

**Gainesville Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of
Friends
Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
9th Month 2008**

Karen Porter read the queries and advice for the 9th Month.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Singing – 9:30 – 10:30 on 3rd First Days. Jean Larson would like to try this out for 3 months. Should be put in the newsletter.
- B. Use of the Meetinghouse: We need to make sure that all doors are locked after any meetings. Also, we need to make sure that tasks such as doing dishes and taking the trash out are completed. Many clerks are up north right now, but we need to somehow make it a point to pick up the ball when it drops. If you things see that need to be done, please feel free to take them on yourself.
- C. New Membership – On Aug. 30th, Sandy Lyons wrote a letter requesting consideration for membership. The letter was given to Ministry and Nurture. It was read aloud at Meeting for Worship for Business.
- D. Brian Blackmore will write a letter asking for consideration for membership.
- E. Young children in worship. One member said that it has come to his attention that sometimes children were informed while in meeting that there is a first-day school. Tim asked: What is the philosophy of the meeting with how young children are integrated into worship? Is it the sense of the meeting that children can sit and discern God? Or is it the sense of the meeting that children have to go out. We agreed that it would be good to have a discussion on this subject. The 15 minutes in meeting is just for those children who are attending First-Day School. Laura Winefordner noted that anyone could stay in meeting. Brian Blackmore brought up “choice theory,” which says that a child can choose from a cornucopia on the table, and that the child and the family should know the choices. We need to make it clearer to families about what we offer them. One suggestion is that perhaps the greeter can let new families know the options. Dick Beardsley said that the more the meeting is integrated the deeper the experience is for all. Brian Blackmore suggested that the First-Day School Committee make a list of the options that greeters could have available.

Peace and Social Concerns Committee: Jim Morrison reported. We have been continuing our work to support universal single payer health care and the banning of cluster bombs and promoting peace in the Middle East. As always, we encourage people

to send letters and e-mails to their elected representatives and write letters to the editor. When we do not send out special Action Alerts, we encourage people to consult the Friends Committee on National Legislation website or get on their list-serve to receive regular messages and alerts about critical issues.

Following the Democratic and Republican National Conventions we became aware of incidents of arrests of and excessive force against demonstrators and arrests and detention of journalists. (One of those arrested was Eryn Trimmer, whose parents are members of our meeting.) We had an emergency meeting of our committee and prepared an action alert calling for Congressional Hearings into these incidents of police repression and violation of the civil rights of demonstrators and journalists. Many letters were written—to the Gainesville Sun, Congressmen, Senators, including the chairmen of the Senate Judiciary Committee and the House Committee on the Judiciary, as well as to the mayor of St. Paul and the governor of Minnesota. So far, however, none of our letters to the editor have been published, nor have there been any replies to our letters to elected officials.

At our regular meeting on September 28, we had a follow-up discussion of our Police Repression Action alert.

We discussed plans for collecting items to be sent as packing materials in the Personal Energy Transporter boxes—stuffed animals, used tennis balls, empty medicine bottles, etc. Dick Beardsley is building a special box for this purpose and Sandy Lyon will take the materials to Lake City when the box is full and see that they get sent on to Penney Farms with volunteers.

We also talked about new forums and agreed to do an Open forum on Education on October 5 to replace the one John Westmark had to reschedule for November 2. We had the forum, as scheduled, and had a good turnout of 16 people, and a very lively and useful discussion.

We are making plans for future forums. The next one will probably be on universal health care options. We are still trying to work on a possible joint forum on homelessness with the Unitarian Fellowship and possibly some other churches.

Film Committee: Our September 19 Film night was modified to present an “Evening on China,” with a slide show with Robert Roberg, who recently returned from several weeks in China where, among other things, he taught English for 5 weeks in a middle school. We also had a DVD presentation of Bill Moyer’s interview with Phillip Pan, author of *Out of Mao’s Shadow*, and excerpts from the Olympics opening ceremonies.

Our October 17 film night will feature “The Great Debaters,” about a debate team from a small black college that goes on to win debates over top university debate teams, including Harvard. We welcome suggestions for December and the first months of next year. Some films under consideration: “The Seventh Seal,” “The Sound of Music,” “Bridge on the River Kwai,” “Dead Poet Society,” “Kinamand” and “Snow Cake” (suggested earlier by Laura W.), “Monsieur Ibrahim,” “Mr Smith Goes to Washington.”

First-Day School Committee: Laura Winefordner reported. Jim Porter's class on peaceful alternatives was a great success. The Dr. Seuss curriculum was begun. The older group will work with the younger ones over the next few months to produce the play, "The Mitten," for the Christmas gathering.

Ministry and Nurture Committee: Connie Ray reported. At the September 14, 2008, Ministry and Nurture Committee meeting the clerk expressed the concern that we need to improve the ways to get jobs taken care of in the summer. We decided to list young adults for the Nominating Committee to consider asking to join committees. We decided to ask the Nominating Committee to name "summer" or assistant clerks for the Meetinghouse, Grounds, and Hospitality Committees.

The meeting requests the meetinghouse committee decide what to do in case a meeting for business cannot be held in time for approval for those desiring to meet at the meetinghouse and in case meetinghouse committee is not available. We request that this procedure be added to the request form for use of the meeting.

We checked the directory to make sure that we maintain contact with our members and attenders. Wendy Sterba in Avon, Minnesota, is spending 4 months in Japan accompanying 15 students on a Study Abroad Program. After repeated attempts to contact the Timmers with no response, we propose the following minute. The meeting approved the minute.

Minute 08-08-23: Gainesville Monthly Meeting lays down the memberships of Adrian, Hillary, and Quinn Timmers due to lack of contact.

Committee members will write to Sally Venerable and Michele Stevens. New attenders will be asked if they would like to be listed in and receive a directory.

The committee is still working on a "Spiritual Afterthoughts" handout and changes to "Quaker Worship" to include information about "Spiritual Afterthoughts." We are also working on getting more postcards with a picture of the meetinghouse.

We are working on developing a "Book of Deceased Members." This would be a loose-leaf book kept in the library with a page for each member to include obituaries and memorial minutes.

A message in Meeting for Worship concerning the importance of our testimony on Community moved several people. We now have the date October 18 free. We discussed the possibility of doing a community-building event.

We discussed the danger of injury in case of some sudden emergency while people are assembled in the worship room. We identified problems and hazards and developed a plan to have a 'fire drill' during business meeting to train the leaders of the meeting on the most important points and practices.

Earth-Care Witness Committee: Dick Beardsley reported. Karen Arrington is working on a program for next week called “Walking Gently on the Earth” for the kids and the adults – one designed for children, one for adults.

Hospitality Committee: No report.

Library Committee: About half of the books in the library are now catalogued. We are also organizing the Pendle Hill pamphlets. Each month we will write a review of a book to put in the meeting newsletter. With the advice of Cecilia Haecker, we ordered 8 new books, some of special interest to Young Friends. ‘Stray periodicals and notices’ challenge us. We decided to put them in a pile labeled “Free. We ask that everyone in meeting help us come up with ways to encourage use of the library books.

Meetinghouse and Grounds Committees: The committees reviewed maintenance tasks performed in August and September:

1. Bill Mitchell and Jean Larson trimmed foliage from the spillways to the back retention pond to prevent blockages like the one that occurring during Tropical Storm Fay.
2. Bill Mitchell also trimmed foliage from the front wax myrtles to clear the sign line for people leaving the meeting parking lot, and Jean removed ragweed.
3. John Westmark continues to mow the lawns, blow the drives, and trim the grass overhanging the curbs.
4. The evening motion light by the social room door has been fixed, but the light on the pole remains off.
5. Laura and Jim Winefordner add water to the drains every other week to prevent sewer odors from wafting into the meetinghouse.
6. We have a new key for locking the bar on the door to the main entry, which must also be used to unlock it.

Bill Mitchell and Jean Larson planted nine blueberry bushes along the back fence; Brad Thompson donated these. The committee postponed scheduling a workday until after the return of the Morrisises; a fall creek cleanup also needs to be scheduled. The exterior door has been found unlocked a number of times; we all need to remember to double-check that we locked it after we have used the meetinghouse. Trash left in the meetinghouse and unrinsed items in the recycling bin are an invitation to pests. Individuals hosting events or groups in the meetinghouse need to be sure the trash is removed as part of their cleanup.

The Meetinghouse Committee recommends the Film Committee investigate the purchase and installation of room-darkening shades for the social room. A concern about the sound quality in the social room was raised. Some possible suggestions included flags near the ceiling, drapes, and bathroom-sized rugs hung between the windows on the south wall.

The clerk of the meeting would like the Grounds Committee to have a clerk and the Meetinghouse Committee to have an assistant clerk to function as clerk when the clerk is not in Florida. This way, there would be someone responsible for making sure that the functions of these committees are performed and there is a person who receives reports of

problems. Dick Beardsley will arrange for Alachua Fire Extinguisher to inspect the fire extinguishers and stove suppression system. He will also wash the air intake filter.

The Grounds Committee is considering hiring someone to do yard work on a regular basis throughout the year. However, Dick Beardsley will check first with John Westmark and see if he still really is led to do this work. Brian Blackmore noted that there might be people who want to contribute to the grounds upkeep but don't know how. He suggested that we might want to consider a sign-up sheet.

School Committee: No report.

SEYM Committee for Ministry on Racism: Gainesville Race Committee

A meeting of Gainesville Friends considered the call from the SEYM Committee for Ministry on Racism. Betty Odum and Cheryl Demers-Holton are members of the SEYM committee. Fourteen attended.

The discussion ranged from consideration of a quiz to measure our own prejudices to queries from Baltimore Yearly Meeting and those sent by the yearly meeting committee.

The feeling of the group was that we do not agree to a goal of increasing the minority membership in our meetings to meet the minority proportions of the state.

We would prefer the first paragraph of the queries sent by SEYM to read:

The SEYM Committee for Ministry on Racism is committed to working to eliminate racism in our daily lives. (The next part seems inappropriate.) Change is a fact of life, but changes of long-term and deep-seated attitudes may not shift until individuals commit to the work of increasing their awareness and compassion. This is work that is Spirit-led, important for Quakerism, ourselves, and our world at large.

Much of our discussion considered what we could do to be more attractive to people who may be seeking our kind of worship. Possibilities are: inviting a black church to worship with us, going to their church or organizing joint discussions like those recommended by Quest. Several of us will contact black preachers for their suggestions.

The meeting concluded with the feeling that we agree racism is a concern, but we will need more discussion before we recommend any group action.

Old Business:

- A. Letter on proposed Stewardship Testimony for *SEYM Faith and Practice*. Palm Beach is very interested in having stewardship as a separate testimony for SEYM. At the moment, this is going to be included in the appendix as a possible future testimony.
- B. Report on the Yard Sale: Laura Winefordner reported. We had two sessions because of heavy rain on the first Saturday, but it ended up that we made more

sales the first day. Many items were donated, and we had a lot of help. We made some money (around \$300) and we provided a service to the customers and to the Community Ministries Thrift Shop where we took the items we hadn't sold. Here is some advice for future yard sales:

- a. Have the sale inside rather than outside. It's more comfortable for all, and more controlled. It's easier to set up the week preceding the sale rather than having to cart everything outside the morning of the sale.
 - b. Clothing does not sell, even when it is free.
 - c. Computer items do not sell, even when they are free.
 - d. It's nice to have music during the sale.
 - e. We could probably sell a lot of coffee and snakes during the sale.
- C. SEYM: Catherine Puckett is going to be SEYM Coordinator for First-Day School. Catherine Puckett will write Kathy Hersch introducing Brian Blackmore and Jim Porter to her, and letting her know that they could do some special activities with teens. GFM wants to support Brian in attending SEYM. Karen Porter is going to be a teacher at SEYM (**FIND OUT WHAT AGE GROUP**).
- D. Medicine bottles: Jim Morrison said that Penney Farms also takes empty bottles for sending wherever they are sending PETs; the bottles are used for packaging. Jim Morrison will put together something for the newsletter.
- E. Nonviolent Communications is now meeting somewhere else; Karen Porter will let us know where.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Elizabeth Puckett, recording clerk