

Southeastern Yearly Meeting Gathering & Annual Sessions

March 23-27, 2016

United Methodist Life Enrichment Center, Fruitland Park, Florida

DOCUMENTS IN ADVANCE

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our 52nd Annual Gathering of Southeastern Yearly Meeting!

You are invited to join us in the annual renewal of our ties of fellowship, both within this yearly meeting, and as we welcome visitors from afar and first time attenders to our blessed gathering community!

SEYM Annual Gatherings include lots of hugs, plenty of smiles, laughter and singing from our hearts, and opportunities for deep listening for the guidance of the Spirit in all we are led to undertake together.

We are continuing our format for yearly meeting business sessions. Please remember that:

- **ALL reports from SEYM Officers, Committee Clerks and Representatives need to be shared with SEYM Friends in written form.**
- **If any of the above reports are missing from the DIA, then please bring 50 copies of each missing report to share with Friends and the clerks table, and email the original report to the recording clerks it can be attached to the minutes of Yearly Meeting.**

Written reports are important, to inform SEYM Friends, to include in our minutes, and for our archived records. The DIA is created for that concern and is then posted on the website and mailed to all the meetings and worship groups of SEYM. **As a result, NO time will be allotted on the yearly business meeting agenda for oral committee and representative reports not already on the agenda.** This allows time for worship, as well as seasoning and discernment of any action minutes brought to SEYM. Please hold us in the Light as we continue this process.

Again, welcome to our 52nd Yearly Meeting Gathering. You are invited to have some fun, get some rest (or not), learn something new, and be renewed as we love each other in the Spirit.

In Loving Friendship,



Phoebe Biers Andersen, clerk, SEYM

Southeastern Yearly Meeting
Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

AGENDA

March 24-27, 2016

“The life of a religious society consists in something more than the body of principles it professes and the outer garments of organization which it wears. These things have their own importance: they embody the society to the world, and protect it from the chance and change of circumstance; but the springs of life lie deeper, and often escape recognition. They are to be found in the vital union of the members of the society with God and with one another, a union which allows the free flowing through the society of the spiritual life which is its strength.”

William Charles Braithwaite, 1905

Christian Faith and Practice in the Experience of the Society of Friends,
London Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1960

First Plenary Session • Thursday, March 24, 2016 • 4:15-5:30 pm

Open, centering worship

A Reading from a Yearly Meeting Epistle, the Bible, &/or a Friend’s writing

Welcome

Roll call of Monthly Meetings & Worship Groups, including their milestones (in writing)

Introduction of Visitors & Reading of Letters of Introduction

General announcements (*Please bring written announcements to the clerk prior to session.*)

Agenda review with corrections as necessary.

Appointment of *Ad hoc* Committee for SEYM Epistle 2016

Nominating Committee preliminary report, Kathy Hersh, clerk. pp. 5-8

Review of Minutes for approval

Open Worship

Second Plenary Session • Thursday, March 24, 2016 • 7:00-8:15 pm

Open, centering worship.

General announcements (*Please bring written announcements to the clerk prior to session.*)

Committee for Earthcare & Executive Committee – Update on all aspects related to the new position of Field Secretary for Earthcare; **Teens & YAQs are invited.**

First Reading of Action Minutes from SEYM Committees & Representatives

Ministry on Racism Committee Report..... p. 16

Review of Minutes for approval

Open worship

Third Plenary Session • Friday, March 25, 2016 • 10:00-11:45 am

Open, centering worship.

A Reading from a Yearly Meeting Epistle, the Bible, &/or a Friend's writing.

Welcome of Friends and Visitors not previously introduced.

General announcements *(Please bring written announcements to the clerk prior to session.)*

Review & approval of SEYM Executive Committee Minutes – Lisa Stewart, EC clerk..... p. 9

Review & approval of Interim Business Meeting Minutes – Lisa Stewart, IBM clerk p. 10

Treasurer's report – Neil Andersen, Treasurer

First Reading of 2016-2017 Budget – Finance Committee, Peter Schmidt, clerk

Trustees Report - Jack Bradin, clerk

Review of Minutes for approval

Open worship

Fourth Plenary Session • Saturday, March 26, 2016 • 10:00-11:45 am

Open, centering worship

A Reading from a Yearly Meeting Epistle, the Bible, &/or a Friend's writing

Welcome of Friends & Visitors not previously introduced

General announcements *(Please bring written announcements to the clerk prior to session.)*

Second Reading & Approval of Budget, 2016-2017 - Finance Committee, Peter Schmidt, clerk

Worship & Ministry Report, - Clara Diaz, clerk

ProNica Report - Melissa Ajabshir, Stateside Coordinator & others p. 11

FWCC Report - Clara & Eduardo Diaz, FWCC Representatives..... p. 12

Havana Unprogrammed Meeting for Worship Report – Mercedes Soca, representative

Review of Minutes for approval

Fifth Plenary Session • Saturday, March 26, 2016 • 1:15-2:30 pm

Open, centering worship

Welcome of Friends & Visitors not previously introduced

Second Reading for approval of Action Minutes from SEYM Committees & Representatives

Young Friends – Report of YF concerns & YF MfB minutes to Yearly Meeting.

Laughter Yoga (5 mins.)

Peace & Social Concerns Report - Warren Hoskins, clerk

Friends Peace Teams & Peace Building en las Americas - Cece Yocum, representative

Quaker House Report - Elaine Martin, representative p. 13

FGC Report and Epistle - Ed Lesnick, representative p. 14-16

FLGBTQC Report - Stephanie Preston, representative

Review of Minutes for approval

Open worship

Sixth Plenary Session • Sunday, March 27, 2016 • 9:00-10:45 am

Open, centering worship

A Reading from a Yearly Meeting Epistle, the Bible, and/or a Friend's writing.

General announcements – (Please bring written announcements to the clerk prior to session.)

Second Reading for approval of Nominating Committee report – Kathy Hersh, clerk.

Gathering Committee report – Richard Frechette, program coordinator.

Epistles – Wee Friends, Young Friends, & Teen Friends (*This will occur whenever these Friends arrive in the auditorium.*)

SEYM Epistle – reading & approval

A few words from your clerk

Minutes of appreciation

Review of Minutes for approval

Our Gathering will close with First Day Meeting for Worship at 11:00 am

Nominating Committee Report for SEYM Annual Sessions, March 23-27, 2016

Dear Friends:

Even though Southeastern Yearly Meeting is relatively small in numbers and very spread out geographically, we undertake quite a bit of work:

- Five days of annual sessions with an inspiring Walton Lecturer and workshop leader
- A quality youth program
- An annual Michener Lecture and workshop over Martin Luther King weekend.
- Half-Yearly Meeting, a communal Thanksgiving gathering in Wekiva State Park, an event beloved by many families and outdoor adventurers
- Publication of our Walton and Michener Lectures
- A monthly newsletter sent to one and all
- Maintenance of a comprehensive website, a handy resource to keep us all connected and networked to the wider Quaker world
- Support of ProNica, a nonprofit solidarity organization working with community-based organizations in Nicaragua.

Last year, we united behind the idea of creating a new position in our YM of an Earthcare Secretary, a result of our deep concern for our deteriorating environment and worldwide climate change. Our action has inspired other Quaker organizations and yearly meetings to think deeply about earth stewardship as a priority.

Even with all these time-consuming labors, we maintain a reputation for being a loving and spirited yearly meeting. We are able to do all these things because of the hard work of volunteers on our committees, our volunteer clerk, assistant clerk, and interim business meeting clerk, our volunteer treasurer, the inspiration and commitment of our activist youth, our capable and nimble executive secretary and all of you holding the Yearly Meeting in the Light.

Many of you have volunteered for years in a succession of committees and leadership capacities. Each year the Nominating Committee asks again for your help and you say yes. We are so grateful for your sharing of your time, your energy, your gifts and your Light.

We are at a moment in time when many people have had to step aside and reserve their time and energy to care for aging parents, ailing spouses, or attend to their own health issues. And so we have several openings that we have not been able to fill after much searching.

To meet the challenge of sustaining our lively and faithful YM, we need to find new people in our monthly meetings who may be on the cusp of seeking a deeper involvement in Quakerism and are drawn to the wider Quaker fellowship. There are people in our monthly meetings who have yet to experience the blessed community of the YM Gathering.

The Nominating Committee asks for your help in identifying people who are ready to engage with the YM. We need them as never before. We need young families, we need youth leaders, we need people who are good organizers, good listeners, love being with children, good at math, good at clerking, recording, good at discerning good gospel order. Think for a minute of the folks you see each week at your meetings. Recognize their gifts. Ask if they are willing to get involved. If they can't come to YM, maybe they can take on work in the monthly meeting that would enable another Friend to be released to do YM work.

This challenge of finding people to do the essential work of our YM will require creativity and patience and maybe new ways of doing things. As we gather this week in the Light, may we be alert to the Spirit moving among us. The way will open as it always has.

In the Light,

Ellie Caldwell (Palm Beach MM), Elaine Martin (Jacksonville MM), Eduardo Diaz (Miami MM), and Kathy Hersh, clerk, (Miami MM)

SEYM Personnel & Nominations for 2016 YBM DIAs

Nominations to be approved are in blue/bold

OFFICERS

Yearly Meeting Clerk	Phoebe Andersen	Tallahassee	2017
Interim Business Meeting (IBM) & Executive Committee (EC) Clerk	Lisa Stewart	Palm Beach	2018
Yearly Meeting & Interim Business Meeting Assistant Clerk	Joel Cook	Palm Beach	2016
Co-Recording Clerks, Yearly Meeting	Jan Dahm	Tampa	2018
.....	Lisa Erazmus	Tampa	2018
Recording Clerk, IBM.....	Seeking someone!		
Assistant Recording Clerks	Kody Hersh.....	Miami.....	2016
.....	Andrew Jason	Miami.....	2016
Treasurer	Neil Andersen	Tallahassee	2017
.....	Seeking a Friend to train with Neil		
Membership Recorder.....	Bill Carlie.....	Orlando.....	2017
Young Adult Quakers Clerk			
Young Friends Clerk.....			
Young Friends Recording Clerk.....			

TRUSTEES

Clerk	Jack Bradin	Palm Beach	2018
treasurer	Caroline Lanker	Lake Wales, Tampa	2018
.....	Ellie Caldwell.....	Palm Beach	2016
.....	Jean Larson	Gainesville.....	2016
.....	Mimi McAdoo.....	Sarasota	2017
SEYM Treasurer- (ex officio).....	Neil Andersen.....	Tallahassee	2016

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM (CAPP)

Coordinator	Nancy Fennell	Ft. Myers.....	2017
Trainer	Nancy Fennell	Ft. Myers.....	2017
Trainer	Sandy Lyon	Gainesville.....	2018

COMMITTEES

Archives	Clerk	Connie Ray	Gainesville.....	2017
	.....	Bill Rapp	Lake Wales	2018
	.....	April Merleaux.....	Miami.....	2018
	.....	Derek Merleaux.....	Miami.....	2018

Earthcare	Co-clerk.....	Brad Stocker	Miami.....	2017
	Co-clerk.....	Bill Carlie.....	Orlando.....	2018
	Serrin Anderson	Palm Beach	2016	
	.....	Jocelynn Benton	Tampa	2017
	.....	Jack Bradin	Palm Beach	2017
	.....	Harold Branam	Savannah	2016
	.....	Mike Flanery	Clearwater.....	2017
	.....	Al Geiger	Jacksonville.....	2018
	.....	Catherine Price.....	Lake Wales	2019
.....	Bonnie Zimmer	Gainesville.....	2019	

Faith & Practice *on sabbatical until 2015*

Clerk	Phoebe Andersen	Tallahassee	2016
.....	Cathy Gaskill	Orlando.....	Emeritus

Finance	Clerk	Peter Schmidt	St. Petersburg ...	2019
	.....	Tor Bejnar	Tallahassee	2016

	Shawna Doran	Gainesville	2018
	Tom Corindia	Sarasota	2018
	Steve Donachie	Miami	2018
Clerk of Trustees (ex officio)	Jack Bradin	Palm Beach	2018
Asst. YM Clerk (ex officio)	Joel Cook	Palm Beach	2016
YM Secretary (ex officio)	Vicki Carlie	Orlando	
Treasurer (ex officio)	Neil Andersen	Tallahassee	2015
Half-Yearly Meeting Clerk	Carl Hersh	Miami	2018
Registrar	Beeg Camarota	Orlando	2017
Ministry on Racism Co-clerk	Ellie Caldwell	Palm Beach	2017
Co-clerk	Wendy Clarissa Geiger	Jacksonville	2017
	Cheryl Demers-Holton	Gainesville	2017
	Minerva Glidden	Orlando	2018
Nominating clerk	Kathy Hersh	Miami	2018
	Ellie Caldwell	Palm Beach	2018
	Eduardo Diaz	Miami	2016
	Elaine Martin	Jacksonville	2018
Peace & Social Concerns Clerk	Warren Hoskins	Miami	2016
	Jack Bradin	Palm Beach	2016
	Mike Flanery	Clearwater	2017
	Al Geiger	Jacksonville	2016
	Peter Harrell	Gainesville	2018
	Steve Kinney	Tampa	2016
	Andrea Hoskins	Miami	2016
	Elaine Martin	Jacksonville	2018
	Tim Ray	Gainesville	2018
	Eileen Zingaro	Clearwater	2018
Publications Clerk	Phoebe Andersen	Tallahassee	2018
	Sandy Branam	Savannah	2018
	Stephanie Preston	Orlando	2018
	Mercedes Soca	Tampa	2018
	Seeking more members		
Worship & Ministry Clerk	Clara Diaz	Miami	2017
	Nancy Corindia	Sarasota	2018
	Eduardo Diaz	Miami	2017
	Nancy Fennell	Ft. Myers	2018
	Tom Fennell	Ft. Myers	2018
	Carl Hersh	Miami	2017
	Nancyrose Logan	Sarasota	2016
	Mimi McAdoo	Sarasota	2016
	Nancy Triscritti	Tampa	2018
Yearly Meeting Gathering			
Clerk	Seeking a Clerk		
Program Coordinator	Richard Frechette	Ft. Myers	2018
Registrar	Andrea Hoskins	Miami	2017
	Martha Morris	Orlando	2017
	Stephanie Preston	Orlando	2018
	Floyd Daniels	Miami	2018
	Ellie Caldwell	Palm Beach	2018
Youth Committee Clerk	Seeking a Clerk		
Convener	Vicki Mariner	Tallahassee	2018
	Aurelio Anderson	Tallahassee	2018
	Caroline Chen	Palm Beach	2017

.....	Rolf Hanson	.....	Sarasota	.....	2017
.....	Jennifer Mendoza	.....	Sarasota	.....	2018
.....	Josh Rumschlag	.....	St. Petersburg	.....	2017
.....	Kate Sundberg	.....	Sarasota	.....	2018
.....	Mira Tanna	.....	Orlando	.....	2016
.....	Cecelia Yocum	.....	Tampa	.....	2016
.....	Elaine Petrella	.....	Miami	.....	2019

APPOINTEES

ProNica Board Appointees

.....	Carl Hersh	.....	Miami	.....	2018
.....	Brad Stocker	.....	Miami	.....	2019
.....	Minerva Glidden	.....	Orlando	.....	2019
.....	Joshua Paolino	.....	Miami	.....	2019

REPRESENTATIVES TO ORGANIZATIONS

American Friends Service Committee Corporation, AFSC/Philadelphia

.....	Harold Branam	.....	Savannah	.....	2016
.....	Sandy Branam	.....	Savannah	.....	2016

Friends Committee on National Legislation, FCNL/William Penn House

.....	Jack Bradin	.....	Palm Beach	.....	2016
.....	Nancy Corindia	.....	Sarasota	.....	2017
.....	Karen Putney	.....	Tampa	.....	2018
.....	Lou Putney	.....	Tampa	.....	2017
.....	Eileen Zingaro	.....	Clearwater	.....	2017

Friends General Conference, FGC Central Committee

.....	Dustin Lemke	.....	Tampa	.....	2018
.....	Ed Lesnick	.....	Orlando	.....	2018
.....	Kay Lesnick	.....	Orlando	.....	2016
.....	Gerry O'Sullivan	.....	Miami	.....	2018

Friends World Committee for Consultation - FWCC

.....	Clara Diaz	.....	Miami	.....	2016
.....	Eduardo Diaz	.....	Miami	.....	2018
.....	Sarah Hernandez	.....	Sarasota	.....	2018
.....	Nancyrose Logan	.....	Sarasota	.....	2017

Friends Peace Teams

.....	Cecilia Yocum	.....	Tampa	.....	2018
.....	Shawna Doran	.....	Gainesville	.....	2018

Florida Council of Churches Beverly Ward Tampa 2018

Florida Impact, Contact Person Eileen Zingaro Clearwater 2016

Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns - FLGBTQC

.....	Stephanie Preston	Orlando	2018
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Historic Peace Churches: Quaker, Mennonite, and Church of the Brethren

South Florida	Warren Hoskins	Miami	2016
North Florida	.....	Minerva Glidden	.....	Orlando	.....	2016

Palmetto Friends Gathering

.....	Phoebe Andersen	.....	Tallahassee	.....	2017
.....	Neil Andersen	.....	Tallahassee	.....	2017
.....	Ellie Caldwell	.....	Palm Beach	.....	2017

Quaker Earthcare Witness

.....	Jack Bradin	.....	Palm Beach	.....	2019
.....	Brad Stocker	.....	Miami	.....	2019

Quaker House Elaine Martin Jacksonville 2017

Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) Tim Ray Gainesville 2017

APPOINTED OBSERVERS TO ORGANIZATIONS

FUM General Board Observer Kody Hersh Miami 2018

Executive Committee Numbered Minutes

June EC 2015 Numbered Minutes

- 15SEC01. SEYM Executive Committee approves making the new internet site domain name seymquakers.org. The old domain name of seym.org will be kept for a year, with a direction to the new site.
- 15SEC02. SEYM Executive Committee approves formation of a subcommittee of Executive Committee members to work with the Earthcare Committee on a job description for the Field Secretary for Earthcare and a process for hiring the Field Secretary for Earthcare. Phoebe Andersen, Bill Carlie and Cheryl Demers-Holton agreed to serve on that subcommittee.
- 15SEC03: The Executive committee of SEYM approves SEYM acting as the official 501c3 sponsor of Circus McGurkis for the city of Saint Petersburg in 2015, as required for the permit to use the Lake Vista Park.
- 15SEC04: SEYM Executive Committee expresses extreme gratitude to Tampa Monthly Meeting for their warm hospitality and refreshments in hosting the June 2015 EC meeting.

Fall EC 2015 Numbered Minutes

- 15FEC01: SEYM Executive Committee recommends to the Yearly Meeting that the registrars of the YM Gathering and Half Yearly Meeting be made members of the EC
- 15FEC02: SEYM Executive Committee recommends that YM approve the job description for Field Secretary for Earthcare as published in the FIBM EC DIA. The job description will be sent to the meetings for their discernment and brought to the 2016 Winter IBM for approval.
- 15FEC03: SEYM Executive Committee recommends that YM approve the Description of the Anchor Committee for the SEYM Field Secretary for Earthcare as published in the FIBM Executive Committee DIA. The description of the Anchor Committee will be sent to the meetings for their discernment and brought to the WIBM for approval.
- 15FEC04: The SEYM Executive Committee recommends that the draft personnel policy of 9/25/2008 be approved, with one change: under the heading "Benefits", the first paragraph read only "Health Insurance:" and otherwise be left blank. This recommendation is made with the intention that the Yearly Meeting will address this section and make future revisions to this and any other sections as needed. The draft Personnel Policy will be sent to the meetings for their discernment and brought to the WIBM for approval.
- 15FEC05: SEYM Executive Committee recommends that the Yearly Meeting approve the Suggestions for an SEYM Field Secretary for Earthcare Search Committee as published in the FIBM EC DIA. The description of the Search Committee will be sent to the meetings for their discernment and brought to the WIBM for approval.

Winter EC 2016 Numbered Minutes

There were no numbered minutes.

Interim Business Meeting Numbered Minutes

Fall Interim Business Meeting 2015 Numbered Minutes

- 15FIBM01: Southeastern Yearly Meeting would like to thank Saint Petersburg Monthly Meeting for hosting Fall Interim Business Meeting. You have made us feel welcome in every possible way.
- 15FIBM02: SEYM Fall Interim Business Meeting 2015 approves adding the SEYM bookkeeper to the Executive Committee as an ex-officio member, to attend, as a resource, four meetings annually: Fall Interim Business Meeting, Winter Interim Business Meeting, Yearly Business Meeting and summer Executive Committee meeting. The SEYM bookkeeper will be compensated for his or her attendance in a similar manner as the Administrative Secretary is.
- 15FIBM03: SEYM Fall Interim Business Meeting 2015 approves hardship travel assistance to anyone who serves the Yearly Meeting and needs that assistance. For the current fiscal year, the meeting approves the use of the budget contingency line item to fund this. The meeting approves adding a line item for hardship travel assistance to the budget for FY 2017 and later.
- 15FIBM04: The SEYM Fall Interim Business Meeting approves the minutes approved by the June 2015 Executive Committee meeting.
- 15FIBM05: The SEYM Fall Interim Business Meeting approves the minutes approved by the fall 2015 Executive Committee meeting.
- 15FIBM06: SEYM Fall Interim Business Meeting authorizes Phoebe Andersen as clerk of SEYM to write a letter saying that the bombing of the Doctors without Borders hospital in Kunduz province, Afghanistan is unacceptable and requesting an immediate investigation. She will send this letter to the U.S. president, secretary of defense, state department and the two Florida senators. It will be sent to all the MMs so that it can be further disseminated as led.
- 15FIBM07: SEYM Fall Interim Business Meeting approves a salary increase for the administrative secretary and the bookkeeper as recommended by the Executive Committee acting as personnel committee.

Winter Interim Business Meeting 2016 Numbered Minutes

- 16WIBM01: Southeastern Yearly Meeting as Winter Interim Business Meeting approves Elaine Martin (Jacksonville MM) to serve on SEYM Nominating Committee for a term to conclude at SEYM in 2019.
- 16WIBM02: Southeastern Yearly Meeting as Winter Interim Business Meeting approves the following three documents, as amended, for the Field Secretary for Earthcare (FSE) position: SEYM FSE Job Description (Final), SEYM FSE Anchor Committee (Final), and SEYM Search Committee (Final).
- 16WIBM03: Southeastern Yearly Meeting as Winter Interim Business Meeting approves the formation of the Field Secretary for Earthcare Search Committee as described in the SEYM FSE Search Committee document and instructs the formed committee to initiate the process for seeking and hiring candidates for the position.
- 16WIBM04: Southeastern Yearly Meeting as Winter Interim Business Meeting approves the nomination of the following individuals to serve three-year terms concluding at SEYM in 2019:
- Bill Carlie (Orlando MM) for Earthcare Committee Co-Clerk
 - Catherine Price (Lake Wales WG) for Earthcare Committee
 - Bonnie Zimmer (Gainesville MM) for Earthcare Committee
 - Floyd Daniels (Miami MM) for YM Gathering Committee
 - Ellie Caldwell (Which MM) for YM Gathering Committee
 - Gerry O'Sullivan (Miami MM) for SEYM Representative to FGC Central Committee
 - Beverly Ward (Tampa MM) for SEYM Representative to Florida Council of Churches

William Penn advised that, *“Force may subdue, but love gains.”*

The goal at ProNica has always been love—plain and simple. But the underlying potential for force remains, especially when masked by subtlety and good intentions. With international community development work, organizations can inadvertently force viewpoints and subdue the actual needs of the communities. Power imbalances can mirror financial imbalances; it’s tricky when one partner gives funds and the other receives, no matter how many other avenues there are for give and take.

The Acahualinca Women’s Center, Los Quinchos and the other community organizations ProNica works with are our equal partners in the abstract and most certainly much more than that in our hearts, but our continued work in 2016 is to strengthen that mutuality in the day to day interactions and amidst the shifting dynamics of life in Nicaragua.

How do we do that? How can we authentically mitigate force and foster love in our interactions?

There is no simple answer, but it seems to begin with humility. As we humble ourselves to the challenge of true partnership, it becomes more natural to see mutuality as an aim, not someplace we ever comfortably arrive.

Additionally, a well-crafted and tightly bonded community seems essential. SEYM Nominating Committee appoints Board members adept at Quaker Process who regularly bring ProNica’s work under the magnifying glass of the Integrity Testimony. And then there is the advisory council in Nicaragua, our dear Consejo. As Nicaraguans working for other solidarity organizations, the members ground us in the beauty of the work, the cultural nuance and the doggedness required to stay the course.

Perhaps most importantly, we come closest to true partnership by embracing our role as students. We may be the funders, but the project partners are our teachers, guides and mentors. We may be activists dedicated to social justice, but we didn’t hone our organizing skills under the conditions of war, revolution and life on the margins in the global south. They are our partners and our friends, human in every way, but the subjective power imbalance of the funder melts away when one grasps just how much we have to learn and where the source of that invaluable education lies.

Solidarity is a complex, difficult and wondrous journey. As we reflect on ProNica’s 28 years under the spiritual care of SEYM, it is with joy and curiosity that we glance toward the future with the project partners, those they serve, and with all of you.

Melissa Ajabshir, Stateside Director

FWCC Representative Preliminary Report

World Plenary in Pisac, Peru, January 19-27, 2016

This was a blessed gathering of Friends from 37 countries and 77 Yearly Meetings, held in the Sacred Valley of the Incas, in Pisac, Peru. It is always an adventure to Travel in the Ministry and this trip was no exception for the SEYM team of event attenders.

The adventure starts with a canceled flight from Lima to Cusco on the 19th, requiring an unexpected one night stay in Lima by a delightful group of stranded Quakers who shared a hastily rented apartment for the night in order to catch a 5:00 am flight the next day. Now known as the Lima Nine, this group was ably led by Jonathan Wooley from QUNO-Geneva.

SEYM was allowed two representative slots to the plenary, filled by Eduardo and Clara Diaz from Miami Friends Meeting, but our contingent was gifted by the addition of Nancyrose Logan and her husband David Rakyta from Sarasota Friends Meeting, who were able to fill open slots that became available.

Our team missed the Opening Ceremony on Tuesday but arrived early enough on Wednesday to fully participate that day, albeit exhausted. Our program for the duration was filled with back to back opportunities to fully engage with Friends from diverse backgrounds. Each day started at 7:15 with the option of Unprogrammed Worship or Bible Study by British Friend Janet Scott. Interpreters were always available to allow translation of the gist of the messages in 3 languages, English, Spanish and French.

The typical day included some blend of Business Meeting of the World Body or of a Section, mixed with Worship planned in turns by the 4 Sections, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East, Africa and Asia and West Pacific. In addition, 4 separate Consultations were held, multiple workshops were offered and each participant was assigned to a more intimate small Home Group that met regularly allowing for deep international connections to be made. (My Home Group included Friends from Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, England, Australia and the U.S.)

Four major Consultations met 4 times to thresh out ideas and initiatives pertaining to Ministry and Leadership, Living Ministry Communities, Sustaining Life on Earth, or Equipping FWCC. Plenary sessions were conducted in exemplary Quaker practice by a team of Clerks supported by the General Secretary, Gretchen Castle.

We look forward to speaking to you during our Yearly Meeting sessions. Hopefully we can report more details in an interest group and at one of the Business Meetings. Each of us has been deeply enriched by the experience.

Eduardo I. Diaz
FWCC Section of the Americas Executive Committee

Quaker House Report

“A Place of Peace in a Military City”

On December 4th, 2015 Lynn and Steve Newsom, the Directors of Quaker House, participated in the annual wreath laying for Beryl Mitchell who had been killed by her military spouse. It is just one of the many ways Quaker House not only witnesses to the absurdity and cruelty of war but provides support, counseling and care for those affected.

The Quaker House GI Rights hotline answers thousands of calls from military, active duty and veteran and military families. The number of calls to the hotline continues to increase. This year the hotline answered an average of 280 calls per month for a total of 3370, up from 2659 last year. The counselor's most rewarding yet most time consuming work is helping service members with their conscientious objector status, guiding and providing moral support as they move through regulations, delays and at times deliberate roadblocks of the command structure. Since November I have been helping support the GI Rights hotline by returning messages, screening calls and prioritizing them for urgency. The two weeks after Christmas proved particularly heartbreaking listening to family members tell as their young sons and daughters suffered emotionally to the point of breakdown and hospitalization. In one case, a mother was told to get her son on a plane back to his command.

Quaker House also continues the important work of providing counseling and support for the victims of military domestic violence. Started three years ago with a donation from an anonymous donor, the Quaker House counselor sees up to 10 clients a day. In addition to domestic violence, she also sees clients who suffer from the effects of PTSD, moral injury and other psychological ailments. The reputation of the program has grown both in the community and on base at Fort Bragg. The service is free and often the last resort for those in need of help. Funding for the program is tenuous and any and all investments will be appreciated.

Lynn and Steve continue to travel to reach out to new audiences providing education and information on moral injury. Quoting Rita Nakashima-Brock, “Moral injury results when soldiers violate their core moral beliefs, and in evaluating their behavior negatively, they feel they no longer live in a reliable, meaningful world and can longer be regarded as decent human beings.” Today, on average, 22 veterans a day commit suicide. Lynn and Steve tell stories of numerous people who have come up to them after the presentation to express their gratitude.

Quaker House facilitates Alternatives to Violence Project training and provides Truth in Recruiting literature and information. In addition, Quaker House provides a warm and welcoming place for people in the community to meet. Mindfulness classes are held every Thursday night, a local AA group meets regularly and the Parson, popular musicians in Fayetteville, hold concerts there.

On November 16, Quaker House organized a forum on “Challenging Islamophobia and Racism co-sponsored by approximately 19 other community organizations. Quaker House continues to witness against torture and drone warfare.

Lynn has forged a relationship with Fort Bragg. Through her dedicated work with the military chaplains, a closer association has developed which allows Quaker House to provide information and services on base and personnel at Fort Bragg have started making referrals to Quaker House. In addition to her work with the Military Chaplains, Lynn continues to attend the Bragg Regional Behavioral Healthcare Collaborative, Community Blueprint, the Behavioral Health Professionals Association, the Military Spiritual Wellness Alliance, Greater Fayetteville United and serves on the board of CARE Domestic Violence Center.

Moving forward, Quaker House foresees the challenge of the future; to take the Quaker House message to a wider audience, tackling the increasing administrative complexities, expanding the fund base and succession planning as Steve and Lynn Newsom will retire in 2017.

Submitted by

Elaine Martin, SEYM Quaker House Representative, 2/7/16

Friends General Conference (FGC) Central Committee Epistle October 25, 2015

To Friends Everywhere;

This weekend, over 130 Friends from fifteen yearly meetings and several directly affiliated monthly meetings gathered at the Pearlstone Retreat Center in Reisterstown, Maryland, to discern the future direction of Friends General Conference. We had hard choices to make. We had hoped to be talking about extending and expanding our programs. Instead, we spent the weekend deciding how to strengthen our fiscal foundations in the wake of a feasibility study that lifted up questions about how we use our resources.

We have come to realize that Friends General Conference cannot continue to rely on infusions of wealth from periodic fundraising campaigns, and must learn to make do with what comes in each year to our annual fund, supplemented by prudent spending from our reserves. Although this lesson has been a painful one, we feel confident in moving forward that we are approaching solid ground. We have agreed on program cuts that will bring us closer to a balanced budget, and are committed to living into a long-term sustainable budget. We know that the process of periodically pruning programs and refining goals is normal and natural, and we have seen other Quaker organizations go through a similar process in the past few years.

We have chosen to focus on three main goals: fostering and nourishing collaboration among yearly and monthly meetings, growing and strengthening the Religious Society of Friends, and fostering more inclusive community. We are regretfully laying down our Traveling Ministries Program, and will be unable to continue Quaker Quest and New Meetings, which were funded by grants that have now run out. We will be discontinuing our self-publishing program, QuakerBridge. Couple Enrichment, which has been under FGC's care for 47 years, will continue as a largely independent project. We have approved these changes with a heavy heart, understanding the impact these decisions will have on Friends who use the programs, the devoted volunteers who provide ministry and witness through them, as well as the impact on our beloved staff who have helped coordinate and carry out the work.

Nevertheless, we face the future with faith and hope. Most of the services offered by FGC are still available to Friends, as are the resources developed by past programs. QuakerBooks required less of a subsidy than expected this year and seems to be growing stronger in its new premises at Pendle Hill. In addition to the traditional book tables, it is partnering with Quaker and Fair Trade vendors to offer new kinds of merchandise. Our new Spiritual Deepening program will soon be available to monthly meetings everywhere. The Quaker Cloud is beginning to reach its potential as a Quaker web collaborative, responsive to Quaker needs, and is providing services to a growing number of meetings. The FGC Gathering this past summer attracted far more Friends than expected, and our 2016 Gathering in St. Joseph, Minnesota promises to be just as wonderful. Our diversity work also continues, and we are actively preparing for the White Privilege Conference in Philadelphia in 2016 as part of the hosting team.

This year at Central Committee, we devoted an evening to exploring and reflecting on the continuing destructive impact of the Doctrine of Discovery and the efforts that are being made by people of faith, including a number of our yearly and monthly meetings, to have it renounced. As the governing body of Friends General Conference, we are committed to shepherding FGC to a sustainable future, so that it can serve the Religious Society of Friends for years to come. We might think of FGC as a blanket of many colors, knitted by many hands. Though some colors of yarn are added over time and others dropped, the work is never lost, and the blanket warms us all. We have been humbled and strengthened by our experience this weekend, and look forward to faithfully carrying forward the work and ministry of Friends General Conference.

Friends General Conference (FGC) Report

Friends General Conference (FGC) Central Committee met in sessions October 22-25 at the Pearlstone Center, Reisterstown, Maryland.

FGC looks optimistically towards the coming year after undertaking a deep, Spirit-led discernment on the best way to carry out its Quaker mission in the coming years.

SEYM's three designated representatives participated in the six plenary sessions and two committee meetings at Central Committee sessions last October:

Dustin Lemke (Tampa) completes six years of service on behalf of SEYM and FGC this year. We thank him for devoted service.

Ed Lesnick (Orlando) is SEYM's representative to Executive Committee and a member of FGC Communications Committee.

Kay Lesnick (Orlando) is a member of the FGC Christian and Interfaith Relations Committee.

Also invited by FGC to Central Committee is Susan Taylor (Tallahassee). Susan has been coopted by Central Committee to serve on the FGC Nominations Committee.

A New Representative: Gerry O'Sullivan (Miami) was nominated at the WIBM to replace Dustin Lemke.

From the FGC Annual Report "Living Love:"

"Thanks to you, and to the support of thousands of other Friends and seekers, hundreds of meetings, and many funds and foundations, FGC is creating and strengthening programs and services that transform, engage, and connect Friends across the US and Canada."

Some Highlights:

- Friends coming together to start 17 new Quaker communities with the support and nurture of the New Meetings Project
- Powerful Gathering where 1,241 Friends were invited to "Let Love be the First Motion" in their lives (2014) The 2015 Gathering, "Seeking Wholeness," was highlighted by Parker Palmer and Carrie Newcomer
- Over 100 meetings using the Quaker Cloud online toolkit
- Over 500 Friends empowered to support financially people and causes they care about through stewardship Services
- An invitation was made to contribute to a new Spiritual Deepening program
- *2015 Central Committee Sessions and Annual Budget*

Over the past several years, endowments, grants, and a successful fund-raising campaign, "Stoking the Fire," enabled an expansion of program and services to the Quaker community. Additional funding was necessary to continue varying aspects of the mission. Hence, last Spring, FGC determined a need to conduct a feasibility study to ascertain the efficacy of a new campaign. Based on the results of the study, FGC was advised through an independent evaluator to reassess its programs and financial capabilities before undertaking a large fundraiser.

FGC General Secretary Barry Crossno stated,

"Many members of FGC's governance have become clear that we have more programs and projects than our current funding can support. While we have financial reserves, we know it's important to conserve them so we can draw income sustainably over the coming years. We're therefore discerning which programs are most important for FGC to keep and strengthen. We will let go of the remainder that will allow our programming, funding, and staffing to be better balanced and more sustainable."

Central Committee undertook the charge to approve a new budget. Recognizing as valid the conclusions of staff and the data supplied by the Finance Committee, the governing body was in unity in approving the 2016

FY budget. As a result, the following programs have been reduced or laid down:

- A. Couples Enrichment: This long established program will become independent of FGC financing.
- B. Spiritual Deepening: The pilot of this proposed program proved successful. However, it will be transformed and continued as an online service due to staff decreases.
- C. QuakerQuest: This in-reach and outreach program served us well for more than a decade but has become less viable in the past few years as the grant funding it comes to an end.
- D. QuakerMedia: FGC will publish a maximum of two books in FY 2016
- E. New Meetings Project will continue a limited basis.

Due to program changes, there has been a reduction in staff and reassignment of responsibilities for others. Eliminated are two full-time positions (by attrition) and hours are reduced for one employee. Michael Wajda and Deborah Fisch, two Friends well-known to SEYM, retired.

The Bookstore – QuakerBooks

This past summer, the bookstore moved from FGC offices in Philadelphia to Pendle Hill. Due to a dramatic decrease in sales over the past several years, FGC recognized the need to evaluate the bookstore's future and the annual subsidy given to support this mission. Happily, since the move to Pendle Hill, the bookstore is performing better than projected.

Friends are encouraged to purchase from QuakerBooks. Although book prices are often lower from commercial online stores, the small premium paid for a book will help to sustain a valuable Friends' mission.

The Gathering: We encourage Friends and families to attend the 2016 FGC Annual Gathering this coming summer. The Gathering is in St. Joseph, Minnesota, July 3-8. Registration begins soon. Workshop selections have been posted at FGCQuaker.org

----Report submitted by Ed Lesnick for 2016 YBM

Committee for Ministry on Racism report for SEYM Gathering 2016 DIA

The art exhibit, "39 Questions for White People," will be on display at Yearly Meeting Gathering. An interest group will happen for Friends to discuss our reactions to this exhibit.

The SEYM Ministry on Racism committee meeting will happen on Thursday afternoon at Yearly Meeting Gathering.

The Arthur Morgan School (AMS) is a small middle school for boarders and day students located at the Celo Community in the mountains of western North Carolina. AMS officially became a Quaker school last year and is seeking to racially diversify the student body, which now is mostly white students. Please, check out the AMS website www.arthurmorganschool.org and consider donating money for scholarships to this cause at: Arthur Morgan School, 60 AMS Circle, Burnsville, NC 28714 - 828-675-4262 (main office) -- 828-675-4361 (financial office).

Gentle blessings,

Wendy Clarissa Geiger & Ellie Caldwell, Co-Clerks,
SEYM Committee on Ministry on Racism



SEYM Committee for Ministry on Racism - Reflections from Wendy Clarissa Geiger, *co-clerk of SEYM Committee for Ministry on Racism. This is in addition to a formal report from the Committee's co-clerks.*

The fourth day of Black History Month and Black Spiritual Heritage Month, 2016

Dear Friends in Southeastern Yearly Meeting,

This message is given in light of the beautifully worded Pax Christi USA (national Catholic Peace Movement) statement, "We are called to build the Beloved Community," with its list of women, children, immigrants, Muslims, People of Color of whom to be mindful amidst the violent rhetoric and violence otherwise happening in our beloved country. www.paxchristiusa.org

For victims of oppression, it would go a long way if men, specifically and especially, white men and boys, are addressed in some way. How this violence must devastate and damage men, too, in witnessing it, in being complicit in it - directly and indirectly - and in being blamed for it - explicitly and implicitly. What sorrows they carry in their hearts - often buried, hidden from their consciousness, but perhaps, not their conscience, but maybe so, too. What expectations: to be the "breadwinners" in families; to sexually perform always; but, especially, to grow up knowing our country will call for them to kill other human beings on command in wars; and, expectations of "power over" rather than "power with." The list could go on.

We are often told to be concerned with women and children and minorities within the United States and around the world. But rarely is there mention of men specifically - specifically understood as white men - in any way empathetic or even mentioned at all. It is as though they are the "enemy." The focus is usually on the victims of white men, especially. **What if white men change?** What burdens to expect to be "tops" all the time, to always be the ones in charge, the decision-and-law-makers. I marvel at their obliviousness, such pressures, such blindness to their own feelings. Where are men's tears? When are they nurturing the child-within and the woman-within? And, doing this without shame?

I so love stating here and now of how I, as a white woman, want to be taken seriously enough for white men and boys to work together and for white women and girls to work together to end racism and sexism.

Women getting together to address ending the pandemic of sexism is like Black folk getting together to address ending the pandemic of racism. There is only so much women and Black folk can do, respectively. Where is the place and the structure for MEN to address ending rape and sexism? Where is the place and the structure for WHITE FOLK to address ending racism? It must be here...in our Meetings and Worship Groups...among Friends.

This, above, paragraph reminds me of two statements. Alice Walker titled a chapter in one of her books: "All the Blacks are men, all the women are white, but some of us are brave." And, at the International Thomas Merton Society Conference and General Meeting in Memphis, TN, in June of 2007, on the last day, at the end of the last panel discussion, an elder white Catholic priest offered these words: "The real holocaust in the United States is child abuse."

What do our Meetings and Worship Groups have to say about these matters? What does our Yearly Meeting have to say? Sexism, racism and heterosexism are all connected. "Intersectional" is the term for this interconnection. Last night, I thought of a term for this: co-suffering.

And, how damaging to white folk slavery still is! The pain and shame of slavery make white folk silent accomplices to the ongoing trauma of U.S. history. Wendell Berry wrote eloquently about this: "If white people have inflicted the wound of racism upon Black people, the cost is that we would receive the mirror image of that wound into ourselves... I want to know, as fully and exactly as I can, what the wound is and how much I am suffering from it. And I want to be cured...." (THE HIDDEN WOUND)

All this is to say: I want men and boys to not be the "enemy," and in many ways they are the enemy. And, I want them to be fully human, as I want for myself. I want white folk to not deem, especially, Black folk as the "enemy." Maybe, we do this work rather blindly, feeling our way to Wholeness & Tenderness, changing our country as we change ourselves. Let us listen to the sorrow, listen to the rage, listen to the longing, listen to the hope, despair, and resolve of one another. Let us consider the statements from the Bible: "Love one another as I have loved you;" and, "Love your enemy."

Resolved, Wendy Clarissa Geiger, Jacksonville

