

# Friendly Notes

Santa Monica Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

January 2016



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## Upcoming Events:

- ◆ January 15, 2016 at 8:30 a.m.: Adult Education Reading Group: Rufus Jones, *Essential Writings*
- ◆ January 15 & 29: Quaker Women's Group. Contact Cathleen Loeser for information
- ◆ July 14 to 19: Pacific Yearly Meeting at Walker Creek Ranch. Information will be available in March
- ◆ Visit [quakercenter.org](http://quakercenter.org) for upcoming retreats

## Advices and Queries: Equality and Social Justice

### Queries (from Baltimore Yearly Meeting)

Do we work individually and as a meeting to bring about a just and compassionate society that allows all people to develop their capacities and fosters their desire to serve?

Are we alert to practices in our own country and throughout the world that discriminate against people on the basis of who or what they are, or what they believe?

Do we take the risks that right action demands?

How do I 'speak truth to power' in ways that honor the human dignity of people on all sides of an issue?

### Advices

From the beginning of Quakerism in the 1640s, Friends have been aware that every person is equal in God's eyes. John Woolman spent years convincing Friends and others that slavery was wrong and that people should be paid for their work. Schools were set up by Friends to educate the slave children so that they also might have the opportunity to develop their gifts. In our Meetings for Worship, God's message may be delivered through any person attending that meeting. *Baltimore Yearly Meeting*

In the past, Quakers helped foment vast societal changes by challenging the oppression they saw. Today our voices do not ring as loudly, nor are they as unified when we confront oppression and inequality. *IMYM*

Friends must bear in mind that any perceived inequality gets in the way of relating to that of God in one another.

We are all the poorer for the crushing of one man, since the dimming of the Light anywhere darkens us all. *23.09 BYM*

We need both a deeper spirituality and a more outspoken witness. If our spirituality can reach the depths of authentic prayer, our lives will become an authentic witness for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, a witness which becomes the context for our prayer. Out of the depths of authentic prayer comes a longing for peace and a passion for justice. And our response to violence and injustice is to pray more deeply, because only God can show us the way out of the mess that the world is in. And only God gives us the strength to follow that way. *23.10 BYM*

## 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 ([joannaclinton@gmail.com](mailto:joannaclinton@gmail.com)) or in written form at Meeting.



## Minutes - December 11, 2016

### Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business

Attending: Rachel Fretz, Wendy Christensen, Cindy Waite, Jan Bartholomew, Kristy Moosavi, Mitch Moosavi, Grant Ramey, Henry Yang, Kim O'Brien, Brian Johnston, Dahlia van Gelder, Celia Carroll, Curtis Raynor, Richard Shaw, Carol Tantau, Cristine Reynaert, Cathleen Loeser, Judith Searle, Stan Searl, Ann Fuller, Kate Watkins Shaw

The Clerk read the Advices and Queries: "If we as Quakers want our Quaker approach to faith to be vibrant, cohesive, coherent and socially useful, we need to be clear about what we are and what we are not." *Ben Pink Dandelion*. Worship followed on the queries: "Why do I come to meeting for worship?", "What do I celebrate about Quakerism?", and "What is 'the Quaker Way'?" Friends spoke to the sometimes frustrating process of "looking toward unity" which results in rich answers based on the contributions of everyone. Friends spoke to coming back because this is a safe place, and for the rare and refreshing experience of genuine peace and quiet, inside. Coming to meeting to listen to God spreads and enriches one Friend's life – what is serious is here, not outside.

The Clerk read the agenda, which was accepted.

**Ad Hoc Committee** – C. Tantau reported that the committee met last Sunday and has communicated electronically as well in discerning our legal relationship with My First Place. C. Reynaert described the history, including the Letter of Intent and the payment by MFP of \$1500/month for exclusivity, which was originally intended to be for four to five months, but which has been extended informally. In consideration of Meeting's lack of unity, the concerns of neighbors, and the subsequent appeal of the Conditional Use Permit brought to the Planning Board, Sean and Maria still desire

to move forward, but have proposed that the Exclusivity payments be replaced by a Right of First Refusal. Cristine read the counter letter recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee, and meeting went into worship. It was noted that the matter before us was the letter, not going forward or reaching unity on renting to MFP.

A Friend was concerned that the letter seems to imply unity, and wondered if Sean and Maria truly understand the necessity of the Meeting reaching unity on the project and if the letter reflects our current state with integrity. A Friend stated that the letter is well worded and expresses our lack of unity and our ongoing work with neighbors. The Clerk asked if, by recognizing that we are not in unity about moving forward with MFP, if anyone was led to stand aside or block sending the proposed letter. A Friend suggested that the word "honest" be replaced by "candid".

### 16-12-01 Meeting approves sending the following letter to My First Place:

*Dear Sean and Maria,*

*Thank you for reaching out with your proposal. We are very grateful for the thought and care you've brought to every aspect of this project over these many months. Here is our candid response at this time: the situation with neighbors has caused many in our Meeting to revisit whether this project is an appropriate undertaking (both spiritually and practically). We therefore agree that it makes sense for you to be released from ongoing payments and for our Meeting to be released from exclusivity at this time. We also agree that this does not mean that either side is "giving up" on the project (at least, not until and unless one of us states that clearly). There are also many in our Meeting who are still hopeful that a clearer path forward for the project will emerge.*

*In regard to your request for a right of first refusal, that is not something we can offer in the strict legal sense. By which we mean: because there is so much uncertainty that has yet to be fully resolved (within our Meeting, with*

the appeals process, etc.) we couldn't offer you a binding right of first refusal, whereby – if you elected to trigger that option – we would be wholly committed to moving forward with the project at that time. That being said: we will absolutely let you know if we find ourselves in talks with another potential tenant that move into a meaningful state of negotiation. If, at that time, enough dust has settled all around that you are in a position to suggest, and we are in a position to consider, a proposal for moving forward with MFP, we will of course take that proposal to our Meeting.

Please let us know if you would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Carol Tantau, on behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee

**Worship and Ministry** – S. Searl distributed copies of a minute recommending the formation of a sub-committee, under the care of House Committee, to seek out other renters. Membership on this committee does not imply membership on the House Committee.

Discernment in W&M has been complicated by a diversity of opinions. Stan distributed a packet, also distributed through the listserv, revealing the complexities of renting our space (relevant selections from business meeting notes from October 9, 2016, December 13, 2015, September 13, 2015, and August 30, 2015 and notes from a W&M meeting on October 21, 2016) (attached). W&M is in unity on the importance of the following: being good stewards, being financially responsible, preserving the meetinghouse as sacred space, and that a Friend in Residence is necessary. In response to a Friend's question, Stan clarified that the proposed sub-committee would seek to find out what tenants are available, and W&M will continue to discern guidelines for selecting prospective tenants. In this process, we are coming out of denial about our finances and our community; we have taken the first step on a long journey.

**16-12-02: Meeting approves the formation of a sub-committee under the care of House Committee to seek out other possible renters.**

**C. Raynor stated that he is willing to serve, and Friends expressed appreciation for his experience and willingness. The matter was referred to Nominating Committee.**

**Alice Herman Fund** – C. Reynaert gave a history of the Fund and its support of sojourning grants. Given the lessening of applications in recent years, meeting has approved also offering Meeting Enrichment Grants, and the guidelines for such grants. The committee recommends

adding the following language to the Guidelines: "Funding requests should specify the costs associated with transportation, etc., as applicable, separate and apart from any requested honorarium. If the requesting committee has discerned and agreed that a specific honorarium is appropriate for the provider of the enrichment activity in question, the Alice Herman Committee will consider funding two thirds of the requested honorarium and will ask the requesting committee to commit to the remaining one third of the honorarium cost."

**16-12-03: Meeting approves the language recommended by the Alice Herman Fund, with the addition of the possibility of collecting additional donations at the event.**

The Clerk called for silent worship.

**Peace and Social Action** – B. Johnston read and distributed the Minute on Income Inequality resulting from many months of discernment in the committee and at meeting for business. Brian clarified that it is intended to be shared with other meetings, interfaith groups, and Quaker organizations. Placing such issues in a religious context gives strength to those engaged in the struggle, as clergy involvement was influential in the civil rights movement in the 60s.

**16-12-04: Meeting approves the following Minute on Income Inequality, Economic Inequality & Social Justice, noting our desire to share it widely, and acknowledging the discernment involved in preparing it:**

Friends (Quakers) believe that there is a divine spark in everyone, and on that basis we believe in the equality of all people. That belief leads us to create community among ourselves, foster community in the broader society and promote equal justice and equal opportunity.

We find that the laws, tax structure, and regulations of our society now disproportionately favor and reward the few, while disproportionately impoverishing the many. Wealthy special interests have used their resources and access to influence politics, the courts and regulatory agencies to redistribute wealth to enrich themselves at the expense of the middle class and the poor, who now experience declining wealth, declining earning power and declining levels of education. Our society now experiences rising poverty, homelessness, mental illness, drug addiction and environmental degradation. These factors in combination result in the weakening of our democratic institutions and our social fabric.

We also find that this inequity is reversible, with correction of the tax codes, regulations, laws, and political reform.

We call on Friends to teach themselves and others about the truth of economic inequality. We call on Friends, people of other faiths and people of good will to recognize the need to change our tax code, our regulations, and our electoral processes to restore our social safety net and our educational systems to create a more just, healthier and more sustainable society based on principles of equality and respect for our fellow human beings. We call on Friends, people of other faiths and people of good will to work to reduce income inequality in our society by supporting actions that redistribute the fruits of our economy more broadly and equitably in order to build a stronger, more just, more rewarding and more stable society.

Economic inequality is at the root of many of social ills we now see. We seek to reduce income and wealth disparity, while recognizing that success in doing so will not cure all social ills. Our goal is to reduce economic stress in our society to the point that people of modest means may lead happy, productive lives and realize their God-given potential. We seek to restore the social fabric and respect for the inherent dignity of all.

Our goal reflects our Quaker testimonies on simplicity, equality, peace, community and integrity.

**Nominating Committee** – S. Searl brought three Friends forward to serve on committees.

**16-12-05: Meeting approves Ruth Gooley on the Alice Herman Fund Committee, JoAnn Taylor on AVP, and Kristy Moosavi on the Library Committee.**

**House Committee** – G. Ramey presented an annual report and history of our stewardship of the meetinghouse (attached). A Friend recommended that it be put on our website.

**Pastoral Care** – C. Loeser reported that the committee recommends the transfer of membership from Bethesda Monthly Meeting to Santa Monica Monthly Meeting of Gail Thomas. Approval is held over until the next meeting for business.

Minutes from October 9 and November 13 were read and approved, with one change. In the notes from October 9, under Finance Committee, the exclusivity income should be 30% of our budget, not 3%.

**New Business** – Worship and Ministry has oversight on our communications with neighbors. A Friend recalled that neighbors did want another meeting.

Meeting closed in silent worship.

Respectfully submitted

Kate Watkins Shaw, Clerk

Ann Fuller, Recording Clerk

**Attachments:**

1) October 21, 2016 Meeting of Worship and Ministry Committee

Meeting with the Neighbors. We were asked to discern the next steps with the proposed rental, and to send a thank you note to the neighbors. Is our role is to help meeting determine what business meeting wants to do— what should the process be? Or, is it the role of committees to season issues and bring recommendations to business meeting? While the issues are clear (noise/traffic) in the minutes, what is hard to relate is the passion and depth of speaking from the neighbors. They were expressing how much we matter as a member of the community and how upset/offended/surprised they were that we would proceed with this without their input. Another member did not hear most of the neighbors express how much we matter. One member thought that unless we have a real leading to work with My First Place and childcare, we should not move forward. Sean and Maria are still hoping to move forward, but there is an appeal before the city which could change things. Many of the neighbors don't feel 'heard' and valued by the larger society, and their feelings/passion towards us may be impacted by this. We don't want our decision and process to be reactive, 'we don't want to do this because we are upset with the neighbors' or 'we need to do this because of the money'. We need to proceed on the basis of a leading.

The people who show up at meetings like this are those that would be bothered. A condition of the CUP is that Sean and Maria have an evaluation by a sound engineer. We need more information about the financial impact of not renting to them and how we might make up the shortfall. Let's not reify this small group of neighbors. We need to remind ourselves that we started this process with a concern for stewardship.

We think this is an opportunity for us to grow as a Meeting. We think that business meeting needs to discern the following questions. What is this combination of circumstances inviting us a community to do? What is our spiritual calling as a Meeting with regards to our neighbors? How are we led to proceed, specific to MFP, and more generally with any renter? In order to do this we need the following factual information: the budget implica-

tions of the decision; if we do not rent to MFP how we will either raise the money we need or decrease our spending; the implications related to sound and sound mitigation; what kind of organization is MFP, what is the difference between for profit and non-profit? We recognize that this will take time.

We will ask the ad hoc committee to obtain a sound engineering report. We will also ask the ad hoc committee to prepare a report describing MFP—their educational philosophy, their financial status, the type of children they serve. If they are only able to serve fewer kids, how will this affect their ability to provide scholarships? Kate has already asked finance committee for a report on the budget implications.

**We approve sending the draft thank you note to the neighbors; it would come from Grant's email.**

2) HOUSE ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 11, 2016 by G. Ramey, Friend in Residence

2006 Solar panels installed; we generate more electricity than we use, still pay \$25 per month to be on the grid. 2008 Roof repair and installed skylights.

2010 Two rain barrels installed, water is used for plants. 2014 Hot water recirculating pump installed. Shower and sinks warm in less than 1 minute instead of 3 or more minutes, saves water.

2014 Installed kitchen sink water filter, cost 4x less than bottled water, more counter space

2015 Began to rope off parking from the alley during the week, no longer have to tow cars.

2015 Purchased weed whacker and leaf blower for Friend in Residence. Stopped gardener who came every 2 weeks sometimes doing almost nothing or too late for needs.

2015 Renovated women's restroom with eco-friendly linoleum and paint.

2015 Installed new lighting, faucets, and paper towel dispensers in restrooms.

2015 Set up recycling bin in patio.

2016 City of Santa Monica inspected water usage; Meeting use was okay.

2016 Rearranged the sun shades in the patio to prevent bird droppings on deck.

2016 Began saving kitchen sink water for plants. No longer need to use hose for watering

2016 Set up compost bucket and got Santa Monica to give us green cart for disposal.

## RENTALS

Minimum 2 hours. Rates:

Main room: \$20 per hour

Toy room: \$10 per hour

Monday evening: Women's Alcoholics Anonymous, main room

Tuesday evening:: Buddhist Meditation in toy room, Debtors Anonymous, main room

Wednesday evening: Miracle Project social skills for autistic ages 16-24, main room

Thursday evening: Overeaters Anonymous, main room

Some Saturdays: Continuum movement awareness, main room

Some Sundays: Women's sacred dance, main room

Part time renters include spiritual poetry, sacred drumming, spiritual teachers, photo shoot, holiday boutique, hospice group, etc.

## MAINTENANCE

Friend in Residence does gardening and minor maintenance as needed. Handyman Marek is hired for major maintenance. Sunny Maintenance comes every Tuesday and Friday morning to clean all downstairs rooms and patio.

### Approved November Minute (for discussion 1/8):

11-16-01 We seek a way forward that includes all ages of our community, and ask the Meeting as a whole to know and embrace the importance of our children, youth and their families to the vibrancy and future health of our Meeting. We ask that each one of us reflect on how the Meeting can hold them all in the Light with love and care as individuals and as a vital part of our community. We ask the community to consider activities such as all-ages service projects, holiday celebrations, and other intergenerational events.

*We ask that each committee examine how it can lift up and hold young people and their families in the Light and bring a report back at the January meeting for business. How does each committee address the needs of our children and youth, and their families? How does each committee involve children and youth in their work?*

We invite us all to bring a sense of joy to our activities. We also note the importance of building bridges with Quaker educational institutions.

## Report from the Adult Education Session - Topic: *Western Friend*, the Magazine

From Stanford J. Searl, Jr., Co-Clerk of Adult Education (Date of Session: January 1, 2017)

It was a wonderful session, so deep, open, and probing. Fourteen people attended. I woke up early that morning and in a half-asleep, partially dreaming state, the theme or idea/feeling of what it means to accompany someone else (or in a community or through the magazine) came into my heart and mind. I realized (and spoke about this in our worship that morning) that Quakerism meant that I could cultivate the gift of being accompanied by others and doing the same for them, in the sense of fellowship and companionship and that this was a spiritual path/gift. I realized that one of the great gifts of Quaker community was this reality of accompanying others, a kind of deep dialog and connection between two Friends (or more and more) on their spiritual journeys.

This theme of how we are deeply connected with and accompanied by one another had such resonance, given my own up-bringing as so competitive, even an aggressive individualism. So, being in a supportive, loving dialog with other Friends, a back and forth represented by committee work, clearness committees and so many similar relationships, this mattered. I felt that this accompaniment represented a gift of how to be in community with other Quakers and to yield some of the ego over to the Spirit.

Coming closer to the Nov./Dec. 2016 issue of *Western Friend*, I spoke about how I appreciated the editor and pointed to her editorial statement about how to hold fast to the earth. Then, I spoke a little about Don McCormick's lovely "Mindfulness and Quaker Worship" and how a couple of Don's illustrations reflected upon his experience in our Santa Monica worship for many years. I pointed out how my Quaker poetry ad (with comments by the great Ben Pink Dandelion) was cushioned by Steve Smith's book and the Latin American composers. Then, we heard from others, wonderfully searching.

People loved the cover! It felt real, in the mud and authentic. We talked a lot about the "western" quality of the magazine and how it mattered, that plain speaking and quirky, sometimes zany, unorthodox and daring aspects of the magazine. One Friend commented how the personal experience aspects of the writing in the magazine and the deep connection

with the Divine made such a difference. There seemed to be a language of the heart and of experience and this provided energy.

Another Friend said that the magazine brings a deep unity, a testimony of equality to the work. It's somewhat unsophisticated but that this is a positive, affirming quality, open to all, a kind of gathering in of the Spirit.

We had a conversation about the letter by Kate McClellan and one Friend recommended that this kind of statement – moving from anger to love and reconciliation – might serve as a larger forum from the magazine, hearing from Quaker Trump supporters (or something) and offering a way out of the divisions, disunity and divisiveness of the current politics. Could the magazine play a role in all of this? What might it be? What could it mean? How can the Spirit lead us today in this difficult, fractured time and bring more unity and love, in spite of everything?

One Friend spoke about the themes that emerged from our session and how they seemed to be accompaniment and permission. We reflected about the importance of simplicity in the magazine and how that's apparent and real in the editing and direction.

Friends responded with various metaphors and images about openings, circles, eddies and pools and oceans, maybe to indicate the depth of our conversation.

One Friend, recently moved here from the East Coast, commented about the welcoming, openness, something about the West Coast and how this welcoming was reflected in the magazine.

Friends reflected: how can we be more engaged in a deeper listening, to overcome the gaps in understanding and be less judgmental, more affirming of our underlying wholeness and unity?

One Friend spoke about the poet, Keats, and his negative capability and the importance of being open to ambivalence and to remain in doubt and uncertainty. How can we maintain worship and silence and be open to the Light, even in radical uncertainty?

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Adult Education Reading Group: Rufus Jones, *Essential Writings*  
January 15, 2017 at 8:30 a.m.; clerked by Kim O'Brien

The quotations are from Rufus Jones, *Essential Writings*, Orbis Books: Maryknoll, New York, 2001. We will approach these passages in a modified worship sharing approach and we note the patriarchal language.

**Here are the passages that we will consider:**

“Once at sea, in the middle of the night, when all unknown to me my little boy, left behind in America, was dying with no father by him to hold his hand, I suddenly felt myself surrounded by an enfolding Presence and held as though by invisible Arms. My entire being was fortified and I was inwardly prepared to meet the message of sorrow which was awaiting me next day at the dock.

Another experience came much earlier in my life when I was spending a year abroad after graduation from college. It was at Dieu-le-fit in France, near the foothills of the Alps. I was walking alone in a forest, trying to map out my plan of life and confronted with issues which seemed too complex and difficult for my mind to solve. Suddenly I felt the walls between the visible and the invisible grow thin and the Eternal seemed to break through into the world where I was. I saw no flood of light, I heard no voice, but I felt as though I were face to face with a higher order of reality than that of the trees or mountains. I went down on my knees there in the woods with that same feeling of awe which compelled men in earlier times to take off their shoes from their feet. A sense of mission broke in on me and I felt that I was being called to a well-defined task of life to which I then and there dedicated myself. There have been other similar occasions, though none quite so over-brimming or charged to the same degree with the conviction of objective reality as these two which I have given. There was no excitement, no unusual emotion, no trance or ecstasy. But in both instances there was an emergence of power and fortification. I was brought to a new level of life and have never quite lost the transforming effect of the experience ...” (Jones, pp. 42-43).

“The Quakers meant by their inward Light what the noblest of the mystics had meant by the divine ground or foundation of the soul. They believed that man is not separated by a chasm or isolated from God. Something of God, something of that highest spiritual Nature – that World within the world we see – is formed into the structure of the human soul, so that it is never, even though ‘born and banished into mystery,’ beyond hail of its true source and home, and never without the possibility of divine assistance and communion. The early Quakers, like

their mystical predecessors, were weak in psychology and were unable to think out the full import of their experience or of their significant phrase, the ‘inward Light,’ but in any case they broke with that ancient epic theory of man which their contemporary, John Milton, just at that very time was doing so much to glorify. They leaped to the position that each newborn child is a new Adam fresh from the creative hand of God and bears within him the mark of a divine origin and of a divine destiny ... In the hush and silence of the corporate group which the Quakers raised to an immense importance, they believed man could become aware of that More than himself revealed within himself” (Jones, p. 72).

“No one of us ever knows quite what he wants. Ask almost any young man what he wants to become and he will answer, ‘I don’t know yet.’ He is waiting for somebody, or some occasion to help him discover himself, to reveal to him what his own life means to him. Strange paradox, that I do not know even what I myself want, and that I need outside help to discover the ideal of my own life. Such, however, is the actual fact, as every one of us who has groped and striven for his life’s goal can testify. But if a self-conscious person seldom knows fully and clearly what he is aiming to realize, much less does a group, or a society, or a nation know its own purpose and aim. The guides and prophets of a people are the men or the women who catch glimpses of the true line of march, and so can reveal to the group, large or small, what it wants and how it can fulfill its own destiny.

It is often astonishing to see the power of a phrase which some man coined – a magic word which goes from tongue to tongue, as though a new Pentecost were abroad. It is astonishing until we realize that this man, by a stroke of genius, has hit the word which expresses what everybody is more or less blindly feeling after. He has become a voice, not crying in the wilderness, but a voice uttering the need and purpose of his generation, and if the time is ripe enough and the word is dynamic enough, a reformation, or a revival, or a renaissance will follow. ‘The Simple Life’ is one of these magic words because it comes to a world weary and heavy laden with its gigantic tasks and its enormous complexities – it comes as a revelation of what we all know we want, as soon as somebody has the genius to discover it for us! So far, however, the simple life is hardly more than a happy phrase. We know we want it, but we have not quite discovered what it is ....

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## 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

### Essential Writings excerpts

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Simplicity is first of all a *quality of the soul*, and we must see what it means within, in the spirit ....

The first Christians 'ate their bread with gladness and singleness (or, as we should say, simplicity) of heart.' One of our Master's deepest words was, 'If your eye be single (ie. simple) your whole body will be full of light.' Now what does that mean? It is just the opposite of duplicity or doubleness. Our best modern word for it is perhaps 'sincerity,' absence of every tinge and tone of sham. For the Quaker, 'the simple life' has always begun there. There can be no genuine simplicity in the relationships of life, if there is not unclouded honesty at the heart and center" (Jones, pp. 135-137).

- Stan Searl, Co-Clerk, Adult Education

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**Western Friend** report  
continued from Page 6

Another Friend spoke about how it's important to be searching and open to finding a voice and that the magazine offers this.

To subscribe to *Western Friend*, a print only copy is \$36 per year to Western Friend, 305 N. California Avenue, #203-B, Palo Alto, CA 94301.