



Among Friends

*The Newsletter of the Richmond
Meeting of the Religious Society of
Friends (The Quakers)*

Eighth Month 2006

Baltimore Yearly Meeting Eighth Month Query

Outreach: Do you, as the way opens, share Friends' principles with non-Friends? Do you witness to your Quaker faith by letting your life speak? Do you make non-Friends welcome in your meetings for worship? Do you find ways to encourage their continued attendance?

Calendar

- July 31 through August 6 – BYM in Harrisonburg, VA
- August 12 - Take Two for Peace, meet at Museum of Fine Arts @ 9 a.m.
- August 13 – Marlette Sawyer Memorial Meeting at 2 p.m.
- August 20 – Summer Vacation no Meeting for Worship for Business
- August 27 – Potluck after Meeting, bring a dish
- September 9 – Beginning of If Grace is True: How God Will Save Everyone,
@ Meeting House, 7 to 9 p.m.
- September 17 – Next Meeting for Business at 11 a.m.



**Child care available for
Bible Work Bench, 9:30 and 11:00 meeting.**

Summer Vacation: No Meeting For Business in August.

Traditionally RFM has not held Meeting for Business in August, if there was no pressing business. That being the case, the next Meeting for Business will be on September 17th at the 11 o'clock Meeting.

New Member: Please welcome our newest member **Chris Roberts**. Chris is on the Building and Grounds Committee and is the contact person for scheduling building usage.

News Among Us

Linda Heacock is leaving for Kenya on August 28th. This is her second trip to Kenya as part of her embraced ministry; she will be gone for five weeks. She will also be attending an international conference, in South Africa, on Stopping Violence.

Micah Hostetter is left on July 23rd for a year of study in China. Micah will be studying at Beijing University.

Donna and Bob Rugg are happy to announce the birth of "Baby Boy Rugg," son of *Will and Lillian Rugg* of London, England. Born on Monday July 17, 2006 at 3 p.m.. He is healthy and happy, with strong lungs, blue eyes and a full

head of black hair. He weighed 6 lbs 10 oz at birth. Mom is recovering nicely from the (scheduled) cesarean delivery.

Marlette Sawyer's memorial meeting will be held on August 13th at 2 p.m. She was a sojourner member of RFM. As a life long Quaker she attended until she became too ill to attend. She moved to Richmond to be near her daughter, Chris Charbonneau. Chris is a member of EFM.

Elizabeth Smith is recovering from her hip replacement surgery. During her confinement she would appreciate cards, calls, and probably food.

BIBLE WORKBENCH meets at 9:30 every First-Day morning, in the all-purpose room, to explore texts from Hebrew or Christian scriptures which are scheduled to be read world-wide for congregations in several major Christian denominations. We approach the texts through a Socratic questioning process that connects ancient Story with personal experience of "That of God" within each participant. No particular expertise or preparation is required (other than coming with open heart and spirit), but for those who like to read the texts in advance, the selections for August are:

Aug. 6 -- Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15 -- The Israelites complain about the difficulties of their escape route from slavery in Egypt, and the Lord provides manna in the wilderness.

Aug. 13 -- 2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33 -- David the King mourns the death of his son Absalom.

Aug. 20 -- 1 Kings 2:10-3:4 -- After David's death, Solomon takes steps to secure his throne and establish his kingdom

Aug. 27 -- Joshua 24:1-18 -- Preparing to enter the "promised land," the people are challenged by Joshua to choose whom they will follow--the "I AM" revealed to Moses, or the idols of the Canaanites et al. Or, as Quakers might ask: "Whom will you follow -- that of God within, or the voices of the culture?"

Sessions run from 9:30-10:30 each First-Day morning, usually in the all-purpose room: come join us as we "question authority"!

*It's not too late to sign up for **Education for Ministry**, this is a fun and interesting method of studying the Bible and how it can effect your life. Please contact Jean Jones Andersen for information.*

***Filing Deadline August 7th* SPIRITUAL FORMATION PROGRAM**

Do you seek a deeper spiritual experience? If so, you may want to participate in the BYM Spiritual Formation Program. Spiritual Formation allows people in our busy culture opportunities to encounter the divine with (1) our minds through spiritual reading, (2) our hearts through daily spiritual practices, and (3) our human relationships through local friendship groups.

If you would like to participate in the 2006-7 Spiritual Formation Program, more information can be found through bym-rsf.org. Queries and additional information: Elizabeth Smith, 321-9559, ekoia@aol.com.

Adopted Minute Concerning "Marriage Amendment"

A constitutional amendment will be on Virginia's ballot this November, amending the Bill of Rights, not only defining marriage as between one man and one woman but also denying legal recognition of ***any*** couple, gay or straight, unless they're married. At our July MWB we adopted the following Minute.

"Richmond (VA) Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends is strongly opposed to the proposed Marshall/Newman amendment ("marriage amendment") to Article I of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia, which will be on the ballot on November 7th, 2006.

This amendment would curtail the rights of our brothers and sisters who are gay and lesbian, as well as any unmarried couples, to receive the same recognition and legal protections in their persons, their families, and their workplaces that are afforded to all others.

In keeping with the traditions of our Meeting, we historically have embraced all loving and committed relationships and believe that this is the best way to strengthen marriage. Friends are urged to take action, as they are led, to oppose this amendment."

This Minute will be sent to all the Meetings in Virginia, BYM, the metro newspapers. If you have any suggestions, please contact a member of Peace and Social Concerns (P&SC).

Make Your Voice Heard on the 'Marriage Amendment'

Equality Virginia (equalityvirginia.org), Virginia's GLBT lobbying organization, has formed the Commonwealth Coalition, a broad-based group of secular, government and faith-based organizations, with the mission of **educating** Virginians about the amendment before the election.

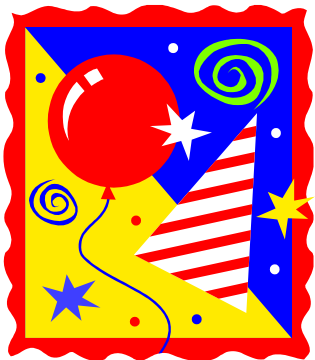
P&SC is sponsoring a letter-to-the-editor campaign to the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, coordinated by Diana Westbrook. Diana will make available key talking points, a sign-up sheet and the *RTD's* mailing address. The goal will be for RFM to submit one brief personal letter per week until the election, with hopes that as many as possible will be published in the newspaper. Please consider participating in this important campaign to defeat Virginia's "marriage amendment." If you have questions, please feel free to contact Diana at prosedoc@aol.com

Study Group: If Grace is True: Why God Will Save Every Person

In January a study group started on the book **If Grace is True: Why God will Save Every Person**. Several people have asked that the group be offered again, so a new group will be starting in September.

We all are on a spiritual journey, trying to understand ourselves, others and, in some cases, what it is to be Christian. We will look at *if God is a loving God, how can there be eternal damnation?* This study group will visit many ideas including new definitions for *grace, repentance, and salvation* in search of a fresh understanding of Jesus' message. Lutheran, Methodist and Quaker groups have studied the book to determine the differences between the dualist approach to Christianity and a universalist perspective.

The study course will consist of five two-hour sessions. It will be held at the meeting house at **7 p.m. every other Monday night starting on September 19, 2006**. Please contact Jean James , fiveacwood@att.net) by August 31st, if you would like more information or to participate.



Third Annual Family Peace Festival

The Richmond Peace Education Center and Bon Air Baptist Church would like to invite you to come to a festival to support peace, diversity, and community.

**On Sunday September 17th
at St. Joseph's Villa from 12:00 to 5:00.**

The Family Peace Festival will include many exhibitors from the greater Richmond area, exciting musical performances from Drums No Guns, Richmond Jazz, and Ululating Mummies, interactive children's crafts, games and performances, a variety of terrific ethnic foods, as well as educational presentations about peace and conflict resolution for youth and families.

The Mission of the annual Family Peace Festival is to provide an opportunity for children, youth, and adults of the greater Richmond area to gather in celebration of peace and diversity. It is our hope that this will foster a growing sense of community.

Sponsoring organizations include; Interfaith Council of Greater Richmond, Bon Air United Methodist Church, Islamic Center of Virginia, Spiritual Mind Center, Asian American Business Assistance Center, New Canaan Baptist Church, Bon Air Presbyterian Church, The Resource Center, Unity of Richmond, and several other faith-based organizations.

RFM has been invited to have a table at the festival. If you would like to work the table and you have any kind of talent, i.e., face painting, balloons, cookie making, or you like to talk with people, please contact Dan Shaw.

Address: St. Joseph's Villa, 8000 Brook Road, Richmond, VA 23227 See our website for more information: www.familypeacefestival.org.

Take Two: Friends Gulf Coast Group

This is an invitation to join many of the folks from the first Gulf trip to go with them during the first week of December. At present, Ada Hammer is organizing the group. She is looking for any volunteers, but will be extra grateful for people with building trade and repair skills. Right now the group has includes 5 people who went on the first trip and 10 new people.

She hopes to meet in September to solidify as a group, and start making decisions. Leadership roles will be needed and they will be looking for: an overall coordinator, work coordinator, a food coordinator, a travel coordinator, and a spiritual guru. Contact Ada for more information.

News from BYM

Baltimore Yearly Meeting welcomes a new General Secretary

Baltimore Yearly Meeting welcomes its new General Secretary, Robert W. (Riley) Robinson. Riley is a member of Friends Meeting of Washington, and has served as its Administrative Secretary for fourteen years, attending to the needs of a Meeting with 460 members, hundreds of attenders and visitors and two "vintage" buildings.



Riley's background with BYM goes back a long way, with regular attendance at Yearly Meeting sessions going back to the 1980s, during the development of its *Faith and Practice*. "There was no way to miss the sense of how deeply Friends were willing to labor with each other and truly abide with each other," said Riley. "These were people willing to be open to change through their worship experience while deeply respecting Friends' traditions. And amidst all the effort, there was joy."

Riley's Quaker experience has extended to other organizations as well. He has served for two terms as Clerk of the Executive Committee of the American Friends Service Committee's Middle Atlantic Region, which put him on the national board as well. He has served on the board Executive Committee and as Clerk of the board Human Resources Committee. He served for many years on the Planning Committee for Friends

Conference on Religion and Psychology, including as an interim clerk. He is currently on the Planning Committee for the annual meeting of the Friends Committee on National Legislation. For years, he has been a regular attendee at Friends General Conference Annual Gathering and at gatherings of Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns.

So what about going to all of those meetings? "Be open to worship at all times. Sit quietly. Listen well. You might try to let the discussion form a complete picture in your mind. See if the main course of the discussion creates a focused, balanced wholeness. If not, ask yourself why and consider how to respond. If your sense of the group's process does seem to show real integrity, then try to listen for what questions are not yet being asked.

What is it? Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Annual Session is coming July 31st through August 6th and the Program Committee is in the midst of planning a wonderful gathering. In addition to speakers, there are workshops, (workshops are Thursday, Friday and Saturday) interest groups, business meetings, a Quaker book and crafts store, an organizational fair, Young Friends programming, Meeting for Worship, Junior Yearly Meeting, Bible study, worship sharing, song, relaxation and renewal for all. The links below include more information about programs at Annual Session and registration materials.

For infants and toddlers, childcare is available. For our young children, day classes full of exploration run from after worship sharing until lunch. Afternoon activities, from swimming to arts and crafts, ensure the children will be supervised and entertained. Evening programs range from the all-age celebration to movies to outdoor games. Parents are responsible for taking children to class, picking them up before lunch, and ensuring that their children are enrolled in a program or are with the parent. Children may not be on campus unsupervised.

Children in rising 6th through rising 8th grades are part of the Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM). High school aged teenagers, Young Friends; gather from Tuesday to Sunday in their own dorm. Young Friends, Friendly Adult Presences, and the BYM Youth Secretary cooperate in a community based on caring, trust, and love. In addition to unique workshops, YF's lead the Produce Department and Coffee House, join the community at the All-Age Celebration, and participate in daily business meetings. Young Friends should look for "The Letter of Understanding". That form needs to be included with the registration for all Young Friends who will be on campus anytime during the week.

First Time Attender Vouchers (free!): Each Monthly Meeting can award three vouchers for attendance at Annual Session for two nights. If you have never attended Annual Session and would like to take advantage of this, please contact your Monthly Meeting Clerk or Care and Council Committee. Do not contact the BYM office please.

For more information you can go online at bym-rsf.org.

**Seventh Month Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
Richmond Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Seventh Month 16, 2006**

Meeting for Worship with a concern for Business (MWB) began at 11:00 a.m. Meeting welcomed first-time MWB attenders Kelly St. Claire, Weylin Gorski, Annabelle Gorski, Evelyn Hagan, T.J. Combs, Allyson Hagen, Kayla Verene, Patrick C. Dodson, and Abi Hagen. Total attendance was 64. Monica Shaw of Ministry and Worship sat on facing bench. Mark Skolnick read aloud the query from Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM). Friends were invited to respond to the queries from the silence.

Minutes: With the corrected spelling of the names of Diane Bowden and Chris Olson-Vickers, the minutes were approved.

Care and Counsel: Margaret Edds brought forward for the second time (as is our custom) the recommendation of membership for Chris Roberts. Meeting approved.

Building and Grounds: Chris Roberts reported that gratings for the ground level windows for safety, particularly facing the playground have been recommended, and that a bid has been obtained. As is our custom, Meeting is asked to approve the expense, which exceeds \$1,000. Meeting approved. Chris also noted that bids for stripping and repainting the meeting house are being sought at this time. This item will be brought to MWB at a future date. Jean James asked that the committee consider purchasing a small (probably electric) lawnmower and volunteered to keep the lawns mowed.

Financial Stewardship: Kirsten Hoogakker presented the 2nd quarter financial statement. There is a question about the Clearing General Fund regarding the Total Operating Expenses and Building and Grounds Committee lines. With the understanding that this question will be promptly resolved, the financial statement was approved.

Patricia Stansbury presented a recommendation that an annual donation of \$100 be established to Friends' Peace Teams African Great Lakes Initiative. These funds would be drawn from Contingencies this year and in following years be budgeting under Quaker Organizations. Meeting approved.

Patricia reviewed the previously recommended schedule of Building Usage Fees which reflect an increase in these rates. Meeting approved the new fee schedule.

Ministry and Worship: Diane Bowden presented a letter of introduction and a travel minute for Linda Heacock's second trip to Africa in August, to be issued by the Clerk of Meeting. Meeting approved.

Diane also presented an educational statement regarding vocal ministry, which the committee proposes to publish in the newsletter periodically and read in Meeting for Worship occasionally.

Peace and Social Concerns: Sally Gudas presented a proposed minute opposing the "marriage amendment" which will be on the ballot in November. As was done with a previous letter, the committee wishes to send this minute to Virginia Meetings, BYM, and, amended as necessary, to the media. After several wordsmithing suggestions, the minute was return to the committee for minor revision and implementation of this plan of action.

Sally reported that for the second year, the committee is involved in the International Family Day of Peace on September 17th, and asked if Meeting wanted the invitation to be sent by the Clerk, representing all of meeting, rather than just the committee. Meeting approved.

Clerk's Business: There being no pressing business, there will be no MWB in August.

Dan Shaw, Clerk of Meeting
Grace Palmer, Recording Clerk

Richmond Friends Meeting
4500 Kensington Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23221-2301

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Richmond Friends Meeting
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Richmond, VA 23235
Richmondfriends.org
804-358-6185

Clerk: Dan Shaw
Assistant Clerk: Barbara Myers
Treasurer: Kirsten Hoogakker
Building Coordinator: Chris Roberts
Clearing Contact: Janice Godshall

**Updates to the Directory and
Mailing List** should be sent to
DirectoryUpdate@richmondfriends.org

Meetings for Worship
9:30 and 11a.m. Every
First Day
Singing
10:30-10:55 a.m. 1st First Day
**Meeting for Worship with Attention
to Business (MWB)** 3rd First Day
Religious Education
11:20 am First Day School
Pot Luck Lunch,
4th First Day, at rise of meeting

Ashland Worship Group
Meeting for Worship
11:00 a.m., 2nd and 4th First Days
Call 227-3439 for directions.

Lakeside Worship Group
Meeting for Worship
6:30 – 7 pm Thursday evenings at
Manor Care, 2125 Hilliard Rd,
Call 539-6552 or 264-8210
for directions.

Midlothian Meeting
Meeting for Worship
11 a.m. First Days, 2502 Huguenot
Springs Road. Newsletter:
www.midlothianfriends.org.
Send newsletter submissions to
mfnews@yahoo.com.
For more information call
598-1676

Among Friends is a monthly Publication of Richmond Friends Meeting. Please submit materials to the appropriate committee clerk. We'd like to remind Friends that the newsletter deadline is the same day as MWB, the 3rd First Day. MWB related documents may be sent as late as the following Tuesday evening. Please submit all newsletter materials to NewsletterEditors@richmondfriends.org.

