



Clerk's Message: BUMPER STICKER

Down here in Tucson the other day I stopped for a traffic light and idly read the bumper sticker on the pickup truck in front of me. Big letters

across the top proclaimed the owner is "White. Conservative. Christian. Gun Owner." And underneath was this question: "How else can I piss you off today?"

You run into a certain amount of attitude out west, especially around the gun-ownership issue, but this bumper sticker seemed to me to take attitude to a new level.

Could this fellow (it was a man driving) actually believe the point of being a white, conservative, Christian gun owner is to piss people off? Waiting for the light to change, I thought about the defensiveness in that. Someone who's confident about who he is and what he values has no need to justify



himself by copping an attitude and wearing it on his bumper.

I arrived at this conclusion: this person wants me to know he thinks I don't identify with the

tribes he belongs to. He thinks I actually disapprove of them in fact. That would mean I disapprove of him, which would suit him just fine because it would prove what a scumbag I am.

Driver's seat psychoanalyzing is fun as far as it goes, but as the Jungians say, "It ain't about what it's about." It occurred to me this person's bumper sticker, and his attitude, might not really have much to do with the tribes he identifies with. It might instead be a crude coping mechanism. He might be a person in pain.

While the light stayed red I tried to imagine a conversation over

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coffee. I thought of asking him, "Friend, what are you so angry about? What hurts you?" Nice thought, perhaps, but realistically how would a conversation like that even happen? I'd just pull up next to him, roll down the passenger-side window, and call out, "Hey, buddy, pull in at that Starbucks at the next corner—I'm buying"?

You can get shot doing things like that. Still, this fellow taught me something that day in Tucson. He and his bumper sticker reminded me that we constantly cross paths with people who are hurting. There are lots of reasons people hurt, and even conservative

white Christians who own guns and nice pickup trucks aren't immune to pain. Anyone who doesn't have a secure life, rewarding work, a loving relationship, the comfort of a homogeneous culture that looks just like them, or the means to fall back on inward resources may well be hurting. Our culture produces a lot of people like that.

An old saying goes, "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a big battle."

The light changed and Mr. Attitude and I parted company. It was a gorgeous January afternoon, as most of them are in Tucson. Bright, warm southwestern sunlight flooded the broad streets, and I realized that to live in a place like that is to live with the illusion that life is easy. It isn't any easier here than anywhere else, of course. But I could see how you might lose sight of the Inward Light in a place that features so much of the outward kind.

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PDF copies of
The LEYM Bulletin
are available at
leym.org

Greetings from the Editors

“... the hopes and fears of all the years are met ...”

Fear rides the wind these days and messes with our minds. At Christmastime the warm weather seemed ominous (what if we lose the Seasons?). “Creepy,” said a friend on the sunny street at 71 degrees. January’s bitter cold was a relief, but we know the planet’s signals—droughts, earthquakes, floods, tornados—speak our possible extinction. The polarized presidential campaigns are alarming as neither side can hear each other. Messages about refugees forced to travel in rubber-raft boats across the Caribbean mingle with news of yet another shooting, another corporate or political betrayal.

And so the theme of this year’s Bulletin came to mind readily, even before we asked Mike Holaday for a clerk’s message and got “Bumper Sticker” — a meditation that turns hostility to thoughtfulness. “Hopes and fears,” we said, and got news of hope with Ken Lawrence’s suggestions for near-drastic action to save the planet we know and love. Nancy Taylor sent news of the ongoing work of the Friends Committee for National Legislation, and Les Walden contributed an insightful story of how the Detroit Meeting Friends have been able to prepare for future needs without knowing what those needs will be. Brad Cotton sent his essay that begins in the heat of disagreement about caring for people who have committed murder, examines the wrongs of the death penalty and lands on his title idea: “Jesus was a Death Row Convict.” Shelley Kotz introduces the restorative writing of death row prisoners in *Compassion*, a bi-monthly newsletter published with the help of an executive board that includes three Broadmead Friends.

The LEYM Program Committee has chosen a theme based on the actions of a well-known Friend during another time of change and danger: “What would John Woolman Do?”

We have, as usual, edited for brevity so we could fit in the announcements, the information, the reports, and other material that readers need. We are thankful for Friends’ essays which call us toward hope along with direct action. Les Walden has contributed photographs and Mathilda Navias, proofreading. Thus we are pleased to offer this winter, 2016 issue of the LEYM Bulletin, strong with the thoughtful help of Friends from all around Lake Erie.

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Susan S. Carpenter
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Announcement:

We welcome your thoughts, reports, experiences, and plans. You can email both of us directly or send material for the next issue to BulletinLEYM@gmail.com. Our deadline for submissions is May 15, 2016. The theme will be *Tending the Fire*.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: UPCOMING EVENTS

February 27, 2016: GPQM Mid-Winter Gathering

Grand Rapids Friends Meeting invites all Green Pastures Quarterly Meetings for the Mid-Winter Gathering to be held 9:00 am—4:00 pm, Saturday, February 27, 2016 at Genesis United Methodist Church, 1601 Galbraith Avenue SE (2 miles east of I-96, off Cascade Road SE), Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Our topic will be “How do I know you? How do you know me? Seeing that of God through our Stories” featuring storytelling & story-sharing, music & dance, interactive & inter-generational fun.

For more information, contact clerk@grandrapidsfriends.org

March 4th-6th, 2016: Midwest Interbranch Young Adult Friends Gathering:

We'll come together at First Friends Meeting, Richmond, IN. The keynote speaker will be Greg Woods. There is more information at the website:

<http://wp.me/p1zxUQ-M7>

April 21-24, 2016: Contemplative Retreat in the Manner of Friends at The DeKoven Center, Racine, Wisconsin.

DeKoven, on the Lake Michigan lakefront, will be beautiful as we move into the season of rebirth and growth. April Allison of Red Cedar Friends Meeting and Roger Hansen of the Milwaukee, Wisconsin Meeting will lead the retreat. More details can be found at <http://schoolofthespirit.org/programs/silent-retreats-2/dekoven-wi-2016>. You can also reach April Allison at aprilallison@heronrising.com

June 3-8, 2016: The Continuing Revolution Conference Series at Pendle Hill

This annual justice conference for young adult Quakers (ages 18-35) is a six day, intensive training-oriented program designed around one thematic issue that changes year to year. This year's conference will be centered around the theme of integrity as a radical act. For more information, visit the website:

www.pendlehill.org/yaqc

Representative Meeting

April 2, 2016 at Cleveland Meeting House

The 2016 LEYM Representative Meeting will be held at 10916 Magnolia Drive, Cleveland, OH 44106, or at another venue as needed due to construction.

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 the registration form).

Registration and 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	4:30 PM

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING:

A meeting of the Executive Committee (Yearly Meeting officers and committee clerks) will be held on Friday evening 7:00 pm, April 1 at the Cleveland Meeting House at 10916 Magnolia Drive, Cleveland, Ohio or at a venue to be announced because of construction. Committee members are asked to provide their own suppers.

Advance Registration

To be received by March 15, 2016

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 1st (# people) _____

Saturday, April 2nd (# people) _____

Please email or post this information to:

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lynnmclark@sbcglobal.net

Phone 330-882-5866

*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 (FCNL : The World We Seek)*

Nancy Taylor,
Ann Arbor Friends Meeting

If you want to feel hopeful, check out the website of **Friends Committee on National Legislation (fcnl.org)** and put your name on their mailing list for Action Alerts. FCNL is the Quaker lobbying organization with a state-of-the-art green office building directly across 2nd Street from the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington, DC. The 45 staff members there build and maintain relationships with members of the US Congress, working to inform and influence the Senators and Representatives about legislation advocating peace building, earth care, social justice, civil liberties, etc. Those same staff draw support and advice from **all of us**, their Quaker constituents, and during the November **Public Policy Institute (QPPI)** they offer us training in how to lobby our legislative representatives on issues that are pressing or coming for a vote.

Every second year the FCNL staff ask most Quaker Meetings in the country to consider and advise about areas that need their attention. That “**priority setting**” exercise takes place this spring: we are all asked to submit (as a Meeting) our seven top choices for the staff to focus and work on for the next 2 years during the 115th Congress, which may look very different after the November election.

The time has come for FCNL to grow the number of youthful participants, and to grow the endowment as well. To that end, the General Committee launched a \$15 million campaign, now beginning the “public phase.” Results are already apparent with the launch of a **Young Fellows Program**, a program of **Summer Internships**, and the establishment of an **Advocacy Corps**. A portion of the funds will be used to convert the house next door into a **Quaker Welcome Center**. It's a very exciting time to be a part of FCNL!!

Foundations of a Meeting

By Leslie Walden

I hadn't thought much about the foundations of Detroit Friends Meeting until one day working with relatively new member Bob Orr, installing a sink in the Meeting's new kitchen. He asked "Do you know why this Meeting works"? I couldn't really say.

"It's because we all like each other," he said. Thinking about that, I could see he was right.

We talked more about it as we worked. Part of the reason we liked each other was that we bonded while doing things for the Meeting House, doing building maintenance and improvement, cleaning the rooms, organizing the library, fixing the roof, and the like. These tasks pulled together our geographically scattered flock.

We also worked at being ready to receive blessings that were not yet evident. Although there were no children in the Meeting at that time, Dot Giessler, who, until the end of her life was convener of the Religious Education Committee, always saw to it that a First Day School lesson was ready every week and that someone was ready to teach it. In addition there was a crib, a library of children's books, a rocking chair to read from, and toys for the youngest children who might visit.

Our efforts paid off in an unexpected way. Birthright Quaker Paul Savage and his family moved into the area, and he went looking for a Meeting. On the weekday he came into our seedy neighborhood, to our storefront meeting house, what he saw, peeking into a window, was a place obviously set for a First Day School. To him, his wife and their three (now 4) daughters this was very important.

The Meeting rose to the challenge. As the presence of the Savage children drew visiting children who



Leslie Walden



Detroit Meeting House

asked to come back to Detroit Meeting, the Religious Education Committee, now convened by Sharon and Joel Ottenbreit, organized into four teams of two members each and taught on successive First Days, each team specializing on a particular aspect of Quakerism. This rotation relieved each of us from having to give up all our Meetings for Worship.

Except for the youngest children, all went into Meeting Worship for the last minutes. Each week the children reported to the Meeting on what they had done and what they had learned. Current attendance to First School now ranges up to 10 children, some of them attending from other Meetings in the area because they want to come to this First Day School, now another foundation for the Meeting.

As with the First Day School, the newsletter contains articles provided by almost every member and attender, another way in which that Meeting acted as if it were much larger than the numbers showed. Paul Savage borrowed an expression from the sport of Boxing and said, "This Meeting punches above its weight."

Because we all like each other.

Resources for meeting clerks and worship group conveners
on LEYM's web site.
from Mathilda Navias, Web Master



Mathilda Navias

A section of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting's web site is devoted to resources for meeting clerks and conveners of worship groups. From the home page at leym.org, click on the "MM Clerks" tab at the far right. Here you can:

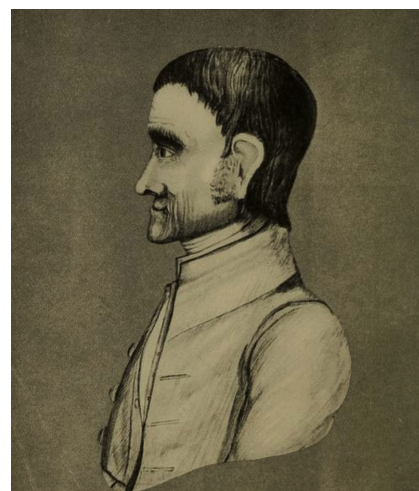
- Access an extensive list of resources for LEYM meetings and worship groups, both on the web and published by LEYM.
- See a schedule of the information requested annually from meetings and worship groups and the due dates.
- Submit changes to contact information for your meeting's clerks, officers, and committee clerks.
- Join the e-mail list for monthly meeting clerks and worship group conveners in LEYM.

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting

July 28-31, 2016
at Bluffton University

The theme for this year's annual sessions is “What Would John Woolman Do?”

John Woolman's ethical insights and sense of social responsibility speak as clearly to twenty-first century audiences as they did years ago. Individually and collectively, we look to the work this early Friend did during a time when the marginalized and maligned were his deep concern. A large portion of his writings focus on racial and economic injustices and the excessive toil and suffering of the many to support the luxury of the few. Woolman gave up his own thriving commercial enterprise because it was compromising his faith. He worked at a personal level to effect change while embracing every opportunity to become inwardly acquainted with the hardship and difficulties of others.



John Woolman
1720-1772

Trying to discern how to live our lives in such a manner, let us consider what we are doing to help overcome the contemporary effects of past and present oppression. Are we affirming equality, treating others with dignity and respect, and seeking to recognize and address that of God within every person? Are we learning to be aware of how our own implicit bias may interfere with the ability to see that of God in every person? Do we or does our Meeting work to overcome social, legal, economic, and political injustices, locally and in the wider world? These are all important issues Quakers should be addressing today.

Announcement from the LEYM 2016 Program Committee: Natalie Finegar is our Keynote Speaker

Natalie, a Quaker, is the Deputy District Public Defender for Baltimore City and has been with the office for 20 years. In her current position, she is spearheading implementation of the office's strategic plan. In the past she created and served as Director of the Neighborhood Defender's Northwest, a division of the Maryland Office of the Public Defender in Baltimore City that is dedicated to holistic representation of its clients. Prior to the inception of ND_NW, Natalie was the Chief Attorney at Central Booking of the OPS.



Natalie Finegar:
Deputy District Public
Defender for
Baltimore City
in Maryland

Compassion: Voices from Death Row

Submitted with comments by Shelley Kotz,
Broadmead Monthly Meeting

From “Old Bones”
by Editor George Wilkerson
North Carolina Death Row, Raleigh, NC:



Writing is powerful. I know a community of creative writers on North Carolina Death Row who are taking on the responsibility to wield power as a tool for creating positive change. The implication is that, without a moral compass to guide their pens, the compulsion to write would forever have to be resisted; for inasmuch as morality is absent, writing is arbitrary, misleading, meaningless, or destructive. They hope to flash out the “Love your neighbor as yourself” principle, to embody it as they walk their thoughts across the page.

Having armored themselves with these protective ethics, they are digging into culture’s rubble searching for ways to put it back together and keep it from falling apart. The grotesque history of oppression is the first area to be excavated. They brought the problem to their group and plopped it in the center of the circle, so that each writer could chip away at it, sifting solid facts from the profuse confusion of opinions, and scrape away the muddy emotional attachments that clouded progress. ...



George Wilkerson

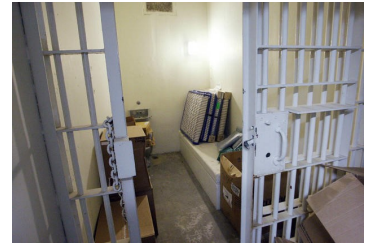
Compassion is a bi-monthly newsletter written by individuals on death row with occasional contributions from family members of victims. The bi-monthly newsletter is distributed free to all individuals on death row in the United States. Selections for the newsletter are chosen by an editorial board made up of prison inmates. Additional support is provided by an outside board. Three Quakers are currently on that board, all active members of LEYM and their monthly meetings. They are Janet Smith (Oberlin), Shelley Kotz (Broadmead), and Kathleen Helbling (Broadmead).

(Shelley’s message continues on page 12)

Compassion continues:

Started by several people from St. Rose Catholic Parish in Perrysburg, Ohio in 2001, *Compassion* has printed one book, *Today's Choices Affect Tomorrow's Dreams*, used in programs working with young people at risk or just entering the criminal justice system. Another book is in the works. *Compassion* operates on donations from both organizations and individuals with a percentage of all undesignated donations given to a scholarship fund for family members of murdered victims.

For me, helping to support *Compassion* is a way of approaching the issue of the death penalty indirectly. Because I believe that there is that of God in everyone, I see *Compassion* as a demonstration that even those viewed as the worst of human beings have something of value to discover in themselves and to share with the world.



Former death row cell now used for storage in Utah Prison



Condemned Inmate Housing Unit

Jesus was a Death Row Convict

by Brad Cotton

This essay was published October 7, 2015 in the *Circleville Herald*, Circleville, Ohio

“I don’t want to take care of him!” Emergency RN Sandy was in tears. We had just pronounced dead a 7 year old boy from a drunken driving car accident. Sandy did not want to take care of the man whose alcoholism caused the accident. The helicopter was on the way for our dead boy’s seriously injured mother and aunt.

“I feel the same way. He is our patient also. This is a hard place to work. Thanks Sandy.”

Hours later in the 5:00 AM quiet I thank all the staff. I steer clear of religion and politics at work. Some of the best nurses, techs, unit clerks and I would disagree for sure. I point out the scar between my eyes: “This was driving drunk. 19 years old. Jumped a ditch at 3 AM. Squad took me to the ER. The Doc said on sewing me up ‘He’s had plenty of anesthesia.’ That guy tonight, he’s not more guilty than me, just unluckier. I wonder how he will do.”

Jesus was the master of the one-line retort. He masterfully told those about to stone to death the adulterous woman: “Let the one among you who is guiltless be the first to throw a stone at her”(John 8:7-8 New Jerusalem trans.). I could have come up with that line an hour later and 20 miles down the road, and would then fight the urge to go back and deliver my now too-late perfect one-liner. Still, after 38 years as a street medic and in the ER I’ve met many a person who was mightily confused about life and why they are here and what sort of world we live in, including many who were downright dangerous and deadly to themselves, others, even their own children. I never met anyone who deserved eternal damnation or the death penalty. They were confused. Confusion sometimes clears, while death by the state arrests the salvation of souls, or often kills those who have truly repented and become new persons.

Kelly Gissendaner died by lethal injection at the hand of Georgians 30 September. Kelly earned a degree in theology in prison and many fellow inmates testified how they were helped by Kelly’s counsel. Kelly was convicted of convincing her lover to kill her husband. The boyfriend-killer may become eligible for parole soon. Kelly was sentenced to death.

Multiple studies have shown that the death penalty is not applied fairly—especially for less privileged or minority persons.



Brad Cotton



Kelly Gissendaner

Kelly's children, as well as Pope Francis, pleaded for her life. Who are we to judge that the Kelly who was executed was the same Kelly who plotted her husband's death? Does not God only know this? If every human needs a chance for God to heal the soul that may have killed, are we not stopping that soul-healing process before it has worked? Or perhaps killing one where the soul has indeed been reborn, who is now a new creation? ("So for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old order is gone and a new being is there to see." 2 Corinthians 5:17 New Jerusalem trans.)

Aside from the moral aspect of playing God and thinking we have the right to decide who lives and who dies, there is plenty of evidence we simply don't have the wisdom. Jim Petro, former attorney general for Ohio, notes that solid research suggests a 2.3% error rate in capital cases: more than one person in every 50 condemned to death was in fact innocent of any crime. (Petro "An Intolerable Rate of Wrongful Convictions" *Akron Beacon Journal* 11 Sept. 2013) Columbia University researchers tracked all death penalty convictions from 1973 to 1995, nearly 5,800 death sentences. Serious judicial errors occurred in 68% of the convictions. Furthermore, 2/3 of cases that are appealed result in either reduction in the death penalty or exoneration. Columbia law professor James Liebman alarms: "It's not one case, it's thousands of cases. It's not one state, it's almost all of the states. You're creating a very high risk that some errors are going to get through the process." (CBS News "Death Penalty Mistakes the Rule" 12 June 2000) In other words, we, you and me, are killing innocent persons. Let's not kill the innocent or put a halt to God's soul healing. We do not have that right, nor are we that smart. Jesus Himself was, after all, a victim of the death penalty.



The following note came to us from Brad Cotton in late December:

"To my readers: I regret that I have been informed that my columns shall no longer be published by the *Circleville Herald*. It is troubling, and indeed frightening for democracy locally and as a whole, that rather than respond with facts and discussion of their own on the receptive Op-ed pages, the Herald's position instead seeks to shut down differing voices. We all lose catastrophically when open discussion is stifled."

Newspaper at the Door

Hopes and Fears for the Planet

By Ken Lawrence (Broadmead Meeting's Earthcare Interest Group)

"In past times God's Creation restored itself. Now humanity dominates, our growing population consuming more resources than nature can replace. We must change, we must become careful stewards of all life. Earthcare unites traditional Quaker testimonies: peace, equality, simplicity, love, integrity, and justice." *Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice, FWCC, 2012*

My hope is that the human family will act quickly enough and boldly enough to reduce the worst impacts of human-caused climate change. My fear is that my hope won't be realized. Right now fear seems to be winning out over hope.

We have passed the point where changing our light bulbs and driving more efficient cars will solve the problem. Of course we should do these things, but we must recognize that they are not going to be enough. Neither can we depend on government to provide a solution. The agreement that came out of the recent UN climate conference in Paris, while a step in the right direction, has no enforcement mechanism and, even if each country follows through with their plan, will not be enough to keep warming to a level that will sustain human civilization as we know it. We the people will need to pressure our governments to meet and exceed their commitments and when they fail it will be up to us to act on our own as needed. The way of life that we in the wealthy, developed world have come to take for granted is going to end. Either we enter the new world intentionally and plan for it, or change will be forced on us in a much less pleasant way.

I could say much more, but for now here are two important actions that should be taken:

1. Remove all subsidies from carbon fuels and add a fee (returned to households as a dividend) so that their use will be discouraged and alternatives encouraged.

(<http://www.citizensclimatelobby.org>).

2. Make modern family planning available to everyone and support education and equal rights for women so that all children will be born planned-for and wanted. The most effective way anyone can reduce their environmental footprint is by having fewer children.

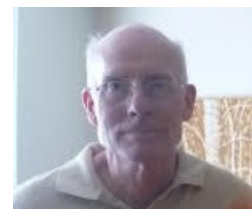
(<http://oregonstate.edu/ua/ncs/archives/2009/jul/family-planning-major-environmental-emphasis>)

It is possible, perhaps likely, that we humans will not come together in time to take the needed level of action to prevent climate catastrophe. I believe that it is important to



Planet Earth

not become discouraged and to continue to do what we know is right.



Ken Lawrence

**LEYM Committee Clerks
2015/16**

Calendar

Advancement & Outreach

Erika Smith (Ann Arbor)

Site & Arrangements

Jon Sommer (Broadmead)

Earthcare

Russ Adams (North Columbus)

Richard Lee (Red Cedar)

Finance

Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor)

Ministry & Nurture

Paula Deming (Waysmeet)

Nominating

Abbey Pratt-Harrington (Athens)

Peace

Lucia Kalinosky (Oberlin)

Adult & Family Program

Dale Pratt-Harrington (Athens)

Publications & Archives

Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor)

Youth & Children's Program

Kate Spry (Cleveland)

High School Teen Retreat Program

Dave Avner (Pittsburgh)

2/29/2016

Due date for responses to
LEYM Annual Queries

4/2/2016

Representative Meeting
Occurs in Cleveland, OH

5/15/2016

Due date for submissions for
Spring Bulletin

6/30/2016

Due date for State of the
Meeting Reports

7/11/2016

Due date for Statistical
Reports

7/28-31/2016

Annual Meeting occurs in
Bluffton, OH

9/15/2016

Due Date for submissions for
Annual Records 2016