

Appendix B: State of the Meeting Reports

App. B, SAYMA, 11, 199

Asheville Monthly Meeting
Athens Monthly Meeting
Atlanta Monthly Meeting
Berea Monthly Meeting
Birmingham Monthly Meeting
Boone Monthly Meeting
Brevard Monthly Meeting
Celo Monthly Meeting
Charleston Monthly Meeting
Chattanooga Monthly Meeting
Cookeville Preparative Meeting
Crossville Monthly Meeting
Foxfire Monthly Meeting
Greenville Monthly Meeting
Huntsville Monthly Meeting
Memphis Monthly Meeting
Nashville Monthly Meeting
New Moon Worship Group
Swannanoa Monthly Meeting
West Knoxville Monthly Meeting

**State of Society Report
Asheville Friends Meeting
2003**

In the past year our Meeting has paid specific attention to its growth as a spiritual community. We have recognized that we are in a time of transition as many of our former leaders age. The Meeting is now in the hands of the “younger generation”. We recognize as well that the formation of the Swannanoa Valley Monthly Meeting has had a great impact on our community as we lost some of our most experienced elders to the new Meeting. We celebrate the growth and vitality of our sister Meeting and our own regeneration.

As we attend to the life of our Meeting we have found it essential to commit ourselves to building firm connections with our children and young people. To this end we have introduced periodic intergenerational worship for which we suspend our usual First Day school activities and met for worship as a community. Our First Day School focus has been on Quaker Testimonies. We continue our Summer Youth Internship program, bringing youth and adult Friends together in community service. We have also grown in our support of our college-aged Friends. This year the meeting celebrates and supports the enrolment of six Friends in Quaker colleges and one Friend at Earlham School of Religion. We have begun the practice of writing to our college-aged Friends to offer our support in their continued educational, spiritual and personal development.

As we grow we find we are continually challenged with how to welcome newcomers and sustain a sense of community. Our newsletter continue to flourish, we have established a meeting internet list serve and web site, www.Ashevillefriends.org. We take time for fellowship after our Meetings for Worship, on sandwich Sundays, during our annual campout and picnic, youth celebration, and holiday party.

With attention to the spiritual life of the Meeting, our Spiritual Enrichment Committee helped to organize dinner gatherings earlier in the fall. These were centered on specific themes, such as a book discussion or for friends interested in membership in the Religious Society of Friends. We have seen the reinitiation of a mid-week meeting for worship with a specific focus on prayers for world peace, followed by a “stone soup” meal. We have had an active Spiritual Formation Group, after the model of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting program, and several Spiritual Friendships at work

We continue to nurture the spiritual development of attenders and members through the offering of retreats and forums. This year we have been blessed with several opportunities to gather with Friends from Swannanoa Valley Monthly Meeting to explore topics related to our continued development and formation as Quakers. These events included a retreat led by Michael Birkel of Earlham College on the work and life of John Woolman, “Quaker Basics” led by Beth and Mel Keiser and Elizabeth Kirk and “Experiment with Light” led by Rex Ambler. We have an ongoing discussion and worshipsharing group focused on unraveling racism. We held a residential retreat in May at Bonclarken in Flat Rock, NC. Jan Hoffman of New England Yearly Meeting led us in the theme “Encouraging faithfulness: listening to the Spirit and each other.”

We look forward to the changes that will come out of this time together. We seek to grow in our faithfulness to the Spirit by developing guidelines for the support of Friends Traveling in the Ministry, including financial support. We currently have three friends working under a traveling minute from the meeting.

As must be true in so many communities, the ongoing war on terrorism, the war on Iraq and increasing conflict around the world have served to bring our community together. Once again, the work of the Spirit in leading Friends among us brought us the opportunity to discern corporately a statement on the war with Iraq. Our process was deeply enriching, and helped us to reaffirm our commitment as individuals and a corporate body to the Peace Testimony. Many of our Friends have been working for peace locally, nationally and globally. As a meeting we have sent health kits to Iraq through AFSC and seen the development of the Peace Resource Service to focus on issues related to youth and militarism in the wider Asheville area.

As we look to the year ahead there is a sense of going “back to Quaker basics” for guidance. We recognize a need to continually nurture our meeting for worship and vocal ministry as well as our meeting for worship with attention to business. We are aware of a need to look at the role of eldering in our community as we seek to grow in our ability to love each other, including how we handle conflict as a meeting community. We seek to make explicit our guidelines and procedures for membership and marriage, including a deep consideration of the meaning of membership in Asheville Friends meeting and of same gender marriage and union.

We have witnessed a wealth of physical changes and improvements to our meetinghouse this year, including the refinishing of the hardwood floor in our meeting room and new paint and carpet upstairs in our First Day School rooms. A complete overhaul of the upstairs bathroom is underway. Our House and Grounds committee, with the help of so many others, has created for us an outward manifestation of the revitalization that we feel corporately. Work on expanding the meetinghouse to include a new worship space was quiet this year. It is unclear when we will be led to move forward on this idea.

We welcome this year six new members to our meeting community. Two Friends became members of Asheville Friends Meeting and four Friends’ memberships were transferred to Asheville Friends Meeting. One Friend became a sojourning member of Green Street Meeting, in Philadelphia. We transferred the memberships of two Friends to Swannanoa Valley Monthly Meeting. We record no deaths and no marriages in our community during this past year.

State of the Meeting Report
Athens (Georgia) Religious Society of Friends
Monthly Meeting of S.A.Y.M.A.
Sixth Month, 2003 (year 2002-2003)

Athens Friends spent much effort improving and promoting our monthly meeting this year. Beginning with a "State of the Meeting" discussion last July, we have explored ways to invite and welcome new attenders. We are now listed on UGA's Church Directory/Map. We put notices in the local paper about special events. We have signs in the Meetinghouse to guide visitors to the worship room and restrooms. We brightened the meetinghouse by a thorough cleaning last fall. Finally, we are considering holding a retreat about growing our meeting. We would like to have an outside facilitator for this retreat.

As part of our outreach, we shared Quaker literature and passed out cold water at the Athens Human Rights Festival in May. Our participation in local anti-war activities also provided outreach opportunities. At protests, rallies and forums Friends shared literature promoting peace, and passed out "War is Not the Answer" yard signs and bumper stickers. We were pleased to see them displayed throughout the area.

Also as part of our focus on improving our meeting, we increased our attention to nurturing members and attenders. We continue to send greeting cards for celebrations and healing. We kept in touch with a former attender who was homebound for several months and had a small luncheon at her house. The Meeting was thrilled to receive a beautiful handmade "comfort quilt" from Nancy York. This quilt will hang in our worship room, and can be taken home by those in need of comfort.

Another area of great emphasis this year was on promoting peace with Iraq. Our activities included publication of a Minute on Iraq in the local paper last August. Several Friends' anti-war editorials were also published in the local paper. Frieda Hammett gave a talk about the Peace Testimony at a Town Meeting on the Iraq conflict. We also signed two different petitions to state legislatures requesting a moratorium on the death penalty in Georgia. Friends sponsored a peace demonstration and walk in the fall. We participated in community based protests and rallies, particularly events sponsored by Doubts about War and Women in Black.

Athens Friends Meeting is grateful for the service of our co-clerks Betsey Collins and Deb Weiler. Deb Weiler stepped in as co-clerk when Patricia Ridley moved to Colorado. The meeting is enthusiastic about our new website (<http://athensga.quaker.org>) which was developed, and continues to be maintained, by one of our youth, Tommy Pulliam. A monthly newsletter is sent to Friends, mostly via e-mail, and is also posted on the Website. We have a listserve that provides for informal discussion, reminders and announcements among those active in the meeting.

Weekly attendance at meeting for worship ranges from 5 to 15. We welcomed one new member and several new, regular attenders. We were sorry to lose two long-time regular attenders, who both moved far way and whom we continue to miss.

Our First Day School has been inactive this year. One older youth participates in SAYF retreats. Bill O'Connell, who traveled from Alabama to meet with us, facilitated a discussion about conscientious objection. Four youth participated in this program.

The meeting increased its attention to the budget this year as we have had increased contributions, requiring new decision-making. The availability of funds brought out thoughts about saving for a meetinghouse. The meeting is exploring thoughts about our own building and is developing a savings plan. We are also increasing our donations to national and local charitable organizations, as contributions allow.

“Second hour” programs are held regularly and include discussions, worship sharing, letter-writing and projects. Many peace/anti-war discussions and activities were held throughout the year. Jean Gowen presented an informative session on restorative justice. We spent one second hour assembling AFSC hygiene kits for Iraq. Thanks to Betsey Collins’ planning, the meeting took several ‘field trips.’ The Sunday afternoon trips included tours of the Martin Luther King Center in Atlanta and the Wrightsboro, Georgia historic Meeting House grounds.

Celebrations and potlucks were held to say good-bye to departing Friends, for the Christmas holiday, and just for fun. We held a candle-lit Christmas Eve Worship. Our traditional Easter worship and picnic was held at the State Botanical Garden, while the rain held off just long enough.

In cooperation with Oconee Methodist Church, our neighbor, the meeting sponsored the second annual neighborhood ice cream social. This free event includes children’s activities, music and ice cream. We are pleased that local politicians have come to this event to meet neighborhood residents. We have already begun planning for another ice cream social this summer.

We continue to support Frieda Hammett’s pre-kindergarten Montessori classroom at Fowler Drive Elementary. The meeting has set money aside to help construct play equipment at the school, we made Thanksgiving turkey treats for the class and we collected children’s books for Frieda to give to the class at the end of the year. The meeting is partner in Family Connection, and a member of ARK, both local coalitions that provide for community support and action on issues affecting children and families.

We were overwhelmed with requests for holiday assistance this year, and decided to focus on gifts for the family we have supported for approximately 10 years. Friends made individual donations to other organizations requesting assistance.

State of the Meeting Report, 2002

Atlanta Friends Meeting

“Life from the Center is a life of unhurried peace and power. It is simple. It is serene. It is amazing. It is triumphant. It is radiant. It takes no time, but it occupies all our time. And it makes our life programs new and overcoming. We need not get frantic. He is at the helm. And when our little day is done we lie down quietly in peace, for all is well.”

Thomas Kelly, Testament of Devotion

How was the Spirit moving through the life of Atlanta Friends Meeting in 2002? All was surely not well in the world. We worshipped in the midst of a nation that was saddened, frightened, and angered by terrorist attacks. We moved from shock and disbelief to action, learning to speak out together against answering violence with violence. We grew this year, deeper, stronger, and more loving. As war neared, our peace deepened.

Our role in the peace movement in Atlanta expanded over the year. We continued our active participation in the Interfaith Atlanta Coalition for Peace and Justice in the World, and joined in support for the Georgia Peace Coalition. Fridays at noon, many of us gathered with others at a street corner outside the office of our least-listening Senator, and welcomed the many honks for peace from the street. Two of our members were eventually arrested there, part of “the Atlanta Five,” for asking for an appointment with the Senator or his staff, and staying until they got one. Our involvement in peace has taken us out of the Meetinghouse to work with the larger community, and has brought more of the community into the Meetinghouse as well. Students at the Friends School have begun their own street corner vigil.

A Friend was led to raise the issue of a banner for the Meetinghouse to make our testimony visible. As we stopped to consider the feelings of the resident manager, we felt the danger that speaking out posed, and realized that other members did not have banners on their homes yet, either. So the yard sign project was born. In orders of 50, 100, 250 and eventually the thousands, we gave Atlantans a way to make their views visible, with Martin Luther King’s words, “War is not the answer.” FCNL asked us to distribute the signs nationally. The Meeting’s own large banner now faces a busy street.

Another moment of shock and deep spiritual searching came when a staff member resigned, citing the racism she had encountered in her work in the Meeting. Meeting expressed a desire to make this right and to heal, but we lacked a clear collective sense of how we needed to change to do so. A special committee has been holding a series of listening skills sessions around the various ways we are divided as a Meeting, including religious differences, race, sexual preference, and class. A group of parents has been discussing how to raise a non-racist child. Nearly every Meeting committee has explored queries on whether its practices include everyone in the Meeting community, especially African Americans. Yet the gap remains large between our spiritual ambition to make Meeting a safe place for everyone and our ability to see and uproot racism in ourselves. Martin Luther King asked, “How long?” and assured his listeners, “Not long.” Nearly fifty years later, we must acknowledge, “Too long.”

Other kinds of diversity also continue to challenge us, including diversity of religious language, and diversity of expression in Meeting.

There were many moving gatherings in the Meetinghouse over the year, times when we joined with the larger Atlanta community in the spirit of a day. We gathered in grief at the death and celebration of the life of Laura Murphy, a beloved member of our community who had kept her own spirit alive, and ours as well, through years of the progressive degeneration of ALS (Lou Gehrig's syndrome). We gathered with our coalition partners in a celebration of peace on September 11, 2002. We gathered in joy at the marriages of Althea Sumpter and Jerry Immel in the Meetinghouse, and of Gwen Davies and John Wuichet at Hard Labor Creek State Park.

A long-standing and difficult issue for the Meeting has been how to include children in Meeting for Worship. Way opened for us this year, and a new commitment to having families worship together in the Meetingroom at the start of Meeting for Worship has settled into a Light-filled pattern.

With the various flows of the life of the city into and out of the Meeting community, attendance has remained strong and new people have joined us in worship. The Advancement Committee has been active in advertising the existence of the Meeting and representing us at community events.

The economic downturn has affected many members of the Meeting community, and we were concerned for much of the latter part of the year about a drop in donations. For the first time in many years the meeting reported a deficit for 2002. Fortunately this was offset by a surplus from prior years, but forced us to consider issues of simplicity in the life of the Meeting. We reduced our budget for 2003.

Six people joined Meeting during 2002. One transferred membership out. The Meeting had 100 total active members in 2002, and an additional 21 members living out of the area.

Reports submitted by Meeting activities and committees follow.

Care and Counsel Committee

In keeping with the mission of the Care and Counsel Committee, our committee members focused on being available to meet needs of individuals who attend Atlanta Friends Meeting. We began the year by reviewing our responsibilities and discussing how we would handle each one.

The recruitment of volunteers was one of the main concerns we addressed. Since there is a certain number of volunteers needed each week to take care of such duties as set-up, clean-up and greeting, we wanted to encourage members/attenders to sign up for these duties. We held two volunteer sign-ups during the year at potlucks and had a fairly good response. To show the appreciation for people who have volunteered, we held a volunteer appreciation party in March. It was well attended and the response to it was positive.

Our member, Jane Wellborn, wrote several short articles describing the various services available from Care and Counsel. These articles appeared in the newsletter and the announcement sheet, depending on the length and subject. We hoped that this information would bring awareness to

the different areas in which Care & Counsel can assist Members/Attendees. We plan to rerun the articles to remind people of the different ways we can help.

To promote socializing among the Meeting population, we planned and scheduled a Fall Fun Night. Unfortunately, the event was poorly attended - perhaps due to a number of events scheduled for the same evening. We will review and try to come up with new ideas to increase participation for 2003. We also conducted a sign-up to form Friendly Eights groups. Several groups did form and are meeting regularly, but quite a few groups were unable to find someone to set up the initial get-together.

The photograph taken of the Fiftieth Anniversary celebration was copied and put out for people to identify themselves and others they knew to help preserve the Meeting's history. A large number of the people in the photograph were identified.

We took time in six of meetings during the year to reflect upon the queries of O.R.A.I.I.A.R.H. and how we, as a committee, function in terms of racial matters. Several of the queries brought about searching and thought as to how we can do a better job to our relations with African-Americans. Even though it was difficult at times, we felt as though we came away with better understanding for these matters.

Central America Committee

The Meeting's relationship with El Sitio, El Salvador, began with the formation of the village in 1991 as part of the settlement at the conclusion of the civil war in that country. Carol Cummings joined a delegation attending the ceremony of formation, and she and her husband Frank have maintained that relationship. Carol and Frank have established residence there as part of the assistance. The Meeting in the past has assisted the local school through the provision of computers. The request of the community is for assistance to graduates of the local elementary school to attend secondary and post secondary schools in other cities through tuition and lodging. The Meeting is raising funds for this assistance, based on a three-year commitment to enable students to complete their studies.

Friends Committee on National Legislation

FCNL legislative action messages were announced at the close of most Meetings for Worship during 2002. Atlanta Friends responded to FCNL calls for action with hundreds of phone calls, e-mails, faxes and letters to the President and Congress during the year. The majority of actions focused on the war in Afghanistan, the development of new nuclear weapons, and the war on Iraq. Our Meeting contact person met with the FCNL staff at the national office in Washington, D.C., in April and conducted lobbying visits at the offices of Senators Cleland and Miller and Rep. John Lewis. Our Meeting sponsored the attendance of Amy Sol-Seigfreid at the Young Adult Friends lobbying training session in Washington, D.C., April 5-8. Atlanta Friends conducted lobbying visits to the local offices of our Senators and Representatives to express their opposition to war on Iraq. Several Friends attended the FCNL training workshop on effective lobbying sponsored by the Atlanta AFSC office on Oct. 29. Susan May attended the FCNL national meeting in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 8-10. An "Iraq Action Update" was prepared by members of the Social Concerns Committee using information provided by FCNL and was distributed after Meeting for Worship from September through November. Two Atlanta Friends

(Courtney Siceloff and Joe Parko) were arrested on Nov. 4 after they staged a sit-in at the Atlanta office of Senator Zell Miller in protest of his refusal to answer questions about war on Iraq.

Green Friends

After 25 Atlanta Friends toured the Southface Energy Institute in Sept. 2001, we arranged for an energy audit to be done of our meetinghouse in spring of 2002. Some sizable changes & repairs were recommended which are gradually being addressed. The most serious one - inadequate roof insulation- is unlikely to be remedied until summer brings light use of the meetinghouse.

Environmental Justice forum (Feb. 02) sponsored by Green Friends & ORAIIARH - A well-attended, interesting dialogue focused on linkages between justice, poverty, racism & environmental degradation & dangers.

In cooperation with SAYMA's Ecological Concerns Network, an Energy Use Survey was conducted by eight Friends during January - March resulting in 76 individual surveys being completed & added to the tally of all SAYMA groups. These indicated that Atlanta Friends have made some significant efforts to live more ecologically but still there is much room for improvement.

Growing out of the survey an Energy Saving forum led very ably by Peggy Barlett, was held in Sept. 02. This very well-attended discussion focused mostly on use of electrical energy in compact fluorescent bulbs, computers, easy & economical energy saving tips, etc.

Several members are serving as liaisons with the green power movement in GA, now growing in a newly formed interfaith coalition, GA Interfaith Power & Light.

The Green Friends e-mail listserv of 41 Friends continues to network & communicate our various concerns & serves as one conduit for action.

Ministry and Worship

The Ministry & Worship Committee worked to nurture a vibrant, inclusive spiritual community that provides persons with differing and deeply held beliefs an opportunity to worship together and seek the unity of the Light and a sense of common purpose. The Committee continued its efforts to welcome new members and attenders who find our worship and community a place to begin or continue their spiritual search. We continued to work to assist newcomers to learn more about Quakerism and to become part of our spiritual community. We encouraged vocal ministry in Meeting for Worship as led by the Spirit.

During the year, Amy Lighthill, Patricia Williams, Elizabeth Valera, Diane Rowley, Chris Mason, and Georgia Lord were welcomed into membership. Elizabeth Hendricks' membership was transferred to the Newtown Friends Meeting at her request. The marriage of Gwen Davies and John Wuichet took place under the care of the Meeting. A memorial service was held for Laura Murphy.

Ministry & Worship encouraged the formation of a spiritual nurturing group organized & facilitated by Daphne Clement. M&W members participated in the vital meeting study conducted by Earlham College and sought to understand and utilize the results in improving the Meeting. M&W considered ideas for additional meetings at different times and/or locales.

M&W worked with the Religious Education Committee in considering participation of the Meeting's children in Meeting for Worship and in seeking ways to increase their participation. This led to a change in the latecomer policy which did lead to increased participation. M&W sought to encourage increased attendance at Meeting for Business. Ideas included more emphasis that Meeting for Business is important and open to all, explaining its importance to new attenders, and announcing the issues of to be addressed at the next Meeting.

M&W sought to develop a set of queries specific to M&W that would effectively challenge us to action on the issue of racism. The Committee began to answer these queries throughout the year, recognizing that racism is an issue that will require its ongoing attention. The committee also recognized a need for increased efforts to welcome newcomers and the need to foster a greater sense of community within the Meeting. The Committee encouraged increased discussion between persons with differing ideas about how to heal racial divisions.

Two of our members, Perry Treadwell and Mary Ann Downey, are recognized and supported by the Meeting for their gifts of ministry and are part of the Traveling Ministries program of Friends General Conference (FGC). In 2002 Perry's ministry took the form of serving as clerk of the Long-Range Planning Committee of FGC, rather than visits to individual meetings. Mary Ann led one retreat, Landsdowne (PA) Meeting, in 2002 with more scheduled for 2003.

Our Roles As Individuals In America's Racial History

Our Roles as Individuals in America's Racial History (ORAIARH) has continued to meet every week during the year, for accountability, sharing, and business. While accountability and sharing seem to take up all of our time each week, and are at the center of the value of this group to us, we also undertook a number of activities in the Meeting during 2002. We hosted Vanessa Julye to speak on her experience at the World Conference on Racism. We held a Saturday workshop for churches in Decatur around "The Color of Fear." Two members witnessed against racism in Gainesville, GA, with a silent vigil in front of the Meetinghouse. Two members planned a workshop for the Meeting on the book Forty Ways to Raise a Non-racist Child, co-sponsored with the Ad Hoc Group. We also continued our education, through monthly readings, including Friends and the Racial Crisis, Souls of Black Folk, and short stories on African and Asian American lives.

Oversight Committee

The beginning of the year 2002 found the Oversight committee interviewing for a new secretary. We accepted with regret the resignation of Renda McCaughan and expressed our thanks and appreciation to her for her three years of service. DeCourcy Squire accepted the position and began in February.

The committee continued looking at the effects of racism on the employees, residents, tenants and contractors of the Meeting. We were particularly discouraged and saddened that the Young Friends Coordinator felt led to resign because of racism. The committee reaffirmed that it is the primary source of support for the employees of the Meeting and urged employees to bring issues/problems to the committee. The committee will also regularly inquire about concerns around which employees may need support.

The committee also undertook with Green Friends to have an energy audit of the house performed by Southface Energy Institute. The ensuing report became the basis for lengthy discussion about changes and repairs to the structure to assist with general upkeep and energy conservation. During the audit process, one of the Southface engineers used racially insensitive language with the resident. The committee followed up with the director of Southface to work toward resolution. Southface followed up through discussion with its employees around racism.

In late summer two of the three air conditioning units were replaced in the Meeting room because they had ceased functioning. All units in the building were serviced. Other repairs to the building were undertaken by the Meetinghouse committee.

Religious Education

An estimated 65 students attend First Day School with an average of 45 students on a Sunday. Class topics included Quaker values, the Old Testament, and current events. RE sponsored activities included the Easter Egg hunt, Youth Sunday, the Holiday Party, and service projects such as the Souper Sunday. Religious Ed developed a survey on how to make the First Day program more welcoming to all.

A major focus this year was to bring children back to the larger meeting of worship on Sundays. Religious Ed sponsored a forum on children and worship. Activities which lead to our goals included standardizing worship times, dismantling Little Meeting for Worship, publicizing helpful newsletter information, and promoting a meeting policy which allows attenders to enter worship at any time.

Social Concerns

The Social Concerns Committee has found no shortage of work this year. We awarded 3 public education grants totaling \$1080 for special projects in less affluent schools. We supported and worked with many local groups on issues as diverse as securing a living wage, Coca-Cola's role in the violence in Columbia, and shelter for the homeless. We held an observance on 9-11 titled "A Call to Peace Instead of to Arms" with Dances of Universal Peace and others.

We also devoted considerable energy to supporting peaceful alternatives to the "war on terrorism" and war in Iraq. We developed Iraq Update education sheets to pass out after meeting for worship each week in August and September. These urged meeting members and attenders to write to the President and various representatives to urge peaceful alternatives to war in the Iraq crisis. We worked with the Interfaith Atlanta Coalition for Peace & Justice and other groups to hold marches and weekly vigils to encourage our government to use diplomacy and to not go to war in Iraq. The Social Concerns Fund is being used to underwrite the distribution of yard signs saying "War Is Not the Answer". Over 800 have been distributed.

Green Friends, ORAIIARH, the FCNL liaison, and the Central America Committee all work under the care of the Social Concerns Committee, and have prepared their own reports.

Young Friends Support Committee

The Young Friends Support Committee had a turbulent year but is moving forward briskly now. Several members resigned due to time constraints. Then in June, the Coordinator resigned after experiencing racism in the Meeting community. The Committee's report to Meeting for Business led to the creation of an Ad Hoc committee to prevent repetition of the Coordinator's experience. Heather Barbour and Sally MacEwen also at this time felt led to clerk the committee, and several other members were also added. As it transitioned, the Committee moved to hire Jeremiah Gold-Hopton as the new Coordinator. He quickly set to work on new activities and also brought the committee up to speed on the program. He met with the young Friends and made a schedule of events that have been growing in participation and support. Almost twenty new Friendly Adult Presences (FAP's) were added to the list of those available. He was also able to reduce his number of hours and increase the budget for programming.

The Committee also revised the Guidelines for FAPs and authorized additional funds to pay for a van to take young Friends to SAYF (Southern Appalachian Young Friends) retreats.

Two concerns have been preeminent over the last year. One was the political situation in Iraq and, more generally, the need for peacemaking in the world. Individuals in the Meeting have been active in local and national peace demonstrations, we have cooperated with local churches on building “peace cairns” to show symbolically the way to peace, and we have held discussions on the meaning of the Quaker Peace Testimony. Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee has been active in other areas as well---organizing local forums on the death penalty, for example. When it appeared that hate activist Fred Phelps was coming to Berea, we joined other Berea churches and the college community in a United and Diverse rally. And we delivered cookies and Christmas cards to the inmates at the county jail in December, as we have for many years.

The other preeminent concern has been over finding a better place to meet. We took a major step when we decided that Berea Friends will actively seek to own a meetinghouse, but so far no suitable property has become available. Meanwhile, we are working toward incorporating and building the financial resources we need to build or buy a place.

Highlights of the year include the December wedding of one of our members, and the birth of two babies to families in the Meeting. We rejoice in these life-affirming events.

Our annual membership review took the form of small sharing groups in which we drew timelines of our lives and talked about the experiences that have made us who we are. Interesting discussions during the year have included thinking about the role of young people in the Meeting and a seminar on evolution versus creationism requested by one of our youth.

Our young Friends have been active. There are more children attending First Day School than last year, and our teens have continued to be active in SAYF and the local ecumenical youth group. With a little adult help, the children built a lovely path in the woods by the creek for all to enjoy. We are very proud of our young people and their growth as Friends. Our current meeting space poses significant problems for the youth program, since we don’t have suitable rooms for different age groups. The teens meet in a Friend’s home and seldom have contact with the majority of the adults.

Currently we have 60 members, including 53 adults and 7 youth, about half of whom live outside of Kentucky. Attendance on First Days averages about 25 adults and 7 children. We are experimenting with the use of e-mail to distribute our monthly newsletter.

---Tim Lamm
Berea, KY

Birmingham Friends Meeting State of the Meeting, June 2003

1. As in past years, a number of Friends have departed and others have joined our Meeting Community. Two members moved out of state. One member stopped attending for reasons we do not fully understand. In the same period, three new people have begun attending on a regular basis, so that attendance at Meeting on a typical First Day (about 10-12) remains fairly constant.
2. We continue to advertise our presence (through a newspaper ad, community outreach, and personal contact) in the hope our Meeting will grow in number.
3. We seek to nourish the Meeting Community. Birmingham Friends meet at "Simple Suppers" held at Friends' homes on one Friday evening each month. We also deepened our connection with one another, and increased our appreciation of the value of listening through a "creative listening" project, held on six successive 2-hour Tuesday night sessions.
4. We have reached out to the surrounding community. We invited neighborhood children and their parents to an "ice cream social" in our lovely back yard one First Day afternoon. Folk music was provided by two Friends. A Celtic dance demonstration was offered by a group of children who used our Meeting House for practice. This spring, a "Peace Festival" was staged in the back yard by students visiting from the New Garden Friends School (located outside Greensboro, NC). Women Friends meet regularly at the home of one BFM member, and invite women from outside the Meeting Community.
5. We are chagrined by the violence and war taking place in the Mid-East. This prompted us to dedicate an unused room in the Meeting House to serve as the "Birmingham International Peace Center". The Center has promoted letter writing and the attendance of Friends at peace vigils that occur each Wednesday and Saturday afternoon here in Birmingham. During the Christmas season, we assembled 26 hygiene packets for distribution in Iraq by AFSC. The Peace Center facilitated the distribution of "War is Not the Answer" bumper stickers and yard signs from FCNL:
6. Two 4-year-olds attend Meeting on a regular basis with their mothers. We recognize the need to implement a First Day School curriculum to meet these children's needs.
7. Our Social Concerns committee meets on a regular basis. Under its auspices, we gathered at a downtown church one First Day to provide lunch for about 200 homeless and low-income people. We donated a sum of money equivalent to the Meeting House property tax we are not required to pay to a local public elementary school. We hoist a black banner from a staff attached to the Meeting House whenever someone is executed in the U.S. The banner reads "Today We Mourn the Execution of a Fellow Human Being". Sadly, the banner has been displayed many times in the past year. (This is part of the "For Whom the Bells Toll" campaign.) Several Friends participated in an ecumenical service held near the Civil Rights Institute in downtown Birmingham inaugurating (gay) PRIDE week.
8. During Second Hour we read and discussed a book entitled John, the Maverick Gospel. We have also met for Worship Sharing during Second Hour, and offered a series we call "Simple Gifts". During these Second Hours, Friends have spoken about activities and pursuits that have had a deep impact on them. We have learned about the healing power of music, how dogs can be trained through positive feedback, and about how the scientific method might be applied to the search for spiritual meaning. Still to come are hours on meditative gardening and feminist theology.
9. Rent from two tenants who occupy the second floor of the Meeting House provides funding that helps offset Meeting House expenses (including our mortgage, which has another 12 years to run). The Meeting House and grounds have been maintained over the past year by the Meeting House Committee. The yard has been glorious this spring, with an array of flowers and shrubs. A Japanese maple has been planted as a memorial to the mother of one of our members. We await a bountiful harvest of pecans in the fall.

State of the Meeting Report

Boone Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Sixth Month, 2003

Attendance at the Boone Meeting have remained relatively steady are around ten members and regular attenders. Miriam Toepel has moved to Jacksonville, Florida near a daughter. Lucy Edgemeyer is now a student at Westtown School. Marian Edgmeyer will be attending Guilford College in the fall. We continue to meet in a room in the office suite of attorney Gail Fannon, 184, N. Water St. Boone, NC 28607.

Outreach programs for the past year have continued with our regular "Sale for Service" at the Boone Mall, a sale of crafts and foods that, this year, yielded \$375 for a donation to RSVP. We participated with Appalachian Interfaith Alliance for Peace and Justice and other area churches in providing hygiene kits for Iraqi refugees through the American Friends Service Committee. A program at our monthly Quaker Forum by Loren Raymond, who spoke to Friends about the work of EPIC, an organization that sponsors projects aimed toward peace and sustainable development in many places in the world, but is based in Boone – led to a decision to make a meeting contribution to this organization and membership for several meeting individuals.

Hickory Ridge Homestead, an outdoor museum with authentic restored log cabins adjoining the Horn in the West Outdoor Drama has become a favorite alternate site for meeting events. We met there for worship and a potluck in celebration of the 400th anniversary of Quakers in North Carolina and for a couple of other events. We plan an "homecoming" of any former attenders of the Boone Meeting at this site for later in the summer.

Prepared by: Judy Geary

BREVARD (NC) FRIENDS MEETING: Report to SAYMA Yearly Meeting: June 5, 2003

Members: 16 Adults

Attenders: 14

Average attendance at Worship: 15

Our Meeting was saddened by the deaths of **Grace Freeman** on October 28, 2002, and **Jim Scott** on March 10, 2003. Both were active attenders for the past several years, enriching our Meeting by their presence, wisdom, love, and grace. They are deeply missed.

Lee Scott transferred her membership to our Meeting from the Asheville Monthly Meeting.

Average attendance at Meeting for Worship has remained steady, with occasional visits of students from Brevard College and yearly visits of the high school students from Eagle's Nest Foundation. Most of our member/attenders continue to be older adults, with a few middle-agers, and an occasional teenager. We have had no children attend, and hence have no First Day School, although we have leaders ready to lead. We continue to have a number of visitors throughout the year.

Activities beyond Meeting for Worship include: our monthly "Meeting for Eating"; Adult Forum, a small group which meets twice a month discussing various Pendle Hill pamphlets; and one Friendly Eights group which meets occasionally. Our only committee to meet regularly is Ministry & Oversight.

Our Meeting Newsletter, published by Jesse Mock after each Mtg. for Business keeps everyone in touch. In addition, we strive to stay connected through e-mail, telephone, and one-on-one visits.

Events of particular note:

In Sept. a called Mtg. for Bus. approved, and published, a minute against the war in Iraq.
In Oct. the Greenville MM, and Clemson WG visited us for worship and potluck dinner to celebrate the tenth year of the Greenville Meeting, which our Meeting sponsored.
Efforts to erect a permanent Meeting sign where we meet, or on a public street, were unsuccessful.
Many of our Meeting joined with others in the community for Saturday noon vigils (from October to the "end of the war") in front of the county courthouse to protest the war in Iraq.
We had a called Meeting for Business, on a Saturday, to discuss the "State of our Meeting" and listing goals for how we can make it stronger and more effective.
In March we announced to the community that our Meeting is a resource for counseling those who are considering conscientious objection to participation in the military, and related issues.
Danny Keller, a teenager attender, formally declared to the Meeting that he is a conscientious objector.
Members of the Meeting (especially Dorothy Mock and Joan Williams, tireless workers on behalf of the Moratorium of the death penalty) rejoice at the NC Senate vote to establish the moratorium.

Our Meeting led a community worship service, in the manner of Friends, during Lent.

Most of our members and attenders are active in a great variety of local and national issues and causes, providing a Friendly presence and witness as they do so.

Our Meeting is strong in spite of our small numbers and advancing ages. We continue to work for adding numbers and variety to our membership.

Grace, Peace, and Love

[Approved, Meeting for Business, May 18, 2003]

CELO MONTHLY MEETING

STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT-MAY 2003

In Meeting for Worship we continue to seek a balance between our outward (action) and inner spirituality in the Meeting. Celso Monthly Meeting has had another spiritually rich and active year.

Activities Related to Iraq-Celso Friends Meeting has participated in and organized a variety of events relating to the war in Iraq. In response to the threat of war we participated in vigils and demonstrations at the national, regional and county level. We had a workshop to make banners for peace and several from our meeting and the county went to Washington, DC in October and Jan. 17. One family went to New York in March and then helped organize aid to be sent to Iraq at AFSC in Philadelphia. We helped organize vigils at the county level with 10 churches. The first was held Sept. 11 and it was dedicated to prayers for peace. We took part in this at the First Baptist Church. A prayer vigil was held on the town square in March. Two more prayer services for peace were held in March at the Presbyterian Church before and after the war in Iraq began. The Meeting House was open for prayer vigils every day. One member made hundreds of peace cranes. These were handed out at the prayer vigils and placed in public buildings. Some also participated in a daily candlelight vigil on the square in Burnsville during the war. Conscientious Objection to the Military-We obtained brochures and the Draft Counselor's Manual from the Center on Conscience and War. In July 2002 we sent CO information to 18 young people from our meeting offering conscientious objector counseling. We sent a representative to a press conference held by a local high school student who publicly registered as a CO and facilitated a newspaper article in the local paper about this.

Hiroshima Day Vigil - We participated in a program in Asheville on Hiroshima Day. Children from Camp Celso made a backdrop banner. We floated lanterns made in First day School and passed out hundreds of paper peace cranes to passers-by.

Immigrant Project and Harassment-The Meeting continues to facilitate the connection of local immigrants with services and information through offering interpretation, transportation and research. During the past year harassment of immigrants became more blatant when someone put up signs on telephone poles with racial slurs, including statements targeting those who had written letters to the editor with opposing viewpoints and other statements. The Arthur Morgan School helped collect the signs and reports were made to the police. One person involved was eventually arrested.

HIP - members of CFM participated in a 'Help Increase the Peace' (a conflict resolution program for students developed by the AFSC) project in Yancey County Schools for a third year. All freshmen at the Yancey County High School participated in a week long session of workshops. Herb Walters of RSVP, working with staff from other organizations, continued to provide leadership. He and others from the Meeting worked as facilitators for the sessions. The project needs additional facilitators if it expands to include middle schools and Mitchell County schools.

School of the Americas- some members joined Asheville Friends and participated in the School of Americas protest in Georgia.

Ministry and Care shared joys and concerns with many Friends over the past year. We acknowledged the deaths of several family members. Sue Snider has moved to Barnardsville and attends our meeting whenever she can. Both of her sons became fathers this past year so Sue is delighting in being a grandmother. The proud grandfather is Lyle Snider in Kentucky. Mike and Nancy Emily adopted a daughter from Russia. Support was given to Don and Fuller McLeod with a workday to build a ramp for accessibility and outside work.

Eighteen letters were sent to all our associate members over the age of 16 years apprising them of their options for membership within the meeting. The letter also included information on conscientious objection to war.

A member of our community, Adam Colby, is in the Army in Afghanistan. The children in First Day School collected items to send care packages to Adam and the other men in his unit.

The Adult Education Committee organized a series of forum discussions. "What Is A Quaker?" These were led by members of the Meeting. It was a five part series and the topics were History of Quakers, Testimonies, Quaker Values and Family, Meeting for Business and Quaker Decision-Making Process and Meeting for Worship. These were well attended, especially by new attenders.

The First Day School has had a very active program this past year. Several parents have participated in teaching the classes. Recently they had a comparative religion course for the elementary age students. They attended some other churches and had individuals come to the class to learn about the Bahai faith, Shintoism, Buddhism, Judaism, other Christian churches and Humanism and Ethical Culture. The children have been involved in service projects and had an ongoing fund raising project to raise money to send to the Heifer Project in Afghanistan and Iraq. They made ceramic ornaments and magnets to sell and also asked for everyone to bring their loose change to contribute. They have raised \$300. The parents undertook a major renovation to the First Day School building. The rooms are very pleasant with the new improvements. We have a small but dedicated group of middle and high school students who often participate in the Meeting for Worship or meet on their own. They collected food for Reconciliation House and participated in our workdays. Many adults have worked with these groups of children.

Building Campaign - We are pleased to report that we have met our goal of \$75,000 for a new Meeting House. We have had monthly meetings this winter to finalize our plans. We started the campaign to build Margithaus (hospitality and caretaker apartment) and the new Meeting House ten years ago. We want to thank all in SAYMA who have contributed to this. We sincerely appreciate your support.

We have worked through concerns in a caring way, giving support to those who shared their needs and concerns with the Meeting.

State of the Meeting 2003

Charleston, WV

War overshadowed all other concerns of Charleston Friends this year. We worked and prayed for a peaceful resolution to the confrontation between the United States and Iraq. During the summer of 2002, we supported three Friends in their travels to the Middle East. We hoped that these visits could contribute to peace and understanding. Dick Whitham and Carlie Numi visited the Occupied Territories with the Christian Peace Teams. John Humphries went to Iraq as part of a Quaker/AFSC delegation, which included a member of SAYMA (Debra Johnson, Memphis). They returned with stories of the hardships faced by Palestinians under occupation, by Israelis threatened with suicide bombings, and by Iraqis suffering under economic sanctions. Their pictures and recollections helped Friends appreciate the urgent need for peace and reconciliation in that troubled region, while better understanding the difficulty of achieving it.

Friends have been active in organizing to try to prevent the Mideast war and in seeking peaceful lives. Many of Charleston's members and attenders participated in the numerous antiwar demonstrations here, including weekly vigils at the Federal courthouse and occasional larger events such as the celebration of Martin Luther King Day. A few have traveled to larger cities to witness for peace. There are also small "peace seeds" groups springing up whose focus is on the immediate and personal response through inner peace and peaceful living.

For several years we have held Meeting for worship in offices of a community development organization in the middle of bustling, multicultural area of the city. After several frustrating years of dealing with the telephone company, we at last have our own telephone listing in the business pages, and appropriately categorized Yellow Pages entries.

As more young Friends go to college, marry, or move away and our median age rises, we have become increasingly concerned with outreach. In late summer we discussed the Friends General Conference Outreach Review. We concluded that, for our size, we are achieving significantly in outreach efforts, while recognizing areas where we could make progress. We agreed to revise some of our outreach materials and to pursue opportunities to invite younger people to meeting.

We continue to have infrequent attendance by families with small children, though we have an active youth group. The young Friends have separate discussions, and join meeting for the last few minutes of worship and organize intergenerational activities for meeting.

This year our adult discussions have focused principally on state legislative matters and international affairs, with special concern for the impending war in Iraq. While not initiating peace initiatives in Charleston, Friends have been active participants, both locally and nationally. Our social ministry has continued to draw in Friends who want to help others. We continue to organize a breakfast in a local women and children's shelter, and a dinner at a men's shelter in the winter. Because our Peace and Social Concerns Committee Clerk is also a lobbyist at the state legislature, we are one of the smallest religious groups with a presence there. We celebrated Martin Luther King's birthday again this year by placing an exhibit in the state capitol featuring Reverend King's writings on peace and social justice. We continue our support of the American

Friends Service Committee's West Virginia Economic Justice Project and other Friends concerns as way opens. A twice monthly Bible Study group meets in Friends' homes.

Charleston Friends helped organize the September 2002 West Virginia Friends Gathering, a weekend of worship, fellowship, and outdoor recreation, held at a nearby Ohio camp. This year we are planning the gathering around the theme of outreach. We welcome SAYMA Friends to join in this year's gathering September 6-7, or to visit at other times during the year.

Chattanooga Friends Meeting
State of the Meeting Report, 2003

Chattanooga Meeting's year has been exceptional--and this assessment comes from a clerk prone to look for the darker side. War in Iraq and its threat have overshadowed everything we have done, but we have risen to the opportunities presented. Meetings for worship have often been gathered and covered by Christ's spirit, enabling the group to reach depths that we are pleased to experience. Attendance at our meetings has increased, so that we occasionally find that on a Sunday thirty people, including children, are crowded inside our rather small meeting room. We have welcome three new people to membership, two by transfer and one by conviction, and planning has begun for a new Quakerism 101 series. Our First Day School has continued on an even keel, although this year's theme of Quaker history did not turn out to be as gripping for the students as last year's exploration of the Bible; still they have engaged enthusiastically in preparing a series of skits on that topic. We have begun and had two of a quarterly Arts and Spirituality series that explore a sometimes neglected option for Friends. We reached agreement on sending a representative to SAYMA's Ministry and Nurture Committee. Friends noted the principled stand of a Roman Catholic sister, formally living in Chattanooga, who was arrested and imprisoned for her protest against nuclear weapons production at Oak Ridge; one member especially expressed the meeting's interest. We continue to be a support congregation for the local Interfaith Hospitality Network. We also have learned something of the discipline required in meetings for business, so that they have continued to proceed expeditiously and with unity.

We offered leadership to the wider community in witnessing for peace during what turned out to be a mercifully brief, if tragic and unbelievable, conflict in Iraq. We wrote to invite our congressman and George Bush to worship with us and experience the unity we had found; we heard only from the president. As part of a world-wide protest, we sparked a march through downtown on March 15 that attracted almost four hundred participants, a huge turnout for Chattanooga. Members participated in regular weekly vigils near the federal courthouse, as well as a candle light witness on a Sunday evening, and we planned and organized a vigil for the day the war commenced. Individuals have also responded in their own ways but have returned to the meeting community for its guidance and Friends' insights. We are still struggling with tensions caused by the war and justifications offered by its supporters and plan a presentation on a possible draft and counseling by Chuck Fager immediately following yearly meeting.

Chattanooga Friends Meeting, deepened by the experiences of this past year, eagerly awaits next year for its challenges and our responses.

State of the Meeting Report Cookeville Preparatory Meeting. June 2003

We have continued to enjoy using the Wesley Foundation for Meeting on Sundays. The kitchen facilities, central location and modest rental charge make it very useful. It also allows for drop in visitors.

Our Vigil for Peace was our most sustained effort as a group. For six months, beginning in November, we kept a weekly vigil at the Courthouse in Cookeville. We were joined at times by various interested people, from high school age to W.W.II veterans. Sometimes the group was as many as 30 people. Some came for one Sunday, others joined us regularly. Our "vigil" was not particularly silent - we were rather boisterous at times, waving at passers by and shouting "Thank you" to those who waved or honked their horns.

The response was mixed, but we did get more positive than negative on average. After the invasion of Iraq, we noticed a group with "Support our Troops" signs and flags standing on a corner near us. We attempted to help people understand why we were there after several hostile letters to the editor about our vigil appeared in the Cookeville newspaper. There was some interesting dialog with people from the other group.

We invited Kim and Susan Carlyle of Friends Committee on Unity with Nature for a weekend and set up a nature walk, potluck, talk and discussion period with them. We were joined by a number of people from the community in a very interesting evening discussing the relationship between "peace on earth" and "peace with earth". Unfortunately, Susan did not make it but we're glad Kim did!

With a little nudging from Nashville, our caring Meeting, we requested and received a change of status from a Worship Group to a Preparatory Meeting. . We have been acting as such for a few years and we are happy to declare our growth in this way.

Four times a year we have an Ecumenical Sunday where members of other faiths can share their journeys, faith and history. This concurs with our potluck Sunday and we shorten our Meeting for Worship to a half hour in order to give our visitors time for a presentation. So far we have heard about the Unitarian/Universalist and Muslim faiths, and look forward to meetings with Hindus and Buddhists later in the year.

We have enjoyed fellowship with other Quaker groups this year having visited Crossville Meeting and Nashville Meeting a few times and had a visit from the Murfreesboro Worship Group. A few of us have attended Crossville Spiritual Center workshops and had a great time. It is a joy to welcome Hazel Hall to full membership in Friends.

We are a small group with attendance of 5 to 14 people. Serious consideration is being given to outreach and the necessary changes that would mean. Of primary concern is our program and space for First Day School.

As individuals we continue to be active in many different causes and concerns. Our Meeting supports and carries us in these endeavors. Our great comfort during these difficult times has been the support we have been able to give and receive in our witness for peace.

Annual Report of the Crossville Monthly Meeting of Friends to SAYMA - May 2003

1. The Crossville Friends Meeting continues to hold weekly Meetings for Worship on Sunday mornings usually at 10 a.m. but in the winter sometimes at 10:30 or 11:00 to make it easier for some older members to attend.
2. The Obed Headwaters School continues to use the Meetinghouse facilities during the week under the leadership of Friend Dennis Gregg.
3. The facilities of the Meetinghouse are also made available to the Grace United Church of Christ which meets on Sunday evenings.
4. At the initiative of Meeting members, up to 40 others of the wider community participated in Wednesday afternoon silent peace vigils at the County Courthouse from October through March.
5. The Meetinghouse was also used as the workshop space for the Quaker Spiritual Practice Center, a Meeting-sponsored activity that sponsored three experiential seminars this past year. These workshops were well-attended and the sponsorship of additional workshops will continue.
6. Meeting member Elizabeth Gregg completed a year as an intern at the Friends Committee on National Legislation in Washington, DC.
7. The annual Easter weekend retreat at the Cumberland Mountain State Park was held with members and friends, funded by a trust fund for the use of the Meeting for such social activities by deceased member Mary Rhodes.
8. Meeting members continue to communicate with state and national legislators on issues of peace, capital punishment, education, and related issues. Special efforts were made to foster peace between Israel and Palestinians as well as to express our strong opposition to the US invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Foxfire Friends Meeting of the Holston Valley
State of the Meeting Report
Spring 2003

Foxfire Friends Meeting moved into its new Meeting House at 731 East Maple Street, Johnson City, TN 37601, in the summer of 2002. In October we invited nearby meetings to join us in a dedication of our new space with silent worship and a friendly feast.

We continue to enjoy our space, which is furnished with simple gray benches borrowed from the old Quaker Church in the Fairview Community near Jonesborough. That church ceased to be sometime in the fifties. We also have a mountain view and a fenced in play yard.

Slowly new attenders are finding us.

Five of us joined the world wide peace vigil in March. As we stood on our corner lawn with our candles in the twilight, we seemed to have a calming effect on the busy corner traffic.

On the fifth Sunday, we continue to write postcards to government officials, guided by information from FCNL.

The Meeting continues to keep in our thoughts two members who can no longer attend, and Ministry & Nurture continues to coordinate visitation and worship.

We celebrate the arrival of a granddaughter of two members of the Meeting; the baby's parents were married under the care of the meeting.

Our youngest member, like our Meeting, is taking baby steps.

Greenville Monthly Meeting Annual Report for June 2002-June 2003

We are proud and excited by our growth in attendance at Meeting for Worship and fellowship activities. A singing program, Bible study, and monthly potlucks add greatly to our cohesiveness. We plan to increase our fellowship activities and have created a committee to promote such opportunities.

We have also noted an increase in vocal ministry, stimulated by the many problems facing our nation and, in turn, our community. War with Iraq, fear of terrorist attacks, and an economic downturn (that has caused hardship and unemployment) have caused anxiety and uncertainty. We participate as individuals in responding to these concerns as we feel led by our heart and spirit. We also provide community services for the homeless, prisoners, and needy families at Christmas time.

We started a mid-week worship group at Furman University, gathering each Tuesday from 12:00-12:30 in the Chapel of the university. Several Furman faculty, former faculty members and their spouses, a few students, and Greenville Meeting attenders made up the group. We intend to continue this worship group in September 2003, and hope to promote more visibility for this educational and spiritual opportunity among the Furman community.

The Furman worship group also took the opportunity to sponsor and moderate a forum on March 6, 2003, entitled "America and Iraq: Collision of Cultures?" This forum was attended by approximately 120 members of the local community, including a large number of students. Three Furman faculty members presented various perspectives on the escalating tensions between America and Iraq; furthermore, one of these faculty members, Dr. Albert Blackwell--though not a Quaker himself--provided an eloquent plea for non-violence. As of this writing, the forum sponsored by the Furman worship group is the only campus-wide event at Furman that has addressed the war with Iraq.

We send meeting representatives to Palmetto Friends programs and participate in SAYMA Yearly Meeting. We recognize that we would benefit by more involvement in SAYMA committees and programs.

Although we have a small number of members and attenders who come from distant points, we possess much talent and potential for spiritual growth and leadership. We pray for opportunities to serve God, to render love and compassion within our community, and to continue to find joy in the Light and among ourselves.

We are happy and proud that Scott Henderson, one of our attenders, joined the Religious Society of Friends through Greenville Monthly Meeting in June 2003.

Presented by Scott Henderson and Norman Goerlich, Clerk

Huntsville Area Friends Meeting
State of the Meeting Report
June 2003

The Huntsville Area Friends Meeting (HAFM) has experienced some growth over the past year. Last year, we reported 13 members/attenders, with an average attendance of 6 persons. This year we have 13 regular attenders/members, plus 7 other persons who join us intermittently. Our attendance during this reporting period has averaged 8 to 12 persons. HAFM continues to meet in members'/attenders' homes.

Highlights from our **corporate** and **individual** activities include:

Corporate:

- Participating in SAYMA and FGC gatherings, *e.g.*, representatives' meetings, meetings of the Ministry and Nurture Committee; and the FGC Traveling Ministries Program Consultation of Affiliated Yearly Meetings;
- Sponsoring a community-wide meeting at Holy Cross-St. Christopher Episcopal Church on "The On-Going Humanitarian Crisis in Iraq," with Debra Johnson speaking about her experience in Iraq with the AFSC delegation, and HAFM members/attenders sharing Quaker and other perspectives on peace-making;
- Participating in the local "Community Intergenerational Peace Festival," at Oscar Mason Community Center, once again bearing witness to Quaker and other perspectives on peace-making.
- Participating in the AFSC's Emergency & Material Assistance Program for the people of Iraq, preparing and shipping 30 health kits;
- Gathering and delivering blankets, clothing and other items for homeless persons as part of an interfaith & Huntsville Police Department collaborative project;
- Currently, working on a fund-raising effort to benefit the Lakota people.

Individual:

- Participating in peace demonstrations and other activities of the North Alabama Peace Network;
- Participating in on-going work and periodic community "speak-outs" about family violence;
- Advocating with/for people with disabilities;
- Helping Hispanic persons to gain access to community services;
- Singing in a local chorus (Huntsville Feminist Chorus), which lifts up themes of "thinking globally and acting locally," related to environmental, human rights, and other peace/social justice concerns;
- Participating in organization of and weekly vigils of "Women in Black";
- Attending Quakers in Pastoral Care and Counseling Gathering and the Willson Lectures at Earlham School of Religion

Memphis Friends Meeting
State of the Meeting
June 2003

We seem to be a Meeting through which many people pass or perhaps, as Kristi Estes suggested, we are a bridge that people cross. So this year we look at the state of our Meeting through the image of the bridges we have been creating.

We continue to build bridges among faiths in our community and among people working for peace. We gathered monthly through 2002 for multi-faith prayers for peace, hosting the July service with the Baha'i fellowship. We joined with other faiths in sponsoring Peace Walk 2002 and were strengthened by the presence of Thich Nhat Hahn in our community. We found joy in hosting an 8-hour peace vigil in our Meeting House. We stood with the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center, Women in Black, and others in public places to question our nation's war in Iraq.

Leadings of various individuals have connected us to the work of wider Quaker organizations and other important groups. Debra Johnson's trip to Iraq with the AFSC delegation led to a traveling ministry in our region and participation in FWCC's peace conference in Greensboro, NC. Blake Burr-McNeal participated in campus peace work at the University of Memphis;Carolyn Jordan continues to serve on the AFSC Board of Directors; David Ciscel has been working with the Midsouth Interfaith Network for Economic Justice; Teia Rogers joined a bike ride to support HIV/AIDS work; Kristi brought the Akora Khatak Afghan Refugee Girls Primary School to our attention; Christina Horan went to Uganda to work on health-related research, etc.

Hosting Fall Representative Meeting was a bridge between our local Meeting and SAYMA, encouraging new Friends to get involved with SAYMA. We nurtured and were nurtured by Oxford Mississippi's worship group, and at November's business meeting we approved the following minute:

The Memphis Friends Meeting approves the certification of the Oxford Quaker Meeting as a Monthly Meeting. We realize that Oxford's inclusion in SAYMA may present a challenge geographically for the yearly meeting. We are enthusiastic about the presence of a close monthly meeting and feel that we can be mutually supportive in creating a Quaker witness in our area.

In April, Oxford Friends and Memphis Friends gathered for a one-day retreat at Wall Doxey State Park to celebrate our respective 1st and 15th birthdays. We are pleased that a few Friends who used to travel the long way to Memphis now have a meeting in their own vicinity.

We are paying more attention to how we conduct business meetings recently, spending more time and approving minutes in the manner of SAYMA. Our Meetings for Learning have been lively, helping our life as a community grow. Vocal ministry is frequent and nourishing, and our newsletter continues to be a valuable bridge connecting us to each other.

Religious Education is sometimes a challenge with our small group, but we see signs of future growth. We celebrate the birth of Alisabeth Robin Koch. We look forward to welcoming Andrew, age 7, from Russia as Stacey Dixon and her family complete the adoption process. We hold Joanne Rhodes and Kelly Askins in the light as they wait for their new baby, due in November.

We welcome new members Neena Ledbetter, Doris Conner, and Steven Barnat, and new attenders Teia Rogers, Paul Nunis, Valerie Lester, Susan Wiley, Anita Martin. We are pleased that Carol O'Conner and Clyde Milner and son can join us occasionally from Jonesboro, Arkansas. We mourn the loss of Joanne Rhodes' mother and of member Barbara Lawing, women who made unique and significant contributions in our local community.

2003 State of the Meeting Report Nashville Friends Meeting

It could be said that Nashville Friends Meeting is much like a community garden. It requires the gifts and contributions of each and every Friend to keep the garden healthy and productive. Our garden flourishes with new plants sprouting from seeds sown by the leading of the Spirit.

We have grown in our capacity to listen and hear the concerns of each other as we seek out new space for our faith community. Holding each other in the Light as we discern our path has had positive effects. Several promising sites proved to be too challenging so we retreated to further exploration and patient waiting for way to open for a suitable location to come on the market. In order to make this move a reality, we established a building fund which, thanks to yard sales and individual donations, has grown in a gratifying manner without compromising our general fund status. We are relieved to find ourselves in healthy financial condition and thrilled that our scholarship fund has been overspent in support of Friends attending the small conference on nurturing meetings, a racism training workshop and the Gathering.

For the first time in many years our Fall Weekend was not held at Montgomery Bell Park. This was a reluctant change, but the park has chosen to spend its resources in other areas than maintenance of the cabins and the facilities have deteriorated beyond use. Although we missed the communal meal preparation of past years, we found that having that done for us by the staff at Bethany Hills freed us for deeper spiritual communing. Nevertheless we were able to help with setting and clearing the tables. We look forward to returning to Bethany Hills and including more regional Friends in future years.

We have welcomed new seekers and new and returning Friends to our meeting. Much to our delight, Dot Dobbins sought membership and was happily approved. Benjamin Foster's arrival brought joy to us and his family and Finn McKinney-Harmon joined brothers Dexter and Zan. We recognized the marriage of Tim and Elizabeth Netsch with a covered dish supper organized by our Hospitality Committee. In unprecedented manner, we quickly reached joyful unity in accepting the recommendation of Ministry and Council that we take under our care the holy union of Thais Carr and Linda Trask. Despite tornadoes and flooding and with valiant efforts of their care committee, the ceremony took place amidst nature's splendor at Cross Winds on May 10th.

The quality of our worship has been affected by the vocal ministry offered by those in attendance. We are sometimes challenged by Friends' unfamiliarity with the foundations of vocal ministry in the manner of Friends. In an effort to decrease "learning by osmosis", we have developed a new welcoming brochure that we hope will help all of us have a deeper understanding of how each of us is called to be a conduit for the messages and guidance of God.

Our First Day School has taken on new life with the coordination of Sita Diehl. We have an enchanting group of babies and toddlers, a vigorous group of middle schoolers and a waning group of teens. On the basis of the carefully considered and thoughtfully presented recommendation of the older young Friends to us during Meeting Worship with Attention for Business, we were led to lay down Family Worship on the days of Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. The children agreed to worship faithfully with us for the last 15 minutes of worship and have done so. This year the First Day School had two projects for those in need. The first was a collaborative effort with adults in creating a quilt for the More than Warmth program that sends the quilts to Afghanistan. During the process of putting together the quilt, the children learned of the conditions under which the children in Afghanistan and Iraq live.

Additionally the children raised funds for the Heifer Project by providing a simple meal for us prior to several Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business. In return for our nourished souls and bodies, we gladly donated money for their project.

Building on the deepening sense of the Spirit among us has enabled us to nurture both ourselves and the wider Quaker community. As we strengthened our inreach, we found more resources for outreach. We sponsored the second annual regional gathering of Nashville Meeting and the worship groups under our care - Murfreesboro, Clarksville and Cookeville. Joyce Rouse, AKA Earthmama shared her music ministry with us all in a delightful concert/sing-along. We joyfully acknowledge Cookeville's new status as a preparative meeting. Further we welcome into membership, Cookeville attender, Hazel Hall.

Our spiritual hospitality extended even wider as Friends were most generous in providing transportation, bedding and overnight hospitality for the Friends from far and wide who came to our area for various committee meetings, consultation and retreats. We sent Friends to attend the third retreat at Bethany Hills, sponsored by FGC's Traveling Ministries Committee, for those traveling in the ministry and their elders/support companions and found ourselves enriched by what they learned there. An unexpected opportunity for hospitality presented itself when Evalyn Parry, a Canadian Friend came through Nashville on a musical tour and we hosted a concert of her thought provoking and tuneful music.

Letting our lives speak our spiritual beliefs, Friends have participated in many social action events. Work with various issues of Tying Nashville Together, establishing greenways and pedestrian safety have been concerns of our Peace and Social Concerns Committee. The demands of the conflicts in the world have led many us to become more active in our witness to the peace testimony. Participation in peace actions sponsored by Nashville Peace and Justice Center; weekly vigils with Women in Black, fasts during jail terms for non-violent demonstration at Senator Frist's office and taking part in the Collateral Damage encampment are areas where Friends lived out the peace testimony. Others found their peace work to be more fundamentally focused, in seeking in their own lives and their families how to live in the power that takes away the occasion for war.

Statistics for 2002-2003

Members (near and far; adult and child) = 49

New = 2

Attenders (young and older) = 61

Marriage = 1 holy union under the care of meeting

1 marriage away from meeting

Births = 2

Deaths = 0

Prepared by the Ministry & Council Committee and the Clerk with assistance from those who attended the second hour addressing how the Spirit is with us.

Approved Eighteenth Day, Fifth Month, 2003

State of the Meeting Report

The **New Moon Worship Group** continues to meet at the Barnardsville United Methodist Church on first day following the new moon at 5 p.m. An email reminder is circulated in the week before each meeting.

We have grown with the addition of a family living in Barnardsville and now have 5 or 6 people routinely coming to our meetings.

We have considered, as a group, Friends Committee on National Legislation's priorities and have responded to their requests.

We have opened for discernment the question of whether we should meet more frequently.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Carlyle

S of the M: Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting has had a challenging year, one where joys and sorrows, growth and loss, promise and disappointment have moved us closer to maturity as a community, with all the growing pains that such maturity often requires. We approach the coming year with less unity than we would have wished, but with a firm faith that we can resolve our differences, aided by the spiritual presence that has sustained us during our struggles.

Ironically, our greatest struggle has been the result of the greatest material gift our meeting has ever received. An attender of our meeting left us a generous bequest in her will - enough money to allow us to think we could move to a permanent home for our Meeting. The enthusiasm generated by this gift moved some of our members to want to act quickly to establish ourselves in a permanent home, while others wondered if we should use the money to increase our charitable and service activities. Still others speculated that we should purchase land for a future meeting house, but that we should take our time deciding on its design and function. It is clear that our decision to purchase the property we now own in Swannanoa was made before we had strong unity on which action to take, despite a consensus to purchase made at a specially called Meeting for Business in November, attended by many of our members.

Our great task this coming year will be to find a way to reach unity in our enthusiasm for constructing a permanent home for our meeting. We are coming to a richer and deeper understanding of Quaker process through retreats, discussions and specially called meetings. Our plans are to move next to a Meeting for Reconciliation where our differences on the future of a meeting house can be addressed and resolved.

We have attracted more and more attenders to our Meeting for Worship and have added five new members. We rejoiced at the marriage of two young women celebrated under the care of our meeting, and have enjoyed the growing contributions of students from Warren Wilson and of the children of our own First Day School. Once a month we gather before Meeting for Worship in singing. Our members have been active in community services both at the local and national levels. Some of us were honored for volunteer service at the Juvenile Evaluation Center, others have helped form the Western Carolinians for Peace and Justice in the Middle East. Some have been part of the Women in Black and other peace vigils and protests in Asheville, while others have served on national Quaker organizations and on the planning committees of SAYMA. We are indeed an active meeting with respect to peace and social justice issues.

We feel also blessed by having so many artists and musicians among us. They have kept us alive to the importance of beauty and the creative spirit in our lives and worship together, and often the vocal ministry has been through song or descriptions of the beauty of the natural world.

As we face the need for a renewed commitment to community building among us, we feel the loss of one of the pillars of our community, Harriet Mercer, whose great gift and ministry to the Meeting was her interest and love for each one of us. We miss her deeply, as well as those members who have moved away. We also acknowledge our sorrow that others have been so disappointed with Meeting decisions over the War in the Middle East or the purchase of our new property that they no longer worship with us. We hope to become a stronger spiritual community, one in which those who have left would have felt more supported.

We ask that those who read or listen to this State of the Meeting will hold us in the Light as we seek to move forward in unity and love. Helping to heal the brokenness of this world we inhabit will require of us as much wholeness as we can bring to the task.

West Knoxville State of Meeting Report 2003

It has been a year of heaviness for us, lightened by growthful, positive happenings within our meeting.

Much of our focus has been on the struggle to connect in inward spiritual community as we respond to these times when outward life has brought so many challenges.

An Ad Hoc committee was created to explore issues related to conflict and loss within our community. Extensive neighborhood listening sessions were held. Responses from many past and present Friends were obtained and shared in two forums, where suggestions on how we might better respond to our problems were sought. The committee is in the process of forming recommendations.

Ministry and Nurture committee is currently exploring ways to address our lack of vocal ministry during most meetings for worship. Are we discouraged and turning inwards? Do we undervalue our reflections?

We continue to work at our commitment to and involvement in the peace testimony. Our anti-violence thrust has included the creation and distribution of "No War in Iraq" yard signs, plus continuing participation in peace demonstrations. We've had special sessions before

and after war began, focusing on individual and corporate responses. Small groups visit local legislators in an effort to achieve ongoing dialogue. Our busy Peace and Social Concerns committee offers monthly forums on peace issues.

New classes have been introduced to the adult religious education program. The teen group flourishes; their interests include Bible study, service projects, and fun! At Christmas, four baskets of ornaments and special foods were created and taken to absentee families.

In a disheartening development, we have suffered a drastic drop in attendance of younger and youngest friends, some of whom have moved with their parents to larger churches, in part because we have not provided consistent child-care.

Achievements this year include approving an extensive revision to our Faith and Practice at last, financially assisting several of us in attending Quaker conferences, tending to repairs around the meeting house, compiling all available minutes from past years into

four large volumes, bringing membership records up to date, and organizing the expanding library.

Many of us felt that the high public point of the year was a celebration of the 350th birthday of Quakerism. Several visitors joined us for a big potluck, some of it in 1650's style, followed by readings, a George Fox/ Margaret Fell skit, and an historical review featuring a ten-foot long candle-lit cake!

Looking back over the year, we see a rise in the amount of creativity, dedication and energy given by individuals and committees to further our life as a meeting. We miss those who have left us and welcome returnees and newcomers. Our numbers range from 25-35 during worship. We have been able to host several groups, including two SAYF retreats. We recently held a memorial service for Mary Elizabeth Wither spoon, a founding member of the meeting.

In spite of quietness, our spirit and worship remain durable and strong.