

Pacific Yearly Meeting
Walker Creek Ranch, Petaluma, California

Sixth Month 18, 2016

Meeting for Business I

Epistle reading. Sue Torrey (Central Coast), Reading Clerk, read from the German Yearly Meeting Epistle 2015. The mystical spirit is in each simple experience. A lecture on “roots and wings” was offered, noting that youth are not just the future but the here and now of our community. We are to fly but to have roots, to be radical community. We must both be and become Quakers. German Friends have called upon their country to open borders to refugees and to care for their needs.

Welcoming visitors. Amy Cooke (Grass Valley), Assistant to the Clerk, welcomed visitors, asking them to stand and give their names. We welcomed Jim Cason from Friends Committee on National Legislation and Leonard Joy of Strawberry Creek, who is returned after an absence.

Clerk’s opening words. Diego Navarro (Santa Cruz), Presiding Clerk, shared words to help orient us to our time together and our work this week. We were invited to take special care to welcome newcomers, as we make the transition to being together in a different way, newly sensitive to one another and the Spirit at work in us. This transition may take time and attention; we are asked to enter this first business session with awareness of being in this transition. The agenda was adjusted to begin with the respectful relationships activity.

Respectful Relationships. Kylin Navarro (Berkeley) and JT Dorr-Bremme(Orange Grove) brought an activity to us to help us get to know one another. Friends shared fellowship, experience, and fun in learning of welcoming ways and of our community expectations.

Our Clerk followed the exercise with further reflections. What is the purpose of our worship in business? Rightly prepared, we enter our process without answers to the questions before us. This openness allows the Spirit to work within us, and for us to give to our community the leadings of the Spirit here present among us. He offered suggestions regarding our process: give our names and meeting before we speak, address the Clerk when called to minister, seek to hear beyond ego and personal will to the true source of ministry before we speak. Waiting will be our way and the movement to speak will come from this availability. We work in spiritual time, allowing the Spirit to move at its own pace, and following that lead and limit. In moving to approval, the Clerk will test for uneasiness while moving toward unity. Be willing to wait to be moved to speak, speak only once to an issue, trusting that truth will arise among us. Wait to be recognized: we are of one body.

State of the Society Report. Members of Ministry and Oversight Committee brought to us excerpts from State of the Meeting reports, grouped according to certain themes:

--What does it mean to be a **community**: to undertake a small and very human effort in the work of strengthening spiritual relationships, to foster the inclusion and treasuring of our children, to engage in connecting to other levels of our Quakerism.

--What is the significance of our **space**? The meeting house is a place of welcoming, we announce this space to others through a welcoming sign, we make a home of the place we find but may not own.

--What is our work of **outreach**? Sponsoring peace contests, the provision of meals for homeless folk, the distribution of needed food assistance, participation in demonstrations, working to support the undocumented ones among us, supporting refugee families, directing inherited funds to the needs of the community.

--What is our **good order**? To regularly investigate our process, to employ clearness committees, to attend to the responsible and patient management of our funds, to stand faithfully.

--Living the **rhythms of life**: embracing life stages, acknowledging declining energies in our lives and meetings, joining in retreats such as at Ben Lomond Quaker Center, being willing to let go, welcoming new members.

In summary, there are challenges before us but joy and renewal in being together. We discover the miracle in coming together in love, which is a gift from God, and receive guidance in changing times. We are called to be available, open, willing to share when called upon, to be patient and inclusive, to live the act of worship in the world. The full state of the society report is attached. [Attachment III]

Epistle Committee. David Lederman (Orange County) of Ministry and Oversight Committee brought us the names of three friends: Chuck Orr (La Jolla), Thistle West (Strawberry Creek), and Mary Klein (Palo Alto), named for service on the Epistle Committee.

Naming Committee. Sarah Rose House-Lightner (Orange Grove), Convenor of Naming Committee, brought names to us for service on our Nominating Committee: nominating for one year as Co-clerks: Nora Cook (Grass Valley) and Stephen Matchett (San Francisco), and for new appointment to the committee: Heather Levien (Berkeley) and Sue Torrey (Central Coast).

Nominating Committee. Stephen Matchett (San Francisco), Co-clerk of Nominating Committee, presented the first reading of a list of Friends who have agreed to serve the yearly meeting in various positions, offering some clarifying comments in introducing the list, and noting additions and corrections. These names will be heard again for consideration at a later plenary.

Our Clerk offered advice in how we approach our discussion of the next matters before us. Our discussions of money need to be filled with worship and care as our other matters are. Some initial proposals are to be brought to us and if there is not present unity we will give them further consideration in listening sessions to follow. Diego gave us information on our financial situation; recent years of deficit now present us with a need for new directions, which the following proposals represent.

Recommendation on PYM delegates. David Barrows (San Diego), Co-clerk of Finance Committee, brought forth a joint proposal from Finance, Nominating, and Ministry and Oversight Committees, regarding the naming of our delegates to Quaker organizations. He reminded us of the different budgets we operate by, the sources of our funds, and the spending authority that our PYM budget represents. We have reserve funds, some of which are restricted. Reserve funds are declining. The reduction in delegate appointments proposed by the joint document reflects an effort to face these declining resources, while assuming responsibility to fully fund those delegates we do appoint. This proposal represents the outcome of many years of deliberation and differing views on the best solution. The full proposal is available on the web site and in paper copies. If this proposal is approved, two additional minutes will be brought forward regarding implementation. Ministry and Oversight continues to labor with other aspects of this issue. Some questions came forward in response to the report. Friends were encouraged to attend the “committee fair” and the listening session ahead for further exploration of the proposal. The joint proposal is attached. [Attachment IV]

Our Clerk brought our session to a close, scheduling remaining agenda items for later plenaries.

Minutes were read and approved. We closed with worship.

Presiding Clerk: Diego Navarro

Recording Clerks: Jim Anderson, Leslie Zondervan-Droz

Attachments:

Attachment III: State of the Society Report

Pacific Yearly Meeting State of the Society Report

June 20/21, 2016

¢ “As we reflect on the state of our meeting in 2016, we ask ourselves, Where’s the enthusiasm? Where’s the juice?” Strawberry Creek MM

¢ Twenty-one Meetings and three worship groups sent in State of the Meeting reports, trying to distill the “juice” and the challenges of their communities. From these, we find general themes and specific examples which make up this State of the Society Report.

¢ **Meeting Community** – Chico Friends Meeting speaks of what it is to be a community:

“Tender, generous, and often very human, we are a small but steadfast people wrestling with what it means to be Quaker. With faith that the power and the mystery of Spirit is in it, we continue to, each in our own way, show up, and when we do, we experience life of the Spirit abundantly.”

“This year we celebrated our 50th Anniversary as a monthly meeting.” Grass Valley MM

“Our Meeting has enjoyed a time of spiritual stability in which the attendance at Meeting for Worship has grown... We want to strengthen our spiritual relationships with both long-time attenders and those who have arrived more recently.” Mexico City MM

“After three quarters of an hour or so, we are joined in silence by the children of the meeting and their teachers. The shine in their eyes promises a lively sharing at the rise of meeting.” Inland Valley MM

“In January we hosted PYM’s Ministry and Oversight Committee, and our discussions with the committee emphasized the importance of our Quaker ties. We benefit from members of our meeting who are active in PYM and SCQM, experiencing the richness of the larger Quaker community.” Orange County MM

¢ **Meeting Space** – the space we use or own creates both opportunity and challenge.

“We continue to be struck by the new openness of our Meetinghouse, symbolizing to both us and the broader community the welcome we seek to provide.” Berkeley Friends Meeting

“We approved a Minute and updated our outdoor sign which now reads: Davis Friends Meeting (Quaker), an open, welcoming, and affirming Meeting.” Davis MM

“For now, we have suspended the search [for a meetinghouse to purchase]. This has been very painful, especially for those who have worked so hard and for so long... Without a meetinghouse we are not very visible to our local community. Yet we have a welcome stream of visitors who know to look for us.” Strawberry Creek MM

“Some Friends have voiced concern over the Meeting owning properties as the many issues it brings may be getting in the way of Spirit rather than leading us toward it.” San Francisco MM

¢ **Outreach/Work in the Community** – As in many years past, the quality, substance and sheer diversity of community outreach and social action is remarkable, including response to the California drought with drought-resistant meeting grounds.

“We are especially happy to continue sponsorship of the student Peace Essay Contest in the Stanislaus County Schools. We are ever heartened by the growth in participation and the depth of commitment and passion of young people. Delta MM

“We continue to express our social concerns through ongoing activities such as providing a meal and music to homeless women once a month, and supporting those who are taking Alternatives to Violence into the community and local prisons. Live Oak MM

“We help with the monthly Rice Plus Project that packs and distributes rice, beans and other necessities to farm families in the Salinas Valley and North Monterey County.” Monterrey Peninsula MM

“Our presence is noted in public events, including demonstrations in support of climate action, the Black Lives Matter movement, and immigration concerns. Two of our members attended the UN Conference on Climate Change (COP) 21 in Paris, one as General Secretary for Quaker Earthcare Witness.” Strawberry Creek MM

“We support the Dougla-Prieta project in Arizona and Mexico, the undocumented student scholarship fund, African student scholarship funds, the East Bay Sanctuary movement, Prisoners packages work, Citizens Climate Lobby and the Interfaith Jewish Voices for Peace.” Sacramento MM

“In response to immigration and refugee crises, members of our meeting have taken in 3 immigrant families and a new committee was formed to offer financial advocacy and support.” La Jolla MM

“When one of our long standing members passed away, his estate was bequeathed to us. We set aside part as an Endowment, a portion was used to complete our new meeting home the rest funded Grants totaling \$174,000.” San Diego MM

“Acknowledging the many efforts of individual Friends in the world, nominations to our Peace and Social Order Committee were suspended pending clarification of this committee’s relationship to the concerns of Friends. Consideration of this action is ongoing.” La Jolla MM

€ **Good Order** requires us to examine not just what we do, but how and why.

“...the Clerk discerned three desirable efforts for the community: To continue the sharing and examination process that has invigorated Meeting for Business; to structure our community so that we are better able to welcome newcomers; and to be more transparent and efficient. We feel both the pressure of uncertain plans for the next year, yet also joy in our new direction.” Palo Alto MM

“Our meeting has grappled with differences of opinions and with individual life challenges, through the vehicle of clearness committees. This is a profound process that helps to center us in love when facing challenges. Santa Barbara MM

“Getting enough money to meet our budget continues to be a challenge, and we are also challenged by the search for members and attenders to take on a position or serve on a committee, or to help carry out a program. Yet we are committed and care and know there is a way through this if we are willing to be open, patient to wait for this response, and ready to act on it when it comes.” Grass Valley MM

“Quaker history shows us that it is often through struggle that we receive our spiritual gifts. We struggle with how people react to what others say and with achieving a common understanding of committee work versus meeting work and how to make decisions.” Chico Friends Meeting

¢ **Rhythms Of Life** – While the familiar problem of aging seems to be consistent throughout, there is a sense of renewal and vibrancy, with a number of meetings and worship groups growing and delighting in newcomers, new members and new families. And it’s clear the work of Bob and Kathy Runyon and Quaker Center has positively impacted and helped nourish many meetings through our Yearly Meeting.

“Many of us are using our Meeting’s Ben Lomond Quaker Center [annual] pass which helps our Meeting grow spiritually.” Sacramento MM

“Marloma Long Beach Meeting consists of six senior citizens of increasing age and diminishing energy. Once a very active meeting, we no longer do social service projects as a Meeting, although individuals take part in a variety of activities. What of our spiritual development? One member described our Meeting as “a place where we go to regenerate our spiritual batteries once a week.” Marloma Long Beach MM

[We held] a meeting-wide retreat, “From Strength to Strength: Visions for the Future of the Claremont Monthly Meeting.” Out of the retreat emerged a sense that we might do well to embrace, rather than lament, our smallness: genuinely prophetic communities are perhaps likely to be small.” Claremont MM

“...because there are fewer of us, many standing Meeting committees are small and we rely on individuals to do work that was once done by committee. The answer may lie in simplifying our process and letting go of traditions which no longer serve us.” Orange Grove MM

“Though our spirit remains strong, we are less able to summon physical ability to accomplish all we wish to do. At the same time, Friends are learning to accept the limits of aging, and are searching for new and creative ways to be of service.” Delta MM

“The Query “How is truth served in our Meeting?” also applies to recognizing our own limitations. Some in our Meeting have learned this through disabilities or illnesses. For others it is a matter of following new leadings and finding new ways to be of service. Davis MM

” ...older, more seasoned Friends, and Friends ways, [are] giving over to inspired, service-oriented outreach. Meeting community inreach is giving way to larger engagement in service to others in the greater community outside our doors.” San Francisco MM

“We have felt a flowing energy from the Divine to welcome new visitors, attenders and members of our community, floating in and out, a life of constant change. We happily welcome four new members this year. We are thankful for the vitality and energy felt by many in our community.” Santa Monica MM

“The Worship Group at Soledad State Prison (CTF) remains under our care. Currently there are 7 to 8 Live Oak Friends who’ve worshipped and participated in worship sharing discussions, with 7 to 10 inmates, twice monthly. Live Oak MM

“We are continuing to grow as a spiritual community in faith and in numbers.” Conejo Valley WG

“The small size of our worship group continues to be a challenge and a blessing. We don’t have the problems, nor do we have the possibilities.” Ojai WG

“We are a small group, but we have shown concern on peace and social justice issues at a time when the world is full of violence and grave injustices. We are thankful for our time together.”

Whitleaf WG

¢ **Summary** – Many meetings speak of their challenges, but also their sense of joy and renewal together.

“Of the little miracles in life, one of those is how we have come together to form a larger community. We have made a family together, a safe place to grow our relationships. An adult who grew up within our Meeting said he remembered Meeting fondly as “a place where he was loved.” Orange County MM

“Chico Friends Meeting life is not smooth, but it is full of joy and of meaningful relationships with each other, the wider world, and the Spirit of God. Chico Friends Meeting

“When Spirit moves in Meeting, it is amazing and glorious, a gift from God. It is in those moments we feel how easy it is to become as God wishes us to be. We trust that Spirit will guide us forward.” Orange Grove MM

“Reflecting on this year, we find strength in the richness of our memories, strength in the power of our hopes. Above all, we seek strength in our togetherness.” Claremont MM

“We...seek to remain open to the will of the spirit and affirm that all creation has worth and dignity.” La Jolla MM

“We recognize the need to remember that we are a living tradition. The world and the Meeting are always changing. We seek the guidance of Spirit in knowing our truth and moving ahead in response to change. We strive to treat each other tenderly and, as we seek the truth and act upon it, we work to touch that of God in each of us.” Strawberry Creek MM

¢ We close our State of the Society Report with a quote from Grass Valley MM:

“ ...our practice is gathering together in silence, to be available, to be open, to be willing to share when the spirit prods or encourages us, to be patient, to be open and inclusive of others’ viewpoints, and to experience this process as our act of worship, our way of being in the world.

Submitted by the Ministry and Oversight Committee of PYM

Attachment IV: Joint Proposal of Ministry & Oversight, Nominating, and Finance Committees

Recommendations and Proposal from Ministry & Oversight, Nominating and Finance Committees

Current Situation: Last year (FY 2014-2015) in the general account PYM spent \$20,400 more than we received. Most income for the general account comes from per-member assessments to monthly meetings in the yearly meeting. There are limits to the amount of funds that can be raised from monthly meetings since their contributions are voluntary. (Assessments of monthly meeting approximately doubled when the yearly meeting hired the Youth Program Supervisor.) Most Meetings supported the hiring, but some still report struggles with their budgets.

For Pacific Yearly Meeting, the budget is a spending authority. The treasurer is authorized to spend up to the limit of the budget. When spending exceeds the budget, approval must be obtained for further spending (i.e., budget augmentation). If at the end of the fiscal year, fewer funds were spent than budgeted, the remainder goes into reserves. When more is spent than budgeted, the difference is drawn from reserves. Obviously, if PYM continued to budget less than actual expenses our reserves would be depleted.

PYM has a variety of reserve accounts; most are restricted for a specific purpose. The unrestricted reserves, from which budget shortfalls would be drawn had been relatively stable in recent years:

2015	\$55,890
2014	\$80,626
2013	\$81,856
2012	\$83,201
2011	\$81,216

This year, in the face of fiscal austerity, three committees (Ministry and Oversight, Nominating, and Finance) are proposing that the funding for delegates be limited to two per organization (other than the Friends Bulletin Corp. (*Western Friend*) Board of Directors, which would continue to send three).

Background: Pacific Yearly Meeting presently names (and, with the exception of FCLCa, fully funds travel for) representatives, delegates, and observers to other Quaker organizations:

- four or five representatives to the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Corporation;
- one observer to Evangelical Friends Church Southwest;
- three board members to the Friends Bulletin Corp. Board of Directors;
- one representative to Friends Committee on Legislation of California (FCLCa);
- six representatives to the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL);
- one observer to the Friends General Conference (FGC) Central Committee;
- one member to the Friends Peace Team Board of Directors;

- one observer to the Friends United Meeting (FUM);
- five representatives to the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), Section of the Americas;
- two representatives to Quaker Earthcare Witness;
- one observer to the Reunion General de los Amigos en Mexico; and
- one representative to the William Penn House National Consultative Committee.

For a considerable time, Pacific Yearly Meeting has pondered these representatives, delegates and observers. How many should be named? In some cases the receiving organizations suggested the number (based on the size of our yearly meeting). Did that mean that we were obligated to send this number? Could we send more? Or less? This issue was considered by PYM's M&O committee without resolution.

A further complication was that prior to 2008, the budget supporting travel to meetings did not fully support travel for the number of delegates named. Both the Nominating Committee and Finance Committee had misgivings about naming delegates and expecting *some* of them to pay their own expenses. (Some Friends are affluent and can and do pay their own expenses; however, if we are expecting representatives to pay their own expense less affluent Friends would not be able to serve.)

At the Representative Committee Meeting in 2008, a minute was passed to fully fund travel of all representatives, delegates, and liaisons. This necessarily increased the budget of yearly meeting, but not as much as might have been expected because some Friends did not charge Yearly Meeting for their expenses and in most years not all of the named delegates actually attended their meetings.

Minute: In order to reduce budgeted expenses, Ministry & Oversight, Nominating, and Finance Committees specifically recommends:

- two representatives be funded for travel to the AFSC Corporation
- one observer be funded for travel to Evangelical Friends Church Southwest
- three board members be funded for travel to the Friends Bulletin Board of Directors
- two representatives be funded for travel to the FCNL meeting
- one observer be funded for travel to FGC Central Committee meeting
- one board member be funded for travel for Friends Peace Team Project Board of Directors
- one observer be funded for travel to FUM meeting
- two representatives be funded for travel for FWCC Section of the Americas meetings
- two representatives be funded for travel to Quaker Earthcare Witness
- one observer be funded for travel to Reunion General de los Amigos in Mexico,
- one representative for the William Penn House National Consultative Committee; this representative also attends the FCNL meeting and has no additional expense for the William Penn meeting.

If this minute is approved two more minutes will be introduced for implementation. The first will cover how to distribute the reduced budget funding among the existing

representatives, delegates and observers. The second will offer a revised configuration for the slate of representatives, delegates, and observers.

Ministry & Oversight Committee supports this proposal as a short-term measure to address some of the fiscal concerns before Yearly Meeting. Meanwhile Ministry & Oversight Committee is laboring with a broader spectrum of issues and is not yet able to bring related recommendations to the Yearly Meeting for consideration. These issues will focus on how we as a spiritual body should relate to, support and sustain other Friends' organizations.

Survey: Finance Committee developed a survey questionnaire to be completed by members of Yearly Meeting. Less than one-quarter of members of PYM responded (215 valid responses). Of responses received, 12% were from Southern California Quarterly Meeting with 347 members and 27% of total PYM membership and 78% were from College Park Quarterly Meeting with 835 members and 65% of PYM membership. The survey responses provide some information but we should proceed cautiously because the number who did not respond is greater than the number of those who did. We have no way of knowing if those who responded are representative of all.

Some findings:

§ 60% of respondent (129 of 215) supported PYM sending representatives to Quaker organizations

- 10% were opposed
- 30% did not answer

§ 41% of respondents give *some* priority for PYM paying travel for representatives

- 22% gave *high* priority
- 21% gave *low* or *no* priority
- 16% gave no answer

§ Although respondents were supportive of sending representatives, written reports were not regularly read:

- 8% frequently read
- 36% rarely read
- 51% never read
- 4% gave no answer

§ 57% of respondents supported PYM providing subsidy for attendees traveling over 200 mile to attend the Annual Gathering

- 9% reported such policy would help them attend
- 8% were opposed
- 26% gave no answer

§ Yearly Meeting presently makes annual contributions to certain Quaker organizations; there was mixed support for this practice from respondents:

- 35% supported
- 32% were opposed
- 33% did not answer

§

Priority for budget allocations:

	HIGH OR VERY HIGH	SOME	LOW	NONE	NO ANSWER
Youth Programs	76%	7%	2%	0%	15%
General & Administrative Expenses	48%	27%	3%	1%	21%
Assistance to Attend Annual Sessions and Rep Com	47%	28%	7%	2%	17%
Committee expenses	33%	36%	13%	1%	17%
Donations to Quaker Organizations	12%	27%	32%	12%	19%
Conference travel for Reps	21%	41%	17%	0%	16%