
Staff Reports

Administrative & Communications Secretary

WITH OR WITHOUT YOU

We tell these stories

about being hungry and thirsty
and frightened and angry
and desperate.

And then we tell stories

about your food and your water
and your presence.

But the second half of the story

does not ring powerfully true in our own experience,
so much so that we find ourselves
and our whole beloved community
are often pilgrims in a barren land;
and we find our sophistication and our affluence
does not at all treat our condition of wilderness.

So finally we are driven back to you,

about to receive and then drawn up short
by the One who has nowhere to lay his head either.

We are bold to pray for your gifts

and for your presence

but we do so prepared to endure a while longer
our thirst and our hunger and our sense of absence

because we have resolved to be on your way with or without you.

Amen

—*Walter Brueggemann*

I have had my six-months sabbatical. I can say that I am rested and ready to work. I can hope that my six-weeks in Philadelphia caring for my mother-in-law, my week in Culebra, my three-week driving trip to North Carolina and back, my three-week trip to Indiana and back on motorcycles, and all my time at the gym, can add up to enough to feel restored. I continue to pray for sufficient faith. I do not/cannot see myself doing any other work. But I come back to the office hearing the staff and Friends tell the story of the last few months, and some feel frazzled and rushed and burdened (both the stories and the people). They are thirsty and hungry. Already I miss some people who provided: Bill How, Heather Moir.

I started the year (Oct 08) at full speed ... that's how it goes, one year into the next. The amount of work in front of your "executive team" was enormous; not sustainable beyond the year, and I only had to sustain that pace for 3 months. The staff planning committee work we were asked to do (one year only) right away gobbled up 12% of my time every week, but I still had to manage all the other stuff before me, including preparing Jonathan to manage Kat Flynn in doing the administration, work on my work plan for Jan-June. (See the job descriptions in the personnel manual at <http://neym.org/PerCom/>)

In the land of plenty Friends, I feel we have little that we need as a faith community. Little people, little money, little time to support the work of the yearly meeting. Are we in the desert or is the desert in us?

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Romans 8:31-32

—KATHARINE CLARK

Archivist

I'm glad to report that more meetings are sending their minutes on a regular basis, as well as hard copies of their newsletters. And more individual Friends are also donating meeting memorabilia, such as histories, photographs, scrapbooks, etc. The shadow side of this good news is that there is more work to be done than one person working one day a week can do. But the Archives are important, and not only because we are the oldest Yearly Meeting in the world, but since we have no creeds or prescribed doctrines, our history tells who we are, where we have come from, and how we have changed and grown as a people of faith. The Archives Committee and I dream of a day when the YM can finance more working hours at the Archives.

In addition to caring for NEYM records, I also answer research questions from people from all over the US and occasionally from abroad. A number of non-Friends who have run into a blank wall on the internet have discovered that we have answers to family history questions. (In one instance, it only took a few minutes to find a great-great grandmother missing from the internet sites.) A Richmond, VA, Friend, who was going to the Ramallah School later this year, wanted to bring the school a gift of information about their earliest history. Because New England Friends founded the school, we have a collection of newsletters—with photographs—put out to inform US Friends and supporters not only about the school but about the situation in Palestine and the Middle East at that time. I have to admit that I can get so fascinated with pursuing such information that it gets difficult to keep the right balance between the research and the other work of the archives.

After the archives computer had a major crash and was out of commission for nearly two months, I did have more time to attend to the backlog, and also to assist patrons who came in person. I gave a workshop at Westport Friends Meeting, designed to help Friends select, organize, and preserve their own meeting records and other historical items. I invite other interested monthly and quarterly meetings to inquire about this workshop, which can be tailored to meet the needs and interests of different meetings.

I invite more volunteers, both for the committee and at the Archives. Because the cost in gas money and driving time is becoming a serious difficulty for interested people, we are experimenting with telephone conferences for some committee meetings. We used the first one to plan our work at Sessions and to do some polishing of the new brochure we “outsourced” to a committee member in Vermont. This will be ready for distribution at Sessions.

I encourage Friends who may be traveling in the Providence area to contact the archives about volunteering a few hours or a day to the Archives. Come and meet your history!

—MARNIE MILLER-GUTSELL

Christian Education Coordinator

Last fall, Jonathan Vogel-Borne raised up the needs of an often underrepresented demographic among New England Friends—families with young children. His words prompted me to listen to and advocate for their concerns and interests. Service to young families became a significant theme in my work. In March, the Christian Education Committee and I hosted a Quaker Family Weekend at Woolman Hill: *Weaving the Testimonies Into Our Parent-Child Relationships*. The over-capacity gathering represented eight meetings. We used this opportunity to solicit feedback on how NEYM could support young families. A variety of suggestions poured forth. They clearly craved a greater sense of community with other Quaker families and desired more involvement in the life of NEYM. More Quaker Family Weekends and family service projects also arose as possibilities.

Taken as a whole, their requests called for a reshaping of our Yearly Meeting culture. We see that we always need to include childcare and/or a children's program whenever we gather. We must work for better communication between NEYM and these young families. Way opened to organize a children's program for the Mid-Year Gathering. Theresa Oleksiw and I created a weekend of activities on peace. The Woolman Hill parents also requested a Young Families' Dorm at Sessions, "near the action" with a child-proofed common room and help setting up cooperative childcare for evenings. I am facilitating this pattern of housing to increase their sense of community and level of participation.

My work nurturing First Day Schools continued through active correspondence, communication through the RE Bulletin Board and REmail, and visits to monthly meetings or individual teachers. Several preschool classes are forming or are hoping to begin teaching in the fall. Other meetings may begin a First Day School with a span of ages comprising a "one room Quaker schoolhouse." Dover Quarter is particularly blessed with new families and the arrival of new babies.

I'm beginning what I hope will be a new tradition at Sessions, a First Day School Share/Fair. Our First Day School teachers create a wealth of engaging, faith-filled lessons each year and we would be enriched by a chance to share. I hope this will extend the reach of good curriculum development in our meetings, and showcase and celebrate these often unsung heroes of our meetings.

I sense more and more the need to support advancement and outreach efforts in our monthly meetings. This is integrally connected to my work nurturing and enlivening our First Day Schools. I am part of a fledgling Advancement & Outreach group in NEYM's Ministry & Counsel. This year, I developed a coordinated strategy, called Quaker Hopscotch, to both attract new families and start up a First Day School the moment children first attend. I sense, our Quaker faith calls us to change the world not only through our own actions but through an intentional offering and modeling

of our Quaker faith to others. As gentle-spirited ambassadors of the Light, we hope they find it to be the gift and guide it has been for us.

—BETH COLLEA

Field Secretary

2009 has been the most trying, yet exhilarating year as an NEYM employee. Entering what the Steering Committee on Staffing Structure called “a year of discernment,” I knew that amount of work before me was definitely going to be demanding, and clearly not intended to be sustainable. Yet, while certainly challenging, each of my accomplishments this year has mostly been rewarding, even life-giving. Since last I reported to you, I have been instrumental in:

- Creating a comprehensive NEYM work plan, in consort with the Staff Planning Committee (Jerry Sazama, clerk, Katharine Clark and myself).
- Developing a Priorities Budget and Timeline to assist Coordinating & Advisory and Finance Committee in their planning around the proposal for the new Junior YM/Junior High YM Program Coordinator position as part of the overall proposal for organizational and staffing structure change.
- Managing the office and other of Administrative & Communications Secretary’s job responsibilities during Katharine Clark’s sabbatical, January – June 2009.
- Coordinating three Committee Days
- Publishing two issues of *The New England Friend*
- Working with the Mid-Year Gathering Planning Committee to successfully hold a weekend-long meeting for worship at the Clarion Hotel in Portland, ME, 4/17-19/2009, including the creation of the Gathering’s website and online registration web application.
- Moving the NEYM website from a static repository of information to a more dynamic, destination site by adding the segment “Yearly Meeting News and Events” to the opening web page.
- Supervising Kate Bonner-Jackson’s role as interim Young Friends Coordinator during Kimberly Allen’s 3-month maternity leave, February – April 2009.
- And, keeping up with most of the other aspects of my job, including meeting visits, support work for Ministry & Counsel, Permanent Board, Traveling Ministries, etc.

All of these items and more bring me to the edge of my skills and gifts. At times I have run out of margin. But, by grace, it is exactly at end of that margin, where God, who has no edges, meets me, comforts me, guides me, and gives me hope that indeed the work that I do in support of NEYM’s vision and mission is on the right path. In deep assurance, and with the restorative experience of Sabbath rest, I look forward to us moving into the Jubilee Year—NEYM’s 350th annual sessions in 2010—with God’s loving Spirit, always available to us, guiding us into new life and new witness. Hallelujah! Amen!

—JONATHAN VOGEL-BORNE

Friends Camp Director

My growth as a person and a leader has taken place in a range of locations through a number of worship opportunities and trainings. During the year I visited six monthly meetings around New England. I participated in a one-day *Courage and Renewal* training in Dover, MA, and, I attended two Quaker events: the FONE (Friends Organizations of New England) retreat at the Meeting School; and the Mid-Year Gathering in Portland, ME. On an ongoing basis I am taking part in leadership training classes. All of these interpersonal and spiritual retreats and trainings have been very helpful.

On the challenging side, despite the implementation of a comprehensive marketing plan for the recruitment of campers and families, we have not reached our goals in terms of numbers for 2009. The reduction in campers—experienced widely in the summer camp world—can most likely be attributed to the downturn in the economy. I currently project that we will be about 10 percent below our projected population of 340 campers. On the bright side, we have an excellent group of counselors. As a money-saving measure we did not hire the two kitchen and grounds support positions. We are lucky that three-fourths of this summer's counselors are returning from previous summers and “know the ropes” well; five new counselors add great skills to the staff and have shown promise during the first few weeks of camp.

I am concerned about the declining number of Quaker youth attending Friends Camp. I have a few ideas on ways we can change this downward trend. First, monthly meetings could become more active in promoting Friends Camp by displaying brochures, making special bulletin boards, sharing e-mails/home addresses of families, and offering partial camperships to help youth attend Friends Camp. Monthly meetings, Junior Yearly Meeting, Junior High Yearly Meeting, and Young Friends could hold retreats at Friends Camp in the fall and spring. I believe that more can be done to promote Friends Camp at NEYM Sessions, during Mid-Year Gathering, in *The New England Friend*, and on the NEYM website. In general, I think that Friends Camp needs to be more integrated with rest of Yearly Meeting.

Beginning this summer, we plan to take a few steps each year to improve make environmental improvements. Some of our efforts for 2009 include: 1) planting blueberry bushes; 2) installing on-demand hot water heaters; 3) doing additional recycling; 4) spending one day each session without the use of electricity; 5) making additional efforts to reduce our use of paper products. For this summer's Mott Family Camp, August 16–22, the Adult Program Coordinator is Rebecca Dorr. Rebecca will use Parker Palmer's Circle of Trust approach to guide people in deeper listening. The Youth Program Coordinator is Kara Price Bachand. She has recently become the coordinator of the Junior High program at NEYM Sessions.

—NATHANIEL SHED

Moses Brown School Head

Living into Jubilee, is a fitting theme, given all the work that has been done by Moses Brown (MB) and NEYM to strengthen and deepen our relationship. Sessions will be a wonderful opportunity for all to seek the right ordering of our business and spiri-

tual lives and to lay down those things that keep us from unity and joy. In particular, I look forward to the potential approval of the incorporation of Moses Brown School.

Friends' values remain at the core of all that we do in the governance and management of our school, and this year I am pleased to report that we made significant progress on achieving the **Board's goals**:

- Advancing the recommendations of The Project group
- Deepening our mission as a Friends school
- Ensuring our financial sustainability for years to come
- Implementing our Long-Range Strategic Plan
- Preparing the way for the next Head of School

This year we had several meetings with the **Committee on Nurturing Friends Education at Moses Brown School**, and the committee deepened its commitment to fostering a growing connection between MB and the NEYM communities. The Committee has identified several initiatives to increase our mutual understanding, which include the Sessions workshop, *How Does the Meeting for Worship Live at the Heart of a Friends School?*, which will be lead by MB's Director of Friends Education, Galen Hamann, and incoming Head of School, Matt Glendinning.

Our **Admissions and Development** work continues to be strong. Currently, we are overenrolled and are poised to exceed last year's **Annual Fund Goal** of \$1.35M. Some Friends have inquired about **scholarship and Quaker students at MB**. As you may know, enrolling Quaker children in our school is a Board and administrative priority and an enrollment management objective. I am delighted to say that we currently are funding **all** our Quaker students who have demonstrated need and that, this year, we increased our overall scholarship budget to \$3.15M.

This year's **Baccalaureate** speaker was our Academic Dean, Laurie Center, and in her address, she emphasized the values of silence, reflection, integrity, and simplicity. The framework of her talk was about the graduates not simply *going* away from MB, but rather, being *sent*—leaving with support, a home, a purpose, and an open invitation to return.

This year, I met with the **Providence Monthly Meeting's (PMM) Ministry & Counsel**, with various individual members of the PMM, including the MB Liaison, Thia Lord, to explore possible collaborations between the School and the Meeting. PMM members were able to join our upper school students, parents, and faculty for our community service day this spring. In the fall, we jointly will host Quaker song leaders, Peter Blood and Annie Patterson.

Through a student-driven initiative that supports our Friends mission, Moses Brown held four **blood drives** this year and collected more than 160 pints of blood, which could help save the lives of 500 people. Also, our students honored the testimony of service by conducting food and coat drives and contributing to a wide variety of community service initiatives, including Camp Street Ministries and Habitat for Humanity.

This year, the **Obadiah Brown Benevolent Fund** supported our development of a new workshop for Friends from MB and other Friends schools: *Caring for Meeting For Worship*. We also used the Fund, in collaboration with the Parents' Association, to host three conversations for MB parents, entitled, *So Your Child is Attending a Friends School: Conversations with Friends about Quaker Testimonies and Practices at*

Moses Brown School. Each session focused on a particular topic for exploration, such as Friends' testimonies and meeting for worship. Our last session of this academic year centered on the peace testimony.

Established by NEYM to support the education of Quaker children at Moses Brown School, the **P.J. Tripp Charitable Fund's** principal as of March 31 was \$439,356 with an annual draw of \$17,655 used as scholarship funding. As you know, two years ago, we implemented a change in policy and practice, and now monthly meetings are asked to send a letter to MB, noting the recipient's active participation in the Meeting. Our current scholar is a junior who attends the Providence Monthly Meeting.

I am happy to say that Moses Brown, again, will host the Friends Council on Education's *Governance Matters* workshop in April 2010.

Some other items of interest:

- Galen Hamann, MB's Director of Friends Education, took seven students to the Quaker Youth Leadership Conference in Wilmington, Delaware, Feb 5-7, 2009.
- The 5th grade did a unit on Quaker Testimonies, capped by programming an All-School meeting for worship using queries based on their learning.
- Galen brought Kenyan Friend, Elphas Wambani, to meet with the 4th and 8th grades which studied Africa this year. The teachers also met with him to find ways to connect Moses Brown students with Kenyan students at Friends Schools next year.
- Several MB teachers will be attending Bill Harley's workshop, *The Teaching Power of Stories*, at Pendle Hill this summer.
- This year our seniors submitted four applications to Friends colleges, and they received four acceptances. While none of our students, ultimately, matriculated at these schools, I am pleased that they are exploring this possibility in increasing numbers.

I hope that this report gives you a glimpse of all that is happening on our campus. I am grateful for your support and want to thank you for all that you have done during the past fifteen years of my tenure. I look forward to being with you in August, to introducing you to incoming Head of School, Matt Glendinning, and to having our paths cross many times in the future.

—JOANNE HOFFMAN

Young Friends/Young Adult Friends Coordinator

"If I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it, even if I may not have it at the beginning." —Mahatma Gandhi

I love this passage. What better way to say, "don't tell me I can't do it!" than this? This has been my theme for the past year. Both personally and professionally, the past year started out with a pretty daunting list of tasks: marriage, first house, continuing youth work, maternity leave, baby(!), return to work with said baby, and large-scale thinking about the Young Adult Friends community.

First off, I must give many, many, many thanks to everyone who helped make my maternity leave possible. Due to budget constraints, my leave was not covered

by a full-time replacement, but rather many wonderful acts of volunteerism, and the tireless, gracious work of Kate Bonner-Jackson. Kate coordinated all three Spring retreats, and did so with great love and care. Thank you Kate, you rock(ed) my world.

The Young Friends and Young Adult Friends did well this year, with all the retreats as usual(ish): lots of love, singing, silliness, worship, and tenderness. I thank God every day that I am gifted with their presence and am able to be party to these communities.

Looking towards the future, I wrestle with the challenges of the Young Adult Friends community. Most Friends, it seems, categorize YAFs as college-aged Friends. While these YAFs are a significant section of the YAF constituency, YAFs are defined as ages 18-35, so what about the older YAFs, and the YAFs with children—the young families? YAF gatherings are predominantly attended by people under the age of 30 with no children (with me being the perennial exception, of course). While it is wonderful that the YAF community has found this niche and caters to this demographic, I can't help but be drawn to the young families who never attend.

I understand at least part of why this happens; the 19-year-old college freshman and the 32-year-old with a spouse and 3 children have pretty different priorities and perspectives in life, and consequently, wildly different needs and desires. What I need to figure out, however, is how to reach out to the older YAFs, particularly those with children. Thus far, all the YAF events I have coordinated were primarily aimed at the aforementioned 19-year-old, and not the 32-year-old. There are a few of us hanging around, staffing retreats and coming to Meeting on First Day, but take a look around most Meetings during worship, and you will notice that there aren't very many of us.

My passion for the next year will be centered on this issue: where are the young families of New England Yearly Meeting, and how can we best serve them?

—KIMBERLY ALLEN

Committee Reports

Permanent Board

Permanent Board consisted of 44 members representing most of the Quarters. Our worship and our work are focused on the internal administration of the Yearly Meeting between Sessions. In this program year, we met five times in various locations throughout New England, and will meet once more just prior to Sessions.

Statement of Vision and Mission for NEYM:

In early 2007, Permanent Board came to recognize that work on organizational restructure was being stymied by lack of a formal statement of vision and mission for NEYM as an organization. An ad hoc working group of Permanent Board was formed in August 2007 and was charged with the task of articulating such a statement for Friends consideration. These Friends met innumerable times over the course of these two years, met with various facets of the yearly meeting family, and presented several drafts for review by Permanent Board. In May, Permanent Board approved presenting the following statement for consideration by Friends at Sessions.

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.

NEYM/Moses Brown School relationship:

At Sessions last year, Friends directed 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 57).

Permanent Board in turn determined that prospective by-laws of an incorporated School would serve as the principle tool to insure such effective governance. Hence, Permanent Board and Moses Brown School Board of Overseers jointly created an ad hoc committee to draft said by-laws. The draft was presented to Permanent Board at our March 21 meeting, and the following minute resulted:

Minute 09-20: On behalf of the ad-hoc Moses Brown School by-laws committee (which consisted of Russell Carpenter, Richard Frechette, Habib

Gorgi, Joanne Hoffman, Christopher McCandless, James Reavis and Betsy Zimmerman), Richard Frechette presented the latest draft of the by-laws, which address comments of Permanent Board members. These are a necessary part of a recommendation to incorporate the Moses Brown School. We approve the proposed by-laws. We will recommend to sessions that MBS become incorporated. We understand that these by-laws call us to a deeper nurture of and engagement with the school. They affirm our mutual goal of Quaker education for all, including Quaker children and poor children. We trust the Committee for Nurturing Friends Education at Moses Brown School will ensure continuing evaluation and growth.

It is the sense of the Permanent Board that the draft by-laws of the prospective Moses Brown School corporation:

- Continues and deepens the relationship of NEYM and Moses Brown School, both immediately and for the long term;
- Requires that Quaker process be followed in the conduct of business;
- Establishes a permanent mechanism jointly “owned by” MBS and NEYM to continually evaluate how Moses Brown School will provide a Quaker Education, and to continue to explore ways of addressing any remaining concerns of Friends.

In May, Permanent Board and Moses Brown School representatives jointly sponsored an information sharing and discussion session in Providence, open to the Yearly Meeting family. We will continue until Sessions to listen to concerns of Friends, and will determine at our pre-Sessions how to address any such concerns. *All the recommendations and related historical and legal documents are posted here: <http://neym.org/mbs/mbs-bylaws.html>.*

Quaker initiative against torture

Following up on Minute 69 of Sessions last year, Permanent Board approved NEYM’s membership in the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, the endorsement of their statement of conscience, the contribution of \$100 to the effort, and sent a letter to then President-elect Obama articulating Friends’ concerns about the use of torture.

Financial Support for Friends United Meeting

Following up on Sessions Minute 63, Finance Committee presented to Permanent Board a possible mechanism that would allow monthly meetings to restrict their YM contributions to not include support of FUM, because of reasons of conscience relating to the FUM Personnel policy. But Permanent Board found itself unable to approve the mechanism, in part because the mechanism would conflict with a integrity of a corporately approved budget. Per our minute 09-20: “We believe in the need to engage in corporate discernment to reach unity and to reach resolve to continue to wrestle with this issue, and express out love and support to those monthly meetings who are doing the same. It is our faith that God will lead us together to a place of unity.”

Organizational & Staffing Structure Recommendation:

For the last several years, various facets of the Yearly Meeting family have labored with the query of what staffing structure would best fulfill the mission of our YM faith community. In 2006 Permanent Board created a steering committee, who in turn worked with an independent consultant to begin the process of exploring the options.

At the 2008 Annual Sessions we heard the consultants' report on their findings about our current staffing structure and how the yearly meeting organization is run. They identified several issues, such as a lack of planning and accountability and the perception that NEYM has been less than an ideal employer. NEYM united in approving a "year of discernment" with the goal of having recommended staffing structure changes considered at the 2009 NEYM Annual Sessions.

To begin the process, Permanent Board approved several initial changes. We created a new one-year volunteer position of Clerk of Planning and charged the Coordinating and Advisory Committee to create a planning process that directed the work of staff. Permanent Board appointed a steering committee to develop a recommendation for a new staffing structure. In September Friends met at Amesbury Meeting for a threshing session to help ground us in this work.

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

- 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 website 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 Committee, consisting of the presiding clerk, the clerk of Permanent Board, the clerk of Ministry & Counsel, and 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 YM secretary; that the committee be staffed by the YM secretary; and that the C&A Committee report regularly to Permanent Board and YM Sessions.
- That the restructured Coordinating & Advisory Committee receive program and staffing requests from YM committees and from the YM Sessions. With direction from Sessions (and the Permanent Board as necessary for timeliness) the C&A Committee, together with the YM 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 Yearly Meeting/Jr. High Yearly Meeting Coordinator position. This position would mirror the current coordination of YF and YAF programs, and would include coordinating JYM and

JHYM retreats during the year and overall oversight and support for the Sessions programs. Our recommendation flows from recognition that this is a job that is nearly impossible to be fulfilled in a sustainable way by a volunteer with a leading, and that we need to address inequities in the allocation of resources among the various youth programs. Our recommendation is for a fall 2009 implementation.

The job descriptions and all other related background documents for staffing structure have been posted here:

<http://neym.org/PerCom/Staffing-Background.html>.

Memorial Minutes

PB received several memorial minutes which are being forwarded to Sessions; we are grateful for the opportunity to reflect on the workings of God in the lives of these Friends. One monthly meeting has suggested that YM establish a mechanism whereby all memorial minutes, regardless of the deceased's connection to Yearly Meeting, be made available to the entire YM family, presumably utilizing the internet. We are currently considering this suggestion.

Other Matters

We approved transferring a dedicated fund from NEYM to Portland Monthly Meeting, approved travelers to Cuba and Friends traveling in the ministry outside the limits of the yearly meeting, approved a line of credit for Friends Camp, approved the creation of a volunteer clerk of Staff Planning position, approved interim appointments to various YM committees. Permanent Board meeting minutes are available online via the YM website. <http://neym.org/PermanentBoardIndex.html>

In all matters, we have sought to be faithful stewards of the Yearly Meeting, and to approach this work with diligence, prayer, and joy.

—RICHARD FRECHETTE, CLERK

Committee On Aging

Thank you!

Last year in our report we asked you to tell us what you needed both as you get older and as you find yourselves taking care of elders in your lives. And you told us! Drawing on your feedback, the Committee on Aging (COA) set as its goals:

- making ourselves available to monthly meetings to meet with their elders and caregivers, helping them form supportive communities and perhaps providing access to some resources along the way. We will try this with one monthly meeting this fall, personally contacting elders and caregivers and inviting them to a meeting that we would attend. After three months we will reevaluate whether this was a good direction and perhaps try it again in some modified form with another MM. Please let us know if you would like us to check in with your meeting, its elders, and caregivers.
- helping those of you who live with hearing loss. Our form of worship doesn't make "mike"ing one person or two an answer. Messages in our meetings are often delivered in a very quiet manner, exacerbating the problem. Meeting spaces vary immensely, sometimes moving around from one month to the

next. We are working with one meeting that has several members who could use a solution to this challenge. If your meeting has this problem (or has a solution that has worked for you!) we would like to hear from you.

We started our mutual learning last year at the COA workshop: *Aging: Honoring the Way of the Elders*. Thirteen Friends gathered for three days of lively discussion about our own aging and caring for aging parents. A nice sense of community developed which facilitated our sharing with one another. (We plan to do more of these workshops at NEYM Sessions in the future.)

Finally, did you know that several magnificent new books have come out recently describing activities facilitate the creation of new brain cells? (This in the face of decades of “you’ll just get stupider and stupider!” threats.) If you would like a list of some of these works, just email us. Fortunately God does not leave us with only loss (and whatever wisdom we might glean from those diminishment).

Be well. Keep guiding us, please.

—PENNY YUNUBA, CLERK

Archives & Historical Records Committee

As a Religious Society without a creed or doctrine, our historical records are the history of our faith, practice, and beliefs. For a complete look at the policies of the archives please visit our page at the NEYM website (<http://neym.org/neymarchives.html>), contact the archivist, or visit our archives in Providence, Rhode Island.

Although our focus is on the records of the past we took a leap into the future by conducting our June 2009 committee meeting by telephone conference call using a free Internet service arranged by committee member Alan Taplow. This method of meeting proved quite satisfactory and productive.

The committee has produced a brochure about the Archives that will be available to be picked up at Sessions by each monthly meeting. During 2009 the committee has continued the work of microfilming documents of the Yearly Meeting of Friends in New England (Wilburite) from 1845–1945.

I would like to thank each committee member from the past year as all have volunteered extra time and effort to complete our various projects.

The Archives of the New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) are located at the Rhode Island Historical Society Library, 121 Hope Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02906. Many of the records are microfilmed and available in the main reading room. Other records of the Archives are available by appointment only. The NEYM archivist is currently (2009) only available on Wednesdays.

The Archives collects minutes for NEYM, its quarterly meetings, monthly meetings, preparative meetings and other particular meetings that may have generated minutes. Most current minutes are generated electronically. The archives prefers to receive printouts made on archival paper and signed by the meeting’s clerk, but will accept other forms of copies.

Recent requests received by the Archives have included research into records concerning the Ramallah School, the Moses Brown School, and Paul Cuffee the Quaker Sea Captain from Westport, MA.

There remains ample work for volunteers at the Archives in Providence. An example of a useful volunteer project would be putting committee minutes in order and tossing out duplicates. The committee itself also has a couple of vacancies that we would love to fill.

—EDWARD GERRISH MAIR, CLERK

Board of Managers of Investments & Permanent Funds

Report for fiscal year 4/1/2008 through 3/31/2009:

In the 2009 fiscal year, annual income distributed from the Pooled Funds after payment of expenses totaled \$9.86 per 100 units (i.e. \$0.0986 per unit.) This distribution is in excess of the \$8.00 per 100 units that the Board had suggested. Because of the particularly unsettled economic environment, the Board is being cautious and suggests that you budget \$7.80 per 100 units (\$0.078 per unit) in distributions for the period April 1, 2009 through March 31, 2010.

The Pooled Funds are a balanced fund, investing in stocks and fixed income securities, and are managed with the objective of generating a stable and predictable income stream. The Board invests in companies whose businesses are aligned with Quaker testimonies. The policies and procedures are available at <http://neym.org/boardofmanagers> or by request from the Board.

In order to maintain a predictable income stream, the Board deviated from its investment guidelines of 60% equities and 40% fixed income by investing less of the portfolio in the stock market and more in cash and bonds. This ensured that the constituents received the amount of income that the Board had recommended. A list of all stocks and bonds in the portfolio is attached to this report.

The Board has continued to develop its proactive involvement in: (1) community fund investments; (2) shareholder resolutions, particularly focusing on environmental policies; and, (3) vigilant proxy voting. In 2009, the Board increased its investment in community funds from 1% to 1.6% of the portfolio, with a total investment of \$70,000 in the Cooperative Fund of New England and the Institute for Community Economics.

For the period from April 1, 2008 through March 31, 2009, the NEYM Pooled Funds had a total return (income plus change in market value of a unit) net of all expenses of -18.71%. This consists of a distribution of income per unit to beneficiaries of 3.32% and a decrease in the market value of 22.03%. A history of the performance of the Pooled Funds including income and capital appreciation is attached to this report.

As of March 31, 2009, the market value of the Pooled Funds was \$4.313 million with 31 participating organizations and a total of 38 accounts. Three new constituents joined the Pooled Funds, while one constituent left the Pooled Funds. The number of accounts remained the same because some constituents consolidated accounts. The market value of the fund decreased by \$1.246 million, while the total number of units decreased by 23,000 the net result of funds received and reinvested versus withdrawals.

We invite you to our workshop, “Managing Quaker Money during Unsettled Times,” Wednesday afternoon, August 5th, an open discussion about the financial

challenges and concerns that NEYM organizations have faced during the year. The Board feels that there needs to be a forum where those responsible for the finances of their NEYM organizations can share experiences and work together to seek solutions. All are welcome.

If you have any questions or comments, please email the Board of Managers at (<http://neym.org/boardofmanagers/index.html>) or call Roberta Chicos, clerk, or Ralph Gentile, Treasurer.

—ROBERTA CHICOS, CLERK

Coordinating & Advisory

Coordinating & Advisory Committee is composed of the presiding clerk, the clerks of Permanent Board, Ministry & Counsel, and Staff Planning, as well as the administrative & communications secretary (who was on sabbatical for 6 months) and the field secretary. We met quite a few times this year. We met with most of the Quarterly Meeting clerks in the fall, to hear about their activities, concerns and spiritual lives. We met with the clerk of Permanent Board's Personnel Committee and one of the consultants of the report received at last year's Sessions, concerning the staff reorganization proposal being recommended by Permanent Board this year. This proposal includes an expansion of the role of Coordinating & Advisory Committee, to be the supervisor of the new yearly meeting secretary position. In the course of the year, we heard reports from and gave input to Permanent Board concerning this proposal and also that concerning the Moses Brown School, which will also be presented at Sessions.

We received news of, and communicated with, monthly and quarterly meetings, as well as the working party on Spirituality & Sexual Ethics, in the areas of sexual ethics and same-sex marriage, both in and out of the context of the Friends United Meeting personnel policy.

Coordinating & Advisory Committee took a leadership role in discerning and holding the April gathering in Portland of approximately 200 Friends from around the YM, including a number who had never been to a YM event previously. We also led a weekend workshop on leadership in Barton-Glover Vermont.

In the effort to help the Yearly Meeting and its constituent monthly meetings embrace the Jubilee theme, Coordinating & Advisory Committee has worked very hard to bring the body together and to try to bring pending items of business to Sessions seasoned for discernment. We have also laughed and felt blessed to be together and be part of this community.

—LINDA JENKINS, CLERK

Development Committee

God does not need your cash!

God owns it all – did before you came along, and will long after you are gone. Because it tickles God's cosmic fancy, the Divine lets us push stuff around. Giving does not make you acceptable to God. Face it, God is crazy about you – indulgent as all get out. There is no magic here except this: when you give away some of your

stuff you are freed from your slavery to stuff. You place your bet on kindness in the universe. You trust and that frees you from the terrible lie that there is not enough to go around, and then you find that you have plenty. It does not matter how much you have to give. The giving develops the spiritual discipline of generosity. It changes you and you change the world. (excerpts from Peggy S. Parsons; Friends Journal, 9/07.)

Your contributions facilitate the work of New England Yearly Meeting--the work of nurturing our children and teenagers through retreats, the work of spiritual development through children's and adults' religious education, the work of inter-visitation among monthly meetings, the work of confronting racism, the work of living the peace testimony, our contact with the wider Quaker world, and the critical administrative work that keeps us in contact with one another.

The fiscal 2009 budget set individual donations at \$130,000. It looks like going into Sessions we will need, an additional \$30,000 to meet this goal. If you have not yet developed the habit of giving annual donations to NEYM, please do so. Approximately 4,500 households receive the *New England Friend*. Last year, 291 households donated directly to yearly meeting. Of these, approximately 55 households donated monthly for an annual total of \$20,000. Just imagine what could be done this year! We could have adequate financial resources to help us deepen our faith community. If we are called to do something, the material resources necessary to do it, will come forward.

Volunteers are also necessary to make this possible, both on the Development Committee and other committees. The Development Committee needs seven members. This committee does policy research to encourage individual donations. We write pamphlets and articles on giving and the spirituality of money, and we write reports on how the yearly meeting uses and receives its financial resources. We do two mailings per year, which involves graphic arts and administrative work. We do donor visits, telephone calls and thank donors. Come join us for a part of this fulfilling work. Training is available. Those interested may contact a member of the Nominating or Development Committees.

Finally, we urge you to make a gift of appreciated stock, name NEYM as a beneficiary in your will or life insurance, or share part of your IRS compulsory 401K disbursements.

Money is a spiritual resource. Please help NEYM meet its financial priorities.

—GERALD W. SAZAMA, CLERK

Earthcare Ministry Committee

Members of this committee met six times during the past year, bringing fresh ideas and leadings from personal and local experiences around New England and the North American QEW.

These are the challenges that arise to guide us: How can we best serve and inspire the Yearly Meeting to bring personal, community, and societal levels of awareness and witness to loving care of the earth that sustains all life? How can we, through experience and experiment, "...dismantle societal barriers to responsible earthcare; (and) put in their place incentives and support for making socially just and environ-

mentally responsible choices?” (From the November 2003 EMC Draft Supporting Statement.)

As Quakers we seek an end to the violence against the miraculous and holy life forms and biotic communities on earth, from the smallest Delhi Sands flower-loving fly to the iconic polar bear to the glorious and ancient mountaintops of West Virginia. We are inspired by the vision of an earth restored. Our call as a committee is to share this with other Friends, monthly and quarterly meetings, and New England Yearly Meeting, and to present the results of our experiments, which will help make this vision a reality.

In the past year we have experimented again with the hub-style committee meeting, to cut our emissions of greenhouse gasses. We are thrilled at the response of Friends to carpooling and “filling-cars” opportunities, made possible by the continued timely publication of ride-share lists by the NEYM Administrative Office.

We held a winter retreat December 5-7, 2008 at Woolman Hill, where we were led to identify the “Fourfold Path of Personal Transportation” for ourselves and others to try out and to enjoy for travel anywhere, especially to Quaker functions. The Fourfold Path: walk, bike, take public transportation, or fill your car.

The results are not yet in on our two recent experiments in cutting emissions, the hub meeting and the Fourfold Path. Our next job will be to report on our experiences as we also ask others to tell us of their own experiments.

Committee members drafted a letter of concern about all the travel involved in conducting NEYM business, with some ideas for reduction. The letter was sent to clerks of five other committees, NEYM Staff, and Permanent Board in order to support and continue this conversation. Friends can read this letter on our web page.

We enter into this work joyfully, with hope renewed as we learn of each other’s projects and leadings on every level, from the home light bulb to the United Nations. Coming together, we are strengthened by the loving corporate building of awareness, action, and support.

—BONNER MCALLESTER, CLERK

Faith and Practice Revision Committee

The work of the *Faith and Practice* Revision Committee is getting more intense as we continue to distribute draft texts for the book and to invite responses to them from Friends as we revise these texts. We remain grateful for the spiritual energy we have felt in responses to texts and in general comments Friends have offered.

At Sessions last year preliminary approval was given to Chapter 9: *A Brief History of Friends in New England*, based on very thoughtful responses to the working paper presented at Sessions 2007. Three chapters and the Preface have now received such approval; the Preface in 2005, Chapter 2: *Worship* in 2007, and Chapter 10: *Revisions to this Faith and Practice*, in addition to Chapter 9 in 2008.

Also at Sessions 2007 we distributed a working paper for Chapter 4: *Integration of Faith and Life: the Meaning, Understanding and Use of Testimonies*. Alas! no thoughtful responses to this working paper had been received by the February 2008 deadline, except one sent by postal mail. Our disbelief led to the discovery that email sent to the fandp@neym.org was not being forwarded due to an email server issue.

(Again, alas!) That situation has been rectified, and Friends can be assured that responses sent will reach us. We hope meetings and individuals who sent responses prior to March 6, 2008 will resend them by the new deadline: November 1, 2009.

In March we posted a working paper for Chapter 11: *General Advices and Queries* on our website, with paper copies mailed to monthly meetings. The deadline for comments on this text is November 1, 2009. At Sessions this year we will present a working paper for Chapter 3: *Corporate Discernment in Meetings for Business*, the fruit of four years of labor. The deadline for comments on this text is February 1, 2010. Again, we welcome comments from Friends; they inform our work and challenge us to continue opening ourselves to the paradoxes present in the faith and practice of New England Friends.

Given these deadlines, we will hope to bring revisions of at least two – and maybe all three – of these chapters for preliminary approval at Sessions 2010.

We encourage Friends to visit our website (<http://neym.org/fandp>) where all texts approved and in process are posted, along with other useful information on background and participation in the revision process (including submission forms).

Paper copies of anything on the website may be requested from the office.

—JAN HOFFMAN, CLERK

Finance Committee

This has been a year of changes and challenges for the NEYM Finance Committee. New England Yearly Meeting was not immune to the economic pressures that we all face in our daily lives and our monthly meetings. But with the careful investment policies of the Pooled Funds management, and thoughtful oversight by the NEYM staff and interim treasurer, Dave Baxter, we remained on budget throughout the year. Thanks must also go to the Development Committee for their on-going efforts to identify new donors and new giving opportunities.

At Sessions last summer, the issue of NEYM's contribution to Friends United Meeting became a focal point of the budget discussion. Friends spoke with great passion about whether NEYM should contribute to FUM while it maintains its current personnel policy. The Finance Committee tried to provide an ad hoc, imperfect mechanism for any monthly meeting (if it united in the decision not to support FUM) to be able to contribute to NEYM. After prolonged discussion, Permanent Board decided not to go forward with this approach and instead to "continue to wrestle with this issue and express our love and support to those monthly meetings who are doing the same." We appreciate the time and discernment that Permanent Board gave to this concern during the year.

A new budget preparation approach this year improved the budgeting process that usually consumes the Finance Committee all spring. Under Jonathan Vogel-Borne's direction, a small group reviewed and prioritized all administrative and office expenses. Finance Committee then met with Jonathan to discuss the priorities, reviewed the numbers, and determined the items that could be budgeted for the coming fiscal year and those that need to be deferred.

I would like to recognize the contributions of several Finance Committee members who resigned during the year because of other commitments and conflicts.

Bob Freund, Andrew Pang and Bill Satterthwaite all contributed tremendously to the committee during their tenure. I would ask anyone who feels called to help this committee in the next few years to talk to any of us during Sessions about our work.

—EILEEN CUMMINGS, CLERK

Friends Camp

We began the year with committee members explaining their reasons for being on the committee and what values they feel that Friends Camp contributes to NEYM. We reviewed our Mission Statement and discussed how well Friends Camp is measuring up to that standard and what changes need to be made. We reviewed staff training and were encouraged to read the staff manual. We also talked about what would be the most meaningful way to spend our time during committee meetings, asked the Director what support he needs from us, and outlined the time frame of Camp business issues that may need our consideration or decisions in future meetings. We renewed our intentions to be present at as many committee meetings as possible to be an active and informed member.

Committee members were asked to select a sub committee to actively serve on, as these have been weak for the past several years. These include Personnel, Buildings and Grounds, Finance, and Programs. The Personnel Committee met for the annual evaluation of the Director. The Buildings and Grounds Committee walked the property boundary lines and marked trees and other objects to identify it. The budget was developed and monitored. We focused on repair and maintenance priorities to camp buildings and ways to reduce costs while working toward more green ways to run the Camp. We discussed marketing and were involved in talking with campers and families: to increase attendance, staffing for the season, and capital funding for repairs to Cardinal Hall.

The camp work weekend was May 16-17, with committee members, campers, families and staff working and sharing meals together. A number of projects were accomplished: trees were sawed down and split into firewood, huge piles of leaves raked and hauled away, fallen branches picked up, flowers planted, dishes washed, cabins painted, bathrooms scrubbed and dock sections moved so they can be repaired. We agreed, that to be on the camp committee, it is also necessary to have practical skills such as operating a chain saw, sewing curtains, fixing equipment, knowledge of legal matters, accounting experience and a willingness to get dirty and tired to spruce up camp for summer.

We planned a meeting for July 22 to see camp in action. We feel by interacting with campers and staff that we will gain greater understanding of the how camp provides a Quaker experience and contributes to the young persons development of their values, confidence, sense of belonging as well as to developing the belief and faith that they have the ability to make a difference in the world.

Friends Camp is an important asset to NEYM. We hear it over and over from campers, parents, and campers who are now adult, that their time at camp helped them define themselves and become aware of the gifts they have to offer.

Many thanks to Director Nat Shed, committee members, staff advisor, staff, campers, parents and grandparents and to NYEM for all that they contribute.

—MARY KNOWLTON, CLERK

Friends General Conference Committee

An association of 14 yearly meetings and regional groups, as well as ten directly affiliated monthly meetings, Friends General Conference (FGC) serves Friends all over North America and beyond. Through its annual Gathering, its bookstore, and its widely varied programs, FGC seeks to bring a simple, radical, and contemporary message of Quakerism to a thirsting world.

NE Friends continue to play a fundamental role in these programs and services, with 23 NEYM Friends active in the following FGC committees: Advancement and Outreach, Christian Interfaith, Friends Meeting House Fund, Development, Discernment in Long Term Planning, Youth Ministries, Publications and Distribution, Friends Pension Fund, Finance, Traveling Ministries, Executive, Personnel, the Committee for Ministry on Racism, and as an observer at the 2008 FUM Triennial.

Some highlights from the past year:

Quaker Quest is an outreach program whose goal is for seekers from the community to learn about our Quaker path. Five North American meetings have completed the full cycle of workshops and public meetings, and over 20 others have begun the process. NEYM is one of the YMs leading the way: seven NEYM meetings are already involved (two have started holding public sessions, three are considering going public, and two are considering having the introductory workshop).

With strong support from FGC's **Youth Ministries Program**, more than 100 young adult Friends from across the Quaker spectrum gathered in May 2008 at Earlham College for *Living as Friends, Listening Within*. The Youth Ministries Program has also helped plan and support a weekend training workshop for adults who work with Quaker youth, a Consultation for Friends Called to Travel in the Ministry, and a Consultation on Quaker Volunteer Service for youth.

Written by Friends Vanessa Julye and Donna McDaniel, and published by FGC, the carefully researched book *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship: Quakers, African Americans, and the Myth of Racial Justice* opens a big door to discussion, healing, and new beginnings. Co-author Donna McDaniel, a member of NEYM, is arranging for extensive outreach within the yearly meeting. In addition, FGC's **Committee for Ministry on Racism** has trained 26 Friends from 12 YMs to assist meetings in considering the issues examined in the book.

Faith & Play materials are the fruit of a collaboration between FGC's **Religious Education Program** and the Children's Spiritual Life Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Faith & Play, based on the Godly Play® Bible study materials, employs visual storytelling and open-ended questions in mutual sharing and creative play.

Even in these challenging economic times Friends are responding with commitment and generosity to the **Stoking the Spiritual Fire of Quakerism Campaign**, sharing the fruits of their labors to maintain FGC's programs that enliven our meetings, embrace seekers, and respond to the leadings of the Spirit. The \$7.25 million campaign has already raised more than \$3.25 million.

Find out more about FGC at www.fgcquaker.org.

—MARGARET COOLEY, CLERK

Friends United Meeting Committee

Reports from our Friends United Meeting (FUM) General Board representatives, sharing news of the work that FUM does, and plans for intervisitation have been the major themes for the FUM committee this year.

The FUM General Board with its new clerk and assistant clerk and several new members seems to be more open to discussing thorny issues. At the same time, the Board is facing difficult financial decisions due to withdrawal of support and the downturn in the economy. We are blessed to have strong and caring representatives from NEYM to the General Board.

Several of our members have presented programs and/or shared the work of FUM within their quarterly meetings. It is important, we believe, for members of NEYM to know that FUM is more than its personnel policy. FUM is a resource for Friends throughout the world and has the care of schools, hospitals, and other missions in Ramallah, Kenya, Belize, Jamaica, and Cuba, as well as North America. New England Friends founded the schools in Ramallah, and a New England Friend, Eden Grace, is currently Field Officer, FUM/Africa Ministries.

Eight New England Friends now have minutes endorsed by NEYM's Permanent Board to travel with a concern for FUM. A ninth Friend has a minute from her meeting to travel within New England. NEYM Minute 2005-60 says, "We encourage intervisitation among yearly meetings in FUM as suggested by the FUM General Board. To better recognize the Light in each Friend, we need to know one another on a personal level. We will build trust through bringing love, humility, tenderness, clarity and truth to our relationships." This year NEYM Friends are planning trips to Indiana Yearly Meeting, Western Yearly Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, and Canadian Yearly Meeting.

The FUM Committee is also sponsoring three workshops at this year's Sessions: *Spiritual Authority Among Friends* by Will Taber; *Broadening Our Understanding of Kenyan Friends* by Marian Baker; and *Where in the World Are We?* By Kim Newlin, FUM/Richmond.

There is broad support in NEYM for the work of Friends United Meeting. Our committee has focused on two aspects of our relationship with FUM. We acknowledge that there is pain because the personnel policy excludes our gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, and transgendered Friends. More importantly, we recognize the deep fundamental differences of the understanding of spiritual authority within the FUM Yearly Meetings, including our own. We recognize, too, that many Friends wish us to continue this affiliation, believing that the acceptance of our differences will come, with God's guidance, through love. We ask for your prayers.

—ANN DODD-COLLINS, CLERK

Friends World Committee for Consultation Committee

Our committee was blessed to take part in two gatherings that testified to God's work to heal the rifts between the branches of the Religious Society of Friends. We were also challenged by a shortage of NE Friends able to travel to these gatherings as YM representatives.

We were welcomed to the '09 Section of the Americas Gathering in Canby, Oregon, by the two local YM: Northwest (Evangelical Friends International) & North Pacific (independent liberal). Though the differences between them have been a source of division in the past, their communities have discovered a love in the Spirit for each other. They send representatives to one another's YM Sessions, jointly host a Quaker women's theological gathering, and encourage inter-visitation between their churches and meetings. We also heard from the pastor of Freedom Friends Church, an independent congregation that defies stereotypical Quaker labels by identifying as "Passionately Christ-Centered, Passionately Quaker, Passionately Inclusive."

The Section is struggling financially and has laid off much of its staff. We adopted a new structure and pray it will reduce financial and personnel burdens while allowing greater flexibility and creativity in taking up the work the Spirit leads us to.

This spring, Philadelphia YM invited their neighbor Spanish-speaking evangelical Friends churches to co-host the Northeast Regional Gathering, making for a more diverse event than in past years. Sixty Friends, both Spanish speaking and English speaking, spent a weekend together in New Hope, PA. The sessions were 100% bilingual — translators were even available for small groups and casual conversation. That fluidity, coupled with the combination of programmed and unprogrammed worship led by each tradition, brought us to a deeper appreciation for our variety of ways to approach God. We felt blessed by the opportunity to deepen our faith journeys together.

As for our NEYM committee, only two active members remained from last year. We long for more involvement from Friends seasoned in the work of building bridges across the diverse Quaker faith. This was the second year in a row we were unable to fill most of our six section representative slots. We sent three reps to Oregon, including one Friend co-opted from outside the committee. Only one member went to the regional gathering, though other NEYM Friends attended. We have spent time discerning what is our committee's central purpose: is it to represent NEYM at FWCC Gatherings and return to share our experiences? Is it to find local ways of doing the work of FWCC — bringing Friends together face-to-face and heart-to-heart across our traditions? Do we function best as an independent committee, or would we operate in better service to the Spirit by working more closely with other Friends concerned with connecting with the wider Quaker world?

We have many questions, but also have trust — trust in a Spirit that can bring together liberals and evangelicals, Spanish speakers and English speakers, and unite us in a common faith and language of Love.

—JEFFREY HIPPI, CLERK

Committee on Ministry & Counsel

This has been a quiet year (relatively speaking) for Ministry & Counsel. The committee embraced, welcomed, and supported its new clerk. The love, commitment, deep prayer and faithfulness of the members of this committee together supported and sustained the transition between clerks, as well as all our business.

The biggest event in the life of M&C this year was co-sponsoring NEYM's mid-year called meeting for worship. The Peace & Social Concerns committee approached

M&C about co-sponsoring in November. The committee approved, and individual members who felt called joined members of Peace & Social Concerns and the wider YM community to plan. This group labored faithfully to produce a deep and provoking (in the best sense of the word) gathering blessed by the presence of 220 individuals and the prayers of many more. Ministry & Counsel members were present at the called meeting to hold the gathered body in prayer, to greet and support attenders, carry microphones, and more. We were all touched by the deep prayer and opportunity and continue to watch the impact of this extraordinary weekend unfold in our lives and the life of the yearly meeting.

Throughout the year we have continued our usual work. At our fall retreat Lisa Graustein led us in exercises to understand how racism, heterosexism, and homophobia still exist in the YM, and to explore how we can respond when we witness such situations in our own monthly, quarterly, and yearly meeting gatherings. Our working party on Spirituality & Sexual Ethics continues to ask our meetings thought-provoking questions about how we understand the interaction between our spiritual beliefs and our sexual ethics and practice. Our working party on Intervisitation is encouraging visits and fellowship together and has developed information to help those undertaking intervisitation. We have tried to further such connections by holding our committee meetings in some smaller meetings, or places where distance has made for less contact with the yearly meeting. The working party on Racism continues its anti-racism work and encourages us all to look at the seeds of oppression in our own community—it was their persistence that led to our fruitful workshop with Lisa Graustein. Throughout all, members of our committee, individually and in groups, seek to support and nurture the spiritual life of NEYM and to knit us ever closer to one another and to God.

In this work we are all aware of how much we will miss the love, guidance, and faithfulness of our dear Friend, Bill How. As a member and then clerk of YM Ministry & Counsel, Bill was an ever-present, quiet voice of love and acceptance. As clerk he was amazingly organized and experienced, but more importantly he was a loving and listening presence. Bill gifted us with his heart and his ability to be present to and listen to all during times of conflict and difficulty within our yearly meeting. His presence and ability, and most of all, himself, are already sorely missed among our committee and the yearly meeting as a whole.

—KRISTNA EVANS, CLERK

New England Friends Home Committee

Our small size fosters a caring community. Every day at three o'clock our residents gather for tea and "chat"—they truly enjoy each other's company. Our staff members, some of whom have been with us for many years, are all trained in their positions and receive ongoing instruction every year. We are fortunate to have an RN as Assistant Director; she oversees the personal care staff and has been an invaluable member of our community. All staff go above and beyond for our residents, and the residents have real affection for them. This is part of the family atmosphere of the Home.

In an increasingly competitive Assisted Living atmosphere, the Home continues to offer affordability and quality. The monthly fee is all-inclusive, something unusual

in our business. The occupancy at the Home was steady until January. We have lost several residents since then, with new people coming in. The economy has had an effect on the application rate. We welcome visitors and encourage you to come and see what a wonderful asset we are. We still have vacancies.

Our lovely building is also aging and requiring increased maintenance and repair. This spring we embarked on an ambitious kitchen renovation, 70% funded by grants. The flowers are now appearing after a snowy winter; and we thank God for the natural and manmade beauty that surrounds us.

On June 27th a celebration in honor of our retiring Director, Gretchen Condon, was held at the Home. Many old friends, families of residents, and former committee members gathered to reminisce and thank Gretchen for her service. Fourteen years ago she arrived with the experience of building senior housing in Hingham just as our Home was beginning the process of adding a wing with rooms for 14 residents. Her expertise in interfacing with construction, banking, and fundraising activities was invaluable. As an active participant in the start-up of the Friends Mutual Health Group, and as the Administrator of the NEYM health insurance, she expanded her duties more. However meticulous she has been as an administrator, she will be especially missed for her personal touch with each person she meets. From teens to seniors, the staff know and love her well; residents have experienced her warmth and care daily at the Home and as she chauffeured them to appointments. We wish Gretchen a healthy and relaxing retirement and look forward to working with our new Director.

We are grateful for the wonderful staff and devoted Home Committee members who work so hard to fulfill our mission:

The mission of the New England Friends Home is to provide a home-like setting for elderly residents who will foster a congenial atmosphere embodying the principles of simplicity, peace, community and equality.

The New England Friends Home, founded and operated by the Religious Society of Friends, is open to all who no longer wish to live independently but wish to join a community which will allow them to age within that family setting.

—ALICE SCHAEFER, CLERK

**Committee on Nurturing Friends Education
at Moses Brown School (ad hoc)**

The committee added an additional meeting to its original schedule of five meetings for the year. We have reported to Moses Brown Executive committee and to Permanent Board once in this cycle.

Our focus has been:

- solidify our vision about Committee tasks,
- identify resource groups who are interested in taking part in those tasks
- explore dialogues to bring to both groups.

In moving ahead with this work, the Committee seeks to foster a growing connection between MB and NEYM communities. Meetings of inquiry during the year have helped to clarify future work for the committee. How we work within the MB community, how we connect to the concerns within NEYM, and how we form rela-

tionships with other Friends Schools in NE are three main streams we are seeking to explore.

Emerging tasks are:

- Deepen conversations between meetings and the school about identifying Friend's children who would be interested in attending MB, and would flourish in the school.
- Creating a bibliography/archive of information on governance practices, Friends testimonies, and Quaker educational practices as a resource that the committee can provide for a wider community.
- Support for Director of Friends Education in the work of providing more information within the MB community about Quaker practices, and building relationships with NEYM Friends.
- Presentation and evaluation of the workshop for NEYM Sessions: *How Does Meeting For Worship Function At The Heart Of A Friends School?*
- Develop a website that will focus on Quaker educational practice and be linked to NEYM.org and Moses Brown's own site.

—ELIZABETH ZIMMERMAN, CLERK

Peace & Social Concerns Committee

The Peace & Social Concerns Committee was active at the 2008 Sessions. We organized the second annual Celebration of Quaker Witness on Sunday afternoon and a Hiroshima Day vigil in downtown Providence on Wednesday afternoon. We also held open meetings for the seasoning of four minutes brought by Quarterly Meetings, and these greatly influenced our work for the rest of the year.

Our committee, jointly with Ministry & Counsel, formed a group to plan the called meeting for worship established by the Minute on Peace passed at Sessions. This group met frequently, sought input from the whole yearly meeting, and organized a weekend-long meeting in Portland, Maine, in April. This group has prepared a separate report about this event and a proposal for continuing the process started by this effort. We hope Sessions accepts this proposal.

Another minute approved at 2008 Sessions led to an endorsement and joining of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT). Patti Muldoon has served as our representative, and we are submitting a proposal based upon an NRCAT action request for consideration at this year's Sessions.

We are looking for ways to foster Quaker witness throughout New England. We feel the first two Celebrations of Quaker Witness have been quite successful, so we are organizing one again this year.

Our peace vigil last year was held in Providence and was somewhat small. This year, with Hiroshima day falling on Thursday, we will not be doing a peace vigil off site. In its place, we are planning alternative ways of demonstrating our peace and social concerns at Sessions itself.

We are seeking to build contacts between our committee and the monthly meetings and their peace and social concerns committees. We are also updating our section of the yearly meeting website and looking for ways to make it a more effective means of communication about Quaker witness around New England. We hope to

continue these efforts in the coming year and look for contributions and suggestions from all.

We also seek to develop our relationships with the Peace Tax Fund, Friends Peace Teams, and other peace organizations located in New England.

Last year at Sessions we heard from many that there was not enough focus on the peace and social concerns despite the theme of “War God Help Us.” We are trying to take steps to increase our focus on these issues not only at Sessions but throughout the year. Please help us.

—IAN HARRINGTON, CLERK

Puente de Amigos

At Sessions 2008, representatives from Cuba Yearly Meeting (CYM), Ramona Leyva of Velasco and Rosario Concepción of Gibara, blessed us with their presence and visited with Friends in monthly meetings. The Cuban Friends named to attend Sessions 2009 were not able to obtain visas for this summer. We pray for Sessions 2010.

On September 7th, we heard that hurricane Ike had a direct hit on the towns of Banes, Gibara and Puerto Padre. Miami Friends sent word about the impact on Friends. Fortunately no lives were lost. Later we learned more about the destruction in Friends’ communities. NEYM received a special US Treasury Department license for hurricane relief and there was an outpouring of responses from Friends in NE and other parts of the country sending their prayers and donated funds for humanitarian relief and reconstruction of church buildings.

Susan Furry, Benigno Sánchez-Eppler, and Cynthia Ganung planned to visit Cuban Friends in November to offer seminars in Quakerism and visit monthly meeting. Initially it was thought they might postpone this travel because of the hurricane, but Cuban Friends asked that the visit go forward with some modifications. The travelers were able to bring letters, prayers and funds for hurricane relief to CYM from NEYM and FUM. The visitors were deeply moved by Cuban Friends’ testimonies about their experiences during the hurricane and appreciated their enthusiastic participation in the seminars.

After months of planning, a work team of eight Friends, seven from Amesbury FM and one from Fresh Pond MM traveled to Cuba in March, 2009. They worked in Holguin on a Friends’ building project and visited and worked with their sister meeting in Vista Alegre. This travel group was able to bring materials for the Holguin construction project because of their contact with members of the FUM. Jan./Feb. 09 Cuba work team, which included Megan Christopher of Wellesley MM.

In April, 2009, Puente gave support to a group of five women who traveled as representatives of New England United Society of Friends Women to attend the annual meeting CYM UFA (Unión Femenil de Amigos) in Gibara. On this trip, Friends from Monadnock and Dover MMs spent time with their sister meetings in Gibara and Holguin.

We are grateful for the financial support received from individuals, monthly, and quarterly meetings, and for grants from the Obadiah Brown Benevolent Fund for travel to visit Cuban Friends.

We feel enriched by ongoing ministries and new leadings to travel to Cuba among individual Friends and monthly meetings. While many Friends support Puente and are involved in welcoming Cuban Friends, we need to have more Friends help in sustaining and maintaining our bridge of love with Cuban Friends. Researching and applying for visas for Cuban visitors and for US licenses for NEYM for religious travel and sending funds to CYM are challenging and time consuming. We are grateful for the assistance from our yearly meeting clerk and office staff and the persistent work by committee members.

—CYNTHIA GANUNG, CLERK

Racial, Social & Economic Justice Committee

Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. Any small, calm thing that one soul can do to help another soul, to assist some portion of this poor suffering world, will help immensely. It is not given to us to know which acts or by whom, will cause the critical mass to tip toward an enduring good. What is needed for dramatic change is an accumulation of acts, adding, adding to, adding more, continuing. We know that it does not take “everyone on Earth” to bring justice and peace, but only a small, determined group who will not give up during the first, second, or hundredth gale. One of the most calming and powerful actions you can do to intervene in a stormy world is to stand up and show your soul. —Clarissa Pinkola Estes.

Our work had focused on how Spirit is calling us individually and collectively to address injustice in a variety of contexts. One of the ongoing objectives of RSEJ has been concrete steps and specific actions to (even if in a very small way) address racial discrimination and other forms of oppression that affect the broad Quaker society and wider community. Our efforts to advance this work fall into five categories: exposure, advocacy, involvement, education, and commitment.

What have we done to move things forward? We connected with individuals in the Wampanoag, Narragansett, and Passamaquoddy tribes to offer the F&P committee a rewrite to the paragraph on King Phillips war. We conducted three workshops at Sessions 08. We are supporting work to consider writing a Justice Testimony. We wrote a letter to George Fox University about the effigy of Obama, which was hand-delivered, and on committee day we showed Friends a slide show on the *Legacy of Jim Crow*. We buried the “N” word at Sessions 08, which included getting many people to sign pledges not to use that word. Through the Freedmen’s Fund and with help from Atlanta F/friends we funded five students; we also produced the 21st issue of the *Freedom and Justice Crier* which, along with diverse articles, investigated and wrote about a racial incident at Moosup, CT; provided a forum for people to write about racial, social or economic issues; and started the NEYM Justice Network. One thing we struggled mightily with was the Israeli/Palestinian situation. We decided to insert a section called the Palestinian Supplement.

We continued to support each other and Friends of color to the best of our abilities with demonstrated love and respect. We are mindful that Susan B. Anthony said:

Cautious, careful people, always casting about to preserve their reputation and social standing, never can bring about a reform. Those who are really in earnest must be willing to be anything or nothing in the world's estimation, and publicly and privately avow sympathy with despised and persecuted ideas and their advocates, and then bear the consequences.

—RACHEL CARREY-HARPER, CLERK

Sessions Committee

Sessions Committee started the year in September by reviewing and digesting the evaluation forms. Attendance at Sessions '08 was the highest ever. In our discernment of the theme for Sessions '09 we 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 '09 will be the beginning of a year of jubilee culminating in our 350th Sessions in 2010. Biblically, jubilee involves forgiveness of debt, suspension of normal work activities and celebration for an entire year—literally a Sabbath year. How that will play out in Sessions business meetings depends on ongoing discernment and “way opening” for the YM clerks.

NEYM Minute o8-52, a Minute on Peace, asked the yearly meeting to hold a called meeting in the winter of 2009 to address the issues raised concerning our Peace testimony. A small ad hoc planning committee of representatives from Peace & Social Concerns, Ministry & Counsel, Sessions Committee and others met several times in preparation for the first-ever mid-year Sessions held in Portland, April, 16-18, 2009. Over 200 people attended—many who had never attended August Sessions. It was a time for extended worship and sharing with no official business occurring. Feedback has been very positive with many attendees hoping for more mid-year Sessions in the years to come.

Sessions Committee has considered changing the venue from Bryant University for several years, though moving our huge group is a daunting task and Bryant works so well for the various programs of the Yearly Meeting. Our committee felt that holding the Mid-Year Sessions in Maine has helped balance the Southern New England/late summer focus of our Sessions. As we age, fewer and fewer venues are able to serve our needs, but the committee continues to be open to consideration of other sites for Sessions.

For the second year, Sessions Committee's Equalization Fund has offered free attendance for one person to each of the 14 monthly meetings that had not sent any representatives for two years. This program has brought a few newcomers in the last 2 years and will be continued for Sessions '09. More importantly it has opened up lines of communication between those monthly meeting clerks and the Sessions Committee. The Equalization Fund continues to be well-funded by monthly meetings and individuals. No prospective YM attendees have been denied funding up to 75% of the costs, when requested.

The work of the Sessions Committee is really a joint effort of Youth Programs, Ministry & Counsel, YM Bookstore, Clerks Table, Audio-Visual and Plenary room coordinators, Christian Education Committee, and the many volunteers at Sessions

itself. It is a task-oriented, joyful committee, yet deeply committed to the real essence of our Sessions: building and sustaining God's beloved community. I am grateful to have been able to serve the committee as clerk for these 3 years.

—BONNIE NORTON, CLERK

Staff Planning

Staff Planning in Context: In John's Revelation, Christ speaks to the angels of the seven churches of Asia Minor calling on them to change. Walter Wink believes that the modern version of an angel of a church is a spiritual community's institutional structure, its implicit rules of behavior. God calls the angel back to its vocation. New England Yearly Meeting is called back to our vocation, back to our special way to participate in God's plan for global society. We hope to be more responsive to our call through the jubilee year, stating our vision, changes in organizational structure, use of a priorities budget, and development of a staff work plan.

On August 2, 2008, the Permanent Board approved a Staff Planning Committee of Jonathan Vogel-Borne, Katharine Clark, and Gerald Sazama, clerk. The Staff Planning Committee works with staff to develop work plans for fiscal year 2010. This includes articulating goals, tasks, measurements/indicators and tracking accomplishments for the fiscal year. If the yearly meeting secretary position is approved, he will report the results of this process to staff, the Coordinating & Advisory Committee, and the Permanent Board. The purpose of the work plan is to increase transparency and accountability and to provide a formal basis to discuss ways to change/modify staff tasks and improve work efficiency.

Most staff members are now committed to the planning process and see how it can improve their participation in and contribution to the YM. The following are some difficulties I have experienced as clerk of the Staff Planning Committee:

1. A need to develop a process between the proposed YM secretary and current staff oversight committees to set priorities.
2. Acceptance of the work and commitment required by the planning process. This includes staff, supervising committees and the Coordinating & Advisory Committee.
3. Acceptance of the newly defined role of the clerk of the Staff Planning Committee.
4. A sense of individualism of some staff, and difficulty to see themselves as part of a broader community with authority over their work process.
5. Resistance to prioritize activities to achieve goals, and resistance to discern and adhere to time allocation decisions to meet goals.
6. Response to the problem at hand rather than to achieve longer-term priorities.
7. Resistance to formal evaluation through systematic reports that are consistent through time and can provide the basis for progress reports.
8. Resistance to the use of quantitative measures, questionnaires and other formal methods to evaluate one's work progress.
9. Present reports, sometimes random in nature need a structural consistency, and need to be related to the staff person's annual report.

It has been a joy to participate with the planning committee. Hopefully, our work will result in real long-term change for NEYM, and it will be part of the process of calling our angel back to its vocation. Personally, Spirit has used this experience to teach me how to love the Inward Light, others and self.

—GERALD SAZAMA

United Society of Friends Women/New England

This year has been an active year for us. In the fall, instead of meeting on a Sunday, we gathered for a two-day retreat on prayer in Smithfield, RI, in late October. (We started our yearly meeting theme on jubilee early!) While there, five members were nominated to travel to Cuba in response to an invitation from Cuba Yearly Meeting to visit their annual women's meeting (UFA). It was a miracle that all five were able to clear their busy lives to go. Ann Armstrong, Marian Baker, Minga Claggett-Borne, Margaret Hawthorne and Sarah Marter traveled to Cuba in April, visiting the annual meeting, as well as a number of local meeting women. Ask them for further details.

At our spring gathering held in early June at Dover, NH Meeting, the five travelers to Cuba shared their experiences and the difference the journey made to their lives.

At our meeting on Sunday, August 2, at NEYM Sessions at 4:15 pm in Janikes Auditorium, we will host two speakers: Katharine Clark, NEYM Administrative & Communications Secretary from Framingham (MA) meeting, and Sara Smith, clerk of Concord (NH) meeting will grace us with ministry on *What Is Forgiveness & How Does Practicing Forgiveness Shape Us?* Bring a friend and come—all people are welcome.

On October 4th, we expect to have Mary Glenn Hadley, clerk of USFW International from Iowa FUM Yearly Meeting as our speaker. She is also available to do some visitation to meetings during that weekend.

Two major projects for this coming year include:

1. Raising funds to enable one of two Cuban women who have been chosen to attend the International USFW Triennial in July 2010 in Kenya.
2. Helping prepare a group of us from New England YM to attend the USFW Triennial which for the first time will be held outside the United States! If you are interested in going to Kenya, talk with us at Sessions.

Come join us!

—MARIAN BAKER, CLERK

Youth Programs Committee

The miracle of acorns: holding one, who could imagine that an oak could come from it? Twenty years ago Kevin Lee planted his volunteer ministry creating in Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) — we believe this is still the only Quaker retreat program for elementary age children. Recognition of Kevin's wonderful work has anchored our efforts this year. The Junior High program (JHYM) has also flourished building, under Gretchen Baker-Smith's wise and strong leadership, a remarkably honest and resilient community.

In a year so full with her own marriage and the birth of baby Ruby, Kim Allen has been a model of play, and thought, and fortitude for Young Friends (YF) and Young

Adult Friends (YAF). Kate Bonner-Jackson's cheerful and skillful plunge into retreat coordination enabled a rich and full spring program. Holding Ruby was the most coveted activity of the June YAF retreat. We have so much young life to celebrate!

We are thankful for all the ways the Yearly Meeting has acknowledged the importance of these programs for youth. NEYM's significant and sustained attention this year to developing a vision statement and ensuring that our staff and organizational structures reflect our most vital ideals has included loving concern for our Youth Programs. We are grateful for the clarity and recognition of the ways we need to change in order to make these programs sustainable. This spring Permanent Board approved a recommendation for a full-time salaried JYM/JHYM coordinator. As we write this report, we know that to become real, this discernment will need your prayerful support throughout Sessions, as well as much help in raising the money that will make this position sustainable.

We suspect that most families whose children have reveled in the elementary and junior high programs have had no idea that the coordinators have been volunteers on stipend. We need as a Yearly Meeting to provide the ministry to our younger children at the same level of monetary support that we have long given to our programs for teenagers. The present JYM coordinator Kevin Lee and JHYM coordinator Gretchen Baker-Smith would be delighted to share the single new position of JYM/JHYM coordinator. Sharing this position is good for both of them now, making it possible for them to continue in this beloved ministry, and the creation of such a position is necessary for the long-term sustainability of these programs.

This is a time of economic hardship, when many organizations and businesses are scaling back. We believe that in periods of difficulty, finding ways to embrace simplicity and build community becomes even more crucial. Our children, our families, and our world, need the kind of spiritual grounding that these programs provide. Maintaining vital programs for our young people is the best possible investment we can make for the future of the Society of Friends in New England and the joy and spirit of our present. We are so thankful for all the ways in which the Yearly Meeting has embraced the work—and play!—of Youth Programs.

—KAREN SÁNCHEZ-EPPLER, CLERK