

Addendum
SEYM Annual Gathering 2006
Documents in Advance (DIA)

For Southeastern Yearly Meetings for Worship with a concern for Business

Plenary Sessions to be held 4/12-16/2006
at the Florida United Methodist Life Enrichment Center, Leesburg, FL

Corrections:

From: Ed Lesnick <edlesnick@earthlink.net>

CORRECTIONS TO THE DIAS FOR THE ADDENDUM

Sorry about this: Page 4 Minute 06IBM03. 063IBM03 change to 06IBM03 "FGC" changed to "ProNica"
Peace.

Ed

Meeting statements regarding affiliation with FUM:

Jacksonville Monthly Meeting

Notes from Friends meeting on FUM issue(s)

from Wendy and Ann Carrigan of Jacksonville MM

Date: Friday, January 13, 2006 9:26 AM

Dear Friends,

The following two paragraphs are sets of statements and questions, respectively, which were voiced during our discussion Tuesday evening, the 25th of October, at Geiger farm.

The longer FUM holds this policy, the more people will join them that agree with this policy. It's self-perpetuating. For the time being, set aside the \$1,200 we give FUM until we have a clearer vision. Have SEYM send an articulate person to FUM to address this concern. FUM needs to clear the way for full participation in discussion of this policy. SEYM affirms kinship with individuals, but we're wondering about kinship with FUM. As a meeting, we want to stay in contact with FUM meetings and members, but our concern with FUM administrative policy raises questions.

What will future generations of Quakers think of this? If we decide to stay affiliated, then are we going to be more involved with FUM? Does one have to be a Friend to work for FUM? Are there Friends in FUM wanting to affirm same-sex marriage who aren't being allowed to speak? What would trigger us - other than this - to get out of FUM? What is FUM gaining by receiving SEYM funds with little other contact with us?

And, a thought from Stuart that concluded our discussion at Geiger farm: "We don't want to imply we have the truth; we just want to make sure that they are seeking the truth."

Gentle blessings,

Wendy

(the following was written by Ann)

Friends gathered at the Geiger home on Tuesday, October 25 to discuss Jacksonville Monthly Meeting's response to the issues regarding FUM personnel policy and SEYM's possible responses. In attendance were

Sue Williams (clerk), Stuart Smith, Wendy Clarissa Geiger, Al Geiger, Bettie Freel, Michael Shell, and Ann Carrigan.

We reflected on our understanding of Friends United Meeting (FUM) and what connections we as Jacksonville Friends might have to FUM organizations. We recognize that we lack a deeper understanding of FUM structure and policy-making and how they may differ from the business practices of JMM, SEYM, and what we think of as the Quaker process of discernment.

Our discussion may have yielded more questions than answers. Among those asked were:

1. Is there any written statement or item in SEYM Faith and Practice which addresses same-sex unions specifically?
2. Does the continued payment of dues to FUM constitute an acceptance of this objectionable policy? Would placing the funds in escrow, pending a full resolution of SEYM's position, alleviate some of the pain of conscience of Friends who feel strongly on this issues?
3. How can Friends be considered members of the Meeting and not qualified for staff positions?
4. Is this policy universally enforced, or selectively applied to eliminate the voices of gays and lesbians in FUM?
5. What does FUM do or say in response to affiliated (Yearly) Meetings whose Faith and Practice are in contradiction to its own stated understanding of the definition of marriage?
6. What can Friends resolve regarding the affirmation of same-sex and opposite-sex committed relationships?

Regarding the first question, we had with us a copy of the green bound SEYM Faith and Practice, and did not have before us the amended section on Marriage that was approved in 2005 Yearly Meeting session. The third text paragraph on the first page does directly state (with my emphasis):

“When a couple, regardless of sexual orientation, feels called into such a sacred relationship, they seek clearness with their Monthly Meeting. When the Meeting finds clearness in the couple, and clearness within the Meeting to take their relationship under the care of the Meeting and God’s guidance, a Meeting for Worship is specially called for public affirmation and celebration of the couple’s lifetime commitment to one another. The ceremony itself takes place in a Meeting for Worship. In an atmosphere of quiet and reverence, the promises of the couple are made to one another without the help of a third person.”

So, SEYM has clearly affirmed a statement of Faith and Practice that is contradictory to FUM’s definition of the marriage-union.

On the last question, Ann drafted a simple paragraph intended to clarify a statement of Jacksonville Monthly Meeting’s position:

“Jacksonville Monthly Meeting recognizes and affirms that of God in all people, and welcomes all those who attend and participate in our worship community. Qualifications of sexual orientation and identification, or marital status, are not conditions for full participation in our Meeting.”

Toward the end of the meeting, Stuart added in his inimitable fashion, “We don’t want to imply that we have the truth on this issue. We just want to make sure that they do.”

Some notes from me in follow-up:

It occurs to me that the intention for the line in the FUM policy has to do with the desire to have its representatives, at least in part, “free from unrepentant sin.” Of course, this is applied in a very narrow scope, where the sin in question is sexual activity outside the sanctity of heterosexual marriage. Or, rather, the appearance of sexual activity outside of marriage. As we discussed, this policy does not seem to address adulterous married persons, let alone any of the other non-sexual situations the Bible addresses as ‘sins.’ It seems to me, then, that this policy is already selectively imposed.

Peace and joy, Ann

continued next page

Jacksonville Meeting continues

If we separate ourselves from all
Who do not agree with all we do
We separate ourselves from all
And we find no one who shares our view

The troubles of today
(And most likely of yesterday and tomorrow)
Are because we each are so sure
Our own way is the true and perfect path
For ourselves and for all others

Let us not divide or cause chasms
Between those who share a common core value
A common history
A common defiance against war and hatred
A common belief in the good in all
A common hope for a better tomorrow

Let us instead strive to find the agreement
The center, the calmness, the hope
If we cannot ourselves abide others
With similar but differing views
How can we hope for a peaceful tomorrow.

If Quakers break apart
It is because we have not tried
To see the good in all, the God in all
Because some among us
Would rather split apart than face the difficulties
Of a world of change (and of some who change more slowly)

Because we choose to let our own arrogance
Come in the way of peace.

We already have many enemies
We should not look for others

Minute of the Miami Friends Meeting 2/12/06 re FUM issue

In response to the request for discernment from Southeastern Yearly Meeting, the Miami Friends Meeting is not united concerning affiliation with Friends United Meeting. Some members are in favor, some are opposed, and some are undecided. We will continue to seek clarity on this issue. We are united in opposition to the discriminatory personnel policy of Friends United Meeting and we want to communicate that concern to FUM.

—Warren Hoskins, for Worship & Ministry at that time, now co-clerk of the Miami Friends Meeting.

Copied to the current Worship & Ministry Committee, Miami Friends Meeting

Statement of Orlando Monthly Meeting on FUM Personnel Policy

As adopted by Minute at Meeting for Business, Third Month 12, 2006

On Second Month 19, 2006, members and attenders of Orlando Friends Meeting gathered after Meeting for Worship to consider the documents relating to Friends United Meeting's (FUM) personnel policy which discriminates against gays, lesbians and unmarried heterosexual couples. The documents related to this policy as well as the experience of Friends over the years in contact with FUM representatives were considered.

Friends expressed support for many of the programs supported and sponsored by FUM. Friends particularly noted the work of Christian Peacemaker Teams and its importance in a time of war. The Friends gathered had no desire for further rifts in our Faith Community and would choose a healing path if such a path becomes available. We also understand that true dialog requires openness to the experience of others that this personnel policy would appear to preclude.

Friends also considered our experience in the Light of the Spirit and life of our community. As with heterosexual couples, we find that true and deep relationships between Gay and Lesbian couples are a blessing of the Spirit. It is our place as Friends to openly discern the inner workings of the spirit and bring such blessed unions under our care as the Spirit chooses to entrust to us. We find all to be equal in the eyes of God.

As members and attenders of an unprogrammed meeting, we consult the inward light of God as the basis for our spiritual understanding. Although we support the efforts of FUM, other Friends, and people everywhere in their spiritual journeys, we will not ignore the light of conscience present in our Meeting. As a matter of faith, we feel led to lovingly disaffiliate from FUM based on a personnel policy that we believe to be discriminatory. To do otherwise would, in our view, compromise the basic integrity of who we are as Friends. We would like to take this opportunity to apologize to FUM for any actions we may have taken in the past that may have contributed to a lack of understanding between us and reach out in love, in the hope that we can one day realize peaceful and authentic relations.

Letter to Southeastern Yearly Meeting from Palm Beach Monthly Meeting on the Subject of SEYM Affiliation with Friends United Meeting

On First day, First month 2006, Palm Beach Monthly Meeting Friends and attenders gathered for a period of worship in a threshing session to discuss the question of Southeastern Yearly Meeting's continued affiliation with Friends United Meeting, due to FUM's discriminatory personnel policy. Retha McCutchen stated, "This policy means that a homosexual or heterosexual single person must agree to celibacy while employed at Friends United Meeting...It is expected that sexual intercourse should be confined to marriage, understood to be between one man and one woman."

We came together, as Friends, to discuss in a prayerful and gentle setting our feelings on affiliation with FUM. It was the sense of this Meeting that we wish SEYM to continue our affiliation with FUM in a very full sense. We affirmed our belief in "that of God in every living entity". We are all God's children. When we gather to learn, to teach and to minister, we do it with love and faith in the divine love of God for all peoples. The vision of family with its diversity, its problems and its strengths is a positive and loving vision. We do not abandon family members because some members of our family do not agree with our views. Nor do we wish to be abandoned because of our beliefs. We need to keep dialogue open for the Spirit to lead us. We must be open to listening and understanding the frustration, anger, and rejection felt by Friends who would be affected by the FUM policy.

Friends were clear, however, that if a dialogue is going to occur, SEYM can no longer be affiliated in name only, but must have an ongoing presence at annual meetings and Triennials. We are happy to note that SEYM now has an active member on the FUM board. Whether our presence at board meetings and our SEYM representative on the board will have an effect on the personnel policy of FUM is unknown.

Let us begin our seeking here and now - within our Meetings, within our communities, and over our weekly potlucks. Let us seek together and prayerfully consider our own sexuality and how we approach and understand someone else's feeling of their sexuality. It is a challenge to look at our personal judgments lovingly and let go of fear.

We acknowledge that the presence and role of FUM in Africa is important to the presence of Quakers in the world. We support FUM and African Quakers' efforts to end polygamy and empower and educate women. We have faith that this will be done with gentle love. We respect the need for FUM to deal with what they feel is required to maintain a presence in Africa, but we must not set aside our concern with FUM'S personnel policy.

We resonate with a Friend who said, "A policy for workers in any Quaker Faith Community should be based on the duties of the job, not based on labels. It should be based on being able to be effective with those they serve and the ability to carry out the duties of the position. Each person should be expected to exhibit behavior appropriate to the culture and situation in which they work."

We wish to continue to meet together to share our concerns with each other and to offer our prayers, our help and our love to all within the family of Friends.

TAMPA MONTHLY MEETING
Minute 1 Third Month 2006

Tampa Friends Meeting unites with the Southeastern Yearly Meeting Minute to Friends United Meeting which was approved in Annual Sessions, Third Month, 2005. We have taken seriously the charge to seek way forward in our discernment regarding our continued affiliation with Friends United Meeting. We struggle with the pain and division within our Religious Society concerning the issue of marriage as it is so differently defined among us. We feel called to state clearly our love for our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered brothers and sisters and seek to accompany them in the continuing struggle against oppression and discrimination. We recognize that our commitment to The Religious Society of Friends is one which requires that we not turn away from one another in seeking way forward. Tampa Friends Meeting admits to difficulty in seeking unity on how we might proceed but we are clear that true affiliation requires much more of our Meeting and Southeastern Yearly Meeting than we have committed to so far in this relationship. We call for Friends within our Yearly Meeting who feel so led to help SEYM build a true relationship with FUM. Tampa Meeting will actively support those efforts and is willing to continue affiliation in seeking to try what love will do.

Stuart Area (Treasure Coast) Worship Group
Opinion regarding SEYM affiliation with FUM

Friends of the Stuart Area (Treasure Coast) Worship Group are united in our concern regarding Friends United Meeting's (FUM) personnel policy. We see this policy as discriminatory against select members of the body of Friends, and as denying the FUM family the benefit of the spiritual gifts these Friends may bear from God. We are also concerned about the contradiction in the FUM board minute 88 GB 52 affirming the civil rights of all people to secular employment, but denying certain gifted Friends employment or volunteer status within FUM.

We are reminded by the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. chapters. 12 & 13) that we are all limbs and organs of the body of Christ. That we are given a variety of gifts, service, and activity by one and the same Spirit. That love is the better way, and that love is patient and kind, never rude, never selfish, never quick to take offence. We must take to heart what Paul says and act in love.

The sense of our worship group is that Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM) should remain affiliated with FUM. We believe it important that SEYM minister and witness in loving concern with our brothers and sisters in FUM. We recognize that to do this we must remain in fellowship with FUM, and commit to being engaged and active participants.

State of the Meeting Reports:

Clearwater Monthly Meeting

2005 was a year of change. The Meeting lost five Friends who moved away to other states. We also moved from the Clearwater Garden Club, where we had been for some years, to another location in Dunedin, the Scottish American Society Hall. Some have asked if the Meeting should change its name to reflect this but Friends are comfortable with our name and its history over the last 43 years since it was recognized as a Monthly Meeting within South Eastern Yearly Meeting. We learn with gladness and some envy of the success of some sister meetings in acquiring their own Meeting Houses and will try to work hard towards this goal so that we may better serve the community. In the summer we met every two weeks at a Friend's apartment on Jeffords Street, Clearwater, not far from the house at 403 Jeffords Street, where the Meeting began in 1963. Winter visitors who have joined us over many years continue to support us and return each fall bringing us the gift of their fellowship. At Christmas time we again collected new underwear and socks for the homeless. We try to minister to and comfort each other. We value our fellowship and meetings with each other. The Meeting continues to be a place of friendship with sharing of both joys and sorrows. We talk about absent Friends and we are concerned for their welfare. We welcome new attenders some of whom have found a spiritual home in our meeting. Now that we are settled in we must turn to look outward as well.

While we respect those of other faiths and persuasions we stand firm in our own faith in Friends' principles. The source of our strength is our Meeting for Worship. Messages often continue in the period we set aside for afterthoughts. We try to advance the causes of peace and justice and to be aware of and respond to the challenges imposed on us by our political leaders. We try not to be unduly conservative, or complacent, or easily satisfied with the little that we can do. As we try to work more effectively for peace and the relief of poverty and ill health we can so easily be discouraged by what we see as our puny efforts in the face of the magnitude of other's needs. However, all things have a beginning and we strive to be faithful in our calling.

Fort Lauderdale Meeting, January, 2005

In this past year the Fort Lauderdale Friends Meeting has grown and struggled. A number of new attenders have added vitality and depth to the meeting. Three attenders have been welcomed into membership, and many of us express a sense of deepening belonging. In one attender's words, "The meeting persists in a great deal of love and joy." Our weekly potlucks assist in nourishing friendship and a sense of community. Several Adult Education opportunities and the first two sessions of Quakerism 101 have been well attended. A Quaker Earthcare Committee has begun and is committed to expanding the environmental awareness of the Meeting and the wider community.

Our Meeting held four threshing sessions to consider issues with FUM. These proved to be helpful in educating our attenders about the wider Quaker world while offering them an experience of the corporate search for truth. Our Meeting's efforts reflected our awareness of the profound implications of these issues, and our conversations were respectful and based in seeking the guidance of the Spirit.

We are grateful to have been spared severe damage from Hurricane Wilma, although many of us were without power for up to 2 and a half weeks. We grieve that we remain at war and thank those of us who work directly for peace for their efforts.

Our clerk, Brian Humphrey, had a cerebral aneurysm before Thanksgiving. He is hospitalized, remains in a coma and has a tracheotomy, although there are positive signs of recovery. Many from the Meeting visit him and all hold him in the Light. We all grapple with how to support Brian and continue the work of the meeting. We experience a sense of loss and long for the day when Brian can be with us again. We are grateful for the steadying presence of Friends around the state who have held us in the Light and offered words of comfort. It means so much to us in this hard time.

Miami Friends Meeting State of the Meeting Report, 2005

Miami Friends Meeting began 2005 with a renewed concern for the functioning of the committees which are the main engines of our daily involvement in the meeting community. We were all taking a deep breath to hasten recovery from the demanding year before, a year that had seen programs for fundraising, for the renovation of Bartram House and the opening of the Quaker Center for Peace, Education, and Social Justice.

As we were reenergizing, Miami was hit by 3 hurricanes, Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, the latter of which did more tree damage around the meeting than any storm of recent memory (even Hurricane Andrew), caused widespread persistent outages of electricity and did much to disrupt local transportation. As families coped with their own burdens after Wilma, the recovery period stressed the meeting, distracting members of the committees throughout the rest of the fall and into the winter. We finished the year with the remains of fallen trees in our meeting house yard, a very present reminder that we are not yet done with the work, although much time has passed.

The Meeting for Worship continues to be central to the life of Miami Friends Meeting. We are sustained and enriched by our silence and sharing. It is our primary source of comfort and support, allowing us to re-center, to reconnect with one another, and to continue with renewed energies to do the work that needs to be done in our meeting and in the larger community.

Miami Friends are blessed to own two properties, and we seek to make full use of both to support work in the community that resonates with Friends. The Meeting House is home to twelve different community groups, including Miami for Peace. The Quaker Center for Peace, Education, and Social Justice is flourishing at Bartram House. On the ground floor, the Bi-Lingual Co-operative Preschool is fully enrolled and thriving. Non-Violence Project has its offices on the second floor, and continues its important work in the Dade Community. The Farm Workers Ministry maintains a small office there as well. The sunroom of Bartram House is seen as an “opportunity space” for both the Meeting and Bartram House users. We continue to envision the best way to fully utilize this space and keep it appropriate for all involved.

Operationally, 2005 was a year of continued development and revelation as we dealt with some very real challenges. These challenges are not new to us, nor are we unique among Meetings because we face them. But they are ours and we respect them and seek ways of approaching them in a way that works better.

— Dealing with the demands of maintaining two properties, one of which has an historic designation, is a very real issue for us both in terms of physical work, planning for future needs of the buildings and making certain we are financially able to go forward with those plans. This is a huge responsibility for a Buildings and Grounds Committee composed mostly of members with full time responsibilities elsewhere.

— We continue to learn how to be an effective and responsive and fair landlord to the occupants the Quaker Center for Peace, Education and Social Justice, housed in Bartram House. The Liaison Committee which acts as the primary contact is staffed with volunteers who are, necessarily, part-timers. Our user groups are there full time and deserve to have their concerns addressed in a timely manner. To date, that hasn't always been easy or possible.

As with most years, 2005 was a year of new beginnings and also a time of loss for Miami Friends.. Friends were saddened by the passing of Bill Wilson, beloved husband of Paula Wilson. Bill, a longtime attender of Miami Friends Meeting, is remembered for his musical talent and his love of life. A Memorial Meeting for

Bill was held August 14, 2005. More happily, in the winter, the Meeting welcomed new members Debbie Arnold and Will Patterson.

In 2005 Miami Friends Meeting laid down the membership of long absent members Matthew Cowden, Allyne Jaycocks, Cynthia Kent, Christina Kent, Brian Kent, Thomas Kent, Chap Morrison, Jane Pyron, John Geer Pyron, Jo Scott Pyron, Aldwyn Zim Jr., and Aldwyn Zim Sr. after receiving no response to letters. The membership of Darden Pyron was laid down at his request.

Many of our young people moved on to college, graduate school, and other areas of the country and the world. We miss them and relish having them with us when they come back to Miami to visit or stay for a while.

More and more it seems, Miami Friends use Miami as a base while commuting to other locations for work and/or leisure time, locations such as New York, China, Atlanta, Cape Cod, New Jersey and others. During the summer, Meetings for Worship are generally smaller than during the winter months with a number of Friends taking extended stays of absence in different places. We recognize that this geographic and seasonal "commuting" means that some of our most active members are not always with us on First Days or even in town for periods of time. We recognize this as who we are right now and acknowledge that this presents both challenges and opportunities to the meeting.

Miami Friends, both the Meeting itself and individual members and attenders, are following many leadings to make a difference in our community and the world.

— There was an outpouring of support from Miami Friends for the victims of the many storms of this season. Along with the local AFSC office, the Meeting has helped a group of migrant workers in West Dade. Further, after Hurricane Katrina, Miami Friend John Rogers traveled to Louisiana, working with AFSC to assess the damage and look for ways for Quaker Meetings to help with rebuilding there. We continue to look for ways to help those still afflicted and although we hope for a quiet 2006, are preparing for the possibilities of the next storm season.

— Miami Friends began a peace vigil just before the Iraq war began, in March 2003. Every Wednesday night, a group of Quakers has held a peace vigil on well-trafficked Sunset Drive in front of the meeting house. Some evenings there are just a few of us; others there are many more. This fall at a special vigil to support Cindy Sheehan, over 70 members of the community joined us.

— The Alternatives to Violence Project ministry continues its work in South Florida with a presence in two state prisons, one Federal prison and well as the larger community. Eduardo Diaz traveled to Venezuela with Jens Braun from New York Yearly Meeting to deliver an Advanced AVP workshop in October. He also led an AVP Mini-Workshop in the Dominican Republic in September. Warren Hoskins held an AVP Mini-Workshop in Miami this fall in anticipation of the October 15 protest in Washington.

— The Meeting's work with Touching Miami with Love continued into the fall. Our young people have been important contributors to this important ministry to Miami's homeless. Young Friends help with hosting a homeless movie night monthly, they staffed a week of summer camp for inner city children, and painted a mural in Reeves Park near downtown. A portion of the proceeds of the fall yard sale went to TML. With the graduation of two of the most active young Friends in this program, the homeless project is now coordinated by families outside the Meeting. We hope to keep in contact with the new director of TML and be involved in other projects with him.

— Kody Hersh attended the Young Friends of FGC Committee and reported on their work to a Meeting for learning. From the New College Campus at Sarasota, Kody continues to be active with FGC and the larger Quaker Community.

We are having a series of adult education sessions based on Truth of the Heart, the writings of George Fox as edited by Rex Ambler. The third First Day of each month different friends have selected and led sessions on topics including, process, the meeting as a whole, Christ – the seed within, women and men in the ministry and others. We recommend this book to other Friends Meeting.

2005 brought an increased number of active and happy children to our meeting each First Day. As our older youth move out to college, our infants grow into toddlers and our toddlers into pre-schoolers, etc., we recognize our increased responsibility to plan and create learning for these little ones. This years, the parents have tried to keep in touch weekly by email, for better planning for First Day School. In addition, in the fall, the Meeting re-instated the First Day School Committee, a committee that had been inactive for several years.

The financial health of the meeting has stabilized after the expenses of the renovation of Bartram house. The Miami Friends appreciates the generous support of SEYM and other Friends Meetings. Our challenge for 2006 is to establish a fund for the care of the Meeting House, with the most immediate need posed by roof problems.

In 2005, Miami Friends implemented a series of yard sales as a way to raise money for the Meeting, the Quaker Center for Peace, Education and Social Justice and other projects the meeting is committed to. We have several loyal and indomitable members who head up these sales, and amazing to all is that the proceeds per sale is in the \$600-\$1,200 range.

Looking forward to 2006, in November, the Overseers hosted what has become an annual potluck for new attenders and members. The purpose of these gatherings is to connect new attenders to the meeting and invite them to participate if they would like. Each committee in the meeting had a representative give a brief presentation to introduce new attenders to the work of their committee. This event happened as the Nominating Committee began its work in earnest to assess the needs of the meeting for the coming year and to determine how to best address those needs through committees. Given the challenges of 2005, that committee formed with a concern to renew some of the meeting's most challenged committees and to keep all of our concerns in balance.

We begin 2006 with a treasured sense of closeness and community often remarked upon at Meeting. The warm smiles of friends and attenders as they arrive on First Day and as the children join us for the last ten minutes of Meeting for Worship, reflect a loving and trusting community that is valued by all.

Addendum 4/12/2006

Orlando Monthly Meeting

State of the Meeting Report 2006

Orlando Monthly Meeting continues to thrive as a refuge for people from other traditions who are seeking a community that is more accepting of alternative lifestyles and faith journeys. We have gained several new members who have become active in the life of the meeting. The influx of new friends made the meeting aware that it must continue to foster a sense of shared community.

A Quakerism 101 course was begun in the fall to further familiarize new attenders and members with Quaker practice and testimonies. Experienced friends also participated in order to strengthen and deepen their Quaker foundations. Plans were made to restart our monthly potluck program to promote social connections in meeting. Our prayer team, bible study group, music group and arts group gave friends opportunities to participate in a variety of activities while deepening their spiritual lives. Efforts were made to reinvigorate and reactivate our committees in order to increase overall participation in the care of meeting and its members.

While seeking to strengthen internal ties among our members, Orlando Monthly Meeting continued to be involved in programs addressing concerns beyond our meeting walls. We made anonymous grants to organizations promoting peaceful conflict resolution and participated in Fresh Start, a local program that assists the homeless in finding jobs and housing. We hosted the January IBM, providing refreshments and arrangements for housing. We also hosted the Michener Lecture in conjunction with Winter Park Monthly Meeting.

Practical matters were also addressed. The library was reorganized, roof repairs were made to Webster Cottage, and committees were consolidated for greater efficiency. Several meeting members faced serious health challenges, and friends found ways to provide some comfort to those in distress. The meeting faced a deep controversy over the management of meeting funds. This issue was peacefully resolved through the persistent effort of the friends involved.

Although Orlando friends faced some difficult times during the past year, we feel encouraged by the increasing participation of members and attenders in the life of meeting, and by the deepening connections felt among friends. We look forward to the new year as an opportunity to continue on our spiritual path as a community.

Palm Beach Monthly Meeting State of the Meeting Report 2005

2005 happily saw fewer dramatic events in Palm Beach Meeting than 2004. We were able to concentrate on becoming more dedicated and outspoken about Quaker values. A Quakerism 101 group completed a course and another is in the planning stages. Deep Ecology and A Course In Miracles continue and interested singers gather 'round the piano on Monday afternoons. Several of our committees meet now during the week, rather than on First Days. The many "other than First Day" activities have helped to strengthen the bonds of community within our Meeting.

Adult Forum is a positive source of discussion and inspiration for our Meeting. Several sessions were spent on the Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice sections. We recognized that the process of considering the sections and the discussions of Quaker practice are as valuable to our Meeting as the resulting document will be.

The Yearly Meeting also asked that we consider our SEYM affiliation with Friends United Meeting. Two of our members attended the FUM Triennial this year. In threshing the issue, we realized that we have not yet crafted a minute on same sex unions for our meeting, nor have we recently looked at our clearness process for all marriages that would be under the care of our Meeting. These are areas we plan to address in 2006.

First Day School has progressed. We have more diverse adult participation than ever before and we have increased our ability to listen and respond to the ideas and ideals of our younger members. Young Friends are participating in the planning for the furniture and finish work for the meetinghouse addition. They have shared many important insights about how the space should be used and respected and about the kind of communication that helps them to feel respected.

The construction project, that will ultimately make our Meeting for Worship universally accessible, has remained our companion throughout 2005. It has challenged us in many ways to live our Quaker values. The City of Lake Worth is requiring a comprehensive landscape plan and Members have committed to using eco-friendly native species for the project.

Last year, we began mentoring our older teens by pairing each teen with an adult member. Tacy Sallen sought clearness on becoming a member and was welcomed into membership in October. Although already a member through her mother's membership, Tacy sought this process as a way to explore her faith and to make a formal commitment to being a Friend. The teen mentoring has enriched our Meeting and we encourage other Meetings to create mentoring partnerships with older teens.

Oversight committee was quite busy this year with membership concerns. The committee made the effort to contact everyone on our list to ask, "How is it with thee?" The inquiries were much appreciated and a couple of lapsed members realized that it was time to lay down their membership. Our beloved Friend Muriel Barker died this year and we had a lovely memorial service. Muriel had moved to California and then to St. Petersburg, Florida.

Susan Jones was welcomed into membership this year and has already moved to Bothell, Washington. Looking over our membership changes for the Yearly Meeting, we realize that we have a large number of non-resident members. One of our ministries seems to be preparing Friends to find their place the world. We are happy to note two membership transfers into Palm Beach Meeting this year: Serrin Anderson from Miami Meeting and Joe Lopez from Bethesda Monthly Meeting (Maryland).

Palm Beach Meeting participated in a number of interfaith activities this year and we look forward to more in the future. The hurricanes and government surveillance of activities at our meetinghouse increased public awareness that Quakers and our Quaker Meeting exist. Publicity always heightens the creative tension between spiritual practice and activism.

In the coming year, we will be searching our minds and faith for peaceful and loving ways to disagree and to connect to the Light in all of us. Our winter retreat theme, Community, Communication, Conflict Resolution and Change reflects this commitment.

We seek to improve our awareness and sensitivity toward one another informally as well as formally. Meeting is our family. It provides a safe place to seek and to ask, "What would the Spirit have me do?" In 2006, we will strengthen our bonds with one another in the Light of the Living Spirit.

Shauna Coolican,
Outgoing clerk

STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT FOR 2005 SARASOTA MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

As our meeting continues to experience growth through new members and attenders, we have felt there is a thirst for spiritual sharing and learning about Quaker beliefs and testimonies. These feelings were recognized and as a result the meeting now has an ongoing inquirers' session once a month with active participation. We also held two religious education sessions, one in the spring on the book, "A Living Faith" by Wilmer Cooper, taught by Fern Mayo, and another in the fall on the Quaker peace testimony, conducted by Jerry Frost. Both sessions were well attended and we were grateful they could be held. We welcomed Jan Dahm, a traveling minister from the St Petersburg meeting, and were uplifted by her spiritual journey. Several members went on a Quaker heritage tour to England in the summer, which increased their knowledge of Quakerism. The meeting also hosted several lectures, seminars and benefit concerts, and we thoughtfully discussed the FUM personnel policy and the presence of homeless persons on our property. These two issues will continue to be discussed in the coming year.

Our young families organized several camping trips where all were invited and they provided much sharing and helped build our sense of community. Our children held bake sales to raise money for tsunami and hurricane relief. We were proud of their efforts and concern for others. They also produced a calendar with their art work. Because the meeting wants to encourage young parents in their involvement in the meeting, we increased child care hours so they could participate more fully in education sessions and business matters.

A threshing session on budgeting was held early in the year to clarify priorities as we move forward. Though this process it was decided to budget for expenditures that the meeting wished to undertake and prioritize them based on actual income. A milestone was reached in December when a decision was made to use funds to retire our mortgage. With this accomplished, we will have more funds for activities related to our spiritual and social leadings. We also completed a much needed records update during the year.

The meeting accepted four beautiful wooden benches from the Augusta, Georgia meeting, which was laid down. We were sad to see the closing of a Friends meeting, but we appreciated the gift with thanks.

We have all felt the loss of two of our members who died during the year, our beloved Elizabeth Clough and Frank Burke.

**Winter Park Monthly Meeting
State of the Meeting Report**

2005 was a year of many challenges and of loss for Winter Park Meeting and for individuals within the Meeting.

We worried and grieved with Pat Fritz as she and Chuck tended to family members in Pennsylvania. We held Martha Morris closely in the Light when after a long illness and severely diminished quality of life, her mother chose to forego any life sustaining treatment—including food. We attended a celebration of Lanita’s life and her special gifts of personality at a memorial service.

Three of our bedrock members, John and Eleanor Wetherill and Cathy Gaskil, announced their intention to move their membership to Orlando Meeting which has oversight of the DeLand Preparatory Meeting they currently attend due to its proximity to John Knox Village where they live.

As our new year begins, we rejoice in the gifts and the promise of our new members and attenders.

Vivian Bird, Acting Clerk

Contents

Correction from Ed Lesnic, Recording Clerk..... 1

FUM Affiliation Statements

- Jacksonville 1-3
- Miami..... 3
- Orlando 4
- Palm Beach 5
- Tampa 6
- Treasure Coast (formerly Stuart) ... 6

State of the Meeting Reports

- Clearwater 7
- Ft. Lauderdale..... 7
- Miami..... 8-10
- Orlando..... 11
- Palm Beach 12-13
- Sarasota..... 13
- Winter Park..... 14