Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association
Report of American Friends Service Committee Corporation Members
June 9, 2011

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) serves as a focus for Quakers in the United States to work to end war by removing the causes of war. Recent work includes educational programs on the human cost of war in Afghanistan and projects to prevent discrimination against immigrants, promote human rights through education and establishment of human rights cities, achieve economic justice through education and action, and preserve vital governmental safety net programs.

The Corporation is the group of Friends who theoretically "own" the Service Committee. According to tradition, it is responsible for appointing the Board and Nominating Committee, providing counsel to the AFSC, and communicating with Yearly Meetings. Slightly more than half of the Corporation's members (such your representatives) are appointed by Yearly Meetings, subject to acceptance by the Corporation.

Summary of Corporation Actions in 2011

At the annual meeting March 4-5, we were introduced to AFSC's new General Secretary, Shan Cretin. We also had a new Clerk, Arlene Kelly. This year the Corporation agreed to reduce the size of the AFSC Board to no more than 25 members. It failed to reach agreement on reduction in size of the Corporation, or on revision in the role of the corporation.

A complete report of the Corporation meeting is in our interim report submitted to the March Representative Meeting (Attachment 1).

Pending issues

The financial difficulties of the past three years have led to streamlining and downsizing throughout the AFSC. One issue under consideration by a national Working Group is U.S. Organizational Structure, which includes the number and configuration of regions. Another is right-sizing the Corporation and bringing its actual and stated responsibilities into synch. In April, the Board Executive Committee (BEC) asked the AFSC Friends Relations (AFR) Committee to focus on the Corporation in terms of its role in outreach to Friends, reporting to the January 2012 BEC meeting and 2012 Corporation meeting. Recently, the General Secretary announced the appointment of Lucy Duncan to the new Friends Liaison position, which is intended to support enhanced dialog among Friends and the AFSC.

Availability of AFSC Staff and Corporation Members for Dialog

This year, Alice Lovelace, SERO Associate Director, is visiting SAYMA. She and your Corporation members look forward to talking with Friends during this annual session about the Service Committee's programs and opportunities for Friends to be involved in them. There is also a display table with information you can take home as well as more details at www.afsc.org.

Charles Schade
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