

Gainesville Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
9, Second Month, 2014

ATTENDING: Dick Beardsley, Gene Beardsley, David Crawford, Shawna Doran, Elizabeth Franco, Ted Jones, Sandy Lyon, Bill Mitchell, Mona Morris, Walter Morris, Betty Odum, Connie Ray, Laura Winefordner, Bonnie Zimmer, Jean Larson, Acting Clerk, and Gary Arthur, Recorder

The meeting opened with worship and a reading of the queries for second month.

The first month 2014 minutes were read and approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT by Bill Mitchell:

General Fund Balance: \$25,269.77

Contingency Fund Balance: \$20,002.00

We are no longer paying for regular lawn mowing service. It's been changed to an on-call basis.

It was pointed out that the amount on Solidarity Sojourns line item is \$500 and will be corrected on the budget.

MINISTRY AND NURTURE COMMITTEE REPORT by Sandy Lyon:

A memorial minute for George Newkirk, who died in June, 2008, has been approved by the Ministry and Nurture Committee and shared with Ocala Friends. It is included here in the addenda.

Friends are happy to learn that our Young Friend Member, Cecilia Haecker is interested in attending Guilford College next year and we approved the following minute in her support:

GFM2014. 2.29: Gainesville Monthly Meeting supports and recommends Cecilia Haecker, a member of our Meeting, as she applies to Guilford College. It has been our pleasure to watch Cecilia blossom, mature and confidently move forward as a young adult.

Sandy Lyon shared news about another Young Friend, Jocelynn Benton, member of Tampa Friends Meeting and granddaughter of Cecelia Yokum. Jocelynn has been active in the Fair Food Movement, and has refocused her energy on the issue of mountaintop removal. Friends approved the following:

GFM2014. 2.30: Gainesville Monthly Meeting wholeheartedly supports Jocelyn Benton in her leading to advocate against mountaintop removal. Should the need arise, we would

consider financial support as she continues her education, activism, and preparation for moving forward with this leading.

Having named two new members of our Meeting's nominating committee, Ministry and Nurture Committee asked for the following approval:

GFM2014. 2.31: Meeting approves the following members to serve on Nominating Committee: Mona Morris, whose term expires 1/2015 and Shawna Doran, term expiring 1/2016.

Our sharing information about Gainesville Friends Meeting at a table set up at Santa Fe College's Religious Diversity Fair, January 29th, was well received.

The Committee is updating the Emergency Contact Forms. Building and Grounds will work with M and N to have the blue notebook with these forms co-located with the first aid kit. End of Life Requests will be stored in the safe deposit box. Meeting asks that the Meeting Clerk, M & N Clerk, and Treasurer all have access to that box.

Connie Ray and Morrie Trimmer are collecting materials about our Meeting's history for a display of SEYM history at the upcoming Yearly Meeting Gathering.

SPIRITUAL STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT:

Clerk Annie McPherson submitted the report, which was read and approved for distribution. The report is included in the addenda.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT by David Crawford:

David presented for discussion 2 budget items for the fiscal 2015 budget: a \$2500 line item for building improvements and repairs; and an increase from \$100 to \$1000 in the Pastoral Care Committee budget, as a means to help individuals in need of urgent financial assistance for housing, food, clothing or other necessities.

There was discussion about both items and David will bring minutes for approval regarding both items to the April business meeting.

SEYM MITCHENER LECTURE HELD IN ORLANDO IN JANUARY was reported on by Connie Ray. The Lecture, Nurturing the Blessed Community, was delivered by Deborah Fisch. Deborah is a member of Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative, and FGC Associate Secretary for Ministries. The lecture was very well attended. A copy of Connie's report is included in the addenda.

PEACE AND SOCIAL CONCERNS REPORT by Elizabeth Franco and Shawna Doran: Elizabeth reported that at present the Committee's top priority is the issue of restoring rights of ex-felons from the Florida Prison System. In support of their work on that issue, we approved the following minute:

GFM2014. 2.31: In accordance with the Quaker testimony that there is that of God in every person, Gainesville Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends endorses the principle that the civil rights of all persons who have completed prison sentences and probation terms should be automatically restored, enabling them to vote and run for office. We believe that integrating former felons into society helps them to become productive members rather than repeat offenders.

Gainesville Friends supports the committee as they move forward in their efforts to act on addressing this concern.

Shawna Doran reported on Friends Peace Teams Asia West Pacific Initiative. It is the hope of the Committee that our Meeting can support the work of that organization by becoming a sustaining member. Shawna will be sharing more information about the work of Friends Peace Teams in our Meeting Newsletter.

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE REPORT by Mona Morris:

The Committee rotation for coffee hour preparations has been put on the bulletin board and included in the newsletter. Committee clerks are asked to solicit help from committee members.

NOMINATING REPORT by Gene Beardsley:

GFM2014. 2.32: Gainesville Friends approve the addition of Tim Ray as Meeting's representative to Gainesville Action Network.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The March 8 Quaker Dinner will celebrate St Patrick's Day.

The April Dinner will be on 4/12/14.

Film Nights are coming up on 2/21 and 3/21.

The Meeting's birthday will be celebrated on Sunday, March 16 with worship outside and potluck lunch in the social room.

The Quaker Reading Group will meet at the Buskirks' home in St. Augustine on 6/14/2014. Beach visits will be followed by potluck dinner and discussion on a selected Quaker pamphlet, to be announced.

ADDENDA:

Gainesville Friends Meeting

SPIRITUAL STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT, 2014

Gainesville Friends met 12/1/13 in Worship Sharing to consider and reflect on the queries sent by SEYM. For a few years we have come together in this manner and it is a time of strengthening the bonds we feel and allowing an honest look at ourselves.

How do we support each other as members of this beloved community?

There is a subtle, but gradually increasing willingness among our members to accept and recognize that some members may enrich our faith community even though they do not regularly attend meeting. They are able to use their gifts to benefit the meeting and positively represent Quakers to previously unreached audiences. The result seems to be an expanding and increasing sense of community that benefits all of us.

How well do our meetings for worship with a concern for business lead to a corporate search for and revelation of God's truth? How does the spirit of worship extend into our committee work and into meeting for worship with a concern for business?

There has been a gradual but welcome change in the Spirit of doing business partly because of a request that individual committees focus on bringing decisions/reports to monthly business only after careful discernment of the committee. The resulting ease and confidence in business meeting makes for less repetitive inquiring and enables reaching unity sooner. The length of business meeting seems shorter. We recognize that this is asking committees to be more diligent, which is especially challenging due to the lack of clerks for some committees.

How does the spirit of worship extend into our committee work and into meeting for worship with a concern for business? Especially in this time of economic uncertainty, are we taking stock of the meeting's financial health and planning for ways to help those in need?

A series of forums run by the Finance Committee on "Counting our Beans" asked members to show where they wanted to put our resources (beans). This was not only a practical financial exercise, but also a spiritual activity. The extended process gave Friends the chance to give valued input about overall spending in our Meeting.

What was our Meeting's witness in the wider community in the last year?

Our presence and outreach in the community have been in several areas:

- Sponsored a table at the local Pride Festival/Parade educating the community about Quakers and our local Meeting.
- Joined other churches in interfaith outreach to local colleges.
- In conjunction with the local Mennonite Church, sponsored a live theater group for a public showing of "I Want to Buy an Enemy" at the Hippodrome Theater in Gainesville.
- The Meeting supported, led by Friend Sandy Lyon, taking some SEYM youth to Friends General Conference to present the work they had done with the Immokalee Tomato Workers Project.
- Hosted a public forum, to standing room only, called "Spring to Action" on the dire situation regarding our Florida Springs and the effect on our health and happiness. Actions for solutions were discussed.
- An ad-hoc committee has been formed to look at exploring the feasibility of creating a "Quaker House" in our community. Including how our Meetinghouse and/or Quaker property could be used for community outreach and service.
- Held Friday night street corner "Quakers for Gun Control" vigils during the time legislature was considering gun control issues.
- The Clerk of Peace and Social Concerns, Tim Ray, represents Gainesville Friends in the local "Action Network" which advocates for the poor and disadvantaged and is creating Legislation sponsored by P.I.C.O. (a faith-based community organizing and advocacy organization).
- Another way we support our wider community is by regularly contributing food and money to Gainesville Community Ministries.
- The Meeting supports Solidarity Sojourns, which takes youth and adults to Nicaragua to build houses in two different locations in Nicaragua. Support for Solidarity Sojourn's mission has taken the form of Meeting donations, providing the Meetinghouse as a venue for fundraising events such as concerts and auctions, as well as informational forums. Individual members have made donations and serve as volunteers and advisors for fundraising and programming.

How do we support each other as members of this beloved community? What would we like Meeting to be to meet our needs and needs of those who would attend meeting?

The Pastoral Care Committee is active in a quiet intuitive way, reaching out to Friends and giving support in times of need; showing us how we embrace others' concerns. The request to "Hold in the Light" seems to summon the tender movement of the Spirit in our midst.

What makes it difficult to attend meeting?

We are challenged by how to best greet new persons who come to us seeking answers, worship and fellowship. As they arrive our designated greeters have pamphlets near the

door and the guest book to start the conversations. We need more success engaging new attenders before they leave between worship and our social hour.

We seem more successful with Friends coming to Meeting who have some experience of Friends or who know more what to expect. In this discussion a person witnessed that during the process of going from attender to member, Gainesville Meeting had been helpful as she faced a difficult health crisis. She felt included and a part of a growing spiritual community, and she is living for the moment each day with this support. Another witnessed feeling incredible hope and excitement as she learns spiritually what works and does not work for her. She is encouraged to step out in Faith.

Meeting Activities and News:

New Year's Eve afternoon we held a Meeting for Worship for Remembrance around a small campfire in our outdoor worship area. This worship sharing provides an opportunity to remember, reflect and share memories of people, pets, relationships and experiences that have impacted and shaped us. It is a very worshipful way to share messages that fit neither in a regular Meeting for Worship nor in a Memorial Service, but are still deeply spiritual. A simple soup supper rounded out the afternoon and provided a simple close to another year with Friends and friends. Several of those who had attended the last two years felt that this is part of why our meeting has such spiritual richness.

We welcomed new members David Crawford, who transferred from Radnor Monthly Meeting, PA, Bonnie Zimmer and Ted Jones, who transferred from Barnegat Monthly Meeting, NJ. We are saddened by attender Bart Hulett's death and Javier Soler & Sophia Durand's move to Athens, Georgia.

MEMORIAL MINUTE FOR GEORGE NEWKIRK

George Newkirk was a member of Gainesville Friends Meeting from September 1972 until he died in July 2008. Since his home was in Ocala he initiated a gathering of Quakers in Ocala. The group continued to meet in the manner of Quakers although it never gained enough strength to become a Monthly Meeting.

George was born in 1918 in Quincy, Illinois and attended Quincy High School and Quincy College, now Quincy University. He maintained ties to his home and family in Illinois and in fact he organized and attended the 60th reunion of his Quincy High graduating class near the end of his life.

[From his youth George had a great interest in nature. He went swimming, hunting, hiking and camping whenever he could. At age 16 he lied about his age so he could join the National Guard.]

During World War II he joined the army but an accident kept him from being deployed with his unit overseas. He was assigned instead as a guard at prisoner of war camp in Colorado. George would regale his friends with stories of his experiences there. A particular incident involved the arrival of Italian POW's in the camp. Immediately they were assigned to be the cooks but they complained that they couldn't cook without Italian

spices. George remedied the situation by setting out to find a local restaurant to supply the camp with spices in exchange for cream and strawberries which the camp had in abundance. Soon the officers were coming to the enlisted men's mess hall to enjoy the new Italian food.

After the war, with money from the G.I. Bill, George completed a Masters Degree in psychology at George Washington University. He later attended Georgetown University as well. His work led him to overseas positions. He specialized in the rehabilitation of floundering educational institutions in 42 developing countries. He developed skills in resolving conflict as he was called upon to explain the origins of cultural differences and how conflict could be reduced.

George had been raised in the Roman Catholic Church. As he grew older he became disillusioned and by 1949 started seeking, as he stated in a Memorial Minute for his longtime friend Charles De Witt, "a spiritual philosophy that would fit my needs." He found that spiritual home in the Langley Hill Friends Meeting.

During the time that George was involved with Langley Hill, the meeting was looking for property for a meetinghouse. George's wife Emma was a member of a Lutheran Church which had a simple frame church building to sell. There was a stipulation in the original deed of the property that it would revert to the family who had donated if it was no longer used for religious purposes. The Quaker Meeting was fortunate to purchase a new home in a desirable location because they would continue to use the building as a house of worship. However the stained glass windows had to give way to transparent glass which allowed the light to flood into the room.

George later transferred his membership to the Florida Avenue Monthly Meeting in Washington, D. C. From there his membership was moved to the Gainesville Monthly Meeting. George moved to Ocala in the late 1960's and worked as a school psychologist. His Quaker activities included serving for a term on the Ministry and Oversight Committee at Gainesville.

When the Daytona Beach Meeting was laid down in the 1970's all of the property reverted to the yearly meeting. Gainesville Meeting wanted to have the chairs and the hymnals. George offered to get them by using a trailer on the back of his car. Gene Beardsley and George went over to Daytona, loaded up the chairs and the hymnals and headed beach to Gainesville. On the way back the trailer had a flat tire. It started to rain as they were changing the tire. They persevered and managed to drive the car through the forest and up to Gainesville. The chairs and hymnals were unloaded and placed in the meetinghouse for a very grateful meeting. The chairs were first used in the meeting room in the meetinghouse on 2nd Avenue and then later in the social room in the 38th Street meetinghouse. George was particularly adept at seeing that useful items were not wasted but put to good use. This was a labor of love for which George and Gene are remembered: a tangible, durable contribution to the worship and fellowship of the meeting.

George started the Ocala Worship Group in 1979. He acquired a house and started advertising. A food cooperative and a women's spirituality group were allowed the use of the house. Four people from the food co-op became interested in finding out about

Quakerism. Then two people responded to the advertisement and on November 3 the first meeting was held to provide information about the Religious Society of Friends. Through his tenacity and dedication George kept a Quaker presence active in Ocala for the next 29 years and provided the nucleus for the continuation of Quakers in Ocala.

George became very involved in Southeastern Yearly Meeting projects, notably the Quaker Center in Orlando in an apartment building next to the Orlando Meetinghouse known as Cisney House. He served on the Cisney House Committee from 1979 to 2002. It had been owned by Orlando Monthly Meeting before being sold to SEYM in 1980. Together with Morrie Trimmer he inspected the apartment complex in order to report to the yearly meeting on the advisability of the purchase.

George served on the Board of Trustees of SEYM in the early 1980's. He served on the SEYM Ministry and Worship Committee in the mid 1980's. He spent much effort in involving the committee in resolving differing concepts of Quaker practice in the Ocala Worship Group which at that time was under the care of Gainesville Monthly Meeting. George's activities in the Ocala Worship Group in the early 1980's included planning Meetings for Learning, helping to start up monthly business meetings, and serving as recording clerk. He had a strong interest in outreach and in strengthening both the Ocala Worship Group and the Gainesville Monthly Meeting as caring communities. His favorite quotation was "Work is love made visible" and he tried through his work to show his love.

George loved working for the children at Half Yearly Meeting. He collected pine cones and brought them along with green paint, spray snow and lots of beads and things the children could use to turn the pine cones into small Christmas trees to decorate their homes. He also brought materials to help with the cupcake and cookie decorating activities.

After the Ocala Worship Group was laid down, George formed what was known as the Ocala Friends Meeting although his membership continued to be at Gainesville. This is a worship group that had no formal ties to any monthly meeting or the yearly meeting. However it functions as a Quaker Meeting without official ties or structure. Associations with the Gainesville Monthly continue including the Memorial Meeting for George after his death.

George's wife Emma who was a lifelong Lutheran and the mother of their two sons died in 1996. George moved to a house with a large room reserved for a Meeting for Worship after Emma's death. In

his later years, George was active in the Greater Ocala Ministerial Association and Marions for Peace which formed to try to prevent the war in Iraq. He participated in vigils, rallies and demonstrations for peace, holding up his AFSC sign "War is not the Answer" and after his knee surgery, leaning on it. When standing became difficult he continued demonstrating in his wheel chair.

George's second marriage was to Marie Elena in 2000. She was a great help to him in preparing for Meeting for Worship in their home and helping him go to his medical appointments and social events. When he was close to 90 years of age George passed away on July 2, 2008 at his home in Ocala. He will be remembered for his sense of

humor, his great story telling, his loving interest in the children of the yearly meeting and his devotion both to Gainesville Monthly Meeting and to the business of Southeastern Yearly Meeting. His generous nature made him very proactive in supporting good works and good people whenever he could. He was a man of energy and enthusiasm who found in Quakerism a place to call home.

As he looked back on his life as he grew older he wanted to eliminate any hard feelings or resentment which may have resulted from past disagreements. He thought through any relationships from his past in which there may be a need to forgive or ask for forgiveness. He made public gestures or wrote apologetic letters to try to mend any brokenness he may have caused. He tried to let the God in him gain the upper hand.

Michener Lecture by Deborah Fisch: "Nurturing the Blessed Community"
Orlando Friends Meeting, January 2014
Notes by Connie Ray

We need to hold on to the big T Truth that underlines all that we do as Quakers.

On the plane Deborah encountered a woman who was in great distress because the plane was being delayed and her father was dying. Deborah helped her grieve. She learned to be present in the moment. That is ministry.

Each string on an instrument makes a different tone, but when played together can make beautiful music. The tension on each string has to be just right.

She found tension in our yearly meeting as we struggled with how to respond to a request for money from Cece Yokum and Jocelynn, her granddaughter. Each string, each point of view, needed to find the right tension. When we can hear these tensions ring true, become clearly defined, then we wait. When the strings are sounded again, there is beautiful music. Let Cece tell us how much she wants. Let the treasurer find the place from which the money will come.

She reminded us of Bob Allenson's greeting, "You are a beloved child of God." In our hearts we can think, "You are a beloved child of God.," whenever we deal with people who are difficult. She has said this greeting to others, and it is spreading through Friends General Conference workshops and at the FGC gathering. This is ministry.

Be faithful to the gifts you are given. Any gift given to a member is also a gift to the whole body, for we have given that person a place to share the gift.

What we learn experientially we can share with each other as the big T Truth in our hearts. This is love.

What draws us together is that we know there is something beyond us. We encourage each other to go out and develop our gifts. Practice discernment. Take the time to prepare yourself for what you are called to do.

We need to share our spiritual journeys with each other. Not wanting to offend other people, we end up saying nothing. What we are missing is the opportunity to work and play together to get to know each other and so feel comfortable sharing our stories.

We are hungry to learn how to do more to help the world. We need to help each other find the time to worship.

The little t truth is Sunday morning. The big T Truth is in pockets of groups gathering quarterly or yearly. Think outside the box. Use these opportunities to share spiritual journeys.

One suggestion for sharing our spiritual journeys is to "listen in tongues." It is not necessary to understand what is said, but listening helps us to understand and translate to language of our own experience. Listening helps us understand and share with the other person. Deborah wants to take the risk to find a Friend to share those spiritual experiences that we can, and maybe translate into our own languages and understand each other.

So, you say, "Share with me your favorite experience in Meeting for Worship." "Share with me a moving experience in your youth." "Share with me the 'ah-ha' moments in your life."

Capital T Truth happens when committees are asked to discern some business, and when they bring it back, we trust each other that the discernment has been done.

Sometimes other Friends can help in discerning what we are called to do. Sometimes a leading for one person needs group discernment. Find the courage to have enough light and knowledge to give to the person who has the leading.

God's love will help us find the whole picture, to give us this picture even if we are temporarily looking in the wrong direction. If we are looking together, however, it doesn't matter what the end product is. If you go on stumbling in the wrong direction, keep knocking ("and it shall be opened to you"), keep seeking ("and ye shall find") keep asking. Share what you have found, what was opened to you, and God's grace will pull all of you in the right direction.

We must share our spiritual gifts and find the gifts for ourselves. Don't covet someone else's gifts, but develop your own. See where the seeds of ministry are in each other and name them. Some may not have been given gifts as great as others but it is important to develop those gifts. Name and nurture these gifts. Encourage each other to develop his or her own gifts.

The ministry of service is part of the big T Truth in our meetings. Be aware of it. Ministry does not always take the form of traditional vocal ministry. Ministry is giving the gifts that we have in the bringing of us closer to the Divine Spirit.

Listen, discern, provide ministry with opportunities, trust God, and then back off and let God take over.

Recognize where the ministry is coming from. Ministry is rooted in God's love. It is something great to grow into Love. Love is the first motion.

The second motion is to listen to where the words come from. The third motion is to share what you discern, what God has given you, to value and recognize the gift.

Be present where you are. Embrace God's love and allow yourself room to grow and move on, knowing there is nothing you can do that would make God love you more than he loves you in this moment.

Love meets us where we are and brings us back when we miss the mark. Live it and take it to the world. Be your authentic self, so that you can live love into the world. Risk living that all the time.