

SEYM Peace and Social Concerns Committee meeting at Leesburg, FL 4/02/2015

Present: Warren Hoskins (clerk of the committee), Vicki Carlie, Caroline Chen, Floyd Daniels, Al Geiger, Elaine Martin, Betty Odom, Lucio Perez-Reynoso (AFSC), Karen Putney, Tim Ray, Cecilia Yocum, Eileen Zingaro

We began at about 1:20 p.m. with silent worship. Warren then started, from the silence, welcoming Friends to another meeting of our Peace and Social Concerns Committee in wartime, when our meetings struggle along in a society in which increasingly all demands of the military are met, and there is hostility towards anyone who might say no to war funds or to overseas military ventures, and when individual Friends (though we are taxed for the military and overseas warfare) are finding it difficult to track and understand what is happening in Ukraine, in Syria, and in Iraq, and where the Saudi bombing of Yemen seemed to catch all by surprise. Increasingly, also, human needs are going unmet in our country. (We did even not speak of the huge concerns for the negotiations with Iran preoccupying many Friends, nor of the ongoing wars in Iraq or Afghanistan.)

We then proposed Agenda items and trusted Warren to order them and track the time. During this time, Tim shared about Jimmy Carter speaking in Gainesville recently, and in his talk making clear how important it is to address the stigma associated with mental illness.

We then made introductions around the circle. (There were no handouts nor whiteboard writings for this committee meeting.) Here are Warren's brief notes about the agenda items agreed to and discussed, with the starting time noted in brackets. [Additional information added later is also in brackets.]

- A. [1:38] **FCNL** - Karen Putney made a short presentation, informing us of newest young adult lobbying program and concern of youth over climate change, which FCNL is assisting them to address. Karen will have a full FCNL workshop Saturday afternoon to which we are all invited.
- B. [1:45] **Friends Peace Teams** - Cece gave a quick overview and introduction, and spoke to the work of Friends Peace Teams in the different areas of the world. FPT is in many countries on most continents, despite small numbers. Cece said she does need tech support for her work, that setting up Skype conferences is difficult for her, and she needs other help with technology.
- C. [1:56] **AFSC** - Lucio spoke about his program in Miami, for whom human migration issues are most important. He goes to court with some people seeking asylum and the office works with the Dream Defenders youth. Support for the American immigration policy called DACA [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals] is important to the office and its volunteers and staff. It was news to us that immigration jails have quotas and must have bodies sent in to justify budgets, even existence.
- D. [2:05] **Palm Beach Meeting Peace & Social Concerns Committee** - Caroline informed us they are reconstituted and getting active again. They are looking at the new director of the State of Florida prisons [Julie Jones is the new Secretary of the Florida Department of Corrections, appointed last year by Gov. Rick Scott in the face of accusations of inmate abuse, deaths and cover-ups by officers and staff]. Palm Beach Friends want to encourage a system of "civilian oversight."

E. [2:08] **Quaker House** - Elaine is the SEYM representative to Quaker House and has been in close touch. Her report is in the Documents in Advance for Yearly Meeting. Discussion of Quaker House work to get local communities to take up the vital concern for addressing "Moral Injury" then ensued. [Moral Injury is explained in Wikipedia at length with cites, at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral_injury - Moral Injury is suffered by being present in warfare for immoral acts which one cannot stop, essentially.] Eileen had attended a workshop on this the previous eve [4/1/15], and Karen had been part of bringing the Quaker House program to Tampa and introducing it (and Quaker House staff) to many local clergy.

F. Elaine continued on with sharing, reading us the introduction from a brochure from **Veterans for Peace**. This seems very close to Quakers in spirit and the Jacksonville chapter which is new wants to connect with and learn from Friends. We discussed asking each monthly meeting to reach out for local Veterans for Peace and build connections. Elaine is working on starting up a new Jacksonville **AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project)** in conjunction with the Veterans for Peace chapter.

G. [2:22] Elaine has identified community organizations around the state [**DART and PICO organizations** which are non profit, congregation based community justice ministries, mainly] that are coalitions of faith-based organizations or are working from a faith perspective to address social justice issues. In Jacksonville main issues are juvenile justice and homelessness. In other communities there may be another focus. She has pages of information which she could share.

We were not able to take up the writing of minutes for SEYM. We will seek a special separate short meeting for that purpose, to draft and submit some short minutes.

We prepared for closing with a brief description from Cece of her new workshop (which could be a 6-day program) on animating for social change. How can one make a presentation that fully engages the people present in vital work on important issues?

Karen then shared with us word she had just gleaned from an FCNL e-mail that Iran and the US had arrived at a framework agreement for a nuclear accord and are on a path toward resolving worrisome nuclear issues.

We closed with this joyful news in silent worship, ending at 2:30 p.m.

--Warren Hoskins