

**FRIENDLY  
CONNECTIONS**

**State College Friends Meeting**

**MAY 2017  
Newsletter**



*State College Friends Meeting  
611 East Prospect Ave.  
State College, PA 16801  
Phone (814) 237-7051*

## Announcements

### ► SCFM Gardening Committee: Wednesday Workdays 6-8 pm:

\*We will meet together every Wednesday from 6:00 to 8:00 throughout the growing season to care for the grounds. Our first work session is this Wednesday, May 3rd. Contact [dorothyhab@gmail.com](mailto:dorothyhab@gmail.com) with questions.

May 6: Work Day at Friends Meeting House for ALL Friends

May 7: Service Project for all FDS students: Planting flowering perennials at SCFM

### ► May 18 SCFM Fundraising Dinner for Housing Transitions

### ► Meeting Contributions:

Dear friends, Our contributions for the first quarter of 2017 are below what we hope by this time. Please consider whether you have made a contribution yet this year, and whether you would like to do automatic monthly or quarterly contributions either by using the PYM

website, <https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=f0f5fd> or by checks. If you need help with how to do this, please contact Connie Wheeler, [cmwheeler15@gmail.com](mailto:cmwheeler15@gmail.com) or 814-883-9121 or Kerry Wiessmann, [kgw11@scasd.org](mailto:kgw11@scasd.org) or 814-571-8909.

► Please sign up to help with potluck and refreshments. We hope each member and/or attender will help with set up and clean up for at least 1 potluck and 3 refreshment dates through the course of the year. Duties include bringing a snack, setting up, and cleaning up.

Visit:

<<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0B44ACA92FA57-state>> [www.SignUpGenius.com/go/30E0B44ACA92FA57-state](http://www.SignUpGenius.com/go/30E0B44ACA92FA57-state)

## **Baltimore Yearly Meeting**

### *Personal Way of Life*

Do you live in accordance with your spiritual convictions? Do you seek employment consistent with your beliefs and in service to society? Do you practice simplicity in speech, dress and manner of living, avoiding wasteful consumption? Are you watchful that your possessions do not rule you? Do you strive to be truthful at all times, avoiding judicial oaths?

QUERIES  
QUERIES

Do you strive to develop your physical, emotional and mental capacities toward reaching your Divinely given potential? Do you cultivate healthful and moderate habits, avoiding the hazards of drugs, intoxicants, and over-indulgence generally? Do you try to direct such emotions as anger and fear in creative ways?

## Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

### *Education*

What is our Meeting's role in the life and support of Friends' education? If supporting or maintaining a Friends school, have we developed an appropriate relationship of Meeting and school? What is our role in the spiritual life of the school and its maintenance of Friends' principles?

What does our Meeting do to support education in the wider community?

What help do we provide for the children and adults in our Meeting to pursue the education they seek, whether academic, technical, or vocational? Do we make provision for children in our Meeting to attend a Friends school?

How do I show my concern for the improvement of public education in my community and in the world?

Am I aware of what Friends schools are doing and of their plans for the future? How do I show encouragement and support?

## **Thinking About Race – (May 2017) Mychal Denzel Smith**

In his recent (2016) book, **Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching: A Young Black Man's Education**, writer Mychal Denzel Smith includes a chapter about his personal struggles with depression. He goes deeply into how difficult it is for black men, whose persona is generally supposed to be macho, to acknowledge mental health problems and any need for – or access to -- mental health treatment.

“What would happen if we reframed the way we understand black male life in a way that took mental health seriously? If we looked outside and didn't see ruthless gangbangers but teenage boys left hopeless and giving themselves suicide missions. If instead of chastising young men for fighting over sneakers we asked why they feel worthless and unseen without them. If we didn't label them junkies but rather recognized their need for affirmation. If we held our boys close when they cried instead of turning them away to face the frustration, pain, and sadness 'like a man.' If we believed black boys were worthy of second chances that didn't involve prison cells. What if?”

This column is prepared by the BYM Working Group on Racism (WGR) and sent to the designated liaison at each Monthly and Preparative Meeting. The BYM WGR meets most months on the third Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Locations vary to allow access to more Friends.

## Spiritual State of the Meeting 2016

### State College Friends Meeting For Baltimore Yearly Meeting

The past year continued to be a mix of successes and challenges for State College Meeting. We had some success with fundraising dinners for local organizations, children's Religious Education began to rebound, and most of the physical problems with our building were resolved. Overall declining attendance, however, led to concern for the Meeting and consolidation of several committees.

We met several times over the year to discuss and discern "How can we come together to create a vibrant, nurturing community with shared purpose?" We used queries to come up with ideas. While there was not a concrete result from these discussions, many felt they brought us closer.

No new members were welcomed into the Meeting. At the same time, we lost several long-term attenders and members. Mercedes Richards passed away at the beginning of the year and Richard Taber and Elwood Way both passed away at the year's end. Some new attenders have joined us and we welcome their presence. Some new, young families have contributed a lot to the RE program and also helped relieve some of the long-term teachers by teaching.

The Meeting last year decided to make the RE Clerk a paid position. This has improved the organization of RE. More children have been attending Meeting and we are very grateful. Our First Day School is divided into two groups: a younger group (K-5) and an older group (Middle- and High School age kids).

The younger group has been given information about other Meetings in our area and even visited one (Pennsdale Meeting). They also have been learning about the "Underground Railroad" (which was once active in our area), as well as about current issues related to segregation and discrimination against minorities. The older group has been learning about Islam through a visit from two active Muslims and also about issues related to conscientious objection.

We continue the tradition of a winter weekend at a nearby state park. While it is focused on young Friends, Friends of all ages congregate and get to know each other better.

In 2015, Care and Concern Committee developed a membership policy for young adults. In late winter the Committee sent out letters to young adult Friends to make contact and ask what they may wish to receive from Meeting. Only a few young f/Friends responded.

Adult religious education has lapsed at Meeting. It was difficult to find anyone to organize it, and when it was scheduled, the attendance was low. The Meeting used to have a Program Committee, but its duties have been folded into the combined committee of Outreach and Social Action. With their wide range of duties and lack of consensus for direction among Meeting members, it is difficult to plan adult education. At the end of 2016, however, there appeared to be movement and energy towards developing adult education programming again. Meeting has established an organization page on Facebook to help publicize local events of interest to friends and share relevant news about our members and attenders.

A highlight of the year included a second Harvest Dinner in the fall. The 70-plus attendees enjoyed a meal together and money was raised for the budget. Several people we do not often see came to the dinner, which added to the pleasure. Aprons and car magnets celebrating the Meeting were also popular items.

To raise money for local charities, the Meeting put on five fundraising dinners. Some were more successful than others and we have learned from the experience that each charity needs to participate in the publicity. We also wished more members of Meeting had attended. Several local organizations appreciated the efforts and the financial contribution.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee, along with several other dedicated members, focused a lot of energy on the mold problem in the garden level of the meeting house. It was also very expensive and depleted the Meeting's maintenance fund. Walls had to be taken apart, everything sorted through and cleaned or thrown out, and companies hired to eliminate the mold. The outside of the meeting house had to be dug up, drainage improved, and the slope changed. Many, many hours of work were done. The rooms were then thoroughly cleaned, painted, and new carpeting was put in one of the rooms. All this work has enabled First Day School to now hold RE in the garden level, and the Meeting hopes to be able to use the area as an additional rental space.

Nominating Committee staffed committees by combining Advancement and Outreach with Peace and Social Action, and combining Care and Concern with Worship and Ministry. The new committees have been feeling their way during the second

half of 2016 and trying to understand the best ways to fulfill the work needed. It is difficult not to lose some of the things the committees used to do when there are fewer people to do the work. The Meeting plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the combined committees and having a paid RE coordinator in 2017.

One Friend who had been doing service in California wanted this report to reflect her experience returning to this meeting after eighteen months away. Although there had been some noticeable changes, particularly regarding the numbers attending on First Days, she also felt a strong sense of Quakers living the testimonies. Her homecoming was much brightened by attending many gathered meetings, peppered with uplifting and deep messages. She had greatly missed this, along with the sense of community that continues to be expressed through warm handshakes, shared work, singing, and loving care of one another. Another Friend expressed her appreciation of all the help she received from the Meeting when she went through a difficult surgery.

Though Meeting for Worship often is composed of small numbers, we continue to value times of gathered worship. Some benches were removed from the meeting room to increase the gathered feel. Speaking is not frequent but it reflects the quality of the silence and is often deeply felt. The Meeting continues to draw a mix of those who come for the spiritual refreshment and those who come for the sense of community.

In outreach, we continue our practice of holding Meeting for Worship at Foxdale Village four times a year and at State College Friends School once a year. The Meetings for Worship at Foxdale

often draw many Friends that are unable to join us at the meeting house and some who are not Friends and want to experience Meeting. Foxdale Friends also continue to hold Meeting for Worship each Sunday under the care of State College Friends Meeting.

The Meeting's relationship with State College Friends School continues to be a positive experience. The Quaker Life committee provides a link between Meeting and the school. Members are: Head and Associate Head of school, two parents of students at the school, three members of Meeting, and the Clerk of the school's Board of Trustees, also a member of Meeting. Events in the past year have been as follows:

- Quakerism 101 was held on two evenings. The first was an intro to Quakerism, the second focused on how Quaker principles are integrated into the school curriculum. These were well attended by several school families as well as some Foxdale residents. Teachers, students and alumni of the school participated.
- The second event was called "Quakers in the Classroom," a day in which several Quakers spend part of a day in the classrooms, describing what it means to be a Quaker. (Teachers may get creative with this.) Children's reactions have been thoughtful and interesting.
- The next event was a meal prepared at the school by the Quaker Life committee to illustrate "Right Sharing of World Resources". Middle school students organized the program, and several families as well as Meeting members attended.

The larger Quaker group we interact with most is Upper Susquehanna Quarterly Meeting, a part of PYM. There are gatherings four times a year we call "Creative Hands" where we

gather for the weekend to do crafts and have a sleepover. We also continue to be actively involved in planning a September retreat weekend with USQM at Chrystal Lake Camp.

Several women from the Meeting enjoy attending BYM's Women's Retreat weekend. Another group of women has been meeting twice a month to deepen their friendship and spiritual life. This has involved reading and discussing spiritual literature, attending an Interfaith initiative group, and attending religious services of other faiths together. A men's spiritual group is also meeting monthly, as is a Course in Miracle's group that meets on a regular basis.

Inter-visitation, however, continues to be rare. Since many of us have irregular attendance at our own Meeting, we do not often have the time and energy to visit other Meetings. Some State College Friends attend FGC, but not many. We struggle to send people to either yearly meeting.

As we suspect is common among all Friends, we have struggled with the election and its aftermath. Joys and Sorrows after close of worship often contain references to our individual concerns. Some Friends were grateful for collective support for coping with their emotions after the election. In 2016, the Meeting did not make a cohesive response except to place a welcoming sign in three languages outside the meeting house. We expect this struggle, individually and collectively, to continue.

**STATE COLLEGE FRIENDS MEETING**  
**MEETING FOR WORSHIP FOR BUSINESS**

**Fourth Month 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017**

Meeting began with silent worship and a reading of the Queries from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting on Care for the Meeting Community:

*Are love and unity maintained among us? When conflicts exist, are they faced with patience, forbearance, and openness to healing? Are avenues for exploring differences kept open? To what extent does our Meeting ignore differences in order to avoid possible conflicts?*

*Is the Meeting a safe, loving place? When we become aware of someone's need, do we offer assistance? Are the meetinghouse and the Meeting property physically accessible to all?*

*Do all adults and children in our Meeting receive our loving care and encouragement to share in the life of our Meeting, and to live as Friends? Do we truly welcome newcomers and include them in our Meeting community?*

*When a member's conduct or manner of living gives cause for concern, how does the Meeting respond?*

*How does our Meeting keep in touch with all its members?*

*Am I ready to offer assistance as part of my religious community serving its members? Am I equally willing to accept graciously the help of others?*

*Do I recognize and face disagreements and other situations that put me in conflict with others? Do I manifest a spirit ready to give or receive forgiveness?*

*Do I treat adults and children alike with respect and without condescension? Is my manner with visitors and attenders to my Meeting one of welcome?*

Responses included one Friend remembering her first time attending the meeting. She had never experienced everyone saying “welcome” at introductions before, and she thought it was a good habit. Another Friend told of a time she attended a Turkish/Islamic group that was set up for conversation, and it was wonderful. She sat with two Turkish students from the university. She asked them what they missed most about being here, and they said the call to prayer that would ring through the town. She thought to herself that we don’t hear church bells any more. She would like being reminded to be called to prayer. It would be welcoming and remind us all to pray.

Another Friend noted that, as usual, the PYM queries are too long and contain several trains of thought. We do offer assistance but maybe don't always follow through. Another thought is that maybe we overlook disagreements or take a long time to resolve them. Perhaps we ignore differences to avoid conflict. Another Friend responded that sometimes avoiding is the way to handle disagreements. For example, years ago there was great disagreement about building a new meeting house. It was laid down for years because it was too divisive. That kept the meeting together. Six or seven years later, the decision went smoothly. It was a lesson on when to do that.

Another Friend responded that avoiding conflict is sometimes a loving way to deal with it and a recognition we don't want to step on each other's toes. Another said that Friends have a reputation of being honest, and it's sometimes better to meet conflicts head on, and lovingly.

## **REVIEW OF AGENDA**

Discussions on the kitchen and Out of the Cold were added, and a discussion on cleaning supplies used. There was also a request for time for announcements.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS AND DISCUSSION**

## **Buildings and Grounds**

Bernie Hoffnar reported. He began with a question about cleaning supplies used. It is a product purchased for Laurence. After discussion, there was unity that people did not care for the smell of the product and a request that something else be used.

Bernie reported the carpet in the meeting room needs to be cleaned. They are working with Jim Adams on how to do it. The Committee has been requested to develop a protocol on use of the building as an emergency shelter. This arose from the request by the Jewish Community Center. The Committee is working on this.

They are also proceeding on the electrical work needed, especially the lighting on the parking lot. Max Lauerer, an electrician, was hired. He also looked at the building and said his first impression is there are problems, some of which may be dangerous. He charges \$30/hour. Buildings and Grounds is working with Finance Committee on how to pay for this. He asked for approval on the electrical work.

*Meeting approved for Buildings and Grounds Committee to move forward on the electrical issues, using their own judgement.*

The Committee has also gotten estimates on needed parking lot work. There are holes, and problems for those with difficulty walking. Ralph Way helped the Committee during meetings with contractors, and in getting estimates. The estimates ranged from a complete redo to minimum work and ranged from \$21,000 to \$1400. The Committee settled on EBY Paving at \$2190 to correct the problems as defined by the Committee.

Questions about the repaving included whether it could be done between Sundays so it did not disrupt parking for Meeting, and whether Friends School has been consulted since they will be impacted. The work can be done between Sundays, but the school has not yet been informed of the work. Finance Committee has approved the expense. Buildings and Grounds will see if the work can be done after school is dismissed for the summer.

*Meeting approved work needed on the parking lot.*

A spring cleanup will be scheduled, but Buildings and Grounds needs someone to take the lead. Kerry Wiessmann offered to schedule it, and the Meeting agreed on May 6<sup>th</sup> from 9 to 11 am. A rain date will also be set. Someone needs to come up with a list of tasks needed to be done.

A concern was raised for the Committee about the uneven sidewalk. They will follow up on it.

## **Religious Education**

Sunny Rehler reported. First Day School did the underground railroad tour of Bellefonte with Robert Lumley-Sapanski two weeks ago. Last week Cy deVries talked with them about her life story.

April is covered for teaching assistants but help is needed in May. Signup genius was sent out with a request for people to assist.

There will be an intergenerational program in May, with qigong and tai chi instructors coming to talk. It will be an opportunity for families to connect.

## **Worship and Ministry**

Margy Frysinger presented the next draft of The Spiritual State of the Meeting Report.

*Meeting approved The Spiritual State of the Meeting Report with a few changes.*

## **Finance Committee**

Kerry Wiessmann reported that a financial review of the books will be done for 2016. She went on to say that “gifts in kind” don’t show up in Quickbooks for a tax claim, so if Friends wish to claim something they bought for the Meeting it is better to submit receipts, get reimbursed, and send a check to the Meeting.

The dinner for Third Way Collective brought in over \$1000. The next dinner, for The Women’s Resource Center, will be on April 20<sup>th</sup>. The last one will be for Housing Transitions on May 18<sup>th</sup>. The May potluck will have a jar for donations for Park Forest Preschool. Lynne Grutzeck told the gathering that Interfaith Human Services was very impressed with the fundraiser for them, and the food served. To raise money for the Meeting there will be a “trunk sale” in the parking lot on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Nominating Committee**

Laurie Jeffreys reported. They have been able to fully staff the Committee. Katy Lumley-Sapanski and Peg Hansen have agreed to serve.

To find people to fill committees, they have used committee descriptions on the website. They are proposing changing the description of the Personnel Committee. The new description would be that it was made up of someone from each committee that oversees a person paid by the Meeting. One of them would be the supervisor, who would do performance appraisals with

input from other committee members. Only major issues would go through the supervisor, not day-to-day needs. There should be job descriptions for each position.

*Meeting approved the new description of the Personnel Committee.*

There will no longer be a Potluck and Refreshment Committee since people are volunteering. They are hoping volunteers will also clean out the refrigerator.

**Finance Committee**

In response to a question about the state of the deferred maintenance fund, Connie Wheeler said that \$15,000 was taken from the Friends Fiduciary funds to pay for the basement and upcoming expenses. Deferred maintenance has also been getting \$400/month. While we do need more money for the budget, we should be ok with deferred maintenance.

**Peace and Social Action**

Committee of the whole, with individual reports.

Kerry Wiessmann recently talked with Phil Jones, the director of Out of the Cold. He said people have wondered about the

absence of SCFM in the program. He said there are other things that can be done beside housing people. We could provide a board member who could keep the Meeting apprised of needs. No organization has to provide someone to stay overnight because there is a paid supervisor. Kerry is hoping that someone will feel led to volunteer to be on the board.

*Meeting approved participating in Out of the Cold if someone will volunteer.*

Lynne Grutzeck announced that Habitat for Humanity is having a fundraiser walk on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Selden Smith reminded the gathering about the Palm Sunday Peace Walk on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Claudia Wilson had three events to announce: a dinner for Park Forest Preschool on May 5<sup>th</sup>, a film about Standing Rock called “Awake” for which donations are needed, and the need for prayer flags for the Climate March. Bernie Hoffnar also announced a talk by Michael Mann at Foxdale on Thursday, movies presented by the Foxdale Diversity Committee, the work of the Nittany Valley Water Coalition, and that Foxdale has an active Green Committee.

The Center for LGBTQA has two events coming up. Kerry Wiessmann said there will be a prom on April 8<sup>th</sup> and they are asking for donations and people to attend. The play, “This Will

Lead to Dancing” will be presented for free at the UBBC on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

Johanna Jackson announced that SURGE will have a meeting on April 13<sup>th</sup> on showing up for racial justice, and there is a group meeting at Webster’s each Wednesday at 6:30 with a new topic each week.

Campbell Plowden recently saw Mujaddid in prison. He has had one appeal turned down by the Ohio Supreme Court. Mujaddid has been doing research on child serial abuse. Campbell also notified the Meeting that he had reposted Ann Ward’s Facebook post on to the Meeting’s Facebook page.

Robert Lumley-Sapanski will be doing a power point presentation on the underground railroad’s history in Bellefonte at the rise of Meeting. Laurie Jeffreys announced that Dean Tuttle’s 107<sup>th</sup> birthday is next week and she hopes many cards will be sent. This led Kerry Wiessmann to tell everyone that Dean told her about how Norma White came to Foxdale and her husband died very soon thereafter. Dean stepped in and helped her a lot, which is why she left a fund to the Friends Meeting.

The BYM Women’s Retreat, Johanna Jackson said, was a great experience. A well-written epistle was issued that will be sent out to everyone. Johanna also said she has been going to Powell House in NYC for about two years. It’s a safe place for kids, and she feels a deep calling to this youth center.

Places to show AFSC's presentation, "Waging Peace," are being worked out with Foxdale and Friends School for the fall. Selden Smith said it might also be shown at Penn State.

## **Friends School**

Dan Hendey reported. He began by thanking those who attended MFW the previous First Day at the school. The Right Sharing of World Resources lunch raised \$350.

Enrollment continues to look low for next year. They are considering combining the fourth and fifth grades and are in the process of getting feedback from parents.

Comcast has approached the school about installing an in-ground wire for their services. The school is also wondering about the tree house in the Friendly Woods and whether that could be moved to the school. Dan will work with the Buildings and Grounds Committee on both ideas.

## **TRANSFERS OF MEMBERSHIP**

Selden Smith notified the Meeting of the membership transfers of Pat Hopkinson to Detroit Monthly Meeting and Louise Sandmeyer and Dick Swails to Southern Maine Monthly Meeting.

## REVIEW OF MINUTES

The minutes for February were approved.

**Next Business Meeting: May 7th, 2017 at 9:00 am.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Selden Smith, clerk  
recording clerk

Margy Frysinger,

### **Attendance:**

Kerry Wiessmann

Connie Wheeler

Bernie Hoffnar

Campbell Plowden

Yuri Plowden

Ann Sidone

Lynne Grutzeck

Michael Grutzeck

Jim Adams

Polly Dunn

Becky Misangyi

Sunny Rehler

Johanna Jackson

Claudia Wilson

Marjorie E. Nelson

Laurie Jeffreys

Renee Crauder

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**RETURN REQUESTED**