

SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN FRIEND

Winter
2006



Newsletter
of the
Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting & Association
of the
Religious Society of Friends

Monthly Meetings & Worship Groups

Anneewakee Creek Worship Group
Douglasville, GA (770) 949-8079

Asheville (NC) Friends Meeting
(828) 258-0974

Athens (GA) Friends Meeting
(706) 353-2856

Atlanta (GA) Friends Meeting
(404) 377-2474

Auburn (AL) Worship Group
(334) 887-9688

Berea (KY) Friends Meeting
(859) 986-9262

Birmingham (AL) Friends Meeting
(205) 592-0570

Boone (NC) Friends Meeting
(828) 263-0001

Brevard (NC) Friends Meeting
(828) 885-2889

Canton (GA) Worship Group
(770) 720-4669

Celo (NC) Friends Meeting
(828) 675-4456

Charleston (WV) Friends Meeting
(304) 925-6123

Chattanooga (TN) Friends Meeting
(423) 629-2580

Clarksville (TN) Worship Group
(931) 647-9284

Clemson (SC) Worship Group
(864) 654-6680

Columbia (SC) Friends Meeting
(803) 252-2221

Cookeville (TN) Preparative Meeting
(931) 268-2592

Crossville (TN) Friends Meeting
(931) 277-5354

Foxfire Friends Meeting
Johnson City, TN (423) 283-4392

Greenville (SC) Friends Meeting
(864) 246-6852

Gwinnett Preparative Meeting
Norcross, GA (770) 315-9478

Huntsville (AL) Area Friends Meeting
(256) 837-6327

Memphis (TN) Friends Meeting
(901) 274-1500

Murfreesboro (TN) Worship Group
(931) 389-6340

Nashville (TN) Friends Meeting
(615) 329-2640

New Moon Worship Group
Barnardville, NC (828) 626-2572

Oxford (MS) Friends Meeting
(662) 281-8381

Royal Worship Group
Blountsville, AL (205) 429-3088

Sevier County Worship Group
Sevierville, TN (865) 429-1807

Sewanee (TN) Worship Group
(931) 598-5031

Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting
Black Mountain, NC (828) 664-0092

West Knoxville (TN) Friends Meeting
(865) 694-0036

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SAF Submissions—Next Due

Date: 01/04/2006

Submit news of your meeting or worship group, original articles, opinions, poetry, announcements, humor, gripes, worries, and cookie recipes to:

SAFeditor@SAYMA.org

or by mail to:

SAF c/o Susan & Kim Carlyle
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Barnardsville, NC 28709
(828) 626-2572

(Please include your name and phone number.)

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For resource-saving, electronic delivery of the SAF, send your name, e-mail address and monthly meeting or worship group name to
SAFeditor@SAYMA.org

SAYF Calendar

January 13-15, 2006 Retreat at Atlanta Meetinghouse; Lead FAP: Ceal & Mark Wutka

February 24-26, 2006 Nurturing/Steering Committees Meetings; Athens, GA; Details TBA; Contact: Cathi Watkins

March 10-12, 2006 Retreat at Berea Meetinghouse; Lead FAP: TBA

April 21-23, 2006 Retreat at Old Greer House, Banner Elk, NC; Lead FAP: TBA

June 8-11, 2006 SAYMA Yearly Meeting at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, NC; Contact: Wren Hendrickson

Quaker Initiative to End Torture

Our intentions are simple, torture must be stopped...especially when it's done with U.S. tax dollars in our name. We feel that educating ourselves is the first work and then choosing actions to oppose torture — both are spiritual responsibilities.

We will begin this work with a Quaker conference on torture on June 2-4, 2006 at Guilford College Greensboro, North Carolina. It's our hope that a well-planned conference can inform without overwhelming and develop a wide variety of actions towards changing laws/policies and rehabilitation for both survivors and perpetrators.

For more information, see www.quit-torture-now.org

SAYMA Calendar

April 8, 2006

Spring Representative Meeting
Birmingham, AL

June 7-11, 2006

SAYMA Yearly Gathering
Warren Wilson College
Swannanoa, NC

September 9, 2006

Fall Representative Meeting
Berea, KY

December 2, 2006

Winter Representative Meeting
Asheville, NC

April 7, 2007

Spring Representative Meeting

June 6-10, 2007

SAYMA Yearly Gathering

From the Editors:

Happy 2006, Friends! May this new year begin to bring peace and harmony to people and planet.
(We have some work to do, don't we?)

Editorial

Taking Care of Business

Each year following SAYMA's annual gathering, the Planning Committee reviews the evaluation forms with the intention of improving the yearly meeting experience for the following next year.

In the "Business Meeting" category, some Friends comment that the business sessions are too many, too

Business sessions are more likely to be worshipful experiences if we prepare ourselves (as we should prepare ourselves for First Day worship). Preparation is both intellectual and spiritual. We prepare intellectually by becoming familiar with the issues that will be considered, reading advance material, and reviewing the agenda. We

without judgment. Respecting each voice, we recognize that of God in one another. We show integrity as responsible members of the meeting, participating in the decision making process and abiding by the decisions.

Given that business sessions are the intersection of worship, faith, practice, and community, one would think that Friends would attend every session and participate with enthusiasm. But they do not. It's common for Friends to say that they are "allergic" to business meetings, that they have to sit too long, or that meetings are boring.

This is likely due to some deficiency of attitude or education. Too many Friends appear to be poorly schooled and practiced in Friends process. This is unfortunate, very unfortunate, because when a meeting for worship

with attention to business is functioning properly it is a spiritually wonderful event – it is a gathered meeting for worship. And when it isn't functioning properly....well.

Are your meetings for business held in a spirit of worship?

long, or too contentious and that we should have more time for other activities. Other Friends call for more and longer sessions, remarking that business is the main reason we come together.

should also have a sense of the meeting's history on these and similar issues.

Our spiritual preparation involves bringing the proper attitude

Do you participate regularly in meetings for business?

The Planning Committee does its best to develop a schedule that balances worship, work, play, education, and spiritual growth. How should business sessions fit into this mix?

If all Friends had the proper attitude toward Friends way of doing business and an understanding of the process, they would recognize that business sessions should help fulfill all the needs stated above.

First of all, a business meeting is a meeting for **worship** with a concern for business. Let's never forget this. Quaker business sessions are "programmed" worship. The business agenda is the program. It should be a worshipful experience from the time we arrive (promptly at the appointed hour) and center ourselves in silent waiting on the Spirit; through the announcements, committee reports, and corporate decisions; and until the presiding clerk signals the end of the session with a handshake.

to the business sessions. We must be willing to humbly relinquish personal positions in the course of group discernment and put trust in the process. We must be studied in Quaker process. And, most important, we must invite the Spirit to participate and guide us throughout this programmed worship session.

The Quaker business session is an opportunity, perhaps the only opportunity, for Friends as a spiritual community to simultaneously worship, interact, and practice our faith and our testimonies. In peace, we set aside differences and listen

Does the meeting study Friends' literature and guides to faith and practice?

— Queries from SAYMA Faith & Practice

The last session of our 2005 yearly meeting business provides an example of the importance of intellectual and spiritual preparation – especially knowledge of meeting history, issue context, and trust in the spiritual process. Yearly Meeting was considering the opportunity to increase our number of delegates to a

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wider Quaker organization. At the same time, the name of the potential delegate was presented. This opportunity had financial implications since YM provides reimbursement of travel and fees to WQO delegates.

This last session of business had a large number of Friends who had not attended previous sessions of business and were unaware of some history — including the previous day's business meeting. While the amount of money involved seemed trifling to some, they did not know that, in that previous meeting, we had an extended discussion of our proposed 2006 budget — which showed a deficit of more than \$5000. Any proposed additional expense was rightly subject to extra scrutiny.

The discussion became emotional when it appeared to some that this scrutiny was directed toward the person who was the proposed delegate. This sensitivity could have been avoided if all Friends present were familiar with the financial context and if they had recalled some recent history. The last time a similar oppor-

tunity arose, three years ago, the two issues were considered separately. First, we considered and approved the delegate position; then we considered and approved the candidate.

If all present had been intellectually and spiritually prepared — knowledgeable of history and context and trusting in the process — we would have had a beautiful moment of corporate discernment rather than a bit of contentiousness and bruised feelings.

The Quaker way of doing business is our unique characteristic. There are other peace religions. There are other religions with similar spirituality and beliefs. But our decision-making process is the essence of our religion. It all comes together — respect, love, kindness, humility, spirituality, faith, and practice — or it should, at meeting for worship with attention to business.

How can we care for our business sessions and improve them?
How can we make business the most attractive part of yearly meeting?
How might we achieve gathered business meetings on a regular basis?

The answer is a word that Quakers don't like: *discipline*. But it's a word that Quakers should like. Discipline is "*training, especially training of the mind or character; methods or rules for regulating conduct of members of a church.*"* Quaker Faith and Practice is a book of discipline.

It is unfortunate that we ask Friends to participate in an intricate spiritual and intellectual process without any requirement that they have any level of proficiency. A Quaker business session where Friends don't know and fail to appreciate the process is like a baseball game where the players don't know the rules. Not a pretty sight!

Suppose we "regulated conduct" of our members by requiring them to read our Faith and Practice and to attend business sessions? Suppose that we required our members to periodically attend classes, workshops, and discussions on Quaker process?

Perhaps, then, Friends would participate with enthusiasm in meetings for worship with a concern for business. ♦

* *World Book Dictionary*

Friends General Conference News

by Penelope Wright (Nashville)

After a year of careful discernment, FGC's Central Committee approved a new program and committee on Youth Ministries. Three SAYMA Friends, Jonah McDonald (Atlanta), Elaine Ruschetta (Atlanta), and Christina VanRegenmorter (Nashville) participated in the discernment process. The last new program FGC approved was about eight years ago — the Traveling Ministries Program, a program which has enriched, deepened and supported many FGC meetings. We anticipate that the new program also will be beneficial to Friends of *all ages*.

With the approval in 2004 of the second five years of our Long Term Plan, many of the committees and efforts of FGC have grown in their work, especially the Committee for Ministry on Racism, Advancement and Outreach; Publications; QuakerBooks of FGC (the bookstore); QuakerPress (the publishing arm of FGC); and the web site (check us out at www.fgcquaker.org!). The *Blue Book* (our guidelines and policies) has been updated through faithful work of the Blue Book Committee and is now posted on the web site for Central Committee members to access. While still available in

hard copy, posting it to the web eliminates 50 pages per book — saving lots of trees!

For the first time ever, the Gathering will be on the West Coast! The **Gathering for 2006 — Swimming in Living Waters** will be near Tacoma, at Pacific Lutheran University, Puget Sound, Washington, July 1-7. The Gathering will be one day shorter than usual and will be able to accommodate fewer Friends than usual, so register early and on line — available after March 1st. (Paper registration will also be available.) One of the plenary speakers will be Marcus Borg.

After many years of challenging and faithful work, Liz Perch, FGC's Conference Coordinator, will be leaving her position after this summer's Gathering. FGC is seeking to fill that position. Anyone led to apply should have their application into the FGC office by January 20, 2006. Email: Friends@fgcquaker.org or US mail: 1216 Arch Street, 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107 ♦



SAYMA Guide to our Faith and Practice Revision Committee

by Free Polazzo (Anneewakee Creek WG), clerk, F&P Revision Committee

SAYMA's Faith and Practice Revision Committee has asked that each monthly and preparative meeting distribute, read, and discuss the committee's most recent proposed revisions to SAYMA's *Guide to our Faith and our Practice*.



The changes were sent out before the Fall 2005 Representative Meeting and responses are due back to the committee by January 28th, 2006. This allows for four months of review by each meeting. Worship groups are asked to meet with their sponsoring monthly meeting or, if none exists, to find a monthly meeting which is discussing these revisions where they could partici-

pate. Our committee will review the responses and revise our recommendations before they are presented to the Yearly Meeting in June 2006. The revised recommended revision will be sent to all meetings the beginning of March 2006.

We are anticipating receiving many minuted responses this year, as the concerns covered in the proposed revisions are near and dear to many Friends. The topics being considered include our testimonies. Among them are: Integrity (new), Peace, Simplicity, Equality, the Meeting Community, Education, Government, Sexuality (needs rewriting), Children, and Earthcare (new).

This may be a good time to refer to the introduction to our **Guide** (page ii of the 1998 printing) to reflect that:

This **Guide**, in its procedures, makes no attempt to lay down final rules that can inhibit the Spirit's leadings....we decided to work from our own experience rather than model too closely on the work of larger, more established yearly meetings. We have remained conscious of the need to write for a particular group of Friends in a particular time and place, a group whose members come from a wide variety of Quaker traditions or, indeed, from other backgrounds altogether. The **Guide** may thus serve to introduce new seekers to our own variety of Friends' practice.

The Committee is also looking for SAYMA Friends who see way open for them to assist the committee in its work. We meet three times a year: once for two days in mid to late February, during Yearly Meeting in June, and

once in late July for three days. We would like to have at least one Young Adult Friend (under 40) on the committee. The committee also needs more diversity in the areas of race and sexual orientation. The committee usually meets at West Knoxville and car pooling is encouraged. Most of the work is done at the scheduled meetings. We probably have three more years of work ahead of us, but we have found that waiting on the Spirit before we proceed cannot be scheduled. Prospective committee members must be prepared for lots of "God wrestling" and be able to hold in the Light the gifts of "nit picking" that are usually not honored in the Religious Society of Friends.

Please contact the Nominating Committee Clerk, Sharon Annis, at nominating@sayma.org if you or someone you know has the gifts needed to serve on the Faith and Practice Revision Committee. We work hard and we have fun, too.

Thanks to all who have labored with the committee in the revision process. I have come to think that the name of our guide needs to be read as: "A Guide to our Faith and our Practice, Practice, Practice." ♦

Memphis Friends Meeting Minute on Torture – November 13, 2005

Memphis Friends Meeting is saddened by the need to draft a minute condemning torture of prisoners by the government of the United States of America. We thought the occasion could not arise in a country dedicated to democracy, diversity, and equality, but it has. Unfortunately, fear of terrorists has convinced some that those charged with protecting our country are only doing what is necessary. We wish to state as clearly as we can that the use of torture has never been and never will be necessary for our security; on the contrary, it actually places us in greater jeopardy and any country that relies on torture for intelligence degrades itself. There is never justification to inflict what is intended as unendurable pain on a child of God. Quibbling over what does and does not constitute torture is deeply disturbing. Our government agencies and military must not train, must not order, and must not allow anyone to inflict pain or humiliation on any prisoner in our custody.

Memphis Friends Meeting calls on all Americans and our elected representatives, including the President and his staff, to bring these shameful actions to an end. ♦

Share Your Thoughts on Yearly Meeting

To SAYMA reps, clerks, and other interested folks:

At representative meeting on Dec. 3 one of the concerns raised by Yearly Meeting Planning Committee led to a deeper discussion about the purpose of our Yearly Meeting Gathering.

Below is the Minute of the discussion. It asks us to bring this up in our Monthly Meetings. Feedback can be sent to the clerk at clerk@sayma.org and the clerk of Yearly Meeting Planning errol@kitenet.net

We seek ways to nurture, play and work together. Are there ways we may do that better?

Thanks, Kristi Estes, clerk

113- 22 The Structure of Yearly Meeting Business Meeting

Dennis Gregg from Finance and Yearly Meeting spoke about an additional issue: the tension between friends seeing the Yearly Meeting as a time for business and as a time for retreat and rejuvenation. Yearly Meeting Planning Committee asks that representatives bring this concern into the light in their individual meetings. The Planning Committee feels the need for discernment regarding how we feel a Spirit-led Yearly Meeting would best be structured.

One friend offered up the possibility of two days of business meeting and two days of no business meeting at Yearly Meeting. There have been requests for half-day workshops and longer opportunities for fellowship and worship sharing.

Another friend spoke with concern regarding our Yearly Meeting's current discipline and whether we are likely to engage each other with spirit-led discernment in day-long business meeting sessions.

Another friend, a former clerk of the Finance committee, spoke from his experience. He said that it was very useful to consult with people at Yearly Meeting and to have space that was not YM business time in between business sessions in order to better do his committee work.

A friend spoke from his long-term concern of whether SAYMA's discernment process is faulty. He asked, "What is the purpose of our Yearly Meeting?" He said that it took the FGC Gathering 100 years before it had a statement of purpose. He spoke of how Yearly Meeting needs to be more than a business meeting. He spoke of how business meetings can be very, very spiritual. He read London Yearly Meeting's statement of purpose, written in 1668 (?). They wrote that they created the Yearly Meeting "to see each other's faces and open each other's hearts to the truth of God once a year." He asked that we look at the purpose of what our Yearly Meeting is. He challenged us to make sure that our business meetings and our workshops and everything we do with Yearly Meeting is done with the intention of seeing one another's faces.

Another friend spoke of how business meetings in FGC have been a source of spiritual nurturance and energizing — even when they lasted to the middle of the night. She spoke of the need for a recommitment to do the "deep" work asked of us as Friends in our meetings for worship with attention to business — both in our monthly meetings and in our yearly meeting.

A friend spoke of how both sides of the Yearly Meeting — the business and the physical and spiritual nurturance — both feed each other. She spoke of how teaching Quakerism could be more integrated into Yearly Meeting. Another friend spoke of how workshops on business meeting could enrich Friends' participation in business meetings.

Friends are asked to hold these concerns in the light and bring them to their business meetings as they are led. The clerk requested that the clerks committee take on the task of discerning ways in which the yearly meeting business meeting can more fully embody an inviting, spirit-led community.

Thoughts on the Purpose of Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting

by Perry Treadwell

At the very end of Representative Meeting Twelfth Month, the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee expressed the tension between our business meetings and other opportunities for Friends to meet with one another: worship, worship sharing, workshops and other venues. Several Friends attempted to discern a resolution. It made several of those present express our expectations.

What is the purpose of Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting? I must admit that at times while sitting through long Yearly Meeting business meetings and Representative Meetings the question has come up. The question became clearer when Representative Meeting in Nashville last Ninth Month struggled with the budget for this year which contained drastic decreases in support of wider Quaker organizations. The increase in assessment was also a difficulty.

I have looked at our present Faith and Practice to get some leading. On pages 8 and 9 there is some guidance:

The yearly meeting exists to support its constituents as they seek, in the manner of Friends, to live out their lives according to God's leadings. In order to do so, annual sessions are held where matters of business are considered in worship.

That seems clear enough in conjunction with one of the functions listed: "Offer and provide on-going care and guidance to monthly meetings." The remaining functions appear to be housekeeping in nature.

Taken together these two statements make clear that the purpose of yearly meeting is to support and nurture its monthly meetings in their religious practice. Then why do I feel that SAYMA spins its wheels in the sand?

I have looked at Quaker history for answers. From Yearly Meeting in London, 1668:

We did conclude among ourselves to settle a meeting, to see one another's faces, and open our hearts one to another in the Truth of God once a year, as formerly it used to be.

The statement reminded me of the joy of seeing so many Friends during yearly meeting. I have been the Friends General Conference (FGC) visitor to Baltimore YM, Lake Erie YM, Ohio Valley YM, and Ohio YM Conservative. I have observed the same pleasure in seeing "one another's faces."

I have seen the same joy in faces over a whole week at the FGC Annual Gathering of Friends. But it took 100 years for the FGC Long Range Conference Committee to define its purpose:

It is the purpose of the Gathering of Friends to help Friends know and deepen

their relationship with the Spirit and with each other, to strengthen their identification as Friends among other Friends, and to testify to the continued presence of unprogrammed Friends as a vital and unique faith community.

While I was on Central Committee of FGC, it became clear that the organization could not continue, let alone increase, its support of its constituent yearly and monthly meetings. The consultants advising on a capital campaign observed, after surveying Friends, that few knew what FGC did. Central Committee responded with a statement of purpose and a five year plan and raised the necessary funds. The statement of purpose has some relevance here:

Friends General Conference is a Quaker organization in the unprogrammed tradition of the Religious Society of Friends which primarily serves affiliated yearly and monthly meetings. It is our experience that: Faith is based on the direct experience of God; our lives witness to this experience individually and corporately; by answering that of God in everyone, we build and sustain inclusive community.

Friends General Conference provides resources and opportunities that educate and invite members and attenders to experience, individually and corporately, God's living presence, and to discern and follow God's leadings. Friends General Conference reaches out to seekers and to other religious bodies inside and outside the Religious Society of Friends.

FGC is a service organization for its members just as SAYMA is a service organization for its members. Maybe we should ask what functions of SAYMA serve its monthly meetings?

In 1960, the Right Holding of Yearly Meeting Committee (then London YM) concluded:

In our worship at Yearly Meeting, it is laid upon us with special weight to listen. It is not our ministry that is required in worship, nor our inspiration in deliberations, but we seek to hear the true word of God speaking through our frail humanity and leading up to the place where he would have us be. This is the right holding of Yearly Meeting.

When I attended Ohio Yearly Meeting Conservative every adult attended the business sessions. They were de-

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liberate and worshipful. In contrast, upon attending a different YM this year, I found about one quarter of the adults (most of them monthly representatives) present for business and I found the meeting contentious. They failed to approve any of their F&P revisions brought forward from the committee. Is it possible that we bring our contentious practices in our monthly meetings to yearly meeting? Do we really trust the Spirit to guide our process?

At the Twelfth Month Representative Meeting, presiding clerk Kristi Estes recalled how spiritually nurturing the FGC Central Committee meeting's for business were. This has been the experience of those of us who have attended Central Committee.

Maybe before we continue to discuss changing SAYMA's name we should ask how SAYMA is serving its members. Is SAYMA too wide spread? Should there be half yearly meetings or even quarters? Would our deliberations be better seasoned with such units?

I am pleased to see that the SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee has been reconstructed and is very intentional in its mission to nurture SAYMA. Maybe M&N should take on an expanded statement of purpose that will help us all be better listeners. ♦

Quaker House Regains 501(c)3 Status After Unexpected "Suspension" by Steve Livingston (Asheville)

Chuck Fager, director of Quaker House in Fayetteville, NC, recently reported on the potentially fatal, but fortunately temporary, loss of non-profit status for his organization. Quaker House, located near the Marine Corps Camp Lejeune in the heavily military city of Fayetteville, NC, has been at the forefront of Friends support for GI rights, conscientious objection, and truth in recruiting.

In the early summer, just as it seemed that the tide in America was turning away from unquestioning support for the occupation of Iraq, Chuck received a letter from the county tax office, questioning whether Quaker House was exempt from property taxes. "The county's letter had my full attention, from the first line," Chuck reports. According to the letter, their 501(c)3 status was "up for review." The county called the review "routine," but a local tax attorney advised Chuck that "such county reviews were almost unheard of"; that "in his opinion, this one was neither random nor coincidental."

Quaker House continued with their work, organizing conferences and rallies, advising GIs of their rights through the very successful "GI Hot Line," and developing a wonderful new tool for truth in recruiting called "Sgt. Abe the Honest Recruiter." By midsummer, with national polls showing flagging support for the war, the feeling at Quaker House was that their work was bearing much fruit. "You could almost feel the logjam breaking up, the tide beginning

to turn," Chuck recalls. Then he heard from a potential donor, who reported that their broker had checked with the IRS and found that Quaker House was no longer a tax-exempt organization.

"It seemed unbelievable at first," Chuck says. "I was on the phone to the IRS within the hour . . . their clerk in Cincinnati confirmed what the broker said: Quaker House's nonprofit tax status had been 'suspended.' Now here was something to worry about."

Chuck secured a Quaker tax attorney who quickly determined that no one knew when, why, or by whom their tax exempt status had been suspended. The IRS suggested that Quaker House might be at fault.

"Unlikely," Chuck says. "IRS mail is not neglected in this house." Meanwhile, the work of Quaker House continued, unabated. Any of us who have ever worked with an organization seeking non-profit status can appreciate the amount of time and work required, especially if the purpose of the organization is at odds with the Federal Government. Quaker House set about wading through the reams of paperwork, with no pause in addressing the burgeoning workload of counseling, rallying, networking, supporting, sharing resources, and reaching potential recruits with their new "Sgt. Abe" campaign. Remarkably, in a mere six weeks' time, Chuck heard back from the IRS that their 501(c)3 status had been reinstated, and retroactively!

"Can I get that on paper?" was Chuck's immediate response. "Within minutes," he says, "the fax was in my trembling hand." When he called the county tax office, they said, "No problem, you're fine." As if nothing had happened.

Chuck is still scratching his head over the episode, not wanting to succumb to paranoia, but still uncertain that it was a simple mistake. "Even if we dodged the bullet this time, the IRS, the FBI, the PATRIOT Act, and the Clandestine Service are all still out there," he shudders. But he is eager to let it go and focus on the work of Quaker House, making it more possible for GIs, potential recruits, and ordinary citizens to stand up for their rights to oppose war in general, and the illegal occupation of Iraq in particular.

Chuck extends best wishes for the holiday season and the New Year to one and all. "Be good to those you love. Work for peace."

"And," he adds, "don't forget us." ♦

Quakers in Pastoral Care and Counseling Annual Conference — Mar. 30-April 2, 2006

(for Friends in healthcare, the healing arts,
or anyone engaged with these issues)

We Shall All Be Changed
Experiencing God's Love Through Health Changes

Quaker Hill Conference Center, Richmond IN
Info at www.qpcc.us

SPICE — D : A Meditation

from Kay Parke (Swannanoa Valley)

A new acronym was brought back to our Meeting, from a Representative Meeting of SAYMA. It should help us to remember our Testimonies:

- S - Simplicity
- P - Peace
- I - Integrity
- C - Community
- E - Equality

These are our ancient and present testimonies. Perhaps another should be added, to bring us up-to-date:

D-Diversity

Simplicity: *Live simply, that others may simply live.*

Peace: *We live in the virtue of that which takes away the occasion for war* (George Fox's response to those who offered him a commission in the Puritan army).

Integrity: Quakers of the 17th century sometimes referred to themselves as "Friends of Truth" — thence our name of "Friends." They expressed their belief about Truth rather more literally than we would today — discarding mythological names for months and days of the week in favor of using numbers — First Day, Second Month, etc. Today, though we often use the customary names for months and days, we cherish essential Truth as much as they did, and broaden Integrity to mean wholeness.

Community: We've always depended on that for support, and have come to understand its necessary costliness.

Equality: The source of our long-term concern for racial equality and for alleviation of poverty. Early Quakers dispensed with titles of special respect. Should we, also?

Diversity: A relatively new recognition that respect must be given to differences of opinion and of cultural background. We often have much to learn from those who think differently.

The letters might also be applied to aspects of our personal lives as Quakers — and good citizens:

Service.

Praiser (however that is understood) — or **P**raise.

Integrity pretty much says it all.

Community important in one's daily life. Creativity too, one hopes, in Community relations. Good Communication. Compassion. And openness to Change — not only in one's personal life, but possibly also in the Community, yes even the Quaker Community.

Evaluation. If we adopt the Muslim pattern of Prayer five times a day, the fifth time would probably be bed-time. That's a good opportunity to **E**valuate one's day in regard to the five testimonies.

Discipline. That's a hard one, but essential! All testimonies depend upon our relationship to God, Spirit, or however one names that mysterious "other" **D**irection of our lives. And there, the **D**iscipline of frequent Prayer may need to be revived in our daily lives. Consider the Muslim pattern — on awakening (to seek for **D**irection for the day); before each meal (a time for thanks); at bed-time (Evaluation?). ♦

Now is the Time for FCNL

by Alice Wald (Columbia)

What a privilege it was to attend and be a part of the FCNL Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, in November. Even better was getting to see the new "green" FCNL office building. I felt so proud of what we, the Religious Society of Friends, and others have been able to do under the vision and guidance of FCNL.



In order to continue its work most effectively, I am asking on behalf of FCNL for each meeting and worship group in SAYMA to do the following:

1) Name a person to be your FCNL contact. (Contacts are the "first call" during important issue campaigns, connecting locals to the legislative team in Washington, DC. They need to have e-mail and will be asked to relay the Legislative Action Messages and *Washington Newsletter* to your group.)

2) Send the name of your contact immediately to field@fcnl.org. (If you need some support in identifying someone, I'll be glad to talk with you further. You can call me at (864) 638-9123 or e-mail at waldam@aol.com and I will call you.)

3) As Contact, at your next Meeting for Business ask your Meeting's approval to send your meeting mailing list to FCNL. (FCNL will not give this list to anyone. They will then send each person three newsletters. Hopefully, by that time you they will be regular supporters of FCNL.)

4) When your meeting/worship group receives information this month from FCNL on the policy/priorities identification process, be ready to set up a time to discuss them and let your voices be heard! Return your policy priorities to FCNL.

Now is the time for the Religious Society of Friends to speak up and out. Please don't ignore this request. If no one is coming forward, hold this request in the Light before your meeting or worship group. Remember that I am available to assist you in any way I can. Just ask. ♦

New: The Quaker Facilities Foundation

The Quaker Facilities Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit corporation chartered to help unprogrammed Friends Meetings acquire desperately needed facilities like a meeting-house.

The Quaker Facilities Foundation has a vision of providing through grants one million dollars each year to local meetinghouse and other Quaker facility projects!

You can help financially struggling Quaker meetings to build, purchase, or expand their meetinghouses.

Learn more at www.QuakerFacilitiesFoundation.org ♦

Environmental Ponderings

by Alice Wald (Columbia)

The Human/Earth Relationship

I recently heard a colleague say he could no longer speak of his concerns as "environmental." Instead, he felt compelled to speak of a "human/earth relationship." I am now struggling with this concept.

Speaking in terms of human and earth brings everything home. The "environment" can be something out there somewhere. But "human/earth relationship" places *Homo sapiens*, properly, right in the middle.

There are all kinds of relationships. One is *mutual*, which Webster's defines as "what two people do, feel, or represent to each other... [it] always pertains to both partners." Of course Earth isn't a people but people do things to the Earth (pollute the air) and the Earth does things that affect people (global warming).

Some relationships are *reciprocal*: I scratch your back, you scratch mine. Reciprocal is "concerning each of two or more persons or things... [it] stresses a balanced relationship in which one action is taken in return for another." (Similar to "mutual" but adds in the balance factor.)

Balance is "to bring into or maintain in a state of equilibrium." For sure, the Earth is great for keeping things balanced. Human relationships, as well, are better when balanced. For example, you've seen couples where one does all the talking and the other does all the listening. That's unbalanced. So, maybe we humans would do well to take some lessons from Earth on balance.

Vulnerability is inherent in human relationships — that is if you really want to know and be known by another. Earth is certainly vulnerable to human activity. But then humans are vulnerable to Earth's processes as well. An example is mercury in the air from coal-powered electric plants, which then gets into lake waters and its fish. The fish are liable to be eaten by low-income women whose unborn children can be damaged. This also highlights the concept of *interdependent* relationships.

Respect is a quality we seek in our human relationships. How would respect manifest itself in the human/earth relationship? Consider the tide. Clearly, it is not something to be stopped. When we do not respect that force and build jetties into the ocean to slow things down, somewhere down the shoreline other beaches and river channels are eroding.

The final quality is *love*. Some say love makes the world go round. Actually that could be more true than we know! Lack of love certainly won't keep Earth from spinning in its orbit. But lack of love may change Earth as we know it — Earth with its beautiful blue skies, rich red sunsets, crystal clear lakes, morning bird symphonies...

I have not spoken of the Biblical concept of "stewardship." It suggests that humans "own" the earth. But you don't own your spouse or your friend or Earth. You are in a loving, respectful, mutual relationship that is reciprocal, balanced, vulnerable, and interdependent. ♦

Lessons from Easter Island

When discovered in 1722, Easter Island, now famous for its gigantic stone statues, was grassland without a single tree or bush over ten feet high. But in its early years as a Polynesian settlement, Easter Island was a subtropical forest. Palm trees, which grew up to 82 feet tall and six feet in diameter, served as a food source.

After just a few centuries of the human settlement, destruction of Easter's forests was underway. The presence of the statues implies that the society was highly organized. They used tools used for carving the statues. They felled trees for transporting and erecting statues, and for burning. The forests were replaced by gardens.

The destruction of the island's animals was as extreme as that of the forest: without exception, every species of native land bird became extinct. Without trees for canoes, fishing was no longer possible. Ultimately, for a meat source they turned to each other. Human bones became common in late Easter Island garbage heaps.

Why didn't they realize what they were doing, and stop before it was too late?

Jared Diamond, in "Easter Island's End" (*Discover Magazine*, August 1995) suggests that the end came with a whimper and not a bang. From year to year, the disappearing forests were hardly noticed. After all, trees were still available in certain places on the island.

Only the old folks could recall a time when there had been lush green trees. As the elders passed, this collective memory faded. By the time the last scrubby short tree was felled, it no longer had any value, esthetic or economic.

(Could it be that no one will notice when the last mountainside is bulldozed to make room for a bigger home or another shopping center?)

There is, however, some good news about the Easter Island story. We have the potential to learn from it. But will we? Perhaps American values need to be reexamined.

One is exemplified by westward expansion in the early days of the United States. People sought gold, new lands, and buffalo to kill for sport, etc. At the time, it seemed as if space and natural resources were infinite.

But they are not. Still, most Americans appear oblivious and act accordingly. For example, when a shopping center gets "old" we leave it standing vacant and relocate.

Americans also have a disproportionate sense of individualism: "This (whatever) is mine and *nobody* is going to tell me what to do. I'm not interested in your viewpoint or in cooperating for our common ground."

American reliance on technology won't save us. The fact is technology solves as well as causes problems.

To sum up, Steven J. McCormick with the Nature Conservancy states, "People clearly present substantial challenges to the health of our planet, but they are also at the core of each and every solution." ♦

Ministry and Nurture News

from Bob McGahey (Celo), M&N clerk

SAYMA's Committee on Ministry and Nurture met at Swannanoa Valley Monthly Meeting for our own deliberations on October 15, 2005, and for worship and a forum on the relationship of monthly meetings with SAYMA on October 16, 2005. The following minutes rose out of our deliberations:

MINUTE: "We are members one of another," a Quaker community of meetings which have joined together to form SAYMA. Within this community, we can listen to each other and share our gifts. As we considered the interrelationship of our Yearly Meeting and its member meetings, in the spirit of Paul (1st Corinthians 12:12-21) we affirmed the bidirectionality of this relationship; meetings both receive and offer assistance through SAYMA. An important role of SAYMA's Ministry and Nurture is the facilitation of the exchange of these gifts, of information and resources within our Yearly Meeting. Meetings within SAYMA should feel welcome to contact this committee, both to request assistance and to share the fruits of their gifts. As committee members nurture contacts with the various meetings within SAYMA, they need to listen for both of these.

MINUTE: In the time-honored tradition of Friends, intervisitation among meetings is something that should not only be a responsibility of this committee, but every SAYMA member's privilege, so that the presence of another SAYMA member at Sunday worship would be not a surprise, but an expectation. ♦

Rural Southern Voice for Peace

Rural Southern Voice for Peace (RSVP), which serves as the International Listening Project Training and Resource Center, is currently conducting the Gulf Coast Listening Project (GCLP) which will address issues of poverty, race, and class that were raised in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. GCLP will conduct in-depth interviews with survivors of Hurricane Katrina, enabling them to share their thoughts and feelings about:

1. Their Katrina experience
2. Their immediate and unheeded needs
3. Issues of race and poverty
4. Solutions and ideas for creating a more just and compassionate nation.

The Gulf Coast Listening Project is currently being organized by grassroots coalitions in four cities. For example, in Columbia SC, the project is sponsored by Columbia Friends Meeting, the Consumer Education Council, and the Christian Action Council. Friends are also involved in the Atlanta, New Orleans, and Birmingham projects. American Friends Service Committee Southeast Regional Office will be working regionally with GCLP and RSVP, which will coordinate GCLP nationally. RSVP is supported by Celo Friends Meeting and SAYMA.

GCLP will apply what is learned from our interviews to a national justice education and action campaign that will become a strong voice on issues of poverty, race and class in our nation.

We'd love to connect with more SAYMA Friends. You can get on our mail list at (828) 675-5933 or www.listeningproject.info; ♦

SAYMA Annual Gathering at Warren Wilson College

Swannanoa, NC, June 8-11, 2006 — *Testimonies from Creation: Savoring SPICE in All Life*

Yearly Meeting returns (again!) to the mountains.

(Call for workshop proposals on other side)

WORKSHOP PROPOSAL FORM (continued from other side)

Please specify Friday or Saturday preference:

Would you be willing to give your workshop twice?
(You may have different people in each session.)

Will the workshop be Lecture? Discussion? Interactive? Some of each?

Preferred participants: Adults, youth or both? Women, men, or both?

Are there limits to the numbers of participants? Maximum? Minimum? What is your ideal number?

Workshop length: 60 minutes? 75-90 minutes? 90-120 minutes?

Does your workshop need more than one session?
(If you offer a two-part workshop, must participants attend both parts?)

Particular space or equipment requirements?
(We will try to have all workshops in handicap-accessible classrooms.)

Please list any books or other materials that you would like to see stocked in the YM bookstore.

Ecological Concerns Network Retreat – March 11 & 12, 2006

in Royal, AL – at the home of Daryl Bergquist and Sara Rose



All Friends are invited for a day of visioning that will inspire and guide the future activities of SAYMA's Ecological Concerns Network. Plan to travel and arrive on Friday the 10th. Saturday will be devoted to exercises, discussion, and worship sharing on our visions for a world with humans in harmony with fellow creatures and Creation. On Sunday, we'll worship with the Royal Worship Group and travel home.

ECN Mission statement: *SAYMA Ecological Concerns Network will provide assistance, including spiritual and consultative support, to Friends in Yearly Meeting who are following their leadings to work on ecological concerns. It will also work to raise the level of awareness of ecological concerns among SAYMA Friends.*

What to Bring

☼ Bedding or sleeping bags. Bring a tent if you wish, or sleep on a porch. Home hospitality is available but limited – please request it when you register. ☼ A towel. ☼ Swimwear for a dip in our pond. ☼ Food to cook together and share (details to follow on registration). ☼ Long pants for a walk to the river (poison ivy is abundant). ☼ Please do not bring pets (Common Ground Community has plenty already, including our friendly, but protective, dog, Gamba.)

The Facility

☼ We are located in a rural area, half way between Huntsville and Birmingham, in the center of the northern half of Alabama. ☼ Our modest passive solar home with large porches is on a 5 acre holding of the 80 acre Common Ground Community. The land is in trust for ecological preservation and the provision of community. ☼ Both composting and flush toilets are available. ☼ Solar-heated indoor and outdoor showers are available.

Please register for the ECN retreat by contacting Carol Gray at (404) 288-8749 or chezgray@mindspring.com **before February 17th.** Travel directions will be provided when you register.

Call for YM Workshops: The theme of yearly meeting at Warren Wilson College, Swannanoa, NC, June 8-11, 2006 is *Testimonies from Creation: Savoring SPICE in All Life*. We are asking SAYMA Friends to consider submitting proposals for workshops addressing this theme. How do you keep *SPICE* in your life? What could you share with F/friends? How can we help one another to live *Simply*, to practice *Peace*, to maintain *Integrity*, to build *Community*, to treat all we meet with *Equality*? And above all, how do we do this with joyful hearts? Workshops might include brainstorming and sharing, or making and doing. Do you like to knit? Do you enjoy singing or dancing? Do you know a lot about composting, or making a home more energy-efficient, or living our testimonies in the world of the workplace or in the political arena? Are you a bird-watcher or can you identify native wildflowers? Will you consider sharing your insights and skills with others? *Workshops which invite intergenerational participation and include an element of play are particularly encouraged!*

Workshops will be offered Friday afternoon and Saturday afternoon between 2:30-5 PM. The sessions can last up to two hours. Please help us in our planning by completing both sides and **returning the form below by February 15, 2006** to:

Beth Ensign (404) 658-1531
173 Flora Ave., NE hensign@mindspring.com
Atlanta, GA 30307

Please contact Beth with any questions you may have. You will not receive confirmation that we received your proposal, but you will hear from us by March 15 on whether or not your workshop will be included in the program.

WORKSHOP PROPOSAL FORM (continued on other side)

Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting June 8-11, 2006 — Warren Wilson College, Swannanoa, NC

Form due back by February 15, 2006

- Title of proposed workshop:
- Your name, address, phone number (and e-mail if applicable):
- What led you to offer this workshop?

- How is the workshop related to the Yearly Meeting theme?

- Tell us about your experience in leading workshops or any related experience.

- Give us a brief (approximately 50 words) description of your workshop. (This will be used for the advance program description to help Friends in selecting a workshop.)