

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

FRIENDLY LINE

April 2022



Letter to American Friends Service Committee from DMVF - Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) 3-13-2022

Warm greetings to the American Friends Service Committee Board and to the General Secretary from Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting, Iowa Yearly Meeting, Conservative.

We write to express our concerns about the ongoing process examining restructuring the AFSC and formally changing how program decisions are made. We agree that our collective seeking to optimize the effectiveness of the Strategic Plan is important. But this process, though slowed down in response to concerns raised by many individual Friends, remains a source of division. We are troubled by the impact on the organization and on the people who are the heart of the AFSC. This includes the communities where and with whom we work.

We truly love and care deeply about the AFSC, whose presence in Iowa dates back to the 1930s. Until the recent closure of the Iowa program and the Des Moines office the relationship between our Friends meeting and the AFSC was strong and vibrant. With these recent changes that relationship has been strained and challenged.

We believe that the restructuring process needs to stop until greater unity is found. The wisdom of Quaker process is that we understand that to move forward without substantial unity is a mistake. As a meeting, conducting our business while grounded in worship, we slow down or stop when we must. We urge you to follow Quaker process now.

Our close relationship with the AFSC was grounded in joining and supporting the wonderful work of the Iowa program, which included many Friends from our meeting serving on the local program committee. Listening to seasoned voices with decades of service to the AFSC we are concerned that any further, and formal, diminishment of the “agency” of the local staff in the remaining four regions in the U.S. to make their own decisions will be a profound mistake. They, and the communities where they work, know best how to be effective. We believe such changes will further erode relationships between the AFSC and Friends meetings and churches. Restoring the power of local program staff to make important decisions in consultation with the communities where we work is the best way forward. Restoring the diminished role of the regional executive committees is also crucial. Our shared mission, and the vision provided in the

A Quaker Minute

There is that of God in everyone.

Friends believe each person is endowed with a measure of the Light, and that as a consequence, all of life is sacred and interconnected.

-- *One in a series on Quaker history and practice, contributed by Pam Blackburn and Jan Falb. This month, adapted from Nine Core Quaker Beliefs, as presented by Arthur Larrabee on Quakerspeak.*

Hosting List for Upcoming First Days

April 10 – Charlie Brown
April 17 – Ann Robinson
April 24 – Deborah & Katie
May 1 – David & Claire
May 8 – Jim & Catherine

Strategic Plan, guides us all. Your support and leadership is essential for our shared success. We are mindful of and appreciate the co-design process now ongoing and hope that the revised proposal will reflect all of our wisdom and experience and will result in widespread unity in support of the best way forward for the AFSC.

The process of creating the ten-year Strategic Plan was inclusive
(continued on page 6)

**Des Moines Valley
Friends Meeting
Meeting for Worship with
Attention to Business
3/13/2022**

Meeting began with a period of worshipful Silence.

Those present included: Deborah Fisch, Bob Henderson, Andrea Holveck, Jack Holveck, Dorothy Lifka, Susan Meyers, DJ Newlin, Patty Reynolds, Virginia Smith. Deborah Fisch served as clerk, since Dorothy Lifka, the presiding clerk, just recently returned from a s trip and did not have time to prepare for the meeting.

The clerk tried sharing a rendition of “Song of Peace” she recently heard on YouTube. However, since she was not listed as host she could not share her screen and it was too difficult for F/friends to hear it over her computer speakers. Since the words of the song seemed especially tender considering the terrible invasion and killing by Russia against people of the Ukraine, the continuing COVID pandemic still claiming thousands of lives a day, the growing evidence of climate change causing erratic and severe weather across the nation and around the world, and the State government seemingly set on taking away human rights rather than protecting them, the acting clerk suggested she include them in the minutes, which was approved.

“Song of Peace,” set to the tune of “Finlandia,” words by Lloyd Jones and third verse by Georgia Harkness:

*1) This is my song, thou God of all
the nations*

*A song of peace for lands afar and
mine*

*This is my home, the country where
my heart is*

*Here are my hopes, my dreams, my
holy shrine*

*But other hearts in other lands are
beating*

*With hopes and dreams as true &
high as mine.*

*2) My country's skies are bluer
than the ocean.*

*And sunlight beams on clover leaf
and pine.*

*But other lands have sunlight too
& clover,*

*And skies are everywhere as blue as
mine.*

*Oh hear my song, thou God of all
the nations*

*A song for peace, for their lands &
for mine.*

*3) This is my song of peace for their
land and for mine*

*May truth & freedom come to every
nation*

*May peace abound where strife has
raged so long*

*That each may seek to love & build
together*

*A world united, righting every
wrong*

*A world united in its love for
freedom*

*Proclaiming peace together in one
song.*

Review of 01/2022 Minutes –

Friends reviewed the February 2022 minutes as published in the most recent issue of *Friendly Line*. If a F/friend finds a typo or other correction in the minutes within the next week, the minutes will be amended by the recording clerk (Deborah Fisch) so they can be corrected for the official Minutebook. Any major error will be brought before the next business meeting for reapproval.

Minute– The minutes for the 02/2022 business meeting were reviewed and approved.

Treasurer's Report No report.

The January and February reports will be reviewed at the April meeting for business.

Finance Committee Report

(Catherine Dietz-Kilen, convener) The Finance Committee met on 02/22/2022 via Zoom. Attendees: Catherine Dietz-Kilen, Kelsea Gillespie, Cindy Winchell and Dick Douglass.

- 1) The committee did not review the financial statements for 01/2022 because they were not yet ready. The committee will review them next month. Kelsea reported that she had made all the payments to the affiliated organizations as she had been authorized to do by Finance Committee (FC) at the December meeting.
- 2) The committee discussed the funds that had been designated for technology upgrades, and with the blessing with the anonymous donor, decided to transfer \$1,000 from the designated Restricted Technology Fund to the Peace and Social Concerns Designated Fund.
- 3) The process of rescheduling the inaugural Friendly Audit has begun. The Committee hopes to find a time in the next two or three weeks when everybody will be available.
- 4) The FC began our discussion of the 2022-2023 fiscal year proposed budget. We do not envision any significant changes to the budget, but we did put together a list of questions to address to some

of the other committees and hope to have the answers before we meet again for our March meeting.

- 5) Other business – Kelsea announced to our pleasure, that she and Pam have completed the transfer of the control of our QuickBooks account over to Kelsea as our new treasurer. Additionally, it was decided that Kelsea will set up a Gmail account for the Meeting’s treasurer, which will be more convenient, and which she will link to her own Gmail account for the time being. When the day comes for Kelsea to pass on her role as treasurer, it will be easy for her to pass over the account to a new treasurer, who will have a “paper trail” of the correspondence for the treasurer.

The Committee discussed the possibility of meeting every two months instead of each month. We will continue to meet once a month through the end of this fiscal year with the goal of having everything so firmly in place that it will be possible to meet every two months in the upcoming fiscal year with the understanding that we can always schedule an additional meeting should the need arise.

Minute 03.22.02 – Meeting listened carefully to the report of the Finance Committee and looks forward to receiving the proposed budget for FY 2023 at a future business meeting. We approve the report with thanks.

Friendly Audit Report – The inaugural Friendly Audit was held 03/01/2022 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom. Present were: Finance

Committee (Catherine Dietz-Kilen, convener; Kelsea Gillespie, treasurer; Cindy Winchell, assistant treasurer; and Dick Douglass); Audit Committee (Dorothy Lifka and Billie Wade). Revised 03/05/2022, 6:41 p.m.

We opened with a few moments of Silence. Catherine Dietz-Kilen and Kelsea Gillespie provided an overview of the purpose and process:

Purpose

- Transparency
- Procedures—what works, what doesn’t.

Process

- Review bank statements, QuickBooks records, and treasurer’s report for accuracy, consistency

Kelsea Gillespie took over as treasurer in 02/2021 after over two decades of service by Pam Blackburn. Pam spent countless hours transitioning Kelsea in order to keep the finances running as smoothly as possible, and the two worked closely to address all known financial concerns before the transition was complete.

- On 07/08/2021, the Financial Plus bank account was closed, with all funds moved into EBank.

Kelsea and Cindy Winchell explained our EBank accounts:

- Savings account earns interest, checking does not.
- Des Moines Valley Friends (DMVF) pays Iowa Yearly Meeting, Conservative (IYMC) \$14,500 over the course of the fiscal year, which is broken down into quarterly payments.

- For Friends House, DMVF reimburses for either 1/2 or 1/3 of the total bill depending on prior agreements; we also have a few set payments (such as internet at \$60/quarter) that fall outside the 1/2 and 1/3 agreement.
- The issues brought to light in Randy Adam's audit were discussed, and it was agreed the concerns had been rectified.

Kelsea discussed the summary statements which provide the aging of accounts receivable:

- DMVF is not to be used as a pass-through organization.
- Contribution is deposited into the Peace & Social Concerns Committee (P&SC) fund or the Sharing Fund which is administered by Ministry & Counsel Committee (M&C).
- All donations are confidential.

Cindy picks up the mail weekly:

- Mail for Finance Committee is left on a shelf of the bookcase
- Kelsea suggested a lock box; Dorothy shared we have a beautiful one crafted by a former Friend.
- Cindy recommended two lock boxes—one for checks, the other for mail
- Keys to lock boxes would be given to Dorothy, Cindy, Kelsea and the Friends House manager
- Dorothy will pick up mail from lock box
- Catherine will price lock boxes and present her findings to the Finance Committee for budget
- For years, Pam had the solitary monumental task of

the financial records. We expressed appreciation for her dedication.

- The big audit by Randy Adams also showed a need for three people with access to the accounts and records as a safety net if one person is unavailable.
- In addition to bank statements and QuickBooks, Catherine, Kelsea, and Cindy serve as accountability and support partners.
- Dorothy emphasized the need for everyone in DMVF to serve on the Audit Committee at some point. One person would rotate off and one new person would join the committee member from the previous year.

We completed the audit in approximately two hours, feeling confident that the finances are handled and addressed appropriately.

Respectfully submitted, Billie Wade

Minute 03.22.03 – We were pleased to receive a comprehensive inaugural Friendly Audit from Billie Wade and Dorothy Lifka and thank them for their good service. We also want to thank the Finance Committee, the treasurer and assistant treasurer for their continued faithful and careful care of our resources and coming up with a workable and fair budget each year. And we want to acknowledge the important and careful work our previous treasurer, Pam Blackburn, did in helping the new treasurer learn the ropes, as well as her faithful service

Ministry & Counsel Committee Report (Gordon Bivens, convener) - Ministry & Counsel Committee (M&C) holds a scheduled meeting the first Sunday from at approximately 8:30 – 9:45 AM prior to worship. This month that was 03/06. The meeting was conducted via Zoom. The meeting opened and closed with a time of waiting worship. Again this month, the main business was to consider the well-being and care of Meeting members and attenders. A clearness for membership meeting for Billie Wade has been set for 03/07 and we look forward to receiving their recommendation next month. If you have a concern or request for M&C please contact Gordon Bivens prior to our next scheduled meeting on 04/03.

Minute 03.22.04 – Meeting expresses appreciation for the faithful and loving service of the Ministry & Counsel Committee that so often takes place behind the scenes. We accept the report with thanks. Meeting approves.

Buildings & Grounds Committee Report – The clerks did not receive a written report. However, we received the following information from Bob Henderson and Fred Nelson. Bob cleaned the outside of the meetinghouse windows and updated the Zoom program and the computer system. He noticed someone backed a large vehicle into the back driveway and did some damage to the road surface. There are two “For Rent” signs in front yard - Social Ministry moved out. There are at least two open offices in Friends House.

Fred pruned the indoor plants.

Minute 03.22.05 – We appreciated hearing about the upkeep work that Bob Henderson and Fred Nelson have been doing and thank them for their continuing care of the meetinghouse. Meeting approves.

Hospitality Committee Report (Charlie Brown, convener) There will be a cleanup morning, April 16, starting at 10:00 a.m.

There will be a talent show during Second Hour on May 15. There will be more information down the road.

Re-Opening Committee Report (Dorothy Lifka, convener) 02/2022 – The members of the Re-opening Committee, David Drake, Andrea Holveck, Deborah Fisch and Dorothy Lifka discussed the revised CDC recommendations for masks during indoor gatherings via email. The committee members were not in unity about a suggestion that masks be considered optional at the meetinghouse and agreed to forward the issue to meeting for business for discussion.

Minute 03.22.06 – We appreciate the careful work done by this committee during the COVID-19 pandemic and are grateful that most of us have managed to stay well. F/friends carefully considered the pros and cons of making masks optional at this time, keeping in mind the most recent recommendations of the CDC indicating that in most cases it is no longer necessary to wear masks for small indoor gatherings. We acknowledge that our children under five still cannot receive vaccinations against the virus and that we have a few members (both older

and younger) whose health is such that contracting COVID-19 or any of its variations could be life-threatening. We want them to be able to attend in person if at all possible. We are grateful for the excellent Zoom setup that allows F/friends to join from a distance. However, many F/friends expressed a desire to finally be able to see each other's faces when gathering at the meetinghouse now that the new safety recommendation state it is safe. Masks have made it more difficult to hear ministry during worship for those both in the room and joining by Zoom. Having considered all these things Friends found unity with:

- 1) Making masking at the meetinghouse voluntary for those who have been fully vaccinated.
- 2) Strongly encouraging anyone not feeling well to stay home and join worship via Zoom.
- 3) Keeping masks available upon entry to the meetinghouse
- 4) Expecting everyone to wear a mask if someone requests it for safety reasons.
- 5) Continuing social distancing at the meetinghouse.

F/friends are hopeful more will feel safe to rejoin those worshipping at the meetinghouse whenever possible.

We know that the world has not yet conquered the COVID-19 virus and its variants and that there may be the need to return to masking if recommended by CDC. Friends ask the committee to continue to monitor any changes to the guidelines and make new recommendations as appropriate.

Nominating Committee Report (Dorothy Lifka, convener) – Dorothy Lifka has rotated off the committee and Dick Douglass has rotated on. Claire Cumbie-Drake and Carol Spaulding Kruse continue on the committee with Claire convening for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Minute 03.22.07 – We appreciate the work of the Nominating Committee and especially thank Dorothy Lifka, who is rotating off the committee, for her faithful service. We also thank Dick Douglass for being willing to rotate onto the committee, and Claire Cumbie-Drake for taking over as convener of the committee. Meeting approves.

Peace & Social Concerns Committee Report (Patty Wengert, convener) – A Zoom meeting was held 03/01/2022. In attendance were Billie Wade, Patty Wengert, Peter Clay and Jack Holveck. We started with a moment of Silence after a short statement for peace and hope for ourselves and the people of Ukraine.

The committee looks forward to a Second Hour Zoom discussion on 04/17.

We discussed past donations and commitments. We also reviewed the affiliate and membership organizations we belong to at this time. We will exchange messages about our ideas before our 04/05 committee meeting.

We have at least nine annual events that local peace organizations hold, including Annual Tax Protest Day, Bishop Dingman Award Dinner, Palm Sunday Peace Procession, Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Commemoration Ceremony, Earth Day, Women's International Peace Day, Feast Of the Holy Innocents, and Alternative Holiday Gift Sale and backpack distribution by Hope Ministries. These are all events we have historically financially co-sponsored over the years.

Committee members discussed the reorganization of the AFSC. The committee would like a letter from our meeting to suggest that the ASFSC use Quaker methods to better allow confidence in the mission of the group. (See the resulting letter, shared in this newsletter, beginning on page 1.)

We will meet on 04/05/2022 at noon via Zoom.

Thank you everyone.

Minute 03.22.08 – We appreciate the many things the P&SC Committee keeps track of on our behalf. We look forward to their Second Hour presentation on 04/17 considering the work of P&SC and helping discern Meeting's priorities for the work of their committee. We hope many members/attenders will be able to participate. Meeting approves.

Other Business

There is no old or new business to consider at this time.

Announcements

Midyear Meeting will be held 03/26 & 27 via Zoom again this year. You must register to attend, as the Zoom address is sent to those who are registered. Ruth Hampton of Whittier Monthly Meeting and current clerk of Scattergood Friends School & Farm Committee is the presenter. There are flyers in the entry way and information on her

presentation is also on the IYMC website. The Midyear Planning Committee suggests Friends may want to gather in their meeting houses or in small groups in homes if they have Wi-Fi and Zoom available so F/friends can have at least some worship and fellowship together.

Meeting Closes – With no additional business, meeting for worship with attention to business ended with a period of silent worship.

The next meeting for worship with attention to business is scheduled for 04/10/2022.

Letter to AFSC

(continued from page 1)

and well considered. We strongly support the current plan, which is now in year three. We strongly agree with the three broad areas of focus for our work- Sustainable Peace, An Economy that Works for People and Earth and Just Approaches to Forced Displacement and Migration. Aspiring to be as effective as possible in creating systems change, this plan is well grounded in Quaker values and testimonies. However, the real power to create systems change comes from sharing power rather than formalizing most power to reside in the Philadelphia office. Transformative change always comes from the grassroots. This is our voice, emerging from the unity of our monthly meeting.

This letter was approved during the regular business meeting of Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting on 03/13/2022. Sincerely and on behalf of Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting,
-- Dorothy Lifka, clerk

NEWS of OUR FRIENDS



(From left): Corey, Whitney, Charlie and Susan in Belize.

Susan Myers and Charlie Brown recently returned from a special trip to the town of Caye Caulker, Belize, with Susan's son Corey and his wife Whitney. Susan reports, "We had a blast – soaking up the sun by our little inn's pool, visiting with Belizean street vendors, snorkeling and loving up the town's many friendly and apparently community-owned dogs. While the warm temps and salty air, were a welcome interlude to our apparent never-ending winter, the best part of our break was to be with Whitney and Corey. We couldn't have chosen better humans for fellowship and fun."

A happy post-script: Corey has just begun a new position with his Atlanta law firm as director of pro-bono client relations.

Gordon and Martha Bivens were featured in the February, Valentine's Day/Month issue of "Indianola Living" magazine. The sweet and inspiring story of how they found each other is under the heading, "It's never too late to find love again."

Query Discussion #6: Family and Home

Present: Jack Holveck, Andrea Holveck, Billie Wade convener, Brock Wommack, recorder
QUERIES:

How can we most effectively foster a spirit of inquiry and a loving and understanding attitude toward life?

What effort are we making to become better acquainted with the Bible, the teachings of Jesus, our Judeo/Christian heritage, the history and principles of Friends, and the contributions of other religions and philosophies to our spiritual heritage?

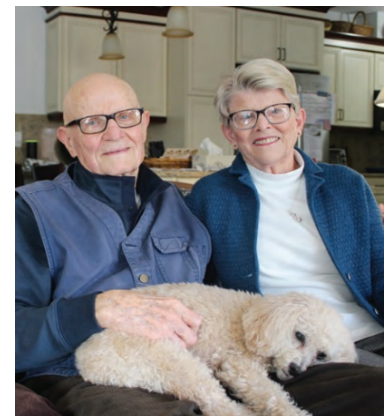
In what ways can we encourage an educational process that is consistent with the values Friends cherish?

How do gender based expectations affect the goal we set and the way we learn?

Do we take an active and supportive interest in schools, libraries and other educational resources in our communities and elsewhere?

How do we prepare ourselves and our children to play active roles in a changing world?

(continued on page 7)



Gordon and Martha Bivens with Marley.

DISCUSSION: This record will be brief for the simple reason that with such a small group, our discussion of the Query concerning home and family quickly became intimate: thus not suitable for public record. I will therefore record general themes and points of view for your consideration of our Meeting.

We opened in silence.

As parents, we cannot beat ourselves up for the way our children “turn out.” Each of us comes into the world as a unique spirit. There is a naiveté common to expectant parents that by their guidance and example, the child will reflect the parent’s intentions. It has never been so.

The Meeting also strives to foster care and concern, love and inclusion to children; yet the individual spirit will absorb or reject what it will.

Peers both within the Meeting and outside within the community seem to have the upper hand in guiding the youth’s spirit on its path.

Every parent seeks a “do over” for at least one moment of parenting.

Members of Meeting put a lot of work into the family of the Meeting. Our Meeting is a great teacher and parent, often offering each of us a second chance without judgement; adults and children.

Mistakes happen! There can be a long-suffering grief that leads to seemingly magical spiritual revelations when the way clears, opening to bring Light upon our mistakes.

It is crucial not to use the Bible as a weapon rather than as a loving guide. Some may seek to

find peace in using control issues, when in fact no one is in control!

We ended in profound silence and worship. March 6th, 2022.

Do you have an update for the DMVF directory?

The DMVF directory is an important way we stay in touch with our community.

Please send any updates to your contact listing (address, email or preferred phone number) in the Des Moines Valley Friends directory to directly to Carol Spaulding-Kruse at carol.spaulding@drake.edu

Also, please let her know if you would like to be added to the directory if you are not already listed – or deleted.

Thank you, Carol, for helping keep this list maintained!

Many Americans oppose Gaza blockade

Last November, the American Friends Service Committee conducted a poll of 1,000 U.S. adults to learn what people thought about the Gaza blockade, and whether having more information would influence their thinking. Jennifer Bing and Beth Hollowell of AFSC write that about half of U.S. adults oppose the Gaza blockade.

Jennifer also took part in a recent webinar on Land Day and the Gaza Great March of Return. Join her and others for the next AFSC No Way to Treat a Child webinar on the Israeli military detention system set for Tuesday, April 12, 11:00 am CT.

-- from AFSC Midwest Digest, April 2022

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:

April 17 – Peace & Social Concerns presentation, directly after worship (Billie)

April 24 - Journey to Friends, with Jack Holveck and Claire Cumbie-Drake (Carol)

May 15 – Talent Show (Charlie)

Query Discussions: First Sundays - Online & in person. Billie Wade, facilitator

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:

Direct questions about the building or grounds of the Meetinghouse 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 Charlie Brown, 515-689-6470.

Friendly Line: Send info for next Friendly Line to Ann at anny@mediacommb.net by Friday, April 29, 2022.

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