

# ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER



Atlanta Meeting of the Religious  
Society of Friends (Quakers)  
All are welcome

Meeting for Worship  
Each First Day (Sunday)  
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.  
701 W. Howard Ave.

## March 2017

### Young Friends Program Coordinator 2016-17 Report to Atlanta Friends Meeting Prepared by Aaron Ruscetta

---

*At the request of the AFM clerk, this formal report to the Meeting for Business has been prepared as an opportunity to share details of my continuing work as the AFM Young Friends Program Coordinator. It covers activities with the Young Friends of both AFM and SAYMA in my sixth year of service to this position. Expanding on need based reporting through the Young Friends Support Committee, future YFPC reports to AFM business meeting can be expected on a semi-annual basis to address the intention of providing broader and more consistent communications, interaction and oversight.*

Atlanta Friends Meeting continues to enjoy a large group of Young Friends who actively participate in our First Day classes and SAYMA's Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) program. While I remain involved with AFM Religious Ed as a frequent adult presence or occasional substitute teacher for our High School first day classes, the majority of my attention is focused on support for the regional SAYF activities and the attendant responsibilities outlined in the YFPC job description, including:

- Friendly Adult Nurturer (FAN) attending all nine retreat weekends, inclusive of SAYF at SAYMA and the semi-annual (August / February) Nurturing and Steering Committees business retreats. Duties encompass maintaining contact lists and communications for active AFM Young Friends and their families, coordinating retreat attendance & adult volunteers, securing vehicles & drivers for away retreats, and planning oversight & retreat management as Lead FAN for the two retreats hosted by AFM each year.
- Service as Lead FAN for SAYF at SAYMA, 2016, and as a member of the planning committee for the 2017 SAYMA gathering.
- Active SAYF Steering Committee member through business meetings and email communications.
- SAYF web site manager for AwesomeSAYFers.org, handling document & notice updates and authoring the monthly retreat synopsis reports (compiled as a report addendum here).

## QUERY

Are your meetings for church affairs held in a spirit of worship and in dependence on the guidance of God? Remember that we do not seek a majority decision nor even consensus.

As we wait patiently for divine guidance our experience is that the right way will open and we shall be led into unity.

· Quaker faith & practice (5th Ed.) BYM  
<http://qfp.quaker.org.uk/chapter/1/>

· The Sense of the Meeting:  
<http://ow.ly/ckLd309fZLe>

- Involved AFM Admin Committee member contributing expertise in computer & media equipment concerns and continuing service as web manager for the AFM website <<http://Atlanta.Quaker.org>>
- Liaison for child care safety concerns for AFM, Religious Ed and SAYF, assisting with procedures and documentation for childcare worker background checks, reference screenings and approvals.

Our SAYF retreat and High School First Day participation has remained strong despite a 2016 graduating class of 22 Young Adults, 12 of them from Atlanta, with three of those now attending Earlham college together. Details of activities enjoyed by our SAYFers over the past year, with noted attendance numbers, are provided here as an addendum. More personal perspectives of the SAYF community can be found in our Worship Journals, publicly archived in the Epistles section of the SAYF website.

Over the past year, the standing FAN community and teen leaders of the SAYF Nurturing Committee supported an average of 35 Young Friends from eight participating monthly meetings at our retreats. The YFPC and SAYF programs continue to operate comfortably within their allotted budgets, though securing needed parent and adult volunteer involvement continues to be a challenge for both the YFPC job and the SAYF program as a whole. Other institutional concerns like existing volunteer attrition, accountable reporting and procedural drift have also come to the forefront recently, but these issues are in process of being addressed by the SAYF Steering Committee over the coming year (as noted in the addendum synopsis of our February NCSC Business Meeting retreat).

In all cases, we strongly encourage everyone with any interest in policies, participation, involvement, or support regarding the SAYF program to visit our website, <<http://AwesomeSAYFers.org>>.

### **Report Addendum: 2016 SAYF Retreats**

MARCH @ Celo AMS:: 35 young Friends (15 Atlanta)

- The Celo/AMS retreat was another outdoorsy adventure with some major hiking. Also some cool fun for those that made it to the Physics Playground. Thanks to Mari and Celo planners for a packed schedule that still left room for relaxing and appreciating the rural beauty of the area. Thanks also to Lisa Rose for the Earthcare presentation that inspired the theme and her support for our upcoming Atlanta retreat.

APRIL @ Atlanta Friends Meeting:: 37 young Friends (18 Atlanta)

- April's Earthcare retreat in Atlanta saw SAYFers learning more about ways to protect our environment on the local level with guest Lisa Rose, plus digging a lot of invasive plants from the AFM grounds and unearthing some great dance moves at the first ever SAYF Prom. Special thanks to the FANs who helped cover all the adult duties with a skeleton crew.

JUNE SAYMA @ Warren Wilson College:: 44 young Friends (17 Atlanta) // 22 graduates (12 Atlanta)

- SAYF at SAYMA, as always, was a retreat full of joy and sadness. So many graduates to appreciate, and never enough hugs or journal pages to tell them how much they will be missed. The consoling joy is our knowledge that the communities they are venturing into, both large and small, will be made much richer for their presence and the spirit of the SAYF community that they carry with them.

AUGUST NCSC @ West Knoxville:: 14 young Friends (3 Atlanta)

- Our Nurturing and Steering committees business retreat in Knoxville was very chill and only a little bit rainy. The new Nurturer group is very self assured and seems to be growing into their responsibilities comfortably. After all the graduations in the spring our group seemed small, but the hearts and compassion remain large. We encourage all of our experienced SAYFers to consider sustaining service to the community as a Nurturer, and the Nurturing committee worked on clarifying the requirements and process this retreat to make that easier. They also took on the challenge of outreach to their local

communities to invite more parent, FAD and FAN involvement, a need that the Steering committee adults are feeling strongly.

SEPTEMBER @ Charlotte Friends Meeting (via Atlanta planning):: 32 young Friends (10 Atlanta)

- Judging from the worship journals now posted on our epistles page, our first ever SAYF retreat in Charlotte, NC seems to have achieved a consensus of appreciative approval from all who attended. It was a grand weekend of "Finding Your Spirit in the Elements", and the Atlanta planners did a marvelous job of seeing that Air, Fire, Earth, and Water were all well represented. Huge thanks go to Jennifer Murdock for all her work in arranging use of the beautiful Charlotte meeting house and opening her home association facilities to us for an amazing afternoon of lake and pool side activities. The Charlotte Friends and SAYFers really made this one an exceptional retreat.

OCTOBER @ Berea:: 26 young Friends (6 Atlanta)

- Our unplugged retreat in Berea was a wonderful haven from which to consider the communications technology that seems to increasingly both invade and enhance our work and social lives. The thoughtful Saturday workshop discussions of the issues demonstrated that, like most every aspect of modern living, it's a matter of seeking a balance, and the hiking, craft and fireside story activities nicely balanced out the weekend with free time tech usage. Thanks go to Jonathan, Beth, and the local planners for a relaxing, inspired and inspiring weekend.

NOVEMBER @ Asheville (via Nashville planning):: 35 young Friends (11 Atlanta)

- Our November Asheville retreat included some cool weather, but the theme of inclusion kept the community warm and cozy throughout our group indoor activities and casual outdoor wanderings. The unity was a refreshing and healing contrast to the divisive trends of current events in our nation. Appreciation goes out to Nashville Nurturers and FANs for their planning, and to the Asheville meeting Friends for their support.

### 2017 SAYF Retreats

JANUARY @ AFM:: 40 young Friends (17 Atlanta with 6 local newbies, 5 of them from the Burundi community)

- Our January Atlanta retreat was cooking! (Literally!) Lots of considerations of Kitchen Counterculture, with highlights of diverse dishes meal making and discussions of Vegan Living with Jane Lay, plus a "Hunger 101" food security workshop led by Brittney Palmer for the Atlanta Community Food Bank. Our wider community dinner invitation brought visits by several of our recently graduated SAYFers who also stayed around for the evening entertainment activities.

FEBRUARY NCSC @ Swannanoa:: 15 young Friends (4 Atlanta)

- Our February NCSC business retreat had a packed agenda but a lot of productive work came out of the long hours. Nurturers addressed new ways to focus on welcoming and inclusion, set a deadline for finalizing their most recent guideline revisions and selected a new co-clerk for the coming year. The Steering Committee was in session for about 10 hours on Saturday forming a plan and schedule for updating our FAN and Retreat planning handbooks to better reflect current practices, establishing new documentation access practices, assembling an ad-hoc committee to address Steering nomination concerns, discussing ways to improve communications and reporting with SAYMA, and examining our recruiting, background check and training procedures for Friendly Adult Nurturers, all alongside dealing with the regular concerns of budget review and setting the coming year's retreat schedule. Special thanks go to our new SAYF Admin Assistant, Autumn Woodward, for her valuable input and attentively detailed minuting.

## **Lives and Callings: the Spiritual Journey – March 5<sup>th</sup>**

---

Building on NPR's Story Corps and This I Believe, the Atlanta Meeting began our own version of these programs in 2007. On the first Sunday of each month, we listen to how one Friend in our meeting answers questions of God's leadings as well as questions about what brings them to this meeting, what led them to become a member or why not, and what they believe now.

If you are new to our meeting, considering membership or a long time attender or member who enjoys hearing a story, you are invited to come to the meeting library at 9 am, on the first Sunday in each month to hear these stories. You are also invited to tell your story and can call Mary Ann Downey at [678-938-8030](tel:678-938-8030) to volunteer or to get more information. Come hear these Friends: Bill Hooson on March 5<sup>th</sup> and Lissa Place on April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## **Women's History Month Celebration – March 18<sup>th</sup>**

---

AFM will celebrate Women's History Month/International Women's Day on Saturday March 18 at 5:30 p.m. at the Meeting House. We'll gather for dinner (provided) at 5:30 p.m. followed by panel, Q & A and small group discussions. We hope to share our leadings and unite for action on behalf of women here in the US and around the world. Panelists will be:

- Shahina Lakhana—*the Feminine Divine: Healing Ourselves, our Country and the World*
- Sarah Walton—*Women in the Justice System*
- Cheryl Cowherd—*Women of Courage*
- Julia Ewen—*Women's Civil Rights/Human Rights: the Way Forward*

Childcare will be available (RSVP to Bert Skellie).

## **Get Involved in Atlanta Friends Meeting**

---

The Nominating Committee matches the skills of Meeting members and attenders with the work of Meeting committees. If you are new to Atlanta Friends Meeting or just want to get more involved, working on a committee is an excellent way to apply your talents and get to know others. Over a dozen committees carry out our spiritual, community, caring and social action work.

Some examples include Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting, Social Concerns Committee, Care and Counsel Committee, and Gathered Meeting Retreat Committee.

Our Meeting has few paid positions, so we mostly rely on volunteers. We are especially interested in people with IT knowledge and abilities. However, even if you don't have talents in a specialized area, your willingness to help is the most important factor. Childcare is offered on the 2nd Sunday of each month after Meeting for Worship, the time many committees meet.

For more information contact one of the members of the Nominating Committee:

Ron Nuse ([ronnuse@gmail.com](mailto:ronnuse@gmail.com))

Waman French ([waman.french@friendsschoolatlanta.org](mailto:waman.french@friendsschoolatlanta.org))

Carolyn Coburn-Allen, ([cccoburn55@gmail.com](mailto:cccoburn55@gmail.com))

Elizabeth Lamb ([gelds@comcast.net](mailto:gelds@comcast.net)),

## **Gathered Meeting Retreat – May 5-7<sup>th</sup>**

---

Save the date for the Gathered Meeting Retreat, from Friday May 5<sup>th</sup> to Sunday May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the Charlie Elliot Conference Center.

## Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business – February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017

### Recorded pending approval

---

**Attendance:** Mike Aland, Juan Allende, Michael Allison, Paul Baker, Don Bender, Rebecca Burley, Mary Ann Downey, Julia Ewen, Sally Ferguson, Susan Firestone, David Foster, Waman French, Clive Gordon, Claire Hannapel, Bill Holland, Mary Jahntz, Elizabeth Lamb, Lynn Leuszler, Georgia Lord, Emmy Mathis, Allison Mawle, Karen terHorst Morris, Ronald Nuse, Aaron Ruscetta, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Brittney Thornbury, Jim Tolmach, Myrna Trapp, Lissa Place (Assistant Clerk), Bethany Morrison (Recording Clerk) (31 Friends).

**Query:** Sally Ferguson presented the query: Do we observe simplicity and honesty in our manner of living? Are we careful to live within the bounds of our circumstances, punctual in keeping promises, prompt in the payment of debts, and just in all our dealings? Do we choose those activities which will strengthen our physical, mental, and spiritual life; and do we avoid those harmful to ourselves and others?

### Discernments

**Naming Committee:** On behalf of the Naming Committee, Ron Nuse brought forth the following names for approval:

- **Minute 2-19-2017-01:** *Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Brittney Thornbury and Jonas Kramer-Dickie as new members of the Nominating Committee, and Carolyn Coburn Allen as a returning member of Nominating Committee.*

**Gift to Stone Mountain Evangelical Church:** Susan Firestone reported the results of her conversation with the leadership of the Stone Mountain Evangelical Friends Church about their needs as the meeting considers an in-kind gift to the Stone Mountain Church from the 2016 budget surplus. She shared a detailed list with prices for First Day School materials and musical instruments, which totaled to \$2997.01. She reported that the AFM ad-hoc committee had consulted with the finance committee and the clerk and found persuasive reasons for giving all the needed items.

Given strong concerns regarding the Evangelical Friends position on GLBTQ issues, the meeting determined that we are not clear to move forward with this gift. The Assistant Clerk (Lissa Place) has appointed an ad hoc committee charged to consider the following questions: should an in-kind gift be made to the Stone Mountain Evangelical Friends Church? Should the gift include a statement from our meeting and, if so, what should it say? The following Friends joined the ad hoc committee: David Foster, Elizabeth Lamb, Waman French, Clive Gordon, Emmy Mathis, Susan Firestone, Don Bender and Georgia Lord, who will serve as the committee's clerk. The committee will report their status at the March Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

**State of the Meeting Report:** On behalf of this ad hoc committee, Claire Hannapel read a revised draft of the State of the Meeting Report for 2017 and submitted it along with an addendum containing Committee Summaries for the year:

- **Minute 2-19-2017-02:** *Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the 2016 State of the Meeting report. [Editor's note: a draft of the report is published in the February 2017 AFM newsletter]*

**SAYMA:** The AFM representative to SAYMA Mary Janhtz brought forward a minute, which the meeting approved, in support of Friends General Conference decisions to implement institutional reforms and an assessment of the organization to address important concerns of Friends of Color:

- **Minute 2-19-2017-03:** *Atlanta Friends Meeting is actively engaged in anti-racism work in our communities and within the Religious Society of Friends. We are gladdened by news that the issues of safety and inclusion raised by Friends of Color are in the process of being addressed by FGC and have led to the deeper work of examining the organization to uncover institutional racism. We offer our wholehearted support of FGC's efforts to address the issues experienced by Friends of Color and the work to eradicate institutional racism within FGC and the Religious Society of Friends.*

**Ministry and Worship Committee:** On behalf of Ministry and Worship, Sally Ferguson brought forward the revised Updated Marriage/Joining Guidelines that were originally approved Eighth Month, 2011. The revisions primarily reflect clarifications based on feedback from couples and Friends who served on marriage committees, along with minor revisions of wording, formatting, and typographical errors:

- **Minute 2-19-2017-04:** *Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the revised Atlanta Friends Meeting Marriage/Joining Guidelines.*

### Reports:

**Nominating Committee:** On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Ron Nuse brought forward Cal Gough to extend his service as Clerk of the Library Committee for one year. His name will be brought forward next month for approval.

**Ministry and Worship Committee:** On behalf of Ministry and Worship, Sally Ferguson announced a Memorial Meeting for Harry Lefever on March 11, 2017.

**Young Friends Report:** Aaron Ruscetta, Young Friends Program Coordinator, reported on the activities of the Atlanta Friends Meeting Young Friends Program in 2016-2017. The following is a summary of the complete report, which he read to the meeting:

Through AFM support for the Southern Appalachian Young Friends program (SAYF), our meeting's own Young Friends Program continued to thrive in 2016 as an invaluable spiritual community for Atlanta teens, both as independent attenders and members of attending families. We were blessed with a group of more than 25 active Young Friends who regularly participated in our High School First Day classes and monthly SAYF retreat weekends, many of whom also served as Nurturing Committee leaders within SAYF. We saw 12 of our Atlanta teens graduate at SAYMA in June, three of whom are now attending Earlham college together, serving as evidence of the Quaker values and enduring friendships that our Young Friends programs foster.

### **Minutes of January 2017:**

- **Minute 2-19-2017-05:** *The Minutes of the January 2017 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business were approved with the following addition to the Finance Committee's report on the 2016 budget surplus: "Several friends reminded us of concerns regarding our providing material support to a congregation whose Yearly Meeting's Faith and Practice does not welcome our GLBTQ members."*

Meeting closed with Silent Worship.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bethany Morrison, Recording Clerk  
Lissa Place, Assistant Clerk



### Please Hold in The Light:

Our leaders  
Our nation's immigrants and refugees

*Those wishing to have requests for Holding included in this monthly newsletter may give the names to a member of Care & Counsel.*



### Atlanta Friends Meeting Contacts

Clerk of the Meeting: Betsy Eggers, [afmclerk1@gmail.com](mailto:afmclerk1@gmail.com)  
 Office Coordinator: Jonah McDonald, [atlantaquakers@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaquakers@gmail.com)  
 Treasurer: Lynn Leuszler, [afmtreasurer1@gmail.com](mailto:afmtreasurer1@gmail.com)  
 Ministry & Worship: Sally Ferguson, [sallyferguson@earthlink.net](mailto:sallyferguson@earthlink.net)  
 Finance: Paul Mangelsdorf, 770-677-4280  
 Social Concerns: Chris Kohler, [chriskohler@mailc.net](mailto:chriskohler@mailc.net)  
 Administration: Steve Collins, [shcollins75@gmail.com](mailto:shcollins75@gmail.com)  
 Care & Counsel: Clive Gordon, [afm.care.counsel@gmail.com](mailto:afm.care.counsel@gmail.com)  
 Religious Education: Jennifer Dickie, [michaeljen@bellsouth.net](mailto:michaeljen@bellsouth.net)  
 Library Clerk: Cal Gough, [calgough@bellsouth.net](mailto:calgough@bellsouth.net)  
 Newsletter Editor: Kate Swett, [atlquakerltr@gmail.com](mailto:atlquakerltr@gmail.com)  
 Webmaster: Aaron Ruscetta, [arxaaron@gmail.com](mailto:arxaaron@gmail.com)  
 Bookkeeper: Jonah McDonald, [afmbookkeeper1@gmail.com](mailto:afmbookkeeper1@gmail.com)

### Calendar for Third Month (March) 2017

#### Area Meetings for Worship

Every First Day (Sunday)	10:00 a.m. – Meetinghouse (AFM), with a smaller group in the Library. 1:30 p.m. - Stone Mountain Friends Church (Evangelical), at Rock of Ages Lutheran Church, 5135 Memorial Dr, Stone Mountain, GA 30083
Every Third First Day	12:30 p.m. – Carrollton Friends Worship Group. St. Andrew's UMC Youth Center, 1106 Maple St.; contact Jean Hudson, <a href="mailto:judson30116@yahoo.com">judson30116@yahoo.com</a> or 678-378-3368; <a href="http://carrolltonfriends.org">carrolltonfriends.org</a> .
Every Second First Day	10:30 a.m. – Macon Friends Worship Group. Contact Diana Day, 478-227-8892; <a href="http://maconquakers.org">maconquakers.org</a>
Every Fifth Day (Thursday)	12:10 p.m. – East Lake Commons, Decatur. Contact Bert Skellie at <a href="mailto:bertskellie@gmail.com">bertskellie@gmail.com</a> or 404-680-4799.
Sixth Day (Friday)	(Mid-August through May), 9:00 a.m. – Friends School of Atlanta. Community Meeting Room, 862 Columbia Dr., Decatur, 404-373-8746.

#### Regular Events at the Meetinghouse

Every First Day (Sunday)	9:00 - Adult Religious Ed, Library 9:30 - Singing, Classroom A/B 10:00 - Meeting for Worship 5:00 - Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship, Meeting Room
Second Day (Monday)	Every other Monday at 6:30 - Spiritual Nurture Group, Library (contact Lewis Fuller for info on how to join)
Third Day (Tuesday)	6:00 - Alex Zinnes Yoga, Nursery Second and fourth Tuesdays at 7:00 - Deep Waters Center for Prayer & Exploration, Meeting Room
Fourth Day (Wednesday)	8:30 a.m. Morning Worship, Library First and third Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m. Worship at David & Freer Jarvis' home 7:00 - 8:30 pm: Semi-programmed worship at AFM. Contact Ashley Wilcox: <a href="mailto:ashleymwilcox@gmail.com">ashleymwilcox@gmail.com</a> , 206-300-5836.
Fifth Day (Thursday)	7:00 p.m. Bible Discussion, Library
Sixth Day (Friday)	Every third Friday, Meeting for Business, Meeting Room
18 <sup>th</sup> of Each Month	Newcomers Welcome Dinner, rotating location

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING  
701 W. Howard Ave.  
Decatur, GA 30030-2902

### ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

Office: MWF 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; 404-377-2474

Web: atlanta.quaker.org, [atlantaquakers@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaquakers@gmail.com)

Clerk: Betsy Eggers, [afmclerk1@gmail.com](mailto:afmclerk1@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Lynn Leuszler, [afmtreasurer1@gmail.com](mailto:afmtreasurer1@gmail.com)

If you would like to have a permanent nametag made, leave a request in one of the baskets on the front table. Indicate whether you prefer one that hangs around the neck or that pins. When Carol Gray has made one for you, it will be placed in the black file box on the greeting table.

If you would like to be included in the AFM database and receive the Newsletter by mail and/or appear in future AFM Directories, please send your name and contact information to Emily Lawson at [elawson7@gmail.com](mailto:elawson7@gmail.com) or 404-200-8479. Please indicate if you want to be in the directory, receive the newsletter by mail, or both. Emily Lawson is also the contact to request mailing list removal.

Contributions to the Atlanta Friends Meeting may be placed in the slot marked "Contributions" in the greeting area of the Meetinghouse or mailed to the Treasurer at the above address. Thank you!

*This newsletter is a publication of the Atlanta Friends Meeting. Views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Meeting.*

Readers are encouraged to submit letters, articles, notices and anything else of interest to Friends. Items should be sent directly to [atlquakerltr@gmail.com](mailto:atlquakerltr@gmail.com) in plain text (Word, not PDF). Pictures should be in .jpg format. Submissions may be edited for length and format.

#### **THE DEADLINE FOR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS IS THE 20<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF EACH PRECEDING MONTH.**

To receive the Newsletter via e-mail, send a blank e-mail to [afmnewsletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:afmnewsletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) from the address where you want to receive the newsletter. You will receive a note back from Yahoo asking you to confirm your subscription; hit reply and you will be added to the list at no charge. To receive general announcements and to participate in discussion, follow the same instructions, but address the note to [afmdiscussion-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:afmdiscussion-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). To receive announcements relating directly to the life of the meeting, send the same note to [afmannouncements-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:afmannouncements-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).