

# Penn Notes

William Penn House

Fall 2005

## A Year of Growth, Gratitude and Possibility

It is early morning here on Capitol Hill. The heat of August has finally broken. I have bought my cup of coffee and wandered down to the patio of the Botanical Garden across from the Capitol to write this article.

I find myself so mixed these days, wondering sometimes if what I think and what I do makes any difference in the world. I think about global poverty, wars, the sad state of the public schools here in D.C., or the difficult conversation between conservatives and progressives.

Then I think about the people who come through the House in waves

...the young adults here for a week of study on citizen diplomacy, human rights or preparing to spend a year working on hunger issues

...Quakers and other activists that flow through here on their way to FCNL meetings, AFSC activities, to lobby their congressional representatives on Native American rights, the Middle East or environmental issues

...the busloads of young people here to spend a week with Washington Quaker Workcamps fixing someone's home and feeding the hungry

...the teachers attending our Teachers of Peace weekend.

I am reminded that there is a wealth of caring people in this world and that this House is supporting and encouraging them.

Two years ago, when I first arrived, the Board had just finished a visioning process. As I was trying to get my mind around the vision and the reality of the House, I saw that if our lodging revenue could cover the operating costs of the house, then we could use our contributions to support the programs and major repair and renovation that an old building like this requires. To achieve this goal we would need an **average** occupancy of 60%! Our occupancy rate had never been that high, and had dropped to 35% after the tragedy of 9/11.

With good marketing and word-of-mouth advertising about new programs I am happy to say that occupancy has been above 60% in 6 of the last 12 months. It takes us about \$180,000 a year to cover the basic costs of the house. We are just \$20,000 away from meeting this important bottom line. That means that the generous contributions that you send are being spent on supporting our growing program.

The Washington Quaker Workcamps held 15 workcamps from April through August. To keep this program growing, we have hired a part-time staff member to help with the workload and expand workcamp opportunities. We have also hired a part-time staff member to focus on solely on program

*"Thank you for your love, your hospitality, for being a launching pad for our youth in mission and a respite for our tired bodies at the end of the day. You have gently taught us the way of the Friends in love and peace."*

*The Youth from the Middle School Mission Trip,  
The Presbyterian Church in Westfield, NJ*

development (meet Helen and Bernadette on page 3).

The most surprising aspect of this house just seems to happen around the edges — Quaker outreach. Each week our guest book is filled with gratitude for this spiritual haven. The Quaker staff, the morning worship, the library of Quaker literature surround our guests, nurture them and provide them rest.

There is no reason our House shouldn't be full the whole year round, and we are working to make it that way. Thanks for your help. ■

*The author, Patricia Newkirk, is the Associate Director of William Penn House.*

## Teachers of Peace: Educating for Peace and Social Change

Last year's workshop on teaching peace was so well received that we applied for additional funding from the Chace Fund. They responded with another generous grant, and we are making plans for three additional seminars.

Several participants from last year's workshop have joined us to tailor the event to better meet their needs and will join the facilitation team for the seminars in October and March of 2006. These two seminars are for teachers of elementary through high-school aged students.

The seminar in October *Teachers of Peace: Educating for Peace and Social Change*, will be held from Thursday evening, October 20th, through noon on Sunday, October 23rd. In a supportive Quaker community, participants will explore peacemaking through the lens of Multi-Track Diplomacy – a holistic framework for both understanding and teaching peace. They will feed their imaginations in sessions featuring peacemakers from a variety of "tracks," and begin envisioning and creating their own units, lesson plans and courses for teaching peace and social change.

To be eligible to attend, participants must complete an application; agree to create a unit, lesson or course on peace and social change; and plan to share their learning by writing an article or making a presentation to their peers. The seminar is free, but limited to just 20 participants. Meals, lodging and transportation costs are included.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in gaining a new perspective on teaching peace and social change, building a network of supportive colleagues, and experiencing sample peace and social change curricula, please visit our web site [www.WmPennHouse.org](http://www.WmPennHouse.org) to download an application. Or contact Bernadette or Patricia at the William Penn House (202-543-5560).

University level educators were also very intrigued by the workshop last year and are hoping to further the discussion on teaching peace from the perspective of higher education. Plans are still in the making for gathering more college and university professors together again to discuss next steps. ■

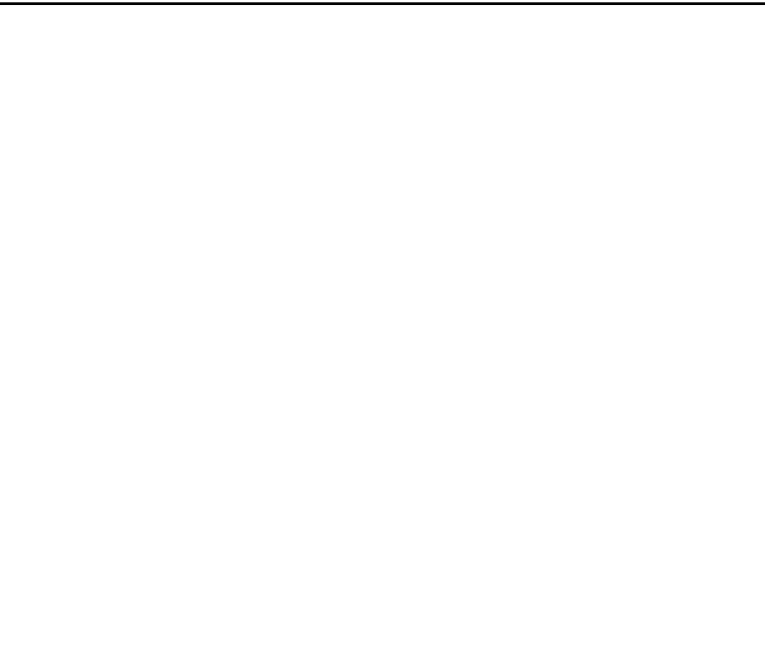
### Helen McClure — Washington Quaker Workcamps Project Leader

I was raised in the Detroit Friends Meeting, and every summer from the time I was five years old, I've been going to Camp NeeKauNis, a camp under the care of the Canadian Yearly Meeting. For the past two summers, I have co-directed NeeKauNis's Community Camp; a ten-day, all-ages, all-family situations (or lack thereof) camp. These are my Quaker roots, and where my values were formed. In college I worked with Peace Games, a group of college students who team-taught conflict resolution skills through cooperative games to elementary school students, mainly in Harlem and Washington Heights in New York City.

By a twist of fate, I ended up accepting a space in a PhD program in international relations, concentrating in conflict resolution and race relations. That program brought me to DC, where I discovered the Friends Meeting of Washington (FMW) and became involved in the Young Adult Friends group (YAF).

Andrei, another member of YAF, mentioned his work with WQW and I told him I was very interested in getting involved. I helped lead the occasional workcamp, including the one in Caretta, WV and the Wednesday morning workcamp. As the year and the workcamp progressed, I began to have a clearer view of how my own service fit in. Rather than my service being to help people by fixing up their houses, it was more to help young people explore what service means as they help people by fixing up their house. When the program decided to add a part-time position, I knew that that step was the one I wanted to take on this winding path to wherever it is I'm going.

Now, I'm part-time Project Leader for WQW, which means I'm helping organize and lead workcamps. Right now the major project on my plate is helping to set up a new home repair workcamp. For the 2005-06 school year, we'll have a group of about a dozen middle school students coming every week for about two hours to help fix up the home of someone who is unable to do the maintenance alone. The challenge at the moment is finding the house, because we've found the kids. It's been a very interesting experience so far, and I look forward to continuing this work. ■



**Bernadette Odyniec, Helen McClure  
and Janaki Spickard-Kellor**

**Bernadette Odyniec — Program Coordinator**

My name is Bernadette Odyniec (O-din-yits) and I started as William Penn House’s part-time Program Coordinator in early July. I bring with me a master’s degree in education, a certificate in Peace and Reconciliation Studies, and 20 years experience designing, coordinating and facilitating educational programs in a variety of settings.

As an active member of Friends Meeting of Washington’s (FMW) Peace and Social Concerns Committee, and as FMW’s former Pendle Hill Peace Network representative and current FCNL contact, I am delighted to work for another wonderful Quaker organization! I am honored to have this opportunity to coordinate programs that explore and make visible the Quaker testimonies of peace, equality, community, truth and simplicity.

So far, I have focused on the *Teachers of Peace* seminar (see article) to be held October 20–23, 2005. Collaborating on the planning, contacting speakers, and developing the seminar agenda and brochure have filled my first days here. I look forward to working with our interns on other educational programs including the Quaker Youth Seminars, writing grant proposals, and working with Bryon and Patricia to publicize and solicit program participants. ■

**Janaki Spickard-Keeler — Intern**

Greetings! As the new intern at WPH, I am still exploring the organization and have yet to meet many of you. I’m very excited about this year, as I have been surrounded by Quakers all my life and still feel as if I haven’t yet gained a complete picture.

As a child, I was a junior member of the Santa Cruz Friends Meeting in California. Perhaps there is someone reading this who has belonged to that Meeting who will say, “But Santa Cruz Friends Meeting doesn’t have junior members!” To which I will say, you are quite right. My brother and I were the only two they ever had, and we are both older than eighteen now, so we can’t claim to be junior members anymore. I’m told that getting the Meeting to agree to the exception took many threshing sessions and a great deal of time, but it was important to my mother, who had been a Quaker most of her life and attended Friends schools including Friends World College. Incidentally, it was while she was living in India, during her time at Friends World College, that she met the woman I was named for. “Janaki” is a Hindu name, another name for Sita, an Earth goddess.

As a kid I attended the Friends Meeting of San Bernardino and later the San Antonio Monthly Meeting, when we moved to Texas. The San Antonio Meeting continues to be the one I attend most often, but I have not yet felt led to become a member. I occasionally attended the Northampton Friends Meeting during my time at Smith College, where I studied Political Science, Math, and French. I have lived in Spain and France and am trilingual on good days.

Not quite knowing what to do with myself, on graduating I applied for a position teaching upper-level math and science at Olney Friends School in Barnesville, Ohio. The way opened for me and I spent a year as a teacher and dorm staffer in the girls’ dorm. At Olney I was delighted to discover that “Conservative” Friends not only exist but are numerous!

I’m excited to have the opportunity this year to learn more about Quakerism and Quaker social action, to live in a city again, and to be able to engage in more direct political activism. In Texas, I did some work with anti-death penalty groups, and I hope to be able to continue with that here. I already love William Penn House and look forward to meeting many of its friends. ■

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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### Facts and Figures

- 2** new part time position created to expand programs
- 6** months that we exceeded 60% occupancy
- 18** workcamps held April through August
- 39** years that William Penn House has been in existence — *next year is our 40th anniversary*
- ???** youth and adults who participated in WQW workcamps this summer

### Upcoming Potlucks & Dialogues

**October 2nd** — Phil Shafer, The Republic of Georgia

**November 6th** —

**December 4th** — John Salzburg, The West Bank

### Teachers of Peace: Educating for Peace and Social Change

**October 20-23, 2005**

A free weekend for teachers of Elementary, Middle School or High School aged students. (see article on page 2).

A Quaker Center  
located on Capitol Hill

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