

Interchange

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

FORMING TOGETHER:

BYM'S NEW OUTREACH AND INCLUSION COORDINATOR DISCUSSES THE MODEL USED IN THE ORGANIZATION'S BUD-DING "GROWING DIVERSE LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE"

Dyresha Harris, Outreach and Inclusion Coordinator

Forming Together

Baltimore Yearly Meeting is a place full of formative experiences from our youth programs where young people explore and take leadership, to Monthly Meetings, Support Committees, and workshops where people of all ages grapple together with the big questions of life. But what shape do we take on when we form ourselves, our communities, and our next generation of leaders in spaces that are not fully representative of the diverse peoples around and among us.

That is the question that first struck me as a young person in the BYM camping program. It eventually became a core component of the Growing Diverse Leadership Program, BYM's new initiative to increase the participation, inclusion, and equity of people of color



As we represent the many people and groups affected by this work in pictures, stories, and quotes, we remind ourselves to approach these, not as tokens, but as moments in the unique experiences of integral members or our community.

and young adults in the camps, Monthly Meetings, and BYM as a whole¹. Camp provided a life-changing environment for me. It was a space that fostered close friendships, modeled great leadership, allowed me to build confidence, and helped me develop a sense of myself. But each of those experiences happened for me—as for all of my camp-mates—in a place where the friendship, leadership, gifts, and perspectives of people of color were not very prevalent. I had the sense even then that there was something happening at camp that was very powerful, but also incomplete.

As I grew older, I realized that the interaction missing was absent in many spaces in the world. And it was not just affecting me and other people of color. It was affecting everyone. We live in a country that is rapidly becoming more diverse, and in a world where the big challenges of the day—global warming, inequity, religious prejudice, police brutality etc—cannot be solved by any one group

alone. However, studies show that the average white American lives in an environment that is %79 white. Similarly, the segregation index for the top 6 most populous areas for African-Americans is 80 (on a scale where 100 is complete segregation)². Asian-American segregation has actually increased in the last decade. Isolation is even worse in schools, where 80% of Latino students and 74% of black students attend majority nonwhite schools and over half of those have fewer than %10 white students³. These divisions are often caused by, accompanied by, and perpetuate other forms of inequity.

Outreach continued on page ???

BYM VISITING MEETINGS

Are you interested in a growing your BYM network and community?

Why not build some new connections among Friends.

Meg Meyer, Visiting Coordinator

Community is a place where the connections felt in the heart make themselves known in bonds between people, and where the tuggings and pullings of those bonds keep opening up our hearts.

Parker Palmer 1977 (2009 Draft BYM Faith and Practice)

As we visit one another we build community and grow. Our Yearly Meeting community is a group of many Meetings which are all very different. I have had the privilege to visit many Meetings over the years. Some are big, some are small. Some (like mine) have lots of "rules." Some are very 'free-floating'. But, I have always felt welcome. It is true that everyone likes a visitor! We want to encourage you to get



out and meet your BYM community. Visit with Friends close to your own meeting or travel some distance and meet Friends.

Recently we introduced a new program for our Yearly Meeting members. It is a program to encourage us to take some time and visit Meetings other than our own. This can take on many forms. You may decide to just to be a friendly visitor to learn more about our wonderful community of Friends. You may have a need or special message you want to share. Whatever your leading we encourage

Visiting continued on page ???

2016 ANNUAL SESSION – SAME DATES, NEW LOCATION

BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING ANNUAL SESSION WILL BE MEETING AT
HOOD COLLEGE IN FREDERICK, MD IN AUGUST 2016.

The Program Committee is excited to announce that the 2016 Annual Session will be in a new location this summer – Hood College, located on the edge of historic downtown Frederick, Maryland. Plan to join your wider Quaker community on the Hood campus, from August 1-7 this summer.

The nearly level 50-acre Hood campus has handicapped-accessible paths and entrances to all the buildings, and is beautifully landscaped with large trees and pleasant outdoor spaces. The large community room in the modern Whitaker Campus Center will be the site for Business Sessions and the 400-seat auditorium in Rosenstock Hall will be the site for the Plenaries. The dormitories we will use are carpeted and have been remodeled within the last few years. And finally, the dining hall is an attractive space with large windows, round tables, and three food stations with menu options to meet our needs.

Frederick is considered the “geographic center” of Baltimore Yearly Meeting,



within 1-3 hours of most Meetings and convenient to the Baltimore and Washington area, as well as Camp Catocin. Access via public transportation includes MARC train weekday service from DC to Frederick in the afternoon and the opposite direction in the morning. Shuttle service is available from BWI Airport.

Speakers and workshops will focus on the theme for this summer’s session, *Discernment and Action in Spiritual Community*. Invited speakers include Nancy Bieber, Lancaster Monthly Meeting, Christina Repoley, Founding Executive Director of Quaker Voluntary Service, Lauren Brownlee of Bethesda and Jen Cort of Sandy Spring. The Carey Memorial Lecture will be presented by the dynamic and entertaining George Lakey from Central Philadelphia and co-founder of the Movement for a New Society. Workshop proposals are being accepted at www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession/workshopprop.html.

Hope to see you there!

PUT ANNUAL SESSION ON YOUR FAMILY CALENDAR: MAKE JUNIOR YEARLY MEETING A HABIT.....



Winter: Time for shoveling snow, ice skating , bundling up and--looking at summer camp brochures to find just the right summer activities for your kids. When looking through the brochures, don’t forget the wonderful “family camp” otherwise known as BYM Annual Sessions. During this activity packed week, shepherded by Friendly staff , your children hear stories, play cooperative games, see the planets and stars, run and jump. In the process they build a Quaker community which leaves them asking next year “when do we go to BYM?” This JYM program frees you go to workshops, attend lectures and expand your own community of Quakers. A special perk is a week without household chores--eating meals prepared by others and never having to do dishes.

This year we will see a couple of changes both to the actual structure of our program and our physical surroundings. While we will miss the hills of Frostburg, Hood College offers new exciting opportunities. The location for the entire children’s program is housed in one building, near to the dorms and in the building where we will eat.

Join us Aug 2nd-7th and make new traditions for us and your family.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS AVAILABLE!

THE EDUCATIONAL GRANTS COMMITTEE OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

BYM Educational Grants Committee Accepting Applications

The Educational Grants Committee of Baltimore Yearly Meeting will be awarding a limited number of modest grants for the school year 2016-2017. Grants will be made to enable members and regular attenders of Meetings associated with Baltimore Yearly Meeting (or their children) to pursue their educational goals. Grants may be applied to expenses associated with undergraduate attendance at accredited post-secondary educational institutions such as universities, colleges, professional and vocational schools. Attendance may be either full- or part-time. Grants will be awarded on the basis of financial need and the Committee's assessment of an applicant's statement of purpose, including consistency with Friends' testimonies. Grants will not exceed \$2,000 per grantee per year. The sum of all grants to a grantee will not exceed \$8,000. In determining the number and amounts of grants, the Committee will be guided by the twin goals of assisting as many applicants as possible with available funds and, insofar as possible, of assuring that amounts of individual grants are not insignificant in comparison with the grantee's needs. Applications will be accepted until April 15, 2016. Click here for to download the application form. For further information or if you have questions, please contact the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Office at (301)774-7663 or online at www.bym-rsf.org.



SUE THOMAS TURNER QUAKER EDUCATION FUND ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Time to let your favorite Friends School know that grants to help explain Quaker faith and practice to school communities are available once again this year. For over twenty years the Sue Thomas Turner Quaker Education Fund has been supporting this path to understanding and outreach. The application deadline is Tuesday, March 1, 2016. Go to www.bym-rsf.org/what_we_do/committees/sttqef/application.html for the application for funds and check our annual reports from previous years to get some ideas about how grants have been used in the past. Please be in touch with us if you have any questions. (sttqef@bym-rsf.org)



MILES WHITE BENEFICIAL SOCIETY

The Trustees of the Miles White Beneficial Society of Baltimore City are now accepting applications for educational funding. Funds are available for books and tracts, Friends educational institutions and programs for the young, and for undergraduate college scholarships. Proposals will be considered for requests up to \$5,000. Preference shall be given to applications from the Greater Baltimore Metropolitan Area and to those with connections to Friends Meetings or their members within the Baltimore Yearly Meeting. All requests must be made in writing. The deadline for applications is March 15, 2016. Notification of approval will be made by May 1, 2016. See the Yearly Meeting website for links to the application forms.

PAULINE UNDERWOOD MEMORIAL WRITING CONTEST

Members of the high school class of 2016 are invited to apply for this scholarship focused on legislative initiatives against the death penalty. The winner will receive \$1,000 and one honors recipient will receive \$500.00. All applications will receive a certificate and be invited to attend a dinner in May, 2016. Entries must be received before February 1, 2016. For full details, including instructions on applying, contact Elaine Herald, St. Theresa Church, 1300 Bridge Street, New Cumberland, PA 17070.

GRANTS FOR THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM

The Elizabeth Ann Bogert Memorial Fund for the Study and Practice of Christian Mysticism is accepting grant proposals for annual awards up to \$1,000. The deadline for proposals is March 1, 2016. For more information, including application instructions, contact Kenneth Woodrow Henke. (kenneth.henke@ptsem.edu)

GROWING DIVERSE LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE WORKING TO INCREASE DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND DIALOGUE

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As we try to live our values in this context, it is crucial that our formative spaces be ones that draw on all strengths and perspectives, and that our leadership opportunities include skills around engaging a wide variety of people. Studies have shown, for instance, that one of the prime factors that can reduce subconscious bias (a phenomenon that contributes to the speed with which an officer uses deadly force or the amount of time a doctor spends with an ailing patient) is “intergroup contact in collaborative settings where groups have equal status and support from authorities.”⁴ “Thus, a community of genuine diversity and equity is not just icing on the cake. It is the core sustenance for creating the world we want. Within this idea is a powerful prospect. As a community of formative spaces, we have an amazing opportunity to form together rather than apart. Many people and committees within BYM have worked towards this goal independently and now the Growing Diverse Leadership Initiative adds additional attention, resource, and opportunities to collaborate in doing just that.

The Growing Diverse Leadership Initiative

For the past six years, a group of camp alumni have been working as part of the Working Group on Diversity at Camps (WGDC) to increase diversity, inclusion, and dialogue at Catoctin Quaker Camp. Based on those successes⁵ the Growing Diverse Leadership Initiative was launched with a grant from the Shoemaker Foundation and will expand the WGDC model to new working groups in Baltimore, Washington DC, and Charlottesville as well as to BYM as a whole.

The most significant aspects of the model are 1) being person-centric (rooted in the needs and experiences of actual individuals) and 2) expanding our ability to create true equity within our organization and communities. To that end, there are five main principals, which can be applied to many environments:

- *Relationships:* Within the working groups, people connected to BYM communities recruit through individuals and organizations with which they are already associated. This helps



to ensure that campers who are a good fit get linked to camp through someone they trust. We also try to invite people to camp in pairs or cohorts so that they don't have to be the only one from their community. Regular events during the year help keep campers' families and community partners connected as well. *Queries: What individuals that I close to (or that I would like to get close to) can I invite to share community with me? How can I immerse myself in others' communities when invited, beyond simply remaining where I am comfortable?*

- *Practical Support:* Practical issues such as internet access, camping gear, transportation, and tuition costs can provide barriers to attending camp for some families. The working groups and camper families providing loaner gear, rides, computer access, and fundraise tuition. *Queries: How can I become aware of and address barriers that I don't experience? How do I maintain a spirit of equality and mutuality when asking for or providing needed access?*
- *Preparation, Self Reflection, and Ongoing Communication:* Working group members prepare campers for their experiences by doing a practice hike where campers learn camp songs and games, and talk about what to expect. Group members also help recruit staff applicants so that the pool from which we hire the best leaders can be a diverse one. During pre-camp training, staff examine their own identities and learn about supporting campers of varying backgrounds. During and after the summer feedback sessions are conducted with staff and families as well as audits of procedures and practices. *Query: Which procedures, practices, or elements of the physical space make my community an inclusive environment and which alienate or favor certain groups?*
- *Flexibility & Creativity:* Working group members recognize that equality is not necessarily everyone getting the same thing. It's everyone getting what they need. Oftentimes, the accommodations we make for one person ends up benefiting others as well. *Query: How can I keep myself open and excited for new possibilities and solutions in the face of well-established traditions?*
- *Commitment:* To allow campers to feel full ownership of the camp community, the working groups commit to supporting all participating campers through their entire life experience at the BYM camps and take steps to support campers' leadership over time. Commitment also means following up about challenges or miscommunication, being open to feedback, and taking an interest in campers and their families outside of the summer. *Query: How do I let my relationships matter enough to stick*

in there through uncomfortable or difficult moments? How do I open myself fully to share the trials and triumphs of others I've joined in community?

The Call, the Ability, and the Opportunity

Creating communities of genuine diversity and equity is a complex and ongoing process that is far from done at Catoctin or elsewhere. Part of engaging in it is the humility of knowing that there is always more to learn and discover. But by committing to these principals, the working group has been able to make tangible strides. Furthermore, the process itself has been transformative for many working group members. If, as is written in *Living the Truth of Our Testimony on Equality* "racism, bias and privilege among Friends... affects our spiritual progress both as individuals and as a religious society"⁶, then so too does our work to undo and heal from it. Our faith provides us not only with the call to live in right relation to each other, but also with the ability and the opportunity to put that call into action. In so doing we strengthen our spiritual core. I invite you to follow that call and bring your unique gifts and skills to this work in a WGDC group, in your Monthly Meeting, or in any other communities that have formed you, so we might all shape our full humanity together.

The Working Group on Diversity at Camps is currently looking for contributors. There are many opportunities to get involved including as a core committee member; as a volunteer; as a consultant, or as a funder. For more details please contact Outreach and Inclusions Coordinator Dyresha Harris at OIC@bym-rsf.org or 301-774-7663 ext. 109.

1. While BYM and the WGDC have chosen to focus specifically on these two groups with this initiative, we acknowledge that race and age are not the only significant groups that are under-represented or under-acknowledged in our society and programming. Though differences certainly exist, many of these concerns and methods can be applied to class, sexual orientation, gender-identity, ability, and other social identities.

2. US Census, 2010, www.census.gov.

3. The Civil Rights Project, 2009, <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu>.

4. *Implicit Bias Review*, 2014, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, www.kirwaninstitute.osu.edu.

5. Campers of color have grown from 15% to a height of 27%, which represents a 66% increase in the number of campers of color since 2010. Staff of color have grown from 3% in 2010 to a height of over 37% in 2014 including half of the In-Camp (or managing) staff and the first director of color in BYM history. Retention rates have been equal to that of white community members which is unusual in majority white environments.

6. From *Understanding Racism and Privilege among Friends*, the Religious Education committee's Subcommittee on Ending Racism and Privilege among Friends, Friends General Conference, www.fgcquaker.org.



DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE

UPDATE GREENING CAMPAIGN:

Catoctin Bath House

Goal: \$297,000.00

To date gifts and pledges: \$190,937.00



We recently got word of another Matching gift challenge for the Bath House project. Each dollar raised up to \$3,000 will be matched! Make your gift today at www.bym-rsf.org/giving/ or mail your check to the BYM office, just add bath house challenge on the memo line.

SHILOH ALUMNI WEEKEND

September 16-18, 2016

Mark your calendars now we will be celebrating the 25th summer of camping at Shiloh Quaker Camp.



RECENT RENOVATIONS AT BYM OFFICES

Bob Rhudy, Interim General Secretary

If you have not been to our Baltimore Yearly Meeting office in Sandy Spring, please visit us. And if you haven't been here for a while, please come back. We've been making some changes.

In November we completed some much-needed renovations that have helped make our meeting room, offices, and guest room much more pleasant. We relocated offices so that all of our staff who primarily work from this location have their own office—for example, the Youth Programs manager and I formerly shared an office as did others in the building. All of our staff offices in this two-story 1960s home-style building were formerly downstairs. Our former General Secretaries lived upstairs, but I commute daily from my family home in Baltimore. We have substantially rearranged the upstairs, with the result that we have a very useful meeting room for up to about 15 people, two offices, a guest bedroom for overnight stays for members coming from out-of-town, two bathrooms, a kitchen, and more room to expand further down the road if desired.

Our meeting room includes a large conference table, Wifi, telephone conferencing capabilities, video feed for referencing, and all the coffee you need.

Downstairs we further rearranged our visiting area and offices, we painted, and we replaced our ancient carpet. It is a lighter and cleaner-feeling environment in which to work, and our offi-



The new lobby of the Yearly Meeting office and the General Secretary's office



The conference table and library

cers, committee members, and Friends from around BYM who have come for meetings or other volunteer activities or to visit have been remarking on the good changes.

After a long delay for Montgomery County permitting to be completed, we have finally begun the process to install solar panels on the office property. We anticipate they will be completed in February and are excited to make this next step in improving our environmental impact.

As you may know, our office is adjacent to Friends House retirement community to our west and borders Sandy Spring Friends School on the east, with a short walk through the woods to Sandy Spring Friends Meeting. We enjoy and appreciate your visits and uses of the BYM office. Please come.



Upstairs informal conference area

3/20 AT ROANOKE: JOIN US FOR A FRIENDLY SING-ALONG

Who said Quakers don't sing? Come to our next Sing-In and see for yourself on Sunday, March 20, 2016 at Roanoke Meeting, 505 Day Ave SW, Roanoke, VA 240165. Both shy and sure singers are welcome! This gathering is not about bringing strong singers together—it's about joining our voices together in a community singing with love.

Meeting for Worship at 10:30, followed by potluck lunch and then singing. Contact Elise Hansard for further details or overnight accommodations at ehansard@verizon.net.

THE NASSAR FAMILY IN PALESTINE: A PROFILE IN COURAGE AND COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE



John Salzberg (Sandy Spring)

The Westmoreland Congregational Church located in Bethesda established the Olive Oil Ministry. It supports the Nassar family farm in Palestine which has an over-riding commitment to non-violence and peaceful reconciliation with its Israeli neighbors.

In 1916 the Nassar family purchased the farm southwest of Bethlehem in what is now the West Bank. The farm is now ringed by five Israeli settlements which take actions against the farm. The farm has no access to electricity or water. Since 1991 the family has spent over \$200,000 in legal costs as Israel has challenged its ownership of the farm. On May 19, 2014 Israeli Defense Force bulldozers destroyed about 1,500 mature, fruit-bearing apricot and apple trees and grape vines along with terraced land. The destruction took place without warning or legal justification.

How has the Nassar family responded? The family lives by the motto "We refuse to be enemies" and believes non-violence is a solution to the situation. Their farm is an island of love and tolerance. Moreover, in 2001 the family established an organization called Tent of Nations to build peace and co-exis-



tence. Thousands of international visitors have come to the farm as volunteers, as participants in youth workshops, and programs in women's empowerment, agriculture training and ecological conservation.

Twelve churches and meetings are participants in the Olive Oil Ministry. Members and attenders from the following Quaker meetings in BYM participate in the program: Annapolis, Bethesda, Frederick, Sandy Spring and Friends Meeting of Washington. The 500 ML bottle sells for \$18 and 70% of the sales price benefits the Palestinian economy including Palestinian farmers and includes a \$6 donation to Tent of Nations. The olive oil is of fine quality, extra virgin, organic and makes excellent holiday gifts. The farmers are paid a certified fair trade price. Are there members and attenders of your meeting who might wish to participate in the Olive Oil Ministry? You may call or email me at 301-774-6815 or john.salzberg@verizon.net. You may also email Robert Mertz of Westmoreland Congregational Church (amertz@gmail.com) who is the coordinator of the program, or you can call him at 301-229-0973. You will find

him very helpful.

Purchasing Palestinian olive oil through the Olive Oil Ministry is a positive way of supporting peace and reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis.

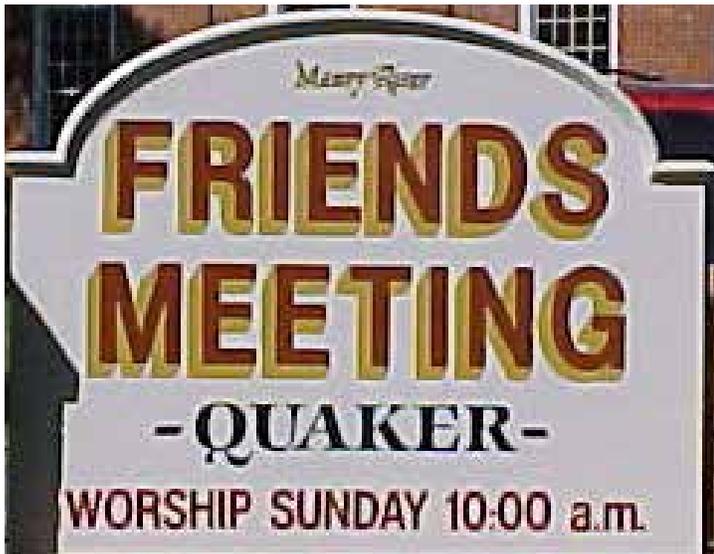
VISIT AMONG YOUR BYM FRIENDS

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you to visit among your BYM Friends.

For help and information we invite you to the Visiting Meetings Web page on the BYM website. Just go to the main page, look for the “What We Do”, select the first item, “Visiting Meetings” and you are on your way. If you need any help or assistance please don’t hesitate to call the BYM office at 301-774-7663 and ask for Ann Venable or email us at visit@bym-rsf.org.

The spiritual life of the Religious Society of Friends has long been nourished by visitation outside one’s own Meeting. Visits affirm the values of friendship, of fellowship, and of the life of the Spirit. They expand the woven network of Friendly connections, open new windows to stir our spirits, and enlarge our understanding of what it means to be a Friend. Whether they are motivated by a special mission or not, the visits of those who come in love and fellowship are likely to enrich those involved, and indeed the life of the Society.
(BYM Faith and Practice)



FREE BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM THE YEARLY MEETING

Baltimore Yearly Meeting has an overload of old Yearbooks/Proceedings that we do not need in the archives. Almost all of them are from 1968 up to the present. 1968 is when the two Baltimore Yearly Meetings consolidated into one, with many thanks to the Young Friends, ages 14 to 35 at the time, who were meeting together and thought the adults should do the same. They are a wonderful source of information about the past records of the Yearly Meeting decisions, committee members, Manual of Procedures, and other bits of the past you may want to know.

If there are specific years you would like to have to fill out your collection, please let me know which years you need so that I can get them to you. For those who would like to have some to start your Meeting’s collection, let me know and I will try to give you as complete a set as possible. Please contact Sheila Bach, archivist, at snbach@earthlink.net if you want some of these pieces of our Baltimore Yearly Meeting history.

ANNAPOLIS FRIENDS MEETING

Annapolis Friends are holding monthly worship sharing sessions on Friends’ testimonies. We are also studying the book *Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving. We have hung a Black Lives Matter sign three times, and it has been stolen three times. Nearby churches have had the same experience. A number of Friends are joining other church members for dialogue on racial issues. On New Year’s Eve, Annapolis Friends played a large part in an interfaith service including Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Muslims and Baha’is.

Carol Brantley, who represented Annapolis Friends on the board of a local homeless shelter and went on to play a major role in re-organizing, expanding, and improving services at the shelter, was honored in the county’s annual Martin Luther King, Jr. dinner. Our Holiday Market earned a record amount of money for three charities: Smile Train, Alternatives to Violence Program, and the Mennonite Central Committee’s Syria and Iraq Response. We wrote and sent to the local paper an open letter to Governor Hogan, asking that he welcome Syrian refugees to our state.

After lengthy negotiations, we have reached an agreement to trade land with a neighbor whose garage extends onto our property.

We will host Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting on March 13 with a program describing our Peace and Justice Center, how it came to be and the programs that have grown from it.

BETHESDA FRIENDS MEETING

Bethesda Friends Meeting is facing a major decision and at the same time a real opportunity for clarifying who we are as a Meeting, and what we envision for ourselves in the future. Since 1964, we have shared the grounds on which our Meeting House stands with Sidwell Friends Lower School; over the years, we have had a collaborative and fruitful relationship with the school. Sidwell Friends School now plans to sell the property, and move the lower school to a piece of property they have purchased in Washington DC adjacent to the upper school. They have welcomed us to join the lower school in this move. The clerks of the Meeting have appointed an ad hoc committee to consider our options, as we will clearly be moving from our current location by 2019, and will need to clarify what we’ll be doing long before that. The ad hoc committee has been tasked with gathering information about a variety of issues related to our options, and sharing these findings with the Meeting as a whole, so that we can discern what arrangements will best serve us and our vision of ourselves as a Quaker community as we move forward into this next part of our journey.

Other notable events and activities this past fall have included the launch of our new website, much improved from our old one, for which we heartily thank the ad hoc website committee (composed of many members of our Advancement and Outreach Committee, joined by some others in our Meeting). We sent several representatives to the FGC workshop called “Grow Your Meeting,” at Valley Friends Meeting in Dayton, VA, and they came back with much enthusiasm and many ideas for how we might grow both internally, amongst ourselves, and externally, as we reach out to others. The children, along with some of their family members and other members of the Meeting, participated in our yearly fall walkathon for the homeless, the proceeds of which go to the Interfaith Housing

FREDERICK FRIENDS MEETING

During 2015, Frederick Friends Meeting addressed several issues: climate change, homelessness, criminal justice reform, and membership.

Climate change. In response to the request from BYM's Unity with Nature Committee, we held a 2-part program to consider climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation. The first event consisted of viewing the video "The Wisdom to Survive: Climate Change, Capitalism and Community." The second was worship sharing on this topic. After Annual Session, we approved adding our Meeting's name to the "Shared Quaker Statement: Facing the Challenge of Climate Change." An informal working group of Friends has also been exploring the possibility of responding to climate change by getting more of the Meeting's electricity from solar power. We are exploring options of installation of solar panels on the roof and/or on top of a pavilion in the yard, which could also serve as additional space for Meeting activities.

Homelessness. Several Friends continue to volunteer in a shelter program that hosts families with children in different area churches. Although we are not able to serve as a host congregation, Friends provide their presence and food from time to time. Our Meeting also testified on behalf of a zoning change to allow the Frederick Rescue Mission to open a shelter for women and children near our Meeting House. The zoning request was approved, and plans are progressing for the shelter to be opened in early 2016.

Criminal justice reform. As an outgrowth of our reading Michelle Alexander's book *The New Jim Crow*, we organized a community-wide program to consider these issues further. Several local churches joined us in sponsoring the event, at the C. Burr Artz Library in Frederick, which included viewing a video interview with Michelle Alexander and group discussion. The library event also included a presentation from Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR). The Meeting subsequently became an endorsing organization for MAJR, and several Friends have participated in actions urged by MAJR.

Membership. The Ministry and Counsel Committee felt led to give attention to the matter of membership in the Meeting. Their members reached out to long-time attenders who had not requested membership and to members who had been absent from the life of our Meeting for some time. In part as a result of this ministry, we welcomed four new adult members (two of them by transfer from other Meetings) and three new associate members. Nine individuals were removed from membership: four transferred to another Meeting, three resigned their membership, and the Meeting terminated the membership of two others who had been absent for at least 5 years and for whom we had no contact information. In January, we approved a memorial minute for our member John Hastings Darnell, who died October 15, 2014. We greatly miss his presence among us.

GOOSE CREEK FRIENDS MEETING

Joined by neighbors, family, and friends, we held an autumn harvest festival to celebrate Bill and Bobbie Cochran's 50th anniversary at Goose Creek Meeting. They moved into the caretakers' home in the old stone Meeting House (across the road from our present one) in October 1965, and have been looking after Goose Creek Meeting in myriad ways ever since.



Crafts at the 2015 Women's Retreat

Coalition. The children also participated in a coat drive for Syrian refugees and gathered many coats. In December, we had our annual Christmas celebration, during which the children presented a play, and the orchestra (comprised of BFM musicians as well as some from the community) accompanied us for the singing of Christmas carols, and also played Bach's Christmas Oratorio and the overture to Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. The Tuesday before Christmas, we had our yearly Candlelight Meeting for Worship, a welcome respite from the busy-ness of the season, and an opportunity for deep spiritual nourishment.

Other committees and ad hoc groups continue to provide many other opportunities for deepening our knowledge of one another, growing our faith and practice, and engaging with others beyond our Quaker Meeting in the interests of social justice and right relationship to the earth. We are grateful for all the work that goes on behind the scenes to provide such a rich array of opportunities for us.

CHARLOTTESVILLE FRIENDS MEETING

Major repairs on our roof and the resulting damage to our kitchen were completed in 2015. During the spring and summer, Friends built pergolas, paths and a bench and installed plantings for a new memorial garden on the Meeting House property. With the replacement this fall of the fence on our back border by the neighboring business owner and some Friendly volunteers, our property is looking good and feeling snug and comfortable.

Our weekly Connections hour between the early and later Meetings for Worship covers a variety of topics of interest such as Bible study, the life journey of specific individuals in the meeting, concerns and opportunities for social action, spiritual sharing, and music. The Bible study, led by Vonnice Calland and Alice Anderson, has been particularly engaging in recent months, focusing on how the early church defined itself. The most recent reading was from Acts where God told believers that all seekers were welcomed and grace was available to them with adherence to only a bare minimum of the multitude of Jewish laws. We will continue to reflect on how this applies to Christians today. CFM is again working with PACEM (People and Congregations Engaged in Ministry) to host homeless women for a two-week period in our Meeting House. Through this program, local congregations coordinate efforts to provide a hot meal and a bed for 12-18 homeless women each night during the coldest part of the year.



We have been pursuing closer spiritual relationships through a regular Wednesday evening discussion gathering and a Spiritual Formation group. A new group is currently being organized to study and discuss the history of Quaker spirituality. Anyone from a nearby Meeting who would like to join this group is invited to contact Patricia Barber (patloubar@gmail.com or 202-271-8244).

First Day School students have met with an artist-beekeeper and an architect who helps to build affordable houses in Haiti. They have spent time with a young Friend who has been teaching them about sustainable farming, permaculture, and his work growing heritage fruit trees. Monthly activities include a knitting circle and interviews with Friends to find out about their Quaker journeys. We've rolled out a new website with lots of information about Goose Creek Friends and what we're doing: www.goosecreekfriends.org/

MENALLEN MONTHLY MEETING

Our Meeting has been changing in many ways. Alexander Griest passed away 8 Sixth month, at age 85. Al was a gentle presence, who spent his retirement years attending to the Meeting Houses and Burial Grounds with care. Mary and Mike Gemmill moved to the Brethren Community at Cross Keys during Ninth month. While they endeavor to attend Meeting for Worship most First Days, Mary rarely travels weekday evenings to participate in our ESL program. Member Vicki Rourke has returned to the area after years in Indiana, and we have a new active attender, Daryl Hewitt. So our Meetings for Worship have taken on a different, younger complexion. Chris Fee assumed the role of Clerk of the Meeting effective Seventh month. We appreciate his willingness to serve, and graciously thank Mary Gemmill for her many years of devoted service.

Meeting is making changes to our by-laws to indemnify members in the case of tragedy, and finds that the 40+ year-old by-laws require numerous other changes. We expect this process to take time, and ask our Meeting for grace in and patience with this process. Our reading group finished reading Michelle Alexander's "*The New Jim Crow*" and began reading Doug Gwyn's "*A Sustainable Life*." Both books have been a part Baltimore Yearly Meeting's annual book read in recent years. The reading group, while small, has allowed participants to know each other better as spiritual kin.

Our outreach to our Hispanic neighbors continues. We mourn the loss of Jorge Perez-Rico, who died this summer. Jorge was a tireless advocate who served the Hispanic and Anglo communities alike for

decades, supporting our ESL program in the process. Our ESL classes continue for their third year, serving new and returning students alike. Pursuant to recently enacted Pennsylvania legislation, tutors working with children have completed training and background checks. Additionally, we provide childcare only to children of students present at any one session.

Menallen Friends Preschool, in its 42nd year, has full enrollment this semester. We expect some changes to the Preschool to come as a result of the by-law revision process, but don't yet know what those changes are. We have increased our assistance with a weekly backpack meals program, John's Meals, which serves the Upper Adams School District at Arendtsville Elementary.

We again held monthly worship at both Redlands and Huntington Meeting Houses over the summer. Trim at the Huntington Meetinghouse was painted this fall, and we have arranged to have a 100-foot-tall, decaying tulip tree removed from Newberrytown Burial Ground once freezes have controlled nesting yellow-jackets. In addition, the Eighth Month Quarterly Meeting, held at the Huntington Meeting House, was well attended, and we look forward to hosting at Huntington and Redlands Meeting Houses in the future, as way opens.

RICHMOND FRIENDS MEETING

Peace and Social Concerns is considering once again becoming involved in supporting refugees in the process of resettlement in the U.S. RFM has a considerable history of such activity to build upon. The committee is also continuing its' prison visiting activity and promoting prison reform.

A six-session series entitled *Living the Quaker Live* will be held on the 2nd and 4th First Days in February, March, and April. The series is designed for newcomers, long-time members and attenders, and those who are considering membership. One or more of our Meeting's elders will facilitate each of the sessions. Each session will have assigned readings from the Yearly Meeting's 2013 *Draft Faith and Practice* and other readings selected by the facilitators. Each session will include a presentation, experiential activities, sharing, and questions and answers.

VALLEY FRIENDS MEETING

This past fall we reduced our committees from 7 to 5 and are encouraging Friends to take on leadings and responsibilities regardless of committee status. Clerking Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business is being shared by various members, some of whom are serving in the role for the first time. We are very pleased to welcome four new members, two who have transferred from Milwaukee. The year closed with our traditional candlelight and solstice celebration which included the joy of seeing old Friends who had traveled a long distance to be with us. We were privileged to host FGC/BYM sponsored workshop, *Growing Our Meeting*. We enjoyed meeting new Friends from across BYM and are discerning ways to implement what we learned.

The charge of reducing or eliminating our Meeting's carbon footprint is an outgrowth of our Minute on Climate Change and is being led by an ad hoc committee. Having completed an energy audit and sought advice of experts we are at the point of decision making regarding significant expenditures to replace our old oil furnace possibly with a combination heat pumps and a solar panel array.

YORK FRIENDS MEETING

York Friends Meeting is a welcoming community, Grounded in God, Growing in Gratitude, Guided by the Light

—York Monthly Meeting Vision Statement

After much discussion and discernment, York Friends have reached consensus on our mission statement:

- As a community of faith we affirm our desire:
- To honor our Quaker heritage to remind us from whence we came
- To sustain our faithfulness to the Divine as our Spiritual Center
- To grow in depth and breadth to welcome and nurture adults, children, youth, and families of diverse backgrounds
- To reach beyond ourselves to co-create a more just, peaceful, and sustainable local and global community

The Seekers group meets weekly on Wednesday nights to worship and study. We remain mindful of the diversity in our experience and understanding of the Divine, while also remembering our roots in Christian tradition and the teachings of Jesus. In response to requests for more Bible study, A Friend presented a program in our First Day 9:30 Session on George Fox's love of the Bible, and how it influenced his witness and teaching.

Linda Rabben from Adelphi Friends Meeting presented the program "Sanctuary, Then and Now" at the 9:30 First Day session on September 20. She also donated a book, *Give Refuge to the Stranger: The Past, Present, and Future of Sanctuary*, to our Meeting Library. Some Friends from York Monthly Meeting are actively involved in programs to finance and shelter refugees from the conflict in Syria. We enjoyed music at our annual Homecoming Picnic on September 13 following Meeting for Worship. It was a beautiful day for a picnic, and for spending time in the beautiful garden behind the Meeting. About 50 people attended, including 10 children and an

infant, and we enjoyed a barbecue, shared dishes, the music of Leah and Marlin Ballard, and, of course, each other.

On December 24, Christmas Eve, about 20 Friends and visitors gathered at 7 PM at the Meeting House for a candlelight service. Those gathered first worshipped in silence, then sang traditional Christmas carols accompanied by guitar. While enjoying the refreshments after the service, a visitor remarked that he appreciated a time of quiet and peace during the busy holiday season. Celebrating the New Year has become a tradition at York Monthly Meeting, and is always enjoyed both by Friends and members of the community. A musical program was provided at 7 and 8 PM by former York Monthly Meeting Friends Ed and Fran Norton.

We have co-sponsored, with the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of York, a community showing of the film *The Doctrine of Discovery: Unmasking the Domination Code*. The film explores the impact of the 1493 Papal Bull declaring that the lands newly-discovered by Europeans could be conquered and exploited by Europeans. The Doctrine of Discovery has been used to legitimate the seizure of land and the disenfranchisement and destruction of indigenous people and their cultures up to the present time. It has influenced the imperialistic policies of European nations for centuries, and has had a particularly strong effect on the assumptions and policies of nations that now occupy the "new" lands of the Western Hemisphere.

York Monthly Meeting continues to welcome new attenders and members and our steady growth calls for more space. After much discernment and planning, we are hoping in the near future to engage an architect to design a new addition to our building. Friends have been generous, and the building Fund is growing steadily. And there is the witness of our own space—the certified pollinator garden, the garden of native plant species, the beehives, the beauty. Some people say we are an island of peace and beauty in the midst of a frenzied and noisy city.

Spring Family Camp Weekends 2016

Friends, Family, Fun and favorite camp activities

at the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camps!

Family Camp Weekends at Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camp Properties offer us all a chance to come and enjoy our beautiful camp properties at a special time of year. Individuals and families are invited to come and enjoy the camps for a day or for the weekend. This fall, we will have a program coordinator at each weekend who will plan camp-type activities for Saturday and Sunday mornings, as well as Saturday afternoon and evening. These may include things like playing in the creek, a crafts project or hiking around one of the most precious places on earth. There will also be plenty of work projects to do! Work projects offer people with all kinds of skills the opportunity to enjoy some meaningful and satisfying work! We will enjoy meals together, have time to explore and even spend some time around a camp fire in the evening. Come and enjoy a camp experience, give the gift of your time, participate with children in activities and find yourself rejuvenated. More information is available at bymcamps.org/programs/family-camp-weekends/

Spring 2016 Family Camp Weekends	
Opequon Quaker Camp	April 29 – May 1
Catoctin Quaker Camp	May 13 – 15
Shiloh Quaker Camp	June 3 – 5

Baltimore Yearly Meeting
17100 Quaker Lane
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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)

BYM CAMPS REGISTRATION IS OPEN! SEE BYMCAMPS.ORG FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER

FEBRUARY

- 12-14 – Young Friends Conference at Sandy Spring Friends School
- 15 – Yearly Meeting Offices Closed
- 25 – Growing Diverse Leadership Initiative Comes to DC Area

MARCH

- 12 – Third Month Interim Meeting at Langley Hill Friends Meeting
- 13 – Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting at Annapolis Friends Meeting
- 19-20 – Junior Young Friends Conference at Midlothian Friends Meeting
- 19-20 – RETreat for Religious Educators at Richmond Friends Meeting
- 20 – Friendly Sing-Along at Roanoke Friends Meeting
- 25 – Yearly Meeting Offices Closed

APRIL

- 1-3 – Young Friends Conference
- 2 – Peace and Social Concerns 2016 Networking Day at Sandy Spring Friends School
- 16 – 2017 Apportionment Meeting (North) at Carlisle Monthly Meeting
- 30 – 2017 Apportionment Meeting (South) at Midlothian Friends Meeting

STAFF AND OFFICERS OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

Kenneth “Ken” Stockbridge	Presiding Clerk ymclerk@bym-rsf.org	Dyresha Harris	Outreach and Inclusion Coordinator oic@bym-rsf.org
Natasha “Tasha” Walsh	Clerk of Interim Meeting imclerk@bym-rsf.org	Jane Megginson	Camp Program Manager janemegginson@bym-rsf.org
Thomas “Tom” Hill	Treasurer treasurer@bym-rsf.org	David Hunter	Camp Property Manager davidhunter@bym-rsf.org
Robert “Bob” Rhudy	Interim General Secretary gensec@bym-rsf.org	Jossie Dowling	Youth Programs Manager youthprograms@bym-rsf.org
Margo Lehman	Comptroller comptroller@bym-rsf.org	Wayne Finegar	Administration Manager admin@bym-rsf.org
Ann Venable	Development Director development@bym-rsf.org		