

**Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
Second Month 14, 2010**

Clerk: Katherine Kowal

Recording Clerk: Jennifer Rhode Ward

Present: Bobby Carter, David Clements, Tom Edelston, Ellen Freette, Gjeorge Gjelfriend, Joy Gossett, Kristi Gjelfriend, Rylin Hansen, Pat Johnson, Steve Livingston, Laura Maynard, Edie Patrick, Kitti Reynolds, Bob Smith, Adrienne Weir

Opening Worship

Reading: Love

Love, like truth and beauty, is concrete. Love is not fundamentally a sweet feeling, nor at heart a matter of sentiment, attachment, or being “drawn forward”. Love is active, effective, a matter of making reciprocal and mutually beneficial relations with one’s friends and enemies. Love creates righteousness, or justice, here on earth. To make love is to make justice. As advocates and activists for justice know, loving involves struggle, resistance, risk. People working today on behalf of women, blacks, lesbians and gay men, the aging, the poor, in this country and elsewhere, know that making justice is not a warm, fuzzy experience. I think also that sexual lovers and good friends know that the most compelling relationships demand hard work, patience, and a willingness to endure tension and anxiety in creating mutually empowering bonds.

Carter Heyward, “Our Passion for Justice”

2nd Month Agenda

Friends expressed concern about the time and spirit (focus on content, rather than word-smithing) of the proposed SAYMA discussion. The Clerk noted that SAYMA revisions were on the agenda since requests for such revisions were received after the last business meeting, but due before the next business meeting. Thus, there was not time to season it within committee work. The Clerk agreed that discussion on this item would be time-limited.

Approval of 1st Month Minutes

First Month minutes were approved as posted. Steve noted that the House and Grounds Committee Report still needed to be posted; the issue is with file compatibility. The recording clerk will re-send that file.

**Communications Committee
Livingston**

Steve

The committee recommended that dial-up internet at the Meetinghouse be discontinued. **Friends approved this recommendation.**

**Proposed 2010 Budget
Clements**

David

David noted changes since the last proposed budget (1st month business meeting), made following

committee recommendations. He pointed out that contributions last year were about 55% of what they were 4 years ago, and he said that the committee anticipated a contribution income deficit for 2010. The Finance Committee agreed that it was okay to run a deficit in years in which actual income fell below projected income.

A Friend said he thought that Finance Committee always budgeted using actual income from the previous year as a baseline. The committee clerk clarified the budgeting process. According to a Finance Committee resolution, approved by Meeting for Business 3 years ago, the yearly budget amount is determined based on either the General Fund amount (~\$22,000) or Actual Contribution Income – whichever is greater.

Other significant changes in the 2010 budget (compared to 2009) include:

- reductions in amounts budgeted for insurance, reductions in funds to the library committee,
- addition of a small \$100 miscellaneous fund,
- adjustments (since the previous month's proposed budget) in the religious education fund,
- decreases in outreach funds (to \$2000, from \$2500; note that these monies are typically spent the year after they are budgeted) and project funds (based on activity from previous years), and
- reduction in SAYMA dues (\$60 per member/attender, based on a future re-assessment of attendance).

A member of M&C noted that we do not have reliable census numbers for SAYMA, and that SAYMA dues are also based on how much the Meeting can afford. The committee clerk agreed that was possible to reduce SAYMA dues if our budget required that; these dues are to be paid quarterly.

The Meeting requests that Ministry & Counsel revisit the number of active members and attenders for the next SAYMA census. This might allow the 2010 budget to be revised, with SAYMA money re-allocated to other budget lines.

Another Friend commented on the significant increase in the SAYF budget line, and asked if SAYF participants might do a yard sale, etc. to earn monies and contribute to this large budget item.

A second Friend responded that yard sales take a substantial adult investment of time, and noted that the Meeting's youth were currently active only in Yearly Meeting. This Friend anticipated that these youth might become more active in the local (Monthly) Meeting in the near future; another Friend agreed and noted that this might be too much pressure for the youth to handle at this phase of their group development. Finally, this Friend noted that if other Friends volunteer their own vehicles to transport youth that we might decrease the money required to rent vans.

A third Friend suggested that SAYF youth be made aware of their part in our budget and encouraged to contribute through fundraising in the future.

A fourth Friend noted that Warren Wilson now had a Quaker worship group, organized by a SAYF youth who did not attend a Monthly Meeting. Thus, SAYF is a good tool for building Quaker community.

A Friend thanked the Finance Committee for their hard work on the budget in a difficult funding climate.

The proposed budget was accepted, including the payment of a first installment of SAYMA dues (~\$2000). The budget might be revised based on M&C census estimates or recommendations about what the Meeting can afford.

Response to SAYMA Faith & Practice Revisions: Marriage

Proposed revisions were distributed electronically. A Friend noted that our AFM Monthly Meeting marriage procedures supercede those suggested by SAYMA, and that our Monthly Meeting procedures will be forwarded to SAYMA. A Friend suggested replacing the word “may” with “might”, and adding a 3rd alternative to Suggestion 7.

Minute: Friends approved forwarding the following suggestions to the committee revising the Marriage Section of SAYMA’s Faith and Practice, adding a copy of Asheville Friends Meeting’s Marriage Minute.

[click here to view suggestions to Faith and Practice Revision Committee](#)

Nominating Committee

Gjeorge Gjelfriend

The Nominating Committee puts forward the name of Jen Rhode Ward for House & Grounds, with specific responsibilities for outside (yard) work. **Friends approved this recommendation.** The committee also noted that AFM lacks a recorder/historian. Finance Committee asked that Pat Johnson’s name be put forward for Treasurer, replacing Adrienne Weir. Nominating Committee will take this into consideration.

Peace and Earth

Kitti Reynolds

On March 1st, for Death Penalty Awareness Week, the Unitarian Universalist Church is sponsoring an *Execute Art, Not People* event, and asked that AFM be a co-sponsor. **Friends approved this co-sponsorship.** On April 30th, the YWCA, Holly Jones (city councilwoman), the Ethical Society, Ba’hai, and others are sponsoring a *Stand Against Racism* event, and they are asking that AFM provide space for this event. Bob Jones and Adrienne Weir have volunteered to help coordinate this program. **Friend approved use of AFM facilities for this event.**

Spiritual Enrichment

Steve Livingston

The committee report was approved as presented.

[click here to view report](#)

Memorial Minute for Gary Briggs (3rd revision)

The minute was approved as written.

[click here to view Memorial Minute](#)

State of the Meeting Discussion

This report will be written by the Clerk and Alan Robinson, to be presented at the 3rd Month Business Meeting. The query asks how the spirit moved in your Monthly Meeting (worship, committees, business, outreach, etc.) in 2009.

- A Friend noted that we are a group of seekers, with the benefits and challenges that go along with that. That Friend noted that the manner in which Meeting for Business is conducted was one area of struggle/change.
- A Friend acknowledged the effort that we as a Meeting have put into being more welcoming, particularly the Hospitality Committee's work.
- A Friend noted that worship, spiritual enrichment, and hospitality reflected our Meeting's deepening and broadening of its commitments to, and care for, the Meeting as a community.
- A Friend noted that committee work was time-consuming but has been fruitful and resulted in seasoning the spiritual aspects of issues being addressed.
- The number of Friends participating in feeding the hungry in Pritchard Park, as well as contributions to MANNA, indicates greater involvement of our Meeting in the community. It also reflects coordination with efforts of those in the broader community, including the Unitarian Universalist Church.
- The Meeting's size has declined, and the Meeting is struggling with financial issues as a result of reduced contributions.
- The lack of youth in Meeting has been a concern.
- Mid-week Meeting has proved fulfilling and essential to those who attend regularly. At least 3 persons attend this Meeting without attending on First Day.
- The Meeting has also added extended worship on Third Days.
- A Friend senses that the Meeting is in evolution. There are many collaborative efforts and a deepening of spiritual connections and welcoming in those who attend. Concerns include lack of youth, difficulty in recruiting committee members, and lack of a permanent clerk.
- The lack of diversity in our Meeting, and the inability to attract diversity, is a concern.

Other

- Adrienne will clerk the Third Month Business Meeting in the Clerk's absence.
- On March 28th, after Sandwich Sunday, Steve Livingston and Pat Johnson will lead a Gary Briggs Memorial Hike. This easy hike will be extendable into a longer hike for those who are able.

Closing Worship

Feedback for SAYMA Faith and Practice Revision Committee on the proposed “Marriage” section

We are heartened to see that SAYMA is moving to openly embracing same gender marriage, rather than merely omitting obvious reference to gender, as was the previous version's approach. We feel this represents movement and growth in the Spirit. Making such a movement provides a form of Eldering for Monthly Meetings in that it reflects back to them the question of whether they too are moved towards a similar opening. The newest version also provides a nice balance for each Monthly Meeting to work this question out for themselves. So, rather than being proscriptive, we feel the newest version reveals the truth of continual revelation and invites Monthly Meetings into this journey.

But what of the queries? Is this being addressed as part of a separate revision? If so, then fine. If not, then we are concerned with the lack of queries. This is one of the richest aspects of the Quaker approach to marriage.

We invite the Revision Committee to consider the following specific recommendations:

1. We note that whereas in the previously approved version, there is an introductory section followed by three numbered sections, the proposed version has been expanded to five sections, with “legal considerations” and “nurturing marriage under the care of the Meeting” having been added. We suggest that the text beginning in the third paragraph, 4th sentence (i.e., “Quaker marriage is distinct from legal marriage . . .”) and continuing to the end of the introductory section, rightly belongs in the new section entitled “legal considerations”.
2. We note an apparent contradiction concerning who creates a marriage. In the first paragraph, we read the traditional Friends' testimony that “we marry none; it is the Lord's work, and we are but witnesses.” But in the second paragraph, we read that two people create a new family through their commitment to a shared life. Then, in the third paragraph, we find that “it is not only an act of two individuals, but the act of a community.” We suggest that if the committee sought to put these three seemingly disparate premises into one paragraph, the apparent contradiction might work itself out.
3. Section 1 ends with a description of the process after the clearness committee has completed its work. It seems appropriate to break the very long paragraph at this point.
4. The last part of the first section describes the embarrassment and expense that might be incurred if the couple rushes into making invitations and reservations before the clearness committee has recommended their union. Might a more positive statement, describing how prudent it is to follow good Quaker order by patiently waiting without assumption of outcome, be more welcomed by a couple considering a Quaker wedding?
5. We note that section 2 begins by repeating the traditional testimony that marriage is “the Lord's work”. Is there a need for this idea to be repeated as a preface to “planning for the wedding”?

6. At the beginning of section 3, in the previously approved version, there is a provision for the wedding invitations having explained the wedding procedure, obviating the need for a person to do so at the beginning of the ceremony. Has this practice been abandoned among SAYMA Meetings?
7. We acknowledge the difficulty of describing Friends' practice regarding the legal documentation of a marriage performed under their care, given that both the laws of the various States and the practices of the various Meetings are in flux, and likely not to settle down for some time to come. We respect the intention of the Revision Committee to endeavor to represent the variety of responses to the current conditions while avoiding a level of specificity that might imply that other approaches are less valid. But since the recently approved practice of our own Meeting is not at all represented in this section, we feel especially moved to offer an amendment, that might also help strike a balance between specificity and broadness. In the sentences beginning with “some meetings” and “other meetings”, we suggest the use of the qualifying word “might” (i.e., “Some meetings MIGHT help . . .” and “Other meetings MIGHT offer”). We suggest adding reference to a third way, which is representative of our own long-sought and carefully discerned practice: “Some meetings might help couples complete state approved forms even if they are not considered eligible, and support those couples in seeking eligibility from the State.” We refer the Committee to our “Marriage Procedure” approved third month 2008, bottom of page 4 and top of page 5, for a full description of our discerned response to the inequality of marriage laws in the State of NC.
8. The last section describes a close and active relationship existing between the monthly meeting and all couples married under its care that seems out of step with our experience of SAYMA marriages. We wonder if there isn't a much greater variation in the level of intimacy between meeting and couple in the actual practice of SAYMA meetings than is expressed in this section. We wonder too if a couple considering marriage under the care of a meeting, especially one in which neither partner is a Friend, might feel a bit intimidated by this additional intimate relationship being attached to their prospective marriage.

Respectfully submitted by Asheville Monthly Meeting, 2nd month 2010

[click here to return to discussion portion of Business Meeting minutes](#)

Spiritual Enrichment Committee report
second month 2010

SE Committee met at 5 p.m. on 2/2. Kitti Reynolds, Pat Johnson, and Steve Livingston were present.

We reviewed the status of our SE program so far. Our First Day offerings have varied from no attendance (at the fifth Sunday singing hour last November) to as many as thirty at the second Quakerism 101 presentation. We sense that Friends have other priorities on Sunday afternoons, and adjust those priorities according to how much value they place on what is being offered.

Only two of the independent groups have met so far, and each has met only once. We encourage Friends who are heading these groups to announce them more frequently, and keep those clipboards going until you have enough folks to warrant a meeting. We want to remind everyone that the leaders of the two groups that have met once want to meet again. Jim Cavener is organizing discussions of Friends Journal articles, and Neftali Fernandez leads the Pendle Hill pamphlet discussion group. We want to remind Friends that Alan Robinson is still interested in having a discussion of Barclay's Apology.

There are two other activities that have not gotten off the ground yet. First was a proposed Bible study to be led by George Gjelfriend. The weight of his other commitments, together with challenges to his health, have led him to set this aside. Is there some other Friend who would like to take it up? Second, with great sadness for our loss we note that Gary Briggs intended to lead after-Meeting hikes. Pat Johnson and Steve Livingston feel moved to take this up, and will be offering a Gary Briggs Memorial Hike on 3/28 after Sandwich Sunday. We will be choosing a locale that offers an easy hike that can be extended into a more strenuous experience for those who are able. More details to come!

The Committee also decided that if Meeting feels led to have Dan Snyder facilitate a day retreat at the Meetinghouse later in the Spring or early Summer, we will take the responsibility of organizing it and "facilitating the facilitator".

Lastly, the Committee agreed to recommend to Finance Committee that a line item be added to the 2010 budget for \$50 to cover incidental costs of Spiritual Enrichment offerings, such as printing handouts or procuring audio-visual aids.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

[click here to return to discussion portion of Business Meeting minutes](#)

Memorial Minute for Gary Briggs
Approved 2/14/10

Gary Allen Briggs, a faithful Friend for over forty years, died on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2009, in Asheville, NC, of complications from H1N1 and pneumonia, compounded by long-standing but non-aggressive Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia.

Gary was born in Olney, Maryland, on September 20, 1941, to Robert Allen Briggs and Mildred Duvall. He earned a bachelor's degree in Physics from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., in 1963 and a doctorate in Meteorology from Pennsylvania State University in 1970. His professional life centered on furthering scientists' understanding of aspects of air pollution meteorology including plume rise, dispersion in the convective boundary layer, and dense-gas dispersion. He worked for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and the Environmental Protection Agency in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. Gary enjoyed setting up experiments and collecting data to either develop or validate mathematical models of physical phenomena. He is best known for the highly influential "Briggs Equations," developed early in his career, but he placed a greater value on the more nuanced equations in his work published in 1975 and later. Gary retired to Tucson, Arizona, before settling in Weaverville, North Carolina, a suburb of Asheville.

A friend at Penn State invited Gary to attend Friends Meeting in State College, Pennsylvania, during his graduate studies, introducing him to what would become his spiritual home. He attended West Knoxville Monthly Meeting in Knoxville, Tennessee, 1967–1976 and 1978–1980, Durham Monthly Meeting in Durham, North Carolina, 1976–1978 and 1980–1998, Pima Monthly Meeting in Tucson, Arizona, 1998–2003, and Asheville Monthly Meeting in Asheville, North Carolina, 2003–2009. In each Meeting, he undertook stewardship of the meetinghouse and grounds—a natural extension of his love of improving his own home and grounds. Social justice, peace, and environmental causes were all important to Gary, spurring him to provide draft counseling during the Vietnam war and a lifetime of charity to like-minded organizations and heart-felt letters to unlike-minded politicians.

Civil rights issues took on a much more personal meaning for him when he recognized and accepted his sexual orientation as a gay man. He and his wife, Elizabeth Hodnett, laid down their marriage, and he became a regular participant in Friends for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (now known as Friends for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer Concerns). He maintained this association for more than 30 years, eventually serving as Treasurer and helping to coordinate mid-winter gatherings in New Mexico and North Carolina. He was a regular at the Friends General Conference annual gatherings for a number of years, assisting with the local arrangements for the 2005 and 2009 gatherings in Blacksburg, Virginia. In 2005, he helped arrange the "Let Love Choose" demonstration to witness support for families with same-sex parents and same-sex marriage.

After his move to Asheville Monthly Meeting he helped prepare a marriage procedure that is inclusive of same-sex couples. He also trained as a Friendly Adult Presence to work with the Southern Appalachian Young Friends and more recently took an interest in putting his extensive spiritual and Biblical study to work in teaching First Day School. He enjoyed delving into family history—especially upon finding that an ancestor, Isaac Briggs, was a well-known Friend near Gary's birthplace a century and a half earlier.

Music was a great love throughout his life, beginning with piano lessons and singing with choirs as a child and continuing through participation in choral groups and societies at Penn State and in Knoxville, Durham, Tucson and Asheville. Practicing his belief in lifelong learning, he undertook piano and voice lessons as well as classes through the North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement at University of North Carolina in Asheville. Gary loved to travel to see and learn about different parts of the world and made friends with people from different countries and backgrounds. He built trails around his offices and around his homes in Oak Ridge and Weaverville, where he could retreat into the woods. He also loved to take longer hikes and backpacking trips—climbing mountains and looking for waterfalls and good swimming holes.

Gary was thoughtful and generous, sharing his love of nature, music, and curiosity with his children, grandchildren, and his wide circle of friends. He is survived by his sons, Allen and wife Elizabeth of Blacksburg, Virginia, and Jeremy of Asheville, North Carolina; grandsons Allen and Grayson of Blacksburg; brother Wayne Smith and husband Paul Del Vecchio of West Hollywood, California; sisters Gale Sexton of Fremont, California, Sherry Stanfield and husband Richard of Yreka, California, Marilyn West and husband Tom of Arcadia, Florida, and Janet Frazee and husband David of Port Charlotte, Florida.

[click here to return to discussion portion of Business Meeting minutes](#)

