

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
Big Stone Gap Worship Group		(276)546-5884 suekobak@roadrunner.com
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
Columbia Friends Meeting	South Carolina	(803) 252-2221
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
Greenbriar Valley Worship Group	Lewisburg, WV	(304)832-6020 wd.bouldin@gmail.com
Greenville Friends Meeting	South Carolina	(864) 246-6852
Huntsville Area Friends Meeting	Alabama	(931) 484-9033
Macon Worship Group.	Georgia	(478) 227-8892 maconquakers@gmail.com
Memphis Friends Meeting	Tennessee	mfm@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) 453-0130
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

SAYMA

P.O. Box 5848

Savannah, GA 31414

SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN FRIEND

Fall

The newsletter of

2013

Carol Nickle, clerk
clerk@sayma.org

Liz Perch, administrative assistant
adminasst@sayma.org

SAYMA

Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting & Association

SAYMA AND AFSC: One Perspective on the Contention

Those in SAYMA who defend the present American Friends Service Committee insist that we should examine the group's character and mission statement, both of which, they assert, are infused with Quaker values. Those who believe that the Service Committee should reveal how many of its staff are Friends respond by asking how non-Quaker staff, no matter how able, acquire Quaker values. Three-day workshops on Quakerism, they aver, cannot substitute for attendance at meetings like this past yearly meeting that immersed us in our theme, "Let us see what love can do."

Let me offer as evidence a letter I found when I researched my 1998 article on AFSC in the journal *Peace & Change*. From Horace Alexander, a weighty English Friend heading up AFSC activities in India, the 1947 letter recounted that a couple, recently arrived from Philadelphia, had told a Hindu inquirer that to become a Quaker one had to be a Christian first. Not Friends, this African American couple had been through a workshop to introduce them to the faith that supposedly underpinned AFSC; it had clearly not worked. Alexander wanted them recalled, a suggestion that drew the ire of the director of Asian affairs, not a Friend himself, who penned a memo to his AFSC boss, speculating that Alexander must be "ill" because he did not see "things in the right perspective."

The discussion regarding SAYMA and AFSC at our 2013 yearly meeting brought this letter back to mind. It caused me to reflect deeply on what makes a body such as AFSC a Quaker institution. I think a nice parallel would be to look at what makes a school a Quaker school. Any school may

call itself a Quaker school, one embodying a Quaker mission with Quaker goals. These might include stressing Friends' testimonies, such as equality and simplicity, teaching about Quakerism in classes, and being inclusive in admitting students and employing staff. It might even require students and teachers to attend a weekly meeting for worship.

Historically, however, none of these attributes, no matter how appealing and desirable, would turn an ordinary school into a Friends school. To be a Quaker school, a local Friends meeting must control the school, set its policies, and establish its policies for hiring teachers. What makes it a Friends school is its ties to a meeting; it has only as much autonomy as allowed by the meeting.

It is my position that the American Friends Service Committee's relation to the Religious Society of Friends is similar to that of a Friends school. The complicating and differing factor is that the AFSC was established in 1917 by a group of eastern Friends in and around Philadelphia who acted independently of any meeting, monthly, quarterly, or yearly. Subsequent to creating the group, they sought support from yearly meetings across the range of historical, theological, and organizational diversity that existed in the Society of Friends. At first, finding positions for young Friends who, convicted by Quaker tradition, could not participate in war, winning adherents across this range was relatively easy, but by the early 1920s more evangelical meetings peeled off and withdrew their support. That process continued, so that today, almost no programmed yearly meetings formally support AFSC

This is why AFSC is so anxious to maintain its connections with unprogrammed yearly meetings, such as ours—we provide its last tenuous ties to the Society of Friends. We do not know for sure how many Friends AFSC employs; its general secretary is adamant in her refusal to reveal either number or percentages. I did discover in my research for my 1998 article that less than a third (32%) of the 1947 staff were Friends, and that was when Quakers were still welcome; after decades of affirmative action and special treatment for those considered part of something called the “Third World Coalition,” the number must be considerably smaller. (That the average Friendly reader has never heard of that group speaks volumes for the kind of remote world AFSC moves in.)

Moreover, the Corporation’s sole power, required by the laws of Pennsylvania where AFSC is chartered, is to appoint members of the Board of Directors from a list provided by a previously appointed “naming committee.” (This group of about 25 is the only body that makes policy for AFSC.) For the rest of its March weekend its members greet each other and listen to speakers extolling AFSC’s worldwide activities. In my opinion, one SAYMA Friend—not three or five—can easily and expertly discharge the heavy responsibilities of the position. Despite assertions to the contrary, there is no requirement

that a certain percentage be Quakers, so it is theoretically possible if improbable for every Board member to be a non-Friend.

I like meetings for threshing, but they do little more than what they are designed for—to allow participants to state their views on the topic under discussion for the benefit of those present. The 2013 version devoted to AFSC revealed that SAYMA members are all over the map with a wide variety of views. We were clearly not united, and in giving our impressions we were only expressing what we believed to be correct, whether it was or not. And, contrary to instructions, some of us, myself included, uttered words that judged the motives and intentions of others.

The bottom line is that we are not much closer to a resolution of our problems with AFSC than we were before yearly meeting. But this I know and know convincingly: Horace Alexander was right in 1947—AFSC cannot take a Methodist, a Roman Catholic, a Muslim, or even the Dalai Lama, off the street and give that person the ability to implement Quaker values on the job in a three-day workshop or by handing out pamphlets on Quaker testimonies and values, no matter how highflauntin’ they may sound.-- *Larry Ingle, Chattanooga Friends Meeting*



DAWNING

*(Reflections on seventh day morning worship at SAYMA,
Morris Pavilion at Warren Wilson College)*

Birds singing as the light grows,
Ancient hills yawn their greatness,
Fresh green foliage surrounds the beauty of this place
as we escape the dewfall in worshipful, octagonal space.
Floor and trusses radiate outward as though they were spokes,
connecting worshipers to a center; bringing us all together, the Quiet Folks.
Reaching inward to connect with The Light,
as the waking environment crescendos to bright.

An open air space with geometric shapes,
long arches and angles,
trapezoidal columns from native stones and timbers erected.
With movement of Spirit we search for the Light that will come as expected, if only we wait;
To lead us and guide us through our daily adventures;
Experiencing the wonder and glory of nature.
We know that tomorrow we'll meet here again
and once again Friends will be all gathered in.

At the rise of this meeting we hope that we might,
share with all we encounter our rejuvenated Light.

George Lynn, Columbia Friends Meeting

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!

ATHENS The meeting begins using Google Voice.

ATLANTA Couple enrichment workshop planned for early November. Approximately 56 attended the meeting retreat. Atlanta unites with Kabarak Call. First year of Quaker Voluntary Service completed. New volunteers arrived in late August. Nashville Friends provided AVP training in August.

CHARLESTON Considered the Palestine minute. Appointed representative to SAYMA Ministry & Nurture Committee. Book groups and Bible study meet monthly. Statewide gathering Nov. 2&3. Attenders to SAYMA expressed concern about the contentious discussion about AFSC.

CHATTANOOGA Friends gathered to work on cleaning meetinghouse and grounds. Friends could not reach unity on the Kabarak Call. Friends decided to write Sewanee Worship Group and ask what the WG considered to be its relationship with the meeting. Sewanee has not responded to SAYMA requests for information. Helping Fund guidelines were adopted. Friends discussed the issue of animals in the meetinghouse.

COLUMBIA The meeting supports an annual Hiroshima vigil. Following members' attending Quaker Quest in Knoxville, the meeting formed an outreach committee. A productive worship sharing on vision for the meeting was held and may be

repeated. A policy was adopted for accepting the donation of stock.

COOKVILLE Meeting's table at Putman Pride was well received. Peace and Social Concerns committee is exploring outreach to other area churches. Prison ministry continues and high school witness will resume in fall. Friends carpooled to Nashville Meeting in August.

GREENVILLE Two members are co-clerks for the 2014 Palmetto Gathering.

MEMPHIS Meeting purchased two refrigerator/freezers for UMNC food pantry. Outreach included newspaper listing, yard sign, website, facebook page, community activities and brochures. Friends donated a CSA share to a veterans hospice program. Friends considered how to respond to two recent break-ins.

WEST KNOXVILLE Meeting began using Quaker Cloud from FGC for electronic storage. The meeting made an annual donation in lieu of taxes to county government. The meeting hosted Quaker Quest presentation, which was attended by Friends from several SAYMA meetings. A Quaker Theology group meets at the meetinghouse twice a month. WKFM invited Big Stone Gap Worship Group to visit the meeting.

TEST YOUR WQW IQ (KNOWLEDGE OF THE WIDER QUAKER WORLD)

From Memphis Friends Meeting Newsletter, August issue

Stands for: . . .

SAYMA _____
 FGC _____
 FUM _____
 EFI _____
 FCNL _____
 AFSC _____
 FWCC _____
 QEW _____
 RSWR _____
 QVS _____
 QUNO _____

City it's in:

Live Oak Mtg _____
 Race St Mtg _____
 Florida St Mtg _____
 15th St Mtg _____
 57th St Mtg _____
 New Garden Mtg _____
 Pendle Hill _____
 Wm Penn House _____
 Quaker House _____

How many Yearly Meetings are there in North America?

___ 32 ___ 17 ___ 10 ___ 3

Of all Friends worldwide, what percent live in No America?

___ 20% ___ 47% ___ 66% ___ 89%

Which one of these early English Quakers visited the colonies?

___ George Fox ___ Margaret Fell
 ___ Robert Naylor ___ Eliz. Fry

Answers:

Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting & Association – Friends General Conference – Friends United Meeting – Evangelical Friends International – Friends Committee for National Legislation – American Friends Service Committee – Friends World Committee for Consultation – Quaker EarthCare Witness – Right Sharing of World Resources – Quaker Voluntary Service – Quaker UN Office
 Houston -- Philadelphia – Washington, D.C. – NY City – Chicago – Greensboro -- near Philadelphia – Washington D.C. – Fayetteville NC
 There are 32 YM in North America counting all kinds of Friends. Only 20% of the world's Quakers live in North America according to FWCC. George Fox



CELEBRATING OUR YOUNGEST FRIENDS: REFLECTIONS ON JUNIOR YEARLY MEETING 2013



This was our first year as JYM leaders, and we benefitted greatly from the materials and ideas handed on to us by Beth Myers and Jonathan, the previous leaders. Over the course of the SAYMA weekend we enjoyed the presence of 18 young friends ranging in age from 6 months to 11 years! Building on the SAYMA theme of 'Let us see what love can do' we organized much of our weekend activities around reading and considering the story book *The Quiltmaker's Gift* by Jeff Brumbeau and illustrated by Gail de Marcken. We blew bubbles, built castles, played games, listened to stories, swam, went to see pigs both large and small, and walked in the creek. Our Epistle at close of meeting included a quilt to which each child contributed a square of their own. Oscar Yockey, a long time JYM attender graduated on to the high school SAYF program. We were sad to see him go, but know that he is excited to try a new adventure. All in all it was a fabulous and fun weekend, and we are already looking forward to 2014!

*Michael Kramer and Jennifer Dickie,
Atlanta Monthly Meeting*





WALK FOR OUR GRANDCHILDREN: THE HEAT IS ON

Geeta and I just completed a Walk for our Grandchildren, part of 350.org's Summer Heat campaign, July 19-27. The brainchild of Steve Norris, a group of elders from the Asheville area led a 100-mile walk from Camp David to the White House with the message to keep fossil fuels in the ground, especially the pernicious tar sands of Alberta, thus deny permission for building the Keystone XL Pipeline. Southern Appalachian elders were joined by others from the length of the East Coast, the Midwest ("Frackistan"), and some from as far away as California and the Pacific NW. Twenty-five walkers made the entire trek, with twenty-odd more joining them at Harper's Ferry for the final 62 miles. This second group included Geeta and me. The elders, mostly in their vigorous 60's, were joined by teens, college students, twenty-somethings and an impressive 11 year-old, Leigh Siler, who told me she was walking for the right of future children to enjoy life on the farm as she has been blessed with.

So this march was not only for but *with* our grandchildren, and it was frequently noted that climate change is NOW, not two generations distant. Indeed, I returned from the walk to learn that unseasonal flooding continues to plague the East Coast, adding to the ironic June floods in Alberta (tar sands ground zero) and the most devastating monsoon floods in 75 years in the Garhwal Himalayas, washing thousands of pilgrims away on their pilgrimage routes.

Beginning at Harper's Ferry, we walked along the historic Chesapeake and Ohio canal, on the towpath between the canal and the Potomac. It is a national park, extending from Cumberland Maryland to Watergate, DC, a remarkably beautiful area saved by the foresight of Chief Justice Douglas, signed into preservation status by Richard Nixon.

The beauty that Leigh Siler spoke about was everywhere evident – huge sycamores, red-orange trumpet vine blossoms, a magnificent Potomac River, whose banks were mostly undeveloped, and the most glorious procession of zebra swallowtails I have ever seen. Rock cliffs rose into the forest above the old stone walls of the canal, where we saw dragonflies, bluegill, and several magnificent blue herons, who felt to me like guardians of this remarkable ribbon of land and water.

The walk was superbly organized, with tremendous attention to the myriad of logistical details. The walkers joined two rallies along the route, an elementary school in MD threatened by a fracked gas compressor plant within less than a mile and the Loudoun County 350 chapter outside the county office building in Leesburgh, VA. Here we heard a rousing speech from Steve's wife Kendall Hale, another from Ohio University climate change resistance leader Ben Bushwick, which brought

me to tears. We were introduced to a visionary local politician, Andrea McGimsey, who wrote a protocol for Loudoun County to follow in moving away from dependency on fossil fuels. The plan is now cited as a model for county governments, though the Republicans who wrested power from her (through lies and innuendo) have yet to heed the document.

We learned early in the walk that a civil disobedience action was planned at a secret target in DC on Friday. Fulfilling this action would require those who planned to participate to leave the walk on Thursday evening for a training in DC. Effectively, half of the through-walkers left for the action, while the others continued, greeting a dozen or so more day walkers as we progressed towards DC. By the time we reached DC, we numbered 75, with about half joining the action at Environmental Resource Management, the company that oversaw the State Department's cursory environmental review for Keystone XL.

Environmental Resources Management was a good target, and the secret was well-guarded by the walk organizers. I was intrigued by the briefing on the action, but Geeta and I decided to stick with our original intention to complete the walk. The traveling community, erecting our tent city each evening in a new site, was really growing on me. But I would miss the fellow walkers, some now friends, who were leaving us for the training and action.

The action at ERM was scheduled for noon. The day of the action, a few walkers left at dawn to be able to join it, 13.5 miles distant. Others rode the metro with the same intention. The rest of us waited for the day walkers. About a half dozen came, with others swelling our ranks as we neared the capital. One cheery young woman calmly emerged from the forested banks of the Potomac, a lovely woodsprite affirming our purpose. As was the case all along the walk, I had probing talks with other walkers, this day with a man who had just joined the movement last fall. When we reached Georgetown, he unfurled his banner, proclaiming the Great Turning and the end of Fossil Folly. On it was written the names of his grandchildren, one just adopted the week before after a long struggle (thus "Hope" was crossed out, replaced by Brian). More and more of the folks I meet in these actions have never done any kind of activism before. Many spoke of their awakening, and the tempo is accelerating.

Though the company was surprised they were the target, the police arrived swiftly, and it was all over in fifteen minutes. They arrived with wire-cutters, paddy wagons, and plenty of plastic handcuffs. As the 54 who were arrested left in their custody, there were huge smiles,

cuffed hands raised overhead, and frequent applause. This was a celebration.

We arrived at the site of the civil disobedience around 3 PM, well after it ended. The police returned from lunch to face a second wave of protesters. We did not see them as the enemy, and the video footage records one woman saying “Thank you” as the police warning was given. Unlike the previous 350.org civil disobedience actions, this one was not scripted, since the target remained secret. But each side still knew what to expect from the other. This is a dance we do in our democracy, and without the police doing their part, our message would be lost. As the commander said to Geeta (he looked like a glamorous politician, an impeccable diplomat), “This is not Syria. We are here to protect your right of grievance to your government.” We are blessed to be able to dance our protest and sing out our grievances. With continuing discernment, we need to take advantage of that blessing, for our window is as narrow as the eye of a needle.

One thing that disturbed me about the action was the rowdy chanting of slogans, both on the street and inside the building. I would prefer dignified silence, punctuated by eloquent signage. Even a clever chant sounds adolescent when amplified by a crowd. I missed the opportunity for silent witness, meditative prayer, inviting everyone on all sides to plumb their depths.

Our walk ended with a lively march Saturday morning, escorted by the police, from St Stephen's Episcopal Church to Lafayette Park, facing the White House. We were greeted by friendly supporters all along the route. Our message to the President was “Keep your promise” on the Keystone, XL Pipeline, something that recent remarks indicate he is inching towards. Our 75-odd marchers now numbered around 350, swelling to near 500 at the Park, where a lively crowd greeted us. So did a SWAT team, who were there to investigate a bomb threat. Our formal rally was thus delayed by almost an hour, but nobody left.

After the park was cleared and the policeman with the submachine gun who had greeted us left, we held the rally, featuring young folks from iMatter and the march organizers. Appropriately, the twin focus was upon youth and the over-65 generation, the grandparents. The most poignant pleas from the youth were from an Eskimo boy

whose entire town had slid into the Arctic Sea due to erosion from Global Warming and a Navaho girl whose family had lost their farm to severe drought and total loss of their water. My young marching friend Alex was there to read from his rewrite of the Declaration as one of Energy Independence, and it was unfurled 175 feet to display the signatures of 75,000, including John Kerry, Barbara Boxer, and yours truly. We were asked to solemnly pledge ourselves to massive reduction in use of fossil fuels, something we were demanding of our government and corporations. This gave me pause, as I've cut back to half the average American, but hit a wall a few years ago. I still fly airplanes, no matter the Prius, which we drive more than ever from our remote rural base in the mountains. Busy lives, spewing carbon. But I raised my hand.

The Asheville Green Grannies sang - smart lyrics to choice oldies - pointing fingers at the White House as they reminded the President of his promises (the biggest is his 2008 campaign promise: “Let us be the generation that finally frees itself from the tyranny of oil.”) All three of the faithful Siler family spoke: young Leigh, repeating her wish that future children be able to enjoy the rich rural life she has; her father Mark, rousing us by echoing our slogans, a surprising orator in our midst.

And then came Mahan, whose speech was an arrow straight into my heart. At 79, he was our oldest marcher (Leigh was the youngest). A retired Baptist preacher, he spoke eloquently about the responsibility of the Boomers present. We have unprecedented life expectancies and wealth – neither of which our grandchildren will have – and an unprecedented challenge. “Don't retire – RECOMMIT!” Then he gave us a fitting image for what was unfolding at this rally. He asked those under 20 to make a central circle, facing out to the rest of us. We reached our hands towards each other, some grabbing hold, others holding shoulders and backs, like a healing. He described two arcs, one of the children reaching up from the earth, a second of the over-65's rising to meet it, forming a *Keystone*. “They are not the Keystone, we are, at this place of meeting. Let's take back this lovely world.” His words and our action said it all. Friends, may we all answer Mahan Siler's challenge and retake the Keystone, resting the whole buttressed rainbow in God's ever-loving hands. -- *Bob McGahey, Celo Friends Meeting*

Videos and useful sites to learn more:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXuFMjC19Yc&feature=youtu.be>

Loudoun County energy proposal: <http://www.loudoun.gov/index.aspx?NID=163>

<http://www.imatteryouth.org>

The SAFriend is YOUR newsletter! All contributions are welcomed, needed, and will be put to use! Please send digital submissions for the winter SAFriend to Beth Ensign: h.e.ensign@gmail.com by December 26, 2013.