

Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association  
Warren Wilson College, Swannanoa, North Carolina  
47th Annual Meeting, June 15 – 18, 2017

**Thursday, June 15**

**47-01 Opening Worship**

We gathered for the 47<sup>th</sup> annual gathering of Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA) with an extended period of worship.

**47-02 Welcome and Reading (Attachment A: Reading)**

The Clerk read the 2016 Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Epistle.

**47-03 Introductions/ Roll Call (Attachment B: Attendance)**

The Clerk welcomed Friends to the 2017 Annual Sessions and introducing those at the front table: Jon Saderholm, Clerk (Berea), Rebecca Sullivan, Recording Clerk (Atlanta), and Barbara Esther, Assistant Clerk (Asheville).

The roll call of Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups was held. Friends were asked to stand or signal when the names of their meeting or worship group were called.

Guest were invited to introduce themselves and included:

Gretchen Castle, General Secretary Friends World Committee for Consultation in London  
Jami DeMarco, Adelphi Friends Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting & Friends Committee for  
National Legislation

Vanessa Julye, Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting &  
Friends General Conference

Avis Wanda McClinton, Abington Monthly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

Liz Dykes, Savannah Meeting, Southeastern Yearly Meeting & SAYMA Administrative  
Assistant

**47-04 Agenda Review (Attachment C: Clerks Thoughts)**

The Clerk gave some brief thoughts on how our business shall be conducted.

**47-04-01** On the recommendation of the Clerk, Friends approved the agenda with modifications.

**47-05 Appoint the Epistle Committee**

The Epistle Committee meets 2 or 3 times during the week to capture the essence of what happens throughout our time together.

**47-05-01** Friends approved Nancy Olsen (West Knoxville), Shahina Lakhani (Atlanta), and Adrian Weir (Asheville) to serve on the epistle committee during Yearly Meeting Sessions 2017.

#### **47-06 Administrative Assistant (Attachment D)**

Liz Dykes, Administrative Assistant, reminded us that this is her 11<sup>th</sup> and penultimate report to SAYMA as the administrative assistant. She read her report and friends accepted it. The Census report is complete minus one meeting and the total membership decreased by 11 people from last year. Meetings are still reporting 200 inactive adult members which is about 15%.

Administrative Assistant will be recommending to the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee that the late registration deadline be moved up because almost 50% of registrations arrived in the last two days of registration. There may also be a recommendation to increase the late fee.

**47-06-01** Friends accepted the Administrative Assistant's report.

#### **47-07 Treasurer (Attachment E: Report and Presentation)**

Roger Wise, Treasurer (Charleston), presented the Treasurer's report via power point, with easy to follow snapshots of our financial situation as a way to make it accessible to everyone present. We are budgeted for a deficit this year and may have a surplus due to expenses being below budget. We have a number of long-term trends that are a concern. We have \$4378.22 left in our budget with 4 months until the end of the fiscal year in September.

Southern Appalachian Young Friends has a separate account that is monitored by the treasurer. They have usually stayed to their budget. However, this year they had a decrease in the number of participants since a large number of seniors graduating last year. They also had a large number of scholarship requests this year so they are looking into their sustainability.

**47-07-01** Friends thanked Roger Wise, Treasurer, and Charles Schade, Assistant Treasurer, for the work they have done to make the budget approachable to all. Friends accepted the Treasurer's Report.

#### **47-08 Ministry & Nurture (Attachment F: Committee Reports)**

Thais Carr, co-clerk Ministry and Nurture (Nashville), introduced Laura Seeger (Chattanooga) as her other co-clerk. Ministry and Nurture started using more electronic communication as a way to decrease their carbon footprint. The committee is aware of the need for worship on phone calls and tries to limit decisions by email. We have had some conflicts in the yearly meeting this year and Ministry and Nurture has served as informal mediators as well as just holding the meetings in the light. Until a meeting asks for help, Ministry and Nurture doesn't do anything. Please reach out to them if needed. Ministry and Nurture is also interested in hearing about specifics topics meetings would like to be further educated about. Thais reminded us that every meeting is allowed a representative to the committee and not all meetings currently have one. Ministry and Nurture has noticed more involvement of friends in social action in the yearly meeting as seen in the state of the monthly meeting reports. Ministry and Nurture granted several requests for financial support for travel.

A Friend asked what qualifications the committee has for dealing with racial concerns. Thais said they are open to being educated, but they realize the best they can do is be a presence for conflict in the yearly meeting and hold the meetings in the light.

Geeta McGahey (Celo) has spent the last year traveling amongst non-FGC friends with the support of Ministry and Nurture. She is traveling with a concern to try to reach across the branches of Quakerism as well as a concern for environmental causes and in particular wanting to support meeting understand and uphold the Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice. Geeta went to North Carolina Yearly Meeting–Friends United Meeting (NCYM-FUM) last year and hopes to return this year with the support of SAYMA Ministry and Nurture. Geeta will also be traveling the Friends United Meetings Triennial. Geeta travels as a member of SAYMA and with greetings from SAYMA.

#### **47-09 Personnel Committee (Attachment F: Committee Reports)**

Barbara Ester, clerk of Personnel (Asheville), reported on behalf of Personnel and read parts of the report.

*Action Item – Proposed Minute: The Personnel Committee recommends we adopt a policy/procedure for our employees when the need, such as need for surgery, extended absence due to injury or illness, or pregnancy/ childbirth, arises. Because our employees are part-time workers, recovery from smaller health problems such as a cold or other short-term illnesses can be worked into the normal work week or month in most cases. When a major illness occurs, there may be a need for a longer absence. If approved, leave will be earned at the rate of one day (8 hours) for every 160 hours worked, equivalent to about one day per a full-time month of employment. The use of this leave would need to be requested of, reviewed and approved by the supervisor for that employee (SAYMA Clerk for the Administrative Assistant and clerks of SAYF for the SAYF Administrative Assistant).*

Friends had a number of concerns and questions about the need for a policy and if it was enough time. Another Friend also wondering why the leave time needed to be earned instead of just awarded when needed. Another friend brought up the idea as a contract between the yearly meeting as the employer and the employee. The employees have committed to us (the Yearly Meeting) and we need to take care of our employees when time comes up. Again, why do we need to have a policy. Why can't we take care of our employees? Another Friend asked if it is possible to make the policy more generous.

Other Friends brought up the idea that a plan does not limit the decisions in the future, but instead allows the employees to be aware of what is available if the need arises. The policy would allow the employee to understand that they are being taken care of. A friend reminded us that a policy is important from a human resource stand point and should be implemented equally to all employees. One employee who needed to take leave this year told us that in her experience was the policy was very fair. However, it would have been more reassuring to know the policy beforehand instead of having to wait to hear what personnel was going to decide.

**47-09-01** Friends united with the current proposed policy and urged the committee to continue to look at the policy.

#### **47-10 Friends World Committee for Wider Quaker Organization Reports)**

Shahina Lakhani, one of SAYMA's representatives to FWCC Section of Americas, introduced Gretchen Castle of FWCC London Office. Gretchen feels a great calling to the work of FWCC and feels the mission of enlarging the Quaker tent through profound diversity and amplifying the Quaker voice around the world is powerful. Gretchen grew up in Iowa the daughter of a Quaker pastor in Friends United Meeting. She spent 30 years in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting where she served as Presiding Clerk. Gretchen has two twenty-something daughters, one of whom is currently serving with Quaker Voluntary Service in Philadelphia. Lastly, Gretchen sang in a band for 15 years called "Faith and Practice" with the tag line "When good Quakers go bad."

Gretchen started by bringing greetings from Friends all over the world. FWCC is important to SAYMA Friends because FWCC is the gathering body for worldwide Quakers. It is the only body that has this purview and purpose. We are all a part of this larger Quaker world. How do we know how the spirit moves amongst us around the world if we don't gather and listen to one another? FWCC sees themselves doing diversity work together, so that we can understand each other because we look different and worship in entirely different ways. Diversity is about understanding one another and appreciation or finding the unity amongst us. FWCC's work is about connecting Friends, crossing cultures, and changing lives through faith. Gretchen also talked about the different ways she represents Quakers around the world.

Big question: How do we see our Quaker diversity as a strength? How does your experience of other ways of worship expand your understanding?

#### **47-11 Announcements**

#### **47-12 Closing**

Friends closed with a moment of worship.

#### **Friday, June 16**

#### **47-13 Opening Worship**

The Yearly Meeting Business resumed with an extended period of expectant open worship. Three messages were shared during this time of worship.

#### **47-14 Introductions/Roll Call (Attachment B: Attendance)**

The Clerk Introducing those at the front table: Jon Saderholm, Clerk (Berea), Rebecca Sullivan, Recording Clerk (Atlanta), and Barbara Esther, Assistant Clerk (Asheville).

The roll call of Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups was held. Friends were asked to stand or signal when the names of their meeting or worship group were called.

Guest were invited to introduce themselves and included:  
Andrei Israel, Executive Director of William Penn House  
Jacob Flowers, South Regional Director for American Friends Service Committee  
Lori Fernald Kamala, Chapel Hill Meeting & American Friends Service Committee -  
Greensboro Office  
Steve Newsom, Fayetteville Monthly Meeting & Quaker House Executive Director  
Mary Jo Kingle, Charlotte Friends Meeting & Quaker Earthcare Witness  
Hayley Hathaway, Monadnock Friends Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting & Quaker  
Earthcare Witness & Friends Peace Teams

#### **47-15 Welcome and Reading**

The Clerk opened with brief thoughts on how our business shall be conducted.

#### **47-16 Agenda Review**

**47-16-01** On the recommendation of the Clerk, Friends approved the agenda with modifications.

#### **47-17 Finance Committee (Attachment H: Budget)**

Lee Ann Swarm, clerk of Finance (West Knoxville), presented the first reading of the budget. She started by reminding us that the fiscal year runs through September. Our budget is actually approved at the September Representative Meeting so this is an opportunity for us to review what is going on. Last year, we approved an adjustment to our assessment that is scheduled to happen this year, which will increase the assessment to \$75 per person (minute 46-23-01).

Finance committee has three major points to their report. First, Finance committee has decided to change the way to calculate the reserves from 50% of all yearly meeting expenses other than those for the annual sessions to 40% of current operating budget which excludes all annual session expenses as well as Wider Quaker Organization contributions and set-aside allocations.

Second, finance committee has been thinking about how to tie an increase in assessments every three years to the cost of living adjustment tied to the consumer price index.

Third they proposed the following minute: *To allow clearly for broader reimbursement of travel expenses the definition of "positions of responsibility" will expand to include members of SAYMA committees both ad hoc and standing.*

**47-17-01** Friends accepted the proposed minute with minor changes. Friends also accepted the report.

#### **47-18 Nominating (Attachment I)**

Beth Meyers, clerk of Nominating (Berea), talked about nominating's need to hear from the body about people who would be good to serve. The body saw the list of committees and what positions will be available this year. A friend raised the concern that some committees are not well staggered.

#### **47-19 Uplifting Racial Justice Committee Proposal (SAYMA URJ) (Attachment J)**

We started this agenda item by acknowledging the ancestors of these lands. Sharon Smith opened by singing the Anishnabeg Prophecy Song to the four directions. Translated into English, it calls us to remember to:

Arise, wake up, stand up,  
Be counted.  
Take care of your responsibilities,  
To yourselves, your families, and your communities,  
For you are recognized in the Spirit World.

Folami Adams (Atlanta) and Sharon Smith (Asheville) co-clerks of SAYMA URJ read some of the report to give us background of what has happened in the last year since minute 46-31-01 was approved.

They followed by reading the Vision, Mission, and Goals of the Committee (See Report).

Friends responded to the proposal. One Friend supported the proposal because we need to put our money where our mouths are. Friends have concerns about the budget and the amount of money, but the Clerk was clear that at this time we need to focus on approving the formation of the committee and then after that we can approve the budget request.

Another Friend stood in support of the creation of the committee, but also stated that they don't believe it is the body's role to wordsmith or talk about the vision, mission, and goals for this group. The friend asked how can the body support SAYMA is reaching these goals? Is it for SAYMA URJ only or is it something for the whole body? The answer was yes. The White support group is the way for non-People of Color to support the work of the goals and helping the yearly meeting as a whole reach these goals.

A Friend asked is there a goal to increase the number of Friends of color. The co-clerks of the committee answered this question by saying that the way to increase Friends of color is about welcoming new Friends so that they understand the system. Creating a positive experience is much more important than actually increasing the number by a certain percentage in a certain amount of years.

There was not unity at this meeting to approve the formation of the committee. With time running out we decided to hold over the process and return to this business item the next day.

#### **47-20 Appoint the Naming Committee**

The naming committee is responsible for the appointment of members to the nominating committee.

**47-20-01** Friends approved the appointment of Hank Fay (Berea), Chris Burg (Greenville), and Geeta McGahey (Celo) to serve on naming committee for SAYMA 2017 Sessions to find one new member for nominating committee.

#### **47-21 Announcements**

#### **47-22 Closing**

Friends closed with a moment of silent worship.

#### **Saturday, June 17 8:15 -- 10:30 am**

#### **47-23 Opening Worship**

The Yearly Meeting Business resumed with a moment of silent expectant worship.

#### **47-24 Introductions/ Roll Call (Attachment B: Attendance)**

The Clerk introducing those at the front table: Jon Saderholm, Clerk (Berea), Rebecca Sullivan, Recording Clerk (Atlanta), and Barbara Esther, Assistant Clerk (Asheville).

The roll call of Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups was held. Friends were asked to stand or signal when the names of their meeting or worship group were called.

Guest were invited to introduce themselves and included:

Kindra Bradly, Spring Friends Meeting, Incoming Director of Quaker House

#### **47-25 Agenda Review**

**47-25-01** Friends approved the agenda.

#### **47-26 Uplifting Racial Justice Committee Proposal (SAYMA URJ) (Attachment J)**

Friends returned to the proposal from SAYMA URJ. The Clerk lead us through a step by step unity process to figure out what we could unite and where we had concerns.

First Statement: SAYMA understands its deep responsibility to create an environment that is safe and welcoming to Friends of color and continues to unite behind the creation of a standing committee to provide focused support in their monthly meetings and at Yearly Meeting.

Friends has a couple concerns and words to change, but were ready to move forward. A need was brought to us and we need to uphold this idea and keep moving toward finding out how to get there.

One Friend asked if the Clerk was not able to clerk this item, but generally the body agreed the Clerk had a vision for how to clerk the meeting, but not a vision for where we would end at the end of the day.

One Friend stood and shared that they were not sure the Yearly Meeting needed a standing committee but instead a leadership team to lead a well-funded campaign to show us where our racism is. This friend was not standing in the way but was offering their vision for what the yearly meeting might do to specifically to address this issue directly.

Second Statement: SAYMA URJ Vision: SAYMA/URJ envisions a Yearly Meeting community where every Friend of color is safe and feels welcome. We see a SAYMA community where the divine light within every Friend of color is affirmed, their unique history, spiritual journey and lived truth is honored, where our messages and concerns, are heard and respected with due consideration. We see a SAYMA community where Friends of color are empowered to build close spiritual Friendships, appreciation, love and support for the weighty responsibilities we carry as people of color, embodying Quaker Testimonies, within and outside of the Religious Society of Friends.

Friends were in agreement with the vision of this committee.

Third Statement: SAYMA URJ Mission: To help SAYMA become a safe and welcoming place for Friends of Color. The committee will do this by providing a safe place for Friends of Color to bring issues and concerns regarding racism within their monthly meetings and SAYMA, and to find support and advocacy. The committee will also work to raise awareness about white supremacy (aka racism) within SAYMA by compiling and disseminating educational resources.

One Friend stood to state their discomfort with the term White Supremacy because White Supremacy is a term that represents the white caps and physical violence done. They did acknowledge that there is also some structural violence aspect of racism but that is not what they hear when the term White Supremacy is said. Other Friends stated it is important for this term to stay in because as White Friends we need to be okay with the discomfort of the term. A Friend of Color offered us the reminder that we “White Friends” have been given the power and that now is the time to change that. This Friend is supporting the White Friends as they acknowledge and enter the work. Another Friend stated that this statement is written succinctly. We don’t want to water it down by changing the wording, but offered that we provide an asterisk to define and understand the context for why we are using White Supremacy. Another Friend reminded us that the United States is founded on White Supremacy because people arrived and started kicking people around and there isn’t a need for an asterisk, instead we need to acknowledge that foundation of our country. Friends continued to acknowledge that the phrase makes them uncomfortable, and yet the statement is important in the way it was presented. Who are we to presume the lived experience of others.

Friends were able to come to agreement about the mission statement as written.



Next we moved to concerns about the structure of the committee. The following concerns were raised and some were responded to.

- Irony of working towards equality but only Friends of Color will be members of SAYMA URJ. We are all Friends and that divine spirit speaks in and through all of us.
  - o Friends need to be separate so that Friends of Colors can make sure they stay in the leadership.
  - o Another reason the committee needs to be made up of on Friends of Color is because there is work that Friends of Color need to do with each other.
- There is no provision for how people are to be members. What happens if members of the committee leave or grow wary who replaces them? The Ad Hoc committee was named by the Clerk with most people bringing their own name forward.
  - o The ad hoc committee would like to recommend that nominating committee bring the names forward, but members of SAYMA URJ send the recommendations for those names.
- How the committee works inside the structure of SAYMA and Monthly Meetings. We are all Friends. We need to work collectively to find the Yearly Meetings way. This committee if it gets formed, will ultimately be doing its own work and needs to report to the yearly meeting so that the whole body is aware of the work they do.
- There was a sense of fear in the room that was based in the fact that White Friends will be excluded from the work of the committee. A set of Friends reminded us that Quakers do this all the time, for example, Finance Committee, and Youth Groups. The people that make up these committees bring their talents and are drawn to the work of that committee. A new issue has come forward and Friends of Color are the people who need to do this within this specialized group. We ought to have faith and trust in this committee, to let them form, let them find the details in that committee and how they might work and bring things forward to the entire Yearly Meeting. Clearly this committee does not work if it does not work within and for all of us.
- It is not the practice of SAYMA to form committees that are exclusionary by visible designations. We do not have to form a committee for Friends of Colors to organize themselves, where separation between SAYMA and the body SAYMA is creating. We are one yearly meeting. We are not an assembly of groups. We are one yearly meeting.
- This is not a committee of SAYMA but instead a group we honor. A SAYMA committee is open to friends who have the talents and have the motivation. And ultimately selected by the Spirit through the body.
- SAYMA committees do not have their own checking account. SAYMA committees have a budget and they are administered from the Treasurer.
- Further consideration from the points of concern from Charleston meeting.
- For this committee to do this work, we need to make SAYMA safe for them and it makes complete sense for a committee that is doing this work. We all need to feel safe for this committee to be formed.
- Concern of what has happened since the mission and vision was formed. A Friend on the ad hoc committee has experienced some silencing on the next steps. Sometimes visionaries are not the ones to do the work. This Friend has felt like they have been asked to leave the group.

- Another Friend responded by saying what they thought had happened so that the body heard their experience. Friends of Color have different experiences in term of experience in Quakerism, as well as identity and childhood experiences. The SAYMA URJ community and committee has its own work to do.

The Clerk tried to seek approval of the formation of the standing committee with the following Proposed Minutes.

**Proposed Minute 1:** Friends approved the creation of a standing committee with the vision and mission as presented in the proposal. At the same time, Friends ask that these concerns, brought today, and other concerns be taken back to the committee and ask that the committee bring back a report to representative meeting and then Yearly Meeting.

**Proposed Minute 2:** The body asks nominating to appoint 3 friends for one year term and 3 friends for a two-year term so that the standing committee can be filled this week to start the staggering of terms.

Friends were not ready to approve the minutes as written. The Clerk took some time to try to figure out where we might go next. Friends were finally able to approve the following minute.

**47-26-01** Friends approved the creation of the SAYMA URJ standing committee with the vision and mission as presented in the proposal.

#### **47-27 Announcements**

#### **47-28 Closing Worship**

Friends closed with a quick moment of worship.

#### **Sunday, June 18**

#### **47-29 Opening Worship**

We gathered and opened with a moment of open expectant worship.

#### **47-30 Introductions/ Roll Call (Attachment B: Attendance)**

The Clerk introduced those at the front table: Jon Saderholm, Clerk (Berea), Rebecca Sullivan, Recording Clerk (Atlanta), and Barbara Esther, Assistant Clerk (Asheville).

#### **47-31 Agenda Review**

Friends approved the agenda.

#### **47-32 SAYMA Reps to WQO's (Attachment G: Wider Quaker Organization Reports)**

The Recording Clerk read the list of representatives to the Wider Quaker Organizations and asked those friends to stand so we could see who they were. Bob McGahey asked to read one paragraph from the Quaker Earthcare Witness report about their upcoming campaign to support the Decade for People of African Descent.

### **47-33 Quaker Earthcare Witness – Wider Quaker Organization Report**

Hayley Hathaway reported on behalf of QEW. QEW is working on climate change, and recently updated their Earthcare Curriculum. QEW does a lot around education. There are a lot of materials on environmental issues, how to green your meeting, immigration, and population growth. Hayley also made sure to let Friends know that QEW offers a mini grant for meetings and Quakers to support sustainability projects.

### **47-34 Nominating (Attachment I)**

Beth Meyer, clerk of Nominating (Berea), introduced the nominating committee as well as the names coming forward for approval.

Concerns about nominations: One Friend brought up the concern that their needs to be a Friend of Color on the Ministry and Nurture Committee. Finance committee also asked for a Friend of Color to join their committee because of the decisions ahead for SAYMA. Both of these concerns were based in the idea that we need to start implementing structures that support our work towards Uplifting Racial Justice in the yearly meeting. There were also a handful of concerns brought forward about Ministry and Nurture and who is an at-large member and who is a representative from their meeting. Nominating also did not bring forward the new co-clerk name for Ministry and Nurture and friends asked who would be supporting Thais Carr.

**47-34-01** Friend approved the nominating committee slate except for the Ministry and Nurture committee. Friends asked that the Ministry and Nurture slate be brought to September Representative meeting to give time for clarity to be found on who is a meeting appointee and who is At-Large member.

Beth then brought forward the Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) Steering Committee Slate. For the last year, there has been an ad hoc SAYF Steering Committee Oversight Committee which brought a recommendation to nominating this week. Because this recommendation is new and will take some discernment, nominating is asking that Friends approve the current SAYF Steering Committee until the Fall Representative meeting and then at that time nominating will bring forward their recommendation about how to move forward with the SAYF Steering Committee membership.

**47-34-02** Friends approved the SAYF Steering Committee slate until the Fall Representative Meeting at which point nominating will report back from the Ah Hoc SAYF Steering Oversight Committee.

### **47-35 Finance Committee**

Lee Ann Swarm, clerk of Finance (West Knoxville), asked for questions on the second reading of the budget. Again, the budget is accepted by this body but is not approved until the Fall Representative body. No major concerns were brought forward.

### **47-36 SAYMA Earthcare Action Network (Attachment F: Committee reports)**

Bob McGahey, clerk of SAYMA Earthcare Action Network (Celo), read the report.

### **47-37 Ministry & Nurture: State of the Society Report (Attachment F: Committee reports)**

Laura Seeger, co-clerk of M&N (Chattanooga), read the State of Society Report.

### **47-38 Ad hoc Assessment Committee (Attachment K)**

Carol Lamm (Berea) reported for the Ad hoc Assessment Committee. Carol started by giving some background information on the work the committee has done over the last year. Including some summary information from the report they gave at the March 2017 Representative Meeting on how the assessment is “calculated,” as well as the results they found about how meetings calculate their assessment.

The committee found that the assessment is tied to how meetings feel about their connection to SAYMA. There are also issues around membership and learning from each other about how to deal with membership and how to stay in contact with distance members.

The committee brought forward three recommendations about where they feel like they should take their work from here.

1. We recommend that SAYMA initiate a process that will engage monthly meetings in reflection and clarification around assessment-related topics, broadly defined, over the coming year, in preparation for approving a revised assessment system at YM 2018.
2. We recommend that YM 2017 approve guiding principles for a revised assessment system, and we propose five principles for consideration.
3. We recommend that YM 2017 ask our committee to continue its work for another year, with a charge to:
  - a. Shepherd the process of engaging monthly meetings in reflection and clarification around assessment-related topics.
  - b. Develop recommendations for a revised assessment system to bring to YM 2018, taking into consideration results of the monthly meeting reflection in step 1.
  - c. Review the annual census process and bringing recommendations for simplification and alignment with the assessment.

**47-38-01** Friends approved the first and third proposal allowing the committee to continue its work on understanding how assessments are calculated. Friends felt like the second proposal needs more seasoning at the Fall Representative Meeting in September.

### **47-39 Naming Committee**

Chris Berg (Greenville) brought forward the name of Kendall Ivie for a two-year term on nominating. Naming committee also brought forward the recommendation that this

coming year SAYMA name the naming committee at the Spring Representative Meeting because five members of nominating committee are finishing their term next year.

**47-39-01** Friends approved Kendall Ivey for a two-year term on nominating committee.

**47-39-02** Friends approved the recommendation from naming committee that next year naming committee be appointed at the Spring Representative Meeting.

**47-40 Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) Steering Committee (Attachment F: Committee reports)**

Mary Linda McKinney, SAYF Steering Committee member (Nashville), read the SAYF Steering Committee report.

**47-41 Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) Report (Attachment L)**

Jonas Kramer- Dickie (Atlanta) and Mile Loftis (Memphis) gave the SAYF report.

**47-42 Personnel**

Barbara Ester, clerk of Personnel, read the minute of appreciation for Liz Dykes.

*There once was a SAYMA AA  
Who frequently showed us the way.  
She nudged us to do  
What was needed on cue.  
Her example inspires us today.*

*Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association has had a great gift in the person of Elizabeth Dykes, better known as Liz, for over a decade. In the early years as administrative assistant, she asked for more work because she so efficiently completed the assignments she was given. We all came to rely on her, "Liz can do that!" echoed until finally she had to tell us to stop sending her more work.*

*There once was a woman named Liz  
Who filed, sent and wrote in a whiz.  
"More work!" was her cry,  
The bar was set high,  
She's simply the fastest there is.*

*Whatever befell her, Liz faithfully served the yearly meeting. This past year has been particularly trying for her, but Mike and a cadre of concerned f/Friends rallied behind her, attempting to give back a little of what Liz had given us over the years.*

*By next year, Liz and Mike plan to retire and move to Florida, just a little closer to that magical kingdom Liz loves to visit in Orlando. By then Liz will have passed on her wisdom and personal magic to another administrative assistant. We hope she knows how she is loved and*

*admired among SAYMA Friends and that she will also know she always has a home at our monthly and yearly meeting gatherings. Thank you, Liz.*

*A decade ago there weren't many  
Who could be SAYMA's top mother henny.  
Neither Rom, Vick nor Mary  
Wiolds the wand of a faery,  
Liz alone has been our magic penny.*

#### **47-43 Minute of Appreciation for Carol Ciscel**

Carol Nickle, clerk of Yearly Meeting Planning Committee (West Knoxville), read the minute of appreciation for Carol Ciscel. We were able to get a book plate printed with this minute and the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee will present her with the minute and a book.

*Friends thank Carol Ciscel for her many years of service on the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee. She served as a member (2005-2006, 2017), Clerk (2007, 2012-2015), and Layout Editor (2008-2010, 2014-2016). Carol's talent and commitment to SAYMA is a gift from which we all benefit and are all nourished. She set a high standard for hard, devoted work in behalf of Yearly Meeting, and those of us who follow her are trying to measure up to the high standard she has left with us. Thank you, Carol, for showing us the way in this ongoing work.*

**47-43-01** Friends approved the minute.

#### **47-44 Registrar's Report (Attachment M)**

Lisa West, Registrar (Nashville), thanked all those who helped the registers during check-in and check-out. Our total participation was 232 people which was down 12 from last year. We had 14 in the Junior Yearly Meeting Program (those under 12), 31 in the Southern Appalachian Young Friends Program, 15 Young Adult Friends and 41 Frist time attenders. This year we collected over \$1400 in scholarship and granted \$1960 in scholarships for Friends to attend. We collected \$560 in late fees and waived \$3903 of fees for staff, Friendly Adult Nurturers and Wider Quaker Organization visitors.

#### **47-45 Quaker House Minute**

Hank Fay, Quaker House Representative, brought a proposed minute of appreciation for Steve and Lynn Newsome the outgoing directors.

*SAYMA recognizes and expresses both gratitude and wonder at the contribution of Steve and Lynn Newsom to Quaker House during their five years as co-directors. The growth in the breadth and depth of the services provided to the community, military members and their families is truly Quakerism in action.*

**47-45-01** Friends approved the minute.

#### **47-46 Set Dates & Hosts for Rep. Meetings**

The Clerk announced that our Fall Representative Meeting will be held at September 16 at West Knoxville Meeting and our Spring Representative Meeting will be held March 17 at Celo Meeting.

#### **47-47 Reading of the Epistles (Attachment N)**

Nancy Olsen (West Knoxville) read the SAYMA Epistle.

**47-47-01** Friends accepted the SAYMA epistle.

Guthrie Armstrong (Atlanta) and Grace Beavin (Berea) read the Young Adult Friends epistle.

Southern Appalachian Young Friends wrote a theme song for their epistle this year, which they sang for us after their report earlier in the agenda.

Nicolina Hanson-Neft, Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) coordinator (Atlanta), and John Maddan, assistant JYM coordinator (Atlanta), are both Quaker Voluntary Service Fellows in Atlanta allowing them to come join us this year and run the JYM program. JYM had 5 children this year. We had lots of fun. We created a sports camp, went to the creek in the rain and had a hand full of visitors for music and storytelling. The book *When a Bully is President: Truth and Creativity for Oppressive Times* offered the center of our program and allowed the JYMers the time to talk about how to resist oppression as well as the historical figures they knew about that had resisted oppression.

Laura McNorlin, Play-Care coordinator (Atlanta), read the Play-Care epistle.

#### **47-48 Junior Yearly Meeting Committee Report (Attachment F: Committee reports)**

Jennifer Dickie, clerk of Junior Yearly Meeting Committee (Atlanta), read a summary of the JYM committee report.

#### **47-49 Minute of Thanks**

Friends are again grateful for our time together in the familiar and beautiful setting of Warren Wilson College and to its staff. We are nourished by the working farm that provides delicious food to the world's best cafeteria. We are glad to gather in a place that resonates so well with our values.

#### **47-50 Announcements**

## **47-51 Closing Worship**

The 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Sessions of Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting closed with an extended time of worship.

Jon Saderholm, clerk  
(archive copies signed)

Rebecca Sullivan, recording clerk

### Attachments:

- A: Reading
- B: Attendance (printed copies only)
- C: Clerk's Thoughts
- D: Administrative Assistant's report and 2016 Census
- E: Treasurer's report
- F: Committee reports
- G: Wider Quaker Organization Reports
- H: Draft Budget
- I: Nominating Committee Report
- J: SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice Ad Hoc Committee report
- K: Ad Hoc Assessments Committee report
- L: SAYF report
- M: Registrar's Report
- N: Epistles
- O: State of the Meeting Reports



## Attachment A: Reading

### Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Epistles 2016

Greetings to Friends Everywhere!

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met for our 196th Annual Sessions on the campus of Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana from July 27 to July 31, 2016. We considered the theme, "One in Spirit: Becoming a More Inclusive Religious Society." As we gathered, we joyfully celebrated the harmony we find in lifting our voices together. However, we also listened to hear which voices might be missing in our yearning to create a more inclusive community.

In our business sessions, we considered some challenges we are facing, including difficulty with staffing several committees, and lack of participation by some of our monthly meetings in Yearly Meeting activities this year. Another serious concern laid before us is that Quaker Heights Care Community, the largest ministry of our Yearly Meeting, is operating at a deficit, which may result in the need to affiliate with another faith based organization.

However, there were also many reminders that the Spirit is prospering among us. We were encouraged and joyful to learn that the Yearly Meeting has hired a new Youth Secretary, with expanded responsibility for leading activities and events for both teens and middle youth throughout the year. We were also encouraged to see the faces of many young adult Friends among us this year. A clear leading came to plan for a program of intervisitation to reach out to monthly meetings that are not active in the Yearly Meeting, to build connections and increase engagement. In considering our budget priorities for the future, we entered a worship sharing process out of which came suggestions for ways to strengthen bonds and nurture our youth, and also a prophetic call that we are being made anew and transformed by the Holy Spirit.

We approved a number of new and revised sections of our Book of Faith & Practice in a more streamlined procedure, including sections on our testimonies of Integrity, Simplicity, Community, and Equality and a section on Listening to the Spirit. We worked faithfully together on the draft of the section on Equality in light of the inward work we are still undertaking to become more sensitive to racial injustice, and we felt divinely led in this process. Our goal is to complete the Faith & Practice revision process by 2018.

One of our Plenary Speakers, Michael Birkel, shared his experience of Religious Hospitality as a guest among Muslims, following a leading to learn about Islam. He shared some meaningful texts from the Qur'an such as "Wherever you turn, you shall see the face of God," and "Common kindness is a sacred duty." We learned that in Islam, as in Quakerism, prayer, meditation, and reflection are believed to open us up to a sense of beauty and sensitivity to injustice. We were encouraged to talk with our neighbors about their religion, because encountering other religious communities can change and enrich our lives.

Niyonu Spann spoke to us on "Trusting the Broken Heart" as a path of transformation to find our way to wholeness and healing. We learned that we must see beyond the illusion of the existing structures of oppression that separate us in order to truly acknowledge and appreciate one another. Through an exercise of speaking and listening in small groups, we were given a safe opportunity to be very honest about the pain we experience from the violence and division in our present world. Niyonu asked us to consider that to be truly inclusive and whole, we must open our arms wider, even when our hearts are breaking. When we lean on a deeper promise: God will assist us in being transformed and healed.

Our time together gave us many opportunities to reconnect over shared meals, singing, workshops and interest groups. In worship sharing sessions we had the opportunity to share more deeply and personally in small groups about our own interfaith experiences and ways to become a more inclusive community. At a memorial meeting we remembered and celebrated the lives of Friends we lost in the past year. At our annual Variety Show, we shared poetry, music, lively skits, laughter and tears.

We now return to our daily lives with opened hearts and outstretched arms, to live into a deeper understanding of loving inclusion. We have heard the call that we are being made anew, that God is transforming us. We know that the same deep mystery beckons and connects us all. We are called into holy encounters, the giving and receiving of hospitality, and listening with the heart past the illusions and boundaries that divide us. We are invited to heal, to reconnect, to share the hidden treasures that are desiring to be known, and to recognize and remember that we are whole.

B: Attendance



## C: Clerk's Thoughts

### **A few thoughts before we start...**

(Many of these perspectives were drawn from Arthur Larrabee's Clerking Workshop at Pendle Hill in September of 2015)

#### **The clerk's perspective**

Here are some of my thoughts about Meeting for Business in the Spirit of Worship to help us come together over the next four days. I offer them not as a presentation of some authoritative understanding, but rather so that Friends might better interpret my words and actions over the next few days.

I encourage discussion about any of these ideas and perspectives.

#### **Characteristics of Meeting for business in the spirit of worship**

- Focuses on Selflessness
- Holds disunity with great care
- Anticipates movement
- Attends to pacing
- Thoughts are spoken and then released
- Truth is spoken *at* the meeting and not *afterwards*

*Requires:*

- *Deep listening*
- *The group laboring together in the same way*
- *Focused and direct speech*
- *Open mindedness and heartedness*

#### **Distinguishing Characteristics of Friends' decision-making process**

- Presence of the Divine
- Openness to all view points
- Excitedness about the decision
- Faith that a way will open
- Willingness to let things season
- Tenderness
- Willingness to be moved
- "Sense of the meeting" does not mean unanimity
- Each member is responsible for his/her participation
- Expectation of transformation rather than prevailing

#### **What are Friends' roles during meeting for business in the spirit of worship?**

*"Quakers didn't get rid of the minister, they got rid of the laity."*

Be present with "clerking consciousness"

- Listen objectively (Is everyone heard?)
  - Attend to the movement of spirit
  - Hold the meeting in the Light
  - Attend to the sense of the meeting
  - What needs to happen next?
  - Maintain a focus on the topics at hand – no side conversations
  - Respond with tenderness
- 
- Stay in relationship
  - Maintain openness
  - Support the process by only addressing the clerk
  - Speak and release
  - Hear and listen
  - Be teachable
  - Be willing to change your mind
  - See each other’s humanity
  - Respect the process

### **What is the clerk’s role?**

*“A meeting for business is a giant Ouija board.”*

- Nurture an environment in which tenderness and vulnerability can be experienced.
  - Connect people and help each person be heard
  - Affirm people and perspectives
  - Maintain a focus on process
  - Speak clearly & listen actively
  - Release the decision-making to the meeting
- 
- Maintain control—developing shared expectations and holding everyone to them
    - *Insist that Friends be recognized before speaking.*
    - *Be a truth-teller.*
    - *Interrupt when people burden the meeting by repeating what has been said, by speaking at too great a length, or who use a tone or language that is hurtful.*

### **Converting passive verbs into active verbs**

What does it mean to “accept” someone? I mean really, what do you have to **do**? What intentions, decisions, and actions are required? How do you need to be changed? (Which is to say, how do you change yourself?)

What does it mean to “trust” someone? Trust is normally a state of being, but what if you are placed in a situation where trust or faith must be acted upon? How can you **do** trust?

And I’m not even getting to the process of forgiveness...

Similar questions can be raised about other inchoate or hard-to-define actions. *These states can all be created or promoted only when people choose concrete actions in the practical world. When confronted by such an opportunity, how will you decide to act?*

## D: Administrative Assistant's report and 2016 Census

This is my eleventh and penultimate SAYMA gathering as Administrative Assistant.

First, let me apologize for the delay in completing the minutes from the March 2017 Rep Meeting. The delay was entirely my fault. I procrastinated a little bit, and then I was overwhelmed with Yearly Meeting Planning details and registrations and the minutes kept falling to the bottom of the pile.

Second, I need to apologize for not nagging meetings for directory updates, and as a result I have 9 updates. I will send some nagging reminders to the remaining meetings and worship groups, and include any updates I get in the next three weeks. Then we will publish the directory, and I'll send a notice for print, CD, or electronic copies.

On the other hand, I did remind frequently and got new census data from all but one meeting. The census is attached to this report. The change is only 11 (down,) but meetings continue to report almost 200 adult members as "inactive." That's about 15% of the reported total.

Eight of ten Wider Quaker Organization reports were received (and one response that due to unforeseen circumstances one couldn't be provided,) again possibly because of ongoing nagging.

Perhaps I needed someone to nag **me** about the minutes?

Finally, I want to report that I have completed the chemo and radiation treatments and received an all clear from the surgeon. I will continue to see multiple oncologists every few months for a while. I appreciate all your prayers, thoughts, and light.

In service,

Liz Dykes



## SAYMA Census 2016-- Reported June 2017

	Asheville	Athens <sup>1</sup>	Atlanta	Berea	Birmingham	Boone	Brevard	Celo	Charleston <sup>1</sup>	Chattanooga	Columbia	Cookeville	Crossville	Foxfire	Greenville	Huntsville	Memphis	Nashville	Oxford	Swannanoa	Knoxville	
<b>1.a. Recorded members</b>																						
Adults	79	0	168	35	20	0	6	41	d/k	25	11	4	6	6	7	5	45	65	3	44	56	
under 18	6	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	d/k	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	0	3	1	
<b>Subtotal: Members</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>d/k</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>57</b>	
<b>1.b. Attenders</b>																						
Members of another SAYMA meeting	0	d/c	d/c	0	0	2	0	0	d/k	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Members in another Yearly Meeting	5	0	d/c	5	3	0	0	0	d/k	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	5	8	0	5	1	
Not members of RSOF	17	20	121	9	11	1	0	33	d/k	1	29	9	3	3	4	14	29	90	4	26	27	
under 18	8	6	42	12	2	0	0	15	d/k	0	8	0	0	0	2	4	4	28	0	12	3	
Subtotal: Attenders	30	26	163	26	16	3	0	48	17	1	37	9	3	3	7	19	38	126	4	43	31	
<b>TOTAL: Individuals to report to SAYMA</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>1300</b>
Adults considered inactive	46	15		18	1	0	0	10	d/k	10		0	2	3	3	0	27	24	0	10	28	197
<b>Report to FWCC (Includes PM/WG attenders; NOT members of other YM's)</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>1267</b>
<b>Reported to FWCC last year</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>1278</b>
<b>Change</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-19</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-11</b>
<b>Members who</b>																						
Attend your meeting	33	n/a	d/c	21	12		6	29	d/k	19	7	3	4	3	4	4	24	39	2	34	31	
Attend Worship Group under the care of your meeting	0	n/a	d/c	0	0		0	0	d/k	1		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Attend another SAYMA Worship Group	2	2	d/c	0	0		0	0	d/k	0		0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Attend another SAYMA Meeting	1	n/a	d/c	0	1		0	0	d/k	0		0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	
Attend in another Yearly Meeting	4	n/a	d/c	0	5		0	1	d/k	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	3	2	
Attend in another religious tradition	d/k	n/a	d/c	0	2		0	6	d/k	0		0	0	0	0	0	4	5	0	0	1	
Attend rarely/not at all/don't know	39	n/a	d/c	18	2		0	10	d/k	6	3	1	0	1	3	0	22	13	1	5	24	

PLEASE NOTE: shaded meetings did not provide new data--most recent available data was used.

## SAYMA Census 2016-- Reported June 2017

	Asheville	Athens	Atlanta	Berea	Birmingham	Boone	Brevard	Celo	Charleston	Chattanooga	Columbia	Cookeville	Crossville	Greenville	Huntsville	Memphis	Nashville	Oxford	Swannanoa	Knoxville
<b>2. Count of Events</b>																				
a. Marriages/commitment ceremonies of members/attenders under care of meeting	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	1
b. Marriage/commitment ceremonies of members/attenders NOT under care of meeting	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	0
c. Marriage/commitment ceremonies under care of meeting, non members/attenders	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	0
d. births/adoptions	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	0	1	0	0	0
e. Deaths	1	1	4	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
f. transfers in	3	n/a	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
g. transfers out/withdrawals	1	n/a	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1
h. new members	1	0	5	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	1
i. new attenders	d/k	3	d/c	6	7	0	3	1	1	1	6	1	0	1	0	4	7	16	0	6
j stopped attending	5	11	d/c	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	3	1	d/k	3	0
<b>3. Active Meeting Participation</b>																				
Under 12 years old	16	6	24	5	2	0	0	8	0	0	6	0	0	0	2	7	15	0	6	1
12-18 years old	2	1	18	9	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	3	9	0	6
Young adults 19-35 years old	1	5	30	2	1		1	8	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	11	21	0	1	6

<sup>1</sup>Meeting does not distinguish between members and attenders

PLEASE NOTE: shaded meetings did not provide new data--most recent available data was used.

## E: Treasurer's report

Our fiscal year budget runs from October 1 through September 30. For this report I generally round to the nearest \$100.

**The Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) in Brief:** Our income after adjusting for Yearly Meeting fees stands at \$34,500, and our expenses (also net of YM) were \$30,100, leaving a surplus to date of \$4,400. Our balance sheet shows \$19,000 in set-aside funds, \$31,700 in YM registration fees, \$22,500 in Reserves, and \$23,900 in surplus cash (Equity, or net worth).

**Change in Accounting System:** After 2 years of development, we abandoned the Quicken personal finance software for an open source double-entry accounting system, GnuCash. GnuCash was first released as a Linux program in 1998, then a Macintosh version came in 2004, followed by a Windows version in 2007. It is a stable system with a robust development team that produces frequent upgrades.

This necessitates reverting to standard accounting formats for the Income and Expense statement and the Balance sheet. While the Income statement is straightforward, the Balance Sheet uses some accounting terms-of-art. Footnotes at the bottom of the page explain these.

**Balance Sheet:** The attached balance sheet shows our current assets (all cash) and obligations (all internal). Our cash accounts are flush with income from registration fees, and this is adjusted by including a liability account for that amount. After deducting the set-aside funds and Reserves, our net worth (Equity) is about \$23,900. While Reserves are an emergency resource for the inevitable uncertainties of finances, the Equity account is unrestricted and available for use as YM is led.

**Operating Income:** Contributions and Interest typically provide only about 2% of our income, the rest is about evenly divided between YM fees and Monthly Meeting assessments.

Income to date from Monthly Meeting assessments are 15% above expectations for this time of the year, and contributions are similarly ahead. Please note, however, that much of the overage is accounted for by two large full-year and half-year assessment remittances.

It appears that the increase in assessments has been generally accepted by Monthly Meetings, at least in aggregate. Presently, treasurer expects income to exceed the FY17 budget by about 6%.

**Expenses:** Expenses fall into four categories:  
*Wider Quaker Organizations* receive annual contributions that vary as finances allow. The initial FY17 WQO budget was \$1100, but the September representatives meeting decided to add the expected surplus from YM. The resulting \$4,200 was disbursed in April. No decision has been made on the amount or distribution of WQO contributions in FY18.

*Set-aside Funds* increased by \$1400 in FY17, distributed to the Spiritual Development fund (\$200), Released Friend fund (\$400), and the Friends World Committee Third World Delegate fund (\$800). No funds have been disbursed to date in FY17. For FY18, only Ministry and Nurture replied to an inquiry, requesting \$1500 for the Spiritual Development Fund.

*Yearly Meeting Expenses* have been minimal, but it is early in that cycle of activity. Late resolution of speaker and bookstore expenses delayed payment of \$900 in Yearly Meeting 2016 expenses. Deposits and printing for YM 2016 cost another \$1000.

*SAYMA Operations* are 20% below expectations to date.

- Administrative expenses were under budget by 15%, largely due to lower staff travel and miscellaneous expenses.
- Personnel costs were 6% higher, attributable to the training of a new Southern Appalachian Young Friends administrator, which required a month's overlap in two salaries.
- Publication expenses were nominal.
- Committee expenses were untapped through May 31
- Travel reimbursements have been paid out at only a quarter of the expected rate. Travel is highly variable from year to year, but also, it is certain that too much was budgeted. Lesson learned.

**Southern Appalachian Young Friends:** YM supports SAYF – a youth program that draws in participants from SAYMA plus some North Carolina meetings– with a paid administrator and an allocation of funds through its Operations funding. This totaled about \$14,600 over the last 12 months. Minor additional expenses are blended with SAYMA administrative costs, such as insurance and background checks for individuals volunteering their time. Funds also come from retreat fees, typically totaling in the \$7000 range. SAYF also receives some contributions from meetings outside SAYMA. The \$2000 allocation was not needed and not requested in FY16, but will be in FY17, and has been budgeted for FY18.

Financially, SAYF's expenditures in FY17 maintained a near-neutral balance. At the end of March they had assets of \$3600, and about \$1000 in reimbursements due that have since been made. Last year saw graduation of a large numbers of seniors, and while attendance at retreats has dropped, at last account it had begun to rise.

Historically, they have run a trim ship, and the program is overseen by a new administrator and an experienced steering committee. Two trends they are watching are a strong increase in the number of scholarships awarded and an increase in the cost of retreat activities, which are already \$200 over budget.

Treasurer completed a financial audit of SAYF by the end of the FY, seeking improvement by self-examination. The main result was finding some improvements they will make in the handling of cash fee payments, and establishing criteria and procedures for future audits.

## **Other Issues and Comments**

The Finance Committee has been investigating the appropriate amount of our budget to book as Reserves. The clerk will present a proposal in her report.

Representatives Meeting in March approved new terms of office for Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. These officers will serve one year as Assistant Treasurer, two as Treasurer, and a fourth as Emeritus. That gives 1 year to learn, two to serve, and another to advise and assist the new treasurer. We must recruit a new Assistant Treasurer during YM, as Charles Schade's term ends with rise of YM.

**In closing**, I would like to express my appreciation to Charles Schade. Charles stepped up to rescue the treasurer's office when two treasurers in a row were incapacitated by ill health, unable to perform their duties, making for a difficult transition. It is only from the inside that one can understand the remarkable work he accomplished. His counsel these three years we have worked together has been invaluable.

Roger Wise, Treasurer

## **Treasurer contact information and financial procedures**

**Reimbursements:** Individual Friends, meetings, and committees with requests for payment for budgeted expenses should send the request with appropriate documentation to Roger Wise. E-mail is preferred (saymatreasurer@gmail.com) with documentation in electronic form (pdf or jpg). Friends may also submit expenses via postal mail to 22 White Rock Drive, Hurricane, WV 25526.

**Payments:** Meetings should send assessment payments to SAYMA's administrative assistant Liz Dykes at 106 Wax Myrtle Court, Savannah, GA 31419. Other payments to SAYMA should be sent to Liz for deposit to SAYMA's account. Please provide pertinent information as to the purpose of the check on its memo line.

**SAYMA Income Statement - Detail – Covering 10/01/2016 to 05/31/2017**

Income		
Adjustments to Income		\$0.01
Assessments		
Asheville	\$715.00	
Athens	\$100.00	
Atlanta	\$8,076.00	
Berea	\$1,755.00	
Birmingham	\$1,412.50	
Boone	\$0.00	
Brevard	\$0.00	
Celo	\$1,685.00	
Charleston	\$0.00	
Chattanooga	\$560.00	
Columbia	\$1,250.00	
Cookeville	\$455.00	
Crossville	\$455.00	
Foxfire	\$0.00	
Greenville	\$975.00	
Huntsville	\$820.00	
Memphis	\$4,255.00	
Nashville	\$4,302.10	
Oxford	\$0.00	
Swannanoa Valley	\$3,720.00	
West Knoxville	\$2,620.00	
Total Assessments		\$33,155.60
Contributions		
Contributions - Restricted	\$0.00	
Contributions - Unrestricted	\$1,090.00	
Total Contributions		\$1,090.00
Interest - CD		\$0.00
Interest - Money Mkt		\$211.89
Publication Sales		

Pub Sales - Directory	\$0.00	
Pub Sales - F&P	\$0.00	
Total Publication Sales		<u>\$0.00</u>
<hr/>		
Yearly Meeting Income		
YM Adjustments to Income	\$0.00	
YM Bookstore Inc	\$0.00	
YM Receipts	\$31,401.95	
YM Scholarship Contrib	\$286.25	
Total Yearly Meeting Income		<u>\$31,688.20</u>
Total Income		<u>\$66,145.70</u>

Expenses

Adjustments to Expenses		\$0.00
<hr/>		
SAYMA Operations		
Liability Insurance Exp	\$1,621.00	
Office Admin		
Office - Duplication	\$151.80	
Office - Guilford Archiving	\$150.00	
<hr/>		
Office - Misc Exp	\$153.34	
Office - Officer Exp	\$117.74	
Office - Phone ISP	\$509.99	
Office - Postage	\$88.50	
Office - Volunteer Bkgrd Chks	\$65.00	
<hr/>		
Travel - Office Staff	\$770.90	
Total Office Admin		<u>\$2,007.27</u>
Personnel		
Payroll Costs	\$384.00	
Salaries Exp	\$14,420.12	
<hr/>		
Staff Training	\$0.00	
Tax Payments	\$4,110.12	
Total Personnel		<u>\$18,914.24</u>
Publications Expenses		
Pub Exp - Directory	\$68.48	
<hr/>		
Pub Exp - Faith & Practice	\$0.00	

Pub Exp - Newsletter	\$605.08	
Pub Exp - Web & Hosting Srvc	\$0.00	
Total Publications Expenses		\$673.56
SAYF Operational Transfers		\$0.00
<hr/>		
SAYMA Committees		
Cmte Exp - Faith & Practice Rvsn	\$0.00	
Cmte Exp - Finance	\$0.00	
Cmte Exp - Ministry & Nurture	\$0.00	
Cmte Exp - Nominating	\$0.00	
<hr/>		
Cmte Exp - Outreach	\$0.00	
Cmte Exp - Peace & Social Concerns	\$0.00	
Cmte Exp - SAYMA Earthcare	\$0.00	
Cmte Exp - Uplifting Racial Justice	\$0.00	
Cmte Exp - Yearly Meeting Planning	\$0.00	
Total SAYMA Committees		\$0.00
<hr/>		
Travel Reimbursements		
Travel - Rep Meetings	\$30.00	
Travel - SAYMA Committees	\$0.00	
Travel - WQO Delegates	\$1,533.21	
Total Travel Reimbursements		\$1,563.21
<hr/>		
Total SAYMA Operations		\$24,779.28
Set-aside Fund Annual Allotments		
FWCC 3rd World Delg Annl Exp	\$800.00	
FWCC Conference Annl Exp	\$0.00	
Released Friend Annl Exp	\$400.00	
<hr/>		
Spiritual Development Annl Exp	\$200.00	
YAF Scholarships Annl Exp	\$0.00	
Youth Enrichment Fund Annl Exp	\$0.00	
Total Set-aside Fund Annual Allotments		\$1,400.00
<hr/>		
Yearly Meeting Expenses		
Facilities & Services Exp		
YM Accommodations & Meals	\$0.00	
YM Grants - WQO Reps	\$0.00	
YM Services & Honoraria	\$256.65	





YM Supplies	\$0.00	
Total Facilities & Services Exp		\$256.65
Junior Yearly Meeting Exp		
JYM Asst Coordinator	\$0.00	
JYM Coordinator	\$0.00	
JYM Supplies, Sitters, Misc	\$0.00	
Total Junior Yearly Meeting Exp		\$0.00
YM Bookstore Exp		\$853.15
YM Print Post Phone & Misc		\$758.18
Total Yearly Meeting Expenses		\$1,867.98
YM WQO Annual Contribns		
WQO - AFSC	\$300.00	
WQO - BQEF	\$300.00	
WQO - FCNL	\$300.00	
WQO - FGC	\$300.00	
WQO - Friends for LGBTQ Concerns	\$0.00	
WQO - Friends Journal	\$300.00	
WQO - Friends Peace Teams	\$300.00	
WQO - FWCC - Direct Contrbn	\$300.00	
WQO - Pendle Hill	\$0.00	
WQO - Quaker Earthcare Witness	\$300.00	
WQO - Quaker House	\$450.00	
WQO - Quaker Volunteer Service	\$450.00	
WQO - Right Sharing of World	\$300.00	
WQO - Rural Southern Voice for Peace	\$0.00	
WQO - Samburu Educ Proj	\$0.00	
WQO - Wm Penn House	\$300.00	
Total YM WQO Annual Contribns		\$3,900.00
Total Expenses		\$31,947.26
Net income for Period		\$34,198.44
Net income for Period x-Yearly Meeting		\$4,378.22

Reserves Calc

The three tables represent the cumulative deficits for up to 4 years across a 10-year span, showing the totals for All Activity, YM, and combined Ops/WQOs/Funds. The most severe deficits are highlighted. Percentages atop of each table show the deficit as a percentage of the total income for the worst case in each fiscal year. Thus, the worst case for All Activity was in the 6-year deficit in FY 2015. The worst case for Yearly Meeting alone was the 4-year cumulative ending in FY 2010.

All Activity:	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
<b>Average Bad Year Deficit = -15.3%</b>				<b>-14.8%</b>	<b>-16.0%</b>			<b>-12.0%</b>	<b>-18.2%</b>	
Total income	\$81,430	\$74,049	\$74,729	\$64,887	\$75,471	\$78,616	\$86,216	\$81,754	\$82,116	\$86,320
Total expenses	\$69,109	\$72,249	\$70,715	\$76,181	\$76,445	\$73,716	\$85,958	\$84,858	\$87,917	\$81,137
Deficit/surplus	\$12,321	\$1,800	\$4,015	<b>-\$11,294</b>	<b>-\$974</b>	\$4,900	\$257	<b>-\$3,104</b>	<b>-\$5,801</b>	\$5,183
1-year surplus (deficit)	\$12,321	\$1,800	\$4,015	<b>-\$11,294</b>	<b>-\$974</b>	\$4,900	\$257	<b>-\$3,104</b>	<b>-\$5,801</b>	\$5,183
2-yr cumulative		\$14,121	\$5,815	<b>-\$7,279</b>	<b>-\$12,268</b>	\$3,927	\$5,158	<b>-\$2,847</b>	<b>-\$8,905</b>	<b>-\$619</b>
3-yr cumulative			\$18,136	<b>-\$5,479</b>	<b>-\$8,253</b>	<b>-\$7,367</b>	\$4,184	\$2,054	<b>-\$8,648</b>	<b>-\$3,722</b>
4-yr cumulative				\$6,842	<b>-\$6,453</b>	<b>-\$3,352</b>	<b>-\$7,110</b>	\$1,080	<b>-\$3,748</b>	<b>-\$3,465</b>
5-yr cumulative					\$5,868	<b>-\$1,553</b>	<b>-\$3,095</b>	<b>-\$10,214</b>	<b>-\$4,721</b>	\$1,435
6-yr cumulative						\$10,769	<b>-\$1,295</b>	<b>-\$6,199</b>	<b>-\$16,015</b>	\$462

Ops, Funds, & WQOs	<b>Average Bad Year Deficit = -26.7%</b>									
Income x-YM (assmt +int + contrib)	\$51,410	\$42,205	\$46,041	\$36,793	\$41,407	\$41,162	\$45,693	\$43,362	\$45,740	\$43,661
Expenses x-YM (total exp - YM)	\$36,573	\$41,902	\$41,459	\$45,646	\$43,814	\$38,947	\$45,858	\$47,610	\$50,723	\$41,588
Deficit/surplus x-YM	\$14,838	\$303	\$4,582	<b>-\$8,853</b>	<b>-\$2,407</b>	\$2,215	<b>-\$165</b>	<b>-\$4,248</b>	<b>-\$4,983</b>	\$2,074
1-year surplus (deficit)	\$14,838	\$303	\$4,582	<b>-\$8,853</b>	<b>-\$2,407</b>	\$2,215	<b>-\$165</b>	<b>-\$4,248</b>	<b>-\$4,983</b>	\$2,074
2-yr cumulative		\$15,141	\$4,885	<b>-\$4,271</b>	<b>-\$11,260</b>	<b>-\$193</b>	\$2,050	<b>-\$4,413</b>	<b>-\$9,232</b>	<b>-\$2,910</b>
3-yr cumulative			\$19,723	<b>-\$3,967</b>	<b>-\$6,678</b>	<b>-\$9,045</b>	<b>-\$357</b>	<b>-\$2,198</b>	<b>-\$9,397</b>	<b>-\$7,158</b>
4-yr cumulative				\$10,870	<b>-\$6,375</b>	<b>-\$4,464</b>	<b>-\$9,210</b>	<b>-\$4,606</b>	<b>-\$7,182</b>	<b>-\$7,323</b>
5-yr cumulative					\$8,463	<b>-\$4,160</b>	<b>-\$4,628</b>	<b>-\$13,459</b>	<b>-\$9,589</b>	<b>-\$5,108</b>
6-yr cumulative						\$10,678	<b>-\$4,325</b>	<b>-\$8,877</b>	<b>-\$18,442</b>	<b>-\$7,515</b>

Yearly Meeting Only	<b>Avg Bad Year = -8.8%</b>									
YM Income	\$30,020	\$31,844	\$28,688	\$28,094	\$34,064	\$37,454	\$40,523	\$38,392	\$36,376	\$42,659
YM Expense	\$32,537	\$30,347	\$29,255	\$30,535	\$32,631	\$34,769	\$40,101	\$37,248	\$37,194	\$39,550
YM Net Cash flow	<b>-\$2,517</b>	\$1,496	<b>-\$567</b>	<b>-\$2,441</b>	\$1,434	\$2,686	\$422	\$1,145	<b>-\$818</b>	\$3,109
1-year surplus (deficit)	<b>-\$2,517</b>	\$1,496	<b>-\$567</b>	<b>-\$2,441</b>	\$1,434	\$2,686	\$422	\$1,145	<b>-\$818</b>	\$3,109
2-yr cumulative		<b>-\$1,020</b>	\$929	<b>-\$3,008</b>	<b>-\$1,008</b>	\$4,119	\$3,108	\$1,567	\$327	\$2,291
3-yr cumulative			<b>-\$1,587</b>	<b>-\$1,512</b>	<b>-\$1,575</b>	\$1,678	\$4,541	\$4,252	\$749	\$3,436
4-yr cumulative				<b>-\$4,029</b>	<b>-\$78</b>	\$1,111	\$2,100	\$5,686	\$3,434	\$3,858

Ratio of expenses (Ops/Total)	Avg.= 0.56	<b>0.53</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>0.56</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>0.51</b>
Ratio of expenses (YM/Total)	Avg.= 0.44	<b>0.47</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.43</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>0.44</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>0.49</b>

## Notes on methodology:

Charles put together a spreadsheet some time back that I've updated to 10 years. Using that, I put together three tables showing net balances based on All Activity (Yearly Meeting, Operations, Funds, Contributions), Yearly Meeting alone, and Operations/Funds/WQOs. I ran this back to look at the effect of 6 years of accumulated deficits relative to expenses.

The most severe deficits - the exceptions - are the ones we should be concerned about. Threshold for these were deficits >20% of expenses for All Activity, >15% for Ops et al, and >5% for YM. These are highlighted in the tables, and the worst case per table is boxed. Along the top of each table is a row with a percentage for the very bad fiscal years, the worst deficit expressed as a percentage of that year's expenses. The average of the very bad deficits are in the title of each table.

Just to see what effect it would have, I calculated an average for all years \*with deficits\* with these results:

All Activity: -12.0%; Ops/Funds/WQOs: -24.4%; YM: -6.1%

The average very bad year deficits were:

All Activity: -15.3%; Ops/Funds/WQOs: -18.8%; YM: -8.8%

Looking at the single worst year, the deficits were:

All Activity: -18.2%; Ops/Funds/WQOs: -36.4%; YM: -13.2%

The bottom rows are the ratios of Ops and YM to the total, which I used to weight the different shares of the total budget that Ops and YM have:  $0.56 * \text{Ops}\% + 0.44 * \text{YM}\%$

## F: Committee reports

- JYM Oversight
- Ministry and Nurture
  - State of SAYMA
- Peace and Social Concerns
- Personnel
- SAYMA Earthcare Action Network
- Southern Appalachian Friend
- Web Manager

### **JYM Oversight**

#### **Child care Programs at SAYMA**

In September, 2016 the JYM committee proposed an expansion to the current child care program at SAYMA for 2017. This proposal responded to the concern that the existing JYM program mixed child care with Junior Yearly Meeting, that the age span was too large to fully implement JYM programming with one coordinator, and parents of young children found that options for child care were very limited at SAYMA. Our research found that Friend's yearly meetings around the country offer Junior Yearly Meeting exclusively for school aged children and many have additional child care options for younger children including infants in some cases.

The JYM committee's proposal for expanded child care program included splitting up the infants, toddlers and school aged children into separate programs and spaces. A Playcare program with a coordinator and assistant would care for 2-5 year old children, and volunteer babysitting would be made available to families with infants. The JYM program would continue to serve school aged children, rising 1st graders through rising 7th graders and continue with a coordinator and assistant. The proposal was accepted by the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee and will be implemented at SAYMA 2017.

In the spring of 2017 the JYM committee hired coordinators for the Playcare and JYM programs and they in turn hired assistants. With the help of the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee we established a location for the new Playcare program.

#### **Childcare Workers Stipend**

The JYM committee worked with the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee to assess the stipends paid to coordinators to ensure they were fair and competitive with other similar positions. The total amount paid for stipends in each child care program remains very similar to last year, but with the change that SAYMA will pay the JYM and Playcare coordinators and assistants each directly a set amount, rather than relying on the coordinator to apportion his/her stipend with the assistants as was the practice in years past.

#### **Job Descriptions**

The JYM committee updated the job descriptions for the JYM coordinator, and created a job description for the Playcare coordinator.

### **Electronic Accessibility**

An application for each coordinator position and the requirements and job descriptions were made available electronically through the SAYMA.org website. Additionally text and photos describing the new playcare program and babysitting options at SAYMA were added to a new tab at SAYMA.org called *children* to accompany the already existing tabs for *teens* and *young adults*.

### **Ministry and Nurture**

2017 has been a year of blessings and challenges. The committee is working on use of electronic media to minimize carbon footprint resulting from travel & fostering closer relationships among committee members. We are dedicated to keeping our conversations related to committee business Spirit-led. Some Friends have been concerned about the use of these media, but we feel that electronic communication is becoming an increasingly integral part of conversations in our society, and we are trying to model that style of communication related to committee work.

The interpersonal challenges seen in our culture at large today have been reflected in some SAYMA monthly meetings. M&N has served as an unofficial mediator in some of these conflicts, while holding other situations in the Light. Some have been successfully resolved while some others remain tender for some of those involved. We continue to hold in the Light those meetings. We will continue to seek Spirit-led ways to resolve the inevitable conflicts that accompany the challenges of daily living. We recognize that change cannot occur when all those involvement remain in their comfort zone.

Also reflecting challenges in larger society, we have seen involvement by Friends in Yearly Meeting and Monthly Meeting committees, as well as non-Quaker organizations, addressing various areas of concern.

In the past year we received several financial assistance requests for various Quaker-related conferences, including attendance at FGC Gathering, and other resources to allow Friends to continue their ministries. We welcome these requests as a reflection of increasing levels of involvement in the ways Friends try to be faithful to their leadings.

We continue to encourage meetings to share their concerns and needs. We would like to see meetings request education or other resources related to their specific needs. Both in written formal conversations as well as informal verbal conversations, we have seen some general themes emerge, although no meetings as yet have made requests.

The committee met in Huntsville in November. In addition to discussion regarding some concerns expressed by specific meetings, we crafted queries to assist meetings in writing their State of the Meeting annual reports. One committee member who could not attend spent a good bit of the morning with us by phone.

The April Ministry & Nurture meeting was held in Swannanoa, where we focused on compiling information from monthly meetings to write the State of the Yearly Meeting.

We continue to encourage more meetings to appoint a representative from their Meeting serving on this committee. We believe that can only benefit all meetings in the Yearly Meeting.

**State of SAYMA – 2016**  
**Prepared by SAYMA M&N April 2017**

We appreciate the time each meeting gave to creating their State of the Meeting report. We will be highlighting what we found to be the themes throughout the YM and encourage each Friend to read each MM's report and share them with your MM. There is much for meetings to learn from others' experiences.

We received 20 reports out of 21 MMs.

From Asheville:

Asheville Friends Meeting is suspended between where we are and where we hope to be.

From Columbia

We are considering how to respond to Executive Orders and other proclamations from the current administration that are in conflict with Quaker values. At this point, we are in a fact-gathering mode. We have not yet been faced with the choice between obedience to civil law and obedience to a higher law, but it is becoming more clear to us that such a choice may soon be thrust upon us. As more communities of faith harbor immigrants to protect them from detention or deportation, in defiance of state and federal law, we expect that we shall be called to choose whom we shall serve, knowing we may well place our own liberty and property, both personal and corporate, at risk. We pray for the courage to live out our conviction that no material thing is indeed ours, but that our conscience can never be taken by force - nor should we yield it to any vaunted authority.

The following themes recurred throughout the YM:

Community:

The reports gave witness to the work individuals and meetings are doing, to clothe the naked, feed the hungry and give shelter to the homeless. Many meetings are opening the conversation on race, and are opening meetinghouse doors to the wider community.

Conflict:

The reports gave witness to the willingness to acknowledge and share Monthly Meeting conflict with the YM.

Commitment:

The reports gave witness to the MM commitments to the Quaker way, preserving unity, patient waiting and what we are called to be a part of. Living in community, while not always easy, we see a resilience and determination in valuing our communities even in the midst of conflict. Small meetings honor their commitment to continue as a Quaker presence in their communities.

#### Challenges:

The reports gave witness to and ask, what is a critical mass, too large, too small, aging, lack of diversity. Our predominantly white Monthly Meetings are challenged to examine and address concerns of race and privilege in both MM and wider communities .

#### Catalyst:

The reports gave witness to last year's YM acting as a catalyst for MMs to look at issues of race and privilege. The mood of our country and outcome of the election has moved many meetings from an inward focus to an outward focus.

#### Words and phrases that stood out:

AVP

NAACP

Tenderness and patience

Love flourishes in laughter

A candle burns brightest in the darkness

Looking at the meeting through the eyes of an outsider

In reflecting on the MM State of the Meeting reports, we were reminded of Margaret Mead's words:

Never doubt that a small group of people can change the world, it's the only thing that ever has.

Finally, from a Friend speaking in Memphis MWAB

"We must remember that tension is different from conflict. Tension occurs within some intrinsic context of unity. Tension in the meeting is a natural part of the meeting's momentum towards unity - an enduring goal of all Friends."

#### **Peace and Social Concerns**

During this past year the Peace and Social Concerns Committee was given only one issue to consider: our possible response to how Friends General Committee was handling concerns raised by Friends of color that FGC was not doing enough to insure that Friends of color felt welcomed and safe at FGC's annual gathering. Columbia Friends brought this issue to SAYMA's fall rep meeting, who in turn asked Peace and Social Concerns to find out and comment on how FGC was handling this request from Friends of color.

Peace and Social Concerns got in touch with FGC and learned that FGC had responded to Friends of color by taking two big steps: adding several Friends of color to its site selection committee so that Friends of color held a majority of seats on the committee; and launching a campaign to raise \$60,000 to fund a thorough study of ways in which FGC could identify and confront aspects of its operations which might be tainted by racism.

On learning of these steps by FGC, Peace and Social Concerns prepared a minute supporting these proactive steps by FGC and brought the minute to the spring rep meeting. The rep meeting was unable to reach unity on the minute of support for FGC's actions, primarily because several SAYMA Friends of color spoke against it..



We note that the strong emergence during this year of the ad hoc committee on racial justice, led by Friends of color within SAYMA, has occurred without any involvement of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee.

### **Personnel**

Our yearly meeting has been fortunate to have such wonderful employees. We want to extend our thanks to Liz Dykes and Autumn Woodward for their exemplary service this past year. Autumn was hired in late August 2016, to serve as SAYF Administrative Assistant after the committee reviewed applications of many worthy candidates.

The Personnel Committee recommends we adopt a policy/procedure for our employees when the need, such as need for surgery, extended absence due to injury or illness, or pregnancy/ childbirth, arises. Because our employees are part-time workers, recovery from smaller health problems such as a cold or other short-term illnesses can be worked into the normal work week or month in most cases. When a major illness occurs, there may be a need for a longer absence. If approved, leave will be earned at the rate of one day for every 160 hours worked, equivalent to about one day per a full-time month of employment. The use of this leave would need to be requested of, reviewed and approved by the supervisor for that employee. This idea was circulated during the September Representative Meeting in Columbia, SC. Feedback was requested, but none was given.

Because we still had no such policy, Liz Dykes was granted leave as she recovered from major surgery and received treatment, with the clerk's approval. Liz had served the yearly meeting so faithfully and so well for ten years. Therefore, we were in unity with the clerk's decision that she be paid her regular salary for the month of September.

We are working with the Finance Committee to adjust salary levels in accordance with Social Security COLAs for the next fiscal year. Merit raises may be recommended to be included in the final budget for approval at the fall Representative Meeting.

Lastly, Liz Dykes has announced her intention to resign from her current position after yearly meeting 2018 sessions. Therefore, the Personnel Committee will be posting the opening for SAYMA Administrative Assistant with a job description and application to be submitted this summer. This would give the new hire time to overlap working and training with Liz for a smooth transition beginning at the fall Representative Meeting. The robust response to the search for SAYF AA gives us assurance that the right person to take Liz's place will be found. She has certainly set a high bar for this supportive position to the efficient running of our yearly meeting.

Thank you for your attention to this report.

### **SAYMA Earthcare Action Network**

During the past year, our committee has focused on learning what each of SAYMA's meetings is doing about earthcare, and supporting those with leadings to resist the continued reliance on fossil fuels. We are especially concerned about the expansion of the network to distribute fracked gas from the Marcellus Shale deposit in upper Appalachia

through a newly proposed Atlantic Pipeline. Numerous studies show that there is no domestic need for the additional gas, and that the plan is to export it from mid-Atlantic ports. Current plans show the terminus of the pipeline inland about 50 miles from Wilmington, NC. One of our members has taken this as a personal mission, and we fully support her and share research results, reports of hearings, and planned actions.

We remain inspired and challenged by the Kabarak Call, to which we were called again by the FWCC world gathering in Pisac Peru in February 2016. We have responded to the Pisac challenge minute for each yearly meeting to make two concrete actions towards sustainability by instituting an eco-corner in the SAYNMA Newsletter, reporting news of environmental action among our constituent meetings in each issue. We have brought before the March SAYMA representative meeting a minute requesting individual Friends to shop for goods and services as locally as possible, and asked our meetings to support this effort.

We have worked with the Faith and Practice Revision Committee to revise and update the Earthcare Queries, a process recently completed.

We sponsored Hayley Hathaway to do a workshop for this gathering. Hayley is the new publications coordinator for QEW.

We have lost three of our 5 core members this year, but have replaced two of them on an ad hoc basis. We are always looking for Friends who carry a concern for earthkeeping to join us.

Finally, please look over the display on ecojustice and sustainability, which uses biblical language in an effort to communicate better with our Christocentric cousins in other branches of the Society of Friends. The work is under the leading of a Friend from Celo Meeting, but is a hybrid effort of QEW, SEAN, and FWCC. If you would like to download it for use in communicating with your neighbors, as well as other Friends, she will gladly e-mail it to you.

Bob McGahey, Clerk

### **Southern Appalachian Friend**

As my term editing the SAFriend wraps up, I can say that Friends still seem interested enough in the publication to submit materials sufficient to produce at least two newsletters a year. Errol Hess continues to produce News of Meetings for each newsletter. The SAYMA Earthcare Action Network requested a regular section in the newsletter this year, also.

Beth Ensign

### **Web Manager**

Due to several problems with the sayma.org email forwarding, I have completed the changeover of our internet hosting service from HostGator to Fatcow. This should improve our service. Please let me know of any problems you experience.

SAYMA has had a Facebook presence for the last year. Follow the link on the sayma.org home page to find it, and “like” us. Robyn Josephs (Swannanoa), Roy Taylor (Atlanta) and I have been posting items we think are interesting or useful to SAYMA Friends.

Committee clerks, please let me know if you would like space on sayma.org to help publish news and information on whatever work you are doing.

Meeting clerks and SAYMA Reps: please help me keep your meeting’s information current on the sayma.org website.

Comments or questions welcomed.

Charlie Wilton (Berea)

SAYMA web manager

web@sayma.org

## G: Wider Quaker Organization Reports

- American Friends Service Committee
- Friends Committee on National Legislation
- Friends General Conference
- Friends Peace Teams
- Friends World Committee for Consultation
- Quaker Earthcare Witness
- Quaker House
- Right Sharing of World Resources
- William Penn House

### **American Friends Service Committee**

This year is the 100th anniversary of AFSC so our annual meeting was combined with a special “Summit for Peace and Justice” celebration. In addition to our meetings for worship and business there were also a large number of workshops, academic presentations and keynote speakers open to the public. There was a wonderful exhibit of the work of AFSC over the past 100 years on display at Philadelphia’s African American Museum called “Waging Peace: 100 Years of Action.” Friends are invited to arrange for hosting of the exhibit in their communities and a flyer explaining how that can happen is attached. During the business sessions, we did the basic work of the Corporation including approving nominations to the Board of AFSC and also approving the members-at-large to the Corporation. (Note: the Corporation has about an equal number of Representatives appointed by Friends’ Yearly Meetings and Representatives selected by AFSC’s Nominating Committee. All new representatives are approved by the existing Corporation Members each year.)

Friends may remember that AFSC had to contract after the economic recession of 2008. Since that bottom, giving had improved and AFSC’s assets had climbed back up. However, unrestricted donations had remained modest and were below expectations. AFSC’s budget relied too much on interest from investments and hoped for large bequests. Forecasted revenues that were too optimistic led to growth in programs that cannot be sustained with the resources at hand. This has forced AFSC to reduce staff by 13% in the next fiscal year. To avoid this problem in the future, AFSC is working to better predict where unrestricted income will be coming from and as well as what endowments can be expected.

One result of budget shortfall is the recognition that AFSC’s work needs to be more focused. AFSC is currently working in 14 countries and in 15 U.S. cities. Other not for profit organizations with that much geographical spread have much larger budgets supporting their work. The current budget shortfall gives AFSC the opportunity to discern what we are led to do under current conditions. It is also an opportunity to remember that programs were expected to grow to a size that would lead to their being phased out and were not expected to continue indefinitely. Ending an AFSC program can be seen as a sign of success. At some point in the weekend someone quoted Richard Foster saying that “Every firm yes requires many firm noes.”

Shan Cretin, AFSC's General Secretary, told us that she had a goal of 100% of all Friends making a donation to AFSC as a way to reclaim ownership of AFSC regardless of the size of the donation. With concomitant values and prayers for AFSC we find that Friends everywhere are welcome to become engaged with AFSC's work. There has been a commitment by AFSC to initiate outreach directly to the Religious Society of Friends' Monthly Meetings, so as to assist them the work they are or wish to do in their local communities. Shan also introduced us to Joyce N. Ajlouny who will become the new General Secretary beginning in late 2017. Joyce comes to us with 25 years of organizational leadership, including her current role for the past 13 years as Director of the Ramallah Friends School.

We all appreciate the opportunity to represent SAYMA as members of the American Friends Service Committee Corporation.

John Adams  
Arnold Karr  
Free Polazzo  
Lee Ann Swarm

Note: SAYMA's representatives to the American Friends Service Committee are members of AFSC's Corporation, the representative governing body of AFSC. In addition, John Adams is also on the Board of Directors and serves as its Assistant Clerk.

### **Friends Committee on National Legislation**

SAYMA was represented by Charlie Wilton (Berea) and Kate Caldwell (West Knoxville) at FCNL's 2016 annual meeting in Washington, DC, November 10 – 13. The theme: *Spirit Led Action*. To listen to many of the inspiring addresses from FCNL staff and guests, visit: [tinyurl.com/fcnl2016](http://tinyurl.com/fcnl2016).

SAYMA was one of 25 Yearly Meetings at the meeting. We gathered to worship, lobby and conduct the organization's business. FCNL's General Committee approved legislative priorities to guide our community's advocacy in the 115th Congress. These legislative priorities, available online at [fcnl.org/priorities](http://fcnl.org/priorities), were the result of widening circles of discernment that included input from hundreds of Quaker meetings and churches across the country, discernment by FCNL's Policy Committee, and consideration by the General Committee.

The legislative challenges before us in the current political climate are substantial. But our relationships on Capitol Hill with both Republicans and Democrats, and the relationships that the FCNL network have established, take on new significance. We encourage all Friends to join us in advocacy. Find out how: [fcnl.org/advocacy](http://fcnl.org/advocacy).

FCNL is building a sustainable future through a \$15 million capital campaign that is strengthening the foundation of FCNL's lobbying and educational programs. We are now approaching the end of this five-year campaign. We have been fortunate to have a broad base of support from our national community of supporters — individuals, meetings, and

churches — who are helping to ensure the future of Quaker advocacy. To find out more about the goals of this campaign, visit: [fcnl.org/action/capital-campaign](http://fcnl.org/action/capital-campaign) . Pledges to the campaign from individuals, monthly meetings, or yearly meetings are invited until June 30 of this year – just until the end of this month. You would then have five years to satisfy the pledge.

When making contributions to FCNL, In order to allow for maximum management flexibility, be sure that contributions are made to FCNL (a 501(c)4 organization), as opposed to the FCNL Education Fund (a 501(c)3 organization), whenever possible. Friends meetings are not at risk of losing their status as tax-exempt religious organizations by making contributions to FCNL.

As our country struggles with deep divisions, it becomes even more urgent to highlight the value we place in one another. We invite Friends to help shift the narrative and spread a message of love by joining the #LoveThyNeighbor campaign: [fcnl.org/lovethyneighbor](http://fcnl.org/lovethyneighbor) .

Please hold us in the Light this year as we continue to work for the world we seek.

Your SAYMA Representatives to FCNL:

Jane Hiles (Birmingham)

Larry Osborne (West Knoxville)

Charlie Wilton (Berea)

FCNL's Work and Accomplishments in the last year:

### **Strengthening and Growing our Advocacy Community**

Thousands of new advocates are turning to FCNL for action and skills. We're using our decades of experience in relationship-focused advocacy to train and empower people looking to influence and change U.S. policies. This work is bringing concerns for peace and justice to an increasing number of congressional offices. Our Advocacy Teams are thriving in more than 40 communities across the country, and we continue to launch new groups to build durable connections with members of Congress and persuade them to support key legislation. Last year, the number of FCNL community members lobbying in person grew by 50 percent. In combination with our Washington, DC lobby days and online resources and trainings to help people be effective advocates, we expect to exceed this growth in 2017.

### **Immigration: Welcoming the Stranger**

As the Trump administration emphasizes enforcement and militarized borders, FCNL is building bipartisan support in Congress for compassionate immigration policies. FCNL staff chair the Interfaith Immigration Coalition, leading lobbying among the faith community to ensure offices hear these voices strongly. We are working closely with Republican and Democratic senators, including Senators Lindsay Graham (SC) and Richard Durbin (IL), to advance the bipartisan BRIDGE Act to protect young immigrants. The 18 young adults in our Advocacy Corps are organizing in their respective communities and building the groundwork necessary to effect real and lasting policy change. In addition to bringing more than 180 people in to lobby in their local congressional offices, members of the

Advocacy Corps are working to shape the media discourse, cultivating a local network of constituent advocates, and developing issue expertise to lend additional credibility to their advocacy moving forward.

### **Peacebuilding: Promoting U.S. Leadership for Peace**

The Trump administration's aggressive foreign policy stances and efforts to increase military spending threaten decades-long efforts on forward-looking prevention of deadly violence. FCNL is working to counteract this trend, and we're partnering with lawmakers like Senator Ben Cardin (MD) to advance peacebuilding initiatives. Administration and congressional decision-makers are reading the report of the bipartisan Experts Committee on Preventing Mass Violence, which we convened last year. The report recommends concrete steps to continue and expand U.S. leadership on preventing mass atrocities. Meanwhile, Republican and Democratic senators are working with us to ask hard questions of the administration and introduce legislation to support U.S. genocide and atrocities prevention efforts.

### **Religious Freedom: Opposing a Muslim Ban**

While President Trump's January executive order effectively banning travel from seven Muslim-majority countries has brought public attention to religious freedom issues, FCNL has been working steadily for nearly two years to raise concerns in Congress about this type of discrimination. We worked closely with Representative Don Beyer (VA) in 2016 and this year to introduce legislation prohibiting the U.S. from denying admission based on religious beliefs. Our professional lobbyists and a coalition of more than 100 organizations are building strong relationships and cultivating congressional leaders in efforts to make religious discrimination untenable as a policy of the U.S. government.

### **Economic Justice: Meeting Human Needs**

Congressional decisions in 2017 could lay the groundwork to transform the government's role in ensuring access to basic necessities for everyone in the U.S. Our lobbying is focused on stopping the policy changes that are steps along this path. As an organization and through our leadership in faith coalitions, we are part of a national mobilization to emphasize the detrimental effects of repealing the Affordable Care Act without a comparable replacement. At the moment that health care and funding for programs such as Medicaid and SNAP (food stamps) will be before Congress, our Spring Lobby Weekend is bringing more than 400 college students in March 2017 to Washington to lobby on these issues.

### **Pentagon Spending: Opposing Massive Increases**

The Pentagon already consumes nearly \$600 billion in government spending, a sum that is equal to what the next seven countries combined spend on their military forces. Now, President Trump is asking Congress for one of the largest increases in Pentagon spending in our country's history. In Washington, FCNL lobbyists are leaders in focusing attention on Pentagon spending in congressional offices, working directly with staff and through key coalitions. Our Advocacy Teams across the country are meeting with members of Congress to raise the moral choices that we are making as a nation when we increase Pentagon

spending at the expense of programs that keep people from falling into poverty and promote peace and diplomacy around the world.

### **Climate Change: Creating Space for Common Ground**

Our moral call for action on climate change has opened a political space in Washington for lawmakers to acknowledge the danger of inaction and discuss positive solutions. In the 114th session of Congress, 17 Republicans cosponsored a resolution that FCNL developed with former Representative Chris Gibson (NY) calling on Congress to act on climate change. We are building support for similar legislation in 2017. Senators and representatives are increasingly interested in joining the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus, which brings members together across party lines to discuss ways to move forward on this issue.

### **Friends General Conference**

This year has been a full year and a hard year as a representative to FGC's Central Committee. As representatives' we serve on the board (Central Committee) and each of us also serve on a committee, Rebecca Sullivan on Nominating and Sharon Annis on Development Committee. At our annual board meeting FGC approved the concept of an institutional audit on racism to review our structures of governance and staffing. This has been exciting work but has created some hesitation to do much of anything else as the board would also like to restructure our governance after or during the assessment as it is too big and obscure to easily understand.

The exciting news for FGC is that we started a new program 18 months ago, the Spiritual Deepening program. This program is an opportunity for one member from your community to get trained in how to use a library of resources to help the spiritual life of the meeting and its members. It is designed to be used for those new to Quakerism as well as seasoned Friends. There are 6 modules one can work from to offer small experiential and reflective workshops. The program is also designed for an individual to work with others on the web to learn about Quakerism as well as deepen their individual faith. Sharon participated as an individual in the first session last Fall. The process was rewarding in many ways. The program is also structured to be multigenerational if a meeting would like to offer Religious Education in that manner.

Another exciting announcement is that the Quaker Cloud, the FGC website server, is getting an upgrade. We will be adding a handful of new features for your website. If your meeting is interested in moving to the Quaker Cloud check out the FGC website as there is a promotion currently going on.

One of the biggest struggles as representatives is that we are supposed to be offering guidance about what SAYMA wants from FGC and vice versa and we do not always know how to do this. Giving reports to Representative Meeting or visiting individual monthly meetings can be helpful to increase Friends awareness (which we have done this year) of what FGC has to offer to individuals and meetings. If your meeting would like to learn more about FGC please contact Rebecca Sullivan, [supersullivan24@gmail.com](mailto:supersullivan24@gmail.com), and see if we can schedule a visit from her to your meeting. We want to hear your thoughts about where you



hope FGC will go in the future and we hope you might look into the programs offered and how they can help your meeting deepen its sense of practiced faith.

Visit Friends General Conference web site to learn more about all of the programs as well as other Yearly and Monthly Meetings. [www.fgcquaker.org](http://www.fgcquaker.org)

FGC hopes that you might join us at the 2018 FGC Gathering in Toledo, Ohio July 1-7, 2018.

In service,  
Rebecca Sullivan and Sharon Annis

NOTE: This is my last report. I will be moving from the area as SAYMA is in session. Service to SAYMA has been a deep joy and continued to support my spiritual life. Thank you for allowing me to serve. Blessings Sharon

### **Friends Peace Teams**

First, Friends Peace Teams would like to thank you for your support, both spiritually and financially. During this past year, our peace work has intensified, and we have new leadership for two of our initiatives. For AGLI (the African Great Lakes Initiative), David Bucura, a long-time coordinator with a local partner organization, stepped in for David Zarembka as our new coordinator. Monica Maher is our new coordinator for PLA (Peacebuilding in Las Americas), taking over the leadership responsibilities from Val Liveoak who is one of the founders of FPT.

The FPT Council (our governing body) has begun an examination our infrastructure, specifically the financial authority and responsibilities, with the goal of more transparency and accountability. Examples of what we are looking at are: What is the Council's role for oversight? What is the role of the working groups for each of the initiatives? And what is its relationships with partner organizations?

Our decentralized structure calls for the three initiatives (AGLI, PLA, and AWP—Asia West Pacific) serves us well. Abiding by and honoring our commitments to Friends process and practice as we solve conflicts and work through opportunities. Just recently, we established a Governance Committee, to be sure our practices continue to empower us all in the manner of Friends.

To help celebrate our twenty-second year, Friends Peace Teams held our annual meeting at Wellesley Monthly Meeting (Massachusetts) on May 18 & 19, followed by our third annual PeaceQuest, where we celebrated FPT's and Friends' work with peace around the world, on Saturday, May 20. PeaceQuest was also held at Wellesley.

### **The Initiatives This Year:**

- Friends Peace Teams Asia West Pacific Initiative engages with peace workers in Central Java, North Sumatra, Aceh in Indonesia; Manila, Tagbilaran City, and Davao City in the Philippines; Seoul in Korea; Kathmandu, Pokara and Bhutanese camps in Nepal; and we

maintain a concern for peace workers in Palestine, Israel, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Ukraine, New Zealand and Australia. As our peace-work follows the calling of our volunteers, in 2016 we actively worked in Nepal, Indonesia, the Philippines and Korea supporting nonviolence, peace, trauma healing, conflict transformation, and social justice advocacy for communities recovering from war or religious violence.

We completed earthquake relief activities in Nepal. We also provided a grant to Peace Place in Central Java to expand their training center and school. We continue to develop and support pre-schools, after-school programs, and parent, family and teacher training based on peace and nonviolence. The book, *The Power of Goodness: Art and Stories for a Culture of Peace* was published and is now available. It is a collection of short stories from the lives of real people who chose nonviolence and reconciliation and is accompanied by illustrations by young artists.

Peacebuilding en las Américas (PLA) has over ten active peacebuilding and trauma healing programs in Colombia, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, Peacebuilding en Las Americas (PLA) provides grassroots solidarity, tools and hope to those most discriminated against and marginalized. 2016 marked an important year for the continued sustainability of PLA's programs. After 13 years of volunteer service, Founding Coordinator, Val Liveoak, retired, continuing as advisor to the new team: Monica Maher, Initiative Coordinator; Allie Prescott, Communications Specialist and Andy Cross, Financial Specialist. During this transition, the new team focused on growing and solidifying relationships with in-field Facilitators, Coordinators, and Volunteers who have passionately supported and facilitated workshops.

In 2016, each of PLA's programs focused work with at-risk youth, teachers, war survivors, former and active gang members, prison personnel, indigenous communities and grassroots leaders. Some program highlights include: the first ever workshop in a Mayan Language in Guatemala; trauma healing workshops in El Salvador with female war survivors who have disappeared relatives; workshops that empowered women in Afro-Indigenous and Indigenous communities defending their land rights against illegal development in Honduras; workshops that provide rehabilitation for former gang members and prisoners in a Honduran Prison; and workshops with victims of violence as well as demobilized guerrilla and paramilitary fighters in Colombia during the historic signing of the Peace Accords. For more information on our work, please visit: <http://pla.friendspeaceteams.org/>.

The African Great Lakes Initiative of Friends Peace Teams (AGLI) has continued its work in Central East Africa: Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, and Democratic Republic of Congo. This includes Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC), Friends Womens Association's, clinic in Bujumbura, Burundi, the Alternatives to Violence Project AVP, and other work. David Zarembka, the founder of AGLI resigned in August, and was partially replaced by David Bucura, a Rwandan. AGLI will be seeking a US-based person for outreach.

FPT's office in St. Louis continues to be run efficiently and frugally by our Administrative Specialist, John Kintree. A new Communications Specialist, Hayley Hathaway, has been

doing a great job updating our website and producing the beautiful new brochure available on our table. Tom Martin and Nancy Shippen continue as co-Clerks. We are grateful to the many volunteers who help us and our partners abroad continue to do this work.

Please visit our table in the display area for newsletters and more to take back to your monthly meetings, and also our website at: [www.FriendsPeaceTeams.org](http://www.FriendsPeaceTeams.org).

Your representatives:

Sallie Prugh, Columbia Friends Meeting

Jack Willis, Nashville Friends Meeting

**Friends World Committee for Consultation**

FWCC Meeting Stony Point NY March 23-26, 2017

Gathering Theme "Living Peace"

FWCC was a life changing and eye opening event for me in more than one ways. Meeting and engaging with people from throughout Americas was one of the highlight for me. But let me start from the beginning. I have divided the report into two sections; one, the events and two my personal reflections. Each day we had worship with a prepared message, business meeting, home group and workshops.

**THURSDAY**

We were greeted with the song, "We are the boat, we are the sea, I sail in you, you sail in me." The gathering theme was introduced along with highlights of NYYM history. Some messages that touched my heart were "Not conformity but unity" and "Unity in us is deeper than our division".

Kitty Ufford-Chase, co-director at the Stony Point center, spoke about "radical hospitality" as a practice of not only welcoming a person but also all they are, including their practices, their thoughts and ways of being.

Reflections: The messages opened my heart and helped me realize that all of us are on the same journey. The idea of "radical hospitality" gave me perspective on accepting people at a deeper level than I had ever considered.

**FRIDAY**

Carl Magruder of Pacific YM introduced "Vision of Shalom" which is not just absence of war, but a supernatural vision. He related that his work as a hospice chaplain helped him to see how each new birth is preceded by death or destruction. He said that because humans and earth at this time are dying organisms, we have possibilities we never had before. We now have the possibility of experiencing living peace or Shalom.

In the evening I chose to attend a workshop by Lucy Duncan on Quaker Social Change Ministry. Some of the ideas shared were, we are here to bring heaven on earth and in order to do so we must create new systems that support this vision and way of being.

Reflections: As a former hospice nurse and also with my current work focusing on healing, peace and creating new systems that support our vision of "heaven on earth", this day gave

me incredible hope. I realized that I have partners all over the world who also hold these aspirations and visions. I felt understood and supported in my vision for peace.

### SATURDAY

Krienia Criado from Cuba shared a different perspective on the parable of talents. The main question she posed was what if the servant with one talent was not lazy but someone who refused to participate in the system of exploitation. She also shared a number of deep queries and observations.

During our home group, one of the Friends shared that having money meant God was rewarding their good work. The conversation then shifted to how people are exploited for money, stealing of indigenous land, slavery, raping of earth in the name of progress and the doctrine of discovery that gave the European people license to kill, convert and assimilate indigenous people. Several Friends of European decent justified the above as “nothing different from what happens all over the world”. The group leader than used the Quaker process to silence a Friend of color who was unable to share her opinion until the end. Reflections: To me, days 1&2 were about building hope. But, on day 3 the reality of fear, prejudice, self righteousness and process violence became painfully obvious. Here I came face to face with oppression that is not only dignified, justified but also romanticized. This experience taught me that unless we become radically aware of our own inner processes, we will always preserve and defend systems of oppression, unless we get past denial of our painful past and actively work on healing wounds oppression has carved on our spirit; we will always live in a world that is divided by race, color, religion etc. This experience made me dig deep. It made me angry and in the end it helped me get in touch with a deeper level of compassion for myself and others.

### SUNDAY

We had the home group meeting first on Sunday. We were given the scriptures we were going to focus on during worship.

The verses from Jeremiah focused on the fact that just saying peace peace is not enough when “my people” are dying. Micah focused on doing good and walking humbly. And George Fox’s quote included “preach among all sorts of people and to them.” I noticed that everyone in our home group was focusing on Micah and the quote from QFP but no one commented on the first quote from Jeremiah.

During Worship Jonathan Vogel-Borne talked about normalization of oppression. He also gave a framework for peace work. The stages he shared were 1. Blessed assurance: “knowing that I am loved for all that I am including my shadow”. 2. Divine disquiet: Learning about one’s own hypocrisy and a call to change. 3. Righteous rage: being outraged at the status quo that only serves the privileged. 4. Holy Obedience: walking the path of peace.

Several interesting discussions were brought up during the worship too. One person shared that an African American, the only POC in that meeting, was read out of her meeting

that day. Another person responded to the outrage over this incident by reminding the worship group to not judge others.

Reflections: This again was a tough day for me. Jonathan's sharing really touched my heart. But the way my home group turned a blind eye, once again, to oppression mentioned in the verse from Jeremiah was mind boggling to me. I also found the QFP quote to strangely resemble the text in the doctrine of discovery. I felt that the comment by one of the Friends about not judging was an example of how we tend to weaponize love and use the Quaker process as a way to not only avoid challenging systems of oppression but shaming others who have the courage to speak up.

### CONCLUSION

Lessons I learned from FWCC are too many to put in a short report. This experience made me aware of the deep love so many of us carry and also the deep fear that holds us hostage to the chaotic patterns of oppressive systems that are no longer sustainable. I understand this is not a linear path and that we often oscillate between different points depending on what is happening for us in that moment. Deep in my heart I feel there is still hope for humanity. I am happy to be a part of this journey of hope to living peace.

By Shahina Lakhani, SAYMA, Atlanta FM

### **Quaker Earthcare Witness**

2017 is an ambitious year for Quaker Earthcare Witness.

During the first 100 days of the new presidential administration, QEW joined other faith-based groups in producing multiple actions highlighting climate change. These culminated with the April 29 march in WashingtonDC, with the help of local Friends' Meetings in the DC area.

The publications committee has drafted material for distribution electronically and as trifold to talk about climate change with deniers (and those in denial). Both Earthcare for Children and Earthcare for Friends curricula are being updated from their 2010 and 2004 editions. These publications are in high demand.

A member of the steering committee has been traveling to reach out on QEW's behalf to students on college campuses in the mid-Atlantic area to work on addressing climate change

QEW's most ambitious project in its history involves co-hosting a side event at the UN in July during the High Level Policy Forum on food sovereignty and access to water as climate change accelerates. The forum is part of the Decade for People of African Descent. Our NGO-level representative to the UN is co-ordinating this major effort, which will boost the visibility of QEW. Donations to meet the \$6500 expenses required for hosting (space rental, food, materials) are still needed. Please mark contributions to QEW for this important effort as "Food Sovereignty."

In the spring meeting in Atlanta, QEW's faithful treasurer for 10 years, a SAYMA Friend from Memphis, reported that QEW remains underfunded, and reserves to meet the budget shortfall are getting thin. He also made a "passionate" appeal for a Friend to come forward to replace him in his duties

Also at the Atlanta meeting, the Sustainability Faith and Outreach Committee re-iterated QEW's support for the Pisac Peru FWCC Minute requesting two concrete actions by meetings and yearly meetings during the 2016-2017 year, and ongoing. The committee also put forward the following minute, which did not find unity:

"QEW affirms the diverse spiritual and theological languages of Friends of diverse Yearly Meetings and is open to publish articles and tri-folds that speak the language of biblical and Christ-centered Friends, as well as non-Christian Friends. We appreciate that Christian language is a gateway for many Friends to access and support the deep spiritual truths of our connectedness with Creation."

A member of the Steering Committee from Celo Meeting has created a tri-fold which attempts to achieve the spirit of this minute, which will be tabled at the FWCC Triennial in Wichita in July under the auspices of Celo Meeting. The QEW publications committee is in discernment over whether it is in accord with the QEW mission statement, and thus could be accepted as a draft tri-fold for QEW.

QEW will continue its long-standing offering of afternoon programs at the FGC Gathering in Niagara, NY. Many Friends thank us for these offerings, along with sponsoring one or two interest groups at the Gathering.

We, the members of and representatives to QEW among SAYMA Friends, invite you to join us in the work challenge and fellowship opportunity with QEW, as we go forward with earthcare in the spirit of planetary and international goodwill during a time of tremendous political challenge in the US.

Respectfully, Bob McGahey, (Celo) SAYMA Representative

### **Quaker House**

Quaker house has had a busy year. Consider these numbers:

*Meetings with community, military groups 90*

*Protests attended 9*

*Presentations and trainings: 19*

*Individuals receiving DV, MST and Moral Injury counseling: 52*

*GI Right Hotline Counseling Calls: Over 3,000*

*Times Quaker House in newspapers: 28*

*Community Forums: 22*

*Hearings for Bowe Bergdahl: 5*

*Visits to Meetings and churches: 18*

*Conferences attended 9*

*Tabling for Quaker House: 15*

*Books published 2: Help for Moral Injury: Strategies and Interventions and Conscientious Objection: Is This for You?*

*Quaker Speak Videos: 2 The GI Rights Hotline and How to Become a Conscientious Objector*

*Awards received: 3 Fayetteville/Cumberland Human Relations Commission Award for Improving Race Relations and Promoting Peace in Fayetteville; NC Peace Actions' 2016 Peacemaker Award; Better Carolina Award from Mountaire Farms*

*Meetings held at Quaker House: 160*

In addition to this tremendous work output, Steve and Lynn Newsom have reached the end of their agreed-upon term of service. A search process resulted in the hiring of Kindra Bradley, who will take over as Director of Quaker House in September. Kindra has been working with Steve and Lynn over the Summer.

Kindra is an attorney. In her practice she represented nonprofit organizations. Previously, she has been an Immigration case manager for Experis, Chapel Hill police officer and firefighter, and Red Cross Disaster Action Team Coordinator.

The SAYMA Rep is a Board Member of Quaker House, *ex officio*. Due to distance, I have not been able to attend Board Meetings, but was kept well informed by the best Board Meeting preparation materials I have seen in the multiple non-profit Boards of which I have been a member. In addition, I have participated in Board discussions on the Quaker House mail list, which functions through a Google Group.

Quaker House is truly Quakerism in Action. They serve not only service members seeking Conscientious Objects (CO) discharges, but work to provide CO information to the community at large. Their book on CO has 3 separate courses on CO, 1 for parents and teachers, the other 2 of different lengths for those wanting information on CO.

Their work on Moral Injury helps service people who are suffering from the result of being in the military in conflict situations. Quaker House also works with family members who have suffered as a result of PTSD/Moral Injury to a family member.

Quaker House works with other faith and social justice organizations, organizing and participating in Moral Injury conferences and workshops, as well as other trainings, including the Alternatives to Violence Program.

Quaker House has had an emphasis on fundraising in the last few months. A major continuing donor passed away, leaving them with a future projected shortfall. The emphasis now is on encouraging individual Quakers to become sustaining givers to Quaker House with automatic small monthly contributions, as led, providing a steady source of income so that Quaker House can focus on giving to those who need their specialized services.

I am attaching the Quaker House Annual Report for 2016

Respectfully submitted,

Hank Fay  
SAYMA Representative to Quaker House  
June 11, 2017



### **Quaker House Military Counseling Center Report 2016-2017 “A Place of Peace in a Military City”**

The Quaker House GI Rights Hotline answers thousands of calls from active duty military, veterans, and their families annually. The number of calls to the hotline continues to increase. This year our Hotline counselors answered an average of 301 calls per month for 3,616 calls. The counselors most rewarding yet most time consuming work is helping service members obtain conscientious objector status, guiding and providing moral support as they move through regulations, delays and at times deliberate roadblocks of the command structure. They also have been busier than ever helping service members who are being threatened with other-than-honorable discharges. They are being accused of “misconduct” or “personality disorder” when they actually suffer from PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury, Moral Injury, and/or Military Sexual Trauma. We help them prove their medical condition so that they can receive an honorable discharge and their medical benefits. We have helped bring national attention to this problem.

Quaker House also continues the important work of providing free and confidential counseling and support for the victims of military domestic violence, sexual assault, and moral injury. Our therapist, Joanna, is a valuable support for our GI Rights Hotline counselors. They have been able to refer several suicidal service members to her and know that they will be in good care. The reputation of the program has grown both in the community and on base at Fort Bragg. The service is often the last resort for those in need of help. Funding for the program is tenuous and any and all contributions are appreciated.

We continue to travel to reach out to new audiences providing education and information on moral injury. We presented for a military chaplain’s retreat for the officers in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade, for the Baptist Peace Fellowship conference, the Asheville Veterans hospital social workers, the Tony A. Biles Clergy Convocation in Concord, NC, a community forum organized by New Garden Friends Meeting, and others.



We conducted our annual Alternatives to Violence Project Training. Fayetteville NOW and the Fayetteville/Cumberland Human Relations Commission co-sponsored. The directors of Warrior Bridge, an employment service for veterans, and the Advocates for the US Army Wounded Warrior Program attended the training. They are interested in using AVP with "Wounded Warriors." This kind of attendance is the result of the bridges we have built with the military. They now trust us to want sincerely to help our service members and veterans

We provide Truth in Recruiting literature and information to people all over the country. We continue to host Mindfulness classes and an AA group, and musicians perform house concerts frequently.

We help conduct, in partnership with NOW, the Human Relations Commission, the public library, and the Cumberland County Association of Educators, regular public discussions on race relations called "Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity" and "Mirrors of Privilege." One of these series brings together students from Fayetteville State University, a traditionally African-American university, and Methodist College, a traditionally white university. We advocate for teaching Conflict Resolution in the public schools. We spoke to the Cumberland County Schools social workers about the importance of conflict resolution and also recommended the use of the Cracking the Code series. Viewing the "Cracking the Code" DVD is now required for all school principals.

We continue to witness and work against the use of torture (with the NC Stop Torture Now group) and militarized drones. We host educational forums on many subjects that relate to peace and justice issues.

Our relationship with personnel at Fort Bragg continues to grow. Through work with the military chaplains and mental health care professionals, a closer association developed which allows Quaker House to provide information and services on base and personnel at Fort Bragg make referrals to our programs. In addition, we continue to attend and present at the Bragg Region Behavioral Healthcare Collaborative, Community Blueprint (we are now on their Advisory Committee), the Behavioral Health Professionals Association, Greater Fayetteville United, the Mayor's Coffee with the Clergy and serve on the board of CARE Domestic Violence Center. We were invited to be part of NCServes, a statewide network overseen by the USO that provides referrals and follow-ups to service members and veterans for all types of needs.

Quaker House took up the issue of the poor mental health care provided for the more than 250,000 incarcerated service members and veterans. This issue was brought to our attention by the tragic case of a service member in Fayetteville who was sentenced to 10-18 years in prison for an offense that was brought on by his severe PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury. We are working with his family and lawyer to help him, and we organized a petition and a vigil calling for "Adequate and Compassionate Mental Health Care for Service Members and Veterans" nationally. The Military Chaplains Association of North America published the petition on their electronic newsletter. Our Op Ed was published in the Raleigh News and Observer and the Fayetteville Observer. In April, the vigil, in front of the

Airborne and Special Operations Museum, brought veterans, VA and DoD employees, the NAACP, members of the Cumberland County Human Relations Commission, and Quakers together. Our advocacy led to the formation of a committee composed of North Carolina VA and prison officials to advocate for “Veterans’ Dorms” in prison, a program that is being utilized in several States. We also provide support for Bowe Bergdahl when he comes to Ft. Bragg for his hearings. His family is very appreciative of our support.

We published two books this year. *Help for Moral Injury: Strategies and Interventions* was written by Cecilia Yocum, Ph.D. She volunteered to write the book after hearing our moral injury presentation. It is selling nationwide and even as far as England. Curt Torell, our board treasurer, wrote *Conscientious Objection: Is This for You? Discerning a Claim and Documenting It with Selective Service*. It, too, is reaching a wide and appreciative audience.

Quaker House was featured in two QuakerSpeak videos this year. One was an interview with our GI Rights Hotline counselors, Steve Woolford and Lenore Yarger, about their work. In the other, Curt Torell discussed “How to Become a Conscientious Objector.” Both videos bring attention to the work of Quaker House.

We led the November PFF/PFYM retreat, “Quaker House: Helping our Victims of War at Home,” featuring one of our GI Rights Hotline Counselors and our domestic violence, sexual assault and moral injury counselor. The team shared personal stories of the service members and veterans that Quaker House helped.

Wilmington, NC, Friends School invited us to do a presentation on the ‘History and Mission of Quaker House.’ The kids had many questions for us!

The Fayetteville/Cumberland Human Relations Commission presented us an award for “our activities and programs which provide positive human relations and for being actively involved in the problems of the community.” NC Peace Action gave Quaker House their 2016 Peacemaker Award.

We are working now to hire the new directors of Quaker House, who will begin in September 2017. We have good applicants so we are optimistic about the future of Quaker House. All our applicants seem dedicated to helping the victims of war at home - our service members and veterans – and working to help our world understand that “war is not the answer.”

Lynn and Steve Newsom, Directors, Quaker House of Fayetteville, 223 Hillside Ave, Fayetteville, NC, 28301

[qpr@quaker.org](mailto:qpr@quaker.org)

Facebook page: Quaker House of Fayetteville

[www.quakerhouse.org](http://www.quakerhouse.org)

### **Right Sharing of World Resources**

Information on Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR) was shared this past year at the Atlanta Friends Meeting via a poster display, a permanent pamphlet display in the Meetinghouse lobby, an announcement during a Meeting for Worship as well as a discussion during the AFM’s Green Friends group.

A poster and sets of pamphlets were on display at SAYMA 2016 in the "Chat and Chew" section and an identical display will be available for SAYMA 2017.

### **William Penn House**

Jan. 20-21, William Penn House served as respite site for activists and peacemakers including those attending Women's March on Washington offering water, warm beverages, restrooms on the first floor conference room. There was coloring station, snacks and supplies for the kids. There was also a comfort station available for the People's William Penn House served as a respite site for those attending the Women's March and the March on Climate Change.

It has been a disappointment because I have not been able to book any kind of lodging at William Penn House this year. Everytime, I tried - they were already booked. I have been supporting Deni Elliot in her Quaker Earth Care Endeavors who has been working with the Delaware River Keeper the umbrella for over two hundred environmental groups. We had several meetings set up with the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources We travelled by train with two other women. to Washington D.C. We booked four beds for the William Penn House. I received a phone call two days before that they overbooked so we were bumped out.

They were gracious enough to book us at the International Guest House which is ran by the Mennonites and even offered cover to any additonal charges that the rebooking would cost. We did stay there Sunday Night. I would highly recommend this place but we needed to be closer to the Capitol on Monday and Tuesday for our meetings in the Senate Buildings. We stayed on the floor of the Trinity Luther Church instead. .

The William Penn House is a short walk to the Capitol and Senate Buildings and would have been ideal for our plans. I would have preferred that Deni and the two women have the William Penn House "Experience" that I have loved and enjoyed but life of life's terms doesn't always give us our way. .

On the other hand, I did attend the Women's March in January and stopped at the William Penn House with my marching partner. The respite was much needed and appreciated. I also received a text message from a family member who along with her husband took advantage of the respite by the William Penn House for April's People's March on Climate Change. Deni and I also attended the People's March on Climate Change.

This family member has a jaded prospective about organized religions because of past experiences. I am happy that she was able to see the Quakers in a more positive light. She talked about how she love the hospitality and energy of the William Penn House. The William Penn House continues to hold Youth Work Camps including one that will be held in West Virginia.

*"We're getting geared-up for our service trip to West Virginia in a few weeks! In the fourth week of June we bring a group of students from Sidwell Friends School to work with [Big Creek People in Action](#), a nonprofit started by the residents of McDowell County that serves the*

*community in the realms of housing assistance, literacy programs, and arts and culture, to name a few. Here, Sidwell students brush-up on their construction skills and engage in team-building exercises to prepare for the trip."* From the WPH Facebook Page. Sidwell Friends School is where the Obama girls attended. They are staying in Washington DC so that the younger daughter can remain there.

The William Penn House is also working with the Southeast White House Mentoring program which connects volunteers with children from Southeast DC in one-one-one mentoring to help them become healthy and productive members of society. The legal battle with the tax dilemma is still ongoing but a generous doner helped out this year. The City of Washington DC is of the opinion that the William Penn House is a hospitality business therefore not entitle to the religious tax exemption.

Respectfully Submitted

Bonijean Isaacs - SAYMA William Penn House Representative

## H: Draft Budget

FY 18 Budget v. 1.0	FY15 Actl	FY16 Actl	FY17 Bdgtd	FY18
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$82,116</b>	<b>\$86,321</b>	<b>\$88,804</b>	<b>\$94,830</b>
Adjustments to Income	\$0	\$1	\$3,052	\$0
Assessments	\$42,458	\$41,680	\$43,500	\$46,200
Contributions	\$3,042	\$1,671	\$1,000	\$1,250
Contributions - Restricted	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Contributions - Unrestricted	\$3,042	\$1,671	\$1,000	\$1,250
Interest - CD	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Interest - Money Mkt	\$165	\$219	\$200	\$300
Publication Sales	\$76	\$91	\$0	\$80
Pub Sales - Directory	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Pub Sales - F&P	\$76	\$91	\$0	\$80
YM Income	\$36,376	\$42,659	\$38,000	\$47,000
YM Adjustments to Income	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
YM Bookstore Inc	\$1,148	\$1,244	\$1,150	\$1,423
YM Receipts	\$33,559	\$39,319	\$35,040	\$43,339
YM Scholarship Contrib	\$1,669	\$2,095	\$1,810	\$2,238
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$87,917</b>	<b>\$81,195</b>	<b>\$88,557</b>	<b>\$100,419</b>
Adjustments to Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SAYMA Operations	\$37,906	\$37,589	\$44,957	\$47,720
Liability Insurance Exp	\$1,412	\$1,356	\$1,500	\$1,631
Office Admin	\$3,145	\$2,754	\$3,580	\$5,495
Office - Duplication	\$275	\$162	\$265	\$249
Office - Guilford Archiving	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$171
Office - Misc Exp	\$462	\$235	\$455	\$2,057
Office - Officer Exp	\$106	\$0	\$65	\$61
Office - Phone ISP	\$510	\$480	\$600	\$565
Office - Postage	\$105	\$210	\$191	\$180
Office - Volunteer Bkgrd Chks	\$162	\$130	\$177	\$166
Travel - Office Staff	\$1,375	\$1,389	\$1,677	\$2,046
Personnel	\$26,410	\$26,366	\$26,627	\$30,657
Payroll Costs	\$432	\$432	\$436	\$502
Salaries Exp	\$21,174	\$21,170	\$21,363	\$24,597
Staff Training	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Tax Payments	\$4,805	\$4,764	\$4,828	\$5,558
Publications Expenses	\$711	\$704	\$1,200	\$1,400
Pub Exp - Directory	\$186	\$0	\$158	\$0
Pub Exp - Faith & Practice	\$117	\$11	\$109	\$0
Pub Exp - Newsletter	\$408	\$693	\$933	\$1,200
Pub Exp - Web & Hosting Srvc	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$200
SAYF Operational Transfers	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000
SAYMA Committees	\$420	\$394	\$1,000	\$1,987
Cmte Exp - Faith & Practice Rvsn	\$46	\$94	\$171	\$400
Cmte Exp - Finance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cmte Exp - Ministry & Nurture	\$183	\$0	\$225	\$1,000
Cmte Exp - Nominating	\$52	\$0	\$64	\$46
Cmte Exp - Outreach	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cmte Exp - Peace & Social Concerns	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cmte Exp - SAYMA Earthcare Action	\$140	\$300	\$540	\$540
Cmte Exp -Uplifting Racial Justice	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cmte Exp - Yearly Meeting Planning	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel Reimbursements	\$3,807	\$6,015	\$9,050	\$4,550
Travel - Rep Meetings	\$68	\$0	\$62	\$150
Travel - SAYMA Committees	\$137	\$398	\$493	\$400
Travel - WQO Delegates	\$3,602	\$5,617	\$8,495	\$4,000
Set-aside Fund Annual Allotments	\$6,395	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,500
FWCC 3rd World Delg Annl Exp	\$250	\$800	\$800	\$0
FWGC-Conference Annl Exp	\$4,955	\$0	\$0	\$0
Released Friend Annl Exp	\$600	\$400	\$400	\$0
Spiritual Development Annl Exp	\$300	\$200	\$200	\$1,500
YAF Scholarships Annl Exp	\$40	\$0	\$0	\$0
Youth Enrichment Fund Annl Exp	\$250	\$0	\$0	\$0
Yearly Meeting	\$37,116	\$39,606	\$38,000	\$47,000
Facilities & Services Exp	\$30,884	\$34,432	\$31,500	\$38,806
YM Accommodations & Meals	\$28,919	\$31,935	\$28,441	\$36,155
YM Grants - WQO Reps	\$0	\$0	\$1,000	\$0
YM Services & Honoraria	\$1,808	\$2,087	\$1,794	\$2,314
YM Supplies	\$157	\$410	\$265	\$337
Junior Yearly Meeting Exp	\$3,198	\$3,062	\$3,000	\$5,450
JYM Asst Coordinator	\$400	\$400	\$1,400	\$0
JYM Coordinator	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$1,400	\$5,200
JYM Supplies, Sitters, Misc	\$398	\$262	\$200	\$250
YM Bookstore Exp	\$1,141	\$1,237	\$1,500	\$1,224
YM Print Post Phone & Misc	\$1,893	\$875	\$2,000	\$1,520
YM WQO Annual Contribns	\$6,500	\$2,600	\$4,200	\$4,200
Budget Net:	-\$5,801	\$5,125	\$247	-\$5,589
YM Net:	-\$740	\$3,052	\$0	\$0

## Attachment H: Draft Budget

## I: Nominating Committee Report

New (and new terms) appointees in 2017 appear in boldface. Blank lines indicate appointments needed.

Note: All terms are two years – WQOs are three years. Terms begin & end after YM each June.

### Officers

CLERK	Jon Saderholm	16-18	Berea (KY)
ASSISTANT CLERK	Barbara Esther	16-18	Asheville (NC)
RECORDING CLERK	<b>Rebecca Sullivan</b>	<b>15-18</b>	Atlanta
TREASURER	Roger Wise	16-18	Charleston (WV)
ASST. TREASURER	<b>Carol Lamm</b>	<b>17-18</b>	<b>Berea (KY)</b>

### Standing Committees

#### Ministry & Nurture Committee

Co-CLERK	Thais Carr	16-18	Nashville (TN)
Co-CLERK			
MEMBER	Christine Sears	16-18	Huntsville (AL)
MEMBER	Chris Easton	16-18	Athens (GA)
MEETING APPOINTEE	Robin Josephs		Swannanoa Valley (NC)
MEETING APPOINTEE	Kim Saderholm		Berea (KY)
MEETING APPOINTEE	Tom Beeson		West Knoxville (TN)
MEETING APPOINTEE	Jan Stansel		Nashville (TN)
MEETING APPOINTEE			
MEETING APPOINTEE			

#### Finance Committee

CLERK	Lee Ann Swarm	16-18	West Knoxville (TN)
MEMBER	Geeta McGahey	16-18	Celo (NC)
MEMBER	Wood Bouldin	16-18	Greenbrier WG (WV)
MEMBER	Dolph Hoehling	16-18	Swannanoa (NC)
Ex officio	Roger Wise-Treasurer		Charleston (WV)
Ex officio	<b>Carol Lamm</b>		<b>Berea (KY)</b>

#### Personnel Committee

CLERK	Barbara Esther	16-18	Asheville (NC)
MEMBER	<b>Melissa Preast</b>	<b>16-18</b>	<b>West Knoxville (TN)</b>
MEMBER	Charles Schade	16-18	Charleston (WV)
MEMBER	Tobin Brogunier	16-18	Athens (GA)
SUPERVISOR OF AA	Jon Saderholm		Berea (KY)
SUPERVIOSR SAYF AA			

SAYF Steering Committee

CLERK	Jennifer Chapman	15-17	Durham (NC)
MEMBER	Mary Linda McKinney	15-17	Nashville (TN)
MEMBER	Aaron Ruscetta	15-17	Atlanta (GA)
MEMBER	Mark Wutka	16-18	Nashville (TN)
MEMBER	Wren Hendrickson	16-18	Chapel Hill (NC)
MEMBER			
ex officio	Autumn Woodward		Asheville (NC)

JYM OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

CONVENER	Jennifer Dickie	15-17	Atlanta (GA)
MEMBER	Marcie Thaxter	<b>16-18</b>	Asheville (NC)
MEMBER	<b>Beth Ensign</b>	<b>15-18</b>	<b>Atlanta (GA)</b>
MEMBER	<b>Paul Laudeman</b>	<b>15-18</b>	<b>Knoxville (TN)</b>
MEMBER	Ron McDonald	16-18	Memphis (TN)
JYM Coordinator(s)			

YEARLY MEETING PLANNING COMMITTEE

CLERK	<b>Carol Nickle</b>	<b>15-19</b>	<b>West Knoxville (TN)</b>
ADULT PROGRAMS	<b>Folami Adams</b>	<b>17-18</b>	<b>Atlanta, GA</b>
WORKSHOPS	Chris Berg	16-18	Greenville (SC)
CO-REGISTRAR	<b>Karen Wise</b>	<b>15-18</b>	<b>Charleston (WV)</b>
CO-REGISTRAR	Lissa West	16-18	Cookeville (TN)
RECORDING REGISTRAR	Liz Dykes		Admin Asst [Savannah]
BOOKSTORE	<b>Judy Geary</b>	<b>17-19</b>	<b>Boone (NC)</b>
ASST. BOOKSTORE	Pam Beziat	16-18	Nashville (TN)
LOCAL ARRANGMNT	Bob Welsh	16-18	Swannanoa (NC)
JYM Rep	<b>Jennifer Dickie</b>	16-18	Atlanta (GA)
YAF REP	<b>Ruby Williams</b>	<b>17-18</b>	<b>Atlanta (GA)</b>
WORSHIP CO-ORD.	<b>Laura Seeger</b>	<b>17-19</b>	<b>Chattanooga (TN)</b>
LAYOUT EDITOR			
SAYF Rep			
At Large	John Potter	16-18	Nashville (TN)

Young Adult Friends

CLERK			
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Nominating Committee (named by the Naming Committee at SAYMA YM)

Co-CLERK	Beth Myers	16-18	Berea (KY)
MEMBER	John Adams	16-18	Atlanta (GA)
MEMBER	Autumn Trayham	16-18	Berea (KY)
MEMBER	<b>Kendall Ivie</b>	<b>17-19</b>	<b>West Knoxville (TN)</b>
MEMBER	Wood Bouldin	16-18	Greenbriar Valley (WV)
MEMBER	Lisa Bennett	16-18	Memphis (TN)

Peace & Social Concerns Committee

CLERK	Bob Welsh	16-18	Swannanoa (NC)
MEMBER	Florence Yaffe	16-18	Celo (NC)
MEMBER	Patti Hughes	16-18	Asheville (NC)
MEMBER	<b>Brian Thomas</b>	<b>17-19</b>	<b>Columbia (SC)</b>
MEMBER	<b>Steve Olszewsky</b>	<b>15-19</b>	<b>Berea (KY)</b>
MEMBER	Christopher Easton	16-18	Athens (GA)
MEMBER	Harry Rogers	16-18	Columbus (SC)

Earthcare Action Network

CLERK	Bob McGahey	15-17	Celo (NC)
MEMBER	<b>Deni Elliot</b>	<b>17-19</b>	<b>Charleston (WV)</b>
MEMBER	<b>Kate Anthony</b>	<b>17-19</b>	<b>Chattanooga (TN)</b>
MEMBER	Roy Taylor	16-18	Atlanta (GA)
MEMBER	Paul Laudeman	16-18	West Knoxville (TN)

Southern Appalachian Friend

EDITOR			
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Web Support

WEB MANAGER	Charlie Wilton	15-18	Berea (KY)
MEMBER	Robyn Josephs	16-18	Swannanoa (NC)
CLERK	Steve Livingston	16-18	Asheville (NC)
MEMBER	Sig Christensen	16-18	West Knoxville

Outreach

CLERK	<b>Wood Bouldin</b>	<b>17-19</b>	<b>Greenbrier (WV)</b>
MEMBER	<b>Hank Fay</b>	<b>17-19</b>	<b>Berea (KY)</b>
MEMBER			
MEMBER			
YAF MEMBER			



Operational Handbook

CLERK	Kendall Ivie	16-18	West Knoxville (TN)
ARCHIVIST	Missy Ivie	16-18	West Knoxville (TN)

**Ad Hoc Committees**

Faith & Practice Revision

CLERK	Free Polazzo	Began 01	Atlanta (GA)
MEMBER	Missy Ivie	Began 01	West Knoxville (TN)
MEMBER	Edie Patrick	Began 07	Asheville (NC)
MEMBER	Beth Myers	Began 14	Lexington (OVYM)
MEMBER	Thais Carr	Began 12	Nashville (TN)

Committee on Assessments

CLERK	Brian Yaffe	Began 16	Celo (NC)
MEMBER	Carol Lamm	Began 16	Berea (KY)
MEMBER	Wood Bouldin	Began 16	Greenbrier Valley (WV)
MEMBER	Bill Holland	Began 16	Atlanta (GA)

Electronic Communications to help facilitate electronic meetings

CLERK			
MEMBER	Charles Wilton	Began 16	Berea (KY)
MEMBER	Robyn Josephs	Began 16	Swannanoa Valley(NC)
MEMBER			
MEMBER			

### Representatives to Wider Quaker Organizations

AFSC Corporation	John Adams	16-19	Atlanta (GA)
	Lee Ann Swarm	15-18	West Knoxville (TN)
	<b>Robyn Josephs</b>	<b>17-20</b>	<b>Swannanoa Valley (NC)</b>
	Free Polazzo	16-19	Atlanta (GA)
FCNL	Charlie Wilton	15-18	Berea (KY)
	Jane Hiles	16-19	Birmingham (AL)
	Larry Osbourne	15-18	West Knoxville (TN)
FGC	Sharon Annis	15-18	West Knoxville (TN)
	Rebecca Sullivan	15-18	Atlanta (GA)
FLGBTQC	Margaret Farmer	16-19	Asheville (NC)
FWCC	Kelsey McNichols	15-18	Atlanta (GA)
	Shahina Lakhani	16-19	Atlanta
FRIENDS PEACE TEAMS	Sallie Prugh	16-19	Columbia (SC)
	Jack Willis	15-18	Nashville (TN)
QEW	<b>Kathleen Stevens</b>	<b>17-20</b>	<b>Memphis (TN)</b>
	Bob McGahey	16-19	Celo (NC)
QUAKER HOUSE	Hank Fay	16-19	Berea (KY)
RSWR	<b>Pat Williams</b>	<b>14-18</b>	<b>Atlanta (GA)</b>
	<b>Steve Olshewsky</b>	<b>14-20</b>	<b>Berea (KY)</b>
WM. PENN HOUSE	<b>Bonnie Isaacs</b>	<b>14-20</b>	<b>Lewisburg WG (VW)</b>

J: SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice Ad Hoc Committee report

**SAYMA 2016 Minutes Concerning the Formation of a Racial Justice Committee:**

46-13 Racial Justice Proposal Steve Livingston (Asheville), SAYMA's representative from Asheville presented the following minute from Asheville Meeting. Asheville Friends approved the proposal at Fifth Month Meeting for Business in Fifth Month. The proposal calls for SAYMA to create a Racial Justice Committee—or whatever they want to call it—charged with supporting SAYMA Friends of Color as a place they can bring their issues and concerns when they come up, as they inevitably must, in an effort to make SAYMA a safe and welcoming community for Friends of Color. This committee would also be charged with educating the wider SAYMA community regarding issues of race and racism; compiling and disseminating resource materials; identifying and selecting workshop presenters, anti-racism trainers, organizers and organizations within our SAYMA region; and facilitating access to said resources among SAYMA Friends.

Comments from the floor: Overall, there was support for creating such a committee; however, some Friends wanted to make sure that we were spending some time reviewing the minute and figuring out what the Yearly Meeting needs in forming said committee.

Friends were clear that this was not the same as Peace and Social Concerns as Racial Justice is not just about what is happening outside of the yearly meeting but also what it happening inside our own body. The Racial Justice Committee would be a place for people of color to come when they have concerns about something happening in the yearly meeting as well as be a committee to support the developing resources for our monthly meetings. This is a population that deserves to be heard, loved, and fully included. The role of this committee is extremely important for the yearly meeting as a whole to educate and add resources to understanding the issues of racism and the things white Europeans are doing to contribute to racism.

Friends expressed the need to make sure that we are doing outreach and working with our children and addressing their understanding and exposure to diversity or the lack thereof. This committee may help do outreach to people of color. We have this wonderful religion made up of great faith and practice, yet we keep it a secret. There is an opportunity for us to encourage people of color to join our Faith through this committee. Another Friend mentioned that we might want to set guidelines about the makeup of the committee as well as make sure we get input from our young adult friends.

Friends were concerned that at times we have seasoned a topic too much. Friends thought that we might make it an ad hoc committee so that it could start working and discerning what it was called to take part in. Another Friend mentioned that ad hoc did not prioritize the group enough to show that we as a body are committed to the work for the long haul. Also with seasoning, it become easy to make too broad of a proposal that then doesn't allow the committee to do its work reasonably and then dies from over commitment.

Friends mentioned that three different issues had been mentioned: race, outreach and youth. Yes, they all merge, and it is too broad. 46-13-01 The Yearly Meeting affirms the

broad idea from Asheville Meeting to form a Racial Justice Committee and unites to form this committee by the end of the weekend. Rebecca Sullivan (Atlanta), Sharon Anise (West Knoxville) and Tim Lamb (Berea) will convene a group of interested Friends to get together to present a report back by Saturday business meeting.

46-31 Racial Justice Committee Proposal Continued Tim Lamm (Berea) presented the edited proposal on the creation of the Racial Justice Committee. We want SAYMA to be a welcoming and safe place for people of color. Therefore, we propose SAYMA create a standing committee on Racial Justice to support SAYMA Friends of Color and provide education and resources to monthly meetings and the yearly meeting regarding issues of race and racism. Examples include: providing spaces for listening and talking about our experiences of race and racism; compiling and disseminating resource materials; coordinating workshops and trainings. We propose an ad hoc committee to address needs that arise for support and education. We also ask the ad hoc committee to develop the standing committee's charge and structure to be presented at Spring 2017 Representative Meeting. We expect the ad hoc committee to be drawn largely from Friends of Color. Friends asked for clarification about why the ad hoc and standing committee were both used in the proposal. To create a standing committee, we need to follow some procedural steps to get the committee description and procedures prepared, so we are creating an ad hoc committee to both set up the procedures as well as act on any concerns that may arise for the standing committee before it is completely formed. Friends had some concerns regarding the racial makeup of the committee. However, other Friends spoke of the importance of the committee for all of us no matter our race. 46-31-01 Friends approved the proposal.

\*\*\*

### **SAYMA/URJ Report**

Six Friends of Color (Folami Adams, Lisa Bennett, Gabrielle Hammonds, Shahina Lakhani, Art Jones and Sharon Smith) were charged with forming a standing SAYMA committee to support Friends of Color and provide educational resources to SAYMA yearly and monthly meetings regarding issues of race and racism. Loving fellowship was enjoyed by all as we accomplished the tasks through working worship on the weekend of November 18-20, 2017 in Atlanta.

The committee decided the name of the standing committee is **SAYMA-URJ (Uplifting Racial Justice)**. Folami Adams (Atlanta) and Sharon Smith (Asheville) are its co-clerks. A draft mission statement and vision were written and approved by the committee. Goals were agreed on by canvassing a wider group of SAYMA Friends of color (FOC) regarding what they need to feel safe and welcome as SAYMA Friends of Color. SAYMA-URJ organized the concerns FOC shared with us into Goals, and they were approved, also.

**Vision:** SAYMA/URJ envisions a Yearly Meeting community where every Friend of color is safe and feels welcome. We see a SAYMA community where the divine light within every Friend of color is affirmed, his or her unique history, spiritual journey and lived truth is honored, where our messages and concerns, are heard and respected with due consideration. We see a SAYMA community where Friends of color are empowered to build

close spiritual Friendships, appreciation, love and support for the weighty responsibilities we carry as people of color, embodying Quaker Testimonies, within and outside of the Religious Society of Friends.

**Mission:** To help SAYMA become a safe and welcoming place for Friends of Color. The committee will do this by providing a safe place for Friends of Color to bring issues and concerns regarding racism within their monthly meetings and SAYMA, and to find support and advocacy. The committee will also work to raise awareness about white supremacy (aka racism) within SAYMA by compiling and disseminating educational resources.

**Goals:** The following goals were compiled by canvassing SAYMA Friends of color (FOC). We asked what FOC need to feel safe and welcome among Friends?

1. Help navigating Quaker culture and process (e.g., a FOC welcome committee; a printed guide to Quaker culture for newcomers; and/or assigned mentors).
2. Provide opportunities to connect with other FOC, in order to build a community of support, share experiences and resources, and receive emotional and tactical support from other FOC.
3. Commit to addressing the concerns of FOC and respond to said concerns in a timely manner with sincere listening and not avoidance, “management,” and “process violence.” \*
4. Engage in conflict resolution/reconciliation processes that do not expect victims to facilitate or take responsibility for what happened to them.
5. Hire skilled facilitators for private FOC only sessions, to help FOC understand and heal from generational racial trauma and develop personal and group empowerment.
6. Arrange ongoing workshops and other opportunities for learning that focus on dismantling racism for all SAYMA Friends, beginning with the Yearly Meeting leadership (including all clerks, the Planning Committee, Ministry and Nurture, Junior Yearly Meeting, YAFs and the Finance Committee).

**Approved:**

1. Folami Adams and Sharon Smith will serve as co-clerks.
2. SAYMA/URJ will meet every quarter (a schedule has yet to be approved).
3. Only FOC will be members of SAYMA/URJ.
4. SAYMA-URJ encourages Friends of European descent to support SAYMA-URJ by forming a separate committee or working group.
5. SAYMA-URJ will create and manage an operating budget with sufficient funds readily available to dispense grass roots reparations\*\* and fund operational expenses as needed

(e.g., lodging, transportation, and travel expenses; resources; training as well the cost of an annual pre-SAYMA gathering and skilled facilitation.

6. SAYMA-URJ needs its own bank account to create financial independence and autonomy for FOC.

### **Recommendations**

1. Hire CrossRoads Anti-Racism Training and Organizing to train all YM clerks and staff as well as members of Ministry and Nurture, the Planning Committee, Finance Committee, the Nominating Committee, Junior Yearly Meeting, SAYF and YAFs.

<http://crossroadsantiracism.org/organizing/institutional/>

2. Include SAYMA-URJ members on the SAYMA Planning Committee, Ministry and Nurture, the Nominating Committee, the Quaker Education Committee, and the Finance Committee. Ideally, there should be at least one SAYF representative/intern working with SAYMA-URJ.

3. Grant SAYMA-URJ an independent operating budget (see budget request).

### **Budget Request**

SAYMA/URJ requests \$16,000 (approximately 20% of SAYMA's overall income) for fiscal year 2017 in order to faithfully and sufficiently fulfill its mission and goals.

SAYMA/URJ requests a separate bank account in order to establish financial independence and confidentiality for Friends of Color. The money will be used to dispense "grass roots reparations"\* and fund operational expenses as needed (e.g., lodging, transportation, and travel expenses; resources; training; the cost of our annual pre-SAYMA gathering; skilled racial trauma healing facilitation for FOC; part-time administrative support, compilation of an anti-racism/multicultural resource database for all SAYMA Friends).

It was suggested at the SAYMA Representative Meeting in March, that SAYMA-URJ model its budget process on the budget process SAYF uses, as SAYF has a separate bank account and does its own budgeting, record keeping and reporting.

The disbursement for SAYF is budgeted by SAYMA at a set amount each year. They don't submit a budget proposal to receive funds. They submit regular financial reports and accounting records.

SAYF uses Quickbooks for bookkeeping - recording reimbursements for expenses, transactions on their account, income and so forth. They electronically store expense receipts and also use an Excel database for retreat by retreat bookkeeping, and physically file copies of deposit information. They currently communicate Quarterly Financial Reports to the SAYMA Treasurer and an Annual Financial Report, as well as an Annual Report on SAYF's activities and participation, to SAYMA each June.

These are the aspects of the SAYF budget and fiscal process SAYMA-URJ would like to adapt. We ask that someone from the Finance Committee work with the SAYMA-URJ co-clerks to set up a similar SAYMA-URJ financial system.

Here is to SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice!

Folami Adams (Atlanta) SAYMA/URJ co-clerk

Sharon Smith (Asheville) SAYMA/URJ co-clerk

Lisa D. Bennett (Memphis)

Shahina Lakhani (Atlanta)

\*Process Violence: When Quaker Process is used to block and/or control leadings of the spirit, and otherwise cause harm.

\*\*Grass Roots Reparations: To do right, by giving-back, according to your capacity, without waiting for an act of Congress. Individuals and institutions can do this.

## K: Ad Hoc Assessments Committee report

### Overview and Highlights

This report is in five sections:

1. **Background:** Why the ad hoc committee was formed.
2. **Survey:** Results of survey of monthly meetings.
3. **Census and Assessments.** Current disconnect and possible future alignment.
4. **Recommendations:** Processes for moving to a revised assessment system.
5. **Guiding Principles for Revised System.** Proposed guiding principles for a to-be-designed revised assessment system.

The ad hoc committee on SAYMA assessments spent the first part of the year working to understand how monthly meetings approach payment of the annual assessment to SAYMA. We surveyed monthly meetings and now have a good handle on the practices of the monthly meetings regarding the assessment. The survey results pointed us in some promising directions for increasing consistency in practice across SAYMA monthly meetings.

The committee has also recognized that the assessment touches on many aspects of monthly meeting life, including but not limited to how monthly meetings view membership; how monthly meetings maintain membership records; how monthly meetings communicate with distant and inactive members; monthly meeting understanding of and experiences with SAYMA; how monthly meetings respond to the annual census; and the census itself. These collateral issues open up possibilities for better alignment of systems within SAYMA. In some cases these matters also open up possibilities for monthly meeting growth as spiritual communities.

We come to YM 2017 with three recommendations for action:

4. We recommend that SAYMA initiate a process that will engage monthly meetings in reflection and clarification around assessment-related topics, broadly defined, over the coming year, in preparation for approving a revised assessment system at YM 2018.
5. We recommend that YM 2017 approve guiding principles for a revised assessment system, and we propose five principles for consideration.
6. We recommend that YM 2017 ask our committee to continue its work for another year, with a charge to:
  - a. Shepherd the process of engaging monthly meetings in reflection and clarification around assessment-related topics.
  - b. Develop recommendations for a revised assessment system to bring to YM 2018, taking into consideration results of the monthly meeting reflection in step 1.
  - c. Review the annual census process and bringing recommendations for simplification and alignment with the assessment.

### 1. Background



Throughout SAYMA's history, the organization has been funded primarily by monthly meetings via a per-person assessment intended to roughly reflect the relative size and, by implication, financial resources of the monthly meetings. A helpful description of SAYMA's assessment is included as an appendix. It explains what the assessment pays for. It also states that the assessment is paid by monthly meetings "per member and regular attender" and further explains: "Monthly meetings exercise discretion in deciding whom to consider 'regular attenders.'"

Over the years, SAYMA's treasurers and finance committees have reported that year-to-year assessment revenue, which it seems should be fairly steady, is in fact somewhat erratic. This makes budgeting difficult. Furthermore, questions keep arising about whether all monthly meetings are paying their fair shares. Friends have wondered whether the discretion given to monthly meetings in determining their assessments might have led to differences in practice that result in significant inequities in the amounts paid.

Treasurers have noted that the numbers on which the assessment is paid are substantially different from numbers reported by monthly meetings on the annual census. See below for further analysis and discussion of this point.

Following a finance committee report that once again called attention to issues with the assessment, YM 2016 established an ad hoc committee to study how meetings count people for their assessment. The committee consisted of Brian Yaffe, Celo, clerk; Carol Lamm, Berea; Wood Bouldin, Greenbrier Valley Worship Group; Bill Holland, Atlanta; and Chuck Jones, Chattanooga.

## 2. Survey

The committee developed an on-line, 12-question survey asking how monthly meetings calculate their assessments and distributed it to monthly meeting treasurers and clerks. The committee reported on its work and the survey results at the March 18, 2017 SAYMA representative meeting in Birmingham.

Highlights of the survey are as follows:

- 20 out of SAYMA's 21 monthly meetings responded to the survey.
- Two-thirds of monthly meetings use a per-person count to determine their assessments. The other third do not; these monthly meetings described a variety of methods for determining how much to pay.
- Among the monthly meetings that calculate the assessment on a per-person basis, there are variations in who is counted.
  - All count active adult members.
  - All but one count active adult attenders.
  - Nine count inactive adult members who contribute financially.
- There is considerable variation in whether youth and inactive members are included in the assessment counts.

The full survey results are included in Appendix B of the report to the March rep meeting and can be viewed along with other YM 2017 documents on the SAYMA website and on the reference table.

The March rep meeting minutes show that rep meeting thanked the committee for its work and declared its work complete. Subsequently the SAYMA clerk asked the committee to continue its work and prepare recommendations for YM 2017.

### 3. Census and Assessments

The ad hoc assessment committee did not start out intending to look into the annual census, but our work has led us there. We have come to see that the annual census might hold some clues about what is going on as well as be helpful in addressing some concerns about the current assessment system. Here is what we learned.

Annually, in January, SAYMA requests census data from monthly meetings for the previous calendar year. Some of the information is submitted to Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), which tracks numbers of Quakers worldwide. However, most of the questions on the census are not required for FWCC. The SAYMA administrative assistant compiles the responses and presents the census to the yearly meeting, and each year the census is attached to the YM minutes. Over the years, various questions have been added to the SAYMA census. There is no regular process or designation of responsibility within SAYMA to review the census to see if the questions are still useful and/or used by anyone.

The census instructions include the following statement:

Note that the census information is not used to determine your assessment (the amount your meeting owes to the yearly meeting). The yearly meeting requests that each monthly meeting contribute an amount based on the total number of adult members and regular attenders (currently \$65 per person). The actual amount is determined by your monthly meeting. However, census information is used to estimate the income the yearly meeting might receive when SAYMA sets its annual budget.

Over the years, as the statement above indicates, as part of the budget process, finance committees and SAYMA treasurers have looked to census reports for numbers of members and attenders. Every time, they have found that most monthly meetings report more members and attenders on the census than indicated by assessments paid.

SAYMA Treasurer Roger Wise provided an analysis. His calculations were based on assessments received during SAYMA's FY 14 – FY 16, compared with the census for the prior calendar years (2013, 2014 and 2015). There is a startling gap between numbers reported on the census and numbers reflected in assessment payments. For example:

- Average total of monthly meeting adult members and attenders on the census was 1,116. Assessment payments received worked out to \$39/person, not close to \$60, which was the per-person amount during those years.

- Differences among monthly meetings are even more striking. At \$60 per person, monthly meetings have paid for from 22% to 186% of the number of members and attenders reported on the census.
- Looked at another way, if monthly meetings were paying \$60 per adult member and attender, the total would be 725 instead of 1,116.

The committee considered a number of possible reasons for the discrepancy between the census and the assessment. The census asks about “attenders” while the assessment policy uses the term “active attenders” – and both the census and the assessment leave definitions of those terms up to the monthly meetings. We know from our survey that some meetings do not use a per-person count to determine the assessment. There may be timing differences between the census’s calendar year end and the point in time that a monthly meeting uses for assessment calculation, but differences from this cause would be negligible. Some meetings include youth in their assessment count – but to the extent that is the case, it just makes the differences noted above even greater. In the end, the difference remains. The difference is a source of confusion and perhaps contributes to a sense of unfairness.

We have concluded that the SAYMA assessment system could be improved by building a connection between the census and the assessment. For instance, if there is to be a distinction between “attenders” and “active attenders,” guidance to monthly meetings on the distinction would be helpful. Or perhaps only “active attenders” should be counted; still, a definition would be helpful. We are not making either of these recommendations at this time – they are just illustrations of what a bridge between the census and the assessment could look like.

#### 4. Recommendations

1. **Foster monthly meeting consideration of assessment issues.** We recommend that SAYMA initiate a process that will engage monthly meetings in reflection and clarification around assessment-related topics, broadly defined, over the coming year, in preparation for approving a revised assessment system at YM 2018.
2. **Approve principles for a revised assessment system.** We recommend that YM 2017 approve guiding principles for a revised assessment system, and we propose five principles for consideration. See final section of this report.
3. **Re-appoint the ad hoc assessment committee for another year.** We recommend that YM 2017 ask our committee to continue its work for another year. All of the current members are willing to serve for another year. We would welcome additional members, and in particular would like to be joined by one or two Friends knowledgeable about the annual census. In re-appointing the committee, we propose the following charge for the coming year:
  - a. Shepherd the process of engaging monthly meetings in reflection and clarification around assessment-related topics.
  - b. Develop recommendations for a revised assessment system to bring to YM 2018, taking into consideration results of the monthly meeting reflection in step 1.

- c. Review the annual census process and bring recommendations for simplification and alignment with the assessment.

#### 5. Guiding Principles for Revised System

The ad hoc committee on SAYMA assessments proposes the guiding principles below for a to-be-designed revised assessment system. A rationale is included with each proposed principle. We recognize that changes to these principles could arise from monthly meeting responses during the proposed engagement process. However, we also believe that it would be helpful for YM 2017 to agree, if possible, on principles that make sense based on what we understand at this time.

These are the proposed guiding principles:

1. **Dependably produce the budgeted assessment income for SAYMA.** Any revision should address a fundamental problem with the current system, in which too often the revenue from assessments does not meet the budget.
2. **Create a link between the annual census and the assessment, so that numbers reported on the census tie to the assessment.** Up to now, there has been no link between the assessment and the annual census; in fact, the absence of a connection has been explicit. However, both systems involve similar data. We think the time has come to align the systems.
3. **Result in monthly meeting payments in proportion to monthly meeting size.** We believe the most practical way of allocating financial responsibility for SAYMA among its monthly meetings continues to be for monthly meetings to pay in proportion to their size.
4. **Promote consistency among monthly meetings, while still allowing room for monthly meetings to exercise appropriate discretion.** The current high degree of inconsistency among monthly meetings is a problem both practically and in terms of trust among monthly meetings. SAYMA cannot and should not try to dictate exactly how a monthly meeting determines its financial support of SAYMA, but SAYMA can promote a higher degree of consistency by providing clarity of expectations and opportunities for monthly meetings to share practices.
5. **Align system elements to support integrity and accountability by monthly meetings.** System elements within SAYMA include at least the following: the census, budgeting, opportunities for sharing information among monthly meetings, and written guidance. Any lack of alignment at the SAYMA level can lead to confusion at the monthly meeting level, making it harder to practice integrity and accountability. Let's fix the systems to make it easier for monthly meetings to support SAYMA with clarity and consistency.

## Appendix Yearly Meeting Assessments<sup>1</sup>

As of October 1, 2016, SAYMA's assessment is \$65 per member and regular attender. Yearly Meeting established this level through minute 46-23-01, which increased it from \$60. From October 1, 2017 forward, the assessment will be \$75.

Monthly meetings exercise discretion in deciding whom to consider "regular attenders." SAYMA encourages periodic payment of assessments, as these monies cover ongoing operational expenses of the yearly meeting which are continuous throughout the year. The annual gathering in June is largely self-financed, with those who attend and are able to pay providing most of the cost of the event.

Yearly meeting assessments cover ongoing operations of the yearly meeting, including salaries of two staff (administrative assistant and SAYF coordinator). They pay for operating our office, much of the SAYF program, the newsletter, contributions to wider Quaker organizations, set-aside funds for purposes such as spiritual development, and committee expenses. Operational expenses are detailed in SAYMA's current budget, which is approved at each fall Representative Meeting, and is attached to that meeting's minutes.

Friends with questions or concerns about the assessment or the use of budgeted funds are invited to contact the clerk of the Finance Committee or the Treasurer. You may contact the Treasurer via email at [SAYMATreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:SAYMATreasurer@gmail.com).

Meetings should send assessment payments to SAYMA's administrative assistant Liz Dykes at 106 Wax Myrtle Court, Savannah, GA 31419. Other payments to SAYMA should be sent to Liz for deposit to SAYMA's account.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [http://www.sayma.org/online\\_documents/Yearly%20Meeting%20Assessments.pdf](http://www.sayma.org/online_documents/Yearly%20Meeting%20Assessments.pdf), on 6/5/17.

## L: SAYF report

Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) held 6 retreats during the past year. We have averaged 33 Young Friends (YF) per retreat with 66 different teens coming to at least one retreat during the past year. Some Young Friends attended all 6 retreats and others attended only one. Details of each retreat are summarized below. Most retreats were hosted at Meetinghouses, but we also gathered once at the Arthur Morgan School. Asheville Meeting was very gracious to host us twice. And we were excited to hold retreats at the Berea and Charlotte Friends Meetinghouses. We are deeply appreciative to Friends for allowing us to use their facilities.

We also held two joint Nurturing and Steering Committee retreats, at West Knoxville Friends Meeting in August, 2016 and at Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting in February, 2017. There was rich discussion and discernment in both meetings. Young friends shared impressive, dynamically responsive reflections and insights on practical challenges in retreats, such as language and inclusion.

SAYF said goodbye to Jonah MacDonald as Administrative Assistant in September 2016, with gratitude for his four years of extraordinary service to SAYF, where he is loved and missed. Autumn Woodward was welcomed as the new SAYF Administrative Assistant.

SAYFers continue to refine their practice of vigorous welcoming to young friends who are new to SAYF, and to host retreats with themes such as *Unplugged*, which explored taking a break from devices; *Kitchen (Counter) Culture*, cooking together and learning about action around hunger; and *Standing up for What We Believe In; Respectfully Disagreeing*. A short description of each retreat is included in an attached PDF, written by Aaron Ruschetta, to further communicate the spirit of this year's SAYF retreats and experiences in community.

### **SAYF Retreats:**

#### **1. Charlotte Meetinghouse Retreat**

**Sept. 9-11, 2016**

Theme: Finding Spirit in your Element: Water, Fire, Air, Earth

Number of Young Friends: 32

Number of FANs:\* 6 + 4 FANITs\*\*/Parents

*Activities included: Swimming at Lake & Pool*

(\*Friendly Adult Nurturers/\*\*Friendly Adult Nurturer in Training)

#### **2. Berea Meetinghouse Retreat**

**October 7-9, 2016**

Theme: Unplugged

Number of Young Friends 26

Number of FANs: 7 + 1 FANIT

*Activities included: Hiking, Tie Dye and Dulcimer Workshops*

**3. Asheville Meetinghouse Retreat  
2016**

**November 7-9,**

Theme: Inclusion

Number of Young Friends 35

Number of FANs: 7 + 1 FANIT

*Activities included: Botanical Gardens of Asheville*

**4. Atlanta Meetinghouse Retreat  
2017**

**January 13-15,**

Theme: (Kitchen) Counter Culture

Number of Young Friends: 39

Number of FANs: 5 + 1 FANIT

*Activities included: Counterculture Cooking for Pot Luck;  
Vegan Living (led by 2016 SAYF graduate); Hunger 101  
(led by Atlanta Community Food Bank)*

**5. Arthur Morgan School (Celo) Retreat  
26, 2017**

**March 24-**

Theme: Self-Expression

Number of Young Friends: 41

Number of FANs:

6 + 3 FANITs/Parents/Community Members

*Activities included: Hiking, Dance*

**6. Asheville Friends Meeting Retreat**

**April 21-23, 2017**

Theme: Standing Up for What We Believe In: Respectfully Disagreeing

Number of Young Friends: 25

Number of FANs: 7

**Nurturing/Steering Committees Retreats**

**1. West Knoxville Friends Meeting**

**August 19-21, 2016**

Number of Nurturing Committee Members: 14

Number of Steering Committee Members: 6

**2. Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting**

**Feb 10-12, 2017**

Number of Nurturing Committee Members: 13

Number of Steering Committee Members: 6

M: Registrar's Report

<b>Category</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
Registered	238	250
Cancelations	6	4
NET	232	246
JYM	14	18
SAYF	31	43
YAF	15	6
First Time attenders	41	Not counted
Scholarship Fund Donations	\$1614	\$1439
Late Fees	\$560	\$720
Scholarships granted	\$1960	\$1243
Fee waivers (Staff, FANs, guests)	\$3903	\$2963



## N: Epistles

June 2017

To All Friends Everywhere,

Greetings from the 47<sup>th</sup> annual session of Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA) gathered at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, NC, June 15-18<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Our theme this year “Weaving Our World Together: Lifting up Racial Justice” built on last year’s program of Unraveling Racism.

In order to develop the theme, the Thursday night plenary was a multi-media presentation that was a visceral representation of the daily experience of people of color.

Complementing the theme, during the Friday night plenary Folami, a Friend of Color, and Tara, a Friend of European descent, shared about their lived experiences and how these experiences shaped their lives and brought them to racial justice work.

Our business meeting was largely focused on our work toward uplifting racial justice. To facilitate this difficult and deep work our clerk outlined principles that could guide our discussion. He focused our attention on incorporating particular values that are characteristic of Friends’ practices. The Clerk guided us to work through the agenda paying close attention to the movement of the Spirit.

As we moved through our Yearly Meeting’s business, it became clear that individual Friends, Monthly Meetings, the Yearly Planning Committee, SAYMA’s Uplifting Racial Justice committee, and SAYMA as a whole had done much seasoning about racial justice work since our previous annual meeting. As we reflect on the work in which we are engaged we are aware of what a labor of love this is. We paraphrase from Ina Mae Gaskin’s book *Spiritual Midwifery*: “We do not describe labor as pain but instead as an interesting (and productive) sensation that demands all of our attention.”

During our business meeting, Gretchen Castle spoke about Friends World Committee for Consultation’s (FWCC) inspiring work and Haley Hawthaway brought us important information about Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW). We were also joined by representatives from American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Friends Committee for National Legislation (FCNL), Friends General Conference (FGC), William Penn House and Quaker House.

For this annual meeting the planning committee provided us with 22 workshop options. There also were full programs for Young Adult Friends (YAF), the Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF), Junior Yearly Meeting, and, new this year, Play-Care for those between the age of 2 and 5.

We wish to conclude with expression of gratitude for all attendees and especially for the open hearted sharing and labor of love of our Friends of Color.

### **Young Adult Friends Epistle**

About 15 YAFs (Young Adult Friends) attended SAYMA this year. The YAF dorm was temporarily moved to Vining. On Friday we held our meeting for business, in which we planned SAYF graduate induction and concluded that we wish to nominate Ruby Anna Williams as the YAF representative to the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee. Last night we welcomed four new SAYF graduates as YAFs (Susan Wilton, Ella Stack, Levi Saderholm, and Emelia Stern.)

YAFs led a worship sharing on Saturday, and focused on our journeys to become weavers of racial justice. Many meaningful messages were shared by Friends of all ages, and it was a powerful experience. In the past year, two Friends spent time on issues of their own conscientious objection. Each wrote letters of conscience to their own meetings.

One wrote a new Wikipedia article, "Conscientious Objection in the United States," in collaboration with (and thanks to) Quaker House, the GI Rights Hotline, and Robert Seeley.

One Friend (Kaitlin Tippin) had a baby boy named Caleb, and her sister Samantha is expecting her second son soon.

### **SAYF Epistle**

When you're on your way,  
You stop at Bojangles,  
But once you're here,  
You better not boshangle.  
Can't have no drugs,  
No alcohol,  
And you'd best believe,  
No sex at all.  
When you're here,  
We'll welcome you with force,  
And don't forget,  
To sign up for your chores!  
It's a SAYF Get Down.  
It's a SAYF Get Down.  
So we're starting off with "S",  
It's for simplicity,  
Low-key Amish,  
But with electricity.  
"P" is for peace,  
It'll make us all free.

I'm telling you the "I",  
Is for integrity.  
"C" is for community,  
It is us, rather than me.  
And when we're all equal,  
That's equality.  
...Oh yeah...and there's stewardship...<shrug>meh  
It's a SAYF Get Down.  
It's a SAYF Get Down.  
If you build a fire,  
Don't let it linger,  
Or the fire marshal will come by,  
And wag his finger.  
If that's the case,  
Better call us,  
There's a fire 'round here,  
It's the SAYF Get Down.

*The "SAYF Get Down" song was written and first performed at the April 2017 retreat in Asheville. It was agreed that it would be the perfect epistle for SAYMA.*

### **Playcare Epistle**

This year we began a new program for is for toddlers and preschoolers, ages 2 to rising kindergartners. Our first Playcare program welcomes 9 children from three friends meetings (Atlanta, Nashville and Asheville)! We truly fulfilled our charge from Sayma with "opportunities to learn through play and reflection, foster friendships, build community. The Playcare environment is simple but offers opportunity for solo and interactive play...[helping] parents, grandparents, and caregivers to attend business meeting, plenary sessions, worship sharing, and workshops as they wish and are able." Playcare this year was a "safe and nurturing program dedicated to offering childcare with qualified adult caregivers."

Playcare was led by Coordinator Laura MacNorlin with Playcare assistants Meredith Reynolds and Kiera McNicolas, and 5 Volunteers who all met the requirements of SAYMA's child safety policy. Several parent/caretakers joined us for meaningful portions of our program like field trip hikes, Faith and Play and Quaker story time, and our exploration of the yearly meeting theme.

Our theme for Playcare our first year was our guideline, We Take Care of Each other and SAYMA theme Uplifting Racial justice celebrating beautiful colors of people.

Playcare was at the Health Center, an amazing space with restrooms, kitchen and plenty of space for circle time, Faith and Play stories, craft projects, story time, music, choice playtime and snack time. We also had lots of fun the pavilion, Gladfelter Lower Patio and swing. We participated in Sing-a-Long, and had a special visit from Ron McDonald to our

program. When the youngest napped, the older Playcare kids were overjoyed to attend the Collaborative Kite Making and Weaving Meditations Workshops. The Intergenerational talent show was a wonderful time to show off our Light with dancing, and to flying our kites!

A Playcare was a program that provided a place for our youngest, and their parents, to explore Quaker faith and friendship together. We are excited for what next year's Playcare will bring and to encourage many more families with young children to attend SAYMA.

## O: State of the Meeting Reports

- Asheville Friends Meeting
- Athens Friends Meeting
- Atlanta Friends Meeting
- Berea Friends Meeting
- Birmingham Friends Meeting
- Brevard Friends Meeting
- Celo Friends Meeting
- Charleston Friends Meeting
- Columbia Friends Meeting
- Cookeville Monthly Meeting
- Crossville Friends Meeting
- Greenville Monthly Meeting
- Huntsville Area Friends
- Memphis Friends Meeting
- Nashville Friends Meeting
- Oxford Friends Meeting
- Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting
- West Knoxville Friends Meeting

### **Asheville Friends Meeting**

Asheville Friends Meeting is suspended between where we are and where we hope to be. Being honest about where we are is important to the process of getting us to where we hope to be.

**Our struggles:** In regard to racism, we are not to the point of unraveling racism in our meeting but rather still struggling to deeply understand and accept our roles as a mostly white community in perpetuating racism both individually and as a spiritual community. We have come to unity at times over specific minutes of support for communities of color and yet sometimes hit painful impasses over terminology and use of resources. Recognizing our differences, the struggle between personalities and the difference between what is personal and what is corporate is all part of our work. We strive to be aware of the brokenness in our world and to respond through educating ourselves, direct service and financial contributions. This work can be more like mending holes in an old moth-eaten sweater than weaving new cloth. This is tedious work, not always the prettiest. New holes come up as soon as old ones are pulled together but through this work is our way forward. Many opportunities arose this last year for the use of our Quaker process as we found ourselves in deep conflict. We have also been reminded not to use Quaker process to avoid difficult concerns. Because of the present racial and interpersonal dynamics some folks have decided to stay away temporarily or leave Meeting altogether while others have been led to engage more. We have much work to do to strengthen trust in Spirit to lead us to truth as opposed to strong personalities arguing specific points of view. There has certainly been avoidance, denial, arguments devolving to name calling, a sense of distrust and still we come and sit together in worship. The process of returning to silence to reflect as messages are spoken both during worship and worship with attention to business helps us to reflect more deeply.

When we experience how challenging it is for us as a small Quaker community with the values we prize to do difficult work in a loving and peaceful manner it becomes easier to understand the incredible challenges that face our world.

**Our successes:** Our Racial Justice Committee provides us with ongoing educational programs and discussions as well as adding books and films to our library that we might deepen our understanding of racism in our meeting and community.

Our First Day School Program is flourishing. The joy and bustle we hear from upstairs as we sit in silent worship is music to our ears. They are exploring what it is like to be a Quaker today, including service projects, living the Testimonies and the many Quaker organizations supporting Friends' beliefs. They have begun to study the impacts of racism on people in the U.S. and have decided to hold Junior Meeting for Business.

We recently celebrated our new members, who joined us during 2016. We have quite a few new strong regular attenders as well.

Our house had a much needed refurbishment under the thoughtful care of our House and Grounds Committee.

Other committees are working well for the most part and our outreach supports these efforts.

**Our goals:** improving our communication, finding ways to have more time together in social gatherings, making time to tell our personal stories, planning a whole Meeting retreat, addressing our conflicts faithfully, and making the Meeting a place that feels safe for all.

Respectfully submitted by Patti Hughes, Clerk of Asheville Friends Meeting

### **Athens Friends Meeting**

For the Athens Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 2016 has been one in which the Spirit has continued at work, helping us through the challenges of a lack of a stable meeting space and of conflicts that led to several attenders leaving us. The Meeting offers itself as a beacon of Light to the wider community.

Our long-term meeting space was sold in 2015, leading us to move to a temporary space in an existing church. That temporary location was also put up for sale in 2016, leading us to move again. We now share space with a yoga and massage studio space. The space is available to us for First Days only and we use a closet for storage. The space is also being sold, so we are again facing the need to find a new place.

As in previous years, Meeting for worship typically finds 10 or fewer gathered. Our structure is lean, with the one standing committee being that one formed this year (Ministry and Nurture) in response to two cases where conflicts demanded engagement by the Meeting. The clerk of the Meeting for the year of this report was Aaron Joslin and the treasurer was Jason Lang. Most First Days, we remain after worship for "Second Hour," for discussions or presentations on topics important to the life of the Meeting. Meeting with attention to business is held every first First Day of the month.

This year has tested our meeting's ability to address conflict. Our small group did not have a standing Ministry and Nurture Committee and had not before experienced substantial conflict relating to communication, trust, and behavior. It was a challenge to address two conflicts adequately and in a timely manner while also honoring the light within all parties.

We grew on a spiritual level by this challenge and were guided by Quaker values this year, but recognize that we fell short of the mark set for ourselves. For one conflict within the Meeting, we sought help from a professional mediator and followed up with a series of worship sharings for healing and a threshing session. Following that first conflict, we established a Ministry and Nurture Committee, which took charge of addressing the second conflict. We faced the conflict directly and fearlessly, but some believe we should have acted more quickly. Several attenders left our meeting during this time. We are grateful for the recent establishment of the Ministry and Nurture committee, and for the work of those individuals. Our awareness of the needs of others in the Meeting is now heightened.

After moving to our current space, we focused on strengthening our community within the meeting, as well as our engagement with the wider community. Monthly, we have midweek gatherings at homes of Friends, for activities such as book reading, preparation of peace poles, creative sharing, and movies. On 24 Twelfth Month, we held a candlelight service. We grew closer through several get-togethers at the Atlanta Meeting's Ferguson Cabin in the mountains. On multiple Second Hours, we discussed the Pendle Hill pamphlet "Four Doors to Worship." Space constraints have led us to lay down temporarily the First Day children's program.

More effort was made during 2016 in engaging with the wider community. As throughout the Religious Society of Friends, engagement is mostly through individuals working independently on causes and with programs, but the Meeting has also organized collective efforts. In 2016, Meeting began participating as a "support congregation" for the Interfaith Hospitality Network by providing evening meals for homeless families. The Meeting took part in the local Human Rights Festival, sent 135 crocheted and knitted hats and five pairs of gloves to Afghanistan, and on MLK Day worked on clearing two cemeteries that are of particular importance to the local African American community. Meeting felt the need to reach out to our neighbors following the November election. This led to two special guest speakers at our second hour discussions: the Imam Adel Amer of the Islamic Center of Athens, and activist for immigrants' rights Beto Mendoza.

In 2017, our meeting continues to look for space, strengthen our internal community, and engage with the wider community.

### **Atlanta Friends Meeting**

This year has been one of community growth and loss. We are aware that we are a busy community with multiple opportunities on any given First Day. However, we are also mindful of the fact that this means we find ourselves with a list of tasks to finish during social hour instead of share in fellowship with each other. As our community grows, we continue to find new ways to welcome newcomers and to slow down to greet each other. This year our meeting retreat was titled "Spiritual Deepening" and offered those gathered the opportunity to explore a variety of ways to deepen our experience of community and worship. This year we made a second care quilt to circulate amongst community members as they recover from major life events. We are also grateful for the opportunities we have together during weekly First Day School, Bible study, and singing.

One of the major undertakings this year was supporting the leading of the Burundi and Congolese families in AFM to start their own Evangelical Friends Church. These families blessed our community for nine years, and in 2015 they asked AFM in a deeply spirit-led letter for support in reaching out to the Evangelical Friends Church-Eastern Region (EFC-ER) to start an Evangelical Friends Church. This year we continued to worship and support them as they met with EFC-ER and found themselves clear to found Stone Mountain Evangelical Friends Church. We are grateful for the friendship we have with them and have also found our community changed as we lost about a dozen children and a dozen adults at worship each week. We are thankful for the spirit these families brought to our community, and we bless and continue to support them as they move forward on their journey.

Another loss for us was the death of four members of our meeting community: founding member Elizabeth Hendricks, Britt Pendergrast, Frank Cummings, and recently, Terry Boling. Three of these members were elderly and the other one died suddenly. We are sad to lose them but are also grateful for the opportunity to grow and deepen our sense of community in our response and affirmations of their lives. Frank Cummings held a celebration of his life on his last visit to Atlanta and started talks about the large bequest to Atlanta Friends Meeting to continue his work in El Salvador. Processing and worshiping over how to accept and foster such a large bequest helped us deepen our sense of what we are called to as a meeting and what we are called to as individuals. The Sunday after Britt Pendergrast died his wife of 76 years couldn't imagine not coming to worship, so the whole family showed up and covered the meeting with a centered worship of remembrance. We are thankful for our elders and how they bless us and continue to support the growth of our meeting even after they have left this earth.

Our meeting has also grown in our anti-racism work, with more racism related messages arising in worship, energy from new leadership, and formation of stronger bonds with SAYMA and local racial justice groups. Within our meeting, we held 2 workshops on reparations and approved a minute of support for the Standing Rock Sioux and indigenous rights. We also supported a group of Friends in starting a nonprofit related to a ministry on racism in the criminal justice system. Discerning how much the meeting could do and at what point the work needed to be self-sustaining was painful, but rewarding in the long run. We continue our work of looking at institutional racism in both our monthly and yearly meeting. Atlanta Friends helped with program planning for SAYMA and offered 5 workshops on undoing racism. In the community, many Atlanta Friends have participated actively in town halls, rallies, and educational meetings for Create Community 4 Decatur: Black Lives Matter as well as in groups such as End New Jim Crow Action Group, and Alternatives to Violence Project. The urgency of our times compels us to live our testimony of equality in our communities and ourselves.

Another way we continued to grow and support our community was in the creation of a sexual harassment policy which can be found attached below. A situation of sexual harassment was brought to the clerk, and a few elders in the community's attention, where swift and loving action sprung forth from. An ad hoc committee was appointed to lead the community through a time of discernment and reconciliation. The committee was clear it needed to inform the community that such a situation had arisen and to hear from the



community. We held a forum where Friends responded to the following queries: "How can we make our meeting a community where we work together to create relationships of love and trust and address harmful actions of harassment? How do we take action in a loving spirit that prevents further harassment and restores trust?" We recognize that as a community we have responsibility to work closely with all of the individuals involved, to take action in a loving and prayerful spirit, and to not look away. We are growing into this rekindled understanding and seeking guidance in our way forward.

We continue to grow and struggle to find ways to be more transparent about the structures of Quakerism as a faith and a practice. We acknowledge there is always work to be done to educate newcomers. This work supports us in continuing to grow our spiritual depth with each other. We find ourselves yearning to know each other more fully. At the same time, we are frequently asked to host national committee meetings which offer us opportunities to learn about Quakerism outside of our meeting experience and reflect on our experiences together.

Atlanta Friends Meeting continues to support Quaker Voluntary Service spiritually, tangibly, and with a great number of folks who offer their time to welcome, spiritually nurture, and engage with these young adults. The Fellows have enriched our community by bringing numbers to our young adult community, energy in committees, and a clear outlet of support of ongoing Quaker Service in the wider Atlanta community.

Our community continues to have numerous children of all ages, even after graduating fourteen seniors and saying goodbye to the twelve to fifteen children to the new Stone Mountain Evangelical Friends Church. We send these Friends off on their journey and hope they will visit often. We are thankful for the growth and saddened by the losses of the year as they help us deepen our spiritual community and acknowledge the spiritual work we do together throughout the year.

### **Nurturing Trust in our Community and Addressing Harassment**

Our Meeting is a community of people seeking to perfect their love of God and all living beings. We support each other in this quest through our silent worship together and in our relationships with each other. While we accept our human imperfections in interacting with each other, we are bound together by the trust that comes from our commitment to treat each other with love, compassion, and respect. Verbal, physical, and sexual harassment are actions which destroy this trust and require vigorous counteraction. We recognize that as a community we have responsibility to work closely with the individuals involved, to take action in a loving and prayerful spirit, and to not look away. If anyone in our Meeting feels harassed by another member or attender, the Meeting needs to be informed, usually through Care and Counsel, in order to act to support all concerned, prevent further occurrence, and avoid the isolation of any person. - Minuted by Atlanta Friends Meeting October 16, 2016

### **Berea Friends Meeting**

Berea Friends Meeting continues to be a spiritually healthy and dynamic community of seekers. We regularly welcome five or six children, six or seven teens, and fifteen to twenty

adults at Meeting for Worship. Visitors frequently join us. We have frequent First Hour discussion sessions that are well attended and which provide fertile soil in preparation for Worship. Our Meetings for Business in the Spirit of Worship are normally attended by about ten people. This year we didn't welcome any Friends into membership in the Meeting, and removed one from membership. We united in mourning the passing of 3 long-term attenders of the meeting.

Our spiritual focus continues to broaden outside the confines of the Meetinghouse. Our teens continue to be nourished by participation in the Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) program. BFM is reaching out to the community through our continuing work on the Alternatives to Violence Project. We now have four apprentice facilitators and are well on the road to establishing a sustainable local presence. Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee continues to organize monthly letter-writing activities, and to liaise and work with other bodies such as the Berea Human Rights Commission, FCNL and Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (KFTC). Over the Summer months, the Peace and Social Concerns Committee sponsored an information table at the monthly "First Friday" community block party in Old Town Berea. This provided a wonderful opportunity to engage with the wider community about issues of concern.

We continue to grapple with many weighty problems. Racism has been, and continues to be, a major focus of our attention. We challenge ourselves to confront privilege and microaggression first and foremost in our own thoughts and actions, but we are also aware that we must remain open to new wisdom in this endeavor. More generally, we see many opportunities for growth in how we manage conflict. We recognize a subculture prevalent in Quakerism of being conflict averse, to which we are not immune. Hopefully we are steadily moving in the direction of facing these conflicts with open hearts, not shying away from difficult or uncomfortable situations.

Financially we continue to enjoy stability and were able, this year, to make contributions to wider Quaker organizations, in addition to a modest payment in lieu of taxes to the City of Berea. This year also saw BFM take definitive steps towards commencing major renovations that will make the Meetinghouse more accessible and usable not only for our own purposes, but also as a resource to the wider community. The renovations will include the addition of an elevator to improve access to the upper level, and a renovated kitchen space. Although the Meeting has taken many years to get to this point, we now seem to be moving forward in unity, with a single vision and common purpose.

We actively nurture a community that provides gentle correction and guidance, and continue to value many long-cherished aspects of our Meeting — the opportunity to worship in a space where mind and body can be still, a home in which we can experience our Quaker identity, and a safe and welcoming community committed to listening, discerning, and seeking unity. We walk together on a path illumined by The Light, supporting and nurturing each other on our journey. We strive to share the value of spiritual listening with those both inside and outside the community, and to serve as examples of what we believe by living what we believe.

## **Birmingham Friends Meeting**

Our year ended much differently than it began. As 2016 began, Birmingham Friends were much more internally focused, working to educate ourselves and to make our Meeting more welcoming to visitors and new attenders.

As we moved into the year, a number of members felt the need for a plan to guide us in the coming years. For a number of years, our main focus had been paying off our Meetinghouse and attracting enough attenders to make the Meeting viable. We began to realize that our “small” Meetings for Worship now had more people than previous “large” ones had. It was time to think beyond survival.

To prepare the planning process, we invited Brent Bill to visit our Meeting and lead us through some conversations about the life of the Meeting, Outreach and our visibility in the community. Our Second Hour reading of *Life Lessons of a Bad Quaker* gave us time to think about how we see ourselves and how we are seen by others. We welcomed Brent to the Meeting for a weekend in April. This weekend filled us with insight, ideas and energy. We were able to use this momentum to develop a simple strategic plan to guide us in the following months. Plans focused on improving the Meetinghouse, making the Meeting more welcoming to visitors (facilities and people), and seeing our Meeting through the eyes of an outsider.

We are grateful that our Adult Education Committee continued to suggest meaningful reading for our Second Hours. We began the year reading *Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race*. Second Hour discussions of the book were well attended and inspired some Friends to become involved in local efforts to address racism like the weekly march of White Birminghamians for Black Lives.

As the year progressed, we saw the need to be involved with other groups in the community. Following the Orlando massacre, we hosted a community vigil with other neighborhood faith groups. We broke Ramadan at the local Islamic Center. We continued our relationship with Greater Birmingham Ministries, an Interfaith nonprofit serving people living in poverty in our community. We also participated in Alabama Arise, an advocacy group lobbying for more equitable legislation for our state.

Our Peace and Justice Committee brought new issues to our Meeting and we found ourselves learning about and becoming involved in Ban the Box, and the Etowah Detention Center protests. We heard from our local state representative and a local investigative journalist. While our Meeting is small, we have great programs.

Some of our challenges are familiar from previous reports. We continue to have a small First Day School group which forces us to continue thinking about the next generation of Quakers. We appreciate the parents who bring their children and the dedicated Friends who take on the role of FDS teachers.

At the same time, many of our members are aging and this year we had a series of workshops on issues related to aging. We are challenged to attract and retain young people.

As the year ended, we found ourselves called even further into the community. Friends were comforted by each other as we faced our own fears and those of others we knew. We ended the year with resolve to create a safe space for those in need and to “speak truth to power” individually and as a Meeting.

### **Brevard Friends Meeting**

In summarizing the state of Brevard Friends Meeting for the past year, let me first say that we have been unable to officially replace the previous clerk, who in the status of clerk emeritus, continues to perform the role of clerk, unofficially. One drawback of this arrangement is that we no longer have business meetings on a regular schedule; we have held called meetings for business.

The most significant event to occur in the past year was that we were evicted from our long term tenancy in Collage Walk Retirement Center. We looked around for another home, and though the agency of one of our attenders, found Elks Club Wellness Center rather nearby, which suits our needs very well. It is a secluded and quiet locale, that in many ways provides a superior spiritual place than our previous location. Our silence on first day has been uninterrupted by any outside disturbances.

One of our regular attenders has been burdened by ill health, and so has been unable to make it to meeting recently.

In the past year a core of regular attenders, some rather new, some long standing numbering six or eight has allowed our meeting to remain vigorous and vital. All who attend derive great spiritual benefit from our silent worship. And so, our meeting continues to be as it has always been, a spiritual haven in a contentious world.

In the light,

Richard Zelman

### **Celo Friends Meeting**

Celo Friends Meeting continues to thrive. Meeting for Worship includes members and attenders of all ages, and many gathered meetings arise from the silence that we hold dear. Our community is strengthened by weekly pot-luck meals following Meeting for Worship and by widespread participation in forums, workdays, meaningful community outreach activities, and Friendly Eights gatherings.

Our Meeting is blessed with many children and with dedicated adult participation in children’s programming. Having intimate relationships with the earth is an important component of First Day School. We take unhurried nature walks where we identify things we find and explore relationships between living things. Our teen group dropped in attendance this year. However, we hosted a successful SAYF retreat. In planning the retreat, the teens deepened their understanding of Quaker process and its value. The nursery group meets each First Day, and they practice virtues of friendliness and cooperation while they

play. They sometimes join the elementary group for nature walks. Twelve children created a shadow puppet show for Christmas that depicted the life of Harriet Tubman and was filled with songs. The program was well attended, and donations went to the local chapter of the NAACP. A local pastor from the African American church came with his daughter to one of our practices, and he invited us to perform the song "Harriet Tubman" at his church for the community's MLK birthday celebration. The Meeting has implemented a Child Protection Policy, as recommended by SAYMA.

The Adult Religious Education Committee offered many stimulating educational opportunities in 2016. Central to this energetic effort is the participation of young-adult attenders as well as new committee members. Max Carter ended the 2015-2016 educational series with a well-attended talk on The Inner Light and his personal journey. Beginning in October 2016, the Meeting began to explore the core testimonies of simplicity and integrity. Dan Snyder began the series with the talk entitled "Journey In, Journey Out: Discerning and Living the Quaker Testimonies of Simplicity and Integrity." In November a panel, composed of attenders and members, led a discussion on the realities underpinning the talk given the previous month. Following this inward discernment, the educational series is moving "outward" to discuss the core issues of discrimination and domination of native Americans through an understanding of the Doctrine of Discovery (January 2017), issues surrounding immigration and our changing political environment (February 2017), understanding what it means to be Muslim in America (March 2017), and Welcoming our LGBT Neighbors (April 2017). The Friendly Eights groups remain active, and discussion is centered on the topics from each of the monthly Adult Education presentations.

The Building and Grounds committee continued its caring stewardship by organizing workdays for routine care and preventive maintenance both inside and outside the meetinghouse. Workdays were well attended; good cheer abounded along with wonderful fellowship around food provided by generous and talented Friends. A storm dropped a tree on the porch of the meeting house, but the damage was covered by insurance and was promptly and beautifully restored by meeting members and community friends. The Meeting was prompted to do a survey of the many trees surrounding the meetinghouse and has dedicated funds to remove potential 'problem' trees. We were challenged with differences of opinion on how areas of the meetinghouse grounds are to be used. By waiting patiently in the Light, we have been led to handle the matter with tenderness and have found solutions that preserve the unity of the Meeting.

Our participation in the yearly SAYMA gathering was enhanced last year by our providing a record number of scholarships, which encouraged attendance of several young-adult members and attenders from Celo. Participants presented their experiences to the Meeting in an afternoon forum.

Community outreach for Peace and Social Concerns is based upon the interest brought to the Meeting by individuals. Meeting members and attenders are active in the local NAACP chapter and in local political action groups. They have brought many opportunities for Meeting participation in gatherings and actions that focus on voter rights, immigration, eco-justice concerns, and sanctuary support. The Samburu Project, which has supported

the education of young women and peace initiatives in Kenya for five years, is nearing completion of its work.

The Meeting participates in the Feed-a-Child community initiative with financial support and with the dedicated work of several members and attenders. A committee for the purpose consists of three food purchasers and deliverers and a financial tracker. Committee members purchase healthy foods for 341 students in local schools each week and deliver them to the children while they are in school. The emphasis is on fresh fruit and nuts for snacks. The students, especially those in Hispanic communities, are very happy to receive fresh fruit.

Celo Friends Meeting continues its relationship with the Friends Committee on National Legislation. The Meeting participated in FCNL's process of identifying priorities by discerning and submitting our meeting's priorities for legislative lobbying. Our FCNL contact is a member of this year's FCNL Advocacy Corps and has received support from the Meeting on lobbying, writing letters to the editor, and building connections with other local places of worship as she organizes for immigration reform.

Many Friends are involved in promoting the stewardship of our environment. A member has received the support of the Meeting to carry her ministry on eco-justice to the wider community of Friends.

The Meeting lost two cherished members during 2016, Bob Barrus and Donna O'Toole. We were prompted to work on issues of record-keeping related to the passing of Friends, and we continue to seek and find ways to support aging or ailing members and attenders. Several individuals are taking active leadership roles in the newly formed "My Neighbors" initiative to help elders in the extended local community remain independent.

Our Meeting is truly blessed with active and spiritually seeking members and attenders who enliven each other's lives and deepen our shared worship.

### **Charleston Friends Meeting**

On February 26, 2017, Charleston Friends Meeting held a discussion following Meeting for Worship to review a draft State of the Meeting report. Greenbrier Valley Friends Worship Group (under Charleston's care) participated by correspondence. We first reflected on the queries that SAYMA's Ministry and Nurture Committee sent in January.

#### *General comments on the queries*

SAYMA provided a list of queries "to help guide [the meeting's] reflection..." in writing a state of the meeting report. Charleston Friends expressed concerns about the breadth of the queries as presented and their lack of a central focus. Query topics included:

- Racism
- Working for reconciliation and unity in the world
- Handling conflicts
- Concordance between inner values and outward behavior

- Welcoming visitors to the meeting
- Rendering unto Caesar

We believe these are all worth discussing, but that each would require extensive reflection and prayerful consideration. Given available time, it is not practical for us to respond comprehensively. Therefore, we have commented briefly on each below, describing how they relate to our meeting's current situation. We follow this with a more general summary of activities, which elaborates on some of the short responses.

1. *How has your monthly meeting used Quaker values to unravel racism?*

We recognize "unraveling racism" as a concern affecting SAYMA and Quakers more broadly. We did have a lengthy discussion of materials provided at SAYMA's workshop during the 2016 Yearly meeting..

West Virginia has a very small non-white population. Racism certainly exists here, but the community has reasonable communication among racial groups. The police and the African American community are not constantly in confrontation. We have supported the West Virginia AFSC program in training Charleston police in race relations, which police officers generally have welcomed..

2. *What is your meeting doing to weave the threads of our world together?*

As described in the summary below, we offer a spiritual community where seekers can find support in their spiritual journeys, respite from the disunited world, and restored energy to enable loving and cheerful engagement with the world as it is. We are working with a local group to welcome refugees. Friends who have traveled internationally or supported international organizations have brought understanding and awareness to Meeting.

3. *How do we avoid conflict or face it fearlessly in divine presence? How do we promote open and honest dialogue in the face of conflict? How does your meeting use Quaker process to resolve conflict?*

We are a very small meeting. We have not corporately experienced significant conflict in the past year. People who attend our meeting come from a wide range of professions and differ in spiritual experience, with strongly held, divergent views and values, and yet manage to have cordial and trusting relations. Individual Friends have had to deal with conflict in their workplaces, families, and neighborhoods. Meeting has endeavored to support Friends in these difficult situations.

4. *How does your meeting outwardly reflect your inner values?*

We aspire to actions that reflect our inner values. Some are described in the summary below.

5. *What is your meeting doing to make Quakerism relevant to young people and people of all ages? Do newcomers feel welcome?*

This has been an ongoing concern with our meeting. We have made a few small steps this past year and have had more visitors lately. Most visitors are in the community temporarily.

6. *How do we respond when the "empire" requires us to do something in conflict with our faith and our practice?*

This is an historic concern of Friends. Charleston Friends have not felt led to respond corporately to such challenges recently.

### **Summary of Meeting Activities in 2016**

*Peace and social concerns* As in previous years, we hosted a holiday breakfast for women and children at a local shelter, presenting small Christmas gifts to the children. We also provided a Super Bowl dinner for homeless men, reaching nearly 80 individuals. Memorable conversations with men, women, and children in both settings enrich our lives. This year for the first time we participated in the “Carry On Project,” coordinated by Mission West Virginia, providing backpacks and personal care items to foster children, replacing the black garbage bags typically used in transporting their personal possessions. These activities are especially important, as they offer an occasion for infrequent attenders to join in Quaker ministry.

Our meeting took a keen interest in refugee issues, participating in interfaith gatherings leading to creation of a local resettlement project (the West Virginia Interfaith Refugee Ministry) with which we affiliated. Many of our members and attenders took part in public demonstrations of support and solidarity with refugee families.

Greenbrier Valley Friends Worship Group united with like-minded groups in public witness supporting love and compassion. They also participated in a local effort promoting environmental stewardship, raising concerns about the impact of a proposed natural gas pipeline on fragile lands in the region.

In response to SAYMA’s 2016 yearly meeting theme, Charleston Friends held a discussion on racism and reviewed the materials from the SAYMA workshop. Ongoing concern for Palestinian welfare at SAYMA led us to invite Chip Poston to give a presentation on the Israeli settlements and the boycott-divest-sanctions movement.

Because of the profoundly negative and angry tone of many political communications, our meeting held the state legislature in the Light. We pray that a positive and cooperative spirit will bloom among those who make decisions critical to West Virginians.

*Religious education.* We completed reading John Woolman’s journal, and began reading *The Essence of George Fox’s Journal*. In Bible study, we are slowly working our way through the Gospel of Luke. We appreciate the insights in seemingly simple stories as we grow spiritually, learning from our varied perceptions and translations.

*Wider Quaker Organizations.* We continue to support the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) policy development process. Several members joined in FCNL advocacy work this year, including a very positive meeting with our congressman’s staff to encourage prison reform. Some also listen to monthly American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) national calls. In addition, we continue to provide a support committee to the AFSC



West Virginia programs, offering advice and help with advocacy. We also contribute financially to Healthy Kids West Virginia, augmenting the hands-on work of AFSC staff.

Meeting was sad to learn of the serious financial situation affecting Friends General Conference.

*Responsible stewardship of our resources.* We reviewed our use of Meeting funds for support of wider Quaker organizations and other social and peacemaking work. We decided to focus more intensively on local and regional causes in which our contribution would make a significant impact as well as ones to which we have a direct connection. This led us to begin supporting Quaker Voluntary Service and Quaker House. We continue to work to dispose of donated land so that we can apply the funds to Meeting projects.

*Outreach.* Charleston Friends Meeting reorganized and simplified its electronic communication system. We reviewed use of the Meeting's telephone number, which generates only 1-2 calls per week (but requires little maintenance and no expense). Recent experience suggests the website is more effective in helping seekers find us.

We've explored queries to help visitors better understand their own spiritual seeking and how Friends might help them on their journey. A family in Huntington seeking to form a worship group approached us for support. We plan a visit to them in March.

*The life of the meeting.* The Greenbrier Valley Friends Worship Group organized last year's West Virginia Friends Gathering. Friends discussed compassionate living, studying Karen Armstrong's book, *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*, participated in workshops, heard about the AFSC's West Virginia program, and shared fellowship. In 2017, Charleston will organize the gathering October 6-8. SAYMA friends are invited!

We joyfully welcomed a new member. A younger Friend has started participating regularly in the life of the Meeting this year. We also had the opportunity to recognize the gifts of members and attenders in new ways as many Friends who had served the meeting in leadership capacities moved on to other responsibilities. The centrifugal force of children and grandchildren outside of West Virginia is pulling one of our families to another community. This is likely to affect others in our meeting, as members make choices associated with aging and leaving the outward workforce.

Meeting for Worship continues to be a place of respite and refreshment for our members and attenders. Perhaps our periodic worship sharing has helped contribute to increasing frequency of vocal ministry of late. We are often moved by this expression of the Spirit in our midst.

### **Columbia Friends Meeting**

Columbia Friends Meeting weaves the threads of our world together with our Quaker Committee process and by our connections throughout the community. Our most active committees are Peace and Social Concerns which includes the Hiroshima Vigil, Building and Grounds, Ministry and Nurture and First Day School. In addition, we have a book club and

ongoing Skype visits with a member who has moved away. During the 2016 Vigil, we dedicated a peace pole inscribed "May Peace Prevail on Earth" in 4 languages. Each inscription was read aloud by a native speaker of that language. Ministry and Nurture developed a wonderful series of Second Hour Programs for the year including a series on the spiritual journeys of members/attenders within our Meeting. Many of us are involved in various activities in the Community such as the Prison Ministry, Columbia Resilience, Food not Bombs, Harvest Hope Food Bank, Meals on Wheels, Transitions Homeless Center and other organizations with similar values. We strive to break down conceptual barriers between the sacred and the secular by addressing questions that do not have clearly religious overtones, like addiction, dietary research that can guide a healthier lifestyle, permaculture, etc. Through all of these activities we grow together in the light of the Spirit.

Peace and Social Concerns was the original organizational unit for a series of Alternative to Violence workshops. We continue to support the AVP-South Carolina (now a state-wide, independent non-profit) which provides ongoing workshops that foster engaged listening rather than offensive or defensive judgement or labeling of the other. Four AVP mini-workshops were held in 2016 and normally there must be a minimum of 10 participants in order to hold an AVP workshop. This means that several dozen people in South Carolina were trained in Quaker nonviolent conflict resolution techniques during the past year. The workshops are ongoing.

The Meeting reflects our inner values in different ways according to how we are each led by the Spirit. We all search for unity with each other and the Holy Spirit in a variety of ways. Some feel led to participate in activism and preparation for the effects of climate change. Other feel a need to develop a deeper inward communion with Love. We offer financial support to wider Quaker organizations and other causes that, though not formally affiliated with Friends, carry on the work of bringing light to the world. We engage in ecumenical dialogue and action through the SC Christian Action Council through the Palmetto Friends Gathering. We have publicly identified ourselves as an open and welcoming community to all human beings. We support religious and secular efforts to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless.

We have a very vibrant Young Friends program teaching about Quaker values especially care of the Earth. We are able to focus more on earth care thanks to a Green Space and garden in the back of the Meeting House. We are blessed with diverse and dedicated adult Friends who encourage and guide our young Friends into the discovery of spirit led engagement with one another, their Meeting, and their world. We had a beautiful fall festival for Tenth Month intergenerational First Day during which some of the participants dressed as well-known Quakers and told their stories.

We are involved in ongoing discussions about racism and FGC and invited a speaker from FGC to discuss the status of the racism audit. We are waiting for a report from the SAYMA reps meeting.

We are considering how to respond to Executive Orders and other proclamations from the current administration that are in conflict with Quaker values. At this point, we are in a

fact-gathering mode. We have not yet been faced with the choice between obedience to civil law and obedience to a higher law, but it is becoming more clear to us that such a choice may soon be thrust upon us. As more communities of faith harbor immigrants to protect them from detention or deportation, in defiance of state and federal law, we expect that we shall be called to choose whom we shall serve, knowing we may well place our own liberty and property, both personal and corporate, at risk. We pray for the courage to live out our conviction that no material thing is indeed ours, but that our conscience can never be taken by force - nor should we yield it to any vaunted authority.

### **Cookeville Monthly Meeting**

Cookeville Monthly Meeting has been moved by Spirit in a variety of ways this year.

Most exciting was that we welcomed a toddler and her parents as new attenders! They had no trouble finding us which let us know that we do indeed have a noticeable presence in the virtual world.

We started with educating ourselves on white privilege and racism and we are in the midst of planning concrete actions.

Our most successful action, with over a hundred people attending, was our fifth annual Interfaith Peace Project. This contest, open to local students in elementary through high school, has become more diverse each year as it continues to grow. The topic for contest participants to write on or create art about was "Peace and Racial Harmony". Interfaith work helps us to build community and weave the threads of our world together.

Other Spirit-led actions of community outreach included participation in a local Juneteenth celebration and hosting a fundraising talk by a teacher at a Guatemalan middle school that we have helped to support over several years.

We have also been moved to many small, continuing actions such as the monthly witness for alternatives to the military at a local high school, various environmental projects in our community, and the formation of a book club.

We feel reconnected and re-energized by the galvanizing effects of the November election, the subsequent women's marches, and other events that helped us feel less alone. Local community involvement in causes we hold dear has rapidly increased.

Our vision is of helping each other to reach the goal of human rights for ALL people, and to act from a place of love rather than fear. We feel that our interpersonal connections can make a difference in this work. Our calling is to be the folks who can lend a hand. We seek to heal the divisions within our community as we realize there is no "us" and "them", only the human family.

Our hope is that our Meeting and community can continue the small but important tasks that will help us fulfill our vision.

### **Crossville Friends Meeting**

We are a small group of dedicated souls who find significant value in our weekly gatherings for worship. Only one couple lives in Crossville, so we rarely have contact with each other during the week. Nearly half of our regular attendees drive over 70 miles to join us in worship, which speaks to the refusal to let our Meeting be laid down.

Because we are so small, and are only able to gather on Sundays, we have no ready way to act as a Meeting to unravel racism in any particular community other than by the way we conduct ourselves where we live.

The outreach of one of our members, with the support of the Meeting, does reach to the mountains of Nepal, where a small but significant amount of financial and moral support of programs for school children and anger management do, in our opinion, help weave the threads of our world together, even if in a small way.

Within our Meeting we are able to tolerate diversity of viewpoint on a variety of issues, recognizing *That of God* in each other and appreciating our connections as friends as well as Friends. While our Meeting does not have a sufficient presence in the city of Crossville to have an impact as a religious group, as has been the case in the past when the Meeting was larger, we continue to feel that the way we conduct our individual lives does reflect our inner values and principles as best we are able. We remain aware of the legacy of the Meeting and feel honored to be keeping Meeting alive.

We seldom have visitors, but they are extended a warm welcome by us. While we no longer have active members who are not considered senior citizens, the daughter of one family has joined our Meeting and we value her membership even though her work has taken her to San Francisco so that she is seldom able to join us.

We struggle with the actions of “empire” and frequently discuss its impact on our lives, striving to find ways of responding that are consistent with our personal values and principles. Because we are so dispersed, it is difficult to participate in actions together beyond occasional letter writing, but we do share what we are doing individually and support each other in such activities with the awareness of differing political viewpoints among our small group.

In short, the continued existence of our small Meeting remains very important to us, and in that regard the state of our Meeting is strong.

Jeff Strain, Clerk

### **Greenville Monthly Meeting** **Overview**

We have continued to grow in the life of the Spirit during the past year. Our online listing via the Quaker Cloud has brought us several visitors, including local residents who are

spiritual seekers. This gives us many opportunities to share our faith and learn from each other.

The adults enjoy hearing from the children about their experiences (for example, anti-bullying lessons) when we are able to conduct First Day School; their capable teachers include parents, who provide helpful ideas for all.

Despite these strengths, we continue to discern a need to attract additional attenders/members to our Meeting, given its relatively small size (we have 6-8 weekly attenders). We are also keeping the daughter of one of our attenders in the Light as she struggles with significant health issues (the attender has been unable to return to the Meeting for any significant period during 2016).

Regrettably, one of our longtime member passed away this fall. He had suffered from a chronic illness for many years. We are keeping his family in the Light.

### **GMM's Activities**

Some of us are active with the Palmetto Friends Gathering (PFG), some with SAYMA, some with FGC. That means that each of us has some type of connection to the larger Quaker community.

At the Rise of Meeting, we have discussions about thoughts that might have occurred during the silence (but that didn't rise to the level of a message) and/or discussions about timely issues of concern. We welcome visitors to participate and to share. The rapport of our Meeting has become more inviting/open since we started doing this.

We give brochures to new attenders. We lend *Friends Journal* and Quaker books. We honor inquirers without proselytizing. Everyone is invited to our monthly pot-luck luncheons.

As noted above, GMM representatives continue to attend programs organized by the Palmetto Friends Gathering (PFG) and SAYMA. We anticipate that this will continue throughout 2017.

We are grateful for the gracious support and hospitality that are provided to us by the Chaplin's Office at Furman University.

### **GMM's Giving Opportunities**

One of our members is a representative on the Board of Directors of Greenville's United Ministries. We also continue to support Quaker House (located in Fayetteville, North Carolina) and several local charities. We remain eager to identify other giving opportunities as they present themselves.

We pray for opportunities to serve God and our community, and to continue to find joy in the Light and among ourselves.

### **Huntsville Area Friends**

HAFM relied on Quaker processes to learn more about ourselves, each other, and our community. This year HAFM engaged with the Bridge and other area programs that welcome refugees. Members of The Bridge from the Huntsville Islamic Center spoke with HAFM and Holy Cross-St. Christopher Episcopal members (HAFM meets at the HC-SC church).

Quaker processes continue to discover the dignity and worth of each person, to listen closely, and grow in tenderness towards one another. Learning more about Quaker processes and practices would help us grow in this direction.

We continue to grow through individual's work and participation in community events. For example, some members are active in Earthcare, while others attend community events related to peace and inclusivity. Some members attended Women's Marches, while others joined the Huntsville community in circling the Jewish temple as an expression of community solidarity. We draw strength from one another and we value members' sharing their individual work, as this contributes to our wholeness. In this way, Quaker values unfold with and among us as we discern individually and as a meeting what our role in the world could be or should be.

We experience joy in our community and spiritual growth together. We have had the great joy of welcoming a few visitors this year and friends who can join us more frequently this year. We particularly celebrate a returning member and her daughter-in-law, both of whom add immeasurably to our wholeness.

We feel challenged by the smallness of our group and the fact that many of us have other duties (work, children, parents, and so forth) that means some things are left undone or HAFM positions unfilled. On the other hand, we take great joy in each other and strive to support one another while building an inclusive, open beloved community that welcomes all. When needed, we join together and accomplish what is needed. It's been a surprise and a joy to all of us to know that Friends can make swift decisions when lead. In the current political climate, we are both fearful and more determined than ever to create this environment.

### **Memphis Friends Meeting**

In silent worship, lively potlucks, and thoughtful Meetings for Learning, in ongoing committees and worship sharing groups, in marching and demonstrating out in the world, in sometimes difficult Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business, in one-on-one conversations light and deep, in struggling to talk about racism, and in yet other ways, Memphis Friends have found ourselves in community and lifting up the testimony of community this year.

In reflecting on how the spirit has fared amongst us, one Friend described the year's challenge as "figuring out what to keep and what to let go of." For some of us, this discernment had to do with our personal relationships or choices, leading us to request care committees or to ask to be held in the light. Others of us felt pulled more strongly

towards wider Quaker connections; for example, one member continued a decade-long involvement in Quaker Earth Witness, and another member began an online Quaker Studies program through Lancaster University and Woodbrooke Quaker Studies Centre.

Several Friends embarked on an exploration of a longstanding SAYMA tradition, women's worship sharing. And discernment drew many of us into projects that speak directly to the state-of-the-meeting queries suggested by SAYMA. Through the leadings of several Friends, the meeting agreed to serve as the umbrella for a new Memphis Alternatives to Violence Project, which continued to grow in its second year and established itself in both the community and the local jail. In the wake of the tragedy at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando in June, several Friends organized and publicized a candlelight worship that welcomed community members as well as Friends who no longer regularly worship with us, many of whom stayed late that evening for fellowship. The community which was strengthened that night later marched as a group with the "Memphis Quakers" banner in Memphis's Pride Parade, and several Friends have begun to explore creation of a gender minority and allies worship-sharing group at the meetinghouse. A possibly record-breaking number of Memphis Friends - 13! - took the 9 hour trek to North Carolina for SAYMA's yearly meeting. In July, spurred by reports from the SAYMA 2016 gathering on unraveling racism and also by national events (in particular the police shootings of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile), Memphis Friends Meeting formed the Working Group for Racial Justice. A core group of Friends has continued to meet every two weeks to explore racial injustice both within the wider community and among Friends.

For some within the meeting, these leadings - in combination with the noise and emotion of the presidential election - crowded their sense of spaciousness in silent worship and especially at Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. Some felt that others were rushing our Quaker process, while some felt that others were resisting movement. Differing understandings of core terms made some conversations difficult. Friends' momentum to act on racial injustice fell somewhere between individual leadings and meeting unity, with some feeling no clear path to unity. Debates were particularly intense about whether we could bring our banner - an expression of unity - to Black Lives Matter protests. Many of us felt led to act in a public way in support of racial justice, while other voices called for community building within our meeting first so we could find a uniquely Quaker response.

So 2016 was a year of tension for Memphis Friends Meeting, tension that made us at times very uncomfortable. We struggled to understand that our tension might in fact be evidence we are in relationship with one another and growing as a community. As one Friend said during a difficult Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, "We must remember that tension is different from conflict. Tension occurs within some intrinsic context of unity. Tension in the meeting is a natural part of the meeting's momentum towards unity - an enduring goal of all Friends."

Without arriving at unity, we nonetheless kept coming together to affirm community, and the community kept growing. The day after the divisive presidential election, Friends gathered across and amidst our differences for candlelight worship. The meetinghouse was filled with people, both familiar and unfamiliar faces, close to its capacity in an echo of the

candlelight worship that had followed the Orlando shooting. The usual few candles on a small table at the circle's center were now surrounded by candles in every window, evoking the words of seventeenth century Friend Robert Barclay, "As many candles, lighted and put in one place, do greatly augment the light, and make it more to shine forth, so when many are gathered together in the same life there is more of the glory of God."

As we reflect on this year, we recognize that our founding members as well as our youngest Friends alike have been teaching us about living in community. One Friend recently described how her long connection to the meeting has given her a feeling of continuity: she has watched herself pass through life stages and she has also watched her own children and other children grow up among Friends, influenced by the Quaker testimonies. Another Friend's daughter, who grew up in the meeting, has been the spark who led to the meeting's involvement in AVP in Memphis. One of our teens felt strongly enough about unraveling racism to work with a team of adults to replicate a SAYMA workshop during a Meeting for Learning. A younger Friend who participated in peacebuilders camp in Georgia brought her concerns about education back to Memphis. A thirteen year old Friend requested a clearness committee for membership. And one of our youngest sat through the full worship hour to earn a Cub Scout belt loop. Over the Thanksgiving holiday a visiting Friend shared with us his childhood memories of growing up surrounded by Memphis Quakers. He recalled memories of the Quakers' marching together in the Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday Parade, a tradition unfamiliar to those who more recently joined our community. With joy, at the December Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, Friends approved the suggestion of one of these newer Friends to march again as a group in the January 2017 MLK parade with our banner.

We finished the year with a renewed commitment to stay in conversation with one another and a renewed hope that our meeting can be a refuge and sanctuary in this turbulent world, a place where we can count on a feeling of acceptance even when we have sharp differences, a place where deep relationships make it possible and necessary to have the hard conversations, a community that is stronger because of our many talents, passions, and experiences. We are entering 2017 with determination to more fully live the testimony of community, as a gift to ourselves and as an example to our wider community. We strive to fulfill the promise of the sign in our front yard - "Visitors Are Welcome." We hear Friends' challenges to grow more comfortable with being uncomfortable - with our individual failings, with the failings of our community, and particularly with the difficult endeavor of unraveling racism. We feel ourselves growing as we march forward.

### **Nashville Friends Meeting**

2016 has been a rich year in which we continued the outward growth we experienced during 2015. We have welcomed a number of visitors and new regular attenders across all age ranges. We have started new programs, and some of our existing programs grew during the year.

In a year that culminated in a political outcome in the Presidential race that few predicted or even imagined, our Meeting actively sought to provide a space that was welcoming, tolerant, and responsive to the needs of the day, while remaining guided by the leadings of



Spirit. As a meeting we sought to create a safe space of Quaker worship for our members and attenders, and we also sought to discern our work in the wider community.

Nashville Friends Meeting welcomed several new members into the Society of Friends this year. Brian Wingate and Lissa West both became new members, and NFM received them with gratitude. We also celebrated the birth of Eloise Margaret Flanagan, who was born in December to proud parents Katie and Michael Flanagan. Each year also sees the loss of dear members and attenders for various reasons. Mina Baisch transferred her membership to Green Street Meeting in Philadelphia. Geoffrey Pratt laid down his membership, but we have the pleasure of his continued attendance at Meeting for Worship occasionally throughout the year. The Niemat family moved to Louisville early in the year, and the presence of the entire family has been missed. We mourned the passing of Lynda Morley, and sent our condolences to her family.

Many people have required various levels of care during the year, and the Meeting continues to coordinate support through committee work as well as individual outreach through visits, meals, cards, and phone calls. We have several ongoing care & support as well as anchoring committees, and we make a practice of announcing and explaining clearness committee to encourage their use.

2016 marked a deepening engagement with the wider community that began the previous year. The use of the Meeting house as a warming shelter for the homeless community continued in 2016, and we have made changes to the Meeting house to make it more hospitable for our guests. In light of the political climate, we started discussions on what it means to be a sanctuary, and we expect that discussion to continue.

The Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP) continues to thrive, with several exciting developments over the course of the year. They started a program where judges can refer people to AVP training in lieu of harsher penalties within the court system and to get criminal charges expunged. Within the school system, AVP has been working with 5th grade students at Joelton Middle School. Several advanced workshops have also been offered to the community at large. Because of this high level of AVP activity, they were moved from the oversight of Peace and Social Concerns and were established as a standing committee.

The Meeting house hosted a variety of events throughout the year that enriched our community. We had a presentation in November by Paula Palmer entitled, "The Quaker Indian Boarding Schools: Facing Our History and Ourselves." We also hosted several movie nights, organized by the Peace and Social Concerns committee, with proceeds benefiting various local organizations. We also co-sponsored an interfaith climate vigil with Tennessee Interfaith Power and Light, which, incidentally, is not a utility company.

We hosted a SAYF retreat in January -- an event eagerly anticipated by our local teens. It was a great success, with approximately 40 teens and 10 adults and an incredible spread of food throughout the weekend provided by the Meeting community. The teen program continues to be healthy and thriving. The teens are drawn to come to Meeting more often

and are now participating in child care for First Day school. This is helping build relationships between the teens and our youngest Friends as well as their parents.

After several years of growth, our First Day school seems to be ebbing, partially because of children becoming teens, and also because of families moving away.

For Regional Gathering, we invited people from the Meetings in our region to present and share about things going on in their own Meetings. We had presentations about: AVP, Business Meetings at NFM, peace and social concerns, SAYF, Meeting for healing, kites and the Spirit, and worship sharing.

Within the Meeting, Spiritual formation groups started in September, and will officially continue through May of this year, although it is clear that some of the lasting bonds of fellowship will continue into the future. Eighteen participants were divided into five groups that meet periodically, and the entire group meets on a quarterly basis. Several participants have expressed gratitude for these groups and the deeper bonds they have fostered. The "Between Us" Friends Couple Enrichment Series was held over 7 gatherings with the participation of four couples within the community.

A couple in our community hosts a weekly Bible study at their home that is attended by Friends from the Meeting as well as many non-Quakers from their neighborhood. The Meeting has been enriched by members' participation in various racial and social justice groups and events.

We added a mid-week Meeting for Worship on thursday mornings that has a good core of regular attenders. We continue to hold seasonal Meetings for healing, with many prayer requests and hands-on healing.

Each year brings unexpected events, and 2016 was no exception. We had an armed robbery at the Meetinghouse while another group was using the space. Thankfully, no one was hurt, and the Meeting has made several changes in security and lighting in order to make the Meeting and the parking lot a less desirable target. We gratefully acknowledge our building-use coordinators, who shouldered much of the burden of implementing these changes.

As an ongoing experiment to better manage the acoustics of the Meeting room, we changed the arrangement of chairs during Meeting for Worship. We now gather at the far end of the room where the ceiling is lower. This results in a closer configuration of chairs. Although the original idea was to improve the acoustics, which it has, we have also noticed that the space feels more intimate.

Because of the changes in the political landscape towards the end of the year, we have been asking ourselves what the Spirit is leading us to do as a Meeting, and what are the gifts we have to offer as Quakers. We will continue to explore the answers to these questions in the upcoming year.

### **Oxford Friends Meeting**

The Oxford meeting remains a very, very small meeting. We have a core group of about 4-5 members and faithful attenders. We continue the practice of ending each meeting with a group hug. We are a tight, happy little band, if reduced in size.

The meeting has failed to maintain contact with the isolated Friend who requested membership in the Oxford Quaker Meeting in 2015. Two of our members committed to continuing a dialogue with him as we prayerfully considered his request. He did not reciprocate when we discussed our own paths in Quakerism and was not responsive to our requests for additional information about his experiences with Friends and why he wanted to join a meeting at a great distance from his place of residence. Eventually there was no more to say.

We continue to have the good fortune to meet at the Powerhouse community arts center. It is a comfortable and welcoming environment that provides the feel of a church. We appreciate the generosity of the Powerhouse, which provides its space to the meeting without charge.

Leadership: During 2016 there was no change in the meeting's officers.

Starkville Monthly Meeting: We continue to correspond with the Starkville Meeting via email and telephone, although we have not visited them in the last year.

Participation in the community: We have remained active in Interfaith Compassion Ministry (ICM), with one volunteer, who is also a member of the ICM Board of Directors. A number of our members and attenders support ICM financially through the meeting. One of our faithful attenders travels a great deal professionally. When she travels she collects all of the toiletries provided by the hotels and regularly brings in a sack of toiletries to donate to the ICM. The ICM is very grateful for these small, but expensive items that they use to assist the homeless.

An individual member has continued to maintain a ministry for a death row inmate at the Mississippi State Penitentiary for about seven years. The meeting as a whole stands in opposition to the death penalty.

Submitted by Pam Coe, clerk

### **Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting**

Our Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business continue with much deep and rich silence. Prayerful work and education has gone into trying to conduct our business meetings as primarily meetings for worship; striving always, as a community, to discern the movement of the Spirit among, within and between us as we discuss various issues.

Wednesday night Meeting for Worship provides a valuable worship time for those who do not regularly attend First Day Meeting for Worship.

A significant theme in 2016 has been the challenge of honoring those with whom we disagree, about: gender and sexuality, land and property, our political situation. Our Adult Education and Spiritual Nurture Committee has scheduled numerous forums throughout the year to help us educate ourselves on these topics and more; Quaker history, Dementia and Alzheimers, Vocal Ministry and Public Speech, worldwide activism, capital punishment, Friends World Committee on Consultation plenary sessions, Aging and Pivotal Life Choices.

Much of our outward ministry happens out of site and knowledge. Many of our members and attenders work outside of the Meeting times and Meetinghouse, often with the support of the Meeting in order to improve our communities and promote equality e.g. members have developed programs to teach English to non-native speakers, some work for Homeward Bound and others provided clothing for the Standing Rock protesters. The Peace and Social Concerns Committee took on the task of re-evaluating how and to which groups we donate funds. Members and attenders were contacted individually by phone to gather where our hearts were led in terms of how we would like to see donations distributed. Local needs made up the largest percentage of our donations; the other areas are Quaker organizations, Earthcare and international medical care. Members of Peace and Social concerns are liaisons to each group to whom we provide financial support to maintain good stewardship of our financial blessings. We received reports from some of these liaisons throughout the year during forums held after Meetings for Worship; Quaker House, the Latino Outreach Program and Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministry.

Members of our Meeting are dealing with issues pertaining to immigrants, peace and justice in Palestine-Israel, Christian Ministries outreach, and conservation regarding the proposed Green Way.

First Day School is a source of care for our young people and we learn from them as well. We are also fortunate enough to have a teen group that meets monthly. The past year the teens have been reading, studying and discussing the book of Genesis.

In response to a number of bequests and gifts, our Meeting recognizes need for discernment among diverse views of our relation to money. Our response to money has been a year-long process directed by an ad hoc Funds Committee to lead us into discernment about how to use money.

### **West Knoxville Friends Meeting**

Dear Friends of SAYMA and beyond,

Much of the work of West Knoxville Friends in 2016 focused on building a loving spirit and working together within the meeting and in our community. We are learning to bring our feelings to the meeting for help when we are angered or hurt by another Friend, and to recognize our mistakes, ask for forgiveness and make amends when we offend another. We remind ourselves often that the Light of Truth will show us our errors and guide us to a loving path if we provide the opportunity.

We held several Meetings for Healing during the year. The experience was intensely loving as Friends exposed their physical, emotional and spiritual needs and asked for help for themselves and others. We felt the support and nurture of Spirit touch us through the Friends who gathered with us. We are learning to be tender with our selves and one another.

We continue the volunteer work we began in 2015 with Family Promise, an organization that provides shelter and meals in local churches for homeless families while helping the families to establish homes of their own. We serve as a support group for a Methodist church which houses the families for four one-week periods during the year. We enjoy working together to provide these services as well as the opportunity to cooperate with the other church. Our relationships with the families are limited but we feel that we are providing them with a valuable service that is truly helpful. There is a strong sense of the meeting that we are led to this work, and it has been beneficial to the meeting to do it.

West Knoxville Friends joyfully accepted two applications for membership from active attenders of the meeting in 2016. One marriage was taken under the care of the meeting. Although we were able to meet all the financial goals we set ourselves in the spending plan for the year, we ended the year with a smaller reserve than in the past few years.

Our Religious Education Committee initiated a series of Saturday afternoon sessions for adult RE. The sessions were longer than second hour, 2-3 hours in length, took place about every three months, and were well attended. This was a resounding success, offering us more time to delve deeper and interact in a richer and more satisfying way. We plan to continue the practice in 2017.

Our letter writing group continues to meet monthly and write to our legislators regarding various issues of concern to Friends, including those issues brought to us by FCNL. This is a faithful group which has met for several years. Naturally, the participating Friends take advantage of the opportunity to follow up the letter writing with lunch and socializing. Some writers have actually received personal responses from legislators! and several have had letters to the editor published in the Knoxville News-Sentinel.

There is a sense of the meeting at West Knoxville Friends that racism and racial injustice in our nation must be addressed, and that we are led to do so. As a small group that is almost entirely "white" and predominately middle class, we are sometimes confused and at a loss as to how to act on the issue. However, we have no intention of allowing that to stop us from moving forward! We have had second hour discussions and worship sharing on the subject of racism, racial injustice, and ways that we might address it. Two of our members have attended the white privilege conference. Many of our members attended last year's yearly meeting with the theme "Unraveling Racism" and workshops at FGC addressing mass incarceration and other manifestations of racial oppression. Beginning in 2015 and continuing to 2016 a large group of members and attenders participated in a book group studying Michelle Alexander's book *The New Jim Crow* and followed it up with a briefer study of *Fit For Freedom, Not For Friendship*.

Several West Knoxville Friends have engaged with Fourth Presbyterian Church, a racially integrated congregation, and have attended both their Wednesday evening “Folk at Fourth” dinners with local musicians and a series of inter-racial discussions with some outstanding guest speakers known for their work against racism.

In the spring, West Knoxville hosted two young men from FCNL who were travelling to enlist meetings in the struggle against mass incarceration and for sentencing reform. They told us about the FCNL advocacy groups and we requested training from FCNL to form an advocacy group. We invited other groups that we thought might be interested to the initial presentation and the response was very encouraging. The group that completed the FCNL training and formed an advocacy group was only about half from our meeting. The other half consisted primarily of members of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, a traditionally African American Church which is now racially integrated. The folks from St. Luke’s were already active in a group working to ameliorate conditions in the local jail and justice system. This has been a very productive relationship for all concerned, as well as introducing us to some wonderful people.

The advocacy team has begun its work developing working relationships with Tennessee senators and congressional representatives from the four counties in which advocates reside (Knox, Sevier, Blount and Anderson counties.)

Although 2016 was a busy year for West Knoxville Friends, there is always more to do. Our Earthcare committee has some projects in mind, as does House and Grounds. We would like to involve more adult Friends with the youth religious education program. For many years we have wished to find an effective outreach program, as we feel that Quaker practice could answer a need felt by many today for a deep spiritual connection and a way to act compassionately with love and hope in a world that is often harsh and unjust.

Many Friends ended the year with feelings of fear, depression and despair over the political situation in our nation. The anger, intolerance and divisiveness of the presidential election deeply disturbed many Friends.

We remind ourselves always, over and over again, that there is peace and joy in the Spirit of Truth and Light that sustained early Friends through their own injustices and imprisonments. We try to deepen our practice so that we may bring the peace, the joy, the truth, the Light, that they enjoyed to our selves, to our meeting, and to the world around us. Dear Friends, we hold you in the Light. You are an inspiration and a comfort to us always.  
West Knoxville Friends Meeting

Joan Barnette, Clerk