

**Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Minutes of the Yearly Business Meeting
Fourth Month, 9-12, 2009**

Numbered Minutes

09YBM01 The first meeting for worship with a concern for business of the 47th annual gathering of Southeastern Yearly Meeting began with the joy of intergenerational open worship at 4:00pm on April 9, 2009.

09YBM02 Southeastern Yearly Meeting approves the minute from the SEYM Worship and Ministry Committee: The Worship & Ministry Committee, Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, meeting in annual session at Leesburg, Florida, in the fourth month, 2009, endorses the process followed by Miami Monthly Meeting in their endorsement of Cormac Ryder Levenson and affirm that the authority on this process rests with the Miami Monthly Meeting.

Miami Monthly Meeting Minute: *Whereas Cormac Ryder Levenson, having grown up as a member of the Miami Friends Meeting and presently planning to enter a ministry of clinical pastoral care, the Miami Friends Meeting endorses Cormac Ryder Levenson for his ministry as a certified chaplain for five years beginning on the tenth day of the fourth month of 2009 with the possibility of renewal upon request.*"

09YBM03 In the circumstance where an individual requests support, financial or otherwise, from the Yearly Meeting, the Yearly Meeting considers that the individual's request should be considered first by the person's Monthly Meeting and then brought to the appropriate committee of the Yearly Meeting by the Monthly Meeting.

09YBM04 The Yearly Meeting gives permission to Quaker Universalist Fellowship to make out-of-print Michener and Walton lectures available to download from their website without charge. The administrative secretary shall discern which pamphlets are submitted.

09YBM05 Executive Committee is profoundly grateful to Nancy Fennell for her four years of steady, loving, and deeply spirit-led clerking of Interim Business Meeting and Executive Committee. Her discernment and guidance with EC ad hoc Committees has helped to accomplish vital tasks such as a Personnel Policy, Operational Handbook, Child Abuse Prevention Policy, and a process for Yearly Meeting Friends to travel and share their gifts with Monthly Meetings. She has been available to assist with conflict resolution within Monthly Meetings. We thank her for our periods of open worship; her deep interest and abiding faith in our Yearly Meeting inspires many. We are a stronger Yearly Meeting because of her compassionate, dedicated service.

09YBM06 Southeastern Yearly Meeting gladly welcomes Savannah Friends Meeting as one of its constituent monthly meetings. We look forward to many years of loving association and growth in the Spirit.

09YBM07 Southeastern Yearly Meeting approves the Faith and Practice chapter, *The Yearly Meeting, Interim Business Meeting, Yearly Meeting Committees and Yearly Meeting Representatives.*

09YBM08 With regard to the following language from SEYM minute 07YBM15 approved two years ago:

“If at the end of the two year period our membership is not in unity to renew the relationship, SEYM will permanently ay down our membership in F.U.M,”
we are in unity that one yearly meeting session’s discernment cannot be directed by another, and that Yearly Meeting 2009 is not bound by that 2007 directive. We cannot be bound by the action prescribed in that minute, as we realize that discernment, being a corporate process, cannot be held in default from a discussion which was unresolved in its own time. Our discernment about affiliation with FUM is an ongoing process, and needs to acknowledge continuing revelation. It will be discerned when the Spirit has led us into unity.

09YBM09 With regard to the worshipful process in which we have engaged this year in order to discern our way forward including meetings of the ad hoc discernment committee as well as business sessions at this yearly meeting, the results are incomplete. We moved with an intention of not letting this issue drain the energy of our gathering, and so allowed that other concerns and Yearly Meeting business have their allotted time. We did hear strong witness to feelings of pain and abuse brought on by the existence of the FUM Personnel Policy. We also heard a call to wait with fresh patience in order to let us try what love will do. We heard a call for engagement being the way of conflict resolution. We recognize that our body is fatigued by our engagement in this issue. We are both frustrated and blessed in our efforts to resolve the issue, and we will need to find time to do so. Until then, our formal membership in FUM will remain suspended. SEYM fully supports and values the spiritual gifts of our gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer Friends, and we are in unity that we do not accept FUM’s existing personnel policy. We will contribute to selected FUM projects, and we will continue to support observers to FUM gatherings, and to welcome visitors from FUM among us. We seek to maintain a loving relationship with Friends United Meeting.

09YBM10 Southeastern Yearly Meeting approves the nominating committee report. Attached.

09YBM11 SEYM approves the General Fund budget for the fiscal year 2010 (6/1/2009 – 5/31/2010) as published in the documents in advance with the following modification: the contribution to QEW shall be increased by \$75.00 to \$200 and a corresponding increase shall be made to the income from Meetings and Worship Groups line.

09YBM12 The donation of \$500 for FUM in the fiscal year 2010 General Fund budget shall be designated as half each for Ramallah Friends School and the Kaimosi Hospital.

09YBM13 The Earthcare Working Group is inspired to help educate the Yearly Meeting community and to facilitate action that would reduce our impact on earthly resources. We encourage each Monthly meeting to have a meeting for discernment contemplating John Woolman’s statement: “The produce of the Earth is a gift from our Creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the Earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age.” Friends are asked to choose how best to reduce carbon our carbon footprint for Yearly Meeting travel.

09YBM14 The Earthcare Working Group recognized the urgency of continued care for the Earth, in keeping with our Testimonies of simplicity and integrity, and acknowledges Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) as the primary Quaker organization working to heal the Earth and all her Creatures. To that end, the Earthcare working Group wishes to encourage each Monthly Meeting to appoint a Monthly Meeting representative to QEW. We also ask that SEYM encourage each Monthly Meeting to include a line item donation in their budget to QEW.

09YBM15 Southeastern Yearly Meeting is deeply grateful to everyone who worked so hard, with love, to make our annual Gathering possible. We thank Mary Ellen McNish, General Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee and our Walton lecturer, for her generosity and time in grounding us in living faithfully, with hope, through times of struggle. We were refreshed by the beauty of the grounds and friendly, accommodating staff of the Methodist Life Enrichment Center.

09YBM16: Southeastern Yearly Meeting approves providing an e-mail data base to the Friends Journal so that thank notes can be sent out to contributors.