

Beacon Hill Friends House

Resident Handbook

2009

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Welcome to the Beacon Hill Friends House!

As a new resident you are now part of an intentional residential community. The following guidelines are meant to answer questions about life here in the House and describe the various committees that serve the House. The Appendices outline some community-building tools that past House residents have created, which are provided as background information for all new residents. In addition to these guidelines and tools, there are other sources of detailed information:

- The refrigerator door in the kitchen is the bulletin board for short-term in-House announcements from staff and residents;
- The side of the refrigerator has information on events, opportunities, etc., in the Boston area;
- The bulletin board next to the message boxes has information, checklists, and sign-up sheets related to chores, meals, and dish crew;
- The chore book (in the chore clipboard) is the source for detailed information about chores and dish crew.
- The calendar on the wall near the toasters has information on which rooms are reserved for guests and meetings, as well as listing House events.

"Required reading" consists of:

- All information posted on the refrigerator door
- Safety and emergency information
- Current policies and queries
- Minutes of any house meeting you miss
- General chore information and specific chore descriptions for chores to which you are assigned
- Anything put in your mail box
- This Resident Handbook!

You are responsible for all this information. Please don't hesitate to ask residents or staff if you have questions.

Welcome to BHFH!

The History of the Beacon Hill Friends House

What is now Beacon Hill Friends House was donated by the Greene family in 1957 to the Society of Friends, who were free to use it as they saw fit. They decided to set up a house that would not only support a Meeting, but also provide a space in which a group of residents would have the opportunity to learn about Quakerism. A limit on residency was imposed as a way to allow the largest number of people to benefit from a quality exposure to the principles that have sustained this religious movement. To ensure that this objective was met, the founders set up a governing board constituted of Quakers from New England Yearly Meeting and also formed standing committees that would address specific issues facing this kind of operation. Residents nominate representatives to these committees, both so their voices are a part of the decision-making process and so that they can gain further experience in Quaker governance. The community has its own meetings to make decisions and discuss issues related to our life in the house.

The BHFH Mission Statement

The mission of Beacon Hill Friends House is to embody the Quaker principles of faith, simplicity, integrity, community, and social responsibility in order to nurture and call forth the Light in all of us.

BHFH fulfills its mission by:

- Providing a center where Friends and others can meet, worship, and study
- Advancing and fostering the principles of the Religious Society of Friends
- Offering opportunities for the development of leadership
- Maintaining a diverse, ecumenical, residential community guided by Friends principles.

Purpose of Our Community

Approved by House Meeting of May 2001 and offered to future residents as guidelines.

As Beacon Hill Friends House members, we seek to live together in community, to practice the values of tolerance, simplicity and respect, and to learn from each other, from the teachings and traditions of the Religious Society of Friends, and from the traditions of other communities. These “other communities” include the groups from which we come (families, spiritual groups, cultures) and other intentional communities from which we may choose to draw ideas and inspiration.

Shared Understandings

As members of this house, we agree to the shared understandings below. We know that we can return to these whenever we need to clarify our purpose, make changes in our House practice, or resolve a conflict between members.

1. We respect ourselves and others in our community. We value the safety and well-being of ourselves and others, and seek to prevent harm to members of our community.
2. We understand that addressing conflict is critical to the well-being of intra-house relationships, and that our goal is to help these relationships work better.
3. We believe that honesty is important to healthy relationships and to a strong community. Through honest communication we enter into a deeper connection with others and open ourselves to learning and growth.
4. We understand that conflict can be a positive challenge that benefits those involved. Similarly, we don't assume that the absence of conflict means that everyone is in agreement, the community is healthy, or that everyone is happy.
5. We seek solutions that take into account everyone's needs. To accomplish this we are committed to a consensus based decision-making process.
6. We acknowledge that the process of reaching a decision is important in itself and affects whether the decision works, so we try to make the process thoughtful and intentional. We seek to understand the consensus process and review it and our own practice of it periodically.
7. We seek to understand the balance of power between the parts of our community: residents, staff, and board, and keep communication between these bodies open.
8. We believe that coercion in all its forms is negative and we try to avoid it.
9. We understand that we have responsibility for the care of our community environment. This includes contributing to the physical care and upkeep of the house, respecting others' possessions and using our shared resources wisely.

Building Community

In the fall and spring, the whole House gets together from a Friday evening through Saturday afternoon on RETREAT in order for us to get to know one another better and to help build community. Residents form an ad hoc committee to plan these retreats.

Early in the fall, we have a workshop on the Quaker decision-making process. This facilitates our House Meetings, making them more productive and enjoyable. In addition, throughout the year, we have workshops on other topics related to Quakerism and community.

Attendance at HOUSE MEETING is one of the main responsibilities of residents. We meet on the first and third Sundays of the month to discuss issues of concern to the community. We alternate between meetings for business and meetings for reflection. The House clerks post the agenda for business meetings on the refrigerator a few days ahead of time, which typically includes committee reports, action items, general announcements, and discussion topics. Meetings for reflection are programmed meetings that provide a more in-depth opportunity for discussion of issues related to life in the House. Meetings are mandatory, however if you absolutely must miss a meeting, you are responsible for reading the minutes. Social engagements are not reasons for missing House Meeting.

Working Together

Every resident is assigned a task to help keep the House going, as we have no cleaning staff. These CHORES are done one to three times a week and take about an hour to complete. Chores are rotated every five weeks, and residents may swap among themselves as long as they notify the Residency Manager. Those on vacation are expected to find other residents to do their chores in their absence.

In addition, everyone is required to participate in (or make up) the twice-yearly WORKDAYS, which prepare the House for winter and summer. We hope residents will also volunteer to help welcome outside guests, help with occasional mass-mailings, etc., when staff are pressed. A willingness to pay attention to small things that need doing -- such as changing hall light bulbs, shoveling snow, or distributing mail -- is helpful.

Detailed descriptions of chores, dish crew, sign-ups, what to do about these when you go away on vacation, and other ways to be helpful around the House are available in the chore book and dish crew handbook in the kitchen.

The Beacon Hill Friends Meeting

Shortly after the Beacon Hill Friends House was established in 1957, a small group of people gathered regularly to worship in the House. In the beginning, there were only a few people attending this worship group, but over the years it gradually grew to about 70 members.

On First Day (Sunday), Friends and visitors arrive for a 10:30 a.m. meeting. They settle into silent worship on the benches in the meeting room, with occasional messages inspired by the Spirit. Children who attend the First Day School leave the meeting after the first fifteen minutes and move into the children care area, dining room and parlor in small groups according to age.

Families come together again for announcements, introductions and refreshments at the rise of meeting at 11:30.

Residents are invited to attend. Several visits plus reading in *Faith and Practice* or other books in the Quaker Library will help you to begin to understand what a Quaker meeting is all about. Since our House is an intentional community, intending to introduce its residents to Quaker ways, we're fortunate to be in a place where we can witness Quakerism in action in our own house. You are welcome to take part by attending meetings for worship and meetings for business, and by getting to know members of the Meeting on an informal basis.

The Beacon Hill Friends Meeting (BHFM) pays rent to the House for use of various spaces on Sundays and during the week for committee meetings and special events. The House and Meeting communities come together under one roof and are both led by the same Spirit. Each community needs the understanding of the other as they both aspire to simplicity, clarity and peace.

HOUSE SAFETY

Fire Safety

Please note the location of exits, fire extinguishers, the fire escape, and the red fire alarm switches. A listing of fire safety procedures is posted in each bedroom; please review it so you know two different escape routes from your room. Boston's police-fire emergency number is 911. You can call from any phone. Also, there is a fire alarm box across the street and up the hill on the corner of Chestnut and Walnut Streets. If you start hearing a high-pitched chirp in your room, it probably means the battery in your smoke detector is failing; ask the directors for a new battery immediately. You will not confuse this sound with the raucous steady blare of the smoke or fire alarms. When the fire alarm goes off, close your windows, leave your room and close your door, and meet your housemates on the sidewalk in front of the house. We will review fire procedures at a House Meeting, but the fundamental rule is: *When in Doubt, Get Out!*

Security

We are our own security system. If you open windows or doors in a public area of the House, be sure to close and lock them when you leave the room. In summer, pay special attention to see that the doors and windows are not left open all night. The kitchen courtyard door should be locked after 10:30 p.m. Security is everyone's responsibility.

If someone you do not know comes to the front door, ask who they are coming to see and beep their friend. If it is an overnight guest staying in one of the guest rooms, beep the person in charge of welcoming the guest (see guest calendar in kitchen and office.)

Health Information Cards

This should be obtained from the Residency Manager, filled out and returned, and will be kept on file in the office in case of emergency. Please be sure to keep these updated if information changes.

Injuries or Illness

There is a first aid kit in the kitchen drawer to the right of the refrigerator. Please let the staff know when supplies are used, so that they can keep it stocked.

Valuable Personal Property

The House is not responsible for loss or damage to computers, electronic equipment, etc. If you would like insurance for your personal property, you are responsible for getting it yourself.

Other Emergency Information

There are a few pages of pink paper hanging near the dish crew signup with information on how to respond to various emergencies if the staff are away. Be familiar with this before an emergency actually arises!

Kitchen Matters

Shared meals form the heart of the house and give us a place to build community. House dinners are especially important because they are a time when we come together to share our lives and share nourishment. For this reason, we ask that residents attend at least three house dinners per week, and fulfill other kitchen responsibilities. Our responsibilities in the kitchen are a way of expressing love for community and for each other.

Dish Crew

Residents and staff (except the Kitchen Manager) serve on dish crew once each week. This involves setting the dinner table, serving dinner, and cleaning up afterwards. Details of the job are found in the Dishcrew Handbook in the kitchen. Sign-up sheets for dish crew are posted in the kitchen as well. On Friday and Saturday, there is no served dinner, and residents are expected to clean up after themselves. Only two people do dish crew those nights, which involves different tasks than other nights (see separate description, also available in the Dishcrew Handbook). People are expected to sign up for dish crew by Sunday of the previous week.

If you are unable to do dish crew during a "dish crew page" week, you are responsible for finding someone to do dish crew for you in your absence.

Dinner Sign-Up

On the dish crew sign-up sheet, note any days you will not be home for dinner, and whether or not you want food saved for you. Not signing out, or signing up for "saves" when you don't eat them, leads to wasted food and is inconvenient for dish crew. Please remember to sign out. On the same sheet you may also sign in guests for dinner. Please sign your guests up before 2 pm on the day of the meal, or if you have a sudden change of plans and want to invite someone after 2, check with the Kitchen Manager to make sure it's ok. Also in the dinner/dish crew sign-up sheet there is space where you should note your guests' breakfasts and lunches for billing purposes (currently \$4.50 for dinners and \$3.25 for lunch and breakfast).

Food Credit

If you are going to be away for seven days or more, you may get food credit by notifying the Residency Manager by signing the "Food and Cooking Credit Chart" posted in the kitchen before the last day of the current month. You are also responsible for signing out on the dinner sheet in the kitchen.

Residents' Refrigerator and Storage Space

The refrigerator in the laundry room and the shelf above the mailboxes in the kitchen are for extras and treats you have bought with your own money. Please label and date your items. Unlabeled items are periodically thrown out. Because everyone shares these spaces, try to take

up no more than your share of the space. Eating other people's labeled food is not ok.

Additional Kitchen Notes

Kitchen cleanliness is very important. Cleaning up after yourself is not just a matter of washing all your pots and cleaning all your dishes for the sterilizer. Wipe up your spills and crumbs -- don't leave them for the next person. Also don't let dishes or glasses accumulate in your room -- we might run out.

House Residency Policies

Admissions Policy

The residency committee admits those applicants who they feel would provide the most healthy and well-balanced residential community. For legal reasons, their discussions concerning specific candidates must be confidential, and those residents who are not accepted receive a very general 'rejection' letter. Residents should, however, express their opinions regarding potential applicants to members of the residency committee.

Residency Limits

The House currently has a four-year limit on residency. Residents who have been in the house for two years and would like to stay for a third year must go through an evaluation process. This process is repeated for residents requesting a fourth year. Evaluation criteria are listed in Appendix C.

Room Assignments

Single rooms, when they become available, are offered to residents according to a seniority list based on receipt of security deposits. Lateral moves (moves from one room to another of the same size) are not permitted. Staff have the final authority in making room assignments.

Drugs and Alcohol

Underage drinking is not allowed in the house. Consumption of alcohol for people 21 or older is allowed in the house, except in the kitchen and during house events (including dinner). Large parties need to be approved at house meeting. People in the house have a range of experiences and feelings about alcohol, so please be considerate and aware of how your behavior may affect others.

The use of illegal drugs is prohibited and can result in immediate expulsion from the house.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed anywhere in the house. Smoking is allowed only in the kitchen courtyard and outside in front of the house. Before lighting up, please check with the people near you, and be aware of how your smoke might affect them. Please also be considerate of guests in the Taj, whose window opens onto the courtyard. Please take responsibility for cleaning up your ashtrays immediately. We expect all residents to communicate with each other and to be flexible.

Residential Probation & Expulsion

Although conflict and tensions are an inevitable result of living in a diverse residential

community of many people and can present an opportunity for the community to grow stronger, the director has on occasion put residents on probation or, under the authority of the Board, asked a resident to leave immediately if his or her continued presence endangered the community. Minor infractions of House policy or an occasional lack of common courtesy do not warrant these kinds of action or even a formal warning; however, there are instances when either probation or expulsion is necessary.

Probation

There are two types of probation: a financial probation of 30 days and a behavioral probation of 60 days. Under both, goals are developed to be met during the probationary period.

In the case of financial probation, probation occurs when a resident does not pay rent within the month it is due. The director will meet with the resident to develop goals for paying off the money owed. Those goals must be met within the 30-day probationary period. If the resident meets the goals, then the probation is lifted.

Behavioral probation is necessary when a resident continually acts in a way that undermines Quaker principles of cooperation, inclusiveness, truthfulness and peace. This kind of behavior is that which disrupts the residential community and can interfere with the staff's ability to do their jobs. The director meets with the resident in the spirit of cooperation to discuss goals they expect to be met during the 60-day probationary period. If the resident meets the goals, then the probation is lifted.

Expulsion

The director has the authority to ask a resident to leave the community immediately without a probationary period if the person's behavior presents an immediate threat to others in the residential community or exhibits behavior so severe that the overall health of the community is at risk.

The director can also expel a resident if the goals set for the probationary period are not met. For instance, a resident on financial probation who does not meet the agreed upon payment schedule is putting the House at financial risk and will be asked to leave. Similarly, a resident on behavioral probation who has not met the goals during probation will also be asked to leave if their behavior has not been genuinely modified.

BILLING -- One month's double room rent is required as a security deposit at the time you are admitted to the House. An additional payment of the first month's room and board is expected when you move in. After that, bills are issued on the first of the month, payable by the fifth. The charges for room and meals are made for the month ahead; charges for your guests are made for the month past. Food credit when away for a week or more is applied for the days away in the month just past. The security deposit is refunded at the end of your stay if one month's notice of departure has been given in writing and your room is left in good condition.

GIVING NOTICE – As noted under **BILLING**, your security deposit will be refunded provided you have given one month's written notice and leave your room in good condition. Because it can easily take more than one month to fill vacancies, we do, however, request two months notice, especially if your desired departure date is other than May 31 or August 31.

Keys

A \$1 deposit is requested for each key (front door and alley gate). Keys should be returned before leaving at the end of your period of residency.

Quiet

Remember that using a computer printer or playing music, etc. may make it difficult for others to read, study, or sleep. Please use discretion, especially during evening hours. We have quiet hours between 10:30 at night and 8:00 in the morning (9:00 a.m. during weekends and holidays), and between 10:15 and 11:45 on Sunday mornings. We also have quiet hours between 7 and 8:30 on Tuesday nights, while the Buddhist meditation group meets in the parlor. During quiet hours, in addition to being attentive to the above, please do not beep people on the intercom system, vacuum, or play music in the music room (which has bedrooms overhead). Additionally, during Sunday morning quiet (10:15-11:45), the washer and dryer are not to be used.

Winter Notes

Residents must supply their own blankets; House blankets are for guests. Space heaters are not allowed in resident rooms, for safety and economic reasons (we do have one in each guest room for guests because those rooms get very cold). Our House is expensive to heat. If you must open a window in cold weather to air your room, please be sure that the door to your room is closed. Also, please let the Residency Manager know right away if your radiator is malfunctioning or something is wrong with your window. Make sure the double doors forming our foyer are kept closed -- this keeps warm air from flooding out of the House every time someone opens the front door.

Summer Notes

Fans are permitted in residents' rooms, but not air conditioners. House fans are provided for use in guest rooms and for residents on the fourth floor. Others wishing to use fans must provide their own.

Furniture

Each room is furnished with a bed, bureau, desk, desk chair, and book shelves for each person. If you'd like different furniture from what is already in your room, feel free to swap around with anything you find in the furniture room in the cellar. Be aware, however, that you will be responsible for returning appropriate furniture to your room when you move to different room or move out of the house.

Other Things to Note

Please let staff know about leaky faucets, slow drains, broken light fixtures, etc. Also, remember that no pets are allowed in the House.

House Communication

Resident Phones

The phone number in the kitchen and coat room is (617) 523-9548. You will be given a beep code (see BEEPER below) that will be used to notify you when you have a call. If you are unable to answer the phone after being beeped, the person who beeped you will put a note in your message box in the kitchen.

If one of the staff members gets a business call on the residents' line, the easiest thing to do is to give the caller the office number, (617) 227-9118. Remember: answering the resident phone is not the job of staff (including the Kitchen Manager).

Office Phone

The phone in the office is not available for resident use. The business number is (617) 227-9118; it rings in the office.

Beeper System

We have a system for paging people throughout the house. Instructions are taped to each beeper unit, and lists of beep codes are posted in strategic locations, so you only need to learn your own code.

Beeper hours are 8:00 am to 10:30 pm, except on weekends and holidays when the hours start at 9:00 am. Also, beeper use is off limits when Meeting for Worship is in session, on Sundays from 10:15 to 11:45 am. If a call comes during these Quiet Hours, try to find the callee or take a message. In addition to the beeper system being used to page people for phone calls (see "Resident Phones" above) it is also used to notify you when a guest of yours has arrived, or if someone needs to find you for some other reason. If you don't know why you are being beeped, come to the kitchen; if no one is there check the office and the front door area.

Mailboxes

Each resident is assigned two mailboxes: one on the first floor near the front door for official USPS mail and one in the kitchen for notes and notices.

Doorbell

Please answer the doorbell when you can, and in particular, plan to admit your own guests. If you hear a beep from the beeper system after the doorbell has rung, it means someone else went to get it. If you hear the bell ring multiple times with no beeps, please go answer the door (and beep so people know you got it).

Internet Access

All of the rooms have been wired for internet access (double rooms have two outlets). The house is connected to the internet over a DSL line, and we also have wireless (which works better in some areas than others). The house only provides access to the internet; residents must use outside service providers for email and personal web pages. If you don't have your own computer, you may use the ones in the library.

Community/Public Rooms

Meeting Room

Friends Meeting for Worship is held from 10:30 to 11:30 am every Sunday. Residents are always welcome to attend Meeting. Quiet is maintained during Meeting; the elevator and doorbell are turned off, as well as certain beepers. The washer and dryer are not to be used, silence is maintained on the deck, and the creaky wood stairs on the meeting room side of the house are off limits.

Guest Rooms

Room 14 (the Upper Taj) is available for resident use. It is available at no cost for guests of residents, with prior reservation. (There is a calendar for making reservations hanging on the door). Guests may also stay in residents' rooms (by pre-arrangement with roommates.) There are extra sheets and blankets in the closet next to the upper taj (if you use them, please wash them and put them away afterwards). Guests may not stay for more than two weeks.

We also have guest rooms that are primarily for paying guests. We have a guest room with a double bed and a private half bathroom (toilet and sink,) and a room with two single beds both on the basement floor. Residents can use either of these rooms for their personal guests at no cost when rooms are available on the week of the guest's arrival, with previous approval of the Residency Manager. If you want to reserve a room more than a week in advance, the Residency Manager can put you on the calendar and you can have a 50% discount. Residents using guest rooms are responsible for taking care of their guests and making sure the room is set up for the next guest(s) when their own guest(s) leave. If you wish to reserve a guest room, contact the Residency Manager, and she/he will let you know what is available.

Libraries

The library on the second floor is a shared common area often used for both studying and reading, but is not limited in this capacity. Residents also may enjoy: using the Library for hosting visitors, simply having an open and quiet space outside of one's room, using the public computers, or even participating in group activities. Please be mindful of how your presence in the library impacts others in the house. If you remove books from the second-floor library shelves, be sure to note where you got them and return them to the same place. Items for everyone's use may be stored in the hope chest, the shelves under the table, or the shelves to the left of the map chest, and should be returned neatly after each use. House meeting may allocate a small area of the library for a resident's workspace, if a resident needs the workspace for an extended period of time. Other than that, personal items should not be left in the library. During quiet hours, keep the doors to the library closed, and please take special care to keep noise in the library to a quiet, conversational level, as loud sounds may travel to adjoining rooms. The library on the ground floor houses the Quaker collection. Residents are welcome to borrow books from the Quaker library using the posted sign-out system.

Approved at House Meeting 5/17/09

Music Room and Parlor

You are welcome to use the piano between 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. if no programs, committee meetings, etc. are going on in the parlor. When there are many musicians in the House, the House Meeting may work out a schedule for use of the music room and piano. **Also, please note that food and drinks are only allowed in the music room or parlor with previous staff permission.**

Group Events in Public Rooms

We rent out the public rooms in the house (usually the parlor or meeting room) to outside groups for concerts, classes, workshops, etc. **The calendar by the kitchen clock will tell you when events are scheduled.**

If you'd like to use one of the public rooms for a large event of your own, here are some guidelines:

Please consider whether the event is something you would normally do in your own home, or if it is something you want to do here because of the large spaces available. For ordinary sorts of things you would host (for example, have a dozen people for a dinner party, or for a small/medium meeting, etc) you should feel free to use the space free of charge. Just check with the Director for space availability. If it is something you wouldn't do in your own apartment, please consider making a nominal donation to the house for use of the space. About \$5-10 per hour is good. If the event you want to host is something that a group would otherwise pay for (e.g. office retreat, classes, concert), we can offer you a 50% discount on the regular rental fee.

Storage

There is storage space in the cellar (plus a limited amount on the fourth floor for fourth floor residents only). Please check with the Residency Manager before using storage space. Residents should plan to take up no more than their share of the space so that all residents can have equal opportunity. All boxes and other items in storage must be labeled. Bicycles should be kept in the cellar or kitchen courtyard. Please also note that all personal items must be kept in your room or in these approved storage areas -- any personal items kept in public space are assumed to be for public use, and the House can not be held responsible for unauthorized use or damage to personal property.

Laundry

The washing and dryer machines currently cost \$1.25 per load. The House supplies basic detergent. Residents use their own quarters for their personal laundry (you can get quarters at the laundromat on Charles Street). The Residency Manager will supply quarters to those doing house laundry as their chore.

Parties

Residents may have planned parties on the deck, in the parlor, or in the dining room (when no House meal is scheduled). Please check with the Director to make sure that this does not conflict with any other events. In order to reserve the room and let others know of a planned party, residents should give a minimum of 48 hours notice by posting a notice on the refrigerator door. For large parties, please present your plans at house meeting if possible.

Additional Office Notes

Office Hours

Staff try to cover office hours (9-5pm) Monday through Friday. There are occasional days when all staff are off or away. In the summer, they go to Yearly Meeting.

Please try not to trouble staff during their off time (after hours, or on their days off) except in emergencies. It can be stressful for them to feel "on-call" constantly.

If an emergency arises when all staff are away, there are some pink pages hanging by the dish crew signup with detailed information on every foreseeable kind of emergency, as well as phone numbers of people to call for help. Try to be familiar with these items in advance of emergencies, so that panic doesn't get the better of you!

Copying and Printing

Residents may use the photocopy machine, but are encouraged to take large printing jobs elsewhere, as it is time consuming for staff to replace supplies. Please look for the black binder with photocopy machine instructions before using. Read the instructions, and log all of your copies. During each billing cycle, your copies will be tallied and you will be billed for them at \$0.10 per copy.

If you need to print something from a computer, it is better if you can do it from your own printer, one at your workplace, etc. If you need to print a few pages from the house, you may use the office printer. Please log the pages in the photocopy log.

Special Treats

If you wish to attend a Quaker-related retreat or conference such as Beacon Hill Friends Meeting retreat, Yearly Meeting, or FGC, half of your registration fee (up to \$50, and not including room and board charges) can be paid by the House.

You are welcome and encouraged to invite your friends and guests to our Holiday Open House. We prepare for it and host it together, and it usually occurs on the second Sunday in December.

House Structure

The Beacon Hill Friends House community is made up of a number of different groups, including the current residents, former residents, staff, committee members, board members, members of the Meeting, and other friends of the house. This large community contributes in many ways to keeping the house running smoothly and includes the following roles, which help to structure the House:

Board of Managers

The Beacon Hill Friends House is governed by the Corporation and the Board of Managers. The corporation includes two representatives of each Quarterly Meeting of the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, two representatives of the Beacon Hill Friends Meeting, four at-large members, clerks of the standing committees, and two current residents of the House. The corporation meets once a year to approve the budget, the nominations, and other important business. The board of managers includes a mix of people whose skills and dedication are helpful to the house, and they meet four times a year to set policies and make decisions. Residents are welcome to attend meetings of the board and corporation.

Staff

The Director, Residency Manager, and Kitchen Manager are responsible for the operation of the House as a Quaker resource center and vibrant residential community. The staff nurture the House by daily care of the ongoing needs of the House and especially of its residents, and by paying particular attention to how the House can best serve Friends' work. Among many other things, the staff are responsible for welcoming guests, financial management and record keeping, counseling residents, maintenance and chore assignments, resident recruitment, and food preparation.

House Clerks

The House Clerks are chosen by the residents (via the nominating committee) and serve six-month terms. The House works with a three-clerk system with staggered terms. The clerks are responsible for planning House meetings, facilitating and recording during the meetings, and helping to serve as a conduit for information exchange between Staff and Residents.

Board Committees

(Two Resident Representatives Each)

Finance Committee

The finance committee prepares the annual budget, reviews quarterly financial reports, and proposes rate changes. The committee also oversees investments, approves expenditures for major capital improvements, and reviews the insurance policy.

Committee members have done such things as investigate ethical investment of House funds, locate an accountant and auditor for the House, prepare information and address financial planning issues.

The committee sees that the House's finances are in good order, and that its not-for-profit status is preserved. The committee meets 4-5 times a year.

Staff Oversight Committee

The Staff Oversight Committee advises the Board on matters of policy and procedure relating to the employment of staff, is responsible for conducting an annual review of the Director, receives regular reports from staff members, and addresses questions or concerns that may arise.

In consultation with Finance Committee, it makes recommendations regarding staff compensation and benefits. It functions in addition to the Director's individual advisor, who provides counsel and support as she carries out her job responsibilities. The committee meets 4-5 times a year.

Program Committee

The Program Committee plans programs for both the internal community and the larger community. This includes workshops (on topics such as conflict resolution and Quaker decision making) that facilitate the development of community and bring community members an increased awareness of concerns that the Board feels it is the Friends House's purpose to foster (non-violence, spiritual growth, etc.)

The committee also facilitates (with funds, ideas, etc.) resident attempts to develop programs that are consistent with the purpose of the Friends House. Programs for the larger community include the annual Holiday Open House, the Good Friday Peace Witness, and the annual Weed lecture.

Committee members generate ideas for programs, contact resource people, help with mailings and hospitality, and reflect in an ongoing way on the Friends House purpose and how the programs fulfill it. The committee meets 4-5 times a year.

Development Committee

The Development Committee has a broader task than fundraising. It promotes and oversees the

cultivation of interest and enthusiasm about the House among Board members, committees, alumni, contributors and other friends of the House. This is the necessary ongoing basis for successful fundraising, and also fosters a wider base to draw upon for Board and committee nominations, and for help and expertise.

With staff support, the committee helps plan, assists with, and monitors development activities. It develops ways for the House to establish a more secure financial base. It encourages ongoing contributions and finds ways to get this work done without putting undue burdens on the staff.

Building Oversight

The Building Oversight Committee is charged with the care (maintenance and improvement) of the physical aspects of the property, inside and out. This includes carpeting, care of equipment, structural improvements, etc. All compliance with safety and fire regulations of the city is under its care.

Committee members not only offer their advice on how to solve particular problems, and set priorities among improvement projects in light of budgetary constraints, but they also often offer their personal skills in carrying out improvements or their time in investigating a problem, getting estimates, etc. This committee meets 4-5 times a year.

Residency Committee

The Residency Committee functions as two related committees. An "In-House-Residency Committee" which consists of the House Director, Residency Manager and three or four resident representatives performs the functions to fill any up-coming vacancies in the house. Resident members of Residency Committee participate in the interviews of prospective residents and thus have a great influence on the selection process. On occasion, additional house residents have been recruited to sit in on interviews when there were not enough committee members available at the time of the interview. Because of the large numbers of meetings required to select residents, this is a very demanding committee.

A larger "Residency Policy Committee" consists of the "In-House-Residency Committee" along with additional members appointed by the Board (often former residents), the Clerk of the Residency Policy Committee (also appointed by the Board), and the Clerk of the Board. This larger "Residency Policy Committee" meets to discuss residency policy (and sometimes problem) issues. This larger committee meets as needed (and it has not needed to meet in several years, at the time of this writing).

Ad Hoc Committees

Search committees are appointed by the Board when one of the staff resigns, and meet only until the position has been filled. Other ad hoc committees may be appointed at the discretion of the Board.

House Resident Committees

House committees are set up to ensure that the inner workings of the House run smoothly. These committees include only residents.

Clerks of the House Meeting

(See HOUSE STRUCTURE)

Nominating Committee

The nominating committee is responsible for bringing a slate of nominees to the House meeting for business when there is an opening on any of the Board or House committees. The committee members are expected to meet with residents to discuss their interests and inclinations regarding committee membership, and balance that with the needs of each committee. After residents have been nominated to a committee, the House has the opportunity to season their nomination before it comes up for approval at the next House meeting for business. This committee meets on an as-needed basis, most frequently around resident transition times.

Social Inspiration Committee

This committee is responsible for remembering and recognizing birthdays, planning other events and celebrations, coordinating good-bye parties for residents before they leave the House, and welcoming in new residents. They meet on an as-needed basis.

Kitchen Committee

The Kitchen Committee works with the Kitchen Manager to address residents' concerns and needs about food, equipment and hygiene. They also help the K.M. with food purchasing decisions, food questionnaires, and other specific needs as they arise. The kitchen committee meets approximately once a month.

Building Care Committee

The Building Care Committee works on small to medium sized repair and beautification projects in the house. They are also responsible for planning workdays (the staff set the date, and the building care committee assigns tasks).

Green House Committee

This committee works to make the house more environmentally sustainable.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A: The BHFH Conflict Resolution Toolbox

This Conflict Resolution Toolbox was created by House residents of 2001 in response to the question "How do we deal with conflict within the House?" Our discussions over the following months resulted in this Toolbox, which is meant to describe different options for conflict resolution that are available to residents. While we have decided not to adopt an official house conflict resolution policy, we offer these resources as tools that conform with the existing norms within the House and show different methods for pursuing resolution of a conflict. It is up to members of the House to decide which tools would work best in a given situation.

Tools:

- Gospel Order
- Forgiveness and Letting Go
- Personal Queries

- Clearness Committee
- Care of Community Committee

- Role of House Meeting
- Role of the Directors
- External mediation options

The tradition of the Gospel Order reflects all three stages of the conflict resolution tools represented in this Toolbox. We present this section on the Gospel Order as historical background to inform the other parts of the Toolbox.

1. Gospel Order

During their early development, Friends, like many other Christian groups, adopted a procedure called Gospel Order as their rule for mediating disagreement within the community. Gospel Order is derived from a text in the Gospel of Matthew which itself has roots as far back as the beginning of the people of Israel in the Sinai desert. The Israelites had been slaves and Moses had the task of teaching them how to be a free people and a community during that long sojourn. The passage that described the Gospel Order is based on ancient teachings from the desert found in Deuteronomy and Leviticus.

In Matthew's time, the new church faced a similar problem. It was the third generation after the days when Jesus walked the road from Galilee to Jerusalem; the second generation after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The last of the "synoptic" gospels, Matthew was written to instruct people who had no first, second or third generation eye witnesses to Jesus' ministry: people creating their community in the midst of a hostile and increasingly fragmented society. Matthew offers a saying of Jesus that expands on other Christian texts about brotherhood to offer a way to handle disputes within the family of faith.

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)

We find ourselves in a similar situation to that of our forebears, the first century Christians and reformers. Our society, too, is polyvalent and loosely bounded. We come from different traditions and cultures and we may have different and conflicting norms for levels of intimacy and friendship, personal style of interaction, or even standards of behavior. The Gospel Order is a straightforward and time-proven way to handle the tensions arising from these differences - and in the process strengthening rather than weakening the bonds of community. Members agree to respectfully work together to find common ground from which to build reconciliation.

1. When a member finds s/he is in disagreement, dispute or other disharmony with another member of the community, that member agrees to seek out the other person first, in a mutually comfortable setting, to describe the disjuncture and seek together to work out a reconciling solution. The goal is to resolve conflict at this level, thereby preventing gossip from spreading to other members of the community and offering the best forum for growth and forgiveness for each party involved.
2. If the two parties cannot find a center from which to work, or if there is disagreement about the solution, the member who still feels aggrieved will ask one or two friends to join in meeting with the other person and again confront the issue - with these witnesses from the community present. The witnessing friends may facilitate discussion.
3. Finally, if there is still disagreement between the two parties, the disagreement is brought before the whole community. If the parties still cannot be reconciled, especially when the aggrieving member refuses to listen, be corrected, or change the unhealthy behavior, further measures may be taken.

Forgiveness and Letting Go

True forgiveness is rooted in self-knowledge. Only when we are able to recognize and embrace our own human frailty are we able to recognize and forgive the frailties and falls of others. Letting go is a natural fruit of forgiveness - a freedom born of our own awareness and acceptance that shadow is as common to all as Light.

Personal Queries

These queries were one of the outcomes of a workshop "Digging Deeper Spiritually through Conflict in our Meetings" which were reported in the October 1989 Friends Bulletin. Friends were reminded that, in conflict, we must be more open to the Spirit to allow us to be "more directly and intensely open, imaginative, vulnerable, and flexible."

Personal Queries

- Am I dealing with reality in my view of this conflict?

- Am I willing to walk a mile in the other person's shoes?
- Am I answering that of God in the person with whom I'm in conflict?
- Am I tender toward the persons with whom I'm in conflict?
- What is it about my personality which contributes to this conflict?
- What is it about my behavior in this conflict which contributes to it?
- Am I acting with enough or too much constraint?
- Am I acting in retaliation?
- Am I acting with profound respect for the other person?
- Am I seeking the relationship which might emerge beyond the conflict?
- Is there anything in my past to make it difficult for me to be flexible in this conflict?
- Does the conflict bring into the open some area of ambivalence on which I need to seek personal clarity?
- Am I being too judgmental?
- Do I trust the Spirit to work in this conflict?
- Am I willing to admit I am wrong?
- Am I using the transformational tools including process we have as Friends?
- Are there issues I am avoiding?
- Am I communicating honestly with other people?
- Do I use process to avoid conflict?
- Am I willing to undergo the discipline of process?

Clearness Committee

Clearness Committee for Discernment

The clearness committee for discernment sets up a dialogue among friends to discern the will of God in their lives. The person desiring clearness asks friends to meet with him/her. The gathered friends serve as intermediaries for God. At the time of the meeting the friend desiring clearness states the problem, issue or concern about which s/he desires clearness. Committee members do not add input or offer opinions, they ask questions designed to lead the friend to reflect on various aspects or concerns that may lead him/her to clearness. The friend may or may not answer the questions in the meeting.

Clearness Committee for Resolving Conflict within the Community

When there is a conflict between friends or between a friend and the community - when they both reach a point where they cannot or will not resolve it by themselves - a clearness committee may be gathered by either or both friends in conflict or by a third community member. One or both friends brings the need for a clearness committee to the community and the community appoints a convener and one to three other trusted community members to be part of the committee. In addition, each party asks a friend to be present as support and/or advocate.

The roles are as follows:

Troubled friends/"Conflicttees" - the people hoping to come to a common understanding.

Convener - supports the process.

Supporters/Advocates - support their respective people, ensure that they are not railroaded, and that the important issues are addressed.

Other people/"Questioners" - ask questions of both sides to facilitate understanding of the conflict and possible solutions.

Two to three hours should be allowed for the meeting, although it may not take that long. The meeting begins and ends with silence, and if the convener calls a break in the session, the break also begins and ends in silence. The more people involved in the conflict, the more directive the convener will need to be in making sure that the pattern of taking turns is followed.

At the right time, the convener begins the dialogue by asking one of the "conflictees" to state his or her understanding of the conflict. Then the friends called to be part of the committee take turns asking questions that the friends in conflict cannot or will not ask one another and which are designed to draw out the problem and the issues or concerns of the troubled friend(s). The troubled friend being addressed may answer or reserve the questions for reflection, but if s/he refuses to consider the question s/he may be choosing not to be a part of the community. As the meeting evolves, the troubled friends may ask questions of one another - or if they cannot, their advocates may do so on their behalf. The advocate's specific role is to be a support for the troubled friend, so that the friend will feel safe.

At some point the convener may see that common ground has been established. At that point the troubled friends may ask one another questions to reinforce their common ground (E.g.: How would you feel if I changed my behavior this way...?). When the convener feels that as much progress as possible has been made toward resolution at that session s/he may adjourn the meeting altogether, or schedule to reconvene at another time.

Possible outcomes are:

1. A resolution is reached. The committee reports the resolutions to the meeting.
2. Some progress has been made. Another session of the clearness committee is scheduled and this outcome is reported.
3. No progress has been made. The matter should be given to the larger community to deal with.

In general the resolutions should be documented, but the proceedings should not.

Care of Community Committee

The Care of Community Committee (CCC) can help with conflicts that do not seem easily resolved by direct approaches to the individuals involved or through the help of the house Staff.

Sometimes what seems to be a personal conflict can partly or fully be a symptom of a deeper community issue that involves a challenge going beyond the people who appear directly involved. This means a resolution of the conflict at an individual level will not solve the part of the conflict which has its roots in the way community relationships are maintained. These deeper roots of conflict are best reflected upon by a larger group of community members, like the care of community committee, who can bring their collective and synergistic wisdom to bear.

Although the Staff of the house are a very important and cherished part of our community, there are times when the dynamics of power may present an obstacle to reflection on conflicts that occur. Thus, it may be helpful to have a space where residents can meet in a respectful, compassionate and spiritual manner without the presence of Staff to reflect on conflicts or issues in the house. The care of community committee provides such a space. The wisdom gleaned from these CCC discussions can then be presented to the Staff and/or the full community in meetings for business.

Conflicts that need full community attention often need to be thoughtfully defined through strategic questions before they are brought before the meeting for business or the meeting for reflection. The community meetings for business and reflection often are constrained by time: there may be only a half hour or so to reflect on a conflict because of other business at hand. The care of community meeting is a place where community members can reflect on how the community can best address a conflict or challenge during meetings for business or meetings for reflection.

Sometimes there are warning signs that conflict lies just beneath the surface of community life. The care of community committee can be a place where a group of residents can reflect on the health of the community and try to overtly or more casually address challenges and issues before they erupt into full conflict. For instance, if a community member seems troubled, a member of the CCC can volunteer to have a casual conversation to try to see if there is anything that the community can do to help.

The CCC is an informal group meeting that takes place once a month (or intermittently) to reflect on the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of the house community. In the first year there was one person who convened and facilitated the CCC. The role of the convener is to listen and watch the community to see if there are issues not being addressed by the Staff, or in the meetings for business and reflection. Commonly, it has been convened on a weekend afternoon and has lasted between one and three hours. Sometimes it is helpful to convene the CCC just to "hold the community in the light" to see what surfaces, even when there is no articulated agenda for the meeting. It is important for the conveners to set a tone to meetings that is much like what Quakers call "worship sharing." The purpose of this meeting is not to vent complaints, but to bring spiritual and compassionate listening and reflection to issues.

Role of House Meeting

The role of the clerks in facilitating the House Meeting includes making sure that conflicts are brought to House Meeting only after other avenues have been pursued. Conflicts between individual house members are the responsibility of these house members to work out on their own, so house meeting should only be used as a venue for working out individual conflicts as a last resort. Sometimes the clerks may also ask a resident to "season" a concern before bringing it to the house meeting. "Seasoning" means clarifying intentions about a concern, especially when it is a new or contentious issue. Often, seasoning involves taking time to sort out true feelings from immediate reactions, letting it "sit with you" over a period of time until a course of action becomes clearer. Other times, it may mean exploring the concern with other members of the house through informal discussions, so that new perspectives can help develop deeper understanding.

Role of Staff

Staff play two roles which are in tension with one another. One is to engage in mediation (or find someone else to do it) when it is appropriate. The other is to stand back and encourage parties to engage themselves, when for instance they seem to be coming to Staff as a way of avoiding their own issues.

Some of the official roles of the Staff include:

- Laying the groundwork: making sure residents understand the community's expectations at the beginning of the year, reminding the community of these at appropriate times, and helping to establish a vocabulary within the community for later discussions.
- Programming: inviting people to come to House meeting and/or dinner who can be good resources or role models. This need not necessarily be in response to specific issues or problems, but as a general support for the community.
- Serving as a sort of "safety valve": if things get really out of hand, our job is to exercise authority or enough persuasion to re-channel the path of the conflict toward resolution.
- Keeping our eyes and ears open: voluntarily or not, and explicitly or not, many resident issues are exposed in our presence, and it is our job to be sensitive to these messages when we see them. On the other hand, it's also true that some issues may be scrupulously kept from our sight by some people, and we need to be sensitive to this as well.

Ultimately, our responsibility is for the welfare of the community, acting for the board of managers and under the board's authority. We have executive power to ensure this welfare, using our own judgment and interacting with residents, board members, or others as appropriate. This may lead to more or less one-sided intervention, based on the authority of the board.

Five obvious principles apply:

1. Responsibility for the welfare of the community, as mentioned above.
2. Responsibility for the welfare of individuals concerned, respecting individuals' dignity and opinions while safeguarding the security of all.
3. Judgment and sensitivity are paramount, even if they are fallible. The board expects us to exercise these as their agents.
4. Discretion and confidentiality are expected from Staff in ways that do not apply to residents.
5. Staff are expected to model conflict resolution behavior, or at least to recognize it when they see it and to be able to access resources that exist in the communities of the House, Meeting, and city.

External mediation options

If the House community is unable to resolve conflicts on its own, the following organizations in the Boston area specialize in conflict resolution:

Mediation Works, Inc., Boston <http://www.mwi.org/>

Metropolitan Mediation Services, Brookline <http://www.metromediation.com>

Community Dispute Settlement Center, Cambridge <http://www.communitydispute.org/>

APPENDIX B: Conducting Business in the Manner of Friends

Notes for Beacon Hill Friends House
House Meeting held May 18, 2008

How Quakers do Business

When Quaker meetings have meeting for business, it is considered an extension of the meeting for worship: we are gathered together to hear (what I'll call) God's will for the meeting. We're looking for the truth that underlies all truth.

This has several implications:

We meet with a sense of reverence/seriousness.

1) Grounded in Silence

The silence with which we begin gives us an opportunity to leave behind whatever we brought with us to the meeting, and draw our loving attention to this community. We settle ourselves down into a deep attentiveness to what our community needs at this moment. We enter into silence when we gather together. Someone in the meeting can call us into another period of silence during the meeting if they feel we need to get centered again. This can be anyone, including the clerk. It can be ended by the clerk, by the person who started it, or by someone who has received clarity on something to say during the quiet.

2) Speaking and Listening.

When others speak, we pay close attention to hear how they might bring us closer to truth. We may pause to let their words settle in before listening to the next message. The clerk may slow us down so we can listen better.

3) Sense of the meeting: Beyond Consensus

When making decisions, we are looking for sense of the meeting: this is different from a "consensus."

"Consensus is an outward process in which a vote is taken without saying either yea or nay. It involves listening to all concerns, and then, through a negotiation process, finding the best solution. Sense of the meeting hears all of the concerns, then moves beyond the verbal expressions to hear the spirit of the concern in order to discern what is 'right' for the group." ...

"Consensus is a process in which adjustments and compromises are made for the purpose of reaching a decision that all of us can accept. It brings us to an intellectually satisfactory conclusion. But sense of the meeting reaches beyond that. ...

"When we seek the sense of the meeting we allow ourselves to be directed to the solution that awaits us. It is a process of surrender to our highest natures, and a recognition that, even though each of us is possessed of light, there is only one Light. At the end of the process we reside in that Light. We have allowed ourselves to be led to a transcendent place of unmistakable harmony, peace, and tender love.

"If the process by which we discover the sense of the meeting is to work, we must be willing to lay aside personal needs and grievances; we must be willing to reach beyond what you or I want.

When I am able to set my ideas aside, and you are able to set your ideas aside, doors are opened which allow solutions to enter on a shaft of Light.

"The sense of the meeting is not discovered through competition of ideas. Outcomes should be determined neither by rhetorical skill, nor logical brilliance. The test of reason is not the test. Though compromise and moving toward consensus are tools which can assist early in the process, they must be laid aside as we reach for the Inward Presence." (The truth for the group.--hb)

"Ideas should be offered and explained, rather than argued. They should be heard thoughtfully and respectfully, just as messages in meeting for worship are heard thoughtfully and respectfully. Sense of the meeting requires listening rather than contending, weighing, rather than reacting. It requires the kind of patience that understands that all things will work themselves out in due course."

Quotes taken from Pendle Hill Pamphlet #307, Beyond Consensus: Salvaging Sense of the Meeting

4) Unity Not Uniformity.

(Adapted from George Selleck's *Principles of the Quaker Business Meeting*, Friends United Press, 1986)

It will be noted that what Friends strive to achieve is unity, not uniformity. As Friends have a wide divergence of views on many issues, it is clear that such unity is not the product of like-mindedness.

The unity Friends seek and hope to capture is God's will in relation to the matter under consideration as understood by the group assembled to listen for the Truth. We seek not for everyone to leave with identical perspective, but rather for the whole group to seek the True course they are being led to.

With patient waiting and listening to the silence and to Friends, we will be alert to find the Truth even in a previously unacceptable point of view. Frequently, a third way, an entirely new solution may arise which incorporates many points of view and which is new thought in and of itself. Everyone present can say That is what I really wanted, but did not realize it.

There may still be Friends who wish the group would move more adventurously, and others who fear what seems a dangerous experiment. Each might have wished the meeting to take a different course than agreed upon. But each will consider what is right for the group with these differences of judgement sincerely held and will give assent to a minute which seems to reflect the sense of the meeting, even if not wholly acceptable to oneself.

TIPS for participants:

- Use the silence to enter into a special way of being, listening for truth.
- Open your heart to the unexpected.
- Listen to others, and allow yourself to hear the truth of their words-even if you disagree. Especially when you disagree.
- Let your words be offerings, rather than arguments.
- If something feels too hard, or if you think we are not listening as a group, ask for more silence.
- Be tender with your clerk(s): their job to hold this process together is a difficult one.

Queries:

- Will the words I wish to speak bring us closer to the truth for the group?
- Am I open to new possibilities?
- Is this thing that I want/believe true for the group or just for me?

APPENDIX C: Behaviors that Facilitate the Quaker Decision-Making Process

1. Avoid arguing for your own position. Present it as lucidly and logically as possible, but be sensitive to and consider seriously the reactions of the group in any subsequent presentations of the same point.
2. Avoid 'win-lose' stalemates in the discussion of opinions. Discard the notion that someone must win and someone must lose in the discussion; when impasses occur, look for the next most acceptable alternative for all the parties involved.
3. Avoid changing your mind only in order to avoid conflict and to reach agreement and harmony. Withstand pressures to yield which have no objective or logically sound foundation. Strive for enlightened flexibility; but avoid outright capitulation.
4. Avoid conflict-reducing techniques such as the majority vote, averaging, bargaining, coin-flipping, trading out, and the like. Treat differences of opinion as indicative of an incomplete sharing of relevant information on someone's part, either about task issues, emotional data, or 'gut level' intuitions.
5. View differences of opinion as both natural and helpful rather than a hindrance in decision-making. Generally the more ideas expressed, the greater the likelihood of conflict will be; but the richer the array of resources will be as well.
6. View initial agreement as suspect. Explore the reasons underlying apparent agreements; make sure people have arrived at the same conclusions for either the same basic reasons or for complementary reasons before incorporating such opinions into the group decision.
7. Avoid subtle forms of influence and decision modification: e.g. when a dissenting member finally agrees, don't feel that he [or she] must be 'rewarded' by having he [or her] own way on some subsequent point.
8. Be willing to entertain the possibility that your group can achieve all the foregoing and actually excel at its task; avoid doom saying and negative predictions for group potential.

Source unknown. Originally entitled "Behaviors That Facilitate Consensus".

APPENDIX D: Community Norms

Approved by House Meeting, 2003.

What qualities about a person should we look for when considering them for a third or fourth year?

The Mandatory Things:

1. 1 dish crew per week
2. Attendance at both workdays.
3. Attendance at both retreats.
4. Service on House and Board committees.
5. Participation with planning and preparation for Weed Lecture and Holiday open house.
6. Attendance at both the Weed Lecture and open house.
7. 3 dinners a week with the House.
8. Attend all House Meetings unless excused.

The Qualities Thing:

1. A demonstrated leadership style—i.e. quiet and dependable, vocal and visible, helpful and available, etc.
2. Attentive and present to other community members.
3. A demonstrated indication that the house/community is a priority in their lives.
4. Someone who has been consistently responsible to House obligations such as retreats, work days, chores, dinners, etc.
5. A balance between the energy that they put into the community and the energy that they take out—how stable have they been?
6. Demonstrates through activities and attitudes a commitment to the House mission and Quaker principles.
7. Has developed meaningful relationships with other community members.
8. Has shown sensitivity to the needs of new residents and guests in the House.
9. Has demonstrated awareness of inclusive behavior and has practiced it in the community.
10. Participation in House activities—not just attendance.
11. Organizing “value-added” activities such as parties, outings, games, etc.
12. Valued attitude—i.e. a peaceful presence, comfortable to be with, etc.
13. Intentionality.
14. Demonstrated presence as a community mentor.
15. Demonstrates consistently good communication skills.
16. The candidate for a third or fourth year should have been a builder of the “spiritual container” that is the community.

APPENDIX E: Things Roommates May Want to Discuss

1. What time do they prefer to get up and go to bed? If you are awake while they are asleep, do they want you to be absolutely quiet in darkness, or are they flexible to a little light and shuffling, within reason? (Perhaps the light sleeper should situate their bed away from the door and window). Does either of you plan to sleep in on weekends? How late?
2. How do they feel about you having friends to spend the night (in the room)? Do they plan to have friends spend the night often?
3. How do they feel about you having friends over while they're in the room? Do they plan to entertain in the room? If one of you is entertaining and the other walks in, do you want the newcomer to leave, join in, or should the roommate entertaining go elsewhere?
4. How do they feel about you touching any of their possessions, both the impersonal possessions (books, pens) and the more personal ones (clothes, toiletries)? Do they intend or want to borrow any of yours? Will you always ask each other ahead of time? Do some things have more of an informal policy?
5. Do they intend to play music while you are in the room? Do you like their taste in music and decibel level? Do they mind you playing your music?
6. How many hours a day do they spend in the room, and usually what time of day? Do they get out of the house much, how often, and if they are home will they spend most of their time in the room? If they are a student, will they study only in the room? Can they or you arrange to work in the house or school library?
7. How cold or warm do they like the room? Do they like the windows, curtains, and door generally open or shut?
8. Do they have many local friends already and consider the roommate situation a "business relationship" only, or are they looking to get to know their roommate on more of a friendship level? Are they introverted with a high value on their privacy, or extroverted with a tendency to share their daily events?
9. If they are undergoing stress of any kind will they tell you? In general, will they want you to leave them alone, or will they need to talk about it? How do they prefer to handle conflict? What roommate conflicts have they had in the past that might have an impact on the present situation?
10. Will they be leaving town many weekends for business trips or trips home? Do they spend a lot of nights away from the house?
11. If you are in your room, do you generally expect them to knock before entering? Do they want you to knock?
12. If you intend to get a phone, what will be the policy with it? Who will answer it late at night or early in the morning? What will be the cutoff time for incoming calls? Will you turn it off at night? Can friends use it?
13. What are the "boundaries" of the room, in regard to closet, wall, and shelf space? Do you both want the room equally divided? Can your possessions mix together or do you want specific sides? What are the cleanliness standards? Do those standards apply to both roommates? Be aware that vague standards like "I like it clean" don't mean much when it comes down to logistics. Be more specific (frequency of vacuuming, etc.) Will you share equally in the room cleaning? Is the neater of the two willing to do extra cleaning work to keep it up to their standard? If one person is in flux, i.e. suitcases and boxes scattered about while packing or unpacking, will it bother the other one?
14. If a roommate doesn't come home one night unexpectedly, should they call? Do they want you to call?
15. Does either of you have room habits that would potentially be annoying to the other? These might include: incense burning, eating in the room, watching TV, drying laundry, having parties with loud music/drinking, having jam sessions. Do either of you have planned room activities that require absolute silence, such as prayer or meditation? Does

- either of you plan to exercise in the room? Has either of you been told that you snore?
16. Do you want the door left open or closed when neither of you is in the room? Is it important?
 17. Try to think of what you consider your room's main uses to be. For some, the room is just a place to sleep, while for others it is an entertainment center, etc. What is your top priority for room use?

Additional Comments

Often roommate tensions have arisen because one or both are accustomed to having their own room, and because one or both are inflexible at some point. Realize that living together involves daily compromise, and it may take more effort to compromise at this point in our lives than when we were younger (e.g. living in college dorms).

Talking everything out, with a third person if need be, is usually the most effective way of keeping peace. Telling everyone in the house except your roommate what an impossible person your roommate is may be the easiest, but it is the most destructive. Be aware that mechanisms already exist within the house for dealing with conflict, should you feel a need to talk with another person about it. The directors, house meeting clerks, and resident members of the Residency Committee are all excellent resources.

This is a situation that can develop into a life-long friendship, an agreeable – if mixed – interlude, or a real headache.

We encourage working things out together. This doesn't mean that, if you're feeling encroached upon, you should move over. Rather, you're encouraged to bring it up. Working to resolve conflicts with your roommate, by yourselves or with the help of others, is an opportunity to practice the skills that are a vital part of living at BHFH.

Appendix F: Philosophy of Chores

THE PHILOSOPHICAL PREFACE or: “When you need words of inspiration because the chores are getting you down”

This philosophical preface to the “Procedures and Opportunities Handbook”, aka: “Chore Descriptions”, is included as a way of reflecting on the deeper meaning of doing one’s chores. It discusses why we have chores, what they symbolize, and what they are without recourse to symbolism.

Why We do Chores

The running of any community, society, organization, etc. requires the coordination of a great many tasks. These tasks range from the lofty ones of defining the overarching purpose of the group and how this is best to be lived out, to the mundane ones of cleaning toilets, putting out the trash and fixing things around the house. *Every one of these tasks is important.*

Our culture has emerged from a history of hierarchical solutions to the problem of distribution of labor. Different people specialize and do different kinds of tasks. At best, this means that people with different interests and abilities are doing what is most fulfilling to them. At worst, it means that those who know how to wield the most power push the worst jobs onto those who are less able or less inclined to resist such oppression. In reality, the best and worst are somewhat mixed in our American culture which upholds the belief that anyone can find their niche, where he or she will be happy, if only they try hard enough. However, our society is based on a machine-model; so that jobs become so over-specialized that people become weary of the monotony of their lives and no one is very happy.

However, our history is not just this story. Our history also offers radical experiments in rethinking the distribution of labor. I would suggest that Christianity, at its’ best, offered the most enduring of such experiments, in the Western world.

With the hierarchical distribution of labor also came the scheme of classifying people, assigning human beings worth according to the general attractiveness of their work--which also flips around and causes certain people to be assigned to certain kinds of work.

Much of what Jesus was doing when he was shocking people and evoking disapproval was turning this upside down. He believed that all people are equally worthy in the eyes of God, and that humble or basic tasks are noble. He encouraged his disciples to be servants to each other rather than to vie for power over each other. Christianity has developed this theme into an ideal of community where all are brothers and sisters, serving each other.

The kind of community that Beacon Hill Friends House is, represents living proof that such a way of life is possible. The 19 people who live here do almost everything which is required for the operation of the Community, (within the larger American culture). We only call for outside help for specialized or emergency needs. But we do not have a domestic staff to do the less attractive chores we would prefer not to do. *This means we have to do them.*

The good news is that when one doesn’t have to spend all of one’s time doing unpleasant work like cleaning toilets and processing trash, such jobs become bearable, or even rewarding by bringing sense of balance into one’s life. If half the people in society were free to do only what they considered “meaningful” or important work, while relying on the other half to supporting them by doing menial jobs, both groups would lead deprived and unbalanced lives. The “privileged”, by detaching themselves from daily life at its’ most basic level, do not make

themselves happier. Their lives may be sheltered from some unpleasantness, but their indulgence, and dependence and exploitation of others, turns back on them in numerous ways.

If we all participate together in **all levels** of work, to sustain human life and society, then each individual's life becomes more balanced. Each person is in touch with reality in a more profound way. By experiencing all levels, we become more aware of human interdependence and more aware of how our actions affect others. This leads to greater compassion for each other, because the very act of engaging fully with life makes one more aware of others and more caring towards them.

Why Standards and Reliability are Important

Many of the chores and tasks performed by members of the Community are connected in complex ways. If one piece is neglected, a larger whole may fall apart. This is why the Directors check to make sure chores have been completed. It is not a symptom of distrust; rather it is a double-check to that "all hell does not break loose" because one or two people "fell short" in completing their tasks.

Since many chores require mutual cooperation, (for example, the trash chore depends on the goodwill of "recyclers"), it is vital that every resident take responsibility for their assigned duties. Completing your chores with integrity can make an astonishing difference in the life of the Beacon Hill Friends House Community.

Chores as an Expression of Love for One Another

Ultimately, we do our chores for each other. When we empty the dish sterilizer tray, our housemates can grab a clean glass and enjoy some juice, which another friend may have made. When you vacuum the front hallway before Meeting on Sunday, a stranger may walk in and think, "Oh this is wonderful, what a clean, healthy atmosphere! I'm so glad there are people who care about genuine hospitality!", and find renewal.

Although we can think of doing these tasks as a way of caring for each other, we must not then interpret the neglect or avoidance of chores as hostility or lack of caring. Discernment can be tricky, but we must be careful not to take everything personally. Most of the time, patience and forgiveness are all that is necessary. If there are times when we suspect that an action is directed at us personally, or if we notice that someone seems to have a habit of shirking responsibility, we should find a gentle way to express this concern to the person directly.

This means that we can transform our momentary anger at seeing a loaded tray of dirty dishes, (that others have avoided loading into the sterilizer), into forgiveness and compassion by remembering three key points. These points are: a) that the person before us was probably in a terrible hurry and didn't mean to make us angry; b) that we are not in such a hurry and it could be rewarding/satisfying to clean up; and c) that the person who follows us will appreciate finding the dishes all clean and put away.

Living in Community – A Chance to Grow

Living in community does have its' challenges, but through constructively meeting these issues, we can find ourselves enriched in unexpected ways. Learning experientially of the enormous spiritual value of humble chores is one of the surprising gifts that we can find here in our community.

Adapted from comments by Laura Rediehs, former Associate Director, Spring 1992.

Appendix G: Why Participation is Mandatory: The Director's View

The Beacon Hill Friends House is more than a place to live. We are here to create something living and vital that is greater than the sum of its parts. We are here to create a community. Together, we must foster deep love, trust, respect for all within and all who visit. Our community is our witness to the world, an example of how we can make the Peaceable Kingdom present here and now. Our community can support us as we strive to live lives of integrity and in the Spirit.

We come together in various ways over the days, weeks and years. We share meals and chores. We work together on committees of all sorts. We get together for fun, service and learning inside and outside the house. These activities, house sponsored or not, all serve to weave us a bit closer together in community.

But the bond that weaves us the tightest, the greatest opportunity to deepen our connections to one another—is in house meetings and retreats. These are times that we all set aside to come together. These are the only times that we commit to all being together. We do this so we can get to know one another deeply, so we can grow deeper as a community, so we can build a deeper level of respect and trust among one another.

Without all of us committing to spend these times together, we become just another place to live.

Yes, that's right: When just one person is missing from these gatherings, there is a hole. Everyone who is there grows closer. The absent person cannot "make up" that shared intimacy. They cannot grow closer to the group and individuals, and the group and individuals cannot grow closer to the missing person.

With full participation, there is a deep sense of commitment. With full participation, we feel the shared commitment. With full participation, morale rises. With full participation we all can grow much closer together.

Without full participation, the force of all of these is weakened. When some residents have given up or rescheduled other opportunities and commitments in their lives, it is disappointing when others have not done the same. The value of group participation drops. Morale drops with it.

Friends, we have an opportunity to grow together, to have a deeper sense of connection with each other, and to build something greater than our individual selves.

Please contribute to the fabric of our community with your whole self. Come to dinner. Come to house meeting. Come to retreats. This is why we are here.