

Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
Second Month 2008 (10 February)
Barbara Esther, Clerk
Jen Rhode, Co-Recording Clerk

Present: Gary Briggs, Bobby Carter, Ellen Frerotte, George Gjelfriend, Kristi Gjelfriend, Joy Gosset, Raelin Hansen, Pat Johnson, Katherine Kowal, Steve Livingston, Rusty Maynard, Philip Neal, Kitti Reynolds, Adrienne Weir

Worship convened at 12:15 p.m.

Reading

The snow was still, silent, and without wind. The first flakes to reach my sleeve were fluffy creations of filigreed lace and I looked at them closely and saw that they were crystals, six-sided crystals. How can one view such majesty, such beauty, such an overwhelming vista of celestial power and not grow to feel that everything about use is governed by laws, greater than physical laws? Laws we can only hope to feel... Feelings consume me now as I write, and in meditation and in our Quaker silence I can sense them radiating from the very atoms inside me. It is a general consciousness that we share with every atom on the universe. Moving, vibrating the atoms are ordering themselves within me. They are the same atoms of the quartz oscillators, the same atoms of snow flakes, and ice crystals miles above me... The sensations, ideas, and motivating forces within us that we call consciousness are the same as those which order the universal spheres in their orbits. This is not the rhetoric of philosophy. It is, rather, an attempt to express feelings that result from periods of blissful stillness. The consciousness of order is the same as that I know when centering in the peace and silence of our meetings.

From Vistas for Inner Stillness (Pendle Hill Pamphlet)
Richard L. Walker

Agenda Review

The agenda was approved as written.

Approval of the Minutes of the First Month 2008

Minute 1: Phil Neal asked that his name be included in the minutes from First Month 2008. With this addition, the Minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report – Adrienne Weir

Adrienne reported that we desperately need a bookkeeper and have needed one since Paelin became ill in early December. She said that she has spent much time this month preparing forms for Federal Income Tax. The Finance Committee made a plea for 1) someone to do basic data entry and for 2) more members of the committee. Adrienne estimated that three to four hours per month are adequate to enter data. If you feel moved to make that gift of your time to the Meeting it would be helpful. Adrienne will help with Quickbooks training and entry of donors to ease production of end of year tax letters to our donors, etc.

The Treasurer's Report was accepted as written. Barbara thanked Adrienne for all her work this month and asked the Meeting to remember to thank Finance Committee members often.

Sustainability Concern – Raelin Hansen

After Raelin spoke with the guests that were brought to the last Peace & Earth first hour, she was inspired to open discussion about having workshops and discussion groups here at the Meeting to talk about different ways of living more sustainably. It would be helpful to us and the larger community to commence such discussion and to have workshops on concrete topics. With the awareness that Friends process can sometimes take a long time, Raelin plans to work on teaching classes on sewing with a focus on sustainability – buying clothes from thrift shops and altering them, buying fabric and making one's own clothing. The idea is to avoid buying clothing from big box stores, or clothing that has been made in sweat shops. Raelin is focusing on this because it is what she does best - sewing and teach sewing. She has a vision of the Meeting becoming more broadly a voice in support of sustainability in our larger community.

- Katherine asked what Raelin would like from the Meeting in support of this. Raelin asked that those with particular gifts consider volunteering to teach classes: making and repairing furniture, etc. She knows that many in the Meeting have gifts and skills. By repairing we avoid buying from big box stores, save things from going to the landfills, save trees, etc. To begin with, she would like to see if other Friends are willing to sit down and talk about this in order to brainstorm ideas involving other people in the realization of Raelin's vision.
- Phil asked if Raelin had investigated YMCA and YWCA activities related to this. Raelin says that she and Bobby have been YM members for past 1.5 years but have not seen any related things posted. Raelin says that even if the YWCA is doing this it will not affect her plans to do such activities here. Her feeling is that we should create our own ideas of what looks nice, feels comfortable, lets us express ourselves so that we can avoid the tyranny of the NY and Paris fashion mavens. She will do this in consultation with Gary to reserve use of the meetinghouse, and participants will donate to pay for costs of materials with any surplus donation to be donated to the meeting. Participants would need to provide their own sewing machines. Sewing machines can be acquired at Iwanna, Goodwill, and Habitat and then reconditioned; Raelin has recommendations for folks who can do repairs/reconditioning.
- Gary says that as a mall-avoider; he is in a quandary when he purchases a new washer, about what he should do with the old washer. Should he put it in the landfill or give it away? Raelin suggests that donation to Habitat or another charitable organization is an option, and that options could be talked about in workshops or discussion groups dealing with sustainability. Barbara reminded us that we need to think about the swords that we are wearing re: the less sustainable parts of our lives.
- Rusty said that there are several paradigms to consider, including doing small things lovingly that might not tip the scale but will serve an important personal role. Others might focus on more pervasive problems but that it is important for workshop facilitators to offer topics that they are interested in and match their talents. He feels that such workshops are as valid as holding mid-week worship in our meetinghouse.

He points out the difference between generic, didactic sessions for the larger community versus things focused within the Meeting community. He says that casting the net larger means that there is more focus on publicity, etc. and less on serving our membership. He is more an advocate of focusing on serving the interests of our membership. Raelin reiterates that her vision is that it is important to start within the Meeting and that there is also great value in eventually casting our nets to the wider community in a second, broader phase. This will benefit the Meeting by introducing Friends to a broader community and might help attendance (which has been lower here in the past few years). This will let us show the broader community who we are, what we are about, our spirit, etc. We can explore this within the meeting as a way to spread the Light into the larger community.

- Ellen said that a few years ago there was a Simplicity Circle (led by Ursula Scott), and that we might, as a first step, could consider resurrecting this model.
- Barbara thanked Raelin for getting the Meeting thinking about this and asked us to email or call Raelin with further ideas for how to implement this. This is not a committee, but an individual concern, which could ally itself with an existing committee if so led.

Committee Reports

- Ad Hoc Marriage Procedure Committee:
 - Gary said that he and Evan made semantic improvements to this document yesterday and will be sending out the latest version, in pieces, to the meeting. The committee requests that Friends read the approved documents *carefully* before next month. They invite all to word-smith but ask that the spirit (and content) of the document not change. Gary assured us that a cover letter would indicate what had been changed from the version that was approved in the meeting for business. Friends are asked to hold both the process and the committee in the Light.

We unplugged the computer used for taking minutes because of surging and blinking power. Barbara states that we may lose our light but we will not lose THE Light.

- Communication Committee – Gary Briggs
 - Gary reported that last week's meeting was productive and covered 5 agenda items.
 - The newsletter began last month (3 pages in January, 5 in February) and includes a calendar and summary of minutes. Julie would like any other relevant contributions sent to her: photos, contemplative writing, anything relevant to Meeting or Quaker testimonies, stories, and columns. Steve reports that he has budgeted for 5 hard copies of the newsletter per month but already has requests for 16.
 - Keiron Mann is working on a new and improved Meeting website, which they are holding back from public use as it is currently in its beta version. In the future he will be seeking content for that, too.
 - Another item concerned the email list-serve, about which Gary sent out a 4-question survey. There was clear consensus in that most preferred to get email news of the Meeting and appreciated the frequency of email correspondence. The

other 2 questions (if list-serve subscribers wanted to hear about wider Quaker news and other events; number of subjects per email) received a wide variety of responses. Gary says that they will steer a middle course, sending a brief synopsis of these events and links in emails. He says that the committee will try to make most people happy. Kitti asks whether we should send Julie announcements; Gary said that Julie included her email address in both the minutes and the newsletter for submissions. We were reminded of due date for the newsletter as follows: submissions are requested by the 16th of the month, and the newsletter comes out on the 1st Monday of each month, just prior to the meeting for business.

- The committee was going to buy a new monitor for the Meeting computer, but as there was no money budgeted for that purpose, we will continue using the one we have. Quickbooks is being installed for the Finance Committee; the Communications Committee is working on passwords for the computer.
- We have an ad in the *Mountain Express*, but Gary asked about putting an ad in the Gay/Lesbian/Transgendered paper for our community: *Out in Asheville*. The spirituality pages in this paper are more visible than those in the *Mountain Express*, and advertising is free. The category is “Spirituality Groups and Churches”, and its goal is to list groups that are friendly, welcoming, and serve the needs of this GLBQT community. City View Quaker Church is already listed (along with many others), and Gary and the committee have drafted a proposed ad:

“ASHEVILLE FRIENDS MEETING (Quakers), 227 Edgewood Road just east of the UNCA campus. We recognize “that of God” in every person and welcome all. We gather Sundays at 10:15 AM for singing in preparation for worship, and begin worship in expectant silence at 10:30. Many more details at www.ashevillefriends.org”

Raelin said that she finds that saying “east of UNCA” might be less informative than “off Merrimon”. Gary said that, if no one has major concerns, he would like to submit the ad in time for the March issue.

Minute 2: Friends approved placing the ad in *Out in Asheville*.

Steve said that advertising to the larger community has been under Ministry & Council but seems to belong more under Communications Committee. Steve says that there is interest in placing ads that would reach other groups within the Asheville community: African-American, etc. Eventually this committee might ask for money for that purpose.

Minute 3: Friends approved transferring the advertising function to the Communication Committee from Ministry and Counsel. All members of the latter committee were present to affirm their willingness to have this happen.

Minute 4: Friends thank Friend Julie Moser and the Communications Committee for the excellent newsletter. Friends approved.

- Finance Committee – Adrienne Weir
 - (will be pasted in later; please read thoroughly)
 - Even if you are willing to act as Bookkeeper on a temporary basis, please consider doing this, as the Finance Committee has a great need.

- The Finance Committee has been using the computer that Communications Committee has set up.
- Kitti asked for clarification about expenditures from the general, outreach and SAYMA funds (item 3C). She asked if the new documents meant that the committees have a ~2 week gap during which those funds cannot be utilized. Adrienne confirmed that this true.
- Katherine asked for clarification about budget balancing. Adrienne said that our practice has been to present a proposed budget (draft, using requests supplied by committees) in December, then to reconcile it to create a balanced budget in January (with the input of the Twelfth Month business meeting). Katherine wondered whether this puts too much responsibility on the Finance Committee. Adrienne and Barbara reaffirmed the important role of the input of various committees and of projected income, pointing out that projected contributions are usually realized as actual contributions.
- Steve pointed out that the vast majority of our monies come into the meeting in December. He suggested that delaying the Final Budget until February will make that budget more accurate and also put less pressure on the Finance Committee. Adrienne will take this to the Finance Committee for consideration, then report back to us in Third Month.
- George pointed out that this document reflects what is already being done by the Finance Committee. He said that if it works, why change it?
- Barbara pointed out that regular contributions via bank draft through Network for Good contributions might allow for better predictions of income by the Finance Committee.
- Gary said that the document seemed to be well thought-out and proposed that we approve it for this year and, if it needs amending at a later date it could be changed in the future (as stated in the Document).

Minute 5: Friends approved the Asheville Friends' Meeting Policy on Budget Process as outlined by the Finance Committee.

- Peace and Earth – Kitty Reynolds
 - The committee met the morning of 2/10/08 and has come to a tentative budget for 2007 expenditures. They will finalize the proposed budget after consultation with Margaret Normile, and will provide an expenditure report in Third Month.
 - The following items were announced: On February 24th (Fourth First Day): discussion of FCNL Legislative Priorities; March 23rd (Easter First Day): non-perishable food will be collected for MANNA with more details to follow.

Worship ended 1:41 p.m.