

COLLEGE PARK QUARTERLY MEETING State of Meeting Reports

Apple Seed Monthly Meeting

“We have to be reminded that spirituality is not a separate compartment of life but life itself...what is ordinary is the major part of our lives... Ordinarity can be radical: when it gets to the root of knowing God in every day life.” Kathryn Damiano, 1996

How has the Light worked in your life in the past year, and how has this influenced your work within the monthly meeting?

Although we remain very small, one member finds this a well- connected meeting, a logical family, where deep and tender issues can be brought up and heard. We get to know one another on a deeper level because of our intimacy. This is a safe place, and we feel able and willing to struggle together, if needs be.

We appreciate the informal adult education which flows naturally as we talk around the table at our weekly potlucks. Meeting for Business is experienced by some as a spiritual event; on the other hand, in the closing silence recently, an attender observed that to her it was “dull as dishwater; no wonder,” she said, “there are so few Quakers.”

This past year we have had several Quaker-eights type discussions. We have had celebrations of summer and winter meeting gatherings and birthdays. Upcoming topics include: “What brings you to meeting.” Hulda Muaka, originally of Kenya YM and now of Palo Alto Meeting, showed us the documentary “Salt and Light” which she and our 3 other PYM representatives created. Well done, Friends!

This year past has been a year marked by loss within our community. Last fall saw the death of and memorial for a long-term and much-beloved attender. In January, we accepted the resignation of another member, who had long ago stopped attending meeting. Also, one of our founding members left us to retire to Hawai'i.

Participation in community events and speaking *truth to power* keeps strong the feeling in us, that true godliness does indeed turn us back into the world to try to mend it. We know too that social action has a positive way of keeping us from feeling either isolated or aloof from the world around us. A community presence is at times difficult for a meeting that does not own its own property. As a whole meeting, however, we are not presently involved in any particular community social concerns activity. This past year we had a thoughtful discussion in support of FCNL's request for input in its policy review and revision.

We're all older with no attenders under 55. We know our meeting cannot survive as a small group of elder Friends. We do not wish to hide our light under a bushel. We understand that many first contacts are now made on the internet. We are investigating a new web presence hosted by the Friends General Conference, which should be up and running by the end of the year. We have also begun to wonder if we might follow Sacramento and Davis Meetings' example and join the Friends General Conference. A discussion of these matters is in our near future.

We would like to attract new attenders and would welcome more ideas about how we might accomplish

that. Perhaps, the P.Y.M. Youth Program Coordinator or the Friends General Conference might be asked to work with meetings like ours, to help us see how we might begin to change that.

There have been times this past year when there have been no space available in our meeting room (which seats 18 - 20), and other times when we have been a half dozen or less. For several years now, we have felt a concern about our dwindling size and how we will survive; somehow, so far, we have.

It is the movement of the Spirit, which feeds us and keeps us alive. Perhaps the “Great Source of All Goodness” has something to say to us, which we have yet to hear.

Berkeley Friends Meeting

Berkeley Friends find ourselves in an awkward position, again this year reporting that we are soon to begin renovation of our meetinghouse and adjacent buildings. However, as we are now negotiating with a contractor, we have the realistic expectation that this time it will indeed come to pass. Waiting for construction to begin has been draining, and we look forward to the release of energy that beginning the project will bring. Now that we have received bids, we realize that we must reconcile the discrepancy between the funds we have available and the scope and thus cost of the project.

Nonetheless, we celebrate that we have enough financial resources committed to be able to begin the work, and have found temporary meeting quarters at Church Divinity School of the Pacific. We invite Friends to worship with us at the Tucson Common Room of CDSF at 2450 Le Conte Avenue during construction.

Can we say that our spiritual life is healthy and our meetings for worship rich? We seek a rich spiritual experience, and always long for deeper connection to the Spirit. We are sustained by both long-term and transitory small groups, from committees to Friendly Dinners, and appreciate the efforts of our Ministry and Oversight and our Outreach and Nurture Committees in developing and maintaining community and contributing to the depth of our meetings for worship. We have found that our sharing of joys and sorrows at the close of meeting for worship helps to connect us with one another. We have also started regular worship sharing sessions between our 9 and 11 o'clock meetings for worship.

Ministry and Oversight has recently formed a new subcommittee for Love and Reconciliation to help Friends resolve differences. The Oral History Working Group continues to record the lives of Friends and is working on ways to share the process of collecting oral histories with other Meetings. Several members of our meeting worked tirelessly in an effort to pass Proposition 34, which would have eliminated the death penalty in California. We appreciate, too, Friends' expressions in art and music that have made our meeting a better place. We often have visitors who are new to Friends, and we feel honored when one of them returns to us and seeks membership in due time.

We continue to be concerned about our aging congregation. We have done well with meeting the needs for pastoral care of our members, but we notice the absence of Friends in their twenties and thirties and note the small number of teens and children in our midst. We were grateful for the recent visit of the Yearly Meeting Youth Program Coordinator, and hope to work with her more to foster intergenerational community. We are encouraged that our teens are leading the effort to revitalize their program and make connections with other teens at local meetings.

Central Coast Friends Meeting

Central Coast Friend Meeting continues to experience a dwindling in the number of people who gather in worship on Sundays and who are able to participate in the work of the meeting. We struggle corporately and individually with understanding where our leadings are and what we are being asked to lay down. We felt that the nature of the queries provided to us by College Park Quarterly Ministry & Oversight says that our meeting is not alone.

This past year our business meeting struggled to discern whether an invitation to begin renting a new building for our meeting was an opportunity we wanted to take, or not. As a result, we found that our business meeting experienced more participation, if not in actual numbers of people attending, those present offered more “ministry” to those meetings. We also cherish growth in the vocal ministry offered in meeting for worship.

Some of our committees are active and working well, but we are not able to fill our Hospitality or Childrens Program committees. One of the ways we responded to fewer committees was to conduct business previously done by committee, in our business meetings.

We struggle not to let too large a share of the work fall on any individual’s shoulders, so that no one carries too heavy a load. We try to be alert and pitch in and share hospitality duties. This spirit of joining in and supporting one another is valuable to many of us, we share a sense of community.

Just a few years ago our meeting had a large, active teen group, but they have grown up and moved on, leaving just a few who attend occasionally. Friends miss their vivacious presence among us and wonder how we can attract more families with children to join us and re-create our youth program. A Friend reminds us that we should not feel guilty that there are not many children attending now. We can be grateful for the good program we had and the young people we grew. We all take great joy in our one faithful young attender, who is three-years-old and comes regularly; her young spirit does much to lift our spirits each week.

It takes work to create a program, whether it is the childrens program, bi-monthly homeless suppers, or the Alternatives to Violence Project, which was established in the California Mens Colony State Prison, in San Luis Obispo, through our monthly meeting. We struggle with choosing between all the interesting work and projects; they all seem important. What do we let go of? Do we select one project and invest deeply? Or, do we keep working on several projects, but perhaps not doing any of those very well?

One individual Friend in the meeting has found her leading, light, and inspiration this year through her work in the AVP program. As a meeting we struggle to know what our corporate relationship is with AVP - despite our spotty sponsorship of that program it continues to grow and prosper.

Other individuals do work in the “wider” Society of Friends, including one Friend who works on The Friends Peace Teams Council and another who serves on the board of Quaker Oaks Farm in Visalia, California.

One of the projects our meeting community participated in this past year was helping for one day with a local community garden (with a mini-grant from Pacific Yearly Meeting’s Unity With Nature Committee). Many of us participated and we all felt joined in the Spirit by the work - work we did with each other and new friends from the surrounding community.

We seek to discover where we feel fresh leadings. To open ourselves to new leadings we must till the soil, much as in a garden. It is hard to pull out old, familiar “plants” which we have grown attached to. It is hard to imagine life without them.

Discerning our obligations from our leadings is a lifelong process, which we are all engaged in. Corporately, we are trying to imagine what our meeting life would look like if we let go of one of our current, beloved activities.

Our meeting for worship is primary, what else do we have light and energy for? We are reminded of the discipline of simplicity. Discipline is practice. We feel called to pare down, so that we may focus on the work that has the most meaning for us; the work that truly needs to be done. We hear that we are being called to simplicity, to pare down, more, again. Through this work, through this practice, we anticipate gathering strength and no longer feeling pulled in as many directions.

We continue to tend our “garden.” Although it calls for weeding, we also find vibrant life growing there and we celebrate that together.

Chico Friends Meeting

Reflections on the past year:

Meeting for Worship is at the heart of our meeting. In general, we have stayed focused on the Light, seeking Spirit, and expressing our deepening faith, whether in deep stillness or following God’s leading to vocal ministry.

Our spiritual life is enriched as well by participation in midweek worship, our Quaker Exploration hour, and uplifting first Day song as well as monthly community “Rise Up Singing” gatherings. Our book discussion groups and well-developed library have given us ample opportunity to enrich our Quaker faith and practice.

Meeting for Business is well-attended, well-clerked, and those of us present tend to support our patient clerk, as well as clerk ourselves. If there is not unity on an issue it is left to season further.

Periodically, our Meeting struggles painfully to maintain love and unity among ourselves. We need a kinder, less critical tone when dealing with differences among ourselves, many feel. The struggle has been particularly protracted and difficult when we deal with differences around the meaning of membership in the Religious Society of Friends.

In our committee work, many of us have noticed that the process (how Spirit moves our work together) is more important than the product. While we have found that this not necessarily the most efficient way to get something done, we believe it is less likely to do damage along the way.

To simplify our Meeting lives together, and to keep God at the center, some of us have tried to keep the focus on what is the most essential. For example, the Oversight and Fellowship Committee recommended to Business Meeting to lay down the practice of committees taking turns preparing a meal for everyone present to consume before each monthly Meeting for Business. Business Meeting recommended a trial of six months to try this change and then evaluate it. For many of us, simplifying

meant not taking on too many activities, even worthwhile ones. Simplifying also has entailed clarifying which committees and individuals do which tasks. We still do struggle with the issues of over busyness, territorialism and resentments as well as a real desire to do more, of loving enthusiasm and deep commitment to our meeting. To avoid burn-out and share the workload, the Oversight and Fellowship Committee has established a Hospitality sub-committee. These actions have helped us significantly to order our Meeting lives, allowing us to focus on caring for our beloved Meeting Community.

We do have a consistent, loving, creative, well-organized and active Quaker Youth Group program. There is childcare available for everyone needing it in order to attend a Meeting function. On First Days, the children come into Meeting for worship for the last few minutes. Then, at rise of Meeting, circle around to shake the adults' welcoming hands.

Our Witness and Service Committee inspires us to actively live our faith in the wider community. This committee oversees the monthly provision of dinner to the homeless guests at Chico's Torres Shelter. It supports the work of our liaisons with Quaker organizations. Additionally, last year the committee hosted several presentations on; the El Salvador Projects, the Undocumented Student Scholarship Project, the Israel/Palestine situation and the homeless people in Chico.

We would like to be more connected and visible to the larger community and maintain a Quaker presence in our worldly society. Occasionally we receive requests for support from outside groups, (both Quaker and non-Quaker) whose values and practices are similar to our own testimonies. We presently are working on guidelines to help us with these requests. Simultaneously, we are refining our guidelines for building use by local community groups.

Our Building and Grounds Committee has put considerable time and energy into caretaking, inspiring those of us who assist with our meetinghouse monthly work projects. This has resulted in community building in a most practical, hands on way.

In conclusion, we feel that the more we bring communication, empathy, respect, consideration, and peace building into our own Meeting, the more that will radiate outwards into our families, our community, and our world...we do stumble, and fall, but we keep trying, forgive, start over, and experience the blessed love and unity that comes from God.

Davis Friends Meeting

We come together every first day to ponder our place in the world as individuals and as a community.

We need each other to test our own ideas and to hear what practices and beliefs others have to deepen our spiritual lives. Most of us find strength, support and feelings of being uplifted in the silence and in our community activities. However, at least one person among us experiences the silence as stultifying.

Some comments are: "I experience joy and awe in the power of unprogrammed worship. What I am thinking is often spoken by someone else in words stronger, clearer than I could speak." "Meeting for worship reminds us that there is Light despite the worldly energies going so many directions. This is not just a personal journey - we seek the Light together."

People express pleasure in belonging to our meeting, although sometimes with discomfort. “I am empowered by the honesty here, the willingness to be vulnerable, to share our weaknesses and struggles. Seeing others’ imperfections tells me there is hope for me.” “I used to feel that Quakers were superhuman. Now, I see that they are just people, and I feel more comfortable...we can’t be perfect. It is good to be a member - it gives fulfillment to life.” “I am strengthened by belonging to a community with common values. I am discouraged by our failure to live up to those values, the amount of energy it takes to keep meeting running and the bureaucracy we create and sustain. We need to reexamine our priorities and structures.” “I am called to give more than feels natural to me.”

Our work for justice has taken several forms. We have focused on racism, prison reform, Alternatives to Violence Program, and support for the homeless. In addition to the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, we have an Earth Care Witness Group and a Peace Action Affinity Group which was able, after conversations over the last year, to bring Representative John Garamendi to our meetinghouse to talk about peace issues. It was a satisfying conversation and a lovely feeling to have 35 people from the community joining 15 Quakers in our meetinghouse.

We labored over and established a policy for a Fund for Leadings. We want to encourage people to carry spirit into the world, we want to support those with leadings such as Tax Resistance, and we want the fund to be unattached to a given person or project. Also, we spent much effort to decide whether or not the requirements for risk management insurance are truly about protecting our children and decided to meet them.

We have about 70 members and attenders, half of whom are 60 years or older. We have 2 teenagers and 12 children. On first days about 30-40 people attend.

Our hopes and aspirations for the coming year are several. We wish to have deeper connections with each other in the Light through dance, music and working with one another. We would like to reach out more to the community with invited guest speakers, and, perhaps, to have a worship group on the Quad at UC Davis. We are improving our grounds, with great ideas and energy. We expect to support each other in caring for our planet as a meeting and as individuals as we faithfully attend to the Beloved Community.

Grass Valley Friends Meeting

Grass Valley Friends Meeting has welcomed this opportunity to reflect on the past year, with its gifts and challenges. We recognize that being a Quaker in today’s world is often not an easy task. Our faith offers us a lifetime of inner and outer work. We come as Friends to our corporate worship to be centered back into the awareness that there is that of God in each of us, and together we open ourselves to the searching Light within.

We bid farewell to several long standing Friends in our Meeting this year. Harold Blickenstaff passed away on May 21, 2012, followed by Beverly Wilson (though not a member, a long standing attender) on May 29th. Along with these lives ending, we welcomed two lives into the world – Calum DeSa in May 2012 and Luke Buckley in July. In October we were witness to the marriage of Pamela Aldridge and Dave Barnett, which is held under the care of Grass Valley Friends Meeting.

Grass Valley Friends Meeting has a wide range of ages present most First Days. We treasure the wisdom and seasoned worship of our elders, many of whom are in their 90’s. And, the voices of our youngest babies remind us during worship that we continue on into a new generation. First Day School

has an average of 5 to 6 children participating, and we hold several young adults in our hearts as they make their way out in to the world. We also hold a concern regarding the ages of our members and attenders – we have only one active teen, one active young adult Friend, and only a handful of families and those in the 25-40 year old range.

The success of the Intergenerational Education program is appreciated, with one person coordinating the activities and many adults signing up to volunteer for First Day school. It shows great creativity and has proven to be a way to meet the needs of our young people and our adults. We all know each other better because of it.

There are several young families in our Meeting, and we query how to support them. We note that participating on committees of the Meeting may be challenging for them, and we seek more ways to discern and meet the needs experienced through raising children and working.

We hold a concern for our elders. We want their physical safety at Meeting, and have met to discuss good practices for assisting those with physical challenges. Some of our elders can no longer make it to Meeting, and others travel to their homes to worship with them. We have also held programs to talk with one another about the spiritual and practical aspects of dying.

Our Meeting is enriched through a variety of activities held after Meeting for Worship. These activities reflect the balance we have between the contemplative and activist elements of our lives as Friends. Spiritual Life, a sub-committee under Ministry and Oversight, hosts a gathering each month. Topics have included Nonviolent Communication and Quakerism, grief work, and emotional healing. Our Peace and Social Justice Committee hosts discussions and presentations on many issues of our time – climate change, Palestine and gun issues are their primary concerns at this time. They also host monthly post card writing sessions to facilitate our communication with our political leaders. Our Meeting also has satellite groups with mid-week worship sessions, book explorations and on-going support committees.

With excitement, and some anticipated mourning, we have an active group in Placer County that is exploring becoming a worship group. We have put a line item in our accounting for just that purpose. It looks like they have found a location for worship.

Quakerism 102 and the Retreat have been valuable in centering our Meeting in the ways of Friends. We experience strong attendance at the Retreat, for Memorial Services and for Spiritual Life sessions. There is also good use of our Quaker Center subscription for anyone interested in participating in workshops or other activities offered by Ben Lomond Quaker Center. Yet we are concerned about a weakening attendance at our more social events such as our 4th of July gathering, our Christmas party and the non occurrence of our annual summer camping trip.

Our Meeting is among those with more attenders than members. We ask ourselves why attenders who have the commitment to discerning and acting in the manner of the Religious Society of Friends do not become GVFM members. Nominating has the age old problem of filling all positions. The current requirement that Ministry & Oversight members also be members of GVFM has been brought to Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business, and we did not find unity on changing this requirement.

Two years ago we brought an outreach committee back into our structure. Now there is talk of making it more active. There is a sense that there are people out there in the local community who are already

essentially Friends but don't know it. We have just started putting the Advices and Queries in the local paper and are looking at what else we could be doing.

Our Library is recognized as valued, well-organized and thoughtful. The children's area and rocking chairs for parents with infants is appreciated. We now have an electronic Library newsletter. We have also made the effort to limit the printed Meeting newsletters in favor of e-mailed ones.

The strong connection to Sierra Friends Center and the Woolman Semester Program is appreciated. We are glad for the current health of this program and the resolution of shared financial arrangements in 2012. We pardoned our loan to them this year. A special energy is provided to our Meeting because of this unique relationship.

In the past Friends have stayed away with the feeling that we were the Political Society of Friends rather than the Religious Society of Friends. This sense is coming up again and bringing with it a question on how we hold our political views. We recognize that the commitment of Friends to seek that of God in every person extends to awareness of how any political issue is addressed. Remaining open to all viewpoints and seeking understanding and solutions is a manifestation of our Quaker beliefs. Inclusivity is the work that lies before us. Are we excluding those with differing views? Are we allowing for that of God in all? Are we extending that embrace to all?

Marin Monthly Meeting

Marin Friends currently has thirteen members and averages between five to fifteen in attendance at Meeting for Worship each First Day. We had one death this past year of an elderly long-time Friend, and two members transferred to meetings in other states. Our aging membership is quite noticeable; some of our members are in their 90s, and the majority of us are 50+. We are happy to report that we have two families with young children attending. Both of the mothers grew up in East coast Friends meetings and are members of the Religious Society of Friends, though not of Marin Meeting. In addition, a regular attender who was a member of the Society some years ago has reapplied for membership with Marin Friends. Her clearness committee has met, and the report will be brought before the Meeting at a called Meeting for Business to consider her request.

Marin Friends meets on the Dominican University campus, at the Interfaith Center located in the Edgehill Mansion in San Rafael. It is a convenient location, accessible and central to Marin County. We now have adequate space for a First Day School. We pay a generous donation to the University Interfaith Office in lieu of rent.

Vocal ministry is generally thoughtful and spirit-led. Currently, we do not have a meeting Clerk. Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee is now more informally organized and meets when there are specific leadings or concerns to be addressed, as well as annually to make recommendations on our meeting's donations. We do not have an active Ministry and Oversight Committee or a formally organized Children's Religious Ed Committee. We do have a competent and valued Treasurer and dedicated and reliable Recording Clerk.

Our meeting has had an annual retreat for the past several years, held in a member's home, and we have found this spiritually and socially enriching.

We receive sufficient donations to take care of all of our expenses and to donate generously to many Quaker and other socially conscious organizations.

However, it has become apparent that while there is a willing spirit in the meeting, there may not be the light and energy to continue as a Monthly Meeting. We have requested and received visitation from the Quarter. We have had two threshing sessions on this topic and continue to work through the matter. While we have not yet decided whether we should request that the Quarter lay down our meeting and allow us to continue as a worship group, this is still a possibility. In the interim, one of our new members has expressed a willingness to serve as Clerk. We will have a called meeting to consider this nomination. We are hopeful that with new and willing clerkship, we might see our way clear on how to proceed. We will keep in touch with our Quarterly visitation committee on this matter.

We give thanks for each other and for the Quaker testimonies that unite us, and we pray for God's guidance in growing our meeting for worship so that our presence is sustained in Marin County.

Mendocino Friends Meeting

Hello to all from the Mendocino Friends Monthly Meeting. Our vitality as a group continues to be reaffirmed. We are a small meeting but find ourselves complete while growing in our commitment to each other and our community. Our Meeting for Worship often includes a reading, generally a query from *Faith and Practice*.

We occasionally enjoy visits from tourists as well as local seekers that participate in our Meeting for Worship, most signing our guest book. Directly following meeting we introduce ourselves and add anything that came up but didn't break the silence. It is a chance to check in and an opportunity to share news or concerns with every one.

Something new that has been added is an informal discussion period at the end of our silent worship. Because it is a new practice we have discussed only a few subjects. Two of the queries so far have been "If you knew your life extended beyond death what would you do differently?" and "Do you believe in karma and how does this affect you?" Everyone is encouraged to bring subjects up and participate in the ongoing discussions.

An idea which has resurfaced and is still in the development stage is the formation of a Book Discussion Group. We have talked about this on a few occasions and asked everyone for input on subject and format. One of the intentions of this group would be to develop a deeper understanding of our spiritual nature. We currently have presentations of a few options including a book by Thomas Kelly. Some are researching availability and group discounts of other books and will be presenting their reports.

In summary, our Meeting is vital, strong, and stable. We are a diverse group. We are socially and politically aware while maintaining our commitment to peace. We seek guidance and understanding when examining issues that span from our spiritual community to global concerns.

Monterey Peninsula Friends Meeting

Our small Meeting has 15 members, and an average weekly attendance of 12, meeting at the Carl Cherry Center where we rent Sunday morning space. An influx of new members and attenders has begun to fill some of the gaps left by sorely-missed departed members.

This year we sent three members to PYM. We have provided a record number of volunteers and donors to the benefit shop run by the Interfaith Council, as well as facilitating the service-learning there of five

college students. Our decision to collaborate with the interfaith council has played a major part in its dramatic increase in funds disbursed to worthy local causes.

In the community we have also participated with the Peace Center, WILPF, Peace and Justice, a Hiroshima memorial event, Rice Packing, Occupy Monterey events, sustainability activities, and anti-war events. We were active during the presidential election.

Within our Meeting we have supported a blind member in getting her own guide dog, we have arranged transportation for several members, and have supported members through their losses, moves, and family challenges. We have continued activities with our sister Live Oak Meeting, and contributed toward joint publicity with them. These achievements give us new energy to tackle some challenges that face the Meeting.

VISION: Our broad vision is to deepen our faith, strengthen leadership, and expand awareness of Friends in our community. We wish to grow our meeting, to allow us to increase our impact locally and globally, and promote Quaker values of peace, tolerance and community.

NURTURING the Quaker community — How can we nurture the spirit among us? What work can we do together that builds our sense of community? We need to find ways to bring a joint, joyful interaction into good works together.

GROWTH: We're clear that to be viable, we need to build up numbers, and put more energy into outreach. There are time limitations set on the present space we are renting. Seekers have to be able to find us, and the wider public has to have a sense of who the Quakers are. We would like to extend our reach and message, and increase the community's understanding of Friends. We can become more visible by working more closely with allies – the Live Oak Meeting in Salinas, the peace and justice community, the local interfaith council, and others.

FINANCE: The Meeting has not covered its expenses this year, nor has it been in a position to continue the previous practice of making grants to worthy Quaker bodies and to local charities. In January 2013 we therefore brought our budget back into balance, by cutting out the expensive newspaper ad, and we have instead developed a website <montereyfriends.org>. We are using other free listings.

This solution in turn clears the deck for deciding what to do longer-term with the Meeting's nest egg. In 1979 a meeting house, previously gifted to the Meeting, had to be sold for lack of the means to maintain it. We now intend to make better use of that money to support our values and pursue our goals.

In March 2013 we therefore called together a well-attended threshing session, asking first what we valued about the Meeting, and, second, what these values might lead us to do with our money. Valuable leadings emerged, that Ministry and Oversight has mulled over, and has now brought specific recommendations back to Meetings for Business. We expect this process of discernment to take time.

Palo Alto Friends Meeting

The meeting for worship continues to be the core of Palo Alto Friends Meeting (PAFM). We typically have 40 to 60 people in attendance each week. The silence usually grows deep and nourishing once latecomers have settled in. Vocal ministry has been quite varied, often very grounded and uplifting. No recurring problems with worship concern us at present.

Over the years more than a few Friends have been disturbed by the lengthy announcement period following worship. This includes visitor introductions, regulars reintroducing themselves in the month of their birth, children reporting on the day's first day school program, and general announcements of news and upcoming events of interest to Friends. Most find great community-building value in the announcement period, which is why we continue with it. Our announcement period is now better regulated, thanks to the organization and self-discipline of the Worship & Ministry committee members who take turns giving the announcements. Also, we have returned to the practice of reading quotations about Quaker worship before a short period of worship at the end of meeting, which contributes to a more centered closing.

Our Building & Grounds Committee has been very active this year improving the physical environment for worship. Most evident is new smooth light-colored flooring in the foyer, more wheelchair- and walker friendly than the old rough concrete floor. This occasioned a general cleanup and "de-cluttering" of the space adjoining our meeting room.

During the past few years some difficult discernment processes have tested our fellowship. After four years of discussion, including two years of experimentally using the new name, we officially changed the name "Oversight Committee" to "Care and Concerns Committee". While there remains some question whether we have found the "perfect name" and apprehension that we may lose awareness of the important oversight role of the committee, in the end more weight was given to our desire to move forward with a more descriptive name, especially for the sake of newcomers. Some among us gave great weight to removing a barrier to those for whom the term "overseer" carries historical connotations of "slave master". Others did not find this a weighty consideration, since the Society of Friends has never used the term that way nor do we even use the term "overseer" at PAFM. We continue to discuss our individual and quite varied associations around the words "oversight" and "overseer" and recognize the need to remain open to continuing revelation.

In 2011 we were unable to reach unity on a proposal to double our financial contributions to outside Quaker organizations. Frustration felt by some has continued through 2012 to the point of their withdrawing from some (but not all) activities of the Meeting. Income higher than projected in 2011 allowed us to augment contributions on a one-time basis for 2012; for 2012 and 2013, we approved budgets balanced by drawing on uncommitted reserves. We continue to examine how best as a Meeting to support the work of these organizations and have experimented with different formulas for allocating the contributions within the total pool. We also recognize that we can strengthen Quaker organizations by encouraging and supporting individuals in our Meeting community to personally engage with the organizations or their causes, in the tradition of "released Friends."

We continue to examine our decision-making processes themselves and our own trust of and commitment to Quaker process. Are we leaving our "ego attachments" at the door? Do we get caught up in intellectual debate or emotional expression, when our decisions are supposed to be spirit-led? Are we open to the "radical transformation" that Quakerism invites us to, or does radical transformation apply only to the other? We explore these themes in various ways in our personal conversations, in Adult Education discussions and study series, and in retreats.

In 2012 we began to actively consider adoption of the British and FGC "Quaker Quest" outreach process. In November we held a well-attended (50+, including 4 teens) one-day "inreach" workshop to learn about and experience the process. The workshop led to many valuable new insights about what Quakerism means to us and how we appear from outside. Worship-sharing in the following business

meeting revealed concerns about perceived proselytizing, but also a yearning for "further attempts to share with each other what is important to us 'knee to knee.' It is very personal; the basis is love. We need to share our humanity." A Core Working Group will continue to keep Quaker Quest in our awareness during 2013.

Mentioned in our 2012 report was a "relationship with Stanford students who identify themselves as Quaker." This came to an abrupt end as all those students graduated this year, including one who had made study of Quaker practices the topic of his PhD dissertation. Then – one of those unexpected gifts – four freshmen came to worship with us and expressed interest in restarting the student group.

PAFM continues to be alive with activities expressing Quaker values. Our two biggest commitments are hosting the Hotel de Zink homeless shelter for December each year and putting on the Harvest Festival fundraiser for Friends Committee on Legislation of California in September. The latter is a huge undertaking, and we appreciate the support of San José Meeting and other nearby Friends. This year teens from meetings throughout College Park Quarterly Meeting converged to give us much needed extra help. We also played host to CPQM teen retreats in March 2012 and, as part of the CPQM gathering itself, in January 2013.

Friends from PAFM serve the greater Quaker community on a variety of committees and boards and other roles. Hulda Muaka was one of four PYM representatives to the Friends World Committee for Consultation "Salt and Light" world conference in her native Kenya, and helped produce a valuable video documentary on this event. Mary Klein has become editor of *Western Friend*. Other indicators of faith at work among us are our Meeting's El Salvador Project and its service learning trips, solicitation of donations for Ecumenical Hunger Program, monthly preparation and serving of dinner for the homeless through InnVision, public endorsement of California ballot Proposition 34 to end the death penalty, use of our meeting house as a polling station, donation towards rebuilding Mito Meeting in Japan after the earthquake, and more. Also, we offer our space as a resource for other community groups to use, as well as Friends Nursery School. We currently have about a dozen outside groups who use our space once a month or more.

We are currently considering participation in a proposed Palo Alto program to allow homeless persons to sleep in their cars in church parking lots, as an alternative to the outright ban on vehicular dwelling imposed by many nearby cities. We sent a letter to over 60 of our housed neighbors announcing our intent to join the pilot program, with three cars allowed to stay overnight. Over 30 signed an opposition petition. We held two public meetings to solicit further feedback, much of which was negative and fearful, although we also received validation of our desire to serve the wider community. Our proximity to schools and the protectiveness people feel for children may make our location problematic. Whether or not we end up participating, it has been a valuable learning experience so far.

With all that is going on within our Meeting and in service to larger communities, there is much work to be done. Our Nominating Committee recently pointed out to us that there are about 120 positions to fill and about 60 people who step forward to fill them. Many have a sense of being weary, as so much of the work is carried by the same people over and over. It is critical for the life and vibrancy of our future that we bring more people to join in the work of our community. We need to better communicate and meaningfully follow up our message of being welcoming to all.

Redding Friends Meeting

There is a deep appreciation for our Worship together in Redding Meeting. The silence is a gift to align

with God. God may have my life. It brings us together in the moment. The silence is cleansing. It puts you at peace. It is a beautiful feeling -- calm, renewed, happy. We cherish the WOW moments of spiritual insight during the silence. It is an opportunity to witness to gratitude. We note without judgment that sometimes our minds wander during worship.

Our Redding meeting remains small. Most of us are middle age and beyond. We do not have children that attend the Meeting. We long for a revival of youthful energy in the meeting. We have met at the Methodist Church for a number of years. Some Friends desire to once again meet in homes. We kid each other that we should put an ad in the paper – “Quaker Meeting free to committed and peace loving young people”.

We love to support each other and build community through work parties at our homes. In this past year we re-built a deck and helped with re-model of a kitchen.

We are very pleased with the event organizing work of our Prison Reform committee in working with the Methodists. We co-sponsored a presentation by Sabrina Porter, the only woman to ever be exonerated from death row. We also co-sponsored a panel discussion on the topic of prison realignment in California. We are currently getting organized to buy out the local Riverfront Play House as a fund raiser for the Meeting and to support the Sequoia School Garden where several of us have volunteered. We have also secured a Unity with Nature mini-grant to support the Sequoia Garden. We continue our involvement in the Shasta County Interfaith Forum, and sponsorship of a “Faith Works” apartment for a low income family.

Friends express gratitude and love for our Redding Meeting. These are my people. I get strength from the meeting and want to give back. It is like a family. I feel at home. I am not judged. There is a feeling of integrity in the group, and a lot of caring for others from the heart. Each person in the group is appreciated. We are proud to tell others we attend Quaker Meeting.

Reno Friends Meeting

The year 2012 was a year of patient growth and improvement for Reno Friends. While we have embarked on few new initiatives, we have grown more introspective spiritually and also strengthened and improved our facilities and financial foundation.

We are deeply committed to providing a place for Silent Worship and Quaker values in Northern Nevada and find that this simple task absorbs much of our time and effort. Keeping the Meeting House, First Day School and our finances in good shape; finding Friends to clerk Worship, Meetings and committees; supporting the Alternatives to Violence Program in local prisons; and organizing social activities and discussion groups comprise the current scope of our Monthly Meeting. Having laid down some of our committees in 2011, we’ve struggled to meet some of the necessary tasks and worry about burning out those who step forward most often. But every First Day, we find ourselves grateful that we have each other and still gather to share the solace of Silent Worship.

Reno Friends started a Group for Spiritual Growth that meets twice a month before Worship and explores different spiritual issues under the gentle leadership of one of our Attenders. This well-attended group has allowed us to share more openly about our individual spiritual journeys and strengthened understanding of the different spiritual philosophies we bring to our Meeting. We’ve been pleased to see Friends take responsibility for different topics, and sense a deep thirst among us for this kind of conversation. We hope this work will deepen the experience of Silent Worship and expect that

the Group for Spiritual Growth will spin off other similar explorations.

Our paid teacher leads First Day School and is an important presence for the young children, especially. Several adults have led classes this past year but we feel we are not doing enough to meet the needs of our teens. We appreciate the youth programming provided by PYM and CPQM, as it gives our teens a chance to connect to the wider Quaker community, including other young Friends. We have provided travel funds for one teen who serves as Co-Clerk to JYM and funds for another teen to attend Quaker camp. We continue to support and fund the PYM Youth Coordinator position and hope that the coordinator could help us find better ways of building programming to attract other young people to our Meeting.

Two of our newer attenders are leading a local urban homestead initiative and have hosted several workshops on nonviolence and war tax resistance at the Meeting House. Their energy and efforts have attracted newcomers, and we continue to support their work and initiatives. The Meeting also supports the Alternatives to Violence Project in Nevada and California prisons with a significant charitable gift. Without that support, they tell us, they would not be able to do their work. We continue to host a monthly nonviolence discussion group, a Palestine-Israeli discussion group and occasionally a Gift Circle. We also provide space in our Meeting House for like-minded groups, such as the Art of Living.

We have upgraded several aspects of our Meeting House, Cottage and First Day School, including installing Internet service to support the First Day School and our FDS teacher, who leases the cottage on our property. We have developed a new website, in an effort to attract a wider and younger audience in Reno. In addition to funding these upgrades, we also have set aside \$2,000 for our building fund in both fiscal year 2011 and 2012.

We do not have a Meeting Clerk, but have found that our effort to consolidate tasks in 2011 has made us more efficient. Our Oversight Committee handles many tasks, our former Clerk continues to manage our communications, and our Co-Treasurers have provided stability and transparency into Meeting finances. We work to recognize and accept the special gifts each of us brings to the Meeting—from leading discussion groups, to writing reports, to repairing buildings. We still feel the absence of Friends who moved or left the Meeting, as well as those who are no longer active. In an effort to build community we've held more fun activities, such as hikes and game nights, in addition to continuing with our monthly potlucks, discussion groups, annual camping trip and work days at the Meeting House. Reno Friends who live in Carson City hold a silent worship in their home on Fifth Sundays, and we've been reaching out to strengthen connections with that group.

Our hopes for the coming year include outreach to students at our neighbor university and the wider Reno community. We seek to strengthen ties with our Carson City community and those in the nonviolence community. We are encouraged by the progress we've made and we trust we'll be led to do better in the coming year. May we be more open to the Inner Light that can renew each one of us.

San Francisco Monthly Meeting

In the foreground, at this writing: The death of a Meeting member last May brought us, in June, a notice that the Friend had bequeathed us a residential duplex mere blocks from our meetinghouse, "to be used for [Meeting's] charitable purposes." The gift carried a condition, namely that the Meeting must retain title to the building as long as the current tenants in the one occupied unit, who have been there for 30 years, remain living there; in addition, the structure itself is in need of substantial repair and renovation, with no funds accompanying the bequest to

cover such work. Either of these circumstances presented a serious potential obstacle to our accepting the offered property. A threshing session in September helped us to air and clarify our concerns, and in October we minuted our determination that we were prepared to take ownership of the building only if a group of able and committed Friends in the Meeting came forward to take responsibility for managing the property and planning for its future, including, in the immediate term, securing financing for and overseeing the needed repairs. In response, a number of Friends committed to Meeting's accepting the gift formed a working group and brought a proposal in January, which, at our March meeting for business, after two months' seasoning and revision, and nine months after the first notice of the bequest, the Meeting approved. Serious reservations remained concerning cost and other matters, even among some of those most supportive of this action, and at least two Friends stood aside from the final decision. So it is not without trepidation that we venture forth on this journey. At the same time, the sense of the Meeting as we reached this decision was that we are being called into a faith in right outcomes, and there is joy in envisioning an eventual use for the building for housing youth interns, for hospitality, or other uses that will enhance and strengthen Quaker witness in our city for future generations.

Our Sunday meetings for worship continue strong and well attended. Our faithful Children's Religious Education Committee provides a consistent program despite staffing challenges. Broadening other Meeting members' participation in this area remains an unmet need. Meeting's midweek and other regular activities (Bible study, monthly potlucks, midweek worship, peace vigil, Quaker study group, and weekly food pantry) continue largely as before. A Retreats Subcommittee of Ministry and Oversight Committee has taken on responsibility for planning our beloved annual Meeting Retreat in May and the now-regular Women's Retreat in the fall. Property issues continue to occupy a significant portion of our business, which can lead to occasional hand-wringing. However, this year in the midst of everything else we did manage to complete a long-contemplated renovation of the meetinghouse kitchen.

The Saturday Quaker Food Pantry keeps growing, both in the number of clients served and in the many volunteers' learning to work together. Yet the group of Friends shouldering responsibility for this extensive Meeting-sponsored effort remains small, a source of stress and frustration for those involved. We must periodically re-examine our corporate commitment to this vital project.

In the area of public witness, besides those already mentioned, the Meeting sponsors occasional special events which this year included a film screening on the subject of U.S.-sponsored torture, and two solo performances by Quaker actor and Bible scholar Peterson Toscano in partnership with the San Francisco Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender Community Center. As always, there is a constant stream of opportunities to express public support for policies that align with our experience of God's will in the world—or, as is often the case, to protest actions that promote the contrary—and, as with any Meeting, Friends avail themselves of these to greater and lesser degrees. Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee asks us to consider ways we might corporately support individuals in our Meeting whose acts of conscience have placed them at risk of losing their liberty.

Last year's report expressed concern about uncomfortable levels of conflict and mistrust among some Friends in Meeting on a variety of matters, and a plea that we practice more patience and charity in order "to bear one another up and to forbear one another's failings and fallings short." There are hopeful signs of progress in this direction. Our Ministry and Oversight

Committee sponsored a one-day workshop in NonViolent Communication, graciously offered by a College Park Quarterly Meeting Friend, that was well attended and has led to a number of follow-up “practice sessions” by participants, and even a scheduled repeat of the workshop itself, to involve, it is hoped, an even larger number of people in the Meeting in this process of listening and plain speaking grounded in love.

We share one another’s joys, celebrate our milestones, help one another in times of crisis and diminishment and mourn our losses. A member whose father died this year invited Friends to her home over the course of three days to join her for worship and worship-sharing, in a practice consciously drawing on the Jewish tradition of sitting shiva. The Friend and those who responded found the experience to be a profound blessing, and cause for reflection on our own society’s practices (or lack of them) around grief and mourning. Another Friend has since offered us a similar, rich opportunity to accompany her in her home following the death of her own father, and there is a sense the Spirit may be guiding us to a new (or old) way of being with one another on the occasion of such life transitions. We are grateful for this opening, and the ways God continues to make us available to one another in all life’s circumstances.

San Jose Friends Meeting

This past year has been a time of transition and spiritual growth for us. Five long time members and attenders passed away. We held memorials at our Meeting House for Jeanne Barber in January 2012, Selim Turnor in October 2012 and Alice Spurrier in January 2013. We will deeply miss all of our Friends who have left us, even as we remember the love and caring they gave to our Meeting.

Last year also brought us an increase in new attenders and visitors, including a spirited group of First Day School attenders. We are grateful for the energy and new ideas they bring to us, and we are glad when they describe our meeting as warm and welcoming.

We removed or released five Friends from membership who had not attended in years. We now have 33 recorded members.

Many committees are working with fewer people, but all are busy and quite productive. Property committee and the resident caretaker came to unity with creating a vision of the property based on sustainability, wildlife habitat (bees and birds) and peacefulness. Ministry and Worship sponsored an “Introduction to Quakerism” series, as well as discussions on deepening our spiritual experience, both of which were well received. Our greeter format was revised in an effort both to make new attenders feel welcome, and to invite them to receive our newsletter and join our email list. Nominating Committee hosted potluck dinners to welcome newcomers and attenders. Hospitality Committee supported us in our frequent potlucks and refreshments after worship, which provide a fruitful opportunity for us to get to know and welcome new attenders.

Two of our members attended the “Seeking Spirit Together” inter-generational workshop at Quaker Center in August, and they also served as Friendly Adult Presences at the teen retreat held at the Harvest Festival at Palo Alto Meeting House in September. Several Friends attended Yearly Meeting at Walker Creek Ranch in August. One of our members is co-clerk of the Peace and Social Order Committee of the Yearly Meeting. We participated again this year in the Harvest Festival by organizing a large used book sale, the proceeds from which go to support Friends Committee on Legislation in California. We also purchased an annual pass to attend Quaker Center programs. Outside groups, both religious and community based, are increasing their use of our Meeting House.

Spiritual bonding and support amongst us are important in our meeting. We put a good deal of effort and prayer into caring for each other. At our business meetings, we seek a high level of cooperation, which makes the meetings a time of spiritual growth for all who attend.

We feel very blessed in The Light.

Santa Cruz Friends Meeting

We have experienced growth and excitement from new and transferred members who contribute to the life of the Meeting, an active children's program, and a clearer connection to local peace groups. We are happy to be part of the great work that is done domestically and internationally by our members and by other Quakers.

We've seen strong community-building through our monthly intergenerational potlucks (with attenders from 5 to 90 years old); the well-attended, deep annual retreat at Quaker Center; our one-day fall retreat; the active community care coordinator role; the strong men's group that began many years ago as a Meeting activity; prayer groups, the weekly worship-sharing and study group; our monthly life-story telling gathering; and the informal care-giver support group. All these activities have fed our souls. One long-time prayer group laid itself down due to changes in the needs and lives of its members.

We have continued to honor the work of individuals in following their Quaker-inspired leadings. Our Leadings and Witness mentor has helped Friends solidify leadings in homelessness, education, economic development, prison ministry, and community work. We provided a streamlined process for sponsoring events by trusted peace and social order groups, so that we can be more visibly present at these events.

Our Finance committee has worked diligently to put our financial house in order. We have refinanced our Meetinghouse through the Friends Meetinghouse Fund of the Friends General Conference with a loan that will pay down the principal, and reduced the size of our mortgage.

We have been meeting our stewardship responsibilities by undertaking some significant repairs to the Meetinghouse.

We have been blessed with a strong, active Nominating Committee and with many Friends stepping up to do the work of the Meeting.

Since finances continue to be tight for many people, we have seen an increased need for scholarships to attend Quaker gatherings. We continue to try to meet these needs.

Our Meeting faces a very difficult challenge in the arrest of, and legal proceedings underway against, a member of our Meeting for alleged inappropriate conduct with a child (outside the Meeting in the course of his professional work) and for the possession of child pornography. We struggle, individually and corporately, to stay in community as we work through our feelings around this issue. We have appointed a Listening Committee to help us hold this member and the alleged victim and family in the Light, and to support members of our Meeting who are particularly sensitive to this issue. In addition, the Oversight Committee has appointed a clearness committee for this member. We share this struggle because we believe that our entire Quaker community can benefit from, and help us with, our process.

We lost one dear member this year to death. We hold him tenderly in the Light.

Strawberry Creek

There is a strong sense of cohesive community in the group of people who attend Meeting for Worship at Strawberry Creek. Worship has grown deeper in nature and Meeting for Worship is less 'chatty'. One friend returning from a long absence described Strawberry Creek Meeting as a very spiritually based loving family. Another one said that "love is present" at our Meeting. There is also a sense of relief that this year has brought us fewer deaths and other challenging life events among our members and attenders.

Immediately following the close of Meeting for Worship we go back into the silence for a time of holding in the Light any we know who are ill or facing adversity. This is done by speaking the names only, without any details. Our practice of going around the room and saying our own names is also an important way of strengthening our community and including newcomers. We have monthly spiritual learning sessions as well as a monthly worship sharing group before Meeting. We now hold one Meeting retreat a year, in order to place greater attention on our 12th month celebration, which attracted nearly a hundred people this year. These practices are all much appreciated by the community.

As we think about how our lives speak, one Friend shared her father's wisdom, "Let your lifestyle be your prayer." As a meeting, we continue to witness corporately via our Dime-a-Gallon program and quarterly Locavore potlucks. We are guided in this by our Peace, Earthcare, and Social Witness Committee and the Loaves and Fishes Committee. We have two active worship groups, one in Oakland and an informal one in Contra Costa County.

Three affinity groups are thriving: an LGBTQ group, an all-inclusive Twelve Step Group, and a brand new young families group, which is also scheduling potlucks and camping trips. In addition, we have several anchoring and support committees for people with individual leadings.

This year our total membership stands at ninety-seven, and it is common to see at least eighty sit down together for worship on Sundays. We had two new members join us, two request transfers to another meeting, one membership laid down, and currently have 3 more memberships pending. We had two deaths, Maggie Ely and Caroline Duhem. Seven new babies were welcomed in September, 2012, and we have a growing number of young children in our nursery. Some of our teens and pre-teens serve regularly as helpers there, receiving training and participating in a special First Day School program designed for them. All told, we have about twenty in First Day School. Because in recent years our children in First Day School have not routinely come into Meeting for part of the worship time, a new process has begun to have the children join us again for the first fifteen minutes.

We find that the realignment of our committees is going well, and that people feel committee work is a nourishing part of belonging to our community. As one person put it, "We have a 'WE' orientation." Our Meetings for Business usually draw at least 30 members, and our process in them has been loving and fruitful.

Two challenges have risen as we discerned our current state:

A number of members of the community feel that there could be more attention paid to newcomers on an ongoing basis. A good approach could be to begin this during our regular coffee hour. As one Friend

said, we need to ask ourselves, “How well do we meet each other?”

Perhaps the greater challenge we face is finding a permanent site. In many ways our current site has served us well for over ten years and we do not yet have unity on a new site. The idea of purchasing property has not advanced, and there appears to be no unified vision of who we want to be in 50 or even 25 years. We are asking ourselves “What kind of a community are we building, not what kind of a building does our community need?” And as we seek to know the answers we also are discerning what our place is in the wider world.

Redwood Forest Friends Meeting, including Friends House, Lake County and Ukiah Worship Groups

In this past year our Meeting’s spirit has been tested but remains resilient. A challenge to the Meeting is our declining membership and its effect on filling openings for Meeting officers, committees and committee clerks. Nominating Committee successfully filled most vacancies, but it was difficult.

Oversight Committee had to lay down our Caring Committee for lack of participation. Despite this, several members have voiced how the Meeting gave them profound comfort and support in particularly difficult crises. An ad hoc committee has formed to look at new ways to keep intact the web of mutual caring that we as Quakers value.

Our children’s needs and opportunities remain an on-going concern. A successful if slightly under-attended Peace Camp took place. The paid staff and volunteers constantly earn our gratitude yet need more support. Nominating Committee was unable to expand their numbers or fill the Children’s Education Coordinator position.

In an effort to deepen our experience of Quakerism, Worship and Ministry put in place Quaker Quest, starting with a one-day retreat. Our Meeting is considering the next phase, which requires investment for advertising and promotion. Meanwhile an extension of Quaker Quest is an on-going series of 4th Day discussions titled “Exploring the Quaker Way.”

Our community has been strengthened by efforts to show more tenderness towards one another by way of “Good Order” in Quaker process. This was in response to at least one painfully tension-filled Meeting for Business. Much love and energy continues to go into discerning its causes and healing its effects. Another positive factor has been a series of weekly “Creative Listening Meetings” in which Friends ask spirit-led questions on how we understand and process anger, love, religion and faith in the here and now as opposed to during childhood. A serious medical diagnosis of a loved Lake County Worship Group member has led us all to reflect on how we live our lives and spend our time.

Grass-roots organizations such as North Bay Organizing Project and Alternatives to Violence Project have contributed substantially to the life of the Meeting. As has the Central and South American Scholarship Program, with a visit by the Director of the Guatemala Scholarship Program to Friends House. And the Teaching English Experience returned to Guatemala in January with five members of our Meeting reporting rich experiences and great success.

Our relationship with the Ben Lomond Center remains vital. For the first time, our Meeting offered to our members and attenders two scholarships per program. They were well used and recipients gratefully acknowledged them.

Property Committee continues to hold our physical property in good care, with particular attention going to a proposed new Courtyard Design. Pacific Yearly Meeting's Holding Corporation, which makes grants for green projects, has given us one for \$30,000 toward the courtyard project.

As to where our Meeting is going, discussions around this are vigorous and varied. Questions include how to continually tend our calling for openness and honesty in both inter-personal relations and relations between individuals and the Meeting; how to reach out meaningfully to any who may feel alienated from the Meeting; will the Meeting grow, how to make that happen and how to deal with resulting growing pains; what is our stance in the broader Sonoma County community on any number of issues and challenges; and finally, how do we best nurture the roots, everyday concerns and individuals of the beloved community that is our Redwood Forest Friends Meeting.

DISTANT MEETINGS NOT AFFILIATED WITH A QUARTERLY MEETING

Big Island Meeting

On the first Sunday of each month, we meet where there is a lovely view of the ocean, and there is also shade. Some of us bring beach chairs. We sit in a semi-circle facing the water. There are picnic tables where we share our pot-luck lunch together after Meeting for Worship.

On the second Sunday of the month, we met on Rose Everly's lanai on the third floor overlooking the pool at Waiakea Villas near Wailoa estuary. Sometimes we have a pot-luck lunch together after Meeting for Worship. It depends on who comes. Please call if you would like to attend on either the second (or the fifth Sunday of the month if there is one) or at any other time. 808-333-2513

On the third Sunday of each month we meet at Pu'u Honua 'o Honaunau in South Kona. It is a similar arrangement to the one at Koloko. In both cases you may expect to find between one and ten people there. Please call Darby Thompson if you are planning to attend Meeting at the National Parks so that you will be expected. She can also give you more detailed directions. 808-322-3116

The fourth Meeting of the month is held in Waimea. It might be with the Purell family in their home or at Elaine Warner's home; or it may even be at a park. Call someone to find out.

If there is a fifth Sunday in the month, Rose Everly's apartment is again available if anyone would like to come. Please call.

We are a far-flung conglomeration of adherents to the tenets of the Religious Society of Friends of the Truth. Each of us is a Quaker from our own perspective. Our perspectives may differ in some respects.

Most of us are also members of other, perhaps more cohesive, organizations. When we meet with them, we represent Quakerism and when we attend Quaker Meetings, we are representative of those groups.

By our silences in the light, and the words arising from those silences; and by our actions, which sprout from the seeds of those words, we show our ways to the multitudes rather than preaching to the choir.

A revised State of Meeting Report will be filed at the Annual Session or shortly after.

Honolulu Friends Meeting

State of the Meeting Report 2012–2013

This year we have been given many opportunities for growth as individuals, and especially as a community. We have great strengths, but we have also been confronted with challenges, some new and some continuing from the last year.

Over a year has now passed since the Hawai'i Area Program of AFSC was laid down, and a new organization, Hawai'i Peace and Justice (HPJ), was formed, continuing some of the same initiatives that were formerly undertaken by Hawai'i AFSC.

Meeting continues to sponsor a variety of initiatives around peace and social justice, organized by our Peace and Social Concerns Committee. We have sponsored films and presentations. We have organized letter writing to our senators and representatives, taking advantage of materials provided by FCNL. Meeting has written to the Governor on the topic of prison reform. The construction of a naval port on Jeju Island in Korea has been of special concern in Meeting, and has taken some to join the protesters on the island itself. We and HPJ participated in the annual Hawai'i College and Career Fair in November, where we informed young people of alternatives to military service. Friends and HPJ participated as a group in the annual Martin Luther King Parade and had an information booth at the parade's end point. Meeting has adopted a statement on peace, which is now posted on our website www.hawaiiquaker.org. Peace and Social Concerns Committee itself faces the challenges that come in any large, open committee, with individuals who have diverse interests and priorities.

Our library is an important resource in the spiritual life of the Meeting. It has increased in size—both through purchases and donations—and the Library Committee has worked to acquaint Friends with the materials available. A new display board with pamphlets and other materials is available for the use of the greeters in welcoming newcomers. Pamphlet and book reviews are now published in the Meeting newsletter. Meeting maintains a collection—not yet complete—of recorded oral autobiographies of Honolulu Friends. A major accomplishment this year has been the conversion of these—formerly on tape—to digital format.

The First Day School committee has continued to operate with the organization started in 2010, which includes an improved time schedule, a year-round curriculum, and a larger cadre of teachers. These changes have resulted in increased interactions between Meeting's children and adults. Our annual Trick or Treat for UNICEF and Hallowe'en party was attended by ten children and sixteen adults. The First Day School Committee has concerns about the small number of children who attend regularly. We organized a children's fair on the grounds of the Meeting House in celebration of International Peace Day. A series of classes titled Raising Peaceful Children provided opportunities for parents to discuss situations they encounter and to think of solutions consistent with Quaker values. The class may be offered again, if better publicity can draw a larger attendance. Such events help to acquaint the community with activities available to children at our Meeting. Another need is to find regular childcare providers to enable parents to attend Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business, or other Meeting activities.

Financially, Meeting is stable. Although it is possible that we will be in the red at the end of this fiscal year, we have sufficient funds to tide us over temporary difficulties. Still, Meeting will need to consider the long-term implications for budget and needed contributions. The Meeting House facility is in good shape. (We did need an emergency fumigation, for termites and other

insects.) In March 2012, Meeting's new solar electric system went into operation. Our monthly electric bill, which had averaged nearly \$200 per month, has fallen to about \$16. Another major accomplishment has been the final adoption of a plan for the construction of a wheelchair ramp. We have been working on the problem of handicapped access for many years. We rejoice that we have finally found a very good solution. Construction will start in April 2013.

Our Worship and Ministry Committee has organized a rich program of monthly adult programs, on a very wide variety of topics. At Meeting's Gathering in April 2012, much of the weekend centered on the relationship between spirituality and wellness, in part as an outgrowth of the previous year's series on "Quakerism and Science." Elizabeth Boardman of Davis Meeting presented a valuable all-day workshop on clerking in January 2013.

Much of the Worship and Ministry (W&M) Committee and Oversight and Counsel (O&C) Committee's attention this year focused on or was influenced by interpersonal conflicts and concerns about behavior of Friends toward each other. A three-part series on the topic "Practicing Quakerism in Community," organized by our then-resident couple in spring 2012, helped focus our attention on some of the issues involved. The efforts we have undertaken have not resolved the conflicts; however, the situation has raised our awareness of the need to develop conflict resolution skills within Meeting. We came to see that the conflicts are fairly complex, involving substantive issues as well as problematic behavior, which can disrupt not only interpersonal relationships but also the proper functioning of Meeting as an organization. A "resolution" will not come quickly. O&C and W&M jointly have been working on a statement titled "Intentions for the Betterment of Honolulu Friends Meeting," which is intended to put forth a positive, affirmative way of moving forward. Progress depends on the willingness of all of us to work towards a more fully spirit-centered Meeting, founded on Friends' testimonies, through the conscientious use of Friends' practices.

Live in peace with each other. And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else. Rejoice always.

1 Thessalonians 5