

Interchange

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

PROPOSED FAITH AND PRACTICE

A GUIDE FOR DISCERNMENT

Elizabeth Meyer, Sandy Spring

Friends do not have a creed, but that does not mean that we do not believe in anything. Instead of signing on to a creed, we seek to articulate our beliefs and our religious practices in our *Faith & Practice*. Because our beliefs are experienced spiritually, it is difficult to put them into words. Yet, we find it helpful to articulate our beliefs both as an orientation to those new to Friends and as inspiration for long-time members. Much of our faith is experienced in community as we seek to discern the Divine will together. Our faith is experienced as we practice it. *Faith & Practice* sets forth our Quaker processes to guide practice in our local Meetings and in our Yearly Meeting. It also serves an accountability function, calling us to faithfulness as individuals and as a spiritual community.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting currently operates according to the *Faith & Practice* we approved in 1988. While this document has been a useful guide for many years, some of it has become out of date. For the past ten years, a revision committee has been working on a new version, circulating drafts and incorporating feedback from Friends and from Meetings. At Annual Session in August, this committee brought a Proposed *Faith & Practice* for a first reading. Now it is important that as many BYM Friends as possible read the Proposed *Faith & Practice* so that we, as a spiritual community, can discern whether to approve the document at our next Annual Session. Printed and electronic copies of the Proposed *Faith & Practice* may be obtained from the Yearly Meeting website. The Revision Committee will be visiting Local Meetings to listen for feedback.

How will we discern whether to approve the Proposed *Faith & Practice*? It is important to remember that no document can perfectly articulate our faith. We celebrate the diversity of ways that the

Divine manifests itself in our lives, and we hope our *Faith & Practice* will leave room for continuing revelation. Nor can we exactly articulate our Quaker practice, which often must be worked out with Divine as-



Annual Session photograph by Nony Dutton

sistance as we go along. Thus, we seek a document that sufficiently articulates our faith and our practice, leaving room for the work of the Spirit. We should bear in mind also that whatever we approve is not set in stone forever. I suggest the following queries to guide our discernment:

- Understanding that our faith is too deep for words, does the *Faith & Practice* adequately articulate our Quaker beliefs and testimonies, in order both to inform those new to Friends and to inspire and challenge those with long experience of Friends?
- Does the *Faith & Practice* provide sufficient resources, such as queries and advices, to assist us in accountability one to another in our Monthly Meetings and as a Yearly Meeting?
- Does the *Faith & Practice* provide sufficient explanation and guidance for our Quaker process?
- Does *Faith & Practice* provide guidance and structure while inviting the work of the Spirit and continuing revelation?

I look forward to our next Annual Session when we can engage in this discernment together.

ANNUAL SESSION 2012 – HOW WAS IT?

BYM Program Committee

Hearing Friends share their hearts in worship sharing each morning has deepened my awareness of the complexity of each person's life and my own understanding of how each person is trying to live into their faith... (Annual Session Evaluation)

Annual Session is for all of us, and Program Committee works through the year to offer something enriching for everyone. We are fortunate to be able to gather at Frostburg State University each year to see old friends, make new friends, and learn what Meetings, Committees, and Quaker organizations are doing. This year good things are being said about the speakers, the many workshops, the interest groups, and all the other events. Look for quotes from this year's evaluations throughout this issue!

People were engaged and had fun. It's not all hard work - Thursday night we all ate ice cream and joined Junior Yearly Meeting for the All Age Celebration. There, the beautiful candlelight labyrinth was present again this year for Friends to walk, among other activities. In addition, people at Annual Session liked:

- That food continued to be supplemented with fresh local produce
- That the dormitories were much cleaner this year
- We had a new space for Junior Yearly Meeting this year and it proved to be the best space yet! Our youngest Friends were

Annual Session recap continued on page 4

FAITH AND PRACTICE IS COMING TO YOU THIS YEAR!

Sheila Bach, Clerk, Faith and Practice Revision Committee
Baltimore Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice* is the document that we all agree speaks for us about our life in the Spirit, our practices and procedures. The first reading of our new *Faith and Practice* was given at Annual Session this August. Now is your final chance to make adjustments to the book!

For the last five years, this Committee has been distributing regularly updated copies of what we have written. We have had very helpful comments on what needed to be corrected or what was unclear. While we have not incorporated all of the suggestions, we have read and discussed them. Some disagreed with others, so we went with what we felt was the best for the Yearly Meeting as a whole.

Here's where you come in. During the coming year, between September 2012 and April 2013, members of the *Faith and Practice* Revision Committee will be asking each Meeting to invite one of us, along with a companion, to visit and discuss how Friends feel about this new *Faith and Practice*.

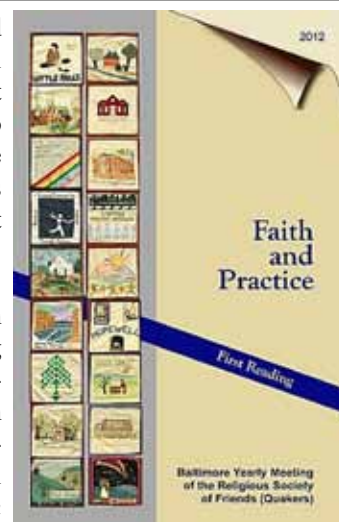
We are anticipating that at the second reading at Annual Session 2013 this document will be approved and BYM will have a new *Faith and Practice*.

The *Faith and Practice* Revision Committee has remained quite constant in its membership. We asked for this to happen after talking with the committee clerks in three other Yearly Meetings who were going through the same process. Keeping the Commit-

tee membership constant enabled us to get to know each other well and to continue working without needing to bring new people up to date each year. While we do have people from both large Meetings and small, our gender ratio has not been as good!

We look forward to visiting with your Meeting during the coming months. The Clerk of each Meeting will receive a letter early in September asking for an invitation to visit with you. We will have copies of the 2012 *Faith and Practice* with us for Friends

to purchase. You can also order some right now from the Yearly Meeting office by calling 301-774-7663 or by ordering at the BYM web page www.bym-rsf.org.



*I have had conversations with my daughter
and her friends here that we haven't had back
home – there is something magical about
being here that creates space for deeper talk
and connections than with even people
I see regularly at home.*

(Annual Session Evaluation)

IMPLEMENTING THE VISION OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

ad hoc Vision Implementation Committee

The vision statement of Baltimore Yearly Meeting as approved in 2011 suggests our strengths and leadings. How can we make these visible in the world? Friends talked formally and informally at Annual Session this summer about this. Some Friends offered some tangible answers, for example noting how helpful the Spiritual Formation and Quaker Quest programs are. Others appreciated the quality of our togetherness—a community where everyone feels loved, or a community where it's ok to make mistakes.

We invite individuals, committees, and Meetings to consider these questions that seek your sense of the vitality of Baltimore Yearly Meeting's work. Please think about any of the roles you might have played in relation to Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Or if you don't know BYM well, is there some part of your life as a Friend or attender that would benefit by greater nurture? We'd like to hear. Please give prayerful time to answering these questions. And then please respond by Interim Meeting Day, October 13. You can email these to visionimp@bym-rsf.org or send them to the Yearly Meeting office.

You can see the vision statement at http://www.bym-rsf.org/who_we_are/visioning/.

*Questions for Reflecting on
Baltimore Yearly Meeting's vision statement:*

Think about BYM in the past. Are there any programs, practices, initiatives, etc. that existed in the past that helped BYM reach some of the same goals that are now part of this vision statement? Should anything be revitalized or recreated?

Think about BYM now. How has BYM touched your life in a meaningful way? What programs (such as camps or committee work), practices (such as Meeting for Business and outreach through wider Quaker organizations), or initiatives (such as the current review of *Faith and Practice*), exist now that help us make our vision real? What should we be sure to hold on to and strengthen?

Imagine BYM in the not-too-distant future. What programs, practices, initiatives, etc would help us better implement our vision as we move into the near and the more distant future? Given BYM's strengths and leadings, is there new work that we could do together? Is there any work that we need to let go of?

Other thoughts about what has worked well and what you think would help BYM more nearly bring our vision into programs and practices?

THE BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING EPISTLE

To Dear Friends Everywhere,

As athletes from all over the world gather in community in London at The Olympic games—an event celebrated by our Young Friends in an exuberant “coffee house” on Saturday night—we think of Friends around the world. Baltimore Yearly Meeting gathered in Frostburg, Maryland, for our 341st annual session, with 340 Friends of all ages present, including many first-time attenders. Our worship sharing, Bible studies, workshops and plenaries wove around our theme of “Spirit-led Social Action,” as we sought to discern the difference between political or secular social action and Spirit-led social action. How do we recognize the difference between the two in ourselves, in our meetings, and then in the world? How can we keep our actions centered in the Spirit, which is the best community builder and community organizer of all?

During the pre-session retreat, Clinton Pettus of the American Friends Service Committee asked us to consider what it means to be Spirit-led, and helped us explore our own experiences of Quaker social action. True Quaker social action, he told us, doesn’t take on easy problems, doesn’t ask us to choose sides, and always holds out the hope of reconciliation. He challenged us to see those we serve as powerful in their own right, only awaiting the chance to speak their truth and find their own way forward.

In plenaries, reports, and worship sharing we heard from Friends who have felt led into social action guided by spirit. Jolee Robinson spoke of living in the segregated South when she was a child, and feeling that African American people shouldn’t have to step off the sidewalk to let her pass. When she was eleven, she stepped off the sidewalk herself, her first witness for social justice, and the beginning of a lifetime of witness. Even as children, she told us, we can know what is truthful, kind and just. Micah Bales reminded us that a group of activists not grounded in Spirit can easily turn into a mob. He spoke of how he and others worked to bring Quaker practice to the Occupy DC movement, answering a real hunger for the sense of grounding and purpose that comes from Spirit-guided witness. He reminded us that God has a call for each of us; God has a call for Baltimore Yearly Meeting. He expressed his hope that we will be blessed in listening this week.

We heard how our camping program contributes to the spiritual and personal growth of campers and staff, and helps build the vitality of our Yearly Meeting. The co-directors of Camp Catoctin reported that in seeking to promote diversity they are working with the query: How can we become a community made up of very different people, not just a community that welcomes different people in? The camps help children discover their spiritual life, their capacity for friendship, and their inner strength. During our afternoon intergenerational program, Linda Garretson shared with us camp stories and songs, capturing the love, joy, and spirit of the BYM camping program. She engaged us in a game that sent 200 people of all ages scurrying around in search of their comfort, stretch and panic zones. We saw how different we are, and how much the same. As an old union song—now a camp song—says: “Drops of water turn the mill. . . singly none, singly none.” We are profoundly grateful for the energy and spirit of the 68 youth through high school age who enriched our sessions this year.

Throughout the week we have been made aware of many injustices that demand our attention. Not far from these beautiful hills, there are nonviolent activists being jailed and beaten for protesting against mountaintop removal. We were invited to visit an art exhibit drawing



Annual Session photograph by Nony Dutton

attention to the destructive impact of fracking on the Dunkards Creek watershed. During our all-ages celebration on Thursday evening, our Junior Yearly Meeting dramatized the need for prisoner visitation and support, as well as engaging us in games, creativity, and ice cream.

Diane Randall, Executive Secretary of Friends Committee on National Legislation, spoke out of the silence to present the Carey Memorial lecture. She spoke of her conviction that “a Spirit-led life leaves us no choice but social action.” She reminded us that we are charged to love God and love our neighbors. We need to relate to everyone: the neighbors who irritate us and disagree with us as well as our family and friends, and also our legislators and their staff. God’s love is always there. All we need to do is relax into it, to find the strength we need. On Saturday we heard that our Peace and Social Concerns Committee has committed to visiting local meetings during the coming year, to engage in a corporate search for Spirit-guided ways to address the conflict between Israel and Palestine. We are grateful for this challenge and opportunity.

We have struggled this week to discern how to use our resources wisely, and in a manner consistent with conscience. We have received with joy the “first reading” of our new Faith and Practice, which is being sent to all our meetings for their discernment over the coming year. We have been challenged to offer ourselves in self-giving love, to practice a ministry of presence, to listen deeply, and to risk vulnerability. We heard from our General Secretary, Riley Robinson, stories about people who helped him see himself as part of a community when he felt like someone who didn’t belong. He urged us to be more inclusive, and to welcome and care for those who may feel like outsiders among us. He reminded us that we may be able to give someone else just what they need and receive from them just what we need. We often receive gifts of the Spirit where we least expect them. As our Clerk of Trustees reminded us: “If you don’t have doubtful accounts, you haven’t been extending yourself far enough.”

We have heard afresh George Fox’s challenge: Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone; whereby in them you may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you. (George Fox, 1656)

In the Light,
Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

WHAT WAS SO INTERESTING ABOUT MEETING FOR BUSINESS AT ANNUAL SESSION?

During Annual Session, Meeting for Business covers a wide and interesting range of topics and engenders discussion from a diverse group of Friends with experience in many areas. Friends enjoy these opportunities. Here are a few (without repeating discussions covered in separate articles in this Interchange):

Youth Programs Committee gave a lovely, detailed report on its many activities, “helping teens express themselves through their Inner Light.” (also see their notice in this issue about this fall’s activities)

BYM representatives to the 2012 World Gathering of Friends in Kenya discussed the wonder of meeting with Friends from all inhabited continents. Reporters included Ann Riggs, BYM’s Embraced (released) Friend who lives and works at Friends Theological Seminary in Kenya, and who speaks very articulately about her ongoing experience.

Camp report: The new Camp Catoctin Co-directors, Dyresha Harris and Kathrin Gilbert, reported for the first time: They had developed a very thoughtful query for their camping program and read it for us: “How do we continue to create a community of different people rather than a community that lets different people in?”

The wider Friends’ organizations of which we are a part do wonderful work and help us to do ours. Friends World Committee on Consultation, Friends United Meeting and Friends General Conference will see their contributions from BYM raised to \$6000 each next year after having been cut greatly in last year’s budget difficulties. Friends were gratified to hear this.

Staff report – This year, through the year, major projects included “moving into” new accounting software, developing the new BYM website and creating the Camp Shiloh Pond. That’s a lot!

Junior Yearly Meeting gave us joy by coming for a visit, telling us what they are doing, and even singing for us!



Annual Session photograph by Nony Dutton

PROGRAM COMMITTEE MAKES ANNUAL SESSION A SUCCESS

Annual Session recap continued from page 1

able to play, ride their cars and be comfortable in a large kid-friendly area in the Gym building.

- There was improved handicapped access to Lane Center, where most of our activities are held. Kevin Caughlan and his group of dedicated drivers circled the campus helping Friends with rides.

So we really read your evaluation forms—and we do respond! And, importantly, the Frostburg State University staff care, too. Dave Treber is the conference director at FSU and a member of our Yearly Meeting. Dave helps keep things running smoothly and we are grateful he is there working with us.

Travel to Frostburg from most parts of the Yearly Meeting is pretty smooth—it’s only 4½ hours for Friends in Roanoke, VA as the Google flies! For most Friends around Baltimore and Washington it’s 2½ hours or less.

We’ve worked hard to keep costs down each year so that more Friends can join us. We offer first-time attender certificates for a two-night stay, scholarship help to Young Adult Friends, and family discounts. There are also work grants available to help with costs.

The Program Committee is working hard to make Annual Session the place to be. Come and join us in 2013—we already have good things in the works!

FSU staff – great!—more than duty would require, cheerful, knowledgeable, etc. Thanks!
(Annual Session Evaluation)

2012 ANNUAL SESSION

PLENARY TALKS AVAILABLE ONLINE

We’ve made this easy for you! For the first time in 341 Annual Sessions, you can listen to part of the Annual Session experience wherever you are in Baltimore Yearly Meeting, be it Abingdon or Williamsburg in Virginia, Oxford or West Branch in Pennsylvania, or Monongalia in West Virginia. Plenary talks from the 2012 Annual Session are available for download to computer or audio player for your listening pleasure and your discernment.

Friends who were there had many positive comments about these talks. This includes Tuesday night’s panel on experiences with social action with BYM-area Friends Jolee Robinson and Micah Bales; Wednesday afternoon’s all-age plenary with Linda Garrettson on camps, leadership and social action; then Friday night’s Carey lecturer, Diane Randall, Executive Director of Friends Committee on National Legislation. Just go to <http://www.bym-rsf.org/publications/speakers/>. These could be used for discussion at adult religious education sessions at Meeting, or you can listen to them when you’re out for a walk. (Or while you’re driving to a BYM Meeting!) There is absolutely no fine print in this free offer! Enjoy.

ADVANCEMENT AND OUTREACH BRINGING QUAKER QUEST

Walter Brown, Clerk of BYM Advancement and Outreach

In my years of doing Advancement and Outreach work, I have heard many Friends say that they were Quakers before they know what Quakers were and it took them a long time to find us. The pictures that Betsy Meyer showed of the Meetings at Annual Session were great but I am sure that some of those groups could be a bit bigger. We have received a wonderful offer from Friends General Conference. They are offering to do a free all-day Quaker Quest training for BYM and are encouraging us to invite 2 members from each Local Meeting. We are hoping to schedule the training for some time in the fall and hold it at one of the central meetings.

Quaker Quest is a dynamic and transformative inreach and outreach program based on the experience that the Quaker way is a spiritual path for our time that is simple, radical and contemporary. Quaker Quest started at Hampstead Meeting in London. Twelve Friends, who felt that something needed to be done to reverse the downward trend in numbers of Friends, started the program. Starting in 2002, they offer a session of Quaker Quest to the public every Monday night. In the early years they studied the sessions carefully and honed the process until they were happy the program. The London Friends took their show on the road in the United Kingdoms and many meetings did their own Quaker Quest programs. The meetings say that it has been generally very positive both in terms of spiritual growth and energy for the meeting and growth in numbers.



Annual Session photograph by Nony Dutton

In 2007, Friends General Conference got the franchise to run Quaker Quest in North America. FGC started by doing a training at 2007 Gathering and later developed the Quaker Quest Traveling Teams to go to meetings to do all-day and half-day training. Quaker Quest is both the training events for the meetings and the public sessions that reach out to seekers who are very often coming to a Quaker Meeting House for the first time.

The trainings events get the Meeting members ready to do the public sessions but are also very much inreach that can strengthen a Meeting. Many Meetings have done the all-day and have found that it has been a real growth experience, even without doing the public sessions. It helps the Meeting think about their beliefs and start to talk about them and what seekers might be looking for in a spiritual community and how we can best present the Quaker way to them.

If a Meeting decides to the public sessions, they decide on the topics to be presented for the 3 or 4 sessions. The series of topics is repeated at least once. The key to having good public sessions is publicize the sessions using flyers, pamphlets, radio ads, and other methods. The idea is to intentionally invite people to attend and to reach individuals who are looking for a different spiritual path and might connect to the Quaker way.

The benefits of doing the entire Quaker Quest process can include energizing the Meeting, deepening the sense of community, being more confident in sharing one's faith with others in your Meeting, considering what it is like to be newcomer in the Meeting, and inviting seekers to share the Quaker spiritual path. Success is defined by the positive energy that the Quaker Quest experience brings to the Meeting by the current participants feeling included in the life of the community, by the experiences of transformation that occur throughout the process, by the increased exposure that the Meeting has in the local community, by having seekers come to the public sessions, and by having newcomers attend worship.

I would like to ask each Local Meeting to consider if they want to send two Friends to this training. Once the decision is made please inform me (carolewalter@aol.com) or the BYM office.

Over the course of 14 years of attending Annual Session I have learned a great deal.

(Annual Session Evaluation)

REFLECTIONS: HOMAGE TO DUNKARD CREEK

DISPLAYED AT ANNUAL SESSION

Reflections: Homage to Dunkard Creek, a 90-artist response to an energy-related environmental tragedy, was on view during the 2012 Annual Session at Frostburg State University's Roper Gallery. The show pays homage to the innocent victims of the oft-hidden destruction wrought in the public's pursuit of easy energy. Organized by Quaker artist Ann Payne (Monongalia Friends Meeting and BYM Unity with Nature Committee), *Reflections* is a cautionary tale, urging viewers to question the rightness of their own relationship to energy extraction and use. Dunkard Creek was beset by excessive coal mine waste, high water loss drawn for 'fracking' natural gas, and suspected illegal toxic frack waste disposal. An alien toxic algae, drawn by the high salt pollution, destroyed 160 species and +/- 65,000 individual animals. *Reflections* reminds viewers that easy access to fossil fuel energy masks the toxic and increasingly violent effects of extracting it. For more information, visit www.homage-to-dunkard-creek.com or contact Ann Payne. (304.292-7673 or Paynestake@frontier.com)



painting by Ann Payne

EPISTLE OF JUNIOR YOUNG FRIENDS

JYFpistle 2012

We are the JYFs of 2012 at BYM Annual Session at Frostburg University in Frostburg, Maryland. Our Clerks were Thomas and William Finegar, and our Recording Clerks were Starling Wolfrum and Tadek Kosmal. Our theme this year was Spirit Led Social Action. We went to a plenary session and had speakers relating to Spirit Led Social Action. This session was filled with both fun and hard work. Our guidelines were language, be mindful of other peoples comfort zones, not to do stupid stuff, use the room safely, include everyone, be responsible for checking in with each other, have fun, continue to live, and after much debate, cheese.



Annual Session photograph by Nony Dutton

We did many things this year. We were visited by Micah Bales, who spoke with us on our theme, Ann Payne, who spoke on the Dunkard Creek killing, in which 65,000 lives of creek creatures including rare snuff-ox mussels were lost due to fracking by coal companies.

Robinne Gray and Tasha Walsh both came in and did activities with us. On Friday, we were visited by Charlotte Boynton who worked with clay with us. We also played manhunt, Sardines, Bob the Weasel, Capture the Flag with the YFs and JYM program, also attended the inter-generational plenary on stepping out of our comfort zones. We are currently looking forwards to coffee house and thank you circle.

This year we used the Quaker process to reach our goals. To us, Quaker process is a form of consensus to reach a decision or to find a common goal. We used the Quaker process to select our Clerks and Recording Clerks, hold Meeting for Business, write our

Epistle, and plan the JYF party.

Sincerely, and with extra cheese,

Anna, Gabriel, Gabe, Andrew, Anna, John Mark, Jared, Thomas, William, Starling, Tadek, Miranda, Kayla, Andrew, along with teachers Stephanie Bean, Anna Rain, Windy Cooler, Susan Robare, Donna Williams, Amrit Moore, Gobind Moore, and Mary Campbell.

YEARLY MEETING OFFICE BUILDING NEWS

Riley Robinson, General Secretary

We've continued to look at practical ideas for maintaining and economizing our operations at the Yearly Meeting office building in Sandy Spring, MD.

Insulation – One of the things that last year's energy study recommended was the installation of new insulation in the attic. Compared to the recommendations like new windows, it seemed like an economical place to start.

Metro Insulation came well recommended, and it turns out that Fabian Makani, who owns the company, is a member of East Africa Yearly Meeting! He's from Kakamega, Kenya. (He also gave us the best price.) The main part of the work he did was to blow 21 inches of insulation into the attic. So did it work? Well, the last three bills have saved \$333.73, even though the early summer had a hot spell that contained some of the hottest days ever recorded in our area.

We also want give heartfelt thanks to Alan DeSilva (Sandy Spring), who came and did a lot of valuable work around the edges, sealing doorways and other gaps as part of the project.

Trees – Our extensive tree-trimming around the building last year meant that not a single branch fell on the new (April 2011) roof this year, even in the June derecho storm. So we avoided any claims on our insurance, and any cause for a future rate increase. However, some trees have been left so weakened and damaged that we will have to do more work soon for safety.

These are ideas worth considering for your Meeting House and your home.

FCNL ENCOURAGES FRIENDS TO ACT TO REDUCE PENTAGON SPENDING

The Friends Committee on National Legislation's Executive Committee has adopted a *Minute and Call to Action* regarding its concern for the decisions on the federal budget that must be made by the end of this year. Current law—the Budget Control Act of 2011—requires a reduction in projected Pentagon spending of \$1 trillion over 10 years, providing a momentous opportunity to shift budget priorities. FCNL has identified this Pentagon budget reduction as a means to realign national priorities and urges immediate active engagement and lobbying efforts from Friends across the nation. Congress is expected to take action on the Budget Control Act shortly after the November election. FCNL specifically urges Friends meetings, churches and members to do the following now:

- Minute endorsement of the reduction in projected Pentagon spending and the preservation of federal budgets which support the peaceful prevention of deadly conflict and other human needs.
- Encourage Friends to communicate their support for these priorities to the public and to Congress.
- Encourage Friends within the Meeting to contact their elected members of Congress to report this message.
- Come to FCNL's first Quaker Public Policy Institute, November 15-16 in Washington, D.C. (Visit fcnl.org/lobbyday for more information.)

Friends can get copies of the *Minute and Call to Action*, talking points on the proposed Pentagon cuts, and other materials and assistance from Bob Rhudy, a member of FCNL's Field Committee, (410-669-7587 or bobrhudy@yahoo.com) or Katherine Phillipson, FCNL staff coordinator. (800-630-1330 or katherine@fcnl.org)

EPISTLE OF YOUNG FRIENDS

Dear Friends,

We hope this epistle finds you in good health and good spirits. The 2011-2012 year has been a tranquil one for Young Friends, relatively devoid of difficult or stressful issues. We'd like to extend our thoughts and our love to the Friends of Intermountain Yearly Meeting in their time of loss. We're holding you, and all struggling Friends, in the light.

The Young Friends kicked off their year with a conference at Adelphi Friends Meeting in September. Friends may remember that last year the Young Friends struggled significantly with the sharp increase in attendance of our conferences and the lack of community investment that came along with it. To many, September con felt like the first conference where Young Friends were able to have a highly-attended but still Spiritual conference. Over the course of the weekend, YFs engaged in a variety of fun activities, from the "Color Group Olympics," to a workshop on community investment led by Alison Duncan, our wonderful Youth Programs Manager. At September Con, the YFs first implemented last year's decision to worship at every conference. On Saturday night we enjoyed each other's talents in a diverse and fun-filled coffeehouse.

In November, Young Friends were joined at Sandy Spring Friends Meeting by last year's graduates at the Thanksgiving Conference. Friends discussed policies and practices that could increase our sustainability, like using mess kits instead of disposables dishware. Fueled by delicious chili, Young Friends had a great square dance. Unfortunately, the plumbing of Sandy Spring couldn't accommodate a hundred people, and we had to make a series of desperate calls to Port-a-pot companies. Thanks to the heroic action of one company (which Young Friends honored with a standing ovation), the community could continue to excrete.

The traditional February Conference (Love Con) fostered community, friendship and love. In the beautiful library of Homewood Friends Meeting, the Nominating Committee met and began the nominating process for the following year's Executive Committee. A "speed dating" exercise helped Friends learn obscure things about each other. Our workshop, a frank discussion with an opinionated and hilarious expert on sex and relationships, was informative and fun. It was especially interesting to compare generational perceptions of appropriateness and what constitutes classy behavior. Young Friends also played kickball at a nearby park, built a giant pillow fort, cracked open and ate a coconut, and had a combination ice cream social/dance party.

Although we usually hold our April gathering on a farm and do outdoorsy community service, this year we gathered at Friends Meeting of Washington in downtown DC and opted instead for more urban stewardship through the William Penn House. Some YFs beautified parks, others planted trees and did stream restoration, and still others did maintenance work in William Penn House itself. Throughout Con, Young Friends held a mock Hunger Games, which kept us alert and vigilant. In the evening, we enjoyed a Coffeehouse that included skits, songs, yoga exhibitions, and a multitude of other talents.

After last minute news about a dangerous construction situation at Hopewell Centre Monthly Meeting, we scrambled to secure a new place to meet in May. Thanks to the generosity of Goose Creek Friends Meeting, we were able to relocate. We took advantage of the

weather by playing, singing, and even sleeping outside. We also made a visit to the Goose Creek itself, cooling off in the secluded stream. Thanks to a workshop on Shiatsu massage technique and energy manipulation led by a lovely woman named Celeste, Young Friends left this conference more balanced and relaxed than ever. In our traditional graduation ceremony, Young Friends bid goodbye to our leaving seniors.

Amidst tears, we raised up their gifts, shared happy and silly memories, and wished them well in their futures.

At Annual Session, the Young Friends spent an exciting and exhausting week learning, playing, working, pranking, and rejoicing in one another's inner light. The very first night, Handbook Committee met and continued the process of thoroughly revising the Young Friends handbook to ensure that it accurately reflects the current state of our community. Throughout the week, the committee continued to revise and update the handbook, a proud hallmark of our self-governance. Other important committee work took place in the Produce Committee, which facilitated intergenerational play; The Coffeehouse Committee, which put on a spectacular and hilarious talent show; and The Food Committee, which worked hard to make it easier to feed a hundred teenagers for a weekend. The ad hoc Prank and Flashmob Committees kept Annual Session silly, and the glorious and intelligent Epistle Committee wowed everyone with their brilliance and awesomeness.

A few highlights of this year's Annual Session also included a workshop on the current political state of Syria and a musical and spiritual workshop led by Jon Watts and his partner in ministry, Maggie Harrison. Young Friends also participated in a difficult and cleansing yoga workshop led by the lovely Anna Rain. We tried to reach out to the greater BYM community as much as possible during the week by being "red hat" attendants in the cafeteria, inviting adult Friends to join us for a Meeting for Worship in our lounge, attending the All Age Celebration, and hosting an interest group wherein adult Friends could bring us their technology questions. Traditional activities like midnight swims, sardines, multi-age capture the flag, and wink kept us moving and laughing. We also got to see the spectacular Phantom Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps, our neighbors on campus, perform.

As the Young Friends wraps up another year, we continue to bask in the intense caring, trust, and love we find in our community. We hope other Young Friend Communities had similarly fantastic years, and that the coming year is filled with love and light.

With Love,
The BYM Young Friends

**Fall, Friends,
and Families...
at the BYM Camp
Alumni Reunion**

**October 5-7, 2012
at Catoctin Quaker
Camp**

Former campers and staff of Catoctin, Gayden, Opequon, Shiloh, and Teen Adventure are invited to our annual Camp Alumni Reunion. Bring your family! The weekend is run like typical camp day and includes unit activities, meals, socio-economic groups, Fire Circle, swimming, singing, and more!

Details: Contact Sara Bugler (sara_kay_w@yahoo.com) or <http://tinyurl.com/campalum2012>



GIFT PLANNING SUPPORTS OUR VISION NOW AND THROUGH TIME

Robinne Gray, BYM Development Director

The names of Ethel Reynolds, Thomas and Abigail Griest, Mary Pat Lennon, and Emily Bayless Graham may not be instantly recognizable to many BYM Friends. They have passed on -- some long ago and some recently -- yet today's Friends are the beneficiaries of their planning and generosity, because each of these Friends made a provision for our Yearly Meeting in their estate plans. In each case, these Friends made use of the simplest and most common form of planned gift: a bequest via his or her will.

In our travels and conversations with Friends around the region, members of the Development Committee have been informed by several families that they have included Baltimore Yearly Meeting in their estate plans. While no one is obliged to disclose their estate plans to the charitable organizations that will receive planned gifts, those of us who work in advancement are always pleased to have the information. Such knowledge helps any organization do long-term planning -- and, more important, knowing of Friends' plans allows us to express our gratitude to our donors and to work with them to ensure that their gift will be used as they intend it to be.

We ask donors who are considering a making a bequest to bear in mind what would best serve BYM now and into the future. I'm told that another Yearly Meeting had an endowed fund left by a thoughtful donor in an earlier century. The fund was to be used

to feed and stable the horses that brought Friends to Yearly Meeting! Because the fund carried this donor restriction, the only way that Yearly Meeting could make use of the funds in the era of the automobile was to undertake a formal legal process to have the designation changed.

Perhaps because of this, BYM's Faith and Practice includes a section on "Policies and Advices Regarding Estates and Bequests" that asks donors to consider making gifts with "the fewest possible legally binding restrictions, with preferences being expressed in terms of guidance." An unrestricted gift gives the Yearly Meeting the flexibility to use the gift where it will have the greatest impact.

Making a charitable bequest is quite simple to do, and can begin with adding a codicil to your will—typically a sentence or two that includes the full name of the beneficiary organization, along with a fixed dollar amount or percentage of your estate that you wish to give. (Sample language is provided on the new gift remittance envelope included with BYM's mail appeals)

If you are interested in making a bequest or other planned gift to Baltimore Yearly Meeting, call or email me in the BYM office, or speak with another member of the BYM Development Committee. We work with Friends Fiduciary to assist Friends in creating a planned gift that meets your financial goals and your philanthropic intent.

REPORT ON APPORTIONMENT DISCERNMENT

Betsy Meyer, Presiding Clerk

(from the minutes of Sixth Month 2012 Interim Meeting)

At our last Annual Session, Baltimore Yearly Meeting sought to discern how our Monthly Meeting should share responsibility for funding the Yearly Meeting. That is, we considered whether there might be a better way to calculate apportionments.

Since the late 1990's, the BYM Stewardship and Finance Committee has used a formula to calculate apportionments, the shares that Monthly Meetings are asked to contribute to fund the Yearly Meeting each year. The formula takes into account the resources of each Monthly Meeting, including contributing households and Meetings' investment income. Each year the Stewardship and Finance Committee seeks financial information from each Monthly Meeting in order to apply the formula. Stewardship and Finance also takes into consideration any special circumstances that Meetings ask the committee to consider, and it refrains from raising any Meeting's apportionment by more than 25% in any one year.

At this past Annual Session, Stewardship and Finance Committee asked us to consider a different approach. Under this approach, Stewardship and Finance annually would determine what is needed to fund the Yearly Meeting operations, and then ask each Meeting to pay a part of that amount based on the share the Meeting had paid in the prior year. Each Meeting would then respond whether it could pay that amount, or if it could pay either more or less than the amount requested.

At Annual Session, we decided that we needed to ask each Monthly Meeting to consider the two methods and share their Light with the Yearly Meeting. Therefore, I invited each Monthly Meeting to engage with us in this discernment. I sent out documents describing

the current method and the proposed new method along with queries to consider. I asked Friends to respond by this spring.

Twelve of our Monthly Meetings responded (30%). One Monthly Meeting enthusiastically embraced the proposed method, and another Meeting liked the proposed method, but without much enthusiasm. Two Meetings were comfortable with either method. The other eight responding Meetings supported the current apportionment approach. Though the formula seems complicated, these Meetings felt that the current approach was more fair.

So Friends, I do not see a groundswell of support for the apportionment method proposed last summer, and in the absence of such a groundswell for change, my sense of the Yearly Meeting is that we are led at this time to keep to the current apportionment approach. This does not mean the current method is carved in stone. Our Stewardship and Finance Committee, and all of us, can continue to discern the best way to share the costs of the important work of the Yearly Meeting. And Friends concerned with this issue are invited to serve on Stewardship & Finance Committee. Due to the absence of a groundswell of support for changing the apportionment method, I do not intend to place this issue on the Annual Session agenda.

One blessing that has come from this process is that those Meetings that engaged in this conversation about apportionment gave their members an opportunity to learn about the Yearly Meeting and an important part of its financing.

(Friends present at that meeting approved notifying the Meetings of this finding. Two information sheets explaining the BYM apportionment system are available from the Yearly Meeting office and online under Stewardship and Finance Committee's page.)

FRIENDS SERVICE WEEKENDS 2012

**FUN FOR ALL!
JOIN US THIS FALL!**

Friends Service Weekends at Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camp Properties offer us all a chance to come and enjoy these beautiful places at a special time of year. Individuals and families are invited to come and enjoy our camp properties for a day or for the weekend. There will be plenty of work projects to do but it is also a great time to come to camp and explore, play in the creek or enjoy a walk in one of the most precious places on earth! Work projects offer people with all kinds of skills the opportunity to enjoy some meaningful and satisfying work! We will also enjoy meals together, have time to explore and even spend some time around a camp fire in the evening. Come and give the gift of your time and find yourself rejuvenated.

Catoctin Quaker Camp	September 15 - 16, 2012
Shiloh Quaker Camp	September 22 - 23, 2012
Opequon Quaker Camp	September 29 - 30, 2012
Catoctin Quaker Camp	October 27 -28, 2012

"I don't know why more people don't come to every weekend; I can't think of a time when our family has more fun together!"



This fall we you will have lots of opportunities to come to camp so pick a date or two and plan to join us for some fun, fellowship and meaningful and satisfying work at the camp properties. When you know which weekend you will be attending, how many people will be coming with you and when you will arrive send that information to davidhunter@bym-rsf.org

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

Work weekends are held on both **Saturday** and **Sunday**; you may come just **for the day** or you may **spend the night** on Saturday night. You may also arrive Friday night if you'd like, but there will be no dinner served on Friday. We will provide simple breakfasts and lunches on Saturday and Sunday as well as the evening meal on Saturday night. **Bring bedding** (we do not always have enough suitable mattresses), flashlights, and anything else you may want. Cabins are generally available or you may bring a tent. Please visit the Website before you come to make sure everything is on schedule. http://www.bymcamps.org/work_weekends.htm for more information.

Friends of all ages are welcome. Young people (0 to 18 years of age) should always bring their parents or a Friendly Adult Presence (FAP). Parents or FAPs will be responsible for supervising the young people under their care.

Don't forget to send an e-mail to davidhunter@bym-rsf.org if you plan to attend.



"For me it's as spiritually refreshing as Meeting for Worship."

ARE QUAKERS CALLED TO LIVE SUSTAINABLY?

UNITY WITH NATURE COMMITTEE OFFERS QUERIES FOR DISCERNMENT BY INDIVIDUALS AND LOCAL MEETINGS TO CONSIDER OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CREATION. FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO WWW.BYM-RSF.ORG.

COMMITTEE AND ORGANIZATION NEWS

FGC BEGINS NEW MEETINGS PROJECT

Friends General Conference is pleased to be embarking on a project to nurture new worship groups and meetings in the United States and Canada.

The *New Meetings* project is being developed in response to inquiries from Friends asking for support in starting new worship groups and Meetings. Sometimes the requests have been from existing Meetings that have become too large and want help in creating satellite worship groups. Other times, the request has come from Friends and seekers in areas where there is no established Meeting and they want guidance on how to nurture a flourishing Quaker faith and practice community. In yet other cases, the request is from Friends who believe they live in densely populated areas that can support additional worship groups and Meetings that might be more local for them. Given these requests and evidence that there are many seekers who want to explore Quaker faith and practice, the Executive Committee of Friends General Conference approved the formation of this project. To keep updated or learn more, check the following websites: <http://www.fgcquaker.org/services/new-meetings-project> and <http://www.fgcquaker.org/faqs-about-new-meetings-project>.

FRIENDS UNITED MEETING

40 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR THE FUTURE OF FRIENDS

Friends United Meeting invites Friends everywhere to meet together in the Spirit to contemplate how Friends are called to be a vital, dedicated movement for good in the world. Starting October 10, this can include queries, guided devotional exercises, and small-group gatherings. For more information, contact FUM. (765-962-7573 or info@fum.org) On the web, see www.fum.org/about/40DaysofPrayer_2012.htm.

MINISTRY AND PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE

QUERIES FOR WORSHIP SHARING AT ANNUAL SESSION 2012

Committee members who facilitated worship sharing at Annual Session around the theme of *Spirit-Led Social Action* reported that their groups had found the queries meaningful enough that they hoped for sharing with a wider audience. We offer them below.

(Food for thought: Does spiritual growth lay the groundwork for social action, or does social action lay the groundwork for spiritual growth?)

Wednesday: What is the most difficult thing you have ever done as a personal witness for peace or justice?

Thursday: Tell about a time in your life when you experienced a deep sense of being at peace. How did it happen, and what was it like?

Friday: Have you had the experience of listening deeply and lovingly to someone with whom you disagreed? What happened?

The morning Bible study was outstanding!

(Annual Session Evaluation)

Saturday: Tell about a time when you felt you really made a difference. What would enable you to make more of a difference in the world?

WORKING GROUP ON RACISM

THINKING ABOUT RACE – FROM *OPEN CITY: A NOVEL* BY TEJU COLE, 2012, P, 251-252.

Here, the narrator is attending a concert at Carnegie Hall. “Again the oboist played an A, and this time the woodwinds tuned, and they were joined by a flurry of strings. At last a signal came from the stage, and a hush fell on the hall. Almost everyone, as almost always at such concerts, was white. It is something I can’t help noticing; I notice it each time, and try to see past it. Part of that is a quick, complex series of negotiations: chiding myself for even seeing it, lamenting the reminders of how divided our life still remains, being annoyed that these thoughts can be counted on to pass through my mind at some point in the evening. Most of the people around me were middle-aged or old. I am used to it, but it never ceases to surprise me how easy it is to leave the hybridity of the city, and enter into all-white spaces, the homogeneity of which, as far as I can tell, causes no discomfort to the whites in them. The only thing odd, to some of them, is seeing me, young and black, in my seat or at the concession stand. At times, standing in line for the bathroom during intermission, I get looks that make me feel like Ora Benga, the Mbuti man who was put on display in the Monkey House at the Bronx Zoo in 1906. I weary of such thoughts, but I am habituated to them. But Mahler’s music is not white, or black, not old or young, and whether it is even specifically human, rather than in accord with more universal vibrations, is open to question. Simon Rattle, smiling, his curly hair bouncing, came onstage to applause. He acknowledged the orchestra, and then the lights dimmed further. The silence became total and, after a moment of anticipation, Rattle gave the downbeat, and the music began.”

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



Youth Programs Committee photograph by Nony Dutton

YOUTH PROGRAMS OFFERS A RICH SELECTION OF EVENTS FOR BOTH YOUTH AND PARENTS THIS FALL

The school year is about to begin! The Youth Programs has several upcoming events this year for children and their parents. *Raising Quaker Teens: A Weekend for Parents, RE Teachers, and FAPs* will be held on October 20 and 21 at William Penn House. This is intentionally co-scheduled with the first Junior Young Friends conference, so parents can drop their child off at the JYF con, and attend this event for themselves. It costs \$75, and pre-registration is due Oct 5th.

The JYFs have chosen the theme 'Trust and Relationships' this year, and will explore trust and breeches of trust in friendships, dating, and marriage. Their first conference will at the weekend of October 20-21 at Alexandria Friends Meeting.

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. The first Young Friends Conference will be at Sandy Spring Friends Meeting the weekend of September 21-23.

Please save the dates for these conference in the rest of the year. The locations that have yet to be determined will be announced soon.

JYFs: December 1 - 2, March 9 - 10, and May 10 - 12 at Shiloh Quaker Camp.

YFs: November 23 - 25 (Thanksgiving), February 15 - 17, April TBD, and May 24 - 26 (Memorial Day Weekend).

Pre-registration is required one week in advance of each JYF con (or until the 35 person max is reached), 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. There are three ways to register for a 'Con'

- Mail a Registration Form, a Medical Form, and a check made out to BYM to the office at 17100 Quaker Lane, Sandy Spring, MD 20860;
- fax the same forms to 301-774-7087, and pay online. To pay online, click on the 'make a gift' button on the BYM website (bym-rsf.org), then 'click to make a donation now' and follow the directions to register for a BYM conference or retreat;
- send Alison an email at youthprograms@bym-rsf.org, telling her that you plan to attend, and bring your paperwork and payment with you.

Link to the forms (and a whole lot more) can be found at the Young Friends (yf.bym-rsf.net) and Junior Young Friends (jyf.bym-rsf.org) websites. If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact Alison Duncan.

LOCAL MEETING NEWS

ANNAPOLIS FRIENDS MEETING

In May, we welcomed Maurine Pyle and Helene Pollack to give a workshop on *Worshiping with Early Friends*. In June, Dot Walizer reported on the Friends World Gathering in Kenya. In July, Molly Finch gave a PowerPoint presentation on her several months with Ann Riggs at Friends Theological College in Kenya. Over several months we have written and approved a new peace minute. It will be at the center of our public program for the International Day of Peace. We also have approved a minute in support of marriage equality. This summer we met several times to discuss the book *The American Soul* by Jacob Needleman. We were gratified to find that the kind of community the author believes was mandated by the Bill of Rights is very similar to what we find in our Quaker communities, where we freely meet, talk, and listen together in search of truth, rather than to win a point. This fall we will be studying John Woolman's Journal. We have a monthly partner enrichment group; a monthly poetry group; and a threshold choir, a women's choir with a ministry to enjoy singing a cappella music and, eventually, to bring small teams to minister to those who are sick or dying. We are once again collecting school supplies for low income schools in Philadelphia and Takoma Park.

BALTIMORE MONTHLY MEETING, STONY RUN

After process of discernment, the Meeting approved this minute in July:

Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Stony Run, supports the Civil Marriage Protection Act of 2012. The Meeting welcomes the day when couples, regardless of gender, can marry and be entitled to the state's legal protection for themselves and for their children.

We will host an event called "Finances Through the Lens of Spirit: Inviting Open Conversations about Money in Friends Meetings, Churches, and Organizations" on October 26 & 27, 2012. It will be presented by Friends Fiduciary Corporation and will cover various topics from fundraising challenges to simply having an open conversation about how finances can better express Quaker values and your Meeting's or organization's priorities. To register or to get a copy of the flyer with more information, e-mail Adrian Bishop, Meeting Coordinator, srmeetcoord@stonyrunfriends.org. Overnight hospitality is available – please include your needs in your registration. Also in October, we will host a fund-raising concert of live Irish music at the Meeting House. All are invited to join us (tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door) on Saturday, October 13 at 7:30.

CARLISLE MONTHLY MEETING

Carlisle Meeting has been able to provide hospitality to Friends who were trekking across Pennsylvania for social justice. We provided dinner, breakfast and overnight lodging for EQUAT walkers who were walking from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh to protest PNC Bank providing loans to mining organizations who were practicing mountain top removal. Later we provided overnight and meal hospitality to Jesse-Blue Forest, from Charlottesville Monthly Meeting who plans to walk across the country to the Pacific Ocean. He was walking to urge citizens to support legislative action to abolish the Selective Service System in the United States.

A group of Carlisle Friends has been reading and studying *Conversations With Christ* by Douglas Gwynn, and meeting biweekly for discussion and meditation. In our discussion of the transfer of membership to Carlisle of the Fisher family which includes three children Carlisle Friends considered the process of designating children of active members as birth-right Friends. Carlisle Friends lacked a sense of the Meeting concerning this designation. Baltimore Yearly Meeting *Faith and Practice* does allow it, while the Revised *Faith and Practice* does not have a provision for it. The Fisher children were transferred as associate members. Karen Anderson and Horst deLorenzi and children Lars and Hanna are transferring to State College Monthly Meeting. Pegi Siegel transferred to Medford Monthly Meeting (New Jersey.) On August 26, Friends enjoyed worship, picnic and singing in a nearby park.

CHARLOTTESVILLE FRIENDS MEETING

In June, member Jesse-Blue Forrest began a cross-country walk advocating the abolition of the military draft of slavery. In preparation for the trip, Jesse presented the Meeting with his most prized possession, a pipe, which in his Native American culture indicates that we are part of his family. The pipe is in the Meeting's safekeeping until his return. In July, Charlottesville accepted a communication from Louisa County Worship Group indicating that they had stopped meeting and the group was laid down. Charlottesville have discontinued midweek Meeting for Worship but continue to hold an extended Meeting for Worship once a month. This two-hour worship opportunity is in addition to the regularly scheduled Sunday morning worship. Charlottesville Friends were invited to worship with Shiloh Quaker Camp one Sunday in July. This has become an annual event, and those attending enjoyed a refreshing dip in the new pond and a delicious lunch following Meeting for Worship. A total of 14 people from Charlottesville Meeting attended all or part of Annual Session this summer. Three of those were first-time attenders.

DEER CREEK MEETING

Deer Creek remained active through the summer with its annual Blueberry Festival on July 14, an event attracting wide participation in the community as well as members young and old. On August 25, a Tea promising an assortment of "Sweets and Savories" attracted a gathering of about 75. It was conceived by Kim Holloway, who, with her husband Andy, had visited villages in Nepal benefiting from the Heifer International project, on a study tour in 2008 and shared their experiences with the Meeting with words and slides.



Annual Session photograph by Nony Dutton

Kim and Andy will participate in a Nation's Triathlon in Washington on September 9 and the Tea will support their effort for the benefit of the Heifer project.

HERNDON FRIENDS MEETING

In early September, the Meeting will hold its annual Fall Retreat at Algonquian Park. The Fall Retreat has become a recent tradition for our Meeting year and provides a time for our community to come together in fellowship and spirit. The day will begin with a guided walk on park grounds along the Potomac River. After the walk, we'll gather and sing. This will be followed by Meeting for Worship and then a potluck lunch. After lunch, we'll play games for a couple hours appropriate for all ages of our community. Fellowship is the focus of this year's Fall Retreat, which is appropriate since the event is organized by our fellowship-encouraging Hospitality Committee and Ministry and Oversight Committee. Many individuals not on these committees, however, will contribute to making this day a success. Many of our members and attenders vacation during the summer, and the Fall Retreat is a nice time for our community to reunite and spend time with each other. In years past, the Fall Retreat has taken advantage of the many green spaces in our region. We've also had speakers present on the roots of Quakerism and the role of the Meeting Clerk, played volleyball, had Friends from other Meetings attend, and even enjoyed a driving rain.

HOMWOOD FRIENDS MEETING

On September 9th, we will resume the monthly Quaker Book Club which is now in its fourth year. Additionally, we have held several meetings to weightily consider and discuss our interests in keeping our very large Meeting House or moving to another more cost effective building and location. In the end, we discovered that though it is very costly, both in money and in our time, to keep up our building, there are several practical reasons that we are attached to this old building and that our hearts can not let it go. We are continuing to explore ways to utilize and maintain our Meeting House.

HOPEWELL CENTRE MONTHLY MEETING

After two years of planning, fundraising, and actual work by the contractors, the interior restoration of Hopewell Meeting House was completed in time to host the wedding of Bonnie Wilson and Clyde Bryant on June 30. We are in awe of our landmark building's restored beauty; and our Committee of the Interior is striving to further simplify and de-clutter our inside walls and spaces in the true Quaker fashion. At our end-of-summer Homecoming, we welcomed back many old Friends, including those from BYM and local Meetings for a re-dedication of our now doubly beautiful Meeting House. In a brief ceremony, we paid tribute to long-time, now passed member, George Sheetz, who loved and cared for Hopewell Meeting House for many years; and R. Dixon Bell read a poem he wrote for the occasion. Showers did not stop our picnic outdoors where we enjoyed an as-always delicious potluck and catching up with old friends.

In reaching out to the community, some of our members recently attended a "Hands on Hunger Education Workshop" at a local food bank. In Religious Education, we continue to explore the monthly Queries and "Faith & Play" lessons. Seekers' Group is reading and discussing Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*; and our youth, led by Linda Wilk, look forward to connecting with the youth at surrounding Meetings for group activities. Happily, we have



Hopewell Meeting House Homecoming 2012

named our new Clerk of the Meeting, Rebecca Ebert, with Betty McCormick as Assistant Clerk; and Carol Melby as Clerk of Ministry and Counsel. Ahead of us in October, is our second series of Public Talks on *The Quaker Way*—four Wednesday evenings on which we invite the local community to join us at Centre Meeting House for a lively exchange on the topics of *Quaker Meeting: My Spiritual Home, Quaker Worship, Peace & Social Justice, and Simplicity*. Watch for more details on our website, hopecentre.quaker.org and on Facebook. We wish you all a bountiful and bright fall season.

LANGLEY HILL FRIENDS MEETING

Summer has been a quiet time at Langley Hill with many away at the FGC Gathering, Annual Session, and various vacations and travels. We have been blessed by a steady flow of visitors. Several members and attenders who had shared writings and poetry over 20 years consolidated them into a book called *Quaker Spirituality from 'Inside/Out,'* edited by John Surr, Judith Larsen, and Pardee Lowe, Jr. Meanwhile our small, but diligent, Committee on Racism has been meeting regularly and makes more and more materials available to all of us through our Meeting listserv and special events at the Meeting House.

Sadly we have lost two long-time members: Stanly Berkemeyer and John Kettelle. Stanly was one of our Meeting's founders and served in many positions, including Clerk, before moving to Friends House about 10 years ago. We cherish her in many ways—so it was gratifying at Annual Session to hear additional tributes to her roles among the larger world of Friends. John Kettelle came to us from Radnor Meeting in Pennsylvania, bringing children and grandchildren along, too. John loved to speak in Meeting, and we came to value his wisdom and insights. Like great trees in the forest under whose shade we flourished, Stanly's and John's deaths leave great holes in the canopies of our lives. (And for John's service, as requested by far flung members of his family, the service was broadcast to them via Skype.)

LITTLE FALLS FRIENDS MEETING

We are very proud of our recent high school graduates Hannah Stambaugh, Paul Clark, and Bennett Remsberg. Hannah will be attending the Eliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University. Bennett will attend Washington College and Paul will be studying at a University in Japan. Congratulations also go to Lars Stromdahl on his graduation from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.

Plans are underway for the celebration of the 275th anniversary of

the founding of our Meeting. The weekend of June 8 and 9, 2013 has been set aside for special activities to commemorate this event. More information will be available as our plans progress.

MAURY RIVER FRIENDS MEETING

Maury River Meeting is delighted to welcome two new members. Judith Wiegand has transferred her membership from Palm Beach MM, and long time attender Eli Fishpaw has now become a member. We were well represented this year both at Annual Session and at the Gathering at the University of Rhode Island.

MENALLEN FRIENDS MEETING

Menallen Friends now offers Meeting for Worship at Huntington Meeting House at 10:30 am on the first First Days and at Newberry Meeting's Redland's Meeting House on the third First Days at 10 am during warm weather months. There is Meeting every First Day at the Menallen Meeting House with potluck on the second First Days. All are welcome. We have named a scholarship to the Menallen Friends Preschool in honor of our retired treasurer, Peggy Fisher. As part of our outreach program it was awarded to a student from the Lincoln Intermediate Unit's migrant education program at La Escuelita. Our summer began with a successful reunion of the Blackburn Family at Menallen whose ancestors were instrumental in establishing the Meeting in the 1750's. We rounded out the summer with a history/arts camp for children and a peace concert featuring young musicians from all over the world.

NOTTINGHAM MONTHLY MEETING

In this age of cell phones, we found paying for a phone line to the Meeting House in Oxford hard to justify. On the other hand, we do not want to lose opportunities for seekers to find out about our worship community. As an experiment, we are using Google Voice to provide a phone identity for the meeting (in Web listings, Friends Journal etc.). If you dial 484-758-0750, the call will ring the phone for several volunteers in the Meeting. If none of us answers, the call is shifted to voicemail and an email is sent to those volunteers, so one of us can attend to the call as quickly as possible. (We all too rarely remembered to check the old answering machine in the Meeting House.) Similarly, we've rigged the email address for the meeting (info@oxfordfriends.org) to forward to a circle of volunteers to ensure that inquiries receive attention. We'll keep you posted on how it works.



Annual Session photograph by Nony Dutton



Annual Session photograph by Karie Firoozmand

PIPE CREEK FRIENDS MEETING

At Pipe Creek Meeting, a recent inspection of the bathroom, kitchen and activity room floors revealed the need for extensive repairs. Although the replacement of the floor in the Meeting Room was achieved with all-volunteer help and minimum expense, we believe that this project will require professional services. In contemplating the best approach to this renovation, we have initiated a capital campaign to establish a Building Fund. This fund will be separate from our current operating budget that allows us to keep the doors of Pipe Creek open to all who wish to join us. We will use the monies raised to apply for matching grants to create a permanent fund for the care and growth of the Pipe Creek Meeting. We are asking for your support. To contribute, please make your check to: Pipe Creek Meeting and designate "building fund" in the memo. Mail to: Pipe Creek Meeting, 455 Quaker Hill Road, Union Bridge, MD 21791.

RICHMOND FRIENDS MEETING

Three Young Friends who graduated from high school this spring were honored at a reception sponsored by Religious Education in early June: Mariossa Marinelle, Alec Shobe, Martin Slag. We hold them in the Light as they advance to college. Friends Bob Rugg and Sally Jennings were married under the care of Meeting in June. Summer was ushered in with the well-attended, multi-generational Spring Retreat at the Clearing. Discussion focused on Keith Helmuth's pamphlet, *If John Woolman Were Among Us: Reflections on the Ecology of Flush Toilets And Motor Vehicles*. We continue to use both. The summer term of Adult Education's First Day 9:30 sessions, always popular, has featured Friends sharing their spiritual journeys through singing, quilting, reading, prayer, and Sufiism. The recently formed Aging Group meets quarterly and remains focused on learning how to help older Friends negotiate living safely and independently in their own homes. Outreach continues with the active participation of Friend Sally Gudas at the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy. Several Friends are working on the Global Concerns Committee of the Richmond Peace Education Center to advance peace not war with Iran. The committee has met with Congressional Representatives and U.S. Senators. The *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship* Friendly Eight discussion group continues to explore ways to bridge the historically deep racial divides in Richmond.

ROANOKE QUAKER MEETING

Roanoke Friends continue to search for a permanent Meeting House location. While our search committee has labored diligently to research and investigate all potential sites, nothing suitable has been forthcoming yet. However, the process of the search has been beneficial to us as a community, as we labor together in decision-making and discussion. We trust that Way will certainly open and there will be a Meeting House in our future!

This spring we began a series of discussions every fifth first day based on Pendle Hill pamphlets. These discussions have been well-attended and serve not only to stimulate us but also to familiarize Friends with Pendle Hill and the pamphlet series. We rejoice in the birth of Anna Josephine Dybdahl, born June 22nd to Angie Martin and Peter Dybdahl and look forward to her presence in the life of our Meeting.

SANDY SPRING FRIENDS MEETING

We will host Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting, with Tom Farquhar as speaker, on September 23, 2012. The Hospitality Committee has been heavily involved in making sure guests are welcomed with the traditional corn pudding and tomatoes. Friends in Unity with Nature (FUN) is active in two projects concerning the quality of local streams; one involves improving on-site retention of storm water on the SSMM

campus, which is located on the headwaters of the Anacostia River. Eliminating storm water runoff from our property will both help recharge ground water levels and reduce erosion downstream. We are sharing information with appropriate Meeting committees as they develop a plan for the entire campus, including new construction—to be used incrementally as opportunities arise. The other project involves stream monitoring by Young Friends from our First Day School and some of their friends. They are led by a member of FUN and other adults. They monitor the water quality at a nearby location on the Northwest Branch

WHAT HOLDS A MEETING TOGETHER?



At the lovely historic Warrington Meeting in Wellsville, PA, it's set in stone. The building was originally built in 1769. This end is the new addition, built in 1782. Look from top to bottom to spell P-R-A-Y-E-R.

three times a year, recording data on the quantity and variety of stream-bed life (mainly water insects), the volume and temperature of the water, and the condition of the stream bed. We have been involved in this ongoing project for several years as part of a region-wide effort associated with the Audubon Naturalist Society in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

VALLEY FRIENDS MEETING

In May, Valley Friends sponsored a well-attended public discussion and video based on Parker Palmer's *Healing the Heart of Democracy* at the local library. Our book study group had also been reading this book. Saturday movie night and dinner at the Crawford home was a popular monthly event this past spring as was the annual youth camp-in, camp out at the Meeting House. We will all miss the Siderhurst family and wish them well in their new home in Hawaii. Mid-summer VFM hosted 18 Teen Adventure bikers Saturday night and enjoyed their presence with us for worship the next morning.

WEST BRANCH MEETING

West Branch Meeting has been very active in the community and with its outreach services. The Meeting members supported the community Lenten services and hosted one. The ministerium of Grampian takes turns hosting weekly services and on Good Friday also. Our community raised over \$9,000 for Relay for Life. Many local families have been affected by cancer. We continue support with prayers and resources to those in need. Recently West Branch was one of the sponsors for a community wide Vacation Bible School. Children and adults were welcomed with an average of 100 attending daily. It is held annually during the week of Grampian Days, our community home-coming festival. A special thank you to Sue Johnson for her dedication to the program, and to Ashauna Wriglesworth one of our youth for her leadership during Grampian Days. We continue to support our friends; neighbors, and those in need with prayer, emotional and financial support.

YORK FRIENDS MEETING

A 2-day Alternatives to Violence workshop was held at the Meeting in April with 14 people in attendance. Through interactive games, exercises and role plays, the participants examined responses to situations that might lead to violence and learned how to develop alternatives. On April 21 York Friends held an outdoor native plant and gray elephant sale as a fundraiser for local charities. The fundraiser was successful financially and included free entertainment by 70+ Sacred Harp Shape Note singers from 9 states. Quite a busy day for a Meeting House that many non-Quakers consider to be a vacant historical building in downtown York. Seven Friends finished the Spiritual Formation program in May. The participants enjoyed the opportunity to share their personal journeys with one another. Although the paths are each unique, our understanding of the Divine intersects at multiple places.

Do Quakers dance? We do at York Meeting. On the First Fridays in May, June, and July we hosted Dances of Universal Peace. The circle dances come from multiple faith traditions and everyone is welcome. Some may choose to dance, others join the musical accompaniment while others sit and absorb the tranquility of the atmosphere. York Meeting's Community Garden is growing and thriving. From tomatoes and peppers to tea and herbs, the variety in each garden is delightful and enjoyable as multiple visitors to the Meeting House grounds marvel at the growth by God's miraculous design.

BYM WELCOMES TWO NEW MONTHLY MEETINGS

This summer at Annual Session, two Meetings were welcomed as they transited from being Preparative Meetings to become full Monthly Meetings. They are both lovely places to visit!

SHEPHERDSTOWN MONTHLY MEETING IN SHEPHERDSTOWN, WV

Some Friends' idea of heaven is to be in a good bookstore. Imagine being able to go to worship in one each First Day! Shepherdstown has all the charms that a small-college town can offer. "In the past year Friends have reported a growing sense of community and nurturing of relationships. This sense of community has been fostered through conversations at rise of meeting, potlucks, informal gatherings at a local restaurant, and other social occasions." – 2011 Spiritual State of the Meeting report. shepherdstownfriends.org



Friends of Shepherdstown Monthly Meeting; photo by Elizabeth Meyer

MATTAPONI FRIENDS MEETING IN COLOGNE, VA

Mattaponi has its own spacious, sunny Meeting Room behind the barn on Dayspring Farm, which is committed to sustainable agriculture. Meet the horses and goats, and contemplate the flowers! "As we are present to the beauty, power, and cycles of nature we are inspired to know Spirit." – 2011 Spiritual State of the Meeting report. (www.bym-rsf.org/who_we_are/meetings/va_meetings/mattaponi.html)



Friends of Mattaponi Friends Meeting; photo by Elizabeth Meyer

Baltimore Yearly Meeting
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BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING UPCOMING EVENTS

SEE THE YEARLY MEETING WEBSITE FOR DETAILS AND OTHER EVENTS (BYM-RSF.ORG)

SEPTEMBER

- 21-23 – Young Friends Conference at Sandy Spring Friends Meeting
- 22-23 – Friends Service Weekend at Shiloh Quaker Camp
- 23 – Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting at Sandy Spring Friends Meeting
- 29-30 – Friends Service Weekend at Opequon Quaker Camp

OCTOBER

- 5-7 – Camping Program Alumni Weekend at Catoctin Quaker Camp
- 13 – Tenth Month Interim Meeting at Sidwell Friends School
- 20-21 – Junior Young Friends Conference at Alexandria Friends School
- 20-21 – Raising Quaker Teens Workshop at William Penn House
- 27-28 – Friends Service Weekend at Catoctin Quaker Camp

NOVEMBER

- 18 – Warrington Quarterly Meeting at York Friends Meeting
- 22-23 – Yearly Meeting Office Closed for Holiday
- 23-25 – Young Friend Conference

DECEMBER

- 1-2 – Junior Young Friends Conference
- 2 – Nottingham Quarterly Meeting at Little Britain Monthly Meeting
- 24-25 – Yearly Meeting Office Closed for Holiday

STAFF AND OFFICERS OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

Elizabeth “Betsy” Meyer	Presiding Clerk ymclerk@bym-rsf.org	Robinne Gray	Development Director rgray@bym-rsf.org
Riley Robinson	General Secretary gensec@bym-rsf.org	Jane Megginson	Camp Program Manager janemegginson@bym-rsf.org
Margaret “Meg” Meyer	Clerk of Interim Meeting imclerk@bym-rsf.org	David Hunter	Camp Property Manager davidhunter@bym-rsf.org
Marion Ballard	Treasurer marionballard@comcast.net	Alison Duncan	Youth Programs Manager youthsec@bym-rsf.org
Margo Lehman	Comptroller comptroller@bym-rsf.org	Wayne Finegar	Administration Manager admin@bym-rsf.org