

# Interchange

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

## WHAT WOULD GOD HAVE US DO IN THIS HISTORIC MOMENT?

Honesty, integrity, equality, justice, community, diversity, peace, nonviolence, civic and social responsibility, and care for the earth – these are some of the fundamental values that we Friends have discovered together through our direct experience of God. They stem from our collective discovery that there is that of God in all people. They are key elements in our vision of the Peaceable Kingdom.

So, what would Love have us do when the highest political office in the land is occupied by a president who shows so little care for the core values by which we Friends have lived and testified for centuries? What are we called to do in relationship with the millions of people who were attracted to his message and supported him? What would God have us do to heal the deep wounds and bridge the wide chasms that now divide our communities and nation?

It has never been Friends’ purpose to impose our values on others through edicts or coercion. Rather, we have sought to change hearts and minds by stirring and awakening the Spirit within. We seek faithfully to listen for and follow God’s leading,... to listen for and answer that of God in all people,... to let our lives speak (not just our words) for what we believe,... to behold that we are one in the Spirit,... and to be willing to sacrifice and suffer for what we believe.

Friends have faced seemingly insurmountable challenges many times before. Since the very beginning of Friends’ experiment with Truth, we have spoken Truth to power and willingly accepted the consequences. Friends have struggled for religious freedom, to

*Moment continued on page 5*

## WORSHIP AND CHANGE

*Marcy Seitel, Clerk of Interim Meeting*

Several years ago at Annual Session, I was sitting in the quiet of the evening next to the beautiful candlelit labyrinth that the Junior Young Friends had created. It was an awesome place of peace and quiet. Suddenly the sound of exuberant voices and pounding feet could be heard, and then began to fill the air. A crowd of young people, teens and children, had just finished a postponed game of capture the flag and were running to rejoin the All Age Celebration. I heard the noise of this happy group, still hidden from my view by the buildings at Frostburg University. As all those runners came into view, they in turn saw the labyrinth. In a moment, with an unstated but obvious consensus, the group stopped running and quietly moved forward. A number of them came to walk the labyrinth, calm and quiet and present. Others walked by, also quiet.

In that moment I was struck by something I have often noticed, something I treasure—the ability of Friends of any age to be very involved in something one moment, and in a mindful, even worshipful silence in the next. Sometimes Friends ask for a moment of silence, a moment of shhhh (MOSH), as our Young Friends say, and other times we just find the silence among us, as the running youth did at Annual Session.

This ability, this desire, to seek the quiet of the Spirit even amidst noise and activity, celebration and distress, is key to our journey as Friends. It is because we can fall into these wonderful moments of silence that we can find our way as Friends – we can find peaceful solutions, workable plans, loving responses, where we once had thought these things were impossible. And we can bring about real change, not only in the world, but in ourselves.



*A future camper cleans the Thunderdome during the 2016 Shiloh Quaker Camp Reunion*

Baltimore Yearly Meeting is now undertaking three initiatives that require us to examine ourselves and the assumptions that guide the way we live. We are looking at issues of equity, of sustainable living on the planet, of operating as an organization with integrity. While we as Friends have worked on these issues in the world, we find we must also work on them among ourselves. Instead of speaking truth to power, we are working on ways of speaking truth to each other – even if we are not practiced in having these conversations, and even if we are at times uncomfortable.

First, the Friends in Unity with Nature Committee is asking all local Meetings to calculate our carbon footprints, to tally and become aware

*Worship and Change continued on page 4*

## DEVELOPMENT NEWS

### CATOCTIN BATHHOUSE CONSTRUCTION AND FUNDRAISING UPDATE

To stay informed on the Catoclin Bathhouse project, go to [www.bym-rsf.org/giving/catoctin-bath-house-project.html](http://www.bym-rsf.org/giving/catoctin-bath-house-project.html). This photo was taken on November 29, 2016. The basement is excavated with no unmovable large boulders found! The basement walls are going up!



As of December 12, 2016 we have raised in gifts and pledges for the Catoclin Bathhouse Project \$389,029.87. We have a \$50,000.00 matching gift challenge we are working on and expect to meet that by December 31, 2016 for an additional \$17,345.10. We continue to seek your financial support for this project, go to <https://bym-rsf1-org.presencehost.net/giving/give-to-catoctin-bathhouse-project.html> to give. Thank you.



### OTHER PROJECTS IN NEED OF SUPPORT:

#### Shiloh Quaker Camp Needs a New Stove:

**Cost: \$6,000 (for a refurbished commercial one)**

The current stove/griddle shoots flames out the controls and is in desperate need of replacement. If you want to give to the Shiloh Stove Appeal go to <https://bym-rsf1-org.presencehost.net/giving/campdonations.html>, in the notes section put Shiloh Quaker Camp new stove.

#### Opequon Quaker Camp Needs a New Kitchen Floor:

**Cost: \$12,000**

The floor and sub-floor in the kitchen have given way and it is imperative that it be replaced before the start of camp 2017. Go to <https://bym-rsf1-org.presencehost.net/giving/campdonations.html> and in the notes section put Opequon Quaker Camp emergency kitchen floor.



#### Scholarships for Women's Retreat, Spiritual Formation, Youth Programs, or Annual Session.



Why not consider sponsoring a young person to attend a Young Friends Conference with a gift of \$50.00. Our unique Young Friends conferences offer a sanctuary from the frenzied lives of the teens who attend. The community has become an important stepping stone on the way to maturity and spiritual recognition. Go to <https://bym-rsf1-org.presencehost.net/giving/gifts/ymsgiving.html> and enter your where you want your gift to go.

### VISITING MEETINGS

Join us and visit a new Meeting. Share Friendship with other Friends in BYM. For additional information or assistance go to [www.bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/visiting\\_meetings.html](http://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/visiting_meetings.html) and get started today.



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

### 2017 ANNUAL SESSION: JULY 31 – AUGUST 6

Years before the tragedies of gun violence, before young adults drop out of school without good job prospects, before they are sent to prison, all too many youth in our communities begin to turn in the wrong direction. The school-to-prison pipeline begins. Why? How?

With our 2017 program theme—“**Growing Towards Justice – Acting on Faith**”—together we will seek a way to “*live in that life and power that will take away the occasion*” for violence, injustice and the waste of precious young lives in our communities.

Beyond the horrific headlines and news from the streets of our cities, we must look carefully and recognize the many roots of this crisis. What are the causes? What actions can we take together to help change lives - as people of faith, concerned citizens, organizers, advocates, and volunteers?

George Fox called Friends to live in “*the virtue of that life and power that [takes] away the occasion of all wars....*” Today, Friends are also asking, how can we use our “life and power” to take away the occasion of this violence, this waste of young lives, the injustice that plagues our communities?

**Please mark your calendars now  
to attend the 2017 BYM Annual Session  
at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland**

### WANT TO LEAD A WORKSHOP AT ANNUAL SESSION?

If you, or a committee you are part of, wants to lead a workshop, please submit this form (<http://www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession/workshopprop.html>) not later than February 22. Workshops are held Thursday, Friday, and Saturday afternoons, and typically cover a range of topics that relate to the theme of Annual Session, and other topics of interest to Friends. Interest group times are also available for those that want to converse with others on a topic, without the preparation needed for a full workshop. Interest group requests can be taken any time before or during Annual Session.

## A RECIPE FOR MAKING A QUAKER

*from Junior Yearly Meeting*

Ever wonder what it takes to make a Quaker? Well, just like brownies, there are many recipes; here is one version.

#### INGREDIENTS:

Infants-toddlers	Loving arms	100 Silly Songs	98 Duplo blocks
48 books	35 toys that go zoom-zoom	150 Walks	caring guidance as needed
1 Coffee House/10 acts	15 lesson plans	new F(f)riends	too many games to count
conflict as rises	Meeting for Business	1 capture the flag	projects to help others
	paints	1 ice cream social	

#### DIRECTIONS:

Bring your family to Annual Session first week of August; register your children (from infants to questioning middle-schoolers) in Junior Yearly Meeting

JYM enfolds them into loving arms.

Infants and toddlers- sing silly songs, put Duplo blocks together, play with zoom-zoom toys, read books, again and again. Have plenty of practice in sharing toys and being praised. Repeat for four years.

Return for Kindergarten year. Have fun with other kids learning about our Quaker faith, put on skits, make up games, play with parachute, learn to be more fair and kind with one another, learn to welcome newcomers, watch how cool the Young Friends are, and play Capture the Flag with them. Learn to make decisions as Quakers. Put on a skit at Coffee House in front of the rest of the Quaker Community and enjoy their applause. Repeat for 5 years.

Return to become a Junior Young Friend. Have more independence and responsibility- sign yourself in and out of the classroom, help decide what you will do during the week, have a sleep over, , Learn more about being a Quaker and increase your experience running your own Meetings for Business. Repeat for 3 years.

Say good bye to Junior Young Friends and follow the path to Young Friends and soon on to our Young Adult Friends.

Let season for several years. Ingredients continue to blend over time to develop bold hardy flavors.

We hope that you have enjoyed our recipe. Families, as you plan your summer schedule and your children’s camps, please save that first week in August for an unusual mix of family time and children/adult programing.; put Annual Session on your calendar and make Junior Yearly Meeting a favored part of your child’s year!

## COMMITTEES LEAD REFLECTION ON YEARLY MEETING'S WORK

*Worship and Change continued from page 1*

of the energy of the planet that Meetings use. We deeply value living on the planet in a way that is respectful of our environment, yet we have habits that are counter to this goal. Second, the ad hoc Growing Diverse Leadership Committee, along with the Working Group on Racism, is asking Friends to examine the ways in which our Meetings are not always welcoming to People of Color. We value equity, yet are not always aware of the ways we may not be living equitably with others.

And third, as a Yearly Meeting, the ad hoc HOPE Committee is examining how we can work with more integrity as an organization to live into our vision statement. Questions about decision-making, the role of staff in the Yearly Meeting, and other key questions are being seasoned and will be brought back to the body of the Yearly Meeting. Friends have raised serious concerns about these issues, and yet we would like to realize our goal of binding all Meetings into the Yearly Meeting in more helpful, purposeful, meaningful ways.

It is the practice of finding the Spirit in quiet moments that can sustain us through these challenging explorations. We are growing and changing as a Yearly Meeting. We hope to be more diverse, to reconcile our energy use with our concern for the environment, and to run our programs more effectively. All of this will bring change. Our practice of going from intense discussion to silent worship, back to discussion, and into worship can provide a foundation for the discernment that will help us find paths that are truly new, truly of the Spirit's leading.

## QUAKER SEEDS SPROUT IN CUBA, PALESTINE, BELIZE AND KENYA

*Georgia Fuller, Langley Hill  
BYM Representative to the FUM Board*

As Friends United Meeting steadily moves from an American missionary organization to a global partnership, new life is sprouting:

1) Years ago **Friends in Cuba** began preparing for the transition from Fidel Castro's era. Anticipating that this transition might reveal restlessness, uncertainty, and even conflict, they began the Cuban Quaker Peace Institute. The first class was in January 2013. In spring 2016 the Institute graduated 12 certified mediators—just six months prior to the death of Fidel Castro.

2) **Ramallah Friends Schools** began in 1869 and has survived and thrived under 4 governments—Ottoman, Turkish, Jordanian, and Israeli. The Lower School just won the Green School Award from the local Municipality. Students practice water and electricity conservation and recycling. For those of us who struggle with the conflicts in Palestine/Israel, Ramallah Friends Schools offers us a Quaker way forward at [www.friendsunitedmeeting.org/work-with-us.html](http://www.friendsunitedmeeting.org/work-with-us.html). Apply or encourage another Friend to apply as the new Head of School, the Quaker Life Coordinator, or a teacher (one-year contract). Consider volunteering as a Friendly Presence (chaplain, 3-9 month commitment) or financially supporting a Friendly Presence.

3) **Friends School in Belize** has been a tiny institution with a big presence. It offers a second chance for students, who struggle in a poor and dangerous area of Belize City, to retake and pass the exams

## LOVE CAMP!!!

Want to see your camp friends during the school year?

Come join us at BYM's Youth Conferences!

Filled with games, workshops, worship, and small group bonding at various Quaker Meetings in Maryland and Virginia, these conferences are an opportunity for youth to come together to create a loving Quaker community, where they can learn, make mistakes and grow.



### 2016-2017 Schedule:

#### Young Friends (High School Age):

February 10-12, March 31-April 2, May 26-28

#### Junior Young Friends (Middle School Age):

December 10-11, March 4-5, May 5-7,

Check out our website for location, registration, and more info

[http://www.bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/](http://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/)

OR Contact: Jossie Dowling, Youth Programs Manager  
Youthprograms@bym-rsf.org

necessary to enter technical or college programs. The government and residents have asked Friends to expand this work. After three years of study, Friends United Meeting has bought a large piece of land with two structurally sound buildings that can be renovated for classrooms, offices, worship space, staff housing and a community center.

4) FUM has just hired Oscar Siema Mmbali to be our pastoral minister in Belize. His leading is to shepherd our Friendly presence in the school and community. Oscar is a graduate of **Friends Theological College in Kaimosi, Kenya**. FTC has just graduated a record 60 students with degrees ranging from chaplaincy certificates to diploma (2-year junior college degree) to a Bachelor's of Theology.

### Global Partnership comes to Wichita

Early registration for the FUM Triennial ends March 31, 2017. You do not have to be an appointed representative from BYM to meet and worship with Friends from around the world.

(One) kindled soul may be the agent whereby the slumbering embers within are quickened into a living flame.

— Thomas Kelly  
The Eternal Promise



### 31st Triennial Gathering of Friends United Meeting

Friends University, Wichita, Kansas  
July 12-16, 2017

Speakers: Miriam Were, Wess Daniels,  
Jan Wood and Colin Saxton

## FRIENDS ARE CALLED TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS AS OURSELVES

*Moment continued from page 1*

reform prisons, to resist participation in war, to end slavery, and to secure voting rights for women and People of Color. We have resisted and endured violent revolutions, civil wars, world wars, and (thus far) the nuclear arms race. Friends before us endured horrendous, scary, violent times, when the future must have looked incredibly bleak and uncertain.

Is this political moment any different? I believe the perils we face today as a people and as a nation are greater than any we have faced before. The fissures run deep, and we are entering a time when the people taking power and their supporters seem intent to make them even deeper and wider. Our fundamental capacities for self-governance, civil discourse, and collectively discerning the common good have been sorely weakened. Our political system is broken and dysfunctional at a time when national and global crises are mounting. What future do we have as a people if we cannot respect one another, listen to one another, recognize and celebrate our differences, learn from one another, seek truth together, challenge and disagree with one another, trust one another, and then discern our way forward together through mutually agreed upon political institutions and processes?

So, what do we Friends do? God is not partisan. In the Spirit, we are all united. We are called to love our neighbors as ourselves—and, especially, to love our enemies.

We do what we always do... We gather in the Spirit... We faithfully listen for and follow God's leading... We listen for and answer that of God in all people... We let our lives speak (not just our words) for what we believe... We recognize that we are one in the Spirit... We willingly sacrifice and suffer for what we believe... We speak Truth to power... We proceed in the Light with love, faith, and hope.

... And then we do more... We dig deeper into our souls than we ever have before... We support one another... We offer sanctuary and refuge to those in need and fear... We seek out and engage with those with whom we disagree... We show love and kindness for all... We reach out and unite with others in the Spirit as we never have before... We offer our world a more compelling and powerful vision: the Peaceable Kingdom here and now.

### FAMILY CAMP WEEKENDS SPRING 2017

Camp	Dates	Jobs
Shiloh Quaker Camp	April 28 – 30, 2017	Plant pines
Catoctin Quaker Camp	May 12 – 14, 2017	Plant shrubs
Opequon Quaker Camp	June 2 – 4, 2017	
Fall 2017		
Shiloh Quaker Camp	September 22 – 24, 2017	Remove Boxwoods
Catoctin Quaker Camp	October 13 – 15, 2017	
Opequon Quaker Camp	October 27 – 29, 2017	

## KEEPING LOVE AT THE CENTER OF OUR MEETINGS

Sixteen years ago, Virginia Schurman was faithful to a leading to nurture a Spiritual Formation group at Gunpowder Friends Meeting. Since then, we've been meeting each third Thursday evening for the fellowship of a (planned) potluck meal and worship sharing in response to a shared reading (or a podcast, of late). We are regularly 20 or more Friends around the table on those evenings—longstanding members, newer attenders—seekers all. We come for the widening circle of relationships that nurture each one of us and deepen our sense of community at Gunpowder. On other agreed times throughout the month, smaller “spiritual friendship” groups gather to share our spiritual journeys and support one another in our varied spiritual practices.

Our experience is that at the heart of Spiritual Formation is love, a love that allows us to be held as a Meeting in our joys

and sorrows, in our growth and change, in our care for one another and for the world beyond our Meetinghouse. And importantly, our experience in Spiritual Formation is not unique.

Meetings across our Yearly Meeting know the gifts of this program.

If you would like to learn more about how to participate in Spiritual Formation as a Meeting community, please contact the BYM Spiritual Formation Working Group co-clerks, Amy Schmaljohn ([aschmaljohn@friendsbalt.org](mailto:aschmaljohn@friendsbalt.org)) or Alan Evans ([alanwe46@gmail.com](mailto:alanwe46@gmail.com)). We'd be pleased to visit your Meeting and to help you to renew or begin a Spiritual Formation group. Stay tuned for more word on the Spring Spiritual Formation retreat in May, when you can gather with other Friends from across the Yearly Meeting in the spirit and tradition of our beloved Spiritual Formation program.



## OUR “MORAL CRISIS OF THESE TIMES” TO-DO LIST

*Ann Payne, Clerk of Unity with Nature*

Did you ever look at your work and/or home to-do list and think, “I don’t know where to start!” Sometimes, in fact, I DON’T start. It’s just feels too overwhelming. I confess it’s times like these that I might just irrationally settle down for a totally wasted evening zoning out on Facebook. Unity with Nature notes that often this is how it goes when we face the escalating climate crisis. Now called by many “the Moral Crisis of Our Time”, the climate crisis is vast, and, even more than our personal to-do lists, overwhelming. We might even feel mysteriously drawn to Facebook just thinking about it - but what is our Quakerly moral duty to respond?

Unity with Nature’s recent inquiries focus on how we Quakers might begin to tackle our burgeoning ‘climate to-do list’. Following advice from Gandhi and Martin Luther King, the best place to start may be for each of us to examine our own personal contribution to the problem first. It is a simple beginning, to ask “What is my and my family’s personal contribution to the climate problem?” Sure, your truthful witness won’t fix everything - far from it. But examining one’s own role in a problem does create momentum, which can’t be said for avoidance, worrying, or overdosing on Facebook.

To launch us BYM Quakers into action with a little momentum, UWN vetted carbon calculators, some of which are reasonably accurate - and even



*Tree Planting with Unit 1  
at Catocin Quaker Camp*

fun to do. The short list of the best has been distributed to every BYM Monthly Meeting, for clerks or contacts to share with you. (Ask if you haven’t seen it. We can resend.) The simple task of calculating your carbon footprint takes very little time. It reveals how big your footprint is. UWN’s accompanying brochure “Next Steps”<sup>\*</sup> lists a host of modest ways to start shrinking the Big Footprint problem most of us share. As a bonus, you’ll very likely gain a sense of satisfaction for facing up to the problem. That’s the wind in your hair - you’re moving.

In addition, the calculator exercise also reveals places we are ‘trapped’ by our wasteful society. “I can’t reduce my drive to work” or “I can’t afford an electric car”, for example, may reveal the need for better public transportation. With discernment, an issue that most draws (or frustrates) you may reveal itself. Look for that. Unity with Nature invites you to join BYM Quakers as we face our collective “to-do lists”. Let’s begin together in righting our relationship with the earth, one step at a time. I’m guessing your dread of engaging this issue will begin to diminish once you’ve put your foot on the path. If you do happen to find yourself on Facebook, please visit/like <https://www.facebook.com/BYM.FriendsListeningPost/>. (I hope you won’t find me there.) UWN welcomes suggestions and inquiries at [bymunitywithnature@gmail.com](mailto:bymunitywithnature@gmail.com) and welcomes interactive discussions at [bym-unity-with-nature@googlegroups.com](mailto:bym-unity-with-nature@googlegroups.com).

## A&O HELPS SHARE FRIENDS’ WITNESS

*“Political civility is not about being polite to each other. It’s about reclaiming the power of ‘We the People’ to come together, debate the common good and call American democracy back to its highest values amid our differences.” Parker Palmer*

As our democracy continues to evolve, how can Friends help heal the divides that run deep in our communities and our nation? How can Truth be communicated when the issues we face are so emotionally charged?

Many Quakers seek to give voice to their witness in this changing political landscape. The questions of how to share our witness loom large. But many have been down this road before, and know that the best way to get started is by learning from what others are doing.

If your Meeting is undertaking a witness, other Friends could benefit from your experiences. Please think about sharing your work with other BYM Meetings. The BYM Advancement and Outreach (A&O) Committee wants to serve as a conduit for this sharing. The ideas you share will be made available on the BYM web site. You can send information about your Meeting’s activities via e-mail at [Jeannette53@gmail.com](mailto:Jeannette53@gmail.com) or by phone at 703-801-5947.

The A&O Committee has created a page on the BYM website [www.bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/committees/aando/moveforward.html](http://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/committees/aando/moveforward.html),

which not only has information about the work of other Meetings, but provides quick access to good information on a wide range of issues that may help with your public witness.

The BYM A&O Committee offers a few queries for prayerful consideration by each Meeting:

Have we expanded our relationships to include new faith groups and other groups with whom we might work to further peace, equality, freedom of religion, and other principles prized by Friends?

As concerns grow about potential changes to U.S. immigration policies, is it appropriate for Quakers to consider if and to what extent they want to be involved in the Sanctuary Movement? Should we begin preparing now, prior to any policy changes?

Are we mindful of the need to consider our words and attitudes, even when dealing with those with whom we may not agree, and relate to all with compassion and love, affirming our Quaker values?

If you have any questions about or ideas to share with BYM’s Advancement and Outreach Committee, please contact Jeannette Smith.

We look forward from hearing from you and learning how your Meeting is engaged in furthering the work of Friends now.

## STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE CONTINUES WORK ON BATHHOUSE FUNDING AND APPORTIONMENT REVIEW

The Stewardship and Finance Committee has been actively working on two major issues over the past several months. First, the Committee has been engaged in the process of developing a financing plan for the Catoctin bathhouse. Second, the Committee formed a Subcommittee to review and analyze the existing apportionment formula.

The Development Committee has kept readers updated on the progress of the fundraising efforts for the Catoctin bathhouse. The Stewardship and Finance Committee is in the process of designing another way for Friends to support the Catoctin bathhouse project. It is what we are calling a “Friendly loan”. A Friendly loan is a loan made by a Friend to BYM for the purpose of financing the construction of the bathhouse.

The loan is considered “Friendly” for two reasons. First, the lender is a Friend. Second, the interest rate is considered “friendly” as compared with the interest rate that BYM could otherwise obtain from more conventional or traditional lending sources.

As you know, construction is well underway on the new bathhouse at Catoctin. We expect the construction to be completed and the bathhouse to be ready in time for the 2017 camping season. BYM has sufficient funds from contributions and from temporary sources to finance all construction costs.

Of course, our expectation is that continuing contributions to the building fund will pay a substantial amount of the construction costs. When the construction is completed and the temporary sources of financing need to be repaid in or around June 2017, BYM may need other sources of long-term financing for the project. The use of Friendly loans is one option for BYM to consider.

We are contemplating that the term of a Friendly loan will be a maximum of 36 months with interest paid on the last day of each quarter, or 4 times each year. We anticipate that repayment of both principal and interest on each Friendly loan will come from continuing contributions to BYM.

If you are interested in becoming a Friendly lender, please contact Ned Stowe at [nedstowe@bym-rsf.org](mailto:nedstowe@bym-rsf.org) or 301-774-7663.

On the apportionment front, the Apportionment Subcommittee has met several times via conference call and is now reviewing the results of the recent survey of monthly meetings and using the information to evaluate possible changes to the formula.

The subcommittee has tentatively concluded that two elements of the current formula, one which assigns extra weight to the number of households contributing more than \$100 annually and another which limits annual increases or decreases in a monthly meeting’s apportionment to 25%, have not had the effect which was intended when the current formula was adopted. There is a high probability that when recommendations are presented at Annual Session, they will include eliminating these two elements.

Issues yet to be decided include whether it is desirable and/or possible to give some relief to monthly meetings with mortgages, and what needs to be done to clarify restricted vs designated vs unrestricted income, including income from investments.

The Subcommittee expects to make a preliminary report to the full Stewardship and Finance Committee, and to Interim Meeting, in March. The work on the formula will also be a focus of the annual apportionment meetings held in spring 2017.

### WANTED: GOOD HOMES FOR BOOKS!

The Baltimore Yearly Meeting Archives has collected quite a number of books and other materials that are not items for the Archives. We would like to give them away to meeting libraries and/or individuals where they can be used.

**Interpreters Bible** – all 12 volumes – 1956

**2 boxed courses about William Penn** –  
upper elementary age

**Various Religious Education materials and books** –  
ask for specifics if you are interested

**Old books of discipline and Faith & Practices** –  
prior to 1968

**BYM Yearbooks** – 1970 to 2015 –  
very few complete  
sets by year.

Write to Sheila Bach at [snbach@earthlink.net](mailto:snbach@earthlink.net) if you have an interest in any of these. For Yearbooks, please state years wanted.



*Womens' Retreat 2016*

## SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS AVAILABLE!

### SUE THOMAS TURNER QUAKER EDUCATION FUND ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Time to let your favorite Friends School know that grants to help explain Quaker faith and practice to school communities are available once again this year. For over twenty years the Sue Thomas Turner Quaker Education Fund has been supporting this path to understanding and outreach. The application deadline is Wednesday, March 1, 2017. Go to [www.bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/committees/sttqef/application.html](http://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/committees/sttqef/application.html) for the application for funds and check our annual reports from previous years to get some ideas about how grants have been used in the past. Please be in touch with us if you have any questions. ([sttqef@bym-rsf.org](mailto:sttqef@bym-rsf.org))

### MILES WHITE BENEFICIAL SOCIETY OF BALTIMORE CITY PROGRAM YEAR 2017 SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

The Miles White Beneficial Society, a charitable organization affiliated with the Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), is accepting applications for scholarships for college undergraduate students and grants up to \$5000 to non-profit 501(c)3 educational organizations in the Greater Baltimore Metropolitan area. Preference for awarding educational grants will be given to those organizations that are associated with the Society of Friends and that are providing educational opportunities, including books and instructional materials, for young people. Preference for awarding scholarships shall be given to applications from the Greater Baltimore Metropolitan Area and to those with connections to Friends Meetings or their members within the Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Application forms for college scholarships and for grants to organizations are now available. There are separate forms for each category. The deadline for applications is March 15, 2017. Notification of approval will be made by May 1, 2017. Questions or concerns about the application process may be sent to the electronic mailbox [mileswhite@stonyrunfriends.org](mailto:mileswhite@stonyrunfriends.org).

### EDUCATIONAL GRANTS COMMITTEE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

The Educational Grants Committee of Baltimore Yearly Meeting will be awarding a limited number of grants for the school year 2017-2018. Grants will be made to enable members and regular attenders of Meetings associated with Baltimore Yearly Meeting (or their children) to pursue their educational goals. Grants may be applied to expenses associated with undergraduate attendance at accredited post-secondary educational institutions such as universities, colleges, professional and vocational schools. Attendance may be either full- or part-time. Grants will be awarded on the basis of financial need and the Committee's assessment of an applicant's statement of purpose, including consistency with Friends' testimonies. Grants will not exceed \$2,000 per grantee per year. The sum of all grants to a grantee will not exceed \$8,000. In determining the number and amounts of grants, the Committee will be guided by the twin goals of assisting as many applicants as possible with available funds and, insofar as possible, of assuring that amounts of individual grants are not insignificant in comparison with the grantee's needs. Applications will be accepted until April 15, 2017. For further information or if you have questions, please contact the Yearly Meeting Office at 301-774-7663 or online at [www.bym-rsf.org](http://www.bym-rsf.org).

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## CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

American Friends Service Committee was founded in 1917 in response to WWI, with the goal of both relieving the suffering of war and providing alternatives to military service. AFSC knows that miracles can happen when we build the capacity for peace person-by-person, community-by-community. As our 100th anniversary approaches, we want to share powerful lessons from our history and remember the connections AFSC has built across the world. We've developed a traveling museum exhibition about AFSC and will be hosting a peace and justice summit conference in Philadelphia to share and learn with you.

*Waging Peace: 100 Years of Action* is an interactive exhibition opening in January 2017 at the African American Museum in Philadelphia. The exhibit demonstrates the effectiveness of nonviolence to build justice, overcome oppression and prevent violence, using the provocative stories of those who struggled against injustice during the last century. The exhibit is built around five issue areas AFSC continues to engage with today: building peace, ending discrimination, addressing prisons, just economies, and immigrant rights. A call to action, inspiring visitors to engage in justice work beyond the museum, is the capstone of the museum experience.

AFSC has also created a condensed version of the exhibit for use at Quaker meetings and churches. If your Meeting/Church would like

to host the condensed exhibit, visit <https://www.starcafe.org/service/centennial> to fill out a short reservation form. We will provide a guide with promotion and event ideas to meetings displaying the exhibit.

Another part of our 100th anniversary celebration is an AFSC-sponsored summit April 20-23, 2017 in Philadelphia. With the summit, we will articulate a vision forward for peace and justice by joining movements that are making the connection between militarism, racism, and materialism. The summit consists of an academic symposium and a variety of workshops, culminating in a day of action to "let our lives speak". Everyone is welcome to participate in the summit, but pre-registration is required to attend the workshops. Visit the AFSC Centennial website, [afsc.org/100](http://afsc.org/100), for details.

We know that after 100 years, AFSC has many deep and poignant connections within the Quaker community. If you have had a meaningful experience with AFSC, as a participant, staff member, supporter, or donor, we invite you to share your story for our "Peace works" series on the AFSC website, [peaceworks.afsc.org](http://peaceworks.afsc.org). A First Day School curriculum will also be available in 2017 for meetings, including an intergenerational session on gathering Peace Works stories.

Let us continue this powerful work together for the next century!



## WORKING GROUP ON RACISM AND GROWING DIVERSE LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE SEEK HELP BUILDING CHANGE GROUPS

Last August Baltimore Yearly Meeting revised its vision statement to identify ourselves as Friends “of many skin colors, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, stages of life and socially constructed racial identities.” The BYM Working Group on Racism (WGR) and the ad hoc Growing Diverse Leadership Committee (GDLC) are asking local Meetings to support that vision by identifying one or more Friends to constitute a local Meeting “change group” that commits to helping the Meeting lower existing barriers to involvement of people of color in that Meeting.

We envision this effort as a partnership between the GDLC and the WGR on one side and local Meeting change groups on the other. Friends in each Meeting have crucial knowledge about the culture of their own Meeting as well as an understanding of the larger local community. The WGR and GDLC are familiar with many of the resources available for doing this work, for example:

[MCOB handouts](#)—used at a two-session workshop at the 2016 White Privilege Conference, they describe how to use the “Continuum” printed in the 2015 BYM Yearbook to help an organization become more multiracial and antiracist.

[White Privilege: let’s talk](#)—a four-part curriculum published by the United Church of Christ in 2016 and being used by congregations around the country as part of that denomination’s “Sacred Conversations on Race.”



*Annual Session 2016 photo by Jennifer Domenick*

[Ideas for lowering barriers](#)—a list cobbled together from a variety of sources. Friends may choose from that list whatever might work best or makes most sense. Items five and six on that list suggest conducting workshops. The WGR is willing to conduct or arrange for those workshops at local Meetings.

[EECW presentation](#)—a detailed description of an all-day “White on White Institute” at the 2016 White Privilege Conference. It uses the concept of “critical humility” to help white people learn ways to talk to other white people about racial issues in ways that are likely to evoke positive responses.

Curriculum materials on race that could be used in First Day School (see #4 on the “Ideas” document):

[Quakerbooks.org](#)  
[Bouncebackparenting.com](#)  
[Coolmompicks.com](#)

[Forharriett.com](#)  
[Binoandfino.com](#)

Anyone interested in doing this work in his or her local Meeting can contact the Working Group at [wgr@bym-rsf.org](mailto:wgr@bym-rsf.org) and keep your eyes peeled for more resources on the new “Change Group” page on BYM’s website—coming in 2017.



*Annual Session 2016 photo by Jennifer Domenick*

### INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Indian Affairs Committee has updated informational fact sheets on the current tribes in Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. These are now available on the committee’s website at [www.bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/committees/indian/factsheets.html](http://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/committees/indian/factsheets.html). There are two versions, short and long, of each state fact sheet. The short version may be printed as a single, 2-sided sheet.

## VALLEY FRIENDS MEETING IS GOING CARBON FREE

Valley Friends meeting believes “Earth Care” is a responsibility of all inhabitants of “Spaceship Earth.” This fundamental belief led to months of collective soul-searching. From which our monthly meeting approved a Minute on Climate Change at the August 10, 2014 meeting for worship with a concern for business. The Minute acknowledges “climate change [as] real, significant, worsening, and urgent” and calls for “immediate attention . . . at all levels: personal, community, national, and international.” The minute is for Valley Friends a living document and was revised in 2016 to better speak to the spiritual desire to be carbon free.

The year following the initial approval of the Minute in small groups and as a Meeting we deliberated practical Earth-Care measures to put in practice at the Monthly Meeting our beliefs as expressed in the Minute on Climate Change. Using several methods to calculate our annual carbon dioxide contribution of the Meeting House, we found it to be 46,000 pounds. We engaged a consultant to evaluate our total energy uses and offer advice on reducing our energy consumption. As a meeting we committed ourselves to reduce our “carbon footprint” to zero.

Early in 2016 at several Meetings for Worship with attention to Business we discerned the way to live out the spirit of our Minute on Climate Change. Meeting approved a bold initiative: the reduction of our “carbon footprint” from the Meeting House to zero in two phases. Phase 1 replace the 60-year-old inefficient oil furnace with a modern, efficient heat pump. Phase 2 install a solar array sufficient to meet all electrical needs including heating and air conditioning.

Phase 1 is complete and we are now heating our Meeting House with the new efficient heat pump. We plan to start Phase 2 early in 2017.

Community response was overwhelmingly positive when the Minute on Climate Change appeared as an op-ed in Harrisonburg, Virginia’s *Daily News-Record*. We have involved the greater community in

funding our “carbon zero” project. Valley Friends Meeting members have done the traditional fund raising for the project. We contributed and pledged funds and have offered Friendly Loans for the project. But for a small Meeting to raise the anticipated \$60,000 all alone is a daunting task.

We are gratified that the local community has come forward to help. Several climate focused groups have contributed toward the project. Committed individuals and families from our community have sent funds. A local activist and musician held a fund raising concert to contribute to our Carbon Free project. From this wonderful community support we learned there are folks and Friends who cannot reduce their own “carbon footprint” but appreciate the opportunity to make a contribution to Valley Friends Monthly Meeting project as a way of living out their concern for “Spaceship Earth.”

We invite members and Meetings of BYM to join us in our quest to become carbon free. If you feel so lead to contribute funds, a pledge or a friendly loan would you please contact Sam Moore, VFM Treasurer PO Box 781, Dayton, VA 22821, sbmoorester@gmail.com.



Valley’s New Heat Exchanger

## TATTOOS ON THE HEART – A MUST READ

### FATHER GREGORY BOYLE – A MUST SEE

Save the Date – March 22, 2017!

*Tattoos on the Heart* – a must read. Father Gregory Boyle – a must see. Father Boyle is the author of the *New York Times*-bestseller *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*, which

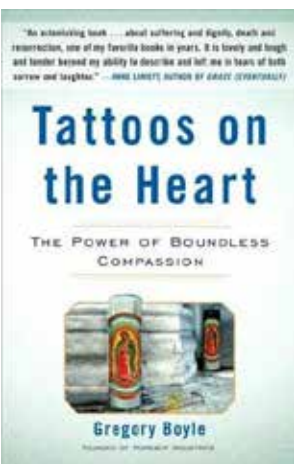
was named one of the Best Books of 2010 by Publishers Weekly and received the PEN Center USA 2011 Creative Nonfiction Award. Father Boyle was inducted into the California Hall of Fame in December 2011 and was recently named the 2016 Humanitarian of the Year by the James Beard Foundation.

Father Boyle, a Jesuit priest famous for his gang intervention programs in Los Angeles, makes winsome connections between service and delight, and compassion and awe. He heads Homeboy

Industries, which employs former gang members in a constellation of businesses. This is not work of helping, he says, but of finding kinship. The point of Christian service, as he lives it, is about “our common calling to delight in one another.” The Quaker version of that. . . . “seeing that of God in everyone.”

It’s not often we have the opportunity to hear the motivating insights of a speaker the caliber of Father Boyle, but we are going to have that opportunity soon. Father Boyle is coming to Adelphi Friends Meeting for a special mid-week service hosted by the Ministry and Worship Committee on the vital topic of *The Power of Boundless Compassion*. Father Boyle is a galvanizing speaker who travels the country sharing his models of relationships needed to help real change take place. Once you’ve read the book, you know you’re in for an awesome and inspiring treat. Please mark your calendars for Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. Don’t miss this event!

If you can come early to join us for a meal at 5:30 pm, please let us know. For more information, please contact Susan Richardson at [asusanw@gmail.com](mailto:asusanw@gmail.com) or 301-474-0333.



## ANNAPOLIS FRIENDS MEETING

Annapolis Friends met in October to discuss our situation with regard to diversity. We used the Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist, Multicultural Institution. Friends wrote their answers to some queries, then discussed them. The queries asked about the state of the Meeting with respect to inclusion of persons of color, possible barriers to inclusion, and how our Testimonies inform our approach to attracting and including persons of color. Another query asked what aspects of our Meeting are essential to our identity as Friends? In other words, what parts of our culture can be modified to accommodate people from different cultural backgrounds, and what aspects are essential to who we are? Another meeting is planned to continue moving forward.

Many Friends are giving good support to the youth of our Meeting. A strong group of teachers is supplemented by others who offer one-time sessions at First Day School. Others check in at the nursery to make sure any baby newcomers are cared for. One family donated outgrown playground equipment and other families dedicated several weekends to disassembling and then reassembling it, involving the kids in the process.

Every New Year's Eve, Annapolis participates in an interfaith service in which we ask people to join us in five minutes of silence. We also reach out to the greater community by hosting meetings of Climate Stewards of Greater Annapolis and Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform.

## BETHESDA FRIENDS MEETING

This past October, Bethesda engaged in a spirit-led process to decide what we would do in response to the news that Sidwell Friends Lower School (whose campus our Meeting House is on), was going to move from Bethesda to Northwest DC. Sidwell Friends School generously offered to bring us with them in this move, since they were going to build a Meeting House for the lower school that would be appropriate to our needs. The other possibilities available to us were to rent a space or to buy property; both these options might have allowed us to stay in the Bethesda area.

Our Meeting embarked upon a year-long discernment process, during which a very hard-working and dedicated ad hoc committee gathered information relevant to our choices, solicited feedback from members and attenders via a sophisticated survey, and held several threshing sessions during which questions, concerns, and hopes could be shared. This process culminated with two Called Meetings. During the first Called Meeting, our clerks, Ralph Steinhardt and Susan Kaul, encouraged us to first share our sense of the principles by which we hoped to make a decision. As people shared ideas, these were written on large pieces of paper and posted on the wall. Among the sixteen principles generated were: "We should proceed in a way that our community is even stronger after the decision than it was before the decision;" "Anyone who speaks in favor of a particular decision should address the concerns of those who resist that option," and "We should keep our hearts open to the Light and to one another." Many thoughts, hopes, visions, and concerns were shared. It was clear after three hours that our discernment process was not concluded, and we agreed to meet again the following Saturday.

During our second Called Meeting, the messages began to cohere



*Annual Session 2016 photo by Jennifer Domenick*

and to lead us to unity. We minuted our unity thus: **Bethesda Friends Meeting joyfully and gratefully accepts the invitation of Sidwell Friends School to move to the consolidated Wisconsin Avenue campus.** A sense of thankfulness and joy accompanied this decision, and the Meeting expressed enormous gratitude for the work of the ad hoc committee, the guidance of our clerks, and the thoughtful and spirit-led participation of our members and attenders.

## BLACKSBURG FRIENDS MEETING

Some of our teens attend Meeting for Worship, some do not, but all are faithful to their once a month Friday evening at the Meeting House. The theme for last school year was "Seeking Our Spiritual Center" with the focus of a mirror to see themselves in a frame they decorated. They made life size images of how they wanted to be perceived and posted sayings as guideposts for adults to read and make additions. They hosted a wonderful all-Meeting evening to look over their portfolios and discuss people who had influenced them. Attendance by younger children is sporadic, but two adults are on call each Sunday. Elizabeth Briggs prepared a large notebook with a lesson plan, reading, and craft activity with a sign-up sheet to indicate which children participated. It is a treat after Meeting when we hear their enthusiastic report.

## CHARLOTTESVILLE FRIENDS MEETING

In September, Friends hosted several special events. The Meeting House rafters reverberated when more than 50 singers gathered in the Community Room for the Rivanna River shape note singers' all-day sing. American social/peace activists Theresa Kubasak and Gabe Huck, authors of *Never Can I Write of Damascus*, and Daniel Demeter, author of *Lens on Syria*, shared experiences and insights they gained while spending several years in Syria in the years just prior to (and in Gabe and Theresa's case, even during the early years of) the conflict that country is currently witnessing. At the end of the month CFM hosted a couple of dozen Young Friends from across BYM for their first weekend conference of the year. In addition to these events at the CFM Meeting House, many members attended the open house sponsored by the Islamic Society of Central Virginia in late September and several Friends offered solidarity with that congregation.

On October 1, 24 Friends met with Elizabeth DuVerlie and Dave Etheridge of BYM's Working Group on Racism for a daylong workshop in which we explored white privilege and its effects and considered what we as members of CFM want to do about it. The conference was an outgrowth of a BYM initiative to help local Meetings move



Bathhouse Day of Destruction

along the continuum described in *On Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization*, as well as an outgrowth of the work of our own *Waking Up White* Friendly Circle and the earlier efforts of Elizabeth Shillue and other Friends to work on antiracism efforts at CFM and in our Charlottesville community, bringing the film *I'm not Racist, Am I?* to the Paramount, Tandem Friends School, and our local public schools.

The Meeting has welcomed a second set of twins to our worship together: Abraham and Aaron Sorenson were born in late October, and they join Sonja and Mateo Leff who are 2 ½. All our children are busy preparing masks, music makers, and costumes for the Christmas play to be held on December 18.

### GOOSE CREEK FRIENDS MEETING

Goose Creek Friends Meeting is excited to announce a new working group under the care of its Peace and Social Concerns Committee: the S.P.I.C.E.S. Traveling Peace Troupe! Their mission is to engage audiences of all ages in live, interactive performances of stories built on the themes of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship as a way to sow love and nurture these values in ourselves and the community. The Troupe expects to have its debut performance on February 12 at rise of Meeting. After a few more weeks of preparation, they'll take to public venues. The students in First Day School will help with in-Meeting performances only. They are creating their own Youth Peace Troupe for peer group performances. To learn more, contact Maria Nicklin (marianicklin@gmail.com) or Eric Carlson (ecarlson40@gmail.com), co-clerks.

### HERNDON FRIENDS MEETING

Herndon Friends celebrated twenty years in our current building this spring, a lovely home that satisfies all our needs except one: besides the worship room, there is only a small space for babies plus one other room to use for First Day School. Expanding the building turned out to be impractical, but finally an ingenious solution was found. We now have an Amish-built cabin in the corner of our parking lot, the perfect club house for our elementary school class. The older kids continue to have First Day School in the form of "Meeting for Breakfast" at a local restaurant.

After watching part of the movie *Hometown Habitat*, which shows how and why we can use our own properties to provide sanctuaries for wildlife, we were inspired to hold an interfaith showing and discussion for the neighboring faith communities. Representatives of seven communities attended and plan to take the idea back to their own congregations, where we hope the process will repeat itself. For details about this interfaith movement, see [www.plantnovatives.org/faith-communities.html](http://www.plantnovatives.org/faith-communities.html).

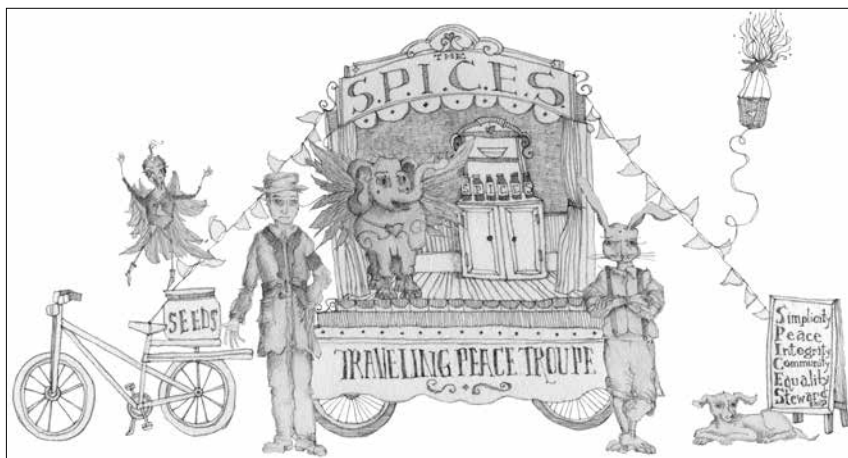
### HOMWOOD FRIENDS MEETING

The Peaceable City Series is an 11-week, Quaker-led, lightly-facilitated discussion series held on Tuesday evenings at Homewood from early October to late December. Jo Brown, an artist, activist, and Friend, inspired the series and serves as the moderator. The series is sponsored by the Homewood Friends and Stony Run Peace and Social Justice Committees.

The Peaceable City series is designed to bring people together to understand the tributaries of violence, and their many remedies, and then through this understanding, to act. It is not designed to provide simple answers; rather the goal is to cultivate strong, creative, and new ways to address longstanding problems, to deepen understanding and dislodge mythologies, and to strengthen commitments to social justice action, and engagement in the city, within our Meetings. Each session of the series includes a screening of a TEDTalk, 18 minutes in length, followed by discussion. There is a different talk each evening because there is more insight to be gained from exploring the array of ideas across the series of talks, than from just a few. Topics range from gender violence to police brutality to incarceration to non-violence, with speakers from police officers to former inmates to prosecutors to protest leaders. Talks were chosen not only for their specifics and quality, but also for their readiness for adoption and local interpretation. While a number of non-Quakers have attended, the most consistent participation has been from members of our own local meetings. Nearly half of Homewood's regular attenders have participated in the Peaceable City series at least once. For additional information about the Series, contact Jo Brown ([jobrownbluesky@gmail.com](mailto:jobrownbluesky@gmail.com)).

### HOPEWELL CENTRE MONTHLY MEETING

Hopewell Centre has enjoyed an active and productive fall. The highlight of the season was when Art Larrabee brought his "Quaker Decision-Making Workshop" to Hopewell Meeting House. Benches were filled with nearly all our members, as well as with Friends from nearby. It was a great success and we came away with new



insights and ways (not without good humor) to make our Business Meetings more spirit-led. We are all now coming to Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business with a newfound commitment to “clerking consciousness.”

We are pleased to report that our Peace & Social Justice Committee has passed a minute denouncing “all speech that promotes, directly, or indirectly, white supremacy ideology... Friends are urged to test their leadings by confronting resurgent hate rhetoric wherever it occurs.” We’ve been engaging in ongoing discussions about how to confront and respond to racist remarks in a Quakerly way. We were excited to connect with other faiths in a Unity Walk (led by Shenandoah University’s Religion Department) in remembrance of 9/11. There were deep and lively conversations amongst Quakers, Jews, Bahá’ís, Presbyterians, A.M.E. Episcopalians, Mennonites, Metropolitan Community churchgoers, and Muslims as we walked and were welcomed into each place of worship. Most recently, we have initiated a Thursday evening Meeting for Worship at Centre Meeting House in downtown Winchester. This will meet the needs of members and attenders who find it hard to be there on First Day; and we hope it will bring in students from Shenandoah University and seekers from the local community. Our Spiritual Formation Group continues to flourish; our Sustainability Dinner & A Dialogue meets monthly; and we continue to reach out to those in need at the Highland Food Pantry. May the holy days be sacred and illuminating; may the New Year bring safe harbors, understanding, and joy.

### LITTLE BRITAIN MONTHLY MEETING

Little Britain was involved in a community yard sale for raising money for Right Sharing of World Resources. By taking off the price tags from previous sales and asking for a donation; we brought in over \$200. Penn Hill is a good spot to hold this and those from the community who brought their items were pleased. It was a good way to reach out to the community. In the past two years Penn Hill Meeting has been dealing with having to cut down two old trees next to the Meeting House. We are looking forward to watch a redbud and silver bell grow to take their place, flanked with milk weed.

Some of us helped Drumore celebrate 200 years of the Meeting House on October 1. Vail Palmer, at 89, flew in from Oregon. His parents were married in the Meeting House in 1926. He has just published *Face to Face*. He tries to understand some of the Bible sayings that do not make sense today. Both of our Meetings are small. We enjoyed the annual Thanksgiving covered dish at Eastland November 20 with people who do not usually join us.

### MIDLOTHIAN FRIENDS MEETING

Midlothian continues finding joy in simplifying the operation of our Meeting as we intentionally follow the promptings of the Spirit. Each time we have let go of a form we thought necessary for our Meeting, the Spirit has been there to show us how to ‘just be’ in the Presence.

After this journey together for the past six years, we now experience an operational environment at our Meeting that is as simple as our Quaker worship. And we are eager for what may come next! For us, it has been a matter of letting go of control so we allow the Spirit to guide us, communally. This group experience has been a reminder to each of us to do the same in our lives outside the Meeting House. It also spurred us to consider individual simplicity during our monthly ‘Meeting for Nurture’ where Friends shared their

journeys into a more simpler life. There is a relaxed and reviving energy that is now sustainably palpable in our Meeting instead of the busyness that used to define our gatherings. Increased intimacy has resulted. Our Meeting House environment has truly become a physical haven for us from the world around us; so much so that we now encourage Friends to visit the Meeting House and its wooded grounds at any time for their personal rejuvenation. Keys are eagerly made available to all Friends so they can avail themselves of this respite at their convenience.

Due to the simplification of our ‘Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business’, we now use this time together purely for discerning the spiritual path forward for Midlothian Friends. We have ceased using it for various announcements and administrative matters that previously utilized much time and could have been best handled through email. To emphasize the discernment purpose of Meeting for Business, our Recording Clerk now only minutes decisions, rather than the entire Meeting for Business deliberation. We have found we now have plenty of time during Meeting for Business to initially consider all spiritually related matters as an entire meeting in order to allow the Spirit to first provide direction through all of us. If needed we refer purely logistic or administrative aspects to standing or ad-hoc committees. This approach clearly places our entire Meeting community in a steering capacity for our committees, rather than the other way around. This healthy evolution in our Quaker process has increased attendance at our Meetings for Business to be equal to that of our weekly Meetings for Worship. We assume this is because very spiritually meaningful things now happen during that Meeting for Business time together.

Finally, we have discovered the joys in making needs of the Meeting known to the entire Meeting community via email or announcements after worship, so we can experience together the answer the Spirit provides us to these perceived needs. We have found that if it is a genuine need, the Spirit will nudge some Friend to provide what is needed without us ‘pushing’ one another to provide it. In humility we have come to recognize that if no Friend responds to a perceived need, perhaps the “need” was not as great as we thought. And we accept this as our answer as we let the “need” go or perhaps discern another way forward.

### PATAPSCO FRIENDS MEETING

In November, Patapsco joyfully celebrated its 20th anniversary. We welcomed back several founding members and early attenders who had moved away. We remembered how a founding member went on a tour of historic houses in Howard County and discovered Hebron House, a lovely farmhouse which we now happily rent from the Presbyterians who own it.

Friends explored queries about our relationship to the Meeting. In worship sharing, we each sought to express: What has Patapsco Friends Meeting meant to me? When have I felt at home at Patapsco Friends Meet-



Annual Session 2016 photobooth provided by Jennifer Domenick

ing? How have I participated in co-creating the community? What are my hopes for Patapsco Friends Meeting? A founding member observed that Patapsco had “started from scratch” and took nothing for granted. It was a “learning meeting,” opened to new lessons. People didn’t want to do things automatically as they had been done in the past. A former clerk recalled how the Meeting was challenged by the crisis of 9/11 and found its way forward together, as she hopes we will in honoring our values today. Another Friend experienced the Meeting as open to hearing and doing what Spirit asks, giving the example of our prison ministry.

Many Friends described their sense of finding a home and a warm welcome at the small, “right-sized” Meeting where people can “know each other and be known.” One said it has an “old soul feeling.” We told stories about the treasured children who grew up in the Meeting. Some Friends spoke of finding a place where they could safely speak of difficult challenges they were facing in their families, such as mental illness. Small group activities, such as reading *The New Jim Crow* and regularly discussing Pendle Hill pamphlets, have helped Friends “know each other in that which is eternal.” One Friend found the Meeting a place where “people have each other’s backs, in spiritual growth and also in a practical way.”

Seeing darkness ahead, a Friend stressed the need to continue to co-create community as we continue our spiritual journey. We will need spiritual and emotional help. We will also need to face the challenge of seeing how best to relate to those who do not share our values. It seems an especially good time to be reading Joanna Macy’s *Active Hope* together.

In the past twelve years, we have all been touched by the Meeting’s prison ministry. In 2017, some present and former members of the South Mountain Friends Fellowship will be leaving prison, two of whom expect to be near us in the Baltimore area. We are acutely aware of the difficulties of this transition and will provide support where we can. As this report is written, we are stunned by the sudden loss of a beloved member of the South Mountain community, Monroe Wright, who died of a heart attack the night before our Christmas gathering on December 10. It is hard to take in, yet it felt right that we all heard the news together (from one of the correctional officers who had taken him to the hospital) and could honor his memory in an impromptu memorial service. Monroe was a kind, perceptive, thoughtful man who loved reading and studied meditation. He refused parole because he would have to admit regret for a crime he says he did not commit. Despite this, he actually expressed gratitude for his time in prison and never stopped growing and learning. The fellowship meant a lot to him, and he meant a lot to each of us. We will miss him. Goodbye, Monroe.

### PATUXENT FRIENDS MEETING

Patuxent is fortunate to have a variety of interfaith activities and organizations enriching our southern Maryland communities. Recently, on a bright and blustery day, a standing-room-only interfaith Thanksgiving Service was held at the Southern Maryland Islamic Center in Prince Frederick. Sponsored by the Calvert Interfaith Council, Southern Maryland Islamic Center, and the Daughters of Abraham, many faith traditions were represented and participated in the service. A bountiful table of food was provided by the hosting members of the Islamic Center. Many families with children attended as if to say this is the kind of community we want for our

children as they grow up.

The program included poetry, music, responsive reading, scriptures, singing and prayers representing the many faith traditions present. In addition to the sponsors’ traditions, we heard B’hai, Jewish, Episcopal, Latter-day Saints, Methodist, Baptist elements plus excerpts of Taoist, Islamic and Confucian prayers. We also heard an original poem from Chaplain Alice Thompson, Calvert Memorial Hospital. Altogether, a very rich offering! Everyone was invited to visit the sanctuary if they wished.

### PIPE CREEK MEETING

Members of Pipe Creek have translated their concerns about hunger, community, and education into action. Members continue to support the local food pantry through its organic garden during the growing season and with canned foods throughout the remainder of the year. Pipe Creek provided the mashed potatoes for the community Thanksgiving meal. The once a month First Day school at Pipe Creek continues. Recently, young persons work together to translate their learning into artwork and presentations. The book club continues to examine issues related to the principles of Quakerism as a result of reading *The Quaker Way*.

Pipe Creek continues to research the restoration and repairs of the Meeting House but have postponed expansion. We will look to expanding membership and community during 2017. The 3rd annual Pipe Creek Reunion was held in September. Former and current attendees and members enjoyed grilled foods, potluck sides, and shared memories. This event will take place annually on the 3rd Sunday of September.

### RICHMOND FRIENDS MEETING

Since last spring, Richmond has been assisting a refugee family from Iraq. Members of Meeting were excited about this opportunity to help a family get acclimated to our country and have been generous with time, money and other things needed by the family. The family had been given a good start with help from Catholic Charities, Reestablish Richmond, and International Rescue Committee, but needed more person-help from a community group like ours. Transportation was an immediate first need as the family does not have a car; we have responded with rides to doctor and social service appointments, shopping for groceries and school supplies.



Annual Session 2016 photo by Jennifer Domenick



*Annual Session 2016 photo by Jennifer Domenick*

When the family wanted to move to the opposite end of town, our members pitched in with two pick-up trucks and five people. Several others took the children to and from their new school for two weeks before they moved. Members generously donated a couch, dining table and chairs, a computer, five sewing machines, 4 of which were further donated to a sewing class for refugees, various other items as well as food. In addition, thanks to financial donations, we have paid their utilities and will continue until at least July of this year, plus some extra financial costs related to their move. Looking forward to a “typical Thanksgiving” potluck at a member’s home, we celebrate these new friendships we have formed with this couple and their two winsome children. They won’t always need our help, but our friendship with them will continue.

Early in 2016, the Adult Spiritual Education Committee pointed out that the Meeting had not done a Quakerism 101 program for a long time. Unable to locate any archived supporting documents for this subject, the committee created “Living the Quaker Life,” working with currently available materials. They started by offering a free copy of BYM’s Faith & Practice to all who committed to attend as many sessions as they could. They gave away over 50 books!

The committee then broke out topics, with accompanying readings in F&P, as follows: (1) How We Worship; (2) Living our Testimonies [Parts 1 & 2]; (3) Appreciating From Whence We Came; (4) How We Organize Ourselves and How We Conduct our Business; and (5) Living Our Faith. For each topic, one ASE member worked with a member on another committee to develop each presentation which then included certain elements: (1) An introduction; (2) A “Quaker Speak” video, developed under FGC auspices; (3) Development of the topic, introducing...; and (4) Some interactive time, usually breaking into small groups. The program was considered a success with about 50 people attending each session and overwhelming positive feedback being received. Some thoughts on why the program was so successful are: the interactive time was essential to engagement and maintaining interest, keeping things experiential, and building community; the short video helped break up the time. Additionally, giving out BYM F&P helped interest, commitment, and attendance. It helped to spread things out over a lot of people and devote so much time to open community participation. The ASE Committee is continuing this general theme throughout the year and looking ahead, covering topics like “Clearness Committees,” the Hicksite Split, theologies of early Quakers—any topic relevant to Living the Quaker Life.

## WEST BRANCH MONTHLY MEETING

West Branch is looking forward to the Christmas season. Our nursery class is at 10 now with the addition of Mailey Marie Stiles; daughter of Colt and Abbie Stiles. Our local Grampian ministerium recently sponsored a Thanksgiving eve program and 3 of our members represented our Meeting. Life members Ruth Ann Neal and Polly Rodgers passed away recently. We have rejoiced in the recovery of one of our members from cancer. She believes and has proven that faith is bigger than fears and that we must all live for today. Now our prayers are going out to a member’s granddaughter that has spina bifida and complications from it. Our biggest concerns recently were the environment, cancer, and the national election. We continue to support friends and neighbors with prayers and gifts. Many have much; and many more have less.

## YORK FRIENDS MEETING

The last few months of 2016 have been a very exciting time for York! On October 1, member Melanie Cardell married Tom Scofalos, and the following month members Shannon Grimm and Matt Schultheis celebrated their wedding on November 12. Both ceremonies were held in traditional Quaker style in the centuries-old building, followed by simple receptions with family, friends, and the Meeting population.

The comfortably mild fall weather allowed us to host our annual Homecoming picnic outdoors. Friends who’ve moved out of the area came back for the day to enjoy food and fellowship, and local members and attenders who don’t often get a chance to join in worship made a special point to join us that day.

The First Day School students had a unique opportunity to not only observe, but help with, an archaeological dig right here on the Meeting House grounds. Many outside of York Meeting don’t realize that this building was only outfitted with running water in the 1990s, so until that point, we made use of a charming stand-alone brick outhouse in the yard outside. Concurrent with the festivities of the homecoming picnic, a group of urban archaeologists began their exploration of the areas in and around the structure, and guests could help sift through mesh trays of dirt to find treasures. And treasures were found! As we delved deeper, more interesting artifacts were unearthed, and we have now enlisted the help of some college archaeology students to help us sort through all we’ve found.

2016 is the 250th anniversary of our Meeting House, the oldest house of worship in York City that is still in use. This October’s First Friday, we opened our doors and invited the public in to share our history and engage interested individuals in fall harvest-themed activities, discussion, music, crafts, and of course yummy treats.

We were grateful for the presence and wisdom of Baltimore Yearly Meeting’s Outreach and Inclusion Coordinator Dyresha Harris, who joined us on November 13. She facilitated an interactive exercise on race and diversity, which was a most timely topic considering the discomfort in the Meeting following the Presidential election just several days earlier. It has given the Meeting renewed energy to focus on more outreach activities, and help grow our existing Committees.

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## BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING UPCOMING EVENTS

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

### JANUARY

- 13 – 15 – Nuts and Bolts Committee Conference
- 16 – Yearly Meeting Offices Closed
- 27 – 29 – Womens' Retreat

### FEBRUARY

- 10 – 12 – Young Friends Conference
- 20 – Yearly Meeting Offices Closed
- 22 – Deadline for Annual Session Workshop Proposals

### MARCH

- 1 – Deadline for Sue Thomas Turner Quaker Education Fund Applications
- 4 – 5 – Junior Young Friends Conference
- 18 – Third Month Interim Meeting

### APRIL

- 15 – Deadline for Educational Grants Applications

### STAFF AND OFFICERS OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

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