

El Paso Monthly Meeting – Cynthia L. Rains, clerk - State of the Meeting – March 2016

The first three months of 2015 were devoted to planning the annual gathering of the New Mexico Regional Meeting, in cooperation with Las Cruces Meeting. The meeting was held April 17-18 at First Christian Church in El Paso and focused on immigration as well as the rich cultural heritage of our shared border with Mexico. In addition, many of those attending stayed for First Day meeting for worship at the home of Jim Tolbert on April 19.

Our individual gifts and talents came together to host a successful meeting. Jim Tolbert planned the program and recruited speakers for a panel on border issues, Vona Van Cleef handled registration and she and her husband Rich (with help from Fred and Diana Koster of the Albuquerque Meeting) made two pots of chili (one “con carne” and one without) for the Saturday lunch, Connie Crawford managed the budget, Cyndi Rains ordered t-shirts (“Quakers Keep Calm and Seek the Light,”) John Russell and Dee Cameron were in charge of Friday night entertainment, and Autumn Holder made arrangements for the Friday night catered buffet. The Las Cruces Meeting delivered the Saturday morning breakfast, coordinated by Larry and Anna Underwood. Vicki Aldrich and Tim Green, also of the Las Cruces meeting, attended many of our planning sessions and gave us valuable advice and suggestions.

Approximately 50 Quakers from New Mexico Regional Meeting attended the gathering. They came from Durango, Colorado; throughout New Mexico; El Paso, Texas; and Arizona. We were also pleased to have Mary Klein, editor of *Western Friend*, with us from California and Ruth Flower, a staff executive with Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) from Washington, D.C.

El Paso and Las Cruces Quakers, a member of First Christian, and the Columban Mission in El Paso provided lodging for some of those attending and some went to motels.

Connie and Vona attended the Women’s Retreat in Silver City in May, and several of us marched or rode floats in the Gay Pride Parade in June. Jim continues to be active in various movements such as those to promote wiser use of natural resources and to abolish the death penalty. Vona and Rich have participated in several study sessions with the local Pax Christi group.

Two of our regular attenders, Connie Crawford and John Russell, formally joined the meeting. Connie is a representative to FCNL, she and John attended Intermountain Yearly Meeting and John stayed for an extra week to help with one of the youth camps. In addition, John has volunteered at the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Sol y Tierra farm in Anthony, NM, and John and Connie have helped with a burrito-making project once a week for immigrants staying at Annunciation House who need food to carry with them as they board buses carrying them out of El Paso to other destinations.

Jim Tolbert is our faithful email communicator. Cyndi Rains continues as clerk of the meeting, Rich Van Cleef is secretary, and John Russell is treasurer. EPMM has 11 members, nine of whom live here and are active. An average weekly attendance of six continues to enjoy Jim Tolbert’s hospitality at his home, 2701 Frankfort. We meet at 10 a.m. every First Day and usually at 9 a.m. the first First Day of the month to discuss the various topics in Quakerism 102 and at least once a month for worship for business.

We endeavor to honor the SPICES (simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship) in our daily lives and throughout the community and the greater world.

Report prepared by Vona and Rich Van Cleef

