

Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association  
Representative Meeting 144a held by video and telephone conference call  
Fifth Month 4, 2020

With restrictions in place on travel and gatherings due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this representative meeting was conducted via video conference and telephone using the Zoom platform.

Clerk Barbara Esther began by asking Friends to settle in silence.

After a period of silence, the clerk read this selection from our *A Guide to Our Faith and Practice*, with the explanation that she felt it worthwhile to remind Friends why we have a yearly meeting.

*The Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association is composed of its constituent monthly meetings, preparative meetings and worship groups. All members and attenders of these bodies have both the privilege and responsibility to participate in keeping the affairs of the yearly meeting in good order. The yearly meeting exists to support its constituents as they seek in the manner of Friends to live out their lives according to God's leadings. In order to do so, annual sessions are held where matters of business are considered in worship. Much of the work of the yearly meeting is conducted by a variety of committees, which are established and laid down as need arises . . . Yearly meeting sessions also provide time for personal and corporate growth in the Spirit through a variety of activities.*

*A Guide to Our Faith and Practice, SAYMA 2012, page 25*

**144a-01 Opening**

On a roll call, the following monthly meeting representatives were present:

Asheville FM: Morgan Murray  
Atlanta: FM Free Polazzo  
Berea FM: Patricia Gailey  
Birmingham FM: Peter Furst  
Charleston FM: Charles Schade  
Celo FM: Catherine Peck  
Chattanooga FM: Chuck Jones  
Cookeville FM: Rose Black  
Crossville FM: John Strain  
Greenville FM: Scott Henderson  
Huntsville FM: Sherri Messimer  
Nashville FM: Kit Potter  
West Knoxville FM: Nancy Olsen

Others present were:

Annie Black, Cookeville FM, Nominating Committee  
Wood Bouldin, Greenbrier Valley WG, Charleston MM, Clerk of Nominating Committee  
Thais Carr, Nashville FM, Ad Hoc Faith & Practice Queries Revision Committee  
Barbara Esther, Asheville FM, SAYMA Clerk  
Hank Fay, Berea FM, Clerk, Naming Committee  
Carol Lamm, Berea FM, Treasurer, and Interim Recording Clerk  
Bob McGahey, Celo, FM Assistant SAYMA Clerk  
Geeta McGahey, Celo, FM Acting Finance Committee Clerk and nominee for Finance Committee Clerk  
Karen Morris, Atlanta FM, Finance Committee  
Jackson Napier, Berea FM, Finance Committee and nominee for Assistant Treasurer  
Susan Phelan, Huntsville FM, SAYMA Administrative Assistant.  
Brian Yaffe, Celo FM

The clerk reviewed various ways that Friends could indicate requests to speak by phone or using Zoom features. She also explained the use of Zoom features to indicate support for messages and agreement with decisions.

The clerk invited those present to bring forward requests for holding others in the Light. Several Friends were named.

#### **144a-02 Minute of Thanks**

The clerk proposed the following minute of thanks to Atlanta Monthly Meeting, the Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ) Committee and others, for their preparations for the March representative meeting that was cancelled:

**Minute 144a-02-01***We thank all of the Friends who lovingly prepared to open their homes and welcome us to the Atlanta Friends Meetinghouse prior to our cancellation of the representative meeting. All of us are grateful to those who worked to provide hospitality in Atlanta, wishing we could have spent time with Friends face-to-face. We also thank those who endeavored to provide a way for Friends to meet and greet one another on the evening before our meeting.*

Friends approved.

A Friend asked for time for centering. Friends settled into silence.

The clerk invited suggestions for changes to the agenda. There were none.

### **144a-03 Nominations: First Reading**

The clerk explained a new sequence for consideration of nominations, approved at RM143. To allow for seasoning, nominations would be presented for consideration early in the meeting, with approval considered later.

Nominating committee clerk Wood Bouldin, Greenbrier WG, Charleston FM, presented the following slate:

- Jackson Napier, Berea, Assistant Treasurer, to complete 2019-2020 term. Assistant Treasurer becomes Treasurer for a two-year position as of October 1, 2020, to be followed by another year as Assistant Treasurer.
- Geeta McGahey, Celo, Finance Committee Clerk, to complete 2019-2021 term.
- Kendall Ivie, West Knoxville, Member, Finance Committee, 2020-2022 term.
- Free Polazzo, Atlanta, Member, Wider Quaker Organizations (WQO) Allocations Committee, 2020-2022 term.

The clerk invited questions and discussion.

A Friend asked Wood to speak to why the Nominating Committee recommended these Friends. In response, Wood explained the following:

- Free Polazzo has played many roles within SAYMA, which gives him a good background for the WQO allocations committee. His financial expertise will help the committee assess SAYMA's financial impact on the various organizations.
- Kendall Ivie has previously served as treasurer and as a member of the finance committee, and thus has a thorough grasp of all the issues. He has an ability to take matters apart and put them back together.
- Geeta McGahey has been acting clerk of the finance committee since last August. In that role she has done a very good job of keeping track of things. She gets things done, one example being her leadership in guiding the development of the process for allocating WQO contributions.
- Jackson Napier has a good deal of experience with Berea Monthly Meeting and has also connected with Foxfire Friends. He is interested in nonprofit finances. For several months he has been training with SAYMA treasurer Carol Lamm in preparation for becoming assistant treasurer and then moving into the treasurer role.

A follow-up question was whether there were concerns with any of these candidates.

Wood stated that it might matter to some Friends that although Jackson Napier has been an active attendee at Berea MM for several years and more recently attended Foxfire MM, he is not a member of any monthly meeting. With that exception, Wood was not aware of any concerns. Chuck Jones, also a member of the nominating committee, added that Jackson's relative youth might be a concern.

Jackson Napier explained his interest in financial stewardship. It first arose as he helped establish a rotating homeless shelter in Berea. No one in the core organizing group had a grasp of nonprofit finances, a gap which led to distress and even distrust. Seeing a need among such community groups for a better understanding of nonprofit finances, he mentioned his interest in learning more to Carol. She encouraged his interest. He noted that not being a member of the meeting had not interfered with him representing Berea Friends in a variety of roles, both in the meeting and in the wider community.

In discussion, several Friends spoke to active participation in a monthly meeting being as important as formal membership. Other points made were that a person in a leadership role should be conversant with Quaker values, testimonies, and processes. Sometimes formal membership is a stand-in for those qualifications, but the monthly meeting's support is more important. Berea representative Patricia Gailey stated that Berea MM fully endorses Jackson's nomination and sees it as a way that he is once again stepping up to a leadership role.

The clerk explained that Friends would return to the nominating committee's slate for a second reading later in the meeting.

#### **144a-04 Naming Committee**

Hank Fay, Berea, reported that the Naming Committee recommends Sherri Messimer, Huntsville FM for a term on the Nominating Committee. Hank explained that Sherri is relatively new to Friends but stepped up to volunteer for the Naming Committee and is now willing to serve on the Nominating Committee. One concern of the Naming Committee was whether a new Friend would be able to serve effectively on the Nominating Committee. Hank had spoken with Nominating Committee clerk Wood Bouldin about this. Since the Nominating Committee does most of its work through reaching out to monthly meetings, Nominating Committee members don't need to know a lot of people personally. Susan Phelan noted that when even newer to Friends, Sherri accepted the Huntsville representative position and has been faithful in fulfilling that responsibility.

**Minute 144a-04-01: Friends approved Sherri Messimer for a 2020-2022 term on the Nominating Committee.**

#### **144a-05 Nominations: Second Reading**

The clerk began by noting the good discussion earlier about membership – that it had been a reminder that it is important to welcome seekers and encourage them to consider membership. She encouraged Friends to bring the matter up in our monthly meetings, worship groups and at yearly meeting.

Clerk asked for approval of the nominees presented earlier.

Charles Schade, Charleston, made a statement on behalf of Charleston Friends Meeting. After reporting that Charleston is happy to approve the nominees presented, he explained that Charleston Friends wanted to “raise concerns with the urgent need for progress on basic issues that underlie current financial controversies. As an aside, one member of Celo Friends Meeting noted her distress at the amount of time and energy going into this matter that might have been better employed dealing with racism in our meeting and the community.”

A Friend noted that approval does not release any of us from taking responsibility both individually and in our meetings to continue to move forward against racism.

There was some further discussion regarding the assistant treasurer position and whether the candidate, Jackson Napier, was committed to following Quaker process. Jackson stated that his understanding of Quaker process is making decisions together as a community, and that he is committed to doing the best he can to do that.

Nominations were then considered one-by-one.

**Minute 144a-05-01: Friends approved:**

- **Jackson Napier as assistant treasurer.**
- **Geeta McGahey as clerk of Finance Committee.**
- **Kendall Ivie as member of Finance Committee.**
- **Free Polazzo as member of WQO Allocations Committee.**

The approved positions appear as Attachment A.

**144a-06 Next Representative Meeting**

The clerk explained that she expects to hold another virtual representative meeting before September. She envisions the agenda primarily to be the treasurer’s report and proposed budget for next fiscal year, which begins October 1. She asked for Friends’ input. Points made in the ensuing discussion included the following:

- **Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF).** Now that the SAYF community is unable to meet for weekend retreats, SAYF administrative assistant Autumn Woodward is busy with various activities to keep the SAYF community together while they are apart.
- **Consultant to assist in moving through conflict.** In a pre-meeting communication, the Finance Committee had expressed its support for engaging a consultant to assist SAYMA in moving forward through current conflicts. The committee hopes that the next rep

meeting agenda will include finding a way forward on this. A proposal might come from Ministry and Nurture, URJ, Finance or another committee.

- **Concerns about financial stress on SAYMA and others:**

- A Friend recalled that the 2008 recession resulted in a significant drop in SAYMA's revenue and advised Friends to anticipate revenue reductions in the current economic downturn. This Friend expressed concern to preserve core functions such as SAYF.
- Another Friend observed that Friends of color in SAYMA are more at risk than others. Since Friends of color are a part of our yearly meeting, we need to consider how to protect and respond to their interests.

#### **144a-07 More Open Positions of Responsibility**

There are many open positions of responsibility to be filled. A list of open positions is attached to the minutes as Attachment B. Representatives are urged to follow up with their monthly meetings and forward possible candidates to the Nominating Committee.

#### **144a-08 Closing**

The clerk thanked everyone for participating, both those who spoke and those whose presence held the meeting in the Light. The meeting closed with a period of silent worship.

Barbara Esther, Clerk  
(archive copies signed)

Carol Lamm, Interim Recording Clerk  
(archive copies signed)

**Attachment A. Approved Positions RM144a – 4 May 2020**

Approved May 4 Rep Mtg			Current Term	Meeting
<i>Officers</i>				
Jackson	Napier	Assist Treasurer	2019-2020	Berea
			NOTE: Position Term	
			1-2-1	
<i>Finance</i>		<i>Committee</i>		
Geeta	McGahey	Clerk	2019-2021	Celo
Kendall	Ivie	member	2020-2022	West Knoxville
<i>WQO</i>		<i>Allocations</i>		
Free	Polazzo	member	2020-2022	Atlanta
<i>Nominating</i>		<i>Committee</i>		
Sherri	Messimer	member	2020-2022	Huntsville

**Attachment B. Open Positions**

Open Positions after May 4 Rep Mtg Current Term

STANDING COMMITTEES

Ministry and Nurture  
 member 2019-2021

Finance Committee  
 member 2018-2021

Personnel Committee  
 member

SAYF Steering  
 member  
 member

JYM Support  
 member

Yearly Meeting Planning Committee  
 Layout Editor 2018-2020

Peace and Social Concerns  
 member 2018-2020  
 member 2017-2019  
 member 2015-2019  
 member  
 member

Southern Appalachian Friend  
 editor 2018-2020

Web Support  
 Clerk 2016-2018

Outreach  
 member 2018-2020  
 YAF member

SAYMA-URJ  
 member  
 member  
 member  
 member  
 member

SAYF Support  
 member

Representatives to Wider Quaker Organizations  
 FGC 2018-2021  
 Friends Peace Teams 2016-2019  
 Friends Peace Teams 2015-2018