

Friday August 23, 2013
Young Friends Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Clerk: Emma Leibman
Assistant Clerk: Emi Inskeep
Recording Clerks: Hannah M. and Hannah B. (Hannah power!)

Assistant Clerk Emi Inskeep reviewed the agenda, and asked for alterations. A few questions and alterations were offered and were accepted. The agenda was approved. One Friend asked for a review of business meeting practices, and Co-Clerk Emma offered that.

1. Trans Policy update

Samara gave a quick overview of the trans policy discussion that has been happening over the past year, including the policy created by ESC and the related events at Annual Sessions. At Sessions Young Friends created an ad-hoc committee drafting a new policy. Samara (representing the ad-hoc committee) had the bullet points of the policy, though not a written policy to offer for approval or alterations in the Young Friends community. The bullet points follow:

- That there be three sleeping spaces – male identified, female identified, and gender neutral.
- That all gender-segregated spaces will be divided by gender identity, including all “intimate” spaces.
- That this be a stage process, getting reviewed every 2 – 3 years. If gender neutral sleeping space works well for the community, it’s proposed that in a few years the community consider whether we should take the next step to full gender-integration in our sleeping arrangements.
- That staff be encouraged to review relevant paperwork and make changes necessary to accommodate the needs of those outside the gender binary

Samara asked Young Friends to focus on feedback and questions for the first two bullet points, asking for clarifying questions first.

Friends asked how the gender-neutral sleeping space would work. Samara gave some background. It would be for those who would not be comfortable sleeping in male or female spaces, and open to others who ally with them. One Friend asked if the committee had considered just having a mixed sleeping area in general. Samara replied that having a mixed sleeping situation is what the committee was thinking about, but that they wanted to make that transition slowly. A few Friends expressed concern and potential discomfort with using bathroom and shower spaces in a mixed setting. As teens growing into their own gender identity and getting used to their own bodies, some feel discomfort with the potential of seeing the other sex’s bodies by accident, particularly in the shower setting. One Friend brought up the fact that Young Friends is a safe community, although we reach out to a bigger community - Perhaps someone would take advantage of this and masquerade as trans. People could also come in from the outside and be dangerous to the

community without this policy. Some Friends offered that the Rule of Three could apply to showering as well, such that people would feel more comfortable.

Clerks tried their sense of the meeting that Friends are specifically concerned with showers, not with sleeping spaces or bathrooms. Friends concurred. The main issue seems to be being seen or seeing.

Clerk Emma noted that as there are not usually showers in our gathering spaces, we could keep considering the showering needs of YFs and approve the other points.

A Friend reminded Friends that this is a sticky issue; We may need to grow into our comfort with this. Another Friend reiterated that while there is a discomfort there is also the issue of someone coming in a taking advantage.

One Friend raised a concern about sexual assault or rape. Other Friends voiced that this particular concern is no more relevant with this topic than with any other.

The Clerk offered that we are in unity with the three bullet points with the exception of showers from “intimate spaces.” Friends agreed.

2. Reports from Committees from this week

-Graduation Committee

Nathan shared that all but one afghan has been finished but will be done soon. Friends expressed gratitude for the Graduation Committee’s work.

-Outreach

A. Amelia and Kyle brought the report from Outreach, which began with an epistle for the community’s approval [attached in the appendix]. Friends asked about the audience – to whom this would be sent. Friends agreed that it would be sent to PYM as well as the larger Quaker community. We agreed to address it “to friends everywhere.” Friends approved the epistle with gratitude for the Outreach committee’s work.

B. Outreach brought these recommendations to the community:

a. Enhance the Young Friends Facebook page by making it a Group rather than a fan-page, such that Young Friends could all post pictures and post on the timeline prominently. Friends expressed enthusiasm about this idea.

b. Disperse the Young Friends gathering schedules more widely, including outside of Quaker circles (for example, at teacher’s conventions or the Peace Fair).

One Friend asked if the purpose was getting non-Quakers or getting more Quakers to attend, expressing a concern that the distinctiveness of Young Friends might be lost. Another Friend attending Outreach shared that we would do this in a very intentional way, seeking out those who would be interested in our distinctive community.

c. Outreach recommended a new logo – it’s been the same for a long time!

Some Friends expressed that the logo could go more places – bumper stickers, mugs, etc. Hannah M. expressed that there is a staff person in charge of communications who would have thoughts and need to approve the logo. Friends asked Hannah M. to reach out to that staff member pre-emptively. One Friend raised that the current logo promotes the gender binary, and therefore doesn't feel accepting, so a new one would be good.

C. Ben reported for the Program Committee, which brought proposals for upcoming gathering themes and workshops that could be part of them:

Program Committee Proposals:

1. Halloween gathering theme: sustainability
 - a. Workshop ideas:
 - i. Practical Practices
 - ii. Lobbying for sustainability
 - iii. Volunteering at a farm
 - b. Other ideas:
 - i. Organic, local, sustainably raised meals
 - ii. An awesome costume dance!
2. Christmas gathering theme: dualities (and balance)
 - a. Workshop ideas:
 - i. Humor vs. fear
 - ii. Good vs. evil
 - iii. Selfishness vs. selflessness
3. February gathering theme: identity
 - a. Workshop ideas:
 - i. Gender identity
 - ii. Racial identity
 - iii. Religious identity
 - b. Other ideas
 - i. Have the whole gathering be gender neutral? Approval from higher ups at PYM would be required.

Emma offered that the dualities theme also included balance between the two sides of opposites. Emi offered a workshop idea for that gathering, based on the “why are things creepy?” youtube video about ambiguity, threatening and not. Many Friends expressed great enthusiasm for this idea. Lili offered pumpkin carving towards creating pumpkin pie / pumpkin seeds out of the innards. Another Friend brought up that “organic” isn't necessarily sustainable – perhaps shift the focus from “organic” food to tracking what we eat and where it comes from. Friends offered enthusiasm for these idea.

The minutes were read back and received approval.

D. Nurturing Committee

Samara reported for Nurturing Committee. Nurturing Committee attended to two major items this week, the first of which was discernment of permanent nurturers. The following people were discerned as permanent nurturers and accepted their nominations:

Nathan Mullen, Jane Bryer, Bob McLaughlin, Sebastian DiMino, and Hannah Blossom.

These Friends were enthusiastically approved by the community.

The second major item involved how Nurturing Committee is seen in the community. Nurturing Committee wants to write a minute to clarify the role of PermaNurts and Clerks, and address how Nurturing Committee handles worship sharing. Samara invited feedback from the community about these items through writing.

We took an extended break for snacks and cleaning up last night's sweat lodge with George, who had a time constraint.

3. Reviewing Committee Structure / Service Block

Clerk Emi asked, how did the committee structure work this week?

One Friend shared that it worked well in terms of productivity, but that time could also be used for other things - workshops and free time. A Friend suggested that the committee meetings be shorter. Perhaps the committees could be slightly more laid back – a more open structure such that people can go to different committees from one day to the next. Another Friend expressed that presenting during business meeting was helpful. Meeting three separate times was also helpful, allowing Friends to build on each previous day. Some committees require more consistency in terms of participants (like Outreach), others wouldn't need that (like Graduation/Afghans).

Clerk Emi asked, is this something we should continue in the future? And if so, shall we continue this structure at Onas or at weekend gatherings too?

Friends expressed support for continuing to have committees meet. This structure was intended to take some of the weight off of Clerks, and it has accomplished this! It allows more of the deciding power about what is happening in the community to lie with a wider range of Young Friends, which Friends appreciate. The service to Onas was beneficial for several reasons – particularly that it was service to the place where we were staying and the people to whom we have a connection, rather than a random organization that we know nothing about (like we've done at the March gathering).

Friends expressed some concern about the committee-structure taking place at weekend gatherings, offering that perhaps we could have committee meetings at Onas and Christmas and another in the spring. A Friend offered that committees

could have shorter check ins at every gathering (for instance, during a meal) and have longer service chunks during the three gatherings (mentioned above).

The minutes were read back to the meeting and were approved.

5. Bedtime

Clerk Emi handed the floor over to Max who asked the community:

Are we as a group willing to let people who want to go to bed at a time later than 11pm do so?

One Friend expressed that those who want to stay up would have to wake up at the same time as everyone else. Another raised that this is a similar issue to late night – does people coming back disturb the people choosing to sleep? Part of the reason Late Night works is that everyone comes back together, so if sleepers are disturbed, it's only once. Some Friends expressed that they would like those who want to stay up to be able to do so, offering several practical solutions (sleeping closer to the door, having cabins farther away, etc.). Whatever the bedtime is, we will still have to respect the facility's quiet time. Many Friends expressed that this could well work at Onas. One Friend noted that this is contingent upon FAP(s) being willing to be present.

Clerk Emi asked Max to expand on his proposal, and its inspiration from FGC. Max explained how this works at FGC, and offered a further detailed proposal, that at every gathering there be two Late Nights (which at weekend gatherings would mean an extended bedtime).

One Friend offered that the November gathering has special possibilities for this. This could be something that we decide about based on the practicalities of space at each gathering. One Friend offered that people could take their sleeping stuff with them to wherever they are hanging out. Those who stay up late could go to bed later, offering those who go to bed early the chance to actually fall asleep before others re-enter the room. One Friend raised a concern that Friends wouldn't be able to function well when they returned home – in MSF some people's parents didn't allow them to return because of their impaired function due to sleep loss, and similar issues might impact the Young Friends community. One Friend offered that learning to make decisions about waking up and going to bed is part of growing up, which is important for high schoolers' development. Another Friend offered that we would have to be considerate about when Late Nights are happening based on the next days' schedule. One Friend raised the concern that when people don't get enough sleep, they become emotionally volatile, and that gets harmful to the community.

Clerk Emi offered that we give this a try on a gathering-by-gathering basis, starting at Lancaster Monthly Meeting, pending Young Friends' interest and FAPs' willingness. Friends agreed. We will discern about this on Friday night at Lancaster.

6. Announcement – Clerks in the community

Emi announced that there has been a lot of concern over Clerk's wellbeing at this gathering. They appreciate that greatly, and, simultaneously, Clerks signed up for this! They ask that Friends be willing to share their concerns and trust Clerks to do their self-care.

7. Clerk Emma spoke about the two items we were laying over: More about Clerk roles, and FAP roles and relationships in the Young Friends community.

A friend asked about relationships between FAPs and YFs outside of gatherings. Clerk said that young friends can take the impetus to establish relationships with FAPs outside of gatherings, in person or on Facebook. A friend asked who will be nurturing the clerks. Clerks clarified that it is the (yet to be discerned) adult Clerk would attend to that. Clerk expressed that the clerks would need a FAP they feel comfortable going to as Adult Clerk.

We closed with a moment of worship and appreciation for the Clerks and the attention of Young Friends throughout the many many hours of Business!

Appendix

Young Friends Camp Onas Epistle

To friends everywhere:

This year's Camp Onas YF Gathering was a huge success and tons of fun!

We had visits from YF alums and were reunited with friends not seen since our last gathering. We also met friends new to the Young Friends community. We enjoyed the experience together.

Throughout the week we actively participated in various workshops, formed new committees to attend to the evolving needs of YF business, and played many games. These all heightened our sense of a shared bond. Our days began with communal group worship, and concluded with more personal worship sharing, with queries proposed by our fellow Young Friends. We worked together as an intentional community, generating our program, reaching out to those among us that needed a helping hand, comforting those that needed comforting, and creating a space where we can all feel safe and empowered.

This has been an exceptionally memorable gathering. We wonder what memories we will create at our next gathering, and how wonderful that gathering would be if you would join us and bring your ideas too.

In Friendship,

The Young Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting YF Program