

Minutes

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Fourteenth Day, Fifth Month, 2006

Meeting began with worship at 12 noon

Attendance

31 Friends were in attendance: Lynnora Bierce (Recording Clerk), Gary Briggs, Alice Brown, Peter Buck, Jim Cavener, Karen Cernek, David Clements, Barbara Esther, Ellen Frerotte, George Gjelfriend, Kristi Gjelfriend, Joy Gossett, Steve Houseworth, Martha Huggins, Katherine Kowal, Steve Livingston (clerk), Satchel Loftis, Kieron Mann, Laura Maynard, Rusty Maynard, Philip Neal, Margaret Normile, Ellen Oldham, Kitti Reynolds, Evan Richardson, Sam Rizzo, Alan Robinson, Eda Smith, Gerry Smith, Sarah Jane Thomas, John Tweddle.

Opening Reading

A Sense of the Meeting is only achieved when those participating respect and care for one another. It requires a humble and loving spirit, imputing purity of motive to all participants and offering our highest selves in return. We seek to create a safe space for sharing. We pray that we might listen carefully, respectfully, lovingly. We listen always for the presence of G*D through what someone is saying, knowing that each of us is endowed with some measure of Divine Light. The creation of the blessed community is both a necessary prerequisite and an inevitable by-product of corporate discernment.

from *An Introduction to Quaker Business Practice* by Eden Grace

Introductions

John Tweddle from Morningside Meeting of New York City visited with us on this day.

News of Ourselves

1) Yard sale, almost \$700 was raised. We were given great stuff, but Kristi Gjelfriend felt that the weekend chosen had too much competition from other events. Friends united in offering gratitude to Kristi and others who helped with the event.

Friends wished to express their appreciation to Kristi Gjelfriend for her extraordinary effort organizing and visioning our annual yard sale; to George Gjelfriend for his support of Kristi; and to all others who contributed by letting go of beloved items, the bakers, the transporters, the cashiers, and the extra blessed buyers for their support of this endeavor.

Friends also acknowledged Rusty Maynard and Steve Livingston for their strong backs, and Linda Alfredson and Robin Wells for staying with her until the wee small hours of the morning helping sort and price.

2) Kitti Reynolds announced that Sarah Jane Thomas received a letter of commendation for her work with Asheville Women and Children's Shelter, and wanted to thank the Meeting for their contribution of paying for the food that she cooks for the shelter. Friends remembered Ursula Scott's involvement in beginning this work, and appreciated Sarah Jane for continuing after Ursula's passing.

Agenda

Agenda was approved as presented

Request for approval of FAP status for Gary Briggs

Joy Gossett presented a minute expressing support for Gary as a Friendly Adult Presence. **The Minute was approved heartily and with thanks:**

Gary Briggs has served Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) well during the 2005-2006 year. Gary has participated this year as a supportive adult during 3 SAYF retreats, both in Asheville and other locations.

He is also willing and ready to be a Friendly Adult Presence (FAP) during the final longer SAYF retreat during the SAYMA Yearly Meeting, and beyond. Young Friends relate well with him and appreciate his help, as do members of the SAYMA SAYF Steering Committee.

Friends of Asheville Friends Meeting appreciate Gary's reliable continued work with the Young Friends of our Monthly and Yearly Meetings. We especially note that Gary values Young Friends individually as well as in their group activities. Gary has stated that it is a privilege and inspiring for him to spend time with these Young Friends; such respect for that of God in our Young Friends is the highest qualification for adults working with SAYF. Gary is also an experienced father and brings that richness of knowledge and experience to his time with Young Friends.

Accordingly, Asheville Friends Meeting in its Meeting for the conduct of business in the Fifth month 2006 minutes its approval of Gary Briggs as a Friendly Adult Presence with Southern Appalachian Young Friends. We are grateful for Gary's work with SAYF this year as well as his work yet to come. We shall provide this Minute to the SAYF Steering Committee for their information and record.

Thank you very much.

In Friendship,

Steve Livingston, Clerk on behalf of Asheville Friends Meeting

Request for support of a celebration for our High School Graduates

As we have a number of young Friends who are graduating from high school this year, Lynnora Bierce asked if perhaps a celebration was in order. She suggested June 4th after the rise of meeting. Friends were reminded that our graduating seniors would be recognized at the upcoming Youth Celebration. A Friend expressed dismay at attending to committee work in the business meeting. No further discussion or decision was made.

Request for Committee Clerks Meeting and responses to State of Meeting Queries

The clerk asked if Meeting could proceed with generating our State of the Meeting report with prudent speed. He asked if committees needed more time to consider the queries offered, and if we could settle on a date that is most convenient for committee clerks to meet in the near future.

Clerk pointed out that 6th Month Meeting for Business would likely be held on the first Sunday due to SAYMA being on the second Sunday. A Friend suggested an open call to committee clerks to give or email the Clerk times that are available to meet. There is a hope this meeting can happen before our June meeting for business.

Ministry and Counsel

Clerk read the report form Ministry and Counsel.

“We reviewed the process for becoming a member of an open committee when a Friend has an interest in the work of that committee. If after attending a committee meeting a person wants to join that committee the committee clerk alerts the nominating committee which then will bring a recommendation to the business meeting.

“We appreciate the job the pastoral care committee does in maintaining contact with those friends who no longer attend Asheville Meeting. Any correspondence received by the clerk is noted at the business meeting. Friends who have a special desire to keep in touch with any of these friends are urged to do so in a personal way.

“We discussed the needs committee and suggest a policy that when at least two members of the Ministry and Counsel committee agree that there is an urgent financial need for an individual in the meeting the treasurer/finance committee will be contacted to write a check.

Respectfully submitted, Martha O. Huggins”

In response to a Friend's inquiry, clerk clarified that members of Ministry & Counsel must be a member of the Religious Society of Friends, but not necessarily a member of this Asheville Meeting.

A Friend pointed out that there is no “needs committee”, and that the Ministry & Counsel report refers instead to the Meeting's “Needs Fund”. A Friend expressed confusion as to what is an “open committee”. Another Friend expressed that Ministry and Counsel is the only committee that is not “open”. Friends asked that Ministry & Counsel and Nominating sit with this proposed policy for another month. A member of Nominating expressed that the intention of

the committee is to make Friends feel more encouraged about participating in the nomination process.

A member of Finance Committee expressed that Finance may want to review the suggested policy regarding how the Needs Fund is activated. Another Friend offered that the policy was internal to Ministry and Counsel and did not require review by another committee or by the Meeting. A Friend expressed confusion as to why the agenda distributed prior to the business meeting indicated that the policy was being proposed as a minute if it did not require review or approval. Clerk confirmed that Ministry & Counsel's intent was for the identity of any recipient of these funds to remain confidential, and that the amount would not exceed \$500.

Friends accepted the report of Ministry and Counsel.

Friends were reminded that approval is given for minutes, acceptance is given for reports.

Memorial Service for Agnita Dupree

Friends united around holding a memorial meeting for Agnita. Some Friends wished to hold it in advance of the 6/3 memorial in her hometown of Ithaca NY, so that a memorial minute could be sent to them. After some consideration Friends recognized that more time was needed to plan the meeting in a way that would enable a wider group of people to be informed, and for her nearby family members to plan to attend.

Friends approved an ad hoc committee consisting of David Clements, Evan Richardson, and Margaret Normile to plan a memorial service for Agnita. Friends requested that Ministry and Counsel Committee send a letter of condolence to the family on behalf of the Meeting prior to the 6/3 service in New York.

Gerry Smith offered to prepare food for those attending the service, given a few days' notice.

In response to inquiries, Steve Houseworth offered to publish on the Meeting website an address for Friends to send cards and letters to the family.

The Recording Clerk offered that we write a minute now with our large nearly 30 members in attendance. A Friend stated preference for a small group of Friends to draft a minute for approval at a latter date. A Friend admonished the Meeting to follow established practice in writing the memorial minute, expressing regret that no minute had been written in some recent cases. Proper protocol dictates that Ministry and Counsel send a letter of condolence to Agnita's family, and that the ad hoc committee draft a memorial minute based on contributions other Friends might make including themselves.

Alice Brown stated that she did not want a memorial service for her when she was gone. She also stated that she needed to leave and that the next part of business regarding her fielding calls from the meetinghouse voice mail was not as important as her needing a replacement for Ministry & Counsel, from which she desperately needs to be released.

Nominating Committee

Nomination of Scott Evans and George Gjelfriend to House and Grounds and Palin Spruance to Finance were approved.

No volunteer was forthcoming to take over the answering of calls on our meetinghouse voice mail.

Additional Friends interested in serving on House and Grounds are asked to contact Nominating Committee or Satchel Loftis.

Friends accepted the report of Nominating Committee.

Fourth Month Minutes

Friends approved the minutes of the Fourth Month Meeting for Business as posted.

Proposal for a one-day retreat at Common Light Meeting Place

Report was read by David Clements.

"Several Friends have met to discuss the possibility of a Meeting retreat for this fall. Those who have been involved so far are Margaret Normile, Carrie Coward, Katherine Kowal, Joyce Rawlings-Davies, and David Clements. We welcome others to join us.

“We have felt that it would be good to continue our Meeting's recent tradition of having a yearly retreat in the fall. It appears that we do not have the resources of time and money necessary to put on a full weekend residential retreat this year, as we have done for the last two years. The Spiritual Enrichment Committee has decided not to sponsor a retreat this year.

“We propose instead a simpler retreat consisting of a Saturday together, with possibly a follow up session the next day before or after meeting. We have not fully explored what might be the theme or intention for the retreat. We would hope to build and strengthen community together. We might have some educational sessions about various aspects of Quakerism. We might take some time together to focus on our vision of what we want our Meeting to be and where we want to go together. We propose to begin developing a program later in the year, and solicit input from the Meeting community in this process. We intend to keep the Spiritual Enrichment Committee informed of our progress, and expect that the Committee or some of its members may want to help with the planning.

“We propose having a one-day retreat at the Common Light Meeting House in Swannanoa on September 23, 2006. This space is also available on September 16 and September 30, in case there are important conflicts with other Meeting events of which we are not aware. There is a meeting room large enough for expected attendance of 50-60. There are also smaller rooms for extra sessions, and a nearby school that we would hope to rent for a children's program.

“Proposed minutes:

“Meeting establishes the Ad Hoc 2006 Retreat Committee, which is empowered to plan and carry out a Meeting retreat on the weekend of September 23. The Committee members are Margaret Normile, Carrie Coward, Katherine Kowal, Joyce Rawlings-Davies, David Clements. Others are invited to join the Committee.

“Meeting establishes a 2006 Retreat Fund, into which contributions and fees will be deposited, and from which the expenses of the retreat will be paid. Meeting authorizes the Retreat Committee to spend \$500 for the expenses of the retreat. Meeting expects the Retreat Committee to collect fees and directed donations sufficient to cover all the costs of the Retreat. Meeting will transfer up to \$500 from the General Fund Contingency Budget Line to the 2006 Retreat Fund to meet expenses if needed.

“We welcome comments or feedback from interested friends.”

Friends approved the formation of the Ad Hoc 2006 Retreat Committee, consisting of Margaret Normile, Carrie Coward, Katherine Kowal, Joyce Rawlings-Davies, and David Clements.

Friends approved the transfer of \$500 from the Contingency Fund for the use of the Retreat Committee.

A Friend expressed gratitude for the good Quaker order exhibited by the ad hoc committee.

Peace and Earth Report

Kitti Reynolds read the report.

“Peace and Earth met on April 23, 2006. We commended Peace and Earth member Susan Oehler and Asheville Friends member Bob Smith on their being awarded the Grace Lee Peace Award at Warren Wilson April 20.

“Margaret, Kitti, Sarah Jane and Susan will all be helping at the Eyes Wide Open exhibit sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee at All Souls Cathedral April 28-30.

“We decided to support Valerie Collins request that P and E sponsor the appeal for financial support of the quilt project for Helpmate. We remind Friends that we hope any contributions made by Friends to this project would be in addition to any contributions they make to Meeting, and that financial contributions to Meeting not be reduced because of contributing to Helpmate.

“We may meet on May 21 if there is a pressing matter to discuss. Kitti and Susan expect to be away that week.”

Friends accepted the Peace and Earth report.

House and Grounds Update

House & Grounds Committee Report was given by Stachel Loftis.

“Note: No action is required for items in this report.

“Maintenance Projects

“The House & Grounds committee is having about half of the interior of the house painted this month; the whole of the exterior of the house will be painted in August (with additional work being done to spiff up the front porch). As well, we are having the structure treated for termites and mold in the basement.

“Funds for these projects are readily available within the annual House & Grounds budget and other funds expressly set aside for this type of maintenance, which has been difficult to implement until recently due to the high turnover and low participation on the House & Grounds committee.

“Quarterly Committee Meetings

“The committee will begin meeting on a quarterly basis, instead of monthly. The planned meetings will be held on the fourth Tuesday in January, April, July and October. When necessary the committee clerk will convene meetings on a more frequent basis. Our next meeting will be such a meeting to discuss ongoing work projects, on May 23.

“Work Days

“The committee will schedule work days as needed, as has been the case for the past year and a half. The purpose of a work day is to accomplish general cleanup and repair work that is within the means of meeting members and attenders – projects that don't require professional tradespeople or permits for work. In addition to giving members and attenders the opportunity to serve the meeting and to get to know each other better, we are able to keep expenses down by relying on volunteer help.

“Unfortunately, our work days are poorly attended, often seeing only one or two people arrive to help. The results of poor attendance are that fewer projects are completed, annual expenses are higher and more work is done by fewer people, leading to burnout and frustration on the part of those participating.

“On a more positive note, the most recent work day, on May 13, was extremely productive, even though only six people were on hand. Projects were planned to ready the house for termite treatment and interior painting, as well as plain old upkeep. We were able to clear the basement of scrap wood that was gathering mold and providing potential food for termites, haul away the remains from last week's yard sale, securely lay rat poison in two upstairs closets, mow the yard, weed some flower beds, and spend time together enjoying the lovely spring weather and the added company of four children.

“Our next work day is scheduled for Saturday, August 5. We plan to once again provide simple food for breakfast, projects to prepare for painting the exterior of the house, opportunities for members and attenders to get to know one another, and plenty of chances to serve the meeting. Child care will be provided, as usual, and we would like to invite other committees to schedule meetings or projects at the meetinghouse at the same time, such that we might be able to enjoy lunch together. Anyone interested in contributing in any way is invited to speak to the committee clerk, Satchel Loftis.”

The report was accepted.

Participation in United Way's "Day of Caring"

Asheville Friends Meeting may participate in United Way's Day of Caring. AFM may submit a request for a group of volunteers to come and work on a project for the meetinghouse. We would need a couple of member/attenders to be available on September 7th to open and close the meetinghouse, act as contacts, and work with the volunteers. We will have to decide which project would be most beneficial for a group volunteers and the meetinghouse.

Day of Caring 2006: Mark your calendar for Thursday, September 7 to participate in United Way's Day of Caring. United Way would like agencies to offer some large projects this year, so put your thinking caps on! More information will be available soon. Questions can be directed to Sarah Catoe at 255-0696 or scatoe@unitedwayabc.org.

The matter was referred to House and Grounds for further seasoning.

Communications

The clerk pointed out that Communications Committee has not met recently, and that its convener/clerk is feeling overwhelmed with other responsibilities that divert necessary attention. As is the case with some other committees in our meeting, an infusion of new energy would be welcome.

Date for next Meeting for Business

Friends approved holding next month's meeting for business on first Sunday, 6/4, so as not to coincide with the SAYMA Gathering.

Religious Education

Barbara Esther gave a brief review of the committee's written report, asking that the entire report be published as part of the record of the Business Meeting:

Report from the Religious Education Committee, May 14, 2006

We look forward to our end-of-year Youth Celebration on May 21, in just one week. The year has been a very busy and rewarding one for those of us who have worked on teaching the children of the meeting. Of course, there will be changes to be celebrated. We will have three fifth graders graduating to the youth group, five Young Friends graduating from high school and one college graduate this year. At the end of the presentation of our gifts to youth and those who supported the youth through teaching and assisting, those who participated in the Secret Pals program will reveal who they are within that smaller group. It has been fun, as usual, to have this secret exchange. One Friend has continued her F/friendship with her secret pals by remembering them on their birthdays ever since we started having the exchanges. These ties within the community between ages are invaluable to us.

Our Junior Business Meeting has taken up the agenda item of play space/playground possibilities in our yard. They remember fondly our tire swing and playing on what seemed to them a huge play structure in the little fenced area years ago. We of the Religious Education Committee want to support the youths' interest in the use of our ample yard by hosting a forum on June 25th to be facilitated by Fran Thigpen, who has guided other groups to consider their outdoor spaces. Meeting members of all ages are invited to think of everything they would want if the yard were transformed into the ideal space and bring those dreams with them to the forum for us to consider together.

Because our First Day schedule is due to change, hopefully in the fall, the committee is planning to suspend planned activities for the worship hour during the three summer months. We plan to provide a caregiver for the children under five during worship, with the hope that other youth and children will either join us in the worship room or develop a more relaxed worship space in either the entrance room or the library, possibly with a speaker set up to allow the accompanying adults and those children to hear vocal ministry from that space. We will continue to need at least one volunteer for the little ones along with our caregiver. The committee has discussed the choices that we hope will be given to the children and youth as follows: We hope parents will develop an agreement with their children to have the children choose to join worship in one space or another, or quietly read or otherwise maintain a quiet activity upstairs with a minimum of need for supervision. Our preference is for the children to remain in worship. We want to discourage the use of worship time for active play in the yard or boisterous play in any of the meetinghouse spaces. We hope that the children will develop an appreciation for the value of quietly and patiently waiting for messages by being with us during the worship hour. We encourage parents of children younger than five to have them stay in meeting for worship during the first fifteen minutes when it is appropriate.

While we will not have activities during the first hour during worship, the committee has plans to fundraise during the summer for playground/yard plans, with activities planned for the second hour; and sponsor three special events for nurturing of community. These events are: possibly swimming on June 18, miniature golf on July 16 and Asheville Tourists Day baseball game on August 6. Of course we will want adults to participate with us whenever they can. We will need help with transportation and supervision, in any case.

The committee is presently asking our current team members to consider whether they want to continue serving as they have this year. We will have two members leaving the committee, as well. We hope that those of you who have been hoping to serve on the Religious Education Committee or want to be part of a teaching team will contact us so that we can plan for the fall.

Friends accepted the report of religious education.

Meeting ended at 2:20 PM with a brief period of silent worship.