

Agenda  
Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business  
Asheville Friends Meeting  
Eighth Month 9, 2009

Present: Beth Bates, Lynnora Bierce, Bobby Carter, Jim Cavener, Barbara Esther (clerk), Neftali Fernandez, Kristi Gjelfriend, George Gjelfriend, Joy Gossett, Stephanie Gossett, Rylin Hansen, Steve Livingston (recording clerk pro tem), Rusty Maynard, Phil Neal, Edie Patrick, Alan Robinson, Adrienne Weir

Opening worship began at noon.

Reading:

Living together as the body of Christ requires intentional, compassionate care for one another. We need the support of companions on this journey, and when we are willing to serve rather than to look for self-satisfaction, the community grows more robust. Squashed in that uncomfortable Jeep, I longed for space, coolness, and comfort and became absorbed by the irritating idiosyncrasies of my companions. By focusing on my own needs, I forgot that others shared the difficult time of wilderness travel and experienced just as much discomfort. It was easier to complain than to give thanks for our common journey. Not until we sat around a fire enjoying spaghetti at our “table in the wilderness” did I begin to realize the gift God had given to us in one another. As we shared stories, our commonality became far more apparent than our differences.

The idealized image of community as a constantly harmonious gathering of like-minded people does not match the biblical accounts of God’s people as they learn to be together. We become companions to one another as we let go of our personal ideals and welcome the new possibilities that open up when we consent to serve.

*From A Table of Delight, Feasting With God in the Wilderness*  
By Elizabeth J. Canham during a pilgrimage in the Sinai Desert

The agenda was approved with the addition of a question from Hospitality Committee.

**Minute 1: The minutes of sixth month 2009 were approved with the following change: Neftali's surname to Fernández rather than Morales.**

Finance Report – Adrienne W

Adrienne distributed finance reports and explained that she was unable to fax information to/from Pat Johnson in Alaska as they had planned. [reports are posted separately as [All Active Funds other than general thru July end 2009](#), [Budget vs Expense thru July end 2009](#), and [Fund Balances thru July end 2009](#)]

In response to an inquiry, the clerk pointed out where contributions can be found on the “Budget vs. actual by program/projects” form. Adrienne indicated that contributions most recently received may not yet be on the report.

**The Finance Committee report was accepted with thanks.**

## House and Grounds – George Gjelfriend

AT&T is offering us \$5000 to put a 15x15 structure on our property. They will plant a row of trees or shrubs to mask the structure so it will not be seen from the porch or playground/yard. They might be willing to build a wooden barrier which would keep kids off of it.

Several questions arose regarding the plan, which would involve a perpetual commitment. AT&T officials have not said what kind of trees they plan to install.

A Friend expressed her intention to stand in the way. She expressed that having this on our property is out of line with being good neighbors, of being good stewards to the environment, and we have no idea how to deal with it once it has outlived its usefulness. This Friend feels it is not in our best interests to do this, and will stand in the way. Another Friend joined in conviction to stand in the way.

Another Friend expressed grave concerns that it would significantly lower our property value. Who would want to buy a home site with such a structure in the front yard? It was felt that the amount of money being offered is nowhere near enough to compensate.

A Friend expressed concern for the condition and safety of our driveway, especially if access to the equipment via our driveway is considered.

A Friend pointed out that details of the proposal are posted on the website, and united with concerns that have been raised. George pointed out that stakes have been placed in the ground to indicate the space the site would occupy.

A Friend pointed out that widening the driveway would be a very expensive proposition both because of the proximity of the utility pole and because of the rock wall. George pointed out that the SW corner of the property isn't feasible because the site must directly abut public property; i.e. the street.

### **Minute 2: Friends united in declaring that Meeting declines to have AT&T erect their switching structure on our property.**

A Friend inquired where the structure might end up since we declined. Another Friend pointed out that AT&T is expanding their ability to offer bundled content in competition with Charter, and that is likely what this structure is for. George concurred with this observation.

George also reported for H&G that the tree in the neighbor's yard was removed for \$150 after volunteers were not forthcoming to do the work.

H&G is seeking a professional person to clear the gutters and downspouts, rather than have a volunteer do it, who may not be covered by our insurance. Friends are invited to give their advice about caring for our gutters and downspouts to George as clerk of H&G.

A Friend asked that H&G check into the flooring under the near toilet in the ladies' room which seems weak. George said after having checked on the floor that it seems all right to him. The clerk asked that these matters be taken to the committee outside of business meeting.

H&G extends thanks to Alan Robinson for repairing the ceiling fan at the east end of the worship room, and thanks to Frank Roberts for cutting away the overgrowth around our Meeting sign at the end of the driveway and along the rock wall.

## **Report of House and Grounds accepted.**

Nominating Committee – Jim Cavener read the following written report:

The Nominating Committee accepts with regret the following Friend's requests to be released from service on the Spiritual Enrichment Committee: Betsy Rose Weiss, Carrie Coward, Ellen Frerotte and Laura Maynard. They served the meeting well, particularly in supporting the adult RE program over a long three year period. We ask that the meeting approve with thanks. Steve Livingston has asked to be released from Ministry & Council, House and Grounds and the preparation of the Meeting Directory (which Gary Briggs has agreed to take on.) Steve has been tireless in his devoted multi-year service to the meeting for which he receives our heartfelt thanks. We ask that the Meeting approve.

On a lighter note, Steve has stepped forward to offer to clerk the Spiritual Enrichment committee, for which he has displayed talent in the pre-meeting programs he has been offering: in particular Quaker Testimonies and Three Cups of Tea. We ask that the Meeting approve. Ellen Frerotte has asked to be released from the Nominating Committee. The M&C presence will be continued by George Gjelfriend, who has also agreed to serve as clerk.. Barbara Esther has agreed to continue the service she rendered to Ministry and Counsel ex officio as Meeting Clerk. She has been tireless in her efforts and will provide a welcome continuity.

Newcomer Edie Patrick has volunteered to serve on the Hospitality Committee for which we are very grateful. She is particularly interested in how we approach newcomers.

The nominating committee notes there are several extremely well qualified individuals available to serve on Ministry Counsel but are prohibited from doing so because they are not officially members of Asheville Friends. Since their devotion to the Meeting has been otherwise clearly demonstrated, we would like MFB to reconsider this restriction. To which end we plan to bring the matter up for discussion at the September business meeting.

**Minute 3: Meeting approved the release of Betsy Rose Weiss, Carrie Coward, Ellen Frerotte and Laura Maynard from Spiritual Enrichment Committee, with thanks.**

**Minute 4: Meeting approved the release of Steve Livingston from Ministry and Counsel and House and Grounds Committees, as well as release from the task of preparing the Meeting's Directory.**

**Minute 5: Meeting approved Steve Livingston to serve on Spiritual Enrichment Committee as clerk.**

**Minute 6: Meeting approved the release of Ellen Frerotte from Nominating Committee.**

**Minute 7: Meeting approved George Gjelfriend to serve on Nominating Committee as clerk of committee.**

**Minute 8: Meeting approved Edie Patrick to serve on Hospitality Committee.**

**Minute 9: Meeting approved Barbara Esther to serve on Ministry and Counsel as a regular member since her term as clerk of meeting is ending.**

## **Report of Nominating Committee accepted.**

Ministry and Counsel-Alice Brown bequest recommendation – M&C recommends that 1/2 of the bequest be placed in the College Age Friends Support Fund (somewhat over \$7000).

## **Minute 10: Friends approved that one half of the Alice Brown bequest be placed in the College-Age Friends Support Fund.**

Ad Hoc First Day Structure Committee wishes to inform the Meeting that there will be a Called Meeting for Business on 8/23, over sandwiches. The Committee has placed a poster in the library describing suggested changes, and forms for feedback in the foyer. The committee urges everyone to give his or her feedback either in writing or by telephoning Alan Robinson.

## **The report of the Ad Hoc First Day Structure Committee accepted.**

Ad Hoc Support Committee for Stephanie Gossett – Beth Bates read the following written report:

### **Report from the Ad Hoc Support Committee for Stephanie Gossett Eighth Month 9, 2009**

The committee met with Stephanie and Joy Gossett on July 12, 2009 to hear Stephanie's concerns and discuss the way meeting could be of support to her as she enters her senior year at Earlham College and embarks on a semester in Tanzania, East Africa. Stephanie's first response to the question "How can Asheville Friends be of help to you?" was that we have already provided the caring response to her and her family that have made a great difference. That spirit of love and caring and a supportive meeting community is of utmost importance to Stephanie.

Stephanie chose to attend Earlham, she explained, because the college felt right to her: it gave her enough distance and challenge, both physically and academically; it provided learning and study abroad opportunities in Africa; and it set a high academic standard to assure her growth. She spoke of visiting other colleges which either looked manicured or uncared-for, while Earlham was neat, but had dandelions growing in places. There seemed to be room for both the rigors of academia and for the shaggy-locked Quaker heritage of the institution.

As many of you know, that choice brought with it a financial challenge which we have helped to meet in the past. Due to a higher cost of the semester abroad and her lack of work-study while she's in Tanzania, there is a greater financial need this year than ever. Simultaneously, we are in difficult financial times, as a nation, and the Gossett family has lost a significant portion of its income. Stephanie requests financial assistance from us. Despite income from summer work, a merit scholarship Stephanie received and grants and scholarships through Earlham College as well as adding \$9,000 to her debt this year, she needs a little more than \$7000.00 to complete this senior year's study and graduate. Stephanie has completed her first three years with academic honors, having designed a degree in African Studies with the focus on future service work in Africa once she finishes her studies.

Without additional money from Alice Brown's bequest our College-Aged Friends Support Fund has \$7,459.76 at present. If we add more to the fund from that bequest we are in a position to help Stephanie this year without drawing the fund down too drastically. Several individual Friends have added to the fund in earmarked contributions, as well. **The Ad Hoc Support Committee recommends that Asheville Friends contribute a total of \$7,200.00 to provide for Stephanie's financial needs during her senior year and the May term of 2010, when she will complete her major in African Studies at Earlham. Two payments of \$5,820**

**and \$1,360 could be made in August and in December, 2009, respectively, to the Gossett family to partially cover costs of the two semesters.**

In addition to the funds added to the College-Aged Friends Support Fund from Alice Brown's bequest, the Ad Hoc Committee plans to conduct some fund raising efforts to add to the fund. First, we had a pan-African meal on August 2, 2009, here at the rise of meeting. Donations to the fund were accepted at the lunch. Secondly, we plan a silent auction of fine quality donated items later in the fall to benefit the fund. In early December, we hope to have a third effort of sales of hand-printed bags and cloths to be used for gift wrapping instead of paper. These efforts, in addition to individual contributions, should help to replenish the College-Aged Friends Support Fund and remind us of the necessity to add to the fund to insure our ability to respond to future requests.

Respectfully submitted by the committee,

Beth Bates, Gary Briggs, Barbara Esther, and Phil Neal

A Friend united with the recommendation as a good investment of our money.

**Minute 11: Friends approved the grant of \$7,200 to help provide for Stephanie Gossett's senior year at Earlham College.**

Ad Hoc Clearness Committee for Membership for Neftali Fernández

The clearness committee met with Neftali after rise on Meeting on 7/5/09. Neftali expressed how immediately he felt the presence of Spirit in communion with Asheville Friends, and how earnestly he began to explore the history and customs of the Society. He found in his studies that Quakerism resonated clearly and deeply with his own convictions, especially regarding the close personal relationship between the individual and the Divine, and the testimonies of peace and equality. And as he continued attending Meeting and became acquainted with others in the Meeting, he felt a growing sense of community among us, and a unity of Spirit.

Neftali is not by nature a "joiner", but he feels a powerful leading to become a member of the Religious Society of Friends, and of Asheville Meeting. At the same time, however, he has a great respect for good Quaker order, and acknowledges the appropriateness of taking additional intermediate steps prior to accepting the formality of membership, such as attendance at business meeting and participation in the work of committees. He is confident that delaying his request for membership for a few months will be beneficial to him and to the Meeting.

The clearness committee unites with Neftali's findings, and has agreed to reconvene as Way opens, on an unspecified date in the not too distant future.

**Friends accepted the report.**

Peace and Earth Committee deferred due to Susan Ohler having to leave earlier.

Other

We received a handwritten letter of introduction from Monadnock Meeting in New Hampshire, as follows:

Dear Asheville Friends Meeting,

This is a letter of introduction for Drew Thillmany, a member of Monadnock Quaker Meeting. Currently, Drew is pursuing his education in your beautiful city.

We are all very fond of Drew, as he has grown up attending our Meeting. In the last few years, he has traveled to Gibara, Cuba, to visit our sister Meeting, and then he served on the Gibara Committee. Over the years he has been active in New England Yearly Meeting and Friends General Conference.

We will miss Drew's friendly and spiritual presence. While he is in North Carolina, we recommend him to your care.

Regards,  
Nellie Herman, clerk  
Monadnock Quaker Meeting  
Jeffrey NH

Additionally, Friends have been happy to receive email from Pat Johnson, which is now posted on the meeting website. News from Katherine Kowal, who is in Ecuador for the summer, was recently shared by Margaret Normile.

Warren Wilson College is inviting us to their Spiritual Life forum on Aug 23 7-8:30 pm – Jim Cavener offered to attend on our behalf if his schedule is clear on that date.

The following request was received from Rob Waskom regarding the use of the meetinghouse:

Club HOLA, the Latino student organization at UNC Asheville, is having a conference on NC Latino issues this November the 13th and 14th. They'd like to know if students visiting from other schools could set up their sleeping bags at the Meeting House overnight. I've filled them in on some of the rules: this is not for hanging out, just sleeping, etc. What's the process for seeing if this would be okay?

The contact person from HOLA is Jense: [jagarcia@unca.edu](mailto:jagarcia@unca.edu)  
<<mailto:jagarcia@unca.edu>> as he is one of the club co-presidents this year. I can ask him or someone else from the club to attend a Meeting for Business if needed.

Adrienne Weir volunteered to chaperone for the overnight unless Rob agrees to do that. Another Friend reminded us that we have a list of regulations that can be transmitted. A Friend suggested we waive any fees. We may also need to set a limit to the number of people. Gary Briggs may be able to supply the group with a copy of the regulations.

Friends were in general agreement, provided the meetinghouse is available and the organization agrees to our guidelines. Approval will be sought in Ninth Month.

The clerk reminds the Ad Hoc Retreat Committee to begin meeting regarding the October 3 all-day retreat on Clerking with Mary Ann Downey.

The meeting closed with a period of worship at 1:30 p.m.