

# Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

## FRIENDLY LINE

### October 2021



#### Reassign some military spending elsewhere

Iowans in Congress need to act now to cut the bloated Pentagon budget, set to grow to \$778 billion next fiscal year. We simply can't continue to think of national security in Cold War terms. The COVID-19 pandemic, raging wildfires, and a devastating hurricane season in the Gulf have laid bare the truth about our true national security needs. Fighter jets, warships and nuclear missiles are utterly useless against viruses and climate change. Cutting military spending would free up needed funds for a much wider COVID-19 pandemic response, improved health care and real commitments to address climate change, food security, and racial and wealth equity.

-- Letter to the editor, reprinted from the *Des Moines Register*, Sept. 30, 2021

#### Query #3 for October: Meeting for Business

ADVICE: In our meeting for business, Friends seek Divine guidance in handling the affairs of the meeting. By opening the meeting with a period of worship, Friends can more easily wait patiently upon the will of the Divine Spirit while conducting business. This assists our meetings for business in finding the loving unity that

might never be achieved through discussion alone. The right conduct of meetings for business, even in routine matters, is important to the life of the meeting.

Friends are encouraged to prepare for and attend meetings for business just as they would other meetings for worship. Participating in meetings for business and acceptance of responsibilities within the meeting should not be taken lightly. When filling positions within our meetings, it is important to consider the suitability of individuals for specific tasks. Although the clerk is particularly charged with gathering the sense of the meeting, all Friends can assist the process by committing themselves to be faithful in opening their hearts and minds to wait upon the Divine Spirit. QUERIES: How can we hold our meetings for business in the spirit of love, understanding and patient search for unity without becoming frustrated by differences of opinion or the pressures of time? How do we respond when no one else in the meeting seems to hold the views that we do on an issue? How do we respond to a dissenting minority? How do we share responsibilities among Friends in our meeting? How do we serve our meetings?

#### Need Technology to Participate in Meeting from Home?

An anonymous donor has given funds that can be used to assist DMVF members/attenders who need technology upgrades to be able to fully participate in Meeting activities from home. To apply for funding, please contact Gordon Bivens convener of Ministry & Counsel, at [gorbiv@gmail.com](mailto:gorbiv@gmail.com).

#### Meeting for Worship at the Meeting House

DMVF Meeting members and attenders may once again attend worship in person at the meeting house. When there, please wear a mask even if you are fully vaccinated, per CDC recommendation (with the exception of young children or individuals with a medical condition which precludes wearing a mask).

Children are welcome, but childcare and First Day School are not offered on-site at this time.

If you want to participate remotely via Zoom and are not on the Clerk's list to receive the link, contact Dorothy Lifka at [dmlifka@yahoo.com](mailto:dmlifka@yahoo.com).

**DMVF Meeting for Worship  
with Attention to Business  
Sept. 12, 2021**

**Present:** Dorothy Lifka;  
Deborah Fisch; Kelsea Gillespie;  
Catherine Dietz-Kilen; Katie  
Jacoby

If you were present and are  
not listed above, please let  
Deborah know and the minutes  
will be corrected.

The clerk opened meeting for  
business after a time of worship  
and near the appointed hour by  
sharing a poem:

**A Way**

Some saints point  
with wooden spoons,  
and pray with brooms,  
listen best  
when stirring soup,  
give silent counsel,  
dispel gloom, heal dread,  
by simply making room  
and warm bread.

-- by James Littwin  
published in "Friends  
Journal" 9/21

**Review of Eighth Month 2021**

**Minutes** – The minutes for  
August 2021 were printed in the  
September *Friendly Line*. If  
anyone finds a typo or a  
correction important to the  
content, please email the  
recording clerk before the end of  
this coming week. Corrections  
will be made in the minutes that  
are included in the file of official  
minutes for the Meeting. Any  
correction of substance will be  
corrected in the next *Friendly  
Line*.

**Treasurer's Report** –

(Kelsea Gillespie, treasurer)

DMVF ended the FY very  
well, with over \$10,000 being  
added to the general reserves.  
Again, many thanks to so many

members and attenders who  
made this possible.

In July our donations exceeded  
our expenses by \$92 (with 6% of  
anticipated donations received  
and 5% of anticipated expenses  
accrued), and we continue to  
have expenses almost matching  
donations through August.

**Minute** – We accept the  
Treasurer's report with thanks.  
Kelsea said that donations have  
been just enough to cover  
expenses, and that in general we  
are in a good place. However, we  
are still working from an  
austerity budget. We appreciate  
that Friends continue supporting  
the Meeting with their donations  
and ask members and attenders  
to consider if it would be  
possible to increase the amount  
of their donations for future  
programming and projects. The  
clerk of the Finance Committee  
noted that we have received a  
donation in memory of Martha  
Gerstenberger, and it will be  
placed into the General Fund.

**Committee Reports**

**Finance Committee**

**Report** (FC) – (Catherine Dietz-  
Kilen convener) The Finance  
Committee met on 08/24/2021,  
via electronic media. Attendees:  
Catherine Dietz-Kilen, Kelsea  
Gillespie, Dick Douglass and  
Cindy Winchell.

Kelsea presented the 06/2021  
End of Fiscal Year plus 07/2021  
Financial Reports for review.  
The Meeting's financial situation  
continues to improve. The  
Committee discussed  
communicating with the  
Nominating Committee to reach  
out to other members of Meeting  
about joining our committee.

The Committee discussed a  
short article for submission to the

*Friendly Line* regarding the  
Meeting's Sharing Fund.

The Committee discussed  
working with the Ministry and  
Counsel Committee to best  
address the process by which  
funds can be used to assist those  
in need of technology upgrades  
to be able to fully participate in  
Meeting activities from their  
home.

The Committee discussed  
creating a policy for the  
acceptance of gifts given to the  
Meeting as memorials, gifts in  
honor of others and/or for  
proposed special projects. The  
proposed policy will be presented  
to business meeting for  
consideration.

**Policy re Acceptance of  
Memorials Gifts, Gifts Made  
in Honor of Others and for  
Proposed Projects** –

Recognizing that simplicity is a  
Quaker value – 1. Des Moines  
Valley Friends Meeting will  
direct undesignated memorial  
gifts and gifts made in honor of  
others to the Meeting's General  
Fund. 2. Family or friends may  
suggest to donors that memorial/  
honorary gifts may be given for a  
specific budgeted purpose other  
than the General Fund or to  
an already existing designated  
fund. Announcements in  
obituaries or other places that  
direct gifts to the Meeting,  
should clearly state the purpose  
and ask that gifts be directed  
accordingly. DMVF will make  
all reasonable efforts to honor  
such requests. 3. If a donor, or  
the family/friends of a person for  
whom memorial/honorary gifts  
to the Meeting are being  
suggested, wishes those donated  
funds to be used for a  
purpose not already budgeted by

the meeting, a request should be made in advance to add that purpose to the budget. Such a request should be made jointly to the Ministry & Counsel and Finance Committees, with final approval by the Business Meeting.

The Committee decided that we should touch base again with the family members of Jean Sandstrom regarding the designated funds received in her memory. Catherine will contact Andy and Neal.

Kelsea and Cindy will research the options for setting up a QuickBooks account for the Meeting. We are currently using Pam Blackburn's QuickBooks Pro account but will not be able to continue to rely on Pam when she decides to retire.

**Minute** – Catherine reviewed the Finance Committee Report. We approve the Finance Committee Report with great appreciation for their good work. The FC clerk and Meeting clerk both urge everyone to take a turn serving on this committee as you learn more about how Meeting works (and have some fun!)

We thank the FC for developing a plan for receiving designated donations from individuals, couples, and from memorial gifts.

At clerk's request, Finance Committee has agreed to purchase and set up a Zoom account for the Meeting.

**Peace & Social Concerns Committee (P&SC)** (Patty Wengert, convenor) – The September meeting was held 09/07 via electronic media, with Patty Wengert, Jack Holveck, Andrea Holveck, Peter Clay, Billie Wade and Jeff Kisling.

Patti McKee continues to follow our committee work and news also. Patty Wengert will follow up with Steve Shivers regarding P&SC work and online meetings.

Our committee had hoped to hold a fundraising soup lunch on 09/19, but instead we met remotely due to the ongoing concern of Delta Covid 19.

Our next meeting (also via electronic media) will be at 1 pm on 10/05/2021. Thank you to Andrea Holveck for setting up our connections.

Jeff Kisling attended our meeting to share the news of Leo (Hussain Kooshan) and his family and concern for their safety. Jeff reported that Bear Creek Peace and Social Concern Committee is also taking up this concern. We hope to cooperate with our two meetings. Jeff also advised that Leo's younger brother arrived in the U.S. We will be updated with contact info for Leo from Dorothy. Leo has seven family members still in Afghanistan. Penn Valley Friends may also be extending assistance for Leo. Peter has forwarded a draft letter to the clerk for members to consider sending to our individual elected officials to press our leaders to assist people in Afghanistan.

Patty Wengert is in the process of detailing the annual P&SC budget contributions along with activist events by local peace groups for this current year.

The first multi-religious group peace event is "The International Day Of Peace" that has been organized annually since 2002. This year it will be held on 09/21 at Cowles Commons in downtown Des Moines Iowa. A

\$50 check will be sent to co-sponsor.

Other annual events take place in December and include: the Feast of the Holy Innocents, an Ecumenical Service in December and the Iowa Peace Network Alternative Gift Sale. Their website and event calendar are a huge benefit to the committee. We annually give \$100 to the Iowa Peace Network and \$100 to DMARC, the local food bank. In addition, our committee also donates to the DMARC Diaper Fund.

The committee will continue to reach out to the local Black Lives Matter groups. Vigils are held Mondays through Fridays from noon to 1 p.m. at the Des Moines Police Station. Various pastors and religious leaders have made this commitment and seek volunteers to keep the injustice and racial profiling awareness issues moving forward since George Floyd's death.

Thank you to everyone in our meeting, be well.

**Minute** – Patty Wengert reviewed the report for the September P&SC meeting. We appreciate being kept up to date on opportunities in which Meeting, or members/attenders of our faith community may want to participate. We understand that by working with other communities of faith we can engage in peace and justice work and make a bigger impact than acting alone. Meeting will consider the draft letter separately from the P&SC Committee report.

**Consideration of draft letter** – Peter Clay wrote a draft letter for consideration of Meeting to be sent to US

legislators asking for assistance in bringing the family of Hussain (Leo) Kooshan from Afghanistan to the United States as political refugees. Since then, Bear Creek Meeting and West Branch Church, having seen the letter, have let Meeting know they would like to unite in adding their meeting's/church's signature to the letter as well. We, however, had not considered the draft letter until this business session.

**Minute** – At this point Meeting's sense is that sending a letter to U.S. legislators, when Leo and his brother have since moved to Canada to seek asylum for their family and themselves there, is moot. We do not plan to send Peter's letter at this time but thank him for drafting it for our consideration.

Meeting still wants to help Leo in useful ways. We approve asking the Care Committee appointed to help Leo to 1) Let Bear Creek Meeting and West Branch Friends Church know of Leo's changed circumstances and that we now plan to contact Ottawa Friends Meeting to see how best we might continue to be of assistance to Leo, his brother, and their family.

We will also make sure to tell Bear Creek & West Branch Friends they are welcome to use the letter as they feel led. 2) It may be there are things we can do as individuals to assist Leo or his family, or the Ottawa Meeting. 3) The clerk of the FC has advised Leo that Meeting, as a non-profit, cannot legally receive contributions from others to pass on to him for assistance.

**First Day School Report** – (Dorothy Lifka, teacher) First

Day School with the Gillespie children will continue on Zoom. More information about what we'll be doing will be given at the next business meeting.

First Day School with the older kids resumed today. We will continue on Zoom for now.

**Minute** – We appreciate the good work of the First Day School teachers and look forward to hearing more about the project and studies of our young F/friends as the year progresses. If there are F/friends interested in joining the teaching team please let a teacher or member of the RE Committee know ASAP.

**Outreach Committee Report (OC)** (Katie Jacoby, convenor) – The Outreach Committee met with Ann Robinson, Billie Wade and Katie Jacoby present. We agreed that our Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting outreach efforts should be a several stage process and we focused on what we feel should be the first stage. This builds on the ideas and actions we took following our August 2019 discussion regarding outreach. Some of those ideas involved becoming involved with or visiting other groups, and intervisitation with other meetings and faith communities, which were derailed by the pandemic.

**As a First Stage we propose** – 1. **Outside Signage** Purchasing a banner that we can hang on the front brick wall and that will be visible from the street that says **Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting (Quakers) You Are Welcome Here!**; 2. **Social Media Presence** – Bob Henderson and Jan Falb set up a Facebook page a few years ago

and have monitored/maintained it well. Others also occasionally post items. We suggest being more deliberate in posting regularly, at least once or twice a week. For instance: post our upcoming weekly schedule - business meeting, soup dinner (someday, maybe someday soon!), queries, any other event we have upcoming or an event that we think should be publicized. Friends can post items that they feel will be of interest to others. We could repost items from other meetings, AFSC or Friends General Conference. We could also occasionally post about other groups that meet at the meetinghouse such as the meditation group. This way, when others visit FB, the posts will be current, and hopefully relevant and informative as to who we are; 3. "**You are Welcome Here**" – Drawing from the Friends General Conference *Welcoming Newcomers Toolkit*, we propose revamping our welcoming materials. Saying "you are welcome here" as opposed to "we welcome you" or "all are welcome" to put the emphasis on "you," the visitor. We have reformatted the brochure that Ann and Jean Sandstrom developed, while keeping the content the same. We feel this is an excellent brochure that touches on the history of Quakers and a good introduction to our practices. But it's a lot of information. If someone is new to Quaker meeting, or uncertain about what to expect during meeting, we would like to have pamphlets that they could take and look at. We have adapted

FGC materials on *Quaker Worship; Quakers and Prayer; Quaker Testimonies; You are Welcome Here; and What do Quakers Believe?*. We suggest a small pamphlet rack where people could pick and choose what would be helpful to them. (It could also hold the occasional brochures we get from other groups.) Children's materials, i.e., coloring pages and word searches would also be on the rack and available for the children during meeting for worship; 4. Clear signage – We'd like to put up clear signage for the restrooms, children's area, elevator, etc. This is a small item, but one that is important for someone who is visiting for the first time who might hesitate to ask where the restroom is, or where they can get a drink. 5. Video conferencing/Zoom – Having an online presence has enriched our meeting, is here to stay, and for the most part, has been free of technology glitches. One concern is how it looks to those joining online. Our question – What is the best layout, so the room doesn't look cavernous and empty? We also propose having a welcome screen prior to meeting (including a reminder to mute yourself when joining). It would also facilitate a "silent entrance" to meeting. In person, we are greeted by hosts, then enter meeting in silence and there isn't any conversation once in the meeting room. Those joining remotely are missing the hosts' greeting them and understandably it's natural to want to say hello upon entering; 6. Outreach to local colleges – Provide materials to Drake, Grandview, DMACC and

DMU's religious directors to hand out to students who may be searching for a faith community.

**Second Stage Plans** – 1. Create a Meet-Up Page – Add a page to our website that includes upcoming events, articles from the *Friendly Line*, etc. 2. Expand the perennial garden to the south side so it's visible to passersby – We could involve the First Day School in this. The young people could start seeds, research what to plant and/or help design the garden; 3. We would like to restart discussion of the outside children's space development.

**Third Stage Plans** – 1. Offer a Quaker 101 series again; 2. Host an open house; 3. Have a summer family movie night(s) on the lawn and invite others to attend; 4. Recommit to intervisitation with other meetings and religious communities; 5. Strengthen our relationship with Friends House tenants. 6. Continue to network with other progressive groups. 7. Actively seek common ground with groups that might seem on the face of it to be at odds with us.

**Minute** – Friends were very interested in the Committee's report and encouraged its members to move forward with ideas presented in Stage One.

The clerk of Finance Committee cautioned that the city has rules and regulations concerning signage, so the OC needs to be sure to get the necessary permit(s) before they spend money on a sign for the brick wall or put up any other new signage or change location of any current signage.

We were reminded that there is

currently no line in the FY22 Meeting budget for the Outreach Committee since it didn't exist at the time the budget was approved. The treasurer said that in future budgets the Finance Committee will need to have a line in the budget for the Outreach Committee. Meeting approves placing a line item for Outreach in future budgets.

In the meantime, the treasurer and FC convener suggest that when Outreach Committee decides to move forward on any project that requires financing they send a report to the Finance Committee as soon as they received an itemized approximation of the total cost, or a bid is ready so FC can begin looking for places in the current budget from which funds could be transferred.

Meeting asks that proposed written documents for the display area be read by M&C and approved before printing.

Dorothy Lifka reported she told the First Day School students about the new committee, and they are interested in helping as well. They also want to help with the garden.

## **Announcements**

The clerk shared the following announcements -

### **International Day of Peace** -

09/21 at 6:30 p.m. Cowles Commons, downtown Des Moines

### **Queries Discussion** -

Wednesday, 09/15 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Zoom

### **Faith Journeys Speaker Series**

begins Sunday, 09/26 on Zoom. Billie Wade and Charlie Brown will be the first speakers.

**Next meeting for worship with attention to business** – The next meeting for business is scheduled for 10/10/2021.

There being no other business the clerk closed meeting with a time of worshipful Silence.

-- Dorothy Lifka, clerk, and Deborah Fisch, assistant clerk

## **News of our Friends**

**Bob Henderson** just got back from long trip to Alaska with his Drake Friend Mike Reick. They visited Bob's old AF buddies and visited Bob's favorite locations with 3 days in Anchorage, 2 days in Homer, 1 day in Whittier, 1 day in Valdez, 2 days in Fairbanks and visit to AK PBS at KUAC U of AK, 1 day in Talkeetna with a flight around Mt Denali and landing on a Glacier in 3 nights in Hatcher Pass visiting Independence mine, Reindeer and Musk Ox Farms, dog sled rides around the Iditarod museum and a walk on the Matanuska Glacier.

Congratulations to **Virginia Smith** on her successful move! Her new contact information is:  
Wesley Acres  
3520 Grand Ave., C402  
Des Moines, IA 50312  
515-271-6539

## **September Query Discussion – Outreach**

ADVICE: Friends believe it is essential to express in words and deeds the faith that sustains us and the convictions that arise from that faith. It is important to speak with integrity and courage ourselves as well as to listen to others with open hearts and minds. We seek fellowship with all branches of Friends and with



The new Outreach Committee at DMVF is proposing to create a banner for the brick wall on the east side of the Meeting House. The sign needs to be simple and easy to read from the sidewalk and even from the street. We invite Friends' input on this design. Please email [friendlyline@gmail.com](mailto:friendlyline@gmail.com) to share your support, suggestions, concerns.

**Important Note:** At this time, the Outreach Committee is just seeking input. Before work on such a sign moves forward, the committee will check into any relevant city regulations and seek approval to cover expenses for costs from the Finance Committee.

other seekers of Truth. We recognize the oneness of humanity in the Spirit and believe that in learning from one another we may come to respect differences. Truth is greater than any of us may know, individually or as a group.

As we work and share with others within our communities, we may find opportunities to invite them to attend our meetings for worship and other meeting activities. A genuine welcome to everyone is consistent with Friends' testimony of acknowledging the Divine Spirit in each person and of our belief in the dignity and worth of every human being.

### QUERIES

Do we encourage intervisitation within yearly meeting and with other Friends?

Although we haven't been doing much intervisitation recently, one Friend noted that more of us in DMVF seem to be involved in Iowa Yearly Meeting. Friends have also been

participating more in other meetings for worship virtually.

What are we doing to share our faith with others outside our Friends' community?

We avoid proselytizing and that can make it challenging to share our faith more widely. We can take advantage of opportunities when others express curiosity about Quakers.

How do we speak truth as we know it and yet remain open to truth as understood by others?

One Friend expressed the difficulty in remaining open to others' truth in some areas. We realize that the Quaker style of worship is not right for everyone.

In what ways do we cooperate with persons and groups with whom we share concerns? How do we reach out to those with whom we disagree?

We have been cooperating with Edna Griffin Mutual Aid and Friends House. It's hard to reach out to those with whom we disagree. Sometimes they are people close to us. It can be an

opportunity to understand others' point of view and expand and even change our own. How do we make the presence of our meeting known to the larger community?

The outreach committee is working to address this. The meditation group has been a wonderful way for others to find out about us. We can talk about Friends when others ask or seem interested. One Friend is comfortable with the current size of the meeting and isn't concerned about letting others know about us.

Do we invite others to share in our meetings for worship and other meeting activities?

We could do more to reach out to Friends House tenants, some of whom have expressed interest in getting to know more about us. Do we welcome everyone and appreciate the gifts that differences such as race, creed, economic status, disability, age, gender or sexual orientation may bring to us?

Yes, we do. Or at least we try to respect and be open to the gifts of all.

--- Contributed by Dorothy Lifka

### **Want Scattergood swag?**

Scattergood Friends School is trying a new approach to swag, asking friends to pre-order t-shirts, so they can be ordered in batches. The deadline for this batch is Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>. Order at: <https://stores.inksoft.com/scattergoodfriends/shop/home>

## **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:**  
Oct. 24—Update from Leo  
Oct. 31—Journey to Friends - Jim Dietz-Kilen & Deborah Fisch

**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, Oct.29. 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)