
Interchange

Spring 2004

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

CHOICE SEATING

Travelling about the Yearly Meeting I have had the opportunity to sit in Worship on a wide variety of seating. I have found myself in planetarium seats tilted back to look at artificial heavens, on overstuffed sofas, puffy and low to the floor, on logs and lawn chairs under canopies of leaves, and on backless benches, hand fashioned by our immigrant Quakers ancestors. But the standard in most Meeting Houses is the ancient wooden bench with its slat back, polished to a warm patina by generations of Friends settling in to listen for that still small voice. No matter what the seating may be, Friends usually have a strongly held preference for where they like to sit in Meeting for Worship. Hearing, sight and mobility concerns guide some Friends to certain seating. But there are many other reasons for why we invariably head for the same seats every First Day. Some explanations that I have heard are; "For generations my family has sat in this exact spot. The view from this vantagepoint is inspiring. There is a cosmic energy right here. I've been sitting in this same place since the first time I came to Quaker Meeting." It seems that there are as many reasons for choosing a particular place to sit, as there are Friends.

I recall coming into one Meeting and sitting down only to be told that there probably would not be enough room for me on the bench when all of the family arrives, "We always sit here, you know." Realizing they were "sat" in their ways, I moved. During Worship I asked myself, "How does my comfort affect the comfort of others? Am I open to being uncomfortable?" The questions that day went beyond the notion of physical comfort to the old Quaker admonition of "Woe unto those who are comfortable in Zion." When I am comfortable, am I seeking more Light, more Truth?

Back in Worship, it is comforting to be able to look around a Meeting Room and know that certain Friends will be at certain places. It gives us a sense of security and continuity that some things stay the same. In our growing Meetings, new faces fill in around the familiar ones and we continually reset our image of the Meeting Room landscape. I can't help but wonder if something as simple as changing where we sit in Meeting might not give us fresh perspectives on our Meetings, our concerns and others. At the least, there is proof that changing benches will increase your circle of Friends. Try it.

Peace and Love, Lamar Matthew, clerk

FRIENDS WORLD COMMITTEE FOR CONSULTATION 21ST TRIENNIAL

Four women from Baltimore Yearly Meeting had the special privilege of being among the 309 Friends from around the world who gathered in January in Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand for the 21st triennial gathering of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC). (Aotearoa is the Maori name and New Zealand the English name of the country that hosted us. Friends there use the names together when speaking of their country or their Yearly Meeting.)

Sheila Bach, Dona Boyce-Manoukian, Flossie Fullerton, and I thank you for sending us. We look forward in the weeks and months ahead to opportunities to speak directly with many Friends throughout the yearly meeting about our experiences at the Triennial and, for some of us, as guests of Aotearoa/New Zealand Friends afterwards.

Established in 1937 to bring Friends together from different traditions and across geographical separations, FWCC is the principal "umbrella" organization of Friends, embracing Friends from every continent as well as from the Conservative, Evangelical, programmed and unprogrammed traditions.

At FWCC Triennials, Friends gather from as many affiliated yearly meetings as possible for worship and fellowship, to learn about the work and witness of Friends in other parts of the world, and to build personal friendships that, it is hoped, will help to bind Friends together around the world.

Because of its location, this Triennial was particularly rich in Friends from West Asian and Pacific regions, including Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, and Aotearoa/New Zealand. Countries where Friends are few also sent representatives. These included Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, Russia, Indonesia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, and Cuba. Sadly, 22 of the 47 Friends expected from Africa were delayed because of visa restrictions and only arrived on the seventh day of the 10-day conference. All 12 Friends expected from India also had difficulties obtaining visas, which kept them from coming at all.

The keynote address was given by Jean Zaru of Ramallah Monthly Meeting in Palestine on the Triennial theme: "Being Faithful Witnesses: Serving God in

Continued on pg 2

FWCC, Continued

a Changing World.” Jean spoke of the hardships of living in Ramallah and of her concern for the wall presently being built between Israel and Palestine. She spoke in broader terms about all the aspects of life that create divisions, and presented a query: “What walls have I created?”

The challenges of being faithful witnesses were offered in presentations throughout the week from Friends from Aotearoa/New Zealand, Congo, the U.S., Germany, El Salvador, Philippines, and Kenya. Our days were grounded in worship, offered each day by a different yearly meeting, each inviting us to share in that yearly meeting’s customary manner of worship. All participants were also assigned to small worship and sharing groups that met together every day. Over the course of the Triennial, these groups provided a rich opportunity to form deep connections with Friends of different backgrounds.

Triennial business is multilingual, with translation offered into English, Spanish, and French. Business sessions considered changes to the FWCC constitution, the budget, and action minutes from working groups. Nancy Irving (USA) was appointed to be the new General Secretary and Joseph Andugu (Africa) the new Associate Secretary.

The first presentation of the budget showed a severe deficit. It was clear that dramatic refocusing of the work and funding was necessary. Three intense visioning sessions helped develop a corporate vision of the needs of FWCC and how to accomplish those needs. FWCC’s financial situation indicates that if income does not rise substantially over the next three years, it will be impossible to sustain current level of activities. Particular concern was expressed over the possibility of having to cut back on the programs of the Quaker United Nations offices in Geneva and New York if income levels do not increase. After much deliberation, a revised budget was approved for the next four years that anticipates a deficit in each of the next two years and a slight surplus in subsequent years. One of our representatives (Sheila Bach) stood aside from this action out of concern for the seriousness of FWCC’s financial situation.

As the Triennial closed, several Friends commented that this gathering demonstrated a new mission for FWCC: to be a model of possibilities to the world for collectively working on problems in peace and love.

Rebecca Rawls

Support Baltimore Yearly Meeting and your Meeting through Planned Giving. Contact Frank Massey for information <frankmassey@bym-rsf.org>

EPISTLE FROM YOUNG FRIENDS ATTENDING YOUTHQUAKE 2003

In the beginning, Quaker Friends traveled to YouthQuake from many geographic areas and walks of life. We gathered together in communion after the manner of Friends, discussions of our beliefs and as a community supporting each other in our own individual journeys. Early in the week the cold and bitter weather was reflective of our bias towards one another. It was difficult to see the challenges laid before us, paralleled the snow cloaking our view of the Rocky Mountains. Day by day the weather grew warmer along with the strengthening of our fellowship. We began to see that the differences between programmed and unprogrammed Friends did not weigh heavily in our ability to see God within each other and the light in the truths we both share.

We appreciated bible study lead by Max Carter and the passage he chose to focus on, John Chapter 4, because it was particularly poignant dealing with prejudice between two religious groups. We came to understand how uncomfortable unprogrammed worship could be to programmed Friends, as we struggled with the context of songs and sermons. In addition to scheduled events, Friends used free time to discuss faith and issues of the heart. Many of us were surprised at the bridges built and friendships formed between Friends of different backgrounds. The intensity of the gathering increased throughout the week as issues arose such as creation, abortion, and homosexuality.

Throughout our time it was difficult to encounter so many different views, but through the challenges our faith grew stronger. Not all of us left YouthQuake with the same beliefs as when we arrived, but a greater understanding was felt by all. For many of us, YouthQuake became a step in our spiritual journey, challenging us to expand our boundaries and push further on into this faith we call Quakerism.

By the end of the week the weather had cleared revealing to us the inspiration of the

... through the challenges our faith grew stronger.

mountains. Our challenges, similar to these great peaks, lay before us in their beauty to climb and to explore. For most of us our journeys do not end at the conclusion of YouthQuake. Clarity has come to the road ahead of us and through the strengthening of our faith we walk forward into the future.

Mary Crauderuff (PYM), Nate Blood-Patterson (PYM), Joseph Shaffer (BYM), and Rachel Stacy (BYM) (Approved by the YouthQuake Participants from PYM and BYM)

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

EVENTS MARKING ANNIVERSARY OF IRAQ WAR

The anniversary of the United States invasion of Iraq occurs in March and several events are being planned to register opposition to U.S. resort to war rather than diplomacy to address conflict situations. The American Friends Service Committee and other organizations are sponsoring the "Dover to D.C. Memorial Procession" March 14th and 15th. On Sunday March 14th at 12:30 people will gather at Camden Friends Meeting House in Dover and after a brief service a memorial procession will take place to the gates of Dover Air Force Base where the war dead arrive. After the ceremony at the Air Force base, a caravan will proceed to Baltimore for a rally. Then, on Monday March 15th there will be a gathering and observances at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, DC, current residence of many U.S. Servicemen and women wounded in Iraq, followed by memorial procession to White House. For further information, check the peace pledge web site, <http://www.peacepledge.org/resist/update3142004.shtm>.

Then on March 20-21 events are planned in Washington; information may be obtained from the United for Peace and Justice web site, www.unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=1359&preview=1.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

We are pleased to announce the publication of our second original curriculum booklet, *A Quaker Response to Christian Fundamentalism*, by Sallie B. King of Valley Meeting. This resource is for middle and high school youth, and could even be used by adult study groups.

The best introduction to this curriculum resource is in Sallie's own words:

This curriculum was born of necessity. Valley Friends Meeting, in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, is located in an area of strong Christian conservatism. Recently our Meeting discovered that, despite their Quaker upbringing and First-Day School educations, a number of our children were unprepared to meet the challenges of Christian fundamentalism. When friends, schoolmates or neighbors accost them, as they frequently do, insisting upon certain theological views, our children often do not know what to say or think. If the exchange turns into a verbal attack, as it sometimes does, and our children are told that they are going to hell because they don't hold the "true" religious beliefs, they may be shocked, sometimes quite frightened.

We live in a world in which religion can be quite aggressive, even with children. I have always thought that one of the functions of religious education for children is to protect their minds and spirits while their own religious experience and insight is developing. Instruction in Friends' beliefs, history and practices, instruction even in the Bible, while necessary, has not been enough for our children. They needed to directly talk and think about the challenges they were frequently receiving from their Christian fundamentalist peers. Upon investigation, we could find no curriculum suitable for youth that directly addressed this problem from a Friends' perspective. So I decided to develop one.

The objective of this curriculum is to help our Quaker youth understand Christian Fundamentalism and our differences from it, so that they will not be intimidated, overpowered or confused in their interactions with their Christian Fundamentalist peers. The goal is not to enable our youth to argue better with Fundamentalists, but to understand their own religious tradition better in the context of a prevalent challenge that they face in the world today.

There are seven lessons in the booklet, each of which can be adapted to local needs and circumstances. Here are the topics they cover:

- One: What Is Christian Fundamentalism?
- Two: The Light Within and Human Sinfulness – I
- Three: Light Within and Human Sinfulness – II
- Four: Religious Education
- Five: Bible
- Six: Jesus and Salvation
- Seven: Relations with Other Religions

Copies of this curriculum will be available at Interim Meeting (Bethesda Meeting, March 20) or mailed to Meetings who do not pick them up. Additional copies are available from the BYM office, at \$4.00 each.

A Quaker Response to Christian Fundamentalism is the second curriculum resource published by the RE Committee. The first booklet, *Speaking Peace, Living Peace*, for adult-level discussion and study, is a collection of four historical narratives and documents which relate to how Friends have lived the Peace Testimony in times of war and rumors of war. Copies of this booklet are also available from the BYM office, for \$3.00 each, plus postage.

Chuck Fager, Clerk

EXPERIENCING SPIRITUAL BURNOUT?

April 23-25, 2004: Enjoy new growth in God's world.

A Silent Retreat might help restore your spirit. "Be still and know that I am God." We are silent but not quiet and not always still as we seek God's guidance.

The Silent Retreat held at Dayspring Retreat Center, an oasis of quiet and spirituality in Montgomery County has acres of woods, meadows, and 3 ponds—home to many animals and plants. Retreat participants have individual rooms and there is plenty of healthy food.

As the Dayspring introduction sheet notes: "There is no wrong way to spend the weekend in the silence." There are opportunities to walk, read, draw, journal, nap or just be. Silence allows freedom from external demands letting the Spirit flow. Community is formed as we seek together.

For more information call: Jean Christianson at 410/544-1912 or Nan Elsbree 410/647-3591

UNITY WITH NATURE COMMITTEE

Ideas on How Meetings Can Deepen Their Witness for Care of Earth

Information

1. Bulletin Board—Current information regarding eco-issues
2. Shelf—Place for relevant newsletters, books and magazines
3. Study groups—Regular or periodic
4. Meeting newsletter—Articles on eco-issues—eco tips, inspirational queries, information about current problems.
5. Tell people about Quaker Earthcare Witness (formerly Friends Committee on Unity with Nature - www.fcun.org) and BYM's Unity with Nature Committee (contact sdkuzmanoff@yahoo.com or brabson@epix.net)

Education

1. First Day School—Eco-curriculum—from Quaker Earthcare Witness, projects, nature appreciation
2. Adult Religious Education—Spiritual ecology discussion, Quaker testimonies and biblical sources that speak to a concern for care of earth, activities/exercises in nature that support greater spiritual awareness, Care of Earth (Show the video, "The Great Work", by Thomas Berry, invite a guest speaker or just hear from concerned meeting members.)
3. Earth Day celebration

Political/social action

1. Letter/postcard writing – Make it easy by having materials and issues available.

2. Encourage folks to respond to Quaker Earthcare Witness "Eco-Alerts" (www.fcun.org)
3. Network with other monthly meetings / yearly meetings / other faith groups
4. Review and discuss the Earth Charter. Consider endorsing it or using it as a guide for direct action. (www.earthcharter.org)

Activities to cultivate a sense of unity with nature:

1. Walks after meeting, worship sharing, other ideas?
2. Outdoor worship (periodic, regular, once/year)
3. Sponsor/organize workshops on increasing spiritual awareness through reconnecting with Nature. (Read as a group "Awakening to Earth—Natural awareness as a spiritual practice" by Bill Cahalan from Cincinnati Monthly Meeting—www.fcun.org)
4. Friends Wilderness Meditation Center – sponsors nature oriented seminars, wilderness retreat opportunities (connection of nature with spirituality) (www.bym-rsf.org/FWMC)

Direct action

1. Corporate giving – are our investments and giving eco-friendly? (socially conscious mutual funds one alternative—ads in Friends Journal, financial support for Quaker Earthcare Witness—www.fcun.org)
2. Meeting House Eco-inventory—As a community, are we good environmental citizens?
 - a. Review the "Responsible Purchasing for Faith Communities" handbook by the Center for a New American Dream (www.newdream.org)
 - i. Equal Exchange coffee and teas served/sold at meeting.
 - ii. Buying club for meeting folks to encourage sustainable purchases
 - b. Conduct an eco-inventory on energy use, etc. (order brochure "How Eco-Friendly is your Meeting House" at www.fcun.org or make up your own inventory)
 - c. Begin recycling; stop using Styrofoam cups, etc.
3. Form an Earthcare Witness group in your meeting to support individual group members and meeting as a whole in deepening their witness for care of Earth. Send a representative to the BYM Unity with Nature Committee.

10 AREAS FOR INDIVIDUAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

- 1 **Transportation:** find ways to use cars less—walk, bike and use mass transit whenever possible. Buy a high mpg car, and keep it tuned up.
- 2 **Population:** support family planning programs—both local and international—that respect women's rights and aspirations and support their education.

- 3 **Food:** move toward organic, locally grown, seasonal food with minimal processing and packaging, or grow your own. Ask in grocery stores and restaurants where the food is grown. Find local farmers doing Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).
- 4 **Recycling:** recycle everything you can (papers, metals, plastics, oil...) and purchase items made from recycled materials. Also, you can compost yard and kitchen wastes whenever possible.
- 5 **Purchases:** Always ask, "Do I need this?" Beyond reuse and repair, buy for the long term from reliable sources that produce sustainability and equitably. Know/ ask where goods come from. Consider what you might rent, borrow, share or barter for instead of buying.
- 6 **Money:** Support "green" businesses. Invest savings in socially responsible funds or live without excess income.
- 7 **Household:** Minimize use of energy, chemicals and pesticides in house and garden. Maximize efficiency in lighting (compact fluorescents), water use, heating and cooling, and appliances.
- 8 **Community:** Work with others on issues that affect the environment, including population growth, toxics, pollution, and the assumptions of a growth economy. Be active in at least one environmental organization, and support environmentally sound political candidates. Encourage formation of neighborhood groups that support developing more eco-friendly lifestyles.
- 9 **Bioregion:** Re-inhabit the place where you live by engaging in activities that root you in the cycles of nature. Get to know the native habitat around you—protect and restore it.
- 10 **Openings:** Remember you are not alone in these concerns and efforts. Share your concerns with others without blame or self-righteousness. Leave aside apathy and despair.

CAMP PROPERTIES

SPRING PLANS AT OUR CAMP PROPERTIES

This spring we are building four new structures on our properties in order to meet state codes, to provide for more campers, and to replace old cabins. Preparations are underway and anticipation is building. Contractors are being consulted, materials are being procured, volunteers are being sought and applications for permits are being submitted. The Yearly Meeting depends on many volunteers to be successful in these endeavors and keep our costs down.

There are two ways that individuals can be a part of our spring activities: donations and volunteer time. If you have access to building materials at reduced cost, please let us know. If you want to volunteer, we have many wonderful work weekends scheduled where we can further reduce the cost of building and maintaining our properties, have much fun out in the mountains, and share community and worship with Friends we often don't see.

The kinds of help that we need include skilled and unskilled laborers, site preparation, cooking, and organizing. More information is available at: <http://www.bym-rsf.org/camping/work>. Please check there for regular updates; or call David Hunter in the office.

CABIN CONSTRUCTION APPEAL OFF TO A GREAT START

In December the call went out to the parents of recent Catoctin and Opequon campers and to some Meetings. [We will contact all Meetings asking for support in this important endeavor.] The call has been heard! So far we have gathered \$7,715.

Thank you to all who have contributed. If you have not had a chance to make a contribution—it is not too late. We are moving forward in faith but we need everyone's help to bring our plans to fruition. Don't miss your chance to be a part of all the exciting things that are happening in our camping programs! Contributions can be mailed to Baltimore Yearly Meeting, designated for the Camp Property Capital Reserve Fund.

STAFF READY TO VISIT MEETINGS TO TALK ABOUT CAMPS

Frank Massey (General Secretary), Josh Riley (Camp Administrative Secretary) and David Hunter (Camp Property Manager) are eager to come to your Monthly Meetings and talk about what the Camping Program is, what our properties have to offer you as a Monthly Meeting, and what your Monthly Meeting may have to offer the camping program.

We are eager to accommodate any Friendly group and are developing a number of presentations to share. Interested Friends should call the Yearly Meeting Office to schedule a time for us to get together.

BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

ANNUAL SESSION

Inclusive or Exclusive

Meeting God in Everyone

July 26–August 1, 2004

James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA

CAMP WORK WEEKEND

Catoctin Quaker Camp, Thurmont MD
(60 minutes from Baltimore, 75 minutes from DC)

May 7-9

June 4-6

June 11-13

Opequon Quaker Camp, Winchester
(120 minutes from Baltimore, 90 minutes from DC)

April 30-May 2

May 28-30

Shiloh Quaker Camp Stanardsville, VA area
(100 minutes from DC)

April 23-25

May 7-9

May 21 - 23

STAFF NEWS

WELCOME TO OUR NEW YOUTH SECRETARY

Hope Braveheart, who attends Sandy Spring Meeting and lives in Wheaton, MD, has accepted the position of Youth Secretary for the Yearly Meeting.

Hope will be starting in March and will be working with the Interim Youth Secretary, Tom Fox, for six to eight weeks and then getting ready for her first annual session with the Young Friends community in July. Hope currently works for the Montgomery County school system at John F. Kennedy high school. She will continue to work at JFK part time during the next school year in her capacity as secretary for the Leadership Training Institute. This is a program that serves both academically rigorous and at risk students by teaching leadership through service. Hope also worked with the US Dept. of Labor as a Youth Program Facilitator during the world conference "Children in the Crossfire," in Washington, DC. As former child soldiers shared their difficult stories and ideas for peace to a global audience, American youth served as mentors. Laurel Johnson, a former Young Friend and now a student at Earlham College, was a mentor in this program in 2003. Hope has two children, Aidan age 4 and Liam age 5.

All three plan on being at JMU for annual session so please make a point to meet her and make her feel welcome.

ACCOUNTANT

Laurie Wilner, Langley Hill, assumed the responsibilities of bookkeeper at the beginning of November 2003. Laurie has had training and experience in book-

keeping and accounting for several years in other organizations. She has served the Yearly Meeting through her participation on several committees and as the Annual Session Registrar. She will be in the office one or two days per week depending on the amount of work (more during the summer and camping season). Laurie is here to serve the Yearly Meeting committees, individuals who have received educational loans, and Monthly Meetings. If you have questions about committee expenses, loans, etc. give her a call or send an e-mail to <lauriewilner@bym-rsf.org>

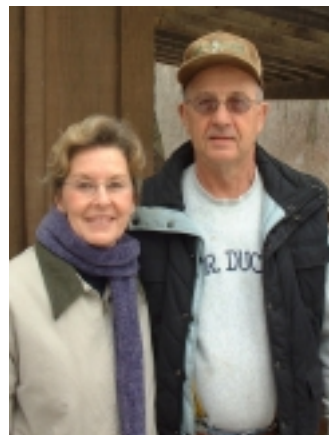
NEW CATOCTIN CARETAKER NAMED

Jerry Coates began his service as Catoctin Caretaker January 1, 2004. He and his wife, Becky, moved into the caretakers' cabin right before the early January snow storms, and began immediately to familiarize themselves with the cabin, the camp facilities, and needs.

Jerry and Becky are from Oxford Monthly Meeting and were very involved in the Yearly Meeting and the camping programs when their children were growing up. They volunteered at Catoctin many summers so they know the program and facilities well. For the past few years they have been a part of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, but now they are coming back home to Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

Becky and Jerry have a real love for the camping program and in particular Catoctin Quaker Camp. So sometime when you are visiting the camp make sure you find them and ask them about their story. Becky has offered to cook meals (cater) or shop for any of the groups that use the camp. If you group is planning a weekend at Catoctin and need a cook, make sure to contact Becky at <catoctincamp@mindspring.com> to ask

what she can do and what she charges. She wants to offer small retreats for couples or families during the winter using the infirmary. Contact Becky to learn more about this. Jerry is planning to make improvements in the facilities and grounds, presenting a cleaner and more pleasing Catoctin Quaker Camp.



Welcome Jerry and Becky Coates, Catoctin Quaker Camp Caretakers.

MONTHLY MEETING NEWS

ADELPHI

Adelphi continues to be a busy, vibrant community with many visitors and folks new to Quakerism checking us out. We hosted Safe Haven, a traveling shelter for homeless men, the week after Christmas. Although it was a smaller than usual group of men, the Adelphi community participated enthusiastically in preparing dinners and visiting with the men while they stayed in our Meeting House.

Our school, Friends Community School, and the Meeting have been working on building a closer relationship by having events that include both groups. A multigenerational storytelling evening is planned as well as an area dinner. FCS is busy making plans for the construction of their new school building in Greenbelt. A preliminary site plan has been approved by Prince Georges County. In addition, students from the school have been planting trees native to this geographic area on the property as part of first steps to restore the land.

Adelphi has made the decision to lay down its Wednesday evening Meeting for Worship due to extremely low attendance. However, our 9:00 a.m. Sunday Meeting for Worship remains an alternative for those who prefer small Meetings. Some members and attenders attend both the 9:00 a.m. Meeting for Worship and the much larger 10:00 a.m. Meeting in the same morning because the experiences are so different!

Takoma Park Preparatory Meeting has made an important decision to move their Sunday 10:30 a.m. Meeting for Worship to “Sangha” at 7014 Westmoreland Ave. They were meeting on the 3rd floor of a building with no elevator, and this new space has wheelchair access. **Marriage:** Somers Knight & Phillip Payett, 12/20/2003.

BALTIMORE, STONY RUN

SEEKING QUAKER ALTERNATIVES TO VISIONS OF WORLD DOMINATION

Stony Run Meeting members and attenders spent several hours over two days in December considering the implications of the think tank-generated document called Project for a New American Century that is being used as a model for what appears to be an effort by the Bush administration to achieve U.S. world domination in order to—in the view of the Project’s proponents—achieve world peace, security and prosperity.

Participants considered if there might be any goals Quakers have in common with the document, and voiced

concerns about the strategies outlined in it. From a Quaker point of view, participants asked themselves how the U.S. can achieve security and peace, and they also discussed how best to communicate about these matters with members of Congress and political candidates. Below is a comparison the participants developed that contrasts the New American Century version of what the four core missions of the U.S. military should be, and what a Quaker version of these missions might be.

Four Core Missions for the U.S. Military New American Century Version

“This report proceeds from the belief that America should seek to preserve and extend its position of global leadership by maintaining the preeminence of U.S. military forces. Today the U.S. has an unprecedented strategic opportunity. It faces no immediate great-power challenge; it is blessed with wealthy, powerful and democratic allies in every part of the world; it is in the midst of the longest economic expansion in its history; and its political and economic principles are almost universally embraced. At no time in history has the international security order been as conducive to American interests and ideals. The challenge for the coming century is to preserve and enhance this “American peace.””

Revised “Quaker Version”

The United States, as the sole “global superpower,” finds itself in a historically unique position of strength and responsibility. The global economy is increasingly interconnected and inseparable from the issues of energy resources, biodiversity, development and human rights. A comprehensive strategy of conflict prevention offers the greatest potential for promoting lasting peace and sustainable development.

References: (See also FCNL’s brochure on “Peaceful Prevention of Deadly Conflict” for a more comprehensive list of resources).

*“Peaceful Prevention of Deadly Conflict,” Friends Committee on National Legislation, 2003. www.fcnl.org (click on War is Not the Answer).

*“Prevention of Armed Conflict,” Report of the Secretary General, United Nations, June 7, 2001. afsc.org/quano/Resources/SGPrvRpt.pdf

*“Preventing Deadly Conflict,” Final Report, Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict. wwics.si.edu/subsites/ccpdc/frpub.html

*“Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategy Forces

and Resources for a New Century,” prepared in 2000 by The Project for a New American Century. www.newamericancentury.org.

Meetings interested in learning more about the results of these discussions, or details about how the events were planned and conducted, should email Stony Run at stonyrunfriends@starpower.net.

BETHESDA

We lost a cherished member when Earl Harrison died in November. A memorial meeting to celebrate his life was held, under the joint care of Bethesda and Friends Meeting of Washington at FMW on December 6. At our January after-Meeting potluck, we rejoiced with member Jean Jones on her 90th birthday (which actually occurred in December), especially the ways she has responded to others’ needs and her witnesses for peace and justice, including many peace marches.

Spurred both by the questions for this year’s Spiritual State of the Meeting report and by a Listening Project on Racism and Diversity carried out by Jane Coe, several committees have been thinking about ways that we can be more welcoming — in general, by seeking out newcomers and longtime members we may not know very well, and in particular by extending a warm welcome to those of other races.

CHARLOTTESVILLE

Outreach is the watchword among Charlottesville Friends in autumn. Regular members return from their travels or shake off a summer trance; new attenders arrive with the start of the school year. We have sought to make our Meeting more welcoming and accessible, continuing our traditions of potlucks and Friendly Circles that include, among others, a men’s group, a monthly book discussion, and a group of Friends exploring practices of spiritual formation. From one evening to the next our Meetinghouse may host any number of activities benefiting the wider community: the rumble of drummers, the Dances of Universal Peace, a substance abuse support group, a string chamber orchestra in rehearsal.

A small worship group resumed its weekly evening meetings at the University of Virginia, student-led and Meeting-assisted. Across town Tandem Friends School continues to thrive. Friends attend mid-day weekly Meeting there, students and teachers from Tandem often worship with us on First Day mornings, and a number of Meeting children are enrolled—a pattern that our growing Tandem Scholarship fund should help sustain in the future.

With a view to wider Friends activities, we took steps this season to reaffirm our commitment to the BYM camping program. We have energetically publicized the availability of scholarships to Meeting families that can use them, and have issued a special call to Friends who may be able to subvene campers’ costs by volunteering for a stint at one of the summer camps. With Meeting support several of our members have taken part in various programs at Pendle Hill. Another member has been active with the Middle East concerns of AFSC, and in return we have hosted a discussion with a visiting AFSC representative. Charlottesville Quakers continue to participate in demonstrations and vigils drawing public attention on the Iraq war and occupation, and on Virginia’s death penalty.

Two Friends died in late 2003 who had graced and served our Meeting for years: Rosemary Johnson in Tenth Month, and Bruce Chartres in Twelfth Month. In supporting them, their associates and families, during the latter phase of illness and at large memorial services afterwards our Meeting was supporting itself as well.

And, speaking of support: Having paid off our old mortgage last summer, we now anticipate incurring a new one, for extensive renovation of parts of our Meetinghouse that good luck (to invoke no higher Sponsor) has upheld well past reasonable expectation. Thorough sifting of options on the part of our Building Committee has produced a plan for Friends’ approval this winter, with construction to occur probably during 2005.

DEER CREEK

In early November, Deer Creek Friends and attenders joined 30 other Harford County churches by providing a week of overnight accommodations and meals in the Meeting House for Harford County men and women who were homeless. Along with other community volunteers, we brought in dinner and spent time with the guests, and found that this experience gave all of us a far greater compassion for those who are homeless and increased our awareness of homelessness. As a result, our Meeting will become a “temporary shelter” for a group again in April.

In December the children enacted the Christmas story for the parents and adults. We decorated our Christmas tree with mittens and gloves for children in need, and shared our annual Christmas dinner together. The Meeting is grateful to a regular attender, Larry Morgan, for his generous gift to the Meeting by repainting the Meeting House doors and trim.

Members of Ministry and Oversight completed a year of visitations to Friends and friends who do not attend regularly. The Committee has taken "Parenting in 2004" as its focus and will offer four special programs beginning with a session on March 21 on "bullying." The Committee continues to look for ways that make members and attenders with children feel part of the Meeting Family, and to encourage all of us to do the work of Friends and to remind us that the spirituality of the Meeting lies within us.

FREDERICK

Frederick Meeting has had an intense fall and early winter. The events of the Fall, and our ongoing growth has made us aware of how we must change in a number of ways. We instituted a training series for committee Clerks, in an effort to better define good process, and support our committees, and the wonderful new leadership that has arisen. We are formalizing our First Day School Child Safety program, and are proceeding with the next step in our exploration of how to develop a larger worship space. We have acquired important additional parking adjacent to our property, and have decided to conduct an intensive one-day facilitated session with an architect to envision the design for a new Meeting Room on the property. Our decision to go forward or not will depend on both the response of the community and financial considerations.

We have sought to build community through more frequent pot-lucks, which have been well attended, as well as traditional events such as our Fall Festival and children's Christmas celebrations. In early Fall we hosted a series of films and discussions based on the PBS series "A Force More Powerful", which were open to the public and well attended.

Much of the Meeting's energy in the past four months has been focused on our Prison Ministry. Over a year ago, we approved a Minute concerning the return of sex offenders to the community, outlining procedures and communications. We found when we began the process of communication in anticipation of an incarcerated Friend's upcoming release, that this represents a significant and painful issue for many among us. We have struggled with the question of whether we really are open to all, and under what circumstances. We have labored intensively for several months to find a way to hold the concerns and feelings of all. Finding unity has been very difficult. We have convened a support committee for the incarcerated Friend, to assist with the many challenges he will face. We have convened an oversight committee to address safety in the Meeting, to

develop detailed procedures and accountability, and most of all to listen. We have convened a series of Listening Groups and Meetings to establish a safe place to express concerns. We have discovered that we are no different than the rest of society in having a significant number within our community who are survivors. We have also discovered that the larger issues we are dealing with have to do with some members and attenders not feeling they are heard, not trusting that the meeting will follow through with safety procedures, and with long-standing interpersonal conflict among some that make openness to the spirit difficult. These are all matters we know we must address; we pray we will do so with love and openness to truth. We have experienced moments of great pain, and moments of astounding grace in our work. We have made a great deal of progress and much work remains. We pray for light as we continue.

Adoptions/Births: Nora Clarke, mid-November; Grace Ann Zimmerman, 12/22/03

HERNDON

Since becoming a Monthly Meeting in 1988, Herndon Friends Meeting is marking a milestone this year. With many of our first generation of children now grown, preparations have begun for two of their marriages under the care of the meeting this summer. Amy Tunis will marry Matthew Shinkman on May 15, and Catherine Marquardt will marry David Wilkins on July 10. Congratulations!

On unrelated business, Herndon Meeting has found a simple solution to a low number of returned surveys for the spiritual state of the meeting report. During the monthly potluck lunch at the rise of meeting for worship, ministry and oversight committee members interviewed those interested who had not turned in surveys. Answers will be incorporated into the report.

HOPEWELL-CENTRE

Recently our junior young Friends group wrote a set of questions concerning Meeting for Worship and conducted a survey of the adults in our Meeting. We thought that the questions in the survey might be of general interest to Friends, so we reproduce them here:

1. How do you center yourself?
2. How do you sit still for so long?
3. What do you think about during Meeting for Worship?
4. What motivates you to come to Meeting?
5. Why does the clock move sooo slowly?

6. Why do you come to Meeting instead of worshipping by yourself?

Birth: Loki Foster Lindsey Kern 6/24/2003

Death: Cynthia Rice Nathan 9/15/2003

LITTLE FALLS

December 2003 at Little Falls was filled with the usual holiday cheer. Once again, Bill and Judy Harlan hosted the annual Christmas in the Barn, featuring caroling and scripture. Our thanks to Mark Young and Darcy Hunt for their efforts in continuing this stirring tradition.

Also in December, the Children's First Day School went caroling at Broadmead. They certainly brightened the day for everyone there.

At the end of the month, the Meeting hosted a Special Meeting for Worship to celebrate the marriage of Amy Babikow and Mel Davila. The couple were married in Florida, but wanted to share their happiness.

The New Year has us putting together our annual Spiritual State of the Meeting. It's something we're still working on, but is also something which is bringing us closer together.

Later in the month, several of our women members attended the annual BYM Women's Retreat.

OXFORD

As we gathered for a threshing session, aware of our dwindling number of active friends, we took stock of our present position. First we searched deep in a really rewarding threshing session where we wrote down our personal concerns and our sense of the direction of the Meeting. These were compiled for more insight. We had spent the past year with a different clerk each month which we found as a good experience and a growing awareness of the business meeting as a real experience. Out of the threshing session, a clerk for 2004 stepped forward to take the position. A deep silence of renewal covered us all at that point in the session and we felt renewed.

As fewer active members can devote to meeting needs, the nominating committee combined committees. Ministry and Counsel has met and is reviewing past memberships and is sending notes to as many as can be contacted to let them know of our holding them in the Light and offering them some procedures if they are interested.

Head Start has been with us since September and has taken on several projects with our physical plant to keep in compliance, some we finance but mostly they have

undertaken the big things at this point. We have had a sense of cooperation and when we need the basement and kitchen, we let them know and they give us the space we need. Their monthly fee was decided on that we will not profit from their presence but we have kept it open for review as we study past expenses and will re-adjust accordingly.

PATUXENT

Patuxent Friends shared a wonderful Christmas Eve Service with the Southern Maryland Unitarian-Universalist congregation. Friends offered our meetinghouse as a place for the service and joined the UUs in the warmth of fellowship, silent worship and music.

Young friends from St. Mary's College brought a concern for a local family to meeting. Friends bought and wrapped presents for a mother and five children. Our young college friends delivered the presents on Christmas, to the delight of the children who helped bring all the packages into the house. The mother expressed her thanks to meeting, saying, "It was the best Christmas we ever had." Meeting thanked our young college friends for bringing us this additional opportunity to reach out to our community.

Friendly Eight gatherings continue to be an important way for Friends to come together to share our spiritual perspectives. They help us to stay spiritually connected and grow individually and as a meeting, so we can then let our lives speak in the larger community.

Our most recent coffeehouse brought a multi-cultural group together in support of the East John Youth Center. Our meetinghouse was blessed with gospel music from two African American choirs. Friends raised \$700 in support of the youth center, sponsored by St. John United Methodist Church, a largely African American parish in our community.

Our next coffeehouse, scheduled for March 13th, will be another joint venture with the UUs. The Chesapeake Yoga Center in Solomon's Island, Maryland has offered their space to accommodate a larger crowd. A rich tapestry of performances will include: yoga and tai chi set to music, a Muslim call to prayer, poetry, Appalachian folk music, gospel and traditional folk music. All contributions will go to Patuxent Habitat for Humanity, which serves both St. Mary's and Calvert Counties.

RICHMOND

Richmond Friends Meeting continues to reap enormous benefits from conducting monthly meeting for worship with attention to business at 11a.m. on each 3rd First Day. Conducting the business of meeting seems

more worshipful and better seasoned during this time frame, with increased communication, a greater awareness of committee work, and collective ownership of that work.

The decision to renovate and expand our religious education building, though a difficult one, has stretched us as a community and provided many opportunities to reflect on and gauge our personal commitment to and financial responsibility for our spiritual home. For our "Joining Hands" fundraising effort, teams of volunteers have visited Friends' homes, explained the building project and fundraising projections, and answered questions about the initiative. Friends report a greater sense of community, connectedness, and shared purpose that has energized our Meeting. Pledges toward the \$600,000 goal have enabled us to move forward with building design. We anticipate construction will begin by summer.

Recent forums that have focused on special topics—conscientious objection, creating simple and meaningful holiday traditions, the quest for simplicity, tax resistance—have enriched us and helped us grow as individuals and as a community. We continue to offer a monthly meal at a local homeless shelter, support important needs of refugee families, and learn more about our Quaker history through the devoted work of our History and Archives committee. Our religious education program is thriving, serving 75 children and teenagers. We are especially inspired by our Young Friends, who have demonstrated their adeptness at using Quaker process to guide their decisions about programs, topics for study and service, and fundraising projects.

VALLEY

Fall was a busy time for Valley Friends. In October Mike Heller of Roanoke Meeting, and an expert on John Woolman, presented a program on "John Woolman's Spiritual Journey". Mike's presentation and the discussion that it generated was thoughtful and rewarding. We held our frugal meal in November with contributions going to Right Sharing of World Resources and the Blue Ridge Food Bank. The women of the meeting held their second annual overnight at the meetinghouse. We are grateful for this opportunity to be together and the sense of community it provides. Our youth solicited sponsors for reading for the Read to Feed program of the Heifer Project International. The Christmas season was celebrated with a program by the youth and our annual candle lighting service. This program of worship sharing with Christmas as the theme is a highlight of our holiday season.

WASHINGTON, FRIENDS MEETING OF

Our Inquirers' Class has just begun its Winter session of six evening meetings. The Ministry and Worship Committee conducts these classes each year in the winter, spring and fall for anyone who wants to learn more about Quakerism, the Religious Society of Friends in general, or our Meeting in particular. The Inquirers' Class has proven to be invaluable to new attenders of the meeting, some being inspired to attend several sessions. Most applicants for membership have attended at least one of these sessions. Although the number of participants varies, there are usually about twelve enrollees. Participants vary from people who have just dropped in to those who have been attending Meeting for Worship for several years.

There is no prearranged syllabus or curriculum, as each group is surveyed at the first meeting for questions they would like to have addressed. The coordinator then selects five members of the meeting to come, each to one of the subsequent meetings to help by providing background from their personal experience.

Michael Cronin has served as a coordinator since 1993. Sara Satterthwaite and Julie Isaacs have more recently joined him in this role, each taking on one session per year. The next two series are scheduled to begin in April and September of 2004.

WILLIAMSBURG

Williamsburg Monthly Meeting sends warm greeting to all our sister meetings. In our continuing focus on matters of concern, we have used second hour to consider the issues of domestic violence, racism, and the death penalty. Activist members have committed their efforts to peacemaking and to working for social justice. These members have participated in a weekly peace vigil and in the Community of Faith for Peace. One activist member is a founding member of All Together, an organization dedicated to harmonizing relationships between the races. Other members of Meeting are invited to participate in this effort. We have scheduled forums that will examine long term military goals in the light of theological reflections as well as a forum on Palestine. Our Meeting continues to be a source of spiritual enrichment for its members and we express appreciation for its continued viability.

Integrity in its root meaning and search for wholeness leads to an even deeper sense of community... This level of wholeness goes beyond the community of persons to a spiritual community with "the ground of our being."
"Testimony of Integrity," Wilmer Cooper; PH 296

Baltimore Yearly Meeting
17100 Quaker Lane
Sandy Spring, MD 20860

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage BLK-RT
STD MAIL
PAID
Sandy Spring, MD
Permit No. 112

Address service requested

Please keep your **address information current**. Contact the Baltimore Yearly Meeting office with any changes. Send changes to janemegginson@bym-rsf.org or call 301/774-7663.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March

20 Spring Yearly Meeting Day, Bethesda Meeting House, Michael Cronin, Clerk of Interim Meeting.
27-28 ... Junior Young Friends Conference, Carlisle Meeting, Contact Hope Braveheart or Tom Fox @ BYM

April

18 Centre Quarter @ State College, Walt Fry, Clerk
23-25 ... Silent Retreat, contact Nan Elsbree at 410/647-3591
23-25 ... Young Friends Conference–Bus Trip to Shiloh Quaker Camp, Contact Hope Braveheart @ BYM

May

4/30-2 .. Camp Volunteer Work Weekend @ Opequon, contact David Hunter @ BYM for more information
7-9 Camp Volunteer Work Weekend @ Catoctin and Shiloh, contact David Hunter @ BYM
16 Warrington Quarter @ Carlisle, Darah Kehnemuyi, Clerk
21-23 ... Camp Volunteer Work Weekend @ Shiloh, contact David Hunter @ BYM for more information
28-30 ... Camp Volunteer Work Weekend @ Opequon, contact David Hunter @ BYM for more information

June

4-6 Young Friends Conference, Contact Hope Braveheart @ BYM for more information: 301-774-7663
4-6 Camp Volunteer Work Weekend @ Catoctin, contact David Hunter @ BYM for more information
6 Centre Quarter @ Fishertown, Walt Fry, Clerk
11-13 Camp Volunteer Work Weekend @ Catoctin, contact David Hunter @ BYM for more information
13 Chesapeake Quarter @ Patapsco, John McKusick, Clerk
19 Summer Yearly Meeting Day, Deer Creek Meeting House, Michael Cronin, Clerk of Interim Meeting
26 Camp begins: Catoctin, Shiloh, Teen Adventure and Opequon! Information: Josh Riley @ BYM

July

26-8/1 Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Annual Session, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA; Lamar Matthew, Clerk

The *Interchange* is available at <http://www.bym-rsf.org/interchange/Spring2004.pdf> Receive your *Interchange* as much as two weeks earlier by requesting to receive a notice that it is up and available from the BYM web site. This will also save the Yearly Meeting printing and postage cost.