

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

FRIENDLY LINE

September 2021



DMVF Named to Iowa Women's Hall of Fame

Congratulations to the Meeting's own Jan Mitchell, who has been named to the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame by the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women. Her fellow honorees are Dr. Roxann Marie Ryan (Cresco), Cornelia Clark, Grinnell) and Donna Reed (Denison).



Jan was recognized as Iowa Teacher of the Year in 1997, and over time, has been a leader in many organizations, including the American Association of University Women. She is especially known for assisting the education and social mobilization of Iowa's Latina students, championing women's rights, supporting the Hispanic community and founding the nonprofit Al Exito, for which she

was recognized in 2019 with the Iowa Latino Hall of Fame Robert D. Ray Award for Equity and Justice.

Due to COVID, this year's induction ceremony will be held virtually on Saturday, Nov. 6.

Read more about Jan's background in an article in the Aug. 13 issue of the Marshalltown Times Republican.

Contributions to DMVF's Sharing Fund

The Meeting has a designated sharing fund which can be used to assist individuals and families in the community in times of unexpected need. The Ministry and Counsel committee determines when it is appropriate to distribute money from the sharing fund.

The Meeting includes a line item in our yearly budget for the sharing fund. In addition to their donations to the Meeting's general operations, folks may make tax deductible donations designated specifically to the sharing fund.

Donations to the sharing fund cannot be directed by the donor to any specific individual or concern.

--- the Finance Committee

Friends invited to Celebration of Life for Owen Newlin, September 18

A Celebration of Life service for Owen J. Newlin will be held on Saturday, Sept. 18, 2021, at Iles Funeral Home, 2121 Grand Ave., Des Moines.

Owen died on July 12, 2020, but a celebration of his life was postponed due to COVID-19. Owen was a lifelong Quaker and longtime leader in the Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting. His service will be held

In the style of unprogrammed Friends worship. (The family is planning to hold a service unless local health guidelines don't allow it.) Masking guidelines will be followed.

The service begins at 2 pm, followed by a reception. The family will be available to visit from 1-1:50 pm prior to the service and following the service until 5 pm.

A livestream option will also be available at the Iles Funeral Home online guestbook at <https://www.ilesfuneralhomes.com/obituary/>. Once there, search for Owen Newlin for the livestream option. For updates regarding please visit the Iles Funeral Home, Des Moines website.

**DMVF Meeting for Worship
with Attention to Business
Aug. 8, 2021**

Present: Dorothy Lifka, clerk;
Deborah Fisch, recording clerk;
Peter Clay, Catherine Dietz-
Kilen, Andrea Holveck, Fred for
worship with attention to Nelson,
Ann Robinson, Virginia Smith,
Billie Wade

Meeting for Worship with
Attention to Business opened
near the appointed hour.

Review of 07/2021 Minutes

Minutes of the 07/2021 meeting
recorded by Claire Cumbie-
Drake were printed in the August
2021 Friendly Line.

08.21.01 – The July 2021
minutes were approved as printed
in the August *Friendly Line*. If
anyone, upon further review, sees
an error please contact the
recording clerk by the end of this
week. All reported errors will be
corrected in the copy of the
minutes placed in the permanent
minute book.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee Report

(Catherine Dietz-Kilen,
convener) The committee met
July 28, with Catherine Dietz-
Kilen, Cindy Winchell and Dick
Douglass.

Review Monthly Financials –

Kelsea has not yet received the
bank statement from Financial
Plus, so she was unable to have
the June financials ready for our
review. We have closed the
Financial Plus bank account, so
this difficulty should not arise in
the future. Although, Kelsea will
be able to have the financial
reports done before the business

meeting, we decided to hold on
reviewing the June financials at
the business meeting because
they are the end of the year
financials, so it is important for
the committee to review them
first. We expect that we will have
June and July available for
business meeting in September.
Schedule for FC monthly
meetings We had decided to
change our monthly meeting
night to the fourth Tuesday at
7:00 p.m. We will continue to
meet by Zoom.

M&C Representation to the
Finance Committee In the event
that the clerk of M&C would like
to have a representative join us
for our meetings, that person
continues to be welcome.

Financial Activities – We
discussed the means by which
the treasurer can best be kept
informed of the financial
activities of other committees.
The payments that the Treasurer
makes on behalf of the Meeting
fall into three categories: bills,
donations and reimbursements.
Bills – Bills are planned and paid
regularly. They do not need any
action to be taken by any
committee before payment is
made by the Treasurer. An
example of bills; our quarterly
payment to Iowa Yearly
Meeting.

Donations – Donations are
generally made by the Peace and
Social Concerns Committee.
Another example is our
donations to affiliate
organizations that are in our
budget. Cindy and Kelsea will
develop a simple form that Peace
and Social Concerns members
can use when the committee
decides to donate. The form, or
the information for that form,

should be submitted to the
Treasurer so that she will know
that the donation has been
approved by the Peace and Social
Concerns Committee (or any
other committee that is donating
from its budget line) so that she
will know it is authorized. She
will know the amount of the
donation, and where to send the
donation. Payment of the
donations made to the affiliate
organizations that are in our
budget, will be approved by the
Finance Committee.

Reimbursements

Reimbursements are generally
for expenses incurred by
members of the meeting on
behalf of their committees. An
example would be the purchase
of supplies for the kitchen by
members of the Hospitality
Committee. Those committee
members who will be making
purchases are strongly
encouraged to let the Treasurer
know that the purchase has been
made, or if possible, even in
advance of making the purchase.
Doing so allows the Treasurer
and the Finance Committee to
keep aware of the finances of the
organization and also allows the
Treasurer to make timely
reimbursements to members who
incurred the expenses, thereby
avoiding the need to amend
earlier financial reports.

Retention of Financial

Paperwork – Pam Blackburn,
former Treasurer, has all the
paper records for the Meeting's
finances when she was the
Treasurer. Pam has graciously
volunteered to look through any
documents that are more than
seven years old and determine if
anything needs to be retained.
For example, if the installation of

the geothermal heating and cooling system is more than seven years old, then documentation of that cost should be retained. Anything that we do not need to retain that is more than seven years old, Pam will dispose of. For anything that is less than seven years old, Pam will let us know when she has completed her project so the paperwork can be retrieved.

Biennial Corporate Report

When Cindy picked up the mail, she noticed we had a letter from the Secretary of State which indicated that our biennial report was past due. Cindy completed the report for us and updated the records, listing Kelsea as our Treasurer and Cindy as the Registered Agent. We thank Cindy for taking care of this task. **08.21.02** – We listened carefully and with interest to the report of the Finance Committee, reviewed by Catherine Dietz-Kilen, convener. Kelsea, the Meeting’s treasurer, has not yet received the bank statement from Financial Plus and so she could not give a separate Treasurer’s Report.

The committee has changed the day and time of their meetings. They will now be held on the *fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom*. Catherine said that anyone interested in the work of the committee is welcome to attend the meeting.

Catherine also *asked that Friends make a good effort to turn in bills needing reimbursement at the time of a purchase* and not save them up or turn them in to the Treasurer weeks or months later. Every time that happens Kelsea has to go back and edit each report for

the months in which each purchase occurred, so financial reports are accurate.

Ministry & Counsel Committee Report (M&C) (Dorothy Lifka reported on the July and August 2021 M&C meetings.) The Committee considered the concerns of Friends.

Gordon Bivens agreed to continue as convener of the committee for this fiscal year.

M&C expressed appreciation for the work of the Finance Committee and clarified that the M&C liaison to the Finance Committee had been attending Finance Committee meetings on behalf of the meeting clerk. The Finance Committee is now meeting and reporting on a monthly basis and the clerk feels there is no longer a need for either the liaison or the clerk to continue to attend the FC Meetings, unless requested by that committee.

A concern was raised about who should be authorized, (besides the clerk) to use the clerk’s email list that is currently accessible to anyone receiving an email from the clerk, such as the *Friendly Line* or a notice of the death of a member or attender. The clerk’s email list contains the addresses for members and attenders, as well as members or former attenders no longer living in the Des Moines area, but still interested in the life of DSM Valley Meeting. It is also sent to some Quaker organizations that have asked for a subscription for *Friendly Line*. In recent months members/attenders of Meeting have used that list, without consulting the clerk or Meeting, to tell Friends about personal interests they believe others in

Meeting would want to know. Concern was also expressed about the possibility that if more and more F/friends start using the clerk’s list to send out notices, others might start ignoring or even blocking emails from the clerk’s address and end up missing an important announcement. And finally, there was a concern that someone might use the clerk’s list to post something not in keeping with Meeting’s faith or practice.

After a careful discussion M&C recommends that *in the future any email needing to go out to all DSM Valley F/friends be sent through the clerk*. The clerk will discern if the email should be sent to all F/friends and, if so, send it out via the clerk’s email list. If not, the clerk will inform the individual of her discernment and suggest they bring the concern to the appropriate committee for consideration.

F/friends are also asked to consider if it is really necessary to “reply all” every time they respond to an email from the clerk or committee.

08.21.03 – We were happy to receive an update on the work of Ministry & Counsel. Meeting approves the recommendation that all requests for an email to be sent using the clerk’s list of Meeting members and attenders be submitted to the clerk. S/he will discern whether or not the proposed email notice needs to go out to everyone through the email list, be printed in the *Friendly Line* or be posted on Meeting’s website, or possibly isn’t appropriate to be shared widely without further seasoning.

Liaisons to Edna Griffin

Mutual Aid Report (Deborah Fisch and Peter Clay) – Deborah reported that her most recent conversation with Adrienna was just before the business meeting of Seventh Month. She clarified that at that time, Adrienna and she talked about the City having recently given notice to those living in one of the camps near the river that they (the houseless) had a couple of days to move their homes and properties, or they would be removed by the city. It is Deborah's understanding that if people don't move by the deadline, properties (tents, clothing, personal possessions, etc.) are confiscated and destroyed, resulting in some people losing everything they own except the clothing they are wearing and anything they might have had with them that day (backpack and contents, food, etc.) Many residents of the camp community are left with nowhere where they feel safe to sleep or take shelter in inclement weather. They must start all over in finding clothing, food and other things such as lanterns, flashlights, food, cooking pots, coats, gloves, hats, clothing, etc. Homeless shelters have been running full, and besides many will not stay there due to fears such as of COVID-19 exposure, theft or attacks.

Adrienna says that EGMA has been working with Des Moines Mutual Aid to try help feed and find donations of food, clothing and shelters for the houseless, and the City's decision to uproot some of the tent communities has added to those already pushed to the limit needs.

We also talked about an anticipated swell of new homeless individuals and families that would occur after 07/31/2021 if/when the government's ban on evicting those delinquent in paying their rent that was imposed when people started being laid off or losing jobs due the closing of all non-essential businesses and services during the pandemic. Happily, that ban was continued until at least 10/03/2021. That date will be coming up soon enough. Hopefully, since the Delta variant of COVID-19 is on a sharp increase, the ban will be renewed as people continue to be unable to go back to jobs or find jobs that pay enough to cover their costs without having to make choices about rent, food, medication, etc. I suggested at that time that if they found themselves in need of extra help due to the rise of houselessness in the area that they should let Meeting F/friends know because I was fairly sure there were individual F/friends willing to help as they could and the Meeting as a whole would want to discern if there were ways they could be of assistance as well. I will be trying to get in touch with EGMA again to touch base with them.

Would Meeting be willing to continue with this arrangement through fall and/or winter?

8.21.04 – Friends expressed appreciation for the work EGMA is doing and are glad Meeting has been able to make the kitchen available to them to help with that work. Meeting asks Deborah to find out if EGMA would like her to bring a request to Meeting to continue to extend the use of

their kitchen through fall and into winter, whether or not the meetinghouse continues to be used by Meeting or other groups who have begun to use the facility again.

Library Committee Report

(Virginia Smith, convener, via Dorothy Lifka) Virginia has agreed to serve as clerk for one more year. Charlie Brown donated *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, and the Horse*, by Charlie Mackey. It is highly recommended by several who have read it. At first glance it may seem to be a children's book, when in fact it has something to share with people of all ages

08.21.04 – We received the report with thanks to the committee for their work. We are pleased Virginia accepted reappointment as convener to the committee. Special thanks to Charlie Brown who donated a new book to Meeting's library.

Peace & Social Concerns Committee Report (Patty Wengert, convener)

Andrea Holveck set up the Zoom meeting for Patty Wengert to convene the meeting, 07/06/2021. Attending were Patty Wengert, Peter Clay, Jack Holveck. We see that Billie Wade and Steve Shivers are also now on the committee. Our meetings have been on the first Tuesday of the month at noon. Let us know what works best for everyone!

The Committee approved one emergency donation of \$50.00 to be sent to the Friends Peace Teams African Great Lakes Initiative for an emergency

response to a volcano eruption, followed by an earthquake.

Members discussed how we might be supportive of current events and movements recognizing both Indigenous humans/people rights as well as Black Lives Matter humans/personal rights movement. P&SC currently has an ad hoc committee to explore issues related to Right Relationship With Indigenous People among us and how we might study and explore also the "land back" rights/ land recognition/ and or what reparations may be made going back to even, the age old, 40 acres and a mule legislation that are being voiced by our fellow community members actively expressing their rights. Reparation legislation has been proposed in Congress for years regarding just forming a commission to discuss reparations. There are several books and essays we Friends could read and discuss going forward.

Recently there has been recognition that former boarding schools operated by religious groups (including some by Quakers) felt (wrongly) that assimilation was the "right" or only path forward. Discovery of mass graves of children at a school in Canada recently shone a light on this practice. It reminds us that doing what *we* think would be of help to our neighbors may not produce a just result regardless of whether they were good intentions at the era and time. It is documented that forbidding First Language, and requiring assimilation was demanded over preservation of culture language and personal

freedoms; matters contrary to the Constitution.

A member mentioned the hope to partner with another congregation via Zoom to broaden our concept of worship around the world. One member currently has a connection with a group in Rwanda and feels something could be set up there if desired.

Also, there are essays and books on the subject of any reparations for past wrongs of our governments, and our own past privileges. *Between The World and Me*, we and other committees may want to explore.

Our committee will meet via Zoom on 08/03/2021 at noon and we hope to meet for an in-person soup lunch fundraiser for 09/19/2021 after meeting for worship.

Peace and Social Concern Committee Meeting 08/03/2021 (Patricia Wengert, convener) Our committee had hoped to meet via Zoom, but two members had health issues come up on that day, so the meeting was cancelled. The next zoom meeting will be held on 09/07/2021 at noon after Labor Day.

08.21.05 – The clerk read the P&SC Report for July. As noted, there was no committee meeting in August.

Religious Education, Building & Grounds, Hospitality Committees – No Reports

08.21.06 – The clerk requests that the Hospitality Committee be responsible finding hosts for each First Day meeting for worship held at the meetinghouse and for keeping a list. She also asks that the names of hosts for

the upcoming meetings be printed in *Friendly Line*.

New Business

Proposed Letter to Send to Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, Des Moines Mayor Frank Cownie and Members of the Des Moines City Council
08/12/2021

Members of Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) believe that there is that of God in everyone. We believe that all people have the right to lead lives of dignity and are entitled to safe, affordable housing, clean water, healthy food, jobs that pay a living wage and access to a quality education.

Our Quaker testimonies of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality and Stewardship help us express our lives according to our understanding of what our faith requires as we seek to witness to the world. The recent ending of the moratorium on evictions that may result in millions of American families, including thousands of dependent children, losing their homes during the now resurgent COVID-19 pandemic concerns us deeply.

We understand that housing is a complicated issue. We also know that Congress has authorized substantial resources to assist landlords and tenants during these very troubled times. Quakers seek to build what we call "Beloved Community" that includes each of us. Jesus said, "Whatsoever you do to the least of your brothers and sisters you do unto me." The "least" among us are the most vulnerable people

in our Des Moines and Iowa communities. They are our neighbors. In truth, we are one another and our shared future can be bright if we let love guide us. We urge each of you, as leaders in our city and in our state, to do everything you can to get the available resources to the people who desperately need them.

Finally, we encourage and appreciate the creative new approaches to addressing housing inequities that we know you are already exploring so that safe and affordable housing may become a reality for everyone.

Respectfully and on behalf of Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting (Quaker),
Dorothy Lifka, clerk
4211 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50312
clerk@desmoinesvalleyfriends.org

08.21.07 – Meeting unites with the concerns Peter Clay addresses in his proposed letter to Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, Des Moines Mayor Frank Cownie, and members of the Des Moines City Council.

Responsibilities of Host and Hospitality Committee (Dorothy Lifka) With the re-opening of the meetinghouse the clerk has noticed we need to have a plan in place for things like taking out the trash in the restrooms, kitchen and other locations.

08.21.08 - Friends ask that the Hospitality Committee give this some consideration and present a plan at the next monthly meeting.

Announcements

Advice and Queries (clerk) We have started a new fiscal year and

with it we have also begun a new round of reading and responding to the *IYMC Advice & Queries* printed in the Yearly Meeting's *Faith & Practice, the Discipline of IYMC*. Billie Wade volunteered to facilitate the August 25 Query discussion on Meeting for Worship. Dorothy Lifka will facilitate the September Query discussion on Outreach, date to be announced. Deborah Fisch has volunteered to facilitate the October discussion on Advice and Query #3, date and time to be announced. The clerk will send out an email when a date and time is chosen by the convener.

There being no other business, Meeting concluded with a brief time of worship. The next meeting for business is scheduled for 09/12/2021.

News of our Friends

Sadly, former DMVF attender, social worker, peace activist and writer, **Karla Marie Hansen**, has passed away. You can find her obituary at:
https://desmoinesregister-ia-app.newsmemory.com/?publink=2adecd0ef_1345eb3

August Query Discussion - Meeting for Worship

Seven attended the discussion, August 25, led by Billie Wade. **Are our meetings for worship held in a spirit of expectant waiting and communion with the Holy Spirit? How do we prepare for worship?**

One Friend said that she usually feels a sense of community and readiness to worship, “especially as we have ventured back to in-person

meeting. “Just by stepping on the sidewalk and walking into the Meeting House.”

There was general agreement that it is valuable to prepare for meeting for worship, though we don't always manage it. One friend said he has found turning off the television and radio from the time he wakes on First Day morning to be helpful.

A newer member said she finds it beneficial to sit down a bit before worship, take a couple of deep breaths, and ask mystery to “tell me what it wants me to know, what it wants me to do, how it wants me to proceed.”

One member often speaks to the divine light at the beginning of worship, saying “God I'm here listening. I'm trying.”

How do we refer to that which is divine? Does ascribing gender to the Holy Spirit affect our worship?

One Friend who has been reading about the Reformation has been thinking about how we think of and refer to the divine. She grew up Lutheran, where the view of God seemed to be very negative – one had to constantly prove themselves worthy. Now that she has experienced a faith that views God as good and loving, a light within every person, she could not “go back.”

One raised in a black Baptist church experienced the God represented there as male, angry, vengeful, punitive and judgmental, and she witnessed a lot of mean-spirited behavior among member outside of church. In the last few years, she started taking a closer look at approaching the divine. She believes we are all connected, “that the divine is a part of us and

we are a part of it.” She landed on the name “mystery” because other names for the divine seemed so gender assigned, and she thinks the divine probably doesn’t have a name that is available to us as humans.

One said that from early on, she questioned always referring to God in male terms, especially as many of the leaders in her Methodist church were women. She appreciates that Quakerism has always been open to women’s leadership, and that it is respectful of speaking of the divine in many ways.

Another suggested that thinking of God as a spirit can help us avoid applying a gender to God. One voiced the thought that humans’ often narrow, male perception of God, is what has so often divided us.

There is some surprise that the way Quakers think of God doesn’t draw more people to us.

How do we integrate our daily lives with meeting for worship?

We agreed we are “at worship” when we are trying to live a life that respects other people and practices kindness, especially to “the least of these” or those who we interact with routinely.

Thomas Kelly’s “Testament of Devotion” was recommended as a good source of inspiration for approaching everyday life in a spirit of worship undergirding we do.

--- Contributed by Ann Robinson

September Query #2: 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 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? What are we doing to share our faith with others outside our Friends’ community?

How do we speak truth as we know it and yet remain open to truth as understood by others? 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? How do we make the presence of our meeting known to the larger community?

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

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

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

Second Hours Coming Soon: 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.

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, Sept. 24, 2021, to Ann at anny@mediacombb.net

Find us online at: www.desmoinesvalleyfriends.org

Check out our **Facebook** group for members/attenders. To be added, email Jan Falb, at jfalb0326@yahoo.com