://www.quaker.org/langleyhill/tomfox.html>

Free the Captives

www.freethcaptivesnow.org

Tom's weblog, which contains his spiritual reflections on the Iraqi people and on his purpose for being in Iraq.

www.waitingintheight.blogspot.com

Free the Captives Now Online Vigil for the Release of Tom Fox

Since early December, John Stephens of Alexandria meeting, and Chuck Fager of State College, have joined together to keep an ongoing online vigil for the release of Tom Fox and the other CPT captives in Iraq.

"We originally started our website, www.freethcaptivesnow.org as one way to join with the international mobilization of support for Tom's release," Chuck said. "The net is a remarkable tool — from the time we came up with the idea, talking

on the phone, it only took about an hour to get a domain name, work up a simple design, and get the site up and running."

The site first began a petition, and urged interested persons to send letters and emails to Al-Jazeera and other outlets visible in the Gulf region. Along with a CPT site that went up a bit later, the petitions soon gathered 50,000 signatures. Al-Jazeera reported that it was swamped with emails appealing for the captives release. Many Muslim groups, including some of the most militant, called upon the mysterious captors to release the prisoners.

As the second stated "deadline" for their execution passed on December 8, we all held our breath. But as the days passed with no news, the mobilization slowly morphed into a continuing vigil. The website is now updated daily, with the refrain that there is no news, filled out by headlines about the ongoing turmoil in the region.

Our hope is that by the time this report is in print, Tom and the others will be released, and the site will be obsolete. But we have learned from combing through press reports that there are many captives in Iraq, hundreds held by insurgents and thousands held by US forces. The fate of those in each kind of confinement is uncertain, and many are held for long periods.

So the vigil continues.

BYM Monthly Meeting Actions and Minutes regarding Tom Fox

Alexandria Monthly Meeting: A Minute in Support of the Release of the Members of the Christian Peacemaker Team

Alexandria Friends request the release of the four members of the Christian Peacemaker Team, Harmeet, Jim, Norman and Tom, who are being held by the Swords of Righteousness Brigade in Baghdad, Iraq. These four men are people of faith with a deep

respect for Islam. They went as guests to Iraq to be in solidarity with the Iraqi people and to act as advocates for human rights. Tom Fox is a member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Our Meeting introduced him to Quakers where he became part of a faith that practices peace. Our peace testimony declares, "The Spirit of Christ will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world. Therefore, we cannot learn war any more." George Fox 1660.

After becoming a Quaker 22 years ago, Tom took this testimony to heart and dedicated his life to resisting the darkness of war and the misery it causes. Each of the four Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) members went to Iraq with a commitment to reduce violence and to advocate for the self-determination of the Iraqi people. As an organization, CPT is respected around the world for its non-violent intervention in support of human rights. CPT Teams have had impressive successes in Palestine, Colombia, Canada, the Mexico/USA border and have worked in Iraq to assist detainees. We appeal to those holding these men of peace to release them unharmed so that they can continue to do the important work of building peace. We also request their release for the sake of Tom's children, his son and daughter who grew up in our Meeting. We ache in knowing they are in such pain and anguish and ask that their father and his friends be safely returned. We hold in the Light Harmeet, Jim, Norman and Tom; the Swords of Righteousness Brigade; families and friends. We pray for peace.

Annapolis Monthly Meeting Minute for Tom Fox

The Annapolis Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends offers our prayers and support for Tom Fox and his colleagues on the Christian Peacemaker Team who are being held in Iraq. We hold them in the Light, as well as their families and all who are suffering because of the war in Iraq.

Pat Schenck, Clerk

Hopewell Centre on Tom Fox

Hopewell Centre Meeting has been much concerned and occupied with the kidnapping of Tom Fox in Iraq. Tom, a member of the Christian Peacemaker Teams, was taken hostage in Iraq along with three other CPTers on November 26. Tom had moved into the meeting's youth house near Clearbrook last fall. He was a friend to many of us and visited our Meeting to tell us about his work in Iraq. Since Tom's capture, our now retired Clerk, Anne Bacon, has dealt with the press on many occasions and continues to do so. The Meeting continues to hold weekly vigils at Centre Meetinghouse in Winchester on Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

Prior to Tom's capture, our newsletter, "The Monthly Silence," published his monthly email letter to our Meeting in which he described his activities in Iraq. Now we are publishing selections from his weblog (www.waitingintheight.blogspot.com), which contains his spiritual reflections on the Iraqi people and on his purpose for being in Iraq. We have also received and published supportive outreach letters, regarding Tom, from other monthly meetings, including Alexandria and Richmond. We gratefully thank you for your compassionate words.

Our Junior Young Friends and Young Friends have been deeply affected by Tom's capture. Many of them came to know and love Tom through his work at Camp Opequon and at other Young Friends gatherings. In order to counsel and help our youth, member Marika Cutler, who is a child and adolescent psychologist, met with them at a recent First Day session. Out of that session has come their desire to produce a book, *Touched by the Light*, which pays tribute to Tom and shows how he has touched their lives. They are writing memories, poems and testimonies and creating art to be included. They have also requested that this be an intergenerational project and have invited our adult members and attenders to submit their own contributions. We plan to share this book with BYM, Langley Hill, and other Meetings, as well as present it to Tom and his family upon his safe return.

If you would like to join with us in this project and send a contribution of your own, send to Anne Bacon at abacon@adelphia.net, or contact her for more information at 540-662-5613.

Langley Hill on Tom Fox

Dear BYM Friends,

Langley Hill wants to express our deep appreciation for the outpouring of support from all over the Yearly Meeting since our member, Tom Fox, was abducted in Baghdad in November. Your messages, prayers and tender presence have been great comfort to us as we seek to understand what we are called to do to help Tom, Norman, Jim, and Harmeet, and to advance their mission of peace.

This has been both a wrenching and very rich time for the Meeting community. We struggle daily with the personal grief and anxiety that accompanies the abduction of a loved one. Yet we recognize that we have only recently joined the large and growing number of families who's loved ones are missing, injured, dead or in other ways permanently damaged by war in Iraq and elsewhere. Our grief is personal, but in no way unique.

Tom's abduction has brought into sharp relief our need to reach beyond our own circle of F/friends to help create peace in the world. One of our responses has been to invite members of all faith traditions to share our journey through the Friday night interfaith gatherings for peacemakers that we have been holding since December 10. Each week we have asked a member of a different faith tradition to share a brief presentation of his or her experience of peacemaking within that tradition. Those present are then encouraged to speak out of the silence about their own experiences and journeys, and then to join us in fellowship at rise of Meeting.

These extended periods of worship have been extremely grounding for many of us. They remind us that we are called first to listen to God and to shape our actions accordingly.

Langley Hill Friends have been led to deepen their ties in interfaith work, to visit members of Congress to lobby for enforceable anti-torture

legislation, to strengthen our relationship with the area Muslim community, and to many other individual and corporate responses reflecting our commitment to creating and nurturing peace. We continue to try to discern our way. We welcome participation in any of these projects from other members of the Yearly Meeting.

We have no way of knowing when or how the hostage situation will resolve itself. We keep Tom and his companions in our prayers and try to take up some of the work they are not now able to do. It is not always clear where that path is taking us. We ask for your prayers and help as we try to learn to be effective peacemakers.

Marge Epstein, Langley Hill

Sandy Spring on Tom Fox

Christian Peacemaker Teams has asked us all to write and distribute statements supporting the peaceful nature of their work and to free the hostages. This is our minute, December 4, 2005. To Friends/friends Everywhere:

Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is very distressed that four members of Christian Peacemaker Teams are being held captive in Iraq. One of these is Tom Fox, a very dear Friend who has been a shining light in our Quaker community, especially in bringing an understanding of peace to our young Friends. We know of Tom Fox's deep commitment to being a peacemaker in all his acts, and know that he is in Iraq to bring this witness, not for any purpose that would be in any way harmful to any other people.

Let your lives speak.
– George Fox

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Advancement and Outreach Committee – New Outreach Resource

Friends General Conference has just added a new feature for “isolated Friends” to the online meeting directory, www.QuakerFinder.org. Visitors to the site can still type in a town name or zip code and get a list of the half dozen nearest Friends meetings. Now they will also see a prompt on the listings page asking if the nearest meeting is too far away. If it is, they can register their location and find out if anyone else has registered in the same geographic area. The system puts the nearest registrants in touch with each other through a double-blind e-mail system, with the list constantly updated as new registrations are received. Over time, FGC is hoping that new worship groups will grow out of clusters of isolated Friends who find each other this way. Why not check out the QuakerFinder website to see if there is anyone registered in your area? You may feel led to register yourself, in order to be put in touch with people feeling isolated and looking for Quaker connections. This new outreach tool opens a world of opportunities. Baltimore Yearly Meeting will certainly have a role to play in ministering to isolated seekers and any new worship groups that may grow up in our area.
Deborah Haines, clerk
BYM Advancement and Outreach Committee

Annapolis Friends Deconstructing Racism Support Group

Have I colluded lately? If so, how?

These are the opening questions a group of Annapolis Friends ask ourselves when 7–9 of us meet once a quarter. Our group is made up of Friends who earlier participated in a series of workshops entitled “Deconstructing Racism,” held at our meeting.

Collusion is defined as: Cooperating with others, knowingly or unknowingly, to reinforce stereotypical attitudes, values, behaviors and/or norms. We collude in various ways, some of which are: (1) remaining silent when, for example, someone tells a racist joke or calls a group a racist name; (2) laughing at a racist joke, or otherwise *by our own behavior*, reinforcing a prejudice or a negative stereotype; (3) denying that a problem of discrimination exists, despite compelling evidence to the contrary.

Until she moved to Colorado, Marilyn Gilmore led the group, first by facilitating our sharing,

and then by leading us in cultural competence skill-building. We will now attempt to continue without her leadership.

The purposes of the group are to continue to grow in our awareness and sensitivity to racial issues and to support one another as we handle difficult racial situations in our daily lives. Ultimately, our goal is to make our meeting a welcoming and comfortable place for people of color who are drawn to our form of worship.

What I have noticed over time is that we have become less defensive about our own struggles with racism; rather, we notice the ways in which we have been conditioned to think and behave, which allows us to change. I, personally, am more comfortable handling difficult situations, and it is my hope that our personal work contributes to helping people of color feel more comfortable in our meeting.

Other meetings that would like to follow a similar path are invited to contact the BYM Working Group on Racism Among Friends at pschenck@toadmail.com.
Pat Schenck
Annapolis Friends Meeting
Clerk, BYM Working Group on Racism Among Friends

Indian Affairs Committee

BYM’s Indian Affairs Committee members have enjoyed some special moments in the past few months. Susan Lepper made two visits to New Mexico to join friend Pat Kutzner who is now residing in Cuba, NM. Susan has been deeply involved for several years with children from the Star Lake/Torreon Chapter of the Navajo Nation who come to Baltimore Yearly Meeting’s summer camps, and with visitors to BYM sessions. This year, we are looking forward to meeting Joe Cayaditto, Chapter President, and other visitors to BYM’s Yearly Meeting in Harrisonburg, VA. In September, Nora Caplan, Alden Lancaster, Mary Mallett and Virginia Spencer had the pleasure of sharing dinner with May Lee, Director of the F.A.C.E. Program and Continuing Education for the Ramah Navajo School Board, Ramah Chapter of Navajo Nation, in Silver Spring, MD. May has long been our contact at Ramah Navajo and shared some beautiful rugs from the Ramah Weavers Association. In December, Sandy Spring Meeting held an alternative gift fair and Nora Caplan raised \$290 for Ramah’s F.A.C.E. Program!

Also, we have just learned of the retirement of Ed Nakawatase, National Representative for Native Affairs at AFSC. AFSC and Ed have played

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a leadership role in bringing Native and non-Native people together so that we can learn from each other and build upon each other's strengths. We wish Ed much happiness in his future activities, and sincerely hope that AFSC will continue the important position of National Representative.

Virginia E. Spencer, Clerk
Indian Affairs Committee

Intervisitation Ad Hoc Committee Traveling to Knit Us Together

Our purpose, as presented to Interim Meeting, is to spiritually oversee and financially support a traveling ministry of presence within Friends United Meeting – a traveling which we hope will knit us together. What is intervisitation under the care of our committee, and what is it not?

The committee does not sponsor travel “with a concern” to change the personnel policy of FUM, though most of us hold the firm truth that FUM’s policy is hurtful. Our purpose is not “to promote dialogue” about the policy or sexuality issues, though we hope honest conversation and open sharing are not strangers to our gatherings and visitations.

Want to find out what others are doing for Peace and Social concerns in Yearly Meeting?

**Have some ideas on Peace and Social Concerns
you want to share?**

Need help doing something about Peace?

**Come to the Peace and Social Concerns
Committee Networking Day!**

Saturday, 3/11/06, from 8:30 - 1:00, in the Community House at Sandy Spring Friends Meeting, on Meetinghouse Road, just off Rt. 108 in Sandy Spring. Light breakfast will be provided from 8:30 - 9:15. Libby Garvey, a member of Friends Meeting of Washington, will speak at 9:45. Libby is an elected member of the Arlington County, Virginia, school board, and immediate past chair. During her seven plus years on the school board, she has developed many ideas about schools and peace. She has, for example, had to confront the No Child Left Behind Act’s requirement that schools submit student information to military recruiters. From 11:00 - 12:45, we will have time to share and learn from others in BYM about peace and social concerns activities. In the past, this day has energized Friends to do things that they have felt led to do, but somehow haven’t done. Clerks of Peace and Social

Concerns Committees are especially invited to attend and bring a written list of their committees’ actions and concerns during the past year. From 1:00 - 1:30 lunch (bring your own). From 1:30 - 2:00 John Salzberg will show a video of the new Friends International Center in Ramallah (West Bank).

Location: Sandy Spring Friends Meeting, 17715 Meeting House Road, Sandy Spring, MD 20860
<http://www.sandyspring.org/> For more information, contact:

Ellen Atkinson, mewa42@aol.com, J.E. McNeil, jmcnrick@yahoo.com Ellen Arginteanu, elarg@rocketmail.com or Bill Mims, musicnotwar@gmail.com

*O Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace!
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is discord, harmony.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sorrow, joy.*

*Oh Divine Master, grant that I may not
so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal
Life.
Saint Francis of Assisi, The Peace Prayer of
Saint Francis (often referred to as “The Prayer
of Saint Francis of Assisi”)*

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ON CHOOSING A NEW GENERAL SECRETARY FROM NOTTINGHAM MONTHLY MEETING

We are grateful for the care and commitment members of Supervisory Committee and the ad hoc Search Committee are showing through the process of discerning who will be our new General Secretary. And we hold in the Light staff and volunteers who have stepped in to handle Yearly Meeting responsibilities during this transition period.

The queries — “discerning our calling and our needs” — Michael Cronin and Lauri Perman circulated for Fall Interim Meeting (still available on the BYM Web site) stimulated prayerful reflection in our Meeting, located at the northeastern corner of the Yearly Meeting region.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting means quite different things to different ones of us. Many of us feel only the vaguest understanding of the full range of activities of the yearly meeting, of its organization, and of the duties of current staff and major volunteer positions. At the risk of oversimplifying, our experiences and sense of the yearly meeting stretch along a spectrum from the yearly meeting as an enterprise, institution or set of administrative functions to the yearly meeting as the collective of Friends who attend monthly meetings.

The former role requires careful stewardship and management by and of staff. The camping program, the logistics for annual sessions, youth programs, and maintaining a communications hub for committees and meetings are important elements of “BYM as institution.” Seen in this light, one Friend noted, “Religious organizations need to be run like businesses.” We hope that yearly meeting staff receive adequate salary and benefits to meet family needs; benefits being a particular challenge with many staff working only limited hours. It is very important that we have on staff individuals with gifts for careful stewardship of financial resources, who will not allow faith in “way opening” to blind our community when there is a mismatch between aspirations and resources.

But, it is easy for those given administrative responsibility to adopt business-like approaches, top down management styles that feel at odds with Friends’ practice. Frank Massey had the gift of not allowing his sense of care and responsibility for our financial assets and liabilities to interfere with his sense of being centered in the Light. While we have every sense of the yearly meeting’s enterprises under Frank’s stewardship moving forward with efficiency and integrity, the gifts that we associate with Frank’s stewardship have more to do with mentoring, facilitating, encouraging others to uncover previously

**You cannot shake hands
with a clenched fist.
Indira Gandhi**

unknown talents. Having seen the long-term benefits of having a servant leader as General Secretary, we tend to crave that in Frank’s successor. It may not be possible to find in a single candidate both gifts of financial and administrative management and the other gifts we came to rely on from Frank.

While many in our Meeting have been actively involved in one or more yearly meeting activities — e.g., annual sessions, committees, camping program, youth programs, and now this Search Committee — we are aware that the vast majority of BYM Friends have little direct experience of the yearly meeting as an institution. We guesstimated that perhaps 10 percent of BYM Friends attend annual sessions each year and perhaps another 10 percent have been engaged with the camping programs.

What does the yearly meeting mean to, what does the yearly meeting “owe” to the people who contribute toward the apportionment but don’t participate in these institutional activities?

Those who don’t participate aren’t saying that the yearly meeting’s institutional activities aren’t valuable. Nurturing our youth (encouraging the next generation of Friends), facilitating communication among Friends, creating the conditions for collective discernment are all important functions. But, it is easy for the communications role to take a backseat to other institutional priorities. It is easy for the yearly meeting as institution to reflect the enthusiasms of those most active in its sponsored activities.

One Friend said that there was little in the Interchange that spoke to her. Another commented that the Interchange might be too much a publication for yearly meeting insiders. The web site has become easier to navigate, but it is not clear to some just what we are supposed to take from it. It has been good to have the General Secretary join us for Quarterly Meeting — makes it easy to ask questions and creates opportunities to share insights or information from other meetings, quarters, committees. This sort of intervisitation encourages sharing that doesn’t depend on knowledge of the yearly meeting as an institution. Just as staff felt Frank’s presence as mentor, encourager, servant

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leader – so our monthly and quarterly meetings felt those gifts when he worshipped with us.

Geographically distant from Sandy Spring, Nottingham Meeting sees the yearly meeting office not as a major presence in our lives, but as a resource – there to offer support, answer questions, and tap into the pool of resources and information available from other monthly meetings. We also see yearly meeting, the institution, as offering the occasional nudge to turn us as a meeting to concerns that ought to be near our hearts – for example considering peace issues in Iraq or Palestine or focusing on the spiritual state of the meeting. A General Secretary traveling extensively among the meetings may not be necessary to meet these needs, but Frank's tenure offers an example in which it was very helpful.

It is humbling to realize that Nottingham Friends have been gathering together for over 300 years. The dynamics of our local, national and global communities are constantly changing, but the reality of our relationship with the Divine remains the same. That grace unites us with fellow seekers everywhere. David Ross, Nottingham Meeting

“SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.” Ps. 34:14

A SILENT VIGIL FOR PEACE, MARKING THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR ON IRAQ

The BYM Peace and Social Concerns Committee invites everyone in the Baltimore Yearly Meeting community to join Friends in a silent vigil at the West Lawn of the US Capitol in Washington, DC, at noon, on Saturday, March 18, 2006. That weekend will mark three years of war in Iraq. This tragic war has so far resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians, and over 2,200 US military personnel. Over 12,000 US military personnel have been physically wounded, and tens of thousands have been spiritually and emotionally devastated.

This vigil has been held each week for over three years, on or near the West Lawn of the US Capitol. It is not a demonstration, nor a protest, but a silent vigil for peace, in the manner of Friends. Though started by Quakers, it is now composed of people from many different faiths. It has been a rich experience for those who have attended. Often, visitors from the US or abroad have expressed their thanks to us for our simple act. Last year, at the time of the second anniversary of the war, over 500 people stood in silence for an hour on the Capitol Lawn.

This year, we would love to see thousands standing in silent witness for peace. Please mark your calendars now, and spread the word.

Do bring your neighbors, your friends, your family, and your hopes for peace. Do not bring any signs or banners. We stand under our simple blue banner, “Seek Peace and Pursue It.”

If you have questions, please contact David Boynton, 703-368-3339, or Bill Mims, 703-281-7293, both of Langley Hill Monthly Meeting.

EYES WIDE OPEN

AFSC's exhibit, “Eyes Wide Open,” returns to Washington May 11-14, over Mother's Day weekend. The American Friends Service Committee, Gold Star Families for Peace, Gold Star Families Speak Out, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Military Families Speak Out, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows and Veterans for Peace are co-sponsors for this witness to the human cost of the Iraq war.

The “Eyes Wide Open” exhibit - which pays tribute to lives lost in the war - will be displayed on the National Mall. Led by many of those who have most directly borne the cost of the war, silent marchers will carry boots representing those who have died and photos of those still in harm's way - calling on Congress to save lives by ending the war.

We look forward to joining with other peace advocates over these days and will be back in touch with you soon with more information. For more information, visit www.afsc.org/Iraq <<http://www.afsc.org/Iraq>> or contact cpifer@afsc.org <<mailto:cpifer@afsc.org>>.

Submitted by Denny Hartzell, Chris Pifer, Heather Foote and Kitty Dana, AFSC Washington Office

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS FROM AROUND THE WORLD GATHER IN WASHINGTON DC AND NEW YORK TO OPPOSE THE WAR

From May 11th to 16th, an international group of conscientious objectors will gather in New York City and Washington, DC for Operation Refuse War, a week of conferences, demonstrations, and actions in celebration of International Conscientious Objectors Day, May 15th. With no end in sight to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a sharp drop in the number of new military recruits, and deep dissatisfaction within the military, the need to popularize conscientious objection and to support conscientious objectors has never been stronger.

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Since the 1980s, May 15th has been celebrated as International Conscientious Objectors' Day. Each year, activities are held in a country where conscientious objectors are facing persecution or harassment. Previous locations have included the Balkans in 2002, Israel in 2003, Chile in 2004, and Greece in 2005. In addition, a similar gathering of conscientious objectors has been held each year in Washington, DC to forward the rights of conscientious objectors in the United States.

This week of action will highlight the difficulties that current conscientious objectors face as well as help build relationships and connections between the various communities within the anti-war movement. The focus of the events will be on supporting contemporary American conscientious objectors and their families, as well as examining the current potential of conscientious objection (in its various forms) as a strategy for building an anti-war movement. In addition, Operation Refuse War will bring together international and American conscientious objectors to share their experiences and ideas. The week will end with a trip for some to speak to individual members of Congress and others to join a demonstration that connects the opposition of this war with the opposition of other wars.

Sponsoring organizations include the War Resisters League, War Resisters International, American Friends Service Committee Youth and Militarism Program, the Center on Conscience & War, the Washington Peace Center, the National Youth and Student Peace Coalition, and Student Peace Action Network.

From J. E. McNeil, Friends Meeting of Washington

STONY RUN AND FRIENDS SCHOOL OF BALTIMORE PEACEMAKING DAY REQUEST FOR WORKSHOPS

Stony Run Friends Meeting, along with Friends School of Baltimore, is planning a day of workshops on Saturday, November 11, 2006 on their joint campuses to educate people about how peace is possible. We are responding to the woman who refused to come to our Film Series, "More Powerful than War," because she said that mankind is not evolved enough to do peace. We believe otherwise!

The goals of the day are:

- To learn that peace is possible; that war prevention works; and that we as a world community can learn to *not* sow the seeds of deadly conflict;
- For educators (teachers, administrators, guidance counselors) to network and learn

about conflict management and peace curriculums and how to integrate them into their classrooms and schools;

- For individuals to come to understand how peace can be created in their lives - as an individual, as a classroom, as a society, as a world community - and how they can make a difference.

In addition to the tracks for educators, there will be tracks for peace and religious education and peace and social justice issues.

We are looking for Meetings/churches/individuals who have developed peace programs/classes/curriculums or programs on peace and social justice issues or religious education programs and who would like to share that material in a workshop.

We welcome all comments and suggestions as well as offers of help! Early deadline for proposals is March 18th. For further information please contact Elaine Yamada, 410-664-2031; emyamada@bcpl.net.

FRIENDS HOUSE—ISN'T THAT FOR WEALTHY QUAKERS?

"I looked at six or seven Quaker retirement communities and this is the only one that I could have afforded. Instead of dreading old age, I find I am rejoicing in it! What a wealth of experience the residents of this community bring to me. I am so happy to be living in a community where material possessions are not a symbol of worth, but integrity, honesty, friendliness, faith, courage and hope are the symbols. I just wish every elder could be as fortunate as me." These are the words of Clare Sinclair, a Quaker activist from Montana, whose only income is her small Social Security monthly payment. Contributions of hundreds of donors to our Resident Assistance Fund make it possible for Clare to live at Friends House.

Friends House is a non-profit retirement community under the care of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Located in Sandy Spring, Maryland on sixty-two partially wooded and gently rolling acres, it is committed to providing housing and services to seniors with a wide range of financial resources. Since the 1967 construction of twenty-five apartments for low to moderate income elderly, it has continued growing and now serves 240 seniors in a continuum of care. Because of our Residents Assistance Fund, no residents in our one hundred low and moderate income housing apartments have *had* to leave Friends House because of their inability to pay their fees since Friends House was founded in 1967.

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However, there are certain challenges facing Friends House today. A growing number of low and moderate income residents is increasing the need for non-government, donor supported financial assistance. Since the founding of Friends House in 1967, the cost of heating, electricity, food, insurance and maintenance have increased dramatically while HUD federal subsidies for low and moderate income independent living housing have leveled off and will be totally phased out in 2016.

There is an increasing need for financial assistance for rent subsidies and medical costs not covered by Medicare—medications, eyeglasses, dental care, and hearing aids. Federal and state funding of medical assistance for low-income seniors is expected to significantly decline for the foreseeable future.

Over 50% of our residents are Friends, the highest ratio we are aware of for any such facility in the country. Approximately one-half of these Friends living in independent living or in the nursing home receive rent subsidy or medical assistance. Twenty percent of Friends House apartment residents receive over \$100,000 in direct financial assistance each year from Friends House. Of those receiving assistance, 72% are Quakers, many of whom have dedicated their lives to Friends service.

If you would like to find out more about Friends House or how you can make a contribution to Friends House, please contact Richard Barnes, Director of Advancement and Development, Friends House Retirement Community, 17340 Quaker Lane, Sandy Spring, MD 20860, call 540.290.0476, or email FriendsHouse@sylvania.org.

BYM CAMPS STILL LOOKING FOR CAMPERS

Shiloh and Opequon Quaker Camps still have room for more campers aged 9-14. We even have room for a few more girls at Catoctin! If you have not already applied for camp, please do. If you know of anyone who may enjoy coming to camp, please encourage them to apply. To apply go to www.bym-rsf.org/camping/ and click on the link to apply online! For more information call the BYM office and ask for Jane, or e-mail me at janemegginson@bym-rsf.org.

STUDENT LOANS AVAILABLE

The Educational Funding Resources Committee of BYM has sizeable funds for educational loans to qualified college and graduate school students as well as secondary school students. Loans can be up to \$5000 per academic year, and

no interest is charged while the student is in school. The application has several parts including comments by a member of the student's Monthly Meeting, so allow ample time to complete the form by the May 15, 2006 deadline. Application packages may be obtained from the Baltimore Yearly Meeting office by e-mail to sandramichaels@bym-rsf.org, or write to BYM at 17100 Quaker Lane, Sandy Spring, MD 20860. The Committee will meet to evaluate applications in early June, and applicants will be informed of the results by June 30, 2006. (The application package should be on the BYM web site by mid-February.)

Oliver Moles, Clerk

BYM Educational Funding Resources Committee

THE QUAKER FACILITIES FOUNDATION ONE MEETING'S ANSWER TO A PROBLEM AMONG FRIENDS

In 2003 a group of Friends from Midlothian Monthly Meeting in the greater Richmond, Virginia area, got together to discuss the pervasive problem unprogrammed Friends seem to have in raising funds for meetinghouses and other facility needs of the local meeting. From that discussion was born the idea of beginning a non-profit corporation chartered to help Friends acquire desperately needed meetinghouses and other facilities.

It was determined this would be accomplished by providing to Friends grants to supplement their fundraising efforts, ideas and programs to help them effectively raise funding for facilities projects, and general support by becoming a vehicle through which the sharing of fundraising experiences could occur.

The group brought their proposal to Midlothian Monthly Meeting for Business for further discernment on how to proceed. The monthly meeting agreed to help the group charter a non-profit corporation that would be under the care of Midlothian Monthly Meeting. A proposal was then submitted by the meeting to the Chace Fund of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for a grant to establish The Quaker Facilities Foundation (QFF). The proposal was accepted and endorsed by the Chace Fund committee and funding for the Foundation's establishment was granted by them. Upon incorporating as a non-profit corporation and after careful review of the Foundation's charter, a 501(c)3 non-profit status was received from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The board of directors for QFF are all volunteers who must be approved by Midlothian Monthly Meeting.

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The Quaker Facilities Foundation should not be confused with the Friends Meetinghouse Fund maintained by Friends General Conference (FGC). The Friends Meetinghouse Fund primarily offers interest-bearing loans to meetings. They also provide a place for meetings and individuals to invest money, so there will be money to loan for the construction and expansion of meetinghouses. Occasionally, if funds are available and a real need is demonstrated, they offer grants of a few thousand dollars.

The Quaker Facilities Foundation has a different mission. It is looking at the whole spectrum of helping with the acquisition and expansion of Quaker Facilities. The Foundation does not make loans to meetings as does the Friends Meetinghouse Fund. It does hope to be able to make grants to meetings for their facility projects. The sharing of ideas through its web site at www.QuakerFacilitiesFoundation.org, and the development of fund-raising mechanisms for local meetings will be the primary focus of the Quaker Facilities Foundation. Eventually, QFF is anticipating that many other mechanisms and ways to help meetings will be provided.

The success of the Foundation will depend on the support and interest received from Friends. If it is supported, it will become a much-needed clearinghouse for ideas, fund-raising approaches, and support in many different forms.

The Foundation currently offers three fund-raising programs to Friends; **MeetinghouseShare**, **Friendly Excursions**, and **IdeaShare**. Eventually, the Foundation plans to support more programs as ideas develop. Recently, a web site at www.QuakerFacilitiesFoundation.org was established by the Foundation to promote these fund-raising programs.

MeetinghouseShare

MeetinghouseShare is both a “giving” and “receiving” program to help Quaker meetinghouses spring up all over the U.S. It centers on a campaign through the QFF website to receive from Friends a \$5 continuous monthly donation to **MeetinghouseShare**. Five dollars may not seem like it is enough to help - BUT IT IS! If just one out of every twenty Quakers associated with unprogrammed meetings donate \$5 each month

MeetinghouseShare, between \$600,000 and \$1,000,000 would be available to grant to local meetings EACH YEAR for their meetinghouse and other facility projects (figures depend on who is counted as a “Quaker”). You can do the math if even a greater proportion of Quakers participate. **MeetinghouseShare** has the potential of having a tremendous impact on Quaker facility projects.

There are a number of meetings struggling to raise funds to build a meetinghouse. Friends at these meetings are meeting in private homes or in rented spaces where conditions are not conducive for the growth of Quakerism. It has been demonstrated often that meetings tend to grow once the meeting obtains its own meetinghouse. A meetinghouse tells the community, “We’re here to stay”. Upon owning a meetinghouse, the meeting may then need to expand their worship room, add religious education rooms, or add other facilities that enhance the life and community of the meeting.

Through **MeetinghouseShare** you can easily help. If just 5% of Friends in the U.S. participate in this continuous giving program at just \$5 each month, QFF could help 40 meetings each year with a sizable contribution. Visit

www.QuakerFacilitiesFoundation.org if you are interested in participating in this program that has the potential to have a high impact on providing meetinghouses and other Quaker facilities for Friends. Giving is made simple through the web site by allowing Friends to use a credit card that will be debited each month. The credit card processing is encrypted and secure. More than 93% of all donations through **MeetinghouseShare** via credit card go directly to meetinghouse projects, as well as other facility projects of Friends. Since the Foundation utilizes the internet to conduct business, overhead is kept low. All operational expenses are related to credit card processing and maintenance of the Foundation’s web site.

The Quaker Facilities Foundation will choose a benefiting meeting as soon as \$15,000 in donations are accumulated. Meetings will be chosen based on three simple criteria:

In existence for at least 5 years

Continuous building fund for at least 1 year

Has been on the **MeetinghouseShare**

application list the longest (first come, first serve)

Application can be made to be a benefiting meeting by accessing QFF’s web site at

www.QuakerFacilitiesFoundation.org.

Friendly Excursions

Many Quaker meetings are struggling to raise enough funds to build or expand their meetinghouse, retirement facility, school, or other facility. This is a program that would provide substantial funding for these facilities projects of Friends. Additionally, **Friendly Excursions** has the potential to increase interaction and visitation between Friends meetings. Also, **Friendly Excursions** provides an avenue for Quaker outreach by conveying to others the values represented by Quakerism: understanding between peoples, appreciation and respect for nature and the

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environment, wholesome activities that connect people, peaceful living, and socially responsible concern for others.

Friendly Excursions offers to the public:

Tours and Day Trips to local sights of interest and education

Seminars that inform and educate

Workshops that improve awareness and knowledge through experience

The fundraising mission of **Friendly Excursions** is to help local meetings:

Increase capital for a meetinghouse fund

Provide funds for any other facilities under the care of the meeting such as retirement communities, schools, social service facilities, etc.

Contribute towards the mortgage payment for any of the above Quaker facilities

Detailed information on how a meeting can begin their local **Friendly Excursions** can be found on the QFF web site at www.QuakerFacilitiesFoundation.org.

IdeaShare

IdeaShare is a simple idea. It is a forum for Quakers to share ideas on obtaining funds for facility projects. As ideas are shared, we can learn from each other, try various fundraising approaches, and report back to each other through **IdeaShare** on the QFF web site about our experience with each idea.

To share an idea through **IdeaShare** or report on your experience with an idea you received from The Quaker Facilities Foundation, visit the QFF web site at www.QuakerFacilitiesFoundation.org.

BYM SESSION TO EXPLORE 'LIVING IN HARMONY'

Friends from across Baltimore Yearly Meeting will gather again this summer from July 31-Aug. 6 at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia for annual session. The theme this year is "Living in Harmony: Called to Live in Harmony With One Another and All Creation." We will explore through plenary presentations, workshops, worship sharing, and our business sessions how Friends of varying persuasions can come together in love to address the concerns of the wider world, in particular the need to gently use the resources of our Earth. Confirmed plenary speakers are Rachel Stacy and Marshall Massey. Rachel Stacy is from Gun Powder Monthly Meeting and was appointed last year to be one of BYM's representatives to the Friends United Meeting General Board, and planned and attended last summer's World Gathering of Young (Adult) Friends in England and in Kenya. Marshall Massey, of Omaha Monthly Meeting, is the co-founder of

Friends in Unity with Nature, now called Quaker Earthcare Witness.

The weeklong session will open Monday, July 31 with a retreat sponsored by Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee. Registration for the formal BYM session will be on Tuesday, Aug. 1, beginning at 1 p.m. and the first business session will be from 3-5 p.m. that afternoon.

Again this year, BYM hopes to encourage Friends who have never come the session to attend by offering "two-free-days" coupons. Each monthly meeting will receive three such coupons and are asked to identify three Friends within their meeting who they feel would benefit from attending. The coupon covers the holders' registration and room and board costs for two days. Monthly meetings are encouraged to give additional financial support to the recipients of the coupons so that they might stay longer. Meetings should consider how they might in other ways encourage as many of their members and attenders to participate in the BYM annual meeting as possible.

2006 FGC GATHERING

Greetings from the Gathering Committee for the 2006 Friends General Conference Gathering of Friends! We have felt Spirit ever-present with us as we have prayed and planned to bring the Gathering week of worship, workshops, programs and community for the first time to the western part of the U.S. We will gather, God willing, July 1-7 at Pacific Lutheran University in Washington State near the Puget Sound.

On March 1, Friends can see '06 Gathering details in the Advance Program at www.fgcquaker.org and can begin registering for the Gathering on that date. We are encouraging Friends to use on-line registration. Real-time confirmation of your workshop choice will begin on March 1. Also, the Gathering may reach capacity before published deadlines are reached and registration will be closed when programs are full. Printed copies of the Advance Program are being sent to meetings in North America, scheduled to arrive in Friends' homes no later than March 15.

AFRICAN GREAT LAKES INITIATIVE

No society that feeds its children on tales of successful violence can expect them not to believe that violence in the end is rewarded. -Margaret Mead, anthropologist (1901-1978)

The African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI) a project of Friends Peace Teams is sponsoring international workcamps in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda

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and Uganda. A two-day pre-service training begins on June 23 near Washington DC. Workcampers fly to Africa on June 24 and return to the US on July 29. Workcampers will assist with building or rebuilding homes, clinics and/or schools. Visit our website at <http://www.aglionline.org> or contact Dawn Rubbert, Program Coordinator, dawn@aglionline.org.

EMBRACED MINISTRY THROUGH BYM

[Linda Heacock recently returned from a 6-week trip to Kenya as part of an "Embraced Ministry" endorsed by her Meeting, Richmond Friends, in the spring of 2005, and subsequently approved by Baltimore Yearly Meeting at the 2005 Annual Session.]*

My ministry with Friends Peace Teams (FPT) evolved out of a strong personal leading to offer training and skills gained over the years in the field of alternatives to violence education, as a resource to the work being done in Kenya and parts of Africa through FPT's *African Great Lakes Initiative* (AGLI). With overwhelming support received from my Meeting, Yearly Meeting, my ministry support committee, family, and friends, my leading became reality in September of 2005, when I embarked on a 6-week journey to Kenya. I joined a peace team of Kenyan facilitators to deliver Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops in Western Kenya and Nairobi. The program is a joint collaborative effort of FPT-AGLI and the Kenyan organization, *Friends for Peace and Community Development* (FPCD). AVP was originally founded in the United States in the 1970's by Quakers in their work with prison populations. It is now international in scope with programs in many countries on nearly every continent. The program is still in its infancy in Kenya, and so they are very dependent on the resources and leadership offered by the African Great Lakes Initiative. AGLI supports and promotes peace activities at the grassroots level in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. In collaboration with yearly meetings and other peacemaking organizations in the area, AGLI works together with native people in local communities to deliver programs and training, and promote deeper understanding and community between Friends in Africa and those in the United States.

The major focus of my trip was devoted to facilitating a series of five 3-day AVP workshops to a diverse group of participants; including Friends church members, community officials, police, teachers, police, and youth. Much of my time was also spent meeting with Quaker activists and leaders in Kenya, attending Quaker worship services, and visiting several of the many programs under the auspices of FPCD and collaborating Yearly

Meetings. I learned that FPCD also sponsors orphan support groups (caregivers of children orphaned due to the AIDS pandemic), programs on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, women empowerment programs, and an extensive youth program that includes peer education, community outreach, economic empowerment, and the use of participatory drama focusing on pertinent issues such as gender-based violence, substance abuse, and HIV/AIDS.

Among the most meaningful experiences I had while in Kenya was witnessing the profound impact of AVP on its participants. I believe the AVP training has been so universally effective because of its concept of "*Transforming Power*", which is the core philosophy of AVP. To me Transforming Power is synonymous with the Quaker "Inner Light", the belief that there is 'that of God' in every human being. In our workshops, following an initial phase of building trust and community, each group would inevitably begin to reveal their personal stories – through conflict scenarios shared in small groups, in role plays, and large group discussions. It soon became apparent that no one had escaped incidences of overt violence in their lives. Violent outcomes – or the potential for violence – were shared in countless examples: disputes over land or animals, quarreling between neighbors, domestic violence, alcoholism, and extra-marital affairs. The training presented our participants with many questions; some seemed almost desperate for answers – *how do I deal with drunkenness and violence in my family, how can I personally confront the HIV/AIDS pandemic, what can I do about my anger??* Perhaps because, collectively, these participants have experienced their share of violence in their lives, we found in general they seemed to have understood the roots of violence in all its forms almost without question. They were ready and willing to look at its alternatives and how to apply them. This may explain why our experiential exercises and role plays were so effective at each level of the workshops. Over and over again, evidence of "*Transforming Power*" was both demonstrated and noted by our participants.

In my 6 weeks of living and working with the people of Kenya, I was privileged to learn much about and appreciate their everyday life and culture. I found I began taking certain inconveniences – lack of plumbing, electricity, modern transportation – in stride. They were overshadowed by the intense richness in the quality of my daily interactions with the environment and the people. I wrote of my experience of the people in my daily Kenyan journal:

"There is a spirit of perseverance and determination in the face of many odds. The

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average citizen has experienced their share of hardship. Because of a severe shortage of medical care, and the prevalence of AIDS, malaria, TB and other disease, most people have lived through the death of multiple family members by the time they have reached adulthood. I find that those I am living and working among demonstrate a genuine acceptance of and appreciation for the good things life has to offer, instead of dwelling on hardship and diversity. They grieve, let go, and move on. Those I meet often appear to be living life to the fullest, reaping gratitude and joy from the little they have.'

I have learned that there are more Quakers in Kenya than there are on the entire planet, and that there is an enormous amount of visible grass roots work being done in the region by Quakers – Friends' churches and organizations – in the name of peace and non-violence. I am left wondering what Friends in the West can learn from this amazing level of priority and commitment in service to others. Our own Meeting, as well as other Meetings within BYM as members of Friends United Meeting, has recently expressed an intention to look for more common ground with FUM. This discussion has led to the suggestion that we can search for individual or corporate ways to support FUM's strong peace and justice witness, testimonies with which we are in unity. I strongly resonate with this idea. Friends in Kenya are deeply indebted to the help that comes from the US through programs such as AVP and the other projects of Friends Peace Teams, AGLI.

My life will forever be changed from all I have seen and experienced while in Kenya. I am now even more convinced that the intentions of the Spirit are for me to continue to be an instrument for the work in Kenya, and to do my part to strengthen the "common ground" supporting our joint testimonies of peace and nonviolence.

**Guidelines, Embracing the Ministry of Friends, BYM Committee for the Nurture and Recognition of Ministry Committee and Ministry and Counsel Committee, May 2000*

MANY FACETS OF QUAKER COMMUNITY

Medford Leas, a not-for-profit Quaker community for older adults located in Medford, NJ, just 18 miles east of Philadelphia, cordially invites members of Baltimore Yearly Meeting to a Quaker Gathering to be held April 29, 2006, from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM to explore the many facets of Quaker Community. Paul Lacey, retired professor, Earlham College and Board Chair of AFSC, will deliver the keynote address "Sustaining Quaker Fellowship

Through Community," followed by a panel discussion "Investing Yourself in Positive Life as You Age." Medford Leas is offering overnight accommodations with local Friends for those interested for the nights of April 28th and/or April 29th. The event will also provide opportunities for fellowship with Medford Leas' Quaker residents, as well as tours of the Arboretum and Community. Members of PYM and NYYM have also been invited. Registration: \$15.00 per person (includes meals); no charge for those under age 14. Reservation Deadline: April 7th. For more information, or to register, please contact: 800-331-4302 or 609-654-3000, Medford Leas, One Medford Leas Way, Medford, NJ 08055, www.medfordleas.org

JEAN ZARU OF RAMALLAH FRIENDS MEETING TO SPEAK IN D.C PURSUE JUSTICE! SEEK PEACE! WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

Dear Friend, I would like to invite you to attend an exciting conference March 3-4. A featured speaker is the Clerk of Ramallah Monthly Meeting, Jean Zaru, who some of you have heard speak at your monthly meeting or at BYM. The conference is hosted by the Washington section of Friends of Sabeel North America. Sabeel is a Palestinian Christian organization based in Jerusalem. We encourage you to attend and to send this notice to anyone you think might be interested. We especially encourage you to publicize it at your monthly meeting and particularly your Monthly Meeting's Peace and Social Concerns Committee. Please post this notice on your meeting's bulletin board, and please circulate the Sabeel conference notice on your meeting's newsletter or bulletins.

Also, you may wish to ask your own monthly meeting's Peace and Social concerns Committee to serve as a cosponsor. Names of cosponsors will appear on the program of the conference. American Friends Service Committee is a cosponsor.

Most of all, please come to the conference and spread the word as widely as possible among your Friends. Program and documentation appears on the following website, www.wiamep.org.

Also, Jean is scheduled to speak at Bethesda Meeting March 19 at 12:30 and BYM Interim Meeting March 25th.

Peace,
John P. Salzberg
Bethesda Friends Meeting

MONTHLY MEETING NEWS

BETHESDA MONTHLY MEETING

Working with due Quaker haste, the “Oversight & Pastoral Care Committee” began seeking clarity on its name in 2003. In late 2005 we reached clearness and renamed the committee concerned with the care and support of Bethesda’s members and attenders the “Pastoral Care Committee” (PCC).

PCC is re-establishing a support group active in our Meeting in the late 90s: “Transition, Loss, and Caring.” This group, led by Elizabeth Conklin and Margaret Plank, will facilitate worship-sharing around the challenging changes we are finding in our lives around the issues of many different types of transitions, caring for loved ones, and loss.

Births/Adoptions: Collier Elkington Zug born 11/24/05 to Jim & Rebecca Zug

Deaths: Phyllis Luckenbaugh, 12/2/04; Nancy Ellicot Madeira, 2/1/05; Jean Brandes, 2/20/05; Jerome Steffens, 3/1/05; Linda Kravitz, 3/19/05 John Buck, 3/30/05;

Marriages/Ceremonies of Commitment
Dabney Ingram and Christian Hackett, 10/1/05

CARLISLE FRIENDS MEETING

Friends in Carlisle participated in Carlisle Cares for a second year. Carlisle Friends opened their meetinghouse during the month of December to provide overnight shelter for the homeless. Friends also extended an invitation to their guests to join them at their annual Christmas program and potluck, and to their January potluck.

The children of the Meeting presented a Christmas program at the Todd Home, a retirement/personal care facility in Carlisle that the Meeting has adopted. We have been presenting programs to Todd Home on a monthly basis for approximately 15 years. The many talents of the children and adult Friends were very much appreciated.

Friends hosted a Second Hour in January featuring Sandy Grotberg (Chambersburg Meeting) speaking about her work in the Alternatives to Violence Project/African Great Lakes Initiative.

In concert with Friends everywhere, Carlisle Friends held a Meeting for Worship with a concern for Tom Fox and the Christian Peacemakers held in Iraq, as well as a candlelight vigil on the square in Carlisle.

We are blessed with many talented Friends in Meeting who willingly share their talents. The following poem by Friend Cox seems apropos:

Blessing on Friends

We have no hidden and secret ends,

For we are not merchants, but only good friends,

Each a sovereign lady or lord

With hand in glove, far from spear and from sword.

We do not meet in debt or greed.

We are bound by love and not by need.

Each is a sister; each is a brother;

Each is a friend; each is free from the other.

Freedom is the basis of Friendship’s Nation;

We give ourselves freely without obligation.

From *Spells For Personal Power* (©),

by Jeremiah Cox of Carlisle Meeting

DEER CREEK

We at Deer Creek show love for each other, our faith, our community and our world through our Meeting activities. Monthly restaurant luncheons have become increasingly popular as a way to deepen our friendships. Our Meeting Christmas dinner at the home of the Buchanan-Wollastons’ was a “Norman Rockwell painting” with friends of all ages. We are grateful for the insights of Sam Trueblood, who led our First Day School discussions in January. A new study group on Quakerism has attracted both Friends and attenders. Deer Creek continues to participate in community holiday worship services and has helped reestablish quarterly “community breakfasts” with other Darlington churches. Our own Burundi Quaker workcamper, Parker Bennett, and Clinton Pettus of AFSC reopened our eyes and hearts to those in need around the world. Holiday projects supported St. Elizabeth’s School, the Heifer Project and Pakistan earthquake relief. Harford Friends School thrives in our midst. We hold in the Light Friend Tom Fox, his fellow hostages and their families, and the endless other victims of the War on Terrorism.

DUNNINGS CREEK

An intriguing First Day presentation was the highlight at the autumn breakfast meeting Sept. 10 at the bucolic, deep-woods home of Gene and Holly Coia. Their daughter Emily, a June graduate of Tulane University in New Orleans, spoke about her two-month adventure last summer in an area of Mexico where abject poverty is the norm. She and 24 other United States citizens joined 25 Mexicans – ranging in age from 18 to 26 – in a program sponsored by American Friends Service Committee and a Mexican association called SEDEPAC. Emily’s group of nine went to a village called Carrizal, 10 hours northeast of Mexico, DF, which had no electricity and no running water. They lived in the village schoolroom, sleeping on cots. They soon learned to be on the alert for curious village youngsters, who would watch their every move through the open windows. For privacy, they bathed behind the water tank using a bucket and a cup. The

MONTHLY MEETING NEWS

themes of the Mexico Summer Project were cultural exchange/peace and sustainability. The group cleared paths and built retaining walls. Emily's group cooked and ate with the locals. Emily learned to grind corn into flour and make tamales. She also got to be quite proficient with a machete. Most of the people in Carrizal are subsistence farmers. While the host families were reserved and took a long time to warm up to their visitors, the children were not so aloof. They were fascinated by the stories the young people told them, in particular, the details of an airplane ride. The children wanted Emily to throw something down to them when her airplane home flew over their village.

A concert Oct. 15 at the meetinghouse netted \$816 for hurricane victims. Gene Coia and Band Aid; Nathan Gates; and the Stone River Gypsies performed before an audience that filled three-quarters of the benches.

Nancy Coleman is taking off on a long Habitat for Humanity gig. She will be leaving at the end of April to fly to New Zealand for a month. Her group of 24 will work on two houses. It won't be all work and no play. The group also will sightsee on both the north and south islands. A weeklong trip to Australia will cap the adventure.

Our Christmas Eve service and finger-food potluck features all of the traditional Christmas Carols, accompanied by Susan Williams. Sam and John Treber read appropriate Scripture passages between the carols. Every year we decorate a cut tree with white lights and handcrafted ornaments — the latter made of styrofoam balls stuck with toothpicks, painted white and festooned with glitter. Friends stand back and hurl the ornaments at the tree. Most of them stick.

Submitted by Nancy Coleman

HOPEWELL CENTRE MONTHLY MEETING

Please see special section in beginning of Interchange for Hopewell's care and concern for Tom Fox.

Our meeting continues to heal and grow since our retreat in June of last year, and we will be reporting more on that in our State-of-the-Meeting report. We regret that our website, <http://hopecentre.quaker.org> has been out of date for such a long period of time, due to technical difficulties. We plan to be up and running very soon. We thank our retiring Clerk, Anne Bacon, for her steadfastness and wisdom during the last five years; and we welcome our new Clerk, Carol Melby.

We are saddened to report the deaths of two beloved members, Brian Landes and Roger Koontz. *We pray for peace in the world.*

Submitted by Maggie Stetler, Hopewell Centre's editor of "The Monthly Silence" newsletter

FRIENDS MEETING OF WASHINGTON

Births/Adoptions: ora R. Krantz born 07/17/05 to Tracy Hart and Gabriel Krantz
Deaths: Elliot "Tad" Moore, 10/19/05; Richard B. Lynn, 11/18/05; Mildred H. O'Keefe, 12/27/05
Marriages/Ceremonies of Commitment: Janet L. Dinsmore and Franklin T. Clark, 10/01/05;
Tracy Hart Gabriel Krantz, 10/09/05

LANGLEY HILL MONTHLY MEETING

On November 26, 2005, our member Tom Fox was kidnapped in Iraq, and the life of Langley Hill Monthly Meeting changed significantly. Tom was in his third Iraq tour with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), an organization sponsored by Friends United Meeting, the Mennonites, and the Church of the Brethren. In the first days after the kidnapping, the Meeting worked to cope with being suddenly in the public eye, with reporters and TV crews all seeking interviews and information about Tom and his family. We organized an outdoor candlelight vigil near an Arlington, Virginia Metro stop on the evening before the kidnapers had threatened to kill the CPT hostages, with members of the Meeting and others reading passages from Tom's Iraq blog. We were gratified to receive support from the local Muslim community, with whom we have developed strong relations since 2001, as part of the worldwide call to have the CPT hostages released. We are also grateful for being held in the Light by many BYM Monthly Meetings, as well as Quaker Meetings and other churches around the country.

As the last two months have progressed, with the CPT hostages still being held, our activities and concerns have blossomed beyond simple concern for Tom Fox the person to a broader concern for how we can continue the type of work that Tom was doing, building interfaith and intercultural bridges and seeking justice for prisoners held in Iraq. We have held a regular series of Friday evening interfaith vigils, with 30-40 people in attendance, focused on peace. Following 90 minutes of worship sharing discussion, we break for fellowship, and then the vigil continues by candlelight until the next morning. Our Peace Committee is leading an effort to press our local Members of Congress to call for the release of information about all people being detained in Iraqi prisons. Although it has been a time of trial for our Meeting, we feel a renewed spirit of community, and energy to work for peace in the wider world.

Submitted by Doug Smith, Langley Hill

MONTHLY MEETING NEWS

MAURY RIVER

In November, Peace & Social Justice committee organized a meeting for five Maury River Friends with the Rockbridge County superintendent of schools. The intention: to begin a conversation about military recruitment in the schools and to request that the AFSC pamphlet "Do you know enough to enlist?" be made available alongside any recruitment information in the schools. The pamphlets will be stamped with names and phone numbers of local contacts. Follow-up meetings are anticipated and a workshop related to counseling those considering the military is being planned for mid-March. Friends have also held two called meetings for worship to pray for Tom Fox and the other CPT members and their captors.

Tasha Walsh was welcomed as a member. Heidi Fishpaw, daughter of Kathy Fox and Eli Fishpaw, and Heber Blanco from Argentina were married on Sept. 10, 2005, in Tamarindo, Costa Rica. William McLaughlin, husband of Nancy S. McLaughlin, died October 26, 2005. Family and friends of Bill and Nancy filled the meetinghouse for a memorial service in early November.

MIDLOTHIAN FRIENDS

Interchange hasn't heard from Midlothian Friends in several years. Here's an update.

Some recent changes have occurred regarding our meetinghouse that we purchased three years ago. A developer has granted us two additional wooded acres surrounding our existing two acres and agreed to also double the size of our parking lot at no cost. Additionally, he agreed to place five more acres of his wooded land surrounding the meetinghouse property under the care of the meeting so that it would never be developed. These measures have ensured that there will be a quiet setting for worship for future generations of Midlothian Friends in spite of the new neighborhood that will surround us. We have also completed our RE building that accommodates three classrooms and handicap access.

The Peace and Social Action Committee (PSAC) has begun to publish a newsletter with advices and news related to peace and social awareness. Additionally, they are now hosting a quarterly Quaker Forum where Friends explore peace and social issues. The committee has begun to sponsor letter-writing campaigns to government officials at our monthly potlucks. Donations by the committee to a different charity each month have dramatically increased this past year to several thousand dollars for each donation. These large donations are funded by our thriving thrift store, The Thrifty Quaker. The store, now 10 years old and self-

sustaining with 7 employees, is undergoing major renovations.

The Care and Counsel Committee has concluded a 3 year process of discernment with the meeting, exploring the meaning and process of membership. There have long been ambivalent feelings within the meeting regarding membership and its place within a spiritual society. The meeting concluded that it views membership as a personal vehicle for spiritual growth if an individual Friend finds it helpful on his or her journey. Regarding meeting committees and positions, no distinction or preference is to be made between members and attenders. Youth membership has been eliminated. Accordingly, we've contacted all of our formerly designated youth members (most of whom have become adults), and revived their connection with the meeting as full members. Many other subtle changes in our membership process have been enacted to bring our process in line with our understanding and conception of membership within a spiritual society. An outgrowth of this whole discernment process has been an audit of our Meeting for Business minutes to ensure we have accurate membership records. As a result, 4 "missing" Friends were added to our records, and their relationship with meeting has been revived. This whole discernment process has strengthened our already strong bonds with each other, increased our understanding of the importance of inclusiveness, and surprisingly increased requests for membership significantly. The meeting now has 67 members and many more attenders – all of whom are able to participate equally, with no visible distinction, in the life of our meeting.

A charitable organization under the care of Midlothian Meeting established to foster the acquisition of Quaker facilities such as meetinghouses has been revived. The organization, called The Quaker Facilities Foundation, just established the web site www.QuakerFacilitiesFoundation.org and began advertising it in Friends Journal. Take a look!

Many of the young couples who once comprised the bulk of our meeting are now finding themselves on the upper end of middle age with many life challenges. Yet, the meeting still maintains its youthful vitality and energy as it welcomes a new younger generation of seekers.

PIPE'S CREEK

In 12th month 2004 we held a "Yule get-together" which attracted many visitors and boosted our subsequent attendance by about eight. In 2004 we gained two new members (Bill Atwater and Linda Payne), in 2005 we gained Frank Reitemeyer, and in 2006, thus far, we welcomed Tony Breda. Last year Dave Rohde's membership was transferred to

MONTHLY MEETING NEWS

Aotearoa/New Zealand, while Ben Swet's and Lynda Osborne's were transferred to Frederick Monthly Meeting. In 2005 we cleaned and repainted the meetinghouse and installed a new metal roof to replace the badly degenerated wood shingles. In twelfth month 2005 we hosted a number of visitors to local houses of worship. Bill Atwater is our clerk, Frank Reitemeyer our treasurer, and Tony Breda our recording clerk. Our recorder has not yet been named, but Vangie Baker (newsletter) and C J Swet (lord of everything else) are acting pro-tem.

SANDY SPRING MONTHLY MEETING

2005 ended an exciting year for Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting, our 202nd since our founding. The Meeting grew once again by more than 25 new members, swelling to over 600 members and over 700 attenders.

The year began with the Membership and Spiritual Care Committee forming a subcommittee on Pastoral Care to help assure that, with so many souls to care for in such a large area, the spiritual and physical needs of those in our Meeting community do not fall through the cracks. The new subcommittee actively seeks out those with needs and tries to best match the need with community resources, and has planned our first-ever Pastoral Care Retreat (February 2006) to begin to train members and attenders interested in being part of the Meeting's resources to those in need.

After four years of false starts, 2005 also began with the formation of a new Facilities Planning Committee to assess the facility needs of the Meeting. Much of the effort so far has focused on our nearly 50 year old Community House, which holds First Day classes for 11 grades, committee meetings and functions and a variety of community and Meeting activities all through the week. Other areas of concern are parking and right-of-way traffic through the Meeting property. After holding three "Charrettes" (group design sessions) for all comers, the Planning Committee is expected to make its recommendations to the Meeting in the spring of 2006.

Like Meetings elsewhere, many members of the Meeting (in addition to activity by our Social Concerns Committee) responded to Katrina through both volunteer efforts and donations. We reacted in horror and sadness with the kidnapping last year of four members of the Christian Peacemaker Teams, including our own very dear friend, Tom Fox. We joined with churches and mosques everywhere calling for their release. Unfortunately, they and others remain hostage to this horrible war.

Our many standing committees, including Peace (e.g., supporting objectors to war taxes),

Friends in Unity with Nature (encouraging a deeper sanctity for the natural world), Advance and Outreach (a revival of Seeker Sessions!), remain very active in the life of the Meeting and the wider community.

We continue to be concerned about FUM hiring practices, mourn the passing of many weighty friends (including Mary Lillian Moore, Robert Turner and Roger Farquhar), and rejoice in another remarkable Christmas Pageant playing to a bursting Meetinghouse.

VALLEY FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING

With a goal of deepening our sense of community and with the help of our youth and their Religious Education leaders, we each made a personal journal page containing photos, our name and anything we would like to share about ourselves. These pages grace our meeting room. Additional second hours have given us opportunity to examine "our busy, hectic, over committed lives" and to discuss our values. A meeting for remembrance allowed us to share memories of those F(friends) and family who have died. An 89th birthday party for one of our elders gave us the chance to celebrate his many gifts to our meeting and to realize Valley Friends Meeting does have a history. Our annual frugal meal and candle lighting Christmas program was well attended. Messages shared at both of these events give us pause to appreciate all that we have, and to share with Right Sharing of World Resources and the local food bank. "Guess who is coming to Dinner" and a monthly "Back Door Coffee Hour" give us time to visit and become better acquainted. The remodeling of our basement has offered many opportunities to share skills and fellowship. This project is almost finished and will give us needed additional space. The peace murals painted by the Shiloh campers are being framed for the walls.

Current world conditions make us feel the need to state our peace testimony in a visible way. One of our attenders donated 4 locust posts from trees on his property. These have been milled, oiled by the youth and one has been planted in the ground in front of the meeting. The next step is to have peace inscriptions added in the six languages most prevalent in our community. We are hoping to eventually place the other poles in the wider community.

Valley Friends continue to support the Summer Peace Building Institute at Eastern Mennonite University by funding a partial scholarship for a student with ties to the Religious Society of Friends. We would encourage the wider Friends community to assist us in growing this scholarship by sending earmarked contributions to Valley Friends, P O Box 781, Dayton, VA 22821.

Submitted by Beverly B. Moore

Baltimore Yearly Meeting
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Calendar of Events

March

- 12..... Chesapeake Quarter; Baltimore, Stony Run Meeting; Ken Stockbridge, Clerk
18..... Peace-Making Day proposals due to Elaine Yamada, Clerk, Peace and Social Order Committee, Baltimore-Stony Run Meeting
25..... Spring Yearly Meeting Day; Stony Run Meeting; Michael Cronin, Clerk
31 – April 2...First Annual North American Conference for Racial Justice and Equality; Burlington Meeting, New Jersey

April

- 7-9..... Young Friends Bus Trip; Richmond. Please submit your forms to Hope Braveheart.
9 Centre Quarter, State College, Susan Williams, clerk.
21-23... Shiloh Work Weekend, David Hunter
28-30.... Catocin Work Weekend, David Hunter

May

- 6-7..... Junior Young Friends Conference - Annapolis MM. Please submit your forms.
11-14.... Eyes Wide Open Exhibit in Washington DC
12-14.... Catocin Work Weekend, David Hunter
15..... Student Loan Application Deadline, Oliver Moles, clerk.
20..... Friends Wilderness Center's Open House! Contact Sheila Bach.
19-21... Young Friends Conference; Sandy Spring Meeting. Please submit forms to Hope Braveheart
19-21.... Catocin Work Weekend, David Hunter

June

- 2-4..... The Quaker Initiative to End Torture Conference, Guilford College, Greensboro, North Carolina
2-4..... Opequon Work Weekend, David Hunter
4..... Centre Quarter, Dunnings Creek, Susan Williams, clerk.
11 Chesapeake Quarter, Little Falls MM, Ken Stockbridge, clerk.
17..... (date and place is not yet confirmed, see BYM website for details as they become available).... **Summer Yearly Meeting Day; Monthly Meeting TBA; Michael Cronin, Clerk**

July

- 7-31-8-6..BYM Annual Session; James Madison University; Lauri Perman, Clerk of Yearly Meeting**
15..... HIPP summer institute for Aug 7-11; Registration Deadline; Kathryn Liss, AFSC-MAR website
15..... Harford Friends School Annual Blueberry Festival, Deer Creek Friends Meeting

Receive your Interchange as much as two weeks earlier by requesting an e-mail notice that it is up and available from the BYM website. This also saves the Yearly Meeting printing and postage costs.