

# Community Companion

Community Friends Meeting

Volume 15, Issue 11

(513) 861-4353

December 2009

**Presiding Clerk:**

Doug Burks

**Assistant Clerk:**

Ken Bordwell

**Recording Clerk:**

Betty Waite

**Ministry & Counsel:**

Eileen Bagus

Doug Burks (ex officio)

Byron Branson

Lisa Cayard

Jamie Fota

Evie Hoffmann

Frank Huss

Paulette Meier

Sunny Rhein

**Treasurer:**

Mary Anne Curtiss

**Newsletter Editor:**

Deborah Jordan

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*next submissions due 12/28*

## Calendar

All events and meetings take place at the Meeting House unless otherwise noted.

**First Day or Sunday: Singing 9:45am. Meeting for Worship 10am Second hour @11:40am**

**December 6th** Carry In Lunch following Meeting for Worship

The long awaited **Teen Alaska** presentation!

**December 13<sup>th</sup>** Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

**December 16<sup>th</sup>** 7 to 8pm Meeting for healing Contact Eileen Bagus or Paulette Meier for info.

**December 20<sup>th</sup>** Annual Christmas Play at the rise of Meeting (Snacks welcome)

**December 27<sup>th</sup>** 10 to 12noon Extended Meeting for Worship There will be no oral announcements, but there will be an easel in the foyer for brief, necessary announcements. If you must leave after one hour, please try to sit near an exit and depart quietly.

## In the Light

Adam Funck is recovering in Children's Hospital after his surgery.

## Gratitude

For the lovely, hand woven curtain in the compost bathroom – thanks to Sarah Hoffmann's hands.

## Summary of Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business – Eleventh Month 8

17 in attendance for Monthly Meeting for Business, with Doug Burks clerking.

1. Web Page Committee-reported by Eric Wolff. Eric gave a brief history of the committee, and noted the issues that he and Nick Rhein encountered as they created the website. Most of the website is Google, Picassa, Blogspot or other publicly available sites, and includes as little html as possible. Eric reviewed the website, explaining the committee's understanding of what their responsibilities consisted. Eric explained the different levels of security on the website. He went through each link in the website, demonstrating and explaining the different options. Suggestions were made as the tour continued with great ideas for tweaking the site. Help available to users of the website were discussed as well as overall navigation instruction.

Community Friends Meeting expresses its appreciation to Nick Rhein and Eric Wolff for their work in creation of a web page for our meeting. The page is exciting and video clips reveal the excitement and joy of our spiritual journey. Thanks for the good work. It is wonderful.

2. Clerk's report: The teens will be presenting a discussion of their Alaska trip during second hour on Dec. 6th.
  - a. Updates on ad hoc committees-the clerk has ongoing efforts on behalf of:
    - i. Sign placement
    - ii. Finance Committee
  - b. Gift policy-see attachment 4-which suggests that all donations except memorial gifts are assumed to be to the general fund. Memorial gifts in memory of deceased Friends will be designated to the building reserve fund unless a special restriction on the gift is placed by the family. This statement will be discussed at next month's meeting for worship with attention to business. Suggested changes should be submitted in writing to the clerk as soon as possible.
3. Action Item -outside  
Seeking Harmony with Creation – Book of Discipline OVYM from the OVYM discipline committee-presented by Lisa Cayard. She noted the process through which this Section of the Book of Discipline has already progressed. See the guidelines in attachment 1 and the Section in Attachment 2. It is the leading of the entire OVYM and has been in process for a very long time. A concern was raised that because the Section is so small, having been distilled from a much longer writing, it might be construed as less important than other Sections within the Book of Discipline. Unity on this Section was achieved and the

Section was approved. A minute of appreciation was expressed for the work done to achieve this Section.

4. Treasurer's Report-reported by Mary Anne Curtiss. She reported revenue of over \$6,000 for the tenth month, and a ratio of cash to budgeted revenue of 14%, which is a great improvement over last month. She is proposing that if funds permit, she may increase some of the smaller charitable donations. She noted that building reserve funds were used for the first time since she has been treasurer, and noted that income for the building reserve fund comes primarily from income from investments. Treasurer's report accepted.

Beginning discussion of 2010 budget- see attachment. Of note is that Gas and Electric budget was decreased due to the anticipated fuel efficiency of the new furnace. Contributions were budgeted based on actual funds received over the past few years. Expenses are approximately \$2,000 greater than anticipated revenue, but Mary Anne felt that with a bit of fundraising, this amount could be achieved. Discussion ensued of how much has been achieved in the November/December time frame in the past, which averages \$2,918 for November and \$4,212 in December and would get us about \$3,000 lower than our budgeted revenue for 2009.

Approval of the budget was received to be moved to January, as Mary Anne will be gone next month.

It is hard to believe that a person who lives such a life of simplicity can be such a great financial manager. The meeting appreciates Mary Anne Curtiss' service as Treasurer in 2009.

5. Committee discussions
  - a. House and Grounds, no verbal report given until later when Eric Wolff commented that the shed work will be done within the next month. He added that Duke will not let us be classified as residential, we must be commercial.
  - b. Religious Development
    - i. The classes are going very well. We have a fairly steady attendance in both the primary and teen groups. The teens are studying the history of our area Quakers by reading Bush River with Wilhelmina Branson. They have expressed an interest in visiting the services of other faiths and denominations. We are looking into the possibilities. All the kids will soon be preparing a Christmas play and that is always exciting.
    - ii. Lisa Cayard noted that windows/doors/peepholes in upstairs classrooms are being discussed.

- c. Peace and Social Concerns-next week's second hour will hopefully be with CeaseFire about violence in the neighborhood.
- d. Adult Education -Eileen Bagus reporting. A new group is being started (Spirit-led Sharing Our Journeys) on Sunday mornings to gather under the direction of the Holy Spirit, to discern the messages we each receive. This group was the culmination of a great deal of discussions/surveys of what Friends need from this committee. This is an experiment and an exciting opportunity to connect to each other on a more intimate level. This will be each Sunday, starting at 9:00am.
- e. FUN committee-Bill Cahalan reporting. New people have joined the committee! They have decided to continue their focus of promoting the local food economy as well as promoting green design. Outdoor meetings through the summer were well received.
- f. Miami Quarterly Meeting, reported by Bill Cahalan was held at Wilmington College on October 18<sup>th</sup>, with a program designed to bring in people from Wilmington Yearly Meeting and OVYM to discuss the history of the two meetings. Byron Branson reported on that history. A minute was adopted against the casino issue voted on last Tuesday. Yellow Springs Meeting had a minute regarding the death penalty which will require further discussion and revision. Next meeting is Second Month 22, 2010 at Miami Meeting, Oxford Friends will host.
- g. FGC Central committee met last month in Baltimore as reported by Eric Wolff, and are breaking down many groups to just three groups. Budget cuts are rampant, but hopefully services, through the revisions, will remain the same. The summer gathering will only be six days instead of seven days.

## Closing Worship

### More Quaker Humor. Hereafter

Friend Jones sat down to his breakfast with the day's newspaper. He was shocked when he turned to the obituaries page, to find an announcement of his own demise. He immediately pulled out his cell phone and called the clerk of his Friend's Meeting. "Has thee seen the announcement of my death in the newspaper?" he asked the clerk. "Errr, yes," responded the clerk. Then after an uncomfortable pause he added, "... Um, where exactly is thee calling from?"

*- shared at the Renewal*

## Peace Focus: The True Meaning of Christmas (hint – it's not about buying things!)

The Christmas season is upon us in full force. Jamie and I took advantage of the mild weather today to go out and get a Christmas tree, so as not to be walking around a tree lot in ten degree blustery weather. So I am reflecting on the meaning of Christmas and how best to honor and celebrate it.

Christmas was originally Christ's mass, the mass celebrating the advent of Christ into the world. That is, it is the incarnation of the Divine Light, it is the Light brought into the world in human form to teach and minister to us all. In that sense it is not an accident that Christmas so nearly coincides with the Winter Solstice which also celebrates the advent of Light into the world.

Christmas is about God's gift to us all of Grace, freely given, abundant, available to all. So it is not inappropriate to celebrate it with giving, especially gifts of the Spirit. But somehow that spirit of giving, gifts of Spirit over the years had gotten absorbed into the commercial culture and translated into an obligation to buy things, buy especially expensive, trendy, highly advertised, STUFF—Barbie dolls and talking trucks, video games and robot pets.

That TV Christmas is not the celebration of the spirit of Christ; it is the celebration of the spirit of materialist consumerism, of the “need” to own things, without regard for their true cost to the world, without regard to where they came from, who made them and how they were made. To participate in it is to become part of our military -industrial capitalism. (See

[http://www.nickturse.com/articles/tom\\_warhome.html](http://www.nickturse.com/articles/tom_warhome.html) for a really scary analysis of the cooperation and interpenetration of the military and toy industry.)

I work with poor people and I have seen parents depressed and agonizing because they don't have a way to buy their children the latest advertised toys. I see people go deeply in debt so their children will have not just a present under the tree, but a big pile of them. And yet when I ask people to remember their happiest Christmases and what made them happy, it is never about flashy presents, it is about feeling loved and cherished, warm family times.

So how can we create those special Christmases which our children will remember as joyful and

meaningful, warm and cherishing? Develop traditions of your own that you come back to year after year. Spend time together, making things. Spend relaxed, fun time together that isn't pressured with shopping and worries, and trying to get everything done in time. Cook and bake and fill the house with scents of vanilla and cinnamon. Volunteer – take your children to the Free Store and volunteer there and let them see that Christmas is about doing for others. Talk to your children about the meaning of Christmas, not just what (things) do they want for Christmas. Sing! Give to charity. Go Christmas caroling. Light candles. Make candles.

If you are going to buy presents, buy them from places that support your values, that support local artisans or empower poor people in other cultures.

Buy from Ten Thousand Villages, the Sarah Center, the InterCommunity Justice and Peace Center St. Nick's day sale, other local craft sales, or from SERRV (<http://www.serrv.org/>), a fair trade organization with a mission to eradicate poverty by working with local artisans and farmers. Buy from catalogues that support good causes, like the National Wildlife Foundation ([www.shopnwf.org](http://www.shopnwf.org)) or the online store at [thehungersite.com](http://thehungersite.com). Be sure the dollars you spend are going to to something you feel good about supporting.

Resources for a different kind of Christmas:

<http://www.adventconspiracy.org/>  
<http://www.buynothingchristmas.org/>  
<http://www.rethinkingchristmas.com/>



submitted by kate anthony

**Who Sends Thee?** Excerpts from the remarks of Roy Joe Stuckey on the dedication of the  
Sarah and Isaac Harvey Statue at Wilmington College

Then, I remembered a busy Saturday, in the spring of 1958, now more than fifty years ago, when Ruthie, Ruth E. Stuckey, that is, attended Miami Center Quarterly Meeting convened in the Chester Friends Meetinghouse.

Late that night, as we settled into our bed, in our farmhouse on Morgan Homestead, near Sabina, she said to me, "At Quarterly Meeting, out at Chester today, Robert Hackney rose to tell us about a march on Washington to try to ban the above ground testing of nuclear bombs.

***Does thee think we ought to participate?"***

To the dedication gathering, I then interjected, "This sounds a lot like Sarah Harvey in reverse! That was 1958. The sixties hadn't even happened yet!" Then I went on to add much of something like this, "So we did it. We loaded our 1955, green, Chevrolet Carry-All Van, with Wilmington College students and young Friends from Wilmington Yearly Meeting and headed for Pennsylvania, where we spent our first night in a Bruderhof monastery; and the next day arrived in Bethesda, Maryland. There, at a mainline church, we had supper and attended a special orientation for representatives of the historic Peace Churches who were charged with the responsibility of making sure that the march followed Gandhian principles."

The next day we walked eleven miles down US Highway 1, to Takoma Park, Maryland, where, in another church, we again reviewed the principles of the practice of non-violence; and watched our Quaker leader, David Dillenger, soak his feet. Eleven miles further down the Potomac, in mid-afternoon the next day, we arrived at the south lawn of the White House and delivered our message.

Ruthie and I do not claim that we stopped the atmospheric testing of atomic bombs any more than did Sarah and Isaac Harvey claim they caused the Emancipation Proclamation. However, we do say that, never again, any where in the world, has there been an above ground test of a nuclear device. Also we proclaim that Quakers are still going to Washington . . .



*One day while plowing, I heard a voice, whether inside or outside of me I knew not, but I was awake. It said, "Go thou and see the President." I answered "Yea Lord, thy servant heareth." And unhitching my plow, I went at once to the house and said to mother: "Wilt thou go to Washington with me to see the President?" "Who sends thee?" she asked. "The Lord," I answered. "Where thou goest I will go." Said mother, and she began to make ready. (from the story about Sarah and Isaac Harvey)*

*Welcome to a New Ongoing Adult Spiritual Education Opportunity:  
"Spirit-led Sharing Our Journeys"*

This group will meet every Sunday morning from 9:00-9:50 A.M. in the basement playroom, beginning on Nov. 15. Two members of the Adult Education committee, Cynthia Sibrel and Diana Beckett will begin the process of the group's gathering, but it is not meant to be facilitated by any one person over time, in any one definite way. It is meant to gather under the direction of the Holy Spirit, speaking to the condition of its members.

This group is intended to offer the possibility for meeting a variety of needs which Community Friends have expressed: a small group, the possibility of getting to know one another more deeply and developing spiritual intimacy, a chance to spontaneously discuss and unburden oneself before worship so that centering down is easier, a place for worship sharing on topics of interest to the group such as queries, sharing our experiences of God, sharing experiences of being led or guided by the spirit, or more structured experiences such as sharing the discussion of a book. These are just some suggestions Meeting has already given us. It is not an exhaustive list.

The format for the group can be as flexible and Spirit-led as the content. The group might like to begin with centering worship, or with a check-in in which everyone describes how their life is going at this moment. If a member is in urgent distress, such as grieving, they might become a focus for prayer and comfort, or discussion. The group might like to use a worship-sharing format out of which they respond to a query or a question, such as "Have I ever experienced a leading? What was it like? What did I do with the leading?" Or they might prefer to use a discussion format with cross-talk. The format can change from week to week or remain the same for a while, such as a month-long discussion of leadings.

We hope you will enjoy the open-endedness of this group. It can continue as long as you find it meaningful. It is a new experiment for the Adult Education committee. We ask you to let us know if it's working or if you need any interventions from us. Please print yourself a hard copy of this email if you think you might try the group. In case it slows down at some point, there are many suggestions herein that may give you a new direction to try.

*Blessings*

**Websites:**

**Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting:**  
<http://ovym.quaker.org/>

**Community Friends:**  
[www.communityfriendsmeeting.com](http://www.communityfriendsmeeting.com)

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“There is a way between voice and presence  
where information flows.  
In disciplined silence it opens.  
With wandering talk it closes.”

Rumi

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