

Attachment C Committee and Officers Reports

- Ministry and Nurture Committee
- Personnel Committee
- SAYF Steering Committee

Ministry and Nurture Committee

The following persons have served as members of SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee for this year: Beth Ensign, Atlanta Monthly Meeting, Bob McGahey, Celso, Edie Patrick, Foxfire, Jane Goldthwait, Celso, Judy Guerry, Huntsville, Kristi Estes, Memphis/Oxford, Mary Kedl, West Knoxville, Nancy Whitt, Birmingham, Perry Treadwell, Atlanta, Thais Carr, Nashville, and Tim Lamm, Berea.

Members of M&N have included the following activities as areas of growth or areas holding particular importance during this year:

- *Reflecting individually and as a gathered committee on the State of the Meeting Reports, a process that has helped us to know more about Spirit at work in the life of monthly meetings and worship groups.
- *Creating together the first State of the Yearly Meeting Report for SAYMA, appreciating the efforts by monthly meetings to get their reports to us in a timely fashion and weaving together the themes that were lifted up in those Reports. (Report attached)
- *Joining with Friends in Athens, Georgia, Cookeville, Tennessee, and Greenville, South Carolina, for times of worship and fellowship, appreciating the gifts of hospitality provided in Friends' homes and meeting places.
- *Giving support to Representatives meetings through sustained listening and holding the clerks' table in the Light.
- *Coming to know both M&N Committee members and Friends in SAYMA monthly meetings on different and deeper levels.
- *Appreciating giving and receiving support for clearness within the M&N Committee.
- *Helping to develop and to season queries for Yearly Meeting, working with the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee.
- *Appreciating Mary Ann Downey's joining us in our meeting in Athens to share about her ministry among Friends in Lake Erie Yearly Meeting and Ceal Wutka's sharing with us in Cookeville, about her spiritual growth through the School of the Spirit.

With the three monthly meetings named above, SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee has enjoyed intervisitation with 13 monthly meetings and four worship groups since adopting our new format in fall, 2004. We are truly grateful to be among Friends in SAYMA. We welcome opportunities to be with Friends in their home communities in the year to come.

Gratefully,
Judy Guerry, Clerk

State of the Yearly Meeting

Ministry and Nurture Committee of SAYMA recognizes that our Meeting life is grounded in and illumined by Spirit. Spirit is the basis of our community life and it is Spirit which impels us into our search for peace and justice within our broader communities of town, region and the world. In our prayerful reading of State of the Meeting Reports by Monthly Meetings, we recognize that the core of our personal and meeting lives is Spirit-led community. We looked for elements across meeting reports that develop this kind of community and that challenge it.

One element that fosters a stable community is adequate housing for the meeting. Friends find that the process of finding or developing housing can be challenging, but working through the challenges in an open, prayerful manner brings Friends into deeper fellowship. Appropriate housing not only enhances the life of present attenders but may lead to new participants in the life of the meeting. On the other hand, meetings which have major distractions or must keep moving suffer both in the quality of worship and loss of attenders. Friends unite through working together in upkeep of the house and grounds and through creative activities, such as planting community gardens.

Friends also build community through experiences of joy and sorrow at special moments in the lives of Friends. Clearness for new members, graduations and birthdays, marriages, and memorial services offer shared joy and sadness as we celebrate each other and share the heights and depths of our spiritual beings. Nurturing those who are ill, seeing each other through family difficulties, and sharing other challenges of life allow us to share and to know each other “in that which is eternal.” In blessing each other we ourselves are blessed.

From time to time Friends are called upon to face conflicts within our own meetings. We find that these are best resolved through open and honest discussion, while remaining mindful of the Light within each of us. We recognize that active listening and seeking to hear each other at the deepest possible level aids in reconciling us, even though disagreements may remain. We recognize that Spirit-led listening leads to discernment and clarity--a gift we give each other and the wider community.

Friends are called into community and through community into action. Friends recognize that in order to remain committed to each other to wage peace effectively and to work for justice, we need Spiritual sustenance. Friends enrich their spiritual lives in various ways, including study of works by Quakers and others, worship sharing, small group interactions, shared meals, and by working together toward common goals. We found that an especially effective way of developing a deepening the spiritual life of the meeting is through retreats, the fulcrum of meeting our spiritual needs and reaching out to the needs of the world.

Friends place a high priority on developing and enriching the spiritual lives of our children and youth. Much care is given to sharing of Quaker values through regular First Day lessons, through fostering activities which help children bond, through intergenerational activities, and retreats. Ministry and Nurture also recognizes that it is important for isolated Friends, who often attend small meetings to be given opportunities through scholarships and other means to attend the annual SAYMA gathering as well as meetings of other Wider Quaker Organizations and much is accomplished by inter-visitation among Friends whether informally or through workshops or other learning experiences.

Ministry and Nurture notes that challenges of decision making, especially during Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, are best met when the principle of worship is maintained throughout the meeting and when Friends remember that the purpose of all of our deliberation is to seek the Truth through leadings of the Spirit.

All of our meetings are active in peace, social justice or environmental issues in various ways. Many, particularly the smaller meetings, do not have committees designated for this work; rather the meeting supports the work of individuals or acts as committee of the whole. Other meetings have Peace and Social Concerns committees or committees devoted to particular issues.

The Spirit is leading Friends to address problems of hunger and homelessness, needs of immigrants, peace education, capital punishment and other peace and justice issues. Many meetings are actively working to “green” their meeting houses and to promote conservation and environmentally friendly products and practices within their membership and neighborhoods. Children and youth often find these projects engaging and learn Quaker values through hands-on involvement.

Seeking to multiply our influence and learn from others, many meetings engage in cooperative efforts with other religious and activist groups. Some meetings participate in interfaith peace councils or other such organizations; other meetings join local churches in sponsoring events on an ad hoc basis. Resources from AFSC and FCNL are frequently found useful.

Outreach, in the sense of conscious effort to inform the wider community of our existence and values, seems to be getting more emphasis in recent years. Several meetings have used or are thinking about using FGC-sponsored Quaker Quest. Friends are using web sites, Facebook and other tools of electronic communication more effectively. Holding open forums or film fests around particular issues are another way to reach a wider audience, including those who might wish to join with us in our meetings. Working cooperatively with other groups provides opportunities to let our Light shine.

Ministry and Nurture sees in all these diverse efforts the action of the Spirit weaving the thread of community to bind our hearts together in loving relationships with each other and the world.

Personnel Committee

The SAYMA Personnel Committee has the privilege of being involved with the Yearly Meeting’s two part-time employees. Therese Hildebrand is the Administrative Assistant for SAYF and operates from her home in Berea, KY. She is supported and supervised by the SAYF Steering Committee. The SAYMA Administrative Assistant, Liz Perch, works from her home in Savannah, GA. She is supervised by the Yearly Meeting clerk.

This committee processes employee evaluations, pay recommendations and job descriptions and is presently working on bringing this work up-to-date. We also follow-up on employee needs as appropriate.

We are definitely blessed by the employees we have – by their expertise, experience and the care with which they hold us. We are very, very grateful.

Recommendation: The Personnel Committee recommends that the Yearly Meeting arrange for a credit card to be obtained for the SAYMA Administrative Assistant for the purpose of making purchases directly related to the work of the Yearly Meeting.

Rationale: The Administrative Asst. has increasingly been taking on work previously done by yearly meeting committees such as printing and distributing advanced programs and registration material, the newsletter and *Faith and Practice* material. The expense of this work should be directly billed to SAYMA and not covered by the employee’s personal credit. We appreciate that she has been willing to carry this expense thus far, but we find that it is not a reasonable or appropriate arrangement for any employee.

Details: It is recommended that the treasurer and employee arrange for a credit card to be issued, with monthly bills directed to the SAYMA treasurer. It is also recommended that a \$1000 cap be set, with future adjustments set by the finance committee. Monthly receipts and expense accounting will continue to be sent to the treasurer in a timely manner.

We recognize that the expenditures may be monitored online by the treasurer should the cap amount be reached and early payments may be made.

Submitted by Kristi Estes, Personnel Committee clerk

[Subsequent action on this recommendation: The SAYMA Clerk recommended that the Finance Committee season this request and forward a recommendation to the Yearly Meeting. The Personnel Clerk met with the Finance Committee. They were in unity with this proposal but recommended a credit limit of \$2000. They felt that appropriate and adequate fiscal controls were in place for this. This would also prevent having to make adjustments for foreseeable expenditures. They also requested that the Personnel Clerk present this to Yearly Meeting as part of her report. This was done at Yearly Meeting sessions 2009.added by Kristi Estes]

SAYF Steering Committee

Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) had another successful year. We hosted 7 retreats during the past year. Six have been completed and the 7th occurs in June at our SAYMA gathering. For the 6 completed retreats, we have averaged 40 Young Friends (YF) per retreat with 81 different teens coming to at least one retreat during the past year. Some Young Friends attended all 6 retreats and others attended one. Details of each retreat are summarized below. Five retreats this year were held at Meetinghouses, and for the sixth, we returned to Old Greer House in Tennessee.

We also held two joint Nurturing and Steering Committee retreats and those too are detailed below.

SAYF Retreats:

1. Atlanta Meetinghouse Retreat September 19-21, 2008

Theme: Healthy Mind Body and Spirit

of YFs 44

of full-time FAPs* 8

(*Friendly Adult Presence)

Activities included trust games, a silent walk to a park, small group workshops at the park and a healing circle centering on the death of Lilli Manis.

2. Asheville Meetinghouse Retreat October 10-12, 2008

Theme: Listening

of YFs 41

of full-time FAPs 7

Activities included a compassionate listening workshop, chi gong, a concert by Jon Watts and a contra dance in the evening.

3. W. Knoxville Meetinghouse Retreat November 7-9, 2008

Theme: Looking Deeper

of YFs 35

of full-time FAPs 8 (plus 1 FAP in training)

Activities included workshop on looking deeper at our cultural advertising, a silent walk looking deeply at nature, Meeting for Business, an evening of singing.

4. Atlanta Meetinghouse Retreat

January 16- 18, 2009

Theme: Spiritual Journey

of YFs 46

of FAPs 7 (plus 1 FAP in training)

Activities included: a creative time workshop, a workshop on stories of hope and peace, Quaker membership (discerning as a YF to become a Quaker).

5. Nashville Meetinghouse Retreat

March 6 -8, 2009

Theme: Embracing Spirituality

of YFs 28

of full time FAPs 6 (plus 2 FAPs in training)

Activities included a walk to Centennial Park on a beautiful sunny day, a drumming circle while there on the steps of the Parthenon with many other park goers joining in.

6. Old Greer House Retreat

April 3-5, 2009

Theme: Nurturing Spirituality

of YFs 43

of full time FAPs 8

Activities included: a workshop on clerking, a fish bowl activity on being a SAYF nurturer, a meeting for worship with thought to the past year and to Bonnie Hardie (it was her last retreat) and plenty of outdoor time.

Nurturing/Steering/Oversight Committees Retreats

1. Black Mountain, NC

Swannanoa Valley Meetinghouse

August 22- 24, 2008

of Nurturing Committee Members 6

of Steering Committee Members 9

We reviewed what went well with SAYF at Yearly Meeting in June and noted changes that we wished to make for the upcoming year. We looked at the letters that we send to parents and to Monthly Meetings, and made some changes to them. We updated the first aid kit. We considered ways to improve Steering Committee communications during this next year. We developed a plan for maintaining our growing archives that Therese will implement over the course of the next year.

2. Knoxville, TN

W. Knoxville Meetinghouse

February 20-22, 2009

of Nurturing Committee Members 5

of Steering Committee Members 7 (plus 2 guests)

We planned for the SAYF program at our next Yearly Meeting. We developed our calendar of retreats for the 2009 -2010 year. We looked at incidents that occurred during previous retreats trying to discern what we can learn from those incidents and what changes (if any) needed to be made. We spent some time asking ourselves how we were doing as FAPs at retreats..