

NPYM Secretary/Directory Coordinator Report

October 9, 2005

Submitted by Turtle Robb, current employee in this position

In this eighth month as NPYM Secretary/Directory Coordinator, I thought it would be good to report to NPYM on how it is going. I realize that having a Secretary/Directory Coordinator position is something new for NPYM, and I wish to be helpful to the community in accessing the value of the position.

Personally, I feel satisfied that I am being productive, doing useful and important work and that NPYM clerks and members have been helpful and supportive to me in this work. I have had some challenges in getting so much information organized but I think it is getting better all the time.

The hours spend on the two areas seem to be fairly consistent with the budget. The Secretary tasks would have benefited by having more hours spent on them. I expect the hours spent on the directory to be less next year for reasons explained below.

Regarding the Secretary tasks:

In terms of preparing for and following up on the SC Meetings, the previous secretary left me with lots of lists, supplies, and instructions. At the actual meetings, I think I done a good job of keeping up with the changes in agendas, lists, etc. Some things that I feel great about are:

1. Doing the IRS and L&I tax forms/payroll paperwork
2. Ordering the reprint of Faith & Practice; sending out orders for books
3. Setting up the office for Annual Session at PLU
4. Designing new version of sign in sheet for SC meeting

The main challenges have been

1. Getting current lists of who the SC reps are and making sure they are all on the email list that goes out with the agendas and minutes. I hope that the new database will be helpful in organizing meeting contacts as well as individual NPYM folks and directory information. I believe that combining these two jobs will be more efficient once they are more fully integrated.
2. Getting the minute books in good order. I have them caught up for now, but have talked with others about going back and getting them more complete for recent years (so that paper copies as well as computer copies of attachments exist in an archived fashion.) This is something I have not had time to work on.
3. Getting Epistles and minutes out to other Quakers in the world. It appears there are gaps for the past few years as well as a section of years in the 1990's and I have not yet found the time to catch up on all those submissions. Foreign language versions for 2005 haven't been sent.

Regarding the Directory: approximately 160 hours billed (out of about 325 total)

This was a larger project than it looked like at the beginning. I am disappointed by how much time this work has taken. I did not bill for all the time it took me to learn the new computer software, or to undo errors that I caused as I learned. The learning had great value to me. I mostly enjoyed the work, but was quite thrilled to finally be done with it (for awhile.) I have also felt committed to making the directory simpler to maintain so that whoever does this job after me will have an easier task.

Due to last minute time constraints, I did not include the indexes of children by year of birth and adults by meeting which Don has previously included.

I feel confident that it will go much smoother next year because

1. The database passed hands 3 times and changed database programs several times. This created errors and caused much of the data to be entered many times.*

2. Now that I have completed the project, I can see places where I had to go back and redo things. Next year I hope to be taking mostly forward steps (details in * footnote.)

NPYM Secretary/Directory Coordinator Report (continued)

Looking forward:

- I would like feedback from Meetings about how they use the directory and what they want or need included in it.
- How can we encourage Meetings to supply the material they want included? I do not have the inclinations Don did to dig out information that does not come to me fairly freely. I do not feel confident to make some of the judgments he did about what to put in or leave out. I would like for Meetings to have more of a feeling of ownership and responsibility for the Directory.
- I wonder how the “membership” of the meetings, in terms of the assessment forms, might be part of the reporting that Meetings do when they reply for the directory. I felt from some of the replies I got in asking for listings for the directory that people felt confusion over these two things being separate. We might get a better response rate if the two things were combined and Meetings only had to reply once a year.

I appreciate the opportunity to do this job. It has enhanced my experience of being a Friend in the world community of Friends.

Turtle Robb
NPYM Secretary/Directory Coordinator
Bellingham Friends Meeting member

*details of the directory database evolution

1. March 2005 Data updates begin coming to me
2. April 2005 I sent letters to meetings asking for Meeting updates
3. 2nd half of April Don sent me a database in Excel from an “obsolete” program
4. May 2005 I trimmed Don's database into a newer Excel form.
5. May Updates from Meetings arrived; I tried to figure out how to merge data into the final directory format.
6. 2nd half of May Dave Fabik offered to do formatting. I forwarded database to him.
7. June 2005 Updates kept coming; I sent them to Dave, thinking he was updating database.. He did do address reformatting which I later changed again.
8. early July 2005 Realized Dave was putting data straight into formatted document, not database, so I entered updates into database to have it current by Annual Session. At AS, date to distribute 2005 Directory was changed to Oct.
9. 2nd half of July Became convinced by many Friends that it would be best to put data into Access database.
10. Aug 2005 Purchased and installed Access and learned basics.
11. By Sept 15 Changed data to Access, prepared first draft of directory
12. 2nd half Sept to now Corrected and updated draft from proof-reading by Don. Unfortunately, I didn't realize how many corrections there would be and I entered them into the formatted document rather than entering them into database and re-issuing the formatted

document. By the time I realized how many changes Don had, time was too short to change strategies. Printing done Oct 13.

13. Currently I have about 8-12 hours of data entry to get database current.
14. Next year: I intend to eliminate many of the above steps! I hope to keep the database fairly current throughout year (Step 1 - 8 hours a month), and plan to use only steps 2, 8, & 11. A proofreading step would be good also, if perhaps a less extensive one.