

**Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
Third Month 11, 2012**

Clerk: Kitti Reynolds

Recording Clerk: Barbara Esther

Present: Bobby Carter, Jim Cavener, George Gjelfriend, Kristi Gjelfriend, Rylin Hansen, Ed Harris, Gail Hipkins, Jim Hipkins, Pat Johnson, Katherine Kowal, Laura Maynard Lane, Edie Patrick, Ruth Stewart, Barbara Esther, Geeta Larson,

Opening Worship

Reading

Mahatma Gandhi, asked his conception of an independent India:” This society must naturally be based on truth and non-violence which, in my opinion, are not possible without a living belief in God, meaning a self-existent, all-knowing living Force which inheres every other force known to the world and which depends on none and which will live when all other forces may conceivably perish or cease to act. I am unable to account for my life without belief in this all-embracing living light.”

Mahatma Gandhi, Selected Political Writings, edited by Dennis Dalton. Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. Indianapolis/Cambridge.

Agenda

The third month agenda was accepted as written.

State of the Meeting Report – as sent to SAYMA-at bottom

Stand Against Racism – Kitti

Does the Meeting want to sign up as a participating organization? Get 25 buttons or 75 stickers free. Connected with Asheville YWCA.



Minute 3 - Friends approved our participation in the YWCA program against racism. We will have 75 stickers available to us to spread the word.

Peace and Earth – Katherine Kowal

Proposed letter to be sent from the Meeting to the citizen-Times.

We, members of Asheville Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), have grave concerns about the proposed Amendment Number 1 to the state constitution. This amendment limits marriage to the union of one man and one woman. A constitutional amendment is a serious matter, yet it is being rushed to the ballot on May 8th with limited public awareness and debate.

As Quakers, we believe that there is “that of God in everyone,” and we have had a long testimony of equality. In our own Meeting we have struggled with the conflict between these beliefs and the civil requirement that limits marriage to heterosexual couples. We have ultimately concluded that marriage will be offered to all members of our meeting regardless of sexual orientation. We feel we have grown in understanding of our religious and civil responsibilities through these discussions. We encourage other religious and secular organizations to go through a similar period of discernment.

The proposed amendment to the constitution would stop this process. It would embed a pattern of discrimination into the very fabric of our state constitution.

Kitti Reynolds
Clerk, Asheville Friends Meeting
[Emailed to the Asheville Citizen-Times on March 14, 2012]

Friends discussed the repercussions of the passage of Amendment 1 to unmarried heterosexual couples as well as to same-sex couples. Friends are reminded that other reasons for opposition to the proposed amendment could be expressed in other letters from individuals. One Friend encouraged us to approve our sending this letter now so that the momentum toward defeat of the amendment is not impeded. Another Friend reminded us of the general ignorance of the amendment’s ramifications in the community is something we can help to rectify.

Minute 2 - Friends approved the letter to the Editor of the Asheville Citizen-Times changing the word abort to stop, while acknowledging that more work needs to be done such as a different letter to the Mountain Express and individual letters and efforts to spread understanding in the community of the disastrous effects of passage of this amendment.

Finance Report – Pat Johnson

Pat reported that contributions are keeping up with budgeted expenses. The report was accepted with thanks.

Review of Minutes from 2nd Month

Minutes of the Second Month Meeting for Business were approved as written.

Other

Friends received word of the untimely death of Allen Briggs, son of Elizabeth and Gary Briggs. He had a massive heart attack. He is survived by his wife and children as well as his brother, Jeremy, and his

sister, Sara. A card will be sent to both Allen's wife and his mother on behalf of the meeting.

George Gjelfriend announced that David Clements will be celebrating a birthday this week. A Friend reminded us that we need to stop our pre-meeting singing at 9:55 so that we can settle into worship. Spiritual Enrichment Committee will take the ordering of pamphlets under its wing. The Ad Hoc Kitchen Committee consists of Barbara Esther, Rylin Hansen, Alan Robinson and Edie Patrick. They will resume meeting about changes in the kitchen to make it more user-friendly and efficient.

Closing Worship

Appendix

Asheville Friends State of the Meeting 2011 report for SAYMA

Our Meeting is in a period of stabilization: we function well together. Although attendance at Meeting for Worship fluctuates, we have an active core of members who come together as a community in a cohesive fashion during our short, amicable, Business Meetings. We experience a great deal of Holding in the Light during our Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business. In fact, we have as many attending BM as we used to some years ago, even though overall attendance at MFW is down slightly compared to a few years previous.

Asheville Friends Meeting has gained two new members this year (Deanna Hatch and Gail Hipkins), although Deanna has recently moved out of state. In addition we have a number of new, faithful attenders whose presence enriches our Meeting for Worship and whose children enliven our First Day School activities. We continue to welcome visiting Friends and visitors from Asheville and other areas. Our Meeting is providing financial assistance for two young Friends to study abroad, in Italy and Monteverde, Costa Rica. Also, we have a young adult Friend, who grew up in the Meeting, now in the Peace Corps in Swaziland. We hold her in the Light. In September, we expressed our gratitude to outgoing clerk, Katherine Kowal, and welcomed our new clerk, Kitti Reynolds.

We continue to sponsor a mid-week meeting for worship, hosted by a member who cannot attend on First Day and including a simple meal together. Last September we joined with people from other faith communities to oppose North Carolina Amendment 1 (which aims to further restrict the rights of same gender couples), and joined with people of Faith for Just Relationships to urge the city of Asheville to provide equal benefits to same-gender couples. This action was done by our clerk and other leaders of religious communities.

Following is a summary of activities of some of our committees:

The Pastoral Care Committee:

Continues to monitor our senior members who no longer attend our Meeting for Worship, contacting them with phone calls and visits. They also visit members who are ill or unable to attend Meeting. The committee has recently completed an AFM Emergency Contact List which gives the contact information for 31 AFMers: their home address, email address, phone number, plus a family member's name, email and phone number, and a local friend's name, email address, and phone number. An Asheville Friends Meeting "Buddy" is listed with their phone number. The "Buddy" is someone who will be in fairly regular contact with the person and inform the Meeting if there is a problem with that

person.

The Religious Education Committee is happy to report that we have had an active year in First Day School. Attendance was up and we have had a fairly regular group of very engaged, dynamic participants ranging in ages from 4 to 13. We have been exploring the Testimonies in a variety of ways. We looked at each testimony as it played out in Quaker history and in the Bible, as it is experienced in our own Meeting, and as it is present in our own lives. We tried to use artistic and written expression in addition to music, drama, and food!

Our teens have been active with Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF), attending most of the regional retreats and hosting two in our own Meetinghouse. One of our teens is involved in the SAYF Nurturing Committee.

Our Meeting has also enjoyed a number of multigenerational events that has encouraged interaction between the adults and children in Meeting. This year, our special events included a secret pal exchange and a youth celebration and cook out.

Spiritual Enrichment typically sponsors Second Hour activities twice a month, except in the summer. In addition, they organized a retreat with Dan Synder, all day Saturday in May, 2011 with fourteen AFM folks participating. They also arranged a joint meeting with Swannanoa Valley Friends at their MH, with wonderful music provided Paulette Myer.

The Hospitality Committee:

Organizes the refreshments after Rise of Meeting with various members and attenders signing up to bring snacks. Friends enjoy a period of fellowship at the rise of Meeting, along with coffee and snacks. The committee also organizes people to act as Greeter before Meeting for Worship. We try to reach newcomers who are attending AFM Meeting for Worship for the first time in order to answer questions and help them to feel welcome.

Peace & Earth:

One of our main goals for 2011 was spreading awareness of peace and environmental issues in our meeting and larger community. Also, we engaged in direct service to our community.

P and E wrote a letter to the editor (following FCNL guidelines) about our opposition to the war in Afghanistan and had it approved by the Meeting before sending for publication in the Asheville Citizen Times.

We helped with three Sunday morning breakfasts in Pritchard Park, downtown Asheville. These are held to feed the homeless, and many members of the Meeting contributed food and drink or helped serve food. We collected food donations for Manna Food Bank and gave them many pounds of food in 2011. We purchased 10 Transition Handbooks to donate to our local public library system and UNCA library.

Our committee decided to hand out flyers from FCNL on the environmental destruction and climate change caused by wars and conflict at certain local events. This was done at the International Day of Peace event and the 350.org awareness day, both held in September. Peace & Earth also sponsored the International Day of Peace event.

A member of the spiritual enrichment committee suggested that Peace & Earth have letter writing day (to elected officials) on the fifth Sunday of the month. Some members of Peace & Earth have taken on this project, and many letters were written in October 2011.

We distributed \$2,000 in funds from the Meeting to various organizations involved in Peace, Earth, and Social Justice. We also distributed \$2,000 in funds as part of our Quaker outreach.

Conclusion:

During this past year, most of our committees met and discussed their long-range visions/plans, the results of which were reported at many of our Business Meetings.

Looking to the future, we are enhancing the appearance of our Meeting House and property and plan to “green” our Meeting House as much as we can. We are working to increase the use of our property by our community and the larger Asheville community following the long range plans of various committees.

Minute 4: Friends approved the State of the Meeting Report as read.