



Tony Hale  
Calusa Nature Center

# FORT MYERS MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Newsletter, First Month, 2018

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**Worship:** In the Iona House at the Calusa Nature Center  
**Mailing Address:** 117 East Mariana Ave. North Fort Myers FL 33927

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**Clerk:** Joan Culver (joanculver@gmail.com)  
**Recording Clerks:** Kathy Hale / Richard Frechette  
**Treasurer:** John Battin

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Month: Pot Luck Lunch
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Month: Meeting for Worship  
With Attention to Business
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## **QUERIES & ADVICES** from Faith & Practice of Southeastern Yearly Meeting

### 1. Meeting for Worship

#### **Queries:**

- Are our meetings for worship held in expectant waiting for divine guidance, with a living silence in which we feel drawn together in the Light by the presence of God?
- Do we respond to the Spirit's prompting to minister, whether in silence, through the spoken word, or through action after the meeting for worship?
- Are we sensitive to one another's needs in meeting for worship?
- Are the spiritual gifts within the meeting fostered and encouraged?
- Are our meetings accessible and welcoming to everyone?
- Are our meetings a source of strength and guidance for daily living?
- Is the vocal ministry in our meetings exercised under the leading of the Spirit?

#### **Advices:**

- Be prompt and diligent in attendance at meetings.

- Come to meeting with expectant hearts and minds prepared for communion with God.
- Be faithful, be patient, and persevere in our service as messengers of truth.
- To everyone is given a share of the responsibility for the meeting for worship, whether through silence or through the spoken word.
- Quiet our hearts and minds for worship prior to entering the meeting room, so the whole group can be knit together in spiritual fellowship.
- Do not assume that vocal ministry is never to be our part.
- Be ready to speak under the leading of the Light. Learn to recognize when a message felt within is from God and if it is a message intended for the group to hear.
- Pray that our ministry may arise from deep experience of the Divine.
- Let our spoken ministry be audible and free from unnecessary words.
- Avoid speaking in a manner that brings a

sense of discussion or debate.

- Allow for a period of silence after a message has been spoken, so the group can reflect on what has been said and continue to be grounded in silent

worship.

- Overly long or too-frequent messages can hinder the worship of others present.
- Receive the ministry of others in a tender spirit.

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## MINUTES OF THE FORT MYERS MONTHLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1st Month 14, 2018

The Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met in Iona House on 1st Month 14 with 16 Friends present. The meeting opened with a period of silent centering. Clerk Joan Culver read queries and advices on the subject of our Meeting for Worship.

The Clerk called attention to the need to approve the minutes from the December Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business following this month's committee reports.

**Ministry and Counsel.** Nancy Murvine reported that Richard Frechette will continue as clerk. While he is away in the summer months, Ministry and Counsel will fill in for him month by month as needed.

A memorial service for Sue Curra will occur at rise of meeting in place of the time used for afterthoughts on Feb 4th.

A draft of the Spiritual State of the Meeting will be distributed for consideration. Ministry and Counsel would like to finalize the report at the February Meeting for Business.

An amendment was made to December **Minute 2017MM23** to say the following: "We approve with grateful hearts the transfer of membership of Kathy Hale from Yellow Springs Monthly Meeting (Ohio Valley

Yearly Meeting) to Fort Myers Monthly Meeting."

There will be a celebration of new membership for Norma and Charlie Lipsen, David Jossi, and Kathy Hale on a date to be selected.

**Treasurer's Report.** John Battin presented the Treasurer's report and reviewed the major areas of contribution the Meeting made in 2017. The Meeting has an end-of-year average of \$5,384. This report will be included in the newsletter, and the Treasurer will have a full financial report for the February meeting. The Meeting has contributed \$2725 for hurricane relief in our area in fall of 2017.

**Finance Committee.** The finance committee has not met and does not yet have a new clerk. Current committee clerk Joan Culver will convene a meeting.

**Nominating Committee.** Clerk Nancy Howell made some corrections to the Committee Report. Kathy Hale will not be serving as Co-Membership Clerk. Richard Frechette will be Membership Clerk. Additionally, Susan Oehl, who is serving as Assistant Treasurer, will not be on the finance committee.

**Adult Religious Education Committee.** Connie Summerlin reported that the first

Quaker 101 class will begin on January 21st following Meeting for Worship.

The Annual Spiritual Retreat will be held Saturday February 3rd at Iona House from 9:30 to 4:00. Retreat Leader is Cece Yocum. A Friday evening worship sharing will be held at the home of Nancy Howell from 7:30 to 9:00.

The committee would like to have an additional committee member and asks that Friends consider whether this is a way they may want to serve.

First Day School. Nancy Murvine reported as convener of this committee that Nancy Howell and Richard Frechette will be Co-Clerks. First Day School will only be offered during good weather, since there is no appropriate space otherwise.

#### **Peace and Social Concerns Committee.**

John Battin reported that P&SC has met but has not selected a new clerk at this point.

The committee is asking the committee to approve a \$700 contribution to the Puerto Rico Hurricane Maria relief and rebuilding efforts. Some discussion followed regarding which organization has the agenda and ability to most effectively distribute the money. The following minute was approved:

- ❖ **Minute 2018MM1.** Based on our experience and information about this organization, the Meeting approves a \$700 contribution to Oxfam earmarked for Hurricane Maria relief.

Carolyn Stanley reported that the P&SC committee will be looking into a new NGO called Cultivate Abundance, recommended by Rebecca Garofano, non-resident member of this Meeting and former ECHO employee. The founders of the organization are also formerly of ECHO, and their purpose is to promote home gardening and

the transfer of food abundance in Immokalee. P&SC will continue to study this and get back to the Meeting.

**Hospitality Committee.** Suzanne Frechette will be the new clerk, and Nancy Howell will clerk when she is away.

**Properties Committee.** Pat Iyer reported that the Properties committee is considering building new shelves for books and making other improvements for better use of the library space. CNCP has given Friends permission to repair the existing four-panel sign in front of Iona House. Friends will have one of the four panels on that sign with the others being used for CNCP and the Montessori school. Properties is also looking for the cost of redoing signage on Ortiz in order for the Meeting to make a proposal to CNPC.

**Outreach Committee.** Connie Summerlin reported that FMMM donated 793 pounds and \$150 cash to the Harry Chapin Food Bank in 2017.

Pat Iyer reported that the committee is considering adding more material on the Friends' testimonies to the website. She requested that Friends consider writing paragraphs elaborating on the testimonies.

The committee is trying to determine whether Friends are listed in the directories of Houses of Worship used by local colleges and universities. They are also considering the possibilities of radio ads.

#### **Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium.**

Joan Culver reported that there is nothing to bring to the Meeting at this time.

New Business. Clerk Joan Culver reported that a permanent phone for the Meeting has been acquired and will be held by Joan Culver and passed to others when she is not available. That number will be on the website.

Treasurer John Battin proposed and the meeting approved the following minute:

- ❖ **Minute 2018MM2.** Friends approve removing outgoing Clerk Nancy Fennell as an authorized signer for the Fifth Third Bank and Suncoast Credit Union accounts and adding the names of incoming Clerk Joan Culver and Assistant Treasurer Susan Oehl.

Friends approved minutes of the December 2017 Meeting for Business.

Minutes of the meeting were read and approved. The Meeting ended with a period of silence.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Hale,  
Co-Recording Clerk

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## Our Meeting's Annual Retreat

Fort Myers Monthly Meeting will hold its Annual Spiritual Retreat on **Saturday, Feb 3**, at Iona House with guest speaker Cecilia Yocum, presenting ideas for "Strengthening Our Spiritual Resources". Cece has been a Quaker for 35 years and is a member of the Tampa Monthly Meeting. She has served SEYM in a variety of positions, has been representative to Friends Peace Teams and worked with Quaker House on a manual for therapists "Help for Moral Injury: Strategies and Interventions." In this retreat Cece will share ideas through experiential exercises and worship sharing. Please be thinking about spiritual practices, resources and/or persons that have nourished you through the years and now. If you have a journal, please bring it with you.

On Friday evening (Feb 2) there will be worship sharing at the home of Nancy Howell (105 Pinebrook Dr.) from 7:30 - 9:00. Please call Nancy at 239-888-9304 for directions and gate code. Saturday's activities begin at 9:30 with a morning session, potluck lunch, afternoon session until 4:00, then rest time followed by group dinner at local restaurant. Cece and her traveling companion, Nancy Triscritti, will also join us for First Day morning worship. Please join us at these activities of spiritual renewal.

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## Chris Ruhnke

Chris Ruhnke is a New Yorker, although he has shed his Long Island accent. He was born in 1956 and grew up on the south shore of Long Island surrounded by boats and water sports. He had a motor boat by the time he was 12. "The 60's were a wonderful time to grow up in the suburbs of New York", he says. Chris grew up in an extended family; his German grandparents lived on their property in a converted garage. Chris is the youngest of three, with his sister Donna and his brother Chip.



The family attended the Episcopal Church, but the family was not particularly religious. Chris' mother made sure the kids went to church, but after they were confirmed, there was no pressure to continue to attend. His family were ardent

Democrats who were liberal and antiwar, and worked in the Civil Rights movement.

Chris' mother stayed home to raise the kids. She loved to garden and cook. She entered the work force after the children grew up and became an executive secretary in Manhattan. Chris' father was a history teacher and a football coach who went on to earn his Doctorate. He taught at Baldwin High School. Chris attended that high school for a year before he transferred to an all-boys prep school in upstate New York called Millbrook. There he played football, and his team went undefeated his senior year, which is still a fond memory for him.

When Chris applied to colleges, he was delighted to get into Columbia University. After two years in the country, he was eager to move to New York City. At Columbia, he majored in Philosophy, and earned his Bachelor's Degree in 1979. Chris also developed his artistic abilities in figure drawing and landscape painting.

After graduating from college, Chris married an artist and they moved to Munich, Germany where Chris worked as a silk screen designer for a T shirt company. After the business failed, Chris' wife went to Berlin and he hitchhiked around Italy, where he lived for a while on a farm in Tuscany and picked grapes. (He denies ever stomping on grapes in a big barrel.)

When it was time to return to the U.S., Chris' wife stayed behind and became a punk artist in Berlin. Chris moved to Seattle where he lived with friends in a classical music commune. When he returned to New York, his wife came from Germany, and Chris got a job teaching in a Catholic school in the Bronx. This Catholic school was run by Marist Brothers who believe you should teach where the need is greatest. Chris is very grateful that he learned the craft of teaching from these good men.

After his marriage fell apart, Chris moved to San Francisco. There were no teaching jobs available, so he worked in a restaurant and worked his way from being a bus boy to a respected waiter in an upscale restaurant. He went through a divorce and his wife later contracted and died from AIDS associated with IV drug use.

Chris decided to move to Sarasota where his parents lived; he simultaneously worked in a restaurant and studied for a teaching degree. After work one night, he was intrigued by an ad for the Army that not only promised to help you be all you can be but to give you college money as well. So, he joined the US Army Infantry for 2 years with the condition that he wanted to be posted in Germany. He loved Germany and drove a Bradley in the Desert Storm war in Iraq. Since the Army gave Chris most weekends off, he bought a car and had a great time traveling around Europe.

Chris returned to Florida and used his college money to get a teaching certificate. He got a job with an ex-Navy Seal in a school that combined academics with windsurfing and kayaking. This was his introduction to the sports, and he ran a kayak shop in Port Charlotte while taking classes for his teaching degree. He met Vicki Scott in these college years.

Next, Chris taught in a prep school in Sarasota where he noticed the sharp contrast between the spoiled kids who talked back and the military where people obeyed orders. He admits that this sometimes made him angry. He decided to seek out the Quakers because he knew that they had a peace testimony and that perhaps they could help him to deal with conflict in a loving and peaceful way.

Around this time Chris discovered the Baha'i religion and got deeply involved with their community. While he still loves the theory of the faith, he found their method of worship to be quite boring. He then met a woman who had been teaching in China,

who put him in touch with a Baha'i recruiter for international schools. So, Chris investigated that and moved to China for two years to teach 4th grade Taiwanese, Japanese and Korean kids in a special international school.

Chris returned to Florida, started painting again, and got into substitute teaching, which he says he loved. He says, "I got pretty good at it. Although it was not well paid, it was great fun and it gave me lots of freedom and a fine quality of life." He also had an opportunity to live in Giverny, France for 2 summers to focus on his plein air landscape painting.

Chris retired from teaching at age 61. He is currently living at his sister's house with her husband and his mother. He wants to get more involved in discussing Quaker theology and practice. He knew within the first 15 minutes of his first Quaker meeting that this form of worship was a perfect fit for him. He loves the spiritual power of the unprogrammed meeting: "I believe that it is an ideal way to approach God, to love Him, to worship Him, and to serve His Noble Cause."

*Profile by Pat Iyer*

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## Time To Let Go

*It's time to let go of the things that don't matter  
It's time to lay down those things that weigh us down,  
That gnaw at our hearts,  
And cause thoughts to scatter...  
It's time now to cherish the Truth we have found.*

*The truth is that love is stronger than hatred!  
And God does provide for all of our needs.  
And gives us the courage to let go our "treasures"  
Jesus, the Bread of Life, feeds every need.*

*So trust and let go of those things that don't matter.  
Lay down those things that are bringing you down.  
Open your heart,  
Quiet your mind's chatter,  
Lie back and cherish the Truth you have found.*

Marianne Lee (*shared in song at a recent Meeting for Worship*)

**Treasurer's Report**

**12 Months Ended Dec. 31, 2017**

General Fund Cash on Hand - January 1, 2017	\$7,831.81
General Fund Contributions - Jan-Dec, 2017	\$22,810.02
Special Contrib. Olympia Friends/Ugandan Safety Network	\$(500.00)
Transfer to Gen Fund Savings	\$(7,331.81)
Budget Outlays - Jan. – Dec. 2017	\$(17,425.61)
<b>Cash On-Hand - December 31, 2017</b>	<b>\$5,384.41</b>
Meetinghouse Savings - January 1,2017	\$47,268.10
Meeting House Ctf. Matured Plus Interest 2016-2017 (\$513.50)	\$19,013.50
Contributions	\$6,054.91
Interest Earned	\$128.75
<b>Meetinghouse Savings - December 31, 2017</b>	<b>\$72,465.26</b>
General Fund Savings - Jan 1, 2017	\$7,574.74
Transfer From Checking 2016 Surplus	\$7,331.81
Special Contrib. to LIFE	\$(2,000.00)
Ministry & Counsel Disbursements - Special	\$(1,224.86)
Interest Earned	\$26.70
<b>General Fund Savings - Dec 31, 2017</b>	<b>\$11,708.39</b>

	General Fund Contributions Year-To-Date	Contributions Budgeted For Year	Contributions Needed For Budget
	\$22,810.02	\$18,220.00	\$(4,590.02)
Budget Category	YTD Outlays	Budgeted Outlays	Budget Unspent
SEYM	\$4,000.00	\$4,500.00	\$500.00
Ministry & Counsel	\$2,998.50	\$3,120.00	\$121.50
Religious Education	\$582.58	\$1,050.00	\$467.42
Newsletter	\$114.31	\$280.00	\$165.69
Hospitality	\$433.32	\$400.00	\$(33.32)
Outreach	\$273.31	\$900.00	\$626.69
Finance Comm.	\$255.36	\$920.00	\$664.64
Nominating	\$49.07	\$100.00	\$50.93
Properties	\$1,771.20	\$1,950.00	\$178.80
Peace & Soc.Cnc.	\$5,947.96	\$4,000.00	\$(1,947.96)
Meetinghouse Resrv.	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$-
<b>Total Outlays</b>	<b>\$17,425.61</b>	<b>\$18,220.00</b>	<b>\$794.39</b>



**Friends Meeting of Fort Myers  
 Religious Society of Friends  
 c/o Richard Frechette, Editor  
 138 Pinebrook Dr.  
 Fort Myers, FL 33907-5988**

Address Correction Requested

## MEETING CALENDAR

All First Days	Pre-Worship Singing	9:55 am
	Meeting for Worship	10:30 am
Sun 1/21 & Sun 1/28	Quakerism 101	At Rise of Worship
Fri 2/2 Sat 2/3	Meeting retreat led by Cece Yocum (Tampa Meeting)	Fri evening – Howell Home; Sat all day @ Iona House
Sun 2/4	Remembering Sue Curra	At Rise of Worship
	Pot luck lunch	At rise of Worship
Sun 2/11	Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business	At Rise of Worship
Sun 2/18 & Sun 2/25	Quakerism 101	At Rise of Worship
Sun 3/4	Pot luck lunch	At rise of Worship
Sun 3/11	Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business	At Rise of Worship