

Penn Notes

William Penn House

Fall 2004

A Workcamp in Appalachia by Andrei Israel

In June, Washington Quaker Workcamps took 14 high school students and 3 leaders from Washington, DC, to McDowell County, West Virginia, for a week-long workcamp. We stayed in the converted elementary school that houses all the programs of Big Creek People in Action, our hosts for the week. Big Creek People in Action lined us up with needed maintenance projects in homes around the area—most of us worked on painting the home of an elderly couple, while a few of us helped install a water tank at a home that had never before had indoor plumbing.

McDowell County is the 7th poorest county in the U.S. When mechanization eliminated most of the jobs in the coal mines, the economy collapsed (I was shocked to hear that McDowell

County produces more coal today than ever before—the profits just go to corporations located far from the mines. Very few miners are needed). In our visit, we experienced firsthand a depth of poverty many of us had never seen; our evening worship-sharing often gave us a chance to reflect upon our privilege and on the economic inequality in our country.

But we experienced more than poverty in our visit: we saw and learned about the strength, beauty, and depth of a community much different from our own. We found that faith plays a central role in this community, far more visible than in our more cosmopolitan world, and we saw the deep con-

nection between the people and the land, often stretching back centuries. We were blessed with the chance to spend a very special evening with Frankie and Carl Rutherford. Frankie, the founder of Big Creek People in Action, shared her family history (over 300 years in Appalachia) and the stories of union organizing in the coal mines, as seen through the eyes of her grandfather and father. Both were frontline organizers who often faced violent attacks for their efforts. Carl, one of the

pre-eminent folk musicians in West Virginia, shared stories and songs with us for almost three hours!

We also had a unique opportunity to get to know another group of young people working and living with us



all week, a Methodist group from central West Virginia. Working and talking with young people from a rural community gave us a fresh perspective on our own neighborhoods, and also broke down stereotypes and showed us that everyone, rural or urban, Quaker or Methodist, rich or poor, young or old, share the same desires, joys and sorrows.

“Work is Love Made Visible”

Recent workcampers have included high schoolers from Sidwell Friends, Tandem Friends (Charlottesville, VA), and Edmund Burke School; middle schoolers from Friends Meeting School (Ijamsville, MD); an Episcopal Church group from Gainesville, FL; and a Presbyterian youth group from Bryn Mawr, PA.

Peace Curriculum Update

On October 8-10, a small group of Quaker educators from around the country will be gathering at William Penn House for the pilot course "Creating a Culture of Peace: A Peace Studies Seminar."

In June, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Chace Fund awarded WPH a \$6680 grant to develop a seminar introducing a "broad, multi-faceted vision of peace building" to middle and high school teachers and university professors.

The seminar will draw on the rich resources of the Washington area, including governmental organizations, non-profits, communities of artists and activists, and on our Quaker faith and practice. William Penn House hopes to create a supportive network of professional educators and to provide them with the resources and encouragement they need to be innovative with peacemaking. The course will serve the diverse needs of these educators, some with their entire syllabus dedicated to peace studies, and others seeking to integrate smaller pieces into a broader discipline such as literature or economics.

The weekend promises to engage mind and spirit. Presenters include Barbara Simmons, a professor from Philadelphia, who will offer the Friday evening keynote address on Multi-Track diplomacy. Saturday's slate features workshops with Meg Satterthwaite, a law professor at New York University, and Bette Hoover, formerly with the American Friends Service Committee, who will lead an exploration into the way of peacemaking for educators.

For more information, or to register for the weekend, visit our website. |

News from the Board of Directors

William Penn House Board member *Maia Carter Hallward* leaves shortly for six months of research in Jerusalem. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in International Relations from American University's School of International Service, and she is studying Israeli and Palestinian peace and justice groups for her dissertation. She has taken sabbatical leave from her Board responsibilities while she researches, and we await her return to the Board when she comes home. |

Recent Visitors

This summer has brought an exciting and diverse group of guests to the William Penn House. The **National Student Partnerships** brought an enthusiastic group of college students here for training in campus-based organizing and advocacy. Several churches brought youth groups for mission trips, including **Powers Ferry United Methodist Church** from Georgia, **Jamestown Presbyterian Church** from Pennsylvania, and **Holy Trinity Episcopal Church** from Florida. The **American Lands Alliance** once again brought environmental activists from around the country to lobby for environmental stewardship. **Operation Understanding**, a summer program that brings together Jewish and African-American teenagers, stayed here at the beginning of their tour of civil rights movement landmarks across the American South.

Our new Internet presence on Hostels.com has brought many more international guests to the House. It is exciting to sit down to breakfast with guests from Germany, South Korea, Jamaica, and other far-flung regions. Recent visitors have included: Richard Kuiltja, an aboriginal Australian here to receive an award for his native-staffed tourism company (www.anangutours.com.au), two young men from Britain on a year-long journey around the world, and a British Friend who is the head of the BBC Radio World News Desk. |

New Memberships in Quaker Organizations

William Penn House has recently joined two Quaker organizations that will help us get the word out about our programs:

Friends Council on Education (FCE)

(www.friendscouncil.org)

The FCE will allow us to communicate directly to the Quaker secondary schools in North America and to respond to the needs of these schools.

The Quaker Information Center (QIC)

(www.quakerinfo.org).

Our membership in QIC gives us a visible presence at Friends Center in Philadelphia and on the QIC website, deepening our connections to Quakers around the world. |

New Interns Join William Penn House

A true strength and asset of William Penn House is our internship program. For several years, the House has been blessed by the presence of interns who work for William Penn House for periods up to 1 year. On the whole, they are either recent high school or college graduates and are interested in the internship as a transition, to supplement their education or to serve their faith community. Through this program, we help to train the next generation of Quaker leaders.

The interns work primarily on hospitality and program planning. Interns have lots of opportunities to interact with Friends, activists, tourists, students and teachers from around the globe. This year we have two new interns: Amy Marie Babcock will be with us for a year and Sarah Klein will be with us for 6 months. Each enriches us with her own talents, passions and interests.

Amy Marie Babcock

Greetings from the heart of DC! I have been in the city now for two months and am enjoying it immensely. I moved here from Indiana after serving as a pastor for two years at Friends Memorial Church in Muncie, IN (Indiana Yearly Meeting).

I was born in Nebraska and raised a United Methodist in Northwest Ohio. I graduated from Bluffton College (Mennonite) in 1997 with degrees in religion and communication. I served one year of voluntary service in Pittsburgh where I worked in the Dispute Resolution Services department of a local mediation center. I attended one year at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (Presbyterian) before moving to Indiana and finishing my Master of Divinity degree at Earlham School of Religion (Quaker).

After experiencing, and enjoying my participation in, several denominations, I found a spiritual home in the Religious Society of Friends and became a member in 2002. The mystical practice of Quaker worship is a place where I anticipate a lifetime of learning and growing in the journey to the heart of God. |

Sarah Klein

Hi, I am a recent graduate of Antioch College in Yellow Springs, OH with a concentration in painting.

I started here in May and will continue until Thanksgiving. Through my work here I have been

able to have the wonderful opportunity to meet people from around the world, further my knowledge of Quaker and peace communities, and explore the exciting city of DC.

My experiences here have also included working with the Young Friends Summer Seminar in June

along with fellow intern Amy Marie Babcock. This was a great opportunity for both us and the Young Friends who attended. We had the opportunity to listen and learn from peacemakers, their personal experiences and differing pathways towards peace.

In the future I would like to work in Art Education in a school or museum setting. Through my work here I am learning how a business can be run efficiently, yet with heart. I hope to take this important perspective on life and work with me into future endeavors beyond this internship. |

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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.

Please make gifts payable to William Penn House and send to: 515 E. Capitol St. SE,
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Events at William Penn House

We recently hosted a meeting with **Luis Ramirez, a Senator from Costa Rica**. Senator Ramirez is encouraging Americans to raise awareness of how our administration's insistence that Costa Rica join the 'coalition of the willing' affects Costa Rica. Costa Rica is the only Central American country with a long-standing democratic tradition and the only one without an army.

A delegation staying here from the nationwide group advocating for the creation of a federal **Department of Peace** held an information session that brought together national advocates and local Quakers. More information on legislation to establish a Department of Peace can be found on their web site: www.dopcampaign.org. |

Upcoming Potluck & Dialogue

October 3—Modern-day Slavery
Gerri Williams (Friends Mtg. of Washington)

November 7—Fair Trade
Jackie DeCarlo (Friends Mtg. of Washington)

December 5—Christmas, Poetry Reading
Michael Newheart (Adelphi)

Fall Schedule of Events

October 10-12—**Creating a Culture of Peace**
A Peace Studies Seminar

November 11-21—**Couples Enrichment**
Facilitated by Rich and Joan Liversidge

Washington Quaker Workcamps
Holiday Workcamp, December 18th & 19th
Martha's Table—Washington DC

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