

## **Nominating Committee Annual Report, November 1, 2015**

The Nominating Committee is pleased to present its annual report, including our proposed slate of nominees for officers, committee members and representatives to various Quaker organizations, to begin in January 2016. In the attached list, the names in italics are the people whom we have nominated this fall; the others are already serving.

The members of the Nominating Committee are honored by the Meeting's trust in us to discern the best possible use of the energies of our members and attenders. A Quaker monthly meeting is only as healthy and vital as the committees that do its work, and thus we realize the weightiness of our charge – to be aware of the strengths of our individual members and attenders, as well as the challenges they face, and to discern how best to use their talents and energies while respecting these challenges.

A difficulty we have faced in recent years, which seems only to have increased this year, is the attrition in the cadre of people who have tirelessly served on BFM committees year after year. We have lost numerous people to geographical moves, illness, death, and pre-occupying professional or personal obligations. Despite our best efforts, this year there are several committees for which we were unable to identify qualified persons for all of the positions sought by that committee.

At the same time, as we look at our slate of nominations, we are impressed with the strengths and talents of those we still can count on, and we are so grateful for their continued willingness to serve. We trust that those who are unable serve currently due to stresses in their lives will find more openness to serve in the future. And as new attenders become more familiar with our Meeting, we hope we can count on them to join committees that suit their interests. We are pleased that this year we do in fact have quite a number of new names on our list of nominees, and we welcome these new people with gratitude and enthusiasm! We hope they find committee work to be a gratifying way to connect with others in Bethesda Friends Meeting.

Because of the attrition we have had in seasoned members and attenders, we have focused on giving each committee the talents most apt for that committee, instead of focusing just on the number of committee members. We trust that the people best suited to the work of the committee will find a way to prioritize the committee's work and get it done. At the same time, we know that committees appreciate continuity in the numbers to which they have become accustomed, and we certainly try to come as close to these numbers as we can. Even with our concerns about losses in our community, we would like to note that there are 131 separate, filled positions in our 2016 slate. We warmly thank everyone who has agreed to serve in these positions, whether as officers, committee members, or representatives and liaisons.

In order to ensure that committees maximize the effectiveness of the members they have, Nominating Committee will be asking committee clerks to notify new and continuing committee members that their attendance at committee meetings is normally expected, and that a member should notify the clerk(s) when s/he is unable to attend. We believe such an expectation will help to emphasize the importance of committee service to our community.

Nominating Committee does the great bulk of its work from August through November, meeting weekly, and making numerous calls between meetings. But we do meet at other times during the year, to do some review and planning. We begin to contact committee clerks in late spring to check in and see how their committees are doing, to review who on their committee will be

rotating off in the coming year, and to ask what kinds of talents and strengths they are hoping for in new nominees. Throughout the year, we also attempt to get to know newcomers, and encourage them to consider joining committees. In September, we arrange for committee clerks to be available at potluck, so that members and attenders can talk to them and learn about the work of various committees. This is helpful to those looking for a new committee assignment, or those who haven't served on committees but would like to. At the close of each nominating period, we review our process, and talk about what worked well and what might be improved, and orient the new members of our committee.

We would like to present to the Meeting two important concerns that have arisen during the course of our work this year. The first concern is that the average age of BFM members and attenders is increasing, which diminishes the ability of some to contribute to the work of the Meeting. We count on and appreciate the experience and wisdom of our long-time members and attenders; at the same time, we realize that in future years it is inevitable that many of this group will move, become ill or too old, or become unable to serve for other reasons. While we have had some younger new attenders, we believe we need an even more robust influx of younger attenders. They will enrich us, and also provide a solid group of peers for the younger people who already attend. While we realize our Meeting is facing another significant challenge – the question of where we will choose to locate ourselves when Sidwell Friends Lower School moves – we think this is an equally important challenge for us. Without the vigor of a younger generation ready to take up increasing responsibility, we face the prospect of a gradually diminishing community. We urge the Meeting to consider how to address this issue.

A second concern we would like to bring before the Meeting is how we arrange for Spring Fling. Until a few years ago, the management of Spring Fling was under the care of the Advancement and Outreach Committee. After the A&O committee asked to be relieved of this responsibility, a succession of volunteers stepped in to coordinate Spring Fling, and veteran unit managers continued in their roles: Jane Coe, the White Camel sale; Liz Hofmeister, the Plant Sale; Lydia Adelfio, the Silent Auction, and Angie Parlin, the food. They enjoy it enough, they say, to keep on one more year. But they want to find successors to learn the ropes this year in time for the 2016 Spring Fling, and be able to assist or take it on thereafter. The same goes for the coordinator role. Spring Fling is not a standing committee of the Meeting, so it is not under the care of the Nominating Committee. But we are well aware that the way the Meeting is currently managing Spring Fling is not sustainable. We hope successors will come forward, and that way will open for Spring Fling to be sustained by a combination of continuity and refreshment in the leadership roles. We encourage the Meeting to consider how this might be accomplished.

Each of us on the Nominating Committee this year feels it has been a great pleasure to serve; everyone on the committee has pitched in and worked with both sensitivity and enthusiasm. Our committee will be seeing Stephanie Koenig, Anne Parlin, and Georgianna Ziegler rotate off for service on other BFM committees, and we will welcome Margaret Plank and Doug Smith as new members in 2016. We are grateful both for our outgoing members and their work, and for the talents and energies of our incoming members. All of us feel honored by the trust the Meeting puts in our discernment, and grateful for the opportunity to serve the Meeting in this way.

Stephanie Koenig, co-clerk  
Rick Morgan, co-clerk  
Susie Crowley  
Ellie Fink

Frank Greve  
Anne Parlin  
Dean Pruitt  
Georgianna Ziegler

