

**Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
Fourth Month 11, 2010**

Clerk: Katherine Kowal

Recording Clerk: Jennifer Rhode Ward

Present: Bobby Carter, Jim Cavener, Tom Edelston, Barbara Esther, Gjeorge Gjelfriend, Joy Gossett, Rylin Hansen, Doug Lane, Steve Livingston, Laura Maynard, Margaret Normile, Edie Patrick, Kitti Reynolds, Alan Robinson, Eric Singletary, Adrienne Weir, Robin Wells

Opening Worship

Reading:

At start of Spring I open a trench
in the ground. I put into it
the winter's accumulation of paper,
pages I do not want to read
again, useless words, fragments,
errors. And I put into it
the contents of the outhouse,
light of the sun, growth of the ground,
finished with one of their journey.
To the sky, to the wind then
and to the faithful trees, I confess
my sins: that I have not been happy
enough, considering my good luck;
have listened to too much noise;
have been inattentive to wonders;
have lusted after praise.
And there upon the gathered refuse
of mind and body, I close the trench
folding shut again the dark
the deathless earth. Beneath that seal
the old escapes into the new.

Wendell Berry

Review of the Agenda, 4th Month Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Approval of the 3rd Month Minutes was deferred until next month, to allow Friends time to review them. *With this change, the agenda was approved as written.*

Finance Committee Report

Adrienne Weir

[click here to view Finance Committee General Fund report](#)

The Finance Committee noted that monetary contributions to the Meeting were lagging. Only 18% of the expected contribution monies have been received, even though 25% of the year has

passed. *The Finance Report was approved as presented.*

State of the Meeting Report to SAYMA

Alan Robinson

click here to view draft State of the Meeting report

Alan reminded us that the State of the Meeting Report would only be as useful as the Meeting allowed it to be. He noted the importance of the integrity testimony in guiding both the writing of this report and the future of the Meeting. Another Friend noted that these reports informed both SAYMA and other, smaller Meetings within SAYMA (who read these reports as a means for sharing ideas).

Suggestions for report revisions included:

- Several Friends proposed changes to the report, with additional information about the state of our Meeting's youth (including increases in reported numbers). A Friend noted that it was vital to acknowledge the growth and flourishing of our youth group, even though the youths might be few in number. The quality and depth of the youth's participation in First Day School (and other activities) has increased; adult Friends who are involved with these youth asked that such positive changes (along with intergenerational interactions) be acknowledged.
- A Friend noted that AFM *membership* was steady, but First Day *attendance* had declined.
- Another Friend commented on the report's tone, which began with the Meeting's monetary and numerical challenges. Many of those present felt that it would be better to combine the concerns and positive changes in the report's first sentence, setting a more positive tone of the overall report.
- A Friend noted that the Hospitality Committee was not new, but that they had become much more active in leading Meeting hospitality events.
- A Friend asked that midweek worship be described as small (not very small), and noted that most at midweek worship are AFM attenders (rather than AFM members).

The Meeting thanked Alan for our work so far, and entrusted Alan to make changes in the report's wording to reflect the spirit of Friends' concerns. *The State of the Meeting Report was approved with Alan's amendments.*

As we transitioned to the next order of business, the Clerk noted the importance of being tender towards one another's feelings with our words during Business Meeting.

Nominating Committee

Gjeorge Gjelfriend

Nominating Committee seeks a member of the Spiritual Enrichment Committee. Please let Gjeorge know if you are interested. *The Meeting approved the immediate release of Ellen Frerotte from her AFM committee duties, as she prepares for her June move to West Virginia. The Meeting also approved the nomination of Kitti Reynolds to M&C.*

Clearness Committee: Marriage of Laura Maynard & Doug Lane

Barbara Esther

[click here to view report of clearness committee](#)

The report is being delivered on behalf of Betsy Rose Weiss, clerk of Laura and Doug's Clearness Committee. The couple will choose a wedding committee. *The Meeting approved the marriage of Laura Maynard and Doug Lane under the care of AFM (10 July 2010).*

Request for Use of Meetinghouse: Summer Day Camp

Steve Livingston

The request is from Heidi Marie and Steven Huber-Feeley, who had been hired to coordinate the young children's activities as SAYMA for the past 4 years. They hope to offer a summer day camp guiding children's spiritual development, called "Our Cosmic Story" and based on Montessori values. The camp would be for rising 1st- 6th graders, running Sunday night, then M-F (9 a.m. – 4 p.m.), and the couple has proposed 4 potential summer weeks. Friends were concerned that our Meeting could not provide much logistical support to this enterprise. Our Meeting's rental by-laws currently differentiate between profit-making and non-profit groups, and do not allow the former to rent our properties.

The Meeting was unable to reach unity on using the Meetinghouse for this camp. We hope to re-visit this proposal for the next year.

Tribute to Phil Neal (Draft Minute)

Barbara Esther

Asheville Friends want to recognize J. Philip Neal for his many years of dedication to and participation in the meeting community since the formation of Asheville Friends Meeting. Phil served as the first clerk for our Meeting, served on various committees, and always willingly stepped up to assist in Meeting responsibilities such as membership clearness, memorial committee service, and care for our members' needs. Phil, along with his wife, Peg, developed our songbook before the new FGC hymnal was published. For years we benefited from their interest and talent in music. We are grateful to have the Neal family in the circle of Friends. First Grace Neal, Phil's mother, Phil, Peg, Emily, Edna, and Jim, along with Phil's grandsons Jeff and David, have spiritually enriched us all. We trust that we will continue seeing Phil and his family at wider Quaker gatherings and on visits. We wish Phil well as he continues his service and communion among Friends in the meeting to which he has moved his membership: Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting.

We plan to read this minute during Phil's celebration next week. *This celebratory minute was approved as revised.*

Peace & Earth Committee

Kitti Reynolds

[click here to view report of Peace and Earth Committee](#)

The report was provided and elicited no questions or comments.

Other

- Rylin noted that we had yet to re-visit our revised Meeting for Worship schedule, and that we

should do that in a future Business Meeting.

- Rylin spoke about the difficulty of gardening at Battery Park Apartments. She asked if this group of ~5-9 women from Battery Park could create a vegetable/flower garden on the Meetinghouse property. The Clerk suggested that Rylin take this request to House & Grounds.
- The Meeting noted that today was Jim Cavener's birthday. Those present sang to him.

Closing Worship

*Finance Committee General Fund report begins on next page
[click here to return to discussion of Finance Committee report](#)*

Ordinary Income/Expense	Jan 1 - Apr 5, 10	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Income				
4000 · Contribution Income				
4010 · Unrestricted	1,887.00	15,890.00	-14,003.00	11.88%
Total 4000 · Contribution Income	<u>1,887.00</u>	<u>15,890.00</u>	<u>-14,003.00</u>	<u>11.88%</u>
7010 · Interest Income	64.64	500.00	-435.36	12.93%
Rental Income	1,010.00	3,400.00	-2,390.00	29.71%
Total Income	<u>2,961.64</u>	<u>19,790.00</u>	<u>-16,828.36</u>	<u>14.97%</u>
Gross Profit	2,961.64	19,790.00	-16,828.36	14.97%
Expense				
Transfers TO Other Funds**				
Scholarship Fund Transfer**	0.00	200.00	-200.00	0.00%
Total Transfers TO Other Funds**	<u>0.00</u>	<u>200.00</u>	<u>-200.00</u>	<u>0.00%</u>
Meeting House				
House and Grounds				
Cleaning	37.50	0.00	37.50	100.00%
House and Grounds - Other	0.00	3,000.00	-3,000.00	0.00%
Total House and Grounds	<u>37.50</u>	<u>3,000.00</u>	<u>-2,962.50</u>	<u>1.25%</u>
6180 · Insurance				
Property/Casualty	0.00	2,400.00	-2,400.00	0.00%
Worker's Comp	0.00	400.00	-400.00	0.00%
Total 6180 · Insurance	<u>0.00</u>	<u>2,800.00</u>	<u>-2,800.00</u>	<u>0.00%</u>
6390 · Utilities				
Electric	53.76	0.00	53.76	100.00%
Gas	104.31	0.00	104.31	100.00%
6340 · Telephone	56.85	0.00	56.85	100.00%
6410 · Water	39.68	0.00	39.68	100.00%
6390 · Utilities - Other	0.00	2,700.00	-2,700.00	0.00%
Total 6390 · Utilities	<u>254.60</u>	<u>2,700.00</u>	<u>-2,445.40</u>	<u>9.43%</u>
Total Meeting House	292.10	8,500.00	-8,207.90	3.44%
Meeting Support				
Hospitality Committee	0.00	150.00	-150.00	0.00%
Pastoral Care Ctte	0.00	20.00	-20.00	0.00%
Communications Ctte	0.00	200.00	-200.00	0.00%
Advertising				
Friends Journal	0.00	100.00	-100.00	0.00%
Total Advertising	<u>0.00</u>	<u>100.00</u>	<u>-100.00</u>	<u>0.00%</u>
Finance Ctte				
Miscellaneous	0.78	0.00	0.78	100.00%
Finance Ctte - Other	0.00	20.00	-20.00	0.00%
Total Finance Ctte	<u>0.78</u>	<u>20.00</u>	<u>-19.22</u>	<u>3.90%</u>
Library	0.00	200.00	-200.00	0.00%
Ministry and Counsel Ctte	0.00	50.00	-50.00	0.00%
6240 · Miscellaneous				
6120 · Bank Service Charges	0.00	150.00	-150.00	0.00%
Office Supplies	0.00	50.00	-50.00	0.00%
6240 · Miscellaneous - Other	0.00	100.00	-100.00	0.00%
Total 6240 · Miscellaneous	<u>0.00</u>	<u>300.00</u>	<u>-300.00</u>	<u>0.00%</u>
6560 · Payroll Expenses	0.00	200.00	-200.00	0.00%
Religious Education Ctte				
Childcare	283.00	800.00	-517.00	35.38%
First Day School	0.00	600.00	-600.00	0.00%
SAYF	450.91	1,000.00	-549.09	45.09%
Total Religious Education Ctte	<u>733.91</u>	<u>2,400.00</u>	<u>-1,666.09</u>	<u>30.58%</u>
Spiritual Enrichment Ctte	0.00	50.00	-50.00	0.00%
Total Meeting Support	<u>734.69</u>	<u>3,690.00</u>	<u>-2,955.31</u>	<u>19.91%</u>
Outreach				
6140 · General Outreach	0.00	2,000.00	-2,000.00	0.00%
Peace and Earth Ctte				
Projects	0.00	200.00	-200.00	0.00%
Total Peace and Earth Ctte	<u>0.00</u>	<u>200.00</u>	<u>-200.00</u>	<u>0.00%</u>
Quaker Outreach	0.00	2,000.00	-2,000.00	0.00%
SAYMA Dues	0.00	3,200.00	-3,200.00	0.00%
Total Outreach	<u>0.00</u>	<u>7,400.00</u>	<u>-7,400.00</u>	<u>0.00%</u>
Total Expense	<u>1,026.79</u>	<u>19,790.00</u>	<u>-18,763.21</u>	<u>5.19%</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>1,934.85</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>1,934.85</u>	<u>100.00%</u>
Net Income	<u>1,934.85</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>1,934.85</u>	<u>100.00%</u>

[click here to return to discussion of State of the Meeting report](#)

2010 STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT ASHEVILLE FRIENDS MEETING

Asheville Friends Meeting seems to be in a period of transition. Over the last several years we have seen a small but steady decline in our membership. Our average attendance at Meeting for Worship has dropped about 10% in the last year. This has caused stresses on our Meeting's resources: Members are stretched trying to provide personnel for the various committees. For the first time in recent history we have experienced a budget shortfall. And, perhaps most troubling, we have lost a cohort of high school and college age youth who might have become part of the future of our Society.

Paradoxically, though, there are signs of renewed energy and vitality. We have made special efforts to reach out to visitors and newcomers. We have a new hospitality committee that has sponsored after-Meeting coffee and snacks so attenders are encouraged to stay and socialize after Meeting for Worship. Many members report a deepening sense of closeness to one another. We now offer opportunities to know each other more intimately during our monthly Sandwich Sundays where members are invited to tell about themselves around themes such as "how I came to Quakerism" or "my volunteer work in the community." Weekly opportunities to share our joys and sorrows as well as weekly reminders are designed to assure that the pastoral care committee does not allow any of our members to "fall through the cracks" in times of need. However, even as we rejoice in our deepening sense of community, we are aware of the lack of diversity among us, and our need to find ways to be more inclusive of those who are different.

Many members have expressed a sense of a deepening worship experience as well. We have less vocal ministry and deeper silence. Messages are often deeply felt and Spirit-inspired. And, we have a wider variety of people offering vocal ministry. As one member has put it, "We are a meeting of seekers, and that presents both strengths and challenges."

In addition to our Meeting for Worship on first day, we have a very small but meaningful midweek worship followed by a shared meal of "stone soup." Some members who find it difficult to attend First Day worship have found this experience to be a way to share worship and feel connected to the Meeting. A monthly extended Meeting for Worship has also been provided for those who want to explore a longer worship experience. We also offer spiritual enrichment programs on a variety of topics at least twice a month.

In October, we offered a one-day workshop on clerking, led by Mary Ann Downey. We hope that, as more of our members gain skills in clerking, this will pay dividends in the future, not only in recruiting clerks, but in enabling all of us to understand and participate in Meetings for Business and committee work. We continue to attempt to find balance between getting tasks accomplished and maintaining a sense of worship in our meetings for business.

Although we have only one high-school age youth now active in our Monthly Meeting, we remain committed to our young people. The Meeting has made efforts to support its youths'

involvement in SAYF by providing transportation and a “friendly adult presence.” We mourned the loss of Gary Briggs, who died on Christmas Eve, and who had been a devoted “FAP” for the last several years.

Finally, we are mindful that our sense of community and caring needs to reach out to the wider Asheville community and, indeed, to the world. We have initiated a policy of regularly collecting food for the MANNA Food Bank and have made a commitment to provide breakfast to the hungry in downtown Asheville on a quarterly basis. Because we are a small Meeting, we have found it helpful to form alliances with like-minded religious groups. We have formed these alliances to support our testimony against racism and the death penalty, for example.

Much of this revitalization came about through a process of focused introspection. We realized that we were shrinking, that the number of youth in our Religious Education program and our SAYF activities was diminishing, that our adult attendance was getting smaller, and we asked ourselves why. We held several meetings and threshing sessions specifically designed to examine these issues. Once we acknowledged the existence of these challenges, we redesigned our first day schedule to make it more desirable for families to attend Meeting for Worship and other first day activities together. The mere act of examining the issues facing us, on its own, seemed to revitalize the spirit of our meeting.

click here to return to discussion of clearness committee report

In the fall of 2009, Laura Maynard approached Barbara Esther about convening a committee on clearness for marriage. Laura Maynard & Doug Lane realized that their bond was leading to marriage and they not only wanted to be married under the care of the meeting, but that they wanted the deepening that the process would afford.

The committee on clearness for marriage, comprised of Barbara Esther, Christopher Jayne and Betsey-Rose Weiss, met initially on December 17, 2009.....We all felt the strength of Doug & Laura's love & commitment to each other and the positive influence that this clearness process was providing...and determined to continue the joyful work of the committee....

Our second meeting was held January 20th, 2010.

Our discussion was again candid, probative & illuminating. A deepening was felt by all. Our third meeting was held Feb 3, 2010. During this meeting, the light was clearly with us in discussion and in fact.

The committee is impressed by the thoughtful and intentional nature of Laura & Doug's relationship, the compatibility of their direction and values. Their love, commitment & respect for one another are strong & growing.

The committee recommends that the Asheville Friends approve of their marriage under the care of the meeting.

Peace be with you,
Betsey-Rose Weiss
Barbara Esther &
Christopher Jayne

click here to return to discussion of Peace and Earth Committee report

1. P and E has spent all the funds allotted for Quaker outreach for 2010. Detail will be in the next budget report.
2. Our meeting donated 75 pounds of food to MANNA on March 16, thanks to Jen for delivering it.
3. P and E is sponsoring two Earth Day activities. The first will be a bird walk led by Kitti in the UNCA Botanical Gardens on Sunday, April 25, at 8:30 AM. Bring binoculars if you have them. The second activity is a Meeting Garden Party, probably on May 2, where we will plant flowers and shrubs on the MH grounds purchased on May 1 at the UNCA Botanical Gardens plant sale. [rescheduled for Saturday, May 8]