

To Friends of North Pacific Yearly Meeting

Last year I reported that Coordinating Committee was seeking better understanding of how “Coordinating” differed from “Steering”. I’m pleased to report the Coordinating Committee embraced coordinating this year. In fact at the end of the April Meeting a member approached me and said, “ I really enjoyed this meeting, now I understand the value of coordinating”. Not something we hear very often following 8 hours of listening to reports, sharing the states of our Meetings or struggling to find ways of overcoming perceived or real barriers to making North Pacific Yearly Meeting a resource for our Meeting Groups.

The Fall began with us taking up ideas and recommendations that came to us through Ad Hoc Committees that reported to Annual Session 2014.

We reviewed the proposals offered by the Family Affordability Ad Hoc Committee.

- The first proposal was Annual Session have one less Plenary Session for business. Following considerable discussion Coordinating Committee discerned that this request was inappropriate. They felt that the structuring of the AS Plenary Sessions was the job of the Presiding Clerk not a specific “policy”. During discussion we were reminded that no one is forced to attend any particular Plenary, that Friends needed to be reminded that business can be powerful worship and refreshing, that the spiritual level rises as we come to a sense of unity.
- Proposal two relating to encouraging Meetings to consider financially supporting children and sponsoring their Jr. Friends was approved.
- Proposal three offered the suggestion that Meetings with no children consider contributing to the Yearly Meeting for the financial support of children. Coordinating Committee approved that message.
- Coordinating Committee recognized concern had been expressed regarding inadequate allowance of time for fellowship and family activities. It expressed appreciation to the ASPC for responding to that concern. The Ad Hoc Family Affordability Ad Hoc Committee was laid down with appreciation for its work.

Annual Session approved the Ad Hoc Structure Committee’s report and recommendations last year. Part of the minute of decision approved at Annual Session said: “Coordinating Committee will find an appropriate way to connect with those Meetings that are not able to name a member.”

- At our November 2014 meeting we counted 10 Meetings who had not sent members
- Discussion of what we could do to foster connection with those meetings revealed that we needed first to confirm that no member was present because of the inability or unwillingness to nominate one. The CC clerk agreed to contact those 10 meetings to discern each of their situations
- A number of individual CC members volunteered to be correspondents to those Meetings who self identified as unable or unwilling to send a member
- I’m pleased to report that this outreach resulted in 4 new members at our Spring Meeting and the connection of 6 current CC members to individuals in the remaining 6 Meetings for personal contact throughout the year.

The Ad Hoc Committee for NPYM Communications provided us with a dizzying array of ideas and suggestions to consider. Following considerable discussion including many ideas and suggestions the Committee agreed on the following actions:

- The NPYM discipline Committee is asked to consider guidelines for electronic communications as part of the revised Faith & Practice. That task was completed and is an appendix that is available for review and consideration by Meeting Groups
- That Nancy McLaughlan, a former editor of *Friend Bulletin* be consulted about the time necessary to collect, read and summarize articles from all Meeting Newsletters available in NPYM. She did similar work as part of her editor's position. The consultation happened, however the results were inclusive and have not yet been followed up on.
- That each Coordinating Committee member compiles items of interest from their Meeting's newsletters and any Meetings under their care. Those reports are to be e-mailed to the CC clerk in advance of the April CC meeting and posted on the NPYM website. This initiative failed on 2 counts: No Members remembered to take the action and the Clerk neglected to remind Members to take action prior to the April Meeting.
- The NPYM Secretary was asked to make sure that CC Members are copied on all Meeting correspondence along with identified Meeting contact people. That action was completed.

At every Coordinating Committee meeting there is an opportunity for the 11 standing committees of the Yearly Meeting to report on their work, initiatives, health, joys and challenges. It would be poor use of our plenary time to give a full accounting of the work of all the standing committees. Let me briefly call out some of the highlights of the work reported to Coordinating committee over the last year.

- The NPYM Committee on the Discipline has completed drafts of several chapters of the Transitional Faith and Practice. Some are still out for responses from Meeting Groups. They are hopeful that the new document might be published by Spring of 2017.
- A newly revived Information and Technology Committee is working to evaluate the two databases NPYM uses. One to accomplish AS registration and another to track who comprises our North Pacific Yearly Meeting so that a directory can be published and targeted mailings might be sent.
- Ministry and Oversight Committee continues work to help bring clarity to clerks of Meeting M&O committees on topics of interest through group conference calls. In this last year topics have been *Quaker Process* and *Quaker Values and Communication in the Electronic Age*.
- Outreach and Visitation Committee has revised an older NPYM publication called *Visitors and the Visited* and posted it on the NPYM website. They also started critical thinking work on the possibility of a visitation program modeled somewhat along the lines of the old *Brinton Visitor Program* co sponsored by NPYM, PYM and IMYM. However attempts to find Friends to serve on an Ad Hoc Committee to help draft the planning aspects of the program have not gotten a good response. The outcome of this idea is currently uncertain. The committee also has reported poor representation at their conference call meetings.
- Peace and Social Concerns Committee updated the resource directory showing issues that each Meeting Group was concerned with including contact information for other Friends wishing to network or get more information. The committee also expressed difficulty in self-expanding to meet a need for more participation.
- Youth Committee is pleased with the work of our new Children's Program Coordinator. Both Jay Thatcher's work at Annual Session last year and his travels around the NPYM region, sometimes in partnership with Katherine Spinner, have been very fruitful in

recruiting interest in the AS Children's program and sharing ideas for local children's program ideas.

- Nominating Committee had a difficult year. Resignations from existing positions, some technology difficulties and lack of participation from members on Nominating Committee due to various factors led to frustration that you will hear more about in their report to Annual Session later. CC appointed a Pre-Nominating Committee to bring for approval at Annual Session the names of Friends to serve on Nominating Committee.

Friends, that's the end of formal reporting. There is, however, something more that I'd like to share. I don't really know the best way to share it; the cursor has been blinking at the bottom of the page for the last 45 minutes, my head's working but the words aren't appearing on the page. Maybe just a stream of consciousness would serve...

Meetings report during our worship sharing time at Coordinating Committee that many are experimenting with various forms of co-clerkship. Sometimes that means dividing the duties, sometimes dividing the times for clerking work. Some Meetings also report dropping committees or combining the work of several committees into one. The most common reason expressed for this is "we just don't have enough people". This occurs even in Meetings who report new people joining the Meeting.

I recently spoke with a person who had served previously on Nominating Committee. She said, "you know during the time I was serving it took us asking approximately 10 people for every open position before we got a 'maybe' or a 'yes'. I just counted 98 positions on the grid that Nominating Committee is responsible for. At 10 asks per position that means that Nominating Committee has to ask 980 people to fill the slate. Thank goodness for overlapping terms I guess. But, what else does that say about us? Are we averse to serving or are we top heavy with positions? Nominating committees at the meeting level and the Quarterly Meeting level express the same frustration about finding people willing to accept responsibility for open positions.

As I mentioned earlier two of our NPYM standing committees have desired to expand themselves for general committee work or for specific short-term projects. Each has found little response to their request.

Looking over lists of folks who have taken on roles in planning Annual Session, serving as representatives to organizations, serving on standing committees or clerking roles for NPYM one begins to see a lot of recycling of the same people. Why, when we look at those who willingly take on clerking or committee roles in our Meeting Groups, Quarterly Meeting and Yearly Meeting are there so many familiar faces?

Originally I thought to try to name this observation but I quickly realized that naming something means that one can identify what it is, point to a root cause or a reason for its existence. I only know what it feels like not the reason or reasons it seems to exist.

So I end with two queries we might consider:

What are the barriers that prevent or inhibit you from participating in the organizational aspects of your faith community?

How has participation in the organizational aspects of your faith community informed your spiritual life?