

Minutes for College Park Quarterly Meeting

Winter 2020

Opening Plenary:

Clerk's remarks: Clerk Barbara Babin welcomed us and thanked us for coming. Our theme today is harmony with creation and finding our witness, and hopefully we will have juicy stuff to take back to our meetings on these topics.

We are meeting on land originally inhabited by the Ramaytush Ohlone people, who lived all along the San Francisco Bay coast. Even as we are concerned about our environment today, they have carried these interests for a long time, and we can be aware of this and look to them for history and assistance.

We participated in an interactive role call by areas and introduced ourselves by names, Meetings and what animals we would be if we weren't human.

Plenary I:

Clerk, Barbara Babin, told us that she tries to stand when she speaks and to speak loudly and clearly, and she asked that we also stand to speak and say our names and meetings. She also reminded us that she may not call on everyone who has their hand raised. We will be discussing a topic which feels very pressing, but we will be faithful to the presence among us.

We welcomed visitors:

Hayley Hathaway, Communications Director for Quaker Earthcare Witness, and

Guelord From Congo, applying to Stanford University.

Alma Moon, The Teen Group co-Clerk, reported on their activities for today, which include going to the Farmer's Market for salad makings for dinner, developing information on food, and having fun together.

Naming Committee

Bob Runyan made a report for the Naming Committee. The Clerk of Nominating is going off the committee, and the normal contingent is six people. Naming does not have any names to bring at this time, so they ask Friends to approach Bob or Dinah Bachrach if they have interest in serving on Nominating Committee.

FASE Board

Mico Sorrel (Strawberry Creek and Redwood Forest) and Patti Callahan (Redwood Forest) , the co-Clerks of the Board of the Friends Association of Services for the Elderly (FASE) presented a report on developments over the last year (attached in the archived minutes).

In September 2018, Friends House began a relationship with Covia which has been a very positive relationship. Covia has a lot of experience in managing similar facilities, and their values are in line with Friends House. Finances continue to be a challenge for a number of reasons outlined in the report. They're looking at ways to trim costs without raising rates too much for residents.

Mico talked about the impact on the recent wildfires on planning for the future at Friends House. [add more here]

Ad-Hoc Committee to write a Climate Minute

Ad hoc committee members: Shelley Tanenbaum, Mica Estrada, Carl Magruder, Keith Runyan, Nancy Glock-Grueneich and Marcia Roberts

This ad hoc committee was formed at Fall quarter when Friends asked that we record what we were feeling about the climate. They have been working diligently. They have drafted some materials saying where we are, a plan of action, a list of resources and more in their report.

There will be a panel again this afternoon, as there was in the fall.

Shelley Tanenbaum presented the two minutes drafted by the ad hoc committee.

A. MINUTE OF CLIMATE WITNESS

Environmental degradation, including human-made climate change, presents an existential threat to life on Earth as we know it. In addition to damaging the biosphere, it negatively impacts racial justice, right sharing of world resources, gender equality, migration, genocide, and conflict. Harm to Earth is caused by greed and the delusion of separateness. Friends are complicit in this harm. Spirit is calling us to seek an Earth restored through celebrating our profound interconnectedness to all things, and we resolve to act together to effect the necessary changes in our individual lives, in our Meetings, and in the systems and practices of our wider society.

B. MINUTE: CALL FOR REFLECTION AND ENGAGEMENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES:

College Park Quarterly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends invites our twenty Monthly Meetings to reflect and engage upon the following, and to report back at Spring Quarter.

- (1) **Earth Restored Testimonies:** Read together and reflect upon the queries offered below.
- (2) **Ecological Integrity:** Support each other and find practical ways that our collective and individual lives testify to a belief that there is that of God in all Creation. These ways may include reducing our carbon footprint, changing our diet, or modifying our consumption patterns.
- (3) **Earthcare Witness:** Drawing on our long history of acting on spiritual concerns, Friends will explore how best to engage the wider society in transforming the collective conscience, and taking positive action toward an Earth restored. This may include supporting individual action, corporate witness, and/or supporting our Quaker organizations.

We are asked to take the drafts back to our Meetings and consider them. A Friend spoke of the joy they've found in the courage that exists in people and encouraged us to seek for trust.

We accepted the report and will consider the minutes later today.

It was suggested that we can't wait until we are perfectly in alignment with our values before we start advocating for changes in systems that we need to become better.

Finance Committee

Carl Anderson, Clerk of the Finance Committee, made the report. In Fall quarter, we paid more than we had a year earlier, but we had wonderful attendance, so we came out ahead.

Plenary II

We had a panel presentation moderated by Shelley Tanenbaum who was a participant in the Fall panel on climate. Each of the participants has had some queries to help prepare and will address that which speaks to their condition.

We began with a poem by Avotcja, a poet and member of Strawberry Creek Meeting. She feels that she is always part of the Earth and she sees God in everything. We are part of a cosmic symphony, and we have gone out of tune.

A Simple Freedom or Was it Just a Dream?

Avotcja Jiltonilro

Once upon a time when the world was green
When this Earth was heaven
The trees used to sing to us & we sang their praises
Danced in honor of their beauty

And reveled in the millions of gifts they gave us
Life was a simple, but complicated symphony
When lovesick Leaves sang & romanced hungry Wind Spirits
And Clouds pregnant with the promise of tomorrow
Kept us drunk on the sweet wine of her Rains
Then came the invasion
Wood-eating devils that make termites look like angels
The Lakes, the Streams, the green...all gone
Forests of dreams destroyed
The simple beauty of millions of yesterdays eaten by greed
And lifelessly regurgitated into the ravaged soil
As echoes of green cry in the shadow of what once was
Tree Spirits hidden behind ancestral tombstones
Their seedless offspring roam thirsty Deserts
Beside invisible uprooted generations
Trying to remember days when Nature reigned
And all Her green gave the world Oxygen to breathe
And got the World drunk on the fruit of their love
Days when trees romanced the clouds
And Rain was the Wine of heaven
Now their ghosts silently scream
Wide awake nightmares
Restless Spirits hidden in the sands of a long ago time
A time
Before "they" came
Like an atonal swarm of hungry Locusts
Suicidal wood-eating demons that looked like angels
But took joy in the devastation of uprooted generations
In the destruction of
Sacred medicinal Flowers that once perfumed the Air
And now
The Lakes, the Streams, the green...all gone
In their place grow tearful memories
Crying echoes
Dancing in the weeds with Hurricanes & Earthquakes
Shades of days when this Earth was heaven
When happiness was
Being able to safely lie in the grass & just breathe
And be serenaded by a chorus of singing Frogs & Birds
It was a simple priceless freedom, or
Was it just a dream?
Once upon a time when the world was green

Visit <avotcja.org>

Gayle Matson, Bridge City Friends Meeting, Divesting from Fossil Fuels

Moved to Chico from Portland. The northwest has gotten rainier. She was looking for a smaller town with a good Friends meeting; she moved in September 2018 and the Campfire happened in November. It was the worst fire in California history. Gayle had not connected to the climate issue on an emotional level though she'd worked in the industry, but she realized that this was the beginning. She had to leave town in the face of her initial grief. 19,000 structures burned with about 25% uninsured; Paradise was not a wealthy place. The disparity between those who have means and those who don't

became much clearer to her. She could so relate to another Friend's description of climate grief, looking for meaning.

Linda Hutchins-Knowles, San Jose, Mothers Out Front

She always had a sense that life was meant to do something good in the world. The first movement she was involved with was the abolishment of nuclear weapons. After graduation, she traveled to study the role of women in some other countries. She saw "An Inconvenient Truth" and felt the need to do something but didn't know what. She learned about advocacy from Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) and then started a local branch of Mothers out Front. She keeps thinking about Kant's Categorical Imperative: what would the world be like if everyone did what I'm doing? The most impactful thing she did was join a group. Bringing our weight to that makes such a huge difference. Joanna Macy gives her a lot of hope.

Laura Magnani, SC, AFSC, Abolishing Prisons and Restorative Justice

AFSC has been lifting up the importance of intersectionality from the beginning and refusing to raise one issue up over the other. The phrase "right relationship" goes to the heart of the matter. If we could get that figured out, we would be on the path we need to be on. The answer comes from the spiritual side of our tradition, we need to feel the wholeness of our being with other beings. We need to be in relationship with first nations people and with people directly impacted by issues. You don't have to go to Detroit to find water that's not drinkable, but it's mostly in poor sections. It's pretty easy for Laura, as a person of means, to live in a certain sort of bubble. How these catastrophes impact communities is very dependent on how viable those communities are. The American Friends Service Committee's biggest issue now is immigration, and the major cause now is because people can't live where they have been living for various reasons. They try to connect these issues and help people see these connections. "Don't do things out of guilt but out of love."

There are differences in how we take action and that makes a symphony.

A friend pointed to the work of Tommy Orange, *There There*, and his representation of a Native American living today in Oakland.

Another friend suggested that we don't share enough about what we have done, because we discount what we've accomplished. Linda said that San Jose has a climate smart challenge where people can make a profile and then the website suggests more steps you can take. Mothers Up Front encourages people to form groups and support each other.

Friends shared projects they have undertaken and recommend. One friend commented that we need to be in conversation with one another and that they would love to see some of these ideas on a board, so we can share.

Plenary III

Nominating Committee

Janet Wile, Clerk of the Nominating Committee, delivered the report (attached in archived minutes). Because we did not hear these names in Plenary I, the clerk will make interim appointments, and we will hear these names again at spring quarterly.

Ministry and Oversight

Ann Marie Snell (SF) and Jim Anderson (Chico) of College Park Quarterly Meeting Ministry and Oversight, presented the M&O report (attached in the archived minutes). They reminded us that M&O now has the care of the regional gatherings project. Last year, three regions had very successful gatherings, and they hope that such meetings will take place again this year, including in areas that did not have them last year. There is information about this project on the CPQM website.

M&O also serves to provide support to organizations that are struggling. Last fall, we heard that CPFEA (College Park Friends Educational Association) has been having difficulty, and M&O has provided them with an ad hoc review committee.

Interest Group Reports

The intergenerational group had a report from the teens, a pitch about FCNL advocacy training, spaces at the Lakey workshop next weekend for young people, and a report about the current status of Pacific Yearly Meeting's discernment about the Unity with Nature Committee. Javaughn Fernanders, PYM's Youth Program Coordinator, talked about sources of funding for projects for youth.

The interest group(s) on what meetings are doing now about the environment broke into three groups. Many people are living their concern for the climate and talking to others in their meeting about what they are doing. They feel that they can take these messages out into the world and become involved with other organizations.

People also talked about websites such as FCNL and QEW, are wonderful resources for how to do lobbying.

Interest Group on the Response to the Ad Hoc Committee Minutes

People in this interest group were very happy with Minute A as presented in the morning plenary. The interest group recommended approving it now with some editing later.

People in the interest group were also ready to move ahead with Minute B, though they made suggestions for change. They wanted to add that the queries are suggestions to monthly meetings, and the monthly meetings would also probably want to create their own.

The Clerk's sense was that we were too close to the end of the day to reach unity on Minute A before we send these materials to monthly meetings. She read Minute B to the meeting again. Are we easy with sending this back to our monthly meetings?

We minuted our easiness with sending the draft of minute B to monthly meetings for their review and having them report back at spring quarter.

We thanked the ad hoc committee for their work and laid down the ad hoc committee.

Teen Committee

Alma Moon, co-Clerk of the Teen Program, made the report. The teens gathered and went to Palo Alto Farmer's market and learned where the food came from. They then made a collaborative worship sharing collage, thinking about the root causes of climate change. They then participated in the intergenerational interest group and helped to make dinner.

Registrar

We received a report from our co-Registrar, Eric Sabelman. We had a total of 85 participants from 16 monthly meetings. We had visitors from Quaker Earthcare Witness, the First Mennonite Church of San Francisco, Peter Kengode from Kenya and three people who participated remotely. We thanked Pam xxx, for her assistance with remote participants. The meeting with most participants was Palo Alto. We had a good representation of meetings.

We reviewed the minutes for Plenary 3 and approved them with corrections.

The 242nd session of College Park Quarterly Meeting will be hosted by Ben Lomond Quaker Center, May 15-17, 2020. See you then!

Faithfully submitted,

Barbara Babin, Presiding Clerk
Heather Levien, Recording Clerk