

Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
Asheville Friends Meeting
1/09/2005

Meeting gathered at 11:32 a.m. Twenty-nine Friends were in attendance: Lynnora Bierce, Lindsay Bridges, Alice Brown, Bobby Carter, Jim Cavener, David Clements, Becca Dion, Agnita Dupree, Barbara Esther (clerk), Joy Gossett, George Gjelfriend, Kristi Gjelfriend, Joy Gossett, Stephen Houseworth, Nancy Kuykendall, Steve Livingston (recording clerk), Satchel Loftis, Rusty Maynard, Phil Neal, Adrienne Renee, Evan Richardson, Alan Robinson, Betsy Rose-Weiss, Sam, Ursula Scott, Eda Smith, Gerry Smith, Jennifer Walker, and Robin Wells.

Clerk Barbara Esther opened the meeting with several minutes of centering worship and two quotations. She expressed that the first, from Geroge Fox, seemed especially appropriate in the context of the tsunami disaster in the Far East:

"I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death; and an infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that also I saw the infinite love of God, and I had great openings."

The second quotation was from Rufus Jones:

"Every situation may be turned into an occasion for winning a nearer view of God."

Barbara took a few moments to remind us of good Quaker order in conducting our business, as taught by Arthur Larrabee in his clerking workshops:

We look for and affirm the Spirit in ourselves and others.

We will deal with each other in ways that are truthful without laying blame or otherwise hurting others.

We will wait to be recognized by the clerk before speaking.

We will take responsibility for doing what is necessary to move the meeting forward.

We will speak only once to an issue unless we have new information to offer or need clarity.

We will not take ourselves too seriously and we will have some fun.

We seek resolution of conflict and to heal the hurt which may arise.

We seek to empower everyone through the process.

Introductions:

Becca Dion and Adrienne Renee introduced themselves, attending meeting for business for the first time.

Approval of Minutes:

Friends approved the minutes of 9th, 10th, and 11th month Business Meetings as written and posted.

The clerk offered two corrections to the minutes of the 12th month Meeting. In last paragraph of the section entitled "Representative Meeting", after the minute reflecting Friends' approval of the report, and in response to a Friend's inquiry about qualifications needed for helping with registration, Barbara's reply should read "the need is more for Friends who have *experience as registrars*" rather than for Friends who have *served at the table*". In the report of the Religious Education committee, in the first paragraph, the committee is developing a trifold *pamphlet* rather than a trifold *display*.

Two Friends offered changes in dates from what was reported in the minutes of the meeting, and Friends agreed that the dates should be changed in the record of the meeting even though the change might be reflecting upon decisions made subsequent to the meeting. Thus, the Nominating Committee's forum on how the work of the Meeting is accomplished would be recorded as being planned for 1/30 rather than 1/16, and the Committee Clerks' workshop would be recorded as planned for 1/29.

Friends approved the minutes of the 12th month Meeting for Business with these changes as noted:
page 2, last paragraph, change “third first day” to “fifth first day”
page 4, paragraph 5, change “served at the table” to “experience as registrars”;
page 5, Religious Education Committee report, first paragraph, change “display” to “pamphlet”
page 7, paragraph 6, change “a mini-retreat next month” to “a mini-retreat on 1/29/05”

Clearness Committee for Membership

Alice Brown read a written report from the Clearness Committee for Membership for Lynnora Bierce.

“The Committee, comprised of Alice Brown, Barbara Esther and Phil Neal, met with Lynnora Bierce to hear her readiness to become a recorded member of Asheville Friends Meeting and the Religious Society of Friends. We recognize Lynnora’s already full participation in the life of the meeting and her willingness to share in community building among Friends. We find her to have a firm understanding of Friends’ history and practices and a seeker’s curiosity to know and experience communion with Spirit and with others in her faith community. We recommend with great joy that Lynnora Bierce be accepted as a recorded member. She wishes to let her children choose membership as they are ready rather than have them recorded as associate members.”

Friends approved with joy the membership of Lynnora Bierce in the Religious Society of Friends, Asheville Monthly Meeting.

A Friend observed that Lynnora had engaged herself in the work and community of our meeting from the first time she came in the door.

Friends approved a welcoming committee for Lynnora Bierce consisting of Goerge and Kristi Gjelfriend, Jennifer Walker, and Steve Livingston.

Friends were reminded of our tradition of providing a copy of the *SAYMA Guide to Our Faith and Practice* to new members, as well as the gift of a book.

Nominating:

Steve Houseworth reported for the Nominating Committee. He introduced the membership of the committee to Friends: himself, Ursula Scott, Barbara Esther, John Wykle, and Karen Cernek (clerk). He explained that the purpose of the forum/workshop on fifth first day this month was to encourage community building and to explore how the work of the Meeting takes place. He described the process for the forum to begin with two worship-sharing sessions, the first to include youth, followed by a meal of meat and vegetarian chili and cornbread. He indicated that there would be another activity, the nature of which would not be revealed until the forum. He noted that child care would be provided, and that some help was still being sought from Friends for this and other needs.

Steve then talked about the weekly calendar that he has begun distributing through our Meeting's email list. Noting that the effectiveness of the calendar is dependent upon its reaching as many Friends as possible, he encouraged Friends to go to ashevillefriends.org and register for the email list if they are not already on it. He suggested a “buddy system” wherein some Friend with email access would agree to print out a copy and see that it reaches another Friend without access. He cautioned that the e-calendar is not meant as a substitute for our Meeting newsletter, but is only a stop-gap measure, and assured Friends that Nominating Committee is still seeking a Friend who is led to take on the role of Newsletter Editor. He pointed out that the e-calendar not only helps us to reduce the number of announcements at rise of meeting for worship, but also helps us to keep up with the specifics of upcoming events, which are often lost in the instant after a verbal announcement is made. Friends supported the idea of continuing the weekly calendar even after our newsletter resumes publication.

In response to a Friend's concern about identifying those in the community without email access, Steve indicated that in the absence of a better suggestion, we must depend on those Friends to speak for themselves. Another Friend inquired as to how the calendar affects Spiritual Enrichment's plans for changing the process at rise of meeting. A Friend from that committee related that the process of discernment is still ongoing in the committee.

In response to inquiries about deadline, Steve said he needs to have electronic copy by 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday evening for publication at 9:30 p.m. that night.

Friends noted with gratitude that Steve had taken on the ministry of the e-calendar as a personal response to an observed need in the community.

Friends accepted the report of the Nominating Committee.

Finance:

Nancy Kuykendall read a written report.

“Asheville Meeting has \$15,000 left to us by Pat Lyon and Lucille Carlson. We ask for an *ad hoc* committee to study and make recommendations for the use of these funds. Finance Committee proposes to act on the matter if there is no recommendation by 3/31.

“Finance Committee asks that Jennifer Walker go to Ministry and Counsel for oversight and discernment in her leading to raise money for the World Gathering of Young Friends. Finance Committee will require a liaison person to the Committee to approve all expenditures and methods of payment.

“House and Grounds has asked Finance Committee to set new rental rates. Finance Committee will set rates based on covering expenses. Approval is requested from the Business Meeting that Finance Committee set new rates based on House and Grounds request and after research by Finance Committee.

“We sat with the queries provided by Business Meeting in 3rd Month 2004. We realized the Meeting's need for money for day-to-day expenses and Finance Committee will take action to raise more money. Finance Committee is asking committee clerks to keep an accounting of money budgeted and money spent by their committees.”

In response to inquiries about Jennifer's fundraising efforts, Nancy informed the Meeting that Jennifer would be reporting shortly on her intention to raise money to subsidize attendees from developing nations at the World Gathering, that oversight is requested for all moneys raised, and that Finance Committee will assist in setting up an appropriate account to hold and disburse the funds.

Regarding the rental rates, Friends recognized that there were other ways to compute appropriate fees and were not yet united on using the “recovery of costs” method. In order to forestall undue debate in the business meeting, Finance Committee invited those Friends with different views to consult with the committee as they engage in their discernment. Friends agreed that the new rates be brought to business meeting for final approval before being implemented.

Friends approved an *ad-hoc* committee consisting of George Gjelfriend, Ursula Scott, and David Clements to recommend use of funds donated to the Meeting by the estates of Lucille Carlson and Pat Lyon.

Satchel Loftis distributed a statement of Meeting income and expense covering most of the calendar year 2004. He explained each line item on the statement, showing that both our income and our expenditures were somewhat below our budgeted projections. Nancy requested that each committee clerk look over their committee's expenses to see if a change in the budget projection for 2005 is warranted, and asked that any outstanding receipts be submitted for reimbursement immediately so that we may “close the books” on year 2004. She further stated the intent of Finance

Committee to bring the 2005 budget to business meeting in 3rd month, therefore any Friends with concerns should bring them to the committee before the end of this month.

Satchel indicated that he is now generating a monthly income and expenditure statement, which is available to any Friend who requests it. He offered thanks to Nancy for her shepherding of the handoff of accounting responsibilities to him from David Clements. He said the process went very smoothly, citing Nancy's excellent organizing skills.

Meeting accepted the report of Finance Committee with gratitude.

A Friend observed that the relative unpredictability of income and expenses as reflected in the handout might make it easier for each of us to accept a budget that does not exactly match our varying expectations.

Peace and Earth:

Ursula Scott read a written report prepared by committee clerk Kitti Reynolds.

“Peace and Earth met last on Twelfth month 19, 2004. Kitti Reynolds is now clerk of P & E. We agreed to support the City of Asheville’s new plan to find homes for the homeless within 10 years. We will be sponsoring forums on the first First Day of each month from Feb through June. We encourage more member of our meeting to participate in the “Peacemaking and Life of the Spirit” workshops at Common Light Meetinghouse. The second of three will be Feb 25-26. The Martin Luther King breakfast is coming up. P&E will arrange for an ad in the program. Finally, we are deeply concerned with the direction our country is going after the Nov. 2004 elections. We agreed that one thing we could do is work to improve the environment. We will be tackling specifics of this proposal in our coming meetings.”

Friends were reminded that there is a Martin Luther King Breakfast in Black Mountain as well, on the 22nd of the month. Those Friends who frequent the internet were asked to please remember to “click” the Hunger Site.

Ursula explained that the purpose of the forums is to acquaint our community with the work that is being done by our membership. The first forum, scheduled for 2/6, will feature the Asheville-Buncombe Community Relations Council, of which Friend Bob Smith is the Director.

Reflecting on the report that Peace and Earth is “deeply concerned with the direction our country is going” a Friend cautioned us not to become partisan in our statements.

Friends accepted the report of Peace and Earth.

Recorder:

Phil Neal read a written report:

“The task of Recorder includes the keeping of records of all individual recorded members of our Meeting. Each recorded Friend should be noted in a file maintained by the recorder, with vital statistics related to birth, marriage, membership (when joined, when transferred, etc.), offspring, date of death, and possibly other lifetime events while a member of the Meeting. At present, these data are entered on a special paper form originating from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. The filled-out forms are kept in an expandable file book with a removable front cover allowing additions of names (forms) in alphabetical order, or else removed.

“This record book is presently greatly lacking in up-to-date entries, and sometimes in accuracy of records. One problem, easily solved, is the lack of blank membership forms, now no longer obtainable from PYM (not being used there). More can be printed, if desired, from master copies on hand, taking care to use paper not made by a chlorine bleach process.

“Since the recording task is now lagging considerably, it seems time to evaluate several related procedures. First, since re-printing is now in our hands, does the form need revision? Second, should recorder's records be kept exclusively in the record book, or computer recording instituted, either as a supplement or as a replacement? The latter option would mean getting the assistance of a computer-adept Friend. The recorder now holding office recommends that a committee conference be called involving the recorder, the archivist, and possibly a third Friend who is interested, and acceptable to our Ministry and Counsel Committee. This ad hoc committee should confer by a stated date and return to our Business Meeting with a stated plan of action for approval. If said plan brings forth extensive discussion, it should promptly be remanded to the presenting committee.

“It must be kept in mind that the statistics in an up-to-date membership record book are an important part of the computation process for determining the yearly assessment debt of AFM to SAYMA. Therefore the actions described, preceding, will need to be implemented at an early date.

“The recorder, who has not moved in this direction as quickly as needed, should ask for assistance in bringing this membership record book, with desired changes, up to date following committee decision on actions that may include revisions in procedure.”

Friends agreed that records would best be kept both in computer files and on paper, and warmly accepted Lynnora Bierce's offer to consult with the proposed ad hoc committee in developing a new form to replace the one no longer available. Friends recognized that the record book was not the sole factor in determining our SAYMA assessment. The clerk observed the value of having membership status indicated on our Meeting's roster.

Friends approved an *ad hoc* committee consisting of Phil Neal, Susan Mitchell, and Lynnora Bierce to consider the work of the recorder and the design of a new form for the record book.

Satchel Loftis and Rusty Maynard were recognized as likely to be helpful in bringing records up to date.

The report of the Recorder was accepted.

World Gathering of Young Friends:

Jennifer Walker gave an impromptu report. She thanked the Meeting for the support she has received so far, especially in producing a Minute of Support on very short notice at last month's Meeting for Business, which enabled her to be accepted in good order as a delegate to the Gathering. She related that Ministry and Counsel is expected to form a Support Committee for her ministry. She explained that she intends to travel to nearby meetings seeking funds to support not only her own attendance at the Gathering, but to support attendees from developing countries who clearly do not have the resources to raise the necessary funds on their own. In response to a question, she related that the amount of \$10,000 as her fundraising goal was somewhat arbitrary but had precedence in the practice of Britain Yearly Meeting. Asked how she expected to be able to raise such a sum, she replied that she really didn't know yet, but that she would begin by asking.

Ursula Scott and Lynnora Bierce offered to serve on Jennifer's support committee. Jennifer united with a Friend's caution that we not become embroiled in fiscal mismanagement that might result in an undue tax burden on her. The Friend pointed out that Central Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has an excellent set of guidelines for proper handling of funds. Finance Committee united with the need to observe proper procedure, and hopes to offer a structure that will be adequate to that need.

Friends accepted the update on Jennifer Walker's ministry to the World Gathering of Young Friends.

News of Ourselves:

The clerk reported that Nickietie Jayne was improving after her recent bout with viral meningitis, at home again and beginning to have some mobility, though still requiring a great deal of rest. She thanks the Meeting for their care.

The clerk also expressed thanks to the planning committee for the holiday gathering, and special thanks to the musicians, Joy and Dan Gossett, Paul Endry, and Chris Carter.

The Recording Clerk asked that Friends hold Susan Oehler in the Light as she travels to Washington DC to participate in planning of the counter-inauguration and to work with AFSC on the Eyes Wide Open exhibit.

Jim Cavener reported that he and Alan Robinson will be away for the greater part of the next two months and asked if Friends might know of anyone interested in house sitting or a short term rental.

Evan Richardson related that Wesley Clements will be clerking the Elementary Class Business Meeting.

Nancy Kuykendall reported that Christy Bischoff is doing well in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Individual Concerns:

Jennifer Walker reported to the Meeting that she, Rain Newcomb, and Suzanna Roettger are organizing a Young Adult Friends worship group. She read a brief written report:

“A Young Adult Friends group is beginning to form at Asheville Friends Meeting. We plan to meet at the Meetinghouse at 7:30pm on the second and fourth Thursday of every month, beginning February 10th. The second Thursday will be an hour of Silent Worship, and the fourth Thursday will be a social gathering and outing. 'Young Adult' Friends are loosely defined as being between the ages of 18 and 35, but we welcome all to discern their own involvement. We are also interested in welcoming young people who are not currently involved in a Quaker Meeting, or who would like to know more about the Quaker Tradition.”

Lindsay Bridges brought a request to the Business Meeting that we consider examining our First Day schedule to allow more interaction between adults and youth. She read a letter to the Meeting:

“When I think about what I most wish for my daughters to walk away with after 18 years of being a part of the Asheville Friends Meeting Community, one enormous piece of that is a rich, deep meaningful experience of how Meeting for Worship can nourish and nurture their whole lives.

“I wish for them to know how to allow Silence and the Light to enter into their lives so that they may walk on knowing how to draw from that well at ever greater depths throughout their lives.

“In light of that wish for them and for all of our children, I see several deep problems with our current time formatting which has our children in their 'Religious Education' program during Meeting for Worship.

“As things stand now:

- our children have only limited experience with Meeting for Worship.
- and we have only limited experience of our children's presence in Meeting for Worship.
- there is a very small core of dedicated adults who have generously set aside their 1st Day Worship time to be with our children. They receive very little break because so few of the rest of us (myself included) are willing to give up our worship time in order to be with the youth in a long term way (we as adults of this community are missing out tremendously in our opportunity to be involved in the spiritual lives of our children in this Meeting
- And that small dedicated core of adults deserves the opportunity to be in Meeting for worship in a long term way just as the rest of us.

“If our children's spiritual enrichment programs were to occur before or after Meeting for Worship, it would also provide an ideal time for an adult spiritual enrichment program on a continuing long-term basis or even another worship time.

- There are ways available to do all of this without starting before 9:45 and going beyond twelve.

“Therefore I would like to propose that we as a Meeting take on the question of: Is our current time structure serving us, meaning both adults and children, as well as it could?”

“And if there is agreement that we would like to look at this question, then willing to serve on a committee that would take on this question.”

The clerk offered that this question has come to both Religious Education and Ministry and Counsel in the past. Friends united on their desire to have more interaction with our young people, including in a worship setting. A Friend expressed dismay that this matter could not be examined by the Long Range Planning Committee, which has failed to rise up after Meeting's expectation that it should do so. Other Friends supported the idea of an *ad hoc* committee due to the urgency and importance of the matter. Friends were not united on whether a Young Friend should be asked to serve. Some felt that adults should do the initial discernment and a representative of Young Friends should join later, while others felt that this would send the wrong message to our teens as to whether we trust their maturity and competence as Friends. How could the adults presage the needs and concerns of our Young Friends?

Eventually Friends agreed that the process could be undertaken incrementally, and that the *ad hoc* committee might simply undertake discernment of the question posed by Lindsay and report back to next month's business meeting.

Friends Jennifer Walker, Evan Richardson, and George Gjelfriend offered to join Lindsay in serving on such a committee.

Friends approved an *ad hoc* committee consisting of Jennifer Walker, Evan Richardson, George Gjelfriend, and Lindsay Bridges to examine the question of whether our current time structure is serving us, meaning both adults and children, as well as it could, and bring a recommendation as to how to proceed to our 2nd month business meeting.

Ursula Scott brought a number of photos to the meeting that had been stored in the library. These were black and white photos taken by Rivka Maher that had been commissioned by the Meeting, matted and framed. Meeting asked Ministry and Counsel to decide where they should be displayed or to whom they should be given.

Ursula also asked for feedback on the arrangement of the meeting room this morning, with the chairs across the room longways.

Letter of Introduction:

The clerk read a letter recommending Laura Maynard and Karen Cernek to the Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF):

“We commend to you two Friends who are well known to us in Asheville Friends Meeting: Karen Cernek and Laura Maynard. They are serving as first-time Friendly Adult Presences and Friendly Adult Drivers (FAPs and FADs) for the January 2005, SAYF retreat in Atlanta.

“Karen is a long-time Friend with experience in service to the meeting in many areas, presently serving as clerk of our Nominating Committee. She also has experience serving a family as respite care provider for a teen with some

special needs. We recognize her people skills and ability to relate well to young people. She is a fantastic cook who has helped provide meals for Asheville SAYF retreats in the past!

“Laura has been attending our meeting for the past five years and brings experience as a teacher. She also brings a calm and serene presence to her encounters with others. She is an Earlham graduate, which is where she first became involved with Friends.

“We hope that these two gifted and loving women will both enrich and be edified by their experiences this month with Young Friends. Please welcome them in your midst.”

A Friend pointed out that Laura will be serving only as a driver rather than a FAP, so the word “respectively” was added after the parenthesis near the end of the first paragraph of the letter, to so specify.

Friends approved as amended the letter to the Southern Appalachian Young Friends recommending Karen Cernek as Friendly Adult Presence and Laura Maynard as a Friendly Adult Driver.

Close of Meeting:

Meeting ended at 2:05 p.m. with a brief period of silent worship.