

We are so grateful to Council member, Judy Alves, for hosting the January face-to-face Council meeting at her home in Fort Myers. April Goering, Lucy Jones, Sally Timmel, Renee Wormack Keels, Deborah Sullivan, our facilitator, S. Barbara Stanbridge IHM, and I were warmly welcomed and cared for. We worked hard, accomplished much, and attributed part of the momentum to clear heads in a fresh environment. As usual we each brought something to center and ground us at the beginning and end of each day. Lucy shared the *Parable of the Old Woman* by Ruth Gallant once again and we reflected on Grail threads past and present and lifted our hopes for future threads of future weavings that may take shape in ways we barely recognize. For the first time in more than two years, we spent one evening taking some time for play. We chose Balderdash, a word game involving bluffing, that elicited belly laughter to the point of tears.

For the last two face-to-face Council meetings we focused our agenda on the bigger picture in light of where we are as an organization. We know that the Grail that once was, no longer exists. We know that we need to re-invent ourselves if the Grail is to have a future. Our task is to attend to both our current reality as it is and to our potential future. We expect that the survey we just sent out will help us to know what our members need and what they are able to offer.

Attending to the future, The Young Women's Initiative met for the first time following our Council meeting. They reported that the meeting went very well and that they gelled well as a group together. Discussing their mandates including being *antiracist from inception*, they noted that they would like to add the word "*anti-oppressive*" as well "*in order to reflect our understanding of intersectional identities and intersecting oppressions.*" Further, they expressed their commitment to the centrality of spiritual core as a commitment to being "*interspiritual in a shifting religious landscape.*"

We carefully reviewed the proposal submitted by Teagan Blackburn, Ieva Zadina and Joy Garland on their vision for the use of the Grail Center in Cornwall on the Hudson, NY and prepared our response. Since the proposal is not fully formed, we noted and detailed each step needed for a full and complete proposal. The deadline for the newly completed work is March 26. We continue to offer funds for technical assistance, as needed. If the completed proposal meets the criteria necessary for a feasible project, the proposal will go to membership for a vote.

We will initiate Grail regional gatherings this spring. We will look at our resolutions to be antiracist and to rebuild the Grail's spiritual core within the context of our evolving Grail story. Our hope is that each of us will find our place in the story now. We will host a National Gathering in 2020 and are in the process of considering locations.

We attended also to business of the Grail.

- Council approved the budget for 2019, including funding for an antiracism retreat in the fall of 2019.

- As is custom, Council reviewed the Grail bylaws. We support a number of small changes in bylaws to reflect our current reality and structure. The proposed changes have been posted in our biweekly National Grail News.
- Council considered the possibility of changing the Grail structure. Because we acknowledged that our real issue is one of decline, we recognize that change in structure simply will not address this issue. We also noted that the current structure instituted in 2003 was reviewed and evaluated in 2005 and a report of that review is included in the report of the extraordinary GA of 2005.
- Council affirmed a decision to form a task group to develop the concept of forming a Mission Grant Fund. While not deemed viable within the context of our immediate reality, the concept could lay a foundation for such a fund when viable in the future.
- Council affirmed one member to write Code of Ethics Policy for Grail Email Correspondence and Use of the Listserv.

Finally, we looked at our relationships with each other as Council and at how we work together as a group. We recognize that we need to foster our own spiritual practices in order to work together at a deeper and more generative level. We are aware of how important it is to be able to work together as a team. We recognize the challenges of being leaders in a time of organizational decline and challenge. We know that our time of challenge will persist for several more years. While each of us might not have chosen to face the current challenges, we trust in that which is bigger than we are. We trust that we are here in this moment together for a reason. We are called to be here.

We will be seeking nominations for candidates for Council leadership for an election in August. The Council will need to replace two to three members whose terms are ending this year. Please pray for the candidates we need to carry our movement forward. We acknowledge that to be antiracist, we need women of color at the governing table. Renee cannot be the only one. To forward the resolution of rebuilding our spiritual core, we would like to have women who come from varying faith/spiritual traditions.

Thank you for filling out the surveys sent to you to 1) help us assess our needs and capacity and 2) help the Antiracism Working Group assess the best location for the fall antiracism retreat. As the dates are decided upon, please plan to attend the upcoming regional gatherings in the spring of 2019, the antiracism retreat in the fall of 2019 and the national gathering in the spring of 2020. One possibility may be to invite ex-officio members to the table who are not currently Grail members.

Peace and blessing,

Pamela Cobey  
On behalf of the Council