

Friends World Committee
for Consultation

SECTION OF THE AMERICAS

Comité Mundial de Consulta
de los Amigos

SECCIÓN DE LAS AMÉRICAS

newsletter

In This Issue • June 2006

A Gift from Chiquimula	1
2nd Spanish Publications Consultation	3
Susan Bax Fund Update	3
The World of FWCC	4
Honoring our Founders	4
Wider Quaker Fellowship	5
"Our Intentions are Simple..."	5
Around the Regions	5
Quaker Youth Pilgrimage	6

A Gift from Chiquimula

Walking down the cobblestone streets of Antigua Guatemala, I started to reflect on what the 2006 Annual Meeting meant to me. The words *beyond expectations, crossing barriers*, came to me, and I was reminded of Henri J. M. Nouwen's phrase, *from the house of fear to the house of love*. Since our experience was beyond expectations, it meant crossing barriers, and it also was an exercise in moving out of the house of fear and into the house of love.

It had been thirteen years since the Annual Meeting of the Section had last taken place in Latin America. Meeting outside the Section's well-known northern territory represented big challenges for all. Even I, as a Latin American, had to learn things in a different way.

I cannot count how many times over the last two years I sat at a breakfast table, was offered a ride, was escorted to the store, or invited to dinner or afternoon coffee, when I visited to meet with the Local Arrangements Committee. These Friends showed how committed they are to FWCC by giving their time and talents, and even going beyond what was required to embrace us all as true members of the same Family of Friends. They were way ahead of our questions and preparations, or, as we say in Mexico, "*cuando uno apenas va, ellos ya vienen de regreso*." (Just as

we're getting started, they're already coming back.)

What can be said about people who almost stopped every other activity, gave up their holidays, met their dental practice clients on weekends so they could fully attend the planning meetings; who asked for a leave of absence from work or school, spent long hours cooking meals, met for choir or Marimba or string instrument rehearsals after work; who sat with staff for hours to discuss new needs and ideas for solving unexpected situations, ran to the photocopier, brought you something you needed but forgot at home, or simply sat with you over a cup of coffee and in Spanish or broken English tried to have a conversation with you? *Beyond expectations!*

What can be said about the even smaller group of Friends from the Guatemala Monthly Meeting based



Women from the Ambassador Friends Evangelical Church welcome Annual Meeting participants with tamale supper. Photo: Sharon Gunther

in Antigua? Organizing nearly every transportation detail for almost 200 people was a big challenge, but they did a splendid job. They also shared from their heart what is dearest to them: their testimony of equality and sharing with those who have less, which has been carried out for more than 30 years through the Scholarship and Loan program. They also went *beyond expectations*, and our gratitude goes to them.

When we meet in the North, Latin American Friends are only represented minimally. Is it truly sufficient to have just a handful of Latin American Friends leading a Friday morning devotional at Annual Meeting to really capture a sense of the Spirit-led worship services of the Friends Churches and meetings in the southern part of the Section? This year, in Chiquimula, a larger group of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

A Gift from Chiquimula

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Friends from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras were able to participate, thanks in part to one US Friend donating what he would have spent to attend, to cover their costs. For many Evangelicals it was their first time



to meet “those other” Friends. Some Friends from the unprogrammed tradition met Evangelical Friends for the first time. Having an opportunity to worship together in local evangelical churches and share in a silent meeting for worship, meant *crossing barriers* of form and content and theology for all, in addition to the challenges of language differences. Hearing each other and listening from our hearts in a worshipful manner certainly made a big difference.

Attendance by a larger group of young Friends from all over the Section was also a wonderful surprise. Watching them talking, discussing, having fun, and planning for the future is a great hope for Friends. I trust that if FWCC continues to be instrumental in helping the younger generation of Friends to meet worldwide, our barriers may fall apart and our resistance and self-guardedness may give way.

An expectant community worshipping together experiences communion and is transformed by God through a common commitment. The tears, songs, and small sermonette; the impact of a person just standing and saying “Gracias;” the joining hands, raising hands and singing together—all in a single experience of more than 200 Friends

in our closing worship, with some speaking English, Spanish and other languages was a revitalizing sign of the power of the Spirit. That is what inspired us all to move *from the house of fear to the house of love*. The Spirit sent us back home with renewed hope, not expecting to change the other, but to share, *crossing barriers and going beyond expectations*.

After more than one hundred years in Guatemala, Friends continue to grow in that beautiful land, and one can certainly affirm after visiting amongst them, that the seed planted by Friends in Guatemala fell into fertile soil, and it is still bearing fruit and fruit in abundance, part of which was shared with us in Chiquimula in 2006 by small groups who turned into giant givers. Our gratitude to them all is beyond words!

Loida Fernández González
Executive Secretary
Committee of Latin American Friends



Vidalio Sosa (left), National Evangelical Friends Church of Peru, with Katy Cullinan, New England YM. Photos: Sharon Gunther

The 2006 Section of the Americas Annual Meeting took place March 16–19 in Chiquimula, Guatemala. Over 200 Friends from the Americas and beyond participated in the business and worship of Annual Meeting. Local arrangements were coordinated by the Iglesia Evangélica Embajadores Amigos (Ambassador Friends Evangelical Church), an independent monthly meeting. Friends from Guatemala Monthly Meeting (Pacific YM) provided invaluable assistance by coordinating buses between the airport in Guatemala City and Chiquimula, about a four-hour drive. The Guatemala Scholarship and Loan Program (Redwood Forest Friends Meeting, CA) organized pre- and post-Annual Meeting study tours.

Chiquimula is home to 20,000+ Evangelical Friends, in two yearly meetings and one independent monthly meeting. The first Friends missionaries arrived in Guatemala in 1902 from California Yearly Meeting (now Evangelical Friends Church Southwest).

Second Spanish Publications Consultation

A second publications consultation on Quaker religious education and other materials in Spanish took place immediately following the March Annual Meeting in Guatemala. New voices joined some of last year's participants. Together, they brought lots of energy and ideas to the table. There was much discussion on how the Internet can give greater access to lists of available resources, as well as the written resources themselves.

An ongoing project, started as a result of last year's publications consultation, is the continued work of translating a children's lesson series from Barclay Press. This work is being done by five members of the Mexico General Meeting of Friends (Reunión

General de los Amigos en México.)

Several committees were formed to handle communications, editorial decisions, finances and translations. The next step calls for planning several writing workshops, which could include developing new writers,

bringing experienced writers together to work on a specific topic or theme, and writing children's religious education lessons.

Working together via face-to-face consultation can be a model through which Friends from different traditions cooperate with each other in projects and ministries of common concern. It is clear that FWCC's role in this continues to be pivotal, and that in the future we need to make good use of all opportunities that arise for meeting, and consider ways to advance this needed work.

Susan Bax Fund Update

Ten women from the Americas received assistance from FWCC's Susan Bax Fund in the past year for travel in the ministry. Projects included planning women's spirituality conferences, leading workshops in Bolivia, and researching the feasibility of a women's quilting ministry in Burundi.

The award to Patty Federighi and Carolann Palmer of Northwest YM of Friends Church exemplifies the kind of work the Susan Bax fund supports. Patty is the director of the Stone Soup Quilting Ministry in Seattle, WA which provides handmade quilts as a source of spiritual strength and healing for bone marrow transplant patients. At an FWCC Northwest Regional Gathering in 2005, they heard David Niyonzima of Burundi YM speak of efforts to work towards healing and forgiveness in his country. Part of the work includes

providing safe houses and women's support groups for victims of rape.

While gathered for prayer not long after David's visit, the idea of providing the same kind of spiritual strength and comfort to trauma victims in Burundi developed. "Just as the making of the quilts has blessed and enriched lives of quilt makers here, perhaps the making of quilts could offer the same blessing and enriching of the lives of quilt makers in Burundi—a double blessing," says Patty. After further prayer, discernment, and consultation with David



Photo: Carolann Palmer

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Susan Bax Fund Update

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Niyonzima, Patty and Carolann decided to pursue this leading and applied to the Susan Bax Fund.

In early January of this year the two women arrived in Burundi. They met with local Friends and learned that there is great interest in starting a similar project there, utilizing locally available materials and resources. They also visited Congo and Kenya. Patty envisions the quilting groups this way: “The members of the women’s support group work together to pro-

duce a quilt which would be given to a new coming member of the group. As the new members are integrated into the group, they learn to quilt also, and work on quilts to be given to the next women to join...” As a result of this leading, Patty Federighi has been released from her duties as staff at North Seattle Friends Church to pursue funding to facilitate the next step of the Burundi quilting project: training sessions for the first group of Burundian women.

The Susan Bax Fund provides travel funds to support women in the Section of the Americas who are led to travel in the ministry. A portion of the fund also enables women who are representatives from their yearly meeting to travel to the Section’s annual meeting, with particular attention to helping women under the age of forty. The fund was established from a legacy gift to FWCC by Susan Bax (Canadian YM).

For application guidelines, go to www.fwccamericas.org/about_us/schol_grants.shtml or contact the office.

The World of FWCC

Section Clerk Elizabeth Mertic and staff Loida Fernández and Margaret Fraser recently returned from FWCC’s Central Executive Committee and related meetings—the last before the 2007 Triennial International Representatives’ Meeting in Ireland.

Highlights of the meetings were:

- a new mission statement for FWCC
- establishment of criteria that must be met before FWCC takes on fresh work.
- plans to route representatives from countries in the global south to next year’s Triennial IRM through countries that do not require transit visas.
- plans to hold a world conference in 2012 on two sites—in Africa and Latin America—focused particularly on those who have not yet attended an international FWCC meeting.
- discussions on how to carry out the governance of FWCC between International Representatives’ Meetings. How do we maintain accountability and participation while conserving funds and natural resources?

FWCC Capital Campaign: Honoring our Founders

Next year, FWCC turns 70. In September 1937 almost 1,000 Friends gathered at Swarthmore and Haverford Colleges for a World Conference of Friends, and FWCC was born. We invite you, as meetings and individuals, to recognize those who were active in our first 30 years through our Founders Fund.

Contact our office for copies of our Founders Fund brochure which contains the names of those who participated in the world conferences of 1937, 1952 and 1967. We welcome invitations to meetings to share your

reminiscences. The campaign is on track—we are more than half way to our goal of \$2.5 million. At press time gifts and pledges to the campaign totaled over \$1.3 million.



Wider Quaker Fellowship

Our two English and one Spanish mailing per year are now available online as well as in print, and we're encouraging our Fellows who have internet capability to access the materials that way. Our first e-mailing went out last fall to over 200 Fellows. We will continue to provide print versions sent via regular mail.

If you would like to join our mailing list, please contact us through the FWCC web site at www.fwccamericas.org/about_us/programs/wqf.shtml or by regular mail at: WQF, Friends Center, 1506 Race St., Phila-

delphia, PA 19102, USA. As always, we do not charge a set fee, but we rely on the generosity of those who can afford to contribute, to help us cover costs for everyone, including those who cannot.

"Our Intentions are Simple; Torture Must be Stopped"

With this declaration, 130 people from 17 yearly meetings gathered at Guilford College the first weekend in June to launch the Quaker initiative to end torture. This was the culmination of a movement that began with the concern John Calvi shared with us at Annual Meeting in Tempe, AZ last year.

"I was afraid it would be hectic, anxious, agitated" said one participant, but "instead have found it hopeful." Another said it was "really helpful and beautifully planned." Scilla Wahrhaftig (Lake Erie YM) of FWCC's Peace Issues Working Group, said "We were very much focused on developing ideas of actions we can take, and, in particular, the ways in which those Friends gathered at Guilford could bring this concern to their monthly, quarterly and yearly

meetings. We left having taken vital steps in identifying how we can draw on our faith and heritage to build a powerful and effective movement to bring about the abolition of torture." The participants' booklet reported "Without the generous financial, administrative and spiritual support given by FWCC, this conference would be only a dream and not a reality." The organizers hope to hold a second conference the first weekend of June 2007, also at Guilford College.

"We left having taken vital steps in identifying how we can draw on our faith and heritage to build a powerful and effective movement to bring about the abolition of torture."

Plan now to attend one of the regional gatherings that will take place this fall. Information and registration forms will be available online and from the Section office.

SOUTHEAST

Baltimore, Jamaica, North Carolina (FUM), North Carolina (Conservative), Southern Appalachian, and Southeastern yearly meetings

September 22–24

Jamestown Friends Meeting, NC

LOWER GREAT LAKES

Central Canadian, EFC-Eastern Region, Lake Erie, Ohio and Wilmington yearly meetings

September 29–October 1

Quaker Heritage Center
Wilmington, OH

NORTHEAST

Eastern Canadian, New England, New York and Philadelphia yearly meetings

October 13–15

Purchase Meeting, NY

LATIN AMERICA

The following workshops and activities were confirmed during the Annual Meeting in March:

July 6-10 in Juli, Perú

November, a gathering of unprogrammed meetings in Latin America, in Costa Rica

December 1–2, in El Salvador

MEMBER YEARLY MEETINGS AND GROUPS

Alaska Friends Conference
Baltimore
Bolivia—Central
Bolivia—INELA
Canadian
Colombia—Bogotá MM
Costa Rica—Monteverde MM
Cuba
El Salvador
Evangelical Friends Church Mid-America
Great Plains
Guatemala—Embajadores Amigos MM
Guatemala—Santidad
Honduras
Iowa (Conservative)
Iowa (FUM)
Illinois
Intermountain
Indiana
Jamaica
Lake Erie
México—Reunión General
New England
New York
North Carolina (Conservative)
North Carolina (FUM)
Northern
North Pacific
Northwest
Ohio
Ohio Valley
Pacific
Perú—INELA
Philadelphia
South Central
Southeastern
Southern Appalachian
Western
Western Association of Friends
Wilmington

Quaker Youth Pilgrimage

The Section of the Americas will host the 2006 Quaker Youth Pilgrimage this summer. Twenty-four teenagers and four leaders will travel through Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. The group will come from England, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, The Netherlands, Hungary, and the U.S.A. Together they will learn about “Quaker Service in Action through the Ages” as they build an international community of faith.

The goals of FWCC’s Quaker Youth Pilgrimage are to understand and respect different cultures within the Religious Society of Friends and the wider world cultures, to understand Quaker history and spiritual roots, to facilitate a growing appreciation and acceptance of Friends’ common heritage, to understand the nature of one’s personal relationship to Christ and to Quakerism, to facilitate opportunities for pilgrims to open new doors on self-development and Christian and spiritual growth, and to

develop committed leadership within the Religious Society of Friends.

There are a variety of opportunities for Friends to support these youth, even if you do not live in the hosting regions. In particular, we are hoping to have volunteers committed to holding the pilgrimage in prayer at specific times throughout their month together. Please contact Susan Lee Barton (765-939-1449 or susanleeb@fwccamericas.org) if you are interested in this or other volunteer opportunities.

Next Annual Meeting in Providence, Rhode Island

New England Friends will welcome us next **March 15-18, 2007**. Save the date now! The theme is based on 2 Corinthians 9: 6-12, “Share abundantly in every good work...” and “...the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” All Friends are welcome for business, worship and fellowship with Friends from the diverse yearly meetings in the Americas.

New Website

Have you seen our website lately? We’ve reorganized it to make it easier to find the information you need. Look for expanded features in the future, including the most comprehensive listing and search vehicle for all monthly meetings, churches and worship groups in the US and Canada, in all yearly meetings and traditions.

www.fwccamericas.org

Goodbye, Edward— Welcome, Sharon

Development Assistant Edward Sargent has retired. Edward worked for FWCC for almost ten years. Sharon Frame (Philadelphia YM) has joined the staff as Campaign Assistant. Please join us in wishing both Friends well.

Planned Giving for FWCC

Over the years many Friends have included FWCC in their estate plans through bequests and charitable gift annuities. The inclusion of a **bequest** in your will is one of the most straightforward ways to give. Bequests have allowed FWCC to continue our work among Friends in the Americas in a significant way.

A **charitable gift annuity** with FWCC, issued and administered in partnership by Friends Fiduciary Corporation, can serve as a safe and convenient way to receive lifetime income and also respond to the desire to partner with FWCC in its ministry and work. For more information contact us at (215) 241-7251.

Want to know more FWCC news?

The electronic newsletter is the best way to know what's taking place **before** it happens. It is e-mailed monthly and contains more information than we can print in two paper newsletters each year.

Register at www.fwccamericas.org and we'll send you the new, 2006 full-color map, *Finding Friends Around the World*.

Monthly Meeting contacts needed

Are you willing to receive our monthly e-newsletter, print it out and post at your meeting/church? Let us know! Email us at newsletter@fwccamericas.org. Your help in keeping Friends updated on FWCC events and news from around Section—and beyond—is part of the ministry of FWCC.



Margaret Fraser, FWCC Executive Secretary (left) with Lidice Longoria, Mexico General Meeting of Friends.

Buttons and T-shirts available

Help promote FWCC by wearing a new logo button to the next gathering of Friends you attend. This new version has the colorful Section logo in both English and Spanish. We also have a few T-shirts left with the Section of the Americas logo, made for the annual meeting, size L only. The shirts are 100% cotton, white with colored logo in English. Buttons cost \$2 and T-shirts \$8 including shipping, and are available from our office.



Stewards from the Ambassador Friends Evangelical Church, at Annual Meeting.

Photos:
Sharon Gunther

MISSION

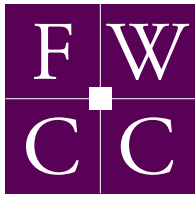
In bringing Friends together face-to-face and heart-to-heart across traditions and national borders, FWCC Section of the Americas seeks to promote exchanges that advance spiritual renewal and vitality within the Religious Society of Friends.

Annual Meeting, March 2000



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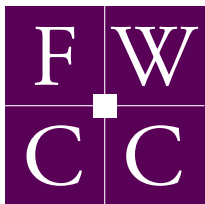
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THANKS ARE DUE...

Contributions from individual Friends to our annual fund increased by 7% last fiscal year. Thanks to all of you for your support!

**FWCC newsletter is published by the
Friends World Committee for Consultation
Section of the Americas.**

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