

ANNAPOLIS FRIENDS NEWSLETTER — FEBRUARY 2012

CALENDAR

- Meeting for worship: 11 a.m. on First Days
- First Day School for children: 11 a.m. (Joining meeting for worship from 11:45 a.m. to noon)
- Nursery care for our youngest: 11 a.m.
- Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business: 1st First Day of month at 9 a.m.
- Adult religious education: As noted in calendar below
- Care of the Meeting House for Second Month: Pastoral Care

FEBRUARY 5: 9 a.m. Meeting for worship with attention to business; 11 a.m. Meeting for Worship; 1 p.m. Potluck lunch

FEBRUARY 12: 9 a.m. Meeting for Learning: Spiritual State of the Meeting; 11 a.m. Meeting for worship

FEBRUARY 19: 9 a.m. Committee Meetings; 11 a.m. Meeting for Worship; 9 p.m. Newsletter items deadline: please email!

FEBRUARY 26: 11 a.m. Meeting for Worship

QUERIES FOR SECOND MONTH: MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Are meetings for business held in a spirit of worship, understanding, and forbearance? When direction seems lacking, is this seen as a challenge to a more prayerful search for truth? Do we humbly set aside our own preconceived notions as to proper action, seeking instead Divine guidance as to the right course? Is the Meeting aware that it speaks not only through its actions but also through its failure to act? Do you participate regularly in meetings for business, discharge faithfully your committee responsibilities, and assume your share of financial support of the meeting? (Faith and Practice, p. 38)

MEETING FOR WORKSHOP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS MINUTES

EIGHTH DAY OF THE FIRST MONTH, 2012

Present were: Elise A. (Clerk), Phyllis S. (Recording Clerk), and 30 other Friends and attenders. Our Meeting began with centering worship.

Annual Building Rental Report: The full report presented by Sky E. will be attached in the book of MfB minutes. In 2011 AFM received \$20,057 in rental fees, exceeding the budgeted amount of \$17,850. Most of the fees were received from nine weekly or monthly renters, seven of whom are returning in 2012. Our budget goal for 2012 is \$19,000. Virtually all renters are complying with AFM's request for rider-type insurance certificates. We have requested these since late 2010, upon the advice of counsel. A dance group is dedicating a portion of their receipts towards the payment for refinishing our cork floor in about four years.

The Building Use Coordinator very much appreciates Minette Clarke-Swindle and Karl Richmond standing in for him when he was absent.

Annual Trustees Report: The full report, presented by Sky E., will be in the book of AFM minutes.

The trustees met quarterly during 2011. Each session began and ended in silence, in acknowledgement of their need to best serve the Meeting as a whole. Trustees continue to be responsible for major financial matters, investment funds, and legal transactions of the Meeting. Trustees respect the trust given them by the Meeting as a whole, and invite the interest of others in serving as Trustees.

In January 2011 Trustees ratified the officers, committee slate, and budget as approved in December 2010 MfB. At each meeting the Treasurer presented the treasurer report. Each Trustees session included an investment review. The Trustees, with the Stewardship and Finance Committee, continue to monitor investments. Trustees submitted the Youth Safety Policy and Guidance document prepared by the Children's Religious Education Committee (CREC) to our insurance company for review. Comments were noted, and CREC and Trustees were satisfied with the current policy and guide. Trustees approved a bid on a raw land property adjacent to AFM. An environment study by a contractor and members' observations disclosed sufficient concerns to withdraw from the contract. The upfront deposit was returned.

Ministry and Worship Committee: Tricia R. joyfully presented the membership requests of Kit H. and Susan D., reading from Kit's letter of request.

Peace and Social Concerns: Phil F. reported on AFM and the Occupy Wall Street movement:

In response to the Occupy Movement and minutes by various Friends organizations, during its MfB, twelfth month, AFM requested that P&SC hold a threshing meeting. Friends are doing research and P&SC drafted a minute, based on a minute drafted by the Homewood Meeting. The minute was drafted to clarify and publicize our position. This minute will be attached to the book of MfB minutes. In addition to defining the AFM-OM relationship, the minute serves to frame an action agenda and to publicize our position.

ACTION: AFM Friends approve cosponsoring a forum with the UU Church and allowing them to use our logo on flyers advertising it.

AFM Friends approve the minute with the addition of sentences reflecting ideas from our following discussion.

AFM Friends approve the P&JC, through P&SC, moving forward as they feel appropriate.

Meetinghouse and Lands is currently studying various solar options for AFM and will report to MfB in the future.

Closing: These minutes were read and approved during Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. Meeting closed with silent worship.

Respectfully Submitted,
Elise A., Clerk, and Phyllis S., Recording Clerk

AFM DECONSTRUCTING RACISM DISCUSSION

Dear Friends:

The next Deconstructing Racism discussion will take place Saturday, February 4, from 2 to 4 p.m., in the meetinghouse library. Our group is under the care of AFM Ministry and Worship Committee. Friends get together every 2 or 3 months to talk about our recent experiences related to race and diversity.

We open in silent worship, update each other on events in our lives, examine our own unaware racism, discern our individual and collective leadings for furthering equality and justice, and close in silent worship. Hope you can share in this discussion. Newcomers, oldies, and all in between are welcome!

Peace,
Jean

LECTURE/WORKSHOP ON "CARING FOR CREATION"

An international theologian on environmental sustainability and care for creation, Dr. Ellen B. Davis, will be giving lectures and a workshop in Annapolis on March 11 and 12.

She is a Professor of Bible and Practical Theology at Duke Divinity School. Her most recent book, "Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible," integrates biblical studies with a critique of industrial agriculture and food production.

Dr. Davis' visit is co-sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Chesapeake Interfaith Environmental Group (of which AFM is a member), and the Chesapeake Covenant Community. For detailed information visit www.annapolispresbyterian.com.

BYM THINKING ABOUT RACE GROUP

Jay Smooth, a video blogger and host of New York's longest running hip-hop radio show, presented at a TED conference meet-up at Hampshire College. In the talk, "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race," Smooth says it's sometimes difficult to talk about race because we're taking the wrong approach: "We deal with race and prejudice with this all-or-nothing, good person-bad person binary, in which either you are racist or you are not racist."

The truth, he says, is that discussions about race are a lot more complex than that. And once people acknowledge that fact, they'll be able to have more honest and productive conversations. He adds, "Anytime we're dealing with race issues, we're dealing with a social construct that was not born out of science or reason or logic. We're grappling with a social construct that was not designed to make sense."

The Baltimore Yearly Meeting Working Group on Racism meets most months on the third Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Bethesda Friends Meeting or Friends Meeting of Washington. If you would like to attend, on a regular or a drop-in basis, contact Pat S.

NOTE: Friends who wish to comment on this or any other "Thinking About Race" items, may do so at this website: <http://racismwg.bym-rsf.net>. The BYM Web Manager has set this up as a kind of blog. You will first need to register by emailing webmanager@bym-rsf.net.

REMEMBERING BETTY LOU RILEY

Betty Lou Riley passed away early on December 29, 2011, after a long illness, her husband Ted reported to us. Betty Lou was clerk of AFM on two different occasions, including when we first moved into our present building. After leaving here, she and Ted spent several years at Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, Indiana. They had been at Friends House for about five or six years. A memorial service was held at Friends House on January 22.

LIBRARY CORNER

"Black Fire: African American Quakers on Spirituality and Human Rights"
Edited by Harold D. Weaver, Jr., Paul Kriese, and Stephen W. Angell

Reviewed by Pat Schenck

I bought "Black Fire: African American Quakers on Spirituality and Human Rights" because of my interest in diversity among North American Friends. But when I read N. Jean Toomer's three essays on Quaker silent worship, I realized that I was reading some of the best writing on that subject I had ever encountered, regardless of the race of the author. Our worship would be deeper if all members of AFM read these essays. Jean Toomer was an active Friend, a writer of the Harlem Renaissance, and the author of the novel "Cane," and I thought his essays were worth the price of the book.

Some of the writers in this collection were members of the Religious Society of Friends. Others were attenders or simply influenced by Quakerism. The early essays were written by people who were or

had been enslaved as well as free African Americans during the time of slavery. An example is Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806), who is famous for helping lay out the streets of Washington, D.C. He never joined any denomination but he frequently attended Quaker meeting. The book includes his letter to Thomas Jefferson arguing against slavery. In his reply, Jefferson said he had sent Banneker's letter to the Secretary of the Academy of Science in Paris as proof of the intelligence a black man could display. Other early writers included the Quaker ship owner Paul Cuffee (1759-1817); Sojourner Truth (1799-1883), who associated with Friends but chose Methodism; and Sara Mappes Douglass (1806-1882), a birthright Friend whose autobiography is in our library, who was required to sit with her mother on a special bench in the corner during meeting for worship.

The remaining essays were by twentieth century writers. Besides Jean Toomer, this section includes Howard Thurman, who was not a Friend but who studied with Rufus Jones, taught at Earlham School of Religion, and spoke at both FUM and FGC gatherings. Another writer is Bayard Rustin, birthright Quaker and early practitioner of nonviolence in the 1940s when working for the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Rustin instructed Dr. King in the theory and practice of nonviolence. He was the chief organizer of the 1963 March on Washington. Perhaps the greatest theoretician of the Civil Rights Movement, he was kept in the background because he was openly gay in an era when that fact could have brought down the Movement. The book includes his 1943 letter to his draft board (he subsequently spent three years in federal penitentiaries) and a number of essays on nonviolence and human rights. His biography is in our library.

Several articles are critical of the caution with which Quakers embraced the Civil Rights movement. Many Friends supported Dr. King but were quick to criticize the black power movement and slow to recognize the violence inherent in segregation, poverty, and closed doors in employment, education, and so on.

There is much more. You can read the book from cover to cover (as I did) or select essays of interest. Just don't skip the Toomer essays! Our library has a copy, or you can order it from Quaker Books.org.

QUAKER QUOTES

Friends are not to meet like a company of people about town or parish business ... but to wait upon the Lord. (George Fox, Epistle 313, 1674)

The Quaker method is likely to be successful in proportion as the members are acquainted with one another, better still if real affection exists among them. (Howard Brinton, Reaching Decisions: the Quaker Method, Pendle Hill Pamphlet Number 65)

The process of discernment brings the threads of tradition, scripture, community, and guidance of the Spirit together in the present moment. In discernment we seek unity with God's guidance; the process helps us become God's people. (From "I (Hope I) See Dead People" by C. Wess Daniels, Friends Journal, January 2012)

The belief that the Light is within all [people] means that every person is capable of taking an advanced position and can be appealed to on these grounds. The same identical Light shines in every heart however obscured by selfishness and greed. Hence the nonviolent method of good will and confidence will sometimes produce unexpected results because it reaches something in the other person which responds in similar fashion. That of God in one person arouses similar capacity in the other. [People] tend to rise to what is expected of them. No human being is so depraved that nothing but force can appeal to him [or her]. There are many extraordinary instances in Quaker history in which an evildoer has been suddenly halted and transformed by the power of nonresistance combined with good will. These methods sometimes fail, but so also does the method of violence. (Howard Brinton, "Peace Testimony of the Society of Friends," American Friends Service Committee, no date)

My child, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare they will give you.
Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely only on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3: 1-6)

In a truly covered meeting an individual who speaks takes no credit to himself for the part he played in the unfolding of the worship. For the feeling of being a pliant instrument of the Divine Will characterizes true speaking "in the Life." Under such a covering an individual emerges into vocal utterance, frequently without fear and trembling, and subsides without self-consciousness into silence when his part is played. For One who is greater than all individuals has become the meeting place of the group, and He becomes the leader and director of worship. With wonder one hears the next speaker, if there be more, take up another aspect of the theme of the meeting. No jealousy, no regrets that he didn't think of saying that, but only gratitude that the angel has come and troubled the waters and that many are finding healing through the one Life. A gathered meeting is no place for the enhancement of private reputations, but for self-effacing pliancy and obedience to the whispers of the Leader. (Thomas R. Kelly, *The Gathered Meeting*, 1945)

HOW TO SUBMIT NEWSLETTER ITEMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Please submit items for the calendar and brief descriptions of events by 9 p.m. on February 19.
- Phil Caroom is the editor of the Annapolis Friends Newsletter. Please send any items for inclusion in the newsletter to him at annapolisfriendsmeeting@gmail.com.
- Friends also are asked to watch your email for announcements of meetings and to listen for announcements at the rise of meeting.
- Event and activity organizers, please also post your announcements on the bulletin board for those who do not use electronic mail!
- Announce List: announce@annapolis.quaker.org; Discuss List: discuss@annapolis.quaker.org

CONTACT INFORMATION

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