

Tampa Friends Meeting

Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

Minutes

11 Second Month 2007

OPENING SILENCE

QUERY 2 - MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH A CONCERN FOR BUSINESS

Are Meetings for Business held in the spirit of Meetings for Worship?

In decision making, do we promote a spirit of love, understanding and patience as we seek unity on an appropriate course of action?

Do we keep our remarks simple and speak only as the Spirit leads? Are we able to unite in good grace with the Sense of the Meeting when our personal desires tend in another direction?

Do we maintain respect for others, however strongly our opinions may differ?

Are Meetings for Business seen as positive opportunities for testing and practicing our spiritual life?

RECORDING CLERK

Cynde Mercer recording clerk.

ATTENDEES

John Arnaldi, Nicholas Autry, Tom Blackburn, Billy Lee, Chris Hugues, Steve Kinney, Cynde Mercer, Rod O'Shea, Karen Putney, Lou Putney, Amy Souza, Rick Souza, Nancy Triscritti, Andrea Walsh, Bill Ward, Nil Wilkins, Barbara Wolfe

BUSINESS

Minutes of 7 First Month were read and approved with corrections.

The Treasurer's report was presented by Tom Blackburn and accepted as presented.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Nominating – Nancy Triscritti presented the proposed nominations for 2007 and the Meeting approved the list.

Property – Lou Putney reported that the committee proposes to buy three unfinished wood bookcases for the library at a cost of no more than \$700 for the bookcases and materials for finishing. Chris Hugues volunteered to finish the bookcases. Meeting approved the expense.

Peace and Social Concerns – John Arnaldi brought forward a statement in support of Sami Al-Arian and will be traveling to Washington to meet with representatives of Congress and the Department of Justice on behalf of Sami Al Arian.

Minute 1 Second Month 2007

The Tampa Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends supports the statement from the Peace and Social Concerns Committee calling for justice and humane treatment of Sami Al-Arian and its distribution to U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez, Glenn A. Fine, Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Justice, members of Congress, members of the world wide fellowship of Quakers and media.

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CALENDAR

Each First Day	9 am. Adult First Day School
18 Second Month	9 am. Adult First Day School – Reflection on “Friends and Their Spiritual Message” by Howard Brinton
18 Second Month	Potluck lunch
24 Second Month	Friendly Dinner
25 Second Month	SEYM Faith and Practice discussion following Meeting for Worship
4 Third Month	Friends Peace Teams report – Cecilia Yocum will share with us on her work with Friends in Rwanda.
11 Third Month	Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
18 Third Month	Potluck
25 Third Month	SEYM and Friends United Meeting
4-8 Fourth Month	Southeastern Yearly Meeting

CLOSING SILENCE

**Tampa Friends Meeting
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**Tampa Friends Meeting
2007 Nominating Report**

Clerk	Nil Wilkins
Assistant Clerk	
Recording Clerk	Cynde Mercer
Treasurer	Tom Blackburn
SEYM Representative	Barbara Wolfe, Cecilia Yocum, Andrea Walsh
HOPE Representative	Kennan Ferguson
Earthcare Witness Representative	Francis Drake, Sharon Olenski

Ministry and Worship**

Cecilia Yocum	2004, 2007
Nancy Triscritti	2005
M.J. Arnaldi*	2004, 2007
Nil Wilkins	ex officio
John Arnaldi	2004, 2007
Karen Putney	2007

Nominating**

Nancy Triscritti*	2005
Lou Putney	2004, 2007
Barbara Wolfe	2004, 2007
Sharon Olenski	2007

Property and Grounds

Lou Putney *
Andrea Walsh
Chris Hugues
Franko Triscritti
Francis Drake
Tom Blackburn
Cecilia Yocum
Billy D. Lee

Hospitality

Dustin Lemke*
M.J. Arnaldi
Amy Souza
Kathy Ward
Melissa Van Dyke
Rick Souza

First Day School

Amy Souza*
Cecilia Yocum
Nil Wilkins
Liisa McMahon

Library

Karen Putney*
Francis Drake

Peace and Social Concerns

John Arnaldi *
Andrea Walsh
Steve Kinney
Cecilia Yocum

* clerk of committee
** committees carrying a 3 year commitment

Tampa Friends Meeting Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

Friends call on Attorney General Gonzales to be just

For more than 350 years, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) has worked for peace, justice, and the alleviation of suffering.

For many years here in our own community, the Tampa Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) has observed with concern the cases of Sami Al-Arian and other Muslim men who have been held by federal authorities on terrorism-related charges. It is clear to us that these persons have not received equal treatment under the law and have been subject to harsh, at times abusive, treatment while incarcerated by federal authorities.

In December 2005, a Tampa jury acquitted Sami Al-Arian on eight of the most serious terrorism-related charges and did not reach a verdict on the nine remaining charges. In February 2006, the plea agreement was accepted in which Sami Al-Arian pled guilty to a single minor charge.

Of grave concern to us now is Sami Al-Arian, who has been on a hunger strike since January 22, 2007.

- On that date, a federal judge in Virginia held him in contempt for refusing to testify before a grand jury there.
- Before being called before the Virginia grand jury, he was serving the last few months of a 57-month sentence under a plea agreement reached with the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida on February 28, 2006.
- U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales approved the plea agreement which included a non-cooperation clause that stipulates that Sami Al-Arian will not be involved in proceedings for any other charges.
The plea agreement also stipulates that Sami Al-Arian is not guilty of any crimes of violence.
- The time held in contempt extends his sentence.
- Sami Al-Arian continues to be kept in solitary confinement, as he has for the most of the past four years.
- As one recent example of abusive treatment, while moving him from Atlanta to the Virginia jail by bus during severe winter conditions, he was only allowed to wear a tee shirt, under shorts, and disposable paper pants. The guards wore overcoats and gloves and some were verbally abusive.

From our concerns, we, the Tampa Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), call upon these persons to act in the interests of justice for all:

1. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales:
 - Be true to your word and to the rule of law: honor the plea agreement made in the case of Sami Al-Arian in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida on February 28, 2006.
 - Guarantee humane treatment for Sami Al-Arian while he remains in federal custody.
 - Release Sami Al-Arian within the time frame specified in the plea agreement.
2. Members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives:
 - Request that Attorney General Gonzales explain why he has violated the plea agreement in the case of Sami Al-Arian in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida on February 28, 2006.

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- Request that Attorney General Gonzales explain why he has failed to provide humane treatment of Sami Al-Arian during incarceration.
3. Members of the world wide fellowship of the Religious Society of Friends and to our sisters and brothers of all faiths:
- Join us in calling for justice and humane treatment for Sami Al-Arian.

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