

Rough draft.
Comments?
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Jacksonville Friends Meeting
State of Society Report

Jacksonville Friends continue to meet regularly at 10:30 on Sunday mornings in the library of the Bartram Campus of The Bolles School in Jacksonville. Regular attenders find that our Meetings for Worship nurture the Spirit among us from week to week. We strive to make our Meeting a welcoming place, and are pleased that our guest book records numerous visitors over the past year, some of whom stay in touch on a regular basis. As an occasional potluck event does alter our regular worship schedule, we suggest that visitors call in advance. All are welcome!

We are happy to report this year that Pat Murphy has been approved for dual membership in Jacksonville Friends Meeting and in North Hampton Friends Meeting in Massachusetts. We also report the transfer of Henriette Groot's membership from Jacksonville Friends Meeting to Santa Cruz Monthly Meeting in California.

A Memorial Meeting for Worship was held on April 26, 1998, for Lodrick Harris, beloved Friend and former Clerk of our Meeting.

Jacksonville Friends Meeting continues to participate in the wider community as an active member of the Interfaith Council of Jacksonville. Once again this year we were among faith groups represented at the Interfaith Worship Service. As a Meeting we also actively support the Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice. We try especially to promote educational activities for youth, and supported the annual Peace Camp this year with a contribution to the scholarship fund. We were deeply concerned for the many people who suffered the effects of severe hurricanes during the summer of 1998, and were able to send contributions to assist victims in both Haiti and Nicaragua.

Provision of consistent Religious Education in our Meeting remains a challenge that we strive to meet. The presence of children among us has been infrequent during much of the year, but we are prepared for children, when they do come, with a regular babysitter and child care supplies. We have recently welcomed a new family with young children into our meeting and are working to provide a positive First Day experience. This year the older children in our Meeting purchased and distributed book covers promoting peace among middle and high school students.

Our adult education group focussed on the book *Honest to Jesus* during the past year and is now seeking direction for the future. The many avid readers within our Meeting delight in sharing books and articles with one another. This habit has been known to produce lively informal "adult education" about various aspects of Quakerism and the spiritual life.

Living at considerable distances from each other continues to present difficulties in our life as a Meeting. We give thanks for the numerous binding threads which draw us together. Our newsletter is one such thread. Potluck events are a source of joy and fellowship on a fairly regular basis. Friends' support of each other's creative pursuits, personal struggles, work concerns, social action and spiritual seeking is much valued in our busy lives apart from one another, and helps to gather us when we join in worship. We look forward to a new year in the Spirit, and treasure the Light that Friends – both nearby and at a distance – regularly shed on our community.

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Jacksonville Friends Meeting extends warm greetings to all those within the Southeastern Yearly Meeting. We continue to meet for worship on First Day mornings in the library on the Bartram Campus of Bolles School. Adult discussion is held once a month before Meeting for Worship and pot luck dinner. First Day School and child care are provided on the second First Day of each month. We welcome visitors! Because our potluck dinners are held in different homes and at different times during the month, it is best to call ahead to find the time and location of Meeting for Worship.

The meeting has been nurtured by many traveling Friends who attend for short periods. We are always delighted to see these Friends, and those who visit on a regular basis during the year have come to be an important part of our Meeting. We thank God that several Friends have relatives in the Jacksonville area! We are pleased that our newsletter continues to reach Friends who are rarely able to attend Meeting. Thank you to Debbi Rasmussen for serving as newsletter clerk.

This past year we welcomed some new attenders and approved two new memberships. We were also saddened by the loss of Lodrick Harris and Charles Catanach. Lodrick had been one of the handful of faithful Friends who had been instrumental in getting the Jacksonville Meeting established and maintained. Charles, who was a more recent addition to our meeting, was very well liked and was an asset to our community. We will miss both of them and continue to hold Mary Harris and Enid Catanach in the Light.

The children in our meeting continue to be a blessing to us. At the Twelfth Month Meeting for Worship and potluck dinner, they held their annual Christmas pageant, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all those present. And, under the capable direction of Heidi Lowey-Ball, they have recently formed "The Patch-of-Fog White Lightning Children's Choir." After one Meeting for Worship the Children's Choir, playing a number of percussion instruments and accompanied by Heidi on the guitar, led the adults in singing "The George Fox Song." A great time was had by all, and we eagerly look forward to future performances by our talented and enthusiastic young people!

During the first part of the year, our adult forum read and discussed "Living Buddha, Living Christ" by Thich Nhat Hanh. We are currently working on "Honest to Jesus," a study guide of the core sayings and parables of Jesus, by Jerry Echols Carpenter. Not only do the forum meetings generate lots of interesting thought and discussion, but members are always suggesting worthwhile books to one another.

Jacksonville Friends continue to be active in peace and social concerns. Members participated in the Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice STOP THE CASSINI campaign, a vigil at Kings Bay Submarine Base commemorating Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days, and a recent vigil to STOP THE BOMBING OF IRAQ. One of our members provides a Quaker presence on the Violence Committee of the Interfaith Council, others are active in the Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice, or are active in a ministry to serve the homeless. All members readily serve in many areas where they feel called and it is a testimony to the diversity of our group that all feel nourished by the Meeting.

We are thankful for the fellowship and spiritual growth that we have enjoyed during the past year. We start out 1998 with Sue Williams and Hans Fletcher as our new co-clerks. Thank you to Heidi Lowey-Ball for her faithful service as the previous clerk. We feel willing and able to go wherever the Spirit may lead us.

Respectfully submitted by Jacksonville Friends Meeting..

SOM
Sue Williams
Hans Fletcher