

ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING NEWS, Web Edition for September, 2021

YOUTH



QUERIES:

- Do you establish family standards including the mutual obligations of youth and adults?
- How do we get to know and care for our youth as individuals? What have we learned from the wisdom expressed by our youth?
- How do we share our deepest beliefs with our youth, while leaving them free to develop as the spirit of God may lead them?

ADVICES:

Rejoice in the presence of our youth in meeting. Recognize and affirm the gifts that they bring to the life of the meeting community, and ensure to the maximum extent possible their well-being and safety.

Our youth need their peer groups. They also need opportunities to join with the whole group as an integral part of the meeting, sharing experiences that deepen relationships.

Part of sharing is learning our past as Quakers. Even more important is sharing what we as Quakers understand to be the Truth today and expressing the ways in which it shapes our lives.

All Friends need to be mentors to the youth in their Meeting.

VOICES:

But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.

-Mark 10:14 (NRSV)

I want that we may all show our faith by our works, by our honesty and justice and mercy and love; I want love to begin with little children; they should be governed by love, and love only. I am glad the rod is so far banished in the family circles and the schools. Children love peace. The little child knows when it says, Mother, I love everybody. There is a Divine instinct in them which prompts to this feeling.

-Lucretia Mott, 1876

We seek to affirm in each child at school, each member of the meeting, each person we meet in our daily lives, the person that he or she may with God's help grow to be. We are all the merest infants in God's world, struggling to stand upright and walk unaided, trying in vain to articulate our halting thoughts and feelings. We stumble and fall. We give way to self-pity and shame. God hauls us to our feet again and makes sense of our childish babble, never ceasing to believe in what we may ultimately become. Do we do the same for our children and one another?

-Barbara Windle, 1988

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FROM CARE & OVERSIGHT:

An excerpt from BYM's 2013 *Resource for Faith and Practice* shared by Care and Oversight Committee: *Caring for One Another: Advices*, p. 37:

Our Meetings are strongest when Friends are concerned about the welfare of every member of the Meeting community. While we need to guard against prying or invasion of privacy, it is nevertheless essential that Meetings be aware of the spiritual and material needs of members of the community and express caring concern in appropriate ways. To this end, we are to live affectionately as friends, entering with sympathy into the joys and sorrows of one another's lives.

As we are willing to offer help, so we need to be willing to make our needs known and to accept help. In bereavement, we need to give ourselves time to grieve. When others mourn, we need to let our love embrace them with the simple things of life: praying together, talking, planning meals, caring for children, and otherwise being of comfort. In offering pastoral care, it is not necessary to find the right words; it is important to be present.

FROM WGSV:

The Working Group on Stewarding our Vision is charged with naming and supporting future Meeting aspirations. The next meeting of the WGSV committee will be held on Tuesday, September 14, 2021, 4:30-6:00pm in person at the meeting house. We will be continuing our discernment around the monthly meeting's request for the WGSV to create a process for addressing the need for sound

long term financial planning. Friends are most welcome to join us. If you plan to attend please contact Greta Kirk-Mickey at greta.mickey@gmail.com or Anita Langford at amlangfo@verizon.net.

FIRST DAY SCHOOL FALL ACTIVITIES

We are planning a rich round of activities to foster connection among our Young Friends and nurture their religious development – all while keeping an eye on safety in the ongoing presence of Covid.

We have two outdoor FDS activities planned which we hope the wider community will join. We will also be asking the community to join the efforts of Young Friends in local relief work through the North County Pantry (see report following this one.) And we will resume on-line religious education.

First Up – Picnic lunch (BYO) and hike at Patapsco State Park. Saturday, September 11, noon.

We usually head up north, BUT THIS TIME we meet in the Fielding's neighborhood to share picnic-table fellowship and then explore the lovely trails at Patapsco. If you are not familiar with the park you are in for a treat! And it will be great to hear how school is starting for our YFs.

We will meet at the Soapstone Trail head, 1288 South Rolling Road, Halethorpe, MD. Detailed maps for where to meet (address for GPS, where to park, what to bring) will be sent the week previous.

There will also be a “fancy dress” gathering – SAVE THE DATE – Saturday, October 30th.

FDS SCREEN TIME begins on September 26, 11:30 to 12:15 with FORTH FIRST DAY FDS: FFFDS!! and will continue every fourth First Day through the school year. We will be using brief video presentations, some sent out ahead for YFs to share with their families. Together in screen time we can share reactions, respond to queries, possibly share a related activity.

Getting Involved in Local Relief Work through support of the North County Pantry

We will again be gathering contributions to the Holiday food baskets at Thanksgiving and Christmas and helping a family celebrate Christmas with some gift purchases (see related article about our support of students.) Detail of these efforts, and how the GFM community can chip in will be forthcoming.

We are so grateful for the presence of these Young Friends in our midst and deeply appreciative of the care and concern our community continues to provide them.

North County Cluster Back to School Project, *From the First Day School Working Group*

This month Gunpowder participated in the back-to-school project at the North County Cluster. Gunpowder, along with the other participating churches, was asked to donate one book bag, a water bottle, and a \$25 gift card. These were given, along with various school supplies, to the families supported by the North County Cluster. They were very appreciative!

Submissions from LouAnne Smith:

Information about the Draft and Conscientious Objectors

Conscientious Objector workshops offered by BYM this fall:

Selective Service System (SSS) registration for a possible draft into compulsory U.S. military service, now, is automatic in most states when getting a state driver's license. If the draft is reinstated, youth could have as little as nine days to prepare a CO claim before having to go before a local draft board. Thus, Quaker youth could easily miss the chance to claim status as a conscientious objector (CO).

If your Meeting (or other BYM unit) has youth ages 15-18 who want to find out how to claim conscientious objector status in Quaker-based "how-to" workshop, please email Phil Caroom (pcaroom@gmail.com) of BYM Peace and Social Concerns and Annapolis Friends Peace and Social Concerns for more information. Such workshop(s) would be interactive and offered via Zoom on some date(s) t/b/d during fall 2021.

News about the draft published in POLITICO (with thanks to Elizabeth Koopman for the article)

By Burgess Everett and Connor O'Brien, 07/19/2021 04:47 PM EDT

Senate Democrats are proposing a sweeping rewrite of the military draft laws aimed at requiring women to register for the Selective Service System, according to a draft authored by Senate Armed Services Chair Jack Reed and obtained by POLITICO.

The changes to Selective Service could be attached to the National Defense Authorization Act, a defense policy bill that's one of the few pieces of legislation considered a "must-pass" by Congress. The move would reignite a contentious debate over whether women should be required to register for the draft, a move the House and Senate have each considered in recent years, though the change has never become law.

The language proposed by Reed (D-R.I.) would expand registration for the service to "All Americans," striking explicit references to males. It's expected to be considered during committee markup this week; floor action on the bill would wait until later this year. A spokesperson for Reed declined to comment.

Currently, law states that U.S. men must register for the service when they turn 18 for potential military conscription, though no one has been drafted into the military in more than four decades. Men who fail to register for the draft can be fined, imprisoned, or denied federal jobs.

Calls to expand the draft to include women have grown in recent years, particularly after the Pentagon opened all combat roles to women in 2015. A congressionally-mandated commission that reviewed the draft also backed the change last year.

From BYM *Faith & Practice* 2013 Resource, p. 69

Peace: *"Since its founding over 350 years ago, the Religious Society of Friends has testified to the worth of every individual by refusing to participate in war. We repudiate war because it violates the primacy of love, destroys lives that God has given, and tears the fabric of society. Members of our Society have traditionally refused to serve in the armed forces."*

For the drummers among us!

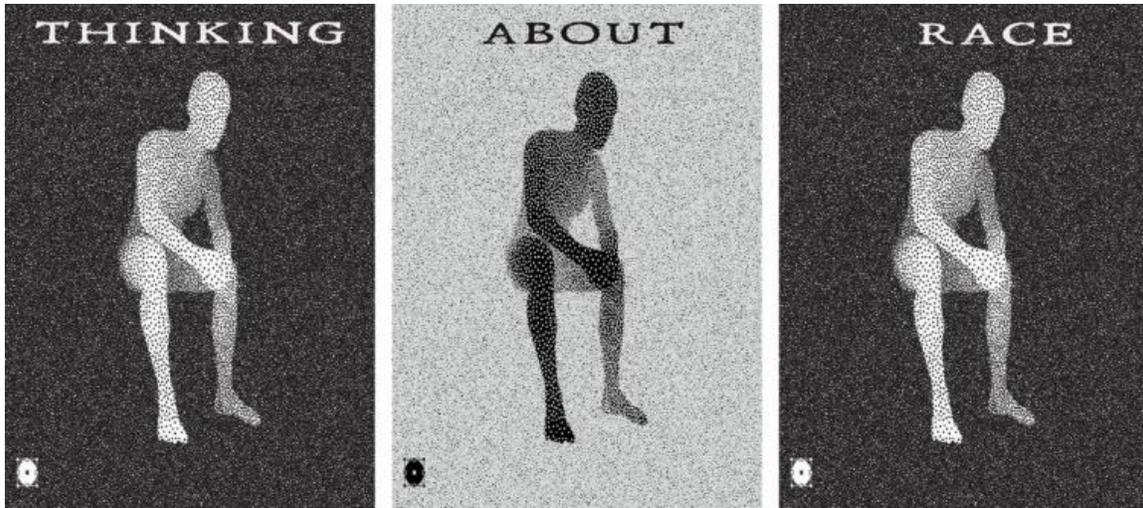
Baltimore Rhythm Festival

Saturday 9/18/21, Noon-8pm,

Outdoor Festival at Baltimore Montessori Charter School

1600 Guilford Ave, Baltimore 21202

More info at <https://www.baltimorehythmfestival.org/>



Race Manners: Which Black People Should I Believe?

From *The New York Times*, June 28, 2021; by Jené Desmond-Harris

As you know, there's no committee that gets a consensus from the over 41 million Black people in this country and issues proclamations about the right way for white people to think about racism.

For what it's worth, the fact that you care at all — that you value what Black people have to say and that you take seriously the idea of listening — puts you ahead of plenty of Americans who wholly disregard what Black people experience or simply want the worst for us. So, in my opinion, you're on the right track.

And I have empathy for you because I've been there — wanting to do the right thing when it comes to marginalized groups to which I don't belong, while encountering conflicting takes about what the right thing is. Is it helpful to transgender people or cringeworthy for cis people to put pronouns in our bios and email signatures? Are straight people a supportive or annoying presence at Pride? Am I honoring or alienating people if I use "Latinx" instead of "Latino"? Is "fat" a straightforward descriptor that I should use to support people who have reclaimed it, or is the pain the word still causes for some reason enough to avoid it?

I've had to accept that there won't be a single clear answer and that I have to take responsibility for wherever I land on these questions. To get to a similar place, here's what I think you should do: When you're thinking about this, start by replacing "Black people want racism to stop playing such a big role in their lives, and I want to make sure I'm listening to the right ones so that I can feel like a good ally" with "I want racism to stop playing such a big role in all of our lives, and I'll support things

that I believe will make that happen.” You’ve heard the expression about how we need co-conspirators, not allies, right? Even if you’re not personally a victim of racism, you can — and should — still think of yourself as someone who has skin in the game.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/28/opinion/race-america-defund-police.html?searchResultPosition=1>

This column is prepared by the BYM Working Group on Racism (WGR) and sent to the designated liaison at each local Meeting. The BYM WGR meets most months on the first Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, currently via Zoom. If you would like to attend, contact clerk David Etheridge, david.etheridge@verizon.net.

The Web Edition of the Newsletter does not include minutes from Gunpowder’s Meeting for Business. Personal Information has been redacted. The full newsletter, complete with minutes, is available at the Meetinghouse – attenders may also request the electronic or print edition.

Please feel free to inquire with Gunpowder’s Clerk at gunpowderclerk@gmail.com.