

Penn Notes

William Penn House

March 2006

Our 40th Anniversary Year

This year William Penn House celebrates its fortieth year. Looking back over our forty years of ministry gives us an opportunity to see where we have come from and to contemplate where we're headed.

During the early 1960's, the Friends Meeting of Washington (FMW) had sponsored a seminar series focusing on Quaker witness. The Seminar Committee included members who were central to both the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). In 1964, Ed Snyder, the director of FCNL, spent the fall at the Quaker UN Office where Bob Cory was then on the staff. Ed returned "convinced that Quakers should have a house on Capitol Hill similar to Quaker House in New York, close to the United Nations."

The Capitol Hill Property Committee was formed and found the property at 515 East Capitol St., SE. Bob and Sally Cory indicated that as they completed their assignment at the Quaker UN office they were available to "...host ..visitors and serve as coordinators of the Seminar Program," which now included the house on Capitol Hill. In May of 1966 the Trustees of FMW presented a minute asking the Meeting to sponsor the purchase of the property.

Bob and Sally moved to Washington with their children, Lois, Bart, Eric and Lincoln, to make the William Penn House a reality. They had an abundant background in administering work camps, running foreign student seminars and providing hospitality for refugees from Europe.

The founders could not have foreseen the abun-

dance of major peace and justice demonstrations which provided a "baptism by fire" for William Penn House. Protests against the war in Southeast Asia were followed in 1968 by the *Poor People's Campaign*. Later came the Native American *Trail of Broken Treaties* and then the *People's Revolutionary Constitutional Convention*. Besides being a center for demonstration strategy and non-violence training, William Penn House quickly became a place where congressional staff members and citizen action leaders could meet to discuss public policy issues.

As the busy, volatile 60's became the calmer 70's, 80's and 90's, William Penn House changed as well. Our emphasis shifted toward education about public policy issues. Adult and youth groups came to learn from diplomats, government officials, researchers at think tanks and leaders of non-governmental organizations. Groups and individuals staying at the house took full advantage of the proximity to the Capitol to visit with legislators to share their views.



Bob & Sally Cory

Today we continue to expand this legacy of witness and service and to provide affordable lodging to citizen activists. We offer seminars on teaching peace; we have expanded our service opportunities through the incorporation of Washington Quaker Work-camps into our programs; we have restructured our Quaker Youth Seminar to include the work of AFSC and FCNL; and, through our internship program, we nurture the spiritual lives of young adult Friends.

We have worked hard to improve the accommodations, to be good stewards of this historic row home, and to be faithful to the legacy of those who previously served William Penn House. ■

Hold Peace in Your Hands

Our Friends from the Port Townsend (Washington) Friends Meeting recently presented us with a gift of one of the peace balls created by artist Phoebe Huffman, a member of their meeting. It embodies the message of William Penn who said "True godliness doesn't turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it and excites their endeavors to mend it."



The following is Phoebe's explanation of the concepts inscribed on the tiles of the peace ball:

"There are six bands woven around the peace dove pentagons. I see these concepts as interdependent on each other.

- Red Band—the main concepts behind peace work: Justice, equality, human rights, security and advocacy.
- Yellow Band—Basic human needs.
- Aqua band—Peacemaking tools.
- Blue band & Purple Band—Attributes and qualities for peacemaking.
- Green Band—Caring for our earth.

Hopefully this ball can be a helper for talking about peace with ourselves and others, and for personal reflection on how we are living and working towards peace. "

Thank you Port Townsend Friends. ■

"I Have a Dream..." The 2006 Quaker Youth Seminar

On October 13-16, 2006 a dozen high-school aged young Friends from across the country and a dozen DC area students involved in AFSC's Help Increase the Peace Program (HIPP) will spend a weekend together at William Penn House. The purpose will be to explore together issues of racism, civil rights and democracy, and to think about what comes after the dream of equality. What is the reality of equality in today's world? What can we do to make the dream more of a reality?

Preliminary plans include a visit to the halls of Congress and a visit to one of DC's African American neighborhoods, an area rich in history. The weekend will include HIPP training exercises, discussions of the life and work of Martin Luther King, Jr., a presentation on current legislative initiatives to fight discrimination, and a walk to the Lincoln Memorial.

We are hoping that this weekend will broaden horizons, foster friendships, shed new light on the Quaker testimony of equality, and rekindle our commitment to overcome racism. If you think your meeting might be interested in sponsoring someone to attend this seminar, or you know of a young Friend who would be interested, please let us know so we can send them an application.

Our hope is that Friends Meetings will support one or two young Friends in attending, and ask them to report back on what they experienced and how they would like to see Friends back home follow up on concerns about equality and racism. Young Friends will feel wonderfully empowered and knitted into the meeting community if they know that their service and their opinions are valued by their meeting. They may also be able to spread the seeds of what promises to be an extraordinary experience within the wider Quaker community.

Planning for this program has involved an exciting collaboration between AFSC, FCNL, Friends Meeting of Washington and William Penn House. We look forward to sharing that energy with Friends across the country, and seeing what kinds of collaboration can be fostered locally. We look forward to giving our young people an opportunity to envision a world free of racism and to engage with the Quaker commitment to equality for all God's children. ■

Deborah Haines, WPH Board



Our New Intern Natasha Almonor

Salutations to my new circle of *Friends*! The D.C. area has gradually become my hometown during college and graduate level studies at Howard, Trinity and George Mason Universities. My professional focus has evolved around the development and evaluation of language learning software. As a New York-bred, Afro-Caribbean* American Muslim woman, the advancement of multilingual-multicultural education has spanned nearly my entire adulthood—comprising both career and avocation. I have recently returned from a two-year stint at the University of South Carolina and am transitioning into doctoral study in Computational Linguistics at the University of Maryland.

The initial month of my internship has confirmed my suspicion as to the most enriching way to begin each day. Although my new housemates could easily affirm that I'm not a "morning person," I have, since my teen years, flirted with spiritual regimens that awakened me with the dawn. Sitting Head of Meeting at morning worship several mornings per week has proven a most blessed duty.

I pray I might contribute to experiences others will find equally edifying. I am working with Bernadette Odyniec to plan our next Teachers of Peace Seminar and with Patricia Newkirk to enhance the aesthetics of our space. As I better acquaint myself with my colleagues and their work, I look forward to becoming more involved with other ongoing programs. I welcome suggestions and invitations to collaborate wherever I may be of use. I cherish the wonderful friendships which render the William Penn House as home.

*WARNING: One of my many quirks to be forgiven is compulsively sharing at least one hilarious "My cousins and I..."—story daily! ■

The work of Washington Quaker Workcamps continues to grow in exciting ways. This past fall, we led 8 overnight workcamps, compared with only 3 one year ago. The workcampers came from three Friends schools, a Unitarian Universalist congregation, a summer youth peace-building program, and a local Presbyterian church.

We continued our home repair program this fall, working with two area schools, Georgetown Day School and Sidwell Friends School. We began work on our second home in September, and finished that project in January. On February 1, we began work on our third and fourth homes, two row houses in the same block, in the Brightwood Park neighborhood of Northwest Washington.

One of our fall weekend workcamp groups helped with our home repair project, and the others worked with our long-time partners at **Martha's Table**, **Washington Parks & People**, **Zacchaeus Community Kitchen**, and the **Anacostia Watershed Society**, and new partners **Christian Communities Group Homes** and **Community Family Life Services**.

We continue to have success bringing Quaker groups into the program: in the next several months, we will lead workcamps with the 11th grade of **Oakwood Friends School** (from Poughkeepsie, NY), upper school students from **Sandy Spring Friends School**, the 5th grade from **Tandem Friends School** (from Charlottesville, VA), and first-day school groups from two local monthly meetings. ■

Andrei Israel
WQW Program Coordinator



Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

I want to support the mission of William Penn House to make visible the Quaker Testimonies of Peace, Simplicity, Equality, Truth and Community.

Please make gifts payable to William Penn House and send to: 515 E. Capitol St. SE,
Washington, DC 20003

Enclosed is my gift of \$50 \$100 \$500 Other

I/we authorize William Penn House to charge my/our account in the amount of: _____

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Coming Events

Peace Garden Dedication

Our peace pole, a wooden post with the words "May Peace Prevail on Earth" in 8 different languages, will be installed in the newly landscaped front garden. Join us for the dedication on **Saturday, April 22, 2006 at 2 p.m.**

Anniversary Bike Ride Fundraiser

Join us for a day of fun — ride 4 miles or 40 with other bike enthusiasts. Scheduled for **Saturday, September 16th, 2006.** For more information and to register, visit our web site at www.wmpennhouse.org/bikeride.html.

Quaker Youth Seminar—"I Have a Dream"

October 13-16, 2006 Registration is Limited
—see the article on page 2—

40th Anniversary Celebration

October—day TBD

Teachers of Peace Seminar

November 2-5, 2006

A Quaker Center
located on Capitol Hill

515 East Capitol Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

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