

Newsletter

DECEMBER, 2004

Arthur Boyd, Clerk
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Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Stony Run

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MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH A CONCERN FOR BUSINESS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2004, 1:00 p.m., in the Meeting Room

AGENDA (tentative)

Opening Worship.

Consideration of Query 12 – The Environment.

Continuing to Worship, we consider:

Review of Minutes of November 7, 2004 Monthly Meeting.

Overseers Report.

FORMAL REPORTS:

Friends School Trustees.

Friends Care, Inc.

Finance Committee – second reading of the 2005 budget, for approval.

Indian Affairs Committee – Homewood and Stony Run,

Proposal to request meeting with Governor Ehrlich.

Announcements.

Worship Sharing and Silent Worship.

From the Faith and Practice of Baltimore Yearly Meeting

Query 12: The Environment

Are you concerned for responsible use of natural resources and their nurture for future generations? Do you try to avoid wasteful consumption and pollution? Do you seek to preserve the beauty and balance of God's world?

From the Advices of Faith and Practice:

Humankind and the Environment: Population growth and technological abuses are threatening the planet. Millions of people are malnourished or starving, unable to obtain food, homeless. Our faith that there is that of God in every person calls us to concern over this tragic situation. Friends are advised to set the example in living simply so that others may have the wherewithal to live. We are called also to work for public policy aimed toward conserving the world's resources on one hand and sharing them fairly among all God's children on the other.

Civic Responsibility: Friends believe that the aim of government is to preserve a community in which justice, peace, good order and individual development are possible. Members of our Society are also citizens of the community and the nation. The free institutions under which

we live give many of our members a direct share in the responsibilities of government and in forming a healthy public opinion. Friends have supported the state as long as its requirements have not opposed the leadings of the Inner Light. Whether or not directly involved in government, we need to consider carefully our responsibilities in influencing legislation and educating fellow citizens on public issues. Friends should work with people in other churches and in the community to bring about desirable ends through the institutional resources of society.

MONTHLY MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH A CONCERN FOR BUSINESS MINUTES

Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Stony Run
November 7, 2004

Nov. 04 – 1- Consideration of Query 11. The Meeting began at 1:00 pm in silent worship, with 34 people present (5 arrived later), during which Query 11, Education, was read, as well as a segment from the advices of the BYM Faith and Practice on education. Denise Wible and Ann Kehinde were attending for the first time. The Meeting took place in the Library, due to a previously scheduled annual event, a memorial service for people who are hospice volunteers to mourn the year's losses, that took place in the Meeting Room and dining room.

Nov. 04 – 2 – October Minutes. There was one correction in section 4: to read “one person, soon to become a member of the committee” not “of the Meeting.” The minutes were approved.

Nov. 04 – 3 – Overseers. Diane Proctor gave the report.

1. New members: This is the second reading of the request for membership by Bill Morton and Sandi Morton. Friends approved. Alice Cherbonnier, Suzanne O’Hatnick, Marjorie and Harry Scott, Elizabeth DuVerlie will constitute the welcoming committee; others are welcome.

Overseers have met with attender Elizabeth Faas, who has requested membership; they recommend approval of Elizabeth for membership. This is the first reading of her name. We hope Friends will be sure to get to know her in the coming month.

We have received a request for transfer of the membership of Lamar Matthew from York Meeting to Baltimore, Stony Run. York Meeting commends Lamar to our loving care. Friends approved. Anne and John Michener, Don and Gail Gann, David Bakker and Cynthia Sanders Bakker, Cathie Felter, Geni Elliott, Meg Boyd Meyer and Arthur Meyer Boyd will prepare the welcoming event; others are welcome to participate.

We are happy to report on a very pleasant welcoming dinner for our new member, Larry Caudill, on Halloween evening at the home of Elaine Yamada and Don Macauley. Others present were: Blaine Keener, Marilyn Clark, Solomon Reddick, Lyn Stewart, Bob Clark, and Diane Proctor.

2. The meeting received the following note from Amy Rakusin and Phil Fratesi: "We wish to thank the entire Meeting community for the tender care we were given before, during, and after our wedding. We know that we are blessed. Love, Amy and Phil."

3. Updates on members and families: Bob Hubble is recovering from a more successful second shoulder surgery. Suzie Manger is recovering and back at work after a recent hospital stay. Lizzie Fetter, daughter of Suzie and Bob Fetter, recently delivered a baby girl. Michael LaBua's grandmother died recently; our sympathy to the family. Paul Phillips continues to regain strength after his back surgery.

Diane said she appreciates members letting Overseers know in advance of the business meeting, any news of members and attenders. Additional news items: Peggy Randol of Roland Park Place is ill. Elizabeth Cadwallader's aunt, Nancy Earl, has leukemia. Barbara Conley and Gerry Schatz will be moving to East Lansing, MI where Barb will be Chief of Medical Oncology and Associate Director for Translational Research at the Great Lakes Cancer Institute and Gerry will be Assistant Professor of Bio-Ethics. Rafael Tamargo has been honored as the first recipient of the Walter Handy Endowed Professorship in Neurosurgery at John Hopkins School of Medicine.

Nov. 04 – 4 – Nominating Committee Report. Blaine Keener reported that Suzy Filbert is proposed for membership in the Peace and Social Order Committee for the term Nov. 2004 – May 2007; for Friends Care Board of Trustees, to extend the terms of Lillian Freudenberger and Henry Holloway until 2007 and to appoint Helen Riley for a term from Nov. 2004 – Oct. 2007. Friends approved these appointments

Informational items: Laura Holter began service on the Board of Friends School in July 2000 (not 2004). Lamar Matthew resigned from the Friends Care Board of Trustees in October 2004; a replacement will be sought.

The Stony Run-Friends School Joint Nominating Committee invites suggestions for nominees to the Friends School Board. Names can be given to Arthur Boyd.

Nov. 04 – 5 – Finance Report. Margaret Allen reported, handing out copies of the 2005 Proposed Budget and of the Finance Committee's proposed changes to try to reduce the deficit. Referring to these documents, she described the five sources of funding, the largest of which are contributions and the endowment, and how estimates for contributions are drawn from the preceding four quarters. Funds from the endowment consist of 5% from the average of the last three years; this year's reflects the fall off of the stock market, as will next year's. She then reviewed the expenses.

Reserves and endowments were reviewed briefly. The Meeting House Care Fund is the one Property Committee has access to, and therefore Finance Committee zeroed out the \$8,000 reserve that had been in the property lines. Some years ago the Meeting decided there would not be separate reserve funds for separate committees. This decision still needs to be translated in our operating practice.

Margaret reviewed the proposed changes, inviting Friends to ask questions and offer advice. Michael Boardman referred back to the 2002 surplus, some given to Faith Fund loan and some to FCNL capital campaign. The rest was returned to the budget. A Friend expressed dismay at not giving staff a 2% cost-of-living increase, saying it would be better to dip into reserves; Friends agreed.

Friends reviewed the average contribution per giving unit (household). Some recommended that the biannual solicitation letters be more proactive and "energetic," and

that they include these average giving amounts. Another Friend asked if fundraising could begin to reflect the Hopes and Dreams process, which suggests defining and promoting a specific vision. Doing so would mean that the fundraising would be based on looking forward rather than looking back.

A Friend suggested looking at staffing patterns and costs for salaries as part of overall financial planning for the future. Indeed, Staff Oversight and Personnel Committee is looking into this and will report to the Meeting when their study is completed. Burial Ground could increase rent for the tenant, as costs are going up. Also, the \$17,000 reserves for Burial Ground will not be spent soon, so some could be freed up. Friends expressed great appreciation for Margaret's work as Finance Committee clerk.

Nov. 04 – 6 – Ad Hoc Committee on Aging Services – Interim Report. Alice Cherbonnier, the committee's convenor, reported, briefly reviewing the history of Broadmead and what has happened since it was started. Friends Care, Inc., is the umbrella group over, among other entities, Broadmead and Friends Care Community Services. The latter has developed Live Well with Friends, an at-home senior care program.

Another program being developed under Friends Care, Inc. is Campus View, a residential setting for the elderly, planned to be constructed on the campus of Essex Community College, adjacent to Franklin Square Hospital. This program will have income limitations in order to qualify for needed government funding.

The ad hoc committee will look at the business plan of Live Well with Friends, seeking to assess its viability and looking for a way in which Stony Run might be able to make a difference in the outcome of the plan, perhaps by making a grant or loan that would enable the plan to qualify for additional funding. If the Meeting were to contribute a large sum from its \$300,000 Aging Fund, this would not affect the regular Meeting budget. It was noted that FRAUC has decided to allocate the interest from this fund to Friends Care for two years, with about \$15,000 per year anticipated.

The committee is seeking to ascertain what is available for those in the middle-income range. A home-based program could be relatively expensive, in part due to rising transportation costs of those serving clients. Also, what about a sense of community? For instance, if a couple joins and then one dies and the other is isolated at home, what provisions are available for the remaining spouse? Live Well with Friends has developed responses to these questions and is working to affiliate or integrate its programs with a residential seniors' program such as Broadmead.

It was pointed out that GEDCO's Stadium Place has a segment planned for middle-income residents. A Friend noted that we have no way to know, and no idea how to find out, how many Stony Run people we are talking about in terms of those whose incomes are too low for Broadmead and too high for a limited income setting such as Campus View. The question also arose: Is our concern for only our Meeting or society as a whole? Both are important and should be of concern to the Meeting. It is important to find out how the "vendor" determines whom they accept into a given program. A survey of current members could be fruitless, because people do not know what they will want "when they get there."

The broad question is: Is the Meeting willing to do something more, in addition to Broadmead, to help meet the needs of its members as they age? Friends were reminded that,

at the time Broadmead was established, the Meeting stated it wished to develop other modes of senior care for those unable to enter Broadmead.

The committee will continue to gather and assess information, and expects to come back to the Meeting with a proposal of some kind. Added to the mix of considerations was the fact that Sandy Spring Friends House, with a large contingent of Quaker residents, has announced a major capital campaign to enable expansion. It was noted that this facility is not geographically close to Stony Run, and that the committee would first seek to find a way to augment offerings available in the Stony Run area.

It was pointed out that Live Well with Friends is not to be confused with the similarly named Friends Care at Home, which operates out of Philadelphia (and is affiliated with Fairhaven, an Episcopal retirement community in Sykesville).

Nov. 04 – 7 – Peace and Social Order Committee request to sponsor AFSC exhibit. Elaine Yamada and David Robson presented the details about the exhibit, “Eyes Wide Open: The Human Cost of War in Iraq,” proposed for Sunday-Tuesday, Nov. 21-23. The School is ready to support the project that would be on our shared campus. There is also a possible site at Johns Hopkins—the Mattin Center. Friends agreed to tell AFSC that we will host it here, if they cannot find a better site. [Update note since the meeting: The exhibit has been postponed until spring 2005.]

Nov. 04 – 8 – Informal Reports. The Clerk reminded Friends that informal reports are not “required,” but rather are an opportunity to share information about what is going on in the Quaker community that is of particular interest to Stony Run.

- **BYM Interim Meeting.** Michael Boardman gave a detailed report. In regard to the most controversial matter, whether to continue to contribute to Friends United Meeting and, if so, how and how much, Friends have not reached unity. Since the FUM fiscal year has changed from the calendar year to the end of June, BYM has more time to try to reach unity. Don Gann reported that two more monthly meetings (MMs) have joined with this concern, and four other MMs have not reached unity. There was a proposal to use all the money for inter-visitation (between BYM and FUM), rather than giving it to FUM. Three main options: 1) unite around something both good for YM and good for FUM but that doesn’t give them money directly; 2) a local option to withhold MM donations; 3) fail to reach agreement at all this year.

Lamar Matthew addressed the issue of a concern about a certain Friendly Adult Presence (FAP)’s inappropriate behavior, saying that it is being handled very confidentially and very compassionately. He will speak with Young Friends when they meet at Stony Run in two weeks; the key is to keep them safe.

- **BYM Camping Program** There is a five-page report that should appear, somewhat shortened, in the next newsletter. Applications will be available at the end of November and are due by February 1, 2005. Property management is looking into the concern about water quality in the lagoon.
- **Stony Run Camping Weekend.** David Bakker reported. Attendance was down, perhaps due to the later date this year. There was a shortfall of \$351. The date for next year is Sept. 30-Oct. 2. The Bakkers, having organized this event for three years, need to hand over the responsibility to someone else next year. This falls under Overseers, who can help find new leaders.

Nov. 04 – 9 – Announcements. William Miles presented a letter explaining that the Indian Affairs Committee has again been denied, by Dept of Corrections Commissioner, Frank Sizer, implementation of the Sweat Lodge in prisons “for safety and security concerns” without any offer to meet nor any explanation. The committee seeks guidance, since Quakers are “being frozen out,” and it is no longer about sweat lodges, but about gaining access to public offices. Friends realize that this situation may be leading up to a legal process. It should come before both our Meeting and Homewood’s as an action item next month, with a draft letter to the Governor that contains background of Quaker history, of steps taken so far (demonstrating that appeals have been exhausted), and a request for a meeting with the Governor. This should also appear in the December newsletter.

At the end of the meeting, a Friend requested that if, in the future, the Meetinghouse is used on a Monthly Meeting day, the business meeting not be held in the library since the acoustics are poor for large meetings and hearing devices are not available there. The meeting ended with a brief period of worship at 3:45 pm with 25 people present.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth DuVerlie, Recording Clerk and Arthur Boyd, Clerk

Friends who signed in, as they signed in: Cathie Felter, Meg Boyd Meyer, Bill Morton, Harry Scott, Marjorie Scott, Lamar Matthew, Maria Brown, Brian Gamble, Michael LaBua, Diane Proctor, David Bakker, David Diorio, Donald Gann, Charles Cluxton, Robert Goren, Gail Gann, Geni Elliott, Blaine Keener, Ann Kehinde, Mike Boardman, Sam Legg, David Robson, Fred Leonard, Ann Michener, John Michener, Elizabeth DuVerlie, Arthur Boyd, William O. Miles, Bob Breyer, Elaine Yamada, Alice Cherbonnier, Nancy Moore, Cynthia Kerman, M. Denise Wible, Cynthia Saunders, John C. Merrill, Margaret Allen, Suzanne O’Hatnick

MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS SCHEDULE

November, December, January, February, March

Monthly Meeting is held the first First Day (Sunday) of the month at 1:00 p.m.

April, May, June, September, October

Monthly Meeting is held the first Third Day (Tuesday) of the month at 7:30 p.m.

July, August

Monthly Meeting is held at 11:15 a.m. on a First Day as arranged.

**NEXT MONTHLY MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH A CONCERN FOR BUSINESS
WILL BE HELD SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, AT 1:00 P.M.**

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Homewood - Stony Run

TO: Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends - Stony Run

Dear Friends;

As some already know, in a minuted concern, Friends submitted information on other states' and federal accommodation of sweat lodge practice to Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA), which unanimously approved (Apr04) of the request by Eagle Speak Society for a sweat lodge at Eastern Correctional Institution (ECI) in Westover and resolved to communicate their resolve by letter to the Commissioner of the Division of Corrections (DOC). The Commissioner's response to MCIA was negative.

Subsequently then, I asked US Sen. Barbara Mikulski's office to facilitate a meeting between Friends and MD Secretary of Public Safety & Corrections (PS&C) Mary Ann Saar (8/27/04), which was previously denied by Sec. Stuart Simms.

Sen. Mikulski's office forwarded my letter which contained detailed objections to DOC's uniform ban on sweat lodge practice, to Sec. Saar at PS&C with a request for a direct response (8/31/04). [Briefly, I believe that I can demonstrate that the state does not meet the prevailing (federal) standard for the burden of religious practice when it bans outright sweat lodges for Indian prison inmates.]

I have now received a letter from DOC Commissioner Frank J. Sizer (10/12/04) again denying implementation for "safety and security concerns" but without any address of issues, of salient points and without any offering to meet or any opening for dialogue. DOC, then, continues to answer Friends' appeals on behalf of Indian friends with summary judgments, peremptory denials and a studied unwillingness to admit us to a state (i.e. public) office for any discussion. Since Commissioner Sizer is a 21-year veteran of the federal prison system wherein sweat lodge is mandated and functions at all security levels, his abrupt denial, to me, seems especially facile.

Although it might be possible to seek intervention by state legislators to schedule a meeting at DOC, I am inclined to think that DOC's response would be more of the same. Procedurally, then, the last office of appeal (in the executive 'chain of command') is that of the Governor, to which I believe we should apply. In my view, the question for the Governor is not about the particulars of this concern, but whether or not these (or any state offices) shall be open to Quakers for the expression of corporate concerns and for meaningful dialogue? And then, shall we be given an appointment at DOC or not? If the present example of PS&C and DOC is to be taken as precedent, Friends can be ignored.

I expect that making an appointment to see the Governor will be no easier than making one to see the lesser lights in his constellation; and, therefore, having approval of Indian Affairs Homewood-Stony Run, I lay this matter before the Meeting for Business at Stony Run before proceeding further. Procedurally, I would say that the committee is returning our Minute 9/04/01 to the Meeting with a request for guidance. It is my understanding that this will be taken up at Meeting for Business in December.

Naturally, all my documents & correspondence are open for Friends review. Attached is a summary of alternative actions and approaches, with my notes for consideration. Of course, the Meeting may produce other pathways of development.

William O. Miles

11/9/04

Notes: We are working within the frame of government to effect a *policy change*. Legislation is not needed; we have a law [RLU&IP Act 2000]. Litigation is not a viable option because 1) it's contrary to our general principles and 2) we have no legal standing.

Ultimately, what's needed is a *DOC Directive*. The purpose of a meeting with the Governor is to *get an appointment* at Dept PS&C / DOC. The purpose of meeting(s) at PS&C is to *get agreement in principle* that the federal standard obliges DOC to accommodate sweat lodge. The purpose of meeting(s) at DOC is to *produce the draft of a Directive* that will satisfy requirements of compelling government interest(s).

The value of the exercise may be no more than an exhaustion of administrative procedures and a demonstration of the state's intransigence for reference later during a judicial review or legal action (by others). We have 'informed' US Dept. of Justice.

DOC is a highly insulated compartment of government perhaps generally unaccustomed to outside influences, able to exercise somewhat arbitrarily or capriciously, and/or usually able to certify its own work. It may be that DOC resists dialogue because their position is basically untenable and they know it. It may be that DOC has a hidden agenda, e.g., they don't want sweat lodges for vague or inadequate reasons, irrelevant to the standard ("some other group will want something", "it will cost money," "there might be problems," etc.). It may be that DOC only responds to lawsuits, scandals or riots to produce policy changes not to their liking. It may be that the whole premise upon which we work - that DOC is accessible and responsive to Friends input - is fatally flawed.

Alternative possible actions: Return Minute to Indian Affairs without substantive action. *Possible, but perhaps unlikely. In this event, we will apply to the Governor's office on our own. Most likely outcome is dismissal without dialogue.*

Application to Governor by the Meeting. *Perhaps most likely. Draft letter can be produced for signature by Presiding Clerk, with reference to history & service, testimonies, specific concern, etc. Positive outcome unlikely. Expect polite refusal. Similar appeal(s) to Department of Public Safety & Corrections produced no meeting, no dialogue.*

Application with support of other Meetings. *Same as 2. circulated within Yearly Meeting for endorsements. Takes time. Positive outcome more likely, but how likely? If formally carried to Yearly Meeting, a year will pass...*

Application to Governor through a 'friend at court'. *Same as 2. - 3. with a 'fix' in. Implies that we have some political connection. Who?*

Application to Governor with demonstrations of support. *Same as 2. (or 3.) with some mobilization (e.g. 100 Friends in front of State House) What, when & how? Can this be produced without appearing to 'force his hand'? Positive outcome possibly more unlikely than in 2. - 4.*
other?

wom 11/9/04

Pages 9 and 10 are the Friends Care, Inc. Annual Report (supplied hard copy only).

Revised Calendar of Reports to Monthly Meeting

Included with this newsletter is a revised calendar of reports from groups and committees to Stony Run Monthly Meeting. As the number of reporting groups has grown, and committees added, laid down, or changed in purpose, our schedule no longer met the needs of all groups or of the Meeting. This revised schedule was drafted in consultation with the affected groups.

The major changes proposed are as follows:

- (1) Groups which make a formal annual report (written) and published in advance in the Newsletter are no longer scheduled to also make an informal report later. Any group may still request from the Clerk to make an informal report at any time, with appropriate advance notice, but an informal report is not expected.
- (2) Several groups within and outside the Meeting, with which the Meeting has a significant interest, are provided a scheduled time to make an informal report (verbal, which may be supplemented by written handouts).
- (3) Finance Committee's budget presentations are returned to their former time of November (first reading) and December (approval), so that budget and salaries will be approved for payments, which begin January 1st.
- (4) Nominating Committee's presentations are returned to their former time of April (first reading) and May (approval), so that an approved committee slate is ready for terms and committee meetings, which begin June 1st.
- (5) Ministry and Counsel's March report includes both their formal committee report (had been May) and State of the Meeting report (remains in March).
- (6) Informal report scheduled time now adds the following: Young Friends, Men's Retreat, FGC Gathering, Friends School Liaison, Camping Weekend.

These changes will be an adjustment, more so for some committees. The result should be a smoother and more timely flow of business agendas for Monthly Meeting, more easily understood rationale for reports, and – most importantly – more of the truly vibrant life of the Stony Run community made evident and celebrated at Monthly Meeting.

**BALTIMORE MONTHLY MEETING OF FRIENDS, STONY RUN
SCHEDULE OF REPORTS TO MONTHLY MEETING**

Annual Formal Reports must be published in the Newsletter BEFORE Monthly Meeting (10th of the month previous to reporting). Informal Reports need not be written, but are listed on the preliminary agenda published in the Newsletter. Groups not listed may request to give a report.

FORMAL

INFORMAL

January	Staff Oversight & ITOP Executive Secretary Archivist	
February	Property Library Unity With Nature	Young Friends
March	Hospitality Ministry & Counsel (Formal & State of the Meeting) Funds Review & Use	
April	Friends Aid Nominating (1st Reading) Trustees (Formal & year end financial) Finance (Formal & year end financial)	Quarterly Meeting BYM Interim Meeting
May	Nominating (2 nd Reading) Overseers (Formal & Statistical) Peace & Social Order Naming	
June	Religious Education Spiritual & Intellectual Nurture Ushers	Men's Retreat
July/August		Quarterly Meeting BYM Interim Meeting
September	Burial Ground Stony Run McKim Com.	BYM Yearly Meeting FGC Gathering
October	Indian Affairs Com.	Quarterly Meeting Friends School Liaison
November	Finance (1 st Reading)	BYM Interim Committee BYM Camping Program Camping Weekend
December	Friends School Trustees Finance Com. (2 nd Reading) Friends Care, Inc. (Broadmead)	

10/04

Thoughts About Ways to Simplify Christmas

“The very trimming of the vain world would clothe all the naked one”
- William Penn, Maxims, No. 73

“The ancient doctrine of simplicity might be applied today to diminish the superfluous activities which prevent leisure and relaxation. The multiplication of time-saving gadgets seems, paradoxically, to increase the general busy-ness and complexity of life. The baton of some invisible conductor seems to be gradually increasing the tempo of life. The solution, as the sages and seers of all the great religions have pointed out, is not to increase our attainments but to decrease our desires; in other words, to follow the path of simplicity.”

Howard Brinton, *Friends for 300 Years* (1952)

1. Make charitable contributions instead of giving gifts. Write a brief letter to the person in whose name you are making the contribution explaining the mission and activities of the recipient organization.
2. Ask family and friends not to give you gifts. If they insist, suggest that they make a donation to a charitable organization in your name.
3. Plan and carry out a family activity such as serving a meal at a homeless shelter
4. Stop sending Christmas cards to the world at large. Send a handwritten note to a few friends who are far away.
5. Think about what you really have enjoyed in Christmases past and try to limit your activities to those things.
6. Think about the things you dread about Christmas and seek to eliminate them.
7. Cut down gift giving by instituting an extended family gift giving rotation.
8. Instead of giving gifts to extended family members, draw names from a hat and write a personal letter to the person whose name you've drawn, telling him/her why you love him/her and what you've learned from him/her. Send the letters in advance so they can be opened and read on Christmas morning.
9. Don't be a slave to tradition; experiment with new ways to celebrate, e.g. by exploring Christmas traditions in other countries.
10. Talk to your children about simplicity in Christmas celebration. Help them to understand that the real joy is in the meaning of the holiday, not in the gifts they receive. Encourage them to give gifts they make themselves or help them choose and carry out a project to emphasize this idea, such as visiting hospitals or nursing homes on Christmas.
11. Train yourself to avoid or ignore advertising images showing how Christmas is *supposed* to look.
12. Don't overindulge in rich and unhealthful foods and treats. A modest sample can bring a great deal of enjoyment.
13. Downsize the tree or, better yet, skip it entirely.
14. Consider planting and decorating a small tree on your property instead of having a cut Christmas tree inside the house.
15. If a traditional Christmas tree is a must, consider letting the children take charge of its placement and/or decoration. Allow them wide latitude in making aesthetic decisions. It will give them something that is uniquely theirs, while relieving the adults of one more chore.
16. Fill your stockings with useful items, then give them to a shelter.

17. Let family and friends know what you are doing so that they can adjust their plans and expectations accordingly.
18. Recycle gift wrap, or use newspapers for gift wrapping (the comics section makes interesting and colorful gift wrap); or skip gift wrapping altogether.
19. Set up a brainstorming session with family or friends to talk about what you can do to reduce commercialism and return the holidays to their humble and simple beginning.
20. Give family members the gift of your time: gift certificates for such things as a day with the kids fishing or flying kites, a picnic at their favorite park, a trip to the zoo or the aquarium, dinner and a movie with just one child.
21. Help your children change the focus of their Christmas by teaching them the importance, and satisfaction, of giving rather than receiving. Help them choose and carry out a project to emphasize this idea, such as visiting hospitals or nursing homes on Christmas.
22. Unless you really love cooking elaborate meals for a large crowd, make your Christmas dinner a very simple one with only one or two things which everybody likes. It will cut down on stress and allow the cook to enjoy the company.
23. Give a gift to a special person of something you already own and cherish. It will make both of you feel good.
24. Cut your Christmas spending by half this year.
25. Turn off your television during December. You won't miss all of those commercials.
26. Adopt a gift-giving theme, which everyone in the family can adhere to in selecting modest gifts for one another.
27. Arrange for the extended family to meet in some out-of-town place (e.g., Colonial Williamsburg, or the family's favorite skiing venue) to celebrate the holiday away from the stressful local scene.
28. Limit gifts to an individual child to three, with the explanation that that was the number of gifts the Magi brought to the baby Jesus.
29. Simplify food – cold cuts will probably be as welcome as turkey and all the trimmings.
30. Go with the flow. Don't try to swim upstream if the rest of the family insists. Your presence alone will be meaningful.
31. Focus on the meaning of Christmas. Ask each person at Christmas dinner to summarize their view of the meaning of Christmas.
32. Modify the Christmas tree by removing the lights and substituting a single candle (not on the tree).
33. Rethink the meaning of Christmas cards. Re-connect with long lost friends.
34. Look for opportunities to connect with the community at Christmas (shelters, soup kitchens, toy drives, etc.)
35. Limit the number of gifts you will give to each person (one is a good number, if you can make yourself do it)
36. Instead of exchanging gifts, ask (preferably in advance) each person present to describe their fondest Christmas memory.

From the November 14, First Day Forum presented by John Steele.

A FEW RESOURCES WITH
Thoughts About Ways to Simplify Christmas

A number of the above suggestions have been taken from *Simplify Your Christmas*, by Elaine St. James (MJF Books, 1999), which includes many more ideas. Available at Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, Borders and most bookstores.

Alternatives for Simple Living, a non-profit educational organization, provides resources for responsible living and celebrating. P.O. Box 340, Sergeant Bluff, Iowa 51054, 1-800-821-6153, www.simpleliving.org. A copy of its Fall/Holidays catalog can be found in the Stony Run Library.

Simply the Best, a CD-ROM containing the bulk of the resources produced by Alternatives for Simple Living during the past 30 years for Christmas, Easter and other non-seasonal occasions has also been deposited in the Stony Run library.

A free *Holiday Activity Kit*, with crafts, games and other ideas to bring families closer together during the holidays, plus tips for creating homemade gifts, is available from *The Legacy Project*, a non-profit program that works to strengthen the bonds between the generations. 1-800-772-7765, www.legacyproject.org.

ASTT NEEDS WARM JACKETS AND COATS: The ASTT organization (Advocates for Survivors of Torture and Trauma) has again asked members of Stony Run for donations of warm used adult-size jackets and coats. Many of their clients have recently arrived in this country and have little experience with cold weather, nor funds to help. Please CLEARLY mark any donated item with the words "for ASTT" and hang them on the hooks nearest the office. We thank you so much on their behalf.

A THOUGHT FROM THE PAST: "A little patience, and we shall see the reign of witches pass over, their spells dissolve, and the people recovering their true sight, restore their government to it's true principles. It is true that in the meantime we are suffering deeply in spirit, and incurring the horrors of a war and long oppressions of enormous public debt.....If the game runs sometimes against us at home we must have patience till luck turns, and then we shall have an opportunity of winning back the principles we have lost, for this is a game where principles are at stake." Part of a letter Thomas Jefferson sent in 1798 after the passage of the Sedition Act.

CAROL SINGING: Come to the Carol Sings at Stony Run on Sunday evenings, December 5, 12, and 19, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. After the caroling on December 19, there will be cookies and punch served in the Dining Room.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT STONY RUN: All ages are invited to Stony Run's Library for Christmas Eve fellowship (stories, singing, and worship sharing) by firelight 7:00 to 7:45 p.m. followed by refreshments.

COURSES OFFERED: Earlham School of Religion, a graduate seminary in the Friends tradition, offers *Christian Reconciliation: Conflict Resolution in Church and World*, January 3-14, 2005 in four regional locations (CA, IA, NC and PA). Semester Two on-line courses include: *Introduction to Pastoral Care*, *Quaker Life*, and *History of Christianity*. Students can apply for degree or occasional student status. For information or to apply, contact Sue Axtell at axtelsu@earlham.edu or www.esr.earlham.edu.

WE HEAR FROM FRIENDS SCHOOL: What is going on at Friends School? Folks at Stony Run Meeting may be wondering what is going on at Friends School. Did we really agree to have the Upper School addition so close to the Meeting House? What is happening to our parking lot?

In construction, excavations are always much larger than the actual building. Additionally, one's perception of space and size will change as finishes and landscaping are put into place. The excavation adjacent to the Meeting House is large because of the depth of the excavation. So that the hole does not collapse, the sides are dug at an angle to the actual building footprint. Just wait to see how things change every week. We also thank the School and contractor for going to the extra trouble and expense to save our tree! The parking lot is being filled with 40 to 60 wells for a geothermal air conditioning system for the new middle school. This system will save energy and is widely considered to be a sustainable approach. Additionally, other utilities are being installed to better serve the school into the future. A little inconvenience on our part is helping Friends School make these wonderful improvements to their campus and operations. Peter Doo, Friends School, Building Committee.

We have encountered several issues that have temporarily shut down drilling in the Geothermal Well Field (Upper School parking lot) since October 27th. Drilling may resume as early as Wednesday, November 10th. Foremost, the volume of water produced as wells are drilled through fissures must be addressed with compliant sediment and erosion controls (SEC) in place. The School received one complaint from a neighbor due to the color of run off into Stony Run. Friends School is addressing this concern with SEC inspectors and will appropriately modify SEC if necessary.

Although testing was done, poor soil in an area designed for 25 wells will force us to reduce the total number of geothermal wells drilled in the Upper School lot. Deeper wells (requiring fewer wells) can be drilled but are more costly. Also, the deeper the wells are drilled, larger volumes of water are encountered.

The Upper School lot should be able to provide a number of wells to sufficiently heat the new Middle School building. However, additional wells are needed to adequately cool the building. A cooling tower (if required, would be located at the westernmost end of the Upper School lot) can be used efficiently to provide the appropriate cooling needs with a reduced number of wells installed. We are awaiting costs for all scenarios.

We do know that the completion of the well field (including installation of gas line) is delayed one month at this time. Instead of availability of parking on the Upper School lot upon return from winter break, the estimated availability is February 1, 2005. Sincerely, Bonnie Hearn

HEALING PRAYER GROUP WELCOMES ALL: The Healing Prayer group continues to meet the **second Wednesday of the month at 1:00 p.m.** at a **new location**, the home of Suzanne O'Hatnick, 432 Drury Lane (contact her for directions). Please call Suzanne at 410.362.2604 or e-mail to shohatnick@aol.com any prayer requests and also to let her know, too, when a situation about which the group has been praying has been resolved. The next meeting is **Wednesday, December 8.**

WANTED: A companion for a 52 year old aphasic physician (stroke). Forty hours per week, no lifting required. Must have own car and references. Salary and benefits are negotiable. If interested, call Marilyn Larach at (410.654.1597 (friends of Paris Kern).

“Living from the Center”
Baltimore Yearly Meeting Women’s Retreat, January 21 - 23,

“Life from the Center is a life of unhurried peace and power. It is simple. It is serene. It is amazing. It is triumphant. It is radiant. It takes no time, but it occupies all our time. And it makes our life programs new and overcoming... And when our little day is done we lie down quietly in peace, for all is well.”

Thomas R. Kelly, [A Testament of Devotion](#)

BYM women have been gathering for an annual retreat for over 10 years. We invite the women of BYM to join us for: an opportunity to relax, connect with each other and ourselves, exploration of our theme...”Living from the Center”, worship and worship-sharing/Song and Dance, workshops, a Quiet Room for reflection/an Arts Room for playful creation, and a chance to do as much or as little as we please.

Location: We will return to the mountain top site of last year’s retreat, Skycroft Retreat Center, Middletown, Maryland, near Frederick.

Cost: Basic fee: \$95 (lodge accommodations). Motel rooms (limited supply): add \$25

Schedule: Friday, January 21, Registration: 4:30 pm; Dinner: 6:00 - 6:45 pm; Opening Program: 7:00 p.m.; Sunday, January 23: check-out by 2:00 p.m.

Registration: To register or add a friend’s name to our mailing list, contact Frank Massey at the BYM office, e-mail: bym@bym-rsf.org. phone: 1-800-962-4766. For other information, contact Susan Johns Smith at 410-869-9246 or sjsmith@toad.net. Registration due date: December 15, 2004.

Space is limited and early registration is encouraged.

Scholarships: Limited funds are available from the BYM Women’s Retreat Scholarship fund. *Please seek support from your Monthly Meeting first.* Please contribute to our scholarship fund.

Workshops: This year workshops will largely reflect our theme: “Living from the Center”. We welcome your ideas for workshop offerings. Please submit a description for a proposed workshop, including the title and its relationship to our theme, to: Barbara Katzenapple at katzenapples2@aol.com.

<p>Important Registration Information: Registration Due Date: December 15, 2004: Space is limited and not guaranteed. Please register early. All registrations will be held until December 15th and confirmation letters will go out after that. If we are over-subscribed by December 15th, preference will be given to women who are associated with Friends’ Meetings. After December 15th, registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.</p>
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Baltimore Yearly Meeting Women's Retreat
Registration Form

Last name: _____ First: _____ e-mail: _____

Street address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Daytime phone: (____) _____ Evening phone: (____) _____

Are you associated with a Friend's Meeting? Y/N

Meeting: _____, _____ Member _____ Attender

Is this your first BYM women's retreat? Y/N

Sleeping accommodations:

___ **Lodge:** groups of 4 to 8, bunk bed (pillow / blanket provided / linens \$6 extra).

Dormitory style bathroom.

I Prefer: ___ early to bed group ___ "night owl" group.

___ **Motel room:** Ten double occupancy rooms are available (private baths).

Linens included. Cost is \$25 extra. Rooms are limited.

A motel room is: ___ strongly preferred or ___ required.

Other preferences / requirements:

___ vegetarian meals

___ wheelchair accessible bathroom

___ special sleeping needs (e.g., white noise): _____

___ other special needs: _____

Fees:	Check if this fee applies	Fee	Fees included
Basic registration (postmarked before 12/15)		\$95	
Late fee (postmarked after 12/15)		\$25	
Motel room (double occupancy) – add \$25		\$25	
Linens (lodge rooms only)		\$6	
Scholarship requested (indicate amount requested)			()
Total			
Scholarship Donation (please be generous)			
TOTAL			

Make checks payable to BYM (memo "Women's Retreat").

Send registrations and fees to:

Baltimore Yearly Meeting
17100 Quaker Lane
Sandy Spring, MD 20860-1296

Important note:

Do not bring alcohol. Skycroft has strict regulations against it. If you use alcohol during the weekend, you will compromise our ability to return to the center.

GOOD NEWS FROM FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE: One hundred and fifty Friends attended the four-day annual sessions of FGC's Central Committee last week. Every one of our fourteen affiliated Yearly Meetings, from Alaska to Florida, plus three non-affiliated but "unprogrammed" Yearly Meetings—Pacific, North Pacific, and Iowa Conservative—were well represented.

There was a tremendous energy in the sessions. Acknowledging that it has no authority to speak on behalf of its affiliated meetings, Central Committee saw its way clear to approve a powerful minute on our *experience* with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer Friends:

"Our experience has been that spiritual gifts are not distributed with regard to sexual orientation or gender identity. Our experience has been that our Gatherings and Central Committee work have been immeasurably enriched over the years by the full participation and Spirit-guided leadership of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer Friends. We will never go back to silencing those voices or suppressing those gifts. Our experience confirms that we are all equal before God, as God made us, and we feel blessed to be engaged in the work of FGC together."

We also felt the weight of making important financial decisions that will be required as we implement the new Long Term Plan for 2004-2009. Moving forward with this work will involve new initiatives and expansion of existing programs that will require both more money and additional staff support. Consideration of this complex issue was deep and Spirit-led, and we eventually reached a place of true unity on how to proceed.

Three days after the sessions, one Friend wrote about her experience as follows:

"Though it was exhausting and painful at times, and confusing!, it was so full of the power of God's love in our community that I returned home deeply, deeply grateful. That is what makes community: the challenge, the wrestling, the Love that grows and persists through it all."

You can reach Friends General Conference at 1216 Arch St #2B, Philadelphia PA 19107. USA <http://www.fgcquaker.org>.

BRICKS AND BREAD FOR GEDCO: Dear GEDCO (Govans Ecumenical Development Corporation) Faith Members and Supporters, What do you give to the person who has everything? --- *Bread and Bricks!!* The holidays are quickly approaching and this is the traditional time of year when GEDCO launches its *Alternative Holiday Giving Program*. Our *Bread and Bricks* year-end giving program offers individuals the opportunity to make a donation to GEDCO and/or one of its programs in honor or memory of a family member, loved one, or friend. As in past years, we send these colorful, holiday brochures to GEDCO faith community members to distribute among their congregations. We would be ever so grateful if you could support us again this year in our efforts. Many of our past supporters make gifts to Epiphany House or CARES as a special way to honor loved ones and friends. This also helps GEDCO meet its year-end fundraising goals. Please let me know if we may send these brochures to your churches and how many you would like. Contact me at srichburg@gedco.org by November 19th so that we may get the materials to you in ample time for the holiday season. Thank you for supporting GEDCO and *Bread & Bricks*. Best Regards, Shelia Richburg, Assistant Resource Development Director.

CARES PANTRY ALERT Canned Fruits, Canned Vegetables (green), Dry Cereal, 1 lb. Rice, 1 lb. Elbow Macaroni, Canned Soup, Peanut Butter and Jelly (always needed), Plastic and Paper Grocery Bags. *Note: Low salt, low-fat, and sugar-free or low sugar items are welcomed in order to accommodate special dietary needs of some of our clients.* If you have any questions, call the GEDCO office at (410) 433-2442. Thank You in Advance for Your Generous Support!! CARES is a program of Govans Ecumenical Development Corporation.

DONATIONS AND FOOD FOR CARES: Dear CARES Friends and Supporters: With your generous and faithful support, the CARES food pantry and financial assistance center has already served nearly 4,500 individuals and families in need. Thank You! **However, there is MORE WORK TO BE DONE!** Since January, successful partnerships with the Fuel Fund of Maryland and the Center for Poverty Solutions allowed CARES volunteers to distribute help to our neighbors in need, avoiding utility cut-offs. However, funds for utility assistance are now depleted and we are turning people away who look to us for help in times of crisis. **The winter months are just beginning, the need is real, and CARES resources are being stretched beyond our capacity to serve** In the upcoming weeks, won't you help by making a special appeal to your congregations and community groups for food and donations in support of CARES? **"Giving nurtures the souls of both the giver and given."** As always, your gifts are most appreciated by GEDCO staff and volunteers but, most of all the clients we serve. Peace and Blessings, Shelia.

GOOD WISHES TO RAPHAEL TAMARGO: Stony Run Meeting sends good wishes to Raphael Tamargo upon the receipt of his professorship at Johns Hopkins Hospital. This is an enormous honor as was shown by a great outpouring of respect, warmth and regard for Rafael at the ceremony on Nov. 4 at Hurd Hall, Johns Hopkins Hospital. He is the first recipient of the Walter E. Dandy Professorship in Neurosurgery. Walter E. Dandy, MD, is recognized as one of Johns Hopkins renowned visionaries and was a pioneer in the development of neurosurgery. He began his career at Hopkins in 1910. Fifteen members of Dr. Dandy's family and the two surviving students of Dr. Dandy were present at the dedication. During the installation of Rafael as the first recipient of this professorship, Rafael was recognized as a master clinician and surgeon, an innovative scientist, and a dedicated teacher. This endowed professorship will allow Rafael to remain at Hopkins for the rest of his career, continuing his teaching, research, and service. Congratulations Friend!

UPCOMING FIRST DAY FORUMS

December 5: "End-of-Life Issues", Part I, presented by Overseers' Committee.

December 12: "Food Choices and the Environment", by Unity with Nature Committee.

We all know that "we are what we eat", but did you know that your food choices have a profound effect on the environment? Come join a discussion about the impact our eating habits have on the world around us. We'll discuss how vegetarianism, organic food, fair trade, and bio-regionalism relate to the historic Quaker testimonies of peace, simplicity, equality and integrity. Discussion will be led by Paul Phillips and members of the Joint Stony Run - Homewood Unity with Nature Committee.

December 19, The Overseers Committee will host a facilitated group conversation in which participants will reflect on their **experience of Christmas** now and over the years, and discuss what meaning we find in, and give to, Christmas.

December 26, The Overseers Committee will host a facilitated discussion process in which participants may reflect on their **experiences of the past year** in the context of their personal life journey, and make claims on the promise of the coming new year.

January 9: "Sparks of the Divine," with Drew Leder.

January 30: "Practicing Simplicity," presented by the Simplicity Ad Hoc Committee.

Forums take place in the Dining Room, with bagels and beverages at 9:00 a.m., program at 9:15 a.m..

QUAKER READERS GROUP will Tuesday, December 14 and continue meeting on the second Tuesday of the month through March. The evening begins with a light supper at 6:30 p.m. followed by discussion of selected readings. Copies of December's reading (a writing by Alice Paul, are available in the Library.

CAROL SINGING AT STONY RUN

Sunday, December 5th, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 12th, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 19th, 7:00 p.m.

After caroling on December 19, cookies and punch
Will be served in the Dining Room at 8:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Gathering in the Library

Friday, December 24th, 7:00 p.m.

All ages are invited for Christmas Eve fellowship
of storytelling, singing, and worship sharing by fireside.
followed by refreshments at 7:45 p.m.