

Caln Quarter's Virtual Swatara Plenary “Growing our Meetings”

Optimizing Your Meeting's Presence in the Community

By: Susan Vorwerk

Upper Dublin Monthly Meeting (UpperDublinQuakers.org)

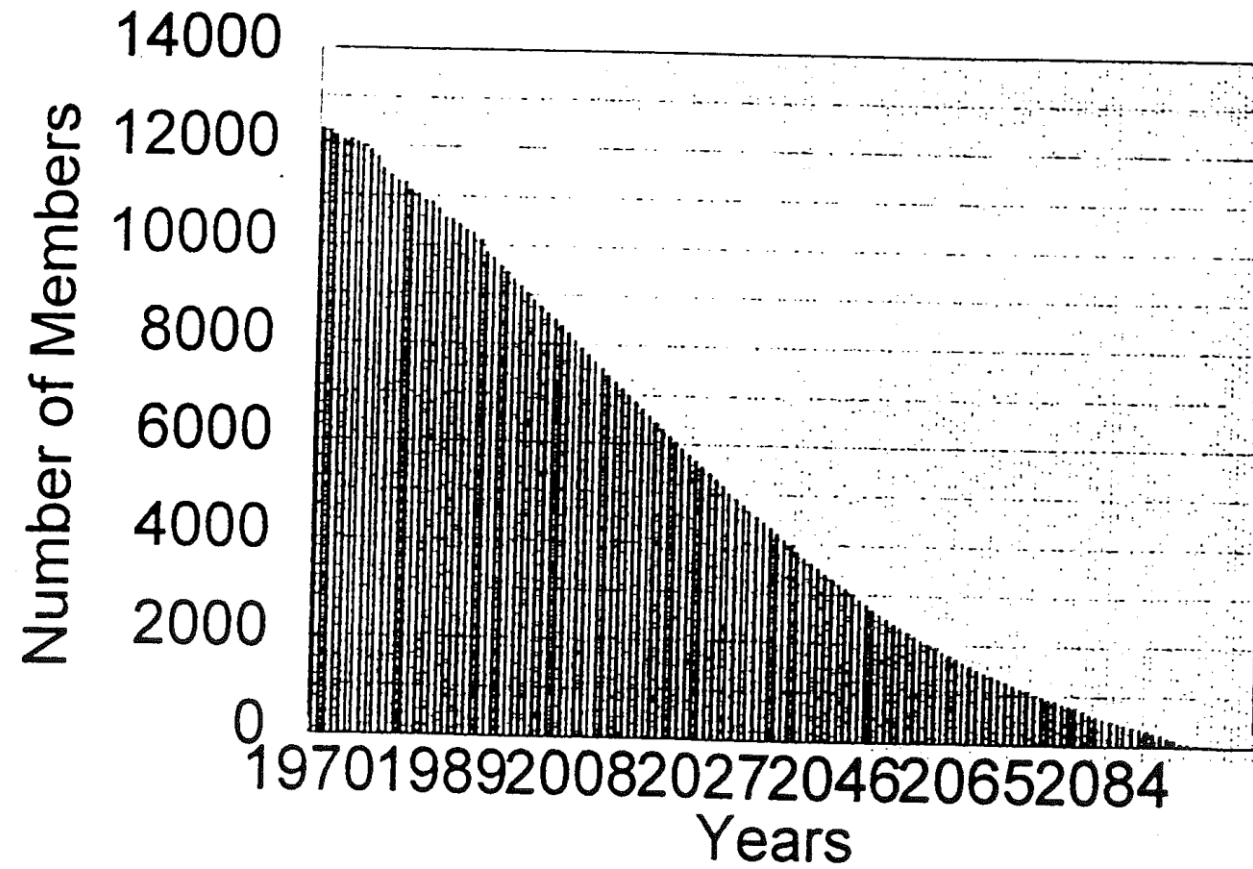
Byberry Monthly Meeting (ByberryQuakers.org)

INTRO

- Those who know me know I love talking about ways to grow our Meetings – its my Quaker raison d'être.
- While this program is about Outreach, I truly believe that Outreach is probably only about 1/3rd of the puzzle, the larger 2/3rd of the equation are really a factor of our efforts in Inreach, which leads to “Tribe” development (with a bit of “branding”).
- Before I get into the details of why that breakdown, I offer some context / background.

The Final Decline of PYM

Number of Adult Members: 1970 to 2090



Membership Numbers Given at 3-Year Intervals

Scattergraph

- In 1997 the daughter the then General Secretary of PYM , as part of a statistics class, created a scattergraph, plotting the longevity of PYM. Based upon the trends, her projection was that by 2072 the last member of PYM will either die or resign... that is in the next 50ish years... PYM will no longer exist.
- Long before seeing this report last week, I already knew “Nasa, we have a problem”, but these results, which were corroborated by “professionals”, absolutely break my heart.
- For centuries Friends have worked towards and implemented major social change (prison reform, racial, gender and ability equality, voting rights abolition, and yet have been reticent to adopt the social drivers that would be instrumental in keeping Friends relevant.
- We need to do something, and we need to do something NOW -- Before we perish.

The Problem --- A Little Narrative Background:

By now the story of the General Secretary's daughter's statistics project has been widely circulated. She used the YM membership statistics as a data set for a math class exercise on developing scattergraphs, trend lines and equations for making predictions. The results of this work were quite striking! *According to his daughter's statistical projections, the last member of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting will either die or resign in the year 2072.* (The General Secretary checked these calculations, fine tuned them and graphed them on his computer. The results were substantially the same. See Appendix A.)

Icarus and Daedulus

- I recently read an article by Seth Godin, noted author and marketing guru. He recounts the Greek myth of Icarus and Daedulus.
- As you may remember, Icarus and Daedulus, having been banished on the Isle of Crete are determined to escape the island. Daedulus fashions wings out of feathers and attaches them with wax to his son's back so they can fly off the island and across the ocean. Just as the two are about to depart Daedulus tells his son, whatever you do, don't fly too high, for the sun will melt the wax, you'll lose your wings, and by this you shall truly perish.
- Godin argues that the telling of this story typically emphasizes that part of the story – Flying too high was allegory for hubris, don't get too confident, or full of yourself – if you do, you, like Icarus, shall meet trouble.
- Godin argues that what is oft forgotten is the rest of the warning. Icarus is also warned by his father, not to fly too low, as for certain, his wings will get caught up in the mist, the sea foam. The water will dampen the feathers, preventing lift and flight, and by this too you shall perish.
- My ministry, to all who will listen is that this is the exact the situation within which the Society of Friends finds itself. We have been flying much too low! And – if we don't change course, we too shall perish -- and data trends tell us we only have another 50 years to correct our course.
- Last week when recounting the myth to Irene, she elaborated on the hubris issue, by making the correlation to the Early Friends approach as a "selective club" – to birthright only – to strict adherence of rules of the club.

- As we look to a new approach, I once again look to Seth Godin for guidance.
- Godin has written a best-selling marketing book titled “Tribes” and you can also see his Ted Talk on the subject. The basic premise is that the advent of technology, it has never been easier to find your tribe -- those people with whom you share your interests. We now find “degrees of separation”, thanks to FB, LinkedIn, reduced, as we’ve never seen before... and with our meetinghouse burial grounds, Find-A-Grave and Ancestry.com I personally have found my “tribe” by meeting Walton cousins and Foulke cousins, I’d never have met any other way, without that technology. (These tools are a wonderful resource for our Meetings).
- Outreach should be 1/3rd of our efforts and Inreach and Tribe Development (with some branding) should make up the majority (or the remaining 2/3rds of our efforts).
- With technology, outreach, when best employed, is a very nuanced, targeted and individualistic opportunity to create “followers” and “find our tribe”. The scattershot approach, and broadcast marketing is expensive and outdated. Some of the biggest names and most notable brands developed a following not by buying billboards, but by **courting relationships**.

A New Approach – Developing Tribes

- One of the most important aspects of Tribe development is the understanding that we don't need EVERYONE to want to be Quaker.
- We don't need to proselytize and try to convince every Catholic, Jew or Muslim to want to become Quaker.
- We just need to find those who believe what we believe; those for whom our tenets resonate; those who are “seeking” a new way of communicating with a Higher Power (God);
- AND THEN -- let **those** people know that we might be a spiritual home for him/her/ them, and that they are invited and welcomed to explore our community.

As we encourage more meaningful and genuine connections with each of our existing Members;
as we create a loyal “tribe” who will advocate for our community;

THEY WILL then will promote our gifts to their OWN extended networks;
THEY WILL influence and educate their OWN group of potential future Friends;

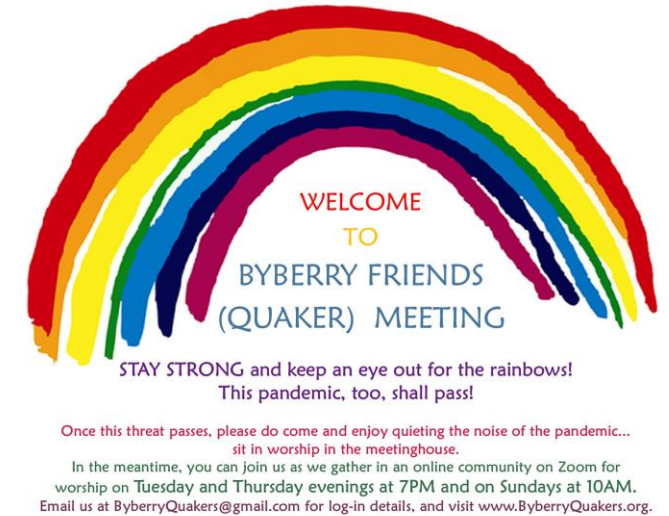
Collectively we will establish common goals -- where all Members and Attenders can actively contribute AND simultaneously feel that the congregation is addressing the needs of each individual.

Those who can speak to the benefits best are those who know, love, cherish and respect the Friends in that community. So we need to be sure ... that all in our Meetings are appreciated for their gifts – are appreciated for who they are and what they contribute!

Together We Are Stronger Gratitude to our First Responders and Essential Workers



Street Sign at Byberry Friends Meeting




Street Sign at Upper Dublin Monthly Meeting

We are using recurring images both within a Meeting and within the Quarter. Creating a bit of “brand recognition”, and also by using the same images, they are readily recognizable on various social media platforms, as being from Byberry or other Quaker organizations.

We've Withstood the Test of Time

Byberry Friends (Quaker) Meeting has withstood the test of time...



We were your neighbors, long before and throughout:

1887 STOCK MARKET CRASH	THE CIVIL WAR	THE 1918 INFLUENZA	THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION	2008 RECESSION	2 WORLD WARS	1929 STOCK MARKET CRASH
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Join us for online (Zoom) worship
at 10AM on Sundays and
7PM on Tues & Thurs.
Get to know us.
Email to get the link to join us
ByberryQuakers@gmail.com

Web: www.ByberryQuakers.org
f: Byberry Quakers

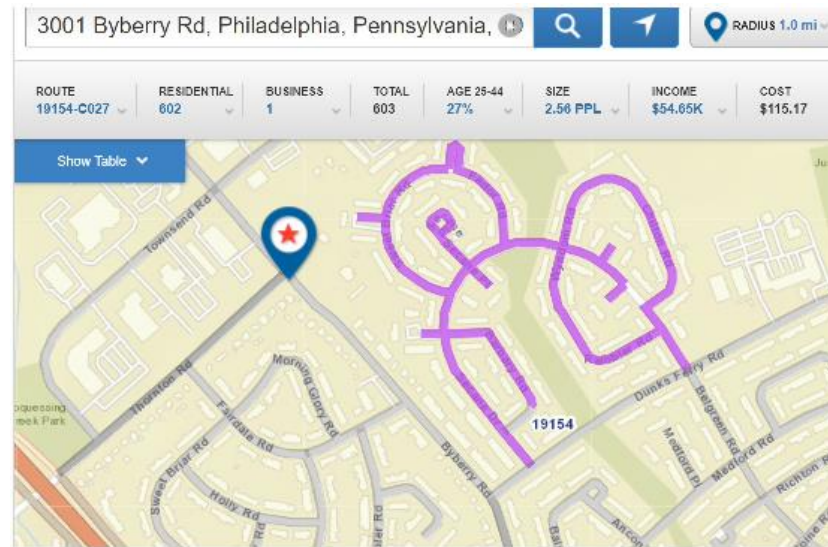
Through all of these crises, we have (and will continue) to be right here, as a spiritual resource for the community. The Covid-19 pandemic is no different.

As we try to manage the "noise" of phone calls, Facebook, texts, Instagram, radio, and television, our Meeting is a respite from the overload of news. Byberry Friends (Quaker) Meeting is a place to find stillness, to meditate, to quiet the "noise".

There is a business adage that says, getting to a close or sale requires 7 touches. As “additional touches” to our banners and door sign, we have also created this postcard – which may also be adapted into a banner down the road.

In the meantime, as Friends on the Membership Development Granting Group know, and based upon all that stuff I said earlier about the advent of technology making it easier to find your tribe – you can probably guess, I am typically not a fan of direct mail pieces, but there are some exceptions. Typically a return of about 2% is expected on typical (non-targeted) mailers. Those figures are for buying a pizza or trying a new hair salon. I don’t have the statistics for finding a spiritual home, but I can imagine it would be even lower.

“Every Door Direct Mail” ®



This piece, when mailed, will be using the “Every Door Direct Mail” ® program by the US Post Service. Using this service, you can select specific mail carrier routes. As you can see in this slide, (the star is the schoolhouse but that entire open land to the right is the Meeting property). We have many neighbors who adjoin the back of the property. We have specifically chosen ONLY those homes that are directly behind the Meetinghouse.

These people already know we exist. They drive past us likely many times per day. They may have had children who attended the Byberry Kinder Academy (early learning center). They are now seeing our banners, seeing our FB posts... this should just support those efforts, and because it is a small area, it is a very cost-effective proposition.

Unplug & Recharge



Another Outreach Effort that we are using at both Upper Dublin and Byberry is the Unplug & Recharge Meeting for Worship. Both communities offer a potluck meal following Meeting for Worship.

This has been a very popular program at Upper Dublin for quite a few years. It is a mid-week evening, worship, and attracts Friends from other Meetings, as well as being a very low key, no pressure way of getting to know more about Upper Dublin, and getting to spend quality learning more about the lives (outside of Meeting) of Members, Attenders and Visitors.

This is the Upper Dublin Brochure.

Unplug & Recharge (Cont)

Meditation is
the art of
being still.

It is said
that prayer is when
you talk to God—
and meditation is when
you listen to God.

It is a process
in which
you can release
everything that is
going on in your mind
in order to hear
what is going on
in your soul.

We should all take time,
each day,
to let go of fear,
anger, responsibility,
and ego,
in order to allow Spirit
to show us
the way.

— Iyanla Vanzant



Upper Dublin Monthly Meeting
of the Society of Friends (Quakers)

Invites you to join us for
our monthly

Unplug and Recharge

on the 2nd Wednesday evening of each month
Quaker Meeting for Worship from
6:30 ~ 7:15 PM

followed by a meal of warm soup,
fresh bread, and great conversation.

Also, please feel free to join us for our weekly

Meeting for Worship
Sundays from 10 AM to 11 AM
Hospitality with light refreshments follows.

All are welcome!

Unplug and Recharge

Upcoming Dates
(at 6:30 pm)

07/08/2020

08/12/2020

09/09/2020

10/14/2020

11/11/2020

12/09/2020

Upper Dublin
Monthly Meeting
of the Society of Friends
(Quakers)

1506 Fort Washington Ave.
Maple Glen, PA 19002

www.UpperDublinQuakers.org

Please visit and "Like" us
on our Facebook Page:
"Upper Dublin
Friends Meetinghouse."

These files can be found on
the Byberry website, (at
[www.ByberryQuakers.org/events/Calm Quarter Outreach](http://www.ByberryQuakers.org/events/Calm%20Quarter%20Outreach))

where you can see, read and
download these images.

I am happy to share the
designs for Friend to
customize as they see fit.

Unplug & Recharge (Cont.)



Unplug & Recharge with Byberry Friends Meeting
Last Sunday of Each Month
11:00 Worship - Followed by Light Potluck Lunch

Unplug & Recharge

on the
last Sunday
of each month
with a
Quaker
Meeting for Worship
from
11:00AM ~ 11:45PM
followed by a meal of
warm soup,
fresh bread,
and great conversation.



Byberry Friends Meeting
(Quakers)

3001 Byberry Road
Philadelphia, PA 19154

ByberryQuakers@gmail.com
(215) 632 4027

Upcoming Dates (at 11:00AM)

01/26/2020
02/23/2020
03/29/2020
04/26/2020
05/31/2020
06/28/2020

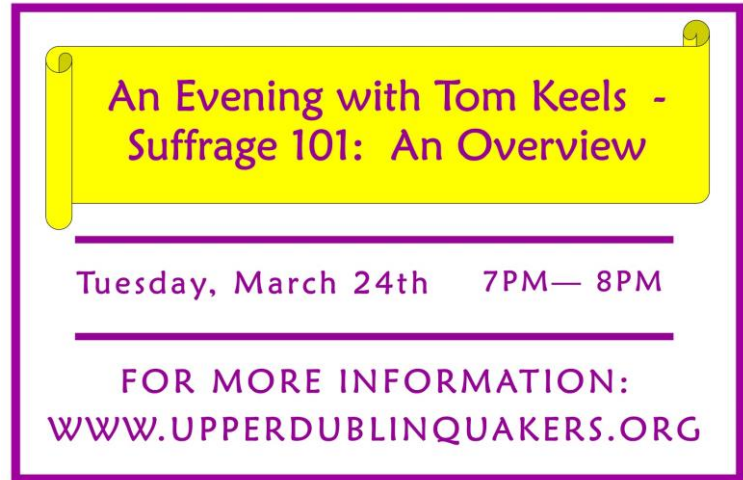
Byberry just introduced Unplug & Recharge in December.

As we have no running water and no bathrooms at Byberry, it made offering hospitality a bit cumbersome. In just three (not counting April) short months, the response has been fabulous.

We've had Members and Attenders who were attending infrequently have become more engaged and are attending more regularly.

AND – they are doing the Outreach (our Tribe development). They are bringing visitors. This is the best kind of Outreach (borne out of a concerted effort to Inreach).

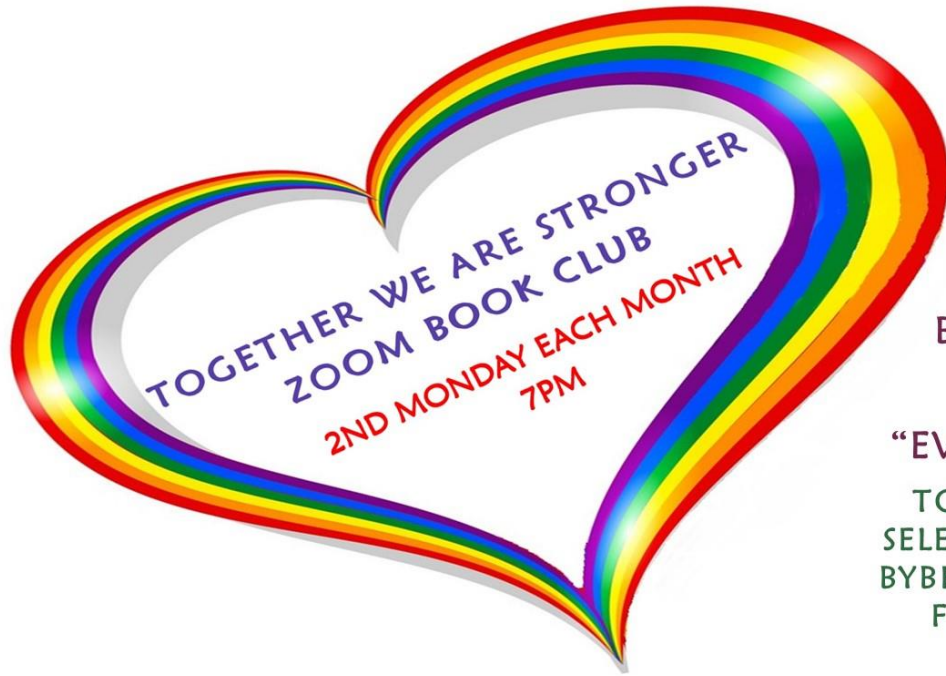
100th Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment



This was an entire year of programming designed around the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment. We had performers, speakers, movies planned for March thru December. The future of the program is unknown.

The banners were designed so that the left banner would be static, and the right banner would change. This afforded the continuity and recognition of programs in the series, but then the specifics would change each month with the upcoming event.

These events were to take place at both locations, taking advantage of economy of scale. Once a press release is written, it can be used for more than one location. The same is true with the banners, door signs and social media posts. Rather than re-inventing the wheel, we should be sharing resources and efforts. Many of our Meetings are small, but we don't have to give off that perception. We are all part of a larger body within the Quarter, and within the Yearly. TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER! Let's truly use that to our advantage!



We liked the idea of using the
"Together We Are Stronger"
for our book club, as we think
that accountability might
lead us to actually read the books.
(Hahaha)

VISIT
BYBERRYQUAKERS.ORG

AND THEN
"EVENTS" & "BOOK CLUB"
TO SEE OUR FIRST READING
SELECTION. THEN EMAIL US AT
BYBERRYQUAKERS@GMAIL.COM
FOR THE LOG-IN DETAILS.



This was accidentally left out of the slides and discussion, but this book club is offering a wonderful way to introduce non-Quakers to some of the tenets of Quakerism, using novels, historical fiction, and very readable stories. Wherever possible, the book choices are either recognizable authors: Sue Monk Kidd, Tracy Chevalier or recognizable storylines: "The Abolitionist's Wife" (about John Brown's wife, Mary), "The Invention of Wings", "Mary Dyer Illuminated", or "Friendly Persuasion".