

Southeastern Yearly Meeting Executive Committee Meeting 7/19/08

The Executive Committee convened at the Tampa meetinghouse at 10 AM. The meeting started with a period of silent worship.

EC members attending were: Nancy Fennell, clerk of Interim Business Meeting; Gary Arthur, Assistant clerk; Ed Lesnick, Recording clerk; Treasurer, Neil Andersen; Phoebe Andersen, Membership Recorder and clerk of Faith and Practice Committee; Nancy Triscritti, co-clerk of Worship and Ministry Committee; Herb Haigh, clerk of Trustees; Caroline Lanker, clerk of Finance Committee; Steve Kinney, clerk of Gathering Committee; Mary Jo Klingel, Nominating clerk; and Lyn Cope, Administrative secretary.

Also present were: Ellie Caldwell, Committee for Ministry on Racism; Barbara Letch, Committee for Earth care; Andrea Walsh, Gathering registrar; Jack Bradin, Trustee; Tom Fennell, Nil Wilkens, and Kay Lesnick.

Susan Taylor, YM clerk, was unable to attend. Susan provided a written report discussed as agenda item YM Clerk's reports/concerns. Also, not in attendance were Warren Hoskins, clerk of Peace and Social Concerns Committee; Karyn Begin, Half Yearly meeting clerk; the Young Friends clerks; and Youth Committee clerk.

Following silent worship, IBM and EC clerk Nancy Fennell introduced the agenda. There were no additions or changes.

Neil Andersen gave the **Treasurer's report**. The General Fund budget for 2007-2008 shows a negative balance of \$2,000 to \$5,000. A final amount will be given when SEYM records are justified with the bank statements. Neil is working on this process.

At this time, the 2008 Yearly Meeting Gathering is \$2446.01 over budget.

Caroline Lanker presented the **Finance Committee report**. In comparing budget increases, Caroline noted the increase in the present (FY 2008-2009) budget is less than in the recent past.

In order to properly calculate apportionments for affiliated meetings, letters were mailed to monthly meetings showing SEYM's calculations based on the YM's membership list and requested monthly meetings to compare their lists with yearly meeting's data.

Some meetings updated by subtracting people no longer attending (transfer, resignation, death, etc.). This recounting lowered some apportionments. However, it also resulted in higher apportionments as the percentage of the shared commitment increased for others.

A percentage of the total YM apportionment went up for some even though the meeting or worship group did not gain in membership. Hopefully, next year with membership lists justified, apportionments will accurately reflect the reality of the membership lists.

Lyn Cope noted that two meetings have made up adjustment losses allowing SEYM to cover debts.

The clerk thanked Caroline for her efforts. Evaluating the apportionment process continues in the Ad Hoc Apportionment Review Committee.

08EC 03 EC appoints Jean Larson, Gainesville MM, as a member of the Ad Hoc Apportionment Review Committee.

Other members of the committee are Caroline Lanker, Phoebe Andersen, and Neil Andersen.

Lyn Cope, **Administrative secretary**, answered questions about her report. [Attachment: Secretary's report].

In response to an earlier question, Lyn explained the Michener lecture surplus does not go to the General Fund. Herb Haigh asked why the inventory of publications was not included in the budget as an asset. Lyn stated the time and cost is prohibitive of recording every item, and the inventory (with few exceptions) moves in and out of our possession in a regular timing. Because of demand, replenishing the inventory is not an added expense.

Caroline noted that in the use of proper accounting principals, inventory is counted as an asset. But, since publications is in the black, "we are ok." Also, there is difficulty in accounting; i.e., managing the books to include inventory. Lyn added that a lack of demand for older items in storage would need to be counted as a loss if inventory is counted as an asset.

Upon further discussion, Lyn summarized the publication process, including discounts and overage. She stated that there would be added costs if the current printer needs to upgrade his equipment.

Herb Haig pointed out that the FGC bookstore operates at a loss while SEYM publications have posted profits..

The clerk requested that the topic be set aside for future discernment. Friends agreed.

Lyn commented on QUIP – Quakers Uniting In Publications. She requested SEYM's membership in the organization at an annual donation of \$60. This was referred to the Finance committee for consideration.

Due to YM clerk Susan Taylor's absence, the **YM clerk's concerns** were presented by the EC clerk. [Attachment: YM clerk's e-mail.]

The clerk read the letter from Savannah, Georgia Friends who request affiliation of their meeting with SEYM.

EC approved the following minute.

08EC04 Having received a letter from Savannah Friends Meeting requesting membership as a Monthly Meeting in SEYM, the Executive Committee appoints a visiting committee to meet with Savannah Friends.

The visiting committee will review SEYM guidelines for becoming a Monthly Meeting in SEYM and be available to offer support in the clearness process. After both the visiting committee and Savannah Friends have received clearness, the visiting committee will report its recommendations to EC.

The following SEYM Friends agreed to serve on the Savannah visiting committee: Susan Taylor, Neil Andersen, Phoebe Andersen, Lyn Cope, and Herb Haigh.

SEYM Friends express joy in receiving Savannah's request.

The EC clerk will request the YM clerk to inform Savannah Friends of the minute.

Prior to the minute's approval, Friends spoke of Savannah Friends background and leading to associate with SEYM. Lyn Cope said there has been a long period of discourse between Savannah Friends and SEYM. The goal of membership in SEYM is not a sudden leading. Savannah Friends have regularly attended Yearly Meeting Gathering and some are long time Quakers from PYM.

The clearness process for SEYM and Savannah Friends must be sensitive. Each application is unique. Herb Haigh mentioned Birmingham (AL) MM's interest in SEYM. Should an association begin, the Birmingham situation would also be unique. The clerk noted, with appreciation, concerns related to past experiences in adding monthly meetings to the SEYM.

Phoebe Andersen referred to the Faith & Practice. She stated that the visiting committee should be void of presuppositions but familiar with the process set forth in Faith & Practice. It was noted by Caroline Lanker that SEYM's visiting committee and Savannah Friends would be engaged in a mutual clearness process.

Susan Taylor, YM clerk, also wrote EC regarding making the YMB agenda more spacious. She would like to "continue to strengthen the foundation of open worship in our business sessions." The YM clerk suggests that committee clerks and representatives to organizations submit their reports for inclusion in the Documents in Advance (DIA), and report "only on essential items that have come up since the DIA." Susan requested EC to discern this further.

EC considered several options and noted other YM practices, but EC also agreed that time is needed for worship and all need to examine the brevity of their spoken reports. It was noted the clerk provides the proposed agenda.

Friends note the passing of George Newkirk. "How special it was to have him with us at Yearly Meeting Gathering. His commitment was inspiring."

The YM clerk also noted the need for additional members on the Nominating Committee.

The report from **the Prayer Group and FUM discernment** was presented and discussed. The facilitators are pleased with the three worship-sharing meetings. A fourth is planned for Tallahassee on September 6. The attendees explained the “forgiving, nonjudgmental, and healing” aspects of the sessions.

The **EC clerk’s report**: Following lunch prepared by Tampa Friends, Nancy Fennell reconvened the meeting for worship with an attention to business. The clerk opened her report by stating the process of including “Stewardship as a separate testimony” is ongoing.

A clarification of the current relationship between FUM and SEYM was given. SEYM does not have representatives to FUM. As approved at yearly business meeting (08YM18), an Ad Hoc FUM Discernment Committee was approved. FUM General Board/Commissions is listed under “Representatives to Organizations” in the Directory. However, since our membership in FUM is not in effect, the positions are that of “Observers” and not true representatives.

A concern had been brought to the clerk about how SEYM informs those effected by EC, IBM, or YBM decisions. Minutes are posted on the SEYM web site, and appear in the DIA. Officers will continue to be cognizant of communicating business decisions to those directly affected. It is also recommended that clerks refer to published information when questions arise.

Steve Kinney gave a **YM Gathering Committee summary report**. There was a short fall of about \$3,000, but this amount may yet be determined to be a smaller amount.

Ellie Caldwell, who plans the many activities needs assistance. There continues to be a need for volunteers, particularly for the Youth Gathering. The 2009 contract with the United Methodist Life Enrichment Center has been signed, and there is a small rate increase. There will be no “lodge” accommodations. The planning of the workshop schedule is underway. Ellie stated that the schedule may eliminate the workshop sessions prior to the Friday evening dance.

Friends discussed general attendance problems. Changing demographics, fuel costs, environmental concerns, and funding youth activities were among the challenges considered.

Phoebe Andersen reported on the **FUM Triennial** held July 9-13 at High Point, North Carolina.

In reference to the controversy created by an African Friends (FUM) pastor and his inflammatory statement about gays, a minute was previously passed by the FUM General Board. Included was the view that FUM considers all God’s children beloved.

Phoebe said the triennial had a congenial atmosphere. Progress was reported on Friends educational initiatives in Belize and Jamaica. In Kenya, a new administrator has been appointed at Kiamosi hospital, reconstruction of the building’s roof continues, and there is a new fundraising effort.

Phoebe and Lisa Stewart conducted worship sharing groups at the Triennial. Some African Friends noted the conflict between their African traditions and liberal Friends egalitarian views.

Phoebe emphasized the need to be “tender to one another regardless of points of view.” SEYM needs to be regular observers at FUM. Neil Andersen added that our simple presence at FUM functions can impact change.

Phoebe and Lisa were thanked for their continued leadings with much gratitude.

In **other business**, Caroline Lanker presented a “visioning concern” about the status and care of worship groups within SEYM. Situations vary among worship groups and their relationship to the Yearly Meeting and between worship groups and the monthly meetings in care of the groups. Caroline asked “What is the honesty of the relationship?”

The clerk and others recognized the different status of SEYM worship groups. Nancy Triscritti offered that there are issues Worship & Ministry can “hopefully address.” Herb Haigh noted the process by which a monthly meeting who cares for a worship group scrutinizes its membership lists in the apportionment process can demonstrate its true care and relationship of the worship group.

Jack Bradin informed EC of Faiths United For Sustainable Energy (FUSE), a Jewish reform committee on environmental concerns. FCNL requested Quakers to consider a collaboration in this interfaith initiative, which is also part of the Florida Green Lobby.

Ellie Caldwell stated that more information about the Committee for Ministry on Racism will be appearing in the SEYM newsletter. Additional reports will be forthcoming. Ellie also commented on attempts to legislate a “Good Samaritan” exemption for food store donations. In this way commercial donations of food would not be hindered by the fear of unwarranted lawsuits.

A Minute of Appreciation was offered by assistant clerk, Gary Arthur, and approved by EC.

08EC05 SEYM Executive Committee expresses heartfelt gratitude to Tampa Friends for their warmth and generous hospitality during our July meeting. Thank you for providing overnight lodging and a meeting place, for preparing lunch, and for your loving kindness.

The Fall EC meeting will be held in the St. Petersburg meetinghouse on Friday, October 3, beginning at 7 pm. Committee meetings and the Fall IBM will be on the following day.

The meeting closed in silent worship.

Secretary's Report to EC 07/19/2008 to be held at the Tampa Meeting House

This report describes activities that have taken place since YBM-2008.

General office activities following WIBM-2008:

Routine office work continues, albeit, at a slower pace than before Yearly Meeting for which I am thankful. Thanks again to those of you who are using the 321.729.0078 line for voice during regular business hours.

Financial/Bookkeeping:

The books have not yet been closed for fiscal year 2007-2008. I am waiting for Neil to review a discrepancy of \$1875 (in our favor) that occurred in the QBP records during an upgrade-patch last summer.

The YBM-Gathering's expenses were greater than income. Funds to cover the shortfall have been transferred from the General Fund in the amount of \$2446.01 to cover this shortage.

Consequently the General Fund came in at (-)\$5633.92. This figure does not include the \$5300 check written to reserve the LEC site for YBM-2009.

A bright financial spot for last fiscal year is that Publications earned \$2495.69 over expenses, and to date for this fiscal year, have received \$492.97 which will help cover printing costs for the two pamphlets to be printed this summer.

The Clerk of Finance and Treasurer will go into greater detail.

Publications (Print and Electronic):

The Directory 2008-2009 has been printed and bulk mailed. The newsletter, delayed for numerous reasons, is now nearly at press. The booklets/pamphlets will be printed this summer and available at FIBM.

Website:

The <www.seym.org> website is current with organizational details. The Peace and Social Concerns web pages are updated by Michael Shell who continues to do an outstanding job. Please avail yourselves of this wealth of information available on line. Please consider that you have access to the SEYM office files at all times from the archives pages and to our corporate conscience through the Peace and Social Concerns committee's pages.

New Concerns:

- Concern continues over SEYM's financial status.
- Concern continues for wider recognition within SEYM regarding the worldwide contribution to international service that several Quaker organizations offer, namely: Friends Peace Teams, AFSC, FWCC, ProNica, and QUIP (Quakers Uniting in Publications). All of these service-oriented organizations deserve wider recognition for the efforts they expend on behalf of Quakers of all persuasions.
- No other new concerns.

Other related information:

I have found myself functioning as the Quaker representative to numerous local peace and social activities. This is both personally positive and demanding. I am grateful for the slower pace of the summer.

Respectfully submitted by Lyn Cope, 07/19/2008

Yearly Meeting clerk's E-Mail

On Mon, Jul 14, 2008 at 7:47 PM, Susan Taylor <susantaylor410@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Friends,

Thanks for the agenda, Nancy and to Tampa Meeting for hosting.

I'm very sorry that I will not be able to attend our meeting on Saturday, though technically I'm back in time from the birth of granddaughter, Emma Rachel Brooks. She arrived a week earlier than expected. I was fortunate to be there for her birth and the following two weeks! I returned home last evening. Privileged to be there for 19 days. I need to have some quiet time this weekend and worship at Tallahassee Meeting.

I especially enjoy the retreat quality of our summer EC meetings and will miss the fun and nurture of being with you.

YM clerk's report:

1. **Savannah visiting committee-** I'm grateful that Savannah has made their request and will be happy to be a member of the visiting committee if Friends desire.

2. **Making YBM agenda more spacious:** I would like to continue to strengthen the foundation of open worship in our business sessions, and make room to give time to whatever might arise from more centering in God's love. More worship may help us all to stay in the guidance of the spirit and clerking consciousness- facilitating "love as the first motion" in our presence, speech and action.

One thought I had was for us to provide support for committee clerks and representatives to organizations to put their reports in Documents in Advance and to report only on essential items that have come up since DIA. Thanks to all of you who have already worked to encourage this. I would be happy to work with the Assistant Clerk in providing that support. I also wonder if the minutes have to be re-read at the end of a session, since all we record during our sessions are action minutes, which we've already approved. I apologize for erring in not having the minutes read at the end of our last plenary session last year--an oversight in the longing for worship. Keeping that after lunch business session on Saturday is a help. What discernment do the rest of you have on this?

3. **Reports from prayer group and FUM discernment-** Phoebe, Nils or someone active in this group report on this. One of my concerns is that discussion of SEYM's relationship with FUM not happen through e-mail. We have a worshipful process in progress and I feel deeply that we be supportive of that process. May we continue to hold this process in the Light.

4. **"Heeding God's Call: A Gathering on Peace"-** to be held Jan. 13-17, 2009 at 4th and Arch St., Philadelphia. An ecumenical event planned by Phila. YM, the Church of the Brethren and Mennonite Church USA. Purpose: "strengthen our witness and work for peace in the world by inspiring hope, raising voices, taking action." PYM has apportioned the 100 Quaker delegates among the 33 YM's in North America according to membership. SEYM has been asked to send one delegate. I have asked Warren Hoskins, clerk of SEYM Peace and SC Comm if he could attend. He is making plans to do so. Should he not be able to go, Herb Haigh volunteered after last YM. John Arnaldi was also recommended. Warren expressed support for either of them. I have not spoken with John Arnaldi. Unfortunately, there is room for only one person to attend. People of faith from outside the Christian community will be invited including "Our Jewish and Muslim sisters and brothers." Liz Perch is a main organizing administrator of this gathering, and I will e-mail her tonight that we will have a representative. PYM wants to hear 7/15 if we will be sending someone.

5. **Naming committee:** We need help in finding people to serve on the SEYM nominating committee.

Mary Jo Klingel has agreed to clerk the committee and Martha Morris has agreed to serve. Petra Doan decided she couldn't be on the committee. If any of you know of anyone not already on a YM committee who has gifts for being on this committee, please contact me, Herb or Ed Lesnick. We need at least 3 people.

6. **George Newkirk:** I will write a note to Maria Elena on behalf of SEYM. How special it was to have him be with us at YM in April. His commitment was inspiring.

Traveling Mercies, with love,
Susan