

Interchange

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

RESPONDING TO VIOLENCE IN FAITH AND NOT FEAR

Betsy Meyer, Presiding Clerk

Last year, to avoid a traffic jam on Interstate 84, my husband and I took a detour through a picturesque community, Newtown, Connecticut. Little did we imagine the unspeakable tragedy that would occur there in a few months. As the news and reactions to it unfolded, I was filled with sadness. Sadness at the loss of innocent lives, of course, but even more sadness as I realized that with all the gun violence over the past few years, it has taken the mass murder of little children – 6 and 7-year-olds – to shame our national leaders into a discussion of gun control.

Where is God in the sadness? God is present. God works through the first responders, the counselors and comforters, and through the outpouring of sympathy and help the residents of Newtown have received. God is giving courage to those who are speaking up for gun control. We cannot understand why the innocent suffer and die. That is a mystery. Yet I have to believe that God is powerful enough to work through everything, even through tragedy.

Forces in our culture are trying to tell us to be afraid, be very afraid: dress school children in body armor; arm the principal and teachers; post armed guards in schools. Of course, we must take reasonable safety measures, but we cannot allow fear to direct our actions and

pervade our lives. As Friends, we are called to respond in faith and not fear. Yes, bad things sometimes happen to good people, but God is in us and with us, and nothing can separate us from God. This is good news, enabling us to let go of fear and live into faith.

The accompanying story from Menallen Meeting tells how these Friends were led to respond in faith to local gun violence. After a shooting in nearby Gettysburg PA, Menallen Friends felt the Spirit leading them to speak out against weapons. However, knowing that many of their neighbors are hunting and gun enthusiasts, they were concerned. If they made a strong statement for gun control, would someone retaliate by vandalizing the Meeting House? Menallen Friends wrestled with their leading, and in a gathered meeting felt the guidance of the Spirit giving the words of a message of peace to their local community. For maximum visibility, they decided to publish this message as an advertisement in the Gettysburg newspaper. When they made arrangements for this ad, they could not have known about the tragedy in Connecticut that would come, but the message of peace felt timely and right when it appeared in the paper soon after the Newtown violence. Menallen Friends provided a timely prophetic witness in their community. When we respond in faith rather than in fear, we truly become instruments of God's peace.

COME TO ANNUAL SESSION WITH THE GRANDCHILDREN

Barbarie Hill, Charlottesville Friends Meeting

My husband and I have attended Yearly Meeting sessions for many years, first at Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting and now at BYM. In 2010, we offered to take our two older grandchildren with us to Annual Session. We weren't sure how it would work but quickly found that it's a real pleasure to share the Yearly Meeting experience. We loved seeing them learn and play and interact with other Quakers, both children and adults. We appreciated the opportunity to deepen our grandparent relationship by living with them for several days in such nurturing and stimulating surroundings. The children loved exploring a new environment, making new friends, and participating in almost non-stop activities. They left that year already talking about attending again the next summer.

After the two older grandchildren had such a good time, they insisted their younger sister should come too. So the five of us, my husband and I and three

grandchildren, arrived at Frostburg State University this past summer. We were assigned to one of the larger rooms in the dormitory, where three additional mattresses were placed on the floor for our young charges. The kids thought that staying in the dorm was a great adventure, and living all together in one room created a wonderful sense of closeness. Bedtime wasn't a major problem because the days were so full of activity that sleep came very easily to all of us.

We liked wearing our spiffy new green BYM ID pockets around our necks, and the kids were able to keep their meal cards in the zippered pockets without fear of losing them. The cafeteria presented a few challenges shepherding three young children through its intricacies, but the kids loved choosing their own food, not to mention dispensing their own soft-serve ice cream. Mealtimes were definitely anticipated with enthusiasm.



photo by Karie Firoozmand

Grandchildren continued on page 8

MENALLEN MEETING REACHES OUT TO COMMUNITY AFTER SHOOTING

Rae Tyson, Menallen Meeting

When 19-year-old Shiphod Brown was shot and killed on the streets of Gettysburg, last summer, several members of Menallen Monthly Meeting were saddened by the loss of another life. She had been shot by a young man with a handgun as she sat in her car.

In true Quaker fashion, the member carried their grief to the Meeting House the next First Day. The issue was raised in an informal discussion at the rise of Meeting. The message was simple and direct. Isn't there something we can do or say about gun control in our community? Though many agreed that Menallen should reaffirm the Quaker position of non-violence, there were concerns raised about taking a stand that might offend the law-abiding hunters and sportsmen in Adams County.

The issue was set aside until the next Business Meeting. After a period of silence, the discussion led to a need to discuss the issue in another context. Meanwhile, members were asked to express their thoughts in writing. Six did so and the issue was set aside until a Called Meeting in December. When Clerk Mary Gemmill convened the Meeting, the options ranged from letters to elected officials or to the editor of the *Gettysburg Times*. As they sat in silence, one member looked out the window of the Meeting House and saw an eagle perched nearby. The eagle sighting was an inspiration, leading the member to suggest a low-key Christmas greeting that would reaffirm the Meeting's

stand regarding gun control and non-violence. It was further decided that a paid ad would be more effective than a simple letter writing campaign. Through-



out the process, the Meeting was guided by the Friends Committee on National Legislation's policy statement regarding gun control and non-violence.

A message of Peace and Mediation was approved and published on Dec. 21, 2012. It appeared in the *Gettysburg Times* one week after the tragic school shooting in Newtown. The simple message transformed a local concern into one that mirrored the growing concern about gun control nationwide. The ad brought immediate expressions of support from the Gettysburg area community. Now, the challenge for the future will be how to take further steps towards curbing gun violence in our country.

QUAKERS TAKE A POSITION AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

AFFIRMED AT SHEPHERDSTOWN MONTHLY MEETING

JAN 20, 2013

Thou shalt not kill. You shall love your neighbor as your self. If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other cheek as well.

These are profound commandments of moral action present in the Bible. In Quaker tradition the testimonies of peace and non-violence counsel us to abhor violence of any kind. Thus we wholeheartedly support pleas for meaningful action on reasonable and rational gun-safety legislation, such as the Friends Council on Education letter of Jan 14, 2013.

Quakers include Democrats, Republicans, and independents. We do not oppose gun ownership. Yet unfortunately, guns are often used to enforce one individual's will against others through violence or threats of violence. We do oppose permitting guns in public areas where there are children. We oppose access to weapons that are never appropriate for civilized use. According to the *Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery*, 80% of all gun deaths and 87% of all child deaths by guns occur in the US.

Jesus' instruction to turn the other cheek is one of the most difficult commandments — difficult precisely because it runs counter to our instinctive nature when we are attacked by another person. Quaker testimony expresses Jesus' transcendent conviction that the answer to violence is not more violence. It is not an eye for eye, nor a tooth for a tooth. Instead it is a path that turns away from fear, hate, vengeance; that turns instead towards love, hope, forgiveness, compassion, and kindness.

Great religious leaders and philosophers throughout the ages teach essentially the same thing. We Quakers find that message in our heart to reject violence. Peaceful conflict resolution practices are an attainable ideal. When our forebears from out of the wilderness laid the foundation of the civilization they could only dream of -- they agreed, even in the mythic "Old West," to leave the guns outside the doors of civil society. In a democratic society, we affirm, under the rule of law, we will seek justice and the remedies to grievances of every kind through civil means, not shoot it out in the street.

This present epidemic of gun violence has deep roots involving many social issues: mental health, culture, social inequalities, poverty and more. These issues must be addressed. Peaceful conflict resolution is a sober process of distinguishing the *positions* people take from their *real interests*. It requires wisdom and patience to see common ground amidst apparently irreconcilable positions.

Violence is not *only* about guns, and gun violence is not *only* about mass killings. However the first step toward a commitment to peace, to an end to violence, is "leaving the guns at the doors" when we sit down to resolve conflict. That does not make the solution easy politically. But the absence of perfect solutions is no excuse for us to give up hope.

We ask that every political and faith leader go on record, now, and lend their voice to urgent effective action to reduce gun violence and insure that current and future generations may live and learn in our country free from the threat of gun violence. Do not remain silent.

GIVING TO ORGANIZATIONS – HOW DO MEETINGS DECIDE?

Riley Robinson, General Secretary

Many Meetings include charitable giving to other groups in the Meeting budget. But questions often arise: “Who are these groups, and why are they in our budget?” Friends must consider which organizations to support and how much to give, along with the key question, “Why?” Related discussions also arise about when to choose to give as a Meeting or as an individual.

Friends Meetings give corporately for deeply held reasons:

- Because the Meeting is a core part of a larger organization (directly or indirectly), such as the Yearly Meeting, Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, and Friends World Committee for Consultation. These are organizations that knit Friends together to share, to speak, and to act together as one worldwide denomination.
- Because work is being done on the Meeting’s behalf according to shared Quaker principles that its members feel deeply about. For instance, American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on National Legislation, and Right Sharing of World Resources carry the concerns of Friends into the wider world in many important ways that individual Meetings couldn’t do at all, or so nearly as well, alone.
- Because Meeting members have a leading to support an organization with which they have a special relationship, such as a nearby Quaker school or center.
- Because Meeting members are led to direct participation in an organization, such as a local shelter for homeless people, and the gifts support and motivate that effort.
- Because Meeting members past or present have had an especially meaningful role in the founding or long-term progress of the organization.

These are all good reasons to give. Meetings do well to be clear as a group why they choose to support an organization or cause, and how to prioritize their giving. It is far better to support organizations with which the Meeting feels a relationship and commitment.

Consider the following: Are Friends really united about this choice? Do they understand that, once it is in the budget, each Friend must plan to support the Meeting’s choice financially? Does this choice spur Friends to learn more about the work, and possibly participate in it? Does information about this work appear in the Meeting newsletter and in First Day discussion sessions?

One caution: Money should support Friends’ leadings, witness, and work in the world, but it can’t substitute for it. If a discussion begins to sound like a check is being written as a gesture disconnected from a strong, lively commitment, you might want to ask some questions.

What if a Meeting does not arrive easily at decisions about shared financial contributions to outside organizations? Once the Meeting has met its commitments to the organizations of which it is a member, it may choose to simply function as a conduit of information.

It is truly rewarding for Meetings and Friends to appreciate the work being carried on their name by Quaker service organizations and by any organization of which the Meeting is a part. This is knowledge that needs to be renewed constantly as new members come in and as organizations grow and change – and there is always good news to share!

BYM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM POISED FOR INCREASED CONTACT, GRANTSEEKING

Robinne Gray, BYM Development Director

A huge thanks to the many Friends and camp families who made gifts and helped us exceed our fundraising goal for 2012! Unrestricted giving is up nearly six (6) percent over 2011, and operating support for camp programs and properties is up 25 percent from last year. Gifts connected to our smaller programs, such as the Youth conferences, Annual Session, and the Women’s Retreat, are up by 40 percent! As this goes to press, we are still analyzing all 2012 gift data to determine our success in seeking new and increased gifts.

2012 Gift Summary (unaudited)

General Fund	86,125
BYM Camps	
Camp Operating	58,404
Morley Endowment	3,280
Camp Capital	10,616
All Other Gifts	6,848
	165,272

With the successful completion of the Shiloh Pond, we did see a decrease in camp capital gifts, and gifts to the Barry Morley Endowment were higher in 2011 when donors honored longtime Catocin director Linda Garrettson in her retirement.

In December, the Development Committee met to review the development program audit that was completed by consultant Helen Colson. Helen will be at Interim Meeting on March 23 to speak about the report, which may be found out on the BYM website. We feel that the report contains a number of helpful recommendations that will inform our work as we move forward. In particular, we look forward to making more visits to BYM donors and to seeking more outside funding for camper aid and capital projects. I encourage Friends who know of particular grant opportunities to call me at the BYM office.

In its fourth full year of operation, the BYM Development Program has continued to grow in size and sophistication. An augmented and updated member database enables us to reach more people each year with Yearly Meeting information and appeals. And each year, we adjust the front line and back office of the program, trying new things, honing our message, and increasing clarity and consistency.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONSULTATION ON COLLABORATING ACROSS YEARLY MEETINGS

Members of Four Yearly Meetings (BYM, Philadelphia, Lake Erie and South Central), as well as a representative from Friends General Conference, meet for a weekend consultation in Philadelphia the first weekend in January. Baltimore Yearly Meeting was represented by MJ Foley and Gail Thomas; Marsha Holliday, Clerk of BYM RE, while unable to attend, is also much involved.

We created an inventory of the strengths and needs of RE in our Yearly Meetings and discussed ways we can help one another to provide support for both our First Day School and Adult Education teachers. One hope is to create a common website, since several of our Yearly Meetings, including several not able to send representatives, already post curriculum and ideas for building stronger programs. Below is the Minute we approved.

To Friends Everywhere:

Ten Friends gathered from four yearly meetings and Friends General Conference with a concern for the state of religious education in our Yearly and Monthly meetings. We met at the Mother Boniface Spirituality Center in Philadelphia, PA, January 4 to 6, 2013 with the support of a grant from the Clarence and Lilly Pickett Endowment for Quaker Leadership. The Friends in attendance were chosen by their Yearly Meetings as Friends with knowledge of the religious education programs within their Yearly Meetings.

We came together with passion and love for religious education. We were hungry for time to meet in person to support each other in our calling to develop and nurture Quaker religious education for all ages. We quickly experienced a sense of community, reconnecting with old friends and meeting new ones. We considered the question of what is included in the full scope of religious education, and while there are many topics to be covered, we would ultimately want religious education to provide a fertile environment for Friends to experience God as love.

We looked at the state of religious education in each of the Yearly Meetings represented among us through an exercise of taking inventory, considering a wide range of components that would be part of a vibrant religious education program. We found that this exercise affirmed our strengths and revealed where we need additional support for religious education programs and teachers.

We are concerned that we currently lack an organizational structure for bringing Friends together across Yearly Meetings to care for religious education. We noted the diminishing of staff support for religious education within several Friends organizations and discussed the challenge this creates in nurturing vibrant religious education programs.

The areas we identified as priorities for renewal are:

- *Communication with religious education teachers in Monthly Meetings regarding the resources that exist and the best uses of these resources. We are concerned that Friends are not aware of, and not using, the available materials.*
- *Training for teachers, and tools for Friends to use in providing this training.*
- *A system for mentoring religious education teachers, programs and committees.*
- *Venues for meeting face to face to support each other in this work and nurture new Friends in becoming involved at a deeper level.*

We began to wrestle with potential solutions to these challenges and to seek concrete ways to solve them through collaboration across Yearly Meetings.

We ask for your prayers as we continue to seek God's guidance for this work. We pray that you may be blessed with an abundant and joyful spirit for religious education.

Yours in the Spirit,
Joan Broadfield, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
MJ Foley, Baltimore Yearly Meeting
Kathleen Karhnak-Glasby, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Becky Morehouse, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting
Carla Pratt-Harrington, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting
Trudy Rogers, Friends General Conference
Gail Thomas, Baltimore Yearly Meeting
Michael Wajda, Friends General Conference
Melinda Wenner Bradley, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Liz Yeats, South Central Yearly Meeting

OPEN UP YOUR MEETING WITH QUAKER QUEST TRAINING ON SATURDAY, MAY 11, 2013

This is an invitation to explore Quaker Quest, a dynamic and transformative inreach and outreach process based on the experience that the Quaker way is a spiritual path for our time that is simple, radical and contemporary. Friends General Conference is offering a free full day Quaker Quest training for two Friends from each Local Meeting in BYM. This is a change to get a real taste of what Quaker Quest is all about. The Friends who come should have an interest in Outreach and want to learn about Quaker Quest. Your Meeting does not have to do the full course of Quaker Quest called the 'public sessions'. The training is a six-hour event consists of 15 exercises some of which can be used in different ways as inreach for a meeting as well as training for outreach.

The training will take place at Langley Hill Friends Meeting. Refreshments and coffee will be available at 9 with the program starting at 9:30 am. Lunch will be provided and donations gratefully accepted. Please contact Walter Brown at 202-882-1764 or carolewalter@aol.com with any questions about Quaker Quest or this training and to RSVP. Please come and help us build a stronger Quaker community.

NEW FOR 2013 EDUCATIONAL GRANTS AVAILABLE FROM THE YEARLY MEETING

The Educational Grants Committee of Baltimore Yearly Meeting will be awarding a limited number of modest grants for the school year 2013-2014. Grants will be made to enable members and regular attenders of Monthly 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 \$2,000.00 per grantee per year. The sum of all grants to a grantee will not exceed \$8,000.00.

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, 2013. For further information or if you have questions, please contact the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Office at 301-774-7663 or online at bym-rsf.org.

MILES WHITE SOCIETY ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

The Trustees of the Miles White Beneficial Society of Baltimore City are now accepting applications for educational funding. Funds are available for books and tracts, Friends educational institutions and programs for the young, and for undergraduate college scholarships. Proposals will be considered for requests up to \$5,000.

Preference 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. All requests must be made in writing. The deadline for applications is March 8, 2013. Notification of approval will be made by April 15, 2013. Applications should be made to: Andrew Passmore, 15031 Priceville Road, Sparks, Maryland 21152-9721, or apassmore@comcast.net.

RE COMMITTEE INVITES EDUCATORS

The BYM Religious Education Committee plans to meet at Interim Meeting at Little Britain Monthly Meeting on March 23. Everyone working with or interested in Quaker education is invited to attend. Every Local Meeting RE Clerk is an ex-officio member of the BYM Religious Education Committee.

NEWS AND QUERIES FROM VISION IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

You are waiting expectantly - and your patience will be rewarded! The work of discerning how to implement the vision of Baltimore Yearly Meeting is complex and challenging, and very, very interesting. Understanding where we are and how we got here has been a big part of our committee's work so far. Partly we have accomplished this through storytelling, as we share our own experiences in and knowledge of BYM, and partly this has involved numbers crunching and analysis as we look at the specifics of BYM programs.

Most of all, through our four meetings since Annual Session 2012, we have come to feel a real love and admiration for the people, the Meetings, and the work that makes up BYM. A number of queries have arisen from our work, and below are a few of them.

- How is my Local Meeting a laboratory for peace and justice? What support does my Meeting need to become more of a laboratory? What can BYM do to help Friends witness in the wider world?
- How can Local Meetings and our Yearly Meeting teach and nurture Friends through the lifespan, from birth to death? How can we create safe places to explore our faith and to learn more about Christianity? What do Friends need to know?
- How do we nurture the growth of teachers, leaders, and spokespersons for the Religious Society of Friends?
- How can Local Meetings integrate all age groups into the life of their Meetings, including children,

young adult Friends, adults who are parents, adults who are not parents, and Friends as they reach older ages?

- How are we welcoming new and more diverse people into our Meetings, and incorporating them into the life of our Meeting? How is BYM invested in inviting new Friends?
- How can we discern our corporate ministry as Local Meetings and as a Yearly Meeting? How should we balance our efforts so that all the work that we discern is ours to do can be done in a manner that teaches us and nurtures us, thus molding us for further service?

While our committee discusses, prays, and threshes out our recommendations for how BYM can implement our vision statement, please join us in thoughtful consideration of these queries.



photo by Don Frame

CATOCTIN IN WINTER - ALIVE WITH BEAUTY

Don Frame, Catoctin Quaker Camp caretaker

The red rubies, green emeralds and blue sapphires of a simple ice formation will be here after the crowns of kings are buried by their failed societies. That was the thought I had this morning once I looked out the window and realized God's jewelry shop was calling. We had an ice storm a few nights ago. Finally today the clouds were chased away and His royal blue cape embraced the trees and the sun scattered gems throughout the underbrush.



photo by Don Frame

My fingers went numb. I didn't have my beautiful assistant, for my friend of nearly 40 years had finally found a job after some months of searching. I put on some warm gloves

and used a twig to change my camera settings. Catoctin is colder and damper than anywhere I've lived. Once Old Man Winter comes there is a continual battle with the ice and snow. Right now there's a break.

This is no doubt a place of beauty. Serving on the board of the Catoctin Forest Alliance is one way of acting to preserve it. I joined soon after arriving when David Hunter invited me to a meeting. The CFA has received several grants geared toward reconnecting children with nature. There's no greater insurance or legislation available to combat the emerging pathologies of a distracted population. Nature is powerful medicine.

Antonette has finally arrived home. She's now working in Thurmont. We had some months together and she helped greatly in guiding my emergence as an artist. So we're here and adjusting to the house. The tools of my trades are everywhere and getting the both of us to fit in the space allotted is cause for lots of thought and plotting, but we enjoy our quiet dinners and time together and will rejoice at the arrival of the wine berries and day lillies again.

FRIENDS HOUSE MILESTONES

Flossie Fullerton, Sandy Spring

In the fall of 2012 Friends House Retirement Community Nursing Facility-Stabler Hall received a five star rating from the Federal Government. This started a period of celebration recognizing that Friends House has been in business for 45 years.

The celebration began on Sunday October 28th with an Open House showcasing activities important in the life of Friends House residents. This included the chorus, flower arranging, art activities and a bridge game, as well as guided tours of the facility.

The official 45th Anniversary Celebration was on Thursday evening, November 1st. The program included remarks by Executive Director Kevin Harrington and Board Members John Smallwood and Mary Satterfield. Three residents, Dottie Hett, Betty Hutchinson, and Ralph Blankfield spoke about significant events in their life at Friends House. Following this was an exceptional musical performance by the Sherwood High School Chamber Singers. Topping off the evening everyone was treated to cake and punch.

The next day, Friday November 2nd, the celebration continued with an International Fashion Show. Organized around the wonderful staff, who have come from many parts of the world, they showed off the wide variety and beautiful national dresses. In-between the International contributions, the Elephant Shop

thrift store volunteer staff modeled some of their favorite items from the shop. The event



was highlighted with the inclusion of many nursing home residents in the audience appreciating their staff helpers in a new light. We look forward to a future where the spirit of Friends House that includes love, respect, and support carries on for another 45 years.

FRIENDS WILDERNESS CENTER GETS NEW GEODESIC DOME CABIN

Keith Curtis, Herndon

22 Friends and friends came to Friends Wilderness Center on Saturday January 12 to help erect the Geodesic Dome Cabin being constructed as a retreat cabin for the Center. The 16 foot diameter dome, based on the work of R. Buckminster Fuller, is built of a series of interlocking triangles, providing great strength with half the building materials of a conventional structure of the same square footage. The dome is being built near the Niles cabin, home of Shelia Bach, caretaker of FWC. When completed, planned for summer 2013, the cabin will provide overnight accommodations for 3 to 4 people visiting FWC.

Bert Curtis, Katherine Cole, and Kathy Gold provided lunch for the work crew, bringing three kinds of chili for the workers. Shelia allowed the work crew to eat in the comfort of Niles Cabin—al-

though with unseasonably perfect mid January weather of bright blue skies and 65 degree temperatures many people ate outside.

Friends Wilderness Center is a unique 1400-acre wilderness preserve and spiritual sanctuary on the western side of the Blue Ridge. In addition to hiking and camping, FWC hosts events throughout the year including stargazing, poetry readings and meditation. FWC is a non-profit Quaker organization operated by an independent board of directors.



RIGHT RELATIONSHIP MINUTES SHARED WITH NOTTINGHAM QUARTER

Eli Fishpaw, Maury River Friends Meeting

On December 2, Friend Linda Davis of Gunpowder Meeting and I shared with Nottingham Quarterly Meeting our Meeting's Minutes on Finding Right Relationship. Aldo Leopold defines, "a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, resilience, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." Our minutes were warmly received and respectfully considered by those gathered. We encouraged Friends to deliberate on how we achieve the love response to the powerful dilemmas faced of our times. Some expressed interest in doing so. I was impressed by the deep Quaker heritage in these Meetings.

*"Peace and justice depend upon restoring and maintaining the Earth's ecological integrity, and accepting constraints on our behaviors that affect others."
Gunpowder Meeting's
Minute on Spirit and Nature*

The Unity with Nature Committee is encouraging all Local Meetings to deliberate on these dilemmas. To be sustainable we must meet our needs in ways that maintain or enhance the value of the resources and environmental resilience available to the future. Are we called to

find such a standard? Our search is for a path to living in peace with the creation. To do that requires honest recognition of the truth of the unsustainable practices we still depend on. With that recognition will come a culture wide determination to creatively adapt to protect the renewable abundance of life in our environment. This requires us to stretch beyond our comfort zone. Consider the Sustainability Queries on the Committee's page of the Yearly Meeting website. The full text of Local Meeting Minutes on Right Relationship and Sustainability are gathered there as well.

Unity with Nature Committee meets in person when possible, but more commonly holds discussions by telephone, Skype, or email. The Committee has recently examined Quaker's spiritual connection to sustainability, and the role of Faith and Practice in deepening our relationship to nature.

The art exhibit *Reflections: Homage to Dunkard Creek*, displayed at Annual Session 2012, is now available in portable form. The original art has been reproduced on several scrolling banners, simple to unfurl and display in meetings, schools, libraries, etc., both indoors and out. The show offers Quakers an opportunity to consider the true costs of energy consumption. Info at paynestake@frontier.com or 304.292-7673.

INTERVISITATION'S SPRING PLANS

The *ad hoc* Intervisitation Committee's charge expires as of Third Month Interim Meeting. The Committee has spent some time in a discernment process considering how to integrate intervisitation into the routine practice of the Yearly Meeting. At Interim Meeting, the Committee will present its final report, with a recommendation that the committee be laid down, and a working group under the care of Ministry and Pastoral Care be established. Several members of the current committee have expressed willingness to serve on the working group. The report and proposal will be available before Interim Meeting intervisitation.bym-rsf.net.

Letters of invitation to other Yearly Meetings are going out in January. We hope to have good representation at Annual Session this year. Those from BYM who wish to travel should be preparing now. Steps to take include notifying your Meeting of your interest, requesting a clearness committee, and asking the Meeting to support your travel financially. Also, please notify Jolee Robinson (mjoleerob@cs.com) of your interest in traveling and which Yearly Meeting you would like to visit. A calendar of Yearly Meetings and information on clearness committees is also on our site.

There is a special opportunity for visiting this year. United Society of Friends Women International is holding its Triennial in Indianapolis July 3-7. Those women who attended the Triennial in Mombasa, Kenya are aware of the power of these meetings. Visit the USFWI website for registration materials. Clearness committees and travel minutes would be appropriate for USFWI also.

In the past, we have scheduled training for outgoing visitors in conjunction with Interim Meeting. This year, it is anticipated that there will be a gathering of prospective and past travelers in the Spring or in conjunction with the June Interim Meeting.

PEACE AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

For the past six months, the Committee has continued exploring how Friends can engage in promoting peace in the Mideast while expanding relations in our local community. We do not have answers but feel we have better questions to lead us to the next phase as we invite people who share a desire for peace in the Mideast but may have differing investments and/or ideas of how to achieve that peace to join us. As part of this work, we are also reaching out to Local Meetings to invite ourselves to their Meetings as we seek to bring greater fellowship within as well. We are on course to submit a full report at Annual Session this August about this experience and how we envision this can benefit our shared desires for a more harmonious and just world.

As many Friends may know, Maryland Governor O'Malley is seeking to abolish the death penalty in that state, a move that is in alignment with Quakers and our work over the decades. Gary Gillespie, a member of Homewood Friends Meeting and the Executive Director of the Central Maryland Ecumenical Council, is actively involved in supporting this move. Maryland Friends are encouraged to get in touch with Gary to stay information about how and when to best get involved, including getting more information about an ecumenical event that will be held in Annapolis on February 6 (details are still being worked out). Gary's e-mail is garygillespie80@gmail.com.

*"We can accept incremental transformation, but we must also recognize urgency in the need to achieve right relationship."
Maury River Friends Meeting Minute on
Right Relationship with Creation*

FRIENDS THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE INSPIRES CONTINUED STUDIES

Ann Riggs, Annapolis Friends Meeting

My report entails three recent blessings. Before I left Kenya for Christmas in US, the new chair of the FTC board's Development and Fund-raising committee went with a student, a faculty member and a driver to visit our sugarcane plantation. They took a picture of the cane, which appears on the back of the FTC Christmas card. When they returned they shook my hand, congratulating me on how lush the sugarcane looked. The student, who had himself participated in the early stages of work of planting the seed-canes and weeding, remarked that the work crew had thought the work was a joke. He and his fellow workers were sure the sugarcane would never make a good harvest. That made me laugh! They didn't even know how capable they already are of building a better future for themselves and their Meetings.

During the on-campus studies of the "school-based" or modular students in the Diploma in Theology program, several came to see me to talk about continuing their studies in the bachelor's degree. All were mature students who had entered the Diploma course (similar to an associate's degree in the US) with the idea that this

would be all the study they would undertake. All were studying in the "school-based" format of study because taking time away from their existing work or ministry for full-time study did not seem realistic or desirable. But this group of four had been so excited, so inspired by their FTC studies that they were looking for ways to come for study in the bachelor's degree, which is not offered in the convenient "school-based" format. It is my hope every single one of their teachers feels as blessed as I do by what they have accomplished in inspiring these mature students for eager further learning.

In late November while things were very challenging on campus, I had a task of taking a day away to give the graduation address and blessing of the graduates in Kitale School of Theology. The small college is operated by Elgon East Yearly Meeting. It was a lovely day of pride in accomplishments and eager hopes for ministry in the future. I was grateful for the chance to meet with these Friends and get to know their institution better. The happy and peace-filled day gave perspective on the current challenges back at Kaimosi return and a reminder that education is always "pole pole" as we say here in Kiswahili, bit-by-bit and slowly-by-slowly.

THINKING ABOUT RACE

At this time of year, families with college-bound students are attentive to admissions issues. A *New York Times* editorial on November 19, 2012, addressed "Class-Based vs Race-Based Admissions." Here are excerpts:

"To maintain or build the levels of racial diversity on selective campuses, it is necessary to maintain race-conscious admissions.

"For colleges and universities committed to diversity, the right way to think about class- and race-conscious admissions is as complements rather than alternatives. Both are essential for a truly diverse campus.

The Working Group on Racism meets most months on the third Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, usually at Bethesda Friends Meeting or Friends Meeting of Washington. If you would like to attend, on a regular or a drop-in basis, contact clerk David Etheridge, david.etheridge@verizon.net.



FRIENDS SERVICE WEEKENDS

Come and enjoy our camp properties for a day or for the weekend. There will be plenty of work projects to do but it is also a great time to come to explore, play in the creek, or enjoy a walk! Work projects offer the opportunity to enjoy meaningful and satisfying work! We also enjoy meals together, time to explore and time around a camp fire in the evening. Come and give the gift of your time.

Spring 2012 Friends Service Weekends

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Catoctin Quaker Camp | May 4 – 5, 2013 |
| Shiloh Quaker Camp | May 11 – 12, 2012 |
| Opequon Quaker Camp | June 1 – 2, 2012 |

You DO NOT need to have any building or carpentry skills in order to pitch in! We need all kinds of people to make contributions. You do need to have some energy and a willingness to get dirty, try new things, be flexible and enjoy the company of others who want to pitch in too. We need sweepers, painters, cooks, ditchers, and trail clearers as well as carpenters and handy people. All of us have contributions to make, so come on out and enjoy some physical activity and the company of Friends! Full information is available at bymcamps.org/wp/friends-service-weekends-spring-2013

GRANDCHILDREN A

JOY AT ANNUAL SESSION

Grandchildren continued from page 1

Each morning, we attended family worship sharing where crayons and crafts provided quiet entertainment for the children and inspiration for our sharing. After worship sharing we delivered each to their respective classes where they were lovingly guided through learning and play activities while we attended business sessions. The rest of each day varied with my husband and I trading off when needed between adult and child-oriented activities: JYM games and swimming sessions, afternoon naps, intergenerational activities, workshops, committee meetings, hymn singing and plenary speakers.

We hope you consider bringing your grandchildren to Annual Session this year. We recommend it and hope to see you there!

PAPAW GOES TO OPEQUON

Don Crawford, Valley Friends Meeting

Ah Summer. In my youth it was a time for carefree escape from the confines of the classroom. A time to explore, to learn of the outdoors, to make new friends ... overnight camp away from home! When I was old enough, I went to summer camp every year until I entered college.

When two nieces came to live with us in the late 1990s, we enrolled them in a session at Shiloh Quaker Camp. In only one session their lives were forever changed. From the silliness of camp songs with verses that go on forever (surely designed to ensure a return to camp the next year just for a respite of peace and quiet in the home) to the new appreciation of food: "I love falafel!" Seeing the changes in them I had to become more active in the camping program. So I started coming to Friends Service Weekends.

During those weekends I met other adults who had similar stories of how camp had changed their kids' lives. I made good friends. And in some small ways I helped keep the camp properties maintained. As often happens when one is active and enthusiastic, I was invited to increase my participation, and was welcomed onto the Camp Property Management Committee.

Last summer our oldest granddaughter reached the age where she could attend one of the BYM camps. Her mother, like all moms I suppose, was uneasy with her first born going off to overnight camp. They lived in Indiana at the time and our granddaughter only knew one young Friend. So I offered to go to camp, too. Not so much to be there for my granddaughter—she is very precocious and makes friends quickly—but to ease her mother's mind. I also wanted to experience for myself the daily life of Quaker camp. Off

we went to Opequon. Me as the maintenance guy and my granddaughter as the camper. We both had a blast!

I enjoyed doing the fixing that was needed. It was mostly uncomplicated stuff: light bulb replacing, faucet repairing, screen patching and the like. I also helped staff and campers prepare wooden parts to use in craft projects. The real joy came from interacting with the campers. They were bright, articulate, polite, helpful and—except when sleeping or in quiet meeting for worship—singing. As an adult volunteer, I wasn't alone. The cooks and medical person were interesting and fun to be with. We even participated in skit night goofiness. The maintenance work was a refreshing change from my usual work life, interesting conversations with adult Friends brought new perspectives, but the kids made the week wonderful. Just to sit and listen to the testimonies at Meeting for Worship or learn more about them individually in quiet conversation I was encouraged to know that these future leaders of their generation will make the world a better place.

I heartily recommend you check out the opportunities to volunteer to be a cook, maintenance or medical person at one of the Quaker Camps. You may find it to simply be a refreshing break from your routine or it may be a life-changing experience.



Papaw

SING, BREAK INTO SONG

Singing is breaking out all over! Three Quaker sings will be happening over the next few months: Sunday, 2/24, 1-4pm, at State College; Saturday, 3/16, 9:30-4pm, at Sandy Spring, and Sunday 3/24, 1-4pm at York. For more information, see outreach.bym-rsf.net/.

Two years ago, Ruth Fitz of York Meeting shared a leading to help more singing happen in the Yearly Meeting. With help from a few Friends and the support of the Advancement & Outreach Committee, four sings have been held, since then. Ruth has also led singing at the Women's and Spiritual Formation Retreats and at Annual Session. She has a special interest in leading Friends in singing in harmony.

With help from other song-leaders as well, the sings have had a mix of hymn, chant, folk (a la Rise Up Singing), and even a taste of shape-note and choral singing. For the first time in November, we had some Young Friends lead a session of camp songs! (Singing is one of the best intergenerational opportunities going!)

Your Meeting can host a sing too! Our small group of organizers has collected a mailing list of attenders, a list of proven song-leaders, and has learned a few tricks about getting the word out. If your Meeting would like to have a sing, we can help. Contact us at bymfriendlysingin@gmail.com.

COME TO THE YEARLY MEETING APPORTIONMENT MEETING

Monthly Meeting apportionment affects you! Please come, listen and give feedback, and make sure your Meeting sends a representative. Hear about how other Meetings are handling their finances and about how the Yearly Meeting is doing. The Stewardship and Finance Committee will host this annual meeting at Charlottesville Friends Meeting to consider issues of apportionment – that is, financial support of BYM. It is a time for sharing and consideration of important issues. Questions or for more information, contact Co-Clerks Jim Riley (540-667-6919 or jriley@jtrileycpa.com) or Tom Hill. (434-295-1795 or quakertomhill@gmail.com)

FRIENDS CONFERENCE ON RELIGION AND PSYCHOLOGY MEETING COMING

FCRP will be meeting on Memorial Day Weekend, May 24-27, 2013 at Lebanon Valley College. This will be the 71st annual conference. The topic is Early Trauma and Return to Balance. The plenary speaker is Dr. Donald E. Kalsched. He is the author of *Trauma and the Soul: A Psycho-Spiritual Approach to Human Development and Its Interruption*. He has been a plenary speaker at the Conference before and was very well received. There will also be small groups for deeper exploration of the material. For more information and to register, after March 1, 2013, go to www.fcrp.quaker.org.

CENTENNIAL OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE ACTION BEGINS WITH COMMEMORATION OF MARCH 1913 SUFFRAGE PARADE ON WASHINGTON

Roger Burns, Friends Meeting of Washington



One hundred years ago, a 27 year old Friend came to Washington, DC, arriving virtually penniless and bearing with her only a mandate to create an event that might promote women's suffrage. Alice Paul was given no funds to fulfill her mission. Within less than three months, Alice had organized a now-historic women's suffrage parade on Pennsylvania Avenue which was so impressive that it overshadowed the next day's inauguration of the incoming President. With this accomplishment, Alice was

able to press for a meeting at the White House between national-level feminist leaders and the new President.

Alice Paul, grew up in the Quaker community of Moorestown, NJ where virtually everyone she knew were Hicksite Friends, and con-

ducted themselves as though women's rights were an everyday fact. When Alice was old enough to leave home and enter the non-Quaker world, she was thunderstruck with the lack of rights that women had. Alice joined the women's movement, whose efforts to enact women's suffrage had become stalled. Alice got permission from the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) to revive work on promoting a constitutional amendment. Alice came up with innovative ideas on how to make progress, many volunteers were invigorated with the new approaches.

When obstacles arose within Congress, Alice became more publicly strident. A falling out led to Alice's group formally separating off from the national association. Alice's "National Woman's Party" went on to implement a new tactic: they picketed the White House. Hundreds of picketers were arrested and sentenced to the Occoquan Work House. While there, Alice and other leaders went on a hunger strike. They were then force-fed via tubes put through their nostrils and throats, a very painful experience. News of these abuses leaked out and galvanized public opinion. Officials relented and the protesters were released.

There are a series of centennial milestones that are coming up for suffrage-related historic events that Friends and others might consider worthy of commemoration, from the March 1913 parade in Washington to the final passage of the 19th Amendment in August of 1920. Friends might want to honor these milestones by creating public events and/or by integrating the history of these events into religious education curricula for children and adults.

WEST BRANCH CELEBRATES BICENTENNIAL

Walt Fry, West Branch

West Branch Friends Meeting acknowledges 200 years of worship. Friends, primarily from the Quaker community in Half Moon Township, Pennsylvania, settled in the Grampian Hills of Clearfield County beginning in 1810. These included the families of James Moore, Samuel Johnson, David Wall, Joseph Davis, Gideon Widemire, Jonathan Waln, Jason Kirk, Joseph Spencer, Caleb Way and others. From the beginning, they met for worship, primarily in the home of James and Lydia Moore.

Centre Monthly Meeting authorized an Indulged Meeting for Worship in Clearfield County on December 17, 1812 to be known as West Branch. Worship continued in homes until the first Meeting House was built in 1824. At this time, Centre Monthly Meeting approved West Branch as a Preparative Meeting, which means that it could conduct its own business with approval of the parent meeting. In 1833, West Branch was given Monthly Meeting status to stand alone.



*West Branch Friends
photo by Betsy Meyer*

ADELPHI FRIENDS MEETING

At Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business on January 13, Adelphi Friends Meeting approved the following minute:

Adelphi Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends understands that God, who loves all people unconditionally, is leading the Meeting to honor the gender identity of each person, as that person determines it.

In addition to welcoming transgender persons to worship with us, in 2009 our Meeting supported a Friend and her family through her gender transition as she claimed her wholeness as a woman. Our testimonies of equality and community confirm that when we embrace that of God in everyone, including the full spectrum of gender identities in our Meeting, our worship deepens and our community is enriched.

Every person should be able to live out fully what the Spirit is leading them to be. Adelphi will be an affirming, safe, and nurturing place for everyone. We extend our loving care to all transgender persons, and their families and friends, who seek to share our Quaker spiritual journey and corporate life.

Jen and Lexi Chapin-Smith were married for a second time under the care of Adelphi Friends Meeting Jan. 5. While they have already been married under the care of the Meeting for six years, this wedding was the first in the state of Maryland for Quakers under the new same-sex marriage laws. Long-time member Bob Auerbach was the subject of a news obituary, with photo, in the Washington Post Dec. 28. Bob led a remarkable life of peacemaking dating to World War II and was actively engaged in that cause at the time of his death.

Following nearly three years of discernment, Adelphi closed one chapter in its consideration of how to upgrade the facilities at its Adelphi campus, with the a report from Friend and architect Michele Booz and Associates. Its findings may be relevant to Friends now or in future consideration similar undertakings, and is on the Meeting's website.

ALEXANDRIA FRIENDS MEETING

Alexandria held a Meeting for Worship by candlelight on Christmas Eve, followed by fellowship and music with desserts and punch. This practice gathers our community together, bringing young and old together in our peaceful meeting home. We use electric candles for light during the Meeting for Worship for the safety of people and property, finding it does not distract from the quietude.

We struggle with the challenges and joys of our historic building and have learned that we are not as robust as its founders. Determining the proper sources for heat in winter and cooling in summer that align with our historic structure has lead to much searching, both spiritually and as searches for the right equipment. We are also experiencing a realignment of the road to our Meeting House, as part of the regional Rt. 1 realignment.

ANNAPOLIS FRIENDS MEETING

A study group read John Woolman's *Journal* in the fall. A brunch program introduced new attenders to the committees of the

Meeting prior to Nominating approaching people to serve. Framed important minutes of the Meeting, including our peace Minute and our Minute on marriage equality, now are a permanent exhibit in our front hall, and we are updating our member picture board. Annapolis is hosting Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting in March. The program will be the BYM Working Group on Racism's presentation of the workshop *What Is This Thing Called Privilege, and What Do We Do With It?*



Lexi Chapin-Smith [left] and Jen Chapin-Smith cut their second wedding cake

The children's program this year is on community. We held a child welcoming ceremony in November and each child received a certificate signed by all present. Our Christmas program featured the musical talent of our young people. We provided Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for a family that was having serious financial problems and we provided school supplies and winter coats, mittens, and scarves to our partner school in Philadelphia and to a school in Takoma Park. We had a very successful Christmas Market in December. Proceeds went to Friends Peace Teams to support Kenya's pre-election peacemaking and to FUM to buy water filters for Kenya. In addition, \$100 was given to the First Day School children to donate to a worthy cause of their choice.

BALTIMORE MONTHLY MEETING, STONY RUN

On February 23, Friends will gather at the Benjamin Banneker Museum for a living history presentation. Quaker Martha Ellicott Tyson (portrayed by Virginia Schurman of Gunpowder Meeting) and friends of Benjamin Banneker will "visit" us through gifted interpreters and answer our questions about relations between free African Americans and Quakers at the start of the 19th century. The museum is in Oella, which is near Ellicott City. Stony Run will have a three-part forum series as part of our Religious Education for adults. This exercise and discussion based series is based on the book *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy*, by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone. The mess referred to is the crisis of climate change and what we need to do to participate in turning away from the causes of it and toward a future where right relationships among people and the earth sustain us. The dates are February 24, March 3 and March 10. Everyone is welcome to join us. You can contact Karie Firoozmand for information at 410-302-1684.

CHARLOTTESVILLE FRIENDS MEETING

As is our usual custom, Charlottesville formed Friendly Circles groups in the fall. This year we have a group exploring BYM's revised *Faith and Practice* as well as groups involved in hiking, exploring ways to claim and live the lives we're meant to live, and enjoying eastern mystical poetry. There's a men's dinner group and a group focused on events for children and families. The book discussion group was so popular that we established a second one to keep the size manageable and the discussion lively. For a two-week period in November, CFM participated in the PACEM program by hosting homeless women for an evening meal and overnight accommodations. In December we celebrated the holidays with a festive potluck and carol sing as well as the Christmas pageant produced by our religious education classes.

DEER CREEK FRIENDS MEETING

On October 21, 2012 Deer Creek approved the FCNL Executive Committee Minute on the Pentagon Budget Cut. We will communicate the approval of this concern to our elected representatives in Washington, DC.

DUNNINGS CREEK FRIENDS MEETING

We mourn the loss of our dear Friend, Jeff Leber, who came to our Meeting with a love for seeking and learning. He was an inspiration to us all as he dealt with his cancer, and then gracefully passed on.

Dunnings Creek Meeting has been busy reviewing new and different avenues for outreach in the surrounding community. We are also in the process of planning and getting ready to construct a meditation labyrinth on the side of the Meeting House that is rarely used. All are welcome to come and explore our new project when it is completed. Stay tuned for the "grand opening" announcement. Who knows, "if we build it, they may come." Christmas Eve came with snow and ice, but several families braved the elements for a cozy and intimate Meeting, sharing musical gifts and reading and of course good food.

FRIENDS MEETING OF WASHINGTON

The Holiday Season was especially lively and joyful at FMW. We started off the festivities with our 21st annual Shoebox Project. Friends gathered to assemble, stuff, wrap, and distribute more than 1,000 boxes filled with practical items for D.C.'s homeless citizens. The Christmas Eve turkey potluck featured the traditional carol sing, worship, and holiday spread and was well attended by old Friends and new ones. Lizzie Williams performed a tribute she had written for the people of Newtown, Connecticut. Friends who were not fortunate enough to hear Lizzie and her friend Sita perform the tribute that night can find it on YouTube. Many Friends gathered at the Meeting House on New Year's Day for a workshop on the Peace Testimony, following a curriculum developed by Britain Yearly Meeting. The next week, the Mary Jane Simpson Scholarship Committee held its annual Barbara Nnoka Memorial Luncheon to raise money for its program. The committee, which is jointly administered by FMW and Bethesda Friends Meeting, offers college scholarships to graduates of DC public schools. This year the luncheon raised more than \$2,500. The luncheon is named in memory of Barbara Nnoka, and FMW member who shepherded the program for many years.



*Bill Jones and Sarah White at the Maury River Simple Meal.
Photo by Christine Williams.*

GOOSE CREEK FRIENDS MEETING

During the past year, Goose Creek has celebrated the birth of several new babies and the addition of several new members. Sadly, we have had to bid farewell to members who have died, including Arlene Janney, whom many in BYM knew over a long period years, and Julie Guroff, who was active in BYM's Unity with Nature and the Friends Wilderness Center.

We have continued our support of Midwives for Haiti through Wendy Dotson, and Hlekweni Friends Rural Service through Patricia Barber (Goose Creek MM) and Steve Brooks (Friends Meeting of Washington). Our friendship with a group of seasonal workers who come to our neighborhood each year from Mexico and Central America continues to grow. They join us for increasingly lively suppers two or three times during the landscaping season, and a group of Friends tutor several of them in English in the evenings – marveling at how they can muster the energy after a long day of work. In November our Camping Committee staged a successful silent auction of artwork, antiques, and collectibles, raising funds for BYM camps.

GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING

We have welcomed several new members into our Gunpowder Meeting community over the past several months. Jennifer Robinson, Tracy Haidar, Kerensa (Kerry) Zimmerman and the entire Lane family consisting of Ben Lane, Anne Lane, Emily Lane, Rebecca Lane and Abigail Lane joined our community in the way of membership. Evelyn Lynette Poey Fielding and Eric Daniel Poey Fielding gave birth to Edan Isaac Poey Fielding on the 2nd, Eighth Month, 2012. Edan Isaac Poey Fielding, our youngest member, was welcomed into membership on the day of his birth. Kerensa (Kerry) Zimmerman and Meredith van den Beemt, members of Gunpowder Meeting, were married on 22nd Ninth Month, 2012.

Our dear Friend, Karolyn Sue Kelsey Huffman died on 22nd Tenth Month, 2012. Karolyn is greatly missed by her F(f)riends and family. Karolyn is survived by her husband, John, her daughter, Laura Huffman Reynolds, her son in law Robert Reynolds, her son, Stephen Reynolds, her daughter in law, Leda Longwood and 2 grandsons and 3 granddaughters. Karolyn was the Director of Admissions at the Broadmead Retirement community for 33 years before she

retired. She worked endlessly to assist residents with the transition to their new home. Karolyn's Quaker witness led her to serve on several committees with the American Friends Service Committee, to actively participate in rallies for Peace and Civil Rights and to be work with the Baltimore City Exchange Program. Karolyn left an indelible mark on those around her. Karolyn's memorial service was held on 17th Eleventh Month, 2012 in good order in the way of Friends at Broadmead Retirement community under the care of Gunpowder Meeting.

HERNDON FRIENDS MEETING

For the past few years, Herndon has been thinking a good deal about the land our Meeting House occupies. Specifically, an embankment on the north side has been eroding into the street, has become impossible to mow, and in some areas has been overtaken with invasive plants. Our House and Grounds Committee has been working diligently to find a solution to this problem. A plan to improve the problems with erosion on the north side of the Meeting House was approved by the Committee and then the entire Meeting in 2011. The first stage of the process took place in the spring of 2011 and involved removing what little plant materials remained on the embankment, which were some grasses and invasive plants, like Vinca. In the fall of 2011 and 2012, and again in the coming fall of 2013, the old mulch was (or will be) raked away and native plants were (and will be) planted along the embankment. Plants were chosen based on the recommendation of Meeting member Kay Fowler, who is the Executive Director of the Fairfax ReLeaf Organization. In all, 112 perennial plants, 17 ferns, and eight shrubs were chosen for the embankment, including blueberries, milkweed, cornflowers and goldenrod. The first two area of plants are thriving and members of the Meeting are looking forward to the final stage going in later this year. All of the work has been completed by members of the House and Grounds committee and other volunteers.

HOPEWELL CENTRE MONTHLY MEETING

Hopewell Centre's second round of public talks in October was a great success. Members shared their personal experiences about why they are Quakers; how they practice Silent Worship and Vocal Ministry; and how they live out the Quaker testimonies. Many guests joined our Seekers' Group afterwards to learn more about Quakerism; several began attending Meeting regularly. Although

an outreach effort, the ripple effect of the talks has been substantial. Members reported a reawakened faith in Quaker tenants; a desire to re-explore *Faith and Practice*; and a renewed sense of community and closeness within the Meeting.

Our ongoing Seekers' Group is now reading and discussing *Quaker Spirituality: Selected Writings* with its inspiring foreword by Douglas Steere, as well as studying the Peace Testimony at the request of newcomers. Friends in our journaling/memoir group continue to support each other in their writings which range from prayers and life stories to spiritual journeys. After some post-restoration heating repairs and a costly new roof for our tenants' house in Clearbrook, our building funds need replenishing. So we look forward to fundraising activities including a Peace Festival and continuing sales of our popular Quake 'n Bake cookbook.

Hopewell Centre Meeting continues its community outreach by joining with neighboring churches and local agencies such as CCAP to feed the hungry. Through our presence at the Valley Interfaith Council, we enjoy the opportunity to interact with other faith leaders and explore contemporary issues such as poverty, death penalty and racial unity. Our Centre Meeting House in old town Winchester, known by the local community as "The Quaker House," has long been a haven for AA meetings and Bahai'i services. Now we are welcoming other like-spirited groups, including a newly formed Buddhist sangha and the Metropolitan Community Church for weekly services. We also hosted a Memorial Service for Victims of Domestic Abuse, led by the Unitarian Universalists, the first of what we hope will be many joint ventures.

With joy, we announce the birth of Arlo Adams, son of Kristin and Tom Adams and brother of Abraham, Anna and Ava. With sadness we note the passing of a long-time member and wonderful spirit, Pansy Estep, at the age of 98.

LANGLEY HILL FRIENDS MEETING

Langley Hill continues to offer many rich opportunities to its members and attenders and hopes these offerings attract new attenders especially families. Our Religious Education curriculum has been revised to add focus on Quaker values, simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship. Concern about diminished numbers has re-energized our advancement and outreach efforts. Our internet presence is improved, we have WiFi in the Meeting House, and a successful workshop for children and adults on spirituality included communities beyond our Meeting. We've welcomed two new children born into the Meeting, Theo Colaninno Brown (7/16) and Bridget Elise Isele (7/29). Theo's great grandfather was a founding member of the Meeting. Second Hour programs included several intergenerational worship sharing times to bring all our youngest members together with the adults. Programs are already scheduled through May. A weekly "drop-in session" before worship, a mid-week worship hour, and a monthly discussion group on third first-day evening completed opportunities for the Meeting to gather opportunities for the community to deepen its relationship with the Divine. Several topic groups are active: movie night, racism working group and, of course, our committees. We cherish our community, value and appreciate our improved Meeting House. We are blessed.



*Maury River Simple Meal.
photo by Christine Williams*

MAURY RIVER FRIENDS MEETING

On November 18, Maury River gathered after rise of Meeting for a Simple Meal. We recall this intergenerational fun having been held among us for at least 10 years now, with some early Young Friends organizers 2 years past college age now. With the children doing much of the work, 40+ were with us and raised a nice donation for Heifer International.

MIDLOTHIAN FRIENDS MEETING

Midlothian held an Open House for Friends and the community to celebrate the completion of the Meeting House and grounds renovation. It was a four year process starting with the kitchen and ending with the worship room, and included everything in between while also establishing trails and outdoor meeting spaces on our 4 wooded acres. All funding, materials, and labor were donated by Midlothian Friends.

We launched an expansion of one of our two Meeting sponsored charities: Friend\$hare. We opened a Friend\$hare boutique next to our already established store, The Thrifty Quaker (TQ). The new store, is also a thrift store but it displays and sells higher-end items. The additional funding from sales at the new Friend\$hare store will allow us to support many more area families who are in dire financial need. The Quilting and Handiwork "Friendly Eight" continues into its 2nd year and is now an inter-generational gathering of Friends ranging in age from early teens to active elders. Meeting monthly at the Meeting House for 3 hours of fun, food and fellowship, their current projects are patchwork potholders to donated to Friend\$hare.

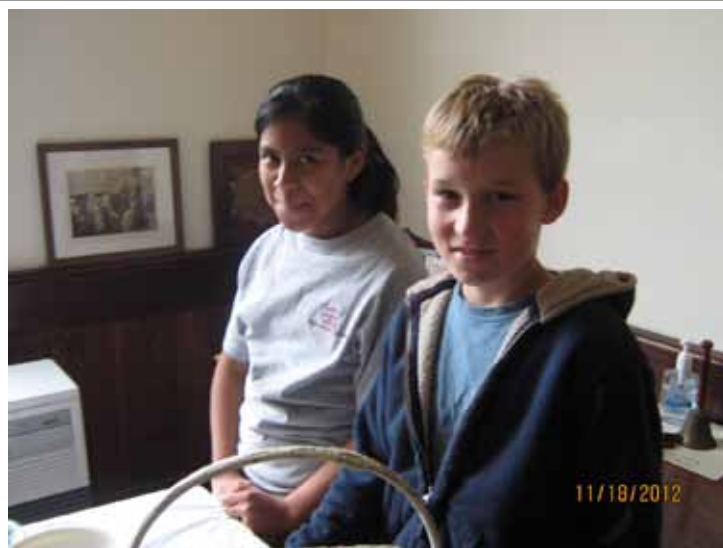
Our Financial Stewardship committee has been streamlining our finances and accounting with the goal to simplify things so that Friends are better able to understand our financial condition while minimizing the effort required from the treasurer. Finally, our Spiritual Nurture Committee has started a weekly adult RE session before worship each Sunday to consider and discuss a spiritual passage for just 30 minutes.

NOTTINGHAM MONTHLY MEETING

As the Meeting has shrunk in size, we've worked hard to bring our expenses in line with our resources. At one point, the set of contributions to local agencies and organizations was our largest budget item; now the Yearly Meeting Apportionment tops the list. While we have only a tiny share of the Yearly Meeting budget, we want to meet our obligations with integrity. For the past couple of years, in approving our annual budget, we've established a number we are confident we can meet, agreed to pay that amount quarterly, and agreed to consider trying to close the gap between our commitment and the apportionment set at Annual Session as our end of year finances become clearer. For example, the 2012 Apportionment was \$3750 (a 25% increase over the 2012 amount that we deficit-spent to cover). We committed to paying \$3,000 and in December were able to provide an additional \$375 (half the gap), despite running a bigger deficit than we had hoped. This year, we've budgeted \$2,800 toward our \$3,440 apportionment and will continue finding ways to live more cheaply with abundance of Spirit.

PATUXENT FRIENDS MEETING

During our 12th month Meeting for Business, Friends shared reflections about the Safe Nights program, which shelters homeless



*Evan Massie and Celie Hayslette.
photo by Christine Williams*

men, women, and children during the coldest months of the year. The program is going through a transition in leadership and is in need of continued support. One of our members has come forward to serve as the Meeting's representative in continuing this service. The discussion caused members present to ask hard questions about homelessness in our community. There is passion present to discuss this issue and to identify how we as a Meeting are called to engage. While we do not act as a host for Safe Nights (our facility is too limited), for a number of years we have assisted Middleham Episcopal Church by providing and coordinating meals. We also support the local homeless shelter, Project Echo, with meals and regular monetary contributions. A member serves on their Board of Directors, and others lead conflict resolution workshops for the residents of Echo House and inmates at the county detention center. Contributions from Patuxent Friends, combined with others in the community, recently helped a single mother stay in her home and keep her family together. And yet, there is always more to do. We spent the second half hour of worship on 16 Twelfth Month in worshipful sharing around the topic of homelessness. We have more to say and do regarding our community's responses to it (Meeting, county, neighborhood, commissioners, etc.). Friends are committed to doing what we can and perhaps a bit more.

RICHMOND FRIENDS MEETING

A list of recent and upcoming opportunities for joy, service, and learning at Richmond reveals the vitality of our individual and corporate lives in community: Sacred Circle Dancing; Singing; Take a Second for Peace walk; a Rise of Meeting Forum about Martin Luther King; another Forum on Israel and its treatment of Palestinians; Listening Circles on Quaker participation in the civil act of marriage; VICPP Lobbying Day at the General Assembly and an earlier FCNL Training and Lobbying Day in Washington; and a Meeting for Muffins introduction to BYM camping. Additional activities have been delivering and serving First Day evening meals to Hull Street Shelter; contributing food for clients of the Fan Free Clinic as well as the collection of socks for local jail inmates; delivering used clothing and household items to the Thrifty Quaker in Midlothian to support the Peace Education Center; and holding a fund-raising chili lunch for an April trip to re-build homes in the tornado-ravished rural crossroads of Ider, Alabama.

Braced with the blessings of our vibrant community we are now reaching deeply into the life of the Spirit in response to the tragic wounding of an attender. Please hold the wounded individual and family and our Meeting community in the Light as we journey through the shadows into the grace of healing and understanding.

ROANOKE MONTHLY MEETING

Roanoke has experienced an increase of new attenders and inquiries over the past several months and so we are exploring ways to promote understanding of what we are about to newcomers. We will be hosting Quaker Quest sometime this year. There are also monthly dinner and discussion meetings at the home of our clerk which address aspects of Quakerism.

Our Peace and Social Justice Committee continues to seek projects in which Roanoke Friends can labor together. For the fifth year, we will be volunteering on MLK National Day of Service to assist with the clean-up and restoration of Springwood Burial Park, a long neglected African-American cemetery in Roanoke. We are also involved as volunteers in local elementary schools, assisting in school activities, providing take-home snacks and tutoring in math and reading. The reading tutoring even includes one of our dogs who is trained to "listen attentively" as children practice reading to him and his handler.

Roanoke Friends mourn the loss of Jeremy Mott who died suddenly on September 2nd. Jeremy was well-known for his activism during the Vietnam War, as well as his advocacy for peace and justice issues. His presence will be dearly missed, not only within our Meeting, but in the wider world as well.

WEST BRANCH MONTHLY MEETING

West Branch recently celebrated the 200th year anniversary at Grampian, Pa. In November fruit baskets were packed and delivered to shut ins, the elderly, and friends of the Meeting. West Branch participates in the Jesse Tree, a program sponsored by the churches in the Grampian and Curwensville area for under-privileged families in the area. Clothing and gifts are provided as needed to families



photo by Jenifer Morris

by individuals anonymously. The pick-up day was at the Meeting House for the Grampian area. Christmas enabled us to do a food bank for a young family. The father was battling cancer and passed away soon after. Christmas Eve service was an unstructured candlelight service with participation by many of the members and their families. We continue to pray for the ill, support those in need and be good friends to all. Many have much, many more have less.

YORK FRIENDS MEETING

On November 18 River Crossing Playback Theatre visited York Meeting for Warrington Quarterly Meeting. Friends had an opportunity to share stories of what being a Quaker means to them and the actors played the story back with integrity and respect in hopes of building a community dialogue. Although each story is different in the details, we all share the same human experience. In a society that often minimizes the importance of how our feelings and stories affect our lives, Playback Theatre honors those feelings and stories.

A Spiritual Formation group of 10 has been meeting regularly since September. They are currently studying the book entitled *Light to Live By: An exploration in Quaker spirituality* written by Rex Ambler. Over the past year there has been sporadic attendance by visiting children. Therefore York Meeting has started development of a child safety policy for First Day School with the idea that if the Meeting is prepared, the children will come.



photo by Don Frame

New Year's Eve was once again an open house with live entertainment at the Meeting House at the request of various people in the wider York community. Ed and Fran Norton of Flute and Friends provided the musical entertainment while other Friends extended hospitality to many visitors in between the evening's three performances. The variety of music, historical anecdotes, and humor was well received by audiences of all ages. Flute and Friends have a new CD, composed by Ed Norton, available for sale at a cost of \$15 of which \$5 will be donated to York Meeting House. If interested, contact Ed Norton at 717-259-6388 or edandfran2@verizon.net.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting
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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)

FEBRUARY

23 – Leadership and Clerkship Training - Frederick Monthly Meeting

MARCH

2 – FAP Training - Baltimore Monthly Meeting, Stony Run
3 – Nottingham Quarterly Meeting - Nottingham Monthly Meeting
9-10 – JYF Conference - Frederick Monthly Meeting
10 – Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting - Annapolis Friends Meeting
23 – Third Month Interim Meeting - Little Britain Monthly Meeting

APRIL

27 – Apportionment Meeting - Charlottesville Friends Meeting

MAY

4-5 – Friends Service Weekend - Catoctin Quaker Camp
11-12 – Friends Service Weekend - Shiloh Quaker Camp

JUNE

1-2 – Friends Service Weekend - Opequon Quaker Camp

JULY

30-August 4 – Annual Session - Frostburg State University

STAFF AND OFFICERS OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

Elizabeth “Betsy” Meyer	Presiding Clerk ymclerk@bym-rsf.org	Robinne Gray	Development Director rgray@bym-rsf.org
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