
Minutes of the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends

Saturday evening, August 1, 2009

1. The New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met on Saturday evening, August 1, 2009, for its 349th Annual Sessions at Bryant University in Smithfield, RI, singing as we entered. Out of gathered worship the clerk welcomed all with news of change. This is the first of the two-year Sessions theme of Jubilee. She invited Friends to consider Jubilee, a new way of being together, with joy and tenderness. Jubilee a time of letting go of business as usual, to be open to welcoming God into our lives, is a time to make space for the divine. Sessions committee, building on developments within the Yearly Meeting of the past several years, felt led to the theme of Jubilee and asks us this year to live into the theme of Jubilee.

The clerk introduced the Unity Agenda, a tool we will use experimentally this year to help us free more time for corporate worship and discernment. The items appearing on the Unity Agenda are proposed for consideration without discussion. Each item listed appears in the advance documents with the name of a Friend available for consultation on that item prior to it being brought forward for action. Friends are asked to familiarize themselves with the Unity Agenda, to read the written information pertaining to each, to discern whether they have concerns or questions and to consult with the named Friends if need be, prior to the business session when the Unity Agenda will be addressed. If there are concerns raised that seem to warrant greater attention, that item can be removed from the Unity Agenda and put on the regular agenda for corporate discernment or other disposition. Friends will be asked to accept and approve items for which no such concerns are raised, without further discernment.

The clerk asked for all to work together to make the road of Jubilee smoother. A two-year process, we will continue the thread through the week of how we will conduct our corporate work, being mindful of the unrenewable resource of time that is ours. The clerk asked for support and for all to work together.

2. Members of the clerks' table introduced themselves: Linda Jenkins (NSan), presiding clerk; Rebecca Leuchak (Prov) and Brian Drayton (Weare), recording clerks; Frances Brokaw (Han) and Gregory Williams (NBed), reading clerks.

3. The clerk asked NEYM Sessions staff to rise and expressed appreciation for their work. Jana Noyes (NLon), access needs coordinator; Alison Hersey (Mon), accounts manager; Josiah Erikson (Mon), audio visual coordinator; Sandy Moyer (Mon), bookstore coordinator; Virginia Bainbridge (NLon), bookstore assistant; Jean McCandless (Burl) childrens bookstore; Beth Collea (Well), Christian Education coordinator; Clifford Harrison (Camb), database manager; Esther Wheeler (Well), housing coordinator; Eric Edwards (Sand), Christel Jorgenson (Camb), and Nancy Marstaller (Dur), information desk; Katharine Flynn Wilson (Wor) and James Wilson (Wor), office assistants; Katharine Clark (Fram), office manager; Bruce Kay (Stor), plenary room coordinator; Laurel Swan (Hart), registrar; Jonathan Vogel-

Borne (Camb), sessions coordinator; Jason Eisack (Ames), shuttle coordinator; Edward Kerman (Mon), special needs child care; David Baxter (Fram), interim treasurer; Elizabeth Poynton (Wor), volunteer coordinator; Elizabeth Yeats (Austin MM, South Central YM), *YM News* editor; Kevin Lee (Wport), youth and family pastoral counselor.

4. The reading clerks called the roll by quarter, Friends rose and raised hands as their monthly meeting within the quarter was named. The clerk took a census of modes of transport to Sessions, asking how many Friends came to the gathering—by horse, by bicycle, by foot, by public transportation, and in cars by numbers of passengers.

5. The clerk introduced visitors and representatives from Friends' organizations: Keith Helmuth (New Brunswick MM, Canadian YM), representing The Quaker Institute for the Future; the Grace family, Eden, Jim, Isaiah, and Jesse (BHill), with us from Kisumu, Kenya, and their work with Friends United Meeting (FUM); Sadie Forsyth (Put) staff for Philadelphia YM; Chris Pifer, staff for Friends General Conference (FGC); Liz Yeats, editor of *YM News*; Jane Berger (Chappaqua MM, New York YM), representing Friends General Conference (FGC) Advancement Committee; Viv Hawkins (Central Philadelphia MM, Philadelphia YM); J.E. McNeil (FM of Washington, Baltimore YM) representing the Center for Conscience and War; Rebecca White Bordonado (Toulouse MM, France YM); Laura Melly (Chestnut Hill MM, Philadelphia YM); John Cooley (Central Finger Lakes MM, New York YM); Derek Lamson and Annemarie Fux (West Hills Friends Church, Northwest YM); Adrienne Solenberger (Bellingham MM, North Pacific YM); Kody Hersh (Miami MM, Southeastern YM); Ruben Hilare (Santidad Amigos, Bolivia); Newton Garver (Buffalo MM, New York YM) representing the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund; Jennie Isbell (Clear Creek MM, Indiana YM) representing Earlham School of Religion; Keith Harvey, Director of the American Friends Service Committee's Northeast Regional Office (AFSC-NERO); Debka Colson, AFSC Fundraiser; Nan Gaylord Thompson (Central Philadelphia MM, Philadelphia YM); Doreen Walker of Pendle Hill; Wendy Parker (Northwest YM), Max Giacalore (Italy), Nancy & Nora Spicer (Bath MM, UK, formerly BHill)

6. We appointed the following adult visitors to our youth programs: Childcare, Martha Penzer (Burl) and Mary Gilbert (Camb); K-2, Rebecca White (Toulouse, France MM) and Alan Kohrman (Well); 3-4, Patsy Shotwell (Well); 5-6, Charlotte Fardleman (Dov); JHYM, Dorothy Zug (Mon) and Carol Rein (NShor); YF, Theodora Waring (Well) and Eileen Cummings (Wint); YAF, Heidi Blocker (San) and Debbie Humphries (Hart).

7. Coordinators of the youth programs and their staff were asked to rise. The coordinators are: Kimberly Walker-Goncalves (Nham), childcare coordinator; Betty Ann Lee (Wport), JYM coordinator; Laura Ethier (Fram) and Cynthia Rankin (Sand), afternoon JYM co-coordinators; Kara Price Bachand (Stor), JHYM coordinator; Laura; Kimberly Allen (Dur), Young Friends (YF)/Young Adult Friends (YAF) coordi-

nator; Kate Bonner-Jackson (Camb), YF assistant coordinator; Ben Guaraldi (Camb), YAF assistant coordinator. The children left to join their own evening programs.

8. The clerk returned to the theme of Jubilee, taken from Leviticus 25 and Luke 4:16-20. She urged us to test our leadings to speak, and referred friends to the flow chart found in the Advanced Documents for Sessions and the YM News, which may prove helpful. Calls for prayer, periods of silence, and the proposed revised chapters of our Faith and Practice may assist our work of applied contemplation. We met in anchor groups this evening. Anchor groups are a place to explore our ideas about issues and to go deeper in our discernment of the Yearly Meeting's work. These groups anchor us in the Spirit and in our community. They provide the seedbeds for our discernment throughout the week. The clerk introduced Susan Vargo (Nham), who gave directions for the work of the anchor groups. She presented the queries to be considered tonight:

1. Share your name, meeting, where you live, who you live with. What is one practice you have for creating Sabbath or rest in your life?
2. Is there anything you are carrying that you need to lay down? What branches in your life need pruning?
3. What new life is arising for you? Where is way opening for you?

Anchor groups were reminded that they are scheduled to meet again for 45 minutes on Sunday and Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday morning, August 2, 2009

9. Friends gathered for intergenerational worship led by JHYM and celebrated with exuberance and wit.

10. Philip Raines, the pastor at Durham Friends Meeting gave the keynote address, *Living into Jubilee*.

Sunday afternoon, August 2, 2009

11. We heard an excerpt from the 2009 epistle of Illinois YM. Deeply aware of the ecological, social, and historical challenges facing us, these Friends gave renewed attention to the testimony of simplicity. Times of challenge can be opportunities for renewal and refreshment, if we resist the impulse to act for action's sake, and trust the experience of Friends that inward turning to the guidance of the Spirit leads to faithful, focused, outward action.

12. Janet Hoffman (MTob), clerk of *Faith & Practice* Revision Committee, introduced the working papers for the three chapters the committee is presenting this year: *Chapter 3: Corporate Discernment in Meetings for Business, Chapter 4: Integration of*

Faith and Life: the Meaning, Understanding and Use of Testimonies, and Chapter 11: General Advices and Queries.

In preparation for our consideration of sexual ethics, Janet directed our attention to the working paper for Chapter 4 on testimonies. How can we discern the truth of a testimony for ourselves and as meetings? How can we hold conflicting truths on the same topic? When there is such diversity, there is a particular need to get to the ground and root of our testimonies. Committee members then read the advices from the working paper.

13. Phil Fitz, a member of Ministry & Counsel reported on progress on our 2007 Minute of Commitment. He prefaced this report by recounting for Friends some of the background of that minute.

For the last five YM Sessions, our relation with FUM, with its personnel policy, our understanding of sexual ethics, and our relations with other meetings have been a dominant concern in our meetings.

FUM, an association of Yearly Meetings, is a worldwide body, which NEYM Friends helped to found. It includes wide theological diversity, and more African than North American Friends. This diversity brings with it tensions along many cultural and theological lines, and some of these tensions have focused poignantly on issues of sexual ethics and the status of homosexuals. Some members of FUM, including some in East Africa (where homosexuality is illegal), are deeply opposed to toleration for homosexuality within the church, and find the notion of same-sex marriage anathema. One segment of FUM's personnel policy bars from leadership anyone involved in a sexual relationship outside of monogamous heterosexual marriage. This aspect of the policy has caused much pain to Friends in New England and elsewhere. It has reinforced other theological differences, such as the role and value of the Richmond Declaration of Faith.

Since 2004, Friends have asserted in a series of actions our disagreement with this aspect of the FUM policy, and especially the discrimination against non-heterosexual Friends, while affirming our commitment to our membership in FUM. We have undertaken intervisitation within and beyond our YM, and have worked in many ways to testify lovingly but forthrightly to our understanding of God's will in this matter. In 2007, as we threshed this concern, we became clear that it was urgent for us to undertake a consideration of sexual ethics, and the result was our minute of commitment. He reminded us of key elements in that minute:

- *Engage in conversation about the deepest meanings of family, marriage and committed relationships and explore what it means to have all of these under the care of meeting.*
- *Support the work of our Ministry & Counsel working party on Spirituality and Sexual Ethics. We need to articulate our sexual ethics and the spirituality of sex.*
- *Re-distribute NEYM Minute 2005-55, Connecticut Valley QM in Support of Same Gender Marriages, and ask MMs to season and test this issue and forward the results to their QMs in preparation for bringing them to YM Sessions in 2008 for discernment.*

Connecticut Valley, Northwest, and Salem QMs have all minuted their approval and support of same-sex marriage within their meetings. Dover is clear to allow

their own MMs to discern their own practice. The All-Maine Gathering (Falmouth & Vassalboro QMs) minuted its support of the state of Maine's action to legalize same-sex marriage, though these QMs have not yet spoken to their own practice in this area. We have not heard yet from Sandwich and RI-Smithfield QMs. The work is progressing; it's not yet done.

He ended with a query used by Ministry & Counsel in threshing this question: "What gifts does God want to give New England Friends by raising this concern at this time? What do we need to do, to receive the full measure of those gifts?"

See Minute 19 for the continuation of this business item.

14. We heard a memorial minute for Hugh Steven Ogden.

Hugh Stephen Ogden, 1937–2006

Every morning, Hugh began his day writing for at least two to three hours. His journals describe the simplicity and intensity of the life he lived in Glastonbury, Connecticut, and on his island in Rangeley, Maine. Hugh recorded the rhythms of people, places and nature that surrounded and flowed through him, each morning writing in solitude on the dignity, disturbances, and divinity of life. His three children now have the legacy of over three decades of his journals. Hugh's poems were rooted in those writings, seeded by his inordinate capacity to be fully in the presence of whoever or whatever he was with.

Visiting Hugh's island, it is clear that closest to his heart was his family. He raised his three children as a single parent, and Hugh's first concern was the safety of his children. The island is a fragile ecosystem that was a constant worry for Hugh, where he built by hand a second cabin, sheds, and a boat-house; where every summer his three children came, with their own children, for long visits with Granddad. On his writing desk at the cabin, there were the same poems he had spread out before him the weekend he fell through the ice. One poem, written two months before his death, was titled, "To My Son", beginning with the line, "The son who knows his father will die also knows he will too..."

Hugh wrote of the extraordinary spirit he found in everyday humanity. A frugal man himself, Hugh was uncommonly generous with his heart and made friends with all willing to share ideas and thoughts with him. Though creating a peaceful world and ending the war was a primary concern of his, Hugh's best friends in Maine were a rainbow array of NRA defenders and ardent nature supporters. Hugh loved to argue and laugh hard with each of them.

Hugh always seemed to be teaching, not only in his literature classes at Trinity College where he taught for over 40 years, but in all his encounters. Hugh's iconoclastic look and lifestyle seemed to challenge everyone he met. He offered the world dissonance with his singular wild hair, often bound by a red kerchief. Along with his suspended jeans, he always seemed to be framing the famous George Fox question: "Here is what I have to say, what canst thou say;" Hugh was ready to listen, debate and deepen each person's perspective on humanity, earth justice, and our freedom and responsibility to choose.

Hugh found his way to Hartford MM sometime in the early 1980s, when his two oldest children, Cynthia and David, were off to college and his youngest daughter Kathy was finishing high school. In the silent worship of meeting, with the wisdom of Moses Bailey and other guiding elders, Hugh found a spiritual home.

He was in his early forties then. Hugh was born to parents who were Presbyterian and he and his one sister were raised singing Protestant hymns, religiously attending church each Sunday. His own paternal grandparents were birthright Quakers, and he graduated from Haverford College in 1959 before attending New York University and the University of Michigan. Hugh later became an active member of the Haverford Corporation. Over the last three decades of his life, Hugh grew to be a beloved and cherished elder in the Hartford MM, often sharing mystical poems on abiding awareness and gratitude. His messages called upon all of us to know the grace and beauty of darkness as well as that of light, honoring all that is of life in ourselves and in the natural world. Out of the silence, Hugh's words sang us down to our roots.

In the summer months in Maine, Hugh also attended the Rangeley Congregational Church, where he sang the hymns he cherished from childhood. On the last day of his life, Hugh was cross-country skiing across Rangeley Lake to get to church on time.

Each day life called and Hugh chose the totality of its offerings. His muse guided him to record his witness in seven published books of poetry. Many believe the enduring messages of his poems are yet to be fully discovered by the wider world. The one long epic poem he always hoped to write was in fact written not in words, but in 69 years of rugged, embracing life – sharing with all the knowledge we most need to live through our enduring questions. Hugh taught us, over and over again, that it is easiest to hear the answer when we hold ourselves, and others, in love.

—HARTFORD MONTHLY MEETING, CONNECTICUT VALLEY QUARTERLY MEETING

15. Richard Frechette, clerk of Permanent Board, reported on Permanent Board's work in response to our minutes of 2008 in regard to our financial and other relationships with FUM. When issues come before Permanent Board, it must determine whether action is needed, or whether the Permanent Board's best role is to season the business in preparation for the next YM Sessions for business.

Last year, YM Sessions requested that Finance Committee should seek to develop some way to enable Friends who have conscientious objection to contributing to FUM to avoid such contributions, and the committee developed a proposal for Permanent Board's consideration. In the ensuing months, a few meetings have developed methods to address the concerns on their own, awaiting YM guidance.

In reflecting on the Finance Committee's proposal, Permanent Board came to feel that the development of an algorithm to make this possible would compromise the spiritual integrity of our process of developing a budget as a corporate body. As their minutes 2009-20 state:

"We heard concerns about enabling individual restrictions on contributions coming from a monthly meeting. We also recognize that the concerns of con-

science of some Friends are leading us, however reluctantly, to somewhere we cannot yet discern. We also affirm the budget we approve in Sessions is that set of commitments we are faithful to. An accounting solution to allow monthly meeting to earmark funds may be an easy solution for yearly meeting, but not necessarily the right one. We believe in the need to engage in corporate discernment to reach unity and resolve to continue to wrestle with this issue, and express our love and support to those monthly meetings who are doing the same.”

For this reason, Permanent Board has sought discernment from MMs and QMs before they move ahead any further to develop some kind of fiscal process in response to this concern.

The issue is still being seasoned within the meetings, and while a few individual meetings have come to some tentative solution, no proposal has been adopted by any QM, and it seems clear that Friends have more work to do to reach clarity on this complex issue. We will resume our deliberations on this matter at this evening’s session.

16. David Baxter, acting treasurer, presented his report on the state of our FY09 budget. As of June 30, 2009, individual contributions are about \$35,000 more than FY08, largely because of a single generous \$25,000 contribution that was pledged last spring. Monthly meeting contributions are significantly lower so far, (about \$34,000). In addition, our income from investments has also suffered. For FY09, we budgeted a deficit of \$17,000. Although our income is likely to be lower than expected, savings on expenses, largely cancel this out. Our working capital will be in the range of about \$130,000, still \$20,000 lower than FY08. We are in reasonably good financial condition, especially in light of the general financial climate. Friends accepted the report.

17. Eileen Cummings, clerk of Finance Committee, presented the proposed budget for FY10 for first review and comment. She noted a few changes from FY09: the budget projects a small increase in donations from MMs; there is a small increase for staff costs and the addition of a coordinator for Junior YM/Junior High YM; office costs are lower by approximately 30% with increased use of electronic distribution of materials, a revised process to produce the minute book, and more conservative travel budgeting; “benevolences” increased by about 30%, restoring some of the funds cut in FY09 for FUM, FWCC, and FGC.

Sunday evening, August 2, 2009

18. We began the evening meeting in our anchor groups to consider the queries:

- I. *To what extent have I as an individual been able to lay aside my own opinion and seek instead the will of the Holy Spirit in discerning how we are led as a group?*
- II. *To what extent has the limited response to threshing of sexual ethics (that is, what constitutes a positive sexual relationship) been due to:*
 - our own internal resistance to speaking about these questions publicly?
 - more important questions and needs before us?
 - the Holy Spirit calling us to proceed slowly?

- other reasons?

What can the Yearly Meeting do to support the process?

III. *What are the questions that need to be considered to identify what constitutes a positive sexual relationship?*

IV. *How can we best witness to the world and to other yearly meetings about our support for gays and lesbians?*

V. *How do we listen for the Holy Spirit when there is conflict between two good things? Consider the following pairs of good things:*

- Support FUM and its work in education and health care in Africa, while standing up for gays and lesbians.
- Respect individual conscience in contributions, while corporately discerning a common Yearly Meeting budget.
- Respect and nurture leadership and autonomy in African Quakers, while upholding those truths about gays and lesbians which we believe the Holy Spirit has given to us.

VI. *How are we led by the Holy Spirit as a Yearly Meeting on these questions?*

- Spiritual same-gender marriage under the care of the monthly meeting on these questions?
- Legal recognition of same-gender marriage by the state
- Threshing of sexual ethics/what constitutes a positive sexual relationship

Does the Holy Spirit call us to:

- wait quietly for further Light at a future time, or
- write a minute of exercise now, or
- test approval of a minute now, or
- thresh the question(s) further, or
- something else?

If more threshing is called for, in what setting should that threshing occur, and what can the Yearly Meeting do to support the process?

19. After our conversations in anchor groups, we returned to our discernment about the FUM personnel policy which bars from leadership anyone involved in a sexual relationship outside of monogamous heterosexual marriage, our relationship with FUM, and the concern among some Friends not to contribute financially to FUM. The worship was deep, and the discipline held, despite the pain of many kinds that have been expressed tonight. There was a strong sense that we need to continue in our threshing as a whole body, though we know that resolution may not come soon.

We yearn to act and dwell in love, and feel strongly the bonds of affection and relationship within our YM family, and the wider family of Friends. These are very precious to us. We hear also the claims of justice and compassion, and rejoice to witness to them. Furthermore, we acknowledge that we have much to learn and change in our own ways of acting, thinking, celebrating and forgiving, here amongst ourselves.

We have not yet found the path forward, and with God's help will carry our distress and confusion for a while more, waiting on the Spirit who is both love and justice to guide us according to our capacity, and give us the gift of endurance. We have tasted, during this worship, both the bitter spirit of mourning, and the sweet

one of confidence and joy in the Light. Way will open. We direct the clerk to make space for us to continue this discernment later this week, and concerned Friends are asked to season this matter further, and to be alert both to the spiritual issues at stake, and to practical steps we might take.

See Minute 53 for the continuation of this business item.

Monday morning, August 3, 2009

20. The Bible Half-hour began this morning with the ministry of Eden Grace, *Jubilee as rest* (Luke 4:18–19).

21. We heard excerpts from the epistle of France YM. Fear spurs us to fight or flight, but only love can inspire us to construct a world in which we will be ancestors. Friends felt led to renew their commitment to simplicity of life which cares for the earth and all its creatures, including ourselves. This simplicity, arising from love, can enrich our vision, and strengthen our sympathetic fellowship with each other.

22. We welcomed Kim Newlin (Plainfield FM, Western YM), and several visitors from Moses Brown School (MBS), including: Habib Gorgi, clerk of Board of Overseers; Elizabeth Zimmerman (Prov), friends coordinator; James Nagel, head of finance; and Joanne Hoffman, head of school until this year. We also welcomed Matt Glendinning, the new head of school, who told us that his transition to the work is going very well, and spoke of his hopes for the year ahead. He asked Friends who had been staff, or current or past overseers to stand.

23. Janet Hoffman, clerk of *Faith and Practice* Revision Committee, presented the working paper for *Chapter 3: Corporate Discernment in Meetings for Business*, to help us prepare for our deliberations on the restructuring of Moses Brown School. We experience a spiritual unity in our meetings for worship without expecting to affirm it in words. When we gather in meeting for business, we seek to discover our truth as a corporate body. We have faith that we will be guided as a group. We also have faith that we will find a way to express in words the spiritual unity we can affirm, sometimes easily, sometimes after difficult labor. Committee members then read excerpts from the working paper.

24. Richard Frechette, clerk of the Permanent Board, presented a recommendation from the Board on the incorporation of MBS, to replace the current relationship under which the school is an unincorporated division of NEYM. The Permanent Board developed this proposal in acting upon a decision of this meeting in 2008 directing Permanent Board to “discern whether it is necessary to create a new corporate structure to ensure, as Friend Moses Brown mandated, ‘the continued effective governance’ of the school, given the financial and legal realities of today.” (Minute 2008–57). He outlined the main features of the developing relationship, as follows:

A new corporation would be formed, Moses Brown School; the responsibility for governance of the school will lie with the Board of Overseers. One third of these overseers will be Friends, appointed by the Yearly Meeting, and a Friends coordinator will continue to serve on the Executive Committee of the Board.

Proposed revisions to the school's by-laws are designed to continue and deepen the relationship of New England Yearly Meeting and Moses Brown School, both immediately and for the long term, under the care of a Committee for Nurturing Friends Education. They reaffirm the long-standing requirement that Quaker process be followed in the conduct of business; and establishes a permanent mechanism, jointly subscribed to by Moses Brown School and New England Yearly Meeting, to continually evaluate how Moses Brown School will provide a Quaker education to the children of Friends as well as others. Moreover, the intent of Moses Brown School is to put renewed effort specifically to educate the children of Friends.

Under the new corporate identity, any change of the school's mission statement, or by-laws provisions related to the number or manner of selection of Friends serving on the Board, or methods of conducting business, must be approved by New England Yearly Meeting. The revised by-laws ensure that Yearly Meeting will have a real and strong role in the governance of the school, through the Board and other instruments, "in perpetuity," as provided in Moses Brown's original vision and gift.

Friends wrestled with many aspects of this proposed action. Friends care deeply about this school. Our relationship with it brings home many important questions about our religious values, the way we serve in the world, and the way we do or do not well educate our own children in our religious truths and practices. Our long deliberations, about this question, and the pain that many have expressed, reflect our desire to be good stewards of a generous gift that has been maintained and built up by the efforts of many hands, and has made valued contributions to our Yearly Meeting's life as well as the life of the Providence area.

Understanding that these important considerations will be part of the final arrangement, we accept the Permanent Board's recommendations as follows:

1. We authorize formation of a new RI corporation to be the operating entity for Moses Brown School.
2. We authorize transfer of the operations of Moses Brown School, including bank accounts, buildings, and other assets and improvements, to the new corporation, together with a long-term lease of the underlying land. We ask Permanent Board to consider carefully both the term of this lease, and mechanisms for periodic review.
3. We authorize appropriate adjustment of the arrangement between the Yearly Meeting and Providence MM with respect to the portion of the land upon which the Providence meetinghouse sits.
4. We authorize the creation of a Committee for Nurturing Friends Education, and direct the Permanent Board to finalize a charge for the committee, and then to request that Nominating Committee find the requisite number of members, to be approved by Permanent Board.

We authorize the Permanent Board to implement these changes in consultation with local legal counsel, and authorize the presiding clerk of the Yearly Meeting to execute the required legal documents on our behalf.

We note that, as the final documents are developed, concerned Friends will have abundant opportunity to make contributions to the outcome, as well as to uphold the spiritual health of the School.

We direct Permanent Board to convene a working group composed of members of the Board and any concerned Friends who wish to participate, to identify issues that Friends need to have included in the final working out of the plans. Already in this session, we have heard some specific concerns that we ask the Permanent Board and its working party to address:

- *In response to concerns about how best to characterize the Board of Overseer's decision-making process, we ask the Permanent Board to make clear that, while we do not demand that the Board of Overseers adopt Friends worship, we do expect them to maintain decision-making by gathering the sense of the meeting, rather than by majority vote. We recognize that a precise characterization of this can be a challenge, but we have found in the past three and a half centuries that the struggle to do so can deeply shape the qualities of the community and its service.*
- *Some Friends fear that the proposed change of governance will lead to further separation between the School and the Yearly Meeting, and we ask Permanent Board to establish that the School will make significant investment, both of effort and of money, to enable Friends children to attend, including such ideas as finding suitable living arrangements in private homes for students from a distance;*
- *Because the Nurture committee is a very important part of the connection between Friends and the school, we ask the Permanent Board to ensure that this committee has a clear charge consonant with the stated objectives, that it has regular meeting times, and that there be guidelines for the qualities needed by its members.*

We recognize that there remain among some Friends deep concerns about this momentous step. Some of these will be addressed by careful listening and participation in the working out of this new structure for the relationship between New England Yearly Meeting and Moses Brown School; some will only be addressed by results and outcomes—the test of time and faithful action.

Deeply aware of the complexities inherent in this process, we can affirm with joy that God's power is over all.

25. We heard a memorial minute for Graham Peters Chynoweth.

Graham Peters Chynoweth 1945–2008

After three years of living with cancer, Graham Peters Chynoweth, born Graham John Chynoweth, completed his 'journey to the other shore,' with his wife, Linda Chynoweth Peters, by his side, in the sun room at their home in Canterbury on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 2008.

Graham was born in his mother's parental home in Portsmouth, England. His childhood was a world tour, with annual moves including stays in Germany, Washington, DC, Virginia, northern Japan, and California. Graham graduated

from the United States Coast Guard Academy in 1968. His service in the Coast Guard included a tour of duty off Vietnam's Mekong Delta.

Graham married Judy Keller in 1968. They had three children: Kate, born in 1973, Gray, born in 1978, and Emo, a foster child who joined the family in 1981. The marriage ended in 1988. In 1990, Graham married Linda Peters and changed his name to Graham Peters Chynoweth. Their son Peter was born in 1993.

Graham later completed a Master's in hospital administration at George Washington University and moved to New Hampshire. His natural talents and a desire to grow roots into his community led him to the practice of law, which he began in 1983 after graduating from Franklin Pierce Law Center in Concord, NH. He focused his legal career on family law, finding professional and personal fulfillment in helping his clients through some of the most difficult times in their lives. An active member of the New Hampshire Bar Association, he served as a member of its Board of Governors and twice as chair of its Family Law Section. Through this work within the Bar, Graham played a pivotal role in helping tune state law to encourage more amicable settlements for divorcing couples. Posthumously, the New Hampshire Bar Association awarded him the E. Donald Dufresne Award for Outstanding Professionalism.

Graham was a wise counselor for his friends, for his professional clients, and for the voluntary committees and elective bodies upon which he served. Among these were a term as a representative in the NH State Legislature and a term as the first Board Chairman of NH Public Radio, having been the driving force of its creation.

One committee assignment was particularly rewarding and formative to Graham's experience and understanding of life as a Friend. That was the NEYM Long Range Planning Committee of the late 1970s. Having joined Concord MM in 1975 as a convinced Friend, he was tapped as the fresh new face to join a team "aglow with weighty Quakers" (his words). He knew the questions to ask that would aim for the root of the issue at hand. His contributions were insightful, ever encouraging, realistic, and honest. Graham added the levity needed to lighten things up at the right moments. These became his hallmarks as he applied his formidable energy to other projects throughout his life.

Working with the Long Range Planning Committee drew Graham right into the core of the yearly meeting, which led to multiple terms serving variously on Permanent Board and the Personnel Committee. And Graham always encouraged new members in Concord to delve into all that the yearly meeting had to offer. At Concord MM, Graham served as clerk for three different periods of time as well as recording clerk for several terms. He acted as recorder for many years and was also a member of the Ministry & Counsel committee. In fall of 2008, he was one of six incorporators when the meeting formed a corporation to own property for a new home to be built for the meeting.

From the late 1980s until his death Graham served on the board of the Obadiah Brown Benevolent Fund. He felt the significance of history and held his predecessors in high esteem. Graham enjoyed being able to trace the lin-

eage of his seat on that board all the way back to William Rotch, a well known Quaker of his day.

Graham delighted in the children of his community and worked tirelessly to support their growth. Graham volunteered in classrooms, annually judging spelling bees, and bringing the U.S. Constitution to life on Constitution Day. He famously and believably played the part of Benjamin Franklin in full costume before rapt young audiences. Graham served on the local school board for several terms and ultimately as its chair. He was the epitome of a public servant. His peers described him as a person of unquestioned integrity, boundless passion, and deep compassion. It was fitting that his memorial service on December 13, 2008, was held in the Canterbury Elementary School, a scant mile from his home.

Young people who found their way to Quaker meeting were nurtured, indeed treasured, by Graham. He chose to work with the elementary-aged children at NEYM Sessions and retreats. They brought out his inner child. He played hard at JYM Ball and everything else. He also mentored the young people, sharing his passion for language and precise expression, so important to the education of new clerks. Graham took great satisfaction in their development as leaders for our future. He also enjoyed role-playing leaders of our past at YM sessions, William Rotch among others.

So much of what Graham did arose from prayerful intention and his awareness of his place in the endless stream of life. He was aware that he had received many gifts and shared them generously with those who were fortunate enough to know him. Graham recognized the importance of life's passages and made a point to celebrate them with the essential community of family and friends just as this minute does now. His toasts, with flute of sparkling cider raised high, were renowned. A birthday, a special accomplishment, an anniversary, an award – all were significant to him, worthy of recognition.

Though he always returned to Quaker meeting, Graham sojourned with several other spiritual communities. With Linda he attended services at two Roman Catholic parishes. He entered into fellowship with Christian pastors and lay leaders during the formation of WVNH, a Gospel radio station. This was a transformative time of ferment and growth in Graham's spiritual life. He was also very much at home in the Canterbury Community Church where his spirit was nourished. His keen intellect and spiritual discipline challenged him to probe for answers and guidance while his heart and the Holy Spirit led him to search ever more deeply for God, and the seed of Christ within.

It is the custom at Concord Meeting, at the rise of worship, for each attendee to introduce him or herself. Invariably, Graham stated, "My name is Graham P. Chynoweth. I live in grace and reside in Canterbury with my wife Linda Chynoweth Peters and our son Peter Chynoweth." In large measure that grace was living in the awareness of what is fundamentally important. A young Friend wrote to thank him for being such a peaceful, steady presence through her childhood: "I will be holding you in the Light during all your transitions, and I firmly believe that wherever you reside, you will always live in grace."

Graham never shrank from the truth. And he was blessed that he came to understand the truth of his own mortality. During Graham's last month of life his visitors found a man whose ministry was not done. He lifted their spirits even as they came to minister to him. He put them at ease. He inquired after their prayer life. His compassion demonstrated that he was at peace with the truth of his impending death. He passed from this life in the same manner in which he lived. We are so blessed to continue to share with him the great sea of love even as we miss so deeply the comfort of his physical presence.

—CONCORD MONTHLY MEETING, DOVER QUARTERLY MEETING

Monday evening, August 3, 2009

26. We welcomed Larry Jalowiec (Richland MM, Philadelphia YM) and Laverne Shelton (Madison MM, Northern YM) representing the FGC Committee for Ministry on Racism, and Bruce Birchard (Central Philadelphia MM) FGC Secretary.

27. We heard a memorial minute for Virginia Towle.

Virginia Towle, 1922–2008

We give thanks to God for the life of Virginia Towle, who served actively among Friends in New England for many years.

Virginia Tripp Towle was born and brought up in Westport, Massachusetts. At age five she contracted polio, and spent a year isolated in a hospital before entering grade school a year early. She remembered failing only one question on the test for early entrance: "What color is a white horse?"

Her parents exposed their children to a number of churches. Virginia found a home in Westport FM three miles away and began attending on her own.

During her teens and college years, she earned room and board by working as a nanny. Her father lent her tuition for her first semester of college with the understanding she would be responsible for all future tuition. She obtained a degree in Home Economics at Massachusetts State College in Amherst, Massachusetts.

While working at Indianapolis Children's Museum, she attended the Five Years Meeting Triennial (now FUM). She was met at the Richmond, IN, train station by a Friend from Friends General Conference, who was accompanied by Phillip Towle. Virginia and Phil married in 1946. For their honeymoon, they bicycled throughout the British Isles on a tandem bicycle.

During their early years of marriage, Phil and Virginia lived in a castle in Luxembourg. Although she suffered from motion sickness, Virginia would fly to Brussels to greet and provide hospitality for young Americans coming to Europe to participate in post-World War II rebuilding efforts. She also took part in a Young Friends caravan that bicycled through Europe after the war.

Upon returning to the United States, Virginia and Phil lived in Philadelphia and were active in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. When Phil learned the research

and development he was involved in at Leeds and Northrup was being used to develop rockets with military applications, he terminated his employment.

They changed life and career directions, moving to Hinckley, Maine, where they were active in North Fairfield Meeting. In Hinckley, they worked at The Goodwill School, a school for boys who came from broken families or who had lost a parent. While serving as a house-parent, Virginia gave birth to the first three of their five children.

In 1956 the family moved to Rindge, New Hampshire, to work at Hampshire Country School for bright, emotionally disturbed students. After living at the school for a year, they were encouraged by its founder to purchase a house in Rindge. There some of the most challenging boys could live with them as family members. Virginia and Phil's last two children were born in Rindge.

The Towles had close connections with The Meeting School, which was just starting up in Rindge. Virginia and Phil, along with other Meeting School families, founded Monadnock Monthly Meeting, which originally met in members' homes and later at the school.

In the 1960s Phil and Virginia were called to work for FUM in Kenya. Phil traveled ahead to begin teaching at Chavakali Boys School. Virginia followed on a freighter with their five children. While in Kenya the family attended Kaimosi Friends Church. Virginia held a leadership role in what is now the National Council of Churches of Kenya. She focused on the roles of women both in the Friends Church and within the Council of Churches. When traveling on church business, she broke with colonialist missionary tradition by insisting on staying in the homes of her Kenyan counterparts and friends.

Virginia served as headmistress of the Kaimosi Demonstration School, an elementary Friends school which her youngest children attended. She expanded the school's size, reinvented it as a boarding school, and opened it to Kenyans beyond Kaimosi. Every school holiday the family traveled widely throughout eastern Africa, taking an entourage that included friends, students, guests, and teachers from Chavakali. Later, Virginia would enjoy telling stories about car breakdowns, dealing with wildlife around their tent, and negotiating checkpoints and language barriers in Burundi and Rwanda.

Virginia remained active in women's issues when she returned to New Hampshire. Over the years she traveled extensively throughout North and Central America as a delegate to gatherings of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), FUM, and United Society of Friends Women (USFW). Within NEYM she served on FUM, and FWCC Committees, Nominating and Personnel Committees, Permanent Board, and as clerk of USFW-NE.

Virginia made a practice of attending meeting for worship faithfully, and of visiting other Friends' Meetings when she traveled. Even when near blindness curtailed her driving in later years, she attended whenever she could find a driver. Struggling with physical disabilities stemming from diabetes, she kept up with what she deemed necessary and important.

When Virginia moved to Meredith, NH, to live with her daughters, Monadnock Meeting (home of her longest membership) felt her absence. She had offered her gift of hospitality, welcoming newcomers and hosting Friends

in her home. She worked quietly behind the scene to help build community, storing little tidbits about individuals to link people with common interests.

Virginia always felt close to the earth, and loved gardening. She also loved to walk, collecting interesting objects to bring home as souvenirs. Many remember how she added a certain flare to her passion for simplicity and sustainability by driving a sporty red Honda CRX that got good gas mileage.

Never a proselytizer, Virginia allowed her life to exemplify her beliefs. She could be persistent (to the point of inflexibility at times), always basing her position on principle. She courageously advocated for others, particularly for school-aged children who were having difficulty with the system.

North Sandwich Friends Meeting benefited greatly from her long Quaker experience and her careful attention to correct process and proper recording, as well as her good humor. Lifelong, Virginia was a minister who responded to the needs of others in her home meeting and in the wider Quaker community.

—MONADNOCK MONTHLY MEETING, NORTHWEST QUARTERLY MEETING

Tuesday morning, August 4, 2009

28. The Bible Half-hour began this morning with the ministry of Eden Grace. *Jubilee as redemption* (Luke 4:18–19)

29. The clerk welcomed Amanda Kemp, of the Theater for Transformation who will be performing in the evening, *Show me the Franklins: Remembering the Ancestors, Slavery & Benjamin Franklin*.

30. Alice Schaeffer (Fram) introduced the new head of the New England Friends Home, Susan Sheehan, who will take up her position in the coming week. Gretchen Condon, director of the New England Friends Home for the past 14 years, has retired.

31. We heard a prayer request from the New England Regional Office (NERO) of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) director Keith Harvey. AFSC is facing deep fiscal challenges involving significant downsizing of operations and this has had a deep effect on the region and the institution's programming. Keith asked us to pray for NERO-AFSC as they face challenges, and to hold in the light those leaving the office as they go through this transition.

32. Ian Harrington (Camb), clerk of the Called-meeting Planning Group presented their report of the mid-year called meeting for worship, which took place April 17-19 in Portland, ME. This time for meeting, praying and making space for the spirit was held as directed by the Minute for Peace (2008–52). Ministry & Counsel jointly with Peace & Social Concerns Committee and other Friends planned the gathering, seeking the guidance of God's will. The weekend brought over 200 Friends together. They sought our direction, and asked us to consider the following proposal:

New England Yearly Meeting urges all our meetings to continue seeking what we are called to do to address the tragic state of the world, and we encour-

age the Called-meeting Planning Group, under the care of Ministry & Counsel and Peace & Social Concerns, to provide opportunities for such discernment through deeper and extended worship in the coming year.

Friends were invited to participate in the planning moving forward, without at this point defining a clear oversight structure. Friends shared their desire to have Young Friends and Young Adult Friends participate in planning and attending.

See minute 50 for the continuation of this item.

33. Bonnie Norton (Well), clerk of Sessions Committee, described the year-long planning process for this year's gathering. In their discernment of the theme for Sessions 2009, committee members were moved both to restore and celebrate the vitality of our Quaker faith during this time of profound change in our country and in the world. The theme that came forward was *Living into Jubilee*. Yearly Meeting 2009 will be the beginning of a year of Jubilee culminating in our 350th Sessions in 2010. In preparation for next year's gathering, Bonnie offered for our consideration the following queries:

What does living into jubilee mean to you?

What does jubilee mean to your MM, your QM, your committee?

What do we want Sessions 2010 to look like?

We settled into a period of reflection out of which Friends shared hopes for the coming year. The clerk urged us to continue the deep listening and discernment of plans for next year's continuation of Jubilee.

34. In the spirit of our Jubilee theme, Friends affirmed or approved as appropriate, the items from the Unity agenda:

1. Staff Reports — *See page 71 for the staff reports.*
2. The State of the Society Report of Ministry & Counsel. — *See page 34 for the State of Society report.*
3. The Committee reports. — *See page 79 for the committee reports.*
4. Nominating Committee Slate — *See page 102 for the Nominating Committee List.*
5. Bank Resolutions — *See page 35 for the resolutions.*
6. Re-hire Nathaniel Shed for Friends Camp; appointment of clerks, at-large Nominating Committee appointments. — *See page 36 for these appointments.*
7. The Peace & Social Concerns minute to endorse a call for a commission of inquiry into U.S. sponsored torture was approved with one revision. — *See page 36 for the minute.*

While we have gone ahead with this unity format for this year, Friends expressed regret that we have approved a minute of reports we have not heard delivered in person and with which we have not lived corporately. Using this new procedure, we have not had the opportunity, in a personal way, to know in business session the staff, committee clerks and other presenters, and hearing them as they share their spirit, is missing.

See the addendum to the minutes for the continuation of this business item.

Tuesday evening, August 4, 2009

35. We gathered for the performance of *Show me the Franklins: Remembering the Ancestors, Slavery and Benjamin Franklin* by The Theater of Transformation. We were invited into a post-performance conversation about race and the creation of new possibilities by remembering, forgiving others and ourselves, and releasing our reasons for why things can't change. Friends shared moving descriptions of how experiences of racism keep the legacy of slavery alive in their daily lives. We hunger to be able to talk about race and racism, not from the head, but from the heart.

Wednesday morning, August 5, 2009

36. The Bible Half-hour continued this morning with Eden Grace. *Jubilee as restoration* (Luke 4:18–19)

37. An announcement from the Development Committee urged us to donate in any way we can to NEYM.

38. We welcomed visitors Douglas Alston, recipient of the Freedmen's Fund Education Fellowship and his mother Pam Cummings. James Varner (Oro), representing Freedmen's Fund, read a letter from Douglas to NEYM Friends describing his first year at Guilford College, after which Douglas and his mother thanked all of us for the opportunity he has received.

39. We heard the memorial minutes for Adelaide Nichols and Roberta Nichols.

Adelaide Dustin Nichols 1916–2008

We give thanks to God for the life of Adelaide Dustin Nichols who died quietly Tuesday, April 8, 2008 after a long illness. Adelaide began life on the family farm in Contoocook, NH, on Oct. 19, 1916. Her life on the farm included training oxen, pumping water, cooking on a wood stove, delivering milk before school, and riding a horse to school. She developed a lifelong love for animals and gardening.

When Robert O. Nichols drove his sister Rosamond to Contoocook to visit her Bates classmate and future husband Eldon Dustin, he met Eldon's sister, Adelaide. Robert and Adelaide married October 30, 1937. They celebrated their 65th anniversary shortly before Robert died. They had three children, Larry, Roberta, and Stan, ten grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren, all of whom she cherished.

Family and friends discovered in Adelaide a source of wisdom and assistance in life skills and child rearing. She welcomed young people into her home, she counseled them, and she supported them. This work, in turn, deepened her spiritual life. She reported a seminal moment in her spiritual life when a foster child had run away; Adelaide realized she could personally do nothing but pray

and trust God. She also derived much spiritual strength from her connection with nature, enjoying gardening for its practical value and its spiritual value.

As a young mother she was part of a sewing circle that made sure no neighboring family fell through the cracks. She was highly pragmatic. When she saw that something needed doing, she did it. She was a strongly spiritual woman, active in Concord Friends Meeting and in New England Yearly Meeting. She took advantage of Bible study opportunities in both communities, often choosing Bible centered workshops at Yearly Meeting, yet sampling broadly from many spiritual teachers, as evidenced by her book collection donated to Concord Meeting Library. For example, she was deeply moved by the Letters of the *Scattered Brotherhood*. She was a faithful and active member of USFW- New England for many years.

Adelaide's family was central to her life. She brought her grandchildren to Yearly Meeting, and was thrilled when they became leaders. She supported her husband's volunteer work in the prisons and demonstrated great patience with him.

We all felt safe in Adelaide's presence. She taught many by example about kindness, forgiveness, and the power of love. As she lost her memory to dementia, she was never angry but still exuded gentleness. We miss her centered presence, her calm, humble bearing, and her joyful smile.

—CONCORD MONTHLY MEETING, DOVER QUARTERLY MEETING

Roberta Nichols 1944–2008

Born August 24, 1944, in Rockville, Conn., to Robert O. and Adelaide (Dustin) Nichols, Roberta Nichols graduated from Suffield High School, Conn. in 1962 and Acadia University in Nova Scotia, where she received a B.A. degree in biology in 1966. She did graduate work at Plymouth University in the field of elementary education and earned a Master's degree in counseling psychology from Antioch New England in 1988.

Roberta's long career in early education began in elementary schools in Fonda, NY, and Plaistow, NH, before she moved back to her grandparents' farm in Contoocook, NH, and began teaching at Merrimack Valley Day Care Service in Concord in 1970. She went on to spend 38 years at Merrimack Valley Day Care before retiring in 2008 for health reasons.

Roberta's kindness, patience, gentleness, and great love for children were conspicuous and well known to all who knew her. Throughout her career, she worked with disadvantaged children ages one to 12. Roberta became a lead teacher and mentored many new teachers. Over her decades of service, she led many teacher workshops dealing with issues in early childhood education. Sensitive to the needs of others and ever desiring to help them, she became a foster mother and eventually adopted one of the children. Her unconditional, selfless, and never-ending love of her adopted daughter, Angie, was inspiring to all who knew Roberta.

Roberta had an openness and goodness about her that reminded us of the pure innocence of a child, yet was tempered by her life experience. She took great joy in the simple things in life. Roberta had an infectious laugh, coupled with a sometimes-wry sense of humor, and delighted in the company of her family, friends, and colleagues, all of whom she valued highly. She devoted much of her time to caring for her parents in their declining years, giving up her own home and living with them to care for them. She delighted in all opportunities to be with her grandchildren.

She loved flowers and rarely missed a flower show. She also enjoyed the ocean, singing, swimming, travel, “letterboxing,” browsing yard sales and flea markets, reading, and crafting. She took great joy in music and cherished any opportunity to attend a concert with friends or a gathering for singing. We miss hearing her lovely soprano voice in weekly singing before worship and at the annual Carol Sing, which she never missed.

She was a long-time member of the Concord MM and active in causes of peace, justice, and opposition to homelessness. Roberta truly lived the testimony of simplicity: she designed and sewed her own clothes; she lived frugally; she designed and built her passive solar home. Roberta was humble, ever gentle, ever sensitive to others, and looked always for ways to serve. We found her a great source of spiritual wisdom and comfort, much like her mother Adelaide. Her messages in meeting conveyed her sense of hope and belief in the power of goodness and love, and her understanding of her own culpability and weaknesses. She contributed her wisdom to the wider Quaker community by serving on the NEYM Ministry & Counsel and within her local meeting on Ministry & Counsel.

When she learned she had only months to live, she embraced her days and made plans to do many of the things she had never had a chance to do before. She got to swim with dolphins in Hawaii. She finally experienced the Grand Canyon and the northwest USA and western Canada, and she visited friends and family across North America. Roberta died quietly Oct. 28, 2008, at the Concord Regional Visiting Nurse Association Hospice House. In spite of her illness, her final months were as full of courage and grace and light as the rest of her life had been.

—CONCORD MONTHLY MEETING, DOVER QUARTERLY MEETING

40. Martha Penzer (Burl), clerk, and other members of the Correspondence Committee, presented us with the first draft of an epistle. Friends approved, with appreciation for their work, adding a request that the committee continue to discern our corporate spirit over the remaining days of Sessions.

41. Janet Hoffman, clerk of *Faith and Practice* Revision Committee, thanked our presiding clerk for initiating a practice this year of yoking the draft chapters of our *Faith and Practice* revision to our work on specific issues in our meetings for business. In preparation for our consideration of the staffing restructure proposals and the proposed vision/mission statement for NEYM, committee members then read

excerpted advices and queries from the working paper for *Chapter 11: General Advices and Queries*.

See Minute 42 for the continuation of this business item.

42. Richard Frechette, clerk of Permanent Board, briefly introduced the Staff Reorganization committee's work on organizational restructure. The lack of a formal statement of vision/mission presented a challenge to them. Permanent Board charged an ad hoc working group with articulating a vision/mission statement. Carolyn Hilles-Pilant (B Hill), a member of that working group presented us with a summary of the process of evolving a statement, the issues encountered by the working group, and the considerations the drafters took into account. In the statement the committee wanted to name the diversity that is us and to underline our growth and action into the world. Listening to God through the voices of Friends of NEYM they drafted and brought to us the following Vision Statement:

New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Witnessing to the power of God in our lives...Spirit-led to faithful action.

Yearly Meeting provides a voice and a center for Quakers in New England, upholding monthly and quarterly meetings through support, resources and connections so that Friends can do God's work.

New England Friends come together in worship and fellowship from a rich diversity of theological perspectives and both unprogrammed and pastoral traditions. We are called to listen deeply to the Inward Guide and to each other as we seek to be a gathered faith community.

Witnessing to the power of God in our lives, we envision a vibrant and growing Quaker presence in the world, Spirit-led to faithful action.

While Friends considered approving the Vision Statement, there remained unease among some at the institutional cast of this endeavor and an affirmation that we already have an articulated statement of mission within *Faith and Practice*. Friends did not reach unity on this.

See Minute 46 for the continuation of this business item.

43. Richard Frechette, clerk of Permanent Board, introduced Edward Baker (West) and Karen Sánchez-Eppler (Nham), who described for us the work of the steering committee on staff restructure. This body was created and tasked by Minutes 2008-27 and 2008-48, to engage in a year of discernment concerning a new staffing proposal to be brought to Sessions 2009.

The staffing structure recommended by the committee, in collaboration with the Personnel Committee and Coordinating & Advisory Committee, and approved by Permanent Board for presentation to Friends at sessions, is:

- *That both the current positions of field secretary and administrative & communications secretary be eliminated;*
- *That there be a single yearly meeting secretary, with both executive and pastoral functions, and that this position be offered to Jonathan Vogel-Borne.*

- *That a new position of communications director be created, with office administration, publication and web site development functions, and that this position be offered to Katharine Clark.*
- *That the yearly meeting secretary report and be accountable to a restructured and expanded Coordinating & Advisory (C&A) Committee, consisting of the presiding clerk, the clerk of Permanent Board, the clerk of Ministry & Counsel, the YM Treasurer or clerk of the Finance Committee; that the C&A Committee name one of its members to serve as the primary supervisor to the yearly meeting secretary; that the committee be staffed by the yearly meeting secretary; and that the C&A Committee report regularly to the Permanent Board and to YM at Sessions.*
- *That the restructured C&A Committee receive program and staffing requests from YM committees and from the Yearly Meeting in its annual Sessions. With direction from Sessions (and the Permanent Board as necessary for timeliness) the C&A Committee, together with the Yearly Meeting secretary, would be charged with prioritizing program and staffing requests, generating a yearly plan which includes the creation of a budget proposal to meet that plan, and an annual evaluation structure.*

Permanent Board has also united with the recommendation of the NEYM Youth Programs Committee for the establishment of a full-time Junior YM/Junior High YM coordinator position. This position would mirror the Young Friends/Young Adult Friends coordinator position, and would include coordination of JYM and JHYM retreats during the year, as well as overall oversight and support for the JYM and JHYM programs during Sessions.

If both the treasurer and the clerk of Finance Committee might wish to serve on Coordinating & Advisory Committee, Permanent Board will make that determination. These recommendations are for implementation October 1st.

We gave grateful thanks for the good work of our staff. With reservations about the amount of work that has been assigned in this new structure to each of our staff positions, we approved the proposal.

Wednesday evening, August 5, 2009

44. Friends met in anchor groups to consider the queries:

- What one thing will I let go of or lay down by August 2010 to make more room for the Spirit?
- What one thing would I like my Quaker community to lay down to make more room for the spirit this year?
- If I wish to lay down a large burden (or several things), how can I ask and receive support in creating space for the Holy One?

45. We welcomed visitors Kevin Victoriano (Hart), Nora Spicer (Bill) from Young Friends, and Anne Jenkins-Provost (NSan).

46. We approved the minutes of Wednesday morning, noting the good work of the Vision/Mission working party, but also a concern that we had not specified in our deliberations any follow up action for the Vision/Mission statement. It is held for further discernment.

47. Eileen Cummings, clerk of Finance Committee, presented their final version of the fiscal year 2010 budget, which we approved.
48. Martha Penzer, clerk of Correspondence Committee, read the revised epistle for our consideration. With thanks to the committee for their work, the epistle was approved.
49. We heard a memorial minute for Jean & Norman Constantineau.

Jean & Norman Constantineau 1928–2008

Jean and Norman Constantineau, members of Lawrence MM, died within three weeks of each other in January and February, 2008. Jean Patricia Constantineau was born in Lawrence, MA, on June 30, 1928, to Mary O’Kane & Eugene Forbes Tolman. Norman Albert Constantineau was born in Lawrence, MA, on May 18, 1928, to Alfred & Elaise Constantineau. These high school sweethearts were married on December 21, 1947, and enjoyed a joyous life together for sixty-one years. The love and light, which Norman and Jean reflected throughout their lives, came in part from their remarkably close marriage, often described as a marriage made in heaven—they were always happiest when they were together.

Jean and Norman joined Lawrence MM in 1951, after a deliberate and thoughtful search for a religious community. They raised their two daughters, Karen and Jan, in the meeting and were strong supporters of Friends education, sending both girls to Lincoln School, particularly because of the advantages of a girls Friends school. The Constantineau home was a wonderful place to grow up in, serving as a crossroads for friends, neighbors, and the numerous visitors who came as the result of the many family committee involvements. One had only to enter the Constantineau home and receive Jean’s warm greeting to know that he or she was a treasured guest who would be valued and closely listened to. During the Vietnam War years, Jean served on the meeting hospitality committee and Norman on NEYM Peace & Social Concerns Committee, bringing the family into contact with the wider world of the peace movement, with all its diversity. Jean remembered one Japanese peacemaker bringing a special gift of live crabs to the noon meal, offering the family, “all you want.”

During the war period of the sixties, Jean worked in the Dean’s office of Merrimack College, where she also was studying library science, graduating with her degree at the age of fifty. Jean quickly became a focus for students interested in nonviolence, and students flocked to her for guidance. During this period, the Constantineaus participated in a sit-in at the draft board as part of a group of conscientious objectors engaged in passive resistance. The group was taken to the police station and detained, but not formally booked. It was during this period that the Constantineaus organized an antiwar vigil on the Lawrence City Common with representatives from area churches, the first such peace vigil the conservative mill city had ever known. Jean’s concern for the race issue led the Constantineaus to help organize the first intervisitation Sunday between all-black and all-white churches, which included follow-up visits to each other’s homes.

Norman was appointed to the Peace & Social Concerns Committee soon after joining the meeting in 1951, and remained on this committee either at the monthly meeting or YM with some interruptions until the 1980s. Norman worked on Oaths of Allegiance, counseling for Conscientious Objectors, the local alcohol problem, preventing recruitment films from being shown to high school age boys, and showing AFSC peace films in area schools and churches. Norman and Jean had a lifelong concern for the United Nations, and Norman worked on local commemorations for UN Day held in Lawrence. In 1963, after more than a decade as representative to Salem Quarterly Meeting, Norman was named as its clerk. This was a difficult assignment, since the QM was asked to resolve a disagreement concerning Amesbury MM. Norman approached this challenging time with his characteristic diligence, patience and gentleness. This approach bore fruit in subsequent years when ultimately the dispute was resolved. Lawrence MM will long miss Norman and Jean—who showed us the way, the Truth, and the Light.

—LAWRENCE MONTHLY MEETING, SALEM QUARTERLY MEETING

50. We reconsidered the Called-meeting Planning Group's proposal in minute 32 that they should continue in its work.

The clerk noted that the proposal does not contain a structure for moving forward and asked for concrete ideas on how this work will be done. It is the expectation of Friends that the Called-meeting Planning Group, with its overseeing committees and Earthcare Ministries, will carry forward the implementation of their plan, and following our new staffing structure, Ministry & Counsel along with Coordinating & Advisory Committee will discern how staff might be involved. Friends expressed the desire that individual Young Friends and Young Adult Friends be invited to participate in this process. Friends approved the proposal.

51. This week Friends had a first taste of Jubilee, a time to take stock of where we are and where we need to go, a time of deep consideration for where God is leading us, the marking of a new beginning. The clerk asked the body to consider how we were going to move into Jubilee for the 2010 year. We considered a number of wonderful ideas and see possibilities for the future. We have also heard from Friends of the importance of being flexible and obedient, faithful listeners for God's voice in moving forward. As we have unpacked the many dimensions of the Jubilee message, we have been moved by the call to truth telling, celebration, liberation, restoration, and rest. This tells us something about our about spiritual condition. In seeing this much, we have been faithful in the first few steps; we should continue. We will be lead further, as the way opens. We invite every Friend and every segment of our community: committees, monthly meetings, and quarters, to commit themselves to discern next steps into Jubilee.

Thursday morning, August 6, 2009

52. Eden Grace gave the concluding Bible Half-hour. *Jubilee, Jesus, & the prophetic tradition* (Luke 4:21)

53. Earlier this week, a working party was convened on our relationship with FUM, the FUM personnel policy, and sexual ethics. This party has met five times during Sessions, and presented two proposals. We are grateful for their concerned work. We considered each proposal in turn.

The working party presented a minute. After careful consideration, we approved sending the following minute to our monthly meetings:

Minute of Affirmation for consideration of Monthly Meetings.

Friends in New England Yearly Meeting experience the varieties of love in our community as gifts of God. We are all children of God, and we all have the same potential to reflect the Divine Light in our lives. Our hearts resonate deeply with the biblical injunctions to “love God” and to “love your neighbor as yourself.”

Just as Friends have historically witnessed to the Light present among all races and genders, we witness that the Light is present among people of all sexual orientations and gender identities or gender expressions. We experience our sexuality and sexual identity as integral components of who we are as children of God.

We are grateful for the fruits of the Spirit and the blessings of ministry and leadership that God has sent our spiritual community through the hands and lives of all Friends, regardless of their sexual orientation or identity. Being mindful of the oppression lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, intersex, and queer (LGTBIQ) Friends face, we feel a special commitment to offer loving support to these Friends.

We recognize that families that include LGTBIQ parents or children face additional difficulties in our society. We hope to remain sensitive to those difficulties and to respond together with love, integrity, and witness when needed. We recognize the need to support children who are questioning their own sexual orientation or gender, and we support their discernment and living out of the identity the Spirit leads them to.

For many years, many of our monthly meetings have experienced the blessings of having same-sex couples and marriages in our midst. With every marriage taken under its care, the meeting affirms that each relationship is the work of the Spirit, and a blessing to the couple, to their families and to the Friends community. We affirm the good order of same-sex marriages that are and have been conducted in some monthly meetings of NEYM. We encourage all of our constituent monthly meetings to discern how they can best offer to all couples the same care, and affirmations of their leadings to walk together in love.

54. With regard to financial contributions to FUM, in the light of the FUM Personnel Policy, we approved the following minute.

Minute for Finance to FUM

If a monthly meeting minutes the intention of some of its members to exclude FUM from their contribution to NEYM, the MM treasurer will notify the NEYM treasurer of that decision, including a copy of the MM minute with the communication. The monthly meeting will then decrease their intended contribution by the appropriate amount, and the NEYM treasurer will decrease our contribution to FUM by the same amount. The MM treasurer is responsible for calculating the percentage of their budget that goes to NEYM. For FY09, the percentage of the NEYM budget that goes to FUM is 1.5%.

A fund will be established to which individuals can donate to add to the Yearly Meeting's contribution to FUM. Individuals may donate to this fund if they wish to help ensure that the full budgeted amount goes to FUM.

The NEYM treasurer will exercise care in communicating with FUM about the potential variability in NEYM's contribution to FUM.

Friends find themselves painfully stretched between apparently conflicting imperatives, in both of which the honor of Truth is involved, in the context of our continued committed relationship with FUM. We understand that it will place a burden on Permanent Board, Finance Committee, treasurer and the accounts manager to elaborate the implementation. We further recognize that we must develop a more permanent response, in right ordering, and taking care that Friends are kept well informed as the work proceeds. Therefore, this process is to be in force until September 30, 2010, unless explicitly extended by the YM in its Sessions next year.

We are struggling with this decision, even though it is taken in tenderness to conscience. Several Friends told us that they are not in unity with this decision, but are willing to stand aside.

55. Jonathan Vogel-Borne, field secretary, gave a report on the YM Sessions. Seven hundred twenty-six Friends attended this year, close to the average attendance of other years. Of these, 234 were under 35, include roughly 70 YAFs. 17 children in child care, 56 in JYM, 39 JHYM, and 66 YFs. There were 16 campers. Older adults numbered 540. We will be at Bryant University next year, starting August 7, 2010.

56. We heard reports from adult visitors to our youth groups:

- Childcare. Martha Penzer—If you go to childcare, you get to do pudding finger painting and then lick your fingers
- JYM κ-2. Rebecca White and Allan Kehrman—inclusion, creativity, caring, sharing, and song. Discussion of wheel safety (noting that the adults sometimes don't obey the rules).
- JYM 3-6. Patsy Shotwell and Charlotte Fardelman—Business: proceeding in good order: scooters, bicycles and rules at intersections. A working group developed a minute which was brought to the meeting for business. "Every year I try to do this, and it's always the same—kids having a great time, the adults are loving and working hard with them."
- JHYM. Carol Rein and Dorothy Zug—We were present for a discussion on the Sabbath. The students were arranged around the room but all connected—by knitting, by their hair, by hand-holding. One student offered a poem—a memorable line says: Dealing with the sacred is not passive! There was a

lively discussion about Jubilee, and the experience of Sabbath observance in Judaism. They learned that Quakers use queries for guidance, and that the Sabbath is God's gift to us.

- YFs: Theodora Waring—The YFs have two kinds of committees: year-long and short-term, for this week. They discussed a wide and thoughtful range of possible themes for retreats. Eileen Cummings recounted how YAF space invaders came in and took the seniors out (to be introduced to the YAF group into which they will move next year.)
- YAFs: Debbie Humphries and Heidi Blocher: We're blessed by the gifts and faithfulness of our YAFs who are present in all parts of the sessions, with a range of gifts and ministries. The visitors reported on lively and well-attended interest groups on spirituality and sexuality and on deepening worship. Business sessions were serious and loving, and light. There is great promise in our young people.

57. We heard the epistles from the various parts of our Yearly Meeting.

58. No further business appearing, Friends, including all our children, concluded in worship, purposing to meet, if consistent with the Divine will, on 8th month, 7th, 2010, at Bryant College in Smithfield, RI.

Addendum to the minutes, from the "Unity Agenda"

State of Society Report

Every new calendar year, the monthly and quarterly meetings of NEYM are asked to perform a "searching self-examination ...[of]... spiritual strengths and weaknesses, and of the efforts made to foster growth in the spiritual life" (1985 *Faith and Practice*, p. 244). The Yearly Meeting provides some guiding queries, and asks that the resulting State of Society reports be returned in the spring. Approximately 30 percent of monthly and quarterly meetings do so.

We wonder if looking at our statistics would better help us understand the spiritual health of NEYM. We note that the demographic makeup of yearly meeting is aging in a manner that is not adequately explained by national demographic patterns. We also note that the membership and number of attenders has not grown over the past 20 years. How can the yearly meeting sustain itself if these trends continue?

There are, however, many green and growing aspects of NEYM. As meetings and as individuals, Friends value the work of the Spirit and their work in society. Most monthly meetings report a satisfactory spiritual life, though smaller, rural meetings tend to report more concern in this area. Most meetings would agree with one meeting's report:

There is a sense of being brought in and held, and a sense of being sent out again — of being nurtured yet nudged to do more, or to do what we do with more of a Spirit-led constancy.

Within the Friends community, we seek to understand who we are and explore our theological diversity in a loving way. We value our attenders (occasional and long-term) and ponder the meaning of membership. Some meetings have released Friends for service in the ministry, and have begun the process of recording Friends as ministers. Many Friends travel with concerns and practice intervisitation. Several meetings have held *Quaker Quest* sessions. Adult education is vital to many meetings.

Friends responded strongly to the plan for a called meeting for worship in response to a minute on peace that was approved at Sessions 2008. Other highlights from the monthly and quarterly meetings include local community action of all sorts, nonviolence, racial and social justice, spirituality and sexual ethics, earth care, and youth ministry.

The YM is blessed with a gifted staff and clerk, and the many committee volunteers that actively work on our behalf. Our youth programs continue to thrive. We treasure the experience of older Friends and mourn the loss of those who have died.

As a body, the YM remains without a sense about several issues important to us, including:

- Participation in and contribution to Friends United Meeting (in response to an FUM personnel policy considered by the Yearly Meeting to be discriminatory).
- The degree and focus of corporate action in response to the condition of our world.
- The financial challenges that face the YM at the present time, made more difficult by economic conditions.

How can we heal ourselves as a community and recommit ourselves to God and one another, even as we acknowledge the anger and hurt feelings after conflict within NEYM (and sometimes about the nature and structure of YM itself)? What are the underlying spiritual conditions that might account for these struggles? We recognize the truth of one meeting's experience:

While we may aspire to true unity, we do not always experience that unity; nevertheless, the aspiration is an important one.

We cannot know what our Jubilee year will bring. But perhaps we should consider the initial State of Society query sent to meetings this year:

What is the Spirit asking of us? Is the Spirit asking us to move forward on this ...[task]... or is [it] something that we can lay aside for a time to attend to that still small voice, the sole authentic authority for movement?

Bank Resolutions Minute

The following resolutions are brought by the Finance Committee:

- 1 That Edward Gerrish Mair be appointed New England Yearly Meeting treasurer for the ensuing year.
- 2 That Sandra Moyer be appointed New England Yearly Meeting assistant treasurer for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified.

- 3 That Elizabeth H Muench be appointed Friends Camp treasurer for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified. The Friends Camp treasurer will work under the oversight of the NEYM treasurer and the Friends Camp director.
- 4 That the NEYM treasurer be authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of New England Yearly Meeting as needed.
- 5 That the Camp treasurer be authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of Friends Camp as needed.
- 6 That the assistant treasurer, the communications director, and the yearly meeting be designated as alternate signers, individually, of all bank accounts of NEYM of the Religious Society of Friends, except those separately defined in #7, for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified.
- 7 That the Friends Camp director, the Friends Camp treasurer, and a designated member of the Friends Camp Committee be authorized, individually, as signers of the Friends Camp bank accounts.

Appointment of Clerks

Permanent Board minute 09.44, Report of Clerks Nominating Committee; the following nominations for 2010 were presented:

- Presiding clerk: Linda Jenkins
- Recording clerks: Brian Drayton & Rebecca Leuchak
- Reading clerks: Greg Williams & Beth Bussiere-Nichols (Port)

Friends accepted these nominations and will forward them to Sessions.

At-Large Nominating Committee Appointments

Permanent Board minute 09.45:

Report of Internal Nominating Committee; the following name was presented for at-large member of the NEYM Nominating Committee: Edward Mair (Ames). Friends approved these recommendations.

A Minute Calling for a Commission of Inquiry into U.S.-Sponsored Torture

“Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.”
—Hebrews 13:3 NRSV

New England Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends (NEYM) calls for a Commission of Inquiry into the use of torture by our country. As noted in our Minute 2006-73:

“New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends finds torture immoral, illegal, and abhorrent. Torture—in wars, in prisons, and in homes—steals the humanity of the tortured, the torturer, and those who have knowledge of it.

“We believe in the sanctity of life, a faith that arises from our experi-

ence that there is that of God in everyone. This Light helps us to see our face in the stranger's face. Fear and denial cause us to forget our deep connections with one another. Only when we are willing to surrender to the Light, individually and corporately, can we eliminate the roots of torture.

"New England Yearly Meeting calls upon members and monthly meetings to seek Light and act to end torture."

As renowned Quaker William Penn once said, "A good end cannot sanctify evil means; nor must we ever do evil, that good may come of it."

"History has shown that when a future outcome, however noble, seems of greater worth than the human being before us, any means, any atrocity, is possible." (New York Yearly Meeting *Faith and Practice*, 1998, pp. 50, 52)

In 2009 we note that reliable evidence available to the public has shown that the United States has engaged in torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in response to the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, including a report produced by the International Committee of the Red Cross and released to the public in February of 2009 that concluded: "[T]he ill-treatment to which [detainees] were subjected while held in the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency of the United States] program, either singly or in combination, constituted torture."

At this time the full story on the scope of U.S. sponsored torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment has yet to be fully revealed. Public understanding and acknowledgement of what the United States has done in these respects are necessary to ensure that our nation never again engages in this conduct.

As an organizational member of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, New England Yearly Meeting calls for an impartial and independent Commission of Inquiry. NEYM calls upon our government and our people to seek truth and healing rather than retribution.