



## Third Haven Friends Meeting

405 South Washington Street

Easton, Maryland 21601

(410) 822-0293

[www.thirdhaven.org](http://www.thirdhaven.org)

## FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

***“Unprogramed Meeting ‘an experiment in religious anarchy’ an expectation that ‘more will be brought out of the room than was brought in -more depth, more insight, more truth, more knowledge, more growth, in each and among all’ Quakers in America Thomas d. Hamm***

### Readers report

... The report of your meeting for business was quite moving. We hope there will be healing and I reflect that we have had similar experiences over different matters. It is so difficult while it is happening.

**Website visitor** ... as a child I once was taken to visit the Third Haven meetinghouse. My memories of the visit are hazy, and consist of only a few images underlaid with an intense feeling of peace and deep spiritual focus, but the visit nonetheless left quite an impression with me. I am ... in the process of composing a brief paper to "compare and

contrast the Shrine of Ise (the national Shinto shrine in Japan) with non-Japanese religious architecture." My immediate choice was to compare the meetinghouse, because the underlying themes of simplicity and spirituality carry over, but are executed in totally different ways ...peace be with you, Hilary Hatch (Member of Community Friends Monthly Meeting, Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting)



\*\*\*\*\*

### What's New?

On Sunday, Dec. 26, in the common room for fellowship after Meeting, these sets of mothers and daughters visited together. Katie Hawkinson, Marsie Hawkinson, Kristen Hawkinson, Sally Claggett, Lorraine Claggett, Susan Claggett, Serena Claggett, Maya Claggett, Katie Claggett, Peggy Paul,

Molly Paul, Sally Hirsh by *Susan Claggett*



**Blessed are the peace makers**

In December Sumner, Jim, and Peggy talked together about the statement which Jim had brought to the meeting 2 or 3 years ago.

**STATEMENT see Business Minutes.**

...It is a simple statement, which we hope can lay this(same gender) matter to rest, with fairness to all, and hurting none. Peggy & Jim Paul 1/4/05

*(From Jim Paul - 2003) Faith and Practice states, p. 50:*

*"While most Friends' marriage ceremonies conform to civil law, couples who do not want, or are not eligible to contract a legal marriage occasionally ask for a ceremony of commitment or wedding under the care of the meeting. The Religious Society of Friends has long asserted its freedom to conduct under divine leading marriage ceremonies not conforming to civil law."*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Announcements for Third Haven Monthly Meeting**

For those who may have a child or grandchild looking for a liberal arts college Winslow Womack has left information in the common room concerning Guilford College. Guilford is a small, coeducational, liberal arts college in Greensboro, North Carolina, founded in 1837 by the Religious Society of Friends.

February 5 (seventh day) 10 am Southern Quarter Peace committee meets at Third Haven

New **Third Haven Website updates at [www.thirdhaven.org](http://www.thirdhaven.org)**

- **Committees reflects the approved Nominating Committee report**
- **Committee Reports gives up to date reports**
- **Quaker Network gives complete text of PYM announcements**
- **Query for First Month gives text of current query**

New announcements are always welcome - please send them to [hawkjm@goeaston.net](mailto:hawkjm@goeaston.net)

**Philadelphia Yearly Meeting notices:** for complete text see <http://www.thirdhaven.org/> Use the [Quaker Network](#) link on the left side of the home page

**The Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends dates are March 31 to April 3, 2005. Information: PYM News and [www.pym.org/pm/ann.php](http://www.pym.org/pm/ann.php) Materials will be mailed February 1. Seek and Find will be held on Saturday, April 2, 2005, from 4:15 to 6:00 PM**  
**50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of PYM's Reunification - Contact Fran Beer: 610-388-1886 or [franbeer@udel.edu](mailto:franbeer@udel.edu)**

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Mexico Summer Project –June 26 to August 15, 2005 . Contact: Christina Repoley (215)241-7295 or [crepoley@afsc.org](mailto:crepoley@afsc.org)

Elaine Pagels Lecture - “Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas.” Saturday, April 16, 2005, 9 to 12am at the Fourth and Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia beginning at 9:15 am. Tickets \$10. contact: Sally Rickerman, 121 Watson Mill Road, Landenberg PA 19350; 610-274-8856; [sshrr@earthlink.net](mailto:sshrr@earthlink.net)

The World Gathering of Young Friends August 16-24, 2005, in Lancaster, England. Contact: Connie Blood, PYM, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia PA 19102. [connieb@pym.org](mailto:connieb@pym.org)

Friends Institute is offering a competitive grant of \$5,000 in a business plan

competition for Young Adult Friends (age 18-40) contact: Kareem Brantley at [k\\_brantley@yahoo.com](mailto:k_brantley@yahoo.com)

PYM's Workcamp Working Group contact Coordinator Arin Ahlum Hanson for more information on how to get involved. Call 215-241-7236 or email [arinh@pym.org](mailto:arinh@pym.org)

China Summer Workcamp, July 25-August 21, 2005. Contact: [chinaworkcamp@pym.org](mailto:chinaworkcamp@pym.org) 215-241-7236.

<http://www.pym.org/workcamp/China/china.htm>

Friends Counseling Service: individual, couple, and family therapy. Contact: Deborah Cooper, 215-248-0489.

Friends who are licensed social workers are, from time to time, contracted by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to make home visits with elderly Friends. If you are such a social worker, and would be open to such work, please send your vita to Phil Mullen, PYM, 1515 Cherry St., Philadelphia PA 19102 or email [philm@pym.org](mailto:philm@pym.org)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Third Haven Friends Meeting**

Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> Month 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005 Meeting for Business

**Attending** – Paige Bethke, Ken Carroll, Larny Claggett, Susan Claggett, Tom Corl, Mary Cotton, Joe Davis, Leigh Ann Dodge, Kurt Freund, Doreen Getsinger, John Hawkinson, Marsie Hawkinson, Ginger Howell, Peter Howell, Bob Kemp, Bob Marshall, Cathy Marvel, Steve Moore, Mike Mullen, Nancy Mullen, Sumner Parker, Jim Paul, Peggy Paul, Diane Proctor, Dee Rein, Anne Rouse, Jim Rouse, John Schreiner, Candace Shattuck, Craig Smith, Karen Stoker, Norval Thompson, Peggy Walbert, Rob Weiland, Ann Williams, Irene Williams, Winslow Womack, Frank Zeigler and Joyce Zeigler.

The meeting opened with a period of silent worship. Marsie Hawkinson, Clerk of the Meeting, clerked the meeting for business. She opened the meeting saying the last meeting for business had been difficult for the Meeting and painful for many. Harsh words were spoken. She prayed for God to hold all present in the Light and help us love one another.

**1<sup>st</sup> Query** – During the meeting for worship, Bob Marshall read the 1<sup>st</sup> Query on the

Meeting for Worship. During the meeting for worship, Friends spoke to the Query. A Friend posed another query, “why do I want to be a member of this Meeting community?” She answered that she wanted to be a member of this Meeting community, because she had felt she could answer “yes” to the queries. Another Friend reminded the Meeting that the meeting for business is meeting for worship for the purpose of conducting business, a meeting for worship for business. Another Friend noted that the Query caused her to reflect on her seeking to understand faith, hope, charity and love.

**Minutes of the 12<sup>th</sup> month 12<sup>th</sup> meeting for business** – The minutes of the 12<sup>th</sup> month 12<sup>th</sup> meeting for business were APPROVED without change, as published in the 12<sup>th</sup> month *Newsletter* and distributed electronically to Friends with e-mail addresses and mailed to others.

**Clerk’s announcement and report** – Marsie Hawkinson reminded Friends that next first day, 1<sup>st</sup> month 16<sup>th</sup>, Southern Quarterly Meeting will be at Camden Friends Meeting, Camden, Delaware. Southern Quarter Friends will join Camden Friends in celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Camden Friends Meeting. The meeting for worship begins at 10:00, followed by

speakers Ken Carroll and Mike Richards on the history of Camden Friends. Lunch and the meeting for business will follow. The Clerk encouraged Third Haven Friends to attend and join in this milestone celebration. In a later action the Meeting APPROVED the publication of a Southern Quarterly Meeting brochure and authorized Susan Claggett, as the Meeting's representative to Southern Quarterly Meeting, to review and make such changes as may be needed. The Meeting will provide \$100 to support publication of the brochure.

Marsie Hawkinson reported that the committee of all Meeting clerks had met 3 times (5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> months 2004 and 1<sup>st</sup> month 2005) with Caroline Packard, who serves as the Change and Conflict Response Specialist for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. The purpose of her work is to help monthly meetings "strengthen their ability to respond lovingly and effectively to difficult differences and changes". In 12<sup>th</sup> month, Caroline met separately with the two groups most affected by same gender commitment issues and process. On 1<sup>st</sup> month 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005 she facilitated another lengthy discussion with the committee of clerks reviewing past meetings and defining the issues and planning for the future. As a result of these meetings, the clerks indicated that members and attenders of the Meeting should undertake one or more processes of conflict resolution, addressing the question, "Why do I want to belong to this meeting community." Caroline Packard and the committee of clerks considered 3 techniques, "jigsaw puzzle", Friendly 8 dinners and discussions, and "appreciative inquiry". The committee of clerks agreed to make a report to the meeting for business. Smaller groups of this committee will confer with Caroline to better understand how we could use the "jigsaw puzzle" and/or Friendly 8s. Marsie Hawkinson made a full written report available to those present at

the meeting for business, which can be published in the *Newsletter*.

**Treasurer's report** – Treasurer Joe Davis presented the financial report for Third Haven through 12<sup>th</sup> month. The net income for 12<sup>th</sup> month was \$8,957. The total income for the 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> month period was \$26,117; the total expense was \$22,420; with the net income of \$3,698 in the year to date. The Treasurer is still expecting some end of calendar year financial contributions. Compared to the same 6 month period on the previous fiscal year (FY2003), in the current year total income was 21% less, total expenses 13% more and net income 72% less than at the same point in the previous year. On the balance sheet, the net equity (cash) available was \$54,807. Joe Davis acknowledged the work of Karin Stoker in assisting him as Treasurer. The Meeting APPROVED the Treasurer's financial report for Third Haven, with thanks to Joe Davis and Karin Stoker for this report and their excellent work.

**Overseers** – Paige Bethke, Clerk of Overseers, presented the 2004 Annual Report Overseers. The report stated that the Meeting welcomed Cathy Marvel and Ginger Howell as members, and accepted Leonard Baynham's transfer of membership. Edith Silvers transferred her membership to Abington Meeting. Friends attended the wedding of Jane Caldwell's granddaughter Nora in the old meetinghouse on 4<sup>th</sup> month 10<sup>th</sup>. Attenders Peter and Carey Curtis and their 4 children moved to Maine. After approving Jenny Van West's transfer of membership from Salmon Falls Friends Meeting in 2003, the Meeting accepted her resignation in 12<sup>th</sup> 2004. 2004 saw the passing of members Robert Bethke and Helen Goldsborough, Wicomico River Friends Meeting member Dorsey Baynham and long time attender Ellen Schoffner. The Meeting APPROVED the 2004 Overseers Annual Report with great thanks to Paige

Bethke and the Overseers for all of their excellent work on behalf of the Meeting. The full report is published in the *Newsletter*.

**Recorder's report** – In the absence of the Recorder Pinney Claggett, Marsie Hawkinson gave the 2004 Recorder's report. At end of 2003 Third Haven had 118 adult members and 16 child members, and at the end of 2004 Third Haven had 117 adult members and 16 child members, for a net loss of 1. In 2004, one member transferred into the Meeting, 2 applied and joined; 2 members died and one resigned. The Meeting APPROVED the Recorder's 2004 report, which Marsie Hawkinson will forward to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

**Other Business** – There were no reports from committees responsible for Worship and Ministry, Library and Outreach, Common Room or Property and Grounds. First Day School Committee indicated some funds will be used for Godly Play training and/or a children's garden. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Interim Meeting has formed a committee to consider the use of membership development funds. The Communications Committee will continue to disseminate information by e-mail. The committee will publish the nominations as APPROVED at the 12<sup>th</sup> month meeting for business in the next *Newsletter*. A Friend thanked the committee for the earlier publication of the *Newsletter* and minutes of the meeting for business. The Testimonies and Concerns Committee continues to work on planning a summer day camp for Meeting children. At the request of the Clerk of the Meeting, the Meeting APPROVED the development of the summer day camp.

**The Friends General Conference Development Committee** will meet at Third Haven, 1<sup>st</sup> month 28<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup>. On the 1<sup>st</sup> month 30<sup>th</sup>, Michael Wadja will speak at the rise of meeting for worship. The potluck

lunch planned for that day will be combined with the traditional annual new members and attenders lunch sponsored by Overseers. Overseers will support arrangement for the lunch and call on Third Haven Friends to provide food and help out.

**Proposal on same gender ceremonies of commitment** -- Peggy Paul read the following: In December, Sumner Parker, Jim Paul and I talked together about the statement which Jim had brought to the meeting 2 or 3 years ago. We have subsequently talked about this statement with members of about 40 families in the meeting, only regretting that time didn't permit greater numbers. As a result of these conversations, we feel that this statement -- which we are distributing to the January Business meeting -- is something that most, perhaps all, of the meeting can now accept. We ask that it be inserted in the minutes of the January Business Meeting and in this month's Newsletter.

We wish to bring it to the February Business Meeting, with the request that at that time, the meeting be asked to approve it, or not, (bearing in mind the additional option of standing aside). We believe most Friends feel that everything to be said on this subject has already been said, over the past 4 ½ years, sometimes to the exhaustion of all. The month elapsing before the February meeting provides ample opportunity for those who may wish to talk together about our proposal. It is a simple statement, which we hope can lay this matter to rest, with fairness to all, and hurting none. -- Peggy & Jim Paul

**STATEMENT:** Third Haven Friends Meeting will accept requests from two persons of the same gender, who are members or regular attenders, to celebrate a ceremony of commitment to each other, to

be followed by the clearness process, as set forth in Faith & Practice. Members and attenders of the Meeting, may, if they wish to do so, take the commitment of the parties under their personal and collective care.

Explanatory Note: (This does not put the union under the "care of the meeting," but it allows those who wish to do so, to make this commitment to our fellow Friends. Participation would be voluntary, and no one would be forced to agree to something against their belief.)

\*\*\*\*\*

**LIBRARY & OUTREACH REPORT  
For 2004**

The past year leaves much to be desired in activity. However, there were some items of note:

FIRST, we received gifts of books from two of our members' families which were "foundation" books on Quakerism. The Talbot County Library, looked over our old books and accepted 2 dozen for their already existing "Quaker" shelf in the Maryland Room where they will receive permanent protection.

As a result, we were able to transfer books for circulation from the East side to the West side of the Library, allowing more shelf space for incoming new Quaker books.

The Committee finished our Outreach project of having available 'pass outs' in the form of a letter to newcomers to take with them. Realizing that very few members know what is inside the envelopes, we have provided each of our committee chairs with a copy of these letters. If their time is limited, a committee member can be informed of its contents. The letters contain 3 parts:

The meeting for business closed with a period of silent worship. The next Third Haven meeting for business will be at the rise of meeting for worship 2<sup>nd</sup> month 13<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tom Corl  
Recording Clerk  
Third Haven Friends Meeting

1)A general welcome ,2) A description of the basic religious faith and practice of Friends

3)A sign-up card to be filled out for further Meeting activities. We wish to remind our membership that the Library and Outreach Committee can create help and situations that attract people, but it is up to each person in the Monthly Meeting to do their part in individual outreach.

Respectfully submitted-by--- *Frank Zeigler*

**A book of interest** in the Testimonies and Concerns reference file on the library shelf.

*Race Matters* by Cornel West.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. writes of West that he is one of the few cultural critics in this country equally concerned with matters spiritual and material.

West dedicates this book " to my wonderful son Clifton Louis West who combats daily the hidden injuries of race with the most potent of weapons - love of self and others". His 2001 preface begins "...Black people in the United States differ from all other modern people owing to the unprecedented levels of unregulated and unrestrained violence directed at them. No other people have been taught systematically to hate themselves.....for the primary purpose of controlling their minds and

exploiting their labor for nearly four hundred years". West speaks candidly, even harshly, of the black people and their unrecognized complicity in this exploitation,

but his message ultimately is that in his dedication to his son. Because race matters to us and our society, read this book. *From Lorraine Claggett*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Nominations Committee Report**

"The life of the Meeting is enhanced by the active participation of Members and Attenders in the offices and committees that are responsible for the ongoing activities of the Meeting. We are grateful to all who have served in the past who have contributed time and effort to the tasks related to the life of Third Haven. All are encouraged to join in assuming some are of responsibility for the Meeting. The role of the Nominating Committee is to discern the gifts of Members and Attenders and to make recommendations regarding Meeting officers, clerks and committee members, for the coming year.

Unless there are unusual circumstances, the Nominating Committee will not recommend changes during the year. In the case of the Hospitality Committee, however, any Member or Attender, is encouraged to offer to help in that area at any time."

- Clerks, Representatives & Trustees
- Clerk – Monthly Meeting - Marsie Hawkinson
- Assistant Clerk - Monthly Meeting - Anne Rouse
- Recording Clerk - Tom Corl
- Asst. Rec. Clerk - Susan Leibman
- Recorder - Laurence Claggett, Sr.
- Treasurer - Joe Davis
- Burial Committee: Clerks of Meeting, Overseers, and Property and Grounds
- Resident Friends - Sam and Vickie Webster
- FCNL (Friends Committee on National Legislation) - Frank Zeigler
- Interfaith Housing Development Corp. of Eastern Shore – Larnie Claggett

- TACL (Talbot Assn. of Clergy & Laity)- Ann Williams & Ralph Young
- Southern Quarterly Meeting - Susan Claggett
- NAACP, Talbot County - Doreen Getsinger
- AFSC MAR (American Friends Service Committee) – Valerie Mazur
- PYM Interim Meeting - Doreen Getsinger, Marsie Hawkinson, Norval Thompson
- QUNO (Quaker United Nations Office) - Jim Paul
- PYM Annual Giving – Larnie Claggett
- Talbot Partners - Lorraine T. Claggett
- Third Haven Newsletter editor – Norval Thompson
- Third Haven Website editor – John Hawkinson

**Committees**

**Overseers Committee.** Paige Bethke, Clerk. Members: Dee Rein, Doreen Getsinger, Norval Thompson, Nancy Mullen, Helen Womack, Joyce Zeigler

**Worship & Ministry Committee.**

Bob Marshall, Clerk. Members: Laura Bode, Tom McCall, Jim Paul, Cathy Marvel, John Shoffner, Meredith Watters, Tom Corl, Irene Williams, Ralph Young.

**Testimonies & Concerns Committee.**

Lorraine B. Claggett, Clerk. Members: Norman Hackland, Ralph Young, Wayne Flanagan, Valerie Mazur, Karin Stoker, Nancy Mullen.

**First Day School Committee.** Candace

Shattuck & Susan Claggett, Co-Clerks. Members: Laura Bode, Beth Mufson, Helen Womack, Codie Chaudoin, Lorraine T.

Claggett , Kristin Dickey, Sally Claggett,  
Samantha McCall

**Library & Outreach Committee.**

Anne Rouse, Clerk. Members: Tylor  
Wrightson, Lorraine B. Claggett, Peggy  
Walbert, Mike Mullen, Frank Zeigler.

**Hospitality Committee.** Ann Williams  
& John Hawkinson, Co-Clerks. Members:  
Beth Mufson, Codie Chaudoin, Dan  
Chaudoin, Cathy Marvel, Lorraine T.  
Claggett.

**Property & Grounds Committee.** John  
Schreiner, Clerk. Members: Mary Cotton,  
Tom Bartlett, Sally Vermilye, Bob Kemp,  
Sr., Bob Kemp, Jr., Larnie Claggett, Leigh  
Ann Dodge, Rob Wieland, Ginger Howell,  
Peggy Paul, Clay Owen, Craig Smith, Kurt  
Freund, Dyan Redick, Betty Jean Wheeler.

**Budget & Finance Committee.** Winslow  
Womack, Clerk. Members: Joe Davis,  
Larnie Claggett, Bill Lane, Allan Mielke,  
Sumner Parker, Norval Thompson, John  
Watters,.

**Common Room Committee.** Peggy  
Paul, Clerk, Members: Ann Williams, Beth  
Mufson, Winslow Womack

**Nominating Committee.** Mary Cotton,  
Robert Kemp, Sr., Meredith Watters.

**Communications Committee.** Norval  
Thompson Clerk, John Hawkinson, Asst  
Clerk. Members: Paige Bethke, Mary  
Cotton, Nancy Mullen, Ginger Howell, Dee  
Rein, Ralph Young, Marcia Ormsby.  
Trustees. Bill Lane, Tom Bartlett, Kenneth  
L. Carroll, Laurence Claggett, Sr., Marsie  
Hawkinson, Allan Mielke, Monimia Barker.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Overseers Annual Report 2004**

Overseers Committee is responsible for  
leading in a caring community, for helping  
Members and Attenders find their right roles  
as nurturers for the Meeting Community and  
for providing pastoral care and counseling.  
Committee Members for 2004 was made up  
of : Stephanie Flanagan 05' , Doreen  
Getsinger 06', Norval Thompson 06', Peggy  
Paul 04' , Joyce Zeigler 06' , Nancy Mullen  
06' Helen Womack 06', Monimia Barker  
06', Dee Rein 05', Anne Rouse 04' and Paige  
Bethke 05'. The committee was chaired by  
Paige Bethke, Peggy Paul and Anne Rouse  
throughout the year --**Activities of  
Overseers** included a luncheon for new  
Members and Attenders 2<sup>nd</sup> Month 22<sup>nd</sup>  
which was attended by about 60 Members  
and Attenders. Overseers and FDS

recognized Moving Up Day for High School  
and eight grade students in June. Hospitality  
hosted a picnic that followed the ceremony.  
A joint meeting with Worship and Ministry  
was held on 10th Month 04 to discuss the  
coordination of our committees for the care  
and welfare of the Meeting. No initiatives  
were identified but both committees  
benefited from the larger meeting and  
agreed to meet together again in the winter.

At the suggestion of member Nancy Mullen,  
Overseers agreed to acknowledge and  
celebrate birthdays of Members and  
Attenders as a way to reach out to the  
Meeting community. A project with the  
First Day School will result in a poster that  
will identify birthdays on the perspective  
months. **The care and oversight of**



**Members and Attenders** included the following events. We were happy to **welcome** Cathy Marvel and Ginger Howell as Members in February 2004. We accepted Leonard Baynum's **transfer of Membership** from Wicomico River Meeting. We attended the **wedding** of Jane Caldwell's granddaughter Nora at THFM on 4<sup>th</sup> month 10<sup>th</sup>. With **regrets** we wished Attenders Peter and Carey Curtis and their four children well as they moved their family to Maine in July. After approving

Jenny Van West's transfer of membership from Salmon Falls Monthly Meeting, Washington in 2003, we accepted her resignation at 12<sup>th</sup> month Business Meeting. Finally, 2004 saw the **passing of Members** Robert Bethke and Helen Goldsboro; also Wicomico River Meeting Member Dorsey Baynum and long time Attender Ellen Schoffner. Memorial Services were held for each of the above at the THF Meeting house. Respectfully submitted *by Paige Bethke*

\*\*\*\*\*

**The committee of clerks--** reports that it has consulted three times, beginning in May 2004, with Caroline Packard, PYM's "Change and Conflict Response Specialist." Caroline's job is to help Monthly Meetings strengthen their ability to respond lovingly and effectively to difficult differences and changes. In December Caroline met separately with the two groups most affected by the same gender commitment process. On January 8, 2004 she held a lengthy discussion with the committee of clerks reviewing past meetings and defining the issues and planning for the future. As a result of these meetings we recommend that members of the meeting undertake one or more processes of conflict resolution, addressing the question,

**"Why do I want to belong to this meeting community?"**

**The summary of these meetings provided by Caroline Packard** follows: Caroline met with the committee of clerks in May, 2004 and helped us explore what there is about our Meeting that helps us as a community to respond effectively to differences, and what might be getting in our way. In this session, we decided we wanted to learn more about different discussion

structures, workshops, or processes that might help the Meeting explore differences in a safe and loving way.

We met again with Caroline in September. In this session, we realized that we did not yet have enough information to recommend a structure or workshop to the Meeting, because we didn't know what kind of structure or process would best respond to the concerns of some whose views were not represented in our the committee, especially those with concerns about having same-gender commitment ceremonies under the care of the Meeting, which has been a topic that has involved particularly difficult differences for our Meeting. (In this report, we'll call this group the "Concerns About SGCC Group").

We also realized that we didn't know what kind of structure or process would best respond to the concerns of those who are supportive of or neutral about same-gender commitment ceremonies and who have withdrawn from active participation in the Meeting because of discomfort with the level of disagreement in the Meeting or with the Meeting's inability to resolve the

commitment-ceremony issue. (In this report we'll call this group the "Withdrawn From Participation Group").

Caroline therefore recommended that she meet with as many Meeting members as possible who fall into these two categories, and interview them to find out what their concerns are and what if anything they would like the Meeting to do to strengthen its ability to respond to difficult differences.

To make this happen, we asked Molly Burgoyne to convene a session with Caroline and invite everyone she (and we) could think of who fit the definition of the Withdrawn From Participation group, and we asked Sumner Parker to convene a different, separate session with Caroline and invite everyone he (and we) could think of who fit the definition of the Concerns About SGCC group. Molly and Sumner graciously agreed to do this rather large task, made even larger by the fact that these sessions, originally planned for November, had to be cancelled at the last minutes due to illness in Caroline's family, and rescheduled for December.

On Sunday, December 5, Caroline met at the Meetinghouse with approximately eight people who came to the Withdrawn From Participation group session, and after that she met at Sumner Parker's house with approximately eight people who came to the Concerns About SGCC group session. As is her practice, Caroline has held both of these discussions confidential.

Caroline met again with our committee on January 8, 2005. She reported to us that it was her sense from her sessions on December 5 that it would be too much to ask right now that members come together with others as a whole Meeting for one big blow-out session or retreat to discuss the difficult

differences directly. Many key Friends would probably stay away, and this approach at the current time would not accomplish enough by itself to be worth the worry, planning work, and difficult, deep session work that would be involved. When a Meeting has already tried various approaches to discussing difficult issues for several years, bringing people back together, holding "yet another" such session can feel too risky and "all our eggs in one basket and what if it makes things worse?"

Instead, Caroline recommended that the Meeting begin slowly, over a period of months, to engage in various processes to strengthen members' ability to respond lovingly and effectively to difficult differences. After 6-12 months, the committee would evaluate progress to learn whether the Meeting community had developed to the point where it felt ready to engage directly in a discussion of the difficult differences. She presented three processes to us: Appreciative Inquiry, the Jigsaw Puzzle technique, and Friendly Eights. These three processes are described in detail below.

The Committee of Clerks discussed the different approaches and agreed to report to the Meeting what we have accomplished so far. We also appointed task groups of three committee members to study each process further in consultation with Caroline, adapt and tailor them to our Meeting's particular situation as appropriate and make a recommendation to the Committee at its next meeting. The Committee hopes to agree on a process to recommend to the Meeting within the next 2-3 months. The Committee welcomes feedback, input, suggestions, or questions from members of the Meeting community about its ongoing discussions with Caroline.

**DESCRIPTION OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY.** The Committee of Clerks could recommend to the Meeting that it sponsor an “Appreciative Inquiry.” This would be a structured, facilitated discussion open to anyone in the Meeting community in which members would share in a safe, contained format, their reflections on deepening questions such as these: Why do I want to belong to this Meeting Community? Is there any value for me or for our Meeting community in the fact that we are holding difficult differences? What in me helps me stay open and tender toward those in my Meeting with whom I deeply disagree on an important issue? What in me gets in the way of my staying open and tender toward those in my Meeting with whom I deeply disagree on an important issue?

**DESCRIPTION OF THE JIGSAW PUZZLE TECHNIQUE.** The Committee of Clerks could recommend to the Meeting that it sponsor a series of workshops to learn and practice a method for group discussion called the “Jigsaw Puzzle Method,” that helps groups explore and integrate different points of view rather than polarizing and fighting or debating. People could come to just one or all four workshops. The “Jigsaw Puzzle” discussion method helps when members are disagreeing or divided on an issue, or when the trouble seems to revolve around a “difficult” or “fragile” member.

**How it helps:** It changes the discussion pattern so instead of arguing back and forth like a ping pong game, people explore and deepen their understanding and come to a shared sense of the way forward. **How it works:** The whole group listens as at least three people with similar views discuss *with each other* how they feel similar or agree. Then at least three people with a different view explore how they feel similar or agree *with each other*. Finally, at least three people with a third perspective do the same. (This third perspective is often, “I don’t

care,” or, “I just want everyone to be happy,” or “How about a compromise?”) As the group listens, they become more accepting and curious about their differences. Often, an integrative solution emerges spontaneously. **Why it works:** In assembling a jigsaw puzzle, you look first at how the pink pieces fit together, then at how the green pieces fit together, beginning to notice subtle differences between similar pieces. Once you fit similar pieces together, you begin to see how apparently very different pieces can come together to form a coherent picture. What had been a jumble of pink and green can become a coherent picture of a green orchard at sunrise. Groups faced with a complex issue should apply the jigsaw puzzle method repeatedly to exploring each aspect of the issue in turn, just as a complex jigsaw puzzle will require the sub-assembly of many parts of the picture before the whole can be fit together.

**DESCRIPTION OF FRIENDLY EIGHTS.** The Committee of Clerks could recommend to the Meeting that it sponsor a series of “Friendly Eights.” A Friendly Eight is eight members of the Meeting community sitting down together to an informal supper followed by a formal discussion. Each Friendly Eight is hosted by a different Meeting family, in their home or at the Meetinghouse. The purpose of Friendly Eights is to help people become more deeply connected to one another through a combination of social time and formally structured discussion time on any topic that people agree needs to be talked about in order to strengthen and deepen the life of the Meeting. A three-hour time frame is recommended. The eight people for each supper-discussion should be chosen to put together what is on balance a diverse group who would not normally all gravitate toward each other. All discussions should be formally structured, start and end at a fixed time, and be led authoritatively by someone

with the skill, courage, and authority to maintain the structure, keep the group on topic, ensure the group starts and ends on time, and interrupt appropriately and effectively as needed to do all this.

Difficult topics should be led by someone perceived by all as being neutral on the topic. Very difficult topics should be led by

a skilled outsider. It is useful to end each discussion with ten minutes for people to step back from the discussion and reflect on what they've learned and then another five minutes after that for participants to name any "loose ends" or "next steps" they want to take as a result of the discussion.

Third Haven Friends Meeting  
405 S. Washington Street  
Easton, Md. 21601

Meeting for Worship  
Sunday 10-11 a.m.  
Wednesday 5:30-6 p.m.  
Everyone welcome