

Executive Committee Meeting  
Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends  
1/14/2011

Following an afternoon of worship sharing concerning the spiritual state of SEYM, the Executive Committee (EC) met at the Orlando meeting house from 7pm to 9:45pm.

EC members attending were:

Gary Arthur, Acting Interim Business Meeting clerk, YM Assistant clerk  
Ed Lesnick, Recording clerk  
Susan Taylor, Yearly Meeting clerk

Neil Andersen, Treasurer  
Phoebe Andersen, Faith and Practice committee clerk  
Nil Wilkins, Finance Committee clerk  
Ellie Caldwell, YM Gathering clerk; clerk of Ministry and Racism  
Nancy Triscritti, Worship and Ministry co-clerk  
Mary Jo Klingel, Nominations Committee clerk  
Warren Hoskins, Peace and Social Concerns clerk  
Rolph Hanson, Youth Committee clerk  
Barb Letch, Earthcare committee clerk  
Andrea Walsh, Half-Yearly Meeting clerk  
Herb Haigh, clerk of Trustees  
Lyn Cope, Administrative secretary

SEYM Friends also attending were:

Melissa Ajabstein	Ann Kelly
Jack Bradin	Steve Kinney
Sybil Brennan	Dustin Lemke
Peter Crockett	Kay Lesnick
Chuck Deneen	Nancy Rose Logan
Nancy Fennell	Mimi McAdoo
Tom Fennell	John Rumschlag
Ann Jerome	Ann Sundberg
Davida Johns	Cece Yocum

The meeting began with silent worship followed with greetings by IBM and EC clerk, Gary Arthur.

Gary Arthur, presiding clerk, spoke of the divisions confronting our society in these difficult times. As Quakers we should not enter one camp or other. We are encouraged as Friends to be an example. The clerk expressed the afternoon Worship Sharing is an example of "what love can do." [Attachment 1: Worship Sharing Prior to January Business Meeting: A Beginning Visioning

for Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM)]

This evening's agenda draws heavily on the alleged sexual abuse incident that occurred at Half Yearly Meeting in November 2009. This has impacted the SEYM youth program and the need to address its effectiveness.

Due to time constraints, Friends concurred with the Presiding clerk's request to postpone the Administrative secretary's oral report. The written report is included here as an attachment. [Attachment 2: Secretary's report.]

Following introductions of those present, Friends consented to the agenda, which will focus on items 4, 5, and 6 on page 4 of the Documents In Advance. [Attachment 3:

Upon proceeding with the evening's agenda, Friends raised several concerns about (1) the Youth Committee's role in approving youth workers, (2) the role of a possible ad hoc committee to revise and rewrite our *Child Abuse Prevention Procedures* and the *Youth Program Worker Training Manual*, and (3) using a different background check process for volunteer youth workers.

The clerk read the Query: *How effectively are we working with and caring for our youth? Are we working toward providing an engaging, well-structured and safe Youth program in our YM?*

Friends concluded that SEYM Youth Program is not working effectively to meet the needs of young Friends.

Friends commented that the YM has lost valuable people who have moved out of the region. The need for good leadership for our children is a priority.

SEYM should learn from the experiences of other yearly meetings: Ohio Valley YM has a focus on program and family; SAYMA youth demonstrate the results of a vibrant program.

Engaging projects like those sponsored by AFSC and activities such as camping and other outings help the youth stay connected.

There is a problem in meeting the program needs of younger and older teens. Middle school aged children require their own program. Also, the youth program should provide for those children needed who need a lot more attention.

More needs to be done.

The clerk read a second query. *How well are we implementing the SEYM Policy on Supervision of Youth and Child Abuse Protection (CAP) Policy and how well do we address the need for changes to that policy as they arise? What ARE the procedures spelled out in the policy? Also, how will the policy be implemented?*

There needs to be a change in the process of clearing volunteers.

There is confusion over the policy and the process of submitting the necessary documents, finger printing, background checks and accompanying expense.

Logistical difficulties, expense, and confusion of background checks, impractical process, keep not implementing policy. Caroline Lanker shared several concerns regarding the Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Policy which were published in the *DIA*. [See *Documents In Advance*, page 5.]

It was agreed that several of the queries listed as agenda items, would be postponed for further discussion. Included are: What is the state of our SEYM Youth Committee? Does the YM want to hire a youth coordinator? With regard to addressing the YM Hiring Policy Non-discrimination clause, which has been laid aside from previous agendas, The YM clerk and the IBM clerk have agreed to ask the Trustees to season this piece of business and bring it forward at a later date.

The final query raised by the clerk: *Does the YM want to replace the use of fingerprinting for background checks with "Shepherd's Watch" church background check procedure?*

*Shepherd's Watch* is a background check service which is part of the risk management group Safe Church sponsored by Guide One Insurance. For a minimal fee this service offers varying levels of background checks and a web-based registration process for affiliated groups (churches). Further explanations were provided.

Friends discussed the ways and means of funding the process as well as the need to revise related documents. Executive Committee approved the following minutes to be brought before Winter IBM.

**11EC01 EC** recommends SEYM replace the use of fingerprinting for background checks with the Safe Church Shepherd's Watch background check procedure. Funding will come from the 8500 Contingency Fund for this current fiscal year.

**11EC02 EC** appoints an ad-hoc committee to revise and rewrite our Child Abuse Prevention Procedures and the Youth Program Worker Training Manual in an effort to rid them of inconsistencies and to make them a document we can use. The ad-hoc committee will include Lyn Cope, Cece Yocum, Herb Haigh, Josh Rumschlag, Chuck Deneen, and Steve Kinney. This committee will also update and clarify how SEYM youth activities are supervised and implemented.

There were questions of clarification regarding the sexual abuse case's status. The following statement was composed to be included in the E.C. minutes' narrative:

Regarding the issue of the alleged sexual abuse incident at 2009 Half Yearly Meeting, the criminal aspects of the case are closed. The prosecutor has decided not to bring forward charges. The civil implications, which include SEYM's responsibility, are expected to be resolved in the next few weeks

The Executive Committee approved that the Worship and Ministry Committee takes under its care the voluntary pastoral care of Yearly Meeting youth who were interviewed by the detective in the alleged sexual abuse that occurred at Half Yearly meeting in 2009. Pastoral care will also be made available to youth who were present at the Half Yearly meeting, but not interviewed by the detective. Before any youth are contacted, parental consent will be obtained.

Herb Haigh will report at Saturday's business meeting. As a matter of pastoral care, Herb offered his assistance in the healing process with the youth effected by the November 2009 and subsequent investigation. Herb and Pam Haigh work with Worship & Ministry committee.

Following announcements, the meeting concluded with worship; Friends were encouraged to speak out of the silence.

## Attachment 1

### **WORSHIP SHARING PRIOR TO JANUARY INTERIM BUSINESS MEETING A Beginning Visioning for Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM) Friday, January 14, 2011; 3:00- 5:30 p.m. Orlando Meetinghouse**

Greetings Friends,

At our Interim Business Meetings in October, we shared the sense that SEYM Friends would benefit from taking time to come together for a time of visioning for the Yearly Meeting.

The idea arose from a gratefully received letter to SEYM from Nancy Fennell, Ft. Myers Meeting, in which she shared her concerns about the spiritual state of our Yearly Meeting. Her letter included the following:

We have just come through a difficult and long process of determining our 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 our 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 our 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.

From our meetings in October, there arose a desire to make time available to meet on Friday afternoon, January 14, and see where the Spirit leads. Orlando Friends have expressed a willingness to make the meetinghouse available from 3 to 5:30 PM that day, and Clerk, Susan Taylor has agreed to lead us in a time of worship sharing on visioning for our Yearly Meeting.

We will begin with the list of queries from Nancy, included below, and perhaps Friends who feel so led might offer other queries, which could be taken into worshipful sharing.

Thank you, Orlando Friends, for opening your meetinghouse early for this to happen.

Yours in good faith and in God's tenderness and wholeness,

Gary Arthur  
SEYM Assistant Clerk

Susan Taylor  
SEYM Clerk

Queries:

- (1) Do we serve YM from a sense of leading?
- (2) Do we feel God's presence among us in our work?
- (3) Do we seek and focus on God's intention in the work of our committees?
- (4) What guidance is being offered to help Friends in SEYM live as Quakers today?

**Attachment 2:**  
**Item distributed through e-mail for Friends' Consideration at EC**

As Executive Committee prepares to gather on January 14 in Orlando, there are two main items we need to consider. First is the concern, which was raised by Nancy Fennell, about visioning for the Yearly Meeting, and next are questions regarding the way our Yearly Meeting cares for our youth.

Friday afternoon at Orlando Meetinghouse, Susan Taylor will lead us in a time of worship sharing trying to discern something of the spiritual state of the Yearly Meeting, and later, in the evening EC will meet to address an agenda of the following questions that have arisen regarding our Youth:

1. How effectively are we working with and caring for our youth? Are we working toward providing an engaging, well-structured and safe Youth program in our YM?
2. How well are we implementing the SEYM Policy on Supervision of Youth and Child Abuse Protection (CAP) Policy and how well do we address the need for changes to that policy as they arise? What ARE the procedures spelled out in the policy?

Also regarding our Youth Policy, this from OCT 2010 IBM Minutes needs a note of how it will be implemented:

SEYM affirms that for any and all SEYM sponsored events, which include a formal youth program, the SEYM Child Abuse Prevention Procedures will be administered uniformly by those implementing the program, with regards to registration, security, behavior policies and enforcement thereof. If any Yearly Meeting event does not have a formal youth program, all attendees will be under the care of their family unit or appointed guardian in accordance with same SEYM Policies, which will be spelled out in the registration process.

3. What is the state of our SEYM Youth Committee? Do we need to make a distinction between the Gathering Youth Committee and the SEYM Youth Committee? What does the SEYM Handbook say about Youth Committee? Should we try to encourage the committee to meet regularly, at least 3 times a year? How can that committee be proactive in nurturing our youth programs in SEYM meetings? Might it make a practice of contacting meetings to find out what they're doing in terms of YM youth programming, and what they might need? How can SEYM Youth Committee tap into available resources from FGC and other sources for religious education in meetings? (Perhaps these questions are ones, which can be taken up by the Youth Committee when they meet.)
4. Does the YM want to hire a youth coordinator?
5. Does the YM want to replace the use of fingerprinting for background checks with "Shepherd's Watch" church background check procedure?
6. Regarding the allegations of the sexual abuse incident at Half YM, 2009, we've reported on efforts to support the victim and her family. The concern was raised of how we support and reach out to the accused and his family.

Caroline Lanker shared these concerns regarding the Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Policy:

1. The policy is not well understood.
2. While emphasis has been on dangers of sexual predators, there are other concerns for safety, as well. We need to know how to report an incident and to whom.
3. The CAP Policy needs to apply to all YM events.
4. CAP training is not happening and needs to be carried out in a meaningful manner.
5. We need to discuss the relationship between parental responsibility and authority of the YM.
6. We need to codify organizational responsibility for the implementation of CAP Policy.  
(Perhaps responsibility of outlining and implementing policy could fall on organizers of event, while Youth Committee would review, approve and monitor.)

Following are notes from the parent of the teen who was sexually assaulted while attending Half Yearly Meeting, 2009:

1. SEYM needs to revise our youth policy. If there's going to be a coed teen cabin, we need two FAP's (Friendly Adult Presence), one awake at all times. They must be over 25 and have been fingerprinted prior to the event. No one else will be allowed in cabin. Nighttime trips to toilet need escort or partner.
2. Read Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting Association's youth policy and consider adopting aspects of it for SEYM.
3. Allow sufficient time for child abuse prevention training at YM gathering. Require all workers to attend.
4. Someone on the Gathering Committee needs to be appointed to record who has been fingerprinted and who's taken the child abuse prevention training and when.
5. No un-fingerprinted volunteers will be left alone with youth.
6. Daytime supervision of youth at Half YM needs to be discussed, as well, as it needs support of more fingerprinted adults. Care has to be taken to ensure that our youth are safe while at the same time encouraging growth, freedom, and Quaker community.
7. We need clear boundaries as to where teens are allowed to be when not with a supervising adult and clear rules with consequences.

8. Teaching our youth, helping them to understand the community of Friends and at the same time insuring their safety is the most difficult challenge that SEYM and other Quaker Meetings face. Unfortunately, it may be the one thing that most Quakers least like to be a part of. It's very possible that things have gone wrong because those responsible for the youth are too few in number, causing them to be overburdened.

9. Year after year, supervising youth falls on the same people, who end up getting burned out and not having enough time or energy to deal with everything they are responsible for. What is more important than our youth, than raising them in the light? Perhaps having some of our weightiest friends participate in teen activities such as the fish bowl or the rope course would help our youth feel important and encourage the spirit of Quakerism to grow in them. Perhaps teen activities should occur at times when other committee meetings are NOT taking place – when all can participate).

7. We also need to address the YM Hiring Policy Non-discrimination clause, which has been laid aside from previous agendas.

## **Secretary's Report to EC 01/14/2011 to be held at Orlando Meeting House**

### **General Information/Confidential:**

My strengths are also my weaknesses—in caring as deeply for yearly meeting as I do, I allowed the emotional tenor within our yearly meeting's youth program for the past 2 years to take a toll on my well being. Commencing two years ago at Winter Interim Business Meeting 2009 when youth commandeered Webster Cottage, I was required at the last moment—late at night and for her safety—to move our speaker's spiritual support person to the Marriott Hotel. The tenor continued to worsen through Yearly Meeting 2009 culminating in my awareness that several youth who had looked forward to the Nicaragua trip would no longer be participating; parental reasons were somewhat vague. Several youth were rude toward ProNica committee members and staff. Reports of youth activity in Nicaragua were not encouraging (alcohol and sexual activity). Concern was sufficient that several parents decided that rules /guidelines needed to be adopted. A debate followed whether the document should be called Guidelines (not enforceable) or Rules (enforceable). Written and modified, the Draft Rules were printed in the newsletter, in the Documents in Advance for YBM 2010, presented, and discussed but the youth failed to bring agreement forward for approval on the floor of the meeting. Following YBM 2010, it came to our attention that all had not gone smoothly by continuing to presume our youth, sans significant personalities, would be as responsible for themselves as parents had hoped.

During this past summer the office communicated with Safe Church, an arm of our insurance company—and is waiting for approval to our application. In the mean time, several families have communicated their ongoing concerns about omissions in our youth program.

Hopefully, our envisioning meeting on Friday afternoon, as way opens to explore the future of SEYM's objectives, will bring relief.

### **Communications regarding youth issue include:**

Secretary's Report FIBM 2010, page 2, bottom of page:

3) <http://psychology.about.com/od/developmentalpsychology/a/parenting-style.htm>.

This is as applicable to Church programs as it is to individual parenting styles.

Following FIBM, the office presented idea to Finance Committee and Officers regarding a suggested one-year position to hire a youth coordinator (see next page) proposal to be funded by the Trustees, perhaps from the Unrestricted Fund or from Domini Funds.

In December, the office hosted Friends Peace Teams translator Antero, who informed me that his church automatically requests one adult per 1.5 youths on all field trips. When I expressed amazement, he informed me that the kids did not resent the adults but rather liked the attention and the attention was easy and comfortable—more like—with adults always being aware of where the kids were and what they were doing. If we adopt the Safe Church Program, this will be easy and affordable and perhaps encourage a greater number to volunteer.

### **General office activities following Fall EC Meeting:**

Routine office work is up to date including snail mail and most email. Routine financial bookkeeping is up to date. Routine publications (print and electronic) as follows: 1) published of *The 'present' of Quakerism: Young Adults* by Stoph & Maia Hallward, 2) transposition done and editing being done for *The Jesus of History* by Betsy Neale and Richard Mitchell; cover designed and approved. 3) thanks to those who noted the website was down. Our Host wrote, "The data center made an error when editing their DNS records, and the pointing of your domain was removed (the server itself wasn't down). I had them correct it." 4) Newsletters still on hold.

**The following proposal** was sent to the Clerk of Trustees, the Finance Committee, the YM Clerk, Assistant Clerk, and the youth workers. Comments have been sparse. Informal responses have come from those to whom I have shared Friends Peace Teams translator Antero's suggestion (see page 1 of this report). Somehow having more people involved rather than trying to select those who have been fingerprinted, etc. seems more possible. One person questioned the proposed salary range as too high (nothing is carved in stone—this is a draft proposal) and another thought it too small! I carefully calculated the hours to be greater some weeks, lesser some weeks, but for bookkeeping purposes it is easier to pay an employee monthly rather than keep hourly time tables, though they could be easily kept if the Treasurer is willing to figure FICA.

Page 1 from the Office	<b>FUND PROPOSAL</b>				10/6/10	
	<b>Paid YOUTH COORDINATOR</b>					
	one-year					
	Description	# of Events	Hours/event	Total Hours	Rate	TOTAL
	Salary	annual paid monthly	4/hour/week	224	\$15/hour	\$3,360.00
	EC Meetings	4	8 hours	32	\$15/hour	\$480.00
	FIBM	1	8 hours	8	\$15/hour	\$120.00
	HYM	4 days	4 days	32	\$15/hour	\$480.00
	WIBM	1	8 hours	8	\$15/hour	\$120.00
	Michener Lecture	1	8 hours	8	\$15/hour	\$120.00
	YBM	5 days	40 hours	40	\$15/hour	\$600.00
					TOTAL SALARY	\$5,280.00
	NON SALARY COMPENSATION					
	Registration fees					
						\$400.00
						\$70.00
						\$400.00
	SEYM Budget					
						\$327.36
						\$76.56
					TOTAL COST	\$6,150.00

**Proposed purpose of 1-year Youth Coordinator position would be to provide leadership to:**

1. Discern number of families and youth who would wish to be involved (ages & interests).
2. Discern number and names of non-parent adults willing to volunteer, note and interest level and time availability.
3. Oversee/coordinate/clerk SEYM Youth Committee (ideally 8-10 individuals, parents and non-parents who would volunteer to oversee activities at YBM and HYM) and to assess viability of SEYM Youth Program, brainstorm programs, confer with teen committee and to be inclusive of family activities to include all children in some activities.
4. Design viable programs for Preschool-K; early-mid elementary; grades 6-8.
5. Oversee/work with Junior Yearly Meeting Clerks (YBM) to create a teen committee with goals and aspirations with appropriate teen activities several times as year if desired.
6. Provide monthly email (brief) evaluation of tasks accomplished to designated EC support committee with cc to office.
7. Write quarterly reports to EC to be included in Documents in Advance.

Respectfully submitted by Lyn Cope