

Executive Committee Meeting
Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
10/2/2009

The Executive Committee (EC) met at the Sarasota Meetinghouse, Sarasota FL, Friday evening, 10/2/2009.

Executive Committee members present: Becky Steele, EC and Interim Meeting clerk; Susan Taylor, Yearly Meeting clerk; Gary Arthur, Assistant YM clerk; Ed Lesnick, Recording clerk; Treasurer Neil Andersen; Nancy Triscritti, Worship & Ministry co-clerk; Phoebe Andersen, Faith & Practice clerk and Membership Recorder; Caroline Lanker, clerk of Finance committee; Mary Jo Klingel, Nominations committee clerk; Ellie Caldwell, YM Gathering clerk, and Warren Hoskins, Peace and Social Concerns committee clerk pro-tem.

Also present were: Andrea Walsh, YM and HYM Gathering registrar; Barbara Letch, Committee for Earthcare clerk; Lisa Stewart, FUM observer; Kay Lesnick, Orlando MM; Steve Kenney, Tampa MM; and Nil Wilkins, Tampa MM.

The meeting began at 7 PM with silent worship followed with greetings by EC and IBM clerk, Becky Steele. Sarasota MM was thanked for accommodating EC and the Fall Interim Business Meeting (FIBM) sessions.

Following introductions, the meeting's agenda was approved as amended.

There was a review and discussion of administrative secretary Lyn Cope's report. [Attached] Lyn was unable to attend FIBM due to recent surgery. EC warmly conveyed the following:

We hold Lyn in the Light, we miss her presence, and we anticipate her rapid recovery.

EC considered the yet to be published 2009-2010 SEYM Directory. Postal Service bulk mail requirements have changed and charges have increased. Also, the proper details of submitting a certified mailing list have complicated the process. This has contributed to the delay in the composing and mailing of an accurate Directory.

Another concern is obtaining accurate information from monthly meetings for apportionments. Based on monthly meeting submissions, the Directory is used as a determiner for calculating the apportionments. Earlier submission of Directory information is necessary. Notice should go to meetings prior to Gathering requesting additions, deletions, and corrections.

Susan Taylor, Yearly Meeting clerk, suggested publishing the Directory based on what information is currently available. Arrangements were made to contact meetings whose updated data is still needed.

Friends discussed a possible electronic alternative for the Directory. This would save paper and significantly lessen costs. Security and file size might preclude distributing the Directory in this manner. The matter was referred to the administrative secretary.

The administrative secretary is seeking direction regarding the disposal of seldom sold or requested SEYM pamphlets. A motion was in order.

09EC04 EC approves administrative secretary Lyn Cope's request to seek input from the publications discernment appointees concerning recycling a selection of older SEYM pamphlets.

Susan Taylor offered the Yearly Meeting clerk's report. Susan was looking forward to the Friends General Conference Central Committee sessions to be held October 21-22. As a yearly meeting clerk she is an ad-hoc member of the central committee.

Susan noted that Sylvia Graves, Friends United Meeting (FUM) general secretary, has received SEYM's Yearly Meeting minute approved at YBM and would be responding to it. The response will be of assistance and direction in our ongoing discernment of the SEYM-FUM relationship.

It was commented that there are misconceptions that ad-hoc discernment committee sessions are only for those who support a continued relationship with FUM. The ad-hoc committee meets in worship to discern God's will in the matter.

Lyn Fitz-Hugh's *Friends Journal* articles were recommended reading. Susan also spoke of the remodeled Friends Center in Philadelphia, which is now a green certified building,

Mary Jo Klingel summarized the afternoon meeting of the ad-hoc Discernment Committee. A question was raised about the further need for the committee. Committee participants' thoughts on recommending laying down the committee led to no conclusion. There will be further discernment in January at WIBM.

Friends continue to be neither in agreement for affiliation nor disaffiliation with FUM.

The work of the committee needs more input from SEYM Friends. A Friend commented that it was important to approach the issue in a worshipful way and a presence and deepening of the spirit is provided for by the current discernment process.

Friends shared their leadings regarding the SEYM-FUM relationship. There were few new leadings and many were reiterated from past sessions and meetings. There is clearness that a division continues. There are those who are clear about separation and those who continue to feel FUM has something indispensable to offer and to which SEYM should be a part.

The question was raised as to what the ad-hoc committee is doing for YM; and is it possible the committee has a threshing function. Does the committee provide a forum for only those who wish to maintain affiliation?

One member stated the issue is also about a paid ministry and the proselytizing which FUM practices. Another reminded us “what love can do.” There was sentiment about “moving on” and the need to recognize the issue has consumed SEYM to the detriment of other Quaker testimonies and concerns.

A member stated “FUM is not “them;” they are “us.” There are all kinds of people in the organization, including staff and Board trying to be all-inclusive. There is no disagreement that FUM has and is undertaking worthwhile projects in the Quaker way.

We should recognize that there are different passions coming from different places. “We’re in limbo until FUM responds or we can we say ‘who we are.” SEYM is in unity that we speak lovingly to one another in spite of our different views. A member stated, we all should consider “what is God’s will.” In the process of continued discernment, Friends should care for one another.

The ad-hoc discernment committee wishes more input, listening, and sharing of experiences. They will meet again to discern its role at WIBM. It was proposed that an open threshing session be held on the WIBM weekend.

09EC05 EC approves a threshing session to be held 1-3 PM on the Friday preceding the 2010 WIBM to be held in Orlando. It will be a time for worshipful listening to all concerns regarding questions of our YM’s relationship with FUM. The session will be facilitated by Susan Taylor.

Trustees’ Report: A review of role of Trustees as in the old F&P (as it impacts 501c3 and liability issues) was briefly considered. The Finance Committee and Clerk of Trustees and Connie Brooks met at YBM-2009 to discuss the complexities of this issue. This item was set aside for continued consideration.

It was announced Deland has laid itself down as a Preparatory Meeting. A worship group in nearby Orange City has been organized. Interested parties are forming a worship group in Hilton Head, S.C. Miami MM is celebrating the 50th year of their meetinghouse on November 1. Savannah welcomes Friends to partake in their founding day celebration on November 15.

Neil Andersen gave the Treasurer’s report. More will be shared at Saturday’s IBM and at the Winter IBM in January. In summary, the balance for FY 2008-2009 is approximately \$45,000, a \$5,000 increase from the previous fiscal year.

Also regarding 2008-2009, of seven SEYM committees eligible to claim expenses within a budget line, only three did so. \$62,500 of \$64,000 was received from monthly meetings. Individual contributions were \$725 less than budgeted. Overall, the treasurer is pleased by the figures.

For the current FY 2009-2010, at this point, meeting donations received should be one quarter of the budgeted amount. Twenty percent has been received to date.

Ellie Caldwell, committee clerk, gave the YM Gathering report. The 2010 Gathering is in its first stages organization. Consideration is being given to clarifying the registration form, individual meals, the coffee house, and break outs. The pavilion will be available at no cost to SEYM.

The Walton lecturers will be Betsy Neale and Richard Mitchell. Their topic is *The Historical Jesus*.

An inquiry was made on the possibility of SEYM funding the FUM general secretary's attendance at YBM. The FUM general secretary's attendance at the 2009 Gathering was considered invaluable.

It was pointed out that SEYM does not fund travel to YM gathering for representatives from organizations we currently support. It was the meeting's sense that those who wish to partake in raising money are not precluded from doing so as individuals or as a group.

It was further clarified that chosen SEYM members, who go to FUM functions, attend as "observers," and not representatives.

Concern regarding expenses accrued from our administrative secretary's job-related injury was referred to the Finance committee.

A Friend raised a concern about the supervision and conduct of SEYM youth on their recent sojourn to Nicaragua. The concern was referred to EC and the Youth committee for further consideration.

New Business items were taken under consideration.

SEYM (St. Petersburg MM) will host the regional section of Americas, FWCC, in 2011.

Warren Hoskins, Peace and Social Concerns, brought forth the concern of the proposed Eagles training site. The committee will meet Saturday on this and other topics.

AFSC's financial concerns were mentioned. 180 AFSC employees have been laid off and the organization is facing difficult financial problems.

The meeting for worship with a concern for business concluded in silent worship.

Secretary's Report to EC 10/02/2009 to be held at Sarasota Meeting House

This report describes activities that have taken place since EC Meeting, 06/13/2009.

General office activities during the summer:

Routine office work done accomplished daily or weekly: mail, email, trips to post office, bank, trips to warehouse for book ordering, shipping, etc., bookkeeping, website updating, address corrections, etc. I applied for and was awarded the Volunteer Coordinator position for the FGC Gathering. Had a great time, roomed with ProNica Stateside Coordinator, met and talked with myriad interesting people, and I believe I was a good ambassador for SEYM. Following FGC Gathering, the pall that settled on the Gathering following the death of one attendee and brain injury of another, followed me home. Perhaps the sorrow was compounded by reports of illness by several SEYMers and pending surgeries. Perhaps this explains the unduly slow committee work with the exception of the Gathering Committee clerk and Worship and Ministry who are hard at work, and consult with the office regularly.

Financial/Bookkeeping:

The office has all the routine financial bookkeeping up to date with the exception of not yet receiving the apportionment contribution data from the Finance Committee and confirmation from Treasurer that bookkeeping data entry is accurate for FY Annual Report 2008-2009. The Trustees are encouraged with the value of the FFC Funds holding better than might be expected and are appreciative of Friends' and Meetings' donations.

Website:

The SEYM website <www.seym.org> content is accurate to date with the exception of images on home page. The Peace and Social Concerns web pages are updated monthly by Michael Shell who continues to do an outstanding job.

Publications (Print and Electronic):

What has fallen through the cracks for postponement has been the newsletter. Originally scheduled to go to press prior to FGC Gathering, there was insufficient material; photographs and graphics had not yet been received. An adequate number of submissions have now been received and filed.

Reviewing a draft of *SEYM Directory 2009-2010* caused a flurry of submissions for corrections. One volunteer, bless her heart, has now corrected the Quaker organization data in section-ii and emailed that to membership clerk. Unfortunately, due to the foibles of email, we are never sure if submissions have been received or not. It has been office procedure to forward all updates as they arrive, thinking a weekly update of mailing addresses ensures correct mailing labels throughout the year. This decision needs to be revisited.

Regarding the pamphlets, a question, however, has arisen, as I listen to the lecture tapes. As a member of the Quaker Universalist Fellowship Steering Committee, I have been privileged to be part of the discussion of the wisdom of print vs. online pdf downloads—presumably downloaded for free. It seems at first flush, in those cases where the lectures are of an extreme personal nature or provided time-critical information, it may be unwise to invest \$250-\$350 in pamphlets that may not be robust sellers. Several older pamphlets from past decades come to mind that simply are not selling, and in some cases can't be given away, or are not taken when labeled "FREE" at IBMs or YBMs! In the name of simplicity, I request permission to recycle a small selection of these.

Since we, in fact, do nearly have sufficient monies set aside for printing *Faith and Practice* c. 2010, I would like permission to seek input from the publications discernment appointees. Originally their appointments were for consideration of submitted manuscripts by individuals rather than for the lectures. Please advise.

Endnote:

I had planned to take a week off following each surgery, but unfortunately, due to daily demands, ended up working 1/4-, 1/2-time during convalescence. This has simply prolonged healing time. *I greatly appreciate those who have assisted during this time.*

Respectfully submitted by Lyn Cope