

Virginia Beach Friends Meeting

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www.vbfriends.org

**Virginia Beach Monthly Meeting
Religious Society of Friends
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Sixth month 12, 2016**

Meeting opened with a period of silent worship. Sixteen persons were present.

Query: 12. *Do we welcome newcomers and non-members to our meetings? Are they encouraged to share in Meeting activities and to consider membership when they are in agreement with the principles and practices of Friends? Are our younger members appointed to committees and encouraged to share in other responsibilities of the Meeting? Do we visit one another frequently, remembering those who may be lonely? Does this visitation and caring extend beyond the members of our own Meeting?*

Response to Query:

In the recent long range planning process a commitment was made to be more intentional and active in drawing in new attenders. Communication Committee's work on the website puts us out in the world. The activities of individual members in visitation are noteworthy. A more systematic monitoring of the needs for visits might be in order.

The work of the school and the activities of the Peace and Social Justice Committee and individuals in acting on our



Weekly Events

- * First Day (Sunday), 10:30-11:30 am - Meeting for Worship.
- * First Day (Sunday), 10:30-11:30 am - First Day School - younger children join Meeting during or after Worship.
- * Fourth Day (Wednesday), 8:30-9:00 am Morning Worship.
- * Fourth Day (Wednesday), 7:00 pm Mid-Week Prayer.
- * Sixth Day (Friday) 9:00-9:30 am - School's Meeting for Worship. All are welcome, with special invitation to the School and Meeting Community. Meets weekly when school is in session.

Newsletter Submissions

To submit news, photos, articles, or original writing for the newsletter, please email Christen at christenhansel@cox.net.

principles, bringing them into the world, is also an important sort of outreach.

Head of School, Linda Serrette, reported on many activities in the life of the school. Graduation was held on June 11th and was a deeply moving event.

Ministers, Elders, and Overseers reported that they discussed Friends in need. More systematic approaches to ride-sharing and visitation are being considered.

A description of conservative Friends from a Pendle Hill pamphlet was sent to Communications Committee for posting on the website. There will be no further action for now with regard to the discussion of the presence of this term in our name.

Yearly Meeting has changed from planning a revision of the existing *Faith and Practice* to writing a completely new document. There is concern in the Meeting about this process. The following statement will be read at Yearly Meeting:

Our meeting has been baffled and confused with many of the proposed changes to the "Faith and Practice, Book of Discipline." We have attempted to not only express our concerns about the changes without understanding some of the need for the changes, and continue to respond more directly to the proposed changes. After the past Interim Body Meeting we recognized that the Discipline Review Committee is also puzzled by our responses.

It was easier to explain the changes in the first two sections after hearing from the discussion when attending the Yearly Meeting sessions related to these sections.

The same concerns exist with the remaining sections, especially the Introduction and History sections, as proposed.

The Introduction section seems to have a different purpose than the original. This led to a discussion as to the purpose of this new addition. Questions such as "Is this to explain the title of the book, trying to change the title or focus of the book, or it is trying to define the terms to better explain the book, or something else?" Therefore our responses reflected our confusion. As a result supporting the proposed changes is difficult without a

Thoughts shared by the Peace and Social Justice Committee:

"It seems to me that the basic problem is not political, it is apolitical and human. One of the most important things to do is to keep cutting deliberately through political lines and barriers, emphasizing the fact that these are largely fabrication and that there is another dimension, a genuine reality, totally opposed to the fictions of politics: the human dimension which politics pretend to arrogate entirely to themselves. This is the necessary first step along the long way toward the perhaps impossible task of purifying, humanizing and somehow illuminating politics themselves."

Thomas Merton, *A Book of Hours*

much better understanding of how this proposal will improve the book. The same is true of the History section. Trying to evaluate the extended history changes when we do not understand the need for it is difficult. Adding back in some of the information originally left out of the revision did not make anything clearer. The addition of the paragraphs at the end of the history section also did not help clarify our concerns.

We offer the following quote (which we are considering using) to help explain to newcomers what “conservative” means to us, but do not know if this would be helpful or not to our other Monthly Meetings.

Conservative Friends as defined by Douglas Gwyn

In the Pendle Hill Pamphlet #425 “But Who Do You Say That I Am?” (page 15 Published 2/2014)

Conservative Friends share an interest in early Quaker witness, but are particularly drawn to the classical; Quaker faith and practice of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They are inspired by the example of Conservative Friends in the United States. That small group of mostly rural Friends has retained more of traditional Quaker practices than have the larger evangelical or liberal Quaker streams.

Thus, while the new Conservative Friends are Christ-centered in their faith, they are often most drawn by the practices of traditional Friends. These include deeper meetings for worship, a more worshipful and disciplined business method, the recognized leadership of recorded (but still nonprofessional) ministers, the authority of elders to mentor Friends into a deeper spiritual life and a more courageous lived testimony, and the explicit answering of the Quaker queries, rather than using them simply as rhetorical questions.

MEO recommend that Meeting gather to discuss the issues arising out of this process. A date and time will be forthcoming.

Finance Committee reported on its work on the guidelines for administering the Rita Wass endowment. A document was circulated and is accessible on the website as “Rita Wass Endowment Grant Guidance.”



Monthly Events

- * First First Day (first Sunday of each month), 9:00 am - Building & Grounds Committee meeting.
- * Second First Day (second Sunday of each month), 8:30-10:15 am - Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention To Business.
- * Third First Day (third Sunday of each month), Noon - Peace & Social Justice Committee meeting.
- * Third First Day (third Sunday of each month), 9 am – Adult First Day School
- * Fourth First Day (fourth Sunday of each month), 8:30 am - Ministry and Oversight meeting.
- * Fourth First Day (fourth Sunday of each month), Noon - Communications Committee meeting.

Meeting approved this document with an understanding that the guidance will evolve to incorporate what we learn as it is applied.

Meeting authorized distribution of \$1500 during 2016, consistent with the guidance. We are encouraged to think together about creative grant applications.

There was no separate **Treasurer's** report this month.

Building and Grounds Committee reported that new carpet upstairs and downstairs is being planned.

Ceiling work is underway, with initial work taking place off site. Installation is set for eighth month.

The next work day is the twenty-fifth day of sixth month.

Communications Committee continues to investigate loudspeakers and microphones for the meetinghouse. The website has been updated.

Nominating Committee submitted the list of committees and positions.

The report of the **Peace and Social Justice Committee** is available on the website. It is a rich and detailed document that all are encouraged to read. The key activity this month is the annual Virginia Beach Symposium for Peace and Racial Harmony. Friends will join with the Baha'i community for potluck and discussion.

Meeting approved David French, Nancy Nixon, and others who are able to attend as Meeting representatives to Yearly Meeting.

Meeting closed with a period of silent worship. Twenty persons were present.

Nancy Nixon, Clerk

Patrick Goold, Recording Clerk

Quaker Meeting: First Day

By Bob Young

Sunday silent meeting

blackbird squawks at us
from branch
outside the window

elderly man muffles his
cough
baby in the row behind me
squeals
a yellowed leaf bows to
bless the earth

within, within there is quiet
there is peace.

Upcoming Events

[Yearly Meeting](#)

Dates: July 13-17
Location: Guilford College
Greensboro, North Carolina

[VBFM Adult First Day School](#)

Date/Time: July 17, 9 am (3rd Sunday of the month)
Location: Meetinghouse
Current Topic: Metaphors of Meaning

[Creeds Preparative Meeting Humdinger](#)

Date/Time: Sunday July 31, 2016
Location: Creeds Preparative Friends Meeting
Address: 1941 Clifton Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23457

[Coastal Friends Gathering](#)

Date: Saturday August 6
Time: 11:00 am, potluck follows
Location: New Bern, NC

[Dave French's Presentation on his travels to Africa](#)

Date/Time: August 7, noon to 2:00pm
Location: Meeting House

[Coastal Friends Gathering](#)

Date: Saturday November 6
Time: 11:00 am, potluck follows
Location: Wilmington, NC

Query to Consider for August:

Meeting for Worship

1. Do we faithfully uphold our testimony for worship which is based on silent waiting, and for a free and unprogrammed ministry that may be shared by all? Is there a living silence in which we feel drawn together by the Light of Christ, the power of God in our midst; and is this inspiration carried over into our daily lives? Do we come to meeting with hearts and minds open and ready to worship in silence or in vocal ministry or prayer as the Holy Spirit leads us? Does our Meeting encourage those who may have a gift in the spoken ministry?

Valedictorian Speech from Friends School Graduation

By Cameron How

First, I wanted to thank all of the friends, family, faculty, and distinguished guests for being here today. Your commitment and understanding have built us into the young men and women we are today.

So, what is a Valedictorian speech? Well, the first thing you need to know about me is I overanalyze everything. From academics to social interactions, I refuse to accept anything for what it usually is, simple. And some things never change, so in deciding what I was going to speak to you about, I looked up where the word Valedictorian comes from, what it means. It comes from the Latin "*vale dicere*" meaning "to say farewell". So, essentially I am supposed to be giving you a "farewell address" into the rest of your lives. . . .

What more is there to say? We have been through it all together. . . . We have stumbled, we have triumphed, we have overcome academic challenges, we have made new relationships, and have had relationships broken. This year we have watched our loved ones fight for their lives. We have found ourselves lost at times, but we have always been found. We have been poised, confident, and diligent enough to get through what has been, for most of us, the most rigorous and demanding year of our young lives.

Reminders

The purpose of this newsletter is to share the Monthly Meeting minutes with members, attenders and others interested in the Virginia Beach Monthly Meeting. The minutes represent the official view of the Meeting. Other articles relating to the Meeting are included on a space-available basis and reflect the views of the person submitting the information.

Materials for consideration at Monthly Meeting for Business should be sent to the Clerk, Recording Clerk, and vbfm.emailer@gmail.com no later than the Wednesday prior to Meeting for Business. Thank you, from our Communication Committee!!

Documents submitted for review and comment before being presented to MFB for approval can be found at:

<http://vbfriends.org/DocPa d/Review/ main.html>.

My life experience outside of Friends School is limited, to say the least. The stories I have to share, the lessons I have to teach, are being pulled from a substantially smaller pool of experience than almost everybody here. At 16, what could I possibly have to say that you haven't seen, heard, or done? More importantly, what message could I possibly convey that is going to prepare you for a lifetime of experiences I have yet to experience?

Not everything that counts can be counted,

**And not everything that can be counted counts.”
Albert Einstein**

If you could sum up the Friends School philosophy into a famous quote, that would be it. Our mission statement reads, “At Friends School, we integrate the Quaker values of equality, integrity, simplicity, peace, and environmental stewardship in a nurturing community of academic excellence that encourages mutual respect, personal responsibility, and the fulfillment of each person's potential, based on the Quaker belief that there is that of God in everyone.”

We are a school focused on building the intangible qualities in all of us. Rather than being driven by money, or high test scores, or an undefeated sports team, we strive to give kids a pathway to manifest the best qualities about themselves, to become their authentic selves. And it took me until late into my late high school career to truly understand and appreciate that concept.

So, rather than give you the whole, “The world is your oyster,” spiel, rather than tell you about the world and what it has to offer, I figured I would reflect on everything Friends has given us, more than the lifelong friendships and everlasting memories, the deep, intricate understanding of what it means to be yourself, to value others, to have integrity, and to trust that when you don't know where you are going, direction will find you if you are open to it.



Book Reading + Signing

TENDER WITNESS

A Book of Poetry

By Paula Lippard
Justice

MONDAY, AUGUST 8th

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

First Colonial Inn

845 First Colonial Road

Virginia Beach, VA

Please email
laleylippard@gmail.com with
any questions

Much like a ship sets sail to its next destination, we have gathered all we can from this port in our lives and are steady and prepared to make the voyage to our next port. We have learned all we can from this place and are ready to use that wisdom to conquer the next chapter of our lives.

“Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think.”

Albert Einstein

I was fortunate enough to teach a middle school class this semester with 10 of the most intelligent, intuitive, heartening, caring, genuine, real, understanding, and authentic people I have ever met.

I wanted to make the class more than the listening to and regurgitating of information, so I designed a curriculum and challenged them to take a look at their lives and where they wanted to go since the most important thing you can study is yourself. They changed my life. They showed me their perspectives, which had not yet been cut down and molded by people telling them “no” or “you can’t” because of insecurities other people have. My middle schoolers were completely true to themselves and had no problem sharing who they were, a lesson at the foundation of a Friends School education. That quality, that perspective, is at the heart of what it means to be a student here and is something I think many people lose as they get caught up in other people’s lives, trying to please, trying to gain acceptance, rather than being true to themselves.

Don’t lose that perspective!

We, as a culture, are so infatuated with this idea of a fairytale, that one day we will find our Prince Charming, our Cinderella, that we will achieve great feats to be marveled at by our contemporaries, but we see it only as an idea, as mere speculation, as a fairytale never to be had or achieved. My question to you is, Why not? Why can’t you have . . . *that*? Why can’t you be . . . *that*? Why can’t you do all that you want to do, see all that you want to see, and be all that you can be? Why not? Some people call it being naïve. They say, “We haven’t seen the real world yet, we don’t know the hardships and the obstacles, the loss, the pain, and the suffering life has to offer us.” Of course we don’t. But if it wasn’t for the hardship, if it wasn’t for the obstacles, if it wasn’t for the loss, the pain, and the suffering, then what would make life worth living? Don’t ask for an easy life, ask for the strength and the grit and the composure to endure a tough one. One that is going to pull the best out of you, one that is going to beat you down on several occasions so that you can get up clean yourself off and start anew on the path to your dreams.

Be all that you can be!

So how do you go about doing this, how do you build the good life, how do you live your life in pursuit of something that is going to make you happy, that you are passionate about, that makes you feel like you are successful? The way you build the

good life is just like you build anything. Bring in the right ingredients, take out the wrong ingredients, set the right intention, put them together, and watch what happens.

The first thing you can do is surround yourself with people that bring out the best qualities in you. People who see you for you, not for who they are, not for who they want you to be, but for all that it is . . . that encapsulates you. Find people that push you, that challenge you, that make you get comfortable with being uncomfortable, that make you better, that force you to have integrity, that force you to have character, that force you to be accountable to yourself and everyone around you. Most people find friends that make them feel safe, that make them feel comfortable, as if everything in their life will be a constant stream of events that will **always** stay the same.

“If you love life don’t waste time, for time is what life is made up of.”

Bruce Lee

The only certainty in life is that it's not going to last forever. So why spend it in a state of emotional and spiritual stagnation? Why box yourself in a limited life?

Surround yourself with people who bring out the best in you.

Time is a completely man made construct that is meant to keep us organized, scheduled, and predictable. The first thing you learn about life is that it is anything but organized and predictable. Time is often attributed with being a major deciding factor in people's lives; it changes everything; it allows you to grow; it allows you to understand; it helps you find yourself; and it can often heal wounds and broken relationships.

Don’t let time be a deciding factor in your life.

Your time here is limited, so don't waste it; don't leave it up to time to give you what you want. Be an active participant in your future, in where your life takes you, in who you become. People often hope that something will change; that something better than what is currently happening will happen. But hope alone will never be enough. **So take the lead in your future or it will pass you by.**

“He who says he can and he who says he can’t are both usually right.”

Confucius

If there is anything you should have learned in your tenure at Friends school, it is to be true to yourself. That we all have a different, unique story, and that that uniqueness should be celebrated and built on.

**“If you change the way you look at things
The things you look at change.”**

Wayne Dyer

We must understand that our perspective is made up of an accumulation of everything that has happened to us . . . and through us. The experiences we have, the relationships we make, the memories we create, influence our outlook greatly. People often get so caught up in other people's lives that they forget what is important to **them**. People look for problems, they seek out conflict, always looking at the bad side, the wrong side, the problem side, giving a million reasons why it can't be done.

**Instead, I urge you to view every obstacle
As an opportunity to taking the next step in reaching your goals.**

Back to the ship metaphor: After a ship sets sail against the winds of life, it is seldom sailing directly toward its destination. It uses the wind and tacks back and forth, sailing upwind, until it reaches its destination.

“Don’t let the fear of striking out hold you back.”

Babe Ruth

Fear is an integral part of all of our lives. It reminds us that we have something to lose, whether it is something we already have or wish we had. But don't let that fear, that uncertainty, keep you from giving it a go. The only thing you can do that is riskier than trying is not trying. One of my classmates once said to me “I don't do things for me now, Cameron. I do things for me in the future, so I can look back and say because I tried that, I did it that much better the next time.” (Or, at least that was the Serbian to English translation.)

Don’t let immediate setbacks deter you from long term goals.

But make sure you rely on other people as well, because if you try to do everything by yourself, one day you are going to run into something a lot bigger than you and you are going to have to reach outside yourself to find the motivation to keep moving forward.

Which brings me to one of my final points before I let you go. The support network we have here academically and emotionally is one that most people spend a lifetime trying to create. But in my experience, when I see people leave this place, that sudden loss of community and uplift shocks them, and it takes them time to readjust before they can move forward with their lives. Be aware of this fact, and be so rooted in who you are, and how you express yourself, that you can have the confidence to be who you are and realize that at any point in time in your life, there is at least one community of friends that accepts you for no other reason but for you being you.

“Small School, Big Opportunity.”

School Motto

Our size, or lack thereof, forces us to share our lives with people who have completely different interests. That have a completely different perspective on the world around them. At most other high schools, you would be ridiculed and outcast for becoming friends with someone different from yourself. But we have grown up in a place where the filmmaker can befriend the bookworm, where the workaholic can befriend the actor, where the jock can befriend the artist/gamer . . . and our lives are that much richer because of it. The opportunity is limitless. It is kind of scary to think that something you have dedicated your heart and soul to for so long seems to be slipping between your fingertips before you are ready to let it go. But as with anything that awaits you, you will never be truly ready. We have had a lot of lasts this year, our last

game, our last prom, our last high school exam, but we are on our way to a lot of firsts, too.

I have found myself searching for answers a lot this year. Asking more than academic questions. Asking why the world is the way it is, why people do what they do, why people act, feel, and are a certain way? But I find comfort in knowing that Friends School has provided me with the intellectual, moral, emotional, and spiritual compass to give me direction in the slew of challenges and questioning that is yet to come, and you should find comfort in this too. You have learned all you can from this place and are ready to set sail into the next great adventure of your lives. So, in closing, I read you this quote.

“Now, Voyager, sail thou forth to seek and find.”

Walt Whitman

Thank you.