

Eleventh Month 9, 2007

Dear Friends,

Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM) has long been concerned about the geographic difficulties experienced by Friends in its constituent meetings and worship groups. Meetings are spread out over a large area, so that, with a few exceptions, SEYM meetings are relatively isolated from one another. While the internet helps us a great deal with communication, it is not a substitute for meeting together face-to-face to share worship, fellowship, ideas, spiritual gifts, concerns, problem solving, and support.

Enclosed is a draft of a proposed inter-visitation plan which focuses on sharing our gifts and fellowship. Initiated by Phoebe Andersen, Tallahassee Monthly Meeting, the draft is being sent to meeting clerks, worship group contacts, Worship and Ministry clerks, and our unaffiliated meetings. SEYM would like each meeting and worship group to season the proposal and discern if it speaks to your condition. Initial feedback should be sent to Phoebe Andersen, phoebea@comcast.net. It will be appreciated if feedback is received before Winter Interim Business Meeting (January 13, 2007).

I hope you and your meeting are as excited as I am about the potential of the inter-visitation plan. By working together and keeping an open mind and heart, I believe we can put together something that will extend and deepen our relationships and enrich us all.

Yours in the Light,

Nancy Fennell
Clerk, Interim Business Meeting
Southeastern Yearly Meeting

SEYM DRAFT Inter-visitation Plan

Outline

Definition of program and proposed benefits to SEYM

A. Establish Geographic Regions within SEYM

We propose to organize all of the MMs, PM, WGs and Unaffiliated Meetings of SEYM into regions for the purpose of lessening the burden on the inter-visiting traveler(s) by providing choices of nearer meetings to visit rather than the possibility of traveling from Miami to Crestview (approx. 650 miles) or Charleston to Key West (approx. 900 miles). For example, the Northern Region travelers might inter-visit with the Central Region meetings but not necessarily with the meetings of the South West or South East regions.

- Northern Region – Charleston, Gainesville, Jacksonville, Tallahassee MMs; Crestview, Golden Isles WGs; Savannah Unaffiliated.
- Central Region – Orlando, Space Coast, Winter Park MMs; Deland PM; Ocala WG; Halifax Unaffiliated.
- South East Region – Ft. Lauderdale, Miami, Palm Beach MMs; Key West, Treasure Coast (Stuart) WGs.
- South West Region – Clearwater, Ft. Myers, Sarasota, St. Petersburg, Tampa MMs; Lake Wales, Managua WGs.

B. Each Meeting Determines the Spiritual Gifts in their Meeting

- Discern Spiritual Gifts – Each MM, PM, WG & Unaffiliated meeting determines spiritual gifts and associated persons in each meeting. (For example, gifts may include: Ministry, Counseling, Quaker Business Process, Religious Education [faith, practice, history, etc.] and the target age group of each RE offering [adults or youth])
- Willingness to Travel – Each MM, PM, WG & Unaffiliated meeting determines who are willing to travel (within own meeting's region, other near by regions and/or all regions) and the spiritual gifts these Friends can share.
- Submit names to SEYM – Each MM, PM, WG & Unaffiliated meeting submits name(s) of their gifted person(s), their gifts, willingness to travel and to which of the geographical regions to the SEYM Inter-visitation Committee.

C. SEYM creates a committee and process for coordinating Inter-visitation

- Build simple database of information from Meetings of available persons and gifts (provided by Phoebe Andersen).
- Create an Inter-visitation Care Committee of at least 1 representative from each of the 4 regions plus 1 SEYM EC member (who reports committee activity to EC and YM; maybe the assistant clerk?)
- The committee coordinates requests for inter-visitation from meetings with available personnel from the database. The committee tries to send visitors in pairs whenever possible.
- The committee develops a process for evaluating the benefit of each visit to requesting meetings. (Consult with FGC TMP program)
- The committee develops a process to nurture and further develop the gifts of volunteers. (Consult with FGC TMP program)
- Initially, all inter-visitation is voluntary and cost is born by the volunteer. Requesting meetings are asked to provide hospitality if possible. SEYM Administrative Secretary sends letters acknowledging the gift of time and resources of the volunteer for tax purposes.
- The committee works with Finance & Trustees to develop some funding source to partially offset some of the expense for inter-visiting travelers.

D. Annual Regional Gatherings Within SEYM

- **Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Palm Beach model**
These MMs gather once a year at a public park for an afternoon potluck picnic gathering at the beach with the purpose of building relationships within these MMs, providing another opportunity for Quaker youth to interact and everyone to have fun.

We propose to encourage all of the MMs, PM, WGs and Unaffiliated Meetings in each geographical region to organize an annual gathering guided by the model presented above to strengthen relationships and provide a geographic center for meetings in each region that makes it easier on Friends to participate in SEYM activities. This is dependent on full support of the MMs for the plan as they will be primarily doing the work of organization of the annual event in each region.

Can SEYM provide some financial support?

- Northern Region – Charleston, Gainesville, Jacksonville, Tallahassee MMs; Crestview, Golden Isles WGs; Savannah Unaffiliated. The geographic center of the North Region is between Jacksonville and Golden Isles (assuming access by interstates as much as possible).
- Central Region – Orlando, Space Coast, Winter Park MMs; Deland PM; Ocala WG; Halifax Unaffiliated. The geographic center of the Central Region is near Deland (assuming access by interstates as much as possible).
- South East Region – Ft. Lauderdale, Miami, Palm Beach MMs; Key West, Treasure Coast (Stuart) WGs. The geographic center of the South East Region is near Ft. Lauderdale (assuming access by interstates as much as possible).
- South West Region – Clearwater, Ft. Myers, Sarasota, St. Petersburg, Tampa MMs; Lake Wales, Managua WGs. The geographic center of the South West Region is near Sarasota (assuming access by interstates as much as possible).