

**Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
Third Month 10, 2013**

Clerk: Kitti Reynolds

Recording Clerk: Jennifer Rhode Ward

Present: Jim Best (visitor from Floyd Monthly Meeting), Bobby Carter, Jim Cavener, Barbara Esther, Rylin Hansen, Gail Hipkins, Jim Hipkins, Gjeorge Gjelfriend, Kristi Gjelfriend, Joy Gossett, Pat Johnson, Katherine Kowal, Laura Maynard Lane, Steve Livingston, Julie Mahler, Edie Patrick, Ruth Stewart

Opening Worship

Clerk's Reading

“If our inward leading is to be ‘doers of the truth’, then integrity needs to be at the center of our being, at the center of our consciousness, and at the center of our outward witness.”

William Cooper, The Testimony of Integrity, 1991

Integrity means wholeness. For Friends, this wholeness is rooted in Truth and available to those willing to open every aspect of life to that transforming influence. One of the original names of Quakers, “Friends of Truth”, implies Friends' understanding that the light of Truth reaches into every corner of our lives. ...From the beginning, Friends have sought a unity in their private way of acting, their public stance and their relation to the natural world, seeking to live under divine guidance.

SAYMA Faith and Practice, 2012

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

Approval of 2nd Month Minutes

Finance Report – Pat Johnson

So far this year, AFM has received \$1671.93 in contributions and \$990 in rental income. Thus, our total income has been \$2,782.18 for the year, and our net income is \$1160.94. Our current Building Fund balance is \$68,825.13

Expenditures so far have included:

- \$506.96 for cleaning supplies (House and Grounds Committee)
- \$636.84 for utility bills
- \$45 for Friends Journal renewal (Library Committee)
- \$120 for supplies (Religious Education)

We have not yet made outreach disbursements, and most committees have not yet spent their budgets. Pat noted that we will pay our SAYMA dues before next month's Business Meeting. A Friend noted that payments to SAYMA should be mailed to Liz Perch. Pat said that we will

transfer \$300 from General Funds to the Scholarship Fund based on last year's scholarship expenditures.

A Friend noted that rental income did not seem to match utility expenditures, and he wanted to discuss AFM's rental policy. Another Friend said that we agreed to have a threshing session on the rental policy before bringing this matter before Business Meeting.

***Peace and Earth – Katherine Kowal**

Last week at Meeting for Worship, a Friend gave a message that began with “may all beings have access to clean water” and ended with, “may I do my part to make these things happen”.

The Peace and Earth Committee recommends that we take \$8,000 from AFM's Building Fund to give to Madison Quakers to build one well in VietNam. This donation to build one well would be part of our response to the Kabarak Call for eco-justice, which asks us to “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable”. Katherine passed around pamphlets about the well project, describing the 20+ year relationship between Madison Quakers and reconciliation / reconstruction work in VietNam. We noted that the AFM Building Fund currently has \$68,825.13 in it, and that AFM has no immediate plans for building.

A Friend asked how many persons could fit in our main worship space, as the size of our group might be increasing. It seems that space and chairs limit us to ~65 persons. Another Friend thought that our membership numbers were static, and he said that money from the Meetinghouse Improvement Fund could be used for future building projects if needed. A Friend spoke about the importance of supporting this project, since we as a nation had rained so much terror on VietNam, and said that she had become a Quaker due to the VietNam War and her dissatisfaction with Presbyterians' response to this. A Friend spoke strongly in support of this proposal, saying that when the time came to build another space that way would open.

A Friend spoke of the history of the Building Fund, which started when AFM was meeting at the YMCA building. He said that there were hard feelings among some when we acquired our current space rather than building a new worship space. He said that he had misgivings about diminishing the Building Fund, but that when a need arrives to build/expand, that he thinks that funds will be forthcoming. Thus, he supports the overall proposal, asking that we stay mindful of the vision of contributors to the Building Fund when they gave monies.

A Friend said that she left organized religion after working on her M.S. in divinity at a theological seminary. She was working in outreach to inner city migrants but became disillusioned with the way that churches put money into taking care of themselves rather than caring for others. She spoke about her experience with Quakers during the VietNam War and its aftermath, and said that she felt personally vested in supporting projects in VietNam. Two Friends spoke in strong support of this proposal.

We noted that a Friend emailed her comments saying that she hoped that we could work on needs close to home (local projects) rather than just those abroad.

A Friend noted that Stephanie Gossett planned to continue her work in Swaziland, and she might seek future support from the Peace and Earth Committee for this work.

Friends approved using \$8000 from AFM's Building Fund to go to Madison Quakers to support their building of a well in VietNam.

A Friend connected our project back to the Kabarak Call, and noted that we might not yet be feeling afflicted. She said that she hoped that this funding decision was the beginning rather than the end of our Kabarak Call conversation.

A Friend said that the feeling of plowing new ground was invigorating, and he was pleased with the precedent that this well-building decision set. He commended AFM on its positive and worthy decision, and said that his work as an ESL teacher had let him realize how much we had decimated the Vietnamese people. Another Friend said Swannanoa Valley Friends might be inspired by our decision to act themselves, and he was pleased that the way was open for us to act on this.

Report from SAYMA Representatives' Meeting – Steve Livingston

Representative Meeting was held at Columbia SC Meetinghouse on 3/9/2013. Meeting began with a period of worship after which clerk Carol Nickle read a passage from our Faith and Practice recounting the brief history of our Yearly Meeting.

Administrative Assistant Liz Perch reported that initial data for the 2013 census indicates continued modest growth in the Yearly Meeting population. According to the census, there are 32 members of Asheville Meeting and 37 attenders, including 3 members and 14 attenders under the age of 18.

A first draft of the 2013 Directory will be sent out to Monthly Meetings for updating and correcting, with a deadline of May 6 for responding with changes and additions.

Barbara Esther reported for the SAYMA Nominating Committee that there may be as many as 30 positions open by the time of Yearly Meeting. Friends who feel led to serve the Yearly Meeting should inquire about what opportunities are available.

SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee reported on the great difficulty they are having in answering to the needs of meetings and worship groups due to their lack of members. They encourage every Monthly Meeting to search within their membership for one or two Friends who could serve the Yearly Meeting in this capacity.

Copies of the Spring issue of the Southern Appalachian Friend were distributed. Deadline for submissions for the Summer issue is April 8. Editor Beth Ensign has offered as a theme "What I do on my summer vacation" but as always the newsletter will accept any offerings that reflect the interest and concerns of SAYMA Friends.

Reporting on Friends World Committee for Consultation, Berea Friend Tim Lamm described how the FWCC is downsizing in response to a tighter budget, reducing the frequency of

worldwide gatherings from three years to five, and Section of the Americas meetings from annual to biennial. Our Yearly Meeting is very active in FWCC: we sent two delegates to the World Gathering last year in Kenya, and Memphis Meeting will be hosting an upcoming FWCC workshop in two weeks.

Errol Hess reported on the FGC New Meetings Project, which is answering to the needs of seekers who are not in close proximity to existing meetings. Through the web-based Quaker Finder service, FGC has identified that there are thousands of people each year seeking a Quaker connection, and is now compiling data to predict where potential new worship groups could take root. The New Meetings Project offers resources and support to facilitate formation of new worship groups and foster connections with existing meetings.

Friends' interest and efforts in outreach are also supported by the Quaker Quest program, which helps meetings become more aware of their own beliefs and attributes, reach out to their surrounding communities in a welcoming way, and help build a stronger sense of belonging in both newcomers and established attenders. SAYMA Friends have an excellent opportunity to experience the Quaker Quest program in workshop being offered at West Knoxville Meeting on Mar 20. This workshop will be free of charge. Our own Gita Larson will facilitate.

Atlanta Friend Jennifer Dickie informed Friends about a new Quaker group, the Quaker Voluntary Service, led by Christina Repoley, providing a year long experience of worship-based Quaker service for young adults. Currently there are about a half dozen young adult Friends living in community, worshipping with Atlanta Friends, and performing service projects to the Atlanta area. QVS expects to form two additional groups, in Philadelphia PA and Portland OR in the coming months.

Mark Wutka of Atlanta Meeting reported on our youth program SAYF (Southern Appalachian Young Friends). About sixty youth have participated in at least one SAYF retreat in the past year, with typical attendance being in the 30s. He reported that the young people have asked for the retreats to focus more on Quaker spirituality. SAYF is in need of additional adult volunteers to help with transportation and serve as adult shepherds at the retreats.

A major change that will take place in the process of becoming a SAYF volunteer, or working with the Junior Yearly Meeting, has been precipitated by our Yearly Meeting having to obtain insurance to cover liability for Child Abuse and Sexual Misconduct. The insurance company will require all volunteers to undergo a strict screening process that will include a criminal background check. Some Friends were extremely uncomfortable with the unQuakerly dependence on law enforcement entities to provide clearance for potential volunteers, and other Friends were disquieted by the abandonment of Quaker process necessitated by our summer gathering host, Warren Wilson College, requiring that this insurance coverage be in place prior to our gathering this year. Friends agreed that the wording of the guidelines as presented were so broad as to infringe on the rights of gathering attenders who elected not to be involved with the youth programs, but acknowledging the urgency imposed by our hosts, agreed to set aside normal Quaker process and empower the subcommittee working on the insurance issue to revise the wording in a way that will make the requirements clearly specific to volunteers and staff working directly with youth.

Free Pollazzo of Atlanta reported on the AFSC Corporation. He explained that AFSC is not a Quaker meeting, acknowledging that this is a concern of our Yearly Meeting, as expressed in a minute approved at 2011 Yearly Meeting and forwarded to AFSC, requesting that AFSC poll its Board of Directors to determine how many of their staff were members of the Society of Friends. AFSC has responded to this request, declining to comply. There will be a threshing session at our summer gathering to consider where our Yearly Meeting should go from here.

Like so many other Quaker organizations, AFSC has felt the pinch of budgetary constraints. Although their current year's income was higher than expected, their traditional funding sources are drying up, and they have had to cut back on staffing and combine geographical regions. They now maintain only 4 regional offices in the U.S., down from the previous 9.

Acting Treasurer Charles Schade provided a report of our financial position. Due to the untimely passing of previous treasurer Deanna Nipp-Kientz and the prolonged illness of current Treasurer Alan Robinson, Yearly Meeting has been unable to access funds and financial records held by the Self Help Credit Union. Charles and Admin Asst Liz Perch have been working with all possible speed to resolve this problem. Friends agreed to allow for three officers of the Yearly Meeting to be signatory on this account in order to avoid a repetition of this quandary.

Charles pointed out that several Monthly Meetings had not paid their SAYMA assessments yet this year. Asheville was among those Meetings.

Speaking for the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee, Memphis Friend Carol Ciscel was pleased to report that the Warren Wilson campus should be fully prepared for our arrival. Because the sixth month begins with a weekend, Yearly Meeting will occur on the third weekend of June this year rather than the usual second weekend. The dates are June 13-16. She reminded us of the theme "Let Us See What Love Can Do", and showed us a button that has been designed displaying the theme, that will be available to attenders. Plenary speakers this year will be Max Carter, a long time faculty member at Guilford College, and Herb Walters of Celso, whose life work has been the establishment and facilitation of the Rural Southern Voice for Peace (RSVP). Cost of attendance will be slightly higher this year due primarily to an increase in Warren Wilson's room fees, however SAYMA will be making it easier for young adults and others with financial challenges to attend by offering plentiful scholarship money and by subsidizing meals for Junior Yearly Meeting attenders. The advance program will be available at the beginning of next month. Scholarship requests should be received through the Monthly Meeting's Scholarship Committee by the end of April. Deadline for registration is May 15.

The Fall Representative Meeting will take place on 9/28 at Nashville Meeting. While your Meeting Representative has felt privileged to serve Asheville Friends in this capacity for the past two years, he is willing to pass this responsibility on if another Friend feels led to serve, but is also willing to continue in this capacity if not.

Barbara Ester is co-clerk of SAYMA's Nominating Committee. She asked Friends to consider their talents and inclinations, and consider the positions that will come open for our Yearly Meeting:

- Assistant Clerk
- Recording Clerk
- 3 members of Ministry and Nurture Committee
- 2 members of Personnel Committee; note that 1 of these positions is the Assistant Clerk
- 3 members of SAYF Steering Committee
- 11 members Yearly Meeting Planning Committee
- 4 members of Nominating Committee
- 2 members of Ecological Concerns Network
- editor of SAF (the Southern Appalachian Friend)
- wider Quaker organizations, including QEW (Quaker Earthcare Witness), William Penn House, FWC (Friends World Committee), Quaker House, and FCNL (Friends Committee on National Legislation; 2 persons)

SAYMA State of the Meeting Report – Kitti Reynolds

Kitti read this report aloud to solicit comments from those gathered at Business Meeting.

A Friend commented that the spirit of our Meeting and Clerk was evident in the report. Another Friend noted that, having read State of the Meeting Reports from other Meetings, she thought that our report was particularly welcoming. Another Friend said that he was uneasy about welcoming new babies before their birth. A Friend suggested saving this news, as well as news about Gita's membership, for the 2013 State of the Meeting Report.

A Friend asked that we qualify comments about the growth of our group, as it is modest. Another Friend said that Religious Education noticed the addition of families with children, and that the children actively attend 9:30 singing, but that this might be an item for the 2013 State of the Meeting report. A Friend questioned making news about addition in numbers the topic sentence of our report, as changes in numbers might not be the most important thing that has happened to us as a Meeting. A Friend asked that the depth of our worship (both the silence and vocal ministry) be commented on in the report.

Friends approved AFM's 2012 State of the Meeting Report.

Kitti thanked all for their electronic and vocal contributions to this report.

*** Nominating Committee – Katherine Kowal**

We would like to nominate Gjeorge Gjelfriend for the Ministry and Counsel Committee. George served on M&C for many years and cycled off when he completed his term in December. The committee has requested that he re-join, and he has agreed to do so.

Friends approved Gjeorge Gjelfriend's membership on the Ministry and Counsel Committee for a 2-year term.

We would like to nominate Jim Barham for the House and Grounds Committee. Jim is a relatively new but enthusiastic attender who is interested in this committee.

Friends approved Jim Barham's membership on the House and Grounds Committee for a 2-year term.

We are also asking that we create a new position of Inreach Coordinator on an experimental basis for one year. This person would assist new attenders with practical concerns like getting a nametag and copy of the directory as well as answer questions about Quakerism and direct them to appropriate resources. Generally we do not have positions that are not shepherded by a committee, but we feel that in this case the position does not fall under an existing committee. At the end of a year we will re-evaluate whether to continue this position and whether or not to place it under an existing committee. We are nominating Nancy Kuykendall for this new position.

Friends approved Nancy Kuykendall's position as Inreach Coordinator for a 1-year term.

A Friend said that he was pleased that Nancy was back with our Meeting.

A Friend was concerned that her work on the Religious Education Committee was taking her out of Meeting for Worship. She had asked Nominating Committee to replace the R.E. co-clerks, but that has not yet happened. She asked that Friends reflect on this need and discuss their ability to do R.E. work with members of Nominating Committee. Religious Education needs First Day teachers, particularly with the growth of the First Day program (more children attending).

Religious Education will prepare a clipboard to pass around to recruit First Day teachers from our larger groups of attenders. These people would not need to serve on the committee, but could help relieve the workload on the small R.E. committee.

Announcements / Concerns

- There will be a reception for Homeward Bound 5:30 this Thursday (14 March) at the ALOFT Hotel in downtown Asheville. There is a charge for this event, and proceeds go to Homeward Bound.
- Homeward Bound is having a non-event, asking folks to stay home and give thanks for the home they have. Friends are then asked to *donate* the monies that they would have spent on a night out to Homeward Bound.
- On Tuesday, 2 April, Peace and Earth will host a showing of a 30 minute film about Fracking (which is now legal in North Carolina) at 7:00 p.m. at the Meetinghouse. This event will include a potluck and is open to the public. Bring a friend and a dish to share.
- Yearly Meeting will be June 13-16 at Warren Wilson College. The theme is "Let Us See What Love Can Do". Cost of attendance will be a little higher due to increases in Warren Wilson room and meal fees. SAYMA will offer scholarships and meal subsidies to help Young Friends and those of limited incomes.
- Barbara Esther asks that people sign up on the clipboard to request nametags. She will print each time the list becomes 6 persons long

Closing Worship

Asheville Friends Yearly Report to SAYMA for 2012

This past year Asheville Friends have experienced a deepening worship in both silence and vocal ministry. Our Meeting has experienced modest growth in numbers, with average attendance each First Day increasing from around 29 to 31. We have welcomed a new member, Pat Johnson, and two babies, Eden Mae Ward and Alice Eleanor Lane. We have also seen a noticeable increase in attendance by “youngish Friends”, singles and couples with young children. Our library now serves a dual purpose; with the addition of a colorful rug and special shelving for toys, it is also our nursery (thanks to the Ad Hoc Library/Nursery Committee).

Religious Education Friends have been busy with our annual Secret Pal gift exchange and a Monty Python and the Holy Grail party (comparing the search for the Grail with George Fox’s search for the Divine). We continue to enjoy our annual intergenerational Youth Celebration cookout.

Early in 2012 our Meeting had a threshing session to discuss our Meeting House and whether to try to sell it and move to a newer building. There was a strong sense that Friends wished to remain on our property and continue to use the building, with perhaps an addition of a separate meeting room at some point. House and Grounds, with able leadership, has greatly improved the appearance of our Meetinghouse by building lovely arches which will soon be entwined with flowering vines – all this to shield our windows from too much sunlight. The grounds have been beautified by Nicholas Wells, who grassed in many bare spots in our lawn and constructed a sturdy picnic table, for his Eagle Scout project. We have been fortunate that many local groups have rented space in our building, and thus contributed to our yearly budget. Our heating system efficiency was greatly improved by the discovery and removal of a plastic Easter egg from the intake pipe.

Ministry and Counsel meets monthly and is confident that our Meeting continues to be strong and Spirit-filled. We have placed a basket of queries in the foyer for Friends to look over as they settle into worship. We do wonder if our lives are becoming too busy, as shown by our not having had any kind of residential retreat in the last few years.

Peace and Earth has sponsored letter-writing opportunities at the rise of Meeting, participated in the International Day of Peace, and led us in writing a letter opposing North Carolina Amendment One, enshrining anti-gay discrimination in the State Constitution. In addition, Peace and Earth contributed to many worthwhile Friends’ organizations and to local groups that express our beliefs. They sponsored two food drives this year, with contributions from our Meeting going to the Manna food Bank. Some friends visited Senator Kay Hagan's office to lobby for reduced Pentagon spending and presented them with a fruit pie to illustrate our talking points as suggested by FCNL. With the help of others in our Meeting, Peace and Earth has continued to contribute on a quarterly basis to the Sunday morning breakfast at Pritchard Park for Asheville's hungry population.

Our Meeting has been sponsoring activities of one of our members, Stephanie Gossett, who is teaching English for the Peace Corps in Swaziland. Stephanie co-wrote a grant to lead a workshop called GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) and also wrote a grant to reform a local preschool, to both of which the Meeting made a substantial contribution.

Spiritual Enrichment Committee, in keeping with its stated mission, nourished adult spiritual sharing and growth in our meeting. They have sponsored second hour discussions on Quakerism, as seen through the pages of the new Guide to Our Faith and Practice. Intergenerational activities included baking Christmas cookies for isolated Friends we seldom see.

We are looking forward to 2013; with the many contributions of members and attenders we expect to continue our growth in Spirit and in numbers.

Respectfully submitted by Kitti Reynolds, Clerk of Asheville Friends Meeting
