

South Eastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

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EPISTLES FROM YEARLY MEETING ANNUAL SESSIONS 2013

To Friends everywhere,

Greetings from Southeastern Yearly Meeting, together at the Life Enrichment Center in Fruitland Park, Florida for our 49th annual Gathering March 27th to 31st, 2013. We wound our way from all parts of Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and Nicaragua to arrive Wednesday afternoon with warm hearts and cold noses, braving the near arctic 50 degree temperature of this early spring. Our theme for the Gathering was Friends Leading: Climate Change – A Crisis of Spirit, led by Roy H. Taylor III. Roy is a member of the Atlanta Friends meeting and rising clerk of Quaker Earthcare Witness. The first night we were introduced to Green Building for Homes and Meeting House, learning that the first and most important investment we can make in the greening of our dwellings is a case of caulk to seal our buildings inside and out. Our journey continued on Friday when we learned how to introduce transition to our cities and towns with community garden projects, one step at time.

During our meeting for worship with a concern for business, we spent time in discernment on our charitable donations and how best to offer resources to the diverse list of groups that speak to our passions.

Each day as we pondered the bigger questions, we were offered an array of workshops; the challenge was to choose. There was writing, drawing, laughing and chanting. We shared Quakerism basics, First Day School challenges, translating worship into action with our business meetings, and examining how Quakers can become enablers. There were reports from the world conference in Kenya and on the work being done by FCNL, FGC and AFSC. Each workshop session offered at least one, usually two, workshops on our relationship to the earth and our responsibility to be good stewards, remembering the earth is a gift to be shared. And what would a gathering be without a plethora of committee meetings?

Our Young Adult Quakers returned this year to renew bonds and bless us with their energy. Offering service, comfort and love, they set up a spot in the front of the auditorium to wash feet on Thursday.

This year we were 168 in all, 15 coming for the first time.

The Healing Center offered peace and quiet with Reiki and tea.

The Faith and No-Practice Band once again brought us an intergenerational dance. With the help of our seasoned dance caller, we learned the steps to dance the night away.

Southeastern Yearly meeting announces to the wider Quaker world that our own Faith and Practice, developed over a period of twenty-three years, is finished and will be available in book form by the end of April 2013. The e-book version will be available for Kindle or Nook from amazon.com and Barnes and Noble.com. We believe it will be the first electronic version of Faith and Practice in the United States.

The Yearly Meeting continues its support of ProNica, the project we share with indigenous self-help groups in Nicaragua. ProNica's new staff shared the inspiration and joy they feel as they journey with our Nicaraguan project partners who willingly make personal sacrifices to continue the work even as they face diminished financial resources.

Saturday brought great joy as our consciousness was raised by a dramatic production by our youth explaining the plight of the Immokalee farm workers and the campaign to bring fair wage tomatoes to Publix and other local supermarkets. They will be taking their concern to the Friends General Conference Gathering this summer and our spirit and support goes with them.

On Saturday night, Roy Taylor led our gathering in a journey to consider how we might become whole in body, mind, spirit and planet. Using our Quaker Testimonies, he called us to action. We learned we need to be leaders who plant seeds of discomfort, to initiate beneficial change in our care of the planet. Knowing the good we are capable of, we are asked, "How can we keep from singing?"

As the five days draw to a close we feel a shift in the air as the warmth of a Florida spring creeps in and we begin our fiftieth year. Please join us next spring in Florida as when we consider the place of Quakerism and our testimonies in the 21st century.

March 31, 2013

Phoebe Andersen, Clerk
Southeastern Yearly Meeting

JUNIOR YEARLY MEETING EPISTLES

To Friends Everywhere,

We are the Southeastern Yearly Meeting Juniors and Teens. This year we began on Wednesday with games of Bananagrams to reunite with old friends and get to know new ones. The next day we worked on our board about our journey and involvement in the Fair Food Campaign. We also began working on a skit about the Fair Food Campaign that we would present to our Yearly Business Meeting on Saturday. In the afternoon, we played Settlers of Catan with the Walton lecturer, Roy Taylor, to learn about the environment. We were also able to ask him questions about helping the environment. To end our afternoon, we learned a square dance with Gary Arthur. On Friday, we did worship sharing in the morning and continued to work on our skit. After lunch, we headed to Kelly Springs for tubing. This was really fun except for when a camera was lost and we had to wade through algae and muck to find it, which we eventually did. In the evening, we participated in the Intergenerational dance and performed the square dance we had learned the day before. Saturday began with our presentation to the Southeastern Yearly Meeting Business Meeting to gain a minute of support for our involvement in the Fair Food Campaign which will be helpful this summer when we go to the Friends General Conference gathering with this issue. We also facilitated the Easter egg hunt for younger Friends and played intergenerational kickball in the afternoon. We watched the documentary "Happy" in the evening which was very interesting and informative. Looking back at this gathering, we were very successful and enjoyed our time together greatly. Thank you to all of those who put in time and money to make this a great year for us.

Sincerely, **The SEYM Juniors and Teens**

Kate Sundberg
Lis Sundberg
Maddi Glynn
Vincent Cosomano
Jocelyn Benton
Aurelio Anderso

Dear Quaker Friends,

We are members of the SEYM youth program. This year it was very exciting. We learned about the environment. Every class was started with worship sharing about our topic, the environment. Also, the activities were about the environment. Here are some examples: The first environmental activity was a nature walk. Then we learned a song about nature. The next day more people came. We did more songs; everyone learned them this time. Also we did animal yoga, and seed art, and we sat in a big green stretchy thing. We did things out of the children's group too. We did dancing, Lord of the Rings Monopoly, a game called Eagles' Nest, and we did the hedge maze (it was really a labyrinth). Once we even saw an alligator in the lake. We did a parachute game and we made stars. Our favorite drink was a blue raspberry drink; it tasted like a blue ring pop.

Sincerely,
Young Friends Elementary Group