

From Mendocino Friends Meeting

State of the Meeting Report

April 2014

Greetings to all from Mendocino Friends Meeting This State of the Meeting Report is a collaborate venture that we hope will convey our current status as well as our growth and vitality. Although we are an eclectic group, there is a feeling of community that is deepening. Our weekly attendance has increased even though a member family moved and requested a transfer of membership. We also lost Michael Matthay's sister, Susanna, a member of Redwood Forest Meeting, who would attend when she visited. We were fortunate to have extended participation by Scott Codey while he was visiting the area in his quest to learn and promote sustainable agriculture. We wish Scott well on his next and future ventures. As it became too much of a burden for our dear member Hanneli Reeves to host our monthly potluck, we have moved it back to the shul after Meeting for Worship.

A successful practice that has been in place for a little over a year continues. At the rise of meeting we discuss a predetermined topic. These topics, which generally last a month, have included faith, gratitude, life after death, living with loss, etc. The insights revealed in these discussions promote a deeper and better understanding of our core beliefs, hopes, and fears without judgment. This helps us further our knowledge of one another and discover our similarities as well as accept our differences. Although we find solace in the deep silence of meeting, there is a shared vibration of thoughts and feelings which blossom during our discussion and often carry over to our tea and snack time. This all helps bind us as a spiritual community. It also may be in part responsible for our increased attendance.

We held a workshop in February titled "Aging as an Adventure". This subject was timely for our meeting as our youngest member is now 57 years old. About 40 people from the local community joined us in sharing lunch along with the positive and negative aspects of aging. This included the practical measures of finding assisted living and the importance of updating advance directives. Claire Gorfinkel of Orange Grove Friends Meeting helped us focus on the realities facing us as we age. We were introduced to the concept of a virtual community, something that would help us remain in our homes with the help and support provided by neighbors and friends.

Holding this workshop brought us a secondary bonus. We were invited to give a presentation about Quakerism to the volunteer chaplains from the local hospital. This was given by Connie Fledderjohann, a long term member, and included a brief Quaker history. The focus of the invitation was to assist chaplains in being sensitive to Quaker beliefs and practices. Our core beliefs were discussed along with the ideas that we very seldom pray aloud and are quite comfortable in the silence. The essence of the message was to ask the patient what they wanted. A copy of *Faith and Practice* was given to the Chaplain's Library.

We experimented with a new program of a Saturday Afternoon Movie with the focus on spiritual concepts. We all contributed to the list of potential movies. An unintended consequence was that our after meeting social interactions from time to time became an opportunity to review and discuss movies that had inspired us. An additional gathering, even monthly, is difficult because we live in a rural area thus participation dwindled.

Another noteworthy event was the Power Point presentation made by Agnes Woolsey, a frequent attendee. It involved the importance of local government being able to claim more independence with a county charter. This concept, although not new, would allow the county to start a bank that could address housing in foreclosure. Other benefits could be control over environmental policies that affect local issues and would allow Instant Runoff Voting..

Mendocino Friends Meeting has not been participating in the wider Friends organization as some of us would like. Regardless, we continue to be vital, thriving in the Light as we walk with the Spirit.