

NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING
Fall Session (formerly known as Representative Meeting)
December 3, 2005 at Albany Academy for Girls, 1:30–3:30 P.M.

Linda Chidsey, Clerk
Ernestine Buscemi, Assistant Clerk
Lee Haring, Recording Clerk
Anne Wright, Reading Clerk

Friends gathered in worshipful silence. The clerk introduced those at the clerks' table. Dorothy Garner welcomed Friends on behalf of the widespread monthly meetings and worship groups composing Northeastern Regional Meeting. The reading clerk read the roll call, and Friends stood as their meetings were called.

2005-12-1 Norma Ellis (Scarsdale) read the Epistle from Britain Yearly Meeting, held 30 July to 6th August 2005. As British Friends consider structural changes in their yearly meeting, they try to remember that God is at the center of their time together, that the challenges within and outside their meeting may cause discomfort, and that being a people of God is both rewarding and costly.

2005-12-2 Paula McClure (Montclair), clerk of General Services, introduced the business of that section. Harold Risler (Buffalo) presented the treasurer's report (as of the end of October 2005), which was distributed to Friends as they arrived. Estimated contributions indicate that the meeting will have enough money to pay its bills this year.

2005-12-3 Paula introduced Thomas Martin (Wilton) to present the 2006 budget of \$544,220, which was printed in *Spark*, and to describe the budget-making process. This budget, he said, was again unbalanced, but is lower than the budget for 2005. After discussion by a number of Friends, who recounted the way their home meetings have considered their contributions, and their sense of the challenges facing the Yearly Meeting, Friends approved the proposed budget.

2005-12-4 Paula proposed covenant donations for the constituent meetings totaling \$490,400. These were accepted, as printed in *Spark*.

2005-12-5 Paula introduced Christopher Sammond (Bulls Head-Oswego) to present his general secretary's report. After a moment of silence, instead of reading his printed report (already distributed), Christopher spoke out of a present concern for "wrangling" in the yearly meeting, which he connected to our lack of growth. If wrangling takes up most of a community's energy, he said, none is left over for spiritual advance. To prevent unproductive interactions with one another, we need a vision of where we are going. Our call, he felt, is to create the Peaceable Kingdom, the Commonwealth of God. He concluded: "When the quality of our laboring with each other is more important than any decision we might reach; when the faithfulness of our leaders and of the body is so powerful that we are bound together by it into deep fellowship; when we can take up difficult and painful topics such as child sexual abuse, racism, abortion, or the budget with equanimity and care for one another, lest any one of us stumble; when love and truth are inexorably wed, permitting neither empty saccharine nor slicing arguments; when we lovingly speak difficult truths to one another instead of remaining mute; when we can listen with love and tenderness to someone we vehemently disagree with, seeking to hear that piece of the truth that is for us; then, Friends, then we will be close to living in the Peaceable Kingdom, the Commonwealth of God. Then we will have a taste of what Fox was referring to when he said the power of the Lord was over all, and we will become patterns and examples, a living testimony in the witness of our being. We will know peace, and we will be peace. We will spread peace through the power of our witness, and instead of trying to make peace in the world while wrangling with each other, our meeting shall be a wellspring of peace we share outward, and we shall know that power that takes away the occasion for all wars."

2005-12-6 One Friend wondered whether we could consider a retreat for the entire Yearly Meeting. Melanie-Claire Mallison (Ithaca) announced such a retreat, "Nurturing Our Yearly Meeting, Nurturing Our Selves," sponsored by the Nurture Coordinating Committee, to be held at Powell House on December 16–18.

2005-12-7 Melanie-Claire introduced Julia Giordano (Bulls Head-Oswego), clerk of the Powell House Committee. Space needs for the Powell House weekend conferences have led Old Chatham Friends to make a commitment to

building their own meeting house. If the Yearly Meeting approves, five acres of the Powell House property will be leased to Old Chatham Monthly Meeting for this purpose. Christine (Spee) Braun (Old Chatham), clerk of Old Chatham meeting, said that the growth of that meeting, especially its First-Day school, over recent years, and the need for increasing the meeting's visibility are reasons in favor of the building project. She asked Friends to hold Old Chatham meeting in the Light as the project goes forward. The lease is being considered by the Yearly Meeting Trustees, with encouragement from Friends present.

2005-12-8 Benjamin Frisch (Brooklyn) presented a minute of travel from New York Quarterly Meeting for S. Jean Smith (Manhattan), who will survey Lugulu and Kaimosi hospitals in Kenya, in preparation for the writing of grant proposals for their restoration and improvement. The clerk is directed to endorse this minute.

The minutes were read and approved.

Sunday, December 4, 2005, 10:15 A. M.

*Linda Chidsey, Clerk
Ernestine Buscemi, Assistant Clerk
Karen Way, Recording Clerk
Rima Segal, Reading Clerk*

2005-12-9 The meeting opened in worship.

2005-12-10 Roger Dreisbach-Williams (Rahway-Plainfield) read from the Epistle of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, 2005. Exploring their annual session theme of "Called to Be Merciful," Friends described the flow of divine love that creates gospel order and makes possible a merciful community. The call for mercy moved Friends to take action against torture, against the death penalty, and in favor of restorative justice, extending the hope of peace outward to the world and inward, toward divisions in the Quaker community

2005-12-11 After introducing those at the clerks' table, the Clerk turned over the task of clerking to Assistant Clerk Ernestine Buscemi (Morningside).

2005-12-12 Deborah Wood, clerk of the Coordinating Committee for Ministry and Counsel, introduced Christopher Sammond, who reported on the creation of a series of Powell House weekends titled "Drawing Out Gifts," designed to nurture gifts in Friends within New York Yearly Meeting. Four weekends are scheduled for 2006 and two for 2007. Friends are urged to identify and encourage those in their meetings who could benefit from these workshops.

2005-12-13 Deborah then introduced Joanna Komoska (Peconic Bay), clerk of the Committee on Conflict Transformation, who asked Cheshire Frager (Flushing) to describe a special five-day intensive workshop on conflict resolution being offered January 19-23. It is expected that participants in the workshop will form the base of a Yearly Meeting resource for spiritual resolution of problems within the Quaker community. Representatives from as many monthly meetings as possible are sought.

2005-12-14 Melanie-Claire Mallison (Ithaca), clerk of Nurture Coordinating Committee, introduced Alexander Haines-Stephan and Joanna Hoyt, who reported on the first World Gathering of Young Friends in twenty years, held on August 16th to 24th, 2005, at Lancaster University, United Kingdom. Young people of very different Quaker traditions and politics found community there in a powerful working of the Spirit. Alex Haines-Stephan reported on climbing Pendle Hill and read the Epistle written by the gathering. Alex challenged us to seek community with Friends who do not think or worship as we do, that we might feel as the young people felt, "open, amazed, stretched, and blessed." Joanna Hoyt reported that her eyes and her heart had been opened. She encountered Friends with many different expectations, practices, and definitions of Quakerism, who were nevertheless able, at times, to feel the flowing of the Spirit that needs no words. Together they shared the deep experience of being united in striving to choose love, to live in faithfulness, and to be brave enough to be open to new leadings. Joanna concluded, "The harvest is only beginning."

2005-12-15 Paula McClure of the Transition Working Group asked for approval for having the Worship and Action Group turn over the Peace Initiatives Fund to the Witness Activities Fund, in order to support the peace witness of

monthly and regional meetings. The balance in the fund as of October 31, 2005, was \$2,512.57, with a few vouchers outstanding. Friends approved the transfer of the fund.

The Transition Working Group also affirmed the need for the various functions that the Worship and Action Group has filled within the Yearly Meeting. The TWG will bring recommendations to the spring sessions of the Yearly Meeting.

2005-12-16 Anita Paul (Schenectady) of Witness Coordinating Committee announced that the 2006 goal for the Sharing Fund is \$50,000. This is \$5,000 more than previously gathered. Friends accepted the report.

2005-12-17 Anita then brought forth a minute originally proposed by the Committee for Right Sharing of World Resources and approved by Witness Coordinating Committee in October 2005.

New York Yearly Meeting commits itself, corporately and as individuals, to explore how we may facilitate meeting the minimum needs of all. We all have an impact. The products we choose to purchase, how we invest our money, and our lifestyles all play a role. We commit ourselves to doing research, educating ourselves, and sharing the results with each other so that we may all, as we feel led, be part of the solution.

After discussion, Friends approved asking Witness Coordinating Committee to send the minute to monthly and regional meetings for prayerful consideration. The committee hopes to receive responses from meetings regarding the minute, including thoughts on how to implement the commitment the minute describes.

Friends received minutes from Long Island Quarter, also related to meeting the minimum needs of all, as follows:

1. Long Island Quarterly Meeting approves the definition of meeting the minimum needs of all peoples to be adequate drinking water, nutrition, clothing, and housing, primary health care, and five years of primary education.
2. Long Island Quarterly Meeting approves the widest communication about the critical circumstances of the global poor and of minimum needs by the year 2003.
3. LIQM approves the efforts of Friends, working with other faith-based groups, to encourage the World Bank and the World Trade Organization to work toward meeting the minimum needs of all peoples, as defined in the first of these three minutes.

Witness Coordinating Committee will send the Long Island minutes to monthly meetings as well.

The LIQM minutes will be revisited at the spring session of New York Yearly Meeting.

2005-12-18 The reading clerk read an endorsement from a community in Indonesia to the travel minute for Nadine Hoover. Friends received the returned minute.

2005-12-19 The reading clerk also read endorsements from communities in Bolivia to the travel minute for Newton Garver. Friends received the returned minute.

2005-12-20 The following Friends were appointed to the services indicated.
Delegates to Friends World Committee for Consultation Triennial, August 2007, Frederick Dettmer (Purchase), Judith Inskip (Purchase), Valerie Matthews (Purchase), Helen Garay Toppins (Morningside), 1st Alternate, Robert Baldrige (Fifteenth Street), 2nd Alternate, Radh Achuthan (Peconic Bay); National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, class of 2008, Jeffrey Bird (Summit); Friends Peace Teams, class of 2008, Carolyn Keys (Montclair).

2005-12-21 The following Friends were released from the services indicated.

Advancement: Cinda Putman (Albany), class of 2007

FWCC Committee: Alice Vedova (Ridgewood), class of 2006

Peace Concerns: Thomas Rothschild (Brooklyn), class of 2006

General Services Coordinating Committee: Mary Williams (Bulls Head-Oswego), class of 2006

2005-12-22 Milford Lester, clerk of Northeastern Regional Meeting, thanked Friends for attending, as well as those in Northeastern Regional Meeting who worked on fall sessions.

2005-12-23 Friends charged the Clerk and the general secretary to work in consultation with the Worship and Action group to create a public message regarding the abduction of four members of the Christian Peacemaker Team in Iraq, including Tom Fox, a member of Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

2005-12-24 The minutes of the session were read and approved.

2005-12-25 The meeting closed with worship.