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# SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN FRIEND

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Fall

*The newsletter of*

2011



# SAYMA

*Southern Appalachian  
Yearly Meeting & Association*

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## NEWS OF MEETINGS

*Compiled by Errol Hess. <errol@kitenet.net>*

To make sure that your meeting's news is included in this compilation, please add Errol to your newsletter's e-mail distribution list, and he will make sure to highlight events from your meeting, too!

### **ATLANTA**

A memorial service was held for Ceal Wutka. Monthly movie nights continue at the meetinghouse. The meeting donated a large quantity of items to the Decatur Emergency Assistance Ministry. Friends approved an immigration minute. The meeting will host a "Salt and Light" event in the fall connected to FWCC 2012 World Conference in Kenya. Friends approved FLGBTQ marching under the meeting's banner in the fall Gay Pride Parade.

### **BREVARD**

My Brevard contact says nothing much is going on there this summer. The meeting puts out a quarterly newsletter containing insightful articles about Quakerism. Ask Carol Hoke to send you a copy: Carol Hoke <[carolhoke08@gmail.com](mailto:carolhoke08@gmail.com)>

### **CELO**

Concerns about better welcoming visitors led to changes in introductions and material for guests to read.

### **COLUMBIA**

Friends examined ways to get the meeting phone number out to a greater viewership. Funds continued to increase for a meetinghouse. The meetinghouse committee examined many options. It is possible a former Methodist church may be donated.

### **GREENVILLE**

Greenville Friends celebrated their 20th anniversary on May 1.

### **MACON**

A new Quaker worship group is organizing in Macon, Georgia. They have a website, [www.maconquakers.org](http://www.maconquakers.org), and are linked on the Atlanta Friends Meeting site as well as [www.quakerfinder.org](http://www.quakerfinder.org). Anyone wishing to contact the group can email [maconquakers@gmail.com](mailto:maconquakers@gmail.com) or call (478) 227-8892.

### **MEMPHIS**

Arthur Morgan School students stayed in meetinghouse in early March. First Day School children purchased chicks and bees for Heifer Project. Increased their SAYMA assessment numbers to 36. Agreed to host September SAYMA Representative Meeting.

### **WEST KNOXVILLE**

A meeting retreat was held the weekend of April 29. Compassionate Ministries Ugandan Project funding approved for \$26,416. A FCNL action team was approved as part of Peace and Social Concerns committee.

**BEING SALT AND LIGHT**  
**FRIENDS LIVING THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN A BROKEN WORLD**  
**FWCC Triennial 2012**

The largest worldwide conference of Friends since 1967 will take place 17-25 April 2012 in Kenya. The theme is *Being Salt and Light - Friends living the Kingdom of God in a broken world*. One thousand Friends will gather on the campus of Kabarak University, near Nakuru, Kenya, coming from many parts of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Latin America and North America.

FWCC General Secretary Nancy Irving said, "The theme unites the spiritual foundation of our faith with our understanding of the basis of our work in the world in all its diversity." It is an opportunity to learn experientially what it means to be part of the channels of Universal Love. Friends from around the world will come together and share, from our common heritage, in the things that are eternal. Such conferences foster international understanding and strengthen our Quaker witness. Friends will help iterate their corporate message for the 21st century.

If you haven't been nominated by SAYMA, it is still possible to attend. Applications for open places are welcome. Open place delegates will be full participants in the Conference. Think about what you can give and what you might gain. For many, World Conferences are life-changing events. If you would like to find out more about attending, visit the conference website at <http://www.saltandlight2012.org/>

As we lead up to the conference, I hope to share with you from the advance study materials and look forward to input from SAYMA Friends. If you are interested in having a sharing in your meeting on the theme or looking at the preparation packet when it arrives in September, let me know.

Here is the first of the bible quotes that inform the theme:

*Matthew 5:13-16: Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (KJV)*

In the workshop at SAYMA addressing the theme, we looked at our associations with "salt" and "light". Please share your reflections, insights on how you understand these words. Next newsletter I will summarize the thoughts (both from the workshop and what YOU send) and will encourage us to look at "Living the Kingdom of God" and "the broken world." Send your thoughts to me at [mccahey@yancey.main.nc.us](mailto:mccahey@yancey.main.nc.us).

Here are some queries:

- Q 1- Like salt that serves to preserve... What are we called to preserve? Lives? The Planet? Salt enhances flavor— How do we as Friends enhance our common experience?*
- Q 2- How can and does our way of living show that we are children of the Light?*
- Q 3 Are there examples of salt and light at work in your monthly meeting? How might there be?*

*--Geeta McGahey. Celo Monthly Meeting*

**DATES TO REMEMBER IN 2011-2012**

**Representative Meeting**

Sep 10, 2011, Memphis TN

**Faith & Practice Revision Committee**

Sep 23-25, 2011, Asheville NC

**Representative Meeting**

Mar 10, 2012, Celo NC

**Yearly Meeting at Warren Wilson College**

June 7-10, 2012, Swannanoa NC

**WINTER DEADLINE FOR SA FRIEND:**

December 20, 2011

Do you have stories, poems, ideas, or observations to share with our community?

**Please send your contributions to**

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## REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE TO REVISE SAYMA'S GUIDE TO REVISE OUR FAITH AND OUR PRACTICE

The 2011 Yearly Meeting (YM) business meeting approved two new sections to SAYMA's *Guide to our Faith and our Practice: Meeting for Threshing and Harmony with Nature*.

A section on **Meeting for Threshing** was added to "Nurturing the Life of the Spirit" in Section II of the Guide. There was only a bit of editing of the committee's submission before the YM said "approved" at the first business session on Thursday. This is what the YM approved:

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### MEETING FOR THRESHING

Friends believe that the Light is accessible and within each of us. Thus, we make corporate decisions with faith that the Divine Spirit will guide us to unity. However, strains that develop over troublesome issues can prevent us from seeing the fullness of truth. In such situations, Friends' meetings often hold one or more "Threshing Sessions" to allow ample time and opportunity for differences to be aired and faced.

Meetings for Threshing are usually called by a decision of the Business Meeting but may also be called by the meeting clerk or Committee for Ministry and Nurture or the appropriate counterpart committee. They are not part of Business Meeting or any other meeting. In Threshing Meetings no decision is made, but through them the chaff can be separated from the grain. Such meetings can clear the way for later action on the issue.

It is essential that full notice of a Threshing Session be given and special efforts made to see that Friends of all shades of opinion can and will be present. To the extent that Friends of a given view are absent, the usefulness of such a meeting will be impaired. If factual material needs to be presented, persons knowledgeable about the topic should be asked to

present it and be available to answer questions. It is essential that someone take notes for later reference. The clerk of the Threshing Session may make a report to the Meeting for Business.

Clerking a Threshing Meeting takes great sensitivity and care. The clerk of a Threshing Session makes it clear at the start that the meeting not only expects, but welcomes expressions of wide differences of opinion. Friends are urged not to hold back what troubles them about the issues at hand. Hesitancy to share a strong conviction because it may offend someone reflects a lack of trust. The clerk's job is to draw out the reticent, limit the time taken by too-ready talkers, and see that all have an opportunity to speak, rather than to listen for a sense of the meeting.

Threshing is an activity to nurture and strengthen the community. Friends must take care that expressions of strong opinions and feelings do not spill over into personal attacks. Periods of silence can help Friends hear each other more clearly. Friends need to remain mindful that a Threshing Session is not only an opportunity to speak but also an opportunity to listen carefully and deeply.

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### GUIDELINES FOR THRESHING MEETINGS

1. Speak from your own personal experience or perspective.
  2. Address remarks to the clerk; do not reply directly to or rebut others.
  3. All ideas and thoughts on an issue are welcome for consideration.
  4. Everyone should have a chance to speak.
  5. Everyone with dissenting views has a responsibility to make them known.
  6. A Threshing Session is not an opportunity to admonish others.
  7. Passion is permitted!
  8. Corporate decisions are not made during a Threshing Session.
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## FAITH AND PRACTICE REVISION, *continued*

The Yearly Meeting also approved the addition of **Harmony with Nature** to the “Areas of Witness” section of the guide. This section was the result of many years of discernment by SAYMA Friends. After the committee presented its version to the YM at Friday’s Meeting for Business there was not unity. The committee was asked by the clerk to meet with those who had strong feelings/views about this section and return with a revised section. The Faith and Practice Revision committee met during dinner with many friends who were not committee members and together way opened for a version which was approved without any changes at the Saturday business meeting. This is what the YM approved:

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### HARMONY WITH NATURE

Friends’ concern for the earth is a spirit-led extension of established Quaker testimonies in response to our persistent, and now global, overuse and disruption of Earth’s ecological systems. This concern is rooted in a profound awareness of and love for the Divine indwelling within the material world.

Friends have long recognized that there is a relationship between human misery and habits of consumption and production. Through the work of early visionaries such as John Woolman and Elias Hicks, Friends came to understand that the way they lived had an impact on the lives of others, even if those who suffered were far away and unknown to them.

Today, more than ever, we are challenged to expand our understanding of the interconnection of all living things and the delicate balance required to sustain

the community of life. Human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon earth’s ecological integrity. When Friends are patterns and examples of sustainability we promote these aspirations. We thus support those engaged in transforming our treatment of the earth. All generations deserve to experience a sense of wonder, an intimate connection with the grand diversity of life and an appreciation of their interrelationship with all life processes.

SAYMA Friends respond in a variety of ways to the challenges of sustainable living. Many of us know we must reduce and work to eliminate the harmful consequences of our activities: use of energy, housing choices, modes and distances of travel, diet and other consumption habits. We are called to have courage and find more effective ways to live harmoniously as a part of the natural world.

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Considering the rate at which climate change is happening and the importance for Friends to have guidance on a proven process which allows controversial concerns among Friends to be addressed, these two sections are timely additions to SAYMA’s “Guide to our Faith and our Practice”. The committee thanks all who have participated in the revision of the Guide including those who have held the process in the Light to these many years. We are very close to completing its charge and are looking for ways that Representative Meeting might allow a onetime revision to our committee’s process used so far for submitting revisions. The committee would like to be able to bring a completed revision of the Queries Section to the 2012 Yearly Meeting and we doubt we could do that without some changes to our process as outlined in the very Guide we are revising. Friends do believe in continuing revelation and so the committee is testing its leading with the Fall Representatives committee. In any event the section on the Queries are the final item requiring approval from the Yearly Meeting before we can lay down the Revision Committee and hand off the work to a recommended “ad hoc committee to publish the Guide”.-- *Free Polazzo, Atlanta Monthly Meeting*

One man raised by God's power to stand and live in the same spirit the apostle and prophets were in, can shake the country for ten miles around.—*George Fox*

## EMBODIED WORSHIP/EMBODIED WORSHIP SHARING

We have been working together under a leading to nurture and support among Friends individual and corporate experiences of a Life-giving connection to Spirit. We have experienced such a connection in our lives, although not always easily and certainly not unceasingly. In what we have and do experience we *know* (in the George Fox sense of the word) the potential to increase in each of us a capacity to be part of a beloved community and to deepen our experience of worship. We experience in this the possibility of simple yet real transformation in Love.

We have been drawing from parallels between InterPlay and Quaker practice that, when combined together, seem to enhance the capacity each form has to invite individuals and communities into a deeper and authentic connection with self, each other and the Divine. While we do not claim that this alchemy works for everyone, what we have witnessed in a variety of settings leads us to want to share our work more widely among Friends. We seek to bring to Meetings and other Quaker communities an authentic experience of welcome, an experience in which each of our whole selves – mind, body, spirit – and our individual experiences of Spirit, God, Great Mystery, Universe, Goddess (you name it) have a place. It is our experience that such a simple container, held lovingly, opens up great possibility.

Practically, we have worked in a variety of settings and with a variety of formats. We have come to believe that our offering works best when we can spend a minimum of 3-6 hours with a community. We feel that it is important to provide the safety and gentleness of an incremental introduction to InterPlay before inviting what we have learned into Worship Sharing and/or Worship. Such an introduction is vital to the experience of welcome that we all so hunger for in our hearts. What we offer is accessible to adults of all physical abilities and of

all degrees of introversion/extroversion. We intentionally hold a space for this to be possible. What we offer is not explicitly multi-generational. Our response when asked if children can be invited to participate is that any child who is ready to participate in a full meeting for worship is ready to participate in Embodied Worship/Worshipsharing. We anticipate that there is no set age at which this occurs for all children and so we leave it up to each community's discernment.

If you are interested in talking to us more or having us come to your meeting to share our ministry, please feel free to contact us at [recreatingencounters@gmail.com](mailto:recreatingencounters@gmail.com).

Meetings and other Quaker Communities with whom we have shared our work so far include Celso Meeting, Asheville Friends Meeting, School of the Spirit, Nashville Friends Meeting and Richmond Friends Meeting. We have also offered two residential retreats which were blessed by the participation of Friends from SAYMA, Piedmont Friends Fellowship and NC Conservative YM.

InterPlay is a church and community-building discipline that engages the body (not just the mind) as an instrument of Spirit. InterPlay's power lies in its willingness to be incremental. By a step-by-step way that is light yet respectful, movement, dance, song, poetry and story become surprisingly available for us to express, explore, and appreciate our experiences. By the end of one session people often say: "I just did something (danced, sang, told a story) I've felt blocked and uncomfortable about since I was a kid... and yet I didn't feel self-conscious about it!" --- Importantly, it is a corporate and community experience that practices disciplined witnessing which allows individuals to richly have their own experience while in community.

-- Peter Buck, Joy Anna Hodges, Evan Richardson, Asheville Monthly Meeting

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### GRATITUDE FOR INTERPLAY WITH RICHMOND FRIENDS

What a blessing you brought to Richmond Friends as individuals and as a community! I heard comments like: *I'd never put it into words before. We ARE a beloved community, and I got to experience it this weekend. . .I've never danced in public before, and would not have thought it possible. Somehow I felt free to just express myself.* Personally, I was moved to tears by watching my partner dance for my intention, and amazed when her first word about mine was "Beauty" when I've mostly felt clumsy and self-conscious about dance.

We deeply affirm your ministry of expanded Quaker worship through Interplay.

—Mary Frances Hughes-McIntyre, Richmond, VA, Friends Meeting

## SAYMA MEETINGS AND WORSHIP GROUPS

Aiken Worship Group	South Carolina	(803) 640-9650
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) 344-0406
Birmingham Friends Meeting	Alabama	(205) 592-0570
Boone Friends Meeting	North Carolina	(828) 263-0001
Brevard Friends Meeting	North Carolina	(828) 698-2862
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
Clinton Worship Group	South Carolina	kskingsbury@gmail.com
Columbia Friends Meeting	South Carolina	(803) 252-2221
Columbia Worship Group	Tennessee	(615) 579-7494
Cookeville Monthly Meeting	Tennessee	(931) 268-2592, (931) 268-9889
Crossville Friends Meeting	Tennessee	(931) 484-9033
Foxfire Friends Meeting of Holston Valley	Johnson City TN	(423) 202-8661
Greenville Friends Meeting	South Carolina	(864) 246-6852
Huntsville Area Friends Meeting	Alabama	(931) 484-9033
Macon Worship Group.	Georgia	maconquakers@gmail.com (478) 227-8892.
Memphis Friends Meeting	Tennessee	meeting@memphisfriends.com
Nashville Friends Meeting	Tennessee	(615) 329-2640
Oxford Quaker Meeting	Mississippi	(662) 473-0230
Royal Worship Group	Blountsville AL	(205) 429-3088
Sevier County Worship Group	Sevierville TN	(865) 429-1807
Sewanee Worship Group	Tennessee	(931) 598-5031
Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting	Black Mountain NC	(828) 669-0832
West Knoxville Friends Meeting	Knoxville TN	(865) 694-0036

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