

SEYM REPRESENTATIVES TO ORGANIZATION REPORTS

AFSC Corporation (American Friends Service Committee)

Report included in DIA (Documents in Advance) for Jan. Representative Meeting

AFSC/SERO (American Friends Service Committee, Southeastern Regional Office)

No advance report

FCNL/Wm Penn House (Friends Committee on National Legislation)

No advance report

FGC Central Committee (Friends General Conference)

Report included in DIA (Documents in Advance) for Jan. Representative Meeting

FUM General Board/Commissions (Friends United Meeting)

No advance report

FWCC (Friends World Committee for Consultation)

No advance report

Florida Council of Churches

No advance report

Florida Impact

No advance report

FLGBTQC (Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns) formerly FLGC (Friends for Lesbian and Gay Concerns)

The Mid-Winter Gathering at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico is happening February 18-21. The theme of the gathering is "Spiritual Work at the Edge of Certainty", affirming that Quakers have often been in this place, pushing the boundaries of commonly accepted practices and beliefs. Deborah Fisch, the coordinator of the Traveling Ministries Program of FGC will be the plenary speaker.

Respectfully submitted, Jan Dahm

Friends Peace Teams

No advance report

QEW (Quaker Earthcare Witness), formerly FCUN (Friends Committee on Unity with Nature)

No advance report

QUNO

In May 2004 we visited the Quaker United Nations Organization offices in New York, where we were warmly received by Jack Patterson and the staff and interns. This QUNO office and the one in Geneva serve as a Quaker presence at the United Nations, working for the abolishment of war and to promote human rights, economic justice and good governance. The offices facilitate discussions of weighty world matters through providing information, and by providing space in nearby Quaker House where UN diplomats, staff and others can gather in an informal friendly setting for workshops, seminars and Quaker hospitality.

The QUNO staff approaches disagreements as a neutral party, meaning that they listen to everyone and encourage all to have their say. They hold firmly to the testimonies of Friends.

Since the founding of the United Nations in 1945 QUNO has helped to move many UN issues of concern to Friends forward. The offices make their modest funding go a long way.

More information can be found at www.quno.org. Please check out this quietly powerful organization.

Laura and Jim Winefordner

STATE OF THE MEETING REPORTS

Augusta MM...

Augusta MM laid itself down. Margie Rece has transferred her membership to Atlanta Friends Meeting where she is now living. Membership arrangements for Ed Bertsche, SEYM's first clerk, are being pursued with his family. The proceeds from the sale of the meetinghouse were given to the Outreach Travel Endowment Fund with the dividends going to the General Fund to help support Representative Travel.

Brandon WG...

Brandon WG is being laid down.

Charleston MM...

Charleston Monthly Meeting of The Religious Society of Friends State of the Meeting in 2004

The Charleston Friends meet each Firstday in a gallery in Mt. Pleasant, SC. Membership and attendance have been stable for the past several years. Quite often, traveling Friends as well as visitors to the Charleston area attend our Meeting. Sea Gull Gallery has been our home for about the past two years. We are welcome at the gallery and it is a pleasant place to meet. We continue to search for the means and a site to support a dedicated Meeting House.

For the past two years, we have met one Firstday in a Charleston Children's Garden. We met this fall in the garden of the Boy's and Girl's Club on Mary Street in Charleston. Fred and Jennifer Phillips started and continue to care for the Children's Garden Project. Charleston Meeting has support their work for several years.

Charleston Meeting has felt and expressed ongoing concern about the war in Iraq. Our Meeting is one of the signers of a Minute to the Iraqi people, which was coordinated by the Adelphi Friends Meeting. Meeting members also continue to support the actions of the Carolina Peace Resource Center and Charleston Peace. One of our visiting Friends has more direct contact with Iraq. She is an Atlanta Friend, who is an Air Force reservist stationed in Charleston. She flies regularly to and from Iraq on cargo missions. We hold her in the light as she searches for ways to minister to people involved in the war, both military and civilian.

Several members of the Meeting are participating in the Fellowship of Reconciliation. First, they took a workshop to learn FOR principals and methods of non-violent intervention. The workshop attendees continue to meet monthly as an informal group. However, there is discussion of forming an official Charleston FOR. As an initial activity this year, Charleston Meeting worked with the group to register voters for the 2004 election.

Our Meeting gathered again with other Meetings in South Carolina under the umbrella of the Palmetto Friends Gathering. This was the 15th Gathering, which has occurred annually. The PFG includes Meetings from SAYMA and SEYM Yearly Meetings as well as a Meeting aligned with FGC directly. This year PFG met for a three-day weekend in Paris State Park, which is just north of Greenville

<http://www.CharlestonMeeting.com>

email: contact@CharlestonMeeting.com

Clearwater MM...

In worship sharing some Clearwater Friends spoke of the loving and sustaining warmth and welcome in the meeting's silent worship that satisfies our needs in ways that other Christian denominations do not. We can share our joys and sorrows in supportive worship, worship sharing, and fellowship. Some of us are content with this. However, we are also aware of our individual shortcomings and our differences. Some may come to meeting and not find what they seek. This is often because we ourselves are wanting, do not always know what we seek, and this is not the fault of the meeting. We should foster the special gifts that visitors and newcomers may bring to us and encourage the opportunities for service they may provide.

Dissent and personal conflicts have made some of our members and attenders uncomfortable and have kept some of them away. Others feel held back by what they see as the meeting's lack of structure and focus. They call for opportunities to discuss important issues after meeting for worship and during the week, and ask for guidance and leadership from Ministry and Counsel.

As we struggle to find ways to resolve these internal problems we are also aware that the meeting has no ongoing outreach activities. Our Christmas gifts of underwear and socks to the needy point the way to other possible sustained efforts that we could make to assist those in dire need of help. We have yet to establish a local public identity and make plain who we are and what we do outside the meeting.

Deland WG...

STATE OF THE MEETING 2004

Deland Worship Group

submitted January 2005

DeLand Friends Worship Group is grateful for a year of growth, both in numbers and in Spirit. Attendance has steadily increased over the past year, and now averages 15-20 every First Day, including children. And we have grown spiritually, as we have faced the challenges of that growing community.

We are now meeting in the Stepping Stones Childcare and Day School building at the DeLand airport, every First Day. Meeting For Worship begins at 10:00 AM, and Meeting For Learning follows for one hour thereafter, beginning at approximately 11:15 AM. Some of us adjourn to an airport restaurant afterwards for lunch. We have almost completed a study of Richard Foster's book "*Celebration of Discipline*," led on different occasions by Chris Patton, Susan Fichter, and Dan Vaughan.

Our religious education committee has worked hard on curriculum ideas for our children, and is quickly and effectively implementing them. A precious moment occurred two weeks before Christmas when, just before the rise of Meeting, the children brought in a wreath holding candles, placed it in the center of our circle, and then proceeded to light one of the candles. We all watched in awe and wonder and thanksgiving.

Karen Patton has opened her home to us once a month for a potluck and discussion, in order to provide an opportunity for outreach and for building our own sense of community. That idea grew out of a suggestion by one of our members that we create more opportunities to talk with each other informally, in

order to seek ways to “shine our Light” in our community, instead of “hiding it under a bushel.”

We are holding regular business meetings on the second First Day of the month, in lieu of the Meeting For Learning that day. Susan Fichter has faithfully provided some delicious soup to make it easier for some of us to stay for business meeting after Meeting For Worship. On the second Sunday of December, Chris Patton further enriched our “soup interlude” with Christmas carols played on his harmonicas.

Individual giving has increased, and become more intentional, with a number of our members and attenders making specific pledges upon which a proposed budget could be based. We have accordingly adopted a budget for 2005, and included within it substantial giving to national and local organizations.

On December 30, 2004, we assisted the Unitarians in providing a meal for the homeless at the First United Methodist Church in DeLand, a program sponsored by the Interfaith Care Givers. Through a local school, we “adopted” a family for Christmas, providing gifts and food for a family celebration that would not otherwise have been possible.

We are also saving for that day when we can purchase a Meeting House we can call our own.

Areas upon which we hope to work during the coming year are improving our vocal ministry, and achieving a greater commitment from our members and attenders to the “business” of the meeting, both of which we perceive as being an integral part of our spiritual growth as a community of faith. We also will continue to improve our religious education program for both children and adults, and to increase attendance at our monthly potluck discussion groups.

We are encouraged by our growth this past year, and are challenged by it in the coming year to assume more responsibility in our local and larger communities.

In the Light,

Ann Jerome Croce and Dan Vaughen, co-clerks
DeLand Worship Group

Ft.Lauderdale MM...

Ft Myers MM...

I – What is the State of your Meeting for Worship and Business?

Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

1. Religious Meetings.

Meetings for Worship and Meeting for Business were held at the appropriate time and in an appropriate manner. Monthly Meeting for Business is attended by well over half of our attendance at Worship. We are pleased that newcomers visit and return to us; many winter visitors continue to return year after year and have become an integral part of the Meeting.

A midweek Meeting for Worship in Naples, under the care of Fort Myers Meeting, has been faithfully

maintained. Also, under the care of our Meeting, a Naples worship group has been established functioning only during the first quarter of the year for the convenience of winter visitors.

As the moment for Worship approaches the rush and greetings disjointedly taper off and, as if on cue, Friends gather and center and give growing evidence that hearts and minds are preparing for communion with God.

We further believe that daily devotional reading and spiritual search has contributed to this quiet shift.

Unique in this Meeting was a Memorial Service for Friend Kyle Goff. It was widely attended by Friends, family and people from the Developmental Disabilities Community.

2. Ministry.

We believe that Spoken Ministry

in worship is generally thoughtful and Spirit-led. We have developed regular worship sharing at the rise of the Meeting, which enables Friends to share deeply felt concerns and response to messages given to them within Worship that are not necessarily divinely inspired.

The Meeting, in its desire to deepen spiritually, has united with one member's leading to immerse herself in the internal work of the School of the Spirit. As a group, it is our prayer, that individual calling among Friends will help to leaven the loaf.

We have helped to sponsor the Traveling Ministries Program under Friends General Conference held at the Saint Petersburg Monthly Meeting.

3. Participation in the Meeting.

Because we are a close-knit Meeting, Friends here are generally in attendance at Worship. We welcome newcomers. A woman's retreat has become a tradition for the third year providing an opportunity for Friends, ages 14 to 80s to express their deepest feelings and to minister to each other.

II – How do Friends care for one another?

4. Unity within the Meeting.

Ministry and Counsel, strong and vital, stands clearly as a support to the Meeting, offering caring to all that worship with us.

5. Education

An active education committee continues to plan for and coordinate an a series of studies with well attended classes. This includes the continuation of classes on Barclay and, currently, study, and discussion on Punshon's *Encounter With Silence*. We would recommend this slim volume to other Meetings just as a winter attender recommended it to us.

We assisted with the school tuition of one of our youngest members. Our library on Quaker Thought and History is well used. Unfortunately, the Meeting has failed to provide space for expansion.

5. Oversight of the Members.

Each First Day of the month a pot luck dinner is held to both welcome newcomers and enhance fellowship.

We continue to celebrate new memberships. Our most recent transfer member, Richard Squire, was welcomed and his 95th birthday was lovingly noted. New members William Wells and Nancy Howell enrich us.

Ministry and Counsel, as well as certain members are led to keep in contact with absent members.

Regular monthly meetings of Ministry and Counsel insures constant care of members who are in need emotionally or financially and for those seeking individual growth.

Happily we report three new members this year. However, one tragic loss deeply affected each of us: our Friend Kyle Goff. His memorial service was honored with many friends, families and Developmental Disabilities personnel, as well as a beautiful poem that follows:

Gone before his time-thrust abruptly from an existence meaningful to many, an existence that carried the quality of innocence.

Kyle seemed free of envy, hate, violence. Instead he brought affection, playfulness and a curiosity that was charming. Within his own internal world he had a strong sense of what was right or proper, and on observing the improper-with a shake of his head and a brief scowl, he expressed his disapproval. With those closest to him, he enjoyed instigating mock verbal battles, a give-and-take that delighted him.

If he ever became impatient and frustrated with the confines of his disability, it was barely evident.

There was a sense of brooding thought, a sense that he was reaching for something the eluded him, that there was depth to probe, if only momentarily.

Fly free, dear friend, free of the bonds that restricted man, but not his soul.

Leave us your forever essence, cheerfulness, love, peace... fun...

“Goodnight sweet prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.”

Hamlet, V., William Shakespeare.

III – How Friends meet their Responsibilities Outside the Meeting?

6. Social and economic relationship.

Our members working as individuals express their concern for various community programs such as Environmental and Peace Education, Immokolee Farm Workers Coalition and the Calusa Nature Center, as well as Right Sharing and environmental Advising Committee.

7. Civic Responsibilities.

To our knowledge we are free from judicial oaths.

Individual members were active in the area of civil liberties through participation in vigils and demonstrations.

Some members were extremely active in the 2004 election process.

Other Friends are active in neighborhood organizations. One member is active with her local fire department and emergency management another is guardian-ad-litem and a volunteer at a Senior Friendship Center. A member has contributed to a perpetual fund to serve children in the meeting's name.

For the third annual holiday gift giving, Quaker Elves and Angels gave presents to disabled children and their families.

9. Extending our Message.

Our clerk, representing our meeting, participated in a Unitarian service and provided the message for the worship.

Currently, there is no interfaith alliance in our region.

We have a website that has brought in new people. We also have an automatic telephone message service. We are listed in Friends Journal and Quaker Life.

IV – To what extent is your personal life in accordance with Friends principles?

10. The home.

We visit each other in our homes, hold pot locks, and meetings on special committees.

We share books, home produce, and news of our families with each other. There is an active e-mail exchange. We are mindful and cautioned against recreational activities that are harmful to others as well as ourselves. We are family.

11. Self-discipline.

Friends struggle to find time for daily prayer and one voiced a need for more spiritual fellowship. The mid-week meeting for worship continues to be held in Naples. Family and relationships were mentioned as a support for spiritual discipline as were special places of reflection such as gardens. Others mentioned reading, walks, and work that can be spiritual practices that bring us close to the Spirit.

12. Peace Testimony.

Friends acknowledge the peace testimony is a difficult one to live. The meeting has a number of peace activists, supported to one extent or another, by the meeting. However, we are mindful of the admonition from Yearly Meeting about Friends lack of reconciliation and sensitivity in political areas. And we believe we need work in this aspect of the testimony. The meeting has worked to understand the difference between war, and the protection of the innocent, requiring us to reconsider our attitudes about law enforcement.

Gainesville MM...

State of the Meeting 2004
Gainesville Monthly Meeting

A good spirit prevailed throughout the year among meeting members and regular attenders. Our worship, as we wrote last year, seemed “deep and filled with a calming silence.” We continued the practice of allowing a few minutes after every meeting for worship for “unspoken messages.” A main concern was the transition from our current meetinghouse to our soon-to-be-built one. We signed a binding contract of sale for the old building on June 13 and then closed the deal on December 31. A highlight of the year was a series of dinners to raise funds for the new meeting house, featuring, respectively, Appalachian, Latino, Indonesian, and New England cuisine. An “All-American celebration” was cancelled by a hurricane! Two other fundraising events were a yard sale for students returning to campus and a “Quaker market” featuring a silent auction. Of course we continued

to sell beans. (And we will be bringing some to yearly meeting!)

We had social events with several other religious groups. At the Peace Teaching Camp near Waldo, for instance, we had fellowship with Friends from Jacksonville and Ocala. In May we joined the Ocala Friends for a potluck at Larry and Ellie Clayton's—and several folks went swimming in their pool. We also went to the Mennonite Church for a potluck in September.

The Peace & Social Concerns Committee helped get out the vote in November. It took many steps to promote just political policies, especially to end the U.S. war in Iraq. Kathie Guthrie, Friends Committee on National Legislation lobbyist, made a presentation to the meeting in May. Don Smith attended the FCNL annual meeting in Washington in November. After several people attended a workshop on how to counsel people over the GI Hotline, there was a request that some of these counselors be recorded as ministers. A clearness committee developed queries and a procedure for doing this. The meeting subsequently recorded Dick Beardsley as a minister for the purpose of counseling members of the armed forces in matters of conscience.

The Bible Seminar studied the Book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the 3rd Letter of John, and four of the Old Testament's Minor Prophets, while the Quaker Study Group chose to read and discuss many Michener and Walton Lectures. The monthly forum covered a variety of topics, including Karen and Jim Porter's trip to China. A re-formed Quaker Earthcare Witness began to meet for discussion on the third First Day.

The Ministry and Nurture Committee sponsored an Inquirers' Group that was well attended at the end of October. M & N also started an outreach project to host brunches for Quaker-college graduates living in the Gainesville area. Meeting for Healing continued to be held twice a month.

Two of our dear members, Reuben Keppel and Judy Shea, died this year, to our great loss. A different sort of loss was the departure of the Timmers family for a new life in Ft. Worth. On the joyful side, we welcomed Patricia Ulrey into membership, celebrated the union of Jen Ambrose and Bryan Cotter in marriage, and were blessed with two new babies, Alexander Fetko, grandson of Laura and Jim Winfordner, and Christian Grace, foster child of Jim and Karen Porter.

The year culminated in a wonderful Christmas party at the home of Annie McPherson and David Cook.

Submitted by
Don Smith, Clerk

Golden Isle WG...

Halifax...

Halifax Friends Meeting State of the Society for 2004

Halifax Friends continued to prosper in 2004. The center of the meeting continued to be worship and fellowship, which provides a deep and fulfilling basis for our lives.

We were saddened by the death of Ed Siegel, who, with his wife Pegi, had attended during several winter seasons.

We rejoiced in the pleasure of several guests and welcomed new regular attenders Gloria and Sisco Deen.

Moved to undertake some outreach activity, the meeting agreed to participate in Operation Caring Through Sharing. This organization, which provides a monthly box of food and consumables aid

to a family, seemed to us to provide the opportunity we needed. Although we don't know the name of our family, we know that it is a couple with five children and are able to communicate with them. This has proved to be an excellent project, one that a small group of widely scattered Friends can sustain.

The meeting is also continuing its Fifth Sunday meeting for sharing.

In August, Clerk Dick McCleery found himself led to return to the chaplaincy and accepted a weekend position in Volusia-Flagler hospice. As a result, he had to step down from the clerkship and Jim Geary was approved to replace him. One of the challenges for the coming year will be to find a way to provide spiritual nurture to Dick, as his work prevents him from attending meeting.

Jacksonville MM...

The Report of the Spiritual State of Jacksonville Monthly Meeting

We regularly worship First Day mornings in the library of Bolles School-Bartram Campus, except periodically when we meet in a home on First Day for worship, discussion and a potluck meal. Usual attendance varies between 6 and 13, mostly attenders. jacksonvillefriends.org is our website.

What follows are pieces of our spiritual quilt, written worship sharing, a collaborative poem:

- ** The nature of the meeting is: applying to the world as it is and as it ought to be and getting above today's news.
- ** We started to nurture each other in a different way after the November '04 elections. We meet during the week for informal discussion and more consistently after meeting to share lunch and friendship.
- ** The "crazier" things get out there, the more we need to nurture each other.
- ** As well as meeting amongst ourselves, e-mail helps us feel more connected in this vast city.
- ** A visitor for one month annually said, "We're a small group of people with a depth and spiritual power that is very moving."
- ** We reach out to help people understand the human toll of war.
- ** We have the same soul searching as other meetings do. We continue to search for ways to make visitors feel welcome. Our meetings are often silent; yet we welcome poetry, remembrances, Biblical passages, and social concerns.
- ** The last 5 minutes of meeting for worship are devoted to worship sharing, to express that which we didn't feel led to share during worship. These moments are rich and spirit-filled; and, this time gently eases us out of worship, hemming our quilt of meeting for worship.

FROM A NEW ATTENDER: Coming to meeting for me has been like finding a place you were looking for but didn't know it. It renews me, and I find that when I am not among all of you for a week or more, I miss you. I enjoy closing my eyes, and feeling you all there; it's as though I can sense your spirits and God flowing from you all and it is awesome, overwhelming and at the same time peaceful, very hard to explain. I want to also point out that I, because of my personality, have had a very difficult time at my new job, and have very often felt at odds with what I am expected to do in light of who I am. And because of all of you, just your being there on Sunday for worship is so wonderful; I feel welcomed, and I thank you all for that.

So, whether you have known it, all of you have been a source of support for me. Thank you so much.

FROM A SEASONED FRIEND: We experience a genuine fellowship which brings us back as often as we are able to attend. We find that Friends share common concerns about the war, the poor and human suffering. Members' involvement in the Cuban project [Baracoa (Cuba) - St. Augustine Friendship Association] is the kind of outreach that speaks to the missionary interests in us, and we see this as a meaningful way of building goodwill among peoples. We would like to see more study groups of the Bible and other religious books. We do appreciate the Newsletter and find it informative.

Friends participated in: the Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice youth peace camps and its Walk for Global Justice from Graham, FL, to Brunswick, GA; peace vigils; AFSC's Eyes Wide Open experience; the Baracoa (Cuba) - St. Augustine Friendship Association; making kits for AFSC; an Iraqi toy drive; the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP); and Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication seminars.

Key West WG...

Lake Wales WG...

State of Lake Wales Worship Group, 2004-'05

Friends in the Lake Wales area experienced power outages and tree and fence damage from three hurricanes in August and September of 2004. Fortunately no Members experienced severe damage to homes or physical injury. Assistance and encouragement from Friends in other areas (particularly Michael Wilson from St. Petersburg Monthly Meeting) were greatly appreciated.

David, Catherine and Stefan Price and Ken and Maria Spearman attended Half Yearly Meeting and coordinated food preparation for the gathering. Carolyn Lanker and Bill Rapp attend Representative Meeting and Carolyn currently is serving as Clerk of the Finance Committee for SEYM. This fall meetings for worship resumed at the newly renovated Ridge Audubon Center in Babson Park. The Lake Wales Worship Group met in homes for about three years prior to returning to the Audubon Center. The group welcomes a number of regular winter visitors that boost numbers and bring fresh perspectives to discussion after worship.

Managua WG...

Miami MM...Miami Friends Meeting 2004
State of the Meeting Report

Friends ended last year, 2003, with a retreat focusing on property and financial issues. The weekend of worship sharing was led by Gay Howard of Tallahassee Friends Meeting, former clerk of SEYM and a mentor on Quaker process. From this a leading began to develop a peace center connected to the meeting. Consensus was achieved on having a fund-raising campaign.

The Meeting decided to dedicate Bartram House to activities which arise from our concerns for peace, education and social justice. We envisioned a center where groups working on such issues can be housed, sharing not only space, but inspiration and resources. Our goal was to provide the opportunity for daily interaction of committed and caring people, who are using diverse, innovative approaches to foster Quaker values in our community.

Fund-raising took the form of appeals to members and the wider Quaker community, yard sales, Pounds for Peace where friends sign on sponsors for weight loss, and a cultural series "Simply Gifted". The "Simply Gifted" program included a concert by the Peruvian musical group Kuyayky, a presentation of Wallace Shawn's *The Fever* by Steve Donachie, and Rustin Levenson's slide presentation on her book, *Seeing Through Paintings*. Our website, www.miamifriends.org, tended by member, David Landowne, was instrumental in informing the public about our fund-raising and events. The financial result of this year of hard work is the completion of the bulk of the renovation at Bartram House, with a manageable debt in private loans from SEYM and Miami Friends Members. The finance committee and the Bartram House committee have budgeted so that the income from Bartram will repay these loans and fund future needs as they arise in this old property.

The best part of the fund raising is the creation of "The Quaker Center for Peace, Education, and Social Justice". Upstairs, the Nonviolence Project and the National Farm Workers Ministry share space. The Nonviolence Project, founded by a member of the Nobel family, works with school children teaching non-violence and engaging high-risk youth in positive, alternative activities. The National Farm Workers Ministry brings the issues of farm workers to houses of worship in Miami-Dade. Downstairs, the Bilingual Co-operative Pre-School is thriving, with 18 students and their parents. Plans for the not-yet-completed porch and entry area include making space available for our Alternatives to Violence Project and our nascent HIPP youth program (AVP for teens).

Meeting for Worship continues with an average attendance of 25-30 and an active first day school. We have two dedicated teachers, Kathy Hersh for younger friends and Joan Sampieri for the high school. As our high schoolers graduate and the younger friends mature, there will be a need to reconfigure our classes. A need is seen for a dedicated space in the meeting house for our younger friends, but no area has made itself evident.

The Meeting House continues to be an active focus for community groups. This year Miami for Peace, the "Small Group" of Friends and attenders who have met regularly for ten years, the Bahais, the Tibetan Library Association, Alcoholics Anonymous, Al Anon, Overeaters Anonymous, Young Violinists, Dances for Peace, Death with Dignity, the Recorder Society, and the Sri Chimo Group have met at Miami Friends Meeting.

Our activities in the community continue. Alternatives to Violence Project has held several prison workshops as well as a community workshop at the Independent Review Panel where member Eduardo Diaz is Director. Our connection to Cuba continued with a visit from Anya Mora, Representative from Cuba Yearly Meeting. The Wednesday evening weekly vigil in front of the Meeting House continues to protest the war in Iraq. Over two years our reception has changed dramatically with increasing support and honking from passing drivers. Children of the Meeting still work once a month with homeless persons at Touching Miami with Love.

In 2004 Miami Friends welcomed Joshua and Jessica Begin as child members. The transfers of John Vitale from Media Monthly Meeting in Media, Pennsylvania and of Judith Herron from Rockland Friends Meeting in Blauvelt, New York were accepted.

Member Serin Anderson transferred to the Palm Beach Monthly Meeting, and Cheryl Duvall transferred to the Santa Monica Friends Meeting. In the absence of response to letters and calls from the meeting, the overseers laid down the memberships of Elizabeth Swift Wagner, Karen Swift Cheney, and Frederick Soler. At their request, the Membership of Jack Hamilton and Lisa Hamilton were laid down.

The death of Mary Stickland is noted. Mary was a Meeting attender, whose steady, quiet presence will be missed.

Regular attenders Ethan and Katie Bliss and their son Noah welcomed a second son, Aiden.

Miami Friends Meeting has been truly blessed in working together to make our leading of a year ago a reality. This success has come with a toll on members and attenders and there is a concern that we proceed with nurturing and tenderness toward members who have given much time and energy to Miami Friends during this year.

Notes:

Ocala...

STATE OF THE MEETING (FY 2004)
 Friends Meeting of Ocala (A Worship Group)
 Meeting for Worship Sundays 11:00 a.m.
 George Newkirk, Contact

SEYM March 2005
 1010 N.E. 44th Avenue
 Ocala, Florida 34470-8160
 352-236-2839 gnewkirk1@cox.net

The past year, the 14th since we came together in 1991, has been quiet and peaceful. Our worship is not scintillating but satisfying. If somewhat prosaic, we find comfort in the spoken messages, albeit one person's observation suggested that the women spoke more on spiritual and inspirational themes, the men along anecdotal and philosophical lines. There is a tendency for messages to build one on the other, and it is not unusual for all present to share in the vocal ministry.

We have had several very interesting visitors, including a couple from the Conservative Friends who arrived on a large motor-scooter. They were touring Florida in a motor home, using the scooter for local transportation. Yes, they were plainly dressed, the man wore his hat during worship, doffing it during messages. Our discussion during fellowship was entertaining, interesting and enlightening. We settled the thee-thy-thine usage but learned one should use 'thou' "only when it is appropriate".

On another occasion eight students and four staff members from the Friends School at Celo, N.C. stopped by, sleeping and cooking at Pendle Hollow. They, too, were touring Florida, on a study trip the nature of which we never got around to discussing. A member of the Democratic Club has informally inquired about meeting in the Meetinghouse, as has an incipient Peace Group with a fair number of followers. We welcome visitors, and invite all who pass nearby to stop and visit with us.

We seem to have had more than our share of sadness. Don Calhoun has been in the hospital and is now in a nursing home in Vermont. Ginger Heck broke her replacement hip and is in rehabilitation. Monica Porter is no longer able to attend meetings. Scott Minor awaits a decision on his carotid arteries. George Newkirk was twice hospitalized with pneumonia and his game leg shows no improvement. Jim Ramsey, who with Millie recently moved to Ohio, lost his son in an auto accident. Loretta Harrison, a former attender, passed away. Ed and Jackie Stapler moved to Tennessee, and are sorely missed.

There is a possibility that The Course in Miracles may be revived. While searching for pine cones to decorate at Half-Yearly Meeting, George met a retired professor who had led several Miracles programs. He is interested in holding in the Meetinghouse a community-wide seminar on the subject. He has all the material need for a reasonably sized study group. He is presently occupied but will have free time this coming spring.

The annual Gainesville-Ocala Gathering at the home of Ellie and Larry Clayton is growing into a tradition. It is truly satisfying to meet for fellowship with members of the Gainesville Meeting, with whom we have close ties but so little personal contact.

We continue to participate in the Ministerial Association, and we were a sponsor of the Thanksgiving Eve Service, held this year at Blessed Trinity Catholic Church. We supported Interfaith Alliance, but except for attendance our role was largely passive. None of us made it to a hastily called candle-light vigil held in the Town Square.

Some years ago—probably about 1983—SEYM members were invited to explore the possibility of SEYM accepting and developing a beautiful park-like two and one-half acre woods near Lowell Florida. The matter was shelved when a survey led to closing the access roads. A year ago an adjacent farm was purchased and a legal (40-foot) right-of-way to the area was established. The farm, named Pendle Hollow, is under development. The adjacent area, Pendle Woods, has been cleared and will soon be seeded.

George, as one of the trustees, would like persons interested in developing the area to coalesce, and consider the possibilities of transferring the property to SEYM. The group would explore developing the property in whatever manner might prove feasible. George can be contacted by mail, phone or e-mail, as noted above. He asks only that opinions be withheld until a personal visit to the land can be arranged.

Orlando MM...STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT
ORLANDO FRIENDS MEETING

At a recent Meeting convened to assess our spiritual state, the members and attenders of Orlando Friends Meeting identified the following strengths and weaknesses in our Meeting.

Strengths:

1. A home for spiritual seeking, not religious dogma or certainties
2. A First Day School for the religious grounding of children, not indoctrination
3. An atmosphere of acceptance and tolerance, not criticism
4. A place where peace is valued, not war
5. A concern for our society and our world as a whole, not nationalism
6. A common ground for couples of differing religions
7. A Meeting for Worship held faithfully every First Day in living stillness
8. A Meeting for Learning held faithfully every First Day to discuss topics of current concern.

Weaknesses:

1. Care for the material assets of our Meeting requires a lot of work. Lacking paid clergy or staff, the burden of work falls on members and attenders.
2. Committee functioning has not been optimal and a lot of tasks and decisions fall on the shoulders of individuals or the Meeting-as-a-whole.

During the past year we received the visit of a Traveling Minister from FGC for an outreach workshop, held 2 silent retreats, celebrated 2 weddings, experienced an upsurge in new attenders, continued our interfaith dialogue with visitors from different religions, and survived three hurricanes with minimal damage. Our Worship experience has also deepened. We feel gathered more often, and more Friends have been led to engage in vocal ministry. Enthusiasm pervades our faith community. In the words of one of our members: "The seeds we have planted are now sprouting."

Respectfully submitted,
Eduardo Ysern, Clerk

Palm Beach MM...

**PALM BEACH MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
State of the Meeting Report
2004**

2004 deeply challenged Palm Beach Meeting. We committed ourselves to revising First Day School and Adult Forum in the Light of Spirit and these efforts bore fruit. We finished the Race and Economic Justice film series. Deep Ecology and The Course in Miracles became regular midweek offerings. We increased our contact with Stuart Worship Group. We had workdays that included sewing for AFSC and the ongoing afghan project.

By March, it was clear that Steve Calla's health was deteriorating. Memy Fussell had back surgery. Joyce Zerwekh announced she would be moving to Oregon at the end of the school year. Members rallied to help Steve with several hospitalizations and the Fussell family with Memy's recovery process. In April, Steve and Memy died within one day of each other. We held lovely memorial services. Steve died without known family and the meeting worked to contact his friends and make arrangements for his things. Joyce moved and we miss her.

As summer neared, we became involved in the wider Quaker fellowship. Bhetty Waldron enrolled in the School of the Spirit. Shauna went to Pendle Hill with Kathy Hersh, from Miami Meeting. Ellie traveled to FGC Central Committee meetings and Karen Modell became recording clerk for Quakers for Pastoral Care. Palm Beach County Area Draft Counseling reactivated and held workshops for high school students at the meetinghouse.

Adult Forum followed a "summer camp" format on first days. It was well attended and we recommend the idea to other meetings. Christina Purinton, from the Stuart Worship Group, became a member. Caroline Rodgers' and the Posti families settled into new meetings in Pennsylvania and transferred their memberships. No ground was broken for the addition, but we remained committed to universal accessibility.

By the end of summer, we realized that Bhetty was quite ill. The meeting rallied once again, helping with meals, appointments, errands, and emergency room visits. We turned to Spirit to guide us as we sought to be supportive Friends, while not always agreeing with life choices. Then, the hurricanes came.

Nine Friends and two dogs rode out both Frances and Jeanne at the meetinghouse, which is built into a hill. The Buchholz's provided a camper to the group for a generator and reliable radio contact. Coolers, air mattresses and propane stoves were moved in.

We found the meetinghouse has some leaky spots! Friends stayed in touch with one another as long as the phone service held up. Those Friends further west, shared their houses with the "easterners". Not long after the storms, Jim Carney had a stroke. Wow!

Despite the hurricanes and the election, we were able to have a wonderful retreat with Wade Wright and Mickey Edgerton. Friends gathered at the meetinghouse for our annual Thanksgiving Day potluck. Several members and attenders and Girl Scout Troop 712 went to Half Yearly Meeting. Longtime attender, Martha Nungesser, became a member. Two of our teens, Tacy and Clarke, chose mentors to explore becoming adult members. The clerk's dog drowned in her pool, but was revived with rescue breathing and CPR. Another Friend witnessed the drama. The family reports that Shima is like a new dog since this event!

Bhetsy was set to go to her second session of the School of the Spirit. It wasn't meant to be. She died on December 1st, under hospice care at her sister's. A few days later, Jim Carney died, also under hospice care. Just before Christmas, Ruth Dickinson had pacemaker surgery to regulate her heartbeat. Meals and visits were shared among those living nearby.

Christmas found us all counting our blessings. We realized that our meeting is a special blessing. We look back at the year in amazement and with gratitude. Palm Beach Meeting has been sorely tested, but we begin 2005, knowing that we are members, one of another, truly living in community.

Sarasota MM...

STATE OF SARASOTA MONTHLY MEETING 2004 December 2004

The second full year in our new meetinghouse has been marked by growth both in the numbers of people coming to meeting and new uses of the building. Weekly we have new people worshipping with us. We are especially pleased to have more families with young children among us. This fall saw more visitors from Bradenton and Ellenton the "north" side of town. We are scattered over a large geographical area but we rejoice that most First Days people travel as much as an hour to Meeting reminiscent of Meetings of old.

On First Days our Meetings for Worship the most precious of our times together as a religious community have been vital and energized by a deep silence or a Light filled vocal ministry. The newcomers among us add greatly to our worship both by their presence and their spoken offerings which often shine a new

Light into musty corners. In April our spiritual lives were enriched by Michael Wayda's wonderful workshop. On Christmas eve a small group gathered to worship. So sacred was the silence that they were reluctant to break it even at the end of Meeting. This year the Meeting hosted peace activists and musicians. In April St Petersburg Meeting's Cece Yocum led a highly successful fund-raiser for Friends Peace Teams. In July Maura Stephens' presentation on her trips to Iraq drew many people from the community at large. In the Q and A period she was joined by peace activist Faith Fippinger who that afternoon had been released from prison after serving a sentence for civil disobedience. Afterwards there was an informal jam session with people staying late into the evening making music and talking to one another. Later in the year Peace and Social Concerns committee arranged two concerts including one by attender David Steele. Our participation in the Southwest Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice has increased our presence in the community. We are reaching out to the wider Quaker community with more of us traveling to representative and yearly meeting.

More people participate in the business of the meeting (often more than twenty). Through thoughtful readings by the clerk and efforts of seasoned Friends the business meeting has become more worshipful and participants continue efforts to follow Quaker practice. Our increased numbers have breathed new life into our committees. At the end of the year the proposal to form an earth care committee was greeted enthusiastically; eight people signed up. The new library committee has done a wonderful job of bringing order to chaos. Finally we have shelves for books which for years sat in someone's garage. Care of the Meetinghouse Committee moved past chores of grass cutting and cleaning to expanded use of the meetinghouse. Thanks to some plant loving Friends we have rosebushes in front of the meetinghouse. We are delighted to have outside groups using the building. A Buddhist group teaches meditation and a new Baptist group worships on Saturday. And we have become more adept at handling the responsibilities of ownership. In December we held the second annual Quaker Market which saw increased attendance and greater revenues. It was wonderful community get together.

After five years of able service which included the monumental task of overseeing construction of the building our beloved clerk Fern Mayo is stepping down to a well deserved rest. We are grateful that Janet Huelster a birthright Friend has agreed to take over the clerkship. We look forward with increased energy participation and optimism.

Space Coast MM...

**State of the Meeting
Space Coast Monthly Meeting
January 2005**

The past year has included joys and sorrows. While we may be small in numbers, we are strong in our faith in God & one another. Dealing with our faith and peace testimony in a world in which things seem so much awry is, at best, challenging.

Our meeting continues to search for the time and place of Meetings for Worship most appropriate and suitable for our members/attendees – both very young and older and disabled. The hurricanes added additional challenges to our Meeting, especially the Rogers/Schwartz and Cindy Kipp households.

We had been meeting most First Day evenings at 5 p.m. for worship followed by pot lucks. However we have decided to return to First Day morning meetings. We have found that the decision to have pot lucks has served to build community.

One of our strengths has been use of the webpage for sharing meeting time and location, as well as photos and news.

The participation of Dave and Lyn Cope-Robinson and Kris Darlington in Yearly Meeting activities has been helpful for keeping the meeting involved in the life of SEYM.

Our meetings to discuss the Faith and Practice sections and to communicate our suggestions for consideration by the SEYM F&P committee provided additional community building, and an additional link to the life of SEYM.

The meeting was involved in supporting the Deppners during the last months of Jack Deppner's life, and organized a memorial meeting attended by 250 teaching/educational colleagues and other members of the community. At the wishes of the family, donations to the SEYM Youth Endowment Fund were requested in lieu of flowers. The positive response to this request has been gratifying, and we are pleased that Jack's abiding passion for challenging young people to pursue their interests will benefit the SEYM efforts to provide appropriate Youth programs indefinitely.

Members continue to express their Quaker values by participating in educational activities (through employment), anti-war and political activities (canvassing, poll watching, etc.), and providing help for those who suffered from devastation by our back-to-back hurricanes.

—Barbara Deppner, clerk, Hope Ascher, & David Robinson

Stuart WG...

St. Petersburg MM...

Spiritual State of the Meeting Report
First Month 2005
St. Petersburg Monthly Meeting

The Truth prospers in St. Petersburg Monthly Meeting evidenced in the following words: hope, courage, faithfulness, discernment and integrity.

Our walk as a faith community has been challenging and there is seeking among some of us to find our voice as children of the Light as a secular influence becomes more and more pervasive. A sense has come over meeting to reclaim our worship, our silent expectant waiting, our precious gift of sharing that which is eternal with one another. Vocal ministry has been consistent and strong in this regard--a striking difference to intellectual, political or self focused sharing.

Hope for our spiritual condition exists in the Quakerism class where a small spiritual community has formed. Out of this group of seekers has risen deep and powerful vocal ministry within our Meetings for Worship and Business.

Meeting rose up as a body to settle a nearly two year long struggle that tore at us from the inside. During all that time, some Friends displayed as much courage and integrity as did early Friends in seeking God's will and holding to that Truth. A threshing session and the Meeting for Worship with a concern for Business the following week created the space for egos to finally be laid aside and God to open our ears and hearts. Friends who had left Meeting were asked to return and hold our sessions in the Light. Friends from afar held us in prayer. Friends who heard the Truth were changed. Healing has begun for some that have been broken for so long.

Our ministry as a Meeting continues in a variety of witness. One Friend continues the leading to travel in the ministry and visited over 25 Friends Meetings, gatherings and homes this past year. This same Friend was accepted into the Spiritual Nurturer Program of School of the Spirit. Circus McGurkis, The People's Fair continued creating peaceful community for thousands of its attenders in its 33rd year. Friends again witnessed at the School of the Americas. We continue to be faithful in our 2nd year of participation in a weekly interfaith peace cornering vigil.

We hold up that while we continue to let our lives speak in activism and social justice concerns, we also turn our hearts toward a return to our religious roots, where we witness to God's presence and allow our testimonies to arise out of our faith.

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Dahm, clerk

Tallahassee MM...**Tallahassee Monthly Meeting Spiritual State of the Meeting Report**

On November 21, 2004, the Meeting considered the following queries, which have helped this process of self-examination for the past several years:

How has our Meeting for Worship nurtured our spiritual growth? Meeting for Worship has affirmed the spiritual reality we exist in. This year there have been many messages in Meeting for Worship about loving each other, loving God, loving the plants, loving those who suffer, loving our surroundings, which have encouraged us to think about the effects of a life lived in love. At the rise of Meeting, asking for sharing of joys and concerns has been fruitful, encouraging us to share what we see as being needed for others and for ourselves, and to share our experiences of joy in our lives with the meeting. We have experienced many gathered meetings, with an energy one described as like molasses or syrup, a web of connectedness.

In our committee meetings, we have taken time to listen to one another deeply rather than making assumptions. We have come to deeper understanding of one another as people, and been able to support one another on our spiritual journeys, and in our work in the wider community. One aspect of our meeting's involvement with the interfaith Tallahassee Equality Action Ministry was the undertaking by members of our meeting to carry out TEAM's One-to-One interview process. Through this process of spiritual listening, we engaged in deep conversation with members and attenders about how they experience the meeting and what changes they would like to see, as well as addressing concerns related to the broader community of Tallahassee and Leon County. These conversations contributed to deepening relationships among us, and opening up our sense of the meeting community.

How well do our Meetings for Worship for Business lead to a corporate search for and revelation of God's truth? In our continuing effort to enrich the experience of Meeting for Business and to increase the participation by members of our meeting community, we have continued to experiment with the schedule of the meeting and of the committees reporting to it. We have changed our Meeting for Worship time to a half hour earlier on the day of Meeting for Business, reduced announcements and moved snacks into the meeting room, as well as providing more substantial food for young friends. We have started each Meeting for Business with a reading of one section of the Queries and Advices from SEYM, and worship-sharing about it. We have begun to entrust the standing committees to carry out more of the logistics of meeting business, with less time in Meeting for Business devoted to these issues. We have been challenged to consider the question, "What is the business of Quakers?" And, asked to reinvigorate the tradition of individuals sharing testimony engaging with the issues of their day and how Spirit is moving and working in their lives. This testimony may lead the meeting to unite in a minute for wider circulation.

While changing to an earlier Meeting for Worship time on the day of Meeting for Business seems to have facilitated increased attendance and participation in Meeting for Business, we still have not figured out how to address the issue of late-comers on that day, both newcomers arriving at the regularly advertised time for meeting, and frequent attenders and members who forget our once-a-month variation.

How do we support each other as members of this beloved community? The newsletter continues to be a vital communication link among members, offering not only our calendar of events, but quotations from Quakers and others, writings by members, and the monthly Queries and Advices to stimulate deep reflection. We continue in discernment of ways to use the newsletter in

speaking more to the diversity of needs in our meeting. We have maintained Friendly Contacts with new attenders, and found this experience enriching for ourselves as well. Those who are new often have open ears and the benefit of this outreach is mutual. We are seeking to find better ways to keep in touch with attenders and members who have discontinued regular attendance at Meeting.

Meeting for Worship for Healing has continued monthly this year, offering an opportunity for deep sharing, addressing the needs of our members, families and the broader community in ways beyond what might have been expected.

Young members of our meeting preparing to graduate and leave for college met for discussion of the logistics of seeking membership as adults, transferring membership, and how Friends become involved with a meeting. These discussions explored their experience of God and engaged them in current issues of today. We look forward to continuing such conversations with other young members.

We have expressed loving and caring support to members going through trying times with the gift of handmade prayer shawls. We also made hand knit and crocheted items for our young people who went away to college. We have reached out to provide spiritual and more tangible support to members suffering from ill health.

We need to address the needs of our hearing impaired members, by remembering to speak up in meeting. We ask those who have difficulty hearing to help us be mindful by raising their hands. We are considering whether a small sound system would be a useful addition.

What was our meeting's witness in the wider community in the last year? This year we have "stepped out in the community" through two new projects. We joined a diverse group of 17 other Christian and Jewish congregations in the Tallahassee Equality Action Ministry (TEAM), working to promote justice and equality through improvement of public transportation, access to medical care for low-income people, and fundraising for programs for the homeless. In addition to serving on the board of TEAM, several members of the meeting participated in TEAM's research committees working on these issues.

Our meeting sponsored the Tallahassee stop of "Eyes Wide Open", the traveling memorial exhibition of the boots and shoes representing the dead of the Iraq War created by the AFSC. Many meeting members worked to bring this public statement about the cost of war to Tallahassee, and it was well received by a large number of local citizens.

We also continued to support the ECHO meals for the homeless program several times this year, in those months that have a fifth Sunday. We continued our involvement with the Afghans for Afghans project, producing handmade hats and gloves for people in Afghanistan, as well as for a Sioux Indian reservation in South Dakota. We have also continued our involvement in efforts to end the death penalty.

This year the ad hoc Long Range Planning Committee has identified a process for discerning the direction the meeting membership wants our growth to take in the years ahead. Aside from concerns for eventually enlarging our physical plant, a call to move toward developing ourselves as a center for peace education and spirit-led engagement within our community around issues of peace and social concerns has been clearly discerned.

This year, we have four new members: by application (Youth Membership for Hadiya Elizabeth Najm-Cary, Omari Jonathan Najm-Cary and Nadira Helena Najm-Cary) and by transfer (Neil Andersen); and one membership laid down (Jim Bodie). In addition, we had one youth member graduate from college (Hope Bastian) and three youth members start their college careers (Jessamyn Doan, Anthony Kuhns and Krystal Stark-Bejnar).

Tampa MM...

State of the Meeting Report 2004
Tampa Monthly Meeting

Tampa Monthly Meeting has found loving support, strength and guidance in our Meeting for Worship in a year that has brought us both opportunity and challenges. The burden of war has weighed heavily upon our hearts. We have weathered the storms of an election year and of nature. As a community, we have grown physically and spiritually.

In reflecting on what has passed, we see what a full and enriching year this has been in our community. Witness against the war in Iraq has taken many forms through the work and witness of individuals and our Meeting. This has included distributing ribbons and a poem as a daily reminder of the meaning of peace and war, writing and calling Congress with the guidance of FCNL, standing vigil and ongoing prayer. Through the extraordinary efforts of a Friend most strongly led, Tampa Meeting was able to work in coalition with others in our community to bring the AFSC Eyes Wide Open exhibit to USF (on very short notice). We continue our efforts for peace and continue to mourn the loss of life in Iraq.

Individual witness regarding the elections took many forms, the words of Friend Edward Burrough were shared.

“To the present distracted and broken nation: We are not for names, nor men, nor titles of Government, nor are we for this party nor against the other...but we are for justice and mercy and truth and peace and true freedom, that these may be exalted in our nation, and that goodness, righteousness, meekness, temperance, peace, and unity with God and with one another, that these things may abound.”

—Edward Burrough, 1659

Witness in our community has included working with HOPE (Hillsborough Organization for Progress and Equality) to encourage our County Commission to pay all county employees a living wage and participating in the HOPE membership convention. This commitment enables us to work together with a coalition of congregations and organizations whose voice is but faintly heard in our community. We have found friendship and solidarity with the First United Church (UCC), the same church that first offered the Tampa Worship group space in 1979. Several members of the congregation also meet with the Light Meditation Group which was founded by members of Tampa Monthly Meeting and has been ongoing for two years. This growing relationship has enabled us to present a stronger witness for the cause of peace and justice in the Tampa Bay area.

Tampa Meeting has encouraged members and attenders to seek out a closer relationship to and understanding of our wider Quaker world. Thanks to Friends in St. Petersburg we were able to spend an evening exploring the idea of ministry through the FGC Traveling Ministries program as presented by Deborah Fisch, Deborah Shaw and Jan Dahm, as well as attending a full day workshop the following day hosted by St. Petersburg. A record number of Tampa Friends were enriched by the 2004 Michener Lecture featuring Friend George Lakey. Yearly Meeting and II Yearly Meeting also served to help Tampa Meeting grow in our understanding and relationship to our Religious Society. Reports were made and experiences shared by a number of Tampa Friends who serve or have ties to Quaker organizations such as FCNL, FWCC, Penn House, Pendle Hill and Friends Peace Teams.

The leading of Friend Cecilia Yocum in her work with Friends Peace Teams has been joyfully embraced by Tampa Meeting as stated in the following minute: Minute 2 Sixth Month 2004 Tampa Monthly Meeting supports the leading of Cecilia Yocum to work with Friends Peace Teams in the African Great Lakes Region. We wish to provide spiritual ministry, clearness, prayer and financial support as she continues this work.

Tampa Meeting has sought opportunities to grow through Meeting for Learning. We have learned about each other and our religious society through study and sharing on pamphlets such as: *Spiritual Discernment* the context and goal of clearness committees by Patricia Loring, *Four Doors to Meeting for Worship* by William Taber, and *The Place of Universalism in the Religious Society of Friends or Its Coexistence Possible* by Daniel Seeger. Our learning in a three session Draft Counseling Workshop led by Dana Putney took the form of worship sharing on the questions posed to young draftees by the draft board regarding conscientious objection. Friends found that this sharing moved us deeply and brought us closer as a community. Our learning was further facilitated by the discernment process undertaken on the FCNL priorities and on the SEYM Faith and Practice section on The Monthly Meeting and Establishing New Communities of Friends. We thank both FCNL and the SEYM Faith and Practice Committee for inviting us to a deeper understanding of who we are through this discernment process.

Tampa Meeting continues to be grateful that we have found a permanent home in our community. We gave thanks in a Meeting for Worship held on March 13th of this year. We were delighted to be joined in worship and for an Open House/potluck on this day by 40 Friends, supporters and relatives.

Tampa Meeting found cause to celebrate upon obtaining a mortgage loan from the Friends Meeting House Fund. This enabled Tampa Meeting to officially become the owner of our property and enabled us to repay in full the generous loan made to us by SEYM. Throughout this journey to establish a permanent presence in Tampa, we have been continually grateful for and mindful of the prayers and support of Friends and Meetings in our SEYM community. Thank you.

Our number of members and regular attenders has grown steadily and our Meeting is challenged to be clear about our faith and our practice. This also requires us to strengthen our committee membership and function. We seek to be organized and to include all who feel called to serve our Meeting in some way. We still stumble and have much to learn as we grow into our stewardship responsibilities. We find a sense of humor and well timed joke quite helpful in this process. Growth has also challenged us to reestablish our First Day school, including being prepared weekly for any number or age of youngsters and erecting a canvas topped gazebo in the backyard. Above all, our continued growth affirms that we have much to offer our community and we joyfully welcome each new presence in our Meeting for Worship.

Our continued journey together as seekers of truth has seen us through both personal and community times of distress. We gather to share our joys, concerns and prayers and we continue to seek the peace within that enables us to move forward and witness to the power of love. We attend Meeting for Worship seeking to be spirit led, seeking to discern what we are called to do and praying for the strength and guidance to be faithful to that call.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Putney, clerk
Tampa Monthly Meeting

Winter Park MM...WINTER PARK MONTHLY MEETING
Report of the state of the meeting for 2004

Seeking to deepen our spiritual connections with each other, we were led this year to reinstitute our old tradition of periodic retreats. Our first two retreats, held on Saturday afternoons, invited us to share with each other our thoughts about "Why am I a Quaker? Getting to know each other in that which is eternal" and about "Spiritual Discernment". We look forward to more retreats as we receive inspiration.

A member couple has continued to invite us all once or twice a year to their home for a simple, silent meal which they provide, followed by creative listening. The peaceful atmosphere invites sharing and offers another way for us to grow as a community.

The Winter Park Quaker Committee on Conscience and Objection (comprised of members of Winter Park and Orlando Meetings) has moved into action by mailing an offer of draft and military counseling to area churches and by obtaining a telephone line to receive counseling inquiries. We hope the draft will not be reinstated and wish to provide spiritual support and information to those troubled by war. We are seeking ways to present the issues of conscientious objection and nonviolence in general to our host campus here at Rollins.

Along with many other Florida meetings, we passed through three hurricanes. Our meeting place on the Rollins College campus was not harmed, but many of us lost trees at home or suffered mild to moderate house damage. None of us was injured or experienced catastrophic problems, for which we are grateful.

Many personal milestones were passed. Children of members married, started college and entered a doctoral program. Both parents of our clerk died this fall, unexpectedly and two months apart, saddening our hearts. We celebrated the life of a recent member who died late last year. The member, Ruth Lincoln, is much missed for her intelligence, wit and courage. She was also remembered by husband, children and friends at a memorial meeting in the family's former hometown in Pennsylvania. We are gladdened by the continuing active presence of her husband.

We shared several activities with Orlando Meeting, including a spring meeting for worship and potluck at the residential community of a member couple. This "spring fling", which also included Deland Friends, has become a beloved tradition.

Together with Orlando Meeting we visited the area Islamic Center for Peace. The Muslims welcomed us warmly and told us that we are now part of their family. We hope way will open for us to build on this relationship.

Winter Park State of the Meeting Report, 2004, page 2

Tampa Friend Cecelia Yocum responded to the invitation of Winter Park and Orlando Quakers and spoke with us about her experiences in Rwanda and Burundi with a Quaker peace team. We were deeply moved by her descriptions of the spiritual journeys of the victims of great abuse and violence as they seek to grow beyond their anger and bitterness.

Orlando and Winter Park meetings continue to cooperate on activities such as providing food for the Michener Lecture and cooking once a month for a residential program for men making a fresh start. We remain open to new ways for us to work together.

We have also begun to consider the matter of privacy and the internet as it relates to our meeting website and to communications from SEYM. As a meeting, we have felt concern for protecting the privacy of individuals, and seek expressions for that concern.

Within the meeting, we have experienced conflict in addressing an issue. Dissension within the meeting family produces pain, but it also invites us to worship more deeply together and to grow. We continue to seek light and unity, and we seek them together.

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Arlen Bensen, Clerk



Please bring this with you; save trees.

**YM 2005
Documents in Advance (DIA)
for Plenary Sessions
3/23-27/2005**

Register by mail

Becky Steele, Registrar, P.O. Box 18245, Tampa, FL 33679-8245

Register on-line

www.seym.org

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