

Executive Committee Meeting  
Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends  
4/4/2007

The Executive Committee (EC) met from 3 to 5:20 pm on the above date at the United Methodist Life Enrichment Center, Leesburg FL.

Executive Committee members present: EC and Interim Meeting clerk, Nancy Fennell; Yearly Meeting clerk, Susan Taylor; Assistant IBM and YM clerk, Sybil Ann Brennan; Recording clerk, Ed Lesnick; Worship & Ministry co-clerk, Wendy Clarissa Gieger; Finance committee clerk, Caroline Lanker; Nominating clerk, Dan Vaughen; clerk of Trustees, Herb Haigh; YM Gathering clerk, Steve Kinney; and Administrative Secretary, Lyn Cope.

Also present were Jack Bradin (Palm Beach), Ellie Caldwell (Palm Beach), Tom Fennell, (Ft. Myers), and George Newkirk (Ocala).

EC members not present were Treasurer, Neil Andersen; Faith & Practice clerk and Membership Recorder, Phoebe Andersen; co-clerk of Worship and Ministry Committee, Barbara French; and Peace and Social Concerns Committee clerk, Cecilia Yocum.

The meeting for worship with an attention to business began with silent worship.

EC clerk Nancy Fennell gave opening remarks. Recounting a recent experience, she was moved by a chance conversation with another traveler, who was in emotional distress. Amid the turmoil and “hullabaloo” of the airport and air travel, which seemed such a distance from God, the Spirit’s presence entered the conversation. The clerk hoped this presence would be among us during the Yearly Meeting gathering.

After additions to the agenda were considered, Caroline Lanker, Finance Committee clerk gave a summary **Treasurer’s and Finance committee report.**

The reports and proposed budget were published in the DIA and will be presented to the YM business session.

Income and Expenses are shown through January 31. Since then, donations to organizations have resulted in a negative \$ 620 general fund balance. This is not a concern as \$700+ in donations have been received with Gathering registrations. Also, some meeting contributions have yet to be submitted.

If YBM approves the Representative Travel Guidelines, the Finance committee will need to develop a plan to support representatives. No minute is ready to be proposed.

A consideration was given that representative travel money carry over as with the Triennial travel line item. The subject was referred to the Finance committee for consideration.

**Lyn Cope gave the Administrative Secretary's report** [Attachment 1: Administrative Secretary's Report]]

EC discussed the Secretary's concerns.

The SEYM Archives needs members, activity, and direction. A decision is in order to maintain the YM records at the University of Florida (Gainesville) or Guilford College Friends' library. Guilford has normally received an \$80- to \$400 donation from meetings for housing documents.

Since committee clerks may be unable to be present or participate in their committee's activities or business meetings, who assumes the clerking responsibilities?

Discussion led to the following minute, which will be presented to YBM.

**07EC06** While the Nominating Committee appoints committee clerks and co-clerks, it is recommended the committee clerks at their discretion will appoint an assistant clerk from that committee, so that should the committee clerk be unable to perform the clerk's duties, the committee's work may continue.

**Yearly Meeting clerk's report.** Susan Taylor stated, as was communicated earlier, the working group will meet during Gathering to discern, season, and report on a proposed status SEYM's relationship with FUM. The clerk is grateful to Karen Putney for clerking the group. Most meetings and worship groups responded that a representative will attend. We are hopeful that the group may provide us a way open in order for SEYM to move forward. [Attachment 2: YM Clerk's letter regarding working group]

The **YM Gathering Committee** clerk, Steve Kenney, spoke of last minute Gathering preparations. The need for youth workers continues. Ways must be found to address this need.

**Follow up items** were considered.

1) The concern regarding the most appropriate manner to distribute Documents In Advance (DIA) for yearly and interim business meetings was raised. Environmental, communication, and costs factors were considered. It was concluded to continue the current process in order to communicate the sessions as widely as possible and encourage attendance at the sessions.

Committee was explored, resulting in a minute to be presented to YBM.

2) The Executive committee summer meeting will be held Saturday, June 2, 2007, from 10am to 4pm at Gainesville MM meetinghouse. Following the morning's business agenda, the afternoon session will focus on envisioning SEYM's future.

**Other topics discussed:**

Wendy Clarissa Gieger (Jacksonville) brought forth a concern for establishing an SEYM committee on racism and diversity. Ellie Caldwell (Palm Beach) also spoke to this need. SEYM's level of sensitivity and strides made by the Friends General Conference were mentioned. Wendy Clarissa and Ellie will meet to develop a plan to bring back to E.C.

Caroline Lanker brought clarification to the topic of the YM and monthly meeting membership lists. While multiple membership lists – one submitted to YM and another kept by the monthly meeting for local purposes are legitimate, this system would be fair only if all meetings followed the same guidelines in reporting their members and attenders.

While annual meeting apportionments are voluntary, if meetings use different standards of reporting members and attenders to SEYM, this result could distort the suggested assessment. For example, if a meeting reports to SEYM all irregular and seasonal attenders while another calculates only those attenders who have been present on a regular, recent basis, the apportionment formula is different. Friends agreed to revisit this issue.

Ellie Caldwell brought forth a concern over Kingston MM and Jamaica YM. She encouraged SEYM involvement with Jamaican Friends. Kingston Friends have expressed interest in available programs like AVP. The concern will be brought up in the June EC meeting.

After the minutes were approved, Nancy Fennell requested Friends to hold Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting in the Light. This yearly meeting is holding sessions at the same time as SEYM. The region is in turmoil.

The Executive committee meeting ended with silent worship.

## **Secretary's Report** **to EC 04/04/2007 to be held at the Life Enrichment Center**

**This report** describes activities that have taken place since the EC Meeting, 1/12/2007.

### **General Office Activities:**

The weeks following Winter Interim Business Meeting have been more than full and complex. This, however, is one of the joys of working for a busy yearly meeting. The variety and scope of the projects, jobs, and assisting others with their jobs seems limitless.

Notably, completing the *SEYM Operational Handbook, Procedures & Job Descriptions* and getting it to press, designing its recycled poly-binder cover and index tabs, and getting those to press required a great many hours. Hopefully, the *Operational Handbook* will provide great assistance to the volunteer SEYMers who give so willingly of their time and talents and these Friends will no longer feel like they must reinvent the wheel to be involved—a common thread, that I had been hearing.

I also believe that having the *SEYM Operational Handbook, Procedures & Job Descriptions* in hand (contents are being given to committee members, organizational representatives, meetings, and YM officers) as well as being available in searchable PDF format from the web 24-7 will allow the Nominating Committee to more readily seek and secure volunteers for our vital positions. Friends will know exactly what their “jobs” entail and may commit or not commit—no guilt wanted or needed!

On behalf of the ad hoc Handbook committee, Nancy Fennell, Caroline Lanker, and myself, I wish to thank all of you who participated by providing input and reviewing copy.

In addition to the hours spent on the above project, I have assisted the Gathering Committee with its seemingly unending tasks. Regular office activities slipped a little; QuickBooks Pro decided to malfunction, writing and backing-up unreadable files for the first two weeks in March.

### **Publishing:**

The *SEYM Operational Handbook Procedures & Job Descriptions*, a 152-page book, went to press and will be available at the publications sales tables or from the office. Using upgraded Adobe CS2 software w/indexing and cross referencing plug-ins from Virginia Systems, a searchable PDF (portable document format) is now posted on the web in the file-folder named “Archived Documents Library” (scroll down left side of home page). As per EC minute 07EC04, SEYM workers will each be given a copy of its contents, and may purchase the optional poly-binder w/index tabs for \$6.50. Additional copies are \$15.00 (binder, contents, and index tabs).

Sales for booklets/pamphlets slowed a little. *Building the Life of a Meeting* by William & Frances Taber (Michener 1994) has been reprinted and is available for purchase at the publications sales tables.

At this time, with the costs of printing the *Operational Handbook*, poly-binders, *Building the Life of a Meeting*, and additional T-shirts, the publications bank account for the fiscal year is negative. This is not a worry because in past years, we have had a surplus that is now invested with the Friends Fiduciary Fund and being saved for printing the *Faith and Practice* (\$6000). Since this was an arbitrary decision on the part of your secretary and clerk of Faith and Practice in consultation with the Finance Committee, if need be we could reclaim some of last year's overage. However, I anticipate that continued publications sales for the remainder of the fiscal year will cover these expenditures.

## **Finances:**

Meetings and individuals are continuing to contribute regularly; I greatly appreciate the continued and regular support.

Generally QBP-2007 is an easier to use and faster product than QBP-2003. Its few quirks and faults are worrisome, but patches are being made, and I continue to be pleased to have QBP on my faster computer and to be able to create PDFs directly.

However, we will be over budget for software this fiscal year by approximately \$500 due to upgrading QBP and due my finding Microsoft Word completely inadequate for publishing quality documents. I, personally, purchased Adobe CreativeSuite-2 Premium as *my* tool of choice (\$600 upgrade price; regular price \$1100) but with Treasurer Neil Andersen's encouragement reimbursed myself for \$300. Having this software allowed the creation of the superior PDF formatting of the *Operational Handbook Procedures & Job Descriptions*. I believe that all necessary software is now current for the office, the data-base clerk, and the Finance and Faith & Practice Committees.

## **Website:**

Websites <[www.seym.org](http://www.seym.org)>, <[www.seymmeetings.org](http://www.seymmeetings.org)>, and <[www.seympeace.org](http://www.seympeace.org)> are current with organizational details including posting all YBM Gathering related materials and site maps. I believe that Friends increasingly appreciate convenient access to current and archived SEYM information and documents.

As meetings continued to discern SEYM's relationship to FUM, minutes and their responses to Representative Phoebe Andersen's queries were posted, generally within the hour, in the file-folder named "FUM" on the home page. Letters, also, were posted, including the tender and thought provoking letter-of-concern from Netherlands Yearly Meeting.

## **Continued and New Concerns:**

**Continued:** Archive materials and their location—to my knowledge (see Sec. Report to EC, FIBM 2006) no conclusions have been reached.

**New Concerns:** As EC reviews its role in creating a sub-committee to support personnel, I would also wish that a formal procedure could be in place to support committee clerks who, for whatever reasons, find themselves unable to fulfill their duties. The scope and extent of time required to assist them may, or may not, fall within the capabilities of the office staff. The real question is, is this the role you wish for staff to provide? Surely on a committee-by-committee basis, staff may be able to assist; the problem lies in the increasing number of committees depending upon such assistance.

What back-ups do we have in place to assist committees and their clerks? Surely, the new *SEYM Operational Handbook Procedures & Job Descriptions* will help by providing prospective volunteers with the scope of the positions they are being asked to consider. In addition, a support sub-committee of peers within EC could be a valuable resource and temporary labor pool.

Respectfully submitted by Lyn Cope, 04/02/2007

Attachment 2: YM Clerk's letter regarding working group, April 2, 2007

Dear Friends of Southeastern Yearly Meeting,

***"For Friends the most important consideration is not the right action in itself but a right inward state out of which right action will arise. Given the right inward state right action is inevitable. Inward state and outward action are component parts of a single whole."***

(Howard Brinton, 1943)

Since our Gathering in 2005, Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM) has been in on-going discernment over SEYM's relationship with Friends United Meeting (FUM). On this concern, where do Friends find unity? Do we find way open to remain affiliated with FUM, to disaffiliate from FUM or for another or third way? I would gently remind Friends that the discernments posted on the SEYM website are not part of a voting process and that representatives to the working group described below, as well as SEYM as a whole, remain open to continuing revelation.

In order to facilitate our continued discernment during Yearly Meeting this year, I have called together a working group that will meet during the Gathering. I appreciate that one or two representatives from most meetings are serving on the group. Just as committees within yearly meeting and monthly meetings season complex issues before bringing a minute to meeting for business for further discernment and action, so the working group will continue the spiritual discernment begun by meetings and worship groups. Members will compose a minute to be brought forward to SEYM Friends as a body during our meeting for worship for business session Saturday afternoon, April 7.

I am grateful to Tampa Monthly Meeting for suggesting the addition of this working group as an aid to SEYM's discernment process and to Karen Putney, Tampa Monthly Meeting, for being the convener. I felt the Spirit moving in those actions as well as in the faithful laboring of meetings and worship groups and the loving dedication of our representatives to FUM.

I ask that you hold all of us in Southeastern Yearly Meeting and Friends United Meeting in the wholeness of God's tender love as we search deeply.

Susan Taylor  
Clerk, SEYM