

## **San Francisco Friends Meeting**

### **Tips for New Committee Clerks**

By Elizabeth Boardman, 2005

1. If Nominating Committee has not provided a job description for your committee, ask for it. If there is no job description, draft one and get Meeting for Business to approve it.
2. Review the job description with the committee at the beginning and a few times during the year. Send it back to Nominating with edits as needed.
3. Keep committees small enough so that members know that their absence from committee meetings will be felt.
4. Give each committee member a specific role or task suited to his or her interests and skills.
5. With 5-6 people around the table, the process can be less formal than Meeting for Business. When touchy issues come up, though, you need to request that people get your okay to speak, address you as the clerk, slow the pace and incorporate silence into the discussion, give everyone a chance to speak once before anyone speaks a second time to the same issue, and achieve a substantial sense of unity before finalizing a decision.
6. Remember that an underlying purpose of every committee, whatever its assigned task, is the projection of the “beloved community.”
7. To promote community, meet at least occasionally in people’s homes.
8. To promote community, and to help people get centered in the room, start each community meeting with a quick check-in around the circle to see what’s uppermost in member lives at the moment.
9. Occasionally use the phone instead of email, especially for reminding committee members of commitments. Even on a message machine, your voice is more persuasive than an email message.
10. Send notices twice for any committee meeting, and remind people of their tasks.
11. Decide with the Meeting clerk when and how you will report to meeting for business. It need not be monthly, depending on the committee. Some committee reports will be in writing and some will not. The committee clerk or another person can write or present the report.
12. Be sure you understand the Treasurer’s routine for reimbursing you and other committee members. You are in charge of your committee’s budget.
13. If you get stuck on an issue, don’t just bring the problem back to meeting as a whole. First try brainstorming with the Meeting clerk. Try bringing in some new people or information to help break a log-jam.