

Executive Committee Meeting
Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
6/12/2010

The Executive Committee (EC) met at the Tampa Meetinghouse, Tampa FL, on 6/12/2010 from 10:30am to 4pm.

Executive Committee members present:

Gary Arthur, Interim Business Meeting clerk
Susan Taylor, Yearly Meeting clerk
Nancy Triscritti, Worship and Ministry co-clerk
Mary Jo Klingel, Nominations Committee clerk
Ellie Caldwell, YM Gathering clerk
Warren Hoskins, Peace and Social Concerns clerk
Nil Wilkins, Finance Committee clerk

Also present were:

Mimi McAdoo, Sarasota MM
Davida Johns, Acting Recording clerk
Andrea Walsh, Tampa MM
Peter Crockett, St Petersburg MM
Karen Putney, Tampa MM
Steve Kenney, Tampa MM

The meeting began with silent worship followed with greetings by IBM and EC clerk, Gary Arthur. Tampa MM was thanked for accommodating EC, including refreshments and lunch.

Following introductions, the meeting's agenda was approved as amended.

TRAVEL FUNDS DISTRIBUTED TO LISA STEWART AND LYN COPE

Having received positive responses from all who replied in April to the Clerk's question regarding the distribution of travel funds, amounts were distributed to both Lyn Cope and Lisa Stewart.

\$340 came from the Representative Travel Fund for Lyn's trip to the Quakers Uniting in Publications [QUIP] meeting April 21st, and a donation of \$500 toward Lisa Stewart's Kenya trip came from the SEYM contingency fund.

REQUEST FROM IRS TO FILE 990-N FORM

The YM received a request from the IRS to file a 990-N (e-postcard) form before a June 2 deadline. At the time of writing the agenda, we're awaiting a report from Dan Vaughn, which will detail the result of his conversation with the IRS about this request.

There were 4 files attached to this meeting's agenda that seem to indicate the YM needs not file the form.

If IRS regulations have changed, there may be a need to hire an attorney or tax accountant to

pursue this issue with the IRS on SEYM's behalf.

The following was taken from a note from Dan on 6/3:

He spoke with an IRS agent, who gave him a Revenue Procedure document (96-10) to review for instructions on how to re-classify SEYM as a church, instead of a "religious organization." The 990 instructions themselves still say, as they did at the time of Bill Boyles' letter (on file), that "Inter-church organizations of local units of a church," are exempt from the filing requirements.

The agent said that the deadline for filing this request was "ASAP." Dan planned to assemble and send the necessary information directly.

The Clerk read Dan Vaughan's letter. Dan recommends SEYM hire a CPA with non-profit experience to review current filings and be available to address subsequent IRS activity. Dan would be liaison for SEYM. [See Attachment]

Friends noted the need to assert that SEYM is a church, not a non-profit. SEYM was misclassified; this is to put us in the right class as a church.

03EC10 SEYM was recently asked by the IRS to file IRS form 990 meant for reporting by tax-exempt organizations. SEYM Friend Daniel Vaughan has been talking with IRS representatives and has submitted copies of SEYM's by-laws and articles of incorporation with letters of legal counsel in an effort to clarify with the IRS SEYM's status as a religious organization and SEYM's subsequent exemption from filing. On Dan's recommendation YM will hire a CPA to review what has been filed, correct it or supplement it, if necessary, and be available to respond to any further inquiries from the IRS regarding that filing. Dan has agreed to act as liaison between the YM and the CPA, and will move forward upon SEYM's direction to hire such a person. He will report back on this matter at FIBM.

MEMBERSHIP

Regarding membership concerns, there are currently SEYM Friends, all from John Knox Village near Deland, who comprise the Orange City WG. They meet in Eleanor Weatherall's living room. They are not under the care of a monthly meeting per Cathy Gaskill's wish to be self-determinant in that respect. While they feel a part of SEYM, Eleanor said they had no money (for assessment).

The group was included in the apportionment schedule last year, but the Finance Committee will not include them in the current fiscal year budget.

EC was asked to recommend how they should be listed in the directory and determine how the YM may show its care and support for this group?

The item was set aside for further consideration.

FCNL

Karen Putney, representative to FCNL, is working on peace issues and recognizes the limited amount of SEYM resources available to do so. A FCNL campaign suggests engaging Senator Nelson, who serves on Senate budget Committee. Federal budget is not meeting domestic needs within the US. "Our Nation's Checkbook" campaign addresses this issue. In comparing state efforts, Michigan is responding better than Florida although its state economy is as bad as Florida's. Monthly meetings can join this effort. Karen will call monthly meeting clerks about

visiting Sen. Nelson's local office.

Mary Jo reports that FCNL will pay for a Young Adult Friend to attend its annual meeting.

MEMBERSHIP RECORDER Nancy Howell (Ft. Myers MM) is the new database membership recorder.

WORSHIP and MINISTRY

Nancy Triscritti reported that Lloyd Lee Wilson is the January 2011 Michener lecturer. His topic is *Evolving Quakerism*. He wants no honorarium. He will bring his wife and stay with a local Friend. SEYM's only cost is transportation.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Mary Jo Klingel, Nominating Committee clerk, reported the need to find clerks for YM gathering, IBM, HYM, and adult youth workers. She thanked people for QEW donations.

GATHERING COMMITTEE

Ellie Caldwell, Gathering Committee clerk, reported YM gathering was close to budget, even with the subsidized assistance for youth. There were 130 attendees, 15 children, including 5 teens. Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association (SAYMA) sent two teens and adults.

At the SAYMA gathering there were 250 attendees, 50 were youth. There was a good connection between adults and teens.

Ann Jerome will be workshop coordinator. Planning will begin in October for the 2011 Gathering.

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY AND RACISM

Wendy Geiger and Ellie, encourage all to read *Fit for Freedom Not for Friendship*.

PEACE and SOCIAL CONCERNS

Warren Hoskins reported Peace and Social Concerns (P&SC) meets in Clearwater on June 13. In January, Warren was at the Peace Churches conference, will meet St Petersburg to plan an outreach. Church of the Brethren, On Earth Peace, Mennonites Central Committee, have presences in many countries. SEYM has ProNica and AVP. This is an opening to work with Cristo-centric groups. When Val Liveoak, an AVP representative, passed through Miami, she spoke at a Church of the Brethren activity, which Warren organized.

Quaker Peace Center funds, which support traveling Friends, were available to assist Val's visit. Photographer Skip Shield shared visuals taken of Ramallah and the West Bank. ProNica was also present as there is a large Nicaraguan population in Miami.

US civilians are asked to support troops, above their taxes paying for war. When there are pressing local needs, our taxes are going to war machine. "Wars are making us Poor."

EARTH CARE WITNESS

Susan Taylor suggested Ian McDonald, a Tallahassee Friend and oceanographer at FSU, as a resource on the Gulf oil spill. She will send info to all monthly meetings. The Heart of the Earth group in Tallahassee published a book *Unspoiled*. Tampa Friend Dustin Lemke sold his car and he bikes everywhere, now. BP's largest income is from the military. US government directives have long been ignored by BP. FL Senator Lemieux's bill to gut the EPA was defeated. Another victory was a defeat of military budget increases.

After a break for lunch, EC reconvened at 1pm. Written reports were reviewed. See Attachments: Lyn Cope secretary report (Attachment 1) and Peter Day [Attachment 3].

HALF YEARLY MEETING: Andrea Walsh is HYM registrar.

Mimi McAdoo asked how available are PK Young-stored files (hand-written notebook contents). Someone from Sarasota could inquire; Gary will assist.

SPIRITUAL STATE OF SEYM

At the Executive Committee Meeting, 3/31/10, a concern about attendance at YM gathering was expressed. Five years ago, 200 people attended. This year, 129 people registered, and only 15 children attended compared to 45 last year. Consideration was given to why there was an attendance decrease. Friends offered a variety of comments and concerns:

As they have done in the past and present, the Trustees may look at additional ways to help with costs.

People who are aging are leaving the area. Seasoned Friends, who have supported the Yearly Meeting, are among those no longer able to attend.

The Half-Yearly Meeting format may be a model to consider. Alternatives may include meeting elsewhere and sharing homes for accommodations.

Friends must consider "What is happening to us as a sub-culture?" Have Quakers' core socio-political concerns been taken over by others?

People have problems with jobs, travel, and accommodating their children. Schools don't honor SEYM's letter stating yearly meeting is a religious holiday. SAYMA changed its yearly meeting to June in order to increase children's attendance.

If we were in a position to feed people spiritually and people felt that, they might come.

One Yearly Meeting has time of fellowship and spiritual retreat, and it does business during interim business meetings.

The Gathering Committee might survey Friends about this problem. The survey should be sent to monthly meetings. A Friend stated we don't promote or advertise enough.

Some people are not spiritually grounded in their Meeting and see no value in YM.

The FUM issue has been too much of a preoccupation and divisive.

Friends aren't convinced that YM will do anything for them.

There are youth issues. Behavior guidelines have been disregarded. Yet, parents and others value youth's presence. One Friend mentioned that there are different styles of parenting regarding rules. Another Friend stated we are non-hierarchical and allow destructive behaviors to keep happening. "We have trouble with tough love."

A suggestion was made to have an outreach committee to promote YM.

Others suggested keeping business meeting as part of YM Gathering, since it is the foundation to how we work as Friends. Perhaps, the content could be changed or Gathering be held for fewer days.

Ellie Caldwell suggested greater outreach to other Yearly Meetings might be useful. For example, Worship and Ministry might extend the inter-visitation program.

A letter from Nancy Fennell, dated 4/19/10 follows:

Dearest Friends: Susan Taylor, Yearly Meeting Clerk, and Gary Arthur, Assistant Yearly Meeting Clerk,

I very much regret that I was unable to attend YM Gathering this year, but please know that I held all of you in my heart and in prayer numerous times every day of the meeting. And, I am grateful to Ed for the EC minutes that went up on the web so quickly and to you, Gary, for forwarding me the Epistle. The Yearly Meeting has been, and continues to be, an important part of my Quaker life.

There is satisfaction in having 26 new attendees at the Gathering this year. I will certainly hold YM in the Light "as we work to find ways to create a Gathering that Friends don't want to miss." Both of these things indicate the presence of desire and hope in the Meeting, which is very important.

However, the warning signs in the epistle and EC minutes, as well as those from my own experience in YM, weigh heavily on me, returning again and again to my mind. We have just come through a difficult and long process of determining SEYM's current relationship with FUM. We were blessed to have good clerking, Friends who deeply desired to maintain peace and loving relationships within the YM, and, perhaps most importantly, Friends who were willing to turn to God for guidance and who worked tirelessly to invite and encourage us to labor in the silence together. Overall, I believe we can be pleased with SEYM's faithfulness in this journey.

In reflecting on this, I was drawn to revisit Linda Chidsey's Walton Lecture of 2005, Intimations of Renewal. You may recall that Linda reports that New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM) formed a Committee on Renewal to help the YM address long-time concerns, such as "a continued decline in membership; a decline in financial support of the Yearly Meeting; contentiousness over theological differences; a lack of enthusiasm to serve on Committees or travel in the ministry; the relationship between monthly, quarterly, regional meetings and the Yearly Meeting; a sense that there was a lack of spiritual depth or vision among us (p. 7)."

It is with love and respect that I say that I believe we, the Yearly Meeting, stand convicted on most of the things listed above, if not all. I also have no doubt we could add to the list, perhaps most notably at the present moment, the concerns about SEYM's youth.

We are in a blessed position now, the position of being able to address other business than FUM, a position for which we have long wished. We are given the opportunity to explore a new focus, to find a clearer vision. We can endeavor to serve more deeply as an instrument of God's grace to SEYM Friends.

To what is the YM being called? To what is the leadership of YM (EC) being called? Is it time for SEYM to experience Spirit-led healing and renewal? What part of SEYM's Meeting "has life in it?" What does not? Are we willing to undergo a process of deep Spirit-led exploration, such that we discern before we act? Is EC being called to spearhead and commit to such work? Can we answer with enthusiasm, even passion?

These are queries I believe EC Friends need to discern together in prayer and worship- sharing over a period of time. We often have asked each other what might be wrong about a certain problem and listed SEYM's suppositions. We often have made a wish list of things we would like to see happen in the YM. Perhaps it is time to make a concerted and faithful effort to simply turn inward and listen.

In closing I turn once again to Linda's pamphlet,

Ultimately renewal will come as a gift, an in pouring of God's unending love for God's people. It may not come in the form expected or desired, but it will come.

SEYM's job is to be faithful and deeply obedient. Then, we need only await it with confidence and receive it in gratitude.

With the intent of being "faithful and obedient," and in love and concern, I close in the Light of God's Love,

Nancy Fennell

IBM EC clerk offered queries and suggested a worship-sharing format in addressing YM gathering issues.

Susan, all gatherings together, quarterlies, retreats, and yearly gatherings help grow fellowship.

As a new Friend many years ago, Mimi felt an expectation to attend YM gathering. The more Quakers are together, the more is discovered. She was "hooked" on her first gathering.

Mary Jo "hated" her first gathering in 1984 when she experienced in a child-friendly event without having a child herself. Some new attendees have bumpy beginnings and need special attention.

Questions: Are we economically and spiritually broke? These might be lean years. Should we season the issue slowly?

Andrea stated some need an invitation to participate. Newcomers are clueless about Gathering's structure; they need a specific task.

Gary stated that as a teacher he enjoyed Easter weekend as a time of renewal, the venue, and camping. Perhaps a change is good, though.

Ellie offered that tradition “can become old.” A June gathering would need to be mostly indoors given Florida’s weather.

Karen said, “We’re a work in progress.” SEYM is relatively new and small, made up of mostly convinced Friends. Monthly meeting is where societal and job loss show and are comforted by YM resources. Inter-visitation would help strengthen relationships. A combined YM and MM clerk retreat might build a good foundation. A blessed community takes work.

The wider-Quaker-world organizations inability to present at the plenary was a lost opportunity. Davida Johns resented lost opportunity to share wonderful news about ProNica happenings in Nicaragua; she brings the wider-Quaker world experience to MM.

Peter Crockett MM can learn Quaker process in regular business or meetings.

NEW BUSINESS

04EC10 Allegations of two counts of sexual battery against a minor who was attending HYM in November 2009 were brought forward to Executive Committee. EC will contact the clerk of trustees, who will be asked to seek legal council.

At this time SEYM will undertake a review of all HYM youth activities in order to assure those activities follow established YM rules for supervision.

Nancy will ask Worship and Ministry to Hold EC in the Light. Warren advises caution that we might not have all information. Steve added it is best to err of side of caution; go slow. Ellie concluded EC guidance is needed more than ever. Susan said EC is proceeding as best it can with the knowledge we have.

The following Minute of Gratitude was approved.

05EC10 Executive Committee is deeply grateful to Tampa Monthly Meeting for your generous, joyful, welcoming hospitality for SEYM’s June meeting. The lovingly prepared food was both colorful and delicious. Your eagerness to host us was palpable. The Divine Spirit working thorough you and nourished us as we met.

The next EC meeting is October 1 at 7pm in the Palm Beach Meetinghouse. Local hospitality is available for the Fall Interim Business Meeting (FIBM) weekend of October 1-3. More information will be provided.

The meeting concluded with silent worship at 4pm.

Secretary's Report to EC 06/12/2010 to be held at Tampa Meeting House

This report describes activities that have taken place since EC Meeting, 03/31/2010.

General office activities following YBM:

Office work was anything but routine following YBM. Bookkeeping was being reviewed for the past 5-years for hand over to new clerk of Finance Committee. Both the treasurer and departing finance clerk had reviewed files, bringing everything up-to-date by the end of the fiscal year. My report for summer EC was written; vacation plans made to accommodate any number of Friends. The Gathering Committee has done a phenomenal job of getting required materials to the office in a timely manner both before YBM and to close out the fiscal year. The office is grateful that former clerk of the Yearly Meeting Dan Vaughn offered his expertise in dealing with the IRS regarding SEYM's non-profit status.

RE my report to EC: when I returned from Olney Friends School Commencement and reunions this past weekend, I found that the EC agenda and my draft-report were dealing with different concerns. Neither the clerk of Trustees nor I will be present. I do send my regrets, however. Please know it is with great joy that I am able to cheer for grandchildren Bailey and Louisa Willis (birthright members of Space Coast Meeting) as their varsity Mount Baker crews compete in the US Olympic 2010 USRowing Youth National Championship Regatta at Harsha Lake near Cincinnati this weekend. *I thank you for encouraging me to attend.*

Financial/Bookkeeping:

Routine financial bookkeeping is up to date. Several changes were made in the QBP database to accommodate keeping track of inventory for SEYM's first non-speaker author's booklet, *The Little Quaker Book of DeCutter*. Not only did the author contribute toward the printing cost, but has designated that profit be invested in the Gathering Youth Fund held by Friends Fiduciary Corporation.

Following up on the Secretary's Report on 03/31/2010, regarding differentiating the role of the Trustees and role of the SEYM Treasurer is laid over to EC Meeting at FIBM at the request of the clerk of IBM.

Website:

The online registration for YBM-Gathering 2010 ran quite smoothly with the major complaints being that some browsers frustratingly returned an error message and refused to submit data. Since this happened to the office several times when I attempted to make requested corrections, I do understand the frustration. Quite simply, the complexity of choices SEYM offers for housing and dining require the Excel spreadsheet to have more columns than Excel allows.

The new searchable Google-map of meetings designed by Mike Flanery looks great. It does require Mike, as IT, to keep it current. The office is very appreciative of his efforts on behalf of meetings.

Publications (Print and Electronic)

Sales of *The Little Quaker Book of DeClutter* by Ellie Caldwell are brisk. Both FGC and Pendle Hill bookstores carry our booklets. The office received the component parts of *Directory 2010-2011* but unfortunately there was insufficient time for printing and delivery to summer EC meeting. Please look for it in the mail by mid-summer. The three most recent Michener and Walton Lectures and reprint of Ben Pink Dandelion are anticipated to be published by FIBM. The summer newsletter is coming to fruition and should be in the mail by mid-summer.

Respectfully submitted by Lyn Cope

Attachment 2 – Letter from Dan Vaughen Regarding SEYM's Tax Exemption Status

From: Daniel Vaughen <DVAUGHEN@cfl.rr.com>
Date: Fri, Jun 11, 2010 at 6:47 AM
Subject: 990 Exemption Summary
To: Gary Arthur <garya365@gmail.com>
Dear Gary:

Charitable Organizations (such as the Red Cross), even though exempt from Federal Income Tax, and even though contributions to which are tax deductible, are nevertheless required to file an information return with the IRS called a Form 990. This form reports their income, assets, operations, and contributors, among other information.

(See http://www.marketingexpress.irs.gov/public/videos/topic_1.html) A short form return can be filed if their gross receipts are less than \$25,000. The 990 form is available for public inspection (see, e.g., <http://www.irs.gov/app/ePostcard/>, or <http://www.guidestar.org>).

There is a substantial fine for failing to file, and their recent threat to SEYM was to revoke its tax-exempt status for failing to file for three consecutive months. SEYM has never filed the form. Lyn reports that some Meetings regularly file the form.

Churches are exempted from filing the form under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitutional prohibiting laws "respecting the establishment of religion." So the issue is whether SEYM is a "church." The IRS regulations include "association of churches" in its list of organizations exempt from the filing requirement. It is into that category that SEYM clearly falls.

How, when or why SEYM was classified by the IRS as a charitable organization rather than as a church is lost in the dark mists of history. The last time the issue surfaced a tax attorney informally assured us that we did not have to file the form. We did nothing then to clarify SEYM's status with the IRS.

Now that the IRS has threatened to revoke SEYM's tax exemption, something must be done. I suggested that we hire a tax professional to present SEYM's case to the IRS. That did not happen. Given the 6/2/10 deadline imposed by the IRS, I volunteered to call them for an extension, and to explain. I was politely told that if a reclassification was desired, an application therefore must be filed "ASAP." I was given a Revenue Procedure number (96-10) and a fax number.

This fool accordingly rushed in where angels fear to tread, hoping to do no harm to SEYM's status. We are in an extremely risky position, however, not because we are not entitled to the exemption, but because we have an incompetent advocate. It is very important, in other words, that a tax professional be employed immediately to review what has been filed, correct it or supplement it, if necessary, and to be available to respond to any further inquiries from the IRS incident to that filing. Until that is done, we should not rest.

Peace,
Dan

Attachment 3 - Archive Committee Report

Peter Day sent EC a report on the SEYM archives in the Smathers Library in Gainesville.

Celine Hickey, the 16-year-old daughter of Florence Turcotte will work, under Flo's supervision, on the SEYM archive at the Smathers Library during this summer. Celine will be paid \$8 an hour and will earn up to \$400.

The primary objective of this work is to prepare the papers and records deposited by SEYM and many of its constituent monthly meetings for safe storage. This will involve removing staples, paper clips, and other metal binders, plastic folders etc. to prevent further deterioration. Papers should be sorted by geographical area or meeting location, general topic, or subject, or kind, in date order and, where possible, placed in acid-free folders with acid-free colored spacer pages to separate groups of documents. Folder tabs should have clear-penciled notations stating the nature of the contents and range of dates. Where possible the papers of each monthly meeting and the SEYM will be sorted into separate acid-free archive storage boxes labeled to indicate their contents.

Duplicate papers will be retained unless specific instructions are given otherwise. This is to avoid inadvertent loss of unique marked or annotated records.

The intention is that the work will facilitate a further phase in which the papers and records will be indexed and catalogued.

This work will be carried out under the supervision and guidance of Florence Turcotte, the archivist in charge.