



Clerk's Message

From Sally Weaver Sommer



Sally Weaver
Sommer

This is holy ground; we're standing on holy ground.
For God is present and where God is, is holy.
These are holy hands; God's given us holy hands.
God works through these hands, and so these hands are
holy.

These are holy lips; God's given us holy lips.
God speaks through these lips, and so these lips are holy.
These are holy times; we're living in holy times,
For God loves through us, and so these times are holy.

At the FGC Central Committee meeting last fall, a woman rose during worship and sang these words (with a few adaptations. The song is found on page 152 of *Worship in Song: A Friends Hymnal*). The song resonated with me. I found myself singing it quite often. I did not consider why the song was important to me at the time; it simply stuck in my mind and I paid attention to it.

Our spiritual formation group met soon after I returned home after the meetings. As part of the spiritual discipline program, each participant discerns a spiritual discipline for the year. As I began my discernment I readily

realized that this song would become part of this year's spiritual discipline. I knew that I needed to work on being more intentional about how I use my time. I committed myself to spending time at the end of each workday prayerfully considering the roles I play and what tasks I need to complete during the next week and beyond in order to fill those roles. It became clear to me that adding the prayerful singing of this song each morning to my spiritual practice would better prepare me for the weekly prioritization exercise.

A couple weeks ago, while singing this song, I was jolted by the

(Continued on next page)

Clerk's Message, *continued*

words in the last verse. How could these times be labeled holy? There seems to be so much evil in the world. People are being hurt in their homes, in their communities, at work, by individuals and by structures. We are bombarded by the stories of pain we hear daily and at times by our own experiences. The next Sunday during meeting for worship I was given a message: that's the whole point of the song. Evil has been present for a very long time and is present in all places. It exists alongside the beauty, goodness and love. It is a part of the human reality. But just as much a part of the human reality is the presence of God among us no matter where we are standing. This song recognizes the role we as humans play in co-creation. These times are holy because we can express God's love to those who suffer whether they are close to us or far away and whether they suffer at the hands of individuals or of destructive human systems. All of creation calls out for us to use our hands and lips toward God's purposes.

Now each morning I sing this song as an expression of hope and anticipation. My hands and my lips can be used for good. That is all I'm called to do: to let God love through me. The hope comes from the knowledge that people throughout the world are letting God love through them. Love does overcome evil. These are indeed holy times.

Report on Climate March

By Isabel Erickson, Swarthmore Gazette,
contributed to the Newsletter of
The North Columbus, Ohio Meeting

Sunday, September 21: At 12.58 p.m., in the streets of midtown Manhattan, the four hundred thousand people around me ceased their cheers, put down their signs, stopped their march, and fell perfectly silent. Countless rows of us gazed mutely ahead, hands clasped above our heads. After the chants and yells of the past two hours, the quiet was unnerving. A crowd of almost half a million had gathered and no one spoke a word.

We were silent to honor and remember those most affected by climate change and the extraction of fossil fuels, some of whom were marching at the front of the four mile long column. They were survivors of Hurricane Sandy who had watched their homes flood as they took refuge in the upper stories. They were indigenous people who are fighting against oil and gas pipelines slated to be run through their reservations. They were residents of the coast threatened by the prospect of rising sea levels, or of towns with coal plants that cause high rates of asthma, birth defects, and cancer.

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After two minutes of eerie silence, a rumbling yell rolled down Central Park West toward the student section. It grew louder and louder as more people joined in, screaming at the top of their lungs. Within a few seconds, I was swept up in the middle of an enormous roar. That was the moment when I realized how huge the People's Climate March was. Hundreds of thousands of people united their voices into a single shout, demanding that something be done about the climate crisis. What was remarkable to me was how varied these voices were.



The people that congregated in New York were affiliated with over three thousand organizations from around the world. They came from religious groups, universities, LGBT communities, indigenous tribes, labor groups and the boroughs of New York City. Some of them advocated divestment, others solar power or food justice. Still others took their stands against fracking, nuclear power, capitalism, or oil pipelines. In these particulars, I agreed with some and disagreed with others, but that was unimportant. We were united in our determination that our shout against climate change be heard.

For the rest of the day, I felt that I was part of something much larger than myself. As we marched through the streets, we walked past huge screens displaying some of the other 2,600 partner demonstrations around the world. We were marching with the people of

Madrid, Sydney, New Delhi, and Bogota. Before Sunday, I believed that not enough people cared about climate change to attract the attention of policy-makers and politicians. Now, after hearing countless people from all over the world raise their voices together, I am far more hopeful.

I have been attending Swarthmore Mountain Justice meetings, the first fossil fuel divestment group, and have been intrigued by the divestment movement's direct assault on the institutions responsible for global warming. The Mountain Justice movement grew far beyond the Swarthmore bubble to towns, colleges, and churches around the world. Desmond Tutu endorsed it. Stanford has divested. The Rockefeller family has divested. In New York, I saw hundreds of students wearing orange squares, proclaiming their support for the divestment movement. And many institutions are acting. Worldwide, over eight hundred organizations have divested from fossil fuels. A few years ago, if the divestment movement had a voice, it would have been a murmur. Now it is growing to a shout, a cry that has begun to attract the attention of presidents, CEOs, and prime ministers, proclaiming that we can no longer afford to support companies that profit from the destruction of our earth.



Images of NYC Climate March were obtained through Google.

Greeting from the Editors

In sending out the call for submissions to this Bulletin, we suggested *water* as a unifying theme: the idea followed last fall's theme of *bridges*, which came out of the yearly meeting's plenary: "Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers." Metaphors string together thoughts and experiences of far-flung Meetings, projects, and ideas. While bridges enable us to cross over difficult places, water flows between and among us, creating channels, carrying fish and boats, leaves and branches, trash and beauty. But the submissions to the Bulletin were impressively waterless at first, and we wondered if we'd chosen poorly.

It's been a chilling, troubling fall. During the mid-term elections hope drained away, and a series of law-enforcers killing unarmed citizens has returned citizens to the streets raising their arms in a "don't shoot!" posture and brandishing reminders that "black lives matter" – a statement we once thought could go without saying. Millions of citizens thronged the streets of cities all over the world to protest continued damage to the climate, and rather than taking measures to save the planet, the US is having a political battle over the Keystone oil pipeline.

So this issue includes a Friend's description of the march to save the climate and another's insight into the relationship of guns to perception to fear. We've included announcements of Lake Erie Yearly Meetings' activities. After awhile we contacted a few contributing Friends who blessed us all with water-themed photographs (special thanks to Les Walden!), a beautifully wet and cleansing poem, and an essay from an experienced water conservationist.

As always we welcome your comments and contributions to the Bulletin and look forward to Spring.

In the light,

Susan S. and Berch Carpenter



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CONSERVING FRESH WATER HAS BEEN A LIFE-LONG PRACTICE

By Homer and Clemence Mershon

Conserving nature's most precious resource, fresh water, has been a life-long practice, at the core of how I have led my life. Conservation probably started with childhood memories of our well going dry every summer, then having to haul water buckets up the hill from a neighbor's spring. I've never forgotten those profound lessons of water saving (we children bathing together, washing clothes by hand in cold water, washing long hair infrequently). Even though in the second half of my life, I have lived in a water-bountiful area where our spring has never gone dry, I have continued to live a life of conservation and to teach it.

Our children began a life of water conservation here on the farm, where fortunately our house orientation, solar green house and plumbing date from the 1970-1980s, particularly the Jimmy Carter era when conservation was "in fashion". We can still recycle our gray water from south-facing kitchens and laundry to the north-located garden, reduce shower flow easily and reuse that water. Lower light levels shorten showers. Remaining preparation of cooking liquids often serves as a subsequent soup; the first rinse for dishes or irrigation is for our solar greenhouse plants. Dish rinse water and defrosted ice serve as a pre-soak for many clothes.

When our son moved to Mali in the water-parched Sahel, he practiced water conservation skills in his Peace Corps house. Water drawn from a hand-dug well via a tire bucket was thrice filtered and thrice recycled. The left-over cooking water was used for hand washing, finally ending up as "hill or valley" garden irrigation depending on the season. The villagers were astonished at how many times he reused his water. The added hand-washing step began an important innovation to improve village health. Since then, he has specialized in adaptive farming methods in Sahelian countries as they try to adapt to increased drought caused by climate change.

At about that same time (2000), I found a novel way to try to sensitize my students to the plight of the world's fresh-water poor. I asked my 9th grade world culture students to measure out 1 gallon of water, on which they were to try to live during each of two weekend days. I recommended the "quart/liter top down shower method" which I have used frequently, even where salt water was plentiful. Although most were unable to succeed with experiment (drink, bathe and wash dishes or clothes with just one gallon per day), most agreed that it helped them recognize the fresh water crisis worldwide and feel how fortunate they were.

During decades of travel, I am constantly aware that even when I have felt "water poor" at times, my situation doesn't compare to so many of the world's people. Although my water saving methods will not directly help others elsewhere with little water, at least the conscious act of finding ways of saving water brings me closer in spirit to others. Of the four earthly elements, I feel closest to water.

Elk River,
Yellowstone



Dry Lake,
Utah



Baptism

I bend down and scoop up the water in
my hands,
the good water,
the clean water,
The Living Water.

The spring is right here,
right beneath our feet.
That spring that will sustain us,
The spring that wells up inside each of
us.

I scoop up the water
and hold it in my hands.
I hold it out as an offering.
I bring it up to my head.
I pour it over my hair and feel it go all
over me.

I feel it wash away
 some of my baggage
 some of my messiness.

It washes over me,
and I am baptized
by the Spirit,
by the Living Water,
by the community,
by the greater circle of Friends.

I stand up
and hold out the water.

I want to walk around the circle
and let everyone drink their fill.
I offer words and vision instead,
confident that Friends will find
that same spring.

by Aran J. Reinhart, Sept. 18, 2011



Couple Enrichment

A PROGRAM OF FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE

Couple Enrichment Retreat

**Sponsored by Lake Erie
Yearly Meeting**

7 pm Friday, February 27 to

12 pm Sunday, March 1, 2015

There are few things more fulfilling in a relationship than being deeply understood by the one who loves you, and deeply understanding the one you love. Learning to *listen tenderly* and *speak authentically*, in a safe and sacred space, helps couples gain this kind of deep understanding.

Come refresh your spirits and your relationship.

Who: This retreat is intended for any couple, married or unmarried, gay or straight, regardless of meeting affiliation, who have been in a committed relationship for a year or more.

Time: This is a 15 hour retreat, excluding meal times and breaks. We will finish each evening by or before 9 pm. Couples should plan to attend for the whole time. The Friday evening program begins at 7 pm. Please plan to arrive early in order to settle into your room.

Where: Weber Center, 1257 East Siena Heights Drive, Adrian, MI 49221-1793

Cost: \$325 per couple includes room with private bath and meals.

Registration: To register, contact Merry Stanford and Peter Wood at (517) 281-1570 or merry.stanford@gmail.com.

Include names, address, phone, email address, and any special needs.

Please send a deposit of \$100, or payment in full, in a check made out to Lake Erie Yearly Meeting. Mail to 936 Green Street, Lansing, MI 48906.

Scholarships: If needed, please contact your monthly meeting to see if assistance is available to help cover the registration cost. Many meetings are pleased to take couples under their care by helping to sponsor their attendance at Couple Enrichment retreats.

A Short Personal Memory of the Fear of Violence

by Leslie Walden

Every time I hear of a policeman shooting a person “believed to have a gun” my first reaction is outrage. I think I am not alone in this. But then I remember when I was a news cameraman being sent with a reporter and a sound man to a schoolyard where a boy with a gun had been reported. I was driving and I was the oldest member of the crew, so I felt a responsibility for the safety of my companions.

When we got to the school there was no boy, no gun, and no police. Cautiously I drove along the streets that were one block away from the school, just to make sure.

Nothing.

Then, without warning, fifty feet in front of us, a man in greasy, rough clothing slowly rose from between parked cars. As he reached his full height I could see in his right hand a bright, shiny object. If time had stopped at that moment I could have testified under penalty of perjury that he held a large, chromium-plated revolver of the kind carried by the hero in an old western movie. My best move, as I saw it, was to get the crew out of there as quickly as I could. I jammed the pedal to the floor, hoping to get us moving.



Do you know how long it takes a big SUV to go from idling along to the maximum rate of acceleration? It is a little less than one second. To put it in human terms, one heartbeat.

As we flashed past the man, not nearly as rapidly as I would have liked, I looked again at him. In his hand I could now see, not a large gun, but a bright shiny bumper guard, which he was preparing to mount on his car. I was intensely relieved and intensely embarrassed.

The police, we learned, had been there ahead of us. Finding no one in the schoolyard, they called it in as a false report and left the area.

I was glad they had not encountered the man who was working on his car, and I was glad I was not a policeman.

INTERVIEW WITH ROBB YURISKO, OUTGOING LEYM HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT COORDINATOR

Questions by Peggy Daub; Responses by Robb Yurisko

What brought you to this position? I would call it a leading. My heart opened wide as I read the position description. I remember saying in the interview "I can feel it in my bones."

Why do Quaker Teens need a program like this? Quaker teens need this sort of program because they are often isolated in individual meetings and may not really get to have their own experience of Quakerism in a community of their peers. And the experience is what we are about as Quakers, right? Not a belief but the individual experience of the Divine as it manifests in each. I remember one teen's parent telling me that when his son came home from one of his first teen retreats he said to his father "Now I know why you are Quaker." His dad smiled as he told me. It is essential that the Religious Society of Friends make every effort to provide these sorts of activities for our teens if we want our Society to carry on. Making room for our teens to come together and explore what Quakerism means to them in community with other teens is priceless.

What was the most memorable retreat for you? This is so hard to answer. I can't narrow it down to just one.... We spent two summer retreats in Traverse City, MI at Friends of the Light and their church is amazing and a couple of blocks from the beach. We hosted two retreats at Earlham, one with OVYM [Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting] and one with OVYM and ILYM [Illinois Yearly Meeting] that were a blast. I have been to "The Quake that Rocked the Midwest" four times with our teens and those are memorable because I have been able to see teens from other Yearly Meetings grow up as well. I have loved the smaller retreats, too because of the intimate times we have had with just a handful of us. The car rides there and back. The weeks anticipating and emailing and texting before the retreats... All of these weave together to make a tapestry of magic and holiness that I have been privileged to witness. The whole thing has been just amazing for me!

What have you learned about yourself while working with the teens? As a teenager in an evangelical church I came out of the closet when I was about 15 and lost my whole sense of spiritual identity when I did so because I was no longer accepted in that circle. Up until that point my church had been my life. I was active in my youth group, served on teen committee and even was in a traveling youth choir that traveled to all of the churches in our district for concerts. When I came out that all ended.

I can't tell you how very special and humbling it has been to have been given this distinct privilege to work with our teens. In a way, I feel that what was taken from me in my youth has now been restored to me through LEYM because I got four years of fun and memories in an amazing youth group where I was enthusiastically endorsed and trusted to take on the spiritual nurture of our teens. It has meant the world to me, it really has. You have given me such a special gift, LEYM. Thank you.

Any other thoughts from your experience or advice for a new Coordinator? My experience in working with teens before taking on this role was working in an inpatient drug and alcohol treatment program for teen boys. I think what helped me most in both roles is that I am really just a kid at heart. I often still find myself thinking like a teenager so I feel like I can relate to them and I think that is what has made all of the difference. I can speak their language. I can truly hear them. I meet them where they are. I also try to be real with them. I think being patient, laid back and open minded are very important qualities for someone considering this position. Ultimately, organizational skills, creativity and maturity are needed as well but it is really about being able to accept the teens where they are and create a safe space for them to explore who they are without judgment or getting into power struggles. What would also help at this time of dwindling attendance is finding a new Coordinator who has a vision for building and strengthening the program.

Merry Stanford was the clerk of the teen retreat committee for three of these years and she carries a strong vision for the Religious Society of Friends in her heart which includes our teens; having her support and wisdom was crucial and vital. I am thankful for her faithfulness. Peggy Daub has also been an integral part of this process for me. She served as Yearly Meeting Clerk during my hire and most of my term. Her unconditional support and care have been invaluable and a good example.

Application Announcement

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

HIGH SCHOOL TEEN RETREAT PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting (LEYM) seeks a High School Teen Retreat Program Coordinator. In order to nurture the spiritual life of high school Friends throughout LEYM, the Yearly Meeting seeks to provide a series of four weekend retreats a year, independent of Annual Meeting. The Program Coordinator plans, coordinates, and evaluates these retreats, with the support of the High School Teen Retreat Program Committee. The scheduling of retreats is flexible. The position begins in fall 2015.

The Coordinator serves as a contractual worker of LEYM with a flat fee of \$1200 per retreat. LEYM provides an additional \$1500 per year towards the expenses of the retreats with the other expenses to be provided by registration fees and fund raising.

Qualities desired in a High School Teen Retreat Program Coordinator include:

- Experience with and enthusiasm for working with young people in grades 9 through 12
- Experience with Friends practice
- Commitment to Friends values and testimonies
- Ability to provide leadership and motivation in a flexible environment
- Organizational and money management skills
- Ability to communicate with high school aged youth, parents, and the broader YM community
- Ability to work collaboratively with the High School Teen Retreat Program Committee

Please reply to Peggy Daub, Clerk of High School Teen Retreat Program Committee, regarding your interest by March 1, 2015 at peggydaub@hotmail.com. Please submit a resume that describes experiences that you believe will allow you to perform these duties, and include two references with contact information. The resume or cover letter should also describe your experience with and knowledge of Quaker faith and practice, and elaborate on the kinds of experience you have had working with young people.

Responsibilities of the Coordinator as defined by the current LEYM Policies and Procedures (<http://leym.quaker.org>) :

In order to nurture the spiritual life of high school youth throughout the Yearly Meeting, the coordinator shall:

- (1) In consultation with the High School Teen Retreat Program Committee, plan, coordinate, and evaluate up to 4 teen retreats per year, independent of the Annual Meeting, that are scattered geographically throughout the Yearly Meeting to maximize participation of youth throughout the region.
 - (a) The retreats are to be both fun and spiritually nourishing for the youth.
 - (b) The retreats are an opportunity for youth to develop leadership skills by fully participating in the selection of themes, workshops, and workshop presenters.
 - (c) The retreats should seek to utilize individuals throughout the Yearly Meeting who can offer Quaker-related workshops on various topics of religious education.
 - (d) One of these four retreats has historically been "The Quake that Rocked the Midwest," held over Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend at the Evanston, Illinois, meeting house in partnership with other Midwestern yearly meetings.
- (2) Build and maintain relationships with other youth workers within Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, other yearly meetings, and Friends General Conference.
- (3) Maintain an updated database of eligible youth for the High School Teen Retreat Program.
- (4) Send eligible LEYM youth timely information about upcoming LEYM and national Quaker youth opportunities and events.
- (5) Convey information about all events to the LEYM webmaster on a timely basis.
- (6) Submit all bills and receipts to the Yearly Meeting treasurer in a timely manner and submit a complete financial report annually.

Green Pastures QM Winter Gathering March 20 – 21, 2015:

Friends from across Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting will gather March 20 – 21, 2015, at the Red Cedar Friends Meeting House in Lansing, Michigan, for our Winter Gathering. On Friday evening from 7-9 pm, we will come together to make music; on Saturday from 9-4, Mike Green from Durham Friends Meeting will lead us in an experience of *Sound Spirituality*.

Come Friday evening, Saturday, or for both programs. Overnight hospitality is available if arranged in advance. Child care and activities for young Friends will be offered both days. The program is free; donations toward the cost of lunch are welcome.

The Red Cedar Friends Meeting House is at 1400 Turner St., Lansing, MI 48906. Register with April Allison by email, gpqmgatherin@gmail.com, or online at gpqmgathering.wordpress.com. Please indicate how many adults and children will be attending; which days you can attend; and whether you will need overnight lodging.

Saturday Program

Our retreat leader, Mike Green, says of *Sound Spirituality*:

“We are resonant beings, echo-chambers of the great ‘I am’. What might we learn about that mysterious relationship through the wind-tunnel of sound?

“Our language is infused with our sense of sight—window, looking, seeing, inner eye. What happens when we hear with our inner ear? Let’s explore the world of sound, and hear what it might reveal to us about our relationship to the divine mystery.

“Here are some places we might go:

“First, we might come to know that we are all musicians, just as we are each a beloved child of God. Let me hasten to say that you don’t have to think of yourself as a musician to attend this retreat. Also, please don’t let the use of the word ‘God’ deter you from coming.

“Second, by understanding certain sound phenomena and how we embody them, we might uncover a rich vocabulary for the spiritual journey. Words are pointers to felt experiences, and I hope we will connect with felt experiences both past and present.

“Last, We will share some stories. I’ll share some of mine, if you will share some of yours. Our stories—and meditating on those stories with the help of others who have gone before—are the only Truths we need in order to understand anything important. Our stories are divine food for our souls.

“Bring your willing hearts and voices and, as Pooh said to Piglet, ‘let’s go on an explore.’”

Mike, a member of Durham (NC) Monthly Meeting, has been a core teacher at the School of the Spirit Ministry’s program *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer*. He has also taught music at several institutions of “higher” learning, including the Indiana School of Music and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His wife, Marsha, joins him as his elder and piano companion.

Representative Meeting April 11, 2015 at North Columbus Meeting

The 2015 LEYM Representative Meeting will be held on Saturday, April 11, at The Summit on 16th United Methodist Church, 82 East 16th Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43201.

SCHEDULE

A light breakfast and lunch will be offered for \$10.00 or a donation. Child care will be provided for those who request it by March 15th (see registration form).

Registration & simple breakfast	8:30 AM
Meeting for worship	9:00 AM
Greeting & Announcements	9:45 AM
Committee Meetings	10:00 AM
Lunch	12:15 PM
Meeting for business	1:15 PM
Adjournment by	4:30 PM

A meeting of the Executive Committee (Yearly Meeting officers and committee clerks) will be held on Friday evening, 7:00 pm, April 10th at The North Columbus Friends Meeting House 1954 Indianola Avenue, Columbus, OH 43201. Committee members are asked to provide their own suppers. If you require hospitality please contact Seth Reichenbach.



Advance Registration

(to be received by March 15, 2015)

Name(s): _____

Email: _____

Phone _____

Meeting or Worship Group: _____

Number of persons for Saturday lunch _____

Vegetarians (# _____) Omnivores (#) _____

Please arrange childcare for the following:

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Overnight Accommodation

I (we) will make our own arrangements

I (we) need information about motels/hotels

I (we) need hospitality with Friends on:

Friday, April 10th (# people) _____

Saturday, April 11th (# people) _____

Please email or post this information to:

Seth Reichenbach
6835 McVey Blvd.
Columbus, OH 43235

stresq@aol.com
614-256-0523

Update on Friends Committee on National Legislation

By Nancy Taylor, Ann Arbor Friends Meeting

FCNL continues in good spirits in spite of the country's swing to the right. Soon after last Fall's election, your Quaker national lobby for peace and justice held its Annual Meeting, preceded by a Quaker Public Policy Institute, in Washington, DC. In all a record 425 people were in attendance. The theme was "Living our Faith Through Action" and the focus was diplomacy with Iran.

A highlight of the Annual Meeting is always the quality of speakers that are invited to address us.

Joe Cirincione, President of the Ploughshare Fund, shared that the U.S. has been trying to negotiate with Iran for ten years, and THIS is the critical moment. His organization works to eliminate nuclear weapons altogether.

Colonel Larry Wilkerson (retired) is former chief of staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell, and a Republican. He said that our choice is to bring bigger sanctions, or go to war, or negotiate. Obviously we have to negotiate. If you bomb Iran, you make them go nuclear.

The Edward F. Snyder Award for National Legislative Leadership in Advancing Disarmament and Building Peace (named for the FCNL Executive Secretary previous to Joe Volk) was given to **Senator Chris Murphy (CT)**. Senator Murphy is a leader in the Senate, supporting diplomacy with Iran, working on climate change, reducing gun violence and addressing challenges of the most vulnerable people in our society.

US Diplomacy with Iran is the key. Watch the full interview with Jim Fine: fcnl.org/jimfine.

The Keynote speaker for the Annual Meeting was Quaker author **Parker J. Palmer, founder of the Center for Courage and Renewal**. He noted that FCNL has been giving lobbying a good name for 71 years; the only answer to the power of organized money is the power of organized people. He spoke eloquently to this: "Healing the divides among We the People". We must stop talking about "them" and start talking to each other. Civil discourse is not fundamentally about being nice; it's actively valuing our differences as we discover our areas of shared interests. 15% of the far left and 15% of the far right cannot compromise their ideas enough to participate in a dialogue, but that leaves 70% in the middle who can. How do we get people across lines to gather and explore the genuine reality of human interactions? Make safe spaces. Safe spaces can be created by how you respond to "stuff" thrown at you. Great things can happen when we start from our doubts and loves. Ask honest, open questions that hear people into deeper speech.

The first break of the 114th congress comes during the Presidents' Day recess in February. Members often have time set aside for public events and meetings. Make your plans now! See fcnl.org/howtolobby for step-by-step instructions on requesting and making your visit.

FCNL is in good financial shape this year, usually the case when the political center swings to the right, and it seems to be reaching more young people than ever before. Now we are moving confidently toward the public phase of the Capital Campaign aimed at bringing even more young people into the organization and into active engagement with the legislators of our country. A highlight of the Annual Meeting, as always, was the presentations from the

Program Assistants. These are recent college graduates who come for a year or two to learn and work in the exciting atmosphere of the FCNL Washington office.

Please inform all your young people about **Spring Lobby Weekend, March 14-17, 2015** when the lobby issue will be **climate change** (google fcnl springlobbyweekend). Thomas Taylor and I (Nancy Taylor) are beginning a year as **FCNL Visiting Friends** when we'll be available to travel to Meetings within LEYM to dialogue about FCNL work and goals. We encourage your Meeting to get in touch with us and set a date for a visit. Our emails are netaylor@comcast.net and tftaylor37@comcast.net.

Remember the four main goals of FCNL:

We seek a world free of war and the threat of war

We seek a society with equity and justice for all.

We seek a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled.

We seek an earth restored.

Decision-Making In Committees Workshop this coming February 21

Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting is hosting a workshop for committees February 21 at the meeting-house 4836 Ellsworth Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213. All are invited to participate.

If you've not yet experienced Arthur Larabee, we hope you will give yourself the gift of attending the February 21 workshop from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM. An expert in Quaker process, his knowledge, humor, and deep inclusiveness have been known to have a long-lasting impact on Friends and Meetings. A sought-after speaker, we hope committees clerks and committee members will participate in experiencing how improving decision-making in the Spirit can strengthen a meeting. We hope all in LEYM will join us. Please contact Jo Schlesinger with confirmation and/or questions.
joschlesinger@verizon.net

Program for the 2015 LEYM Annual Sessions, July 30 to August 2, 2015 at Bluffton University

By Janet Dando, Co-Clerk, Adult and Family Program Committee

The theme for this year's annual sessions is "**Sowing the Seeds of Friendship**". Friendship is a gift of the Spirit that allows us to experience love beyond the boundaries of our families. In friendship, there is opportunity for deep listening as well as deep sharing. In friendship, there is the capacity for honesty tempered with compassion and kindness.

Friendship within our meetings and worship groups provides the rich soil for planting a garden that serves not only its members, but the world at large. By welcoming people who have different backgrounds and experiences, the meeting room blooms in a colorful palette of thought, ideas, and beliefs that provide a testing ground for our testimonies and beliefs. In such a garden, it is essential to remember that friendship can only grow if it opens itself to the elements--the wind, the rain, and the sun--as they are offered to us.

Let us take some time to slow down and sit a spell. Bring your crafts, pictures of grandchildren, and board games as we share our stories, our heartaches, and our joys, rediscovering the friend in all of us.

This year, let us consider what it means to us to have a friend, and to be a friend. How do we expand our understanding of the world through the gift of friendship? How do we cultivate diversity within our meetings and among our friends? How do we plant and grow our principles in the wider community through friendship?

Plenary Speaker

Our plenary speaker, our own Merry Stanford, will consider and discuss with us, the meaning of friendship.

Worship Sharing

Friends will again be able to sign up for participation in a worship sharing group on arrival in Bluffton.

Workshops

The deadline for submitting proposals for workshops will be March 30th. Please send proposals to Valerie Vogel at vkeepintouch@aol.com or Janet Dando at dandojanet@yahoo.com. Compliance with the deadline allows us to notify Friends in advance of the Yearly Meeting, and to plan for space and time. We appreciate your help in making this possible. Workshops will again be held on both Friday and Saturday afternoons with some workshops repeated so that Friends may choose to attend two workshops if they so choose.

Bible Study

Amy Pratt-Harrington, from the Earlham School of Religion, will facilitate Bible Study.

Talent Show

It's true--LEYM does have talent! Polish up your act and register with Dale Pratt-Harrington as soon as possible to reserve your place in the talent show line-up. You may contact him at dphdo@aol.com.

*Alert! Submissions for
the LEYM
Spring Bulletin
are due on or before
May 15, 2015*

LEYM Change of Address

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Email _____

Meeting _____

We're eager to hear from you!

Berch and Susan Carpenter
245 Grove Street
Bluffton, OH 45817
berchrc@gmail.com

Note: this and past
Bulletins can be found at
<http://leym.org>

LEYM Committee Clerks

Advancement & Outreach
Dolores Avner (Pittsburgh)

Earthcare
Judy Greenberg (Broadmead)
Richard Lee (Red Cedar)

Finance
Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor)

High School Teen Retreat Program
Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor)

Ministry & Nurture
Paula Deming, (Waysmeet)

Nominating
Abbey Pratt-Harrington (Athens)

Peace
Lucia Kalinosky (Oberlin)
Joyce Balderston (Wooster)

Publications and Archives
Joe Mills (Kalamazoo)

Site and Arrangements
Jon Sommer (Broadmead)

Adult and Family Program
Dale Pratt-Harrington (Athens)
Janet Dando (Athens)

Youth and Children's Program
Kate Spry (Cleveland)

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<http://leym.quaker.org>



Peace I ask of thee O River,
Peace, peace, peace.
When I learn to live serenely
Cares will cease.
From the hills I gather courage,
Visions of the day to be,
Strength to lead and faith to follow
All are given unto me.
Peace I ask of thee O River,
Peace, peace, peace.

*Many of you know this old Girl Scout song,
written by Glendora Gosling and Viola Wood.
You can hear a rendition on
www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGdfyom5HUc*