

# Interchange

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

## JUST TO SAY I LOVE YOU

*Ken Stockbridge, Presiding Clerk*

Why visit Meetings other than your own? “Just to say ‘I love you’” is a pretty good reason. It can be just that simple, and that’s a reason that can work for anyone, anytime, not just your Presiding Clerk.

There are many reasons we might visit other Meetings. We may have a leading, embraced by a clearness committee, and lifted up in a travel minute from our Meeting. We may be on a committee seeking input from our local Meetings. We may hear the Meeting is having a program we’re interested in. They may be hosting a regional gathering or a sing-along or having a work day and need some help from others. We may be participating in a youth conference or picking up a child from one. We may be traveling and find the nearest Meeting on [QuakerFinder.org](http://QuakerFinder.org). We may be curious how other Meetings are different or hoping to find someone who shares a passion of ours that others in our own Meetings may not share. All good reasons, just to name a few. But “just to say ‘I love you’” is pretty good too; you don’t need a reason better than that.

This past Spring, I was trying to find words to describe the “ministry of presence” as I worked on the mission statement for the new Intervisitation Working Group (see its annual report at <http://intervisitation.bym-rsf.net/>). This was a term the intervisitation program embraced several years ago to describe what intervisitation

was really about, but we had never tried to define it. After searching the internet and asking around, one day I recalled a commercial for long-distance calling from years ago. The jingle was “I just called to say ‘I love you.’”

Now, younger Friends may be surprised to hear that there used to be only one phone company and that you paid several cents per minute for long distance calls. So, yes, there were commercials just to get people to call long distance. By the way, it was also one of Stevie Wonder’s most successful singles.

Anyway, I thought, “What simpler way to describe the ministry of presence than ‘just to say I love you.’” A ministry of presence really has no other agenda.

As your new Presiding Clerk, I am very much looking forward to visiting all the spiritual communities within BYM, not just local Meetings, but also our Quarterly Meetings and regional gatherings, our youth conferences and camps, our spiritual formation retreat, our sing-alongs, and others. I have always enjoyed visiting Meetings. I did it for six years as a Young Adult Friend before I even had a local Meeting of my own. Experiencing the wider family of Friends has been one of the great blessings of my Quaker life, and, in my experience, that is very unique to Friends.

*I Love You continued on page 11*



*Annual Session 2014 photograph by Nony Dutton*

## CONSIDER

*Marcy Seitel, Adelphi*

We are passing the baton to you. The ad hoc Vision Implementation Committee has finished its part of the visioning process and our committee has been laid down. Now we turn the task back to you – to everyone who is part of Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

What is the task? To consider recommendations that the ad hoc Vision Implementation Committee brought before Annual Session in August. Monthly Meetings, BYM Committees, and BYM Staff all have recommendations that we are asking you to consider. After exploring the Yearly Meeting, talking with many of you, sharing

our experiences together, our committee came up with ideas for you to consider. When you do this considering, you are continuing the visioning process.

Considering is a wonderful process. It is easy to take it for granted. Our committee, over the course of meeting for two years, considered many ideas. Sometimes this was exciting and full of “Aha!” moments, and at other times it was uncomfortable because we were not sure what answers we would find. But the outcome of the process is something very good – a plan for how to help our Yearly Meeting

*Consider continued on page 11*

## FAITH IN ACTION: LIVING OUR LIVES ACCORDING TO OUR SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

*Linda Goldstein, Charlottesville*

For as the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (James 2:26)

I had the pleasure of attending Ireland Yearly Meeting, clerked by Daniel Sinton, from April 24-April 27, 2014 at Kings Hospital School in Dublin. The theme Faith in Action: Living our Lives According to our Spiritual Experience comes from James 2:26. Irish Quakers indeed live their lives faithfully; this small yearly meeting of 1600 people is actively involved in many important ministries.

The ministry of hospitality was immediately obvious. The Irish Friends warmly welcomed international Friends, in addition to invited guests from the Irish Council of Churches, the Church of Ireland, and Lutheran, Methodist, Roman Catholic, and Presbyterian churches. Also, there were frequent invitations to enjoy tea and biscuits wherever I went during my time in Ireland. It is such a nice way to relax and interact with folks informally.

Each day there was an option of bible study or worship sharing after breakfast. In the early afternoon there were opportunities to participate in interest groups. With the exception of the first and last days, there were sessions in the morning, afternoon, and evening. The first session opened with a thought for the day and each session ended with a reading of some sort. Business moved along smoothly. Many of the reports were sent out before Yearly Meeting started, so they were quickly accepted without discussion. Committee reports and appointments took a minimal amount of time. This allowed the sessions to focus primarily on presentations of the outreach and ministries of Ireland Yearly Meeting.

The Yearly Meeting has recently hired a youth coordinator to expand ministry to the children and teens. Parents and teens alike, movingly shared reports on how this has enhanced their lives. The position is being funded by various grants, and there is a need for more stable funding.

A report was presented on Bloomfield Care Center, which was es-

tablished by Quakers in 1812. It provides nursing care for medically frail, dementia, and palliative care patients. There are also mental health services provided for people of all ages. I had an opportunity to visit the nursing home. It is bright and cheerful. There are lots of gardens, including interior court yards, and every room has a view of greenery and flowers. The Center welcomes long-term volunteers to help with rehabilitation and to reduce boredom. Other support for the elderly includes the James and Elizabeth Muriel Young Old People's Home Trust, which supports Ulster Friends over the ages of 60 with small fuel grants and funds for other needs, and the Elderly Friends Bursary Fund, which serves Friends over the age of 65 with disabilities.

The Yearly Meeting Peace Committee opened its report by saying:

We note that peace relates not only to the obvious acts of violence carried out by individuals, groups and countries on each other, but to the internal peace within individuals. The causes which generate violence are often wide-ranging and complex. Too often, violence is the simplistic answer to difficult problems, which could be better answered by the practical approach of peace. An act of violence is the expression of long-term causes.

Efforts to remediate violence were clearly seen as I visited Quaker Cottage, the visitors centre at Maghaberry Prison, and parts of Belfast and Derry the week following Yearly Meeting. There I heard about work to ease tensions and provide non-judgmental support to all who need it, especially women and children dealing with trauma. I also learned about services to support and guide women visiting their partners at the prison and a visitation program that has recently started to meet the needs of incarcerated men without family support.

Peace work this past year focused on concerns about immigration, education, and the violence in Syria. The committee is considering a decade of upcoming commemorations - the First World War, the War of Independence, and the Irish Civil War - and ponders how these occasions might be commemorated.

AVP is going to have an international meeting in Ireland this summer. Irish Friends are preparing to host this conference with support from the Robert and Kezia Stanley Chapman Trust, which is used for the charitable purposes of the Yearly Meeting including relief work at home and abroad. Themes for the conference are youth leadership, improving AVP workshops in areas of violence, and cyber bullying.

Irish Quaker Faith in Action shared three short reports on their work with the Palestine Trauma Centre, the Mutoto Education Centre, and therapy to war trauma victims in Bosnia.

Sasha Bosbeer from the Quaker Council for European Affairs talked about its 35 year history focusing on peace, human rights, and economic justice. The organization works to effect policy through faith. She emphasized that it is important to educate the candidates and vote. There is fear that there will be extreme candidates in the European Parliament. Another issue is that labor and food security issues, including GMO's, could become less important than profit as the result of treaties with the U.S. They have reached out to FCNL and AFSC for support on this issue.



*Annual Session 2014 photograph by Nony Dutton*

Lynn Finnegan shared that the Quaker United Nations Office provides space for quiet off-the-record diplomacy which can change attitudes. Issues it addresses include peace and disarmament, climate change, immigration, human rights and refugees, food security, sustainable living, and children of prisoners and death row inmates. Its work has led to Irish Quakers working with children of prisoners. QUNO has internships and summer school for young Quakers. The work is very isolating, and Lynn asked for our prayers.

Gretchen Castle presented a slide show on Friends World Committee for Consultation. She focused on the theme Connecting Friends, Crossing Cultures, Changing Lives. The presentation emphasized the commonalities among Friends. We don't need to insist on worshipping the same way as we can share together through relationships with God. Let us be grateful that we each know God in our own way. FWCC has a ministry of accounting for the other, touching souls, and changing who we are.

The Ministry and Oversight Committee had a panel of three on Thursday evening who shared on the topic of How do we Embrace Peace in our Everyday Lives? Friday, there was a public lecture given by Ian Kirk-Smith entitled On Principle Not Consequence: a Quaker Life in Broadcasting. Ian movingly spoke about the way his faith informs and humanizes his work and his interactions. The last evening was a joyful mix of music by Gillian Armstrong and Laurie Creasy and readings by Patrick Semple, a former Anglican priest who writes about his experiences living and ministering in rural Ireland.

The sessions were held worshipfully. The only tensions I felt arose when there were issues related to diversity in faith among Quakers. The Irish Quakers are largely Christ-centered, and some of them have concerns about the divergence in beliefs over the years. One Friend spoke about feeling alienated by those with Universalist

beliefs and another Friend questioned whether the drop of membership in some Irish meetings might be related to this. I hope that continued inter-visitation will aid in lessening these feelings. I am grateful for having had the opportunity to get to meet and know new Friends, while getting a taste of a new culture. I think that Ireland Yearly Meeting 2014 can be aptly summarized by an African greeting which I heard during one of the sessions:

Who are you? What is your Yearly Meeting? What is your ministry?

## OUT OF THE PAST

*From the May 16, 1921 Winchester Evening Star*

Members of the Society of Friends in Winchester and Frederick County, who are with the Baltimore Yearly Meeting, are much interested in a proposal to revise the rules of conduct for its membership at the next annual meeting, making indulgence in dancing, card playing, and music a matter on conscience. The Baltimore Meeting of the Liberal Friends, sometimes called Hicksite Quakers, is expected to make the revision.

The Quarterly, or May, meeting of the Society of Friends, begun on Saturday at the historic Hopewell Meeting House, was continued yesterday, and the final business session was being held today. The attendance yesterday was the largest in many years, and only a small portion of the crowd that flocked to Hopewell was able to get into the Meeting House.

Some of the liberal members of the society expressed the opinion yesterday that they were in favor of revision of the rules of conduct and leaving such things as music, dancing, and card playing to the consciences of members. It was stated that a piano recently had been purchased and installed in the historic old Hopewell Meeting House, and that so far as is known no one objected to the music.

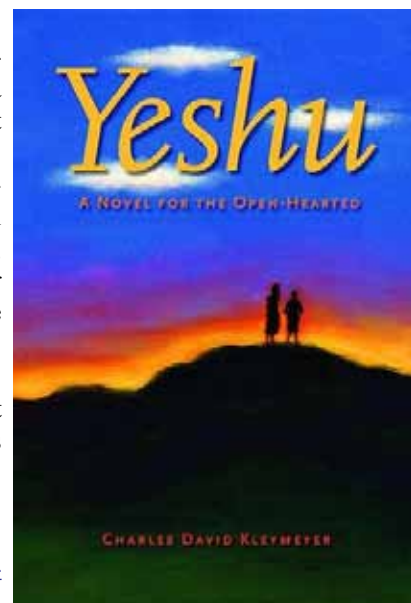
## AUTHOR KLEMEYER HONORED

Langley Hill Friends Meeting member Chuck Kleymeyer has been awarded two national fiction prizes for his book, *YESHU: A Novel for the Open Hearted*. The awards were for "Printed Book - Fiction" and "eBook - Fiction" given by the Associated Church Press (ACP), a broad network of publishers that includes the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Sojourners Magazine*, and *Friends Journal*. Chuck traveled to Chicago to receive the two awards at a banquet culminating the ACP's annual meetings.

The novel is a lyrical, Quaker retelling of the New Testament saga. Readers are invited in to experience the resonant silences in the written record by joining the storytelling carpenter Yeshu and a band of fellow Jewish seekers as they travel through wilderness, village, and city in search of what is divine and what it means to be human. Brimming with adventure, laughter, and natural beauty, the quest they share forever alters their lives, and still impacts ours. The book was written for readers and listeners of all ages and spiritual backgrounds. Through first-person narration, the novel explores a variety of social and spiritual themes: peace and non-violence; contemplative silence; love and community; Earth care and the bond between nature and the spirit; justice and gender equality; and direct connection with a Greater Power—all of them in a non-dogmatic manner. The book contains numerous short chapters that can be used in youth and adult religious education.

Chuck Kleymeyer is an author, a performing storyteller, and a culture and development sociologist with a lifetime of experience serving organizations and communities of low-income ethnic groups throughout the Americas. Most of that time, he was also imagining *YESHU*.

Proceeds from this book are being shared with seven Quaker organizations: AFSC, BYM, FCNL, FGC, Friends Wilderness Center, FUM, and FWCC. Learn more about *YESHU* at [www.Yeshu-Novel.org](http://www.Yeshu-Novel.org).





## EPISTLES OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

To Friends Everywhere,  
Friends gathered for the 343rd annual session of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, from Eighth month, 4 to 10, on the campus of Frostburg State University, in Western Maryland. Our theme this year was “Transformation and Healing”. Our opening retreat focused on bringing our differences into the light. We were reminded that the only constant in life is change, and that change can generate conflict. The word “discernment” kept arising for us as we were led to consider new ways of seeing our differences as something that has the potential to strengthen or even transform our relationships. These themes continued to nourish us throughout the week. Morning Bible study, inspired by a passage from Luke (6:28) - “bless those who curse you” - encouraged us to expand our understanding of who is part of our beloved community. Worship sharing groups also met each morning to consider queries centered on healing and transformation.

Sue Regen, carrying a travel minute from Rochester Monthly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting, shared with us her ministry on “Forgiveness as a Spiritual Practice”. She led us through a guided meditation called The Arms of God Prayer, moving us towards opening our hearts to someone with whom we are struggling. On Wednesday afternoon Mark Tayac, founder of the Tayac Territory Singers and Dancers, and his son Naiche Tayac, shared with us the culture and music of the Piscataway nation, reminding us that American Indians are still here among us. He spoke of how the drum is the heartbeat of life, and that all people everywhere have the same heartbeat. One of our Friends from Kenya shared that the dances made him feel at home. Earlier in the day, the delegation from Friends Theological College, in Kaimosi, Kenya had blessed us with the message “If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten we belong to each other.”

Margery Post Abbot, a released Friend whose ministry is supported by the Multnomah Monthly Meeting, North Pacific Yearly Meeting, spoke of how “power over” dominates and demeans, while “power of the Light” enables us to walk side by side as equals. She reflected on the power Margaret Fell knew as the source for transformation of the human heart, and of the world. She shared a vision of “the wild power of love let loose in the world” and called us to witness to a new way of being, faithful to the new creation.

Our Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business moved us toward healing and transformation. We approved a minute on inclusion, affirming the right of all individuals, including transgender people to understand and express themselves with authenticity and integrity. We shared our deep concern for the child refugees crossing the United States border, for those who are unjustly incarcerated, and for those who are suffering in Israel and Palestine. We agreed to bring back to our meetings a concern for climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation. We welcomed our new Development Director, and approved our first ever capital expenditure budget. Together, we worked on building a “mini cabin” as a fundraiser for our camping program. We heard of the “ministry of presence” that will be the focus of our longstanding inter-visitation program, and received a report from our Vision Implementation Committee, urging us to take simple, achievable steps to strengthen



*Annual Session 2014 photograph by Nony Dutton*

our connections with each other. We were reminded when reports come before us, to look for that of the Spirit, not the fatal flaws.

Our Presiding Clerk Betsy Meyer completed her term of service. We joined in a joyful and tearful appreciation, and a hymn based on the 23rd psalm.

We enjoyed times of play and laughter, including a high energy all-age celebration featuring ice cream and a candlelight labyrinth, and our sometimes raucous Saturday evening coffee house. The presence of our children and young people among us, and the visibility of our thriving camping program, are a continuing source of energy and joy. We treasure the feeling of family we experience here in Baltimore Yearly Meeting. We are grateful to the many volunteers who help us keep our yearly meeting’s commitment to support young families and serve our youth well.

Our Clerk shared a message that seemed to capture where we find ourselves:

In so much of what we do as a worshipping community, we are wandering in the wilderness together, seeking Divine guidance, or we are in exile together, struggling to articulate a common understanding based on our experiences of the Divine. We feel frustrated when we cannot see where we are going or agree on the end product. But we have to realize that the journey is more important than the destination. It is the journey together that makes us a worshipping community. And on the journey we are healed and transformed.

As we undertake this journey together, we are challenged by words lifted up during our memorial meeting: “Who will take up the work that this Friend has laid down.” Perhaps the answer lies in a song the children shared with us in spoken word and sign language:

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me  
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.  
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

### YOUNG ADULT FRIENDS EPISTLE

For Twenty Thirteen - Fourteen:  
A Long-Form Haiku

In winter we came

and gathered amongst our Friends,  
warm in Washington.

We had three workshops.  
Tory Smith and Liv Henry  
discussed policy.

They taught us about  
combating the use of drones  
via lobbying.

We were pleased to have  
Bill McPherson, Pulitzer  
Winning journalist.

We sat in the sun  
and listened to his tales of  
war and history.

Then Friends from ad hoc  
Vision Implementation  
Committee joined us,

for apparently,  
Friends struggle talking to YAFs,  
so we lent our help.

That night we relaxed,  
playing games and sharing love,  
grateful for our Friends.

Homewood held May Con,  
and though our numbers were small,  
many joys were shared.

Chuck Vekert discussed  
combat and PTSD,  
sharing ways to cope.

This was followed by  
a trip to the Museum of  
Art in Baltimore.

That night we ate out,  
a long-time YAF tradition,  
this time Golden West.

Annual Session  
was spent with Friends young and old  
working together.

In Business Meeting  
we continued to struggle  
with the YAF Facebook,

contemplating change  
because of technology  
and the internet.

But we still worshipped,

swam and played games with Young Friends,  
and went out to lunch.

As YAFs keep growing,  
we would like to thank all Friends  
for love and support.

As many may know,  
kindness can move great mountains,  
and though we struggle,

it is nice to know  
we always have each other,  
together as Friends.

In love and in light,  
B.Y.M. Young Adult Friends  
Refrigerator.

## YOUNG FRIENDS EPISTLE

This year, the Young Friends community gathered together for five conferences and Annual Session, consisting of enlightening workshops and fun activities, which helped to foster a greater community. As we welcomed the rising 9th graders and entered the new year, Young Friends discussed important issues that the community faced as well as assessed how to best support outside communities.

In September, Young Friends reunited at Adelphi Friends Meeting with smiles and laughter, setting a joyful atmosphere for the conference. We enjoyed a workshop on journalism that stressed the importance of reporting issues that have very little press coverage, such as the self-immolation of Tibetan monks. This also focused on finding the truth through Quaker values along the journey. In response to a letter from PCYM, Young Friends addressed gendered sleeping spaces and how attempt to be inclusive of all gender identities so that we can greater foster a community of love and light. This letter included our minute on sexual activity and our views on how gendered sleeping spaces enforce heteronormativity and isolate our Queer community. Friends enjoyed a dance party in the evening, and wrapped up their activities with a game on sharing world resources during First Day School in the morning.

Friends met again in November at Friends Meeting of Washington



*Annual Session 2014 photograph by Nony Dutton*



Annual Session 2014 photograph by Nony Dutton

for a weekend filled with playgrounds and comfy Adirondack chairs. Young Adult Friend Jossie Dowling resented a workshop on connections and relationship webs. This flowed into a discussion on privilege and how class affects the world, including among Friends. We reflected on homelessness and the diversity of income levels in the community. This opened our eyes to how all of the members of our community lived. Also at November Con, Friends helped Campbell Plowden send medical supplies to the Center for Amazon Community Ecology indigenous tribes in the Amazon Forest by selling candy bars. We also helped Young Friends, who were doing work in South Africa, by donating soccer supplies for a child's summer camp.

In February, Friends convened at Stony Run Meeting for a postponed Love Con. Young Friends attended a workshop on trans\* issues led by a woman name Chloe Schwenke who works as the vice president of global programs for the organization Freedom House and with the trans\* communities across sub-Saharan Africa. We learned that to be yourself, it takes courage and self-confidence. The feelings of trans individuals in our community were also brought to light and supported in a trans-friendly sharing group.

Come April, Friends were bused to State College Meeting in Pennsylvania for work con. After arriving after midnight on a cold and rainy night, Friends went to bed without Meeting with a Concern for Business. The following day, some young friends were driven to Shaver's Creek Environmental center to do service, while other young friends stayed at State College to do landscaping. Friends learned how to do multiple yard work skills such as chopping wood, building wood piles, planting seeds, and cleaning out ditches. The service combined with the physical labor cleansed us spiritually and mentally.

At the last conference of the year, Young Friends met at Sandy Spring Friends Meeting. In the midst of final laughs with friends and reflecting on the seniors' best moments, we enjoyed a fulfilling workshop on consent led by Maggie Dorr. In addition, we watched aerial dancing by a talented Young Friend and hosted a prom. On Saturday evening, we said a tearful good-bye to the graduates and praised their many achievements past and to come.

During Annual Session this year, Young Friends gathered to have a productive and fulfilling spiritual experience. Our workshops

included conflict resolution, self-reflection through journaling, and self-care and Pilates. These workshops helped us to reach consensus with greater ease and comfort. We attended two plenary sessions, which included a lecture on power made manifest and the American Indian culture of the Piscataway. Friends also played fun games such as wink and unified capture the flag with Junior Young Friends and Young Adult Friends. We also had exciting midnight swims and an entertaining coffeehouse. For a fun intergenerational treat, Young Friends planned small group sessions including icebreakers and games to unite the various diverse age groups of the community, which is known as Produce. We had some enlightening business meetings which included queries on the usage of technology and the inclusion of neighboring communities on campus. Questions were also posed on how to make All Age Business Meeting a more engaging experience for Young Friends and the broader community alike.

The only issue that came to the Nuts and Bolts committee was that the name "Executive" sounded too corporate and exclusive for a community that is built on openness and acceptance. In light of that matter, the name has officially been changed to Nuts and Bolts Committee (NBC). Overall, there were no major problems that were pertinent to the health of the community.

In conclusion, this community was filled with a lot of light and love. Young Friends grew not only in their knowledge, but also in their understanding of issues relating to privilege, consent, gender identity, and underrepresentation. We helped support others through fundraising, community service, and conversation, which helped Young Friends expand their greater appreciation of life and the community.

## JUNIOR YOUNG FRIENDS EPISTLE

Over the week of Annual Sessions, we, the Junior Young Friends of Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM), participated in many fun and educational activities offering opportunities for transformation and growth. From the beginning of this great adventure, we began as we intended to go on by using our hands and feet to tell people about ourselves.

Educational activities were an important part of the adventure. We had a fishbowl where we explored our differences and were rewarded with gummy bears. We learned about how doodling helps us pay attention and afterwards took our doodling journals with us everywhere. We chose two clerks (Daphne Hemilly and Lily Valdez-Lane) and a recording clerk (Robert Finegar) - and had a business meeting. We designed, built and tended a candle labyrinth for All Age Celebration. We attended Produce, where we met more BYM people and learned their names. And Sue Regen, one of the evening speakers, came to our classroom to teach us about forgiveness and how to apologize.

We also did so many fun, but not so educational, things we couldn't count (or even remember) all of them. Some of our favorites include the overnight, capture the flag, drawing with sidewalk chalk (especially all the HoNks), swimming, and Down, Mr. President (a game where the players each put a finger to one of their ears and the last one to do so gets tackled by everybody else). We also did improv, made t-shirts, and played card games and sports. A recurring theme of our daily name circles was the effect of temperature



on our ability to sleep well.

This week of seeing old friends and making new ones was a wonder for us all - and we would like to thank all involved.

## WOMEN'S RETREAT EPISTLE

To Friends everywhere:

We send you greetings and hope this letter finds you warm, sheltered, and hopeful.

Over the weekend of January 24-26, 2014, 130 women from meetings across Baltimore Yearly Meeting gathered at Skycroft Retreat Center for our annual Women's Retreat, to explore the theme: "Wholly/Holy Present: Open. Embrace. Release." It was bitter cold outside. The plenary room, with its wide windows looking out over Middletown Valley, was full of the color of hats and scarves and knitter's yarn. The community we build together is like a beautiful crazy quilt, made up of many bits and patches, that keeps us warm.

On Friday evening, we were welcomed by the Patapsco and Annapolis Friends who organized this year's retreat and introduced ourselves by meeting. Betsy Meyer, Clerk of Yearly Meeting, and Meg Meyer, Clerk of Interim Meeting, read the Yearly Meeting vision statement approved in 2011, and invited us to reflect on it phrase by phrase. Out of the silence we lifted up the phrases that touched our hearts. We reflected on God's infinite love, and reminded ourselves that we in Baltimore Yearly Meeting are first of all a "worshipping community."

On Saturday morning, our plenary speaker was Jen Karsten, Director of Pendle Hill. She began with an opening prayer of inviting us to "welcome the gift of our differences." She organized her presentation around a list of words and names from A to Z—another patchwork quilt to lift our spirits. She told stories of inspiring women, from Granny D to Elizabeth Fry and Rigoberta Menchu. She read passages from the writings of Elizabeth Watson, Zora Neale Hurston and others. She described spiritual practices, and offered bits of practical wisdom. "H" was for "Honoring" ourselves and others: "there are no flaws," she said, "only differences." "I" was for "Invite Stories; Share Stories." We are all unique, she told us. We even worship differently. We need to listen to each other in a way that communicates that we really want to hear. At the heart of her

presentation was J for "Journey" She described Joseph Campbell's typology of the archetypal hero's journey, from leaving home, to returning home with some precious gift or knowledge. Being a hero, she told us, means giving a part of yourself to something bigger than yourself. Whenever we commit to something, we are starting out on a journey. We need to see within ourselves the possibility of being a hero. "M" was for "Mistake": Make lots of them, she said. Take risks. "U" was for the Bantu phrase "Ubuntu", which translates "I am, because we are." This was a favorite saying of Nelson Mandela's and one that can serve us well. Knowing our history, and seeking wisdom from our mentors, empowers us to move courageously outward. In conclusion, she reminded us that we are all part of the work of developing our own Quaker culture. She urged us be adventurous, and to engage the known and unknown for the good of all.

Throughout the weekend we gathered again and again for group singing and quiet worship. In worship sharing groups, in workshops, and over meals, we made space to listen to and learn from each other. Much as a quilt might bring us comfort on a cold night, so did our patchwork of encounters. We not only connected with interesting people we had never met before, but we had a chance to hear stories from people we thought we knew--stories that transformed our relationships and deepened our appreciation for each other.

Workshops offered opportunities for yoga, chanting, writing, walking, sharing gratitude, exploring scripture, and remembering the earth. We were invited to a showing of the powerful documentary by a BYM Friend: "Marii Hasegawa: Gentle Woman of a Peaceful Kind," the story of a Japanese-born American woman who dedicated her life to speaking out against the injustices of war. A Sacred Circle Dance re-affirmed our connection to mother Earth.

Interest group time on Saturday afternoon offered a chance to plan for the future of "Quaker Women and Friends for Sane Gun Laws" which grew out of a concern at last year's gathering. Another group met to share our experiences with the all-BYM reading project for the year: Michelle Alexander's "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness."

We were amazed by the creative energy in our community. The foyer and plenary room were lined with tables where Friends displayed their handwork: jewelry, pottery, greeting cards, spinning, weaving, as well as handcrafts from other countries. An arts and crafts room offered space and supplies for us to make our own creations. Bright colors and beauty were all around us.

As the wind howled outside on this ancient mountain our traditional sharing at the "coffee house" talent night warmed our hearts and filled the room with laughter. What a patchwork of women we are! Perhaps what we have made this weekend is a kind of freedom quilt. Our journey is far less desperate than the journeys undertaken by people held in slavery who used quilts to mark the way to freedom, but we are all travellers looking for signposts. May the quilt of our gathered community guide us and warm us along the way.

With love, Baltimore Yearly Meeting Women's Retreat



Annual Session 2014 photograph by Nony Dutton

## TRANSFORMATION AND HEALING

*Excerpted from Riley Robinson's Report of General Secretary*

Years ago, we were sitting in worship at Annual Session during a summer of drought. I slowly came to envision a wooden wagon wheel turning, then the whole wagon, rolling over a dry dirt road. I began to sense more immediately that a century ago Friends had so great a need for companionship in the Spirit and to respond to shared concerns that they had taken on far more risk, sacrifice, and struggle to come to Yearly Meeting than I had. It sunk in that this motion of coming together had occurred a hundred years before that, and a hundred years before that. Interwoven was the Civil War suffering of Chambersburg, PA around us, and that of our entire region; of Friends seeking a way out of the slavery system over many lifetimes; of Friends seeking a presence among a now nearly-vanished world of native Americans, who were living differently with nature than Europeans. I could only partly feel the immensity of this. There was great weight, and a great sense of beauty. It was not that Friends had always found a perfect unity "in a place just right," but it seemed that I could feel the Light of their seasoned truths in my life, and could feel the continuum of concerns in my world. I wondered if I had any of the qualities that past Friends had envisioned for those of us who now reside in their future. I tried to see how our own seasoned leadings might serve as sturdy vehicles carrying Light into the future as well. I may have gained a sense of how, although in our personal time we only have today to work with, there is an inner spiritual time when we find more resources to bring to bear.

No startling revelation here. But much of the best of my Quaker pacifist experience has been truly anticlimactic in nature. Some meaningful, humbling understanding is found, I am forever changed, and life goes on, clarified and thus improved - sometimes, I realize later, fundamentally improved.

This image of the wheel came back to me recently when I attended a book talk by Quaker author Douglas Gwyn on his new book, *A Sustainable Life* because it was on the cover of the book. The sixteen spokes of Gwyn's wheel represent pairs of concepts that support each other by appearing opposite each other on the wheel. "Equality" is balanced by "community." "Ministers, elders, and clerks" is balanced by "group discernment." "Simplicity" is balanced by "sustainability." Suddenly these stopped being a fond list of comfortable old virtues. I had to consider them as



*Annual Session 2014 photograph by Nony Dutton*

a set of dynamic interactions working in my life today. It was as if I were to lose touch with any one of them, I wouldn't be whole. I also noticed that the wheel did not include some of my most familiar supports, such as "my important opinion" balanced against "all of those other opinions out there."

Doug Gwyn is a scholar, and I am not. He thinks all the time, and I think occasionally when I get around to it. We don't always think alike. But here are some things that I find in his book.

- George Fox's vision on Pendle Hill was merely the beginning of Quaker spirituality coming alive amidst nature;
- Quakers continually employed natural imagery in spiritual writings. They were in the process of defining themselves as something beyond the control of what happened in great stone steeple houses. An awareness of nature opened us to an awareness of the infinite, consonant with our worshiping outside the box;
- We sought to be less rigid, more simple in order to be more responsive to the Holy Spirit;
- This has in our past helped make us more responsive to and appreciative of nature, but does not always do so now amidst the distractions of 21st century life - to our peril, both physically and spiritually, and;
- Friends, and the world, are facing a truly threatening environmental crisis. But Friends already have significant tools for meaningful change if we will use them.

Implicit in Gwyn's wheel is that we need to balance our response to the wake-up calls that we're getting about outer sustainability with a questioning of how our own and our community's inner sustainability is doing as well. When these challenges come, what questions do we ask ourselves, and how do we respond, both individually and together? For Gwyn, this wheel, this dynamic balancing of Quaker qualities, is the model for a Quaker Faith and Practice. It's very timely for BYM Friends.

I'm saying that BYM is a much-needed wheel on the wagon of Quakerism as it moves into the future. I'm saying that our (and I mean each one of us) balancing and centering in the midst of Quaker practices can be our true gift to the world. I'm also saying that being mindful requires a willing attentiveness to the road ahead for us. The energy for our movement forward comes from the Holy Spirit. I do not mean to see God embodied as a horse, but rather to caution myself and others that when we are not careful, the Holy Spirit can appear to us only as a means to an end, not as a greater partner in progress.

The other Friday night at Camp Catoctin, some campers circled rhythmically around the centered light of the fire and led everyone in song;

"We can't return we can only look  
Behind from where we came  
And go round and round and round  
In the circle game" [Joni Mitchell]

Of course the best games are for fun, but they also increase our awareness and alertness. And we Friends are inevitably traveling on the wheel of life towards a greater spiritual destiny. What does this look like?

Recently many of us gathered in the deep and rich silence to say goodbye to our Friend Janney Wilson. There were Friends from many Meetings and friends of many ages, including a host of



grandchildren who spoke with depth and feeling about their loving grandfather and about what each of them had learned about Quakerism through his conscientious objection, his love of nature, and his interest in them as people. Janney lived intentionally and fully through cycles of joy and suffering, which he bore with equanimity. I was drawn to recall being with Janney in a workshop, creating collage. He had signed up for the workshop, but at the start openly expressed misgivings about his lack of experience with art and his unsureness of knowing what he was doing. He went ahead anyway, and through the weekend we would gather around his creations and find them truly beautiful. I was drawn to consider mysticism as the willingness not to be bound by our self-concept or even by our self-esteem, but rather to be open to possibility.

So let me go back to the FGC Gathering. Late in Gwyn's talk, a few Friends confessed to feeling overwhelmed by it all. It was if they didn't know where to start chipping away at the looming environmental crisis. I spoke about BYM's recent experiences. "For our office, we are looking at a new generation of heat pump equipment to heat and cool our office more efficiently than ever before. We are working with an interfaith cooperative to make a group purchase of solar panels for the building. In a fairly short time we can see this building reaching zero carbon energy usage. Our camps are designing their new structures with many green features." I could have gone further about BYM's role of introducing kids to nature, or as a custodian of green space. At that moment I saw the "wheel" of BYM moving forward, helping to support its corner of Quakerism along the road. When I finished, I worried, "I wonder if that made

anybody feel any better?" But Friends over the centuries have demonstrated that grounding oneself in pragmatism can bring new Light.

Quakers have a rich history of inspiration and inventiveness that has truly changed society and the world for the better. Researchers are making it clearer over time how important Quaker faith and practice, developed out of suffering, work and worship together, has been in nurturing that transformation. As we become clearer with each other and with the Spirit about how we find our way together, about how we are to implement our vision, we can truly move ourselves and the healing of this world forward.

So Gwyn's gift of a wheel of Faith and Practice is important for us to hold in our hearts, and to let inspire us. May we submit to the discipline of staying centered in a wheel of testimonies as we mind the wheel of our own life, and may we team together to allow the Spirit to move all our lives forward for real progress. That may start in finding our equilibrium with each other in reaching the deeper understandings that can only then be described in a Faith and Practice. That means we must rely on each other and "keep each other honest." Mystics that we are, we must be willing to become unbound by our self-concept or even by our self-esteem, but rather to be open to Divine possibility. Know that illusions will fall away and be rolled over as we move forward. Staying centered with our own Spirit and staying balanced with each other requires humility openly shared. It requires becoming very good at knowing love when we see it.

## FISHERTOWN MEETING HOUSE BECOMING QUAKER MUSEUM

*Susan Williams, Dunnings Creek*

For over one hundred years Fishertown Meeting House has stood and served as a place of worship for Orthodox Friends. For most of the time it was a flourishing Meeting serving the community as well. As time went on, the membership dwindled, and what few members were left united with Dunnings Creek Monthly Meeting on the other side of the tiny town of Fishertown, Pennsylvania. The Meeting House is now under the care of Dunnings Creek, and members wrestled with what to do with Fishertown Meeting House.

The community of Fishertown was settled mainly by Quakers coming from Menallen Meeting in the 1700's. The wide area here had an extensive Quaker community with a rich history of participation in the Underground Railroad. Under the direction of Joe Miller

and Jerry Miller, brothers who grew up attending Fishertown, a committee of members from Dunnings Creek are working toward turning the Meeting House into a small Quaker museum and possible learning center. We would like to have a history section, a genealogy section, a children's learning and hands on center, and a small area for Meeting for Worship. There are schools very near by who could certainly take advantage of this opportunity to learn of the rich history of their neighborhood. Also Bedford County is growing with tours of points of interest. We could be one of those destinations.

Presently we are operating on a small, donated budget, but are looking into funding possibilities such as historical grants, Quaker grants, and government grants. We have been put in touch with Amrit Moore of Maury River Friends Meeting, a museum enthusiast with helpful experience. She is eager to visit us, and give us some guidance even with her busy schedule. We look forward to working with her.

Presently physical work on the Meeting House is spearheaded by Jerry Miller. Although the projects that we knew had to be done are coming along, we have run into a snag – bees in the back wall! A bee expert from Annapolis, MD came out to survey the situation. He removed some of them and brought a bee box, but could not locate the queens. He will return hopefully to remove the queens and possibly gallons of honey. This is a set back that was not expected, but hope springs eternal and we are still looking to open in May of 2015. Stay tuned for an update.



## YOUTH PROGRAMS WELCOME JOSSIE DOWLING

*Alison Duncan, Youth Programs Manager*

The 2014-15 school year is about to begin! I am excited for another year of Youth Conferences, each an opportunity for Middle or High Schoolers to live with each other in a Quaker Community for a weekend. 'Friendly Adult Presences' run the program for Junior Young Friends (6th-8th graders), and are available as resources for Young Friends (9th-12th graders). The JYFs have chosen the theme Sense of Self this year. Young Friends take responsibility for their community - the shopping and cooking, program, inclusion of new friends, and Spirit of the weekend. In doing so, they learn self-reliance and how to take care of others.

BYM is happy to announce that Jossie Dowling is the first Junior Young Friends Program Assistant. Jossie has a long history with BYM. She was a camper at Catoctin, counselor at Shiloh and Teen Adventure, active in the Young Friends Program, and attender at Adelphi Meeting. She went to Guilford College where she majored in Sociology and Anthropology and was a Member of the Quaker Leadership Scholars Program. After graduating, Jossie worked for the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County, then participated in the Quaker Voluntary Service Program in Philadelphia. Jossie's experience with the diversity of Friends and playful demeanor will serve her as she attends all JYF conferences along with Alison to accommodate increased attendance.



younger. These are intentionally co-scheduled with the first JYF con, so parents can drop their child off at the JYF con, and attend either event for themselves.

**JYFs:** October 20-21 at Homewood Friends Meeting, December 6-7 at Patuxent Friends Meeting, March 14-15 at Richmond Friends Meeting, and May 8-10 at Opequon Quaker Camp.

**YFs:** September 19-21 at Langley Hill Friends Meeting, November 28-30 (Thanksgiving), February 13-15, April 17-19 OR 24-26, and May 22-24 (Memorial Day weekend). Please bring your school calendar with you to the September conference, so we can pick the April date, avoiding any major conflicts.

For each conference, Junior Young Friends should arrive at 10 am on Saturday, while Young Friends should arrive after 7pm on Friday night. All events end at 12 noon (or at the rise of Meeting) on Sunday morning. For each conference, youth need their Registration form, Medical form, and payment if not already submitted. Participants are also encouraged to bring a sleeping bag, pad, pillow, clothes, toiletries, and anything they think will help build community: games, music, or sports equipment. For the first conference of the new school year, everyone must submit a Medical form, which we will keep for the whole school year. After that, youth who have already turned in a Medical form only need Registration forms.

Pre-registration is required one week in advance of each JYF con, and TWO weeks in advance of each YF con. After that, participants will be placed on a waiting list, and registered as space permits. JYF Cons cost \$40; YF Cons cost \$50 for participants who have pre-registered and \$60 for participants who have not. Financial aid is available upon request. To register for a 'Con' mail a Registration form, a Medical form, and a check made out to BYM to the office or register online at the Yearly Meeting website. More info can be found at the Young Friends website, [yf.bym-rsf.net](http://yf.bym-rsf.net), and Junior Young Friends website, [bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/jyfs](http://bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/jyfs).

Please save the dates for the following weekends:

**PARENTS:** There will be two events in the Baltimore area to choose from for parents on the weekend of October 18-19: 1) Co-leading First Day School and 2) *How to fight with your Teen*. Email Marsha Holliday ([hollidaymsd@yahoo.com](mailto:hollidaymsd@yahoo.com)) to register for #1 and Alison ([youthprograms@bym-rsf.org](mailto:youthprograms@bym-rsf.org)) to register for #2. Childcare provided on site for children 10 and

## LITTLE CABIN PROJECT GOAL: \$25,000

The little cabin project came from a collaboration of many Friends. It started with an idea to raise money and awareness about Quaker Camp cabin replacement. Currently, we have 30 cabins at the three Quaker Camps. Many have been replaced (such as the most recent cabin at Catoctin pictured below) but, there are many more cabins to go. The cost to replace a cabin varies somewhat depending on the camp. The cost is about \$25,000 to replace one cabin.



The adventure of the cabin began several months ago. It started with an idea and David Hunter graciously accepted the challenge and ran with it. He taught a couple of workshops with the campers at Opequon Quaker Camp about construction and design. The campers did an awesome job. And so the

little cabin (or tiny as some refer to it) pictured below was built. This playhouse size cabin was then dis-assembled, loaded on a trailer, and made the long journey to Frostburg for Annual Session.

At Annual Session as we raised money toward our goal of \$25,000, we re-constructed the little cabin. We raised \$16,000 toward our goal. Friends in attendance were generous and enjoyed the fun. At the All-age celebration Friends even had an opportunity to paint the cabin including "Way Opens" above the door.



At the end of Annual Session our partially constructed little cabin was loaded back on the trailer and made the journey back to the BYM office where it will remain as we raise the rest of the needed money for final construction.

Will you help us complete the little cabin? For additional information, please call Development Director Ann Venable at 301-774-7663 or email her at [development@bym-rsf.org](mailto:development@bym-rsf.org).



## FRACKING WORKING GROUP OF THE CHESAPEAKE QUARTER

The Fracking Working Group of the Chesapeake Quarter gladly shares the news that the permitting process for the Cove Point (export terminal for liquefied natural gas) expansion has hit an important snag. In August, Calvert County Circuit Court Judge James Salon ruled that a zoning ordinance already granted was invalid. It attempted to exempt Dominion (Cove Point's owner) from permitting processes designed to protect the community of Lusby, Maryland, where Patuxent Friends Meeting is located. This development was unexpected and a cause for great joy.

### QUAKER EARTHCARE WITNESS

QEW is a rich resource for local Meetings as they discern their response to global climate change, resource depletion and environmental degradation. Meetings and individuals do not "join" QEW but instead contribute to the support of the work of this 25 year old organization. QEW is included in our Baltimore Yearly Meeting budget. Friends can order, from the website <[quakerearthcare.org](http://quakerearthcare.org)>, all the literature that QEW has produced - from tri-folds to study guides. Many Meetings order copies of the tri-folds that contain a Quaker perspective on a particular environmentally related issue with a list of pertinent resources at the end. A new tri-fold is usually published each year and this year's "Energy Efficient Travel Options", is very practical, addressing the choices we make in traveling. I urge you to take a look for yourself and your Meeting and if you have any questions please contact Toni Hudson, BYM's representative to QEW at [johudson@erols.com](mailto:johudson@erols.com).

### UNITY WITH NATURE COMMITTEE

The following proposal was approved at Annual Session:

Baltimore Yearly Meeting embraces the Unity with Nature Committee's request for each monthly meeting to discern on climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation. We believe a mindful discernment process will lead us to the hope, inspiration and strength we need.

In approving Unity with Nature's proposal at Annual Session, Baltimore Yearly Meeting is requesting local meetings, individuals, and

## VISIT OUR LOCAL MEETINGS WITH THE NEW PRESIDING CLERK

*I Love You continued from page 1*

Visiting each other is the work of all of us, not just one or even a few of us. But it's not really work and really is not a burden. It is truly a blessing, and I hope to share that with as many of you as I can. We also need to visit to live into our vision statement, as our ad hoc Vision Implementation Committee lifted up.

I plan to take travel companions on every visit I make. Partly, that's just good, time-honored practice. Mostly, it's a way to share the joy. For many visits, I'll seek a companion from a BYM committee, either because of something really great happening in the Meeting that others might want to hear about or because the committee may be able to help address a need there. If unable to find a companion from a committee, I'll also have a list of all-purpose companions to draw from. If you think you might like to join me on such visits and taste the richness of intervisitation, let me know. ([ymclerk@bym-rsf.org](mailto:ymclerk@bym-rsf.org) or 626-782-5377 - that's 626-QUAKERS). Even better, visit a Meeting on your own, and take a F/friend. Just to say "I love you."

Quaker youth communities to engage in a process of discernment on a way forward. Unity with Nature (UWN) submitted its proposal so that a mindful discernment process might inform and unify the family of BYM to better face the future.

The committee offers various assistance to those who wish it. Available resources will include links to completed Minutes from other meetings and a list of readings helpful in deepening consideration and facilitating a meaningful process of discernment. In addition, the committee offers

- A forum for discussions on sustainability and related topics available at the UWN Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/BYM.FriendsListeningPost>
- A discrete email address has been set up to communicate directly with the Committee at BYM UWN [bymunitywithnature@gmail.com](mailto:bymunitywithnature@gmail.com)
- Unity With Nature's Sustainability queries are available for consideration at [www.bym-rsf.org/what\\_we\\_do/committees/nature/sustainability.html](http://www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/committees/nature/sustainability.html)
- Quaker Earthcare Witness offers diverse resources at [www.quakerearthcare.org/search/site/climate%20minute](http://www.quakerearthcare.org/search/site/climate%20minute)

In the coming months, members of the UWN Committee will be contacting local meeting clerks and/or liaisons. Committee members are willing to travel to meetings who request a visit.



*Annual Session 2014 photograph by Nony Dutton*

## CONSIDERING VISION RECOMMENDATIONS

*Consider continued on page 11*  
more truly, more deeply, more easily, live into our Vision Statement.

How do you consider recommendations? By looking for what is good in each one. This is not the same as saying, "This one is good, this one isn't." It means that we look for the direction a recommendation could take a Meeting or a Committee, for what is good and true in the recommendation, for what it suggests that the Spirit might be asking us to do. By giving the same loving consideration we give to ideas that come to us in Meeting for worship, we can grow as a Yearly Meeting.

Each Meeting Clerk and Committee Clerk and the General Secretary will receive something soon from our Committee. Or you can go to the report of the ad hoc Vision Implementation Committee that is on the BYM website and get a head start.

Let's hold one another in the Light as we move forward together seeking ways to strengthen BYM and to bring a stronger beacon of love, faith, and service to the world.





Annual Session 2014 photograph by Nony Dutton

### ANNAPOLIS FRIENDS MEETING

Annapolis Peace and Justice Center continues to sponsor two very active spin-offs. The Climate Change Stewards of Greater Annapolis is sponsoring a trip to New York to march for action regarding climate change. The Center also has nurtured and hosted the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR), a coalition of individuals and nonprofit organizations now organizing a statewide initiative for legislation to fund changes in Maryland's criminal justice system, without raising taxes, which could simultaneously reduce incarceration and improve public safety.

The Meeting held a dinner catered by a food service training program sponsored by a local homeless shelter. We plan to repeat it quarterly. Besides a good meal among Friends, an evening not requiring cooking, and supporting a wonderful training program, we had the opportunity to visit with spouses we seldom see on First Day.

### BETHESDA FRIENDS MEETING

We have been fortunate to have many activities over the past few months that have fostered community life, helped to educate us about important issues, expressed our desire to be of service, and deepened our spiritual lives. Our Adult Religious Education Committee has sponsored many sessions over the years in which we heard members talk of their spiritual journeys. In April we heard from our member, Marion Ballard, about her spiritual journey. Adult Religious Education also sponsored a session on the pamphlet, "Envisioning a Moral Economy," and later in the spring arranged for members and attenders to have a tour of the Slave Museum in Sandy Spring. In April, we had our yearly perennial sale and Spring Fling, both of which raise money for the Ramallah Friends School; this year we were able to raise enough money for three scholarships for student to attend RFS. Our Advancement and Outreach Committee again offered a "Getting to Know You" session, in which we encourage both newcomers and long-time attenders/members to get to know one another and to reflect on questions about Quaker faith and practice. The series, "Experiment in Light," continues to thrive, with meetings twice a month. In these meetings, members and attenders gather to use the guided meditation created by Rex Ambler in *Light to Live By*, an effort to reflect the experience of early Quakers as they sought guidance. Our Friendly 8's groups—one for adults only and one for families, continue to meet for potluck dinners and discussions. In May, we had a service day at

Wider Circle, a non-profit organization in Silver Spring which assists individuals and families transitioning from shelters to more stable living situations. And this summer, we have had three sessions discussing the book *The New Jim Crow*. We are blessed to have a community so rich in collaboration, cooperation, and exploration.

### CHARLOTTESVILLE FRIENDS MEETING

Spring and summer travels are almost over, and Charlottesville Friends Meeting will soon settle into regular school-year activities. Linda Goldstein was delighted to take part in the Quaker Pilgrimage to Ireland led by Margaret Fraser and to attend Ireland Yearly Meeting sessions this spring. Betsy Tucker found renewal in hiking the Camino de Santiago de Compostela in Spain. Several members of the Meeting attended FGC Gathering this summer, and others were present for BYM Annual Session. Hank and Frances Schutz were particularly busy, taking part in both events. Charlottesville Friends will mark the end of summer activities with our traditional family swim and picnic on August 30 at Mint Springs Park in Crozet.

In September we will resume First Day School activities using the *Playing in the Light* curriculum for children ages 5 through 9. Storytelling for this curriculum is a learned practice that requires training, so we have invited an experienced trainer from Philadelphia to visit for a weekend training conference that runs from the evening of the 10th through the morning of the 12th at the Meeting House. All are welcome to attend; cost is \$100 per person and hospitality can be arranged. Contact Rosemary Gould [gouldrosemary@gmail.com](mailto:gouldrosemary@gmail.com)

### FAUQUIER FRIENDS WORSHIP GROUP

Seven attenders gathered in a restored railroad depot in Bealeton, Virginia, on July 20 and eight attenders came on August 17, the third and fourth meetings of the Fauquier Friends Worship Group under care of Herndon Friends Meeting. Singing from the Songs in the Spirit book at 10:30 am was followed by an hour of unprogrammed worship with vocal ministry rising from the quiet. A potluck picnic lunch and informal discussion continued into each early afternoon. The location at Bealeton Library on the corner of Station and Willow Dr. North is a blessing to those in the Warrenton-Culpeper area, most of whom were 35 to 45 miles or more away from their nearest Quaker meeting. The building is affordable and accessible with plenty of tables, chairs, access to library restrooms, parking, i.e. room for many visitors.

The first Meeting for Worship of the Fauquier Friends Worship Group was in May after a Clearness Committee from Herndon Friends Meeting approved actions to rent the Bealeton Depot for the allowed one day per month. The committee also approved advancement and outreach activities to further test the leading. In Sixth Month Meeting for Business, a Minute on the worship group was approved by Herndon Friends.

The Minute includes: "Finding that the process of formation of the Worship Group is proceeding in right order, the Ministry and Oversight Committee recommends that a committee of care for the worship group be established..." and continues to outline some of the specifics of continuing development including use of Herndon Friends phone, (703) 736-0592, for messages. Kim Glazer, Katherine Cole and Harry Tunis served as the original clearness com-

mittee with Bonnie Stockslager and graciously agreed to also be the ongoing Care Committee. Donations may be sent to Herndon Friends Meeting designated for Fauquier Friends Worship Group.

The small but growing and enthusiastic worship group has been meeting on the third Sunday of each month so far but Fauquier County Library (owns and rents the Depot) cannot make a long term promise of availability so Friends are encouraged to keep checking the BYM website under Virginia Meetings for Fauquier Friends page to view upcoming dates of worship ([bym-rsf.org](http://bym-rsf.org)). A link is also posted upper left corner of [www.herndonfriends.org](http://www.herndonfriends.org) home page.

Fauquier Friends Worship Group is thankful for Yearly and Monthly Meeting visitation, suggestions for outreach, for being held in the Light and for the many encouraging messages that have been sent to [fauquierfriends@gmail.com](mailto:fauquierfriends@gmail.com) or to PO Box 224, Bealeton, VA, 22712. If traveling our way, please remember, “You have Friends in Fauquier County.”

### FREDERICK FRIENDS MEETING

In spring and summer of 2014, two issues emerged at Frederick Friends Meeting: concern for homeless families in our community, and improving communications within the Meeting and with the larger community.

Friends from our Meeting have been in conversations with the local Religious Coalition for Emergency Human Needs about the Coalition’s plans to open an emergency shelter for homeless families, and an ad hoc committee within the Meeting explored options for how we could support that initiative. In a Called Meeting for Business in July, we found that we were not yet ready to offer our Meeting House as one of the 13 faith communities that will provide shelter during the year. However, we agreed that a group of volunteers from our Meeting will receive training and help out at other churches when the program starts in September. After a few months, we will revisit our involvement and discern whether the Meeting House should be offered as an emergency shelter and other next steps.

To better communicate within the Meeting and with the outside community, we have taken several steps. We approved new bylaws that, among other things, establish that we wish to be known as “Frederick Friends Meeting” rather than “Frederick Monthly Meeting.” This change is consistent with the desire to communicate in language that is clearer to the general public, and it was already expressed in our new website, printed materials, and Meeting House signs. We also established a standing Communications Committee that includes our webmaster, newsletter editor, and liaisons to the Frederick Area Ministerial Association and Warrington Quarterly Meeting. Representatives from the BYM Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee led us in a workshop that will help us communicate using dialogue rather than debate. And a lively monthly book discussion group is enriching our Meeting through their reading and reflections on the 2013 Draft of *Faith and Practice*. This group will continue in September as it begins reading *The Quaker Reader*, compiled by Jessamyn West. A group to read and discuss *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander will also start in September.

### HOPEWELL CENTRE MONTHLY MEETING

Looking back over summer, Homecoming at Hopewell Centre was, as always a happy and memorable reunion with treasured Friends.

We celebrate the fact that our small Meeting is taking on a more active role in the Baltimore Yearly Meeting as witnessed by the numbers who attended this year’s Annual Session, and those who are now serving on BYM committees. As we move into autumn, we thank Becky Ebert for her invaluable and tireless services and welcome a new Clerk of the Meeting, Mike Hambach. Our committees with some new clerkships are underway, and we’re particularly happy to see the revival of our Peace & Social Concerns Committee under the energetic leadership of Judia Gallinger. Using a new format, Seekers Group is flourishing as members take turns sharing their knowledge about a topic close to their heart — from changes in *Faith & Practice*; Buddhism and Quakerism; and Creeds; to a Dylan Thomas poem on dying — all stirring a lively spiritual interchange. Outreach to the community through our local food pantry and Interfaith Council is ongoing; and our new childcare program continues to delight and nourish our children.

In March we lost a dear and longtime member of our Meeting, David McCormick. David’s beautiful family— his wife Betty and their three children and seven grandchildren have brought us much joy throughout the years —and will continue to do so. David was our faithful and able web master for many years. We are also sad to hear that Elias Tamari has passed. He and his wife Mary Ellen became members of our Meeting and attended with us briefly before they moved to Friends House in Maryland. On a happier note, we announce our new members, Clyde and Bonnie Bryant who were recently married at Hopewell.

And happily we send this news to all of you and rejoice in hearing back.

### MENALLEN MONTHLY MEETING

Menallen Monthly Meeting is a small, vibrant Meeting located in the beautiful fruit belt of south central Pennsylvania. We have operated a Friends Preschool for over 40 years, and offer ESL classes twice a week to our neighbors that work in the orchards. What Meeting can say that many of its participants come to the Meeting House two to three times a week?





We also have three historic Meeting Houses and five Burial Grounds under our care. So we're having a workday at the Menallen Meeting House and Burial Grounds on Saturday, September 20th, from 10 am to 3 pm. We will provide lunch, with homemade fruit pies for dessert. We have lots of work to do: painting, pruning, brush removal, lawn care, driveway repair, and minor maintenance and repairs. We will provide equipment and materials, but if participants wanted to bring work/painting clothes, pruners/loppers, and perhaps a sturdy extension ladder, we would welcome that. Apple season will just be starting and farm markets abound. Pine Grove Furnace State Park, the Appalachian Trail, and Gettysburg National Military Park (or just the touristy stuff in Gettysburg) are nearby, and we could arrange rooms for anyone who wanted to make it a weekend and worship with us. We can offer overnight accommodations with prior inquiry. Contact Dave French at [aardlyquaking@gmail.com](mailto:aardlyquaking@gmail.com), or 717-677-6781. Please RSVP if you can, so we know how much food to prepare, and what tools to line up. But please come even if you weren't able to reply.

### PATAPSCO FRIENDS MEETING

Patapsco Meeting enjoys an annual retreat planned by a committee or group within the Meeting, and this year's retreat was a refreshing exploration of meditation as a spiritual practice. Thoughtfully planned by members who meet periodically to share meditation before Meeting, we learned about different kinds and applications of meditation from speakers within and beyond the meeting. After viewing the powerful documentary "The Dhamma Brothers," about Vipassana meditation in the prison system, we learned about Vipassana meditation. A practicing Buddhist spoke to us about "staying present in difficult relationship interactions." Our newsletter editor followed up by inviting us to write for our meeting newsletter about our meditation practice, and several of the men in the South Mountain Fellowship, who live at the prison in Hagerstown, submitted powerful articles. One wrote: "Today, I use meditation to reduce the tension, anxiety and stress of penal life. It clears my thinking and I become less angry towards people who have disappointed me and physically hurt me in the past."

Many meeting members read "The New Jim Crow," an experience that, combined with our prison ministry, has led to a deep commitment in many members to contribute to prison reform. A group of Friends continues to meet monthly to seek the way forward. Others of us have joined an alliance of organizations led by members of Annapolis Friends Meeting that is working on prison reform in Maryland and plans to work with legislators toward change.



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### PIPE CREEK FRIENDS MEETING

Pipe Creek Meeting continues to support the local food bank with its organic garden. We were able to stave off the groundhog invasions with have a heart traps and extremely an extremely intricate fence system. Fresh produce is picked on Sundays and delivered Mondays. St Paul's Lutheran Church organizes the food bank that now serves more than 100 families in the Town of Union Bridge. The 2nd annual Pipe Creek Reunion will take place September 21 from 12-2. Current and former members attend meeting together and share a meal following.

Members continue to support the efforts to provide adequate housing and healthcare by serving on the coordinating committee of Healthcare is a Human Right Maryland first organized by the Vermont workers and now spreading to other states. <http://healthcareisahumanrightmaryland.org>. Our Meeting over the years has been supporting the efforts of some in Congress to pass a peace tax bill. This would allow us to support out government without using our tax money for war. This year our federal government, and now the courts have given churches and private companies waivers from participating completely in the ACA on religious grounds. This resurgence of religious freedom has given us some hope that we too may participate with a waiver of some kind. We have completed our draft and will ask the wider Quaker community for their endorsement as well.

The Wright family has returned again to the Quaker community of Montverde, Costa Rica for another school year. Their energy and dedication will be truly missed.

### RICHMOND FRIENDS MEETING

RFM held a New Member/New Baby welcome on 6/15 for new members, Marjory Bertolino and Kat Sharp and Persephone Powell born to Kitty and Zack Powell on 2/27. RFM is saddened by the passing in May of Ann Ellms, former member of RFM, who had been living at Friends House in Sandy Spring, as well as, the recent death of Marie Clark on August 10. Marie was 92 and had been married to Bob Clark for 65 years at the time of his death several years ago. Marie and Bob allowed RFM to use their home as collateral for the mortgage loan of our current Meeting House. RFM celebrated the marriage of Cali Jackson and Jimmy Cloutier on May 17th.



One of the main concerns of our Meeting's members has been the many problems with the mass incarceration, the extension of terms, and the separation from family and community support for these prisoners. After one of our members was arrested while protesting torture at the School of the Americas, our Meeting became more alert to the harsh conditions for prisoners.

We have, as Quakers, been long-time objectors to the Death Penalty, and several of our members volunteer in the Federal Prisons in Petersburg, VA. Many of our members have read *The New Jim Crow*, and this has expanded our focus on prisons. We have hosted presentations from CURE, Offender Aid Restoration, and a former prisoner who was wrongfully convicted. We also hosted a member who leads Quaker Meetings at the Goochland Women's Prison. As a way of reaching out to more members on these issues, we host listening circles to reflect on these programs and to consider actions that we might take in the future.

We have also encouraged members to write their representatives, especially the President, to release the Torture report in full to the public. And we maintain regular pro-peace initiatives at festivals and on the day for world peace. We are seeking ways to share information about the Israel/Palestine Conflict, starting with organizing information in bullet points, which might also aid members in reaching out to their legislators. We will also be meeting with the Richmond Peace Education Center. One of our members will also provide a list of corporations that should or are now being boycotted because of their financial benefit from the destruction in this region. And last year we presented a minute to the Meeting on this topic, allowing time later for discussion.

We also had a very successful blood drive in June at our Meeting House working with the Richmond Blood Service asking members to donate blood and encourage their friends to also donate. Twenty three pints were collected.

Finally, like many Quakers, we have been looking to take supportive action on the needs of the environment. We expect to focus on education about fracking and on the policies of Virginia's Dominion Power, which has one of the lowest ratings in working for renewable energy. Also, some members may travel to the March for the Environment at the UN in September.

## VALLEY FRIENDS MEETING

VFM was privileged to provide a scholarship for Adrien Niyongabo from Barundi to attend the Summer Peacebuilding Institute at



*Annual Session 2014 photograph by Nony Dutton*

Eastern Mennonite University. Adrien's presence enriched our worship and our understanding as he shared of his work with Burundian and Rowandan refugees.

In June several Valley Friends participated in the Interfaith Peace Camp (Christian, Jews and Moslems) attended by about 50 children aged 8-15. One friend was active in leadership while others helped with preparing and serving lunches.

In March we began a long process of creating a minute on Climate Change. The minute was approved August 10. This important work continues as we share the minute and live out our commitments to right relationships with the earth and all its creatures.

## YORK FRIENDS MEETING

Learning about community can happen in a multitude of ways. Recently two members went to the White Rose Community Television studio to tape an episode of Faith in Community. This TV program spotlights the activities of local churches and religious organizations on local cable television and on the web. To learn more, go to the Meeting's newly updated Quaker Cloud website at: [www.yorkfriendsmeeting.org](http://www.yorkfriendsmeeting.org).

Over several months Friends met on Third Day evenings to study Marcus Borg's book, *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time*. This was an opportunity to hear about where various Friends stand in their relationship to the Bible and how that relationship may have changed during the course of each individual's faith journey.

In addition to the community gardens in the backyard of the Meetinghouse, Stone Soup and Salad was an opening for Friends to share the bounty of their home gardens and learn about George Fox's concern for nature. This was a delicious meal that replaced the usual simple meal on a First Day in July.

We are looking forward to hosting the group Cycle4Gaza on Saturday, Sept. 20 as they stop to rest on their bicycle ride from Philadelphia to Washington DC. Cycle4Gaza, founded by a group of concerned young people in the wake of the 2009 war on Gaza, seeks to raise awareness about the ongoing blockade on the Gaza Strip and to raise critical funds for carefully selected non-profit organizations that work to support education and healthcare for Palestinians living under occupation and as refugees. Since 2009, they have organized cycles covering over 1800km across the UK and France, Italy, Jordan, Turkey and Germany and raised over 650,000 GBP (British Pounds) in support of healthcare and education projects in the Gaza Strip and in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. This year several BYM Young Adult Friends are participating in the ride.



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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))

### SEPTEMBER

- 19-21 – Young Friends Conference at Langley Hill Friends Meeting
- 20-21 – Friends Service Weekend at Opequon Quaker Camp
- 28 – Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting at Friends House

### OCTOBER

- 5-7 – Clerks of Committees Workshop at Langley Hill Friends Meeting
- 11 – Tenth Month Interim Meeting at Richmond Friends Meeting
- 18-19 – Friends Service Weekend at Catoctin Quaker Camp
- 18-19 – Junior Young Friends Conference at Homewood Friends Meeting
- 18-19 – “How to Fight with Your Teen” at Baltimore Monthly Meeting, Stony Run
- 18-19 – REtreat for Religious Educators at Baltimore Monthly Meeting, Stony Run
- 25-26 – Friends Service Weekend at Shiloh Quaker Camp

### NOVEMBER

- 27-28 – Yearly Meeting Office Closed for Holiday
- 28-30 – Young Friend Conference

### DECEMBER

- 6-7 – Junior Young Friends Conference at Patuxent Friends Meeting
- 24-25 – Yearly Meeting Office Closed for Holiday

### STAFF AND OFFICERS OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

Kenneth “Ken” Stockbridge	Presiding Clerk <a href="mailto:ymclerk@bym-rsf.org">ymclerk@bym-rsf.org</a>	Ann Venable	Development Director <a href="mailto:development@bym-rsf.org">development@bym-rsf.org</a>
Riley Robinson	General Secretary <a href="mailto:gensec@bym-rsf.org">gensec@bym-rsf.org</a>	Jane Megginson	Camp Program Manager <a href="mailto:janemegginson@bym-rsf.org">janemegginson@bym-rsf.org</a>
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