

## Report NPYM Coordinating Committee meeting, 3/18/17, Ann Stever

1. Annual Session will be Wednesday, July 26 – Sunday, July 30 at University of Puget Sound in Tacoma. This is a week later than usual. Keep an eye out for the opening of registration. There is usually a discount for registering early!
2. Coordinating Committee always starts with reports from Meetings about what is going on. Quite a few Meetings have had an increased number of visitors, some of whom have stayed! Lopez Island Meeting is celebrating becoming our newest monthly meeting and invites Friends to celebrate with them Saturday, May 20. Contact them for more information if you would like to go.
3. Our new Faith & Practice will be offered for acceptance at Annual Session. Because it will be published on demand by Western Friend, revisions and updates will be much easier to make. The Faith & Practice Committee has become a standing committee with a small membership which can be augmented if/when major revisions are to be considered/needed.
4. We annually send a visitor, selected by Ministry and Oversight Committee, to Northwest Yearly Meeting's annual session. This year they meet July 23 – 27 (partly overlapping our sessions). M&O is looking for a Friend with significant experience with NWYM, as they are in a tender time, having agreed to split their YM as amicably as possible. Contact Nancy McLaughlan, Clerk of M&O, to get an application form, [nancymaemc@gmail.com](mailto:nancymaemc@gmail.com).
5. This year State of Society reports from the various Meetings will be posted on the NPYM website. They are fascinating, but people usually don't take time to read them when posted at Annual Session, although that will still be done. Check out how other Meetings are doing ([npym.org](http://npym.org)).
6. New Yearly Meeting staff: Mim Lilly is the new Youth Program Coordinator and John Gotts is the new webkeeper.
7. MGOF, at its winter gathering, changed its schedule in order to address a concern that arose. Following the leading of the Spirit as they discerned it, they approved a minute and asked that it be shared with all the NPYM Meetings, as information and perhaps to inspire similar responses. They sent their minute to the Islamic community in Bozeman, to the Montana Association of Christians to Interfaith groups and some secular groups. The minute is at the end of this report.
8. **BIG DEAL**: NPYM is exploring a pay-as-you can fees for Annual Session 2018 (next year). CC became very excited, hearing about the experiment in New England Yearly Meeting. You can read about it at <https://friendsjournal.org/an-experiment-with-abundance>. We have known for years that many people are not easy asking for scholarship. As one person put this, this is a move from "needy scholarship to generous gift". CC recommended to the Annual Session Planning Committee and Finance Committee that a funding process similar to that of New England Yearly Meeting be instituted for Annual Session 2018. An Ad Hoc Committee was set up to work on this.
9. The other **BIG DEAL** was the report on responses to the proposed minute on Gender Inclusivity. Kepper Petzing from Multnomah provided an amazing report about responses so far. Out of 23 Meetings, only 3 had made no response. Some have approved it, some have suggested changes, some, like UFM, reported what they will be doing! The list of concerns was particularly helpful and showed that Multnomah is really listening as well as offering support. Examples of concerns and responses included: This is unfamiliar. (That's OK!) It is really important that Meetings commit to action, not just approve words. Already a Meeting that approved a statement is realizing that it is not so easy to take action and is struggling over the use of preferred pronouns. However, 2 Meetings have already set up subcommittees to explore recommendations for action. We are urged to be sensitive to what people wish to be called. A concern that has been recognized is that some folks feel unsafe in gender inclusive restrooms and showers, e.g. for a rape survivor. The subcommittee emphasized it want to hear concerns and to honor them. We were reminded about the difference between gender

and sexuality: gender is who you are and sexuality is who sexually excites you. We were reminded that this was a deep spiritual process for Multnomah and it is not easy stuff. Be tender with one another. We were reminded that no gender non-conforming person should ever be asked to speak for all.

### **The Montana Gathering of Friends, a Quarterly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Minute on Fear and Healing**

As Quakers, we believe that there is that of God in everyone. We find ourselves in a time of increasing fear for many who feel threatened and marginalized because of their gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, immigration status or political beliefs. We witness this same fear in communities across our country and around the world. We cannot ignore this conflict without violating our belief in the just, equitable and democratic principles of our country and our faith. We acknowledge that labeling people as the “other” emphasizes differences between people and violates the testimony of equality we have shared around the world for the past 365 years. We therefore speak truth to power. When anyone’s safety and security are violated with labels, hate and violence, we must reach out in love, offer protection and build connections between communities. We are committed to the hard work of building bridges and without judgement, opening our hearts to one another to address the fear of those delivering anger rather than love. We step forward to protect all people who feel endangered by their differences. We seek to magnify our presence by working in alliance with individuals and organizations also offering loving protection. We are committed to healing, love and growth of understanding that there is that of God in everyone. Action Steps: 1. Meet again over Easter Weekend 2017 to continue to develop this leading and work to which Montana Friends are called. 2. As soon as possible share this Minute and an invitation to the called Easter Weekend Gathering with our entire mailing list. 3. Develop and address steps to address situations where “anyone’s safety and security are violated with labels, hate and violence.” 4. Share this Minute widely with other faith groups and allied social justice groups in Montana. 5. Send this Minute to local Montana papers. Adopted on February 26, 2017