

Attachment D: WQO Representative Reports

American Friends Service Committee
American Friends Service Committee—Southeastern Regional Office
Friends Committee for Outworld Relations
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer Concerns
Friends World Committee for Consultation

American Friends Service Committee Corporation

I attended the American Friends Service Committee Corporation meeting as SAYMA's representative in Philadelphia November 1 and 2. The Corporation is the legal entity which “owns” the Service Committee under Pennsylvania law. The main official duties of the Corporation are appointing a smaller Board of Directors, which meets quarterly. The Board actually governs the organization. The Corporation's other duties are communication (between AFSC and Friends, especially yearly meetings) and counsel, the latter conducted through Friends processes both formally and informally.

At the initial meeting, I was struck by the breadth of the representation. There were about 20 yearly meetings represented; most were unprogrammed, but there were pastoral and evangelical Friends in the mix. Because this was a year of celebration of the AFSC's 90th birthday, there were special events and presentations. The sense of excitement spilled over into meeting for worship, which was among the most vocal I've ever attended. Worship was programmed the second day.

The business consisted of reports by Board Clerk Paul Lacey and General Secretary Mary Ellen McNish. Both talks were largely retrospective and celebratory of the AFSC's 90th birthday. They also announced the start of a major campaign to increase AFSC's endowment, *Spirited Engagement*. SAYMA might be pleased to know that activities of the West Virginia Economic Justice Project (Mid Atlantic Region, closely affiliated with Charleston Friends Meeting's Peace and Social Concerns Committee) were highlighted in Mary Ellen's talk.

The Standing Nominating Committee presented names for Board members, which were approved, as were the Naming Committee's recommendations for new Nominating Committee members. The Treasurer's report indicated that AFSC is a fiscally healthy, \$40 million/year organization. Most (44%) of AFSC's funds are spend on regional programs within the US, with 27% going to international programs. Fundraising costs amount to 9% of the total.

Friday, November 2 featured an evening presentation of a video, “Spirited Engagement: Quaker Values in Action” and a touching performance by Sweet Honey in the Rock to kick off the campaign. Saturday afternoon was the annual public gathering, featuring a talk by Joan Countryman, first head of the Oprah Winfrey sponsored girls' school in South Africa.

Charles Schade
Charleston WV
SAYMA Corporation Member

American Friends Service Committee—Southeastern Regional Office

This is a time of change for AFSC-SERO (American Friends Service Committee- South East Regional Office) as it is trying consolidate offices, end single person programs, initiate a functioning Gulf-coast program, find new office space, and adjust to changes in AFSC program structure, reporting, and budgeting. A prime consideration in all changes is to consider how projects relate to Southeastern peace and justice needs.

Although my term finally started 12th month 2007, after all the necessary paper-work and approvals were garnished. I was invited to start attending EC (Executive Committee) with the June 2007 meeting. At that meeting four speakers enlightened us on significant problems in our region: The Black Belt of Poverty, The School to Prison Pipeline, Militarism, and Immigration Challenges. It has given all the EC members a good background for discernment of programming and budgeting.

AFSC-SERO's Gulf-coast Program funded by restricted funds donated in the aftermath of Katrina, has been beset by problems. Originally offices both in Biloxi and New Orleans were initiated, but this was untenable and the program was consolidated in New Orleans. It finally has found its niche focusing on youth and initiatives to disrupt the school to prison pipeline. It continues to be challenged by personnel issues.

Georgia Tech wants to buy the AFSC-SERO building and demolish it in order to build a new dorm. A four story 1890's building at 60 Walton Street, two blocks from the main Marta station is an exciting opportunity for AFSC SERO. It meets approval of all staff and potential stakeholders who have seen it in spite of the lack of parking. There is an inexpensive parking lot two blocks away. Handicap safety needs will be considered. There was strong enthusiasm for an ecologically sound renovation.

At the March 2008 Meeting AFSC-SERO's work was consolidated into three core programs. Peace/Economic Justice (Atlanta -incorporating the Middle East work), Healing Justice/Economic Justice (New Orleans, NC), Human Mobility and Migration (NC, Miami). These correspond to new AFSC programs and objectives. The North Carolina Project Voice (an immigration project) office was move to Greensboro, consolidating North Carolina into one office with 4.5 FTE staff-people. Although there have been staffing changes, I am enthusiastic about the increasing relevance and productivity of the work.

At the June 2008 meeting last week, new program committee guidelines were adopted and all programs will need to have such a committee to assure relevance between the program and its targeted audiences. There continues to be ongoing threshing so that the successful EMAP (Emergency Materials and Aid Program) is consistent with AFSC goals and objectives. There are many ways that Friends try to "See what love can do."

Respectfully submitted,

Geeta Jyothi McGahey, AFSC-SERO Representative

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Woods Nash

West Knoxville Friends Meeting

Beyond that short, compact gathering in D.C., the FCNL annual meeting reverberates. This was my first time to attend the event, and I went anticipating valuable lessons and free bagels. I found both. During the quiet mornings that prevail at the William Penn House, I was reminded of my need to transport the discipline of stillness into every morning that I awake in my apartment in eastern Tennessee. FCNL's work to limit the use of cluster bombs reached students in the Smoky Mountains when, several weeks after the annual meeting, my friends and I revived the issue in a crowded high school auditorium. Inspired by FCNL's promotion of a civilian volunteer corps, a small group rose early one Sunday at West Knoxville Friends Meeting to discuss William James's essay, "The Moral Equivalent of War." Finally, after the meeting in D.C., I often passed on a bit of wisdom shared by Joe Volk: We are only justified in having hope when we are also actively engaged. Our friends at FCNL are actively engaged, and I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in their hope.

Friends Committee on Outworld Relations

Friends committee on Outworld Relations (FCOR) has experienced, in recent years, a falling-off in activity and membership. This was predicted at the time of FCOR's last report (2005), due to inability of only one or two supporters to maintain any significant level of activity or interest, as well as lack of energy.

The issue of extraterrestrial visitation has not yet called forth, among Friends, any vigorous activity. Several negative factors seem to be responsible. First, it has been too long in the realm of science fiction, and is thus regarded with a wary eye, not worthy of serious consideration. Second, the worldly problems that occupy Friends' attention today are numerous and well-established as icons requiring full attention. For a Friend to abandon these and to take up, instead, something that most people, including many Friends, regard as insubstantial and weird, requires an initial leap of faith, and then a steadfast adherence to a new set of facts plus evidence, combined with a conviction that ET visitation, besides being very real, is a harbinger of a vast change in our civilization, with an array of benefits and problems almost beyond imagination. I offer here the prediction that, five or ten years from now this paragraph (or the like) may be read out at some Friends gathering, accompanied by heads nodding in agreement. The question at this writing is: what will it take to awaken Friends to this reality and cause them to act in concert, as they do (did) regarding slavery, or war, or human rights.

The opinion is offered here that Friends are uniquely equipped (qualified) to take up this matter and come up with constructive responses to a situation sure to arise, containing liberal doses of hysteria, pseudo-religion, communication problems, false accusations, and whatever else may emerge from a seeming Pandora's box to throw us into turmoil. For example, the common method of communication among the ET visitors is by what we know as telepathy. Would Friends be more capable at this than some other groups, as well as at sorting things out with rational thinking? Can a small group of Friends come together, today, to discuss this matter seriously?

The present coordinator of FCOR does not possess the time or the energy to activate, and be responsible for, a small group of SAYMA Friends acting to rejuvenate FCOR, except to offer a presence and present information and advice. Publishing an ad might be considered, such as the following:

“Wanted: A group of FGC Friends, even two or three, who have a vision of reaching out in peace to visitors from outside our planet – who are now appearing with increasing frequency in our skies. Offered: uphill work facing doubt and opposition, but also amazing new horizons.”

In the Light,
J. Philip Neal
coordinator, FCOR

Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns

Report on the FLGBTQC 2008 Midwinter Gathering at Camp Courage,
Maple Lake, Minnesota (Gary Briggs, Asheville MM)

We were warmly welcomed Friday evening Feb 15 to this north country camp, created to provide a recreational experience for people of all ages with various handicaps. The well-insulated buildings stood on gentle, wooded hills; snow lay a foot deep off the paths and squeaked under foot as the evening chilled towards zero; all was calm and serene. The next three mornings we had meetings for worship in the bright ground floor of the dining hall; Saturday morning our own Wendy Sanford gave us inspiration with a message on our theme, “Courage to Gather”. Early afternoons were given to free time or “work” shop choices like sports in the gym, baking

cookies, singing, and “sledding, ‘shoeing, and snowballs”. I joined children of all ages on the super sledding hill by the lake; we puffed up it and slid down in or on all sorts of contraptions. We were blessed with a large number of REAL kids, and also with an unprecedented number of transgender or transitioning people- mostly young adults.

One major discernment during our three business meetings concerned how to respond to a draft pamphlet FGC is developing for meetings wishing to make known their welcoming of LGBTQ Friends and seekers. We appreciated this intent, but many considerations were voiced, like, how could a single tract accurately reflect all meetings when they stand at many different places along the welcoming path? An ad hoc committee recommended that we invite FGC to engage in a broader dialog with us before moving ahead with this pamphlet.

We also prayerfully considered our response to an epistle concerning certain events at two Friends United Meeting gatherings in recent years. In October 2006 the FUM General Board of North America resolved “to have the conversations necessary to resolve our differences over GLBT personhood and ministry.” This is a major opening. However, the reaction to even the possibility of such discussions from many Africans, at the February 2007 General Board meeting in Kenya, was virulent. The author of this epistle felt that, because they had learned about the October resolution only weeks before, we were hearing a “gut reaction”. We asked how we, a faith community based on radical love, can live out that love in these circumstances. One response was made the next morning, knowing the great suffering of Friends and others from violence which erupted after the recent elections in Kenya: we unified on making an unconditional donation for sufferings to the Kenyan FUM office of \$1000 from our own Fund for Sufferings; an additional \$600 was added by passing the hat.

Evenings were spent in the gym, in games around the fireside, at a “Minnesota Barn Dance” with live music, and a show given by Evalyn Parry, “Queer, Quaker, and Canadian!” We left feeling filled and renewed. Some of us extended the joy by singing together old gospel songs on the long ride back to the airport.

Our 2009 Midwinter will be held in Portland, Oregon, and “it is anticipated that” the 2011 event will be held in North Carolina!

Friends World Committee for Consultation

SAYMA’s representatives to Friends World Committee on Consultation (FWCC) have had a very busy year. There was the Triennial in Dublin in August of 2007, a southeast regional gathering in Jamaica, and the annual meeting of the Section of the Americas in Indiana this spring. Since our last yearly meeting, FWCC has celebrated the 70th Anniversary of its founding and has completed a major fund raising campaign.

Tim Lamm, one of the representatives, serves as the clerk of the Southeast Region. Sallie Prugh, the other representative, is on the Youth Committee.

Dublin Triennial

The Triennial took place at the Kings Hospital School, just outside Dublin, with the theme of “Finding the Prophetic Voice for our Time”. Both Sallie and Tim attended. There were over 300 Friends from 52 countries attending. Each day there were several opportunities to participate in the various styles of Quaker Worship. There were seven plenary speakers who spoke on their ideas of what the prophetic voice of Quakers was or could be. There were business sessions. One of the major issues was changing the bylaws so that there would no longer be meeting every 3 years; rather they would be held at least every 5 years. The next session will be in conjunction with the World Gathering of Friends in Kenya in 2012. There were six working groups: HIV/AIDS, Young Friends, Violence, Environmental concerns, Human Rights, and Outreach. Interested attenders met in these groups several times during the week. There were also special interest groups which met

to discuss various topics. Each day we gathered in small “worship and sharing” groups where we were able to find common ground with people from all over the world and from all branches of the Religious Society of Friends. The final evening was a 70th birthday party with much joyful music and several skits. The weather was mostly rainy and cold (a treat in August after our dry hot summer) except for the one day excursion, which was sunny and pleasant. The Triennial was an inspiration and an experience in increased understanding and appreciation of both our differences and our similarities.

Jamaica Gathering

Twenty-two Quakers from the US travelled to Jamaica January 2-6, 2008 for the southeast regional gathering. Tim and Carol Lamm and Maureen Flannery from Berea Meeting and Jane Goldthwaite from Celo were the attendees from our yearly meeting. About 25 Jamaican Friends and associates attended various sessions of the gathering, plus 22 U.S. Friends. All six yearly meetings in the southeast region were represented.

We had many opportunities to sing and worship together. Mary Langford, a long-time Jamaican Friend and author of a book on the history of Friends in Jamaica, delivered an interesting talk on the origins of Jamaica Yearly Meeting in the missionary work of Iowa Friends (FUM). Moira Morgan, a British ex-pat living in Kingston, gave an inspiring talk about her work with the street gangs of that city. Friends Susan and Darrell Hefte from Miami presented a short workshop on non-violent conflict resolution from their work with the Alternatives to Violence Project. We spent a full day touring nearby Quaker churches and meetings and enjoyed a wonderful meal of local cuisine prepared by the Highgate Meeting.

Although there were a number of logistical and scheduling problems, and the hot water did not always work, it was a valuable experience in getting to know and understand our Quaker neighbors in Jamaica.

Indiana Gathering

April 3-6, FWCC Section of the Americas met at Waycross Episcopal Conference Center in Morgantown, Indiana in the southern part of the state, and spring was just beginning. Both Tim and Sallie were able to attend. The focus of the gathering was from Romans 14:19: “So then, let us be always seeking the ways which lead to peace and the ways in which we can support one another.” Our worship sharing groups focused on queries about inner peace, peace in our communities and peace in the world. One evening we had a wonderful, funny but informative skit about the varieties of Quakers in the Indiana/Ohio area – Wilburites, Hicksites, Gurneyites, Evangelicals, Conservatives---with Friends portraying these groups rising up and then literally falling down and some not knowing where they belonged. There were business meetings of the whole section and regional meetings. There continue to be financial worries for the section, even though the financial campaign has been quite successful. Two staff positions have been eliminated and new ways of doing business have been proposed. The gathering next year (March 2009) will be in Seattle and in 2010 in Honduras. The final evening Rachel Stacey of Baltimore Yearly Meeting and a recent graduate of Earlham spoke of convergent friends and of new ways of thinking and worshipping in small groups meeting away from established churches and meeting houses. As always, gathering together, meeting old friends and making new ones, singing and worshipping, listening and sharing both broadens and makes more clear our faith.

---submitted by Sallie Prugh and Tim Lamm