The Whidbey Island Friends Meeting has been a full meeting now for nearly two years. We have established a well-functioning full set of committees; our business meetings are well attended; and we are slowly growing in numbers with an average of 15 members and attenders at each of our 4 o'clock meetings for worship.

We have established a monthly schedule of post-meeting gatherings. The first Sunday of the month we invite a member or attender (by alphabetical order) to share something of their life and spirit in a series we call "Let Our Lives Speak." The second Sunday is our potluck day. The third Sunday is meeting for business.

We also have a set schedule of the last Wednesday of the month as our "Learning Committee" evening that begins with a potluck followed by a particular Quaker topic for discussion that includes a presenter and small group break outs for deeper, more personal sharing. We have mostly featured discussing the Testimonies one by one.

In addition we have four separate "spiritual nurture groups" - three small foursomes, and a larger men’s group that has met now every other week for seven years. We also have a Bible study group. One of our members has successfully run two, multi-year spiritual nurture retreat programs known as The Way of the Spirit.

Our meeting is sponsoring a FGC led Couples Enrichment retreat here on Whidbey later this month that will include not only members of our meeting but couples from other meetings in the area.

In terms of community outreach and involvement, we have recently joined the Greening Congregation program sponsored by the statewide Earth Ministries organization as part of our Peace and Social Concerns ministry. Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee also has been active recently in sponsoring a book signing presentation by David Hartsough. The Peace and Social Concerns Committee is now planning a rather ambitious program to rally our community to oppose the further escalation of the military offenses in Iraq and Syria. We are planning a newspaper ad, a sign-on petition to our Congressional representatives, and a community forum on the war making to follow that would include a presentation by Matt Southworth, a veteran of the Iraq war who now works with FCNL. Matt will be out west from January 7-14. He will be speaking here on Whidbey on the 10th, but we are hoping other meetings will also plan to invite Matt to keynote a program dealing with ISIS and the present military situation. We will be doing a mailing to regional meetings encouraging them to consider such a gathering.

A special event for our meeting this fall was to share a dedication program with our UU host meeting of establishing a peace pole on the UU grounds. The pole was donated by one of our members who had established the pole at her home in commemoration of 9/11 because she was present there and had friends die in the Twin Towers. She had had it at her home, but when her home was sold she donated the peace pole to the meeting.

One of our members spent several weeks in Burundi and Uganda to help train and establish a peace curriculum there. We were very supportive of her work. Unfortunately, she had a serious accident the day before she returned that has caused here serious ongoing rehabilitation challenges.

Two members of our meeting were the leaders of the plenary program at the Pacific Northwest Quarterly Meeting in September on the theme of weaving our spiritual lives and social action together.

Another unique initiative by our meeting is that our clerk publishes an all-meeting email each Saturday evening with meeting news and events as well as a personal reflection. The email is appropriately called "The Saturday Evening Post."

This is a very active and engaged meeting. We are slowly learning about the wider Quaker community, but still most members do not actively engage in Yearly or Quarterly meeting events. This is part of our growing edge along with attracting more young people and families.

Tom Ewell,

Clerk