



Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting of Friends

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2011

Reflections on Children and Worship

by Carrie Karhnak-Glasby

Last month, I participated in a post-worship discussion on children and worship. We shared hopes, wishes, frustrations, and ideas. When we got into the nitty gritty, it mostly became a discussion about children *in* Meeting for Worship, although we listed other items we wish to discuss in the future.

We were a varied group, just like our Meeting. The group included parents with young children, parents who had raised children (in Meeting or not) decades ago, children raised in a Meeting decades ago, and non-parents. We also came with a variety of agendas. Some of us wanted to explore ways of sharing Quaker worship and faith with children. Some wanted to address the frustrations of noisy children (and noisy feet) in the worship room. Some of us felt nervous about being judged for our parenting choices if we were strict with our children, and also about being judged if we were permissive with them. We all felt there was room for improvement.

It felt like the beginning of a series of ongoing discussions. In the weeks since that group conversation, several thoughts have stuck with me.

1. We are so blessed to have the "problem" of children in worship before us. Many meetings don't have children or families. They struggle to figure out how to attract and keep families. We don't have that problem. We have families bypassing closer meetings to come to us! We are very fortunate. As we struggle with the question of how to integrate young children into worship and how to share Quakerism with our youth, we should acknowledge how lucky we are to have this struggle.

2. Our current structures are not necessarily serving us well. In fact, some of the problems are of our own creation. Consider this:

- We have chosen hardwood floors that echo noise and old benches that creak and moan.
- We have arranged our First Day School and worship service So that the children enter for the last 10 to 15 [*\(continued\)*](#)

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HOLIDAY EVENTS

Twelfth-Month Dinner, Sun Dec 18 at rise of meeting. Turkeys and beverages will be provided; the rest is potluck.

Look for sign-up sheets during coffee hour to indicate what you will bring, and to sign up for tasks from setup to turkey-roasting to cleanup. Contact: Seamus Kearney.

– Friends have traditionally been asked to bring **year-end monetary gifts** for one or more organizations to be selected by the Peace and Social Change Committee. To suggest a recipient, please contact Sara Palmer sarasusa@aol.com at 215-680-3658, or send her a Facebook message.

– New Year's Eve meeting for worship and celebration begins at 7 PM in the Cherry St. Room, Dec 31. Enter by the side door. Bring refreshments to share. Sponsored by the Attenders Committee.

Remember to contribute to CPMM by Dec 31!

REFLECTIONS ON CHILDREN AND WORSHIP (CONTINUED)

of worship. The Worship Room is settled and centered while the children are not. They are excited, and often impatient because of waiting in the hallway for an opening to sit.

- We ask the children to sit quietly from 11:45 to 12:00, when many of them are used to having lunch as early as 11:00 during the week. They are often hungry and impatient for those goodies that are waiting for them in the Cherry Street Room.
- When we take our children out of the worship room, the place to which we most often can take them is the Cherry Street Room, and so we accidentally end up rewarding misbehavior with early access to food.

3. The parenting dilemma -- how do I resolve my child's behavior in Meeting without rewarding bad behavior? -- is very real. Sitting in worship with a squirming child is hard. As a parent, I can't keep centered and focused on worship. I worry that my squirmy child or my corrective whisper is distracting to others. I worry that my child will hate Meeting for Worship and all things Quaker. However, I am very reluctant to leave the Worship Room because I don't want to reward bad behavior.

As soon as we leave the Worship Room, a whole new battle awaits. If I let my child run around or if well-meaning adults offer cookies and juice, my child learns that bad behavior in Meeting gets rewarded. That is no good.

Sometimes we seek a quiet corner or an empty conference room so that we can worship in a noisier way than we can in the "big worship room" without disrupting others. Other times we end up dealing with the mismatch between my expectations and my child's behavior. One thing is clear, though: I don't want to give up teaching Quaker worship just because we can't always manage it in the Worship Room.

4. Parenting is hard. Refilling my spiritual cup, tending to my child's, teaching the forms and practices of this very inward religion, and teaching/enforcing acceptable behaviors during worship -- it's very hard to juggle all of these things. It's even harder to do so with grace. Sometimes everything stays in balance and other times is just plain doesn't.

There is no tidy conclusion to this article because this is an ongoing conversation -- one which we will continue, and try to find ways to support this cohort group of Meeting kids, and one which will need to be repeated time and time again, for as long as CPMM meets and has children in our midst.

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DIRECTORY CHANGES

New address:

Bonnie Clark
512 E Penn St
Altoona PA 16601
814-946-1943
bonnie.clark@verizon.net

Members Released:

Robertta Merrill
Susanna Thomforde-Garner

Died:

Gerald Carlson

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Production and distribution /meeting secretary: Barbara Hayes. Email submissions to emurer@att.net by the 25th of each month, or bring or send them to the meeting office.

The NEWSLETTER is available by email in .pdf format. To subscribe, send your email address to cpmm@afsc.com with "email newsletter" in the subject line.

CPMM clerk: Barry Scott. Assistant clerk: Pamela Haines. Meeting website: www.cpmm.org

Children and Meeting

by Margo Tassi

At the last meeting about children and Meeting, I may have sounded critical of our parents when I used the term "permissive Quakers"! Afterwards, my attitude set me to thinking about my years of teaching art in the Philadelphia School System. I was not what you would call a natural disciplinarian. I had grown up in a household where we obeyed our parents "because they said so." It did not leave me with many skills to convince children to listen when I expected that they wouldn't, and they lived up to my expectations.

Enter Lee Cantor's "Assertive Discipline." This was a program based on positive reinforcement that was promoted by the School System. Basically, I used it, and it worked for me. I ran "behavior contests" for all my classes. The winning classes got to have parties, (sitting at desks, eating snacks), go on trips to the Art Museum, the PA Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Tincum for nature walks, the Mercer Museum, and other places. In addition I gave "good notes" to every child in the younger grades every class when they were good. The contests were based on the point system. I called out points when the students were being quiet and on task. Fifteen points equaled a star, and the class with the most stars that month won the prize. After I retired, I found myself "giving points" when quiet descended in my kitchen! I had done it for about 18 years!

"The System" still did not turn me into a "natural disciplinarian." Like most adults, I preferred to play the role of friendly conversationalist, rather than speak with a tone that assumed compliance. However, it did allow me to get things done in my art room. The children were able to use paint and other messy materials, clean up on time, and actually do some good work. Both art teachers who followed me in my school, quit!

During our discussion about children and Meeting, we did not address one issue. I believe that I do witness parents in the Meeting who are frustrated because their children are not listening to them. Basically, the children are refusing to do what the parents ask them to do. Perhaps the book that is part of Lee Cantor's program, *Assertive Discipline for Parents*, would be helpful. I found the system took a lot of work, but it did get results. The book can be found on line by putting in the term "assertive discipline".

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Worldwide Candle Lighting Memorial Service at Germantown MM

Meeting for Worship with Concern for Our Children will host a Memorial Service in conjunction with The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on **Sunday, December 11, 2011 at 7 pm.** The service will honor and remember children who have died at any age and from any cause, and will be held at the **Germantown Friends Meeting House**, 47 West Coulter Street, Philadelphia.

6:30 pm; informal gathering with light refreshments. The ceremony will occur at 7pm with a calling of children's names. Participants will then be invited to join a circle in front of the fireplace where each person will have the chance to share a photo, name, and a favorite story.

Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Our Children formed as a monthly-sharing group in 2004 shortly after the death of 18-year-old Sabrina Sampson-Knapp, a Germantown Friends School graduate [and niece of Kate Bregman]. Individuals came together in concern for Sabrina and her family, and over time, the group broadened its focus to include all young people growing into adulthood.

For more information: Wendy Wells, Secretary, 215-951-2235 gmm@gfsnet.org

Looking to purchase **locally hand crafted items** for gift giving or personal use? Check out my chef aprons for adults and children, table runners, and place mats at my website: www.HolidaysAtHome.etsy.com. I have items to decorate your home as well as gifts for family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors for Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. Check frequently as I am adding new items daily. If you have questions or need additional information, please call me at 215-844-2604. All proceeds from sales to CPMM members will be divided equally between CPMM and PYM. – Phyllis Babcock

FROM FRIENDS SELECT SCHOOL:

FSS InterSession 2012: Central and South America

From the Friends Select Newsletter December 2011/January 2012

The highly anticipated InterSession is quickly approaching and this year's program promises to be another eye opening, global experience for students. From January 23-27, the entire upper school division will pause to consider a single overarching essential question: Understanding Central and South America : What do we need to know?

Regular classes will be suspended for five days between semesters while upper school students and faculty explore Central and South America—its geography, peoples, natural resources, governments, culture, religions, economies and politics.

A different fundamental question will structure each day's activities. On day one, for example, students will consider, What do we mean by Central and South America ? On day two, the question will be about the changing attitudes towards science and technology. Outside experts in fields ranging from Central and South American history, to government and politics, to arts and culture will engage directly with students and faculty members.

As a personal passion outside of school, upper school English teacher Ian Ranzer has a deep appreciation for Brazilian music. He often plays hits by Brazilian music artists Caetano Veloso and Jorge Ben on his radio show Soul Junction and, years ago, was a member of a Brazilian samba band.

During InterSession, Ranzer will give insight into Brazilian music by introducing Stan Getz, a performer who was integral in making samba and jazz an international sensation. In addition, he will discuss the progression to Tropicália with a look at how and why Brazilian performers were exiled for musical expression.

Upper school art teacher Deborah Caiola will present on art and social change based on her recent trip to Bolivia . For years, Caiola was intrigued by the culture of Bolivia . She will discuss the aspects of social change that are important in her own artwork and the social, cultural, and economic climate she experienced in Bolivia and how it's reflected in the symbols of this inspiring nation.

As in many places of the world, there are ever-present issues surrounding areas in Central and South America . The goal with InterSession is to see the light in these places and celebrate their global impact in all ways. Once students do this, they can then begin to really understand the challenges and adversities the region faces.

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PHILADELPHIA QUARTERLY MEETING:

Coordinator: Gael Livingston. 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA

Phone: 215-241-7067 Email: philaqtr@pym.org

Office Hours: Mondays 11:00AM-6:00PM

For the next Quarterly meeting, The Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting & Germantown Monthly Meeting present **A Program on Racial Justice** Sunday February 26, 2012 at Arch Street Friends Meeting (following morning worship and lunch)

The QM Executive committee meets Jan 23, 2012 at Stapeley. Please forward agenda items for the Quarter to the Coordinator by Dec 15, 2011 to be considered at the January Executive Committee.

the Quarter's website <http://www.pym.org/philadelphia-quarterly-meeting/> also contains:

A list of meetings in Philadelphia Quarter with addresses and worship schedules

Announcements, including minutes of the latest Quarterly Meeting (scroll down)

Information about the QM listserv - and more

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WIDER QUAKER EVENTS

Anti-bullying workshop, Sat, Dec 10 at Friends Center. PYM's Non Violence and Children's Working Group is hosting this workshop. Offered at no cost by educators Penny Colgan-Davis and Betsy Berger, the workshop will address the current research on bullying, the process for reporting bullying, ways to gather information to help and protect targeted students, strategies to deal with and decrease bullying, and techniques to involve bystanders and confront students who bully. More information: www.pym.org/event/anti-bullying-workshop

52nd Annual Nazareth-to-Bethlehem Peace Pilgrimage, Sat, Dec 10, 2011.

This pilgrimage, symbolic of the journey of Mary and Joseph, provides those who walk, those who pass by on the highway and those who just read about it in the Sunday paper with an opportunity to think about what Christmas really means. If you are concerned about your ability to complete the walk, there are frequent rest stops and relief transportation. If you cannot walk a portion of the pilgrimage, consider participating in the related events: traditional hymn singing Christmas carols at Central Moravian Church, simple supper and guest speaker at the Christ United Church of Christ. This year's speaker is Rev. Kelly Denton-Borhaug, Ph.D. Associated Professor and Chair of Religious Studies at Moravian College. Her presentation will be "De-Escalating the U.S. War Culture – A Primer for Peace Activists." For more information, see www.peacewalk.org

Young Friends Christmas Retreat, Dec 27-30, 2011 at Burlington Meeting House, Burlington, NJ. For Young Friends 9th grade (or age 14 by September 1) through college age. Silence has been central to Friends' worship for more than 300 years and yet today many of us are not prepared to use or appreciate silence in our own lives. During this retreat, we will spend 24 hours of our time together in silence, part in "solitude" and part doing things together without words. We will be keeping journals of our personal journeys and a group journal of our experience together. There will be queries to focus our attention, exercises to stir our awareness and a silent walk along the river. We will learn to play without words, and we will learn non-verbal ways to communicate. Your focus should be on using the silence, not trying to get around it. Most of our time will not be in Silence. There will also be a talent show and a dance (not silent - you could be discovered!). Look for a flyer on the PYM website - www.pym.org/programs/young-friends-high-school

Young Adult Friends (YAF) Winter Retreat on Sexuality & the Spirit, Jan 6-8, 2012 at Swarthmore MM in Swarthmore, PA. Join YAFs (age 18-35ish) from across the Philadelphia YM region and beyond for our annual winter retreat, organized by the PYM YAF Working Group. Expect worship sharing, workshops, games, and fellowship as we explore the themes of relationships, spirituality, and sexuality. YAFs are at different places on our journeys, and we come together for rejuvenation, relaxation, and to deepen our connection to one another & the Spirit. Good food and fun are also assured! For more info or to register, contact: Elizabeth Piersol Schmidt YoungAdultFriends@pym.org or 215-241-7075; www.pym.org/programs/young-adult-friends or Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/32059302690/

Middle School Friends Gathering @ Burlington Conference Center

Fri, 01/20/2012 - 6:00pm - Sun, 01/22/2012 - 12:00pm

Join the Middle School Friends community as we wrestle with the challenges of winter, investigate the relationship between dark and light, talk about what the "Inner Light" means to us, and share how we sustain ourselves through the "dark nights of the soul". We will share music, dreams, ideas of Light and vision, and the things that keep us going when times get tough. There will be a group workshop about the healing/sustaining power of music, a dance, and as tradition demands: ICE-SKATING!

Questions? Contact Stephen Dotson, Middle School Friends Coordinator at 215-241-717 or sdotson@pym.org
More info: <http://www.pym.org/programs/middle-school-friends-program> (Link on right side of page)

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Youth Worker Training Day: Accompanying Youth in Spiritual Community, Sun Jan 22, 2012, 10:30 am – 4:00 pm, Friends Center. More info: <http://www.pym.org/event/ywtrainingday>

Reminder - Year End Giving. Please remember your Monthly Meeting and Yearly Meeting as you consider your charitable giving this fall. The work of our spiritual community is made possible by contributions from individual Friends. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting is 103 Quaker Meetings and their members supporting each other in Quaker faith and practice and witness. To contribute to PYM, go to www.pym.org, call Kaye Henley at 215-241-7271, or mail to PYM, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102. Thank you!

The PYM Library is Open Again!

The Yearly Meeting Library has re-opened! The funding for the Yearly Meeting Library was cut from the PYM budget. With these cuts, the library was closed for several months while a new strategy was devised. That strategizing has led to a place where the library can be re-opened two days a week.

In the beginning of October the Library Services Group hosted a Volunteer Training. Nine Friends completed that training and most of them are scheduled to volunteer in the library allowing it to be open two days per week. For the immediate future, the library is now open from **12:00 noon to 6:00 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays**. As the skills and number of volunteers increase, hours may be extended into the evenings. With the reopening of the Library, Friends may again check out books, DVD's, Godly Play materials, magazines and pamphlets. The library is not in a position to mail materials to patrons however, so Friends wishing to borrow must either come into the building or arrange for someone else to pick the materials up for them. The library can arrange for materials to be sent back to your meeting with your representative to Interim Meeting on the 2nd Saturday of most months. You can call the library on Tuesdays or Thursdays, 12-6 at: 215-241-7220. **Note: the CPMM Library Committee currently plans to open the Library on first Sundays at rise of meeting.**

Friends Counseling Service. We are pleased to announce that Deborah Cooper, the Friends Counseling Service Coordinator is now located at the Friends Center offices one day a week, Wednesday, from ca. 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Deborah has been the coordinator for the Friends Counseling Service for almost twenty years. For most of that time she has worked from her home office in Mt. Airy, Philadelphia. Working at the Friends Center offices of PYM will give Deborah an opportunity to integrate the administrative functions of the counseling service with the clinical work she has been doing as coordinator. It will also give her greater access to and support from PYM Staff. Deborah is a member of Germantown MM. Her email address is friendscounseling@pym.org and her phone number is 215-241-7019.

Call for Friends School Educators to serve on the **PYM Public Education Concerns Working Group**. Ever since William Penn founded the first schools in Philadelphia, there has been a strong link between Quakerism and a concern for educating all students. As Penn wrote, "the prosperity and wealth of any people depend in great measure upon the good education of youth." How can public education—and Friends who teach in the public schools—be best supported today? To join this coalescing group (clerked by David Austin, a member of Haddonfield Meeting and a teacher in the New Jersey public school system) please contact Friends in Education Coordinator, Grace Cooke, at 215-241-7224 or gcooke@pym.org.

Occupy Philadelphia. At Interim Meeting on Sat, Nov 12, 2011, the following minute was presented by Aaron Crosman, clerk of Peace and Concerns Standing Committee. This minute was approved by Interim Meeting.

“We are grateful for the conversation that has been opened up about wealth and inequality as a result of the Occupy movement. We commend its nonviolent character, note with thanks the contributions of many Friends to the support of this effort, and encourage others in the Yearly Meeting to consider how they might be led to play a role.”

For more information, see the PYM website at <http://www.pym.org/news/message-about-occupy-philadelphia>

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Cold and Kindness

It's an old Nissan truck, she says
parked by the nursing home.
As I walk out
this bitter winter night
all the white trucks
look big and fat and prosperous.
I turn the last corner
look for the nursing home
find it and then the truck
old, steamed up with life inside.
I tap the window
two cocooned forms stir
becoming Moussa and Maria.

On Christmas Eve we got the call
from a young immigrant
we welcomed to the country
years ago.
A couple from Mali
are sleeping in a car
outside my house.
What should I do?

She did a lot
called shelters
navigated the maze
of social services,
came up empty.

We offered what we could—
names, food, money for gas
(their heat)
then left
to be with a dying mother
and grieving family
for Christmas,
while they slept in the cold.

Back, and picking up the threads
of life at home
we make a plan to meet them
knowing we have space.

He lost his good place at a print shop
then, when winter came
the car wash job
then everything else
except the truck.

It's easy to give food
money for a PO box
where food stamps can be mailed
warm wool sweater
hat, gloves and socks,
easier, perhaps, than all the thanks
that they must give, and give again.

And we are warm
and when they leave
I do not want to take them in.

We reach out to others who might help
to shield them from the arctic weather
coming in.
I think to offer showers
(to more thanks)
and still our empty space at home
looms large and questioning.

A friend calls back
to say they'll take them in
for these ten days
and I go looking for the truck
to bring the news.

This willingness to help is balm
to a troubled soul.
She speaks as I would wish to feel—
grateful for the miracle
of being asked to share her space
with a Maria far from home
looking for shelter with her husband
in the cold mid-winter.

I see how grief
has set our life off-balance.
We've lost that sacred centered place
of spacious generosity.
And yet I rest in knowing it still lives
in fullness in another
and will be ours again.

— Pamela Haines

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Calendar – December 2011

Meeting for Worship: Every First Day (Sunday) at 11:00 (10:00 during July and August)

Childcare is available during worship.

First Day School Classes begin at 11:00 (generally)

ONGOING GROUPS:

Circle of Conscience meets 3rd Sundays 12:30 Room 134

Faith & Practice Workshop meets 3rd Sundays 12:45 MMR

Godly Play meets 3rd Sundays 11:00 MLK

Lamentations meets 3rd Sundays 9:30-10:45 Room 21

Light Group meets 1st and 3rd Wednesday MMR 7:00

& 2nd & 4th Wednesday MMR 4:00

Spiritual Practices Group meets every Monday 7:00 MMR

World Affairs and Quaker Testimonies (CPMM-PMM) meets 4th Wednesdays at Arch St 7:00

Dec 1 Thursday

Membership Care Committee 7:00 MMR

Dec 4 Sunday

Property Committee 9:30 MMR

Racial Healing & Wholeness Committee 12:45
MMR

Dec 11 Sunday

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
9:30 MLK; Afternoon Session begins at 12:45

Dec 12 Monday

Finance Advisory Committee 5:30 Room 21

Dec 13 Tuesday

Gifts & Leadings Committee 6:00 Room 21

Peace & Social Concerns Committee 6:30 Lucretia
Mott Room

Dec 14 Wednesday

Burial Ground Committee 6:00 MMR

Deadline for requesting childcare for Meeting for
Business

Dec 18 Sunday

Attenders Committee 9:15 MMR

Nominating Committee 9:15 MLK

Twelfth Month Dinner 12:15 Cherry St Room

Dec 20 Tuesday

Worship & Ministry Committee 7:00 MMR

Dec 25 Sunday

Christmas Day – Building Closed; Worshipers
enter by side door in Cherry St Room

Dec 31 Saturday

New Year's Eve Worship Celebration 7:00 Cherry
St Room; enter by side door