

# Interchange

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

## IMPLEMENTING THE VISION STATEMENT

*Betsy Meyer, Presiding Clerk*

At Annual Session 2011, the Yearly Meeting approved establishing a new *ad hoc* committee to study the specific implications of the vision statement for the Yearly Meeting as a whole. The Presiding Clerk and the Interim Meeting Clerk were tasked with discerning the composition of this new Vision Implementation Committee. Interim Meeting Clerk Meg Meyer and Presiding Clerk Betsy Meyer worked together in prayerful discernment, seeking a broad group of Friends.

The Committee will bring together both seasoned Friends with much institutional knowledge and some who bring newer perspectives. It will include Friends from across our geography and Friends who have participated in many different aspects of Yearly Meeting work. Many of these Friends also bring significant organizational planning experience.

Here is the composition of the *ad hoc* Vision Implementation Committee: Clerk Marcy Seitel (Adelphi), Jennifer Brooks (Sandy Spring), Andrei Israel (State College), Rich Liversidge (Sandy Spring), Ellen Massey (Washington), Betsy Meyer (Sandy Spring), Meg Meyer (Baltimore Stony Run), Brad Ogilvie (Washington), Mary Ellen Saterlie (Little Falls), Katherine Smith (Maury River), Rich Thayer (Baltimore Stony Run), Betsy Tobin (Frederick), and staff participants Riley Robinson (General Secretary) and Alison Duncan (Youth Secretary). The Committee is beginning its work and looks forward to bringing some recommendations to the Yearly Meeting as way opens.

If you would like to read the full text of the Yearly Meeting's Vision Statement as approved during Annual Session, see page 91 of the 2011 Yearbook.

## CATOCTIN QUAKER CAMP NAMES NEW DIRECTOR!

*Jane Megginson, Camp Program Secretary*

*David Hunter, Camp Property Manager*

Dyresha Harris has been selected as the next Catoctin Quaker Camp Director. She first joined the BYM camping community as a staff child in 1988. She was a camper for 8 years and worked as counselor and assistant director for 11 years. In 2010, she started the Working Group on Diversity at Catoctin. Outside of the camping program, Dyresha has worked with young people of all different backgrounds and ages for over 10 years. Originally hailing from the heart of Washington, she now works in a community center in her West Philadelphia neighborhood.

She has been studying and practicing diversity education for seven years and facilitates professional development trainings throughout Philadelphia. Dyresha earned her BA with a double major in Sociology & Political Science and a Master's in Urban Studies from the University of Pennsylvania. In her free time, Dyresha enjoys travel, crafts, dance, creative writing and spending time with her partner, camp alum, Eo Trueblood.

### SHILOH POND IS DIGGING IN!

On September 20th, heavy equipment began to arrive at Shiloh to work on the pond. The land has been cleared, a dam has been constructed, and we are well into the process of excavating the pond. Once the excavation is done, we can begin installing the system that will

control the level of the water and enable us to drain the pond easily for maintenance. We will also be installing a dry hydrant for fire suppression and a shallow well up on the hill to supply fresh water.

We hope to have time to build a dock for swimming before campers arrive this summer. We will line part of the banks with sand, do a final grading, and plant grass so that we will have a nice grassy area for campers to enjoy. We also look forward to planting trees on some of the land that has been cleared and diverting away from the pond much of the surface water that runs off the mountain. This water often carries bacteria that could present a health threat to swimmers.

It has been an exciting learning process and we are eager to see all of the thought and planning begin to come to fruition! This project is more complex than many of our recent undertakings and solving the puzzles and inevitable problems has been invigorating and challenging. It has also been fascinating and awe-inspiring to see all of the wonders what we have uncovered as we have worked. Things like a 12,000 year old landslides; ancient logging chains, once strong enough to move huge trees, that are now as brittle as glass; soils that seem bone dry when uncovered but immediately weep water when exposed; traces of iron in a rock that is bright red on one side and dark black on the other; and three-inch crystals of water that are forced up on top of the ground overnight.



*Dyresha Harris, Catoctin Quaker Camp Director*

*Camp News continued on page 5*

## BYM IS GOING GREENER

*Riley Robinson, General Secretary*

So is climate change real? What about all that talk about carbon problems? Well, some of us don't remember cherry trees blooming in Washington and Philadelphia at Christmas as we see now. We don't recall moths beating against our window on January nights in Maryland, either. Snowy Owls, we're told, are giving up on life in the melting arctic tundra and trying out Kansas, Texas and Hawaii instead. The US Department of Agriculture has just released a new plant hardiness zone map, changing the plant zones of most people reading this article to a warmer one than in 1990 (although they don't want to say that this is an indicator of climate change- hmmm).

And by the way, how about that price of gas and fuel oil lately? Around here it's gone up 20-30 cents a gallon in a matter of weeks.

Friends know that we have much better options, and we are responding. Britain Yearly Meeting and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting have both approved minutes on environmental concerns. The Friends Center building in Philadelphia and the Friends Committee on National Legislation building in Washington both have been reborn as exemplary green buildings.

None of this has been lost on Baltimore Yearly Meeting Friends. For years, Baltimore Yearly Meeting camps have introduced kids and adults to the beauty of nature and served as a steward of the camp lands. Much of Camp Catoctin is under an environmental easement, in part to help preserve rare plant species. Often a quick look around the parking lot at Interim Meeting will reveal that about a third of the cars are hybrids, and many more are economy cars. At home, a number of BYM Friends have installed solar panels or geothermal heating/air conditioning.

The Yearly Meeting is now looking forward to a number of opportunities as well. Here are some of them:

### **Yearly Meeting Office Building**

**ENERGY STUDY** - An energy usage study was just done on the office building by a consultant. It told us we're leaking air and heat. Some of our ceiling needs sealing. The windows need to be replaced. A plan of action is being made.

**HVAC** - It's time to admit that the aging oil heating and conventional air conditioning equipment will "retire" not so far in the future. One possibility is a switch to a geothermal system. The technology is advancing rapidly in this area, so the difference in cost between oil heat and geothermal is not as great as before, and the ongoing operating costs are much lower.

**SOLAR** - While the building is on the wrong axis for solar, a panel might be placed on a stand in the open yard area of our property. We could generate! It's another case where the newest designs are much more efficient. This is much nicer than drilling for oil in your back yard - and the likelihood of success is WAY better.

**ELECTRICITY** - Through an arrangement with Interfaith and green organizations, BYM has applied to be included in a green electricity

purchase plan that could continue our participation on 100% green energy sources at a much lower cost. Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light has been very helpful in this effort. Local Meetings and even individuals in Maryland and DC could participate in the future. For details, contact the BYM office.

### **BYM Camps**

The camps have been working on conservation for some time as they have updated facilities, including tankless hot water. Some food is being grown at camps.

**GREEN CAMPS** - The Camp Property Management Committee has formed a Green Camps working group to sort out good options for each camp.

**SOLAR** - Sun angles need to be analyzed at each camp, but one thing is clear: when the camps are open, there's lots of daylight! Seemingly obvious, but in this case quite meaningful.

**WIND POWER** - This isn't just about buying wind powered electricity. After some study, we've established that the ridgeline hilltop at Catoctin Quaker Camp is the second highest site for miles around. An anemometer has been placed to measure wind velocity for one year as required. You can see pictures on FaceBook at "Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camp Properties." Power generation is complex to set up, but we now need to think of our land even more deliberately as a resource for all.

### **Local Meetings**

Homewood Friends Meeting, in the midst of Baltimore near the Johns Hopkins campus, now has solar panels on its rather sizable roof. In July of 2011, the Meeting's electricity bill was \$0.00!

Annapolis Friends Meeting is studying a solar panel array to be mounted on a pergola over a walkway.

Friends House retirement community in Sandy Spring, MD is installing a solar panel array.

Richmond (VA) Friends Meeting owns and operates The Clearing, a retreat center that occupies a lovely 75 acres of natural green space. Richmond Friends are supported by Midlothian Friends Meeting in this endeavor.

Mattaponi Preparative Meeting in Cologne, VA, uses a composting toilet, but that doesn't tell the whole story. Friends there meet at Dayspring Farm, a local food grower using healthy soil using practices of natural fertilization and environmentally safe pest control. Louisa County (VA) Worship group meets at Twin Oaks, a long-lived commune dedicated to raising food, living simply and producing environmentally-friendly products.

So some Virginia Friends have been leading the way in progressive green simplicity. But we're all moving along, and we can all share together. What's your story?



*Solar panels at Homewood Friends Meeting*

## TIME TO START PLANNING FOR ANNUAL SESSION

*Riley Robinson, General Secretary*

It's an election year again, and everyone is promising us a bright future if we vote for them. But based on what we've seen before, where is the real leadership for meaningful change?

Please think about dragging yourself away from the TV set (not such a big struggle for some of us in these times) and coming to Annual Session from July 31 to August 5 at Frostburg State University in Frostburg, MD. This year's theme is *Spirit-Led Social Action*.

Yes, it really is possible to have civil discourse on meaningful issues. Just invite the Light! We do, however, need to caution you that this could lead to actual commitment and effective activity on your part on issues (and with people!) that will really affect us all beyond Election Day! And please—come and tell others what you and your Meeting are already doing. We welcome the good news.

The plenary sessions will engage you: On Tuesday evening a panel of BYM Friends will share from their own rich life experiences. On Wednesday afternoon, the all-ages plenary will be led by former Camp Catoctin Director Linda Garrettson on her engagement with the environment though camp experience. On Friday, the new Executive Director of Friends Committee on National Legislation, Diane Randall, will speak.

Year after year, people comment on the stimulating array of afternoon workshops. You can still apply to lead one! The deadline is February 20. Go to [www.bym-rsf.org](http://www.bym-rsf.org). There will also be interest group discussions, time to meet old friends and new, worship sharing, Bible study, singing, terrific programs for ages 0-14, and a



*photograph by Nony Dutton*

wonderful experience for the high schoolers. There will be in-depth meetings where the business of the Yearly Meeting is conducted in worship, and, of course, a great bookstore!

If you have never been to Annual Session, this may be the year to do so. Every Meeting receives three coupons, each good for one person who has never been to Annual Session to attend for two days free! Put the dates on your calendar and plan to be with us for however long you are able, be it one day or the whole week. For the rest of us, the costs are up very little from last year. The brochure will come out in the spring *Interchange*, but will also be on the BYM website. New this year—the long-awaited online registration!

It's part family reunion, part Chautauqua summer conference, part spiritual recharge. The Program Committee works hard year-round, and we invite you to come!

## JOY IN THE QUOTIDIAN

*Betsy Meyer, Presiding Clerk*

I love the word “quotidian” because it is an elegant word with an ordinary meaning. In fact, quotidian means ordinary, commonplace or every day. Late winter/early spring, is the perfect time to appreciate and find joy in the quotidian in our lives. This time of year may seem joyless: the days seem dark; the weather feels raw; the ground is muddy. Where is the joy in that? Yet, at this time, we are not distracted by the abundant smells and colors of spring and summer, the busyness of autumn activities or the festivities of the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. This is a time when we can appreciate the stark beauty of a leafless tree and the subtle flavor a hot cup of tea. Opening our senses to enjoy the quotidian brings us closer to the sacredness of everything.

In the liturgical calendar, this is the time of Lent, a time to turn from distract-



tions back to the Sacred. It is a time to embrace the quiet spiritual growth that comes from appreciating the sacred in the ordinary. We can appreciate the sacredness of our families as we do household chores. We can be grateful for our daily work from which we make a living. Jesus reminded us of the sacredness in the daily when he told his followers to include in their prayers, “Give us this day our daily bread.” In Latin, those words are, “*Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie.*”

Our Quaker testimony of simplicity embodies the practice of finding joy and sacredness in the ordinary, daily life. The Divine is present with us daily. This is the time of year to seek spiritual renewal in the commonplace, grateful for our quotidian bread.

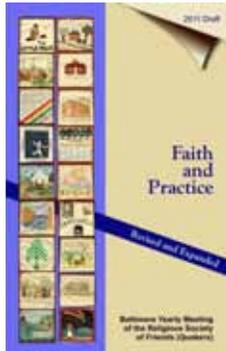
## BYM FAITH AND PRACTICE FINAL

### DRAFT – ARE YOU READY?

Sheila Bach (Langley Hill)

Have you read your 2011 Draft Faith & Practice? Do you own one—and can you locate it? It has a great deal inside to offer you.

The Faith & Practice of Baltimore Yearly Meeting is yours, and also ours. It a spiritual document that says to anyone and everyone who we are, what we do, and most importantly, why we do it. It doesn't tell us exactly what to do, but gives guidance from ages of learning and, significantly, asks us to question ourselves in love and honesty to find the Inner Light. Every member and attender at every Meeting should get to know what is in the Faith & Practice.



Annual Session this year. Or as final as any Faith & Practice can be! If there are things that are incorrect or need clarification, we need to know about them. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity—the last one was approved in 1988.

Do you need to order either the current one or the working draft? You can order it online at [www.bym-rsf.org/publications/purchases.html](http://www.bym-rsf.org/publications/purchases.html). You can even view both versions at [www.bym-rsf.org/publications/fandp/](http://www.bym-rsf.org/publications/fandp/).

Please send changes, additions, corrections electronically to [snbach@earthlink.net](mailto:snbach@earthlink.net) or 305 Friends Way, Harpers Ferry WV 25425. Please act soon! We need to have them in hand by the end of February.

Committee members read every suggestion that we receive. However, we cannot use every suggestion, as some are contradictory to others. We are well aware that we cannot please every person in BYM, but we greatly appreciate your thoughtful contributions. Please help us to make this Faith & Practice as inclusive of our faith and our practice as possible.

The Faith & Practice Revision Committee has been working ten months of each year since 2002—yes, ten years. We are now making corrections and changes that have been sent to us from numerous Meetings and individuals. We are planning on having a final draft at

## WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT FRIENDS HOUSE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY?

Flossie Fullerton (Sandy Spring) and Roger Wolcott (Sandy Spring)

Friends House in Sandy Spring, Maryland is the only retirement community in Baltimore Yearly Meeting whose board is approved at BYM Annual Session. For some of us this represents a strong bond of the principals and procedures between BYM and Friends House. Many residents recognize living at Friends House as making the most of life in a supportive residential Community.

As in other Friends organizations, there are many committees and volunteer opportunities under the organization of the Residents Association to provide ways to participate in the community and support individual views and personal skills. In this way Friends House often provides services on a volunteer basis that other facilities have paid staff to cover. One such service is the “Free Rides” program which provides transportation to local appointments for individuals no longer able to drive. We also have an active community garden and organize our own programs of music, speakers, and films as well as trips to cultural and educational events in the Washington, DC area. Other services available for residents as needed are a pharmacist, beautician, podiatrist, audiologist, as well as exercise pro-

grams, physical therapy, and housekeeping assistance.

Friends House was originally planned as a facility supported by the HUD program to provide a low cost retirement community for Quakers and others. It has grown to include about 150 residents with about 50% Quakers. There are some interesting relationships: a mother and daughter, two college roommates, and two cousins. It is located adjacent to the BYM office and includes independent living garden apartments, independent living cottages, assisted care, skilled nursing, and rehabilitation divisions. Recently Friends House was licensed as a low-level Continuing Care Retirement Community. If you think this might be a place for you, and you would like to have more information, contact Carolee Harvey at 301-924-5100.



## PAT SCHENCK WRITES NEWEST PENDLE HILL PAMPHLET

*Living Our Testimony on Equality: A White Friend's Experience*, Pat Schenck's second pamphlet for the Pendle Hill series, was published in December, 2011. Their website says, “writing openly and personally about her successes, failures, and discoveries, [Pat] shares her stories and offers wisdom to white Friends, in particular, who wish to create more diverse, welcoming, and fully supportive communities of all races in our meetings and in our lives. Discussion questions included.”

Pat Schenck is a member of Annapolis Friends Meeting and the founder of the BYM Working Group on Racism. The members of the Working Group are proud of her efforts and the good writing that produced this pamphlet. Not only do we encourage everyone to read it, but we also encourage Meetings to organize discussion sessions to consider its contents for yourselves and your meetings. Pat would be glad to participate in these discussions, so do not hesitate to contact her with an invitation. You can reach her at [pat.schenck@verizon.net](mailto:pat.schenck@verizon.net).

## SHILOH POND PROGRESSES

*Camp News continued from page 1*

We continue to be deeply grateful for the generosity of Friends and the ingenuity of all who helped make this project possible. We hope that all of you are as excited about making a big splash on a hot day this spring as we are!



*Shiloh pond, from firecircle (left) to dining hall (right)  
photograph by David Hunter*

## FAP TRAINING

MARCH 24 AT FRIENDS MEETING SCHOOL

There will be a training to become a Friendly Adult Presence at BYM's Junior Young Friends and Young Friends Conferences. This FREE training goes from 9 am to 4 pm, includes details on the Youth Safety Policy, and role plays of common FAP experiences. Email Alison Duncan, Youth Secretary at [youthsec@bym-rsf.org](mailto:youthsec@bym-rsf.org) to register by March 16th.

## TORTURE: WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

*Suzanne O'Hatnick, BYM Representative to NRCAT*

After 9/11 our country reacted out of great fear that we would be attacked again. That is understandable. From a psychological point of view, when we feel our survival is threatened, many, perhaps most, will react with emotion rather than respond with reason. A primal reaction is flight or fight. Unfortunately, we apprehended people often with little or no justification; we subjected many to abuse, in part out of a desire for vengeance, in part out of misinformation about how to interrogate, often in an atmosphere of chaos and with untrained interrogators. One of the guards accused at Abu Ghraib of mistreatment of prisoners described the scene as out of the movie *Mad Max*. On the home front, first we were told there was no torture, or, if there was, it was the work of a few "bad apples." Then, when it was revealed as Administration policy, we were told we had to go to "the dark side" to protect Americans.

Despite claims to the contrary by politicians, the effectiveness of torture and abuse to secure information has been debunked by professional interrogators. The legitimacy of such "enhanced interrogation techniques," the code phrase for torture, has been challenged by all branches of our military as well as by human rights organizations here and abroad as well as in courts in France, Spain, Canada and the UK.

Without an examination of what led us to reject our moral values of fairness and the humane treatment of those under our control and the rule of law, we are in danger of reverting to the same practices whenever we feel threatened. The complicity is so widespread in this dark chapter that one can understand reluctance to investigate. The result of not revisiting our behavior, however, has been an ever quickening slide away from the moral high ground. Congress just passed legislation that allows for the indefinite detention of

American citizens. Targeted killings of American citizens have been authorized and carried out by drone strikes abroad. War crimes go unaddressed and an arbitrary system of justice has been instituted. These are only a sampling of the erosion of civil liberties that has taken place since 9/11/2001.

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) believes an interfaith effort across political lines is necessary to urge accountability, starting with a commission of inquiry to bring before the public what has been done and is still being done in our name. Prosecution is not the only remedy, but unless we are willing to know what happened and what is still happening, not only is there no remedy, but also we forfeit a future as a democratic republic as we have known it.

## CONFERENCE FOR PARENTS OF TEENAGERS AT SHILOH

Do you have a child between the ages of 11- 18? Do you teach middle or high school Religious Education? Then this conference is for you! Running from April 20 to the 22nd, this event will include community building, chores, camaraderie and spiritual renewal while learning about issues facing teens and how to cope with them. Workshops will be lead by Harriet Heath, Coordinator of the Quaker Parenting Initiative. Harriet is a licensed developmental psychologist, mother of three, and grandmother of eight. Her more than thirty years of professional experience is guided in the Quaker belief in the Inner Light. The cost for the weekend is \$75.00 and scholarships are available. For more information contact Alison Duncan, BYM Youth Secretary. ([youthsec@rsf.org](mailto:youthsec@rsf.org))

## COMMITTEE AND ORGANIZATIONAL NEWS

### AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is undergoing a restructuring/reorganization. Our region, the Mid-Atlantic Region (MAR), has had programs in Logan, West Virginia; Baltimore, Maryland; Washington, DC; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and even some in New York State. This region will be merging with the South East Region (SERO). Many of you have been integral to the works of the AFSC though the decades. The new South Region will span 17 states, including some of the MAR areas; specifically the Maryland, Washington, DC, and West Virginia programs will go South, while Pennsylvania and New York programs move with the Northeastern region. It is easy to think that this is merely a financially motivated move. But “the most exciting part of this new structure is the opportunity to revitalize our ways of working together as corporation, board, staff, volunteers, Friends meetings and churches and community partners” according to Lucy Duncan, the Friends Liaison for the AFSC, in an informative piece for the February 2012 edition of Friends Journal.

As Baltimore Yearly Meeting’s Representative to the Executive Committee, you may e-mail me (hforsythetasker@gmail.com) any questions you have about this transitional time. You may also want to check out the AFSC website (AFSC.org) to read about their programs. Or talk with people about the work of AFSC. Several people from Baltimore Yearly Meeting are involved in programs, or serve on boards. I have been excited about the work being done in this region, work with prisoners and their families, with teachers and their curriculum, with youth in PA and WV, and with the Upper Big Branch Mine disaster in WV. Moving forward will be exciting as we learn more about the good work being done in the Deeper and Deep South! As I write this a new South Regional director is being sought, and other regions are also in this process. What an exciting time!

### CRIMINAL AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE WORKING GROUP

*“For when I was in prison you visited me.” Matthew 25:36*

Prison ministry has long been a labor of Quakers. While you may not be able to personally visit a prisoner, the Prison Pen-Pal program offers a safe way to connect with someone behind bars. The program affords anonymity, and no sharing of personal information need occur. Notes and cards can be exchanged as frequently as desired, though monthly seems to be a preferred time. We have many requests from prisoners looking to connect with someone on the outside. Please contact Jack Fogarty (301-774-0331 or jfogarty9@verizon.net) or Mike Bucci (301-330-0287 or bucci114@starpower.net) if you would like to share your Light with an inmate in prison.

### FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION

Recently Meetings received a packet from Friends Committee on National Legislation about helping them set their legislative priorities. The following is excerpted from that packet:

A unique feature of the Friends Committee on National Legislation is our practice of involving as many Quaker meetings, churches,

and other groups of Friends as possible in shaping priorities for the lobbying efforts that we undertake together. The priorities process guides all of us in FCNL in focusing our legislative work for the next two-year session of Congress.

We urge you to involve your group in the process of setting priorities for FCNL’s lobbying work for the 113th Congress (2013-2014) by meeting together to discern and record the issues most important to you. Many gatherings have joyously reported on the spiritual depth and sense of engagement they have found through this process. Your participation is essential. Please send us—no later than April 16—up to five priorities that your church or meeting or gathering discerns should be a focus of FCNL’s work in the 113th congressional session. We strongly prefer that you submit your responses online at [fcn.org/113priorities](http://fcn.org/113priorities), because it is so much easier for committee members and staff to receive and review electronic responses. If that is not workable for you, you may send your input to FCNL in another form, as outlined in the instructions.

Hearing from the wider Quaker community is fundamental to our work. We greatly appreciate the time you are taking to read these materials and to gather together for discernment, and we eagerly await your response. Should you have questions, feel free to contact Policy Committee members Marge Hannon Pifer ([pifermh@tds.net](mailto:pifermh@tds.net)) or Jim Matlack ([jmatlack@roadrunner.com](mailto:jmatlack@roadrunner.com)). Former Policy Committee member Welling Hall has also offered to advise ([wellingh@earlham.edu](mailto:wellingh@earlham.edu)).

### WORKING GROUP ON RACISM

On the morning of November 19, some 80 people from Baltimore Yearly Meeting visited the Sandy Spring Slave Museum, just a short way Route 108 from Sandy Spring Friends Meeting. We found the museum impressive in its collection and presentation. One person wrote afterwards, “it was an amazing and memorable visit.” The variety of visuals helped all generations readily get a sense of the real history of African Americans in this country and in the Sandy Spring area. The museum head, Laura Anderson Wright, conducted our tour. She is an outstanding speaker and docent. We especially appreciated her emphasis on celebrating the progress and accomplishments of African Americans. The story of the formation and founding of the Museum, how it attracted community support, and how she and her family have continued to invite people to share their history, touched us deeply. We encourage others who did not make it on this special visit day to contact the museum ([sandyspring-slavemuseum.org](http://sandyspring-slavemuseum.org)) to make plans to see it.

If you are thinking of a Charitable Gift Annuity, you would be wise to commit before March 31. The current rate of 5.8% for those who are 70 years or older will decrease to 5.1% after April 1. A Charitable Gift Annuity is a great way to help yourself as well as the Yearly Meeting. If you have looked at fixed income rates recently, these represent a higher than expected return on your money.

## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE YEARLY MEETING ABOUT INTERVISITATION

*Linda Coates, Little Britain Monthly Meeting*

I'd like to thank the members of Baltimore Yearly Meeting for the opportunity you have given me to participate in the Intervisitation Program. I'd like to let you know that you all travel with me. Often among a Gathered Presence, "I see Friends..." In the turn of a head, movement of hands or a passer by, I have flash backs of dearly loved members of BYM.

I have been able to travel to Great Plains Yearly Meeting three times, New England Yearly Meeting twice, and have sojourned in Monadnock Monthly Meeting in New Hampshire for the last 5 years.

I am constantly amazed by how much feels familiar in a crowd of strangers. The world of Quakers is truly a small and blessed one. Following a leading to "go where I send thee" can be a daunting task. I am constantly thankful to many individuals whose voices and encouragement have been important to my journey and Spiritual growth.

I often hear Lamar Matthew encouraging me to "Let go and let God." When I traveled with Maria Bradley in the summer of 2008, we took the opportunity to visit several unaffiliated Meetings in Kansas prior to attending Great Plains Yearly Meeting in Nebraska. Arrangements for visits/hospitality were loosely made prior to my arrival at Omaha. God connected the edges to provide gracious hospitality from members of Omaha Conservative Friends Meeting, Oread Meeting, Manhattan Friends Meeting, University Friends and Heartland Friends Meeting. I was reminded of Joe Izzo, who taught me to trust that God would provide.

Maria graciously allowed me to feel useful and helpful during our travels. Many others in and among the Yearly Meeting have taught me skills and lessons that I have felt helped prepare and sustain me. June Confer always encouraged me to let my heart speak. Howard

Fullerton emphasized right process. (yes, there are other Howards out there in other meetings!) Discussions with Laurie Wilner about embracing my Quaker roots and upbringing helped me recognize how deeply my perceptions of life have been colored by my home Monthly Meeting. Liz Hofmeister has shown me how to plan ahead to succeed while Lauri Perman has shown me how to seize the moment. Years among the JYM staff and many wonderful Junior Young Friends have taught me to enjoy the moment. There are many other Friends too numerous to list—be confident that all of you have touched me in many ways.



*Intervisitor Aaron Fowler at Annual Session 2010 photograph by Jenifer Morris*

I encourage all of you to take opportunities that arise in your life to visit other Meetings and Friends, let life slow down, let God in. Take advantage of hospitality offered by host Meetings to Interim Meeting, stay overnight, even if it is close to home; when traveling seek out other Meetings or even have coffee with BYM members that may live in the area. Small steps can lead to wondrous spiritual growth.

Note: The Intervisitation Committee is continuing its discernment process and struggling with financial constraints. A training for BYM visitors to other Yearly Meetings and (in response to a request) for members of other FUM Yearly Meetings interested in establishing intervisitation programs is scheduled for April 13-15 at Sandy Spring. See <http://tinyurl.com/7jf3yy6>. If you are interested in traveling to another Yearly Meeting in 2012, contact Jolee Robinson. ([mjoleerob@cs.com](mailto:mjoleerob@cs.com) or 301-588-1580)

## YEAR-END CHALLENGE PUSHES 2011 GIFT TOTAL TO NEW LEVEL

*Robinne Gray, BYM Development Director*

What a year! The 2011 fiscal year rode in on the momentum from the Shiloh Pond mini-campaign begun in fall of 2010. By Annual Session we were thrilled to know the \$90,000 project goal for the Pond had been met - but the Yearly Meeting was still concerned about raising the support needed to meet the budgeted amount for operating contributions.



In early fall, the Development Committee was approached by anonymous donors, a couple who offered a challenge match of \$5,000 if BYM Friends would contribute a total of \$50,000 in November and December. News of the challenge was mailed in our year-end appeal, along with the a color card of the Vision Statement approved in August. Because Friends responded so generously, our Yearly Meeting had a strong finish to the year, receiving over \$71,000 in the month of December alone.

We extend a huge thanks to all of the Friends and camp families who have made gifts to BYM and its programs! Direct support from Friends and Meetings in our region goes a long way toward BYM's financial vitality and stability.

<u>2011 Gift Summary</u>	
General Fund	\$ 81,400
BYM Camps	
Camp Operating	\$ 43,785
Morley Endowment	\$ 6,855
Camp Capital	\$ 80,994
All Other Gifts	<u>\$ 19,394</u>
TOTAL	\$ 232,428

In early 2012, the Yearly Meeting will be undertaking an evaluation of the Development Program, which has just completed its third full year. At the same time, Stewardship and Finance is exploring other possible methods used for determining Apportionments from BYM Monthly Meetings. Other BYM bodies are considering other aspects of our budget- and-finance picture. With the help of the dozens of Friends doing this work, the Yearly Meeting continues to refine our financial practices. In doing so, we strive to create the best conditions for our programs, people, and activities to flourish.

## RENOVATIONS AT HOPEWELL MEETING HOUSE

### NEARLY COMPLETE

The Hopewell Meeting House, located near Winchester, Virginia, is undergoing extensive interior renovations. The building, the oldest part of which was built in 1759, is one of the two Hopewell Centre Meeting Houses and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Hopewell and Centre used to be two separate Meetings, and they joined together in 1999 to form Hopewell Centre Meeting.

All of the interior plaster is being repaired at Hopewell. Over the years, cracks had formed in the walls and parts of the plaster ceiling had either fallen or become loose. In 2009, the Meeting decided to move forward with an extensive renovation project. A committee was formed to research what had to be done and to recommend a way forward. After talking with a number of contractors and other individuals familiar with repairing old lime-based plaster, the Meeting decided to hire a local contractor, Vintage Renovation and Construction. One of their specialties is restoring historic buildings using original techniques and materials. After further planning, the Meeting launched a fundraising campaign in November, 2010. The goal was to raise a minimum of \$80,000 which would allow the project to proceed.

Besides seeking individual donations, the Meeting carried out a number of fundraising projects, including the production of a calendar and a cookbook, putting on a Colonial era dinner at the Meeting House, and holding a Peace Festival and Auction. We reached our fundraising goal in June, 2011.



*Hopewell Meeting House*

While waiting for the work to begin, we planned for the removal of everything in the Meeting House. We rented storage trailers for our benches and other furniture. Historic books were stored at the Archives at the Handley Regional Library. All items were removed from the balconies, everything was taken off the walls, and eventually the only item remaining in the Meeting House was our piano. What a sight to see a completely empty Meeting House – probably the first time since 1759.



*Hopewell's ceiling gets new plaster*

In October, scaffolding was erected inside and work began. All of the old, loose plaster was removed and the cracks in the walls were prepped. Then the remaining plaster on the ceiling was stabilized. Along the way, we found that some additional work had to be carried out on our slate roof. Plastering began in January and we are planning to move back in soon.

We are fortunate to have another Meeting House. We have been meeting at Centre Meeting House in Winchester since October. This project has required the support of everyone in our Meeting and many outside the Meeting. Our Yearly Meeting Friends have been spiritually and financially supportive of our efforts, and we are very grateful for that. We hope our friends from throughout the Yearly Meeting will join us in commemorating the renovation when it is completed, as it gives us another cause for celebrating our community.

## THINKING ABOUT RACE: FEBRUARY 2012

Jay Smooth, a video blogger and host of New York's longest running hip-hop radio show, presented at a TED conference meet-up at Hampshire College. In the talk, "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race," Smooth says it's sometimes difficult to talk about race because we're taking the wrong approach: "We deal with race and prejudice with this all-or-nothing, good person-bad person binary, in which either you are racist or you are not racist." The truth, he says, is that discussions about race are a lot more complex than that. And once people acknowledge that fact, they'll be able to have more honest and productive conversations. He adds, "Anytime we're dealing with race issues, we're dealing

with a social construct that was not born out of science or reason or logic. We're grappling with a social construct that was not designed to make sense."

On YouTube, search for Jay Smooth and then choose "How To Tell People They Sound Racist." To see the full talk, go to [colorlines.com/archives/2011/11/jay\\_smooths\\_ted\\_talk\\_on\\_how\\_he\\_learned\\_to\\_stop\\_worrying\\_and\\_love\\_discussing\\_race.html](http://colorlines.com/archives/2011/11/jay_smooths_ted_talk_on_how_he_learned_to_stop_worrying_and_love_discussing_race.html).

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](mailto:david.etheridge@verizon.net))

## BYM YOUNG ADULT FRIENDS, AN EXTINCT SPECIES?

*Amrit Moore, Pierre Grahn, Clerks, Young Adult Friends*

Dearest friends, I am here to put to rest your concerns that Young Adult Friends may be an extinct species. We are in fact alive and quite well! To further comfort you I'd like to assure you, we're not even an endangered species! Our past gathering, in January, had over 20 members! Half of them were new members we were thrilled to welcome! "Well then where are the YAF's? What are they doing? I never hear about them!" You may tell me. As we grow into our college stage of life, and beyond, our time together, and with you, sadly becomes thin as we go out to do such amazing things in this world. So I'm writing to share with you what things we are passionately doing that limit our time with you;

Our loving Friend, Genevieve Oei was an Americorps volunteer in Hartford, CT from Sept 2002 until Aug 2003. "My job was teaching basic computer skills to Adults studying to earn their GED." Julia Barge tells us, "I'm traveling around South East Asia. I studied abroad in Singapore then went to Malaysia (KL), Hong Kong, and Thailand (Phuket). Be back in January in time for my last semester of college!" Patrick Roof shares "I've been doing work on BYM camps!"

It's been awhile since we've seen, Sam Flower Horne, because "I'm in a Teaching Masters program." He's proud to tell us. (He was also married Wren Beckett this summer!) Sasha Bugler is quite busy too! She's proud to share, "I'm captaining the UMD women's ultimate team for the second year in a row and we're hoping to make it to nationals this year :)"

Many of us are prosperous travelers, Rachel Stacy, joyously shares, "I went on a Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) delegation to Northern Iraq in October and now I'm discerning full time work with CPT." And, of course, who could forget the presence of Alison Duncan. "I work as the Youth Secretary at BYM. I also carry a concern for racial equality in the world, but I've chosen to start in my community, attending FGC consultations on race and working for diversity in BYM camps." She says.

So while our time together, and with you, may be sparse, we are alive and thriving. I assure you are often in our thoughts. There are many more YAF's who have equally incredible stories to share, and we welcome your support, curiosity, and prayers for us.

Love and Light.

## 2012 WOMEN'S RETREAT EPISTLE

Retreating, we remember  
Waves of the Presence permeate  
Rising us up and breaking  
us open.  
Tumbling, engulfed and  
Finally floating  
Everyone's story-our own.

To Friends Everywhere:

Namaste.

This is an organic annual Gathering of Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) Women—an ebb and flow of fellow seekers. We come to be rejuvenated by the Light that seems to shine more brilliantly when we worship, sing, listen, play, dance laugh and cry together. Our stories of triumphs and tribulations and the journey toward love inspire and nurture each of us in different ways. This year our host meeting, Sandy Spring (Maryland) invited five women of BYM to share their journeys.

These Quaker women remind us that when we attend to the spirit the courage to act rises. Bette Hoover (Sandy Spring) shared her journey, and included the vignette from a Native American Grandmother answering a young woman: "How do I know when I'm on my path?" "Just look at your feet!" Susan Kaul from Bethesda Meeting shared her story of how over time she came to know that God was accompanying her, whether she was aware of it or not. Ramona Buck of Patapsco Meeting, told the story that sometimes conflict seems like a monster, but we should walk to it and through it, and on the other side an elegant solution can appear though we may not see it at first. Mosi Harrington of Adelphi Meeting reminded us that there are billions of children of God. Accompanying others on their journey may be all that is needed. We do not have to be brilliant to be effective, but dogged. Show up. Dance into our



*2012 Women's Retreat photograph by Carol Beigel*

power! Pat Schenck (Annapolis) reminded us that the enemy of power is worrying about what others think of us. Although we are each unique children of God—we are not better or worse than anyone else is—just unique.

As we told our stories to each other, we felt the ebb and flow of our connections. We carry forward a renewed sense of Spirit.

Reflect  
Listen, Plan, Affirm  
Breathe  
Create, Play, Sing  
Share, Dance, Eat Talk  
Dive in.  
Connect Renew.

Namaste.

The Women of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Women's Retreat  
From Skycroft Retreat Center, Middletown Maryland

## MEETING NEWS

### ADELPHI FRIENDS MEETING

Adelphi Friends Meeting continued its concern over the issue of BYM resuming financial support of FUM in light of FUM's policies on same-sex relationships among Friends, with plans in 2012 to address its seasoned thoughts to the wider Quaker world. Meeting continued as well in its deliberations on what changes might improve the physical property at its Adelphi campus, as well continue reviewing the possibility of relocating the Meeting.

Adelphi Friends have taken an active role in the Occupy Washington movement, with particular contributions from Young Friends, some of whom have served in leadership and peacemaking roles at the site. The life of meeting continued with Friends actively supporting grass roots projects in Haiti, with some members/attenders active in efforts in Annapolis to legalize same-sex marriage in the state, and with others addressing the critical effects of the Citizens United constitutional amendment effort.

Michael Newheart returned from a month-long sojourn in Kenya among Friends. Ken Leonard and family moved to Tanzania through August to study economic improvement issues. Mary Ellsberg and Michael Levi returned from visiting Friends in Kenya as part of Mary's work on behalf women in Africa. Assuming the clerkship as of January 1 were Jade Eaton, with Michael Levi assuming assistant clerk responsibilities.

### ANNAPOLIS FRIENDS MEETING

In January, Annapolis Friends had an adult education session on Martin Luther King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech. Pat Schenck addressed those gathered for potluck on why she wrote her recent Pendle Hill Pamphlet and why she wrote it in the first person. Riley Robinson and J.E. McNeil talked with us about Friends United Meeting. In February, we were addressed by Dr. Safi Kaskas. He works to find commonalities among Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Our own Sam Shropshire works with him and others in Jeddah, finding similar messages in the Bible and the Quran. Our children are learning about prophets and prophecy, both biblical and Quaker. Annapolis Friends are looking for meaningful ways to connect with the Occupy movement. Young adult Friend Molly Finch has gone to Kenya to assist Ann Riggs at Friends Theological College. Annapolis Friends Meeting has installed two electric vehicle charging stations in the parking lot and is investigating solar panels for the roof of the Meeting House.

### BALTIMORE MONTHLY MEETING, STONY RUN



Women's Retreat photograph by Carol Beigel

Stony Run continues to do many things to reach outward, inward, and laterally. We continue to reach out to our visitors and newcomers at Meeting, and work (often in ecumenical settings) with organizations to reduce

violence and the conditions that lead to violence in our city. We reach in to feed the life of our large meeting of members and attenders of all ages. We have First Day School, a Young Friends group active in service and with other BYM Young Friends, adult discussion forums, a reading group, and many other Meeting-wide activities. Our Peace and Social Issues Committee officially joined with that of Homewood, and the new name for the combined committee is the Baltimore Quaker Peace and Justice Committee. There is also a presence on it from Old Town Friends Worship Group. We have a longstanding relationship with the McKim Center, an after school and summer program housed in a building that came from the will of a long-ago Friend with a deep concern for educating children. The building still stands, and in this time of funding cuts, Stony Run members are helping to discern a way forward so that the children can still have McKim's teaching and support in their lives! Stony Run hosted Interim Meeting in October and provided input for the *Faith & Practice* revision. We continue to work in our diverse Meeting to worship together both at weekly Meeting for Worship and at Monthly Meeting for Business, trusting that way will open and the search for divine guidance will always bear fruit. We continue to sow seeds widely, remembering always that they grow where they are nurtured.

### BETHESDA FRIENDS MEETING

Jim Moody, a Bethesda attender who served in Congress for 10 years as a representative from Minnesota, addressed several inaccuracies contained in a chain letter that is currently circulating asserting that members of Congress receive excessive pay and benefits. Jim told the Peace and Social Justice Committee that he didn't believe the pay (\$80,000 when he served in the 1980s, \$174,000 now) is excessive given that members must maintain two residences—one in their home district and a second in the DC area. Jim also felt members of Congress should receive a decent salary so that those who are not wealthy still are able to run for and hold office.

### BLUE RIDGE GATHERING

For the past few years, southwest Virginia friends of Floyd, Roanoke, Maury River, Blacksburg, and Abingdon Monthly Meetings have been getting together once a year for a day of worship, fellowship, and learning. The 2012 Blue Ridge Gathering is April 29 at Blacksburg Meeting House, 9:45 am - 4:15 pm. Worship begins at 10 am. Afternoon presenters are Chuck Fager, retiring director of Quaker House, speaking on *Long-Term Quaker Peace Work: a 'Front-Line' View* and Baltimore Yearly Meeting Clerk Betsy Myer, on *The Mystical Dimension of Social Action*. We encourage everyone to come join us, with special invitation to other Friends congregations of southwest Virginia. Potluck lunch. Childcare will be available and young friends are welcome!! To receive directions and the day's schedule, contact Mary Helen Brainard. (mhbrainard@hotmail.com or 540-261-3247)

### CARLISLE FRIENDS MEETING

When Carlisle Friends bought an aging church in 1993 we saw possibilities for it to become a serviceable Meeting House for us. Certainly the price was affordable even when we included the most necessary improvements. So we settled in to pay the mortgage, and after fifteen years we paid it off. Then we turned to major projects

which had been postponed until funds were available. With no more mortgage payments, we were able to proceed. We took down a rotting steeple, sold the bell, repaired the roof, repaired damaged windows, put in a new furnace with air conditioning, and remodeled the entrance. Of course, we have become aware that the list is endless. But the biggest jobs are complete, so come visit us.

In the midst of all this activity we sponsored *Quaker Quest*. We had a few visitors, most of them people who were very active in their own churches, who came to us to learn who Quakers were. We did not get any new members but the in-reach was meaningful to us as a faith community. Then in 2011, a year since, we have seen an influx of visitors, several of whom have become regular attenders. What happened? We think maybe the advertising of *Quaker Quest* informed people of our presence. Certainly a new and improved web site has helped notify the public.

Carlisle Friends are seeing our youth mature and leave Carlisle for education far and wide. With a smaller First Day School we faced the problem of an isolated teacher and only one child attending. We are very grateful to the Yearly Meeting's response to our cry for help. We are following the lead of several of the Meetings who replied to our pleas. Now we have regular attenders who are willing to join the "class of two" to prevent possible accusations of abuse. We keep a record. So far this is working.

## CHARLOTTESVILLE FRIENDS MEETING

In our continuing effort to connect with the surrounding community, members of Charlottesville Friends Meeting distributed Halloween treats to trick-or-treaters from our Meeting House porch. The Meeting was pleased to host homeless women for two weeks in November through the PACEM (People and Congregations Engaged in Ministry) program. Between nine and seventeen women were fed and housed each night with help from Tandem Friends School and three area churches. The Meeting enjoyed a festive potluck and carol sing during the holiday season. The event was well attended with participants overflowing our community room and spilling into the library and meeting room spaces. Another holiday event was our Religious Education pageant on the Sunday before Christmas. The children enacted a Christmas story featuring Mary and Joseph as well as dogs, lambs, angels and even a bunny. Our youngest child, born this fall, played the part of baby Jesus perfectly. The Meeting is planning for BYM's Clerking and Leadership Workshop which we will host in February and the Interim Meeting to be held in Charlottesville in March.

## DEER CREEK MEETING

The summer's major event for our Meeting was a two-week tour of England and Wales in June/July centering on historic Quaker sites. Twenty-five members and friends ranging from teenagers to seniors were led by Pat Pickard, a longtime British tour guide who now attends our Meeting. A favorite stop was Fenny Drayton, the village where George Fox was born and the lovely and little-changed Anglican Church he attended as a child. The arrival of our bus had been quite unexpected by those still lingering after their Sunday service, but they were most hospitable, serving us coffee and offering the church for our own worship service. In Lancashire's beautiful countryside our bus stopped by a meadow where we walked or ran, depending on age, to the foot of Pendle Hill where George

Fox had the epiphany that led him to speak to large crowds and win many followers in the area. We explored Swarthmoor, the home of Judge Thomas Fell and his wife, Margaret, that was to become known as "the cradle of Quakerism." In nearby Kendal we saw the history of Quakerism presented in the several dozen panels of the famed Quaker tapestry. Our three-day stop in London included a visit to the grave of George Fox in Bunhill Fields where also are buried the artist and poet, William Blake, and John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, and across the street, John Wesley. It was a tour that is expected to carry over into First Day School discussions this fall.



2012 Women's Retreat photograph  
by Carol Beigel

The annual Blueberry Festival held at Deer Creek Friends Meeting in July for the benefit of Harford Friends School was its usual success clearing about \$8,000 from the sale of blueberries by the quart and in pies, scones and muffins. On January 14, Deer Creek Friends young and adult had a dinner at the Meeting House for the benefit of the little church in the village of Fenny Drayton. Their church is lovely but in need of repairs and its congregation is small. We returned their kindness by raising over \$1,000 at the dinner to help with its preservation.

## DUNNINGS CREEK FRIENDS MEETING

We have enjoyed a healthy attendance accompanied with interesting and thought-provoking adult discussions for First Day. Even though many of our long-standing members were away for the holiday, our Christmas Eve was small but warm and intimate. We will miss our long time Friends of Holly and Gene Coia who have headed off to New Orleans seeking their new chapter in life. However, we are very happy to welcome our newest addition, Bennet Elizabeth Spitzer-Koontz, born January 18 to Heather Koontz and Todd Spitzer.

## FREDERICK MONTHLY MEETING

Frederick has been busy with the usual challenges many Meetings have: keeping the building in good order, encouraging First Day School attendance, as well as adult attendance and involvement in Worship and Meeting activities. Ministry and Counsel has been busy organizing clearness committees, contacting members, and beginning the process of crafting the annual Spiritual State of the Meeting report. Quarterly Meeting was held in November. It was good for many of us to get to the quarterly session at which we said good-bye to Andy Hoover as clerk, and hello to Leada Dietz as the new Clerk of Warrington Quarter. We shared our perspectives about the importance and function of the quarter and its activities.

As a Meeting we have been organizing (via a small ad-hoc committee) a *Quaker Quest* program which will (Lord willing!) take place on February 11. We held our annual Christmas potluck on Sunday

December 18th, and then our Christmas Eve Service on the 24th, and started Friendly 8s this January. Even though there does not seem to be much new, inspiring, or earth shaking, many are busy with the responsibilities of raising children, care giving for elderly parents or others, and this takes a fair amount of energy. However, sometimes when we come to Meeting, we find the Light of corporate worship lifts us up and carries us on.

### FRIENDS MEETING OF WASHINGTON

During the last of 2011, Friends Meeting of Washington welcomed several new members and transfers. The Membership Committee has been contacting Associate Members who are over 25 to ask whether they wish to apply for full membership. Elizabeth Kendall and Sasan Sabet were married under the care of our Meeting at Sidwell Friends Upper School on January 15, 2012. On October 16, 2011 we held a Memorial Meeting for Michael Jack, who died on August 22, 2011.

Lively and engaged discussions have taken place in efforts to help hard of hearing F/friends. Benches have been experimentally moved around in attempts to help everyone hear. The Ministry & Worship Committee has undertaken a survey in an attempt to facilitate this process. For many has resulted in discussion of what it means to be community. The FMW Property Committee has been very active remodeling, renovating and updating our buildings, particularly Quaker House. The FMW community has turned out and supported works days. In early January, Ken Orvis was hired as the Interim Property Manager.

The Occupy Wall Street/Occupy DC movement has also engaged the FMW community as it looks at ways of supporting this grass roots movement that is still in changing and development. In November, the Personal Aid Committee sponsored a well-attended "End of Life" workshop where practical matters surrounding advancing years, death, wills, powers of attorney, and care-taking for others were addressed. In December, the FMW community came together to support the Shoe Box project. This annual project consists of assembling, filling and wrapping over 1200 boxes that are distributed to area shelters. The boxes are filled with personal hygiene items—such as soap, socks, and underwear. They are gender-specific and many are made for children.

### GOOSE CREEK FRIENDS MEETING



2012 Women's Retreat photograph by Carol Beigel

Goose Creek Meeting was enriched and enlightened by an inreach/outreach workshop held in November under the leadership of Walter Brown (Langley Hill) and Ken Stockbridge (Pata-

psco). We celebrated the Christmas season with a potluck supper, carol singing, candle lighting, and an exchange of homemade gifts. Meetings for Worship were held on Christmas and New Year's Eves. Meeting continues to support the work of Friend Wendy Dotson, who is a volunteer with Midwives for Haiti. We finance a mobile clinic's monthly visits to treat women in the village of Naran. In February Wendy makes her sixth trip to Haiti, where she will be training local midwives and setting up a new birth center in Trianon.

### GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING

Gunpowder Friends Meeting is actively refurbishing the Meeting House benches to make them more stable and to improve their appearance. We are getting assistance from a cabinetmaker that works at Friends School of Baltimore. We have also increased the number of cushioned chairs for those Friends who need the added back support. First Day School is very happy with the success of the Faith and Play curriculum as well as the impressive fund raising from the Christmas bake sale. FDS teachers are planning for additional storage facilities to keep up with their growing activities. The adult religious education program called "Quakerism" has been renamed "The Quaker Way" and is now occurring at the rise of Meeting on the 2nd First Day. Attendance is dramatically improved and feedback is encouraging. The topic changes from month to month, so participants do not need to prepare ahead of time. This makes it more attractive to those of us whose schedules may not allow us to attend consistently.

### HERNDON FRIENDS MEETING

Started in mid-January, Herndon is sponsoring a midweek Meeting for Worship at 7:00 pm on Wednesdays. The Meeting is for anyone in our community who wishes to come together for worship. Also new to Herndon Meeting is a lively Friendly Eights book club that is focused on reading journals and testaments of Friends. Currently, the group is reading and preparing to discuss Mary Penington's *A brief account of my exercises from my childhood*. The text was first published in 1848 and can be found online for free. Two books have already been discussed, *John Woolman's Journal* and Thomas Kelly's *Testament of Devotion*. The group hopes to learn more about the lives and beliefs of Quakers who came before us.

### HOMWOOD FRIENDS MEETING

In late May, we held our 3rd annual Family Weekend at Catoctin. Friends were welcome to share food enthusiastically cheffed by Debbie Kennison. Adults and children eagerly hunted for that elusive perfect marshmallow-roasting stick for cooking their own Smores over the conversational indoor fireplace or campfire where we worshipped and sang. Whether thrashing pond water with arms while swimming or paddles while canoeing, hiking or just plain talking, all enjoyed a simply fun weekend!

In July, our electricity bill was \$0.00 due to all the solar power collected. On September 25th, Homewood held Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting. Especial thanks to Member Mibs Pell and the Hospitality Committee for organizing a sumptuous potluck banquet. Shirley Dodson who is Pendle Hill's Director of Communications gave an interactive afternoon presentation, illustrating Pendle Hill's history, current status, and enriching programs. Volunteers spoke about their enlightening Pendle Hill experiences.

Members Herb and Nancy Clark were honored by the Greater Ecumenical Development Corporation (GEDCO) for their compassion as perpetual volunteers at a local food pantry (CARES). Homewood is a longstanding member of GEDCO which is CARES' umbrella community organization. By writing about her spiritual journey, Member Charlotte Kennison qualified for a four-week Youth Pilgrimage, sponsored by FWCC, in the UK, Netherlands and Belgium along with 13 other participants.

Upon reading of the House and Grounds Annual Report in January, 2012, we approved to minute Member Graham Entwistle's tremendous contributions of time and energy. In particular, he helped the Meeting to understand the complexity of foundational issues we encountered last year which resulted in the removal and laying down of a new dining room floor and plumbing repairs.

Homewood History Day will take place on March 25th when we will celebrate many of the events that have taken place over the years using quite a collection of clippings and other memorabilia. It will be a chance to welcome back some of our beloved elders. If any of you would like to attend or have items related to Homewood that you would like to share or lend, please bring or send them along for display.

### HOPEWELL CENTER MONTHLY MEETING

We have been enjoying our ongoing discussions of the monthly Queries; listening to Friends tell their "spiritual journey" stories in Adult RE; and welcoming many visitors and new attenders, including young ones. Throughout the spring, our Young Friends will be visiting local Friends Meetings and they've already enjoyed an inspiring visit to Shepherdstown Preparative Meeting. Our Seekers Group continues on with its lively exchange of ideas and reflections on the latest revision of *Faith & Practice*. For fun, many Hopewell-ians have been gathering at the Good Natured Green General Store in Martinsburg (owned by members, Pam and Jim Smith) for delicious, home-cooked food and down home bluegrass and bluesey music sessions. Sadly, we wish to mark the passing of Mary Ann Joliffe Light. She attended Hopewell Meeting when she was young with her parents; she is buried in Hopewell's graveyard along with her family.

### LITTLE BRITAIN MONTHLY MEETING

Little Britain appreciates the visits by Betsy Myer. When she joined us in November, she observed that, other than West Branch, no other Meetings she has visited use the *Friends Bible Study* published by Evangelical Friends. She thought other Friends might like to be aware of this publication to use in promoting Bible Study. We can get discussion, even though it sometimes seems to be promoting different ideology than we share. Having the Presiding Clerk travel to all of our Meetings seems time consuming and we think she is ideal in her position. Thanks Betsy!

### MAURY RIVER FRIENDS MEETING

This past summer, three of our Young Friends, Silvia and Laurel Sheffield and Maya DeHart, asked one of Maury River's treasured educators, Elise Sheffield, to lead them in a study of the Bible, as was done sporadically during the busy school year. As emerging members of society, they felt a real disadvantage not knowing more about Biblical references encountered in daily and academic life. They decided to meet twice a week, eventually meeting 7-8 times,

with these rules: each session was limited to an hour, they would have food, and they would meet at different locations (such as the coffee shop). No preparation was required (except by their teacher!) and each student brought her own Bible. They studied Genesis, Exodus, Ten Commandments, some of the more sensational stories, laws, Prophets, Psalms, Ezekiel, Song of Solomon, Prophets, Gospels, Church history, and letters. Their approach was fresh and they all found their project, which came to be called the Bible Revival, to be great fun and quite enriching.

### MIDLOTHIAN FRIENDS MEETING

The two charities under the care of Midlothian Friends Meeting, The Thrifty Quaker and FriendShare, continue to fulfill their missions beyond our expectations. Over the last 3 months about \$10,000 has been raised by the Meeting's thrift store, The Thrifty Quaker, and given primarily to local charities. Additionally, about \$40,000 worth of household goods and clothing have been given away to those in need. Due to its continued good work, the store is held in high esteem by the Midlothian community. Over the last year, our Meeting's QUAKER (outreach) committee has started to utilize the public witness of the store as a setting to provide the general public with information about Quakers. This effort has brought us new attenders at our Meeting. FriendShare had its annual fund drive during the end of 2011, raising about \$12,000 for its work of providing one-time financial assistance to non-Quakers. FriendShare partners with private and governmental social services efforts to assist recipients to end their cycle of poverty, violence, or addiction.

Our Meeting thoroughly enjoyed hosting the BYM Junior Young Friends for their December conference at our Meeting House. We have a comfortable wooded location that is easily accessible with lots of outdoor spaces and nature activities to occupy any visiting group. We really enjoy sharing our Meeting House and grounds with other Quakers. We hope to see other groups in the future.

The renovation of our Meeting House continues due to gifts of money, time, and talent from Friends. The Meeting House has recently been painted, and a troublesome and damaged extra large glass sliding door has recently been replaced. We are now exploring the replacement of the old, stained worship room carpet, and the removal of very large dead trees from near our Meeting House and RE building.

The Meeting community has been making an effort to re-energize our commitment to our Quaker values and process, and the spiritual community we have built over the last 25 years. A gradual, significant decline in participation within the Meeting, including the decline of children in our RE program, had resulted in a loss of energy and sense of community for a number of Friends. This has required some honest soul-searching as individuals and as a group—not an easy process. We are committed to continue with this spiritual process in faith that we will heal each other and our spiritual community. Although we have lost the presence of some dear Friends over the last few years, we have also been blessed with many new Friends who are bringing us enthusiasm, wisdom, and a fresh spiritual awareness as we all go through this process together. We are hopeful that those we've lost will rejoin us - we miss them! We are beginning the New Year with a renewed sense of community, a gradual increase in worship attendance, and new approaches in how we practice our Quaker faith.

## MONONGALIA FRIENDS MEETING

This past October, we hosted a Fall Gathering of West Virginia Friends. The theme of the meeting was how our Quaker faith and practice informs our response to environmental problems and leads us to solutions. We enjoyed the workshop, presentation, and fellowship of Campbell Plowden (State College), who manages the Center for Amazon Community Ecology. Campbell spoke about his efforts to promote grassroots, ecologically-based development in the Amazon region. A special part of the program was a visit to Arts Monongalia, an art gallery featuring local artists. Friend Ann Payne has organized an exhibit that highlights the problems of environmental degradation in our region. The exhibit, *Reflections on Dunkard Creek*, features artwork of species killed in the poisoning of nearby Dunkard Creek (PA). In addition our Meeting has formed a listserv available to all West Virginia Quakers, which allows us to communicate with Friends who belong to other Yearly Meetings. We are, for the second year, hosting a series of documentaries for the community that address issues important to us as Friends. It has been heartening for us to be able to provide screenings of these films which would not otherwise be available to Morgantown residents; in addition, the discussion after the films has proven to be rewarding.

## NOTTINGHAM MONTHLY MEETING

Small Meetings often find the rich heritage of multiple historic Meeting Houses and burial grounds a bit of a burden. We've recently seen them as opportunities for connecting with fellow seekers. The Brick Meeting House in Calvert, Maryland (which for decades hosted East Nottingham Preparative Meeting) now serves as the gateway to a tour of the Nottingham Lots – thirty-seven 500-acre parcels granted by William Penn in 1701. A granite map stone directs one to markers on each Lot. The community energy behind this project and curiosity about renewed activity around the Meeting House prompted us to commit to hosting Meeting for Worship here (previously a summer event) year round (first and third Sundays at 10:30). We're getting 15-25 people on a First Day, many of whom would be unlikely to come north to our Meeting House in Oxford, PA, despite its advantages in terms of electricity, indoor plumbing, and thermostatically controlled heat. The Cecil County Maryland Historical Trust, which since 1975 has owned the "Little Brick" property in Rising Sun (where West Nottingham Preparative Meeting met until 1904), celebrated the bicentennial of that Meeting House on October 1. Meeting members were there with displays giving visitors an opportunity to learn not only about the rich heritage of the Quaker settlers of this region but also that Spirit continues to move us in joyful companionship and service today. Revival, to be great fun and quite enriching.

## PATUXENT FRIENDS MEETING

Several of us recently had the privilege of participating on clearness committees for new members. Gathering for an hour or two of Spirit-filled sharing reminds us of the richness of life in our Meeting community. We listen profoundly to the attender as he shares his spiritual journey and how, at this point, she feels called to commit more fully to the life of our meeting. It is touching to hear of her challenges and her passions. We are humbled to learn the aspects of our community that draw others to join in our corporate spiritual life. Joining with a prospective member in this way is a sacred duty. It is the opportunity to support him or her as he tests his leadings. It may be the first time he has thoughtfully articulated his

faith and his inspiration to others. This makes for rich and personal conversation, and we respect the exchange with the confidentiality that it deserves. Our reports back to Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business are a high-level summary of our conversation that candidates have indicated they are comfortable in sharing with the broader Meeting community.

Patuxent Friends are fortunate to enjoy the presence of several of our founding members. Some are birthright Friends that bring a depth of Spirit that anchors us when we are tempted

to pursue a tangential course. The majority of us are convinced Friends. While we don't enjoy the same level of Quaker history, we bring diversity of experience and perspective that surely enriches our Meeting. Whatever our background as committee members, we approach these interactions as a gift. As the candidate shares her journey and articulates her measure of the Light, each of us has the opportunity to look upon our own path and check our direction. We are reminded of the important things that led us to this community and encourage us to stay active and engaged. Just as for the new member, we are supported with the opportunity to test our own leadings and check for clarity.

## RICHMOND FRIENDS MEETING

In Ninth Month, Peace and Social Concerns Committee and the Richmond Peace Education Center sponsored the AFSC exhibit of Eyes Wide Open boots and shoes, representing Virginia's U.S. military and Afghan civilian casualties in Afghanistan at the Family Peace Festival. The exhibit was highlighted in an article about the Festival in the Richmond Times Dispatch.

Beginning last summer, and continuing intermittently through the fall and winter seasons, the Adult Spiritual Education Committee has hosted a series of First Day presentations by individual Friends, *The Many Experiences and Expressions of Spirituality*. These programs of deep and insightful witness are well attended. In Second Month, faculty from the School of the Spirit will invite Friends to explore "musical pitch," a beloved gift that helps us embody listening, knowing, and oneness with "that of God" in our daily lives. In First Month, the Religious Education Committee held a First Day full morning workshop for parents, "Integrating Quaker Values into Family Life," led by Harriet Heath. Activities and care were provided for children and a potluck lunch was also shared. New members of the Meeting are Jay Tubb and David Bartlett.

Occupy Richmond has been invited to use the Meeting's facilities for planning and organizing purposes. Activist and Friend Al Schnitzius has offered locally designed Prayer Flags to interested supporters, who are encouraged to display them in their yards and homes. The funds he collects are designated for the Occupy movement.



2012 Women's Retreat photograph by Carol Beigel

Plans are now being finalized for able-bodied Friends to journey to Alabama in Fourth Month for a week, as they join work camp efforts that are rebuilding areas devastated by last year's (and the more recent) tornadoes.

With the legislature in session during First and Second Months, Friends are active in representing issues of concern to their legislators. Friend Sally Gudas, working with the Friends Committee on Commonwealth Legislation (FCCL) and the Virginia Interfaith Council for Public Policy (VICPP) reliably and regularly informs Meeting of action needed to lobby for or against particular bills. Of immediate concern are bills that would expand the death penalty. We continue to voice strong opposition to capital punishment. Several Friends are also regular correspondents to the editorial pages of the Richmond Times Dispatch. The paper has honored their witness on behalf of social justice and environmental concerns by featuring their letters as "Correspondent of the Day" on at least two occasions in the past year.

### WILLIAMSBURG FRIENDS MEETING

Williamsburg currently meets at the Montessori School outside of town, and the school is expanding! The Montessori staff have been wonderful hosts to our Meeting, and we are delighted, but the shortage of space left us scrambling to find a new spot for the library. Fortunately, one of our new attenders, Bill O'Connell, will be housing the library for us. We are so thankful for Bill! We are attempting to reach out to the community by placing advertisements in the local paper.

Our faithful childcare high school student is moving on to JMU this fall. Katrina was well liked by the four children who come to Meeting every other week. She usually joined us for worship if no children attended, and she will be very much missed. The students in first day school studied a variety of topics this year. They discussed the meaning of many words associated with religion, and touched upon some of the stories of the Old Testament. Adult Education addressed the Gospel of Thomas, as well as reading and discussing the new *BYM Faith and Practice*.

We've had several new attenders join us this past year, and this has been enriching. We also lost a faithful attender, Lee Nichols. Lee was an upbeat, knowledgeable attender who was a member Sandy Spring Meeting. His ministry was warm and revealed a tender, kind, helpful, person. We miss him.

### VALLEY FRIENDS MEETING

For the third year in a row, Valley Friends enjoyed a September weekend retreat at the beautiful Shiloh Quaker Camp. Through a multi-generational listening game we gained deeper appreciation for each other. Our traditional s'mores, poetry, storytelling and singing around the campfire brought Saturday evening to a climax. The weather cooperated to allow us one last Meeting for Worship for the season in the beauty of the outdoors.

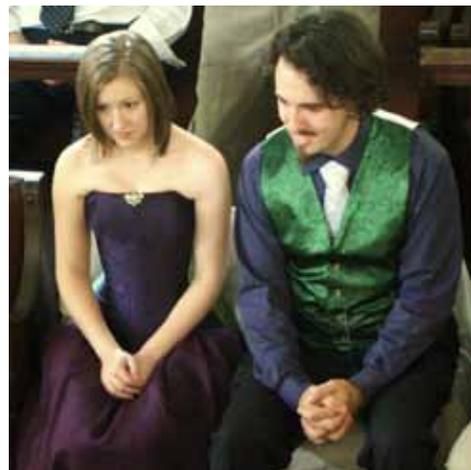
Three weddings highlighted the fall. We signed and sent wedding congratulations and blessings for two young members both whose weddings took place out of town. The third wedding took place at the Meeting House on the last day of the year and brought together a new family of four.

New committees and officers took effect in September bringing needed change. The wonderful dilemma of having a wider age range of ages of youth has resulted in Religious Education Committee creating three separate groups. We continue to enjoy having the youth spend the last 10-20 minutes in Meeting with the adults. Ministry and Worship is sharing the role of greeter with anyone who is interested in doing so. In an effort to help increase participation at Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business, our new Clerk instituted having food available throughout, has asked each committee to describe their particular responsibilities and goals, and has invited children of all ages to gather in the middle. Alternative child care was also made available. Attendance so far has shown an increase.

### YORK FRIENDS MEETING

In October, York Friends held our 3rd annual retreat entitled *Expanding Our Friendships* with 13 Friends in attendance. Joe DiGarbo and Ron Ashby from Lancaster Meeting led a 2-hour introduction to the Alternatives to Violence (AVP) project. This intro sparked enough interest to start planning a 2-day AVP workshop later this spring. Then Friends took the Myers-Briggs inventory (developed by Quakers Katharine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers) to gain a better understanding of how we relate to one another based on personality types. On a lighter note, Friends made up some skits and raised their voices in song to finish the day. Our Meeting House was open to the public once again on New Year's Eve as part of York City's New Year's Revolution. Ed and Fran Norton of Flute and Friends performed their light classical music intermixed with some humor and fun. Other Friends extended hospitality and fellowship to the multitude of guests before and after the 4 concerts. According to one visitor these concerts were better attended than other venues that evening.

York Meeting has opened the Meeting House to Transition Town York, PA to show the *Awakening the Dream, Changing the Dream* symposium twice. The goal is to create an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling and socially just human presence on Earth. It is very well presented not only stating causes and the current problems but encourages everyone to be involved in working together to address the issues. During discussion we realized just how much these 3 parts of environmental sustainability, spiritual fulfillment, and social justice are interwoven. York Friends have been waiting for way to open to do community outreach for several years as we have been considering a Peace Building to provide additional space for First Day School and other activities. We have finally decided to put the building on hold and focus our time and energy on community outreach in the form of a community garden to open in a few months as planting season arrives.



Wren Beckett and Sam Flower Horne  
photography by Lindsey Younkins

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## BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING UPCOMING EVENTS

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

### MARCH

- 4 – Nottingham Quarterly Meeting at Nottingham Monthly Meeting
- 10-11 – Junior Young Friends Conference at Baltimore Monthly Meeting, Stony Run
- 11 – Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting at Baltimore Monthly Meeting, Stony Run
- 17 – Third Month Interim Meeting at Charlottesville Friends Meeting
- 24 – FAP Training at Friends Meeting School
- 30-April 1 – Young Friends Conference

### APRIL

- 14 – *A Ministry of Presence* Workshop from Intervisitation at Sandy Spring Friends Meeting
- 20-22 – Friends Service Weekend at Catoctin Quaker Camp
- 20-22 – Parents of Teens Weekend at Shiloh Quaker Camp
- 21 – Apportionment Meeting at Valley Friends Meeting
- 27-29 – Friends Service Weekend at Shiloh Quaker Camp

### MAY

- 4-6 – Friends Service Weekend at Opequon Quaker Camp
- 11-13 – Junior Young Friends Conference at Opequon Quaker Camp
- 11-13 – Friends Service Weekend at Catoctin Quaker Camp
- 18-20 – Friends Service Weekend at Catoctin Quaker Camp
- 20 – Warrington Quarterly Meeting at Pipe Creek Friends Meeting
- 25-27 – Young Friends Conference

### STAFF AND OFFICERS OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

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