

Interchange

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

THESE TIMES! WHAT TO DO? LET'S EXPLORE TOGETHER AT ANNUAL SESSION

If it sometimes seems that Friends' sense of testimony has waned in recent years, it is certainly not for lack of issues. The difficulty, rather, is in knowing where to start. Our problems can seem so overwhelming, so big, so impersonal, that it can lead to paralysis. In the face of the sheer number and magnitude of our problems, I suspect that all of us have at times struggled with the temptation to hopelessness and despair.

-Thomas Gates, *You Are My Witnesses*,
Pendle Hill Pamphlet #435 p. 21-22

Ken Stockbridge, Presiding Clerk

When I look at the theme narrative (p. 2) for this year's Annual Session, *Growing Toward Justice—Acting on Faith*, I quickly feel overwhelmed by the range of issues cited, especially realizing how little I'm doing about them. Yet I take heart in knowing that I am part of a vibrant spiritual community in which so many people are involved in great efforts on these and other concerns. Our blessed community provides a space in which we can support each other in growing into our gifts and leadings, integrating our contemplative and activist impulses as mutually supportive and essential aspects of the life of the Spirit. This is true both in our local Meetings and in the wider Quaker community.

Our Annual Session is an especially rich opportunity to connect with Friends from other Meetings to learn what each other is doing and explore ways to work together. It offers a truly exciting variety of plenaries, workshops, interest groups. Junior Yearly Meeting provides rich programs and experiences for our children. We share fellowship at meals, worship sharing, and other times. Also, through our business sessions, we co-create our blessed community, making decisions that include everyone (which is a revolutionary act in the current partisan, polarized political environment).

Imagine if you left our Annual Session with a greater sense of clarity of what you are personally led to do, what you can do that makes a difference, and who wants to share in that work with you. Wouldn't that help energize you? Wouldn't it help energize our shared Quaker communities and our witness, locally and in the Yearly Meeting?

Come. Be a part of it. All are welcome, for a day or for the whole week.

The Loving Presence does not burden us equally with all things, but considerably puts upon each of us just a few central tasks... For each of us these special undertakings are our [particular] share in the joyous burdens of love...

- Thomas Kelly

BYM ANNUAL SESSION 2017 IS RETURNING TO HOOD COLLEGE!

Barbarie Hill, Program Committee Clerk

Spring is definitely here, and many folks are making travel plans for the summer. We hope that BYM Annual Session will figure prominently on your calendar of important things to do in the summer months. With our theme, **Growing Toward Justice – Acting on Faith**, in mind, we've planned an interesting variety of plenaries and workshops, and there are always many useful interest groups. Participation in business sessions helps us understand and carry on the activities of the Yearly Meeting, and worship sharing, meals, and singing provide opportunities for Friends to get to know one another better. The beautiful grounds of Hood College in Frederick, Maryland offer ample outdoor spaces to relax and enjoy solitude or a chat with Friends.

We always have an excellent program for Junior Young Friends, too, but this year we're making a special effort to attract families



Annual Session 2016 photo by Jennifer Domenick

with children who are in 8th grade or under. Yes, children from cradle through 8th grade will attend Annual Session **AT NO COST** this year! We hope this will make it easier for more families to have the wonderful experience of Quaker family camp where children attend stimulating classes and activities while adults have their own events, and all ages share activities like worship sharing, an intergenerational plenary, and the All-Age Celebration. And we shouldn't leave out the fun of eating in the cafeteria (with ice cream) and sleeping

in a dormitory – no cooking or chores for anyone. Grandparents, think about bringing a grandchild or two – it's a wonderful bonding experience!

Prior attenders have let us know that the sense of community at Annual Session is the number one reason for their presence. We want everyone to experience that shared community, so save the dates of **July 31 through August 6** and plan to attend.

**ANNUAL SESSION 2017 BEGINS JULY 31 FOR THE PRE-SESSION RETREAT
REGULAR PROGRAMING, INCLUDING JUNIOR YEARLY MEETING, BEGINS TUESDAY, AUGUST 1 AFTER LUNCH
CHILDREN FROM BIRTH TO 8TH GRADE ATTEND FOR FREE!**

ANNUAL SESSION 2017 THEME

GROWING TOWARD JUSTICE – ACTING ON FAITH

With our 2017 program theme - “Growing Toward Justice – Acting on Faith” - together we will seek to understand and discover ways to “live in that life and power that will take away the occasion” for the tragic violence, injustice, and lost human potential that begins in childhood and extends into entire communities.

We look at the tragedies of gun violence, substance abuse, untreated mental health issues, mass incarceration, etc. and ask what caused these situations and how can we work to prevent them in the future. Can we speak to issues starting in earliest childhood and reaching into a person’s adult life that sowed the seeds of a violent and unjust world? We are concerned that too many children are born into dysfunctional or harmful situations, that schools do not have adequate resources and support for struggling children, that there are not opportunities for positive activities to encourage creativity or wholesome sports, that discipline too often reinforces negative self-images instead of offering mediation, mentors or educational alternatives, and that too many young adults are not adequately prepared for meaningful employment.

And what stands in the way of our responding to the call to act? Fear too often holds us back from engaging meaningfully with others. As T.S. Eliot wrote “between the idea... and the act falls the Shadow” (*The Hollow Men* (1925)). Will we hesitate to share our lives with those with whom we might interact? Will we indulge our fear that they won’t like us, that we’ll make mistakes, that it will take too much time or require too much commitment, that we’ll not know what to say or do?

Or, in the Spirit, can we take courage, follow our leading, and see how way opens? As Friends, our shared Light can overcome the Shadow and the darkness of our times. Anne Frank, writing in her diary during the darkest of times, observed “Isn’t it wonderful that none of us need wait a moment before starting to change the world?”

Calling all Artists, Artisans & Creative Individuals

(Including those who don’t know they are!)

Join us in visualizing the Beloved Community!

As part of its work to create an environment of deeper & more meaningful equity, diversity, & inclusion across age and racial/ethnic lines, the GDLC invites everyone to delve into their creative spirit, bringing art of any medium that answers the following query for a low-pressure, self-curated art exhibit which will be displayed at Annual Session 2017:

As we work towards becoming a more diverse Yearly Meeting, what does the Beloved Community we hope to create in the future look like (or sound like or feel like) to you? How can we live into that community now? What are we letting go of or changing to make this possible? What are we longing for and gaining?



Keep your eyes out on the Annual Session section of BYM’s website for more details.



PRE-SESSION RETREAT: AMY SCHMALJOHN AND ALAN EVANS COURAGE AS A SPIRITUAL STATE OF BEING

This year’s opening retreat for Annual Session will be led by Gunpowder Friends Alan Evans and Amy Schmaljohn. Together, they serve as co-clerks of the Spiritual Formation Working Group and host the program’s twice-annual retreats. Alan is a graduate of the Shalem Institute’s Spiritual Guidance Program. He has served as a retreat leader and mentor for Shalem’s Spiritual Deepening



Program and served on the adjunct faculty at Bon Secours Spiritual Center. His ministry includes service as a spiritual director for both individuals and groups. In addition to her service to BYM on the Ministry and Counsel Committee and the Spiritual Formation Program, Amy teaches religious studies and social justice at

Friends School of Baltimore. She lives in northern Baltimore County, where she and her husband steward a small farm and woodlands.

The opening retreat will invite participants to explore courage as a spiritual state of being. Through individual reflection, worship sharing, and creative expression, we will consider three foundations for spiritual courage: deep knowing of self, trust in the self-Spirit relationship, and being in community. Come and help us prepare the ground for this year’s Annual Session, which will encourage us to “Grow Toward Justice” and “Act on Faith.”



2017 PLENARY SESSIONS

TUESDAY EVENING PANEL DISCUSSION ENDING THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE

Panelists:

Phil Caroom, former Maryland Juvenile Court master & judge

Eddie Conway, founder of prison literacy project

Natalie Finegar, Deputy District Public Defender for Baltimore City

Vince Taylor, former Juvenile Probation Officer and manager of school “Restorative Justice Circles”

Moderator: Ruth Flower

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON PLENARY SPEAKERS: BETTE HOOVER AND MARCY BAKER SEITEL NONVIOLENCE AND SOCIAL ACTION FOR ALL AGES

This interactive plenary for ages 5 - 90 will focus on our faith-based thirst for justice based on principles of nonviolence. Seeing that of God in everyone calls us to live our lives in ways that reflect that profound truth. “Seek peace & pursue it.” “War is still not the answer.” “Black lives matter.” These statements of faith expect action. Together we will practice nonviolent actions, make posters for protests, and find other ways to move us towards social justice.



Bette Hoover is a member of Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting and past clerk. She worked as the director of the AFSC/DC program, led AVP workshops in prison and facilitates Circles for Restorative Justice.

Marcy Baker Seitel is a member of Adelphi Friends Meeting, and has worked for a long time in creative conflict resolution, as a workshop facilitator and classroom teacher, and as a teacher in the JYM program. Marcy enjoys working with Friends of all ages on issues of conflict resolution and peace making.



FRIDAY EVENING CAREY LECTURER: SHAN CRETIN RACE, POVERTY AND PRIVILEGE: WORKING FOR JUSTICE IN DIVISIVE TIMES

Shan Cretin has served as General Secretary for the American Friends Service Committee since September 2010, with responsibility for AFSC’s worldwide peace, social justice and humanitarian assistance programs. She had previously served seven years as a Regional Director supervising AFSC’s programs in Southern California, Hawai’i, Arizona, and New Mexico.

Before coming to AFSC, Shan worked for 28 years in public health, serving on the faculties of Harvard, Yale, West China Medical University, Shanghai



Medical University, and University of California at Los Angeles. Shan has lived, worked and traveled throughout the United States and many locations in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and Canada.

A member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Shan is a former clerk of Pacific Yearly Meeting. She co-founded the Los Angeles chapter of Alternatives to Violence Project and has facilitated conflict resolution workshops at the Chino Youth Correctional Facility and in the Los Angeles community.

ANNUAL SESSION 2017 EVENTS OF THE WEEK

WORSHIP SHARING

Our days at Annual Session begin with worship sharing from 8:15-9:15am. This year, we will offer many ways to get ready for our days of worship, business, learning, and fellowship. You can sign up for a Worship Sharing group when you arrive on campus. The Worship Sharing groups invite Friends to share deeply around the theme and queries for Annual Session. In addition to the standard worship-sharing format, we are pleased to offer some alternatives.

- In the “Experiment with Light” format led by Sarah Bur and Susan Russell Walters, Friends will experience a guided meditation thought to reflect the worship experience of early Friends. The meditation prompts participants to focus on an issue of concern and to be guided by the Light in considering how to move forward. Following the meditation, participants will share about the experience.
- In a session led by Ruth Fitz inviting participants to sing and chant, “we will listen and sing and wait to share together as we seek to be attuned to the Divine.”
- A “Family Friendly” worship sharing session will make space for laughter, movement, and other gifts of being in intergenerational community.
- Our Unity with Nature committee will hold a worship sharing session out of doors.

Whatever morning worship sharing session you join, we hope you’ll be nurtured and make new connections while at Annual Session.

BIBLE STUDY

One of the joys of Annual Session for many Friends is participating in morning Bible Study (Wednesday through Saturday, 8:15 – 9:15am). We are delighted that Sabrina McCarthy and David Etheridge will be leading Bible Study again this year. Participants will explore four different methods of Bible Study each morning, each with a different passage. Studying Matthew 8:28-34, we will “Put ourselves in the story.” Exploring Mark 7:24-30, we will follow the “Friendly Bible Study” method. With Matthew 5:38-48, will use the ancient method of “Lectio Divina,” and studying Exodus 2: 1-8, we will use Biblical commentaries. Come to discover many ways to engage the Bible for spiritual growth and deepening.

WORKSHOPS

Informative and thought-provoking workshops on a wide variety of topics of interest to Friends are presented on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday afternoons from 2 to 4pm. Workshop leaders are experienced BYM members or representatives from other Quaker organizations. Detailed descriptions of workshops are on pages 5-6. Sign up for one Workshop or a Connecting Local Meetings session each day. Some workshops limit attendance, so make sure you get the workshop of your choice! You may indicate your workshop preferences at the time you register or when you arrive on campus.

INTEREST GROUPS

Interest Groups provide a great way to gather informally to focus on topics of interest to Friends, and can greatly enrich your Annual Session experience. Topics and locations are announced in the *Daily Minute*. Since we can only have up to 15 groups at a time, there is a priority list for subjects:

1. BYM business concerns;
2. BYM activities: committees, working groups, response to issues raised by speakers;
3. BYM Representatives to Quaker organizations;
4. Local Meeting concerns;
5. Other Quaker organizations.

Please sign up at least a day before the event for a room. Write a short blurb to be included in the Daily Minute. If your request is accepted, that information will be printed in the Daily Minute along with a room number. Leave your request in the folder at the Information Table in Whitaker Student Center. Please note: If a major item arises in Meeting for Business that requires a threshing session, this could take precedence over Interest Groups, even if already scheduled. You may also share your request with Barbara Thomas in advance. (bthomas60@comcast.net)

PRODUCE DEPARTMENT

On Wednesday and Friday nights at 9:15 pm, Friends gather to participate in this inter-generational activity of games and worship sharing organized by the Young Friends. It is an opportunity to get to know people of different ages in a relaxed, playful, intentional way, as well as to support our rising leaders.

ALL AGE CELEBRATION

Join us Thursday for an evening of intergenerational fun! This year, we will be focusing on ways to harness the theme of Annual Session. Enjoy ice cream and other getting to know you activities. We hope to see you there!

COFFEE HOUSE

The Coffee House is a series of open-mic performances coordinated by Young Friends. It begins at 7:30 pm on Saturday. Anyone may sign up to perform. Sign up notices will be posted in several locations around campus later in the week.

THE DAILY MINUTE

The *Daily Minute* is the newsletter of Annual Session. Each day it will be available at the dining hall and online, giving highlights and updates for the events of the day. Other messages can provide helpful information for campus services or other news.

EVENING SINGING

Gather ‘round, all! You can sing around the piano from 6:15 to 7:15pm Tuesday through Saturday evenings.

HEALING CENTER

The Healing Center is a place to BE, just as we are, with our talents and strengths, our ills and wounds, centering in the Light. The Program Committee has identified a space for the Healing Center, but does not yet have a volunteer to organize it. Anyone led to take the lead on this should contact Barbarie Hill, the Clerk of Program Committee (barbariehill@gmail.com) as soon as possible.

REGISTRATION DESK HOURS

Monday:	12:00 pm - 2:15 pm 4:30 pm - 7:00 pm
Tuesday:	8:45 am - 9:15 am 12:30 pm - 2:45 pm 4:30 pm - 7:00 pm
Wednesday:	8:45 am - 9:15 am 1:15 pm - 1:45 pm 4:30 pm - 7:00 pm
Thursday:	8:45 am - 9:15 am 1:15 pm - 1:45 pm 4:30 pm - 7:00 pm
Friday:	8:45 am - 9:15 am 1:15 pm - 1:45 pm 4:30 pm - 7:00 pm
Saturday:	8:45 am - 9:15 am 1:15 pm - 1:45 pm

LOOKING TO REDUCE THE COST OF ANNUAL SESSION 2017?

There are of options available to help defray the cost of Annual Session. It is necessary to apply for many of these, and instructions are included. For Friends registering for Annual Session online, you can indicate what form of assistance you are seeking during the registration process.

1. **First-Time Attender certificates:** Each Local Meeting may award up to three vouchers to first-time adult attenders, or Friends returning after a long absence, giving them two free days at the Early Registration rate. Contact your Meeting Clerk!
2. **Junior Yearly Meeting Workgrants:** If you have experience and would enjoy working with children, JYM is a great “home” during Annual Session. You can have fun, be valued as an important part of the JYM staff community, and, as a bonus, you would also qualify for a work grant! Please consider take some time to consider this, and if you wish more information, contact Ellen Arginteanu (ellenandjulesarginteanu@yahoo.com). If you are interested in Friendly Adult Presence (for Young Friends) contact Jossie Dowling (youthprograms@bym-rsf.org) for clearance and training.
3. **Maximum Fee Cap:** Annual Session fees are capped at \$1,500 per family.
4. **Tent space:** Tent space is an option available nearby at Fredrick Friends Meeting, but must be separately requested by no

later than June 30. Showers and bathroom facilities are available, as is an Electric Vehicle Charging Station. Contact Katie Bliss (looperbliss@gmail.com) if you are interested. You should register as a commuter for Annual Session.

5. **Young Adult Friends:** Young Adult Friends aged 18-35 are invited to apply for financial assistance for Annual Session. This helps YAFs participate as fully as possible in the Yearly Meeting. Funds are limited, and so are given out first come - first served, with a preference for BYM Committee members and officers. As much as 50% of the registration costs may be covered by BYM. This assistance cannot be combined with first-time attender certificates but may be combined with BYM work grants. If you would like to apply, please:
 - 1) Determine how much you can afford to pay,
 - 2) Apply to your local Meeting for assistance as soon as possible,
 - 3) If more assistance is needed from BYM, please get a letter from your Meeting stating the amount of assistance being provided by your Meeting,
 - 4) This letter and the regular application to attend Annual Session must be received in the BYM office by the early registration date. (June 27)
7. **Ask your Local Meeting!**

BYM ANNUAL SESSION BOOKSTORE — BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER!

Quakers love to read! This summer, the Bookstore will be located in a large, comfortable area on the first floor of Whitaker. Plan to stop in and browse. Many new titles to choose from, plus a wide selection of crafts and clothing. Plus, titles and book signings from BYM and Quaker authors. To contact the Bookstore Manager, just send an email to bookstore@bym-rsf.org.

Workshop leaders: There is still plenty of time to order books to support workshops—let the Bookstore know how we can help.

Vendors: If you would like to offer items for sale in the Bookstore—let the Bookstore know! Tabletop spaces are limited to 3 feet in width. The application process is easy, but we need to know that you plan to come. That way, we can provide enough table space for everyone to fit comfortably. There is a minimum charge of \$20 per booth. Vendors pay 10% of gross sales to the Yearly Meeting. If you sell less than \$200 worth of merchandise, you will have to pay a \$20 minimum fee to the Yearly Meeting.

GOLF CART DRIVERS WANTED!

Program Committee is looking for volunteer golf cart drivers for Annual Session 2017. A driver's license is required. If you are interested in helping, please contact Martha Gay (martylou@gmail.com). Please include your contact information, the days you expect to be present at Hood College, and any prior any experience ferrying people around in golf carts.

**PLANNING TO SET UP
A DISPLAY
AT ANNUAL SESSION?
HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:
DISPLAY SPACE IS AVAILABLE
ON A FIRST COME-FIRST SERVE BASIS.**

**TABLETOP SPACES ARE LIMITED TO 3 FEET IN WIDTH.
RESERVE YOURS BY
E-MAILING YOUR REQUEST TO
BARBARA THOMAS (BTTHOMAS60@COMCAST.NET).**



Annual Session 2016 photo by Jennifer Domenick

2017 ANNUAL SESSION WORKSHOPS

THURSDAY WORKSHOPS

CLMT – Connecting Local Meetings: Outreach as Witness, Witness as Outreach: Several local Meetings have seized the moment and found their voice in their communities. They have reached out to other faith communities and organizations to collaborate on projects and have provided leadership for resistance to social policies that are contrary to Quaker testimonies. Share challenges your Meeting has faced, and hear from meetings that have successfully moved to new outreach and actions. *Facilitated by Jeannette Smith (Langley Hill), Advancement and Outreach Committee.*

T1 – Energy Choices –switch to clean renewable energy and save money: Bob Bruninga (Annapolis): We all face major energy decisions on average about every 2 years. Learn about the benefits and practical preparations to help you make a choice for clean renewable energy and transportation. Save money in the long run with Solar, Wind, Heat pumps, and Electric Vehicles. (P) *Bob led Annapolis Friends Meeting towards 100% solar and support for EV charging.*

T2 – Creating a S.P.I.C.E.S. Traveling Peace Troupe: sowing love within ourselves and the community: Debbi Sudduth and Maria Nicklin (Goose Creek): Come see a puppet show in action and find out what's involved in creating a Troupe like this through a Q&A and crafts. Created around Quaker testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship. This has been our antidote to the negativity and stress of our current world. www.goosecreekfriends.org/s.p.i.c.e.s.-peace-troup.html *Debbi is a recently retired social worker with 40 years experience working with adolescents, and never thought she would be in a puppet troupe; Maria is a commercial artist working in Western Loudoun County.*

T3 – Criminal Justice Advocacy: Phil Caroom (Annapolis): Friends' ongoing work towards improving criminal justice—bringing fairness to minorities, making the system restorative, etc.—may seem like 'drinking from the proverbial firehose.' There is much to be done. This workshop invites Friends to a) see the "big picture," b) maintain a faith-based focus, c) stick together, and d) avoid despair! *Phil is a Maryland judge (retired) and on the Executive Committee of the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform.*

T4 – Shape Note Singing: Barbarie Hill and Hank Schutz (Charlottesville): This Early American music form combines religious poetry with a cappella, four-part harmony to create a spiritual community in singing that is accessible to all. All who wish to participate, both beginners and more experienced shape note singers, are welcome. (E) *Barbarie has been singing shape note music regularly for about seven years. Hank is a trained musician and has many years of experience with shape note singing.*

T5 – We All Have Equal Rights to the Earth: Nicolaus Tideman (Blacksburg): In growing toward justice, we should be concerned with the rights with which people enter the world, including equal rights to the earth. We will discuss theories of rights to the earth, including John Woolman's writings, and ways people can bring equal rights to the earth to bear in their lives. (D) *Nicolaus is a professor of economics, specializing in public economics, group decision-making, and economic justice.*

T6 – Evil, Suffering, and the Inner Light: Walter Brown (Bethesda): A quick review of historical Quaker views and where modern liberal Quakers are today. Mostly this will be a discussion of your personal philosophy and/or theology as we consider faithful action. (D) *Walter is a life-long Friend and retired psychotherapist who has presented on various topics, in particular religion and psychology.*

T7 – Saint Paul's Lists: Steve Morse (Langley Hill): Paul's favorite literary device is lists. Using a complete "list of Paul's lists," we will see Paul "up close and personal": humor, frustration, encouragement, pride, self-sacrifice, mysticism. We'll read aloud and discuss selected passages from St. Paul's letters (hand-outs provided). An emotional and spiritual roller-coaster ride through the Pauline letters! *Steve's interests include Bible study, mystical experience, and geometry.*

FRIDAY WORKSHOPS

CLMF – Connecting Local Meetings: Lowering Barriers to Greater Ethnic Diversity in our Meetings: BYM has made a commitment to removing barriers that prevent both the Yearly Meeting and its local meetings from realizing our vision of being much more ethnically diverse. In this session local meetings will connect and share with each other what they are doing to fulfill that commitment. *Facilitated by David Etheridge (Friends Meeting of Washington), Working Group on Racism.*

F1 – Joyful Transformation: Making Plant-Based Diets Easy: Mary Campbell (Friends Meeting of Washington, Working Group on Right Relationship with Animals): Interested in a diet that helps the planet but need help with the details? We will share our tips for healthy eating without animal products. Topics will include home cooking, convenience foods, eating out, holiday meals, and the basic nutritional considerations of a vegan diet. Compassionate snacks will be provided! (P) *Mary has been a vegetarian for 40 years, and vegan for three.*

F2 – Sustaining Our Spirits in the Natural World: Sue Hunter (York): The symbiotic relationship between native plants, birds, and pollinators, and the effect of climate change and fracking on Native Plant communities, deepening our connection to and finding peace through Nature. (P) *Sue is a Native Plant Propagator/Professional Horticulturist for 30+ years.*

F3 – Changing the cycle of dysfunctional communication in today's polarized environment: Jeannette Smith (Langley Hill): How often have you observed people talking past each other, eloquently or loudly expressing views that do not lead to any greater understanding on either side? How can this cycle of dysfunctional communication change? Applying worship sharing skills, we will examine how to disrupt this dysfunctional cycle and to build understanding and respect for others. *Jeannette for many years has been concerned about the growing threat of Islamophobia. She will be sharing new research about effective messaging to bridge the growing divide in our country across the political spectrum.*

F4 – Quakers and the Sanctuary Tradition: Linda Rabben (Adelphi): In light of recent attempts to prevent refugees and other migrants from finding safety in the USA, Quakers and other people of faith are considering, planning and carrying out sanctuary initiatives. Through these activities they are following an ancient tradition. We'll explore ways to advance justice by welcoming vulnerable and persecuted strangers. (D) *Linda has worked on migration issues for 20 years as an author, activist and researcher.*

F5 – Teach-In on How to be Part of The Environmental Justice Movement: Answering the Growing Call to Act: Karie Firoozmand (Stony Run), Barbara Adams (Richmond): Learn how to answer the call to action that is growing among us now. Workshop leaders will share experiences and what they have learned about taking action that is rooted in our Quaker experience, but also strategically crafted for effectiveness. The workshop will include interactive exercises as well as discussion time. (P) *Barb and Karie are both active in the climate justice movement and work to bring together Quakers to stimulate social change in ways that will protect our environment and our people.*

IF A WORKSHOP INCLUDES A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF A SPECIFIC FORMAT, IT IS INDICATED BY: (D) DISCUSSION, (P) PRESENTATION, (W) WORSHIP SHARING, OR (E) EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES.

F6 – Acting in Faith in not so Friendly Places: Georgia Fuller (Langley Hill), Intervisitation Working Group guests: Join our panel of Friends who witness around the world: East Africa—Bio-sand Water Filters: more people die of water-borne diseases than wars. Belize—This Friends' school sits at a cross-road for drug and gun smugglers. Palestine—Ramallah Friends Schools has witnessed for peace & equality during 148 years of turmoil. Cuban Quaker Institute for Peace and more. (P) *Georgia has served on the Working Group on Intervisitation since its inception. She has visited Quaker witnesses in Palestine, Kenya, Cuba, and Belize.*

F7 – Who Is/Was Jesus?: Marsha Holliday (Friends Meeting of Washington): Four panelists with different perspectives will present their understanding of who Jesus is or was. Following that, we will have questions, comments, and the opportunity for additional perspectives from the attendees of the workshop. The panelists are Marsha Holliday, Ellen Arginteanu, Hank Schutz, and John Smallwood. (P) *Marsha has a Masters of Theological Studies from Wesley Theological Seminary.*

F8 – Deepening Meeting for Worship: Marcy Baker Seitel (Adelphi): Meeting for Worship is at the heart of our life together as Friends, and a foundation for living our faith in the world. Let's share ways that we can prepare ourselves individually and as a group to make our weekly worship and monthly meetings for business more vibrant, grounded in the Spirit. Resources for Meetings will also be shared. *Marcy Baker Seitel (Adelphi), current serves as the Clerk of Interim Meeting.*

SATURDAY WORKSHOPS

CLMS – Connecting Local Meetings: Helping Local Meeting Committees Thrive: Committees that are effective in their work and spiritually nurturing for their members are a joyous part of local meetings. Please come to share your experience of committee life, both joys and challenges. Members of BYM Committees will be present to talk about ways that BYM can help support your local meeting committees. *Facilitated by Marcy Baker Seitel.*

S1 – Thinking of Birds, Bees, Butterflies: Your Outdoor Space as Sanctuary: Margaret Fisher (Herndon) and Bess Keller (Homewood): We can save the songbirds, bees, and butterflies, starting with our meetinghouse grounds. Outdoor spaces can provide beauty for ourselves and also a vibrant sanctuary for other living things. We'll consider the practicalities of adding native plants, working with nature rather than against it, and providing habitat for wildlife, while minimizing the money and labor involved. (P) *Margaret helps coordinate the Plant NOVA Natives campaign and is the author of "Take Our Advice: A Handbook for Gardening in Northern Virginia." Bess' garden supports a miniature meadow humming with bees and food for lots of birds.*

S2 – Refugees in our Midst: How can we help?: Bette Hoover (Sandy Spring), BYM Working Group on Refugees: Our hearts break as we see images of people fleeing from their homes and we know something is expected of us. The Working Group on Refugees visits and supports newly arrived families from places of conflict. Hear poignant stories of pain and purpose and learn how you can help to make a difference. (D) *Bette served as Director of the DC Mid Atlantic office of the AFSC for over a decade, founded CASA de Maryland and is a lifelong peace activist.*

S3 – Getting off the Couch and in to Lobby: Tools, Resources and Skills for Friends: Christine Ashley (Adelphi): Connect the life of the spirit with the life of service and political change. Friends will learn FCNL best practices for building relationships with congressional officials, and practice tools needed for spirit-led action. (E) *Christine is a Quaker activist and educator, currently serving as the Quaker Field Secretary at FCNL.*



Annual Session 2016 photo by Jennifer Domenick

S4 – Keeping a Mothering Diary: A Journey of the Spirit and a Tool for Imagining a Better World: Janet Benton: Whatever a woman discovers upon becoming a mother, it deserves to be examined and to become something she acts upon. In a mothering diary, a mother can explore her journey and envision a better world for all. We'll begin these diaries together through prompts and discussion. Bring pen and notebook. (E) *Janet Benton is a novelist, teacher, and mentor. She has long kept a diary and has studied Friends' journals; her novel LILLI DE JONG (on sale at the bookstore) is the diary of a Quaker unwed mother in 1883 Philadelphia who decides to keep her baby.*

S5 – Now Let Us Sing!: Ruth Fitz (York): To mourn, to worship, to celebrate life; to nourish our souls and build courage and confidence for the work at hand—that is why we sing. And singing together with a community of Friends is especially restorative. We will sing a variety of genre to nourish our souls. No experience necessary. (E) *Since July, 2013, Ruth has traveled with an embraced Ministry of Music from York Monthly Meeting, leading Soulful Singing workshops in a variety of Quaker settings nationwide.*

S6 – Experiencing God's Love and Grace from Mystics of Faith: Jerry Knutson (Orlando): This guided meditation uses quotes from the Bible and mystics George Fox, Thomas Keating, Edgar Cayce, John van Auken, Thomas Merton, Julian of Norwich, Evelyn Underhill, Hildegard of Bingen, Jewish scholars, etc. Experiencing God's love and grace is a good starting point when "growing toward justice and acting on faith." (E) *Jerry Knutson was a residential student at Pendle Hill, received a M.Div. from Earlham School of Religion and has facilitated workshops in 23 states and Nakuru, Kenya. Orlando Meeting continues to take under its care his ministry in spirituality, discernment, Quakerism, and Prisoner Visitation and Support.*

S7 – Nurturing Spiritual Gifts and Ministry: Joan Dyer Liversidge (Sandy Spring), Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee members: Nurturing gifts and ministry is important to the gathering in the Spirit for the Divine work that calls us. This experiential workshop is designed to take back to your Meeting to assist in the discernment and support of how the Spirit is moving individually and corporately among us. (E) *Joan has traveled among Friends as a Minister of Presence since 2002 and brings this workshop to BYM as a fruit of last summer's travel to Intermountain Yearly Meeting.*

S8 – The Great Quaker Debate of 1672: Non-Violence: Tad Jose and Deborah Haines (Alexandria): In 1672, Roger Williams challenged George Fox and other leading Quakers to defend their beliefs and practices. "The Great Quaker Debate of 1672" provides a fascinating look into the world of early Friends. We'll present portions of the debate from original sources, focusing on issues of non-violence and social justice. (P) *Tad and Deborah have been offering programs based on the Great Quaker Debate.*

IF A WORKSHOP INCLUDES A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF A SPECIFIC FORMAT, IT IS INDICATED BY: (D) DISCUSSION, (P) PRESENTATION, (W) WORSHIP SHARING, OR (E) EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES.

BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING ANNUAL SESSION FEES AND PAYMENT INFORMATION

Please write the Charge Plan letter on the Registration Form

1 Night	2 Nights	3 Nights	4 Nights	5 Nights	6 Nights
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Plan A - Adult Room

Through June 26	\$95	\$190	\$285	\$380	\$475	\$570
After June 26	\$105	\$210	\$315	\$420	\$525	\$630

Plan B - Young Friend

Through June 26	\$95	\$190	\$285	\$380	\$475
After June 26	\$105	\$210	\$315	\$420	\$525

Plan C - Child between birth and 8th Grade *(there is no charge but registration is required)*

\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
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Plan D - Adult Commuter with two meals

\$75	\$150	\$225	\$300	\$375	\$450
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Plan E - Adult Commuter without meals

\$50	\$100	\$150	\$200	\$250	\$300
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Plan F - Single Event Attendance

\$15

Each lodging night includes three meals, beginning with dinner on the day of arrival, continuing through lunch the following day

ANNUAL SESSION FEES ARE CAPPED at \$1,500 per family.

If sub-total is greater than this, enter \$1,500 in the Total Fees Box on Registration Form

**PAYMENT INFORMATION:
EARLY REGISTRATION DEADLINE
June 26, 2017**

**To Pay by Check:
Make check for at least 25% of TOTAL payable to Baltimore Yearly Meeting when mailing completed forms**

To Register online:
www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession/
We accept major credit cards and debit cards
Checks, cash, and credit/debit cards are accepted on campus

**TO ENSURE REGISTRATION,
YOU MUST EITHER REGISTER ONLINE OR
FILL OUT AND MAIL THE REGISTRATION
FORM TO:**

**BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING
17100 Quaker Lane, Sandy Spring, MD 20860**

Refund Policy

If you cannot attend Annual Session and want a refund, you request (mail or email only) must be received by July 17.
Your registration fees, minus a \$25 service charge, will be refunded as soon as possible after Annual Session

**No refunds will be issued for
cancellations received after July 17**

BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING ANNUAL SESSION REGISTRATION

1st time attender	Young Adult Friend	Please fill out and mail to: 17100 Quaker Lane, Sandy Spring, MD 20860												
		Attenders Names				Youth Programs		Workshop Choice			Annual Session Fees			
		Deadline for Early Registration is June 26, 2017				Rising Grade		Enter workshop #			Arrival date • number of nights • plan			
		Last Name	First Name	M/F	Age	Birthdate	Grade	Thu	Fri	Sat	Arrive	# Nights	Plan	Dollars
												\$		
												\$		
												\$		
												\$		
												\$		
												\$		

Registrant's Contact Information (please print)
Street Address
City, State, and Zip Code
Phone Numbers (home, work, mobile)
E-mail Address
Local Meeting

TOTAL FEES	\$
Up to \$1,500.00	\$
1st Time Attender Certificate Received	\$
Donation	\$
JYM Workgrant Requested	\$
FAP Workgrant Requested	\$
Meeting Assistance Expected	\$
Young Adult Friend Assistance Expected	\$
Other Adjustments:	\$
TOTAL ADJUSTED FEES	\$
Payment Enclosed (minimum 25% of Total)	\$
Balance Due	\$

EXPECTATIONS AT ANNUAL SESSION

At Baltimore Yearly Meeting, we are a community of Friends living in the discipline of the Spirit. Attenders of all ages are asked to observe a level of conduct appropriate to Friends' principles; to take care that all of their personal behavior is bound by a respect for the sensitivities of all, including those of the host community; and to remember that our individual actions reflect on the Religious Society of Friends.

As a Religious Society, we profess a belief that God endows each human being with a measure of the Divine Spirit. (Faith and Practice, 1988, page ii.) We cannot permit violent physical, verbal, or other behavior that we find, through corporate discernment, violates that Divine Spirit. Those in our midst whose behavior disrupts program activities and/or threatens the physical and emotional safety and integrity of another will be asked to leave.

Parents and sponsors are expected to be actively responsible for their children at all times. Attenders are asked to help make a safe and supportive community for all children. If unable to function within the guidelines of the community, any attender may be asked to leave. Alcohol, illegal drugs, and tobacco products are not permitted at Annual Session.

6 I/We have read and agree to abide by the BYM Gathering Expectations: _____

**BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING ANNUAL SESSION SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK
JULY 31 TO AUGUST 6, 2017**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
7:00		Breakfast (7:00-8:30)					7:00	
8:00		Worship Sharing, Worship, Bible Study (8:15-9:15)					8:00	
9:00							Retreat (8:30-11:00)	Walking meditation to JYM & Business Meeting
10:00		Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business (9:30-12:00)			10:00			
11:00		Worship				Worship	11:00	
12:00		Lunch (12:00 - 1:30)						12:00
1:00	Retreat Registration	Annual Session Registration	Annual Session Registration (1:15-1:45) Wednesday - Saturday				1:00	
2:00			Siesta (1:15-2:00)				2:00	
3:00	Retreat (2:30-5:00)	MfW w/Concern for Business (3:00-5:00)	Plenary Session: Bette Hoover & Marcy Seitel	Local Meetings and Workshops (2:00-4:00)	Local Meetings and Workshops (2:00-4:00)		Local Meetings and Workshops (2:00-4:00)	3:00
4:00			Meeting f/Business (4:15-5:15)	Interest Groups (4:15-5:15)	Committee Meetings (4:15-5:15)		Interest Groups (4:15-5:15)	4:00
5:00	Dinner (5:00-6:30) Annual Session Registration (5:00-5:30) Tuesday - Saturday						5:00	
6:00	Singing (6:15-7:15) Orientation on Wednesday and Thursday (7:00-7:30)						6:00	
7:00	Retreat (7:00-9:00)	Plenary Panel Discussion	Committee Meetings	All Age Celebration	Carey Lecture: Shan Cretin		Coffee House (7:30-10:30)	7:00
8:00						8:00		
9:00	Registration		Produce Department		Produce Department		9:00	

MEDICAL INFORMATION FORMS AND LETTERS OF UNDERSTANDING

Everyone under the age of 18 must complete the medical information available in the Annual Session section of the Yearly Meeting's website at www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession. No one under 18 can be allowed to participate in youth programs until a medical form is on file. Young Friends who have attended a YF conference in the 2016-2017 academic year do not need to complete a new form.

Young Friends also need to complete the Letter of Understanding, which is available in the same section of the Yearly Meeting website.

JUNIOR YEARLY MEETING

All JYM children attend for FREE this year!

Junior Yearly Meeting Staff welcomes families to the wonderful community at Annual Session. Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) provides fun and learning within a Friendly community for children from infancy through rising 8th grade. It is a great opportunity for your child to meet other kids from different Meetings. The JYM program involves morning classes, which are divided by grades and filled with fun, structured activities focused on the YM theme, and in the afternoon and evening sessions the children participate in less structure fun activities and games either inside or outside. The rising 6th through 8th graders (JYFs) meet in their own community to learn experientially about Quaker process and participate in a wide variety of activities. Together they write an epistle to share with other JYFs around the world. Rising 9th graders may choose to stay with JYFs or join the Young Friends.

For safety reasons, children attending Annual Session are expected to either participate in JYM programs or be under the direct supervision of a parent or other designated adult during JYM program times. A co-op aftercare will be offered after the JYM afternoon program on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 4 pm (when workshops end) until 5 pm (when dinner begins). Parents who want their children to participate must sign up at the Afternoon Program to work one shift. Please attend the interest group on Wednesday afternoon to organize and sign up.

We know that it is difficult for new families to make the newcomer orientation in the evening, so we will have a table at lunch set aside where new families can sit with people who are able to provide information and help. Look for our sign.

YOUNG FRIENDS

During Annual Session, Young Friends (YFs) gather from Tuesday to Sunday in dorm housing. Although the YF schedule is very full, Young Friends are welcome to attend all events of Annual Session, and are especially encouraged to join the all-age events. The schedule makes time to build the YF community through workshops, business meeting, committee meetings, worship sharing, and games. YFs integrate with the larger BYM community at meals, evening lectures, Produce Department, and Coffee House. If you have never attended Annual Session before, some of the information in the *Interchange* may seem confusing. If you have questions, contact Jossie Dowling at the Yearly Meeting office or Young Friends Annual Session Planners Savraj Moore, Tadek Kosmal, or Thomas Finegar. Read through all of the information in this *Interchange* to learn more.

The Young Friends program begins Tuesday afternoon. Anyone of high school age who arrives prior to this time should plan to participate in the Yearly Meeting Retreat and must stay with a parent or sponsor in their room.

EVERYONE must pre-register. (Complete the forms in this *Interchange* and mail to the Yearly Meeting office or register online) YFs are welcome to register for just a day, or for a few days. Keep in mind that unlike Conferences during the year, Young Friends must have an adult sponsor present at Annual Session. Many adults from your Meeting might be excited to be your sponsor if you need one. PLEASE NOTE THAT to be on campus at all, you must GET YOUR NAME TAG from the registration desk. Please check the registration hours listed earlier in this *Interchange*. Please look for **Jossie Dowling** if you show up on campus and have not checked-in yet at the BYM Registration Desk.

Financial Assistance: First apply to your local Meeting for assistance. The Yearly Meeting Youth Programs will match your Meeting's contribution. You could also consider a work grant from Junior Yearly Meeting as a way to defray costs. If you are able, please consider making a contribution to the Scholarship Fund. Also, if it is your first time attending Annual Session, you may request a 2-day 'first time attendee' voucher from your local Meeting or Young Friends.

YOUNG ADULT FRIENDS

Young Adult Friends (YAF) is an intentional community of Friends aged 18-35. At Annual Session, members take part in all aspects of the program, from attending business sessions to leading workshops to providing acts for the talent show. YAF also has its own programming: it does its own business, has a special dinner out, holds late night swims, takes the rising YAFs out for ice cream—and writes an epistle telling the rest of the Yearly Meeting and the wider Quaker community what it has been up to at Annual Session and over the course of the rest of the year.

For more information about the YAF program, contact Katie Caughlan or Jennifer Vekert—and for information about opportunities for YAFs to save money on attending Annual Session, check out the information on page 8. We'd love to have you join us!

BYM DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Each year we ask Friends to support many of the activities sponsored by BYM. Here you will find a brief review of what your gifts support each year. It is by the generosity of many Friends that we are able to offer and grow these important programs. We are grateful to Friends that are willing and able to give as Baltimore Yearly Meeting continues to be your beloved community. Thank you.



Youth Programs- Nurturing Young Friends and Junior Young Friends in community. This amazing program is for our extraordinary young people. It offers hope for your future. Thank you for supporting the Young Friends of Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

BYM Annual Session- Your gifts support families and individuals who cannot afford to join in and attend. This year all children birth thru 8th grade will attend free of charge. Bring your family and enjoy the **BYM community!**



BYM Spiritual Formation Program continues to seek your support. This is a growing BYM program. If you are interested in starting a Spiritual Formation group at your local Meeting let us know. If you are interested in attending but need scholarship help or would like to offer scholarship assistance please let us know. Excerpted from the new Spiritual Formation booklet, "we are all pilgrims on this journey, taking different routes to the same destination." For more information please contact the BYM office.

The 2017 BYM Women's Retreat held at the Pearlstone Conference Center in Reisterstown, MD had another amazing year. Not only do Friends have the opportunity to give directly to support this important ministry but you can also shop on Amazon Smile to support the retreat. If you are interested in supporting the 2018 BYM Women's Retreat go to smile.amazon.com and select Baltimore Yearly Meeting as your charity and these gifts will support Women's Retreat. Hope to see you January 26-28, 2018 at next year's Retreat!



See current project updates on the website at:
<http://www.bym-rsf.org/giving/catoctin-bath-house-project.html>

Catoctin Bathhouse

Miché Booz Architect

coming soon....



BYM QUAKER OAKS The Oak Tree symbolizes strength, endurance, protection, success and stability. Planned Gifts to support Baltimore Yearly Meeting have offered just that to BYM.

THE BEAUTY OF BABEL:

BYM DEMOGRAPHICS SURVEY ALLOWS US TO ENGAGE IN IMPORTANT CONVERSATION AROUND IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY.

Dyresha Harris, Outreach and Inclusion Coordinator

Jesus, as a teacher, was very clever. He often took conflicting ideas, spiritual quandaries, impasses... and by simply shifting perspective, made them into life-affirming opportunities. In the story of “casting stones”, for instance, Pharisees come to Jesus with a yes or no question. A woman has committed adultery and the law says she should be stoned to death. Jesus believes in peace, but also in upholding laws so they are addressing this seeming contradiction. The setup is very black and white. But with a quick turn of wit, Jesus shifts the whole framework. Like any good Quaker might, he turns this binary into a query, answering: “Let he who is without sin cast the first stone.” Now we are no longer arguing about right and wrong. We are reflecting about compassion, accountability, and community. In my discussions around BYM’s demographics survey, I have often thought of this example and what it has to teach us.

In the past two years, as part of our Growing Diverse Leadership initiative, BYM has begun collecting information on a broader range of ages and on racial/ethnic identity as part of our ongoing demographics survey. As we strive to make the yearly meeting more inclusive of and supportive to young adults and people of color, this data enables us to get a picture of our current levels of participation and to see the effects of our efforts over time. However these topics are not always easy to talk about. And while many have seen the significance of gathering this information, others have also raised concerns about possible divisiveness.

Race, now proven to be a biologically arbitrary means of categorizing people by certain physical attributes, has long been used to divide and rank people. Ethnicity, a sociological/ anthropological grouping of people by cultural markers, has also been misused to denigrate. So it’s not surprising that many of us have had negative experiences with talking about these identities. Sometimes being the target of or witnessing prejudice made us feel that identity is dangerous business. Sometimes the negative experience was more subtle like an unexpected look of disapproval from a parent when you commented on someone’s skin color as a child or everyone

tensing at a dinner party when you brought up a racial incident in the news. These moments can leave us with a feeling that acknowledging racial or ethnic identities is rude, hurtful, shameful, or just plain wrong.

We were all hurt by a system that told us we had to be separated by our differences and now we get to stand up together against that separation. But here comes the twist. We cannot truly stand up against division and injustice without acknowledging both real cultural differences and different experiences based on how we have been labeled.

If this seems counterintuitive, consider this: research suggests that acknowledging racial/ethnic identity leads to less bias in members of the majority group and better mental health outcomes for people in minority groups than does ignoring race or “colorblindness.”^{1,2} As Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow* writes: “Saying that one does not care about race is offered as an exculpatory virtue, when in fact it can be a form of cruelty... Our blindness also prevents us from seeing the racial and structural divisions that persist in society ... We have become blind, not so much to race, but to the existence of racial caste in America.”

The truth is, we are not all the same. And that’s OK. In fact, it’s beyond OK. It’s precisely what points us more fully toward Spirit.

The Black Lives Matter movement provides a perfect example. If policing agencies took a color-blind approach to keeping records (deciding not to include information on racial and ethnic identities of victims of police violence) there would be no way to prove or bring attention to the disproportionate use of force against Black and Brown people. Whether looking at health outcomes, education, effects of global warming etc., almost every group working for change in the world relies on such statistics to help them discern and communicate a way forward.

Furthermore, it’s important to note that how people feel about the significance of their racial/ethnic identity can itself be shaped by the ways in which they identify. For instance, a study of Americans showed that 68% of African Americans and 49% of Hispanic people ranked their racial identity as “Very important” to them, while only 17% of White Americans did so. If you combine “very important” and “somewhat important” that becomes 86% of African Americans and 87% of Hispanic people³. For people who feel their racial or ethnic identity is important to them, or has a significant impact on their lives, ignoring or avoiding it can be very hurtful. It is the bristle at the dinner party that can



Members of ad hoc Growing Diverse Leadership Committee respond to the query: Why does doing this work matter to you?

1 “Colorblindness is the racial ideology that posits the best way to end discrimination is by treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity.”

2 Holoien et al., 2011 as quoted in “Colorblind Ideology is a Form of Racism”, *Psychology Today*, Williams, Monica. Dec 2011. www.psychologytoday.com

3 YouGov, March 2015, NOTE: Though the experiences of people of other racial/ethnic backgrounds are important to us as an organization, statistics were unfortunately not available beyond African-American, White, and Hispanic.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITY IMPORTANT

Diversity continued from page 13

inadvertently say: your difference is uncomfortable for me, don't bring that here. In a mostly Caucasian environment specifically, "seeing everyone the same" can too often mean "seeing everyone as White" and encouraging them to behave as such. The problem with color-blindness is that if you are blind to any part of a person's identity or experience, then you can never see them fully.

We want unity and to acknowledge our common humanity. And we also recognize that ignoring or avoiding discussion of racial and ethnic identity can be counterproductive at best, oppressive and hurtful at worst. So what do we do with this apparent contradiction? I believe, through the lens of Spirit, we can find a frame that allows for a third option that is truly life-affirming. As Bayard Rustin said: "To be afraid is to pretend that the truth is not true." So let us look at truth. The truth is, we are not all the same. And that's ok. In fact, it's beyond ok. It's precisely what points us more fully toward Spirit.

Michelle Alexander suggests it may even be a relief to let go of the energy we spend on the unlikely goal of not seeing what is all around us and instead to put that energy toward a goal that is within all of our reach right now. She writes: "The colorblindness ideal is premised on the notion that we, as a society, can never be trusted to see race and treat each other fairly or with genuine compassion. A commitment to color consciousness, by contrast, places faith in our capacity as humans to show care and concern for others, even as we are fully cognizant of race and possible racial differences."

A year ago, a new narrative of the tower of Babel came fully formed into my mind. In that story the people of Babel have been told to multiply and spread out over the world, but instead they all stay together and try to build a tower so tall that it will reach the kingdom of heaven. God looks down on this and is not pleased, so Ze⁴ makes them all speak different languages and they scatter across

⁴ Since I believe God/Spirit/the Light is neither male nor female, I have taken to using the gender neutral terms "Ze" and "Hir" in my humanized descriptions. Try it on while reading this and/or feel free to fill in the pronoun you are most comfortable with.

the earth. I have always heard this story interpreted as a cautionary tale about a prideful people and a punishing God. But what if this wasn't the purpose at all. What if God is looking at this striving group of people and offering them guidance. What if Ze is saying: "You don't create the Kingdom by all being the same, by separating yourselves from the earth, and by trying to lift yourselves above all others. You reach the Kingdom by developing a wide variety of ways to speak about things, by spreading out across the world and developing different perspectives." Perhaps God is telling us that no one person, group, or culture could possibly capture the full complexity of Spirit. So we need people from the desert and people from the rainforests, people who speak tonal languages and people who speak sign-language, people who understand deprivation, and people whose material comfort have allowed the free space to explore other things. What if the great diversity God creates in this moment isn't a punishment, but a gift, a tool, a finger pointing towards a greater relationship with Spirit.

We are not called to diversity because it is fashionable or politically correct. We are not called simply because it makes our organization more vital, relevant, and sustainable, or because (as research shows) organizations with greater diversity increase the intelligence, creativity, problem-solving, and leadership ability of their members--although all these things are true. We are called to diversity, to equity and inclusion because that is how we live in right relationship with Spirit.

Yes, we are different. We have been scattered across the world and we have come together speaking different languages (literally and figuratively) with different life experiences and different perspectives. But what if we didn't have to be afraid of those differences or hide from them. What if we got to embrace those differences as part of the plan and understand that we can be different and united at the same time. We can be different and share commonalities at the same time. We can be different and love each other at the same time. Because the beauty of Babel was never the tower. It was getting to see the true face of God in all of our wondrous variety. For more information about the GDLC and/or the demographics survey, go to www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/committees/gdl/.

"EVEN ONE LIFE..."

GUN VIOLENCE, HATE CRIMES, AND RACISM STATEMENT BY ADELPHI FRIENDS MEETING

We are deeply disturbed by ongoing gun violence in this country, the senseless killing of children, young women and men, fathers and sons, daughters and mothers, citizens and police officers. There are no words to express what is lost when even one life is needlessly cut short.

Gun violence, hate crimes, and racism are intimately linked problems whose causes are deeply rooted in structural inequality, cultural practices, and individual fear. The complexity and seeming intractability of these problems must not lead us to despair. The most fitting expression of our grief and outrage over violence, hate, and racism in our communities is spirit-filled action to work for peace and justice. Identifying and implementing solutions must begin with careful listening and be based in love.

As Quakers, we believe in that of God in every person, regardless of race, class, creed, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability,

or immigration status. We believe there is that of God in people who are targets of violence as well as those who engage in violence.

Adelphi Friends Meeting seeks partnerships with organizations and individuals with the goal of collaboratively identifying and implementing concrete actions that foster love where there is racism, understanding where there is hatred, and peace where there is violence.

Adelphi Friends Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Adelphi, Maryland

Approved November 15, 2016

Michael Levi, Clerk, Clerk@adelphifriends.org

Margaret Weigers Vitullo, Co-clerk, Peace and Social Concerns Committee

Somers Knight, Co-clerk, Peace and Social Concerns Committee

TANDEM FRIENDS SCHOOL SELECTS JANE WHITNEY THOMPSON AS NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

The Tandem Friends School Board of Trustees is delighted to announce the appointment of Whitney Thompson as the next Head of School. After conducting a national search, it was clear that Whitney had the right combination of experience, fit, and leadership style needed for the role. Evangeline Calland, Chair of the Board of Trustees said, "this is a tremendous appointment for Tandem Friends School. Whitney Thompson has the vision for Quaker education, true administrative acumen, and intellectual depth to successfully lead Tandem Friends School into its next 50 years."

Thompson has twenty years of experience as a teacher and administrator at Brooklyn Friends School, where she served as the Assistant Head of School and Dean of Faculty, overseeing complex administrative matters for a school with five divisions and more than 200 faculty members. Whitney has extensive leadership experience in the areas of independent school accreditation and self study, serving on accreditation visiting teams both within the Friends Council on Education, the international membership organization of Quaker schools, and the New York State Association of Independent Schools. Whitney also directed BYM's Teen Adventure Program for seven years, a Quaker summer wilderness program, where small groups of teens spend three weeks together with two leaders challenging themselves with strenuous wilderness activities such as backpacking and canoeing and engaging in service projects to advance their leadership and teamwork skills.

Whitney earned an undergraduate degree from Oberlin College in African American Studies and a master's degree in Adolescent Education from Bank Street College of Education. She is currently enrolled in a doctoral program in Educational Leadership at the University of Pennsylvania.

"Tandem Friends is a wonderful school in which students are challenged to excel academically without sacrificing their authentic voice," said Thompson. "During my visits to Tandem, it repeatedly struck me that students are free to be their true selves. What a fantastic thing to provide adolescents as they transition into young adulthood - a school where they are known, respected, and encouraged to grow! I am incredibly proud to become a part of this unique school community."

Tandem Friends School is a coeducational day school with 225 students in grades 5-12. Rooted in Quaker values, Tandem offers an exceptional college-preparatory curriculum in which intellectual, ethical, artistic, and athletic ideals are pursued. Students thrive on independent, imaginative thought, are fully engaged in learning, and seek the best from themselves and their community. Tandem School was founded by John Howard and Duncan Alling in 1970 and became Tandem Friends School in 1995.

WEDDING CELEBRANTS BRING CHANGE TO VIRGINIA LAW

Laurie Wilner (Langley Hill)

I share this story of change both in celebration and in witness to Margaret Mead's statement, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

As one of Langley Hill's marriage celebrants, I was called to sign the marriage license of a young couple; the bride grew up in the Meeting with my son. It was a delight to serve her in this way. Until...

Virginia Code for marriage celebrants is Quaker-friendly; it states the officiant must sign a "certifying statement of the facts of marriage." The license, however, read, "I certify that I joined the above named persons in marriage on the date and at the place specified." Sitting in direct contrast to these chosen words is what George Fox wrote in 1669, the year he married Margaret Fell, "For the right joining in marriage is the work of the Lord only, and not the priests' or magistrates'; for it is God's ordinance and not man's; and therefore Friends cannot consent that they should join them together: for we marry none; it is the Lord's work, and we are but witnesses." I could not sign the statement.

Fortunately, prior Langley Hill celebrants have a history of altering that language to allow our yea to be yea. Following in those footsteps, I altered the language to state that I witnessed the marriage of the above named persons...

It was more than a year after this that I received a call from the bride. Apparently, the marriage license had gotten lost in the mail and they needed an affidavit from the officiant. I complied and then, after learning that the license had been received timely but had been rejected, received an "Order to Show Cause" commanding me to appear before an Arlington County judge.

Sadly, this was not the first time a Langley Hill couple's marriage had to go before a judge but this time more than an affidavit was requested. The Meeting got involved; the Board of Directors met and learned that insurance would not cover my attorney. Rip Sullivan, an attorney and Arlington County's representative in the legislature, felt this was as much his job as a member of the legislature as it was a legal matter and represented me pro bono. He also attended Meeting as a teen.

Thankfully, the judge listened to Rip, read the license and said, "Well she can't sign this!" He had me alter the language again, this time to reflect the language in the Code, and sign it. The marriage was affirmed as of the date of the ceremony.

Rip, as a member of the legislature then went to work on a permanent fix. Just before Christmas 2016, County Clerks throughout the Commonwealth received a new form that now asks officiants to sign, "I certify to the facts of the marriage of the above named persons on the date and at the place specified."

FRACKING BAN ENACTED IN MARYLAND

Karie Firoozmand (Baltimore, Stony Run)

On Tuesday, April 4, Maryland Governor Hogan signed legislation creating a total prohibition on fracking. This is a huge success for the individuals and organizations that, together, have been working for this goal for several years.

About ten years ago, at the same time Pennsylvania's shocking list of woes from fracking were becoming national news, fracking in Maryland became an issue. Drilling companies signed leases with landowners in our state, and figured they would wait until it was legal to frack. In 2011, an executive order delaying fracking during studies on fracking's public health and environmental impacts was signed. Before the executive order expired in 2014, the first ban bill had been introduced. In 2013, Sen. Karen Montgomery introduced a ban bill. That year, the ban bill got just two supporting votes and died in committee. In 2014, a ban bill came back, this time introduced by Sen. Bobby Zirkin. It got one supporting vote in committee (from Sen. Montgomery) and died in committee.

In 2015, we got the moratorium bill that warded off fracking and called for updated regulations. It was sponsored by Sen. Montgomery and came out of committee with a unanimous vote. The full Senate passed it, and it passively became law when Gov. Hogan avoided signing it. The moratorium was set to expire in October 2017. With a governor who had, during his campaign, referred to Western Maryland as a "gold mine," it was obvious that the time to do something had arrived.

Over the years, environmental and health organizations and concerned citizens had come together to form the Don't Frack MD coalition of over 100 member groups. The needle of public opinion had moved considerably. Fracking had become a household word, and the movement had matured.

Sen. Conway, the chair of the relevant committee, started the 2017 legislative session by saying of the forthcoming ban bill, "It'll never pass." But Sen. Conway was wrong, and the whole thing went in an unexpected way. The House of Delegates passed their ban bill on March 10. It crossed over to the Senate, where no fracking bill had yet come out of committee.

Then, in a truly stunning move, Gov. Hogan held a press conference on March 17 to announce that he supported the ban and would not veto it. Jaws fell open, including mine. This was a reversal of his "gold mine" view of Western Maryland, and I'm still not sure exactly why he did it. I suspect it had to do with the perfect storm of low gas prices, the small amount of gas in Maryland to begin with, and the roar of public opinion against fracking. He probably saw that he would make himself unpopular if he vetoed a ban bill. The ban bill got out of committee with a vote of eight to three. It passed the senate with a vote of 35 to ten. Gov. Hogan signed it into law on April 4.



Fracking continued on page 17

CATOCTIN QUAKER CAMP 60TH REUNION

SEPTEMBER 29TH THROUGH OCTOBER 1, 2017

This summer marks the 60th year we have been holding camp at Catoctin!

JOIN US FOR THIS HISTORIC CELEBRATION

For a weekend of reminiscing, singing around the campfire, frazzlyram, short hikes on the mountain, great camp food, and catching up with old friends.

Added Bonus

Enjoy the history and familiarity of camp, the physical heart of our beloved community for the last 60 years, while also experiencing the brand new bathhouse, a key component in building a sustainable future for our camp, and the mountain we call home, for the next 50 years.

For more information and to register, visit www.bym-rsf.org/events/ymevents/cqcalumni.html



Fracking continued from page 16

Where were Quakers in all of this?

In 2014, the Chesapeake Quarter created a Fracking Working Group. Its members had come together, worked for over a year, and were part of the effort that resulted in the moratorium. In the fall of 2016, a group formed again. That group started its work before the 2017 legislative session and on February 2, six Friends met with Sen. Conway to express our concern and hear her position.

We needed to keep our concern in front of her, so we organized phone calls before and after the meeting to her office; we knocked on doors in her district to get more support; we sent sixty-some valentines to her, describing how fracking would break our hearts. On March 2, about 20 Friends and friends joined a 1,000-person rally in Annapolis to demand the ban. We marched behind a bright blue banner with the message, “Quakers for a Fracking Ban.” We knew that we could not speak for all Quakers, but the spirit moved us to speak for ourselves. We were indeed Quakers for a fracking ban. A week later, during a faith-themed sit-in, Quakers with our banner were present again. Several were arrested that day, as planned. Our demand came from a settled intention to voice a deep desire to protect the water, land, air, people and animals of Maryland.

We kept Friends and friends updated on the situation – sometimes it moved very fast – and urged phone calls to various lawmakers. It took a lot of tenacity to keep making phone calls, but we felt the support from our meetings. We kept asking you, and you kept calling. Sharing the news at various stages of success was a thrill. Sharing this story is a thrill too, especially because it ends with the questions: *what might we do next? How might our Quaker experience open us to the work of protection?*

Spring Family Camp Weekends 2017



Friends, Family, Fun and Favorite Activities at the BYM Camps!

New to camp? Missing camp? Seeking a volunteer opportunity? Need a weekend escape in nature?

Family Camp Weekends at Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camp properties offer us all a chance to enjoy our beautiful camps during this special time of year. Individuals and families are invited to spend a day or the weekend at camp. Each weekend will have a program coordinator who will plan camp-familiar activities for Saturday and Sunday mornings, as well as Saturday afternoon and evening. These may include playing in the creek, a craft project or hiking around one of the most precious places on earth. There will also be plenty of work projects to do! Work projects offer people with all kinds of skills the opportunity to enjoy meaningful and satisfying work! We will savor meals together, have time to explore and spend some time around a camp fire in the evening. Join us for a camp experience, give the gift of your time, participate with children in activities, have fun and find yourself rejuvenated!

Remaining Spring 2017 Family Camp Weekends

Catoctin Quaker Camp	May 12 – 14, 2017
Opequon Quaker Camp	June 2 – 4, 2017



JUNE 3 – SATURDAY – RETREAT FOR MEETING CLERKS – PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

CHARLOTTESVILLE FRIENDS MEETING (CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA)

Mark your calendar for the Meeting Clerks' Retreat, hosted by Charlottesville Friends Meeting. This is a day for spiritual refreshment and sharing of collective wisdom for all Friends. You don't have to be, or have been, a Meeting Clerk to attend. Anyone interested in nurturing spirit-led servant leadership is welcome. We'll gather at 10:30am, with opening worship at 11am, to give folks driving time in the morning. We'll wrap up by 5pm. Charlottesville Friends will provide lunch. There will be no charge for the retreat, but donations for food cost will be appreciated. Overnight hospitality and childcare is available on request. Please RSVP to Ken Stockbridge (ymclerk@bym-rsf.org or 410-306-5010) by May 26.

INTERVISITATION WORKING GROUP

Hello Friends, The Intervisitation Committee invites You to join us. Our goal is to facilitate a greater understanding and appreciation among Yearly Meetings (and some local Meetings.) Come join us in practicing being a friendly ambassador under the care of BYM. We hope by sharing worship and fellowship with other Yearly Meetings a greater perspective and respect can be achieved. If you have interest in learning about how other Friends worship and how they embrace Quakerism this committee could be a good fit for you. Please look for an announcement of our next meeting in February. If you are interested; but can't travel you are still very welcome.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Religious Education Committee of Baltimore Yearly Meeting is offering generous scholarships to current and prospective first day school teachers and Meeting Religious Education Committees to attend the Quaker Religious Education Collaborative (QREC) Meeting being held this August 18-20 in Richmond, IN. Up to 100% cost of attendance paid for depending on need and number of requests. Car pool is a possibility as well. Please inquire with Windy Cooler at WindyCooler@gmail.com about BYM scholarship. Please see <http://www.quakers4re.org/> for more info about the collaborative.

ADELPHI FRIENDS MEETING

On Saturday, June 3, Adelphi Friends Meeting will hold its 2017 Strawberry Festival from 10:00am to 3:00pm, at 2303 Metzert Road in Adelphi, Maryland (between Riggs Road and Adelphi Road). The Strawberry Festival is a long-standing day of fun for the whole family. Annual traditions include a live-entertainment stage, outdoor grilled-food tent, indoor cafe, tie-dye booth, and sale of quarts and flats of just-picked strawberries from Oak Grove Farm in southern Pennsylvania. The large rummage sale is a major attraction, with additional areas for silent auction, clothing, jewelry, plants, and a full room of used books. In recent years the children's area has featured a bounce house, train rides, face painting, and games. Come for the fun and leave with great bargain purchases of clothes, electronics, books, and more. Join us as we celebrate the abundance of summer and the richness of our community! The Strawberry Festival is a rain or shine event. All profits are donated to charity. For more information see adelphifriends.org/strawberry.

ANNAPOLIS FRIENDS MEETING

In a memorial service on April 9 celebrating the life of our beloved Careen Mayer, Friends recalled the many ways Careen's spiritual leadership and teaching affected countless lives. As an early contribution to AFM's May Quaker Market, soprano Katrine Anderson and a group of fellow musicians put on a beautiful concert of Scottish music in April, raising \$1500 to go toward the charities AFM will support in the market. An ongoing concern for vocal ministry has led to a series of adult education programs. Attendance at AFM has increased so much that sometimes when we form a circle for introductions at the end of worship, we stand shoulder to shoulder around the perimeter of the room. We have recently had an unprecedented eight applications for membership. Friend Francis Wayne recently returned from several weeks in Kenya where he met with David Zarembka and took on a project of assisting the Wamama Wasanaa Self-Support group of widows to learn the guidelines for exporting their baskets to the United States. He also visited Friends Theological College. AFM's Green Team envisions a sustainable Peaceable Kingdom. It acts to deepen our meeting's understanding of the interdependence of humans with nature and of our individual and collective responsibility for nature's wellbeing. It has held meetings for learning on energy, climate change, and environment-friendly lifestyle changes and organized rides to marches such as the Women's March, The Scientists' March, and the Climate March. The Meeting continues to support the two organizations that began at AFM but grew into much larger organizations: Climate Stewards of Greater Annapolis and Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform.

BLACKSBURG FRIENDS MEETING

A revitalized Adult Education Committee chaired by Deb Warren has recently held several very interesting programs on the fourth Sunday of each month following Meeting for Worship. One member is familiar with the work of Jon Watts so conducted a session for all of us to watch a segment of Quaker Speak on speaking in Meeting. One technical glitch was quickly corrected with I Phone savvy. The next month Daniel Thorp, chairman of the history dept at Virginia Tech, told of the history of the Christiansburg Industrial Institute (a town next to Blacksburg). Along with 45 other schools for freed slaves started by Orthodox Philadelphians, the Friends' Freedmen's Association (check the website, with records at Swarthmore) in 1862, this school grew to be the only high school for black students in the entire region. It was sold to the public school system in 1934 and in 1947 the remaining funds have been used at four Quaker

Colleges for scholarships for black students (J. Henry Scattergood Scholarships). Most recently a program titled "A Dialogue on Race" was presented to draw out of our entirely white participants their early experiences with people of color, highlighting for us our white world. Sign up sheets were provided for people to work on specific issues in Blacksburg. All of these events have generated long discussions.

CHARLOTTESVILLE FRIENDS MEETING

As we have done for a number of years now, Charlottesville started the new year by participating in the PACEM program. We hosted homeless women for dinner and overnight accommodation every night for a two-week period. In response to actions taken by the Trump Administration on immigration, members of our Peace and Social Concerns Committee brought to us their concern for immigrants at risk of deportation. They led two threshing sessions in which Friends discussed the possibility of the Meeting becoming part of the New Sanctuary Movement. While there are many possible legal risks involved for the Meeting, we believe that the good we can do for those in need of sanctuary far outweigh those risks. The Meeting supported in general a proposed minute stating that Charlottesville has a leading to become a sanctuary congregation but has concerns about the feasibility of housing people in the Meeting House. A Committee for Inquiry has been formed to study the various implications of acting on this leading. We recently added two signs in front of the Meeting House. One of them reads *Black Lives Matter* and the other reads *No matter where you are from, we're glad you're our neighbor* in English, Spanish and Arabic. One member also took it upon himself to purchase several of these signs to resell. Charlottesville has recently completed our State of Society report, responding to two queries. Query: How does your Meeting nurture the spiritual life of members and attenders? Answer (in part): ... Meetings for Worship provide a community connection. Silence is our center, which allows us a way to shed our outer worries and consider the Spirit... Query: What troubles and challenges are you facing? Answer (in part): ...As the current political climate challenges us to action, some feel there is an implicit distraction in this work. It is increasingly hard to let the Spirit rise as political ugliness has become so prominent. The tension between actions and an attempt to live a centered life challenges many. We need to try to balance action with silence and contemplation...

HERNDON FRIENDS MEETING

The Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County held its ninth annual reception. Students from twenty-two high schools were presented the awards for activities that ranged from working to increase tolerance in schools to creating international charities. Our guest speaker was Suraya Sadeed, founder of Save the Afghan Children. Our twenty co-sponsors included Langley Hill and Alexandria Friends Meetings. We continue to work on our multi-year project to make our property a welcoming place for wildlife and to reduce our contribution to the storm water run-off that has been ruining the waterways. We have hired a landscape designer to help us re-envision our landscape using native plants and less lawn.

In March, we united around the following minute.

"Herndon Friends Meeting supports and is in solidarity with the goals of Sanctuary DC/MD/VA, a network of congregations in the DC/MD/VA region that are providing support and sanctuary to our neighbors, friends, and family who fear being detained and deported, or profiled because of their religion, race or political beliefs. Our faith will not

allow us to permit the criminalization and scapegoating of immigrants and people of color. In the face of hate and discrimination we are committed to showing love, compassion and hospitality.”

LITTLE FALLS FRIENDS MEETING

The annual Little Falls Summer Concert will be held this year on Saturday evening July 15th featuring the Mayo Family Band. Come join us on the lawn for lively bluegrass and our traditional blueberry and ice cream treat.

PATAPSCO FRIENDS MEETING

We often underestimate the power of giving voice, but it is real and sustaining. It works its healing not so much by being heard, as by the fact that in giving voice to what lives within, even through the softest whisper, we allow the world of Spirit to soften our pain.

Mark Nepo, *The Book of Awakening*

Patapsco Meeting is laying down our 12-year ministry at the Maryland Correctional Institution (MCI). MCI is downsizing and all of our regular attenders but one have been transferred (or, in one happy case, released). We held a final celebration with our one remaining member in which we recalled and held in the Light each of over twenty men who have been part of the South Mountain Fellowship over the years. Three have died, two after being released and one while incarcerated; the others are all at other institutions now. We have kept in touch with many of them through subscriptions of *Friends Journal* and pen pals. Patapsco plans to provide some limited financial support and spiritual fellowship as others who have been part of the South Mountain Fellowship are released. We have invited our one final member of the Fellowship – the one who has been with us the longest – to write a final minute. Friends said they were disciplining themselves to pay attention to the present to things that matter besides pressing social concerns—for example, loving family and enjoying music. The negativity is hard to bear, and many of us are seeking way to counter messages of fear with hope. It is also helpful to remember we don’t know the future. For now, we seek activities we can support that help build the blessed community. As a Meeting, we have been reading and discussing the book *Active Hope*. We have had two sessions so far and find it encouraging, realistic, and helpful. We look forward to our annual retreat in May, which will be led by Marcelle Martin. Some of us had the joyful task of picking up one of our members and delivering him to a new home where he will receive support in the transition to community life. This man, who had been in prison about 25 years, had the blessing of a caring and committed social worker who worked diligently to place him somewhere he could afford that would offer the care he needed. Many have no such luck and are simply taken to a bus stop to summon a taxi. Patapsco has had two sessions in which we shared with each other our experience and leadings in these challenging times. Most recently, we had a worship sharing session in which people shared:

- How are Friends being led to act?
- What has the time since the election been like for you?
- If you are troubled, what troubles you the most?
- What’s helping you through this time? What in the Quaker testimonies is helping you through?

PATUXENT FRIENDS MEETING

Patuxent Meeting is looking forward to a visit in the near future from one of our favorite teachers, Khady Lusby. She opened the Early Education Center at Adja Penda Ba in Niuro du Rio, Sengal

where she grew up. The Early Education Center at Adja Penda Ba opened for the 2012-13 school year. The program has 70 children in four separate classes ranging from ages 2 – 11. Each class is taught by exceptional local women and boasts a strong early educational learning curriculum including foreign language instruction in French and English. The literacy rate in Senegal is 49.7. However, one of Khady’s students (a 5 year old girl) dreams of teaching all kids how to read and write. Patuxent Meeting has a tradition of choosing to offer support through the connections of individual members and attenders discover. Sometimes it is a local need or project but it can also be in far off Africa. It makes for a cozy world. Patuxent is a small Meeting with a lot of good will energy. Currently the members and attenders support a teacher and 4 students at Adja Penda Ba.

RICHMOND FRIENDS MEETING

Last October, Richmond hosted a Fall Retreat at “The Clearing.” RFM followed its path of examining racial privilege by inviting Corey Roberts, a diversity trainer, to lead us in a thoughtful process of clarifying our own biases and energizing our interest in creating a more inclusive and welcoming Meeting. Plans are underway for our Spring (Memorial Day weekend) and Fall Retreats (October 28). We welcome others to join us. This is a great opportunity to listen deeply and to find community in a peaceful wooded setting.

WILLIAMSBURG FRIENDS MEETING

After meeting for 36 years, the Quakers of Williamsburg Friends Meeting are now occupying our own Meeting House. We have recently leased Fahs House on the campus of the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists at 3051 Ironbound Road, Williamsburg, VA. The Williamsburg Quakers first met in 1981 in the home of founding members Len and Peg McMaster. In the early 1990’s the group met on Sunday afternoons at St. Martin’s Episcopal Church. Since 2006, the Williamsburg Montessori School on Longhill Road has been the Quakers’ Sunday morning home. With the new space on the WUU campus, Williamsburg Friends plan to host more community events and discussions throughout the week. We look forward to hosting more Quaker visitors in our new meetinghouse (Meeting for Worship is at 10am). And we welcome the guidance of other Meetings on how to best manage our new space.

YORK FRIENDS MEETING

York is in the midst of a bit of a rebirth this year, with renewed interest in our previously-dormant committees of Peace & Social Concerns and Communication & Outreach, as well as establishing an ad hoc Working Group on Diversity. And in preparation for our annual Green Elephant and Native Plant Sale, volunteers worked tirelessly to beautify the grounds by spreading fresh mulch and planting over 300 seedlings. It’s really beginning to feel like spring! In March the Meeting House held a reception after Lamar Matthew gave a moving talk on Quaker involvement in the Underground Railroad just blocks away at the Goodridge Freedom Center. The children of First Day School completed their ongoing project of assembling hygiene relief kits, which will be distributed by Church World Services in their efforts to acclimate refugees who have settled right here in York, Lancaster, and surrounding counties. The project began as a modest attempt to provide about a dozen kits, but the final count came to 75, along with a sizable donation collected by a member and his colleagues. Our four-part series on Quakerism 101, which has been enlightening for newcomers to the faith and seasoned Friends alike, will conclude in May. We are looking forward to an on-site retreat facilitated by Amy Schmaljohn in mid-April, and our annual retreat to be held in June.



YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION IS IMPORTANT TO US

Have you moved, or has any of your contact information changed? Please send any updates to admin@bym-rsf.org

BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING UPCOMING EVENTS

[SEE THE YEARLY MEETING WEBSITE FOR DETAILS AND OTHER EVENTS \(BYM-RSF.ORG\)](http://www.bym-rsf.org)

[YEARLY MEETING EVENTS](#)

[LOCAL MEETING AND COMMITTEE EVENTS](#)

[QUAKER ORGANIZATION EVENTS](#)

[OTHER NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)

MAY

- 5 – 6 – Spiritual Formation Retreat at Shepherd’s Spring Outdoor Ministry and Retreat Center
- 5 – 7 – Junior Young Friends Conference at Catoctin Quaker Camp
- 12 – 14 – Family Camp Weekend at Catoctin Quaker Camp
- 13 – Mother (Nature) Day - STRIDE Picnic
- 26 – 27 – Young Friends Conference at Annapolis Friends Meeting

JUNE

- 2 – 4 – Family Camp Weekend at Opequon Quaker Camp
- 3 – Retreat for Local Meeting Clerks at Charlottesville Friends Meeting
- 11 – Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting at Patuxent Friends Meeting
- 17 – Sixth Month Interim Meeting at Gunpowder Friends Meeting

AUGUST

- July 31 – August 6 – 346th Annual Session of Baltimore Yearly Meeting at Hood College
- 20 – Warrington Quarterly Meeting at York Friends Meeting

STAFF AND OFFICERS OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

Kenneth “Ken” Stockbridge	Presiding Clerk ymclerk@bym-rsf.org	Dyresha Harris	Outreach and Inclusion Coordinator oic@bym-rsf.org
Martha “Marcy” Baker Seitel	Clerk of Interim Meeting imclerk@bym-rsf.org	Jane Megginson	Camp Program Manager janemegginson@bym-rsf.org
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