

Interchange

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

ANNUAL SESSION: ACCEPTING GOD'S TIMING

Elizabeth Meyer, Presiding Clerk

Business meeting at Annual Session this summer—Baltimore Yearly Meeting's 342nd—seemed to be about accepting God's timing rather than sticking to human schedules. We had an ambitious agenda, and some of the items took much longer than the Clerk anticipated. More importantly, the Divine message seemed to be: slow down; don't rush anything; take the time to discern fully.

The main item of business this year was the second reading of a proposed revision to our *Faith and Practice*. While Friends expressed gratitude for all the work that went into producing this draft, and many Friends found it inspirational, some raised concerns about various parts of the draft. But more importantly, some Friends were concerned about the process. These Friends felt that the draft brought forward this summer was just too big for us to have meaningful discernment around. How could we just adopt something that many Friends had not thoroughly read and digested? Couldn't we take

the time, even if it takes years, to discuss more fully some of the fundamentals of our faith and of our practice?

One blessing was recognized by all. In the past year, the Faith and Practice Revision Committee visited nearly all of our Meetings to listen to Friends' thoughts on the 2012 draft *Faith and Practice*, and these were considered in bringing forward the 2013 proposed draft. This listening project engaged Friends in discussion of their faith in a new way, and many Meetings studied the draft together. The process of considering *Faith and Practice* has renewed interest in our Yearly Meeting, and it has awakened among us a hunger to talk with one another about our faith.

We felt the presence of the Divine as we labored to find a way forward with our *Faith and Practice*. We did not have unity to accept the 2013 draft, but we recognized it as a gift to us. We asked Nominating Committee to bring forward the names of a new *Faith and Practice* Revision Committee that will use the 2013 draft as a resource. This Committee will present proposed revisions in smaller segments over a period of years. Our *Faith and Practice* may change

God's Timing continued on page 4

ANNUAL SESSION BRINGS NEW EXPERIENCES FOR ALL

*Peg Hansen, Program Committee Clerk
Riley Robinson, General Secretary*

Annual Session is renewing and refreshing. It's the time when we can all truly seek Light together. That's why we've done it 342 times! This August 358 Friends, ages 3 through 88, joined together in the beautiful hills of Frostburg, MD for Annual Session. The weather was cool and inviting, the worship was deep, and the opportunities for learning and growing were plentiful. If you haven't attended yet, please know that you are always welcome.

And please know this: just because we've been doing this for a long time doesn't mean that we won't be trying new things that you might like! Here are a few examples from this summer:

All-age Plenary Session – We began this Wednesday afternoon session a few years ago as an

activity for the whole family (that could mean as a nuclear family, but also as a Yearly Meeting family) where we would focus on a Quaker-related topic together. The presentations have varied greatly from year to year, we've learned a lot, and we've all had a lot of fun! This year we took on a topic that we'd never tried before. We talked about privilege – when we felt that we've had a special privilege and when we've felt like we've had less than others. Dividing up into small groups gave us a chance to share in a meaningful way. Not only did older and younger Friends learn from each other, but people from the same Meeting found out new things about each other, too!

The Working Group on Racism has also held this activity at Local Meetings with great results. Thanks, Gail Thomas and Elizabeth Duverlie!

The Healing Center – Amidst a busy, exciting week, it's really nice to have a spot to peace out with Friends. The Center was back this year to provide a welcoming, worshipful space for healing and nurture. Three healers offered



Annual Session 2013 photo by Nony Dutton

*Annual Session continued on
page 4*

BYM YOUTH SAFETY POLICY

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEWLY REVISED VERSION

Riley Robinson, General Secretary

Baltimore Yearly Meeting approved a revised and updated version of its Youth Safety Policy at the June 2013 Interim Meeting. The original policy had been approved by our insurance company. This time we took a step further and consulted a lawyer who specializes in this area of law throughout our process. We worked with the law firm of Erika Cole in Owings Mills, MD, which specializes in church matters. A great deal of this practice, however, turns out to be with managing matters of abuse.

Certain factors made it especially important for us to update our policy at this time.

- Laws in this area continue to change. Among these changes is greater receptiveness to claims about events that may have happened long ago;
- New situations had arisen which the original policy had not anticipated, For instance, the new environment of electronic communications, such as social networking;
- We wanted to make sure that we were providing a system with adequate confidentiality for all parties. This requires special thought, given the traditional ways that the Quaker community handles business.
- BYM has an organizational emphasis on child and youth activities which merits a special level of responsiveness. Additionally, the policy covers a wide range of activities with children and youth, in a variety of situations.

These conditions apply to Local Meetings, too. Please take some time to review this material at the BYM website and make sure that your Meeting reviews it as well. This would especially include those responsible for religious education, for any youth activities, and for insurance and safety issues at the Meeting. Develop effective policies, train everyone about them regularly, and document that everyone has been trained.

There are three document sections to consider: one is the Youth Safety Policy itself, then the Appendix that comes after the policy with clarifications and forms, and third is a section reviewing child abuse statutes by state in the five jurisdictions in which BYM operates. The policy applies directly to the Yearly Meeting and all of its operations.

It is strongly hoped that this policy and the accompanying material will be used as a reference by Local Meetings. Local Meetings are independent entities and need to assess their own needs. It becomes clearer by the day that everyone in the community is responsible for providing a safe environment for children and youth. This is something that requires proactive planning and attentiveness on a regular basis. When the necessary practices become understood, they need not be an exceptional burden, but rather something to be appreciated and something that will attract families to our community.

The Yearly Meeting and all Local Meetings must follow the law. Additionally we all need to be aware of what is required of us by insurance companies. Baltimore Yearly Meeting has an umbrella policy which gives Meetings the option of getting their own insur-



Annual Session 2013 photo by Nony Dutton

ance through BYM at reasonable rates. Most Meetings choose to have their own coverage under this policy. BYM's provider, GuideOne, is one of the few insurers who still provides coverage for matters involving child and youth safety. For years, GuideOne has provided anyone covered with tried-and-true information about abuse prevention. This information is available at the GuideOne website. Currently, GuideOne says that it sees 20 to 25 new cases per month involving abuse among its clients across the country. It focuses primarily on religious institutions, retirement residences, and the like.

We all want to create an environment in our worship community where everyone is truly safe. BYM has done a lot of the leg work to help us all have this. As a result of this experience, BYM has approved an ongoing working group which will annually consider if any updates are needed to the policy. Please take advantage of this opportunity. If you have any questions please contact General Secretary Riley Robinson at gensec@bym-rsf.org.

LANGLEY HILL FRIEND

PUBLISHES QUAKER-THEMED NOVEL

Chuck Kleymeyer, of Langley Hill Friends Meeting, has just published an intergenerational, interfaith novel that is appropriate for both youth and adult RE: *Yeshu: A Novel for the Open-Hearted*. This book invites its readers in to join a storytelling carpenter, his young neighbors Daavi and Shoshana, and a band of fellow seekers on a journey that forever alters their lives, and still impacts ours. The tale they share was written for readers of all ages and spiritual backgrounds. Its author is a culture and development sociologist and performing storyteller. For five decades he has worked and often lived with ethnic peoples of the Americas, joining their struggles to improve their lives, revitalize their cultures, and restore the earth. Most of that time, he was also imagining Yeshu. To learn more, or purchase, go to www.YeshuNovel.com.

BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING CAMPS FINISH RECORD SEASON!

Jane Megginson, Camp Program Manger

The Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camping Program season just ended. We are excited to report that we had the highest ever number of campers this summer – 596 campers! Our camps altogether were 95% full. Over the past several years we have built a pond at Shiloh, changed our advertising venues and ad campaigns, and started a Camp Open House program where we meet potential camp families in various locations throughout our region. All of this work has paid off, thanks to the efforts by the Camping Program Committee, Camp Families, Development Committee, Members of the Yearly Meeting, contributors to the pond and financial aid funds, and the Camp Staff. We look forward to maintaining or increasing this level of enrollment in the future!



Shiloh Quaker Camp photo by Jenifer Morris

Over the course of the summer, thousands of miles were hiked, hundreds of miles were canoed, tens of miles were tubed, many rock heights were climbed, birthdays were celebrated, ponds, rivers and pools were swum in, games were played, tens of thousands of songs were sung, over 50 workshops were participated in, tarps were set up and taken down, hundreds of hours of service work were completed, over 45 thousand individual meals were served, Meeting for Worship was held over 150 times, and much joy and merriment ensued! If you would like to see more details about what was happening at the camps all summer long, please see the camp website: www.bymcamps.org and click on the links to News from Camps in Session!

CONNECTING LOCAL MEETINGS AT ANNUAL SESSION IDEAS, WISDOM, AND NURTURE

Marcy Seitel, Clerk, Vision Implementation Committee

Sixty Friends exchanged ideas and discussed issues close to their hearts during the Connecting Local Meetings afternoon at Annual Session. The ad hoc Vision Implementation Committee, along with the Program Committee, planned this event to meet Friends' needs to learn from one another about the very real issues that each Meeting faces. There is always much information and insight when Friends gather to share their experiences, but we also shared our love for our Meetings and our joys and frustrations that are part of our daily life together. Those who attended felt the support of this kind of sharing.

Through regular visiting, BYM has heard from many Friends that they long to feel more connected to other Local Meetings. As the ad hoc Vision Implementation Committee has discussed how we can live more nearly into our 2011 Vision Statement, we have found that Meetings need support from other Meetings to be healthy. Quarterly Meetings and other regional gatherings answer this need for some, but Friends still need other ways to give and receive support for the big and small things that are part of daily life. This event at Annual Session was a step toward "creating opportunities for Friends to meet together in that which is eternal."

The goals set for the Connecting Local Meetings afternoon were:

- To celebrate and share with each other the good things happening in our Local Meetings
- To talk in depth about topics of concern to all Meetings

- To broaden our perspective on the everyday life of our Meetings by sharing our knowledge, experience, and wisdom with one another
- To help take the pulse of the Yearly Meeting in relation to important topics

Each of the four sessions was led by a person or persons who have held this concern for a while and could bring a seasoned perspective to the topic. After a brief introduction, Friends responded to queries and discussed their ideas. Deep insights were shared, but so also were very practical ideas. Friends became enthused about new possibilities.

The four topics explored were 1) Advancement and Outreach, led by Katie Caughlan; 2) Membership for Young Adult Friends, led by Campbell Plowden; 3) Pastoral Care, led by Jean Marie Prestwidge-Barch; and 4) Religious Education, led by Amy Schmaljohn. We are grateful to these facilitators helping to make this event be so meaningful. Friends commented that they found great new insights in these sessions.

Would you like to know what sixty Friends talked about? Our notes will be available on the BYM website - on the Vision Implementation page - in early September. Come read and connect to other Friends in many Local Meetings.

ACCEPTING GOD’S TIMING LEADS TO DISCERNMENT

God’s Timing continued from page 1

many times over the next few years, but electronic media will help us keep up with it. As we discern, we expect to engage our Yearly Meeting community in a deeper conversation about our faith and our practice, and we expect to do it in God’s good time.

Our budget discernment presented another opportunity to accept God’s timing. The budget proposal reflected staff salary expenses based on the salary of our previous Development Director, who resigned in June. Some Friends objected to this amount, believing that we were rushing to fill the position without listening to concerns about the expense and characteristics of the position. While some Friends were concerned that we would not meet our budget if the position remained vacant for very long, others felt that volunteers could do some of the required work in the interim and with the reduced staffing costs due to the vacancy, there was no need to fear. Friends approved the budget as presented with the promise that the Development Committee, Camping Program Committee and Supervisory Committee would meet together and listen deeply to one another around these concerns. This may slow the hiring process, but it will strengthen our community in the end. Again, we learned that we had to follow God’s timing, rather than our own.

Our Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee presented proposed revised Guidelines for Embracing the Ministry of Friends. These guidelines provide steps for taking on the ministry of a particular Friend as a ministry of the whole Yearly Meeting. After the deep discernments around both Faith and Practice and the budget, we did not have the energy for discernment around these guidelines, so they will have a second reading at a future Interim Meeting. You can find these proposed guidelines at the Yearly Meeting’s website. God’s timing, again.

As Presiding Clerk, I have learned that I only think I plan the agenda. As our worshipping community engages in discernment, I feel the Spirit leading us and setting the pace. Perhaps the best outcome of any discernment process is trusting the Divine and accepting God’s timing.



Annual Session 2013 photo by Nony Dutton

ANNUAL SESSION 2013 HIGHLIGHTS

Annual Session continued from page 1

afternoon or evening hours to Friends, offering shoulder massage, Reiki, and other means of healing. If you are a healer, please consider joining Steph Bean, Mary Campbell and Friends next year to share your gifts.

Connecting Local Meetings – Quaker Meetings have new experiences and find new solutions all the time. Why not share? This was the simple key to our new Friday afternoon activity, which Friends enjoyed. See more about this session in the article on page 3.

The two evening plenaries dovetailed each other in an interesting way – on Tuesday, Adelphi Meeting’s Michael Newheart asked us to consider deeply “Where the words come from,” when we speak and listen in worship. On Friday Robin Mohr asked us to listen closely to the different languages of Friends, both literally from Friends around the world, and in terms of the language that each of us uses to express ourselves spiritually and theologically. Listening deeply and gaining real understanding ground us all in our faith with each other and with Friends around the world – and then we find how beautiful our networks can be! Both of these talks will be posted for download at the BYM website for your contemplation and for discussion groups. See what you think.

The 2014 Annual Session Theme is *Transformation and Healing*. George Fox advised us to “keep thy mind down low, up to the Lord God.” And “there thou wilt come to receive and feel the physician of value, which clothes people in their right mind, whereby they may serve God and do his will.”

We are aware that Frostburg State does not have the most luxurious accommodations, but with the choice to be simple has come several stable years of room and board charges, allowing more Friends to be able to afford to attend. We keep working on possible improvements.

We look forward to seeing you next year from August 5-10 at Frostburg State University in Frostburg, MD.

WHAT SUSTAINS YOU?

Comfort. Inspiration. Friendship. The joy on the faces of children as they tell of their summer time at camp. The presence of the Divine when we gather in Meeting for Worship at Annual Session. The laughter shared during potluck meals at Interim Meeting Day. Knowing that our efforts to mend a broken world, however small those efforts may seem, are part of a larger community working for justice and peace. What binds you to your Local Meeting and to Baltimore Yearly Meeting? If being with Friends is part of what sustains you, now is a good time for you to help sustain the Yearly Meeting and the Religious Society of Friends. There is an envelope in this *Interchange* to help you make a contribution to Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT TO ANNUAL SESSION

Riley Robinson, General Secretary

Along the west side of the Chesapeake Bay, near Galesville, MD, is a broad inlet called Tenthouse Creek. This is the birthplace of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, where Puritan settlers felt a transformation within themselves through the experience of silent worship and then converted to Quakerism. The name of the creek comes from shelters erected along its shores for our General Meeting to assemble, as it did all the way back to the arrival of George Fox 342 years ago.

We can imagine Fox's gift to Friends by what we know of his writings: To stretch our minds and hearts through mercy and care, to transform our lives and the lives of others by treating everyone with integrity, and urging us to open fully to God as equals with each other.

Such is the nature of the birth of Baltimore Yearly Meeting through the transformation of these settlers. This change would lead Friends to follow Christ's admonition to be "in this world, but not of it."

Transformation is not without risk, but at times comes without an alternative, including where matters of deep conscience are involved. Across centuries, this has meant surviving governmental oppression, resisting wars all around, and seeking to transform the wider culture by infusing it with these very same qualities, not just through perseverance, but through inventiveness and inspiration.

We may know, in the way that we know each other and we know humanity, that Friends also listened and shared about the care of Local Meetings and about how to knit together a religious society. These topics would have included Christian and Quaker education, the care of the Friends community, and ministry and evangelism.

Just the other day, on this Friday afternoon, we tried something new for us. Many of us gathered in groups to listen and share about connecting Local Meetings and about their care, and about how to knit together a religious society. The topics included religious education, membership, ministry and pastoral care, and advancement and outreach.

So over time, the terms that we use to express our core concerns do reflect evolution, but hold much the same energy.

George Fox writes of incidents of healing in his journal. Reports about James Nayler and others exist as well. This week, after much preparation, we brought back the Healing Center. So over time, we are led to invite transformational energy into our lives in ways that are alternative to the mainstream.

This year we have engaged in profound work, travelling from Meeting to Meeting to listen to Friends who had studied *Faith and Practice*. We also held the work of the Vision Implementation Committee in the Light as it, and its subgroups, studied and worked, growing to more fully realize the workings and needs of our Yearly Meeting. We are witnessing changes in our Yearly Meeting, and these changes invite more change.



Annual Session 2013 photo by Nony Dutton

The image of the chrysalis has been given to us to describe our own transformation. We might open ourselves to the possibility that this is not a time of a new chrysalis, but a continued development of the chrysalis that formed when the Yearly Meeting chose years ago to greatly expand the camps. After all, a mere decade or two is not so long for us. And growth and development can be awkward. The sequence can be squirmy and proportions can be lopsided, but the process must take the time that it must take. The camps have grown to be most of what we do as an organization. To move to wholeness and balance, the camps must not be diminished, but the rest of who we are may need to grow and develop. The energy for this transformation would come from mutuality, relationship and integrity. At some point, an image for this whole may resemble the yin and yang symbol.

It has been mentioned that these transformations happen on a very basic level, and involve the whole being. What does that mean in Quaker terms? If we are talking about change at a "cellular level," is each one of us a cell in the body of the Yearly Meeting? Then does the change call for our whole energy? What would that look like? This year Friend Arthur Larrabee is phrasing how each one of us may approach Meeting for Business in this way: Passion is natural and normal in the course of struggling with one's concerns. It may simply be that one Friend expresses a deep concern with great passion. However, once expressed, the concern is no longer one's own. One must release the concern, or perhaps release oneself from the concern. Speak with whole heart, take a deep breath, and step back.

Is the change even more basic, as at a "molecular" level? Then we need to remember our most profound selves and souls.

Simplicity may include remembering that we are called to worship God, and not Quakerism, the Light, and not our own support community, the Holy Spirit, and not the set of familiar behaviors that we think of as ourselves. This access to the Divine may require open-eyed humility and open-hearted mercy above all else. We must allow healing within ourselves in order for it to happen. We must open to the Light to see the truth inside us. We must surrender some of what we think we know in order to realize our true leadings and callings.

We can do all this if we want to, and if we remain aware that the whole of the life of the Spirit is greater than ourselves, and if we do sense that it is the Spirit's true leading.

THE EPISTLES REPORTED TO ANNUAL SESSION AT FROSTBURG, MD 8TH MONTH 4TH DAY, 2013

To Friends Everywhere:

Baltimore Yearly Meeting Friends gathered in Frostburg, Maryland for our 342nd Annual Session during an unusually cool week in August, warmed by the love we feel for each other, and by the Light of God. Our theme for the week was “Growing from Common Roots Toward the Light.”

What are our common roots? How can Universalist Friends and those from a Christian or prophetic tradition find common ground? Can we truly heal the divisions that lie underneath the surface of our Yearly Meeting? An introductory retreat attended by about thirty Friends focused on leadings and witness, spiritual discipline and gospel order. This set the ground for the week where we explored the theme of unity and diversity in business sessions, workshops, worship, Bible study, worship sharing, and plenaries. Perhaps most intensely, we discovered each other’s understandings of our shared faith in individual conversations, as we broke bread or walked together to the next programmed event. As one Friend said: “I came to these meetings prepared to listen, and was moved.”

At our BYM opening session, Presiding Clerk Elizabeth “Betsy” Meyer showed us an Edward Hicks painting of the Peaceable Kingdom, pointing out the long line of Friends in the background, and the little child joyfully presiding among the animals. On Tuesday evening Michael Newheart reflected on the texts and textures of messages offered in Meeting for Worship, based on his experience in his own Meeting. He spoke of “loving to feel the place where words come from,” and reminded us that “power” was even more common in the writings of George Fox than “light.” He urged us to feel the power of God in our minds, hearts and bodies, and to remember that “the power of the Lord is over all.”

On Wednesday afternoon, the Yearly Meeting divided into two groups to focus on a common theme. Friends approximately twelve

and older divided into intergenerational discussion circles to explore how we experience privilege or lack of privilege in various aspects of our lives. Those younger than twelve and their families also had a lively exchange about privilege, and what it feels like to be treated fairly or unfairly. We have also embarked on a “one book project”, asking all of our Meetings to read and study *The New Jim Crow: An Examination of Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color-Blindness*. We were deeply moved by the Spiritual State of the Meeting report from the South Mountain Friends Fellowship, a prison worship group under the care of Patapsco Friends Meeting. Prison might be described as “the closest thing to hell on earth,” the prisoners wrote, “but God is there too.”

Throughout the week, worship sharing queries prompted us to think of our Quaker testimonies as springboards for action rather than merely an opportunity for introspection. In Bible study we reflected on God’s intention that we care for the poor and vulnerable and the strangers among us. An enticing menu of afternoon workshops brought us together around common interests, lifted up new concerns, and challenged us to live our faith more fully. We celebrated 30 years of the Spiritual Formation Program of Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

We acknowledge the enormous expectations we place on our beloved staff, and considered how we can ease their burdens. We were also reminded of the urgent financial needs of some of our treasured programs. Our retirement community, Friends House, is facing the need for substantial building renovations. Friends Wilderness Center, in the mountains of West Virginia, is struggling to meet its ongoing expenses. Our beloved Friend Ann Riggs, whose ministry as Principal of Friends Theological College in Kenya has been embraced by the Yearly Meeting, needs substantial funds to cover the remaining year of her tenure. We see right-ordered support for our staff and programs as a matter of integrity. Our Youth Programs Manager spoke of what a blessing it is to be here, sharing this pain and love as we practice the Holy Experiment. The ministry of visitors sponsored by our Intervisitation Program deeply moved us, as they reminded us to faithfully tend the fire that God has lighted in our hearts.

Consideration of a new *Faith and Practice* absorbed much of our attention this year. We are enormously grateful to the committee that has labored over the past dozen years to prepare a draft, and particularly for their dedication in visiting nearly all of our Meetings over eight months to discuss the draft and listen attentively to concerns and suggestions. We engaged deeply with each other as we strove to understand what *Faith and Practice* means and what role it serves. How can a document express our faith? Can we come to unity when our beliefs are so different? We felt that we could not absorb and consider so much new text at once, especially since some Friends still have serious reservations. We agreed to appoint a new committee that will consider what has been written and the concerns that have been raised, and bring sections of a new *Faith and Practice* to us over a period of several years, for deep discernment.

Consideration of the draft has opened up a conversation about what we believe, and what it is that binds us together. This is an awesome gift. We have already begun the work of acknowledging our differences, and embracing the challenge they pose. By



Annual Session 2013 photo by Nony Dutton



Annual Session 2013 photo by Nony Dutton

talking openly with each other about our own deeply held beliefs and unique individual experiences, we know we can learn to love each other better. One Friend suggested that we are in a chrysalis stage—a messy interim between caterpillar and butterfly. We embrace our state of transition, and move forward in faith. Our Clerk reminded us that forgiveness is a gift that we give ourselves.

Robin Mohr, Executive Secretary, Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas, joined us for the week and presented the Carey Memorial Lecture, "Growing from Common Roots Toward the Light." Robin spoke of convergent Friends: Conservative, Evangelical, and Liberal Friends longing to be radically inclusive. She urged us to become "bilingual" in listening to each other's experiences of faith. She spoke lovingly to the concerns that simmered this week, and gifted us with a hopeful message of what it means to be a people who listen to God. People are hungry for what we as Friends have tasted. We should stop seeing ourselves as refugees and envision ourselves as immigrants shaping our future, living up to the Light that we have. She described the world of Friends as a forest with many groves, growing toward the Light from common ground.

The spirit of our young people lightened our hearts. On Thursday we enjoyed an "All-Age Celebration" which included activity tables, a candle-lit labyrinth, and ice cream sundaes for all. It was a joy to have the entire Junior Yearly Meeting join us one morning to share a report on their activities and lead us in song. The report on our Camping Program, our largest single Yearly Meeting program, was profoundly moving. The directors of the Teen Adventure Foot Program spoke of how rain on a tin roof drowns out every other sound, even a group of teenagers singing at the top of their lungs. "We thought the rain was going to stop," they said, "we kept thinking it would stop. But after a while we embraced the reality that we were all going to get wet." When a continuing deluge delayed a planned canoe trip, the campers turned the wait into a joyful, all-inclusive, muddy game of Ultimate Frisbee. Campers who might have felt merely drenched and miserable were instead bubbling over with stories of their adventures, aware of the power of their own voice and action.

Can we be joyful as our children are? When faced with obstacles and controversy, can we not just endure hard times, but rejoice in them? Times of struggle give us the opportunity to explore alter-

native ways of experiencing joy, and to understand that the Spirit is ever-present. God has certainly been present with us this week.

EPISTLE OF YOUNG ADULT FRIENDS

To Friends everywhere:

Young Adults Friends had an introductory paragraph.

In January, Young Adult Friends (YAFs) gathered together at Stony Run Friends Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland. We were joined by Young Dog Friend Chunsa Macfarlane who was joining us as part of her ministry of keeping toes clean. In the evening we hosted a potluck inviting the greater community to join us for a night of singing though a strict moratorium on Christmas carols was imposed. Friends brought bongos, kazoos and a washtub bass for the event and fun and fellowship was had by all present. Later, Friends gathered for frolicking outside in the snow before deciding hot chocolate was the best thing ever.

Young Adult Friends met once again in mid-May for a cozy gathering at Hopewell Centre Monthly Meeting in Clearbrook, Virginia. Friends engaged in a bit of roadside cleanup for the Meeting, bravely forging onward even in the face of an untimely downpour. In need of a hot meal once done, friends came together to create pirogues from scratch, which quickly became a learning experience for all. The conference additionally featured a viewing of the movie *I ♥ Huckabees*, complete with a lively discussion on existentialism; an abundance of cookies and cake; an extreme scavenger hunt for the meeting room light switch and plenty of quality conversation.

At Annual Session—held at Frostburg State University in Frostburg, Maryland—YAFs live together for a week within a single dorm. Despite this closeness, it often seems that we are farther away from one another than ever. Young Adult Friends hold so many diverse roles within Baltimore Yearly Meeting that scheduling conflicts within the YAF community easily outstrip the number of Skittles on the dorm floor (which is saying something). Young Adult Friends are Friendly Adult Presences, Friends Committee on National Legislation representatives, Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) volunteers, Annual Session Bookstore Managers, Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee members, Assistant Annual Session Bookstore Managers, Annual Session Photographers, Interim



Annual Session 2013 photo by Nony Dutton

Meeting Recording Clerks, American Friends Service Committee members, Youth Program Committee members, Working Group on Racism members, and Program Committee representatives — and that’s before this year’s nominations go through.

But we power through adversity. We gather together to master essential survival skills such as playing overcomplicated board games, coloring in dinosaurs and Hello Kitty, and completing Advanced Level Three-Person Double-Ricochet Food-Tossed-Into-Each-Other’s-Mouths challenges. We hold joint midnight swims with Young Friends (YFs) and play Capture the Flag with YFs and JYM. We brainstorm new methods of outreach and communication for our community and welcome graduating Young Friends into it by introducing them to the primary perk of being over eighteen: we can leave Frostburg State’s campus to buy ice cream anytime we want. On a more serious note, Friend Nony Dutton spent half an hour explaining cricket and we are still in discernment as to what a wicket is. How’s that?

The past year has been both up and down in attendance as Young Adult Friends work their way through life’s current uncertainties, both within and outside of the community. Even so, it is these same uncertainties that help bond us together and allow Friends from ages eighteen to thirty-five a safe haven where we may hold one another up in our struggles and rejoice in our successes.

Sincerely,

The Baltimore Yearly Meeting Young Adult Friends

EPISTLE OF YOUNG FRIENDS

The Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) Young Friends Community has had a wonderful year full of love, conversation, and – sometimes – actual business.

Last year, we approved a new version of our Young Friends Handbook that Handbook Committee had previously spent three years working on. Already, the newest incarnation of Handbook Committee is hard at work reading, discussing, and editing the document in order to accurately reflect the structure of our community.

Food Committee created a spreadsheet to help food planners choose meals that can be made for over a hundred people in some very small kitchens and shop for those meals effectively.

People met over the year to discuss the *Faith and Practice* and made suggestions for revisions that were accepted by the *Faith and Practice* Revision Committee.

This year, Do Good Deeds Committee pledged to give \$200 to cover extra luggage fees incurred from taking much-needed medical supplies and clothing to indigenous Peruvian communities. They led a effort during our February Conference to make lasagna and casseroles for a local food pantry near Stony Run Meeting and led a workshop, about physical, mental, and emotional abuse.

Executive Committee has been having an ongoing discussion with the larger community over concerns related to exclusion. We have been working on inclusion throughout all of Young Friends, as we have grown immensely in numbers in the past few years, and it can be difficult for new members to feel welcome. To accomplish this, we follow several policies. Exec meetings, with a few exceptions,



Annual Session 2013 photo by Nony Dutton

are open to anyone who wishes to join, and we have been making an effort to encourage Young Friends to attend. Open door and “croissants not doughnuts” (leaving spaces to sit when people are gathered) policies are in effect at all Young Friends Conferences, to avoid breaking community. When introducing themselves, Young Friends are encouraged to share both their names and their preferred pronouns, so that no one accidentally gets misgendered. Finally, in order to make Young Friends feel safe and comfortable in a community so full of love and surprise hugs, we have been encouraging a policy of asking before contact, and receiving a very clear “yes” before actually initiating, which we call ENTHUSIASTIC CONSENT!

Young Friends have five Conferences over the year, in addition to Annual Session. This year, our September Conference was held at Sandy Spring, where we played capture the flag and listened to a presentation by one of our Young Friends about the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage he participated in. November Con was at Langley Hill, where Campbell Plowden led an Alternatives to Violence Project style workshop on community building and gave a presentation on conservation issues in the Amazon. The February Conference, called “Love Con” was at Stony Run with two workshops: one from the Friends Committee on National Legislation and one from the Do Good Deeds Committee. There was also an epic dance party. In March, the Young Friends piled onto buses and traveled down to Maury River, where they did service at Common Ground, where one of BYM’s camps is hosted. Our final conference, in May, was held at Hopewell, where we had a massage workshop and said goodbye to twenty seven seniors in a loving and tear-filled night.

This past week at Annual Session, Young Friends have participated in many activities – Meetings for Business; midnight swimming and capture the flag with the Young Adult Friends; the All Age Celebration; watching the Phantom Regiment; and workshops on a variety of subjects including Quaker testimonies and history, privilege in North American society, the Peruvian Amazon, Right Sharing of resources, and Chuck Kleymeyer’s book, *Yeshu*.

It’s been a productive and enjoyable year, and we look forward to doing it all over again next year.

Love and Light,

The Baltimore Yearly Meeting Young Friends

EPISTLE OF JUNIOR YOUNG FRIENDS

JYF Summarizationification (Epistle) 2013

Hello, we are the JYF's of the 2013 BYM Annual Session. Over this past week we have learned about our roots, and how they affect us and our community. Our teachers, Melanie, Bill, Debbie, Dave, Ann, Gobind, Michael, Joanna, and Linda have taught us so much about how to treat each other and how to participate in our community. They have also told us many times how we have taught them as well. We have chosen Starling Wolfrum as clerk and William Finegar as assistant clerk. Then, we approved Thomas Finegar as recording clerk and Tadek Kosmal as co-recording clerk.

So many people have come to our JYF room to teach us and tell us about things that they are doing or cool activities. One of these activities included the doodle-ography journals that we had a bunch of fun drawing in during business meeting and long lectures. Melanie shared with us that while doodling we could retain more information than if we were just listening. Secondly, we had Joanna teach us about chalk art. With the chalk we each drew something about ourselves then passed it on to the next person and so on to create two long portraits of what represents us. Joanna also had us cut out parts of a magazine to represent something to do with us and then we drew a picture combining them, there was one that represented us, one that we liked, one that we didn't like and one that didn't represent us. Another activity that we did was making roots poems in an acrostic form. An acrostic poem is made up of phrases in which the starting letters make up one word, in this case, roots. Later, Dave gave a seminar on the question, "How do you deal with someone who has a fear that you don't share about your situation?" that was followed by a discussion. This discussion was inspired by our interaction with a lovely member of the campus police. Chuck Kleymeyer came and shared about his new book, *Yeshu*, which was a more relatable telling of the New Testament. We went to an intergenerational plenary about privilege and what it's like to have, or not have a privilege. We were positioned in circles to discuss about the groups which we were part of that gave us privilege and groups we were part did not give us privilege. Finally, we played a game of capture the flag with the YFs and the RYFs in teams of X's and O's and we had a lot of fun. The game ended in a quite original Quaker Tie. The last and most important thing that we did was that we practiced approving things... over... and over... and over again.

Overall, the JYF's 2013 would like to recognize the support of the Yearly Meeting and we hope you rest in the light this coming year.

Sincerely,

Will, Tadek, John Mark, Silas, Hannah, Lily, Kyle, Anna W., Anna A., Starling, Miranda, Andrew, Sophia, Noah, Thomas, The Doctor, Amy Pond, River Song and Captain Jack.

BYM YOUTH PROGRAMS HAS EVENTS PLANNED FOR ENTIRE YEAR

By Alison Duncan, Youth Programs Manager

Baltimore Yearly Meeting offers a series of weekend retreats for middle and high school youth. Themes include leadership, loving community, and personal growth. A parent of a Young Friend said, "I think that [my daughter's] high school years would have been more difficult without the abilities developed at con: sense of independence, ability to express her feelings and convictions, sense of belonging".

THIS YEAR'S SCHEDULE:

JUNIOR YOUNG FRIENDS (6TH-8TH)

October 12-13 at [Annapolis Friends Meeting](#)

December 7-8 at [Goose Creek Friends Meeting](#)

March 8-9 at [Charlottesville Friends Meeting](#)

May 9-11 at [Catoctin Quaker Camp](#)

One night conferences begin at 10 am Saturday and end at noon Sunday. The May conference begins Friday night at 7pm, and ends at noon Sunday. They all cost \$40. Registration is open until the 35 attendee maximum is met.

YOUNG FRIENDS (9TH-12TH)

September 27-29 at Adelphi Friends Meeting

November 29-December 1 (Thanksgiving)

February 14-16

April 4-6

May 23-25 (Memorial Day)

These conferences all begin at 7pm on Friday and end at 12 noon on Sunday. Pre-registration is required two weeks in advance of the conference to pay \$50. After that, YFs will be placed on a waiting list, registered as space permits, and charged \$60 to attend the conference.

There are three ways to register for a 'Con'; confirmations are sent within a week of receipt:

- Mail a Registration form, a Medical Form, and a check made out to BYM to the office: 17100 Quaker Lane, Sandy Spring, MD 20860.
- Fax the same forms to 301-774-7087, and pay online.
- Send Alison an e-mail at youthprograms@bym-rsf.org, telling her that you plan to go, and bring your paperwork and payment with you.

During the school year, participants who have already submitted a Medical form will only need a Registration form, as we keep the Medical forms for the whole school year. For the weekend, participants need a sleeping bag, pad, pillow, clothes, toiletries, and anything they think will help build community: games, music, or sports equipment.

COMMITTEE NEWS

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

A CHALLENGE FOR BYM THIS YEAR

To meet the Yearly Meeting's operating budget in 2013, we need to raise \$162,875 above and beyond the revenue from apportionment contributions, program fees and miscellaneous income. We had also planned to raise \$60,000 towards capital expenses in line with the recently presented Capital Plan. The Development Committee agreed to this goal (a total of \$222,875) with the understanding that we would have a development director working with Yearly Meeting members to meet this goal.

As of July 31 your giving has totaled \$56,286, including a grant obtained by the Development Director. This represents 93% of what was raised by this time last year. Reasonably, the Development Committee is apprehensive of its ability to sustain the effort needed to raise \$222,875 by year-end without an accomplished Development Director in place. (It is reasonable to reduce this goal by about \$45,000, to reflect the net difference in staff costs)

The new Capital Plan shows projects that need to be funded in the next five years. The anticipated major expenses in 2014 – if we can raise the funds in 2013 – are \$22,000 for a new cabin at Catoctin, \$22,000 for a cabin at Shiloh and \$1,500 for a Caretaker's shed at Catoctin. Beyond 2014, we need to replace the bathhouses at Catoctin and Opequon, gradually "green" the camps and the office property, introduce wind power at Catoctin, and solar energy at the office. We must not let the camps run down. The camping program provides life-changing experiences for our young people and creates many of tomorrow's Quakers. The camp properties have to be places where 21st century parents and their children want to come to camp. Funding the Capital Plan is in addition to funding the Operating Budget. We have a lot of work to do! And need everyone's help.

Achievements of the Development Program Over the Last Four Years

Four years ago when our development program began we had no information about the past, no contact data and very few donor records – only a spreadsheet of gifts for the purchase of Shiloh Camp property and a spreadsheet of gifts to the nascent Barry Morley Scholarship Endowment Fund. We now have accurate records of all gifts received in the last four years. We have plans for annual giving, capital projects, personal visits, and a planned giving program. We have a calendar for the year of fund-raising activities. We are cultivating relationships with our members and stewarding our supporters. We count everything that we can: number of donors, dollars raised, number of new donors, repeat donors, donors who gave last year but unfortunately not this year (LYBUNT), auto donors, average gift, largest gift, mean gift, percent of goal, cost of raising a dollar, visits to local Meetings, visits to supporters, workshops, mailings. Most of these metrics have been improving year by year and offer an analytical way to evaluate the Development Program. There have also been many intangible benefits. It is not possible to measure the goodwill that has been generated by the visits to local Meetings, the workshops and the personal visits, but it is safe to say that there has been a culture change among Meetings and members in regard to attitude about supporting the Yearly Meeting and thinking about philanthropy. We have come a long way in four years.

Listening Session

We welcome the opportunity recommended by Annual Session to have a Listening Session with all interested parties before we move forward with the critically important task of hiring a new Development Director. We need your help to keep the Yearly Meeting strong, vibrant and growing, and able to meet our current needs with enlarged support for all our activities. We are committed to working closely with Camping Program, Camp Properties and all of the committees and programs of the Yearly Meeting.

AD HOC VISION IMPLEMENTATION

PLEASE COME WORSHIP AND TALK WITH US

Our Yearly Meeting approved a beautiful Vision Statement in 2011, and since then, the ad hoc Vision Implementation Committee has been prayerfully developing ideas some things that might help us as a Yearly Meeting more truly live into the Vision Statement.

Now it is time to hear your ideas.

During the fall, winter, and spring, members of the ad hoc Vision Implementation Committee will be visiting all the Meetings in BYM. Our purpose? First, to worship with you, and to visit with you. We have ideas we'd like to share with you, and we would like to hear what good things are happening in your Meetings right now as well as areas you would like to grow in. To prepare for our visit, please read the Vision Statement as a community, and read the BYM website, or the Handbook that will come out in October, or any other information that will bring your Meeting community up to date on some of the things happening in BYM.

We look forward to visiting you!

INTERVISITATION WORKING GROUP

VISITING AMONG FRIENDS

Would your Meeting like to have visitors? Perhaps someone to lead a workshop? Perhaps someone from a BYM committee to learn about and discuss its work? Or are you someone who would like to visit other Meetings, whether as a committee member or as an individual, whether inside or outside of BYM? Could you lead a workshop for a Meeting?

In 2004, BYM established an ad hoc Intervisitiation Committee to focus on building community within FUM. In June 2013, Interim Meeting laid down the ad hoc committee and created in its place an intervisitiation working group under the care of Ministry and Pastoral Care in order to help integrate intervisitiation into the routine practice of the Yearly Meeting. See intervisitiation.bym-rsf.net for more information.

The newly re-formed Intervisitiation Working Group wants to help facilitate visits of all kinds among Friends. Contact us at bymintervisitiation@gmail.com or 626-QUAKERS (626-782-5377). But first! The Working Group needs to develop a new mission statement and explore whether and how to expand its work to intervisitiation within BYM and/or to intervisitiation outside of BYM beyond Friends United Meeting (FUM). We seek input from you, and we especially seek new members for the working group with a concern for visiting within BYM or Friends with experience with Friends

World Committee for Consultation (FWCC). Please let us know at the contact information above.

ISRAEL-PALESTINE WORKING GROUP

The Israel-Palestine Working Group will gathering for an organizing meeting on September 28 at Friends Meeting of Washington at 10:00. The meeting will be open to everyone interested in working with the Committee. For more information, contact Malachy Kilbride at malachykilbride@yahoo.com.

WORKING GROUP ON RACISM

ONE BOOK PROGRAM LAUNCHED AT ANNUAL SESSION

The BYM Working Group on Racism asks Friends in each Meeting to form groups to read and discuss *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander. That book describes how the “War on Drugs” dramatically expanded both the U.S. prison population and the incarceration rate among African-Americans far above the incarceration rate among white people even though studies show that people of all races use and sell drugs illegally at remarkably similar rates.

In addition to the loss of liberty that usually comes with a drug conviction, there are lifetime consequences. It is legal to deny employment and housing to those with a criminal record. Many states also deny voting rights to convicts. Black people who have been convicted experience life much as their ancestors did during the time of Jim Crow--hence the title of the book.

Michelle Alexander leaves us with two difficult questions: first, how can we address the unjust racial impact of the War on Drugs and, second, even if that impact is successfully addressed, what changes can we make so that our society does not continue to create systems that create Jim Crow-like conditions for black people?

Now is an especially good time for Friends to read this book and discuss the issues it raises because we have good company from outside our Religious Society. Many other faith groups are doing the same work right now. Questions about the fairness of criminal justice system to Black people are on the minds of many more Americans than before due to verdict in the George Zimmerman prosecution. As Quakers we have an opportunity to bring our discernment and leadership to an important moral issue just as Quakers have done throughout our history.

THINKING ABOUT RACE -

DOES OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM WORK?

The bodies of poor, unemployed youths are worth little on the streets but become valuable commodities once they are behind bars.

“People have said to me that the criminal justice system doesn’t work,” Kerness said [Bonnie Kerness of the American Friends Service Committee]. “I’ve come to believe exactly the opposite—that it works perfectly, just as slavery did, as a matter of economic and political policy. How is it that a 15-year-old in Newark who the country labels worthless to the economy, who has no hope of getting a job or affording college, can suddenly generate 20,000 to 30,000 dollars a year once trapped in the criminal justice system?”

From “The Shame of America’s Gulag,” Chris Hedges, on www.Truthdig.com, March 17, 2013

SHARED SECURITY: DEVELOPING A QUAKER VISION OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

Join Diane Randall, Executive Secretary of the Friends Committee on National Legislation and Shan Cretin, General Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee for a conversation about a new vision for U.S. foreign policy grounded in our shared security as a global community. AFSC and FCNL have led the Shared Security project, which has produced a working paper, study guide and blog discussion, available at www.sharedsecurity.org. On October 13, Shan and Diane will speak briefly about the project, followed by responses and open discussion. The conversation will begin at 4:30 p.m. at Friends Meeting of Washington. A reception will follow. For questions, contact Sandy Robson. (sandy@fcnl.org) RSVP helpful but not required.



Diane Randall, Executive Secretary of the Friends Committee on National Legislation and Shan Cretin, General Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee.

2014 QUAKER YOUTH PILGRIMAGE TO BOLIVIA & PERU CRADLES OF ANDEAN QUAKERISM JULY 22 -AUGUST 21, 2014

The Quaker Youth Pilgrimage Program Committee is deep in the planning of a 2014 experience to be hosted by Andean Friends in Peru and Bolivia. We are working carefully and prayerfully to construct the first QYP experience to be held entirely in evangelical Yearly Meetings as well as the first Quaker Youth Pilgrimage in South America. Application forms are now available for pilgrim and leader applicants at the FWCC website. Apply by December 1, 2013.

The pilgrimage will begin in Southwestern Peru and end east of the Andes in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. The total number of pilgrims will be limited to the customary 28, with an expanded number of leaders (5-6) who will need to share the added responsibilities of interpretation and translation. The age range will be the traditional ages for the FWCC pilgrimage, 16-18 years of age at the time of the program.

The mix of pilgrims will be roughly nine from Perú and Bolivia, nine from other yearly meetings in the Section of the Americas and nine from the Europe & Middle East Section. Spanish proficiency is recommended but not required. We will try to hold the cost of the pilgrimage to within the norms of past experiences.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting Annual *Women's Retreat*

January 24-26, 2014 Friday dinnertime to Sunday after lunch

Wholly/Holy Present: Open, Embrace, Release

Calm, open and center ourselves, become wholly present, embrace our gifts and leadings, release our burdens as we seek Holy Presence. Join in the workshops, dancing, chanting, singing, plenary session, arts and crafts, worship and worship sharing, entertainment, book exchange, labyrinth, and more.

Skycroft Conference and Retreat Center
9621 Frostown Road, Middletown, MD 21769

Registration opens November 1 via our website at www.bymwomensretreat.org. \$200 motel room (double occupancy) or \$165 lodge bunk. First time attenders will receive a \$30 discount. Scholarships available. After January 3, a \$25 late registration fee will be added.

Let us know if you would like to offer a workshop or sell crafts that you have made yourself. More details coming soon on the website.

Questions, ideas, workshop proposals, craftswomen requests: contact
Ramona Buck (ramonabuck@gmail.com) Patapsco Friends
Barbara Thomas (bthomas60@comcast.net) Annapolis Friends

BYM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION RETREAT!

On November 9 and 10, 2013, the BYM Religious Education Committee will host its first-in-a-long-time religious education retreat—a RE treat for BYM educators. Our RETreat will provide respite, training, and networking for every BYM religious educator—those who work with First Day Schools, with Junior Yearly Meeting, and with adult education. As our newest religious educators need the encouragement, insights, and support of our long-time religious educators, all religious educators are welcome, regardless of experience.

The BYM RE Committee hopes that every Local Meeting will be represented at this important networking and training RETreat.

Amy Schmaljohn, (Gunpowder) our RETreat leader, will present a course in rest and renewal for educators entitled “Listening to Our Inward Teacher.” Amy has been active in adult religious education for many years. She serves as the clerk of the BYM Spiritual Formation Program Working Group and co-leads the program’s retreats each year. At Friends School of Baltimore, she teaches religious studies, as well as courses in peace studies and leadership.

The RETreat will be held at the cozy and comfortable William Penn House on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. We will begin with coffee at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday and end after lunch on Sunday. The cost for room, meals, and registration is \$90. Day time attenders’ meals and registration is \$55. Please register on-line at the BYM website. Please e-mail the RE Clerk, Marsha Holliday (hollidaymsd@yahoo.com) or call her at 202-544-2629.

CLERKING A COMMITTEE IS DIFFERENT FROM CLERKING A MEETING

BYM is offering an opportunity to explore clerking committees and invites clerks of BYM committees and clerks of Local Meeting committees to participate. In fact, you don’t even have to be a clerk! Just come if you are interested. The event will be held at Langley Hill Friends Meeting on Saturday September 21 from 10 until 3. Please notify admin@bym-rsf.org that you plan to attend, so we’ll have enough lunch. We will talk about the pros and cons of different styles of clerking and present information about how Baltimore Yearly Meeting can help committee clerks.

This event will be quite different from the retreat planned in November for Local Meeting clerks so don’t be afraid to consider attending both! And you will be helpful and still learn something if you already think you know pretty well how to clerk a committee. We look forward to seeing you.

ANNAPOLIS FRIENDS MEETING

We are so proud of these kids! At its public program in 2011 to mark the tenth anniversary of 9/11, the Annapolis Friends Meeting Peace and Justice Center offered \$100 to any students who could develop a peace program. Some high school students at Key School, a local K-12 private school, developed an anti-bullying curriculum called the *Teaching Peace Initiative* and started using it with fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students. Today, with the Center's ongoing support, students at over two dozen schools in 13 states and three foreign countries are part of the Initiative, and college students from all over the country have come together to help guide this innovative solution to bullying. For more, see teachingpeaceinitiative.com.

Previously, AFM Peace and Justice Center hosted a presentation by Israeli and Palestinian members of the Geneva Initiative (GI) during President Bush's Annapolis Middle East Peace Conference and later assisted the GI in reaching an accord on water rights during negotiations conducted in Maryland. A project this year will include participating with other organizations in a candle-light vigil for peace at the White House on October 1 and hosting a news conference for GI spokespeople at the National Press Club on October 2.

Once again we are collecting school materials for an inner city school in Philadelphia and a low-income school in Takoma Park. In accordance with BYM's "One Book" program, we have organized a study group on *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander. We will meet with members of St. Phillip's Episcopal Church, a nearby mostly African American church. Our sojourning member Ann Riggs was home from Kenya for several weeks and she updated us on Friends Theological College, of which she is principal.

BALTIMORE MONTHLY MEETING, STONY RUN

We will have a community-building concert featuring local hammered dulcimer player Ken Kolodner and other musicians to benefit Stony Run Friends Meeting on Saturday, Oct. 19 at 8:00 p.m. We will have Festive chocolate treats at intermission. To purchase tickets, contact Cindy at 443-703-2590 or sroffice@stonyrunfriends.org, or visit www.stonyrunfriends.org.

FREDERICK MONTHLY MEETING

Frederick continues with an ebb and flow of attenders and members, and we are always delighted to have visiting Friends. We delighted to



Annual Session 2013 photo by Nony Dutton

have Friends from three other Meetings in Warrington Quarter join us in late April for the retreat at Camp Catoctin. We look forward to continuing the tradition of having Friends from elsewhere in the Quarter join us in the future, and participate in some planning as they feel so led. In the summer months not many children come to worship on Sundays, so First Day School has not been very active, but worship has been fairly well-attended. Our Wednesday night Worship also continues. We welcome into membership Olivia Evans who has transferred from Homewood. We also welcome a new baby into our midst. In addition, we had another record-breaking attendance at Annual Session with 15 adults and 5 children in attendance, with about half of those being first-time attenders. Some of our Friends continue in their service at the Yearly Meeting level, while others have discovered connections with Friends from other Meetings.

Peace and Social Concerns Committee continues to bring to our attention the needs of our wider community, and have encouraged our involvement in Frederick 48, a coalition of non-profit groups. These organizations serve the Frederick Community and seek additional funding since the county budget was slashed eliminating financial support for groups that meet essential human needs. Ministry and Counsel Committee continues to strive to meet the many needs of those in our Meeting. A new ad-hoc Communications Committee has begun to meet, and help facilitate discussions about how we communicate with each other and the world. Property Committee and Stewardship and Finance continue to be careful stewards of our physical and fiscal resources, and Trustees try to work closely with both. Program Committee has begun book studies, and will be looking at *Faith and Practice 2013*, and are reading some pamphlets as well. We also are working on how to facilitate the book reading and discussion of the one book *The New Jim Crow*. We look forward to welcoming Friends back from their various travels, as we gather this fall, and welcoming you if you should be in our area at any time.

FRIENDS MEETING OF WASHINGTON

Our Meeting has responded to a leading by Stephen McNeil of the American Friends Service Committee to gather a meeting during the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington (Dr. King's "I Had a Dream" march) which is happening at the end of August. We will have a called Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Bayard Rustin, the Quaker organizer of that march, at our Meeting House starting at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 25. This will be followed by a showing of the biopic "Brother Outsider," and a panel discussion. We got an e-mail from Sandy Robson at FCNL, who is organizing a joint meeting of her organization and AFSC to discuss "A New Quaker Vision for Foreign Policy." Our Peace & Social Concerns Committee has taken this on. This has also been a month of deeper understanding of the edges of life, as we hold our dear Friends Sara Satterthwaite and Bill Cousins in the Light. Both passed away peacefully on Wednesday, July 31, surrounded by their families. We thank them for their lives, and all that they taught us about love.

GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING

Our Spring and Summer at Gunpowder Friends Meeting has been quite eventful. We had two marriages in June. Rebecca Richards and Kathy Schaafsma were married under the care of our Meeting on the 15th day, Sixth Month. Katherine Acton and Randall Bauer were also married under the care of our Meeting on the 29th day, 6th month. The weddings were held in good order and our com-



Annual Session 2013 photo by Nony Dutton

munity is so very happy as our Friends move forward as a couple with our loving support. We mourn the loss of two Friends. John Montgomery Sexton and Peggy Matthews Miller. John Sexton's memorial was held under the care of our meeting on the 20th day, Seventh month. Peggy Matthews Miller's memorial service is will be held on the 25th day, Ninth month under the care of our meeting. Our Gunpowder Meeting community holds both families in the Light and in prayer during their bereavement.

HOPEWELL CENTRE MONTHLY MEETING

Hopewell Centre continues to ebb and flow as its members age and grow. Over the last six months, we have lost two Friends: Margaret "Tony" MacDonald, a former member of the Meeting, and Teri O'Connell Lifschutz who was a long-involved attender. We are sad to see these two vibrant women pass. The Meeting congratulates and celebrates this year's high school graduates: Amber Fager, Kai Gingerich and Kelsey Harris. With pride, we can report that Julia Melby, who graduated college in 2012, has entered the Peace Corps and will teach biology to high school students in Ghana.

Within the Meeting, we have continued our outreach work with the Highland Avenue Food Pantry; and for the first year, we have sponsored a boy in Boys and Girls Club Summer Camp. Members participated in an April Poetry Event at Meeting to celebrate the publication of a new volume, *Gathered: Contemporary Quaker Poets*, in which two members, Margaret Stetler and Kristin Zimet, are published. In addition, Adult Religious Education has focused on members' and attenders' spiritual journeys and memoirs and with renewed vigor, on social justice issues.

We are pleased to announce that Robyn Harris has taken over the position of Newsletter Editor for our Meeting. In addition, Jim Riley is the new Assistant Treasurer of Baltimore Yearly Meeting; and Rebecca Bacon now serves as Youth Programs and BYM representative to Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas. Josh Riley continues to serve on Camping Programs, as does Laura Nell Obaugh on the Nominating Committee. We are pleased to have so many from our small Meeting in the service of our Yearly Meeting. As always, Hopewell Centre is focused on building and preserving community, and so this summer we "cooked up" an ice cream social and a potluck dinner, "just because." At the end of August we celebrated our annual Homecoming, welcoming home old Friends and making new ones, as we opened our much-loved Hopewell Meeting House doors to the public. Guests and

members shared Silent Worship and a conversation- and fun-filled picnic lunch (always delicious) afterwards.

We excitedly wait to greet the larger Friends' community as we host Interim Meeting this Fall. Toward that date we are scurrying to complete renovations on our bathrooms; plan for hospitality and meals; and make available some wonderful committee spaces. *Please join us!*

MIDLOTHIAN FRIENDS MEETING

During 2013 Midlothian Friends have been discerning together how we might simplify the operation of our Meeting in order to lessen activities that are not essential to our core purposes: worship and community. Simplicity led us earlier this year to streamline our finances by eliminating multiple bank accounts, increasing the transparency of our financial state, and reconstituting our financial committee to be more effective. We have also changed the bylaws for the two charities under our care, so that redundant financial activities between the charities and the Meeting have been eliminated. Through a seasoned process of discernment regarding our religious education program we have come to realize that we need to provide a simple grounding of a consistent teacher who will then be supported by our RE committee and the adults at Meeting. To ensure this consistency, the Meeting has decided try hiring young adult friend or two as teachers for our dozen or so children for our twice monthly First Day School.

We are also making efforts to encourage a more simplistic approach for the care of Friends who are in need, rather than relying on a Care committee to formally handle all of the needs of Friends. For example, at the end of worship each Sunday and during a silent time at our monthly business meeting, we are now taking time to discretely reflect upon those among us who may have a need for support; and we are arranging the necessary coordination at that time. In addition, we utilize our e-mail distribution list to make sure all Friends are aware of situations where a Friend would like our support. Numerous Friends are enthusiastically stepping forward to provide care and support.

We are eager to see where this simplification process takes us in the coming months; but already, a hopeful Spirit and natural energy is manifesting itself among us as participation increases in our weekly worship and adult religious education program. The Spirit is indeed present among us.

Finally, our year-long experiment with conducting our Meeting for Business on the Second First Day as part of our worship has been successful. The support for this idea has been demonstrated with increased attendance at our Meeting for Worship with Intention for Business. There is often true worship sharing taking place more regularly.

NOTTINGHAM MONTHLY MEETING

Within the Yearly Meeting, Nottingham Meeting is relatively small, on the rural end of suburban, geographically diverse, with three old Meeting Houses under our care and finds Spirit moving in distinct but overlapping points of community.

A monthly book discussion (with dessert!) has been going virtually continuously for over a decade. A nudge from our insurance com-

pany is causing us to find excuses to gather more often at Little Elk Meeting House, where we have been beginning worship with music.

Adult religious education on 4th First Day at the Oxford Meeting House has most recently been sharing passages from J. Brent Bill's *Sacred Compass: The Way of Spiritual Discernment*.

For several years now, we've ended 1st and 3rd First Day worship at the Brick Meeting House with a circle in which we have shared sources of gratitude, expanded on prayer requests, spoken of our joys, sorrows, and leadings. That circle has become a vehicle for turning motions of love emerging in discussion and worship into concrete action. A recent adult discussion was prompted by part of President Obama's words about the Trayvon Martin verdict,

And then, finally, I think it's going to be important for all of us to do some soul-searching. . . . in families and churches and workplaces, there's the possibility that people are a little bit more honest, and at least you ask yourself your own questions about, am I wringing as much bias out of myself as I can? Am I judging people as much as I can, based on not the color of their skin, but the content of their character? That would, I think, be an appropriate exercise in the wake of this tragedy.

The rich sharing – including the query, “what can each of us do to make a difference,” – led to soul-searching that continued during worship. In the circle that followed worship, one person said she would ask a fellow student, who is African American, if she could visit his church with him. Another person said he was going to research where the shirt he wore was made to find out if it was made in substandard factories. And another said she would send cards made with her photographs to each person for whom a prayer request had been made in Meeting.

The next time we joined our circle at the Brick, the three persons reported back to us: the first person was laying the groundwork for asking to visit her fellow student's church; the second had discovered that the shirt had been made overseas, prompting him to find and purchase a made-in-USA shirt; and the third had sent out the cards and would continue to do so. How moving are these simple acts! Actions that did not require a committee, nor planning, nor expenditures of money. They were small actions, but came from the heart of each person and made a profound impression upon those of us in the circle. It is one of the first times we can recall seeing such direct, personal action arise from a Meeting discussion.

RICHMOND FRIENDS MEETING

The annual Memorial Day weekend Spring Retreat held at the Clearing, our retreat grounds in Amelia County, fostered enthusiastic multi-generational participation by the many attendees. In June cheerful applause greeted the choral performance of QWACS, nine Friendly female acapella singers. At a Rise of Meeting celebration a few days later, the community honored four high school graduates: Melanie Bricker, Stephen Moliterno, Carter Pope, and Haley Pope. Each graduate has enjoyed performing and studying music; each also plans to attend colleges both near and far to study music, engineering, music therapy, and elementary education. A mid-July highlight was the marriage, under the care of Meeting, of Ted Heck and Laura Goren, active members in BYM and FGC.

The Meeting continues to be enriched by the Adult Spiritual Education series that featured discussions of privilege this summer. Pat Schenck and Elizabeth Duverlie from the Working Group on Racism shared their insights. Adult education will continue in the fall. Several Friends also plan to attend the Spiritual Formation retreat in early September. The Financial Stewardship Committee is offering guidance to Friends in our giving practices. We are encouraged to give (as generously as grace allows) regularly throughout the year, and not wait with our gifts until the end of the year.

Witnessing to the world, we have held a Gun Violence Listening Circle, written letters to Senators Warner and Kaine requesting fair consideration of social needs in the sequestration process, and supported the Peace Education Center in studying military spending. A candlelight vigil for Peace will be held at the Meeting House on International Day of Peace, September 21.

YORK FRIENDS MEETING

Several community outreach events have been taking place at York Meeting. A Little Free Library was planted in front of the Meeting House in June. The idea is to allow passersby to borrow a book or donate a book. Many pedestrians and parents have stopped to extend appreciation for this conveniently located library less than a block from the market. For more information on this international concept and a picture of the library at York Meeting, go to www.littlefreelibrary.org.

The first east coast performance of *Epiphany: A (Quaker) Cantata of Faith* was held in May with Ed Norton on flute, Fran Norton on keyboard, and Marti Black as the soprano. The composer, Ed Norton, is a member of York Monthly Meeting. It was warmly received by Quakers and non-Quakers alike because the three parts of supplication, revelation, and peace/gratitude reflect a universal spiritual experience. The Cantata is available on CD for \$15.

On April 20 the Annual Plant and Green Elephant Sale was held in conjunction with Go Green In the City. There actually were two green elephant planters available for sale. The following Saturday Sacred Harp singers filled the Meeting House with F/friends, food, fellowship and music. The singers indicated that York Meeting is one of their favorite places to sing due to wonderful acoustics.



Annual Session 2013 photo by Nony Dutton

Baltimore Yearly Meeting
17100 Quaker Lane
Sandy Spring, MD 20860
Address service requested

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage BLK-RT
STD MAIL
PAID
Sandy Spring, MD
Permit No. 10112

Do you want to receive the
Interchange via e-mail?
Send your current e-mail address to:
admin@bym-rsf.org

YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION IS IMPORTANT TO US

Have you moved, or has any of your contact information changed? Please send any updates to admin@bym-rsf.org

BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING UPCOMING EVENTS

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

SEPTEMBER

- 14-15 – Friends Service Weekend at Opequon Quaker Camp
- 20-22 – Camp Alumni Weekend at Catoctin Quaker Camp
- 21 – A Retreat for BYM Committee Clerks at Langley Hill Friends Meeting
- 27-29 – Young Friends Conference at Adelphi Friends Meeting
- 29 – Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting at Patapsco Friends Meeting

OCTOBER

- 5-6 – Friends Service Weekend at Catoctin Quaker Camp
- 12-13 – Friends Service Weekend at Shiloh Quaker Camp
- 12-13 – Junior Young Friends Conference at Annapolis Friends Meeting
- 19 – Tenth Month Interim Meeting at Hopewell Centre Monthly Meeting

NOVEMBER

- 2 – Retreat for Local Meeting Clerks at The Clearing
- 9-10 – REtreat for Religious Educators at William Penn House
- 29-December 1 – Young Friends Conference

DECEMBER

- 7-8 – Junior Young Friends Conference at Goose Creek Friends Meeting
- 8 – Nottingham Quarterly Meeting at The Brick Meeting House
- 29 – Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting at Patapsco Friends Meeting

JANUARY 2014

- 24-26 – Women's Retreat at Skycroft Conference Center

STAFF AND OFFICERS OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

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