

Friendly Notes

Santa Monica Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

November, 2015

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Advices and Queries — Vocal Ministry

Queries

How do I discern when to speak and when not to speak?

How do we encourage Friends to allow ample time to absorb the previous message before speaking?

Advices

If you feel moved to speak, take a moment to test your leading. Is your message from the Spirit, or somewhere else? If it is from God, is it meant only for yourself, or for the entire Meeting? Genuine ministry is often preceded by a physical uneasiness, a “heart pounding weakness”, from which our name Quaker is derived. Remember that silence is not just the space between messages, but a deep and living communion with

the “spirit which gives life”. ...

Allow adequate time between spoken messages, so that all may listen to God, and truly hear the previous message.

Vocal ministry is not based on a desire or inclination to speak, but on the persistent sense that one is being compelled to rise and allow the Spirit to use their heart and mind to speak aloud. Vocal ministry, then, is not a person’s own thoughts and words, but those of the Spirit giving itself a voice through the speaker. For this reason no Friend should come to meeting for worship with either the intention to speak or not to speak.

— *Baltimore Yearly Meeting
Faith and Practice*

Upcoming Events:

- ◆ Dec. 6, 2015: Adult Education: Practices of Clerking with Cynthia Cuza,
- ◆ Jan. 3, 2016: Adult Education: Gretchen Woelfle reports about her recent work in Africa
- ◆ Jan. 17, 2016; 8:30 a.m.: Adult Education: Kim O'Brien leads discussion about David Johnson's [A Quaker Prayer Life](#)
- ◆ March 19, 2016 (Saturday): Adult Education: Diego Navarro, incoming PYM Clerk, leads workshop about leadings and Quaker process

Contributions to Friendly Notes

Friendly Notes welcomes submissions by Friends. A quotation, poem or short essay that speaks to you in your spiritual journey, or something that you have written yourself, can enrich others seeking the Light. Please give a copy to the Editor, Friendly Notes, by email (rebeccatillberg@yahoo.com) or in written form at Meeting.



Minutes - October 11, 2015

Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business

Attending: Jonathan Slakey, Wendy Christensen, Michael Loeser, Shelley Blank, Curtis Raynor, Gail Thomas, Brian Johnston, Stan Searl, Henry Yang, Rebecca Searl, Fred Buell, Kim O'Brien, Grant Ramey, Richard Shaw, Alice Burston, Donna Buell, Ann Fuller, Jan Bartholomew, Grayson Schick, Joann Taylor, Cathleen Loeser, Cindy Waite, Donna Cooper, Kate Watkins-Shaw.

Meeting began in silent worship on queries related to worship and Friends' decision making. A Friend said that the inner seed helps us to be together and stand up to power, and that money threatens to overcome our country.

Peace and Social Action – Curtis Raynor reporting.

1) Curtis read and distributed a proposed Minute, relating that a member had approached the Peace and Social Action Committee with a concern in April, asking us to join others in recognition of the anniversary of the Armenian genocide in the face of non-acknowledgement by Turkey of responsibility. In committee, Peace and Social Action took this seed and made it larger in scope; coming to see that understanding the human proclivity to de-humanize others could have value for us, in identifying and rooting it out in ourselves, and then in engaging our community on different levels to become agents of change. In clarification of a Friend's question, Curtis said that the minute commits us to see if we are led to action; no particular action is implied in the minute. By examining the de-humanizing of the other, which is contrary to our testimony of meeting that of God in every one, victim or aggressor, we can transform ourselves, and then work at different levels to help enlarge the human family. Friends noted that a statement from Santa Monica Meeting could be made in different contexts, for example, Pacific

Francis, to our larger Quaker organizations. AFSC, QUNO (Quaker United Nations Organization), FCLCA and FCNL do not have specific statements relating to genocide. Appreciation was expressed for P&SA's process in moving a personal concern to a community, global concern.

10-15-01 Meeting is in unity supporting the following Minute:

2015 is the centennial of the Armenian genocide, in which as many as 1.5 million men, women and children died. The anniversary of this tragedy, one in a long train of horrors visited on one people by another, serves as a call to people of faith.

What can we do, as individuals and as a spiritual society, to challenge the dehumanizing of one group of people by another? How can we confront an oppressor's justifications for violence against the "other"? Humanity's very existence may depend on the answers.

Quakers have a deep understanding that fear and hatred can be transformed by love and compassion. First, we can look into our own hearts and confront the fears and prejudices we have imbibed from our culture. Then, we can look at the history and institutions of our own society, and engage on the local, state, national, and international levels, with love and humility. Let us look to issues such as the economic well-being of our neighbors, examining laws that promote disparity rather than equality, and confronting aggressors without dehumanizing them.

We can gain strength from our Quaker community as we discern where and how to engage. We gain strength from each other as we do what we can, individually and collectively, to shape a more inclusive, equitable and peaceful world.

2) Curtis distributed copies of the survey of members and attenders' active involvement in peace and social justice activities. The survey also asks Friends to identify which focus issues of the larger Quaker organiza-

tions speak to them the most strongly. Friends will be able to state whether they want their activities to be shared with others or not. Wendy Christensen has made the survey available online; the address will be sent out on the list serve. Printed copies will also be available. In response to a Friend's question about "political" involvement, Curtis noted that the survey is to be used for our education in the meeting community.

3) In response to a Friend's concern with poverty as a unifying and underlying issue, a sub-committee has been formed to work with this Friend and bring their discernment back to the Peace and Social Action Committee.

Nominating Committee – Stan Searl brought forward for the first time Jan Bartholomew on Finance Committee, and Alan Aymie on Fellowship. Any concerns can be brought to Stan, Donna Cooper or Judith Searle.

Alice Herman Fund Committee – Alice Burston read and distributed copies of an amended statement of guidelines for Enrichment Grants. The Clerk sensed enthusiastic support.

10-15-02 Meeting approves the following guidelines for the Alice Herman Fund enrichment grants.

Worship and Ministry – Stan Searl reviewed the Meeting Retreat, beginning with the hymn "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds". In small worship groups, Friends thought deeply together about committee process and meeting for business, using handouts from Arthur Larrabee's workshop at the Quaker Center. Stan read from the handout "The Role of Those Present", emphasizing the importance of speaking and then releasing a message, to listening with the inner as well as the outer ear, to holding an attitude

of curiosity rather than judgement, to be teachable. Appreciation was expressed to the many Friends who worked on the Retreat.

Stan asked for Friends to help re-institute the practice of wearing name tags to welcome newcomers and to help elders and others who have difficulty remembering names. It was suggested that Friends check the box at rise of meeting to see if they have a name tag. A Friend suggested keeping inactive members in a separate place, but not discarding them. A Friend suggested that the greeter could hand them out. Cathleen and Rick Shaw were led to make a pocket chart instead of a box. Friends also were in support of making names and pictures available; Michael Loeser agreed that Children's Education and the older children would work on that. The Clerk sensed a larger issue around being welcoming and inviting to newcomers, and referred this to Worship and Ministry for reflection and discernment.

The Clerk called for silent worship.

Minutes from the July 12, 2015 called meeting for business were read and approved.

Minutes from the September 13, 2015 meeting for business were read and approved, with the addition that Rebecca Searl was in attendance, that Richard Shaw reported for House Committee, and that the minutes were recorded as 07, rather than the correct 09. In the section on Pastoral Care, Judith Searle's name was misspelled. The note that meeting approves inviting PYM Rep Comm to hold their meeting at Santa Monica should have been recorded as Minute 09-15-06. Recording Clerk requested a copy editor, and a Friend volunteered to help. Approval of the section on House Com-

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mittee was held over for the next meeting; since there was lack of clarity about several Friends standing aside from the minute approving the Letter of Intent.

Meeting closed in silent worship.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Watkins-Shaw, Clerk
Ann Fuller, Recording Clerk

May We Recommend from the Library

The Peaceable Kingdom

Book I of Jan de Hartog's Quaker Trilogy

This historical novel is about the founding of Quakerism. I learned more about Quaker spirituality from this book than I have from dozens of nonfiction books on the topic. This book is largely the reason that the author was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature.

- Don McCormick, Previous Clerk, Library Committee

is the difference between a testimony and a concern? What about problems people have with the peace testimony? What do you do about actual conflict in the world?

Disc 3: The Quaker Business Method. *What is meant when it is said that business meeting is held in the context of workshop? Finding the sense of the meeting. What does that mean? Membership.*

- Don McCormick, Previous Clerk, Library Committee

You and the Quaker Tradition

Woodbrooke Study Center, U.K.

This is an excellent introduction to the basics of Quakerism. It is good for newcomers and for Quakers who have been around the block a time or two. I learn something new every time I listen these recordings.

Disc 1: The Foundation. *What does "centering down" mean? What does "that of God within" mean? Quakers and Christianity.*

Disc 2: Meeting for Worship. *How do you cope when there is a verbal minority that really annoys you? The Testimonies. What is the role of the testimonies in the life of the Society? What*

The People Called Quakers

by
Elton Trueblood

This is the book that led me, after several years, to Quakerism. It paints a beautiful picture of the origins, while being clear about the price Fox and others had to pay. The elements of Quaker practice are laid out and justified clearly. Why no paid clergy? Why silence? Why no oaths? Each element made Quakerism more attractive to me. Trueblood is a true authority and engaging at the same time.

- Gordon Ressler, 2011

Adult Education Program—December 6, 2015

"Practices of Clerking" with Cynthia Cuza

Following-up the October 3rd Retreat, Cynthia will explore various layers of Clerking, including a deepening of worship, the meanings of a sense of the Meeting, the importance of deep listening and a variety of related practices.

Betty Smith Muses

We listened to the dialogue between Pan and Syrinx,
 conversation trembling into the group,
 tentative yet terrible in Pan's goat-like feet
 ecstatic desire for the maiden,
 catching-up with her on the river's edge
 pulsating with goat lust
 as the lovely maiden metamorphosed
 into a bunch of tall slender reeds,
 roots driven into the muck of the river --
 Pan's cries bounced off the cool water
 echoing his abandonment and grief.

Another passion poured out anew
 as Pan shaped still-warm reeds,
 feeling their willowy strength
 to create a pipe to blow into and
 a song flowed out into the sunlight
 filling the river banks
 moaning from the river's edge
 crying longing, loss and joy
 vibrating the hollow reeds in his mouth.

- Stan Searl

Alice Herman Committee Sojourning Fellowships

The Alice Herman Committee (AHC) welcomes written proposals from members and attenders of Santa Monica Meeting for a Sojourning Fellowship. Grants are made for sustained visits of a week or more in situations away from Santa Monica where recipients are led to deepen or refresh their Quaker commitment, and share it with others through their deeds, words, and lives.

Submit your applications well in advance of your sojourn; Quaker process takes time. Our budget is determined early in the calendar year. Though applications are considered at any time, worthy projects submitted toward the end of the year may not be approved due to a dwindling budget.

Please include the following in your proposal:

- Amount of time to be spent away
- Detailed description of activities
- The type of report or presentation you will present to Santa Monica Meeting when you return
- A complete budget for your proposed project and the amount you are requesting from AHC. You are generally asked to assume part of the expense for any sojourn.

Send proposals to the clerk of the AHC Committee.

Santa Monica Monthly Meeting

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<https://www.quakercloud.org/cloud/santa-monica-friends-meeting>



WALK CHEERFULLY OVER THE EARTH ANSWERING THAT OF GOD IN EVERYONE. -George Fox

Contributions to the Meeting

While the Meeting values everyone's contributions of time and energy, it also depends on financial contributions to support its many activities. Please give what you can.

Please make sure your name and street address are on your check, and mark it as 'Donation.'

You may also drop checks in the contributions box in the library area. If you wish to contribute by automatic deposit, please contact the Clerk of Finance Committee.

Mail to:
Santa Monica Meeting
1440 Harvard St.
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