

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

FRIENDLY LINE

February 2024



Black History Month: An Opportunity to Celebrate the Contributions of African American Descendants of Slaves

-- by Billie Wade

Black History Month began life as Negro History Week in the second week of February 1926, by historian Carter G. Woodson, who noted the dearth of Black Americans in his studies.

Woodson (1875-1950), the “father of Black history,” wanted Black history taught in schools and to inspire people to make better the life in which they found themselves. He also founded The Journal of African American Studies in 1916. Woodson gained recognition for publishing his book, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, in 1933. By the late 1960s, due, in part, to the civil rights movement and a growing awareness of Black identity, Negro History Week evolved into Black History Month.

Every year, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) designates the theme for Black History Month. Woodson also founded this group as Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) in 1915. The theme for 2024 is “African Americans and the Arts,” which lifts the voices and contributions “in the fields of visual and performance arts,

literature, fashion, folklore, language, film, music, architecture, culinary, and other forms of cultural expression.”

In 1976, President Gerald R. Ford gave February official recognition as the month dedicated to Black History. He chose the month to honor President Abraham Lincoln, who was instrumental in the emancipation of enslaved people in the United States, whose birthday is February 12, and Frederick Douglass, a former slave and activist, who chose

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Next Friends Book Club: How the Word is Passed

Read a book with Friends! “How the Word is Passed” by Clint Smith will be the focus of the next DMVF book discussion beginning Sunday, Feb. 4, at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting plans to have a set of the books available through DMVF by the end of February. In the meantime, several copies are available from the Des Moines and other public libraries.

Meetings will take place via Zoom. The first meeting will choose days/times and put together a schedule of meeting dates. Contact Dorothy Lifka or Billie Wade to receive the Zoom invitation/link or to ask questions.

A Quaker Minute The Lamb’s War Today

Taking their meaning from the Biblical reference to “Christ the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world,” Friends described the commitment to use love as the sole weapon in the “war” against evil, as the “Lamb’s War.”

Since 1981, Friends for a Non-Violent World have developed educational materials that affirm that each of us has the ability to transform any conflict situation with our words and actions. In the Against Violence Project (AVP) FNVW suggest these loving practices:

- Seek to resolve conflict by reaching common ground
- Reach for that something good in others
- Listen before making judgments
- Base your position on trust
- Be ready to revise your position, if it is wrong
- Expect to experience great inward power to act
- Risk being creative rather than violent
- Use surprise and humor
- Learn to trust your inner sense of when to act
- Be willing to suffer for what is important
- Be patient and persistent
- Build community based on honesty, respect and caring.

One in a series on Quaker history and practice, contributed by Pam Blackburn

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, Jan. 14, 2023

Present: Jim Dietz-Kilen, Carol Spaulding-Kruse, Virginia Smith, Peter Clay, Dorothy Lifka, Ann Robinson, Charlie Brown, Billie Wade, Katie Jacoby, Catherine Dietz-Kilen, Deborah Fisch, Dick Douglass

Moment of Silence

**Approval of Minutes from
December 2023** (see January
Friendly Line sent on 01/12/24)

Approval of Minutes Minute:
Friends approved our minutes
from December 10, 2023 meeting
for worship with attention to
business.

Announcements

1. From Logan Jimenez: If anyone is interested in FCNL is hosting an Intro to Advocacy Training on January 18 at 7:00 pm. You will learn how to effectively advocate for the issues you care about. Sign up here: <https://www.fcnl.org/introtoadvocacy>
2. On January 28, Patti McKee will give a Second Hour presentation on The Des Moines Immigrant Connection.

Attachments:

1. November 2023 Financials
2. New hosting description from Outreach Committee
3. Minutes from December Meeting for Business
4. Traveling Minute on behalf of Peter Clay

Ministry & Council Committee Report (Jim Dietz-Kilen) Report of Meeting, 7 Jan. 2024

We gathered in silence at our 8:30 am appointed time on Sunday, January 7, 2023. Billie Wade, Peter Clay, Gordon Bivens, Andrea Holveck, Dorothy Lifka and Jim Dietz-Kilen (convener) were in attendance.

The committee considered a letter drafted by Deborah Fisch to go under her signature, on behalf of the committee, to Ohio Yearly Meeting. This letter is in response to a message left on our website, suggesting we should have more "Orthodox Christian" language on our website and in our Advices & Queries. We will keep the meeting apprised of any response we receive.

Dorothy Lifka (current Friends House Board Chair) provided updates, including that one Friends House tenant who has been serving as manager has been asked to stay until a replacement can be found and another tenant has applied to be the replacement. The application will be considered at their 19 January meeting. Also, Angelo Architects, the firm that conducted architectural reviews for both the meeting house and Friends House about a dozen years ago, will be conducting an updated review of Friends House. Catherine Dietz-Kilen and Katy Jacoby are working with Dorothy and Billie to create a Friends House budget.

Dorothy and Billie are working on plans for an upcoming group discussion on How the Word Is Passed. More information will be forthcoming.

Leo has graduated from college and has an IT job lined up with the Canadian government. The

entire Ramazani family is enjoying being reunited and safe.

Much of our meeting time was spent on a concern regarding a recent message during worship. The Committee hopes that Pam will be willing to focus some upcoming Quaker Minutes on vocal ministry, specifically when to speak and when not. We also hope to arrange a Second Hour on this same topic.

We closed with silence.

Addition from clerk: Peter Clay
Traveling Minute

Minute: We thank Deb Fisch for her outreach to Ohio Yearly Meeting. We await the response from the clerk of Ohio Yearly Meeting before any direct response to the individual who wrote to us.

Minute: We are heartened to learn of the reunion of the Afghanistan family.

Minute: We look forward to the updated report on the physical facility of Friends House.

We discussed the role of the Quaker Minutes in the life of our community and there was some concern about M & C seeking to have future Quaker Minutes with a focus on vocal ministry in response to concerns about recent vocal ministry. Is it rightly ordered for us to seek to direct the Quaker Minutes in particular directions? Friends expressed some discomfort with this approach. Friends were more comfortable with having a future 2nd Hour focused on vocal ministry and/or again having Quakerism 101 as an educational opportunity for members and attenders in our community. Deborah Fisch has volunteered to lead this.

DMVF Finance Committee & Budget Report (Catherine Dietz-Kilen)

Minutes of Meeting, Dec. 13, 2023

Attendees: Catherine Dietz-Kilen, Katie Jacoby, and Dorothy Lifka

1. Financial Statement. The Finance Committee reviewed and approved the November financial reports.
2. We determined that we did not have enough information to make a recommendation to the Business Meeting regarding the potential purchase and upkeep of a defibrillator for the Meeting House. Catherine will send an email to Bob Henderson who raised the idea at Business Meeting and ask him to do the appropriate research regarding the costs of a defibrillator, at his convenience, so that the Finance Committee can have a full discussion and make a recommendation to Business Meeting.
3. Currently, the Meeting is holding a substantial amount of money in two accounts. One is used for our general budget and the rest is in a higher interest-bearing account. The Finance Committee will look into other options for a higher return on funds not needed for the Meeting's ongoing operating expenses.
4. Finance Committee discussed setting up an internet account separate from Friends House. The server for the internet which we share with Friends House is located in a private office and not readily accessible to Meeting, especially on weekends. It is expected that the cost of having a separate internet will be greater than the one-third payment for the internet provided by Friends House, which is included in our current budget. The Finance Committee decided that the extra cost involved is justified by the need for easy access to our own router. Therefore, the funds to pay for the extra internet costs for the remainder of this fiscal year will come from the Finance Committee's transition funds. It is expected that the cost for separate internet will be included in the budget for our next fiscal year.
5. The Finance Committee discussed the cost of background checks for adults who will be working with the children who attend our Meeting. It is likely that our insurance company will pay a portion of the cost. The remaining cost is included in the budget for the Religious Education Committee. The background reports will come to Catherine Dietz-Kilen as the convener of the Finance Committee who will review the reports to make sure that there is not any concern reported. The reports will then be maintained in the safety deposit box for the Meeting and will not be available for public review.
6. **ACTION ITEM:** The Finance Committee discussed the possibility of shifting our financial records to a calendar year instead of the current fiscal year, which begins on July 1st and ends on June 30th. The Finance Committee will recommend to Meeting that our fiscal year be revised to be a calendar year beginning on January 1st and ending on December 31st of each year. The Finance Committee will also ask Business Meeting to consider all of the business of Meeting to a calendar year, specifically the nominations for our persons to fill the many roles that are necessary for the business of the Meeting to be conducted. People who are stepping into new roles would do so on January 1st instead of July 1st, which is almost immediately prior to the gathering for Iowa Yearly Meeting.
7. Our next scheduled meeting will be on the third Wednesday of next month at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom, January 17, 2024.

Concern was expressed at the lack of resources in the library fund. The treasurer clarified that there are resources budgeted for the library in this current budget year even if they are not in the designated fund. The designated fund receives funds that are specifically earmarked for the library.

On the subject of an AED (automated external defibrillator), suggested by Bob Henderson there is not a specific recommendation at this point from Finance Committee.

We discussed setting up a new bank account to earn a higher interest rate.

Background checks will require funds and must stay stored

confidentially in our safety deposit box.

Action Item from Finance

Committee: We have already moved to a cash accounting system. The Finance Committee suggests we change our fiscal year to be the calendar year. This would mean our next budget will be a six-month budget following the end of the current fiscal year at the end of June 2024. After that we will do everything annually, following the calendar year. The committee suggests we switch over everything to the calendar year. This means that when a person takes on a new role that they will start that role on January 1st of the year rather than July 1st.

There are advantages to the yearly meeting as well as our monthly meeting of switching to the calendar year to also be our fiscal year. Friends expressed support for the suggested change to the calendar year becoming our fiscal year and we are in unity with these changes.

Minute: We thank the committee for their work supporting the finances of the meeting and the body approved changing to a calendar year for our fiscal year beginning in January of 2025.

Buildings & Grounds

Committee: No report this month.

Religious Ed Committee:

(Dorothy Lifka)

Report of Meeting Jan. 4, 2024

Present: Dorothy Lifka, Deborah Fisch, Andrea Holveck, Ann Robinson, Linaja Mikalonis, Kari Noble

We began with silence. There was discussion of how to provide programming to high school aged

youth. Possibilities include: their participation as adults, participation in Joys & Concerns with First Day School before or after, late afternoon/early evening social times (we've had one).

Potential challenges for teen participation: they don't like to get up early on Sundays; they may not have their own transportation; one teen attends church services elsewhere in addition to DMVF; they may feel intimidated by the larger adult group. In accordance with the principle that those affected should be part of the decision making - "Nothing about us without us." Dorothy and Deborah will talk to the teens about these possibilities on Sunday.

It was suggested that those signing up for young first day school/child care could do so for two weeks at a time. Linaja volunteered to put together a Google calendar. Concern was expressed about having a wide age span for this group. There would be two adults present who could do two different things with the kids, depending on their ages. It was suggested that the Sparkling Still curriculum be used. (We also have Faith & Play materials, but that wasn't mentioned during the committee meeting.)

Deborah is interested in offering Quakerism 101 for adults and possibly teens.

Addendum from Dorothy: Lindsay, Bryn's father, would prefer that first day school return to the pre-pandemic time of during Meeting for Worship; this would make it easier for him to join us for worship and the teens could start in Meeting for Worship and then have first day school. Having the teens meet concurrent with child care/first day school for

younger children could also reduce the number of adults needed since we wouldn't need two adults for each age group, just two overall.

- Dorothy Lifka

Friends are encouraged to participate in the religious education activities of our community on behalf of our children and adults. Resources for Quakerism 101 are many and can be helpful to our community as we seek to better understand what it means to be a Friend (Quaker).

We discussed the conflict between volunteering to help with First Day School and attending worship or attending 2nd hours.

We continue to discern what changes in scheduling might be helpful in mitigating this conflict. The committee will consider if changing children's programming to be from 10:15-11 AM after the children join worship for the first 15 minutes is a good approach.

Minute: We appreciate the work of the Religious Education Committee on behalf of our youth and adults.

Friends House Board (Dorothy Lifka)

Bob Henderson reported that he went to the Meeting house to update the computer when snow was still deep, and the sidewalk from Friends House stairs to Meeting House door was not shoveled. "I thought the entire sidewalk was to be shoveled by our provider."

We discussed the issues with snow removal and other items such as lawn maintenance. The meeting's representatives to Friends House Board will bring up our concerns at the next meeting.

We would like the snow to be cleared to our meetinghouse door

after any significant snowstorm (more than inctwohes). We also need the parking lot to be plowed promptly after every storm. Many other groups use our meeting house and safe access is important seven days a week. We discussed the contract between Friends House and the third party who provides snow removal and lawn care.

There is concern about the communication between the meeting and the manager of Friends House. We may need to appoint a liaison to Friends House. Concerns can be addressed and clarified at the next board meeting on Friday, Jan. 19.

Peace & Social Concerns Committee (Patty Wengert)

We met on Jan 2nd. We discussed the need to continue calling the President and Congress and calling for a ceasefire in Gaza until Israel stops the current war.

AFSC announced it intends to organize one event every month to support the people of Gaza.

We discussed how our meeting could hold fundraisers to give more money to organizations that are continuing to help in Gaza.

We approved donations to Hope ministries shelter and the Iowa Homeless Youth Shelter. in the amount of \$100.

We discussed the FCNL CAMPAIGN to reduce the Pentagon budget and participating in that program.

The next local peace event to cosponsor will be the Palm Sunday Procession for Peace event, 2024. Easter falls on the last Sunday of March (March 31) this year.

Minute: We express our gratitude for the work of the

Peace and Social Concerns Committee.

Outreach Committee (Ann Robinson)

The committee presented its revised (and more detailed) hosting description and what additional guidance or tasks need to be added. Friends were grateful for the work of the committee in addressing this need to review and revise our instructions for hosts.

A concern was expressed about how adequately we are set up for recycling. The lack of attention to putting trash into trash containers and recyclable items into designated recycling containers is a problem. If we just recycle cans and bottles perhaps that would be helpful. Using a universally recognized blue recycle container for people to put cans and bottles into would be helpful. The “dry” versus the “wet” containers has been confusing to some. It is important to not leave any “wet” garbage but to remove it after each First Day.

There was also discussion of DMVF’s Facebook. We have had some people who are not part of our community posting content that is problematic and inflammatory on our FB page. Katie is now an administrator in addition to Bob and Jan. The individual who has posted problematic content now must have content approved by an administrator. One of several new explicit rules added to our FB page is to always be respectful and to avoid polarizing content. The purpose of our FB page is to share what our community is doing and to post information about what other peace and justice organizations or faith communities are doing. We now

are able to block inappropriate content following discernment by a content moderator.

Minute: We appreciate the work of the Outreach Committee for the revised hosting description and for effectively addressing the issues from outside individuals posting on our FB page.

Library Committee (Deborah Fisch)

No report this month. Our meeting’s book sale will be Feb. 17-18. Please bring books in boxes and bags and place them on the table near the blackboard downstairs in the meetinghouse. The Scattergood students may be able to help with organizing the books in advance of the book sale.

Nominating Committee (Claire Cumbie-Drake)

Final roster was submitted July 2023.

New/Other Business?

Scattergood visit & potluck

What else is needed for Scattergood visits Feb. 4-9? Ann Robinson had mentioned a possible potluck like last year? We considered February 8th as the best date for a potluck for this year. If Friends can loan sleeping cots or similar that would be appreciated.

Storytelling project (Ann Robinson)

Ann presented the possibility of DMVF hosting training for an Open book storytelling project sponsored by IYM(C) and Scattergood Farm and School. The tentative date would be Friday evening March 22 (the evening before Mid-Year Meeting). We tentatively approved this as we await further details.

This has since been finalized for Friday, March 22, 5:45-9:00 p.m., beginning with a simple meal that DMVF will provide. It is possible there may be requests for accommodations from Friends who travel to Des Moines for the training and will need lodging before individuals head to Bear Creek for MYM the next morning. Please contact Ann at anny@mediacombb.net if you are interested in the training and/or can help with the meal or possibly provide overnight accommodations. More information will be shared in coming weeks.

FCNL Priority Issues

Issues we should prioritize for the 119th congress of FCNL. Responses due soon.

Iowa Yearly Meeting Business (Reps Ann Robinson, Carol Spaulding-Kruse)

The IYMC Peace & Social Concerns Committee decided on 28th of 10th Month, 2023, to make available \$1,100 in funds for the purpose of matching each monthly meeting's donation of up to \$100 to the American Friends Service Committee's Gaza emergency response. Pledges to donate will be matched until the 1st of 2nd Month, 2024. Please contact Jon Shafer, Clerk of the above committee, with any questions and with the amount of your meeting's pledge. He will forward monthly totals to the IYMC Treasurer for her to send. Jon can be reached by text or phone at 715-733-0480 or emailed at jonmshafer@gmail.com

Black History Month (continued from page 1)

February 14, 1818 as his birthday (though there are no records of the date). Because of these two men, Black people celebrated during the month.

The first day of February is not a public holiday in that government and public buildings, schools, and businesses are open, but many choose to commemorate the entire month with events and activities. Critics of Black History Month argue for the teaching and celebration of Black history every day, not just one month.

In 2016, 40 years after President Ford's recognition of Black History month, President Barack Obama, the first Black president of the United States, gave a speech from the White House, which was built by slaves. They began construction in 1792 and completed the structure in 1800. The White House has been home to every U. S. president since President John Adams.

Canada celebrates Black History Month in February along with the U. S. The United Kingdom and Ireland celebrate in October.

News of Our Friends

David Drake invites friends to hear about his work with the Ute Tribes in Southwestern Colorado During a second hour, Sunday, Feb. 18. He says, "Over the last several years I have served as psychiatrist and therapist with each of these tribes - sister tribes who are in much different situations economically. My work has been both in person - in Ignacio, Colorado for the Southern Utes and in Towaoc,

Colorado/White Mesa, Utah and remotely from Iowa. They share a history along with the North Ute Tribe in Fort Duchenne, Utah. The Colorado Tribes are the only reservations of federally recognized Tribes in Colorado.

The Ute Mtn Ute Tribe is in the most economically challenged zip code in Colorado and faces significant health, employment, education, and social issues that are constant reminders of the effects of the former boarding schools and intergenerational trauma that continues to this day.

I have been honored to work with staff who grew up and live on the reservation - some who are fluent in the Ute language and keep the cultural and spiritual traditions alive - and work to improve the conditions in their community."

David requests an RSVP to get a sense of attendance. Email David at drakeoffice@gmail.com or text David at 515-229-5085.

Peter Clay's trip to Rwanda to visit and learn from Friends Peace Teams programs will be from February 6 through March 12. He will begin with two days in the capital, Kigali, meeting Rwandan Quakers and some of his FPT colleagues. Then he will spend eight days in Gicumbi, about an hour and a half north of Kigali, visiting the Peace Library and working with the staff in charge of Conservation Agriculture, which helps rural Rwandans to adapt to climate change. He will also visit the new Farmer Field School groups to learn from them about these new approaches.

The final three weeks Peter will be staying in Musanze, in the

northwest of the country and participating in the Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC) trainings. He will be staying at the HROC Center in Musanze. Musanze is the gateway to Volcanoes National Park, home of the Mountain Gorillas. Peter first arrived there in early February of 1985 for his first experience working with the gorillas and with Dian Fossey. This trip will be his first as a Friend rather than as a conservation practitioner. Peter asks DMVF Friends to hold him in the Light during his travels.

A great Quakerspeak video on Quakers and the Holocaust, an interview with **Michael Luck Thrans** was shared recently by a Friend. The interview from May 2022 is inspiring -- about Scattergood Hostel and the young Iowa Friends who took action to make a difference during World War II.

We are sorry to hear of the passing of Quaker and Scattergood alum **Beth Wilson**, 91, of the Paullina Meeting. Her smiles at IYMC will be missed! Hybrid services for Beth will be held Saturday Feb. 3 at 11 AM. Click [here for an obituary and link to the service.](#)

Upcoming Hosting List

Feb. 4 – Steve & Kari
Feb. 11- Charlie & Dorothy
Feb 18 – Ann & Linaja
Feb. 25 – Deb & Katie
Mar 3 – David & Claire
Mar 10 – Peter & Andrea
Mar. 17 – Logan & Corey
Mar. 25 – Jim & Catherine

-- Upcoming Events --

Scattergood Students Visit DMV Friends & Potluck
Sunday through Friday, Feb. 4-9. While in Des Moines, they will participate in service work, including helping to help sort books for the DMVF book sale. Join Irving Treadway, Asa Fisher and a group of current students for socializing and a meal at the meeting house, Thursday, Feb. 8, at 6 PM. Scattergood will provide a main course, but requests that those who are able bring something for the potluck.

The Israel-Hamas War: What is the Witness of the Church?
Thursday, Feb. 8, 7 PM, at the Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Avenue. Presentation by Amgad Beblawi, Presbytery of Des Moines Ministry and Mission Executive

IYM(C) Midyear Meeting is planned for 23-24 Third Month/ March 2024 at Bear Creek Meeting near Earlham, Iowa. This year's theme will be "Reflections on the Environment" with leadership from resource person Lee Tesdell of the Ames Meeting.

Registration & schedule information will be available soon at <https://www.iymc.org/>

If you have children who might want to participate in activities during MYM, **please register early** and let DMVF Clerk Carol Spaulding- Kruse (carol.spaulding@drake.edu) know so she can share the information with the Junior Yearly Meeting Committee for MYM to assist with planning.

Des Moines Valley Friends

Meeting for Worship: Sundays at 10 a.m., at the Meeting House and by Zoom via email invitation from clerk, Carol Spaulding-Kruse, at carol.spaulding@drake.edu

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

Upcoming Second Hours & Events:

Feb. 18: A White Psychiatrist and the Ute Mountain Tribe- David Drake

Feb. 25: Journey to Friends – Addison Williamson

Query Discussions: First Sundays, 11:45 a.m. - Online & in person. Billie Wade, facilitator.

Child Care: If you have a child who would like to be included in Zoom childcare or first day school for older youth, contact Dorothy at dmlifka@yahoo.com.

Building & Grounds: Questions about the building or grounds of the Meetinghouse to Building & Grounds Committee Convenor, Dick Douglass, 515-864-1119.

Hospitality Committee: Questions about housekeeping at the Meeting House to Hospitality Committee convenor Charlie Brown, 515-689-6470.

Friendly Line: Send info for March FL to Ann Robinson at anny@mediacombb.net by Friday, March 1.

Find us online at: <https://www.desmoinesvalleyfriends.org/>

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