

Interest Groups Coordinator Report to Arrangements Committee, January 2016

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Thank you to:

- Our presenters who put great attention and care to a diverse and enriching set of offerings in 2015.
- Those who helped spread the word to offer groups at IMYM. Specifically, Sara Keeney and Paula Palmer were helpful with reminding Friends in December 2015 to send in proposals (v.gd/imym2016igform).
- Pam Gilchrist and Paula Palmer for leadership and facilitation to integrate evaluation into processes to coordinate interest groups.
- Bettina Raphael and Jill Powers reaching out for FQA arts offerings.
- Kay Bordwell for a positive attitude and effectiveness handling operations at IMYM to support all the interest group offerings.
- Others who have been on calls to help the process with Interest Groups: Sara Keeney, Pelican Lee, Vickey Finger, Marc Gacy, Bob Schroeder, Pam Gilchrist, and Paula Palmer.
- One more person to serve with me in determining room assignments in May 2016. Could that be you? If so, contact Todd, as the first person truly led to serve in this way will help IMYM 2016!
- Everyone who attended and shared the Light offered through the Interest Groups at IMYM 2015.

Attached documents:

1. 2016 IMYM draft schedule (v.gd/imym2016dschedule)
2. 2016 Ghost Ranch public location information
3. 2015 MEETING SPACE DIAGRAMS (from a 3/27/2015 conference call with Ghost Ranch Hospitality staff.)
4. 2015 Interest Group Titles (an overview of what groups were where)
5. 2016 Interest Group proposal form updates
6. 2015 Report to Representatives Committee (submitted and not read)
7. 2015 selection of IMYM Evaluation comments related to interest groups

Requests:

- Keep three Interest Group time slots on the Adult Schedule; include an early afternoon time on Friday or Saturday.
- Let all Friends know: Interest Group **Locations and Descriptions** are posted (1) on bulletin boards at **Ghost House** and in the meal line at the **Dining Hall**; is (2) intended to be included with registration packets; and (3) on imym.org.
- Encourage Friends to propose an interest group: (v.gd/imym2016igform).

My vision is for Interest Groups to be a venue to share the Light with others at the summer gathering. In practice I hope to leverage available resources in support of the Light expressed through offerings. This report will highlight changes for the interest group process this year, review 2015, prepare for 2016 and offer support for preparing the Adult Schedule at Arrangements Committee.

While many presenters shared celebrations about organizational support with their offerings there were some challenges. After a few meetings with Paula Palmer, Pam Gilchrist and other members of the Program Working Group (PWG), many suggestions were implemented.

As noted in the 2015 report to Representatives Committee:

2014	2015
39 groups	61 groups
	(+6 groups cancelled.)

“2015 Interest Group Titles” (4) offers an overview of when and where those 61 groups took place. In 2015, there were 10 groups on Tuesday morning and 11 groups on Thursday morning.

Locations

The "2016 Ghost Ranch public location information" (2) shows 27 locations where groups can be held. Six of those locations are used by youth programs. To manage presenter input, all spaces were ordered in three tiers to help with proposals (see attached).

One challenge with group assignments last year stemmed from assigning two groups in the Arts Center, or experimenting with the Cantina/Social Center. In working with Vickey Finger, I (Todd Hierlmaier) made an assumption based on the 2015 MEETING SPACE DIAGRAMS (3) that there was a door between the Arts building gallery (east) and Arts Center main room. Our collective memory missed that the spaces were connected with an open archway. Consequently, several of the groups paired at the Arts Building had noises affect each other. A divider was placed between the rooms yet offered little sound buffering. As noted in the public location (2) document, a second group will not be in the Arts Building unless both groups agree, or it's an arts program that can coexist with the other. The experiment with the Cantina in 2015 also did not work.

In May of 2015, locations were assigned for the 61 groups. Location assignments were sent in an email to all group contacts on May 25, 2015. Several of the multiple day offerings were scheduled in different locations. Two changes were added to the proposal form:

1. "If co-facilitating this group, would you add their contact information in the comments section?"
"Also include co-facilitator contact information here."
2. "IF this is a multiple day offering, add a comment on how the days are related, audience attendance expectations, etc."

These changes may have clarified communication with groups that had co-facilitators. In 2015 one co-led group setup in a location they were not assigned. Fortunately, enough Friends came to help that all ended up in their assigned locations before they began. In another co-led group, I spoke with one convener who was unaware of some questions on the proposal form.

Feedback also revealed attenders who did not know interest group locations. Please help all Friends know interest group location is on **bulletin boards** at Ghost House and Dining Hall or **imym.org!**

In final communications with conveners, I will also try to clarify locations as multiple day offerings may change locations.

Limits to Interest Groups?

The increase in offerings last year offered challenges with assigned locations meeting needs of the groups (as noted with Arts Center and Cantina). Since there are 21 location options, we may not be at capacity, while options become less optimal. More information is now presented for conveners to limit their offerings:

1.) Changes on the proposal form may help with room assignments:

* "Also remember the importance to give and receive: consider limiting your offering to two sessions."

* **"(Optional): Would you like your group to meet outside rain or shine? If so, click "Yes." If no, leave blank.**

Or, add a comment/question in the or "Other" box.

Locations include: Triangle in front of Lower Pavilion, or Ghost House garden."

(If a group agrees to meet outside, that adds four locations on the public location document (2).)

2.) The public location document (2) also offer presenters the chance to choose a location in February, or wait to be assigned a location in May:

"The first 8 proposals for any time slot will be given "early entry" status. With that status, a presenter can choose to be assigned a Tier 1 location in May, or **choose an available Tier 2 location before noon on Friday, February 26.** Locations are listed above and seen on the following map: <http://v.gd/GRmap>"

In the above practice, presenters will learn (before their offering is included in registration materials) if they are eligible for a Tier 1 location (eight options). Or, if they decide that offering their group at one of the other 11+ locations would

not work, they can cancel before the group is offered with registration materials. In 2015, there were six cancellations, so it's easily accommodated.

3.) The proposal form also notes:

“Minimum audience size

Registrations will give us a rough idea of interest. If you have a minimum threshold to meet for your participation, let us know.”

At the beginning of May numbers are drawn from registration to determine interest. Conveners will be presented with an option to cancel at that time if it seems there would not be sufficient audience for their offering. This may free up a Tier 1 location for those groups expecting a Tier 2 location.

Consider an earlier afternoon time slot for Interest Groups

Some evaluation comments on this topic:

“I think the late Saturday afternoon interest groups are not effective. I would not attend one again. Others were excellent and the variety seemed to engage so many.”

“I'd like one business meeting on Saturday afternoon, if possible. Epistles and everything else take time!”

“I thought it odd that the interest groups were either very late in the afternoon or in the evening, as though they weren't that important and were just stuck in the last time slot available.”

Overview since June 2015

About two weeks after IMYM: reviewed operations with Kay Bordwell and Ghost Ranch Hospitality.

August: 2016 proposal form went online.

November: First entries received for 2016 interest groups.

Paula noted the call for Interest Groups didn't go out with fall queries and helped draft a call that went out with an update from Sara Keeney.

December: Questions about Interest Groups led to a PWG threshing of logistics for accommodating needs around interest groups.

Conversations about location information led to the attached public location document (2) and covered criteria to consider in assigning locations for interest group proposals:

Registration numbers, Distance from Dining Hall, Accessibility, A/V needs, Indoor/Outdoor space.

These conversations also acknowledged the unanswered question of early days afternoon programming. So a message was sent to Bill Hobson (clerk of Representatives Committee) with a reminder the February 2015 Representatives Meeting noted: “Sara Keeney, Vicky Finger, and Bill Hobson will try to put together some queries for our approval in June [2015].” As a consequence, afternoons on Monday and Tuesday will not include any formal Adult programming in 2016.

Many suggested changes for 2016 to meet needs addressed in evaluations and feedback are implemented or planned.

Finally, our youth programs may offer interest groups as well. Flora Quimby said she would check with SYF's to offer an interest group. Marc Gacy with Children's Yearly Meeting may offer cooperative games, or we may schedule an intergenerational nature hike with CYM. It seems there may be more offerings to go along with previous traditional activities.

Plans for 2016 (Dates with Registrars previously established.)

January 15-17: Attend Arrangements Committee and help Friends prepare another wonderful coming together that is IMYM.

February 23, 2016: Deadline for proposals to be included in registration materials. Apply early to be guaranteed a Tier 1 location!

Communicate with all conveners about location options (Tier 1 or Tier 2). Address needs as they arise.

February 26, 2016: Brief Descriptions (<http://imym.org/2015igsem/listing-by-date/>) and Full Descriptions (<http://imym.org/2015igsem/full-descriptions/>) documents will be live on imym.org and sent to Registrars for including in registration.

April 8, 2016: Registration update with Registrars with title edits, additions, or removals.

Communicate with operations to prepare locations for groups.

Communicate with all conveners about registration numbers. Address needs as they arise.

Early May first meeting with Assignment Committee (one or two other Friends) to determine needs for location assignments. Send registration numbers to all conveners informing them of interest (and offering a chance to cancel).

Mid May second meeting with Assignment Committee to finalize location assignments.

May 23, 2016: Locations Assigned to all Interest Groups.

May 25, 2016: Location requests made with operations for Meeting Space setups.

Print copies of Interest Group information for IMYM. Address needs as they arise.

June 5-12 attend as much of IMYM as possible and arrange for needs to be met.

2016 Adult Schedule draft

Conversations in mid-December with the PWG also included preparations to recommend a schedule. The draft schedule we used to consider elements is linked here:

<v.gd/imym2016dschedule>

The first attachment is a print version of that schedule.