

New York Yearly Meeting
Minutes of Fall Representative Meeting
Brooklyn Friends School
Saturday, December 2, 2006, 1:30 P.M.

Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Lee Haring , Assistant Clerk
Elaine Learnard, Recording Clerk
Rima Siegel, Reading Clerk

2006-12-1. Friends gathered in silent worship.

2006-12-2. Out of the silence, the reading clerk called the roll by regional and quarterly meetings and their constituent monthly meetings and worship groups. Friends rose in response.

2006-12-3. The reading clerk read a memorial minute for George A. Saxton Jr. Born in Paris, France, and raised in Short Hills, N.J., George carried through his whole life the worship, service and integrity that he found at the George School in his youth. George was inventive and creative, with a natural resistance to authority, traits he drew on in his varied work as teacher, inventor, physician, and international peace and world health advocate. He and his wife, Anne, moved their family to Uganda in 1962, living out their belief that a more equitable international distribution of health care is a means to world peace. They later returned to the United States, joining and founding meetings in different parts of the country as they continued their work for public health. He was a founding member of Physicians for Social Responsibility, for which he later shared the Nobel Peace Prize. He died at home on Christmas morning 2005. George is survived by his wife and four children. Out of the silence, friends spoke their memories of him, describing him as an inspirational role model and a wonderful peacemaker.

2006-12-4. Ernestine (Ernie) Buscemi (Morningside), Clerk of the Yearly Meeting, introduced those at the clerks' table and invited us to engage in the business before us with worship in our hearts.

2006-12-5. General Secretary Christopher Sammond brought his report. He noted that the work of the NYYM staff was greatly challenged during the renovation of their building over the past five months and that the office is about to have to move again to accommodate further renovation. He asked that Friends be patient with the disruptions caused by that construction work. He then turned his attention the Yearly Meeting and spoke about growth in youth programs, improvements in tending to young adult friends, spiritual nurture of individuals, care of our monthly meetings and worship groups, and our deepening in our witness to the world. He reported that we have experienced a second year of growth in membership and that we have a great deal to be happy with, a great deal to be thankful for. He spoke also of work that we must do. We must learn to

faithfully serve as the body, to discern the difference between speaking from judgment rather than from love, and to recognize when we are using an us/them framework. We must learn how to better labor in love with one another, to speak our truth so that it can be heard and to hear others speak their truths, to avoid judgment or seeing those with whom we disagree as "other." We limit our growth when we do not practice this basic Quakerism. We must learn to say the hard things, not just be nice to each other. In at least a quarter of the meetings he has visited, long-standing conflict absorbs the life of the meeting. He also spoke about how difficult it is for meetings to live with individuals who live with a lot of hurt and who spread that hurt around. He offered four suggestions: refrain from making that person a "them" or a problem, keep your heart free from judgment, realize that you have the choice of whether to spread the hurt around, and keep the needs of the individual in mind. His fifth suggestion is that if we cannot do these four things, we should immediately ask for outside help. Conflict in meetings is not a mistake or an embarrassment; it is the workshop in which we can learn to handle conflict in the world.

2006-12-6. Paula McClure (Montclair), clerk of General Services Coordinating Committee, reminded us about Quakerism Economics 101: things you can do that don't cost money but can save the Yearly Meeting money, such as taking materials at sessions so they don't have to be mailed, using the appropriate YM tax exempt numbers, and responding to requests for reports or other information as quickly as possible. She introduced the treasurer, Harold Risler (Buffalo), to give the treasurer's report. He reminded us that the report provides a comparison with the same period of last year. He noted that the Sharing Fund had received only 48% of its expected donations and that he could not make a prediction about what the financial picture would be at the end of the year. Our financial year ends December 31st, so contributions must be received prior to January 12th and vouchers by January 5th to be included under the previous year's budget. Paula introduced Thomas Martin (Wilton), clerk of Financial Services Committee, who presented the proposed 2007 budget. He spoke about the process and the challenges of framing the budget. Rather than the 24 members called for, the Financial Services Committee currently has only four friends serving. He asked how many of us could report that our meeting brought the draft expense budget for prayerful consideration to a business meeting prior to September's Budget Saturday, as requested, noting that many could not. We are still working out how to follow a covenant donation process and Tom noted that we do the best we can—open to and relying on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The proposed budget is balanced, but it is balanced at the expense of some significant expense cuts in programs. Friends approved the proposed budget of \$530,320, which includes expected income of \$530,320, including the expected covenant donations of \$484,400.

2006-12-7. The Clerk reported that New Yorkers against the Death Penalty (NYADP) had been in touch with her in October and needed a very quick response to a request to become signatories to a religious amicus brief against

the death penalty. In consultation with the general secretary, and based on Advice 7 and our previous relationship with NYADP and with the National Council of Churches, she was clear that this action was in keeping with the intentions of the body; therefore, she and the general secretary became signatories on behalf of New York Yearly Meeting on this amicus brief.

2006-12-8. Friends approved the minutes.

2006-12-9. The meeting closed in silent worship.

Brooklyn Monthly Meeting Meetinghouse
Sunday, December 3, 2006, 8:45 A.M.

Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Lee Haring, Assistant Clerk
Rima Segal, Reading Clerk
Melanie-Claire Mallison, Recording Clerk

2006-12-10. Friends gathered in worship. Our Clerk invited us into worship sharing on the query "In your wildest dreams, how do you imagine New York Yearly Meeting?" Friends spoke out of the silence.

2006-12-11. Ernestine (Ernie) Buscemi introduced the clerks' table. Rima Segal (Rochester) read the Epistle from New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, who gathered in August for the 346th session, with the theme "Holy Obedience, from Worship to Witness." Worship and witness are one, and obedience is not simple. They rejoice in their hard and faithful work both in continuing struggles and in joys of community. "God holds us always, even when we forget...."

2006-12-12. Rima read the returned travel minute for S. Jean Smith. Jean traveled to Kenya, where she visited the hospitals at Lugulu and Kaimosi. Those in Kaimosi noted Jean was a New Year's gift and a blessing to their work. Friends received this travel minute.

2006-12-13. Frederick Dettmer (Purchase), clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee, introduced Nadine Hoover (Alfred), who read a report from Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation (COMT). We were reminded of our minute stating that paying for war violates our religious conviction. COMT adds that paying for war is a gross violation of what our souls tell us is right and good, and asks what can we do? Write a statement of conscience, and establish a personal conscientious objector file, for your own clarity of conviction. Public witness of our faith is also critical. Simply keeping track of travel in Quaker service as a tax deduction is such a public witness. Look for ways to fulfill your conscientious objector beliefs as a service.

Fred spoke to the use of the accountability queries in the Witness section's work. This past summer, Witness received a report from the Right Sharing of World Resources Committee. The committee recommended to Witness Coordinating Committee that Right Sharing be laid down, and a resource person be named. Witness approved these recommendations and brings them forward to the Yearly Meeting. Friends approve the recommendation to lay down the Right Sharing of World Resources Committee. Bobbi Sue Bowers (Manasquan) has been approved by Witness Coordinating Committee as the resource person for Right Sharing.

John Randall reported briefly on the 11th annual war tax resistance and peace tax campaign held near Berlin, Germany; a gathering of religious and secular organizations working together against paying for war. As part of the conference, they held a Quaker Meeting for Worship at which many were first time attenders. A German Friend said it was the most gathered meeting he had ever attended, and John himself felt it was spiritual awakening.

Fred spoke to the work done with the support of the Sharing Fund, which witnesses to our convictions. He asked that Friends dig deep and send their contributions.

2006-12-14. **Error! Reference source not found.** (Ithaca), clerk of Nurture Coordinating Committee, brought announcements from the Nurture section. Nurture is sponsoring a series of conferences at Powell House in 2007, on deepening our Quaker beliefs and testimonies, and our connection to our Monthly Meeting or Worship Group. She welcomes everyone to attend. Melanie-Claire noted that the 2007 February FUM General Board meeting will be taking place, for the first time, in Kenya. Christopher Sammond will be attending. And FGC's Young Quakes conference will be held here in NYYM in 2007. She will be a point person to liaison between FGC and NYYM, along with Rick Townsend (Fredonia), Dylan Meland-Lewis (New Paltz), and Kelli Meland-Lewis (New Paltz). Melanie-Claire then read the official letter from the YouthQuake Planning Committee, laying down the YouthQuake conferences. Friends received this letter.

2006-12-15. Timothy Johnson (Schenectady), clerk of Nominating Committee, brought the following nominations: Epistle Committee, Class of 2008, Ron Peterson ('06, Fredonia); General Services Coordinating Committee, Class of 2008 (Member at Large), Ron Peterson ('06, Fredonia); Nurture Coordinating Committee, Class of 2009 (Members at Large), Mary Rothschild (Brooklyn); Chad Dell (Manasquan); Advancement Committee, Class of 2007, Chad Dell ('06, Manasquan). Non-NYYM Appointment: Oakwood Friends School, Class of 2009, Betsy Eschallier (Doylestown, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting).

Friends approved these nominations.

We received the following resignation: Junior Yearly Meeting Committee, Class of 2007, Liseli Haines ('04, Mohawk Valley)

2006-12-16. Our Clerk reported that the Advancement Committee recommends a Lockport Brinkerhoff request of \$2,000 for a Housatonic meetinghouse renovation project. Friends approved this recommendation.

2006-12-17. The minutes of the morning session were read and approved.

2006-12-18. Friends settled back into deep spirit-fed worship.