



FORT MYERS MONTHLY MEETING

OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Newsletter, Sixth Month, 2002

2755 Providence Street
Fort Myers, Florida 33916

Clerk:	Larry Butler	(239) 337-3743
Recording Clerk:	Nancy Fennell	(863) 699-1276
Treasurer:	Albert Webber	(239) 945-2673

- Potluck luncheons are once a month, the first First Day of the month.
 - Deadline for inclusion in the next newsletter is Seventh Month 16, 2002
 - If you would like to receive the newsletter via e-mail, please write to:
quakerswfla@earthlink.net
-

QUERIES FOR THE SEVENTH MONTH

How do Friends meet their responsibilities outside the Meeting?

Social and Economic Relationships

- Are you working towards the removal of social injustices? Have you attempted to examine objectively their causes, and are you ready to abandon old prejudices and think anew?
- What are you doing as individuals or as a meeting to insure equal opportunities in social and economic life and in education for those who suffer discrimination because of gender, race, creed or social class?
- Do you take a living interest in the social conditions of the community in which you live?
- Do you see to promote the welfare of those in any kind of need and to secure a just distribution of the resources of the world?
- Do you regard your possessions as given to you in trust and do you part with them freely for the needs of others?
- Do you recognize that we are a part of the natural world and are you responsible heirs of its resources?
- Are you concerned that our increasing power over nature should be used responsibly with reverence for life and with a sense of the continuing creation of God in which we are called to participate?

Ft. Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Sixth Month 9, 2002

The Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, attended by 13, opened by considering the query on oversight of the members. Friends spoke about our strengths in this area and particularly wanted to thank Ann deNevers and Betty DeWitt for the consistent pastoral care they give so kindly and freely to our Meeting.

Al Webber gave the Treasurer's report, which was approved by Friends. It was suggested that we report on a monthly basis the hours donated to the Calusa Nature Center as an addendum to the Treasurer's report. A discussion of our involvement in this work highlighted the recent donation of 42 hours by the de Olivera family.

02MM16. Friends agreed to send flowers to two non-Quaker friends who regularly donate their Calusa Nature Center service hours to our Meeting.

The Properties Committee suggested that we take care of the paper products needs of Iona House and that we clean up the excess paint left during the recent paint job. Friends were in agreement. The Committee is investigating the cost of a handicapped access ramp for Iona House and will report to us as further information becomes available.

Peace and Social Concerns Committee reported that they have reviewed a request for funds for Ramallah Friends School and recommend that the Meeting send a gift to assist the school in needed repairs.

02MM17. Friends agreed to send \$200, undesignated, to the Friends School in Ramallah, through Friends United Meeting.

Tom Fennell read a statement from those involved in campus ministries recommending that this work be laid down for the present time. As Friends accepted this recommendation, a letter will be sent to the United Campus Ministries of Florida Gulf Coast University to notify them.

The Clerk read letters of thanks from Harry Chapin Food Banks and from FCNL for the Meeting's recent contributions to each.

The minutes were read and approved.

Respectfully submitted

Nancy Fennell,
Recording Clerk

An Open Letter to Friends

Friends,

“To whom much is given, much is expected. With whom much is invested, more is demanded on the return of the investment.”

As members and attenders of the Religious Society of Friends, God has given us the gift of direct revelation, as we listen to God's word to us in Meeting for Worship, and share it with each other. God has invested in the development of a religious community, in which we can exercise group discernment of God's word to us. These are the twin pillars of Quaker religious life, direct revelation and group discernment, and they are God's gift to, and investment in, us as individuals and as a religious community.

We are called to answer to the use of that gift, and the return on that investment, not only at the end of our lives, but every time we pause to listen to what God has to tell us. The question is whether we will have taken God's investment in our meeting and, following the query for the 9th Month, will have extended the Quaker message into our community, or whether we will have simply used God's gift and investment for our own personal benefit.

We as individuals, and as a religious community, would do well to ask ourselves how we will answer God's demand for a return on his investment. What are we doing to bring the Quaker message of direct revelation and group discernment to those outside the Quaker community? What should be we doing in order to make fruitful use of God's investment in our religious community?

Based on recollection of sharing at Meeting for Worship, First First Day, Fifth Month, 2002.

Hank Fay

#####

We Are Not Alone

Excerpted from *Organic Roots*, the North County School and Camp Treetops Bulletin...the writer attended the Peacemakers' Circle Gathering at Nares Wilderness Camp in Yukon, Canada, July 2001.

"Our days were spent sitting outside under a tarp in a circle around a large campfire. We began the day with smudging, the native practice of burning sacred herbs and directing the smoke toward oneself as a way of separating oneself from everyday concerns and preparing to be together in a sacred process of speaking truth from the heart. The essence of the circle process is equality - each person present has an opportunity to speak and be listened to, and each person's voice is of equal value. All titles and rank are left outside the circle. This follows from one of the principles underlying the process, namely that each person is of value to the community and every effort must be made to heal rifts within the community.

"We passed an eagle feather clockwise around the circle, each person responding to a question or idea offered by the circle keeper, the person responsible for guiding the process. When the feather comes, one can choose to speak or to be silent, but only the person holding the feather may speak. In this way, after several passes around the circle, a decision can be reached or a plan devised to which each person has had an opportunity to contribute.

"Peacemaking, sentencing and healing circles are part of a broad international movement that has been described as a restorative approach to justice. Those who have committed an offense are held accountable for repairing the harm while also being supported by the community to learn more productive ways of behaving...Rather than ask the questions: What rule or law was broken? Who did it? How shall that person be punished? The restorative lens or aboriginal community view asks: What harm was done? What needs to be done to repair the harm? Who is responsible for doing that?

- Lolya Lipchitz, Camp Treetops Alumna

Seventh Month Calendar

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

Friends Meeting of Fort Myers
Religious Society of Friends
c/o Erica Lynne, Editor
676 110th Ave. N
Naples, FL 34108