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# FORT MYERS MONTHLY MEETING

OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

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Newsletter, Fourth Month, 2002

2755 Providence Street  
Fort Myers, Florida 33916

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<b>Clerk:</b>	Larry Butler	(941) 337-3743
<b>Recording Clerk:</b>	Nancy Fennell	(863) 699-1276
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Albert Webber	(941) 945-2673

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- Potluck luncheons are once a month, the first First Day of the month.
  - If you would like to receive the newsletter via e-mail, please write to:  
[quakerswfla@earthlink.net](mailto:quakerswfla@earthlink.net)
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## April Potluck

Michael Simonek, Executive Director of the Calusa Nature Center will join Friends for the April 7 potluck. Michael will be introducing us to new plans and goals for the nature center and how Friends can participate.

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### QUERIES FOR THE FOURTH MONTH

*How do Friends Care for one another?*

**Unity within the Meeting**

- Are love and unity maintained among you?
- Do you manifest a forgiving spirit and a care for the reputation of others?
- When differences arise are endeavors made to settle them in a spirit of love?
- Are you patient and considerate towards those whom you find it hard to like or understand?
- Do you respect that of God in each one, though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or may be difficult to discern?



# Ft. Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

## *Third Month 03, 2002*

The Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business opened with a consideration and discussion of the Query on Participation in Meetings. Fifteen Friends were in attendance.

Ministry and Counsel reported on their work on the Meetings' new stationary.

**02MM08.** A recommendation from Ministry and Counsel that Jeannette Botha be accepted into membership was discussed. The Meeting joyously accepts our dear friend into Membership.

The Treasurer's report was presented and approved.

**02MM09.** The Clerk read a letter from John and Chio Kumagai, resigning their membership in our Meeting as they are returning permanently to Canada. Friends discussed the many blessings that this beloved couple have given us. The Clerk will write a letter of appreciation to Coldstream Meeting, where the Kumagais hold dual membership.

**02MM10.** Tom Fennell advised us of the plans and cost of the Meeting's stationary. The Meeting approved the expense and would like to package and sell some of the note cards for personal use.

**02MM11.** Friends reviewed and modified the advertisement to be placed in Florida Gulf Coast University's student newspaper. Immediate submission was advised.

Nancy Fennell, Marilyn Webber, and Bonnie Cummings agreed to serve on the Nominating Committee for the year 2002

George Cummings reported for the Properties Committee on the development projects and plans for the Calusa Nature Center. Friends asked George to invite the Director of the Nature Center to give us a brief presentation on the Center's future. The Properties Committee was asked to meet and develop suggestions regarding the Meetings participation in these developments.

**02MM12.** Given the recent break in and losses experienced by CDCA in Nicaragua, Friends agreed to send \$100 for support and relief.

Hank Fay, shared the report from Peace and Social Concerns, which was accepted by Friends.

An issue of quieter fans in Iona House was raised. This problem was referred to the Properties Committee. Bonnie Cummings will locate a new coffeepot for us.

Minutes were read and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Fennell  
Recording Clerk

# Peace and Social Concerns Committee Meeting

23<sup>rd</sup> Day 2<sup>nd</sup> Month 2002

Attending: Tom Fennell, Nancy Fennell, Hank Fay, Theron White, Jeanette Botha, Anne deNevers

Clerk Katherine Dew was away on business; Tom Fennell clerked. Hank Fay substituted for Erica Lynne, Secretary, who was rehabilitating from a bug.

Hank Fay gave a report on the Immokalee workers, who begin their Taco Bell Truth Tour on 28<sup>th</sup> Day 2<sup>nd</sup> Month. The bus tour with 65 farmworkers will go across the country, arriving at Irvine, CA on Third Month 10<sup>th</sup> Day. Hank and Theron plan to go to Tampa on the 28<sup>th</sup> to join in a kickoff rally. Interfaith Action of Southwest Florida has been active through its staff member in gathering faith community support for the tour.

FCNL has issued an alert regarding the possibility of the return of military conscription.

EPEC, on whose board Hank Fay serves, is issuing an invitation to Ian Harvey, the teacher in Naples suspended for alleged one-sided (anti-war) teaching in his media classes, to give a mock class to the public, in order to demonstrate, rather than talk about, the free-speech issues involved.

Submitted,

Hank Fay

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## Vocal Ministry

*Read on 3/16/02 to Friends attending Potluck for consideration of Vocal Ministry*  
By Anne DeNevers

We meet today on a special concern; according to our Faith and Practice, we are “a committee of the whole” as we focus on this concern.

In our Fort Myers Friends Meeting, we value vocal contributions – the thoughts expressed by members and attenders alike. Do we see these contributions as Divinely inspired? Are they given to teach, to comfort? What questions do we ask ourselves? Today as we humbly evaluate (*dare* we use that word?) vocal ministry within our worship service we each need to question ourselves.

Howard Brinton in *Friends for 300 Years* writes, “Vocal ministry is an important, but not an essential element in Quaker Worship. Both theoretically and actually a meeting which worships in complete silence may be as valuable as one in which speaking occurs. A silent meeting is generally preferred to one in which

speaking does not arise from an inspired source. But experience shows that meetings in which there is little or no vocal ministry for a length of time declines in membership and power...Because the search for the Truth and Life is a group search as well as an individual search, even those furthest along the way derive strength and encouragement from others in the meeting.”

From London Yearly Meeting Proceedings, 1949: “When we gather together in worship let us remember that there is committed to each of us a share in the priesthood. We should help one another, whether in silence or...with words of ministry.”

Faithfulness in speaking, even briefly, may open the way for fuller ministry from others. Above all, even broken and imperfect words springing from a deep place in the heart

may wonderfully draw those present into communion with God and with one another.

And from Rufus Jones in 1934: The Quaker group silence, the cooperative teamwork of the entire assembly, the expectant hush, the sense of divine presence, the faith that God and man can come into mutual and reciprocal correspondence, tend to heighten the spiritual quality of the person who rises in that kind of atmosphere to speak....vocal ministry is not abstract and doctrinal, it is charged with insight for the meaning and significance of life. It answers back to a specific human need. It speaks to the condition of souls. It correlates with concrete reality. It sets hearts beating. It restores waning

On the practical side, Douglas Steere has written of his experience in sharing one person's way of coming to a message and stated things come to him during the week, something he read, a verse of poetry or insight that opens to him during a walk. Quoting him: "Since we have no minister all of us have a responsibility. It is not the abolition of ministry but the abolition of the passive laity that the Society of Friends has striven for. One never brings anything to meeting with the certainty of giving it there....Under the influence of the quiet prayer and this sense of unity in the meeting, what light one brought is completely set aside, or one feels that this should be reserved for another occasion, or it is made over; or new accents, new implications are effected. The mind is often drawn to an entire fresh seed that unfolds itself there in the consciousness of the worshippers.

When I feel drawn to share something in the quiet meeting for worship, I simply rise and say it as briefly as I know how, seeking ever to keep close to the root and to avoid all vain and destructive ornamentation. The other worshippers often do not raise their heads or open their eyes. If they feel in unity with what I have shared and if it speaks to the condition of the meeting, then it becomes a seed for their meditations, if not – they pay little attention to it and continue in their own worship." He goes on to say that at times others speak to this message and a common theme is developed that grips the

mind of every participating worshiper who is present."

Perhaps we've experienced some thought that seems Divine-sent, but we struggle to find the right words, someone else speaks to this thought and it is electrifying as we realize it was indeed God-sent.

A story is told (from the pamphlet *The Gathered Meeting*) of two worshipping Friends sitting together; one man moved nervously but did not rise to speak. Finally the other Friend arose and spoke a few powerful words that seemed to move the meeting forward. After the meeting was over, the man who had spoken nudged his silent neighbor and said, "Next time, Henry, say it thyself."

Months ago Larry gave us a little book by Samuel Bownas – *A Description of the Qualifications Necessary to a Gospel Ministry*, published in 1767. The Quaker culture in Bownas' time was different than today. Then few people spoke in meeting except recorded ministers or those preparing for such. He admonishes us to know when one is called to speak, when one must remain silent, so that ministry comes from the spirit and not some other source. To read this book one is helped to sense the difference between ministry that follows only from the intellect or from emotions and ministry that comes to us from a deeper source. We question that sometimes our speaking in meeting is partly to convince and convert ourselves, and that sometimes such speaking might be more appropriate in a gathering other than a meeting for worship. His description of spirit-led voices is beautiful.

John Woolman's words re-echo this. Woolman wrote, "Turn all that we possess into the channel of universal love." It happens more than we imagine.

The 2001 new SEYM Faith and Practice under ministry lists only three questions and guess what? – They come directly from the queries. They are there for us – so powerful is question one that it has been suggested that we answer it here – a poll so to speak.

***Is the vocal ministry in your meeting exercised under the leading of the spirit?***

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**Update your Calendars!**

**Potluck to Welcome Sarah from CDCA**

**Saturday, 5/18/02, Noon**

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**TO THE MEETING OF MINSTERS AT KENDAL IN WESTMORELAND**

In that love which in time past we have enjoyed together. do I heartily salute you. having in mind some few things to impart. As counsel and caution to us all, including myself therein.

We who apprehend ourselves called into this public station of preaching ought closely to wait on our Guide to put us forth in the work. And dear friends. I see great need for us to carefully mind our openings. and go on as we are led by the Spirit; for if we overrun our Guide and opening we shall be confused, not knowing where, or how to conclude: But if we being and go on with the spirit we shall conclude so that all who are truly spiritual will sensibly feel that we are right. Thus will our ministry edify them that hear it.

And dear friends. let us be singly and in sincerity devoted to the will of God. whether to preach or be silent; for if we are not sensible of such a resignation, it is doubtful that we may set ourselves at work, when we should be quiet, and so bring an uneasiness upon our friends, and burthen upon ourselves. And this conduct will shut up Friends hearts against our service and ministry. And my dear friends, every time you appear in the ministry, when it is over, examine yourselves narrowly, whether you have kept in your places, and to your Guide; and consider whether you have not used superfluous words that render the matter disagreeable, or such tones or gestures as misbecome the work we are about, always remembering, that the true ministers preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus our Lord. Let us bear this in mind, that neither arts (?), parts, strength of memory, nor former experiences will, without the sanctification of the spirit, do anything for us to depend on. Let us therefore, I entreat you, keep to the living fountain, the spring of eternal life, opened by our Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts.

I also desire, that you would not neglect your day's work, in visiting the dark corners of the counties about you; but be mindful of your service therein, as the Lord shall make way for it.

The things above written have been on my mind to communicate to you, my dear friends, with desires that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with your spirits, Amen. Hoping, also, that I shall not be forgotten by you, in your nearest supplications to the God of the spirits of all flesh; remembering me, that I may be preserved by sea, and in the wilderness, through the many and various exercises and baptisms that I may be suffered to undergo for the services sake; and that I may be preserved in humility and self-denial, under the power of the cross, the most the most beautiful ornaments a minister can ever be clothed with; that if it please Him we should meet again, and our joy may then be full in the Holy Ghost, which is the fervent prayer of your exercised friend and brother,

SAMUEL BOWNAS, 1702

**Third Month Calendar**

<b>4/7/02</b>	<b>Discussion Group</b>	<b>9:15 a.m.</b>
	<b>Meeting for Worship</b>	<b>10:30 a.m.</b>
	<b>Pot Luck</b>	<b>After rise of Meeting</b>
<b>4/14/02</b>	<b>Education Committee</b>	<b>9:30 a.m.</b>
	<b>Meeting for Worship</b>	<b>10:30 a.m.</b>
	<b>Meeting for Business</b>	<b>After rise of Meeting</b>
<b>4/21/02</b>	<b>Discussion Group</b>	<b>9:15 a.m.</b>
	<b>Meeting for Worship</b>	<b>10:30 a.m.</b>
<b>4/28/02</b>	<b>Peace &amp; Social Concerns</b>	<b>9:15 a.m.</b>
	<b>Meeting for Worship</b>	<b>10:30 a.m.</b>

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**Friends Meeting of Fort Myers**  
**Religious Society of Friends**  
c/o Erica Lynne, Editor  
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