

NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING

Fall Sessions

November 10–11, 2007

Saturday, November 10, 2007
School of the Holy Child,
Rye, New York

Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Lee Haring, Assistant Clerk
Elaine Learnard, Recording Clerk
Jeffrey Aaron, Reading Clerk

2007-11-01. The Clerk, Ernestine Buscemi (Morningside), called us to worship, reminding us that despite the despair evoked by much of what is happening in the world, the illumination that sends out a divine radiance makes us alive and well. We each and all belong to and are loved by God and this is the grounding for all the work of the Yearly Meeting.

2007-11-02. The Clerk introduced those at the clerks' table.

2007-11-03. The reading clerk called the roll by region and Friends rose in response.

2007-11-04. Boyce Benge (Brooklyn) read an epistle from Illinois Yearly Meeting, Seventh Month 29, 2007. Their theme this year was "Answering that of God." Finding that faithful preparation and seasoning allowed them to complete their work with relative ease, they celebrated the increased inclusion of young Friends and noted that issues of accessibility limited the participation of others. They were reminded that answering implies a two-way relationship, that we are called not just to answer, but to listen and wait for answers, forming a deeper relationship with the Divine.

2007-11-05. The reading clerk read a memorial minute for Barbara Haviland Houser. Barbara was born in 1921 to a family that had been members of Purchase Meeting since 1727, and the meeting was ever a vital part of her life. A steady, calm, and nonjudgmental listener, an excellent cook and stalwart of the Hospitality Committee, she was a caring presence for all, having a special rapport with children and teenagers, inspiring others to feel good about themselves. She served the meeting in many roles and is remembered for her knowledge of Quaker history and practice and her devotion to Quaker community. Friends spoke of their remembrances of Barbara.

2007-11-06. The Clerk introduced the general secretary, Christopher Sammond (Bulls Head-Oswego). Christopher told us that though he had come to his post wanting to get new things going, he now often feels that he is running alongside to keep up. Because the full text of his report was provided at the registration table, he only touched on the main headings from his written report, "Growing in the Spirit": We are becoming more and more active in being a visible presence in our communities; we are better supporting and nurturing our youth; we are at work in proactively addressing the spiritual needs of Friends—all the way along the continuum from new attenders to seasoned Friends; we are changing our structures to encourage more grassroots discernment in our life as a Yearly Meeting; we are supporting a multitude of different expressions of our witness in

the world—giving tangible expression to our spiritual life; we are seeing more and more Friends led to travel in the ministry; we are witnessing greater participation in the work going on at a Yearly Meeting level.

Christopher's message concentrated on the work still to do, including learning how to "befriend" newcomers to our meetings, discerning a clearer vision of what we are called to do as a Yearly Meeting, communicating the work going on at the Yearly Meeting level, continuing the powerful work we do in exploring our relationship with Friends United Meeting, planning and encouraging participation in the new meetings for discernment, and untangling personal and interpersonal wounds from our discernment process in our meetings. He spoke of his sense that we need to continue to look for where we are called to do more work. Friends spoke of their thanks for and use of the general secretary's work.

2007-11-07. Paula McClure (Montclair) brought the business from the General Services Coordinating Committee and introduced the treasurer, Harold Risler (Buffalo). Harold brought a summary of the Treasurer's Report as of September 30, 2007, which is available in full on the Web site. He asked that questions about actual committee work be directed to the committee clerks. So far we have collected more money than we had to this point last year and Harold anticipates that we will collect enough funds to cover our expenses for the year. Friends received the Treasurer's Report.

2007-11-08. Paula introduced Susan Bingham (Montclair). Susan had been approved as the treasurer and John Maynard (Fifteenth Street) as assistant treasurer, effective January 1, 2008, as part of the consent agenda at Summer Sessions. However, to make the transition more straightforward, Friends approved the following minute:

Friends approve the appointment of Susan Bingham as treasurer and John Maynard as assistant treasurer of New York Yearly Meeting, effective November 10, 2007.

2007-11-09. Paula introduced Steven Mohlke (Ithaca), who in turn introduced the members of the Financial Services Committee. All committee members are new to the committee this year. Steve presented the proposed budget, a balanced budget, explaining that some of the changes to the individual lines may make comparison with previous budget somewhat complicated, but that the line changes reflect structural changes within the coordinating committees. Steve and others responded to questions on specific budget items, particularly about expenditures for encouraging participation of new and seasoned Friends in Yearly Meeting gatherings. Friends were urged to continue this discussion in their monthly meetings. Friends approve the proposed budget of \$537,400, which includes expected income of \$537,400, including the anticipated covenant donations of \$483,300.

2007-11-10. The Clerk introduced Linda Chidsey (Housatonic), who delivered a message out of her experience in the meeting of the Public Policy Committee of the New York State Council of Churches (NYSCC) (September 21 and 22, 2007), the committee that establishes advocacy issues for the NYSCC. These issues are currently healthcare, education, immigration, poverty, the environment, and war. Invited at the beginning of their weekend together to listen to the cries of Wisdom, the 26 representatives from the membership denominations had the opportunity to look at their advocacy work through

the lens of social movement stages as well as at roles and methods, based on an organizing scheme from a book by Bill Moyer, *Doing Democracy*. They explored their fears and the obstacles to this advocacy work. In other words, they faced the question: what are the costs of discipleship? Linda brought forward several questions:

What extraordinary thing might God be calling us to do?

How are we distracted from the fundamental message of the Gospel?

What can I no longer *not* do?

How much are we willing to suffer?

She spoke of our being called to participate in God's love, that this draws us out of our fears and to our belief in the fundamental goodness of the world. She asked that we not turn a deaf ear as Wisdom cries out from the hillside.

2007-11-11. The minutes of the morning session were read and approved.

Sunday, November 11, 2007
Purchase Monthly Meeting

Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Lee Haring, Assistant Clerk
Karen Reixach, Recording Clerk
Norma Ellis, Reading Clerk

2007-11-12. The Clerk, Ernestine Buscemi (Morningside), called us into worship.

2007-11-13. The Clerk introduced those at the clerks' table.

2007-11-14. Helen Garay Toppins (Morningside) began the report of the representatives to the Triennial of the Friends World Committee for Consultation by reading from the Epistle of that gathering in Ireland. The theme "Finding the Prophetic Voice of Our Time" was considered through scripture and looking at the lives of those today who are living in the prophetic tradition. Are we called as well? The epistle continued, noting that Friends celebrated the involvement of young Friends, prayed for those affected by disasters, and reached a decision to hold a World Conference in Kenya in 2012.

Helen reported in three parts: as a black woman, she encountered behavior at the Triennial that she experienced as racist or sexist. She responded to these incidents by engaging in open hearted dialogue because she felt that she wanted to stand shoulder to shoulder with her Quaker family.

Helen presented a workshop on prison ministry, feeling accompanied by the spirits of all the people in NYYM and beyond who had nourished this ministry. She said the efforts of others around the world with people in prison with AIDS prepared her for returning to respond to this issue at home.

As staff liaison to young adult Friends, Helen delighted in the presence and contributions of the young Friends from 15 to 20 Yearly Meetings. FWCC decided to set up a Young Adults Committee in the United States; she urged NYYM to make it possible for young adults from our Yearly Meeting to attend. In response to a question concerning making it

possible for young adults from around the world to participate, Helen indicated that the attenders were quite diverse and that the young adults were clear that they intended to maintain and increase this diversity.

2007-11-15. Jill McClellan (Central Finger Lakes), assistant clerk of Nominating Committee, brought the following names forward for approval

Friends United Meeting General Board

Class of 2011

Christopher Sammond	Bulls Head-Oswego MM
Steven Ross	Shrewsbury MM
Beatrice Beguin	Saranac Lake MM
<i>Alternate:</i> Regina Haag	Adirondack MM

Friends United Meeting Triennial

Class of 2008

Beatrice Beguin	Saranac Lake MM
Jens Braun	Old Chatham MM
Ann Davidson	Farmington MM
Irene Goodman	Westbury MM
Regina Haag	Adirondack MM
Carol Holmes	Brooklyn MM
Ruth Kinsey	Farmington MM
Christopher Sammond	Bulls Head-Oswego MM
Steven Ross	Shrewsbury MM

Indian Affairs Committee

Class of 2010

James Hall	Collins MM
James Darragh	Westbury MM

Advancement Committee

Class of 2008

John Edminster	15th Street MM
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Sessions Committee

Class of 2009

John Cooley	Central Finger Lakes
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Class of 2010

Carol Rice	Clinton Corners MM
Charley Flint	Rahway-Plainfield MM

Friends Peace Teams Representatives

Class of 2010

Nadine Hoover

Alfred MM

Nurture Coordinating Committee

Cheshire Frager

Flushing MM

Anola Gowin

Syracuse MM

Personnel Committee

Class of 2010

Heloise Rathbone

Brooklyn MM

Friends approved these nominations.

Friends approved the appointment of William Nichols of Ohio Yearly Meeting to the Oakwood Friends School Board of Managers, Class of 2012.

Friends received the following resignations:

Sessions Committee

Class of 2008, Kathleen Lawson, Cheshire Frager

Class of 2009, Rose Lynn

Oakwood School Board of Managers

Class of 2009, Arthur Washburn

Conflict Transformation Committee

Correction:

Shirley Way was listed in error for this committee.

Barrington Dunbar Fund

Correction:

Jane Simkin was listed in error for this committee.

Friends were urged to identify young adult Friends with gifts to offer and to inform the Nominating Committee.

2007-11-16. The reading clerk read the travel minute for Newton Garver (Buffalo), forwarded from Buffalo and from Farmington-Scipio Region, describing his work on behalf of Bolivian Quakers. Friends approved the Clerk's endorsing this travel minute.

Newton summarized his work in Bolivia since the travel minute was approved. He indicated that the challenges of living for two weeks at a time at 11,000 feet and constantly speaking Spanish means that he is unlikely to continue visiting Bolivia, but he is available to visit Friends Meetings and others in the United States to describe the work of the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund. He conveyed greetings from hundreds of Bolivian Friends and described the varieties of Bolivian Friends' practices. He said that at INELA (Iglesia Nacional Evangélica "Los Amigos," or Nacional Evangelical Friends

Church) each of the visiting Friends was asked to deliver a message, and that each message was warmly received with song and prayer by those present. Santidad and INELA Friends sent greetings to us through Newton. NYYM Friends asked Newton to convey our loving greetings to Friends in Bolivia.

2007-11-17. The Clerk introduced Daniel Jenkins (Saranac Lake), who reported for the Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War in the absence of its coclerk, Jens Braun.

The amicus brief of the Yearly Meeting in support of his petition of certiorari to the U.S. Supreme Court was submitted July 5, 2007. On October 1, 2007, the court refused to hear the case. An appeal to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights is now possible. He thanked the Fund for Sufferings for their support in paying the penalty imposed for taking this issue of conscientious objection to military tax to court.

Dan then updated Friends on the other work of the Committee, including its third conference held at Flushing Meeting in September 2007, the fourth conference being planned for the spring in the Albany area; the work on the Call to Friends inviting them to write statements of conscience, record them with their monthly meetings, and file them with the Yearly Meeting; and the submission of articles on conscientious objection to paying for war to *Friends Journal*.

Dan closed with a message about integrity and the willingness to examine how we earn, store, and spend money. “A goodly part of integrity involves honest recognition of that which we control or have power over and that which controls or has power over us—with the intention of bringing these into right relationship for the blessed community to prosper.”

2007-11-18. Some Friends gathered last evening in worship in response to the message of Linda Chidsey (Housatonic) arising out of the New York State Council of Churches Policy Committee, which asked “What extraordinary thing might God be calling us to?” Paddy Lane (Butternuts) read a proposed minute from the group, calling for Friends to gather in worship for peace. Friends united with the urgency of the concern and shared additional sentiments prompted by the minute. The Clerk, the assistant clerk, Paddy Lane, and anyone else who feels called will refine the minute for distribution to monthly meetings, government officials, the New York State Council of Churches, and Friends everywhere.

Friends approved revival of the Quaker Worship and Action (WANDA) e-mail list and the Worship & Action communications. The Clerk of the Yearly Meeting will see to the implementation.

2007-11-19. Justin Bishop (Schenectady), recording clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee, announced the Sharing Fund goal for 2008 of \$50,000 and in silent worship Friends considered how we are called to support Quaker witness. He appealed to Friends to contribute to the Sharing Fund.

2007-11-20. Lee Haring (Bulls Head-Oswego), clerk of the Interim Steering Committee of the Meetings for Discernment, reminded Friends that this body replaces the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel. The first meeting will be held March 15, 2008, at

Rochester Meeting. The second will be held Tuesday, July 22, 2008, at Silver Bay. He urged meetings to appoint people who are in touch with the meeting and to whom people turn for ministry and counsel. He emphasized the desire to have a range of ages, ethnicity, and theological perspectives. Friends were urged to worship at their monthly meetings during these sessions and to carry the work of these Meetings for Discernment in their hearts.

The Meetings for Discernment will consider the following questions:

How is the Spirit moving in your monthly meeting?

What concerns have been laid upon your heart and into the collective care of your monthly meeting?

How is the Spirit moving in the Yearly Meeting?

What are we as a body called to at this time?

2007-11-21. The minutes of the morning session were read and approved.

2007-11-22. The clerk suggested that the minute from yesterday on scholarship assistance needs more seasoning. She will confer with the relevant committees and other bodies regarding this concern and will report to Spring Sessions. The body approved omitting that minute.

2007-11-23. The meeting closed with the reading of a prayer for peace at Armistice Day followed by silent, expectant worship.