



# The Quaker Heron

Volume 1, Number 1 • November 1999

Newsletter of the Patapsco Friends Meeting

## Letter from the Editor

*This year's newsletters will focus on the Quaker testimonies of community,*

*simplicity, peace, and equality. Given our recent retreat devoted to community-building, it seemed natural that the theme of the first Meeting newsletter would be community. As I put together this first issue, I am very thankful to the people who contributed articles and moral support.*

*Many of the articles in this issue are a response to or reflection upon our retreat. The name of the newsletter—The Quaker Heron—also arose out of the retreat. When Jerry Girbach likened the Meeting to a blue heron — “we move gracefully when it is time to move, rest patiently when it is time to wait, and act swiftly and surely when it is time to act”— a murmur went around the room: “We think we’ve found a name for the newsletter.” Other commonalities arose from that retreat: a commitment to Quakerism, a hunger for spiritual growth, a strong desire for greater commitment to healing ministries, and a belief that our children are a central part of who we are as a meeting.*

*I hope that in addition to*

*cont. on back >*

## What is community?

By John Buck

A community is a number of individuals who share a common interest. Is that true for a spiritual community? What is the common interest of the Patapsco Preparative Meeting community? Or is a spiritual community defined by more than common interest? I would like to thresh these queries over the next few months and do so again at least every few years. Being as clear as we can about “why we are” can help us discern right priorities and right decisions. The following are my personal responses to the queries, derived from as much Light as I can scrape together.

First, it does seem that a spiritual community is a bit different than just any secular community. The phrase “common interest” implies rationality and intellect, the potential subject of a cost-benefit analysis and not the focus of inspiration or commitment. I am drawn to the Patapsco Friends Community by what I can only call oceanic, deep feelings. My intellect (which worries about such things as common interest) is only a raft floating on the currents. For me choosing a spiritual community is on a par with other major life decisions such as choosing a career, a spouse, to have children, to oppose a war, and so on. Spiritual communities typically have a common belief and ask their members to sign up to some credo summarizing that belief. We Quakers slip away from prescribed beliefs by posing queries and offer instead a common form of worship. It is an empty form that one can decorate with beliefs if one so chooses. At the retreat, our group that shared life stories turned out to include a Protestant Quaker, a Jewish Quaker, a Hindu Quaker,

and a lapsed-agnostic Quaker, whatever that is. I quite enjoyed the exercise of sharing life stories. It felt so satisfying to share our humanness, and I felt the essence of our community: sharing human/divine Spirit.

I feel connected also to our history. Around 1650 a large community in northern England called “Seekers” invented a new kind of religious meeting. They had rejected contemporary churches and thought they were trying to recreate the original form of the Church in the days of the Apostles. I think their invention was, instead, profoundly original. They often held their meetings in silence for they did not want to speak unless they were sure God gave them something to say. From the silence these “Waiters” or “Seekers” received a message that a prophet-like person would soon come to lead them. Right on cue, George Fox showed up with the message that they could now be Finders and Possessors. George Fox died, but the “Children of the Light,” the Religious Society of Friends of Truth, carried on.

Our lives today are more fragmented and disjointed than ever in history. We sit mere feet from each other in traffic and do not speak or wave. Spouses no longer share economic production or the same social networks, as they did in farming communities. Children know little of their parent's day-to-day lives. Neighbors live for years near each other hardly knowing each other's names. In this confusion of secular communities, the gift the Children left us, a form of worship and Light-centered activity that lets disconnected lives come together to pool their spirits and share their spiritual journeys, is an especially precious gift.

## Our Weekend

by Ramona Buck

The Patapsco Preparative Meeting held a retreat on the weekend of September 18th and 19th at New Windsor Conference Center in New Windsor, Maryland. Gathering early on Saturday morning, about 20 adults and 15 children soon were involved in a multitude of experiential activities.

The adults were ably lead by our own Susan Rose, along with George Sinnott, from the Sandy Spring Meeting. The children were lead by young Friend, Nathan Harrington, from the Sandy Spring Meeting, as well as by three girls from the local New Windsor community.

Ahead of time, Sherri Morgan had planned oodles of crafts and experiential projects for the children, including a huge mural, dioramas, crafted wood items, decoratively framed Polaroid pictures of the children's group, and time for free play with "dress up" clothes, dishes, building materials and more. For the two infants who were cared for in a room next to the adults, Sherri had brought a small playhouse, and many age appropriate toys. She had arranged for the child care people and had made a special trip to New Windsor the previous week to meet them, take them out for pizza and explain the projects to them. The children seemed to have a very positive experience. The adults' activities were focused in three general areas: getting to know each other at a deeper level; sharing spiritual journeys; and focusing on the future of the Meeting. Many activities were based on the activities used in Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP) training. The multitude of activities included: sharing about values in small groups; drawing, and then sharing with others a picture or diagram of the significant life events in our lives; arranging ourselves around a "pie plate" symbolizing the Meeting; and verbally sharing our dreams for the future of the Meeting community. On Saturday night, John Buck lead both adults and children in some intergenerational group activities in the gym, which focused on cooperation and win/win outcomes. This was followed by a brief attempt at group singing, and then by an outdoor gathering to make "S'

## On Community

Reflections on  
the first  
Patapsco  
Preparative  
Meeting  
Retreat,  
September  
1999

Mores" (roasted marshmallows, combined with squares of chocolate in graham cracker sandwiches). Since campfires were not allowed, the "fire" was replaced by a charcoal grill. A few people then went on a night walk with John, and a few people remained up for a time in the gym talking and playing board games. Meeting for Worship was held on Sunday morning, in addition to a last retreat session. Evaluations of the Retreat were mostly positive. One paraphrased response follows: "Facilitators were well prepared and presentations were well paced. Game time was fun and relaxing; It was beneficial to share life journeys. But, would like to focus more on our spiritual journeys in a subsequent retreat and suggest more quiet time and meditation time." One person said: "Retreat met its objectives and my own objectives; enjoyed the rural setting and the opportunity to stay overnight. Thanks to facilitators and kudos to behind-the-scenes workers and organizers. Well done! See you in Hawaii!" (a reference to someone's suggestion as to a good location for any subsequent retreats). One respondent felt very strongly that it would have been better to have the infants and their teen caretakers in the same room with the adults since children are the basis of community. The New Windsor Center was a calming, welcoming place in a little town nestled in pretty countryside, with narrow, winding roads. The weather was mostly kind and provided some blue skies and sparkling sunshine, a good omen.

## Reflections on a pie plate

By Jim Rose

During the Patapsco Meeting retreat in September, one of the many exercises was to arrange ourselves with respect to the "Meeting's center" as represented by a pie plate. An intentionally ambiguous request lit both the fast ignition and slow burning fuse of recognition, reflection, and response. Here then are two responses to the exercise and to the implicit query, does the meeting have a center?

No. It is difficult for me to position myself with respect to a center which I feel does not exist. What is so important to me about Friends' teaching is the importance of the individual, that there is that of God in each of us. A meeting is a collection of centers, each one a bright spark of hope and love. Each time I attend meeting, I immerse myself in the presence of those centers with joyful expectancy.

Yes. For, while there is that of God in everyone, it is the same God, the same spirit which we all share. There is a common, central sense of the presence of God; a common, central acceptance of the Quaker way. And that commonality, that acceptance, defines us as a community.

Being slightly hue-blind, I often don't understand what is meant by "green." My recourse is simply to ask someone to test my best guess. Of course, I have to trust the answer, but trust is the essence of learning and of growth. Similarly, I often find myself confused by what is meant by "good." And similarly, my recourse is simply to ask a trusted person. We all have revelations both big and small; we all have leadings which can affect our lives and the lives of others. A community, a Quaker community, is an environment where you are able to, and encouraged to test your leadings against the advice and experiences of trusted Friends.

Is there a pie-plate, a center of our Quaker community? Yes there is. But it is an enormous trusted pie plate, and we are all gathered underneath it. Holding hands.

## A Retreat with Friends from PPFM

By Scott Hagaman

Being able to hold the Patapsco Friends Meeting in my mind as "an entity that I can consider myself in relationship to" is reassuring. It is reassuring to know that the Patapsco Friends Meeting is there, and will always be there. This way of thinking is illusory: "the Meeting" and "my relationship to the Meeting" are actually the same.

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Someone scheduled a retreat. The purpose of the retreat was announced: to envision the future of Patapsco Preparative Friends Meeting. I knew we would reach such understanding in the Quaker fashion: through silent meditative prayer. I signed up.

Ninety days of drought were followed by thirty days of rain. Hurricane Floyd took out trees and electricity, and left us glorious weather in its wake: moderate temperatures, a cool breeze, and a bright blue sky. I drove with my seven-year-old son, Sean, to New Windsor. Bicyclists were everywhere—I knew they were loving it. We arrived late in the morning, with the retreat well under way. Sean joined the children in the gymnasium, where they were preparing for a nature walk. The adults were sitting in discussion groups of four in the main building. I would be the late arriving fifth to one group. I demurred from intrusion: I would be pleased to relax while the others continued in their group work. *This would not do: I would join a group promptly for the remaining few minutes.* The four I joined were done talking and it was my turn: *what did I value most in other people? Well? You don't have much time to think about it: we stop in about three minutes and there's more work to do.* Ugh, yeah, right. I'm sorry for being late. Did you already do the meditative prayer stuff? *No. That's scheduled for tomorrow from 10:30 to 11:30.* 10:30 to 11:30? This is not what I expected of a Quaker retreat. A pie tin was placed in the center of the room to represent PPFM. We were asked to position ourselves relative to the center of the pie tin/Meeting. I stood about two-thirds the way to the periphery.

What I value most in other people? "Straightforwardness; thoughtfulness; and self-confidence." I explained that without these, a person is unlikely to hold my interest for long. Most retreaters wanted more time to think about things and talk about things. We were told we have the rest of our lives, if we so wished. I wondered about my thoughts. Do I really find the qualities I spoke of valuable in other people? Is it really such people with whom I cultivate relationships? Are these *my* qualities? Are these ideals that I aspire to? Do my mannerisms betray alternate values that I'm not acknowledging? I contin-

*"Many communal ventures begun  
with great hopes have foundered  
over the question of who takes out  
the garbage. Over and over the  
[Benedictine] Rule calls us to be  
more mindful of the little things,  
even as it reminds us of the big  
picture, allowing us a glimpse of  
who we can be when we remember  
to love."*

— The Cloister Walk, Kathleen Norris

ued my list over the break. "Spontaneity/daringness. Interest in and appreciation for me." I really do appreciate this in someone I like. "Personal sense of physical beauty and style. A high level of intelligence. A quick wit and a sense of irony. One who takes pleasure in exercise." I realized that my mind had moved to qualities I find attractive in the opposite sex. "An aesthetic sense and appreciation for art. Living within one's means/making the most of one's means. Civility." This is something I had heard in the large group discussion and it had stuck with me. "An independent sense of values, rather than being attentive to the current fashion. Active in service to the group and larger community." I was confident, now, that these are qualities I value in others *and* in myself. "Monetarily capable in the material world, though not of it." It's a topic that's not easy to broach: there's something very appealing about someone who has facility with money, and yet very alienating when the person highly identifies himself/herself with it.

I now knew this was not a retreat of meditative prayer. The retreat was structured to have me think about how I live my life. Am I self-aware? Do I live my life in a fashion consistent with my purported principles and values?

Certain events affect us such that our lives change with each of them. We were given crayons during the afternoon session, and asked to illustrate these personal turning points on a long scroll. I began with captions in ink, like a time-line. I found I was representing the majority of events in my life by the people I associate with them. I had a period of Enlightenment in my mid-adolescence associated with my high school counselor. I've had two Renaissance periods of expressive expansion. I made one drawing by the end of the session: a portrait of Sean covered the last seven years of my life. I've always wanted to

be a father and expected it would be a wonderful experience. It has been ten times more meaningful than I ever imagined it would be.

I confess: I've enjoyed the relative anonymity I've had at PPFM to date. I'm less innocent today. I said quite a few things about myself. Small details. Defining details in the world. I was there, too, when other people said things about themselves. I heard. I wasn't expecting this. I wanted to engage in silent, meditative prayer. Why are we talking about practical matters in the substantive world? Now when I come to meeting, it's not going to be the same. The room of souls will be replaced by a room of people with souls. They will be people with details in their lives. Where will they be talking from and how will I hear them: from their souls or from the details of their lives? How will they regard me: as a soul, or as a representative of the details of my life?

The pie tin again appeared in the middle of the room and we were, again, asked to position ourselves relative to the center of the PPFM. I know what to expect with this test/retest exercise. After an emotional group experience, people will feel closer to the emotional center of this group. We were then invited to speak. The exercise was different for me today: I was not having an "emotional" experience. I was thinking about my life: do I live it the way I preach it? And if I don't, what's that a reflection on? And even if I do, who does it matter to? In both cases, just me. There is no "Friends Meeting that I have a relationship to!" There's me and the way I live my life. I'm not here and live my life over there, or there but live over here. I'm just here and my life is as it is, no matter how I might think about it. I stood next to the pie tin.

I stopped by the gym in the mid-afternoon. Sean barely broke away from what he was doing to say hello, stuff half a banana in his mouth, and inform me that he had to kick the soccer ball against the wall without it touching the floor—and off he went. All the children were occupied: four were doing crafts at one table, balls were flying all around, snacks were sitting out on another table to be inhaled as needed, two other tables were set up with crafts for anyone interested, decorated tee shirts were hanging on hooks, painted wood objects were drying on a table in the corner, a 12 foot poster of the children's hand prints hung on the wall. It was not the least bit disorganized; every child knew exactly what he or she was doing.

I become disorganized when, given a range of options, my external actions don't match my internal strivings. Does this have bearing on the goal of the retreat, envisioning the future of PPFM? I think so. PPFM remains an open and, as yet, undefined opportunity for me. The future of PPFM will be what I make of it.

## Question of the Issue

**Q**uestion: With the meeting having grown and gotten more formal, how does one go about organizing an event like the hayride these days (which I didn't organize this year)? Do we need an ad hoc committee? I don't want to always do these things all by myself.

— *Diane Reynolds*

**Answer:** I don't think there needs to be a formal procedure for something like a hayride. I think it would be appropriate to announce your interest in something like that, either through the silent announcements or orally and say you would like to help organize it if others are interested (1) in doing it: and (2) if there were a couple of other people in-

terested in working with you on it. If both those factors were there, you could go forward.

How does that sound?

— *Ramona Buck*

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If you have questions about Quaker practice, matters of the spirit, committee work, or any other issue pertaining to Patapsco Friends Meeting, please forward them to the newsletter, either via e-mail: [diane\\_reynolds@yahoo.com](mailto:diane_reynolds@yahoo.com) or hand them to me at the end of meeting. Thanks.

## Bible Study: James

**P**lease join us for a study of the New Testament book of James. We meet the second and fourth Sunday of each month, 9:15 at Hebron House. We are using the study *James: Faith in Action...* by David S. Young, which can be ordered from the Peace Place in New Windsor, MD (410-635-8708). The cost of the book is \$6.20 (\$4.95 plus \$1.25 for shipping.)

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## Friend of the Issue: Elena Manzanera

**E**lena Manzanera's life has been marked by idealism and a search for spiritual truth. Born in Argentina, Elena spent the early part of her adult life opposing the dictatorship ruling her country while discovering how to start a career to match her spiritual vocation. As a member of the group ASCUA, Elena put herself at political and personal risk by trying to protect democratic traditions in Argentina. Through yoga and the dialogues of Plato, Elena found her spiritual vocation: psychology. As a psychotherapist, she worked, as Plato advised, to create awareness and to pull people from darkness into the light.

However, studying psychotherapy at an advanced level was difficult given the political situation in Argentina at the time, which heavily favored the wealthy ruling elite. In her thirties, Elena came to the United States, practiced as a psychotherapist and family therapist, and also found an offbeat way to have a family by adopting two interracial children. Over the next several decades, Elena's

career went through various ups and downs as she attempted to pursue a PhD, raise a family, and cope with the changing, and sometimes punitive, licensing rules for family therapy. Now entering her seventies, Elena celebrates the lives of her children and her granddaughter Nicole, as well as her 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a university assistant clinical professor at the University of Maryland. She also works as a family therapist, which makes for a heavy schedule, and looks back over her life with wistfulness and gladness.

Earlier in her life, in New York, Elena pursued spiritual studies with the Swami Satchinanda, from whom she learned a series of practices to cleanse her system to be open to the light as well as to spiritual wisdom. She gained the ability to surrender to the light, and both to be good and do good in simple, practical ways. Learning to pursue doing good in an uncomplicated way informed and reinforced her career as a social worker.

Directly before her Quaker affiliation, Elena was a Unitarian. She recognized that

she was at the "extreme left, more religious" than her fellow Unitarians, and thus alone. She was the only one in her group, for instance, who chose to pursue mysticism. She was also alone in feeling that the quality of community she was experiencing was not satisfying. Having read and heard about Quakers, she took the opportunity to attend when she heard of the small Friends community in Ellicott City.

Asked what she finds most meaningful about Quakerism, Elena mentions the silent service, which evokes the light in us, and the getting of wisdom from others who are called to speak up. She lists Universalist tenets of belief in the Quaker tradition as also meaningful, including the recognition of the spirit of the divine in ourselves and others, and the wisdom of the Bible as well as Eastern traditions. She also gains inspiration from the courage of earlier Quakers in treating underdogs such as Native Americans and African-American slaves with kindness and respect.

As Elena pursues official membership with Friends, we look forward to having both her and granddaughter Nicole as active members of our community.

## Committees

### Religious Education

January marks a new year for First Day school, and RE is taking this opportunity to reassess how classes are divided up and trying to recruit new teachers for the upcoming year. We've decided to split the K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade class up into two classes, and split the teaching year into two terms to reduce the burden on teachers.

We felt we needed to separate the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders from the kindergartners since their attention spans and learning needs are so different. This class will be rather small to start with in January, but should grow in October when the Kindergartners move up.

We currently have openings for the first term Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes — that's the term that begins in January and runs through June.

If you'd like to teach, see Roger Reynolds or any of the First Day school teachers. Teaching is a wonderful experience that I highly recommend! It's a particularly good way for Friends who do not have young children to get to know the kids and vice versa.

#### *Backups needed!*

We especially need for people willing to serve as back ups for days when the regular teachers are unavailable. If you would like to teach, but don't want to commit to teaching every week for six months, it may be possible to share a slot with one other person, alternating months or weeks. RE has many curricula from FGC and other sources that teachers can use to help plan classes, though many teachers like to develop their own lessons.

#### *0-3 year-old class*

The younger children follow a flexible curriculum that includes singing songs, hearing a story, and sitting in silence for approximately one minute each class session. A child is chosen each week to break the silence in a routine that marks the beginning of preparation for Meeting for Worship. The stories read center loosely on the spiritual guidance of Dr. Seuss. A craft is offered each week, but about half the children choose instead to play with toys. Weather permitting, children also go to the playground. A strong effort is made to

make these young children feel comfortable with their peers and with the adults in the meeting.

#### *Four to Seven Year Class*

Sandy Girbach reports: From September through November we are celebrating God within us and in each other through exploring two Quaker testimonies, Community and Equality. Through activities, craft projects and stories we are looking at feelings, empathy, respect, and friendship.

#### *Third Grade and Older Class*

The third-grade and older class has recently expanded in size due to the advancement of several younger class "graduates." The group is studying Jesus using a curriculum called "Jesus: Who is he?" as well as the new Bibles each class member recently received. The approximately 13-session course on Jesus covers the Annunciation, the birth of Jesus, Jesus at the Temple, the wedding at Cana, some parables, and Jesus' final days on earth. In addition to the study, the class works on related arts and crafts projects. Teacher Linda Pardoe says she and Sandy Girbach (4-7 year-old teacher) are tentatively planning a Christmas play to include 4 year-olds and up, and Linda herself is considering planning a field trip outside of class for the older children.

### Ministry and Oversight

In larger Meetings, there is the Committee on Ministry and Counsel which focuses on the spiritual life of the Meeting, including the Meeting for Worship. And, there is the Committee of Overseers, which focuses on the individual members, and their care and nurturing. In smaller Meetings, the two are combined to be a Ministry and Oversight Committee, which is what we have here at Patapsco Preparative Meeting. The Ministry and Oversight Committee, in recent months, has been focusing on the planning for the Meeting Retreat, which was the idea of Sherri Morgan, and which was initiated by the Ministry and Oversight Committee. We have also considered the needs of individual Meeting attenders and tried to find ways the Meeting could be of help to them. In addition, we receive letters of request for membership which are sent initially to the Clerk of the Meeting and then passed along to the Ministry and Oversight Committee. We have discussed the Meeting, itself, from time to time and considered what may be needed to nurture it. The committee has also, in the past, arranged for "Quakerism 101": four evening sessions on different topics with regard to Quakerism offered for people in the Meeting, or in the community at large, wishing to know about Quakers. At our next meeting, among other things, we will be considering appropriate follow up to the issues raised at the recent Retreat. The committee currently meets monthly, on a weekday evening, at different members' homes.

## Meeting for Healing

The second First Day of every month, a small group of Friends gather at the Mt Hebron Meetinghouse for a Meeting for Healing. During this Meeting, people—and sometimes situations—are held in the light for healing. During the approximately 20 minutes each person is held in the light, participants speak out of the silence with prayer, thoughts or counsel. Meetings for Healing differ from Meetings for Worship in that one's

attention and energy are totally focussed on the healing of a particular person or situation. We welcome everybody to these Meetings, which are held at 6:30 PM on the aforementioned Sunday. Please call in advance if you will need childcare.

## Book Review

### *The Cloister Walk* by Kathleen Norris

**T**he *Cloister Walk* is a worthwhile book to discuss in a newsletter issue on community. In this book, Kathleen Norris describes and meditates on two extended periods of time she spent at a Benedictine monastery. A married woman, a protestant, and a poet, she appears an unlikely candidate for the celibate, Catholic, and communal life of a monastery. Yet she is sympathetic to and illuminating about this "other" world.

The book, a series of essays on a variety of topics from saints' lives to her own life, is loosely held together by her experience of both the yearly and daily monastic cycle of life. Among other things, during her Benedictine residency she deepens her understanding of community. She learns, for example, that when the monks are evaluating a candidate for full entry into the monastery, they never consider whether they like the person, only whether they believe the person has a genuine calling to monastic life. A more prosaic example of the Benedictine ideal of community emerges at the American Benedictine Academy Convention. At this convention, "an abbot... suddenly dropped all pretense to objectivity and said he was troubled by the growing number of cereals made available for breakfast in his community. 'How many kinds of cereal do we need,' he asked, 'in order to meet genuine health needs without falling into thoughtless consumerism?' The audience... broke into applause, obviously grateful that he'd captured in one trivial example, an unease that many of them share about the way they live in contemporary America." As Norris puts it: "while consumer culture speaks only to preferences, treating even whims as needs to be granted (and the sooner the better), the monastics sense that this pandering to delusions of self-importance weakens the true self, and diminishes our ability to distinguish desires from needs. It's a price they're not willing to pay."

This notion of community in which one takes care of and makes allowances for the more "eccentric" (read mentally unbalanced) monks, sick monks, elderly nuns, even the

dead who are talked about frequently, is quite different from our American conception of community as a group of compatible people, accepting members on the basis of merit—money, likeability, education, looks, health, race etc.—and then building (often literally) walls to exclude all others. This contemporary kind of community, which does cater minutely to the individual, cereal-level, whims of all its members, also frequently does repress their spirits, for everyone lives with the fear that if their "merit" falls below a certain level, they can—and will—be cast out. By contrast, in a Benedictine community, you might not get the cereal you want or many of your whims met, but you can BE who you are with much less fear of rejection.

While there is much ground covered in this book, I was most interested in Norris's discussions of her expanding understanding of celibacy and virginity. I learned that monastic people practice celibacy because they want passionately to enact a love that is "non-exclusive" and "non-possessive." As for virginity, Norris assails our "gynocentric" and narrowly physical definition of virginity. She points out that many of the early female Catholic Church martyrs, who are renowned for dying "for their virginity," were most likely not technical virgins as common practice would have been to rape them before killing them. In fact, says Norris, we should see their "virginity" as an integrity of self—no matter what happened to them, they stayed true or "pure" to themselves, refusing to allow their self-concept to be violated. They did not make the polluting moral compromises that most other people make to get along in the world. This especially came home to me as I watched the movie "American Beauty" recently. In that movie, the male protagonist states several times that he is a "whore" for staying in a job he hates. And we know what he means.

I did have a problem with Norris's preoccupation in the book with the poet (ie., herself) as secular priest. I think we have all heard this argument before, and I felt it was unfortunate that Norris seemed to feel such a need to justify herself and her profession. I think the book would have been stronger and more focused had she more strenuously edited the "poet" parts, but I'm sure others would disagree. All in all, however, it is a worthwhile book by a good writer coming to a deeper understanding of her own faith.

## News

### Book Group

**T**he book group, which meets once a month on the third Sunday of every month at 7:00 at the meeting house, has been discussing *Called to be Peacemakers: A New Call to Peacemaking Workbook*, by John K. Stoner. We will continue with this book at least through December 1999. Stoner offers a wealth of resource references, and is unapologetic in his commitment to peace. For example, in the chapter "Called to be Peacemakers in the Nation," Stoner states: "The mission of a church is to develop a people who continue the strange practice, which Jesus began, of loving their enemies. Loving enemies is incompatible with killing enemies, as every nation knows, but theologians have wrestled for years that it's not that way. The rediscovery of Jesus in this matter is therefore always radical..." (p 76). One question raised in my mind by the above is how to reconcile the command to "love one's neighbor" with the command to "love one's enemy" if one's enemy is killing one's neighbor. There is much here to discuss, and the book could easily take us a year to digest. All are encouraged to attend the book group and offer their opinions.

### Friendly Bunches

**F**riendly bunches are starting again. These groups of about 6 Friends meet for dinner and/or an activity once a month for 3-4 months. As they are social in nature (as opposed to a study or worship group) the bunches are good way to get to know people. We especially encourage people who find it difficult to attend Meeting for Worship on a regular basis to join the bunches. In my experience, they have been a lot of fun. To sign up for the bunches, use the sign-up sheet on the table in the Meeting house hallway or contact Elizabeth Saria.

## Letter from front page

*providing news and information about the meeting and upcoming meeting events, the newsletter will also help us to learn more about each other and to think about who we are. I also ask anybody/thing that was overlooked, slighted or forgotten to remember that this is a work in process being done with a good heart. More importantly, please talk to me/ e-mail me so you or your concern can be highlighted in the next issue. Each issue will feature an opportunity to respond to the previous issue, a "Friend of the Issue" biography to help us learn more about each other, a book review, reports from active committees and groups, and a calendar of events. Otherwise, like the community it represents, the newsletter will evolve and change. Please help shape this voice through your response, advice, and support.*

— Diane Reynolds  
diane\_reynolds@yahoo.com

# Calendar of Events

## Sunday, November 14:

Bible Study: James, 9:15, Mt. Hebron House  
Religious Education Committee Meeting, 12:30  
Meeting for Healing, 6:30 PM, Mt Hebron House

## Sunday, November 21:

Book Discussion Group, 7:00 PM  
*Called to be PeaceMakers*

## Thursday, December 2:

Ministry and Oversight Committee Meeting, 7:30 at the Buck's residence, call for directions: 410-997-2535.

## Sunday, December 5:

Meeting for Business, Mt. Hebron House, time to be determined.

## Saturday, December 11:

Christmas caroling at the Buck's house. 7:00PM cookies and punch. For directions call (410)-997-2535

## Sunday, December 12:

Bible Study: James, 9:15, Mt. Hebron House  
Meeting for Healing, 6:30 PM, Mt Hebron House

## Sunday, December 19:

Book Discussion Group, 7:00 PM  
*Called to be PeaceMakers*



*Patapsco Friends Meeting*  
Mt Hebron House • 2331 Calvin Circle  
Ellicott City, MD 21042