

Southern Appalachian Friend

the Quarterly Newsletter of

SAYMA
*Southern Appalachian
Yearly Meeting & Association*

Fall 2007

Kristi Estes, clerk
1793 Forrest Ave.
Memphis, TN 38112

(901) 274-0833
clerk@sayma.org

Editor: Kathleen Mavournin

White Space

The article that appeared in this space in the printed version of this issue has been withdrawn from the electronic version because of serious concerns for the safety of some of individual's involved in the story. We very much regret the necessity for this measure and urge Friends to seek out a print copy of this newsletter.

SAYMA Office
c/o Liz Perch
330 Goebel Avenue, Savannah, GA 31404
adminasst@sayma.org
(215) 808-6537

YM Clerks, Administrative Assistants, and Standing Committee Clerks

Clerk

Kristi Estes (Memphis)
clerk@sayma.org

Assistant Clerk & Personnel Comm. Clerk

Sallie Prugh (Columbia)
assistantclerk@sayma.org

Recording Clerk

Bill Holland (Atlanta)
recordingclerk@sayma.org

Treasurer

David Ciscel (Memphis)
treasurer@sayma.org

Administrative Assistant

Liz Perch (Philadelphia & Savannah)
adminasst@sayma.org

Ministry & Nurture Comm. Clerk

Bob McGahey (Celo)
nurture@sayma.org

Nominating Comm. Clerk

Errol Hess (Foxfire)
nominating@sayma.org

Finance Comm. Clerk

Susan Phelan (Huntsville)
sjpsprout@comcast.net

Young Adult Friends Clerk

Elaine Ruscetta
eruscetta@gmail.com

Peace & Social Concerns Comm. Clerk

Steve Livingston (Asheville)
nc_stereoman@charter.net

Ecological Concerns Network Co-Clerks

Ron Taylor (Canton) & Carol Ciscel (Memphis)
ECN@sayma.org carolciscel@bellsouth.net

YM Planning Comm. Clerk

Barbara Esther (Asheville)
planning@sayma.org

SAYF Steering Comm. Co-Clerks

Mark Wutka (Atlanta) & Cathi Watkins (Athens)
mark@wutka.com fishlabs@bellsouth.net

SAYF Administrative Assistant

Theresé Hildebrand (Berea)
SAYFadminasst@sayma.org

Deadline for Winter 2008 SAF is December 10, 2007

Friendly reports, concerns, humor, minutes,
musings & poems are welcome

Send submissions to:
Kathleen Mavournin
SAFeditor@sayma.org

Please put your name and phone number
or email address on all submissions.

SAYMA Calendar 2007-8

Winter Representative Meeting
November 30-December 1, 2007
West Knoxville, TN

Spring Representative Meeting
April 4-5, 2008
Atlanta, GA

2008 Yearly Meeting
June 11-15, 2008
Warren Wilson College
Swannanoa, NC

2008 Yearly Meeting Planning Committee

Barbara Esther, clerk (Asheville)
Carol Nickel, adult program (W. Knoxville)
John Potter, workshops (Nashville)
Pam Beziat, co-registrar (Nashville)
Sharon Phelps, co-registrar (W. Knoxville)
Steve Livingston, local arrangements (Asheville)
Chris Berg, worship (Greenville)

Steven Huber-Feely, JYM Coordinator (Chattanooga)
Heidemarie Huber-Feely, JYM Coordinator (Chattanooga)
Kay Hogan Smith, bookstore coordinator (Atlanta)
Missy Ivie, assistant bookstore coordinator (W. Knoxville)
Erika Phelps, Young Adult Friends (W. Knoxville)
Stephanie Gossett, Young Adult Friends (Asheville)
Hannah MacDermott, Young Adult Friends (Atlanta)

Why Come to Representative Meeting? Reflections from Kristi Estes, SAYMA Clerk

The food, itself could have been the main draw – endless manicotti! But there was more to Rep. Meeting that delicious food and good hospitality in Chattanooga. Do I mean the business of Yearly Meeting? Well, that is what we gather around. And it does get done. The Planning Committee chose an inspiring theme for next year's SAYMA gathering in June and got underway with all the details that will require. The Clerk's Advisory Committee helped the Clerk stay on track where the procedures were fuzzy. The Nominations Committee welcomed some new enthusiastic volunteers. We all got to bask in Administrative Assistant Liz Perch's air of humor and super-efficiency.

I love our occasional meetings in Chattanooga. The thirty or forty folks there fill the room in a good way. During opening worship on Saturday morning, I sat with my back to the French doors that were open and welcoming a cool breeze. I looked out over the faces, mostly familiar, but a few that were new. These are Friends who nurture, support and care about our community. Some have been traveling as SAYMA Friends to visit our smaller Meetings. Some have just represented us well in Ireland for FWCC. Some will soon labor more over our expression of Faith and Practice. Some transport, plan and care for our Young Friends. Some work for us – for justice. Some intentionally hold us in the Light as we do the work. And we need each other to make it work.

So as much as it may seem we are there for “business,” the real business of the Yearly Meeting is connecting - in service, in faithfulness, in love, maintaining this beloved community of Friends.

2008 SAYMA Census

Each year in the late winter or early spring (depending on whether you live in Oxford or Charleston!) SAYMA conducts a census of its meetings to determine the number of members of the yearly meeting. Census forms will be mailed and emailed to meeting contacts in January, and are due back to the SAYMA office in mid March.

The total number of members is reported to Friends World Committee for Consultation, which keeps records for all of Quakerism. The membership figures are also reported to organizations like Friends General Conference and the American Friends Service Committee, which use membership totals to determine how many representatives SAYMA is entitled to send to annual governing meetings. FGC may also use membership statistics for planning and funding purposes.

This year, the census will ask some different questions, and ask some old questions in new ways. We'd like to get a picture of First Days at our meetings, so we will be asking for average attendance at worship. Someone in your meeting is already counting each First Day, so ask them to keep a record for three or four random Sundays (don't always count on potluck Sunday or Meeting for Business Sunday) and take an average. We'll also be asking about attendance at business meeting and in religious education for young people. We'll still be asking how many people were born, died, got married, joined, and left in each meeting. The information collected will be reported to Representative meeting in April, and available to all SAYMA Friends. If you have questions, please contact the Administrative Assistant.

Editor's Note

Copies of SAF are mailed to SAYMA Meetings and Worship Groups for distribution. SAF is also posted on the SAYMA website and can be downloaded in PDF format. Notice is provided on the SAYMA Announce email list when an issue is available for download. Friends without web access who cannot easily pick up the newsletter at a meeting house may subscribe via regular mail (notify the SAYMA Office – see page 1); however, to save postage and paper, we encourage Friends to obtain SAF electronically or at their meeting house.

Message/epistle from the 22nd Triennial Friends World Committee for Consultation

To Friends the world over:

308 Friends from 41 countries, representing many different branches of the Quaker family, met at King's Hospital School in Dublin from 11th to 19th August 2007. At our time of arrival, we were welcomed by Irish Friends, who with great love, dedication and enthusiasm made us feel part of their lives. Thanks to their contacts and enormous work by the visa team (Ireland and the FWCC World Office), visas were obtained for a much greater number of participants than was formerly possible, making the gathering more truly representative of our whole membership.

Ireland has a long Quaker tradition dating from 1654 when William Edmundson settled in Ulster. From the beginning Quakers established a reputation for fair dealing and good works. They are still remembered for providing food and employment during the great famine in the 1840s. More recently, in Northern Ireland, they worked to bring opposing sides together and thus contributed to reconciliation. The island of Ireland contains the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom, but Irish Quakers have one Yearly Meeting.

The theme for the Triennial was

"Finding the prophetic voice for our time".

In our daily worship we have heard seven Friends giving their message on the theme. We have been reminded of the tradition of prophecy in the Old Testament and in the early Christian church. We have learned of the characteristics of the prophets, including humility and faithfulness, and even a reluctance to take on a job they never applied for. Just as the Old Testament prophets and George Fox challenged the people of their own time, we have been challenged to realise the prophetic message of God's love in our lives. "Let the love of Christ flow into us, and through us to others that they too may know Christ." If George Fox returned to the world today, would he feel that we were continuing his ministry? Prophetic words are however not enough – prophecy is also action. We can recognise prophetic ministry in the persistent and patient witness of our Quaker organisations and the many examples of peace and community building in the troubled regions of our world. The growing number of Friends transforming their lives to help our endangered planet are also living in the prophetic tradition.

We have felt the joy, passion and excitement of such committed living. It is our hope that we can recognise and encourage the prophets among us. Can we be open to the possibility of ourselves being called to such service which leads us to experience "the fruit of the spirit" (Gal.5:22)?

During the Triennial we worked together on many vital concerns of Friends today, such as the destruction of the environment, human rights, HIV/Aids, Violence, outreach and growth and the increasing involvement of young Friends. We were blessed by the energy of a larger number of Young Friends at this Triennial, several of whom played an important part in the planning and running of this meeting. Worship and sharing groups enriched and deepened friendships, as did the excursions organised by Irish Friends.

As we were together, news of the earthquake in Peru, the landslide in Kenya and the typhoon in the Philippines reached us. We stopped our proceedings to pray for those affected by these disasters and continue to hold them in our hearts.

At the business sessions, some important decisions about the future of FWCC were reached. Instead of having a Triennial in 3 years' time, there is to be a World Conference in five years' time.

Welcome, Friends, to Kenya in 2012!

Dudzile Mtshazo, Clerk, FWCC

Announcements

SAYF Schedule Change: the November SAYF retreat in Chapel Hill has been moved forward one week to November 9-11. Teens and parents of teens please take note.

Sallie Prugh of Columbia Monthly Meeting attended the 22nd **FWCC Triennial** August 11-19 in Dublin, Ireland as SAYMA's representative (Epistle on page 5). She will write of her experience for the next issue of SAF and is available to visit meetings to talk about the Triennial and future plans for FWCC. Transcripts and other information about the triennial are available at <http://fwccworld.org>.

The Southeastern Regional Gathering of FWCC Section of the Americas will be January 2-7, 2008, in Rio Ochos, Jamaica. Details will be available soon at http://fwccamericas.org/events/08_regional.shtml. Friends are encouraged to consider a winter vacation.

The SAYMA Directory will be updated in February, 2008. If you haven't sent in new directory information lately, it would be a good idea to do so. You can check when your meeting's entries were last updated by looking at the the bottom of any page of your meeting's current SAYMA directory listing.

Transformations

by Perry Treadwell

I stomped around the living room shouting, "Okay, God, Jesus said you take care of the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. Will you take care of me?" I didn't expect an answer. I wasn't even sure there was someone listening. I would not admit this conversation for nearly 30 years.

It was 1973 and I had just decided to resign my tenured position and "take to the woods" Thoreau style. I was not going to pay for war, be part of a corrupt government and a hopelessly bureaucratic university. Let me explain how I reached this decision and the consequences of war tax refusal. It was a series of almost unnoticeable spiritual (mystical) experiences.

Although, in retrospect, I can recall instances in my youth and young adulthood when I experienced a unity with the cosmos, my first awareness occurred at La Jolla Friends Meeting. Until then I thought all Quakers were dead. I had a profound spiritual experience sitting in the sunny silence. Then a woman gave a message. I don't remember her words but I do remember that I was impressed... no, moved. The woman, Gretchen Rudnick, introduced herself to our family at rise of meeting. On a later Sunday, she thrust a book in my hands and proclaimed, "You must read this." It was John Woolman's Journal. I did and it changed my life. Woolman is most famous for his protests against slavery and his lifestyle dedicated to simplicity. But he was also a war tax resistor. Many times it has felt as if he is looking over my shoulder. However, many times I have felt a demon sitting on the other shoulder.

Returning to Atlanta, I found the Atlanta Friends Meeting and jumped into the Quaker process of this small meeting with a history in the civil rights movement and then draft counseling. Following attendance at the freshly minted Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association, a small group started looking at the global perspective of the Movement for a New Society.

In 1972, I decided to donate one half of my salary to the Friend's Meeting. I have no idea now how I reached that decision. With the money returned from taxes withheld, we went to England. It was on top of Pendle Hill that I had my next spiritual experience. I could see what George Fox saw: the light overcoming the darkness.

The leading to change my life came unexpectedly. The time was the Sunday morning after the clocks are set back from daylight savings. I arose at my usual time and found that I had an extra hour while the family slept. A couple of days earlier, I had impulsively bought a paperback edition of Robert Frost's poems. I paged through the titles until I came to "Two Tramps in Mud Time." The title grabbed me so I read it. The last stanza froze me:

But yield who will to their separation,
My object in living is to unite
My avocation and my vocation
As my two eyes make one in sight.
Only where love and need are one,
And the work is play for mortal stakes.
Is the deed ever really done
For Heaven and the future's sakes.

Whack! Right between the ears. My life was fragmented; work wasn't fun anymore. I was more involved in environmental education than scientific research. I had walked the drainage system of Atlanta documenting the pollution. I was an active and radical member of the Georgia Conservancy, an environmental organization. I wanted out. I wanted to be doing what I thought meant something "For Heaven and the future's sakes." Then we went to the Friends Meeting for Worship. I rose to share my experience with the poem mentioning avocation and vocation. Shortly, another Friend rose and quoted the whole last stanza. I took this as a strong spiritual message.

Resigning my university position released me to over thirty years of leadings and failings: Service with the South Eastern Region American Friends Service Committee. Saving land from development in Atlanta and beyond. Changing a neighborhood and fighting a freeway. A solar energy company failed when Reagan took office. Giving simple living workshops. Starting a men's support groups. Ministering with an AIDS organization. Leading an adult education course on making friends. Hospice volunteer. Member of Central Committee of Friends General Conference. All the time writing articles, books, letters to the editor.

During this period, I sent the usual letter every year to the IRS explaining why I was sending one half of my estimated taxes to peace causes. I received the usual letters from the IRS which I ignored. I refused to participate other than to fill out the forms and send the usual letter explaining my religious position. Then I reduced my income below a taxable level. In 1995, I began receiving social security and with this extra income and reduced expenses I was able to donate large amounts to Quaker charities. I had learned to materially simplify my life, but the demon remained.

Have I been frightened by the possible consequences of my yearly protest? Every time I get one of those IRS letters my stomach turns. But they can only attach my funds and add penalties and interest. Apparently they would rather do the latter. I have not had my funds attached since 1988 until the last three years when I have protested the Iraq War by sending the whole amount to charitable sources.

Why have I waited so long to share this journey? I simply wanted to make sure that I was following God's leading and not my own ego. I have always felt a strong disconnect between my Quaker practice and my practices "of the world." Some of these activities and thoughts are embarrassing and hardly Friendly. I have listened to that demon on my shoulder.

It has taken me all these years to learn that God still loves me in spite of these stumblings. Or maybe even because of my failures. Nearly a century ago my father's aunt gave him a copy of John Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress. I have come to realize that I have been on my own pilgrimage, leaving family and security to be led. Being a Quaker is a process, not a goal. The path has been difficult at times, but always stimulating. Bunyan's pilgrim's goal is to cross the river into heaven. I am not ready to cross the river just yet.

Added note: When I tell Friends of my tax refusal they inevitably express fear that they will go to jail. If one is honest in the tax returns all that can happen is penalties and interest. But can you imagine the sand in the wheels if a significant number of Quakers refused to pay \$10, \$50, or \$100 dollars. Those 17th, 18th and 19th century Friends were not afraid to refuse to pay for war. Are 21st century Friends so different? Other Friends say that the government will get its money eventually. In my case, it is social security from others that I don't need. Have long exhausted the amount I paid in to SS.

SAYMA MEETINGS AND WORSHIP GROUPS

Anneewakee Creek Worship Group	Douglasville GA	(770) 949-8079
Asheville Friends Meeting	North Carolina	(828) 258-0974
Athens Friends Meeting	Georgia	(706) 353-2856
Atlanta Friends Meeting	Georgia	(404) 377-2474
Berea Friends Meeting	Kentucky	(859) 985-8950
Birmingham Friends Meeting	Alabama	(205) 592-0570
Boone Friends Meeting	North Carolina	(828) 263-0001
Brevard Friends Meeting	North Carolina	(828) 891-7793
Canton Worship Group	Georgia	(770) 720-4669
Celo Monthly Meeting	Burnsville NC	(828) 675-4456
Charleston Friends Meeting	West Virginia	(304) 756-3033
Chattanooga Friends Meeting	Tennessee	(423) 629-2580
Clemson Worship Group	South Carolina	(864) 654-3774
Columbia Friends Meeting	South Carolina	(803) 252-2221
Cookeville Monthly Meeting	Tennessee	(931) 268-2592
Crossville Friends Meeting	Tennessee	(931) 277-5354
Foxfire Friends Meeting, Holston Valley	Johnson City TN	(423) 283-4392
Greenville Friends Meeting	South Carolina	(864) 246-6852
Gwinnett Preparative Meeting	Norcross GA	(770) 315-9478
Huntsville Area Friends Meeting	Alabama	(256) 837-6327
Memphis Friends Meeting	Tennessee	(901) 274-1500
Murfreesboro Worship Group	Tennessee	(615) 895-0953
Nashville Friends Meeting	Tennessee	(615) 329-2640
Oxford Quaker Meeting	Mississippi	(662) 281-8381
Royal Worship Group	Blountsville AL	(205) 429-3088
Sevier County Worship Group	Sevierville TN	(865) 429-1807
Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting	Black Mountain NC	(828) 664-0092
West Knoxville Friends Meeting	Knoxville TN	(865) 694-0036

SAYMA
 330 Goebel Avenue
 Savannah, GA 31404