

# Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

## FRIENDLY LINE

### August 2021



### *Let us hold each other in the nurturing embrace of the light*

A view from DMVF Attender Billie Wade

Myths and misperceptions stoke the fires of racial fear, hatred, and divisiveness. Even individual experiences can be taken out of context and held out as validating examples.

Last week, during Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative), several Friends discussed the responsibility for unraveling racism. Some common misconceptions arose. Black people are tired of talking to White people about the issue and see continued dialogue as futile. White people do not want to approach Black people out of fear they will be harmed. White people see racism as a White problem they're wholly responsible for eliminating.

Everyone is responsible for working toward a world of peaceful coexistence, based on recognition of our common humanity and shared space on earth. We are here together. We cannot circumvent our interdependence on each other and all inhabitants of Earth, breathing or inanimate.

Unless we talk to each other and listen to each other, transformation remains an elusive vapor. Right action is impossible until we know the story.

Let us speak the hard truths. Let us listen to the hard truths. Let us act in ways to promote a thriving planet. Let us hold each other in the nurturing embrace of the Light.

*- Original commentaries by members and attenders are offered now and then in Friendly Line on topics of interest to Des Moines Valley Friends and Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative). Thank you, Billie.*

### **Tapestry of Transformation: Sharing Our Light**

Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) met virtually, July 22-25, for its 144<sup>th</sup> annual session to worship, conduct business, enjoy special programs and a concert and conversation with Quaker John McCutcheon. More than 100 people from at least seven states participated at some point, including a number of Des Moines Valley Friends.

Thanks to all who helped with the Entertainment Committee, gave presentations, assisted with technology and provided funding support.

**Save the date** for next year's IYMC, July 27-31, 2022

### **Moving Beyond Suffering to Hope – No More Nukes Remembrance & Memorial Service, Aug. 6 & 8**

Please join us for a time of remembrance and learning that is now a Des Moines peace community tradition of 40 years.

#### **Friday, Aug. 6; 7:00 PM Japanese Bell.**

A remembrance and memorial service to include reflections, poetry, music, and the traditional ringing of the bell and placement of flowers.

Please bring your own flowers and chair. Rain location is Wesley United Methodist Church, 800 E. 12 DM

#### **Sun. Aug. 8; 1:30- 3:00 PM**

First Unitarian Church, 1800 Bell Ave. DM. Zoom presentations to be followed by local responses.

Presenters will include representatives of:

- Global Zero, to share their campaign to secure international commitments to a No First Strike policy.
- The National Iranian American Council, to give an update on the status of the reinstatement efforts of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran Nuclear Deal. The presentation will include information about the impact of sanctions on the Iranian people.

## **DMVF Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business July 11, 2021**

### **Present:**

Deborah Fisch, Peter Clay, Claire Cumbie-Drake, Andrea Holveck, Kelsea Gillispie, Catherine Dietz-Kilen, David Drake, Virginia Smith, Katie Jacoby

**Minutes:** Minutes of the June Meeting for Business were approved, pending any corrections that may be sent to the Clerk during the week following the current Meeting for Business.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

The Treasurer's report was received and approved, with thanks to Kelsea Gillespie for her work as Treasurer.

At the end of May, our accrued expenses were 71% of what we anticipated for the year, and our total receipts were 101% of anticipated income, leaving significant net income. (You may notice these percentages don't line up well with last month's; adding in the technology budget line affected this statistic).

The fiscal year has come to a close, and while we are still working to prepare the end of year statements, it's clear it was a successful year financially for the Meeting thanks to so many members and attenders who gave generously, both from their wallets and their hearts. We are so grateful.

### **Ministry and Counsel:**

No report. The committee will present the report for July at next month's business meeting.

### **Finance Committee Report:**

The Finance Committee report was received and approved.

The DMVF Finance Committee met on May 26, 2021.

Attending: Catherine Dietz-Kilen, convener; Deborah Fisch, Ann Robinson; Kelsea Gillespie, treasurer; Cindy Winchell, assistant treasurer.

### New Business

- Kelsea presented the May financial reports, which were reviewed and approved.
- We again reviewed the proposed 2021/2022 budget, with consideration especially for two questions raised by members at the June meeting for worship for business. We will present our finalized budget at the July meeting. Suggestions/changes/recommendations include:
  - a. The committee affirmed the recommendation to keep the apportionment to IYMC at the level it was for FY 2020-2021 (\$14,500). Considering potential expenses coming with the change in Friends House, as well as a smaller pool of donors, we feel like this is a good level for now.
  - b. As per a suggestion from the business meeting, we decided to move the money that was going to be budgeted for carpet cleaning (\$350) to the property management account. In addition, if we don't use all the money budgeted for the Friends House transition next year (\$3,000), we will consider putting the balance in Property Management account.

One friend suggested that, if needed, we have a workday when volunteers will clean the carpet.

- We considered a question from Clerk Dorothy Lifka as to how we should plan for future audits. The committee agreed that it will be good to have an outside financial expert review our accounts and records occasionally. We believe that future finance committees should consider each year whether an outside review is appropriate, and if so, to include in the budget the cost of the review.

However, we think that, for the near future at least, we recommend undertaking annual "friendly audits" by an audit committee. It will be expedited and made more meaningful if the audit committee members can use Quickbooks, but this is not required. Cindy Winchell has served as an auditor for IYMC for several years (done every year at the end of IYMC gathering), and it takes several hours, in one meeting, to complete. Cindy also said she has been getting trained in Quickbooks.

### Other Business

- Kelsea showed us a change in format for designated funds, and the committee members agreed that we like the new format and find it easy to understand.
- Kelsea has graciously offered to serve as DMVF

treasurer for one more year. However, she does not want to continue in this role longer, due to the time it takes and other obligations. She recommended to the nominating and finance committees that a new treasurer be identified part of the way through the year, so they can have some time for training to ease the transition. The committee agreed that this was a very good idea.

When the time comes for an outside financial review, a budget line will be added for that purpose. Meanwhile, the Finance Committee is requesting that the nominating committee identify two individuals to serve on an audit committee for the purpose of conducting an annual "friendly audit."

The Financial Plus Credit Union account is now closed and all funds moved to E-bank.

#### **Ad Hoc Tech Committee Report:**

The Committee report was received from Convener, Katie Jacoby, and approved.

The Ad Hoc Technology Committee has worked to facilitate the transition from holding meeting for worship virtually to a hybrid meeting. As most of us return to in-person worship as we are able, Zoom will be less of a focus. However, we want to maintain the connections among our far-flung F/friends, those who can't join us in person and as an option during inclement weather. It has been a work in progress. We are fine-

tuning the hardware and the seating arrangement to address the feedback we have received. We're working hard to make our new hybrid meeting as seamless and user friendly as possible.

Katie recommended that the Technology Committee purchase a computer cart and a cable that secures the computer to the cart and a cover.

The Meeting approved and appreciates the work of the Ad Hoc committee to keep our technology updated.

The Meeting discussed having an in-person and virtual host to make sure that the technology is running smoothly. Hosts have volunteered to open the Meeting House and turn on the computer for the next several months. The Meeting will ask the Hospitality committee to set up hosting moving forward.

#### **Peace and Social Concerns committee Report:**

Peter Clay reported that the Committee met in July. No written report was received. The July report will be included with an August report.

#### **Report on status of Edna Griffin Mutual Aid:**

The report was received from Deborah Fisch on behalf of Peter Clay and herself and approved.

I had a long and really good phone conversation with Arianna, who is one of the people in charge of the Wednesday morning food preparation done in our kitchen by Edna Griffin Mutual Aid. I learned that the group is already prepping for winter. They seem to welcome donations (such as tents, sleeping bags, good winter

clothing, including coats, mittens, warm socks, etc.)

They continue to work very closely with Des Moines Mutual Aid, helping each other out when short-handed and sharing supplies with each other if they are running low on something.

EGMA currently prepares about 100 meals a week in our kitchen. They are distributed to about 70 + regular individuals and others as needed. Left-over meals are frozen for future use when possible or distributed later in the week as needed. Their Wednesdays begin very early in the morning at the meetinghouse and then at about 10 AM they begin distributing the meals at the camps they serve and to some individuals who prefer not to live in a camp. They usually finish distribution anytime between noon and 4:00 p.m. In the summer, they prepare colder dishes and in the winter they try to serve at least one hot dish with meals.

There are currently seven community encampments, communities of houseless people in the Des Moines area. (There are three larger community encampments on the north side and four medium and one large encampment communities elsewhere in the city.) They and DSM Mutual Aid serve these communities, with DSM Mutual Aid serving most of them, and EGMA serving a couple of them.

I learned that about two weeks ago the City gave notice to remove tents and any other objects in the encampment

community on the Des Moines River. Arianna believed the City had given them a two-week notice because they were living on city property. Although everyone was forced to leave, some have already started moving back to the area. Others have joined other communities or are currently living on their own. This makes it challenging for EGMA to get meals to all their people. Arianna pointed out that though it is important to provide food, shelter, and clothing for those in need, the most important thing is that they provide a way to develop relationships with people, and that can lead to them being able to help folks get medical and other life essentials. It can sometimes lead to a person being able to get to the point they are ready to have an apartment and manage on their own. So, though it may seem small, being able to provide a kitchen for EDMA helps them to really serve a part of our population that really benefits from their services.

EGMA would welcome F/friends volunteering to help. Though they have currently discontinued the laundry service that some Friends had recently helped with, there are other opportunities for participation. And they are always in need of donations whether financial gifts that allow them to purchase food, or other things needed by the community, or by donating goods including those already mentioned, and also blankets, non-electric heaters, propane

tanks, etc.

We also talked about the current guidelines we are using for COVID safety, care of the kitchen, including care of the new oven, and the fact that we and others are beginning to use the meetinghouse again. I suggested that in the near future they will need to begin drying their cookware and storing it in their office across the hall in the original portion of Friends House, and she said she would be very happy to do that. She said she is going to make a check-list of things that need to get done during clean-up each Wednesday that they can use and turn in to her on days that she is not the supervisor. They have a meeting of volunteers coming up withing the next couple of weeks, and she will give a reminder about cleanup and provide information about use of the meetinghouse that will require some changes on their part. I felt very encouraged by our conversation!

**Buildings and Grounds**

**Committee:** No report

**Library Committee:** No report

**Old Business:**

Thank you to everyone who provided hospitality, gave sheets and served as docents during the time the BUS-eum was parked in the Meeting House parking lot, and to those who provided meals. We look forward to updates in the coming months.

Reminder that Iowa Yearly Meeting is coming up. Volunteers are needed to open and close the Meeting House for

sessions that people may want to attend at the Meeting House.

Nominating Committee reported that Billie Wade has been appointed to serve on Friends House Board. She will begin her three-year term in September. She is taking the place vacated by Claire Cumbie-Drake, who has been serving out the term of Dick Douglass.

The Meeting requested that the nominating committee send out an email requesting that the individuals who served as conveners of each committee last year call an initial meeting of their committee. Each committee should then select a convener and notify the nominating committee to update the committee list.

**New Business:**

Hiroshima-Nagasaki Memorial.

The Meeting received the following letter from Kathleen McQuillen of the Nagasaki Memorial Organizing Team.

Dear Dorothy,

The Hiroshima – Nagasaki Memorial Organizing Team is pleased to announce the annual observance of the US bombing of the two Japanese cities will be held in two parts this year. (See page 1 for details about the events.)

We are delighted now to invite Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting to be part of this event by co-sponsoring this year's memorial and education program. As a co-sponsor we ask you to:

1. Make a financial contribution appropriate to your organization's budget. Suggested contribution is \$25, \$50. (If it is not feasible to provide financial



sponsorship we ask that you commit to promoting this event through your networks.)

2. Promote this event through your email, Facebook, website etc.

Individual co-sponsorships are appreciated as well.

As a co-sponsoring organization, we commit to you to include DMVF on all promotional material and press announcements. We look forward to hearing from you and hope DMVF will be part of this important and educational experience in Iowa. In order to be included on the flyer please respond by July 16. \*Co-sponsor checks to be made out to WILPF-DM ("Hiroshima" on memo line), Jan Corderman, 281 Christy Lane, Pleasant Hill, IA 50327.

The Meeting approved of being a co-sponsor of the event and will request the Peace and Social Concerns committee make the requested donation.

### **Announcements:**

Martha Gerstenberger, a former member of DMVF who had been living in Massachusetts, has died at age 90. Condolences can be sent to the family via her [obituary](#).

A memorial service has been scheduled July 20 for Don Mott, who died in December 2020 at age 96. The service will be at Paullina Friends Meetinghouse. More details are at: <https://www.iymc.org/donald-william-mott-obituary/>

The Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business ended with a moment of silence.

## **August Query: Meeting for Worship**

### **ADVICE:**

Meeting for worship is the heart of the meeting. In the silence, we seek direct communion with God, the Spirit, conscious of the seeking of others. From the depths of living silence, may come an awareness of the presence of the Spirit. Sometimes the silence is unbroken. At other times a message may come to any one of us which seems intended not simply for the worshiper, but for the gathering as a whole. If the message is not expressed, one may feel a sense of not having been faithful to a leading of the Spirit, but if it is spoken, a sense of peace may follow. We are most effective if we speak clearly, simply and from our own experience. Because we are unique individuals who come from varied backgrounds and life experiences, our messages reflect diversity. Part of our worship together is listening with an open spirit, holding the speaker in love, remembering that silence after the message is part of the message. Our daily lives are linked with meeting for worship. In the search for truth, Friends are encouraged to spend time in individual study, meditation or prayer and to be open to other sources of inspiration around us. The life of the meeting may be strengthened by a deep level of sharing, discussion or worship at times other than regularly scheduled meetings.

Friends should make an effort to arrive at meeting for worship

prepared in mind and spirit to support one another in a worshipful atmosphere. As we give and receive, in speech or in silence, we are drawn together in the life of the Spirit.

### **QUERIES:**

Are our meetings for worship held in a spirit of expectant waiting and communion with the Holy Spirit? How do we prepare our hearts and minds for worship?

How do we refer to that which is divine? How does ascribing gender to the Holy Spirit affect our worship? How do we integrate our daily lives with meeting for worship? Do we seek opportunities for worship outside of meeting?

How does the vocal ministry of the meeting contribute to its spiritual life? In what ways do we recognize and nurture vocal ministry and other spiritual gifts?



Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting House and Peace Garden.

## **News of our Friends**

The salvage logging of damaged and blown down hardwood trees on **Peter Clay's** family land in Wisconsin resumed July 19th. The loggers salvaged the pines right after the storm. This was caused by the 2019 derecho that destroyed 450 square miles of northern forest. After two weeks of logging an astonishing amount has been accomplished. Although the change to the landscape he has loved for over 60 years is dramatic and somewhat shocking, Peter is grateful that he can still be an advocate for and a steward of the land. Looking to the future, he is confident that this will set the stage for Mother Nature to grow a new forest! Peter will be mostly up in Wisconsin until the logging is completed. That may be by the end of August or early September. Peter welcomes phone calls and other supportive outreach from Friends."

Friends are invited to a potluck dinner, Aug. 16, to visit with **Michael Luick-Thrams**, and hear about adventures with the BUS-eum this summer. Details TBA.

## **Owen Newlin Memorial Scheduled for September 18**

The family of Owen Newlin, who passed away July 12, 2020, has scheduled a meeting for remembrance and worship Saturday, Sept. 18, 2021, at 2:00 p.m.

The service will be held at the conference room on the Iowa Methodist Hospital campus on Woodland Avenue, under the care of Des Moines Valley Friends.

## **Consider Support for Hussein (Leo) Kooshan's College Fund**

Several Friends have asked how they might support the college fund for Scattergood graduate Hussain (Leo) Kooshan, one of the BUS-eum's interns we met while he was visiting Des Moines in July.

Leo, from Afghanistan, has been living with Quaker friends in Minnesota and attending the Minneapolis Community and Technical College as the first in his entire family to attend college. He has written a letter telling more about himself and his family to share with anyone who would like to know more about his background. Friends can contact Ann Robinson at [anny@mediacombb.net](mailto:anny@mediacombb.net) to request a copy of his letter.

Contributions can be sent to: Business Services, T.2100, Minneapolis Community and Technical College, 1501 Hennepin Avenue South Minneapolis, MN, 55403. Please be sure and indicate the donation is for Hussain Kooshan and include his student ID# 15591909. Leo thanks F(f)riends, including Brock Wommack, who have already generously contributed to help him go to college and stay in the United States.

He has graciously offered to give a presentation about his country and his personal journey as a young man who now identifies as a Muslim Quaker and wants to make a difference for his country. Plan to tune in to his second hour, online presentation on Sunday, August 22.

## **DES MOINES VALLEY FRIENDS**

**Meeting for Worship:** First days at 10 a.m., at the Meeting House and by Zoom via email invitation from clerk, Dorothy Lifka, at [dmlifka@yahoo.com](mailto:dmlifka@yahoo.com)

**Meeting for Worship/Business:** Regularly held on the second First Day each month at 1 p.m.

### **Second Hours Coming Soon:**

Aug 22 - Zoom presentation by Leo Kooshan on Afghanistan

Sept. 26 – Billie, Charlie, Carol

**Child Care:** Temporarily suspended at the Meeting House. If you have a child who would like to be included in Zoom childcare or first day school for older youth, please contact Dorothy at [dmlifka@yahoo.com](mailto:dmlifka@yahoo.com).

### **Building & Grounds:**

Questions about the building or grounds of the Meetinghouse can be directed to Building & Grounds Committee Convener, Charlie Brown, 515-689-6470.

### **Hospitality Committee:**

If you see a housekeeping problem that needs attention, please contact the Hospitality Committee Convener Cindy Winchell, 515-720-5516

**Friendly Line:** Please send info for next Friendly Line by Friday, August 27, 2021, to Ann at [anny@mediacombb.net](mailto:anny@mediacombb.net)

### **Find us online at:**

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

Check out our **Facebook** group for members/attenders. To be added, email Jan Falb, at [jfalb0326@yahoo.com](mailto:jfalb0326@yahoo.com)