

# Friendly Notes

Santa Monica Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

March, 2016



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## Advices and Queries — Peace

### Queries

(Adapted from AFSC *An introduction to Quaker testimonies*, IMYM and Philadelphia YM Faith and Practice)

- How can I nurture the seeds of peace within myself, my community, and the world? Do I live in the power of that Life and spirit that takes away the occasion of all wars?
- How do I work to settle disputes within the organization and the community with love and sensitivity for all involved?
- How does our Meeting act to advance peace, to oppose violence, and to support the constructive use of authority in our community, our nation, and the world?

### Advices

When we are in accord with God and centered in ourselves, the earth, and all others, we move toward peace. True peace is obtainable only through unity in the life of the Spirit.

In all human life there exists a Light that can lay open the spirit to what is Divine, the source of our being. Because this Light is a sacred reality, and because it exists in everyone, we have embraced an abiding witness against killing, even

for the sake of peace. Our peace testimony arises out of an awareness that even though it may sometimes seem hidden away, the spirit of God is alive in all of us. The source of peace is peace within. Intermountain Yearly Meeting

The peace testimony is about deeds not creeds; not a form of words but a way of living. It is the cumulative lived witness of generations of Quakers...The peace testimony is not about being nice to people and living so that everyone likes us...The peace testimony is a tough demand that we should not automatically accept the categories, definitions and priorities of the world. We look to the Spirit, rather than to prescriptive hypothetical statements. The peace testimony, today, is seen in what we do, severally and together, with our lives. London Yearly Meeting, 1993.

A good end cannot sanctify evil means; nor must we ever do evil, that good may come of it...Let us try then what love will do: for if men did once see we love them, we should soon find they would not harm us. Force may subdue, but Love gains: and he that forgives first, wins the laurel. William Penn, 1693

## 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](mailto:rebeccatillberg@yahoo.com)) or in written form at Meeting.



## Minutes - February 14, 2016

Attending: Richard Chamberlain, Stan Searl, Debbie, Gail Thomas, Tim Vreeland, Judith Searle, Shay McAttee, Maria Manetta, Shelley Blank, Rebecca Searl, Kim O'Brien, Grant Ramey, Henry Yang, Karsten van Sander, Diana van Sander, Celia Carroll, Curtis Raynor, Cynthia Waite, Donna Cooper, Brian Johnston, Cristine Reynaert, Richard Shaw, Carol Tantau, Wendy Christensen, Kate Watkins-Shaw, Ann Fuller

Meeting began in silent worship on queries about Unity. Friends spoke to the individual connection with Spirit, which is tested and refined through all of us listening together; to the challenge of bringing our authentic character to meeting. Each of us has a different piece of the truth.

**Pastoral Care** – Celia Carroll distributed a draft of a long-needed form setting out Friends' instructions for health care and final affairs. The committee based the form on Pacific Yearly Meeting's, but with more attention to privacy. A copy will be kept on file at the meetinghouse and it is suggested that Friends keep a copy at their home, and discuss it with family. Maintaining and updating will be under the care of Pastoral Care. Approval of the form will be held over, and it will be posted on the list serve. Questions and comments can be made to Celia or Carol Tantau. A Friend expressed appreciation for bringing this to fruition.

**Worship and Ministry** – Stan Searl read advices and queries on the annual State of the Meeting Report and distributed copies for worship. Each meeting in the Quarterly produces a report on the spiritual health of their meeting, which are read at the Spring gathering in April. Everyone's input to our report is valued – long time member or attendee or newcomer. The report covers up to the present, rather than the year 2015 alone.

Friends spoke to the Queries: How does Spirit dwell in our Meeting?, How does our Meeting support our spiritual growth? and, What are our hopes and concerns as we move forward?

Santa Monica has followed good process based on Quaker experience, which has deepened our spiritual experience. Individual Friends take self-examination seriously, resulting in inspiring words and action. Vocal ministry has become more focussed after workshops on e.g., clerking. A Friend found Santa Monica to be a fun place to be, not set in its ways, with a variety of people coming and going; others' searching helps this Friend to learn. Different philosophies animate our gatherings; what brings us together is coming to worship in this spiritual home. Outreach by Worship and Ministry to committees has facilitated a deeper sense of the work of committees. In considering new renters, we have come to define ourselves as a community in relation to a place. A Friend mentioned the value of supporting attendance at workshops at Quaker Center. Friends can contact Stan Searl with additional thoughts.

The Role of Santa Monica Meeting Clerk was read and distributed for approval. This statement has been well-seasoned in committee, and was informed by Arthur Larabee's workshop at Quaker Center, and his materials. Pacific Yearly Meeting's Faith and Practice does not have a detailed statement; each meeting reaches its own sense of the clerk's role. A Friend noted the importance of this statement appearing on our website for those unfamiliar with Quaker process. A Friend noted what a clerk is not – a pastor, preacher or spiritual leader. The Clerk has no special role in weekly meeting for worship. Friends suggested adding that the Clerk is a member of the meeting and serves for three years. The Clerk sensed that time is needed to discern this statement; approval will be held over for the next meeting for business, and it will be published on the list serve. Responses can be directed to Stan or Cynthia Cuza.

**Peace and Social Action** – Brian Johnston reported that a sub-committee on income inequality has been meeting, testing whether income inequality is a Spirit led concern of Santa Monica meeting.

The concern was initiated by Tim Vreeland's leading; a clearness committee has been working with Tim. Tim spoke to his strong belief that income inequality is as important an issue as slavery was to Quakers. Friends spoke to the timeliness of this issue, and its importance in relation to many social ills from education to political process and environmental degradation.

02-16-01 Santa Monica meeting supports Tim Vreeland's leading as a spiritual calling, and we are in agreement as a meeting to provide him support in the form of a spiritual accountability committee.

The Clerk called for silent worship.

Brian read and distributed a minute developed in the sub-committee (see attached). A concern was raised that people of wealth were being vilified as individuals, and that Friends do not identify groups of people as "other." A Friend spoke as a labor leader and noted that there are no heroes, no villains, everyone is a victim of income inequality. A Friend said that when we can walk with people who we hate and think are violent and evil, then we are leading. We can be a voice for the voiceless without vilification, based on facts. We can focus on the elders and children in poverty, because they are the ones we care about. The Clerk tested her sense that this issue speaks to us deeply as a community of Friends and that there is support for the minute and the spirit underlying it. Concern is with language in the second paragraph. The minute was sent back to the committee for refinement. A Friend noted that meeting has not yet experienced a corporate concern, and we are moving toward that.

The Clerk tested Friends willingness to stay for the rest of the agenda, and we took a five minute stretch.

**Finance Committee** – Richard Chamberlain distributed reports on 1) 2015 year, with pages on House expenses and contributions made to other organizations, and 2) the budget proposed for 2016. In 2015, we took in less than budgeted in contributions by members and attenders, but had a 50% increase in rental income. Committees spent less than budgeted, and we ended the year with a

\$3732 surplus. A possible underpayment to Western Friend and Friends Journal will be checked with the book-keeper. Meeting approved using the surplus to pay that if necessary. Contributions to the Inter-Religious Council and the Southern California Ecumenical Council have been made, but are referred back to Peace and Social Action for recommendations for the 2016 budget. Richard noted that the budget assumes that we do not have a new tenant; a new budget will be prepared if we do rent to The Activity Place. The Finance Committee only received budgets from four of the eleven committees; other amounts have been estimated. Richard answered several specific questions about rentals and payments from The Activity Place.

02-16-02 The attached 2016 budget is approved

Richard distributed forms for Vanco automatic payments.

**Ad Hoc Lease Committee** – Carol Tantau reported that there is terrific energy in the committee. Carol read a minute approving The Activity Place's application for a conditional use application to find out how current plans conform to special regulations for a preschool. This is a first step, and does not commit the meeting to anything further. The committee will meet with the prospective tenants on February 21.

02-16-03 Meeting authorizes the Clerk of Meeting to co-sign with The Activity Place a Conditional Use Permit Application to the City of Santa Monica for use of the premises as a preschool or day care center, subject to prior approval by the Ad Hoc Lease Committee and confirmation that a Conditional Use Permit does not bind Meeting in any way to proceed with the signing of a lease.

**Nominating Committee** – Stan Searl brought forward Gail Thomas for final approval on the Library and Adult Education committees. Meeting approves.

Reading of the Minutes from the January were deferred to the March meeting for business.

The meeting closed with silent worship.

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

## State of the Meeting Report for 2015 DRAFT

**W**e pray to be spirit-led Quakers, imbibing the powerful faith of the Inner Light, “that Spirit dwelling in us, the Light and the Lord” as one Friend said. We have felt a flowing energy from the Divine to welcome new visitors, attenders and members of our community. “I love the new people, floating in and out, a life of constant change,” observed one member. We are always in the process of becoming, attracting new people, and celebrating our strong sense of community. We happily welcome four new members this year.

We are thankful for our community’s vitality and energy. This year we renewed our attention to Quaker process, which has re-vitalized our committees and created a more active, engaged and intentional Meeting. Five friends attended Art Larrabee’s clerking workshop, returning with valuable information –which we have applied -- on the role of the clerk, the importance of listening to the Spirit in Business Meeting and committee work, and how to clerk ourselves. We have encouraged attendance at Meeting for Worship upon the Occasion of Business, with 23-32 attending. Our intentional focus on process and community discernment is allowing us to move toward discerning a corporate witness through the important work of our Peace and Social Action Committee.

Development of the Meeting’s website, led by our Communications Committee, prompted us to review and in some cases develop ‘job descriptions’ for each committee. This helped us take a closer look at what each committee does and how well they are functioning.

We appreciate the dynamic Adult Education Committee’s work, open to how the Spirit works through us to teach and learn together, listening to guidance from the Inner Teacher. We are grateful for our Children’s Education Committee and appreciate the gifts of our teachers, particularly in reaching out to our young teens, as well as the babies and toddlers. We are thankful for our Committee that organizes

sandwich making for the homeless, for our dynamic Committees for Fellowship, Pastoral Care, Finance, Fellowship and the Alice Herman Committee.

Our Meeting supported a flourishing poetry as ministry leading and is offering support for a new leading about income inequality and poverty. These leadings reflect a deeply felt spiritual integration between being called by the Divine as a conduit for the Spirit and enacting such a calling through a clearness oversight process by which the community creates a spiritual vessel for these leadings. Spirit and action are unified. One Friend commented: “We have a place where we can seek out and teach others and encourage them, support the individual leadings of each other.”

About 40-55 Friends attend Meeting for Worship each Sunday, including a growing number of young families and children. We continue to work toward a more centered Meeting for Worship, addressing the challenge of our open, somewhat porous meeting-house space. We strive to help the Meeting settle and to minimize distractions and the sometimes noisy unsettled qualities of worship. We pray for loving guidance that Friends will search themselves to come to worship with hearts and minds prepared, to enter on time with a sense of calm, holding the silence and stillness, praying to deepen our silent worship together.

We reached a major decision with thoughtful Spiritual discernment to enter negotiations with a new potential renter. This represents both challenges and opportunities to meet the needs of our potential tenant while preserving the Spiritual sanctity of our Meeting Room.

The Meeting bought an annual pass to the Ben Lomond Center and gave assistance, including full scholarships for first-time attenders, to attend the annual session of Pacific Yearly Meeting. These efforts have strengthened our wider Quaker connections and extended our understanding of what it means to be a Quaker. In all of these initiatives, we remain open to the Divine, praying for guidance and focused upon spiritually informed ways of doing business and making decisions.

## Early History of the Santa Monica Meeting

### Part 2 - The Buying and the Fundraising

By Curtis Raynor

In 1956, with an eye towards a future time when the meeting could have its own home, Edith Sperry and Marianna Read combined their money and bought two adjacent lots on Harvard St. The purchase price of 1440-1442 Harvard Street, on which stood a duplex, was about \$16,000. 1444 Harvard was an avocado grove with a small cottage in the back. Its selling price was about \$13,000. Edith and Marianna paid \$7000 as a down payment, the balance to be paid off within 12 years, at \$200 a month. The tenants of the duplex and of the cottage were each paying about \$65 a month rent.

In the Sept 1958 Meeting for Business, having spent a year considering different options, the meeting made the decision to adopt a specific plan of action. The meeting would buy the two lots from Edith and Marianna, at the same price that they had paid for it. This would have to happen in stages, as money became available. But the initial plan was to first buy the 1444 lot, with the avocado grove and cottage, and when that was paid off, to build a modest \$15,000 building, with the primary concern being classrooms for the many kids in Sunday School. When further money became available, the 1440-1442 lot with the duplex, would be purchased, which would make possible a future expansion of the building. Marianna Read offered her share in the lots as a gift to the meeting. Edith Sperry was to be repaid on a monthly basis.

A decision having been reached, serious fund raising activities began, some becoming annual events that were to continue for the next several years. Among the many and varied fundraisers were a luncheon at Helms Bakery, rummage sales, candy sales, cake sales, sales of Quaker date books, bazaars, hootenannys and the Topanga Banjo and Fiddle Contest.

Margaret Zumwinkle related how two guitar playing, folk music loving members of our meeting, Margot Slocum and Peg Benepe, created the Topanga Banjo and Fiddle Contest as a means to raise money for our buying-the-land-and-building-the-building-fund. It was held initially at the Topanga Canyon home of members Ian and Jane Thierman, the same (I am told) wonderful property where for many years our meeting had an annual summer picnic. This was the most profitable of the many fundraisers, but as Lee Storey recounted, from her experience with the event in the late 1960's, it was a fundraiser that required the participation of most of the meeting members in order to pull it off. In later years, after the meeting house was built, the proceeds from the event went to the AFSC and other helping organizations.

Jumping ahead a bit in our narrative, once we had our meeting house, Margot Slocum was again helpful in securing needed funds. Margot taught guitar classes through UCLA extension. She was able to use the meeting house as her classroom, and the

room rental fee paid by UCLA went toward our monthly utility and maintenance bills.

Betty Smith remembered spending one day in a kitchen with other members and making 36 apple pies for a bazaar. It was also related that our meeting engaged in a ticket "scalping" fund raiser. The Bay Cities Jewish Center (26th and Santa Monica Blvd) would yearly stage a play and have several performances, as a fundraiser of its own. Our meeting arranged to buy all the tickets, at \$.25 a piece, and sell them to the public at \$.75 a ticket.

Apparently in early 1960, Edith Sperry married Jay Morgan, who lived in San Francisco. In June she resigned as clerk of our meeting, an office she had held for almost all of the preceding 14 years, and moved north. An illness, apparently cancer, that had started to show itself by the Spring of that year, progressed very rapidly and by August she was very weak in body. She died on August 5, 1960. She bequeathed to our meeting the proceeds from the sale of her home at 1907 12th street, about \$32,000. This money, plus the approximately \$19,000 the meeting had been able to raise during the preceding two years, enabled us to buy both lots, and to build a \$50,000 structure large enough for our children's education and worship needs.

Marianna Read, who with Edith had initially purchased the land, and who had given her share as a gift to the meeting, died in January 1962. Neither were to live to see the fruition of what they had initiated, the creation of the meeting's own home.

Betty related how she and Ruth Kennedy were the executors of Edith's estate and had to see to the leasing and eventual sale of the house, as well as helping to look after Edith's parents, who continued to live for a time in a separate structure in the rear of Edith's 1907 12th Street property. It took a couple of years before the \$32,000 was available for the meeting's use, but the knowledge of this bequest allowed our meeting to alter its 1958 three phase, graduated plan of buying and building, and instead to proceed with the larger building that we have today.

In researching our early years, I had been especially curious to learn as much as I could about Edith Grace Sperry. The head librarian at Santa Monica College from 1942 until 1960, she was both practical and intellectual; determined and active, but rather reserved—not one to grab the spotlight of attention. Colin Edward's mother, Mary, who happened to come to meeting for worship on Dec. 2, but couldn't stay for our Adult Ed. discussion, shared with me that as a teenager in the late 1940's and early 1950's, she attended our meeting and was befriended by Edith. Mary had no car, and Edith several times went out of her way to drive Mary to events that without Edith, Mary would have had to miss. The friendship of Edith and our meeting, led to Mary's decision to enroll in a Quaker school, Earlham College in Indiana.

Edith didn't marry until late in life, not until she was 54 years old, and lived for only about 7 months after her marriage. I had wondered if she and her husband had known of her illness, had known that she only had a few months to live. Betty Smith, who had visited the comatose Edith at the hospital in San Francisco shortly before Edith's passing, does not believe that Edith knew of her impending sickness at the time she decided to wed.

## 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

**W**hile 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.  
Santa Monica, CA 90404

