

**2008
ADVANCE REPORTS**

**New York Yearly Meeting
of the
Religious Society of Friends**

**PREPARED FOR SESSIONS
OF YEARLY MEETING
July 20–26, 2008 SILVER BAY, N.Y.**

Please use the documents of this book throughout the week in preparation for business sessions, committee meetings, and interest groups sponsored by committees or affiliated organizations.

THIS COPY BELONGS TO

NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING ADVANCE REPORTS

The documents of this publication were printed in advance of the 2008–2009 Yearbook for consideration at sessions of NYYM.

Please note that the budgets and expenditures of many committees may be obtained through reference to the Treasurer’s Report. Committees having their own treasurers submitted financial reports. All financial reports are for the 2007 calendar year.

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NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING
Fall Sessions
November 10–11, 2007
School of the Holy Child, Rye, New York

Saturday, November 10, 2007

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 Bengé (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
Steven Ross	Shrewsbury
Beatrice Beguin	Saranac Lake
<i>Alternate:</i> Regina Haag	Adirondack

Friends United Meeting Triennial

Class of 2008

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

Indian Affairs Committee

Class of 2010

James Hall	Collins
James Darragh	Westbury

Advancement Committee

Class of 2008

John Edminster	15th Street
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Sessions Committee

Class of 2009

John Cooley	Central Finger Lakes
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Class of 2010

Carol Rice	Purchase
Charley Flint	Rahway-Plainfield

Friends Peace Teams Representatives

Class of 2010

Nadine Hoover	Alfred
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Nurture Coordinating Committee

Cheshire Frager	Flushing
Anola Gowin	Syracuse

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 (WAN-DA) 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.

NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING

Spring Sessions

April 4–6, 2008

Oakwood Friends School, Poughkeepsie, New York

Saturday, April 5, 2008

Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk

Lee Haring, Assistant Clerk

Karen Reixach, Recording Clerk

Jeffrey Aaron, Reading Clerk

2008-04-01. The Meeting gathered. Lee Haring (Bulls Head-Oswego), assistant clerk, called the roll, asking Friends to rise by regional meeting.

2008-04-02. The meeting settled into worship. Out of the silence the reading clerk read from our Yearly Meeting Faith & Practice on meeting for worship with a concern for business which invites Friends to seek the Spirit and advises on ways that promote the authority of God's Spirit. Friends settled again into silent, expectant waiting.

2008-04-03. Ernestine Buscemi (Morningside), clerk of NYYM, introduced the individuals at the clerks' table. She began the business session by providing background to Friends on the outcome of the closing of the McCutchen, the establishment of the Friends Foundation for the Aging who hold the funds from the sale of the building, and the work of the Working Group on Aging, which is under the care of Nurture. Nurture Coordinating Committee recommends that the Working Group on Aging become the Committee on Aging Concerns. Anita Paul (Schenectady) and Barbara Spring (sojourning at Albany Meeting from Missoula Meeting [North Pacific YM]) described the needs assessment process of creating pilot program in the Albany area, called Aging Resources, Consultation, and Help or ARCH. ARCH works to bring appropriate resources to help seniors, their caregivers and meetings, to identify the seniors' needs, to find the agencies and people to meet those needs, and to serve as facilitators between caregivers and their parents. Resource people are viewed as "enabled volunteers" and paid as consultants. Anita and Barbara presently serve as the enabled volunteers. Barbara indicated that they may also take on other activities, such as developing workshops.

Anita then read the handbook description of the proposed Committee on Aging Concerns. The Operating Budget currently contains \$750 in the Section expenses for the Working Group. This amount would

become a specific line for the Committee on Aging Concerns to be used for committee expenses.

2008-04-04. Friends approved the creation of the Committee on Aging Concerns, in the Nurture Section. The Meeting then approved Yearly Meeting immediately setting up a fund line under the management of the Yearly Meeting treasurer to receive, hold, and disburse funds from the Friends Foundation on Aging. This fund will be under the care of Committee on Aging Concerns.

2008-04-05. Christine DeRoller (Old Chatham), Youth Program co-director of Powell House, reported for the Powell House Committee. Since April 2007 Powell House hosted 75 events for spiritual renewal and connection with 2,500 attendees. The Youth Program has added weekends, using eight young adults as leaders. Major maintenance projects at Pitt Hall included reroofing the garage, buying new chairs for the dining room, and repairing and refinishing the wood floor. Powell House Committee is considering the staff recommendation that the renovations to the Anna Curtis Center at Powell House begin this summer. Phase One would make the back of Anna Curtis Center (Bugg House) more accessible and reduce allergy-producing mold. Chris indicated that a substantial portion of the funds needed for the renovations are in hand, and invited Friends to contribute to the capital fund to ensure that the remaining needs are met. Friends received the report.

2008-04-06. Susan Bingham (Montclair), Treasurer of NYYM, summarized the 2007 fiscal year and the financial picture as of February 29, 2008. Friends received the report.

2008-04-07. Christopher Sammond (sojourning at Bulls Head-Oswego), general secretary of New York Yearly Meeting, indicated that his written report, posted on the Yearly Meeting Web site (www.nyym.org/pubs), offers some examples of how the staff support us as we build the blessed community. He reminded us of the areas of focus he identified two years ago: care of our children and youth, integration of newcomers, spiritual nurture/religious education, conflict resolution, coming to a common vision, and healing the divide between our monthly meetings and the structure of the Yearly Meeting. He feels that there has been real progress. Christopher then reflected on three themes: the recognition of how “generations” of Friends within a meeting plays out, and how that impedes our life and growth; what we might learn from wrestling with our relationship with the rest of FUM

to become more aware of the thoughts and emotions which move us towards hardening our hearts to our fellow human beings, and how we can learn to keep our hearts open, even while emphatically disagreeing with the premises and conclusions of those we differ from; how our use of electronic communication affects us as a community, positively and corrosively.

Friends received the report and ministry of our general secretary, with a sense that we are to get out of our comfort zone and engage with these issues in our meetings and in our lives.

2008-04-08. Frederick Dettmer (Purchase), clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee, introduced Jens Braun (Old Chatham), clerk of the Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War, who provided background on the WCC recommendation that the Yearly Meeting approve publication by Pendle Hill of the Amicus Brief submitted by NYYM to the United States Supreme Court in the case of *Jenkins v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue*. Friends approved submitting the Amicus Brief to Pendle Hill for publication.

2008-04-09. Friends also approved that Jens Braun, Dan Jenkins, and Karen Reixach serve as a writing team to prepare a framing piece, negotiate the scope of any condensation of the brief, work with the attorneys to ensure that the pamphlet is faithful to the arguments in the brief, and review the draft with the clerk of the Yearly Meeting and the general secretary before submission to Pendle Hill. All revisions requested by Pendle Hill will be prepared by the writing team and reviewed and approved by the clerk and general secretary.

2008-04-10. The reading clerk read Minute 2007-07-50 from Summer Sessions calling on Friends to prepare Statements of Conscience on Paying for War. Jens Braun reported that the Call has gone out to meetings in NYYM and other Yearly Meetings. He described the work of listening to the Spirit and reflecting that in our lives.

Witness Coordinating Committee recommends extending the Call to Friends to Prepare Statements of Conscience approved at 2007 Summer Sessions to others (such as Mennonites and Brethren) and publicizing it more widely in the media. In consultation with the clerk of NYYM, the Committee on Conscience Objection to Paying for War would be asked to appropriately revise the Call for publication to others, to identify bodies to which the Call will be sent, and to provide assistance with distribution.

The Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War was

asked to further refine the minute and provide additional information on the Call.

2008-04-11. The minutes were approved.

2008-04-12. The meeting closed with silent worship.

Sunday, April 6, 2008

Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Lee Haring, Assistant Clerk
Elaine Learnard, Recording Clerk
Norma Ellis, Reading Clerk

2008-04-13. The meeting opened in silent worship. Out of the silence, the reading clerk read the 2007 Epistle from Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting.

2008-04-14. The Clerk introduced those at the clerks' table. She spoke of our still sitting together in "that wonderful place we created yesterday" and asked us to hold that place and be together in peace, knowing that time is spacious where God is.

2008-04-15. The Clerk introduced Greta Mickey (Central Finger Lakes), clerk of the Peace Concerns Committee, and Fred Dettmer, clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee. Greta spoke of the difficulty of asking for the laying down of the Peace Concerns Committee. She spoke of how this Yearly Meeting is doing work for peace in monthly meetings and in fifteen separate committees. WCC has asked her to serve as the coordinator for peace concerns and to assist monthly meetings in networking on peace-concerns work. WCC recommended that, as the work of peacemaking in New York Yearly Meeting is strong, and there is insufficient energy among Friends to live into the specific charge of the Peace Concerns Committee, the NYYM Peace Concerns Committee should be laid down. Friends approved laying down the Peace Concerns Committee.

2008-04-16. Fred reported that WCC recommended the following minute: that all general bequests to the Sharing Fund shall be held separate from general contributions to the Sharing Fund pending discernment by Witness Coordinating Committee on the best uses to be made of the bequests. Such bequests shall be deposited with the

accounts of the New York Yearly Meeting trustees or, at the trustees' discretion, in a separate line item in the Sharing Fund, until the clerk of the Witness Coordinating Committee, in consultation with the NYYM trustees, proposes a plan for the management and administration of each specific bequest. Friends approved.

2008-04-17. The Clerk noted that we would next have a report from the Friends United Meeting (FUM) representatives. She spoke about the intent of the Yearly Meeting to stay engaged in the extended and sometimes frustrating conversation, even as our NYYM representatives continue in active dialogue with FUM on our behalf. She asks us to hold the written materials offered and go back to our meetings where meaningful discernment can take place so that we may hear each other when we come together again at Summer Sessions. She introduced Christopher Sammond, who brought an oral report as one of the three representatives from NYYM to the General Board of FUM. [The NYYM representatives are Christopher Sammond, Carol Holmes (Brooklyn), and Richard Goodman (Westbury).]

Christopher told us that they have heard anguish and deep distress and heart-felt exchanges on the current concerns over the sexual ethics portion of the FUM personnel policy and related issues. They have come to understand there is a need for more regular reports and better communication so that Friends throughout the Yearly Meeting can be aware of the delicate work they are doing. They see the FUM Board being significantly polarized. They understand the impasse in FUM, as described by Johan Maurer, a former FUM general secretary, as a sort of "proxy battleground" for yearly meetings that are struggling with diversity in theology and culture. They have felt the need to stop and wait but equally to build relationships of trust with all parties, finding common ground where possible, so that when there is discussion of more difficult issues, parties don't fly to opposite poles. Christopher pointed to the FUM General Board minute of October 2007, which denied hatred and violence toward any and all persons and was a direct response to the homophobic remarks made at the Board meeting in Kakamega, [Kenya] as one fruit of their efforts at building bridges across some of the divides. They have been able to argue effectively against attempts to further institutionalize homophobic policies without exacerbating the existing polarization. He noted that in many of the conversations they have witnessed in this yearly meeting about the conflicts within FUM, they have seen that partial and inaccurate information has served to exacerbate an already inflammatory topic. To help us all in our discernment on how to be in relationship with the rest of FUM, they have assembled a number of documents on the

NYYM Web site, under the Nurture section, in two places. One is under the heading Friends United Meeting, and the other under Minutes on Gender Issues. Further information (including the full text of the FUM representatives' report to Spring Sessions) will be added to the Web site, as it emerges. Friends can also get hard copies of this information by calling the NYYM office. Friends are asked to read these materials so that they can bring informed hearts and minds to our discernment. Friends received this report.

2008-04-18. The reading clerk read the travel minute for Nadine Hoover (Alfred) that was endorsed by Alfred Monthly Meeting, Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting, and NYYM in 2005. Nadine reported on her work under this minute, thanking everyone for all the support she has received. The Conscience Studio Web site (www.consciencestudio.com) has much information about her work in the U.S. The Indonesian AVP work has been taken under the care of Friends Peace Teams. Nadine is working on translating information about Quakerism and the Conscience Studio work into Indonesian. She read a letter from Halimatun Sakdiah, one of the women whose college education is being supported through Nadine's work in Indonesia, who expressed her sense that she is "the lucky person" and her joy and excitement about what she is learning, her chance to study beauty and her opportunities to bring back her education to the kindergarten school in her village of Jaring Halus. Friends received this report.

2008-04-19. Tim Johnson brought a report from the nominating committee:

Corrections and Nominations

Friends United Meeting Triennial

Class of 2008

Replace Irene Goodman (Westbury) with
Richard Goodman (Westbury)

National Religious Campaign against Torture

Class of 2010

Resigned: Mara Komoska ('07) (Brooklyn)
Nominated: Patricia Chernoff (Morningside)

Corrections and Resignations Noted

Nominating Committee

Listed in error, from Farmington-Scipio: Marilyn Ray (Ithaca)
Resigned, from Nine Partners: Mary Williams
(Bulls Head-Oswego)

Sessions Committee

Class of 2010

Resigned: Charley Flint (Rahway-Plainfield MM)

Witness Coordinating Committee

Class of 2008

Resigned: Judith Fetterley (Albany)

Friends approved these nominations and revisions.

2008-04-20. The consent agenda was presented for approval.

Friends approved the laying down of the Spiritual Nurture Committee under the care of the Ministry Coordinating Committee. The work will continue as the Spiritual Nurture Working Group discerns needs for spiritual growth, support, and accountability within NYYM as Friends move through the stages of their spiritual journeys.

Friends approved the laying down of the United Society of Friends Women Committee. Nurture Coordinating Committee recommended laying down this committee as the work of USFW is being done at monthly meetings.

Friends approved moving the New Jersey Council of Churches and the New York State Council of Churches Collegium to the Witness Coordinating Committee. Nurture Coordinating Committee recommended this move because the representatives to these ecumenical bodies help broaden our connections to the wider Christian community and the support and focus of the WCC will assist in this endeavor.

2008-04-21. The Clerk told us that her heart and her feet leapt in joy to be with the very many Friends who gathered in worship at the first Meeting for Discernment held in Rochester on March 15, 2008. She introduced assistant clerk Lee Haring, clerk for the Meeting for Discernment, who read a report on the meeting. The day began with extended worship, longer than many had experienced before, through which we came to know each other in that which is eternal. Lee expressed the belief, shared by many, that this is a growing force that will draw others to future Meetings for Discernment. People spoke the discernment of their meetings, their general impressions from regions or quarters, and out of their own individual discernment. Lee reported that there were seventy-two attenders from thirty-six meetings and worship groups present for the day.

The permanent Steering Committee was appointed for the Meetings for Discernment. The members are: Naomi Paz Greenberg (Flushing), Greta Mickey (Central Finger Lakes), Anne Pomeroy (New Paltz), Rebekah Tanner (Quaker Street and Syracuse), Deborah B. Wood (Purchase), Melanie-Claire Mallison (Ithaca), Frederick Dettmer

(Purchase), Paula McClure (Montclair), and the clerk, assistant clerk, and general secretary of the Yearly Meeting.

The second Meeting for Discernment will be held Tuesday, July 22, 2008, at Silver Bay, with morning, afternoon, and evening set aside for the meeting, making it possible to alternate periods of worship with periods of speaking and listening. All Friends are always welcome at meetings for discernment.

2008-04-22. Peter Baily (Poughkeepsie), head of Oakwood School, spoke from the body, noting the school's pleasure in having us here and saying that we are always welcome, for committee work or larger sessions.

2008-04-23. The minutes of the session were read and approved.

2008-04-24. The meeting closed with silent worship.

2007 OPERATING BUDGET

General Services	2008 budget	2007 budget
Section expenses:		
Audit	3,000	3,000
General expense & travel	2,200	2,700
NYYM officers' expenses	2,700	2,400
Total section expenses	7,900	8,100
Committee expenses:		
Communications Committee	23,500	23,000
Junior Yearly Meeting	0	22,500
Nominating Committee	200	200
Records Committee—donation	3,000	3,000
Sessions Committee	12,000	12,000
Total committee expenses	38,700	60,700
Office operations:		
Administrative expenses	15,500	12,000
Computer consultation	800	1,000
Office equipment	1,800	1,800
Insurance	3,700	3,700
Rent & utilities at 15th St., incl. elec.	25,500	23,800
Office staff travel	9,500	9,000
Total office operations expenses	56,800	51,300
Personnel expenses:		
Hourly staff compensation	21,000	21,000
Staff employees salaries	178,700	173,500
Salary and wage-related expenses	43,000	43,000
Staff development	1,500	1,000
Volunteer support	500	500
Total personnel expenses	244,700	239,000
Bookkeeping services	30,000	28,200
Total General Services	378,100	387,300

Ministry and Counsel	2008 budget	2007 budget
Committee & task group expenses:		
Conflict Transformation Committee	1,500	1,500
Advancement	7,000	—
Section expense & travel	1,750	2,250
Task Group on Racism	800	400
Total committee expenses	11,050	4,150

Program expenses		
Bible study leader Summer Sessions	800	800
Meeting program assistance	300	500
Prov. Meeting visitation	2,000	6,500
Pastors Conference	1,500	1,500
Spiritual Nurturance Program	–	300
Total program expenses	4,600	9,600
Total Ministry and Counsel	15,650	13,750

Witness	2008 budget	2007 budget
Section expense	4,250	4,000
Sharing Fund Campaign expense	2,300	2,300
Bolivian Quaker Education Fund	250	–
Wm Penn House donation	250	250
Total Witness	7,050	6,550

Nurture	2008 budget	2007 budget
Committees' expenses:		
Advancement	–	7,000
FWCC Committee of NYYM	200	200
Junior Yearly Meeting	21,000	–
Young Adult Concerns	750	750
Total committee expenses	21,950	7,950

YM appointees' expenses:		
Quaker Earthcare Witness—rep to brd.	800	800
FGC Central Committee—reps to brd.	2,000	3,000
FUM—reps to brd.	2,500	3,000
Provision, FUM reps to Triennial	750	1,000
Provision, FWCC Quadr reps to brd.	100	500
FWCC—Section meetings	2,000	1,800
Provision, FWCC Triennial sessions	1,400	1,700
Total YM appointees' expenses	9,550	14,450

Allocations and donations:

Friends LGBTQ Concerns	150	150
Friends General Conference (FGC)	8,000	8,000
Friends Council on Education	150	150
Friends United Meeting (FUM)	8,000	8,000
FUM—Triennial Sessions	1,000	1,000
FUM Third World Board reps	300	300
Friends World Comm. for Consultation	4,400	4,000
FWCC Section of the Americas—		
Third World Reps	150	—
N.J. Council of Churches	150	150
N.Y. State Community of Churches	150	150
Oakwood Friends School	12,000	12,000
Powell House	64,000	67,020
Quaker Earthcare Witness	150	150
YouthQuake		—
Total allocation & donations exp.	98,600	101,420
Section expense & travel	4,000	1,200
NYYM Resource Library	500	700
Total Nurture	134,600	122,720

EXPENSES CONSOLIDATION

	2008 budget	2007 budget
General Services	378,100	387,300
Ministry & Counsel	15,650	13,750
Nurture	134,600	122,720
Witness	7,050	6,550
Meeting for Discernment	2,000	—
Contingency		
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET	537,400	530,320

REVENUES

Revenue Source	Expected 2008	Expected 2007
Unrestricted Income from Trustees	13,000	12,000
Income from other sources	13,000	6,250
Registration fees	28,100	27,670
Expected revenue subtotal	54,100	45,920
Amount still remaining to be met through covenant donations	483,300	484,400

COVENANT DONATIONS

	Approved 2008	Approved 2007
All Friends	62,500	62,000
Butternuts	6,500	8,300
Farmington-Scipio	67,000	67,000
Long Island	62,000	70,000
New York	75,200	74,000
Nine Partners	34,600	32,000
Northeastern	30,000	28,100
Purchase	98,000	96,000
Shrewsbury & Plainfield	47,500	47,000
Total covenant donations	483,300	484,400
Total operating expenses	537,400	530,320
Total revenues	537,400	530,320
Expected deficit, if any	0	0

MEETINGS FOR DISCERNMENT

At Summer Sessions 2007, Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel was replaced by Meetings for Discernment. (See minute 2007-07-37.)

First Meeting for Discernment

15 March 2008

Rochester Meeting House

This report, written by Rebekah Tanner and edited by Lee Haring, summarizes joys and concerns expressed by individuals present, some appointed by their monthly meetings, others speaking on their own behalf.

Following an extended time of silent worship, one Friend's meditation, on the flocks of birds that she saw migrating over the Montezuma Wildlife Refuge, as she traveled to Rochester, began the morning's spoken thoughts with the idea that "None of us are just one; none of us are just a flock."

Large on the minds of many Friends were concerns, articulated in a variety of ways, over the current controversy regarding the present hiring practices of the Friends United Meeting (FUM), its stand on the Richmond Declaration, and the relationship of the New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM) to FUM financially and otherwise. Friends from New Brunswick Meeting carried a minute they shared with the gathered body. Friends also referenced the recent minute of Poplar Ridge Monthly Meeting. This concern led many to point out the wide variety of unique gifts, mundane and divine, of Friends throughout NYYM, and to pause, in our agonizing over what concerns us, to recall the idea "We are not humans seeking a spiritual experience; rather, we are spiritual beings having a human experience."

Joys and concerns about meetinghouses and meeting spaces were expressed by a number of individuals. For some this bore on the care and nurture of historic properties; for others it focused on the need to find or create new places to worship. Several monthly meetings have been able to make improvements to existing structures, increasing accessibility and sometimes, as a result, bringing them publicity and advancement. The financial burden of our buildings and the costs involved in making changes were mentioned by some, as well as questions of letting go of our fears, or our "we have always been here" mentalities. The concern of Old Chatham Meeting, mentioned several times, and its future plans seem to deserve special note, as the

decisions that that meeting makes might be tied to the future of the Powell House property, a shared resource of and for the whole body of New York Yearly Meeting.

There was also mention, generally by smaller meetings with more limited resources, of Nurture: How do we care for our elderly, our isolated, our abused or ill or other members with special issues? What role has the meeting in the lives of its impoverished, undereducated, or imprisoned members? Are there resources in NYYM to assist these meetings? If so, can those resources be brought to bear as a kind of cushion that will, by its very presence, further empower these meetings in their worshipful work? One Friend framed the issue, as it is presently manifesting in his meeting, this way: “How do we support individual concerns when the meeting as a whole is not in unity about it?”

One seasoned Friend spoke eloquently of the challenge she sees before us to “do something new!” She reminded gathered Friends that “The Lord’s party is a come-as-you-are party” (in a time when purity was the only way to godliness); that all are welcome, sinners, prostitutes, and tax-collectors included. Jesus says we are all welcome to sit at his table. She encouraged and challenged the gathered Body. And she cautioned that we “don’t want to be so open-minded that our brains will fall out.”

Friends took note of the tendency within our “Quaker culture” to be polite, to not talk about “stuff.” Racism was one issue that came under this fire, classism another. The issue of, and concerns about, the treatment of our gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender, and simply queer members came up again. One Friend, referring to Friends General Conference (FGC) and FUM, wondered aloud, “Maybe we made a mistake trying to get all together beneath one tent.” A non-Quaker guest whose work involves doing respite care through another Christian denomination said that “The church is the people: We are God’s feet and God’s hands.”

The idea of advancement came up many, many times during the day, often coupled with what might be most succinctly called hospitality: being in loving relationship with those you do not necessarily agree with. One meeting was called “a laboratory for experiments of Truth... where we have just begun to see what love can do.” Another meeting was described as “having come, in recent years, out of a long slumber... where we are only just beginning to know how to welcome the stranger.” There was one meeting that had recently felt a need to evaluate and retrench, having “decided to focus on the most essential and put other things aside.” One woman wondered at our failings and questioned “How do we welcome people who do not look like us?” Another of our number voiced her anxiety about the now-grown

children of her meeting. When they were younger and numerous in attendance, she felt the meeting did a good job of nurturing them, but now they are “grown and we don’t know how to nurture them as young adults.” One Friend reminded us, “Everything begins in worship.” He went on to say, “We struggle so with identity, with being so careful to include everyone. We forget that we have a message as compelling today as the day when George Fox spoke it... Every testimony comes from Jesus. It’s about love.” One Friend expressed the gratitude of a small worship group to both Northeastern Region and NYYM for the love and support they have been shown. She said that as yet, “the group has not grown, but the support has.”

We heard many messages of joys and successes. Several of our meetings are thriving: They are doing powerful and empowering work within the meeting, in their local communities, and beyond, in the wider world. It seemed especially sweet that two of our larger meetings are finding ways to be these Lights even while continuing to explore and struggle within, finding ways to be vital even where no unifying theology is expressed by the meeting as a whole. There were those who spoke of deepening worship; of meetings where our children find nurture, where the atmosphere is safe, where outreach to distant humanity in need is active, whether overseas or to those in prisons in New York State. The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) enriches some of our meetings; tax resistance and legislative efforts to change the taxing structure of our nation, others.

All are called to conscientious objection to paying for war, and to work toward ending the death penalty. We were reminded that we need to particularly speak up to those who claim Christ; one Friend suggested that as we do, we will once again be a “great gathered people.”

As the day came toward a close, the four main items the NYYM has determined to especially work toward were named: healing the wounds of racial injustice, witness to conscientious objection to paying for war, spiritual nurture, and the stewardship and care of the earth.

The second Meeting for Discernment is called for all day on the Tuesday of our summer session, July 22, 2008, in Silver Bay, N.Y. The new permanent steering committee will have three new members who were nominated and approved: Greta Mickey (serving a three-year term to end July, 2011), Anne Pomeroy (serving a two-year term to end July, 2010), and Rebekah Tanner (serving a one-year term to end July 2009); in addition to the clerk, assistant clerk, and general secretary of the Yearly Meeting and the clerks of the four coordinating committees.

The last words of the day were spoken by Ernestine Buscemi, clerk,

NYYM and Christopher Sammond, general secretary, NYYM. Ernie reminded the gathered body that “the dance cards have our names on them.” As we are trusting and listening for the Truth, we need to be aware that there are voices that remain silent, and there are also those that may not be coming from a place of love. “We need to move forward and continue to seek the Truth. It is about where the divine is moving. We are here as a Yearly Meeting body to support, nurture, and love each other. We will move together. We are here to be guided by God, the Divine, the Universe....God knows love, He knows nothing else.”

Christopher reflected briefly upon his work on the FUM board. He called his experiences of the past three years some of the “hardest and most painful work” he has done in his 15 years of Quaker service. He is concerned with “laboring with Truth.” He called upon us to communicate about our gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender and queer members—to be affirming our love for our members. He went on to say, “We are not done. We need a spacious concern—growing the edges of this body is around identity and expanding our identity.” He commented that nearly half the monthly meetings in New York Yearly Meeting were represented at this first Meeting for Discernment.

The ideas and comments summarized herein came from individuals who identified themselves as belonging to the Alfred, Binghamton, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Bulls Head-Oswego, Easton, Ithaca, Chatham-Summit, Morningside, New Brunswick, Old Chatham, Orchard Park, Poughkeepsie, Quaker Street, Rochester, Saratoga, Scarsdale, and Syracuse Monthly Meetings; Oswego and Ticonderoga Worship Groups; one self-identified non-Quaker guest; Ernestine Buscemi, clerk; and Christopher Sammond, general secretary of New York Yearly Meeting. This paper was prepared by Rebekah Tanner (Quaker Street) with the assistance of notes taken by Barbara Steinkraus (Syracuse), both attenders of the Oswego Worship Group. Any errors or omissions are mine alone. —Rebekah Tanner.

Ministry Coordinating Committee

This has been a year of transition for Ministry Coordinating Committee (MCC). At Summer Sessions 2007, the Coordinating Committee for Ministry & Counsel (CCMC) was laid down, and MCC was established to take its place. Four new committees were created at the same time: Worship at YM Sessions, State of the Society, Ministry and Pastoral Care, and Spiritual Nurture. The new MCC will now be able

to function as a coordinating committee rather than as a committee-of-the-whole, no longer doing the work of the constituent committees during the limited time available for the coordinating committee to meet. The new committees have been functioning well while working on articulating the scope of their responsibilities and creating pages for the NYYM *Handbook*. Spiritual Nurture asked to be a working group rather than a committee; this change was approved at Spring Sessions 2008.

As a result of the new configuration, MCC will now be composed of a representative from each region (two from Farmington-Scipio), three at-large members proposed by NYYM Nominating Committee, and a representative from each of the constituent committees and task groups.

The Prayer List continues to provide support and comfort to those who request it, and an opportunity for those so called to provide intercessory prayer for others. The Healing Center, a space at Summer Sessions for healing work, will be under the care of Worship at YM Sessions.

The Recording Committee for Anita Paul (Schenectady) continues to go forward. Priscilla Berggren-Thomas (Poplar Ridge) has determined with her committee that she no longer feels led to be recorded as a minister in NYYM. Alice Houghtaling (Schenectady) has asked that her recording process be suspended while she completes her work with School of the Spirit.

The Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel (YMMC), under the care of CCMC, was replaced with the establishment of the Meetings for Discernment during Summer Sessions 2007. The original purpose of YMMC was a meeting of ministers and elders. The Meetings for Discernment, open to all, provide an opportunity for extended worship of the Yearly Meeting body, and welcome seasoned leadings from individuals and monthly meetings. The Meetings for Discernment have their own steering committee, and are not under the care of any coordinating committee. Leadings that the Yearly Meeting feels should be pursued would be referred to the appropriate coordinating committee for further consideration.

MCC is still struggling with the changes. Friends who feel called to the work of deepening the spiritual life of the Yearly Meeting will now be able to do the work without the added responsibility of coordinating committee participation. We invite those who are led to explore service in this way to speak with any member of the coordinating committee or the constituent committees.

Deborah Wood, clerk

STATE OF THE SOCIETY REPORT 2007

Summary of Monthly Meeting Reports

We asked Friends how the Spirit was moving among us, and Friends responded with the same thoughtful searching we have come to expect in State of the Meeting reports. We received State of the Meeting reports prepared by 63 (out of a possible 91) monthly meetings, preparative meetings, summer meetings, and worship groups within New York Yearly Meeting. This number is 10 more than we received last year. These reports are in the Inn in a notebook at Summer Sessions, and the reading of them will give you some sense of our joys and of the concerns that challenge and test us as individuals, as meetings and as a Society of Friends.

Friends spoke openly and frankly about their life in the Spirit. Many reports mentioned the daily rituals that give life to our meetings:

How do we sense the spirit moving among us? In fits and starts.

We break bread together on a monthly basis. We sing praises to the Lord at Christmas. We hug our children and we cherish each other.

Spirit moves in the welcoming smiles, hellos, and ready introductions to newcomers; in the careful questions of concern and gentle statements of support; in the quiet space given those who seem to need to be among us but also a little apart.

These simple rituals bind our meetings together and sink us deeper into worship:

When prisoners arrive in groups of two or three from the five separate cell blocks, they shed much of the stress and distress generated in the prison environment as they are warmly greeted by “outmate” Friends. Spoken word is rare; we welcome the silence. Our hearts are full.

We are conscious of the Spirit working in each of us individually—from “bench to bench,” bringing each of us back to Worship each week.

The mysteries of meeting for worship continue to amaze and confound us.

It is not always easy to articulate what our meeting means to us. We come to worship gladly. Being present here is important and joyful.

This spiritual force within us is something we experience rather than study. Many of us often feel this powerful energy gathering us together during meeting for worship.

And the Spirit we find in worship sends us out into our active, committed lives:

Our meeting and the presence of the Spirit that we ourselves find here anchors our way of being in the world. This is grace, this is the movement of the Spirit. From our centered worship we are sent to be active in the world, taking that sanctuary sense of grace, peace, and prayer with us as part of the core nature of our being.

Our sense of spirit also moves each of us into the world. As individuals, we lead and advise nonprofits; we volunteer to serve, teach, and fundraise; we give sustenance to the lost, lonely, and disenfranchised. And we bring spirit into all of our affairs.

Our active lives, in turn, require adjustments if we are to remain committed to meeting together:

We continue to seek ways to assist members and attenders in juggling busy personal lives with the desire to participate in the life of the Meeting.

Being so geographically far apart, many of us do not see each other except when we are present at meeting. Considerable intentional effort is required to keep in contact. We struggle as to how best to support one another as the calls for help are not always direct or recognized.

Perhaps the commitments of our lives, which we can so easily dismiss as busyness, as part of our witness and service to the world, may enrich our souls and actually deepen our worship together:

Each time we are touched by the movement of Spirit, we are changed. When we return to our meetings, that change is reflected in how we relate to those around us.

All of us can say, as do the members of one of our prison meetings, that “We enjoy being together and welcome the silence of our Meeting.”

Meetings report on the adjustments they have made to hold their community together, “our willingness,” as one meeting put it, “to modify what we do to meet the needs of members and attenders.” One meeting has a support committee for the clerk, another has revived “the practice of anchor committees for Friends engaged in public ministry”; another had its first same-sex commitment ceremony. We asked in our queries for last year’s State of the Society report, “How do you attract newcomers and integrate them into the life of the meet-

ing?” This year meetings reported that they have been exploring this issue and are beginning to take action. One meeting, representative of many others, reported:

We feel an urgency in the work of advancement but we continue to come up short on satisfactory ways of attracting new members.

We see this active dissatisfaction as a first step in a long process in finding our way into the work of advancement; the discomfort motivates meetings to keep searching for creative solutions.

A prison meeting is working together to establish a “friendly” meeting:

Members of our group have gotten past un-Friendly behavior patterns to pull together on more constructive efforts such as looking for the light in others, helping a brother improve his reading skills, and in making the meeting a relaxed place to share personal concerns without fear. One member said, “Really, it is hard to hate someone when you are looking for the good in them.”

Another meeting changed the format of their meeting for business:

Early in the year we experimented with testifying during meeting for business, beginning each meeting with an opportunity for Friends to share how the Spirit was moving in their lives. We found that while this type of sharing during business meeting brought life to the meeting, it left little time to tend to regular business. We discontinued the practice late in the spring but look for opportunities to share leadings of the Spirit with each other.

Another meeting coped with a theft:

Most of the aid we had assembled for military families was stolen from the meeting house a few days before it was to be delivered. We note with joy that Friends shopped and donated again, resulting in a larger donation than had been previously assembled.

These reports give us a picture of living, vibrant meetings changing and moving with the Spirit. But there is another picture, too, of meetings coping with disappointment and dwindling numbers. One meeting reports that this has been a year of transition:

Earlier in the year, we felt that we were losing some of our in-

stitutional memory, and discovered that a number of things that used to be taken care of now fall through the cracks.

Another meeting reports that they “are working to meet the challenges with optimism.” And meetings encountered many challenges:

For the past year donations have not been adequate to meet our budget. Sparse attendance at monthly meeting for business and a dearth of young people remain challenges. We would be glad if our numbers increased.

We have no visible presence in the area because we are renters. And now, because our small number is again reduced, we ponder our future. We believe it will continue to bind us together as we nurture one another. Our spirits are intertwined.

Over and over, meetings reported their difficulties but also their hope:

Ours is a small meeting and every individual matters. The Meeting’s strength and spirit seem lessened when we share First Day worship with only three or four others. One Friend commented that we are on the edge of being a vital meeting or a waning meeting, but that most of the time we seem vital. Yes, Meeting ebbs and flows, but not Spirit.

And sometimes this year, hope was rewarded:

Some of us felt very discouraged at times, but our faithfulness to the Spirit kept us going through the “ebb-tide,” and we have recently experienced a “flow-tide” as new people have come bringing new energies with them.

No matter the circumstances, most meetings coping with change expressed the same determination as this prison meeting:

This community will worship together for the answers we are seeking.

We see this pattern in many reports: members bring the meeting’s notice to a problem; the meeting goes through the difficult process of seeking an answer; and in this process of seeking the meeting returns to worship together to find the peace in which way can open.

One source of energy and spirit in our meetings is our young adults and children. Meetings expressed this joy whether their First Day school programs are large or small, with forty attenders or two:

Again this year the young Friends of our meeting baked close

to a thousand cookies at the “cookie overnight,” an event that is anticipated enthusiastically every year. Anytime our young Friends get together we see Spirit moving among us. Their ability to work with each other and accept each other for who they are is an inspiration that carries over into the meeting.

Our First Day school is a continuing source of joy and concern. Our two young attendees are studying world religions and the school has become a forum for them to discuss their own concerns and ideas about the world.

One meeting sent the Yearly Meeting’s charge regarding statements of conscience to their Religious Education Committee:

They are working on the issue in light of a possible reinstitution of the draft and as a means to help young Friends explore whether they feel led to apply for membership.

Another meeting generously supported a young Friend’s attendance at the Woolman Semester at the Sierra Friends Center in Nevada City, California.

It strengthened all of us to be able to support the growth and development of this young Friend. It gave us something good, tangible, and constructive to do, and created a feeling of family of which we felt a part. We grew closer to each other in subtle ways.

And of course for many meetings, reflection on the state of the meeting led to reflection on the state of their meeting place:

A great deal of our time has been given to exploring whether, how, and where to have a more permanent site for meeting. This has brought us into closer communication with one another and helped us to more deeply feel each other’s longings. It all helped us to envision the future—where we want to go in terms of outreach and what we want to offer one another and newcomers.

The process of building and rebuilding has led to some searching questions:

We have struggled and sought guidance not only on whether to focus our resources on the building, but also on how many of our resources should be relegated to the building as opposed to outreach activities.

We regularly remind ourselves that the renovation is “being done for the love of what goes on here,” rather than as an end

in itself. As one member says, “Out of these concrete things, the Life of the Spirit can grow.”

But of course this process has also led to differences and disagreements. One meeting reported they had decided on “a year of reflection and consolidation.”

We paused in our search for a meeting home. We remain firm in our resolve to find or build a better space than the one we are using now, but this year we took time to voice uncertainty and to acknowledge our differences.

Another meeting looked back on their process:

We note with sadness that a few Friends left meeting over disagreements regarding the building project, a reminder that we still need to work on laboring with one another in a spirit of love.

Our meetings are alive and growing, thinking, and changing. There is no better sign of that life than in our state of the meeting reports. There have been years when these reports were filled with disappointment and frustration. Those responses are in our reports this year, but meetings also reflected with honesty and faith on their trust in the difficult endeavor of achieving community. Whether reaping benefits in the sun or sowing seeds in what feels like a dark winter, meetings trust their process together. Whether faced with challenge or joy, our meetings find their strength in their experience together of the Spirit.

As we look back on 2007 we see a fallible group of human beings struggling in good faith with the extraordinary charge our faith tradition lays upon us as individuals and communities to live in accordance with the dictates of the Spirit. This is an exacting measure, and we have learned better to live within the discipline it imposes on us.

We are comfortable with differing interpretations of the Light but are wary of the metaphor. We see our meeting as an open classroom, a school of conscience. As our founding members were conscientious objectors in WWII, “the good war,” we understand a founding image can endure centuries. We add to it, then honor it again. We will miss the last generation of Friends, yet we are prepared to carry on as well. So we think about our meeting. But an image is not the thing itself, and we remember to settle in and open to the Presence among us.

Just as last year's query about advancement led Friends to think more about how they welcome visitors, this year's query will, we hope lead us to think more about how the Spirit is moving in our meetings:

There are still places in the life of the Meeting where we fail to open ourselves to the Spirit that moves among us. Now we have another query before us: Where are these places, and what are we called on to do about them?

And our grounding in the Spirit leads us still to action in a world which needs our witness to the truth:

Rather than judge whether we had a good year or not, we want to focus on the need to be in the moment and to experience where we are, while always being alert to where we can be. Wary of complacency, we pray that we will be in a position to take advantage of whatever opportunities for service or witness may come in the new year.

We are touched by world events and all the problems in and out of our country. We are constantly aware of the need for soul searching prayer, guidance and wisdom. We realize that this is indeed the time for us as a people known for our Peace Testimony to be upholding that in which we believe.

Advancement Committee

The Advancement Committee continued its twin efforts at monthly meeting renewal and outreach.

We are pleased to see increasing numbers of Friends stepping forward to embrace a leading to do advancement work. We have worked hard to achieve our goal of getting every meeting and worship group on the Web, with at least a static page, and good signage. We believe that having a presence is an essential statement that a meeting is alive and seeking to grow. We published an Advancement Catalogue to all meetings with T-shirts, pins, business cards, an outreach story board, and other materials to show the Quaker flag. These materials were used effectively at an increasing number of outreach events at music festivals, peace fairs, community celebrations, and other regional events at which local meetings felt that "similarly sentimented" folks might be in attendance. We have an individual who has stepped forward to work on campus outreach for his own meeting but also to work with

others in the YM with a similar concern. We had our first public event at 15th Street Meeting in many a year. We owe all this work to many individuals who have felt called and taken action.

To encourage newcomer involvement at Silver Bay Summer Sessions, we gave out nearly 20 financial assistance vouchers. On another money matter, we are working to shift financial aid for Summer Session attendance away from our responsibility, believing that it puts us into an uncomfortable bind of choosing between advancement activities and support of deserving Friends.

Our second annual Advancement Consultation focused on planting the seeds of a Quaker Quest program, a Britain YM-developed outreach program, in the Yearly Meeting. Chatham-Summit Meeting has stepped forward to do a pilot project. They have two individuals who feel called to this work and will be attending an FGC training session this summer. We hope they will be approved to lead this project and be available to train others for Quaker Quest programs in other meetings or regions. We're excited about the outreach potential of this endeavor and want to encourage other meetings and regions to consider sponsoring a Quaker Quest program once it's up and running. Also at the consultation, we had opportunities for individuals to report on efforts at monthly- and regional-meeting renewal.

We are pleased to see many Friends step forward and act upon a leading in the area of Advancement. We continue to believe that renewal and growth will happen through Spirit-led ministry of called individuals with the support of our committee. We believe we are acting upon our minuted goal of recovering a Spirit-led structure that seeks to support individuals called to action.

Herb Lape, clerk

Committee on Conflict Transformation

During 2007, the Committee on Conflict Transformation has continued to assist meetings in identifying and responding to conflicts that arise, helping them to find ways of responding that can support reconciliation and spiritual growth. Our work is confidential, so we can give no details in our report to the Yearly Meeting, except that we continue to receive requests from a large number of meetings, to which we have responded in a variety of ways. There also seems to be increased willingness within meetings to acknowledge the existence of conflict (sometimes of many years' duration) and to ask for help.

2007 is the fourth year since Conflict Transformation was approved as a committee of the Yearly Meeting. For the first few years, we gave a number of workshops in different regions that helped familiarize Friends with the committee and its approach to working in situations of conflict. These workshops also assisted Friends in developing some of the skills and confidence that would help meetings recognize and respond on their own to conflicts as they arise. At present there appears to be less demand for these workshops and more need to assist monthly meetings as they struggle with conflicts, many of long standing.

In 2007, the committee agreed to take responsibility for responding to conflicts that arise during the course of Yearly Meeting sessions. Our purpose here is not to enforce rules; rather, we continue in our role of seeking reconciliation and spiritual growth when conflict occurs.

Current Projects

In addition to its work with monthly and regional meetings and at sessions of the Yearly Meeting, the Committee on Conflict Transformation has provided annual workshops for the past three years in conflict transformation at Powell House, each with a different focus. The 2008 workshop, Dealing in Love with "Difficult" People, was particularly well received. Several meetings sent a group of people together to learn about this topic and how it could be relevant to their meetings.

During 2008 Spring Sessions, the committee offered a forum to consider how to conduct a discussion at Silver Bay on the use of drugs and alcohol and the many ways this affects our community, users and nonusers alike. This arose out of a similar discussion last year, and seems fitting for the current year, as the use of drugs is truly found "across the spectrum of age" and affects our entire community.

Conclusion

The Committee believes strongly that its work in situations of conflict

is spiritual in nature; that when all participants are truly engaged in seeking to discern the way forward under the guidance of the Spirit, conflicts can offer opportunity for spiritual growth and new direction for the individuals and meetings involved. We invite Friends to call upon the Committee for workshops and for other, more direct forms of assistance in responding to conflict.

We remind Friends that the work of the Committee is confidential, so that committees and meetings finding themselves in conflict can approach the committee and engage its assistance without fear of the exposure or embarrassment of public discussion. The Committee also offers a bibliography and other written resources.

In Friendship,

*Committee on Conflict Transformation: Nat Corwin;
Miguel Davis-Dacio; Cheshire Frager, assistant clerk; Steve Ross,
recording clerk; Tom Rothschild, clerk; Sandy Segal*

Epistle Committee

The Epistle Committee receives epistles from yearly meetings around the globe, and some other groups, and selects a few that seem to speak to our condition to be read at the beginning of yearly, fall, and spring sessions of the Yearly Meeting. In addition, during our Yearly Meeting sessions at Silver Bay in July, the committee meets daily to write an epistle that will be sent to all yearly meetings in the world, all the monthly meetings in the yearly meeting, and some other Quaker groups. The epistle we write attempts to provide some flavor of our experience of how God's spirit is moving among us during our sessions.

At Yearly Meeting sessions in July 2007, due to a demanding agenda, the only epistle read from another yearly meeting was from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Seventh Month 2006). However, Friends were encouraged to read all epistles received during the year, found in the epistles binder near the Yearly Meeting conference office.

The theme for July 2007 sessions was Stewardship: Our Earth, Our Mind, and Our Soul. The epistle committee met at least once a day to craft an epistle that not only described the highlights of important business but also captured the challenges and joys of living, learning, and decisionmaking within our community of faith.

The committee continued their work of previous years in making epistles come alive for Junior Yearly Meeting participants. Prior to yearly sessions, one committee member led a workshop for all JYM

staff on the significance and “how-to’s” of epistle writing. During Yearly Meeting, each JYM group was read an epistle written by same-age young people from another yearly meeting and was given tips on how to write its own epistle.

Throughout the year the committee “met” via e-mail to select epistles to be read during Fall And Spring Sessions. Sessions in November were begun with the reading of an epistle from Illinois Yearly Meeting, Seventh Month 29, 2007, which spoke to listening as well as answering to that of God. Due to the full agenda at spring sessions, no epistles were read.

Serving on the Epistle Committee is an excellent way to begin service on a Yearly Meeting committee as well as being inspired, through their epistles, by the work of Friends around the world. The primary time commitment is during Silver Bay sessions, as all work during the remainder of the year is done via e-mail. Friends interested in serving on this committee should inform the Nominating Committee.

Patricia Sears & Nancy Britton, coclerks

Committee to Revise Faith and Practice

The Committee to Revise Faith and Practice has again met this year with reduced numbers, causing us to consider, then set aside, proposing that our committee be laid down. Despite the impediment, we have carried on. We recommended to the Ministry Coordinating Committee and the General Services Coordinating Committee the creation of a new post, Handbook Editor. We now understand that instead, the Communications Committee will take responsibility for overseeing the Yearly Meeting *Handbook*.

We met several times to consider revising the Queries; we produced a revision in which the first-person plural pronoun *we* was replaced by the singular *I*. Our intention was to make Queries more useful as devotional aids for individual Friends, especially when they are read in a meeting for worship. There were also other changes in the revision. When we had gone as far as we could, we asked the Ministry Coordinating Committee to help us think about it. There was general agreement that the suggested changes were a poor idea, because the pronoun *we* includes *I*. We received other helpful suggestions about the Queries. We have submitted a revised statement of our work for the *Handbook*, which was accepted by the Ministry Coordinating Committee.

There has been agreement within the committee not to rest in a

reactive role, but to initiate discussions and make presentations from time to time on one or another section of *Faith and Practice* to the body of the Yearly Meeting.

Lee Haring, clerk

State of the Society Committee

The State of Society Committee has worked this year, as it has every year in the recent past (when it was a subcommittee under Ministry), almost exclusively via e-mail. We suggested the query and wrote the letter for circulation to monthly meetings and worship groups, inviting them to submit a State of the Meeting Report.

We read and think about every State of the Meeting Report submitted to the New York Yearly Meeting Office. If there are issues or situations raised up in a report that we feel need more consideration or action, we bring them to the Ministry Coordinating Committee. We also cull from the reports joys, concerns, and quotations that we feel will resonate with the Yearly Meeting, and we share these together as one of us produces a first draft of the State of the Society Report.

The first draft then circulates among Committee members for changes and adjustments; afterward it is read to the Ministry Coordinating Committee, who also have suggestions. When the final report is finished, we submit it to Ministry Coordinating Committee for approval and it is published in the *Advance Reports* before our July Sessions.

Members of the Committee consider it a privilege to think seriously about every State of the Meeting Report and to hold these reports and the meetings who produced them in our hearts and prayers.

Julia Giordano, clerk

Committee on Sufferings

The Committee on Sufferings met last summer at Silver Bay and then communicated throughout the year by e-mail. We had one request from Dan Jenkins to support his witness to war-tax resistance.

We prepared the following description of the work of the committee and published an article in *Spark* about the work of the committee.

The charge of the committee is to provide assistance to those who are suffering because of Friends' testimonies. The Committee on Sufferings traces its history back to the earliest Friends.

Members and attenders of NYYM may apply for financial assistance. The request should be related to a testimony and should be seasoned by a Quaker body such as the monthly meeting, the quarterly meeting, or the Yearly Meeting.

The financial assistance is not directly need based; the assistance also provides a tangible sense of support to Friends. The committee is not in a position to provide ongoing financial support; rather, the committee is structured to respond to one-time situations or emergency events.

Here are some examples of where the committee can provide partial financial assistance:

- Aid to a student denied financial aid because of resistance to signing a military statement
- Legal costs for nonviolent resistance
- Legal costs for war-tax resistance
- Emergency needs while on a Quaker mission
- Assistance to those who suffer economic loss, such as the loss of a job, because of work in peace activities
- Assistance to those who suffer economic loss, such as the loss of a job, because of racial, sexual, or age-related harassment

To apply for assistance, send an e-mail or letter, or call the Yearly Meeting office. The request should include the following:

- What is the related Friends' testimony?
- What is the total financial burden?
 - How much is covered by applicant?
 - How much by other sources?
 - Requested amount from the committee
- Name of supporting Quaker body: monthly meeting, quarterly meeting, Yearly Meeting

The Yearly Meeting office will contact the committee clerk or other committee members who will respond directly to the applicant.

Mary Williams, clerk

Traveling Friends Advisory Group

August 2007 to July 2008

Five Friends served as Traveling Friends this year: Jim Atwell, visiting some of the programmed meetings; David Herendeen, visiting mostly in the Northeastern Region, with several visits to Manhattan Monthly Meeting; Carol Holmes, focusing on Stamford-Greenwich, with other visits here and there around the Yearly Meeting; Denise Sherman, who spent her time with Nine Partners Quarter and Northeastern Region; and Heather Cook, who traveled to Manhattan MM.

These Friends made at least 23 visits throughout the year, ranging from providing a ministry of presence, to bringing a message during worship. Feedback from meetings has attested to the value of these visits: “We know now that the Yearly Meeting cares.” “Thank you for your support, for just being there.” “You helped us transition when a weighty Friend moved into a retirement home far away.” In the beginning of 2008, the Meeting Visitation Fund was \$13,761.28. There has been \$249.80 expended in travel, \$1,200.00 in program, and \$50 for an elder, leaving us a balance of \$12,261.48.

Besides the visits, several Traveling Friends who return to meetings previously visited have established relationships with members/attenders of the meeting or worship group. Phone calls and e-mails keep them connected for encouragement and support. The greatest gift of a Traveling Friend is a listening ear.

In July 2007, we approved three travelers: Jim Atwell, Angi York Crane, and Heather Cook. Unfortunately, two of these Friends suffered major health limitations but hope to get back into traveling as way opens for them. In spring 2008, we approved four more travelers: Mary Ellen Blakey, Joe Garren, Irene Goodman, and Vonn New. Joe has since taken employment at Pendle Hill, bringing the total to nine travelers.

The Traveling Friends Advisory Group—Debby Wood, Christopher Sammond, Herb Lape, Tom Rothschild, and Ann Davidson—provide supervision and accountability for our travelers. Traveling Friends are encouraged to travel with an elder or spiritual companion. This provides not only another set of eyes and ears, but also spiritual groundedness for the meeting and the traveler. It is our hope that the Traveling Friends are fully present at meetings for worship and will be able to respond as led.

Ann Davidson, Traveling Friends Advisory Group

*Traveling Friends Visits
August 2007 to July 2008*

Jim Atwell

Farmington
Adirondack
Unadilla

Heather Cook

Manhattan

Carol Holmes

Adirondack
Ticonderoga Worship Group
Piseco
Stamford-Greenwich

David Herendeen

Quaker Street
Piseco Worship Group
Ticonderoga Worship Group
Manhattan

Denise Sherman

Cornwall
Catskill
Hudson
New Paltz

GENERAL SERVICES SECTION

General Services Coordinating Committee

Two new task groups were formed by the General Services Section: a General Secretary's Supervisory Task Group to replace the General Secretary's Task Group after Summer Sessions, and an Office Study Task Group. The recommendation of the General Secretary's Task Group that the position of General Secretary be continued with the same job description was approved at Summer Sessions. The General Secretary's Task Group was thought of as a temporary group for the new general secretary, while the new group is thought of as a standing group for his ongoing support and supervision. The General Secretary's Supervisory Task Group was appointed by the General Services Coordinating Committee (GSCC) with six members who will serve staggered three-year terms; this group will report to GSCC twice yearly. The Task Group is in communication with clerks of meetings and committees and would welcome hearing from those with tested leadings, celebrations, or concerns regarding the work of the general secretary.

The Office Study Task Group was formed to study the location and functions of the Yearly Meeting Office. Inquiries were sent to all monthly meetings and committees concerning their contact with and use of the office for meetings. 42 responses have been received from meetings and individuals as of this writing. The Task Group is also researching transportation facilities, both public and private access, to and within various sites and other pertinent office needs. This work will continue for the next year.

Child safety continues to be a concern, and our policies, though in effect, remain a work in progress. The latest document is posted on our Web site. We appointed four members to the Abuse Investigation Committee as specified in our policy.

Four members of the coordinating committee agreed to be co-opted for service on the Personnel Committee, since no new members had been found for appointment to replace those members whose terms had expired. At Fall Sessions a Friend was nominated and approved for service on this committee, and there is the expectation that other Friends will be found willing to serve.

We continue to work with our bookkeeping service to provide timely reports and information to our committees. The monthly treasurer's report is posted on our Web site. Both the treasurer-managed accounts, including the Sharing Fund Committees and various funds as well as the Operating Budget, and the trustees accounts are audited by an inde-

pendent auditor who is a certified public accountant, and these reports are also posted on our Web site. We are continually seeking ways to improve management of the Yearly Meeting's money by watching our copying and mailing costs and whatever other cost-saving methodologies we can utilize. We continue to encourage committees to be mindful of the ways they spend money for meetings by scheduling full-day rather than weekend meetings at a convenient distance for travel. While recognizing that the use of e-mail and conference calls is not a substitute for gathered meetings to reach a sense of the meeting, we do recommend their use whenever possible and appropriate to the committee's business and concerns.

Our constituent committees report their work in the following committee reports.

Paula R. McClure, clerk

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee continues to build on our substantial work over the past several years to ensure that our financial records and practices meet contemporary accounting standards.

The basic work of the Committee is to oversee the work of a professional outside auditor who examines NYYM's books.

The National Accounting Oversight Body has developed several new requirements for nonprofit organizations, and our auditor is reviewing our books in light of these requirements.

The representatives of the Committee meet as needed with the treasurer, the clerk of the General Services Coordinating Committee, and the NYYM staff.

In early June the Committee was awaiting a report from the auditor about the 2007 accounts.

Edward Doty, clerk

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee continued this year to seek better ways to serve the New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM) community of Friends. The Committee carried out the thematic format of the Yearly Meeting publication *Spark*, with subjects including Leadership and Authority among Friends, Conversations on Racism, Prison Ministry, and Young Adult Friends. Upcoming issues will address Nurturing First Day Schools, Welcoming Newer Friends, Friends and the Arts, Death and Dying, Diversity of Friends' Beliefs, and Money and Social Class. A number of Friends throughout the Yearly Meeting have responded very positively to the themed issues of *Spark*. If you have suggestions of themes that you would like the Communications Committee to consider please let us know.

The Committee provides oversight for the NYYM Web site (www.nnym.org). Members continue to work on changing the format of the site to make it more user-friendly and including sections with FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) and/or information for new attenders.

The Web-based newsletter *InfoShare* continued to offer information between issues of *Spark*. *InfoShare* is e-mailed to monthly meeting newsletter editors and others, and sent by postal mail to those who request it. The Communications Committee invites monthly meeting newsletter editors to include material from *InfoShare* in their newsletters. Friends are encouraged to continue to provide updates and announcements about their work and the work of monthly meetings and worship groups for the NYYM Web site and *InfoShare*.

Eleanor Novek, clerk

Financial Services Committee

The Financial Services Committee underwent a substantial transition this year. With Tom Martin's move out of state, the committee had dwindled down to a couple of constituent meeting treasurers. Seven new members were appointed to the committee at Summer Sessions and really began work in earnest after Budget Saturday. We learned our way through the remainder of the budget cycle and presented a balanced budget to the Yearly Meeting body at Fall Sessions. This was approved.

Because the seven new appointees did not join an existing committee structure and culture, we began the work of creating one. We elected officers, we began using a private online tool for

sharing information, and we began meeting through careful use of conference calls. After several meetings, we established a regular monthly meeting time via free conference call. We asked lots of questions. We took time to help each other understand the budget. We learned that reading the budget lines does not necessarily give one a good understanding of the activities and vigor of the Yearly Meeting. We learned that although the Yearly Meeting's transition to covenant donations has been good and in the right direction, there is still a lot of opportunity to improve the budget process, particularly in making the work of the Yearly Meeting more understandable to the monthly meetings that the Yearly Meeting serves, and on which the Yearly Meeting relies for support.

Communication and sequencing became our two major goals for the immediate future. In general, the committee hopes to frame the NYYM expense budget by starting with reasonable, feasible covenant donations. We want monthly meetings to understand how money is being spent in order to make informed decisions about covenant donations. Each of these goals depends on the other. As we attempt to address the problem of defining the best sequence for budget activities to occur, we keep returning to the realization that we need better information available at all parts of any sequence. So we are turning our attention to communicating good information. We hope to present the budget in terms that make it easier for the average person in a monthly meeting to clearly understand how the Yearly Meeting is spending money. As of this writing, our development of this clarity is in progress. We look forward to sharing it with the wider Yearly Meeting body.

In response to an invitation from All Friends Regional Meeting, two representatives from the Financial Services Committee joined that region for a discussion of the budget and budget process.

Steve Mohlke, clerk

General Secretary's Report

I continue to feel blessed to be serving this Yearly Meeting. The greatest part of my work this past year involved meeting visitation, advancement, nurturing the spiritual gifts of individual Friends, and supporting Friends who feel called to strengthen their monthly, quarterly, and regional meetings. I also spent significant time representing us to other Quaker organizations, collaborating with our clerk and assistant clerk, helping various committees to better serve NYYM Friends, and managing our staff.

Visitation continues to be my highest priority, as well as the most enjoyable aspect of this work. It is a real gift to worship with Friends, to hear about the life of the Spirit in their particular community, and to work with different communities on areas of interest or need. Since I have started this work, I have made 103 visits to 74 worship groups and monthly, quarterly, regional, half-yearly, and prison preparative meetings. I take great pleasure in nurturing the gifts of individual Friends, as well as helping Friends from different communities connect with each other, fostering common leadings and interests. I see great value in strengthening communities and helping to create networks of relationships in the Spirit, thus nurturing this Yearly Meeting at a grassroots level.

As part of this visitation work, I have been facilitating and co-facilitating retreats for monthly and quarterly meetings and at Powell House. I really enjoy these opportunities to get to know Friends on a deeper level than a brief visit to a meeting allows.

Another large part of my work this past year has been to support and encourage conversations necessary to this body as a whole. I have supported the continued meeting and discernment of a group of Friends committed to spiritual nurture and adult religious education. Out of these meetings has grown a committed and inspired working group supporting this work throughout the Yearly Meeting. I have also initiated and supported the beginnings of a broadly based conversation about possible staff support for the crucial work of nurturing our youth and young adults. The ad hoc working group invested in this work has met once, with plans to meet a second time before Summer Sessions.

I have also been working with the Communications and Financial Services Committees to find ways of better communicating to the body of this Yearly Meeting the work that is being done at a Yearly Meeting level, and how the operating budget supports that work. In my travels I have found that very few Friends who are not engaged at a Yearly Meeting level have a clear understanding of the nature and

scope of this work and how it is reflected in our budget. My hope is that in better communicating what work is being done, and clarifying how we are currently spending our money to support that work, we will begin to have more informed conversations about our budget, ultimately leading to a discernment of our priorities.

Working with Friends United Meeting (FUM), both in representing us on the FUM General Board and in serving as a resource for conversations here about FUM, has required significant time and energy this year. I have met with Friends from many venues, seeking to provide accurate information about the situation on the FUM board and in the many yearly meetings that make up FUM. This included accompanying Sylvia Graves, FUM general secretary, as she traveled about this Yearly Meeting, listening to Friends and responding to questions and concerns.

I also represented us as part of a small ecumenical group that met with Iranian President Ahmadinejad for a service of prayer and conversation in a chapel at the UN. It was a small step toward encouraging building trust at the height of our administration's saber rattling, and came immediately after Ahmadinejad was publicly excoriated by the president of Columbia University. It provided me a unique opportunity to hear about our country and its positions through the eyes of someone who rejects many of the premises we take for granted—the cultural “air we breathe,” which is invisible to us.

I also participated in the Quaker Leadership Consultation, a gathering of 45 Friends in various positions of leadership in liberal Friends, who gathered to envision how to better support the growth of a dynamic, faithful Religious Society in the years ahead. This was the first such consultation in 29 years, and I continue to be involved with ongoing work arising out of that productive collaboration.

One of the fruits of that consultation has been the growing support for Quaker Quest, a program developed over seven years in London, which is a powerful combination of public witness, inreach, and outreach. I have been working with FGC and our Advancement Committee to bring Quaker Quest to meetings here, and several are already in various stages in that process.

Ernestine Buscemi, our clerk, Lee Haring, our assistant clerk, and I meet once or more each month, as well as conferring frequently on the phone. We share impressions of what is going on in the Yearly Meeting as a whole, allocate responsibilities, offer each other supportive counsel, and worship together. I have greatly enjoyed this fruitful, collaborative relationship.

In my work with our staff I have sought to continue to shift work responsibilities to best use the gifts of the individuals serving us, and

to address the priorities of the Yearly Meeting body as I understand them. Paul Busby and Walter Naegle are freeing up some of Helen Garay Toppins's time so that she can work to support worship groups and do other advancement work. As our issues of *Spark* and *InfoShare* are considerably larger than before, Paul is doing more editing. Walter is now helping out some with finding artwork for *Spark*. We are also using volunteers more, to further free up what staff time we can, and we will be expanding on that in this next year. Our current staffing configuration represents the skill-sets necessary for the work we are presently responsible for, but is not adequate for the volume of work this represents. I have been in conversation with the Personnel Committee about that.

Finally, I have put substantial time into supporting the Meetings for Discernment. These are twice-yearly gatherings of Friends from across the Yearly Meeting designed to "help strengthen connections between monthly meetings and the Yearly Meeting, support individual leadings, and help discern emerging directions within the Yearly Meeting." The first meeting in Rochester was felt by those present to be a good start and a step toward greater grassroots discernment. Those 70-some Friends who attended spoke of feeling nourished by the depth of connection and by hearing the common threads emerging from the time of extended worship. I am very hopeful about how these meetings will impact our life as a broad-based community, and our business process.

I look forward to the year ahead, in this opportunity to serve God and all of you.

Christopher Sammond

Nominating Committee

Unlike other Yearly Meeting Committees, Nominating Committee members are appointed by each regional meeting; two regions still have vacancies on Nominating Committee. The consequences of these vacancies are heavier workloads for all other Nominating Committee members and less familiarity with prospective nominees from the underrepresented regions. An article was prepared and distributed in *InfoShare* (October 2007) describing the operation of Nominating Committee and providing forms that individuals can use to volunteer for NYYM Committee positions, in response to requests from regional clerks and from individuals seeking to serve in the Yearly Meeting.

The Committee continues to struggle with the large number of committee appointments to be filled each year. This burden has been slightly alleviated this year as a few Yearly Meeting committees have been laid down, consolidated, or reorganized, and the *Handbook* is being updated to reflect current committee sizes. The Nominating Committee has continued to benefit from increased nominations suggestions by the general secretary, the General Services Coordinating Committee, the Yearly Meeting clerk, and committee clerks, and from increased e-mail communications among Committee members during the nominations process.

The Committee has become more responsive in filling vacancies due to resignations through midyear recommendations at each Session, which has the effect of reducing end-of-year efforts to back-fill unexpired open committee slots and of allowing committees to function more effectively with full staffing. In the course of 2007, the Committee addressed unexpected shortages in staffing in Financial Services, FUM delegates, and other committees, which occasionally occur due to resignations and relocations.

Friends are encouraged to participate as much as possible in Yearly Meeting committees, which in most cases play roles that cannot be assumed at the local or regional levels. It is recommended that Yearly Meeting committees reconsider which of their functions require attendance at Spring and Fall Sessions (as opposed to e-mail or telephone communications), as many Friends experience travel difficulties; and that wherever possible the outgoing committee clerks identify as many prospective nominees as possible at Silver Bay, to pass on to the following year's Nominating Committee clerk.

*Tim Johnson and Carol Coulthurst, coclerks;
Jill McLellan, assistant clerk*

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee has continued its work this year while reorganizing itself after several key members have rotated off or resigned. Some members of the General Services Coordinating Committee volunteered to help Personnel this year, and we have one new member, but the Committee still needs members.

The words *understaffed* and *overcommitted* have come up in every discussion by the Personnel Committee about the state of the Yearly Meeting office. This year, with the retirement of Judy Inskip, we have been able to give Walter Naegle more hours in the office, and this has enabled some reorganization of workload among the rest of our staff. There have been volunteers working in the office, as well, and the staff continue to plan for the use of more volunteers. We are also in the beginning stages of looking at the possibility of a young adult/youth coordinator position, which may be funded in part by grants.

We on the Personnel Committee witness the efforts of our office staff, Paul Busby, Walter Naegle, Christopher Sammond, and Helen Garay Toppins, in fulfilling the necessary work of the Yearly Meeting. They deserve our gratitude, and it would be a good idea if other members of Yearly Meeting also express thanks to the sustained work these good people do for us.

Julia Giordano, clerk

Yearly Meeting Staff

Paul Busby, communications director

Service to the Yearly Meeting continues to be a joy and a blessing. I still wake up on weekday mornings thinking, “I get to go to work today!”

Once again, my responsibilities for NYYM publications have expanded.

- As editor of *Spark*, I have been responsible for 14 issues devoted to a theme that speaks to the life of the monthly meetings, several having four additional pages. The themes for 2007 were Where We Worship (meetinghouses and other places of worship); Transformation of Conflict; Life behind the Walls (prison ministry); Holding the Earth in the Light (Earth stewardship); and Voices of Young Adult Friends. Producing these special issues entails more work—and a great sense of accomplishment. Topics so far in 2008 have been Conversations on Racism; Leadership; and What Is Your Ministry?

In the near future we plan to have issues on Nurturing First Day Schools; Welcoming Newer Friends; and Arts and Media.

- I have continued maintaining the Web site and expanding it, making it increasingly useful for Friends, meetings, and seekers. I have been able to assist monthly meetings, regional meetings, and worship groups with their own Web sites, hosted on the Yearly Meeting site. Friends, seekers, and others come to the site at an ever-increasing rate—some days the site receives more than 1,100 visits from all over the world. The majority of the calls we receive from seekers come from those who first encountered us on the Web and are hungry for more. The Web address is www.nyym.org, and all Friends are encouraged to visit the site and offer suggestions.
- *InfoShare* is now in its seventh year of publication. *InfoShare*, too, has been expanding. (*InfoShare* is published on the NYYM Web site, but we send paper copies to those who request them. and we e-mail copies to monthly meeting newsletter editors.) *InfoShare* provides a quick, convenient, and informative resource for meetings and committees to share their news and for individuals to stay informed about current NYYM events and concerns.

Once again, I urge newsletter editors, Yearly Meeting committee clerks, and others to send me their information for inclusion in *InfoShare* and the Web site's Events section. Let your Light shine!

- I am also the editor of the *Advance Reports* and the *Yearbook*. I coordinate the distribution of e-mails of a general NYYM or Friends nature to the global e-mail list or to monthly meeting contacts and newsletter editors.

I also answer the phones and respond to many e-mails each day. Sometimes I respond to inquiries by postal mail. I appreciate the opportunity to be a resource for Friends and seekers. It is gratifying to be able to contribute to the Yearly Meeting in these ways, and I look forward to continuing service to Friends.

Walter Naegle, administrative assistant

The 2007–2008 year has been a productive one for me at NYYM. With the departure of Judith Inskeep in fall 2007, I took on most of her duties, including preparation of the letters acknowledging contributions to the Sharing Fund. About midyear, I was fortunate to have my work time increased from two to three days per week. This enabled me to plan my work a little more carefully and take on additional special assignments. Some of these assignments were given to me by the general secretary, Christopher Sammond, such as assisting with registrations for the Meetings for Discernment and Responsible Adult Present Workshop and Training. Christopher also asked me to take

on the job of researching and selecting photographs for the NYYM newspaper, *Spark*.

My usual duties included maintaining the database which includes the NYYM membership and other domestic and international Quaker bodies. I reconfigured the basic database to make sorting by title and/or committee membership easier. I created a separate database for Silver Bay registrations, and contributed to the process of on-line registration by creating a PayPal account. I created tables for both the Fall and Spring Sessions registrations. I also revised the Statistical Report form and the Monthly Meeting Information Sheet, which provide us with information for the *Yearbook*.

I assist Associate Secretary Helen Garay Toppins with financial matters, including preparation of vouchers for payment, reviewing bank statements, and preparing and making bank deposits. Other routine tasks include sorting the mail, composing correspondence, handling telephone calls, and covering the office when my coworkers are absent.

I find the Yearly Meeting office a pleasant place to work and feel that my relationships with my coworkers have improved over the last year.

Helen Garay Toppins, associate secretary

The beauty of it is that after all these years I can still say I love working for and with New York Yearly Meeting. I continue to find it exciting and invigorating. I appreciate the staff that I work with. I am grateful to the volunteers who work with me shoulder to shoulder. I am thankful to my meeting, Morningside, for providing the undergirding of support that keeps me going.

I continue to support youth and young adult Friends in NYYM. I participate in the Youth / Young Adult Coordinator Discussion Group convened by Christopher Sammond. We are examining ways in which the needs of youth and young adults in NYYM can better be met. I hope to see a NYYM young adult intern coming aboard soon.

The administrative and supervisory duties that I cited in last year's report are still in play, so I won't repeat them. My biggest problem is trying to find more hours in the day, more days in the week, more months in the year, so that I can do more advancement and outreach work and still get my administrative work done. I have used staff hours to help formulate the Bedford Stuyvesant Quaker Worship Group and to help nurture our prison worship groups, of which we have two new ones in formation. Advancement and outreach to seekers and to the general public is work that I love. I want to facilitate Quaker open houses. I continue to pray that way opens.

Records Committee

During the last year, the Friends Historical Library has greatly improved our ease of viewing our records. It is now possible to browse the descriptions of the records and brief historical information about each meeting without searching in the online catalog. The URL for the finding aid is at www.swarthmore.edu/library/friends/NYYM/NYY-Mindex.htm These descriptions are current, so it is easy to tell when each meeting last deposited records. If it has been more than ten years since records were deposited, it is time to gather records and send them to Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College. The James E. Hazard Index to the records of New York Yearly Meeting is also available online at Friends Historical Library. This is a personal name index from records that are on deposit. The URL is www.swarthmore.edu/Library/friends/hazard.

Electronic records continue to be a concern. Exploration of methods of managing electronic records is ongoing. At this time, we ask that you not delete the electronic copies of minutes and other financial reports and other vital records. Friends Historical Library is not yet ready to collect electronic records but expects to be able to do so in the next few years. When that happens, detailed instructions will be provided.

Bridget Bower, clerk

Sessions Committee

The Yearly Meeting is more than its “sessions,” and its gatherings include more than worshipful business sessions. The Sessions Committee is responsible for seeing that arrangements for our regular gatherings are planned and carried out. We succeed in this responsibility to the extent that our work goes unnoticed!

The committee includes many of the Yearly Meeting’s officers and staff, which helps to keep us in touch with the overall view and plan of the Yearly Meeting. We do much of our work in subcommittees and meet as a full committee during each of the three sessions—fall, spring, and summer. Communication through e-mail and phone helps, but it doesn’t replace our face-to-face meetings. In January we met for a full weekend at Powell House, concentrating on plans for the summer Silver Bay gathering. We had previously given thoughtful consideration of a theme, and the program subcommittee had composed daily schedules so that as many people as possible are content

with that important aspect of Summer Sessions.

A subcommittee for Spring and Fall Sessions maintains a long-range plan for session locations and offers guidance from past experience to the regional host committees that do so much of the actual work for these two gatherings. We have been happy to cooperate in the inclusion of a youth program in the Spring and Fall Sessions, and have added very small fees to cover that work and to encourage preregistration of youth.

Our planning and background work for Summer Sessions at Silver Bay involve attending to myriad details in concert with Yearly Meeting and Silver Bay staff. This requires juggling conflicting priorities within limited spaces and hours. We try to be wise and merciful in setting up rules and resolving individual and community problems. We work with Advancement Committee to be a welcoming, host-like presence for new and returning guests.

Our budget covers our own activities and the cost of providing programs at our gatherings. We pay attention to registration fee changes and other expenses. Last year we produced a brochure to promote summer session participation, but changed our approach this year to a more affordable poster. Our total expenses in 2007 were \$9,950, about 10% less than in 2006.

Major turnover in committee membership this year has made us appreciate the devotion of longtime members, and gives new members the challenge to continue, while reexamining established assumptions and practices. We appreciate the feedback we receive from other committees, participants, and hosts at all of the gatherings. We welcome suggestions during our week together at Silver Bay and from those who do not attend for one reason or another. We are always seeking new members through the Nominating Committee process. If you feel a leading, think seriously about joining us.

John Cooley, clerk

Transition Working Group

Laid down.

TREASURER'S ACCOUNTS
Statement of Operations 1/1/07 to 12/31/07

	2007 Budget	2007 Actual
Disbursements and Transfers:		
General Services		
<i>Section expense</i>		
General expense & travel	2,700	480.46
NYYM officer's expense	2,400	2,565.98
Audit	<u>3,000</u>	<u>3,075.00</u>
Total section expense	8,100	6,121.44
<i>Committees</i>		
Junior Yearly Meeting	22,500	21,155.57
Planning		2,689.13
Silver Bay		18,466.44
Communications	23,000	24,714.38
<i>Handbook</i>		0.00
Other		0.00
<i>Spark</i>		15,615.73
Web Site/ <i>Yearbook/Adv Reports</i>		9,098.65
Nominating	200	0.00
Records	3,000	3,000.00
Provision for records preservation	0	0.00
Contribution—Friends Historical Library	3,000	3,000.00
Sessions Committee	12,000	9,215.56
Fall/Spring Sessions		2,103.50
Summer Sessions		6,920.51
Other		191.55
Total committee expense	60,700	58,085.51
<i>Office expense</i>		
Office operations		
Administrative expenses	12,000	13,847.73
Insurance	3,700	3,510.52
Rent & utilities 15th St.	23,800	23,800.00
Office staff travel	9,000	10,137.63
Computer consultation	1,000	0.00
Office equipment	1,800	1,800.00

Personnel		
Staff employee salaries	173,500	173,451.96
Hourly staff compensation	21,000	21,315.00
Salary and wage related expenses	43,000	36,298.95
Staff development	1,000	1,260.00
Volunteer support	500	263.66
Bookkeeping service	<u>28,200</u>	<u>28,200.00</u>
Total office expense	<u>318,500</u>	<u>313,885.45</u>
Total General Services	387,300	378,092.40
Ministry		
<i>Section expense</i>	2,650	842.11
Programs		
Bible Study leader at YM	800	1,000.00
Meeting program assistance	500	0.00
Ministry Task Group	0	0.00
Spiritual Nurturance Program	300	0.00
Provision for Friends Travel in Ministry	6,500	6,500.00
Pastor's Conference	1,500	1,505.00
Conflict Transformation	1,500	0.00
Epistle Committee	0	0.00
Faith & Practice	0	0.00
Rep to Council on Ministerial Advisors	0	0.00
Total program expense	<u>11,100</u>	<u>9,005.00</u>
Total Ministry	13,750	9,847.11
Nurture		
<i>Section expense</i>	1,200	1,695.88
NYYM Resource Library	700	354.38
Total section expense	1,900	2,050.26
Committees		
Advancement Committee	7,000	7,000.00
Disability Concerns	0	0.00
FWCC Committee	200	200.50
United Society Friends Women	0	0.00
Women's Concerns Resource	0	0.00
Young Adult Concerns	<u>750</u>	<u>723.32</u>
Total committee expense	7,950	7,923.82

<i>NYYM appointee expense</i>		
FGC Central Committee	3,000	755.45
Quaker Earthcare Witness	800	281.50
FUM Board Representatives	3,000	3,005.13
Provision for FUM Triennial Sessions	1,000	1,000.00
FWCC Section Meetings	1,800	1,800.00
Provision for FWCC Triennial Sessions	1,700	1,700.00
Provision for FWCC Quadrennial	500	500.00
Provision for YouthQuake attendees	0	0.00
YouthQuake planning / travel	<u>0</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total NYYM appointee expense	11,800	9,042.08
<i>Allocations and Donations</i>		
Friends Council on Education	150	150.00
Friends General Conference	8,000	8,000.00
Friends LGBTQ Concerns	150	150.00
Friends United Meeting	8,000	8,000.00
FUM—Triennial Sessions 3rd World Rep	1,000	1,000.00
FUM 3rd World Board Reps	300	300.00
Friends World Committee	4,000	4,000.00
New Jersey Council of Churches	150	150.00
NYS Community of Churches	150	150.00
Oakwood School	12,000	12,000.00
Powell House	67,020	67,018.33
Quaker Earthcare Witness	150	150.00
William Penn House	250	250.00
YouthQuake	0	0.00
Total allocations and donations	<u>101,070</u>	<u>101,318.33</u>
Total Nurture	122,720	120,334.49
Witness		
<i>Section expense</i>		
Coordinating Committee expense	4,000	2,701.55
Sharing Fund Campaign overhead		0.00
	2,300	2,701.55
<i>NYYM appointee expense</i>		
Friends Comm. on Nat'l Legislation		200.00
Friends Peace Teams		0.00
Peace Tax Fund		<u>0.00</u>
Total NYYM appointee expense	2,300	200.00
Program Expense		
Rural & Migrant Ministries		0.00
Provision for Peace Initiation		<u>0.00</u>
Total program expense	0	0.00

<i>Committee expense</i>		
Barrington Dunbar		0.00
Black Concerns		454.37
Indian Affairs		310.52
William Penn House	250	0.00
Peace Concerns		276.00
Prisons		0.00
Right Sharing		0.00
World Ministries		<u>0.00</u>
Total committee expense	<u>250</u>	<u>1,040.89</u>
Total Witness	6,550	3,942.44
Contingency	<u>0</u>	<u>2,000.00</u>
Total Disbursements	530,320	514,216.44
Receipts		
Meetings		
All Friends Regional	62,000	58,630.00
Butternuts Quarterly	8,300	7,000.00
Farmington Regional	67,000	68,248.02
Long Island Quarterly	70,000	61,306.50
New York Quarterly	74,000	79,483.00
Nine Partners Quarterly	32,000	33,213.00
Northeastern Regional	28,100	26,676.00
Purchase Quarterly	96,000	92,169.00
Shrewsbury & Plainfield HY	<u>47,000</u>	<u>47,029.00</u>
Total Meeting income	<u>484,400</u>	<u>473,754.52</u>
Other sources		
Registration fees	27,670	21,119.92
Staff services	0	0.00
Trustees	12,000	12,049.66
All other	<u>6,250</u>	<u>10,206.30</u>
Total other sources	<u>45,920</u>	<u>43,375.88</u>
Total receipts	530,320	517,130.40
Year 2006 opening balance		200,496.68
+ receipts		517,130.40
- disbursements		514,216.44
Closing balance		<u>203,410.64</u>
NET CHANGE		<u>2,913.96</u>

FUNDS REPORT (unaudited)

	Balance as of 1/1/07	Sharing Fund Campaign Income	Other Income	Dist.	Closing Balance 12/31/07
Sharing Fund					
AVP Donation	0.00	2,833.51	0.00	2,833.51	0.00
Barrington Dunbar	14,319.08	12,143.61	50.00	20,700.00	5,812.69
Friends for Black Concerns	3,356.68	3,643.09	0.00	4,638.72	2,361.05
Indian Affairs Committee	5,377.56	5,587.23	5,309.81	8,050.00	8,224.60
Peace Concerns Committee	1,820.86	2,833.50	0.00	600.00	4,054.36
Prison Committee	2,960.51	3,643.09	100.00	5,562.25	1,141.35
Right Sharing	4,889.40	2,223.93	0.00	0.00	7,113.33
Witness Activities	7,146.47	5,262.23	0.00	3,994.71	8,413.99
World Ministries	<u>7,442.80</u>	<u>2,833.50</u>	<u>20,878.55</u>	<u>14,040.00</u>	<u>17,114.85</u>
Total Sharing Fund	47,313.36	41,003.69	26,338.36	60,419.19	54,236.22

Total Sharing Fund Income less Trustee income	41,153.69
2006 Sharing Fund Goal	50,000.00
Percentage of Goal	82.3%

FUNDS REPORT (unaudited) — cont.

	Balance as of 1/1/07	Transfers from Oper. Budget	Other Income	Dist.	Closing Balance 12/31/07
Other Funds					
Advancement — Lafayette	2,698.82	0.00	2,166.00	4,299.49	565.33
Advancement — Leach	1,674.71	0.00	3,235.00	3,192.11	1,717.60
Advancement — Women	221.73	0.00	453.75	0.00	675.48
<i>Faith & Practice</i> fund	3,344.76	0.00	1,136.69	443.15	4,038.30
Sufferings fund	9,700.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	4,700.00
FWCC Triennial NYYM					
attendance	5,168.42	2,225.76	0.00	7,394.18	0.00
Gospel Order packets	286.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	286.69
FUM Triennial NYYM					
attendance	1,269.27	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	2,269.27
Records preservation	1,391.72	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,391.72
FWCC Quadrennial Operating	1,745.99	500.00	0.00	685.99	1,560.00
Meeting visitation	8,353.33	6,500.00	3,025.00	4,117.05	13,761.28
Youth/Young Adults	3,500.00	0.00	2,515.00	0.00	6,015.00
Fall/Spring Sessions	0.00	0.00	7,549.42	7,549.42	0.00
Total other funds	<u>39,355.44</u>	<u>10,225.76</u>	<u>20,080.86</u>	<u>32,681.39</u>	<u>36,980.67</u>
Total funds	86,668.80	51,229.45	46,419.22	93,100.58	91,216.89

Trustees, Lindley Murray Fund

This year the Lindley Murray Fund had income of \$33,107.52, a lower amount from previous years. The New York Female Association received 7.5% of that amount, or \$2,483.00.

Of the amount remaining, the following distributions were made:

AFSC (New York Metropolitan Region)	
Akwasene Task Force for the Environment	1,250
Prison Watch	1,250
Conflict Resolution Program, New York	1,250
Quaker United Nations Program	1,250
Alternatives to Violence Project	1,100
Creative Response to Conflict	3,000
Friends Committee on National Legislation	1,200
Friends Educational Council Ltd	1,200
Friends General Conference	1,000
Friends International Center	724
Friends Journal	2,000
JYM Planning Weekend	800
Long Island Council of Churches	
Women at the Well Project	1,100
NYYM Indian Affairs Committee	1,500
Oakwood Friends School	5,000
Powell House	2,500
Redemption Center	500
YSOP	2,100
Bolivian Quaker Education Fund	1,100
William Penn House	<u>800</u>
 TOTAL	 33,107

We had several new organization requesting funds this year. As in past years there were several organizations that had requested grants in the past but did not respond to our request for proposals sent out last fall.

The Trustees welcome suggestions for other recipients. If you know of an organization that fits the criteria, please forward the contact name and address to the clerk by September 1, 2008.

As of the writing of this report a new clerk has not been named for the Lindley Murray Trustees,

I am rotating off of the Committee after ten years of service.

Linda S. Houser, clerk

Trustees, New York Yearly Meeting

This year the trustees transferred the Trustees Unit Trust from TIAA-CREF Trust Company to Friends Fiduciary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. “The Consolidated Fund maintains a socially responsible witness in its investments in harmony with Friends Testimonies.” The dividend paid by NYYM Trustee’s Unit Trust in 2007 was \$3.08 and for 2008 it will be \$3.18 per unit.

The trustees also received bequests from the estate of Florence Stevens. These funds were unrestricted and were invested in the New York Yearly Meeting’s Unit Plan.

The Trustees’ gave \$3,025 to the Meeting Visitation Fund to support Friends traveling to share Quaker ideals and testimonies with monthly meetings in NYYM. \$1,500 was given to the Youth/Young Adults Fund to support work with young Friends.

The trustees met with the McCutchen Board on their request to NYYM to close the McCutchen Senior Residence due to a drastic drop in their census. The trustees agreed with their request to close the home and sell the property and brought the request to Spring Sessions in April for approval by Yearly Meeting.

The Trustees worked on the general upkeep of the Morris Cemetery, in Morris, N.Y., in Butternut Quarter. We also worked on the Monkton Cemetery, in Monkton, Vermont.

We are continuing our efforts to settle the titles of two meetings that have been laid down, one in Monkton, Vermont, and one Yorktown Heights, New York.

Todd Tilton, clerk

*NYYM Trustees Financial Report
Distribution of Funds for Year 2007*

These dividends from certain trust funds are distributed regularly twice yearly to those beneficiaries who have been previously determined by the trust donors and/or by action of the Yearly Meeting.

Oakwood Scholarship	24,357.30
Oakwood Administrative	46,948.00
H.H. Mosher	3,962.75
Powell House	11,802.04
Advancement Committee	3,478.75
Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting	1,808.73
World Ministries	20,878.55
New York Yearly Meeting	12,049.65
Yearly Meeting Friends' Home	5,118.30
Manasquan Monthly Meeting	2,521.34
Indian Affairs Committee	3,309.80
Friends Historical Library	6,912.74

Funds Under Management

Scarsdale Monthly Meeting	1,118.03
New Brunswick Monthly Meeting	1,138.50
Montclair Monthly Meeting	21,899.18
Farmington-Scipio Region	1,983.97
Cornwall Monthly Meeting	4,583.64
Buffalo Monthly Meeting	<u>1,084.28</u>

TOTAL 174,955.55

NYYM Retained Income Funds—2007 Summary

The income from these funds is held until a request is received that meets with the purposes of the fund as designated by the donor and/or the Yearly Meeting. Some of these funds are released at the request of specific committees or regions of the Yearly Meeting and others are released at the discretion of the Yearly Meeting Trustees.

Fund	Bal 1-1-07	Income	Disbursements	Bal 12-31-07
Haines	1,378.35	1,713.08	1,800.00	1,291.43
Sutton	574.78	341.88	650.00	266.66
Monkton	10,943.84	1,847.72	609.50	12,182.06
Yorktown-Underhill	832.80	1,068.64	1,000.00	901.44
Stevens	12,427.90	6,535.48	7,000.00	11,963.38
Beers	268.44	277.12	325.00	220.56
Smith	1,112.80	677.60	1,250.00	540.40
Morris Cemetery	14,208.61	632.08		14,840.69
Lockport	3,271.14	866.56	2,500.00	1637.70
Brinkerhoff	2,376.90	751.52	2,500.00	628.42
York	7,229.90	10,370.36	9,600.00	8,000.26
Sufferings	3,487.76	1,012.48	<u> </u>	<u>4,500.24</u>
TOTAL	58,113.22	26,094.52	27,234.50	56,973.24
Funds under Management				
Lindley Murray	35,254.84	35,461.68	37,610.00	33,106.52
Unrestricted funds				
General	1,129.16	619.96		1,749.12
Florence Stevens		4,481.46		4,481.46
Trustees administrative	11,072.18	12,586.37	6,680.00	16,978.55

NURTURE SECTION

Nurture Coordinating Committee

The New York Yearly Meeting Nurture Section continues to grow and change. Revising our handbook pages has given us a chance to reacquaint ourselves with our purpose and clarify our place in the Yearly Meeting. Renewal continues to percolate through our structure!

We moved a few of our representatives to Witness Coordinating Committee, where they will be better supported in their work; laid down a couple of dormant committees; and with the closure of the McCutchen, created a working group, which we then approved as a committee, and which NYYM subsequently approved as the Committee on Aging Concerns—all since the last Summer Sessions!

In the meantime, our committees and task groups are working hard, our representatives are connecting us to the wider Quaker body, and we are nurturing Friends at every stage of life.

The Earthcare Working Group offered a series of conferences at Powell House on environmental concerns. The Task Group on Youth sent to monthly meetings a set of queries to start discussions on our relationship to the youth in our meetings, and the task group worked with Sessions Committee to create this year's Summer Sessions theme and focus. Junior Yearly Meeting did a phenomenal job creating Friendly programs for our young friends at Summer Sessions 2007. Young Adult Concerns Committee continued to bask in new energy and focus. The Coordinating Committee continued to gather statements and minutes from NYYM meetings and groups on gender issues. These texts are available on the NYYM Nurture Web site, <http://nyym.org/nurture>, and are in use by the FUM Task Group. Add the Aging Resources, Consultation, and Help (ARCH) Program under the new Committee on Aging Concerns, the dedicated education provided at Oakwood Friends School, the spiritual, spirited—and often intergenerational—conferences offered at the Powell House Conference and Retreat Center, and the weaving together of Quakers from across the world via our representatives to Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, Friends World Committee for Consultation, and Quaker Earthcare Witness—well, you can see how the Nurture Section continues to grow, and change lives.

In nurturance,

Melanie-Claire Mallison, clerk, Nurture Coordinating Committee

Committee on Aging Concerns

With the laying down of the McCutchen, the Friends Home of New York Yearly Meeting, the Friends Foundation for the Aging was established in 2007. Since the focus of the McCutchen had been to provide services to New York Yearly Meeting, the Foundation wanted to fund some activity that would benefit seniors in NYYM. The Working Group on Aging Concerns was approved at the 2007 summer sessions under the care of Nurture Coordinating Committee.

The working group met with a representative of the Foundation and clusters of interested Friends in November of that year and began designing a program to provide information to seniors and adults with disabilities about services that might help them meet a variety of needs. The working group became a committee under NCC at 2007 Fall Sessions. The working group was now known as the Committee on Aging Concerns, and the program's concept was enlarged to include consultation with seniors and their families, as well as workshops and retreats for meetings.

It was anticipated that this new program would receive funding from the Friends Foundation for the Aging in early 2008.

Anita Paul, convener

Earthcare Working Group

The Earthcare Working Group has had a busy year with a large part of our energy devoted to editing and disseminating a press release, sending out the "Eco-Spirituality and Action" minute, and establishing the earthcare curriculum at Powell House. We met as a group—which changed each time, with new people joining in on our work—three times: at Fall Sessions, in an early February teleconference meeting, and at Spring Sessions. Our task now is to compile a report on the minute for Summer Sessions at Silver Bay 2008. We also see that establishing a list of earthcare contacts in the monthly meetings will be a great value in the coming year as we continue to promote the earthcare curriculum, communicate news of our work, and seek feedback and news of earthcare efforts throughout the Yearly Meeting. Earthcare worship-sharing groups will continue to be available this summer at Silver Bay.

The press release, written by Jim Atwell and sent to major news and magazine outlets as well as to more local state media, allowed us to promote our "peace with earth" message far and wide. Additionally, the

Eco-Spirituality and Action minute was featured in articles in monthly meeting newsletters and in *BeFriending Creation*, the bimonthly newsletter of the national Quaker Earthcare Witness organization.

The Eco-Spirituality and Action minute, approved by NYYM at Silver Bay 2007, was sent to the monthly meetings late that year with the invitation and request to send us progress reports and action plans the following spring. At each of our EWG meetings we have shared progress of this minute's reception at our own monthly meetings. We are realizing that it will be difficult to assess the full effect of this initiative, that it has influenced meetings in unexpected ways, and that "action plans" do not tell the full story. Most meetings have struggled with *how* to proceed due to major commitments already in place within the meeting.

The Earthcare Curriculum was launched in March with a weekend called "Earth in the Headlines—How are We Called to Respond," facilitated by Marshall Massey. Angela Manno of the Earthcare Working Group reports:

This weekend with Marshall was a watershed event in the history of Earthcare Witness within the Religious Society of Friends. He began with the simple assertion, "We have a responsibility to serve the force that's propelling us into the future." It was clear that this is not just about survival. It is a sacred duty.... Marshall inspired us with a powerful and visionary set of proposals for far-reaching action that will not only make a significant impact on the condition of our planet but be a means to build up the Religious Society of Friends, to make us once again noticeable to the wider world.... Lastly, it was clear that a growing core of "Earthcare ministers" is forming and that now is the time to link up with like-minded souls to move forward in this crucial common work. To that end EWG is compiling a data base of Earthcare groups in NYYM.

Coming up for the Earthcare Curriculum are:

- Permaculture with Ethan Roland, August 2008
- Eco-spirituality and Action with Angela Manno; Radical Simplicity with Jim Merkle; and Food & Sustainability with Andrew Faust (all in 2009)

We are discussing having an Earthcare weekend retreat in the fall of 2008 to discern our direction and next steps

Liseli Haines and Janet Soderberg, coclerks

Friends General Conference Representatives

No report available at press time.

Friends United Meeting Representatives

To begin, we direct your attention to FUM's Annual Report from General Secretary Sylvia Graves, which is available on our New York Yearly Meeting FUM Web page under the Nurture section. We encourage Friends to read it to learn about the ongoing work and programs of FUM. We lift up one excerpt from that Annual Report about what FUM has been doing in Kenya since the post-election violence broke out in January. That violence

spurred the Kenyan Quakers to positive action and has resulted in over \$125,000 worth of aid from caring Friends everywhere being channeled for relief efforts there. In mid January, Friends organized the Friends Church Peace Team to take supplies and counseling to camps of displaced people. The FCPT has earned such respect that in May, government officials asked that the FCPT go to communities where people had been chased away or had run in fear and prepare those communities to receive them back. The process of reconciliation will be long-term and it is hoped that contributions for peace-making will continue to come forth.

At the February board meeting we learned that individuals and monthly meetings in New York Yearly Meeting had contributed the largest percentage of the money sent to Kenya up to February 8.

We encourage you to read Sylvia Graves's annual report while we devote the rest of our Advance Report to what we (your representatives) have been doing about FUM's personnel policy and about the tensions surrounding the place of gay and lesbian ministry and discrimination.

Individual Friends and monthly meetings have been expressing grave concerns about the sexual-ethics portion of FUM's personnel policy, about hurtful statements made at the General Board meeting a year ago in Kenya, and about the affirmation of the Richmond Declaration as the faith basis for FUM, which also happened at that meeting. Behind these concerns we have often sensed the assumption that we are not doing anything to address the causes of these concerns or are somehow not adequately "speaking Truth

to power”—otherwise, there would surely be some change and movement in these areas that are so painful and challenging to many Friends in this Yearly Meeting.

We seek to assure Friends that for the past six years, your representatives have been speaking about the pain that the discrimination inherent in the policy causes many individuals and monthly meetings in New York Yearly Meeting. But the issue appears intransigent for now.

As we reported in last year’s Advance Report (available on the Web at <http://nyym.org/pubs/FUMRepsReport0704.pdf>):

FUM’s personnel policy, which requires covenanting that for the duration of employment by FUM sexual activity will be confined to heterosexual monogamous marriage, has been a flash point for many of the differences that have been in varying degrees of dynamic tension and at times unproductive dissension in the organization. While this issue is of great concern to many NYYM Friends, we see it as the visible symptom of a tangle of complex, multifaceted issues....It is not “business as usual” at FUM.

The tensions on the FUM board reflect the tensions within many of the North American yearly meetings affiliated only with FUM. For years FUM Board meetings have been what Johan Maurer, former FUM general secretary, calls a “proxy battleground” for those yearly meetings in which diversity of theology and culture has been growing. Rather than laboring with the increasing diversity among themselves, these yearly meetings have turned to FUM to labor, instead, with the dually affiliated yearly meetings. Consequently, the dually affiliated yearly meetings have become identified as “the problem” within the organization by some Friends who hope to revive FUM through instituting theological purification of a sort.

Over the past three to six years, several board members from those tension-riven FUM-only yearly meetings have come up to us privately, thanking us for continuing to raise the hard issues, saying, “We don’t dare speak out.”

Friends will recall that four years ago, the FUM General Board reached an impasse in finding unity on its understanding of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and queer personhood and ministry when it was unable to change the policy. Given the impasse, our practice as Friends is to stop and wait. As we reported to NYYM Sessions in 2006:

In June 2004, the General Board (with between 30 and 40 North American members present), responding to the concern of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, minuted, after a searching session in which a wide range of views were expressed, that there was no

unity on changing the personnel policy and that board members were called to sit in tension together until God opened Way to a clear direction forward....So we on the General Board wait. We wait in tension, in ambiguity, and in humility, but we also wait in faith that God is in it.

This does not mean that we have been inactive. Within the context of that impasse, we have sought to be faithful and effective.

We have been working to do what we can to break down the divisions on the board that make our laboring together problematic. We have been working to build relationships of friendship and trust with all parties, not muting our concerns, but at the same time looking for places of common ground and trust. It was this behind-the-scenes relationship-building and communication that helped passage of the General Board minute in October 2007 denying hatred and violence toward all persons. That minute was a direct response to the homophobic remarks made at the board meeting in Kakamega, and it effectively communicated to FUM as a whole that such rhetoric would not be tolerated.

As we have stepped back from pushing hard in a situation that is clearly polarized and intransigent, the liberal and centrist Friends within the yearly meetings affiliated only with FUM have begun to find their voice and to speak out. This means that some of the conflict is being moved from the “proxy battleground” back to the yearly meetings, with the result that these yearly meetings are having to work through their own lack of unity. We believe that our response to be still and wait in the absence of unity is bearing fruit, albeit slowly.

At the same time, the few Friends on the board who believe that theological homogeneity and what they call “moral purity” are the means to the revival of FUM have continued to try to institutionalize homophobia. Our work has been to reject the various maneuvers in this direction, while at the same time not losing our center or escalating the conflict.

Finally, we continue to seek a way forward out of the impasse we are in. We are clear that intervisitation, the sharing of our time in worship together — without agenda — is one important part of how to move forward. We have been advocating and will continue to advocate for a program within FUM that supports agendaless bridge-building through worship and fellowship. For now, intervisitation is being accomplished by holding board meetings in different yearly meetings. Last fall, the board met at Woolman Hill, where midwestern and southern Friends experienced the hospitality and s/Spirit of New England Yearly Meeting Friends. In February 2010, the board is scheduled to meet at Powell House when we will have our own opportunity to know one another

better. This spring Sylvia Graves demonstrated her commitment to intervisitation by making as wide a tour as possible of our monthly meetings while she was in New York for a week for National Council of Churches meetings.

In many of the conversations we have witnessed in our yearly meeting about the conflicts within FUM, we have seen that partial and inaccurate information has exacerbated an already inflamed topic. To help us all in our discernment on how to be in relationship with the rest of FUM, we have assembled a number of documents on the NYYM Web site, under the Nurture section, in two places. One is headed “Friends United Meeting,” and the other “Minutes on Gender Issues.” We will continue to add information to this site. We urge Friends to read everything posted there.

It is not a good use of our time to have lengthy conversations based on partial or inaccurate information. We ask again that individuals and monthly meetings contact the FUM representatives, past and present, to make sure that the information they are working with is accurate and up-to-date. The outgoing General Board representatives are Carol Holmes and Richard Goodman. The incoming General Board representatives for the new triennium will be Christopher Sammond, Steven Ross, and Beatrice Beguin. In addition to these five Friends, Jens Braun, Ann Davidson, and Regina Haag are also named NYYM representatives to the 2008 FUM Triennial in High Point and are good sources of information.

Finally, because it happened after Sylvia Graves filed her report, there is no mention of the historic and hope-filled Young Adult Friends Gathering held at Earlham over Memorial Day. It was cosponsored by FUM with Friends General Conference and Evangelical Friends International. Over 100 Young Adult Friends between the ages of 18 and 35 attended. They have sent an Epistle to Friends Everywhere. It begins:

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” —*Romans 12:2 NRSV*

In worship, in small groups, in conversation, we have been transformed. Friends affirmed their love for one another again and again. The act of coming together physically was a first step to enacting loving unity. We are hungry for connection and growth in grace with one another, and the healing of our divisions.

As in 1938, when the work of George Badgley and others from the

Young Adult Friends groups of FGC and FUM laid the foundation for the reuniting of New York Yearly Meeting (Orthodox) and New York Yearly Meeting (Hicksite) in 1955, our younger Friends are taking the lead in reaching out to one another to seek loving unity and the healing of our divisions.

Richard Goodman, Carol Holmes, Christopher Sammond

Friends World Committee for Consultation

The Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) strives to increase the interaction and understanding of Friends around the world and to facilitate the exchange of ideas and concerns through region conferences, youth pilgrimages, and visitations.

We did not hold a meeting of NYYM's standing FWCC committee this year because of a conflict with the annual meeting of the Section of the Americas. The Section was held at Waycross Episcopal Camp and Conference Center near Morgantown, Ind., from April 3–6, 2008. An exciting development was the presence of two Friends representing Cuba Yearly Meeting. This was the first time in recent years that visas have been granted to Cuban Friends to come to a U.S.–hosted FWCC meeting.

The keynote speaker was Rachel Stacey, whose theme was “So then, let us be always seeking the ways which lead to peace and the ways in which we can support one another.” (Rom.14:19)

The Northeast Region consists of the yearly meetings of Canada, New England, New York, and Philadelphia. The most recent Regional Gathering was held October 19–21, 2007, at the Mercy Center at Madison, in Madison, Conn., and was a weekend of relaxation, fellowship by the sea, and a multifaceted exploration of “The Living Water.” Speakers were: Dick Kelly, on “Water in Biblical Texts”; Mary Gilbert, on “The Water of the World”; Denise Hart, on “Protecting Water as a Spiritual Leading”; and Jeffrey Hipp, on “Quaker Experiences of Baptism.”

The next Northeast Regional Gathering will be held September 26–28, 2008, at Crieff Hills Community in Ontario, Canada. The theme will be “Being a Peace Church in the 21st Century — Old Testimonies: New Times”

More information is available by visiting the Section of the Americas Web site at fwccamericas.org and the World Office Web site at fwccworld.org.

Lawrence Coulthurst, outgoing clerk

Junior Yearly Meeting Committee

The Junior Yearly Meeting Committee (JYM) has had a quiet year. After several years of laboring with changes in the structure of the JYM program, we find ourselves happy to be able to take a breather. Our meetings have been relaxed and joyful. We are grateful to have been lovingly nurtured by those who have hosted the committee. This breathing space provides some time for us to consider our place within the larger Yearly Meeting community.

Over the past years JYM has sponsored AVP workshops during summer. It became increasingly clear that using JYM as a sponsor for these was restrictive, and so the committee has asked AVP to relieve us of this commitment, thereby freeing the AVP program to be run as they feel would better carry their work forward.

Our position shifted slightly, as the Yearly Meeting approved a change in our coordinating committee. JYM now operates under the care of Nurture Coordinating Committee rather than General Services Coordinating Committee. We have felt the impact of this change over the year, as the clerk of Nurture has taken an active part in helping to make decisions concerning the work of the JYM Committee and the JYM program.

This year's theme for summer sessions, Spiritual Community across the Spectrum of Age, has been a source of gladness for JYM. Our Yearly Meeting has increased interest and respect for the young people in our midst. The JYM committee has made small changes within the program for this coming summer and will continue to explore ways to work together with the larger body to create a community that has a strength generating from a creative center composed of people of all ages. We look forward to worshipping together as a whole community this summer in the auditorium at Silver Bay Association.

The JYM committee has agreed to cut the committee/program budget drastically this year. We will be working along with our coordinating committee clerk to discern the actual financial needs of the YM program, and to revisit our budgetary request with that in mind.

Going forward this year, I hope that more Yearly Meeting members and attenders will feel welcomed as they are led to join our volunteers and committee members, bringing their gifts, passion, and loving spirits to work and play alongside New York Yearly Meeting's youth.

Martha Gurvich, clerk

The McCutchen, Yearly Meeting Friends Home

The McCutchen Friends Home has been closed.

Committee on the Expenditure of the H.H. Mosher Fund

Last year, at our annual sessions at Silver Bay, we distributed more than \$9,000 in books. This included \$4,667 for gifts to 82 monthly meetings, worship groups, prison worship groups, and Friends' institutions (mostly schools). We gave gift books to 26 individuals (staff, recorded ministers, presenters at NYYM, and first-time visitors at our Yearly Meeting from other yearly meetings). These are the highest numbers ever.

Please visit the Book Table, just inside the front door to the lobby at Silver Bay, to replenish your Monthly Meeting's library's shelves with up to \$60 worth of free books again this year. If your meeting is not sending a representative to YM summer sessions, please ask a neighboring meeting that is planning on sending a Friend, to select books totaling \$60 for your meeting as well. Everyone is invited to sign up for an hour or two to help us sell and distribute the books.

Cathy Thomas, for the committee

Oakwood Friends School

Oakwood Friends School's year has been characterized by the optimism and energy that come from a strong student enrollment, a wonderful faculty, exciting new initiatives in the areas of curriculum and service programs, notable campus enhancements, and, as always, a recognition of the spiritual nurture that springs from life in a community guided by Friends' principles.

Our Board of Managers, which includes many members of New York Yearly Meeting, has welcomed several new members, both Quaker and non-Quaker, who bring significant skills in the areas of finance, buildings and grounds, community outreach, and Quaker process. Thanks to the energy and expertise of new and returning members, the Board continues to engage in vigorous planning for the school's financial health and future direction, always keeping Oakwood's mission at the center of its deliberations. In the past two years, nine members of the Board have participated in the "Governance Matters!" workshops

run by the Friends Council on Education. This has been an important way for Board members to hone their skills and to share challenges and joys with peers from other Friends schools around the country. This coming year, Board members will be participating in a series of on-line “webinars” on governance and financial sustainability, again organized by the Friends Council.

Our faculty continue to develop and refine the school’s curriculum, with an eye toward programs that support our core values. We seek to balance the goals of worthwhile knowledge, critical-thinking skills, self-reliance, community, tolerance, and care for one another. Our mission statement urges us to educate young people for lives of conscience, compassion, and accomplishment, and we seek to engage young people in the multiple disciplines and activities that lead us on this path. I am especially pleased by the ways in which Oakwood’s faculty have integrated Quaker testimonies, current events, and service projects within the context of academic disciplines. This past fall, for example, our Middle School students won the Spirit of the Festival award at the Bridge Film Festival, sponsored by Brooklyn Friends School, for their film about the underground railroad and the role of Quakers in the antislavery movement. The creation of this student film was supported by a grant from Friends Council on Education.

This past spring, Oakwood completed its five-year, interim reaccreditation process, conducted by the New York Association of Independent Schools. This process involves reflecting on the report of the ten-year visiting committee, providing a written update on progress made since that time, and hosting a team of three committee members on campus for two days. We are pleased to report that our accreditation was renewed for the coming five-year period, when we will again engage in the year-long process of the ten-year accreditation.

Oakwood’s students and faculty responded to global events in a variety of ways. The Friends Committee, whose membership includes both students and faculty, was especially active in planning programs to help foster dialogue regarding Quaker testimonies as they related to current events. The Peace Club organized trips to demonstrations in Washington, D.C. Students and faculty again took their annual trip to Mexico, organized by the New York State Labor-Religion Coalition, to study the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement on factory workers in the border area between Texas and Mexico. One of our students—a young man whose home is in Asia—has been invited to serve as a mentor for the program during the next scheduled journey. Another group of faculty and students again traveled to New Orleans during spring break to help with the rebuilding process in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Two more trips to New Orleans are currently

being scheduled. Numerous local community-service projects have taken place as well. Two endowed lectureships brought distinguished speakers to the campus: one who shared the technological intricacies of building robotic arms for amputees, and another who spoke on the role of African-American music within the context of the civil rights movement. An annual highlight continues to be our participation in the Quaker Youth Leadership Conference.

Oakwood was pleased to nurture its connections with the wider Quaker world in two particular ways this year. In the fall, we hosted Young Quakes on campus, for their program entitled “Living a Revolutionary Faith.” And in April, we were delighted to host Spring Sessions of New York Yearly Meeting. We hope these groups will come again and again.

All of you who support Oakwood Friends School participate in our school’s endeavors, however far you may be from the campus. None of the school’s work could be done without those who have helped to sustain and nurture this institution over the years. Alumni, members of the Board of Managers, parents, faculty, staff, administrators, friends of the school, and Friends in New York Yearly Meeting and beyond, all work together to make this school an exceptional place for young people to learn and to form the values that will guide them on the varied paths of their lives. We continue to be reminded of our Quaker heritage and its powerful resonance in the complex world around us.

*Peter F. Baily, head of school
Joseph Gosler, president, Board of Managers*

PoGo Working Group

See Young Friends in Residence report.

Elsie K. Powell House Inc.

Our mission is to foster the spiritual growth of Friends (Quakers) and others and to strengthen the application of Friends' testimonies in the world.

2,500 participants can't be wrong! Over the past year, Powell House hosted 75 conferences, retreats, and workshops, forwarding the discernment and understanding of such issues as earthcare, recognition of gifts, alternatives to violence, clerking, advancement, Jesus in the Movies, Far Out Foods and Fair Trade, and the 3-Ds: Doubt, Despair, Delight! Powell House also supported the work of many New York Yearly Meeting committees and outside groups. Almost all of these events helped bolster the infrastructure of Powell House also, as many groups spent their free time expressing their love for our campus by taking on work projects. It's pretty awe-inspiring when people gather for a spiritual workshop and then freely volunteer to rip off roofing, dig up weeds, and clean gutters!

Here at Powell House, we are blessed in so many ways.

Of course the big news of our year is the successful and exciting capital campaign for the Anna Curtis Center renovations—"Building a Community, Building a Better World." We are so thankful for the contributions that have poured in, in support of the greening and updating of the home of the youth program. While financial contributions are the most visible product of the campaign, the contributions of people's time, dedication, and energy is the most gratifying outcome. We have raised over 75 percent of our campaign goal, enough to go forward with phase one of the renovations this summer.

On a personal note, I recently received an e-mail from Ann Davidson with photographs from the beginning of the deconstruction of the Anna Curtis Center "Bugg House"—and when I saw the photos, I burst into tears! There, under the present siding on the building, was the old green siding, which instantly took me back to my years in the Powell House Youth Program—from about 1968 to 1975! Wow. I always knew that the Anna Curtis Center had changed a lot from my days as a teen, but I had no idea how many fabulous memories were tied to that unseen green siding. Now I enjoy the adult conferences as much as those long-ago youth conferences, if not more, but the photos made me think—what memories we are uncovering and creating for our youth today! I daresay they are as blessed now as I was then.

Melanie-Claire Mallison, clerk, Powell House Committee

(P.S.: Find out lots about Powell House and the Adult and Youth conferences at www.powellhouse.org or get on our newsletter mailing list by calling 518-794-8811.)

Powell House Financial Report, 2007

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
for the fiscal year April 1, 2007–March 31, 2008**

Income/Expense	
Income	
Support & revenue	
Contributions—solicited	55,708
Contributions—unsolicited	<u>21,095</u>
Contributions total	76,803
Guest fees	238,999
Investment income	32,627
New York Yearly Meeting	66,517
Rental income	6,195
Other revenue	3,564
Support and revenue total	<u>424,705</u>
Total income	<u>424,705</u>
Cost of goods sold	<u>2,748</u>
Gross profit	<u>421,957</u>
Expenses	
Administration	23,191
Adult programs	17,101
Buildings & grounds	59,579
Fundraising	5,734.00
Housekeeping	45,430.00
Office administration	6,974
Personnel	265,967
Youth program	6,905
Annuities payable	<u>1,130</u>
Total expense	<u>431,831</u>
Net income	<u>(9,874)</u>

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
for the years ended March 31, 2008 and 2007

	3/31/08	3/31/07
Assets		
Current assets		
Checking/savings		
Ordinary Funds	21,738	47,214
Restricted Funds	<u>899,569</u>	<u>871,743</u>
Total checking/savings	921,307	918,957
Total other current assets	<u>7,876</u>	<u>8,891</u>
Total current assets	929,183	927,848
Fixed assets	<u>283,642</u>	<u>345,213</u>
Total assets	<u>1,212,825</u>	<u>1,273,061</u>
Liabilities and equity		
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Total accounts payable	12,393	6,889
Total other current liabilities	<u>22,137</u>	<u>16,690</u>
Total current liabilities	<u>34,530</u>	<u>23,579</u>
Total liabilities	34,530	23,579
Equity		
Endowment		
Board of directors designated restricted	493,738	493,738
Donor designated restricted	<u>112,670</u>	<u>112,670</u>
Total endowment	606,408	606,408
Retained earnings	459,982	132,200
Operating funds	179,279	183,092
Net income	(67,375)	327,782
Total equity	<u>1,178,294</u>	<u>1,249,482</u>
Total liabilities and equity	<u>1,212,824</u>	<u>1,273,061</u>

Treasurer's Note: Due to a change in the Chart of Accounts, Assets now include the Restricted Funds, which are the funds at Friends Fiduciary and Trillium Investments. Dollars changes were due to accountant corrections after End of Year 2007. 2007 is restated here with new Chart of Accounts.

Quaker Earthcare Witness representative

2007 marked the 20th anniversary of the founding of Friends Committee in Unity with Nature (FCUN; now Quaker Earthcare Witness). In 1987, a workshop at Friends General Conference united Friends in their desire to “give forceful witness to the holiness of creation and to demonstrate in their lives the meaning of a testimony on earthcare.” That summer FCUN was born and began publishing *BeFriending Creation*—followed by a series of pamphlets on sustainability and creation care for Friends.

In Fifth Month 2003 the organization changed its name to Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW), which continues to educate Friends about Earthcare through a variety of means. Along with its publications it participates in the management of the Finca la Bella farm in Costa Rica. More recently, QEW has representatives to the FCNL board. Members of QEW joined Friends from Philadelphia YM to form the Friends Testimony on Economics (FTE) program, which publishes the Quaker Eco-Bulletin insert. As of this year, QEW has two Department of Public Information Observer badges for the United Nations. Because of this growing role and presence in *policy* work, the organization is experiencing some growing pains as it moves into the next 20 years with a new name and a change in mission focus. For some this is quite tender. The fall meetings in Atlanta in 2008 will continue work on articulating organizational purpose.

Much of the focus is on the causes and effects of global climate change. The USA, with just 4% of the world’s people, produces more than 25% of the CO₂ emitted. There is a unique role for which faith communities, like Friends, are prepared to fill. In the fall, guest Bill McKibben urged us to make tangible a life of fulfilling the radical teaching of the gospel: a vision of equity for all and an end to entitlement which asks Big Questions about how much is “enough.” In the short term, we need emergency political measures to place a cap on carbon emissions at 80% of current levels by 2050. Business this year included the adoption of a minute on nuclear energy policy. The complete text of the minute will be posted on the Web.

In Bible reflection, we were reminded that Jesus is a man who entered fully in the earthiness of life, into the Passion, and told us that the Kingdom is at hand—merely waiting to be discovered. We should be mindful of the abstracting and distorting power of language. If we listen not only to words, but also to Nature, we might hear some of the names for God:

I am.
I am the resurrection and the Life.
I will be what I will be.

God is that through which we live and move. If we trust our connection to Spirit we know ourselves to be connected to One Great Life.

Kristina Keefe-Perry, NYYM representative to QEW

United Society of Friends Women International

Laid down.

Young Adult Concerns Committee

It is with great joy that I reflect upon the activities of YACC over the past year. We have had two successful conferences, one in the fall in Brooklyn and one in the spring at Powell House. We continue to maintain our Web site and have been working on a newsletter. Some stresses on the committee are the cost of travel for committee meetings, the geographical dispersal of our members, and the turnover of members and hence instability of apprenticeship that comes with being a relatively new committee. We are looking for financial support from the Yearly Meeting and, more importantly, guidance from seasoned Friends in Quaker process, and the involvement of more young Friends on our committee and in our activities. We have exciting events in the making and are happy to be here.

Peace and Joy,

Amy Savage, clerk

Young Friends in Residence Working Group

PoGo (Powell House on the Go) has become the **Young Friends in Residence Working Group** (YFIR). Our mission remains to establish a dual program for young adult Friends and young teens. We continue to move forward toward that vision. It's important to clarify that this is not a Powell House program. It is not staffed or overseen by Powell House. It is a program currently under the care of the Nurture Coordinating Committee of New York Yearly Meeting. Many of those of us on the YFIR Working Group have direct experience of the Powell House Youth Program. We are bringing that experience to the table as we look to establish this program within the Yearly Meeting.

The original leading has seasoned and ripened and the vision is clearer as are the steps to make this leading a reality. We hope to have a pilot program up and running in 2009. The program we envision has four or so young adult friends living in intentional spiritual community for one or preferably two years. Out of this intentional life will come monthly youth programs for sixth to ninth graders. The young adults will facilitate these weekends, which will be styled after Powell House Youth Program weekends. The youth programs will offer a stable, long-term, accepting and affirming space in which preteens and young teens are able to experience Quaker spirituality and nurture one another. In addition to the youth program, interns would offer inreach and outreach to the regional and local meetings where they are based. They might also be able to offer clerical support to the Circle of Young Friends. While interns will serve one to two years, the program is designed to be ongoing and long-term.

Already, young friends are active in this process, some serving on the working group while others are asking to be on the support committee for the interns. One young Friend involved in the working group writes "The Young Friends in Residence Program is a wonderfully exciting opportunity. As a young adult Friend, there never seems to be enough time for me to focus on my religious life. I am thrilled at the possibility of spending a year or two after college to grow deeper in my faith and live in a grounded, spiritual community of Friends my own age. I would treasure the opportunity to help provide for a group of young people an accepting and nurturing community like the one I experienced at Powell House."

The YFIR Working Group is now accepting applications from regions that wish to host this program. Members of the working group have visited Mohawk Valley Monthly Meeting, Perry City Monthly Meeting, Butternuts Quarterly Meeting, and Friends from Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting. We have received an application from

Mohawk Valley Meeting, and we are expecting at least one other application.

We are also accepting applications from Young Adult Friends who are interested in participating as interns within the next five years. We have received two applications thus far, one for a start date of 2009 and one for 2010.

Applications may be submitted to the working group convener, Chris DeRoller, at 524 Pitt Hall Rd., Old Chatham NY 12136. Questions may also be directed to Chris at 518-794-8811 or chrisandmike@powellhouse.org.

The working group is currently looking for two to three more members to help with grant writing, identifying other funding sources, researching, and other tasks to assist a host site in getting this program up and running. If interested please contact us.

Chris DeRoller, convener

Task Group on Youth

The Task Group on Youth has an active clerk and assistant clerk, who feel led to continue the work in support of Spirit-led, intergenerational youth work in monthly meetings and worship groups. Our charge as a task group includes submission of a recommendation to the Yearly Meeting through Nurture Coordinating Committee. The Task Group sent to monthly meetings a set of queries to start discussions on our relationship to the youth in our meetings, and worked with Sessions Committee to create this year's Summer Sessions theme and focus. Members of the Task Group have coordinated the Youth Program at both Fall and Spring Sessions. Most of our members have taken the Responsible Adult Presence training. We continue to add materials to the resource page on the Yearly Meeting Web site and maintain an e-mail list for exchange of information and encourage all Friends to help us make these powerful resources.

Task Group members

Nichole Byrne-Lau (Brooklyn)

Peter Close (Purchase)

Mark LaRiviere (15th Street and attending Old Chatham)
(assistant clerk)

Margaret Lew (15th Street)

Carol Rice (Purchase)

Mary Rothschild (Brooklyn) (clerk)

Kathie Scanlon (Attending Bulls Head-Oswego)

Amy Willauer-Obermeyer (Binghamton Community Friends Meeting)

Though we have energetically engaged youth during Yearly Meeting Sessions and have reached out to youth and young adults, we do not have a consistent youth or young adult member.

We attempt to be representative of the geographical diversity of the Yearly Meeting and our clerk attended the Farmington-Scipio Region 2008 Spring Gathering and met with Friends there about youth work. In preparation for the intergenerational theme at Summer Sessions, members are facilitating: multigenerational activity clusters, a community-wide art project, ice cream socials for middle school-aged youth and their parents, meetings with parents of very young children, an oral history project, and two interest groups: "Religious Education" and "Spirituality of Very Young Children."

In preparation for making a Spirit-led recommendation to the Yearly Meeting, the Task Group is synthesizing the information and insights we have gathered over the last two years. We wish to coordinate with all Friends who are engaged in youth work. We consistently communicate our activities to the clerk of Nurture Coordinating Committee (NCC) and have had a member at all NCC meetings. The budget for our work has been sufficient. We have been in conversation with the clerk of Aging Concerns Committee and the Young Adult Concerns Committee about coordinating around intergenerational activities. We hope to send a member to the FGC Religious Education Institute in August 2008.

Mary L. Rothschild, clerk

WITNESS SECTION

Witness Coordinating Committee

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” (Proverbs 17:17, NIV) Sometimes the world seems to be awash in plagues and pestilence: war, poverty, famine, genocide, torture, executions, racism, ignorance, illiteracy, unemployment, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, pollution, global warming. The inhumanity and inequity, the devastation and suffering generate anger, even outrage. Yet Friends continue to react and respond with leadings emanating from love, with vision and faith and witness. In the words of Paul, “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world.” (2 Corinthians 10:3–4, NIV) In 2007, as in prior years, New York Yearly Meeting Friends engaged our communities and the world with the power of the Spirit, and with the weapons of truth, patience, understanding, love, faith, and quiet insistence.

At the 2007 Spring Representative Meeting, Witness Coordinating Committee brought forward a Minute on Refraining from War against Iran. Friends approved the “call on the United States government to use diplomatic means in concert with the United Nations to resolve issues with the government of Iran, to disavow the use of military force in settling these issues, and to seek a positive, cooperative relationship with Iran in good faith.” (NYYM minute 2007-04-04)

At the same sessions, the Yearly Meeting heard about inequity in the parole process in the New York prisons system that seemingly gave weight only to the person’s criminal history. Friends approved a minute from Purchase Quarterly Meeting and WCC asking for “parole release decisions [to] give equal consideration to *all* of the [pertinent] factors involved, . . . includ[ing] educational achievement, employment skills, disciplinary record, program participation, creation of a viable discharge plan, parole eligibility.” (NYYM minute 2007-04-06)

Friends also considered support for the National Religious Campaign against Torture (NRCAT) at Spring Representative Meeting and approved the recommendation from WCC and a number of monthly and regional meetings that NYYM become a participating member of NRCAT. (NYYM minute 2007-04-08) At Summer Sessions, the Body heard a report from Patricia Chernoff (Morningside) on the second Quaker Initiative to End Torture (QUIT) conference held at Guildford that June. Friends were provided with copies of a curriculum on torture—“QUIT: Teaching about Torture”—from the conference, and approved the nominations of representatives to NRCAT from NYYM.

Throughout the year and into 2008, WCC's Torture Awareness Working Group has sought to keep Friends informed about developments and activities to end our nation's practice of torturing detainees.

Following in the path of our long-standing witness to end the death penalty, Friends at Spring Representative Meeting endorsed a minute from Manasquan Monthly Meeting and Shrewsbury-Plainfield Half-Yearly Meeting asking "New Jersey state officials and governments of other states to enact legislation ending the death penalty permanently. . . ." (NYYM minute 2007-04-09) Letters were sent by the NYYM clerk to New Jersey officials and publications describing the Yearly Meeting's support for ceasing executions. During Summer Sessions, the Body received a report by Bobbi Sue Bowers (Manasquan) describing progress in obtaining passage of legislation in New Jersey to abolish its use of the death penalty; legislation that subsequently was passed and signed by the governor.

Throughout 2007, NYYM Friends continued our witness to enable persons to pay their taxes freely without being forced to support warfare and preparations for armed conflict in violation of their consciences. At Spring Representative Meeting, Friends presented a report on developments in Daniel Jenkins's war-tax-witness case (argument before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and subsequent denial of his appeal by that court). The Body approved a minute authorizing the Yearly Meeting to submit an *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) brief in support of Daniel Jenkins's petition to the United States Supreme Court and utilizing monies from the Witness Activities Fund part of the Sharing Fund to defray the costs of the effort. (NYYM minute 2007-04-10) Reports were presented at Summer Sessions and Fall Sessions about developments in the case and the Yearly Meeting's *amicus* brief; the brief was submitted on July 5, 2007, and the Supreme Court declined to hear Daniel Jenkins's case by order issued on October 1, 2007.

During Summer Sessions, Jens Braun (Old Chatham) reported for the Committee on Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation (COMT), then a subcommittee of the Peace Concerns Committee, about two conferences COMT had organized and led during the first half of 2007 to further Friends' commitment to witnessing against war and the use of our tax monies to support warfare. Friends heard brief statements of conscience from NYYM Friends and were invited to prepare their own statements. The Yearly Meeting approved a minute making COMT a full committee—the Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War (COPW). (NYYM minute 2007-07-47) The Body also approved a minute from WCC and COPW "invit[ing] all of our members to consider our minute of last year acknowledging

that paying for war violates our conviction in the Power of the Living Spirit to give life, joy, peace, and prosperity through love, integrity, and compassionate justice among people” and encouraging Friends to prepare individual statements of conscience and to forward them to the NYYM office for maintenance in a confidential file. (NYYM minute 2007-07-50)

With the support of WCC, the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) offered a very well-attended basic training workshop during Summer Sessions. During our 2007 sessions, WCC also presented stories of witness work from a number of Friends, committees, and organizations, in addition to the reports mentioned above. We heard from Shirley Way (Central Finger Lakes) about her work facilitating AVP workshops in Colombia under the care of Friends Peace Teams, and with assistance from the Witness Activities Fund of the Sharing Fund. We heard from Nadine Hoover (Alfred) about her witness with Centers of Conscience in her home community and her work in Indonesia leading AVP workshops and providing assistance to improve basic living conditions, work that has now become the Indonesia Initiative of Friends Peace Teams. We heard from Linda Chidsey (Housatonic) about the New York State Council of Churches and its annual peace and poverty mission to Washington, D.C., to lobby our federal elected officials. We heard from Newton Garver (Buffalo) about his work with the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund helping Bolivian Friends improve their educational programs. And WCC and the Sharing Fund provided assistance in bringing speakers to Summer Sessions: Roland Kreager, sponsored by the former Right Sharing of World Resources Committee, and Héctor Aristizábal, sponsored by the Torture Awareness Working Group.

During the 12 months of 2007, the Sharing Fund received donations totaling \$41,154, 82.31% of the goal of \$50,000. Witness committees disbursed over \$60,000 of Sharing Funds (including funds from other sources and carryover from the prior year). The Sharing Fund goal for 2008 was again set at \$50,000.

At Fall Sessions 2007, a Friends asked us “What extraordinary thing might God be calling us to?” This report provides a summary of some of the ways NYYM Friends are responding to God’s call. The Advance Reports from the witness committees that follow offer many more examples of the ways in which Friends are answering that query.

Frederick Dettmer, clerk

Witness Activities Fund 2007 Grants

In 2007, Witness Coordinating Committee approved the following requests for assistance from the Witness Activities Fund:

Activity (Requesting Group)	Amount
Children’s Peace Week Interns & Supplies (Albany MM)	750
Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation Conference— Assistance in bringing Derek Brett (Conscience and Peace Tax International) to Speak (COMT)	750
Shirley Way AVP Workshops in Colombia with Friends Peace Teams (Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting)	750
Peace & Justice Film Series (Old Chatham MM)	150
Radh Achuthan Interest Group on Meeting the Minimum Needs of All at Friends World Committee on Consultation 22nd Triennial (Peconic Bay MM)	750
Rebecca White Work with Children, Disabled Persons, and Prisoners in Nicaragua (Quaker Street MM)	750
Peace Book Covers for Local High Schools (Schenectady MM)	240
AFSC Eyes Wide Open Project (Westbury MM)	200
Growing Places Creative Learning Center (Alfred MM)	200
AVP Workshops in the Bronx (Bulls Head–Oswego MM)	750

Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), Inc.

In the past twelve months there has been much to celebrate within AVP-NY, but it has also been a period of challenge and discernment.

One of the significant joys has been the formation of a new and strong leadership team. As we reluctantly said our goodbyes to Gary Riley and Tom Martin, we have seen an excellent group of AVPers step up to take on new roles. Ray Rios now serves as our president, Carolyn Polikarpus as vice president, Kathryn Slining Haynes as treasurer. Cynthia Loring McBain continues her sterling service as secretary. Shirley Way has also joined us as our part-time New York State office coordinator.

We celebrate the focus and energy that have been evident at AVP-NY Board meetings and the ongoing professionalism of the organization, which continues to function according to its grassroots origins. The support that is provided to our area councils by our office coordinator and the leadership team is essential to this.

Examples of the work at Board level include a visioning process at the beginning of the year which was taken up at Area Council level to help groups focus their efforts. In Westchester this helped the Area Council articulate their prime mission as conducting prison workshops, with community workshops primarily focused on training new leadership for prison programs. The Board also works as liaison with the Department of Correctional Services (DOCS), and a series of meetings culminated in a productive meeting in February that addressed some concerns and strengthened the relationship between AVP-NY and DOCS. The production of high-quality materials is important, and the *Training for Facilitators Manual* is under review at this time, together with an orientation packet for volunteers.

Prison workshops are a major focus of AVP, and many of our prison facilitators are now coming home. The support of these men and women through transitional services has been identified as an area of interest to the organization. We were enthusiastic to hear of the work of AVPer Mark Graham, who while still on parole has taken on the task of setting up a transitional housing project in Brooklyn. Called the Redemption Center, this house is definitely styled as “more than a place to sleep.” Mark is passionate about creating a community that exemplifies the values of AVP. On a trial basis the AVP Board has revived our Flight Path to Freedom (FPTF) project with Mark Graham as our consultant. We are funding FPTF as an AVP Transitional Services Project, and Mark is mandated to specifically connect with formerly incarcerated AVPers as they come home and set them up with housing, connect them with AVP workshops in the community, and so on. Given that he has a lot of these activities happening at the Redemption Center, he has been very successful with the project to date.

Landing Strip, the AVP support group that meets twice a month at 15th Street in Manhattan, continues to provide a much needed service. Additional Landing Strip meetings now also convene twice a month at the Redemption Center in Brooklyn.

The AVP-NY Board was also pleased this year to support the international work of facilitators in Colombia and Indonesia through grants.

So what have our concerns been over the year? Because we are a volunteer organization, sometimes the load falls to too few, and there have been genuine worries expressed that we may be at a point in our development where we are at an organizational crossroads. Statistically, the number of workshops that we do in prisons and the number of prisons that we serve has been falling in recent years. Our local groups are not as robust as they were in many areas, and all complain of a lack of new facilitators. This year at our Annual Meeting at Seneca

Lake the attendance was disappointing—made even more so by the refusal of parole to let three former prisoners attend. Fiscally, we see this reflected in a struggle to produce a balanced budget—a major fundraising effort will be required this year together with careful planning so that we do not spend down capital that has been bequeathed to us—or, in spending it, we do so with mindful priorities set for a strong program.

These concerns are a challenge. But for many of us they are a challenge to think creatively. To look to different areas of the country and the world to see what is happening with AVP. To look to different models of the program such as Help Increase the Peace (HIP), the AFSC-sponsored youth version. To connect with others who care about this work. To think strategically and ask for guidance—what next?—always trusting that this awesome and amazing program has evolved and adapted thus far, and trusting that way will continue to open.

Workshop numbers for 2007:

- 182 workshops (130 prisons, 26 community, 26 mini)
- 2,325 certificates of completion

Judy Meikle, clerk

Alternatives to Violence Project, Inc. (AVP-NY), Financial Report, 2007

Ordinary income/expense

Income

Direct public support	
Contributions—individual	13,109.48
Contributions—churches/meetings	<u>1,984.00</u>
Total direct public support	15,093.48
Indirect public support	
Contributions—NYYM	3,584.21
Foundation/trust grants	<u>1,250.00</u>
Total indirect public support	4,834.21
Program service revenue	
Manual sales	1,454.55
Annual meeting fees	1,445.00
Interest—savings/short-term inv	0.48
Dividends & interest—securities	18,554.81
Miscellaneous revenue	<u>87.11</u>
Total program service revenue	21,541.95
Total income	41,469.64

Expense	
Program services	
Grants to other organizations	1,000.00
Awards & grants—individuals	638.70
Annual meeting expenses	2,320.92
Landing Strip	1,334.05
Manuals	2,422.50
Scholarships	2,500.00
Volunteer expenses	526.91
Workshop expenses	<u>260.35</u>
Total program services	11,003.43
Management & general expenses	
Payroll expenses	22,765.05
Payroll taxes	1,957.86
Payroll service fees	1,079.56
Health insurance	550.00
Accounting fees	2,504.09
Supplies	1,015.03
Telephone & telecommunications	2,124.78
Printing & copying	568.00
Postage	1,146.96
Bank service charges	43.25
Rent	1,900.00
Utilities	58.12
Travel & meetings expenses	1,268.97
Misc expenses	875.66
Insurance—liability	719.13
Insurance—Workers Comp	308.42
Other expenses	625.39
Filing fees—NY State	<u>20.00</u>
Total management & general expenses	39,530.27
Investment fees	<u>50.00</u>
Total expense	<u>50,583.70</u>
Net ordinary Income	-9,114.06
Other income/expense	
Other income	
Unrealized gain (loss)	<u>-1,601.74</u>
Total other income	<u>-1,601.74</u>
Net other income	<u>-1,601.74</u>
Net income	<u>-10,715.80</u>

American Friends Service Committee

Representatives to National Corporation

The American Friends Service Committee held its annual Corporation meeting November 2–3, 2007, at the Holiday Inn-Historic District, in Philadelphia, Pa. On Friday evening, a gala event at the nearby National Constitution Center celebrated AFSC's 90th anniversary and continued progress, with a showing of a video of AFSC work over the years and a concert by the group Sweet Honey in the Rock.

The Corporation is composed of members that are either Yearly Meeting appointees or at-large members appointed by the Corporation. The Corporation meeting routinely occurs immediately after, and separately from, a nationwide AFSC staff meeting attended by the area directors and the regions' staffs. The Corporation then meets and hears a fresh report from the executive secretary and the treasurer, as well as several featured reports of AFSC activities in the past year.

Paul Lacey, clerk of the Corporation, reported a summary of his extensive travels, acknowledged AFSC's 90th anniversary, and expressed his concerns for youth, strategic play, the "Spirited Engagement" fundraising campaign, and ending the Iraq war.

The general secretary, Mary Ellen McNish, reported on AFSC's emergency work in Southern California with undocumented workers left homeless by wildfires. AFSC provided healthcare training and services in the Americas, and this information was part of the AFSC response to the Pennsylvania attorney general's investigation of Dr. Elowesser's estate. In other programmatic work, McNish noted a change in public opinion about the Iraq war, and that AFSC has continued to seek elimination or reduction of military recruitment in public schools. Eyes Wide Open continued as displays in each of 40 states. Assessment of the QIAR (Quaker International Affairs Representatives) program was reported. In AFSC's joint international and domestic work on the Middle east, a highlight was a trip to Iran in early 2007 in which AFSC representatives joined with other peace organizations; they met with President Ahmadinejad and other Iranian representatives.

One success in 2007 was an agreement between NGOs (nongovernmental organizations, such as AFSC) and the military on the provision of humanitarian aid in war zones, in which the NGOs accepted USAID guidelines. In the U.S., AFSC has been mapping racially motivated violence and preparing recommendations on how undocumented persons might respond to ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) units. AFSC continues its work on economic justice in many of its

area offices and has source book, *A Just Minimum Wage*, available. In prison-reform work, AFSC focused on solitary-confinement issues.

In internal organization responsibilities, the AFSC Board worked on reevaluating and improving AFSC's organizational structure.

Joan Cope Savage

Middle Atlantic Region

The Middle Atlantic Region of the American Friends Service Committee has programs in Logan and Charleston, W.Va.; Baltimore, Md.; Pittsburgh, Pa.; Syracuse, N.Y.; and Washington, D.C. The work of these programs falls under the National AFSC Goals of Economic Justice, Healing Justice, Peace, and Human Migration and Mobility.

Economic Justice continued to be the focus of the work of the West Virginia Economic Justice Project. A major focus this year was on building a progressive infrastructure in West Virginia for a more effective network/movement for social and economic justice. The West Virginia Public News Service and the Virginia News Connection are two results of this work. Staff from the program was also involved with initial negotiations in founding of the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy. These programs are important aspects of the work to help low-income and working families to get the best deal possible under the current system. The staff with this project has built coalitions with many groups across the state and created working relationships with them that have made important differences when negotiating for change.

Economic Justice was also the focus of the work in Logan, W.Va., in the housing-repair project of the NEW+ program. Students and others from Friends' schools in the Middle Atlantic Region spent time in Logan repairing homes for people in need. The connections made through this service benefit everyone.

The CAFFE (Community Advocates for Family Empowerment) project is a program for economic justice in Syracuse. The goal of this project states that "low-income families and people concerned about low-income families are empowered to advocate for themselves and for changes to the human services system." A highlight of the work of this project is the Leadership Development Workshop for Women. Leadership skills on various topics are taught over an eight-week period.

Healing Justice was the focus of the work in Logan in the mentoring project of the NEW+ program. High school students of African descent in the local high school participated in a mentoring program

that included enrichment activities, photo projects, the Black History Program, and visits to area colleges. In the past this group created photo books titled *Welcome to My World* and *Remembering from Back Then, Stories of Our Grandmothers*. The latter was part of a celebration banquet honoring the elders in their lives named “Standing on Their Shoulders.”

Healing Justice was also a goal of the HIPP (Help Increase the Peace Project) workshops at Hillbrook, the local detention center for youth near Syracuse. The workshops gave the participants new skills for healing conflicts in their lives.

The Baltimore Urban Peace Movement is a program of Healing Justice in Maryland correctional facilities. Staff provides programs in conflict resolution, yoga/meditation, anger management, and communication and mediation for incarcerated men who then use these skills to help other inmates.

Peace is the underlying focus of much of the work of AFSC, but it is at the top of the work of the Pennsylvania Program “Empowering Voices for Peace and Justice.” Eyes Wide Open exhibits were shown across the state with people trained in listening skills present for those looking for someone to talk with. The Military Listening Project listened to veterans from Iraq and their families about their experiences. They wrote a moving report of the results of their survey, which can be found on the AFSC Web site, www.afsc.org, under US Programs/Pennsylvania.

Peace is part of the youth work of the DC Peace and Economic Justice Program in their “Youth in the Know Leadership” project. This project empowers youth to take charge of their lives by helping them understand and know their legal rights as citizens of this country. This past year they conducted a conflict-resolution workshop at the African Immigrant and Refugee Conference and organized a coalition-building gathering in collaboration with the African Freedom and Justice Leadership Council.

Peace is also the focus of the work in Syracuse in the Youth Empowerment/ Help Increase the Peace project. Students trained in HIPP created and led forums for their classmates on topics of interest and concern to them including Stereotyping, Bullying, and Paying It Forward.

Peace was also a primary focus of the work in Baltimore under the Baltimore Urban Peace Program. Projects this year included a Listening Project, collaboration with the Safe Streets Project, an antiviolenace initiative of the Baltimore City Health Department, and participation with five congregations to organize the Baltimore Christian Peace Witness against the war, in Washington, D.C.

Human Migration and Mobility is the focus of the Project Voice Program. Most of the work of this project this past year was with people from the South Asian community. They were given information about legal issues and offered referral services, educated in the green card program, informed of their rights as workers, and helped with SSI benefits. This program has just completed its third year and is making a significant difference in the lives of the people it touches. Next year the program will expand to include an African community from Somalia in D.C.

This is just a small picture of some of the programs of the Middle Atlantic Region, which covers most of New York State. Please refer to the report in the 2007 *Yearbook* for general information about the Region and ways to be in touch with the work. The AFSC Web site is a rich source of information and is well worth checking out.

Irma Guthrie, NYYM representative to MAR

New York Metropolitan Regional Office

Highlights of the completed 2006–2007 program year included (1) two completed comprehensive program plans preceded by program evaluations; (2) new program dimensions as evidenced by the work of Other Options, the Community and Youth Gun Violence Project in conjunction with New Yorkers Against Gun Violence, and the state-wide exhibits of Eyes Wide Open and Cost of War; (3) engagement with all facets of changes in the organization; (4) review of NYMRO's compensation; (5) welcoming six new members to the Executive Committee; (6) maintenance and attraction of new revenue.

This winter Pat Clark joined us as an interim Criminal Justice Program director. She immediately registered an appreciation of the program work she has witnessed and her excitement for the opportunities this work offers us to build upon. It is her expectation that we will increasingly connect our work with advocacy opportunities and the Quaker community.

One of the changes in the organization is the method of budgeting. Lee O'Neill, director of finance for AFSC worldwide, spoke with Executive Committee members to help them to (1) gain an overview of the organization's finances, (2) understand NYMRO as a budgeting unit within the organization, and (3) acknowledge some implications of the proposed new financial planning system. This time of several transitions is a bit unsettling. However, NYMRO is in a good position to adjust to the new system as we learn to work with it.

The Summer Internship Project thrives, each year attracting more

candidates. A new pattern is emerging: Some of those applicants who were not accepted for the program volunteered to work with us without a stipend just for the experience. While we are not able to accommodate them all, we see this as a sign that our internships are increasingly highly regarded. Summer is just the right time to have young people working against gun violence, exhibiting Eyes Wide Open and the Cost of War, and informing people about Other Options to the Military.

After long and thoughtful discussions, in our April Executive Committee meeting NYMRO's proposed AFSC Statement on Immigrant Detention, originally brought forward by our Immigrant Rights Program, was approved to be seasoned by the organization and forwarded to the Board. It follows here for your consideration.

The Quaker vision of justice is grounded in our core belief that "there is that of God in everyone" and the Biblical call to welcome the stranger. Our vision, as it applies to immigration, draws on years of experience in international human rights work and with immigrant communities worldwide. Human migration is a global phenomenon driven by political, social and economic considerations that demand not just our attention, but our humanity and compassion. We are all God's people, no matter our circumstances.

And so we react with dismay to the increasing criminalization of individuals with tenuous legal status in the United States. In particular, we see the increasing overuse and abuse of detention as a demonstrably failed policy and practice. The U.S. government's punitive focus on arrest, detention and deportation diverts attention from more compelling human, civil and labor rights issues and from the complex causes of immigration. This punitive focus, in its harsh and capricious application, shatters families and stokes fear in communities; creates incentives for individuals and businesses to profit by the incarceration of others; and shames our highest ideals as Americans and our deepest convictions as Quakers.

We envision an immigration policy free of imprisonment, a policy that offers humane treatment to asylum seekers, refugees, and economic migrants, and that provides for legal status for undocumented immigrants.

We call for the end to the misguided and profoundly unjust policy of detention in our immigration system.

Upper New York State Area Office

The Upper New York State Area Office of AFSC conducts three projects: the Akwesasne Environmental Justice Project (with the Mohawk Nation at the New York-Ontario-Quebec borders), the Community Advocates for Family Empowerment Project, and the Youth Empowerment Project.

AFSC's partnership with the Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment (ATFE) bore abundant fruit this year. Our work together fell into four categories: sustainable agriculture, black ash tree preservation, fruit tree preservation, and education and advocacy efforts.

The sustainable agriculture project encouraged families and community organizations to grow their own vegetables. This year, 145 families were served at tree and seed giveaway. The 2,000 strawberry plants that were planted in a field on Cornwall Island last year were ready for harvest this year. The berries were for the community's use, as strawberries hold an important place in Longhouse ceremonies. Heritage varieties of corn, beans, and squash were planted in community gardens. The seed was saved, so that the varieties can be planted again next year.

The black ash preservation project collected 20 pounds of seed from trees around Ontario and New York. Also in 2007, a Black Ash Center was launched, which links federal, state, and provincial agencies with Native American communities throughout North America to plan for how to save the black ash tree for future generations. Black ash is used in traditional basket making in many Native cultures.

Children from the Akwesasne Freedom School took a larger role in the management of an apple orchard that was donated to ATFE. The children were taught the fundamentals of tree pruning, and assisted in orchard cleanup. They also harvested the apples and made cider, jam, and apple pies from lessons written in the Mohawk language.

Education and advocacy efforts included the annual roadside cleanup in the spring. 21 teams competed to pick up the most garbage from the ditches. Also, several schools visited the sugar shack during maple syrup season. About 40 gallons of sap was boiled from the taps on 100 trees. Maple syrup from ATFE is used in Longhouse ceremonies.

The Community Advocates for Family Empowerment (CAFFE) project served low-income families in Onondaga County. The project surveyed case workers at the county Department of Social Service (DSS) as it created a one-hour advocacy training. This workshop gives people important information about how to work with the staff of DSS to get their families' needs met. The training is designed to reduce

the number of people who are escorted from the DSS offices because they've resorted to violent behavior out of frustration.

The CAFFE Women's Leadership Development Workshop trained 19 women in two sessions during 2007. Each session consisted of eight weeks of classes in topics ranging from public speaking to meeting facilitation to leadership styles.

CAFFE also participated in three nationwide, call-in days. Members and allies were encouraged to contact legislators about federal budget legislation that would have given more funding to programs that assist low income families.

The Youth Empowerment Project used Help Increase the Peace Project (HIPP) to teach nonviolent conflict-resolution and leadership skills to young people. Five basic HIPP workshops were conducted at Hillbrook Detention Center. One mini-workshop was conducted in December, and Christmas presents were distributed to the young men at the facility.

The HIPP format has been adapted for use in school settings. 58 students in three Syracuse high schools and junior high schools were trained to be peer facilitators. They led their fellow students in a total of four forums at their respective schools. A total of 449 people, including students, parents, and teachers, participated in the forums.

The project also collaborated with the Central New York chapter of the Alternatives to Violence Project to conduct joint trainings at Syracuse University this year. Three basic, two advanced, and two trainings for trainers were offered.

With the support and assistance of many Friends in New York and around the Middle Atlantic Region, Upper New York State Area Office of AFSC advanced its efforts to address economic justice and peace-building issues in our community.

Chrissie Rizzo, UNYS Area director

Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development

The Barrington Dunbar Fund convened this year with a renewed resolve to continue the work of Barrington Dunbar and to spread his message to Friends throughout NYYM that we should help the disadvantaged.

Due to the ever increasing cost of education today, the Barrington Dunbar Fund was inundated with more requests for scholarships this year than ever before. As usual the committee carefully and prayerfully considers every request. We try to focus more on children from kindergarten through high school, giving special attention to those who come from single-parent households and to those whose parent(s) are incarcerated and who are in dire need of assistance. Most of our students attend Quaker schools in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Westbury, and Poughkeepsie.

We found this year to be most challenging, since requests were high and funds were low. However, we did our best to help as many as we could with the funds that were allotted. We wish to thank the Sharing Fund for making it possible for us to continue the work of Barrington Dunbar.

Marvea Thompson, clerk

Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development 2007 disbursements

Friends Seminary	6,500
Oakwood Friends School	350
New Leadership Group	500
Providence House	500
Earlham College	2,000
Hour Children	500
YSOP	500
Norwich University	1,300
Brooklyn Residential Home	300
Redemption Center	1,500

Friends Committee for Black Concerns

The Black Concerns Committee (formerly the Race Relations Committee) has the following mandate from New York Yearly Meeting

1. to broaden and deepen communication among all ethnic groups
2. to develop among Friends a keener awareness of the violence of racism
3. to stimulate involvement of Friends, as individuals and as members of meetings, in today's racial crisis
4. to stimulate Friends as individuals and as members of meetings to be creative in working with all ethnic groups to overcome the handicaps of the past and to achieve political rights, educational excellence, economic opportunity, and social dignity
5. to increase awareness among Friends of the history and contributions of Blacks and other ethnic groups both within and outside the Religious Society of Friends
6. to support, enhance, and deepen the multiracial character of the family of Friends

One of our priorities has been enhancing the multiracial character of the family of Friends. We have been doing this in part by supporting the creation of the Bedford Stuyvesant Worship Group in Central Brooklyn, N.Y. According to the 2000 United States Census, New York City has the largest number of persons who define themselves as African American or Black in any city in the United States, with the majority living in Brooklyn. Redemption Center allows us to worship there rent free, and we in turn have given money, time, and energy to help create the physical space, which needed and still needs a lot of work. The Bed-Stuy worship group meetings have been multiracial.

To develop among Friends a keener awareness of the violence of racism we supported the White Anti-racist Summit held at the White Privilege Conference in April in Springfield, Mass. We provided funds to WACAN, the White Anti-racist Community Action Network, to cover costs of WACAN members who participated as summit facilitators. The summit was attended by 70 people from across the USA, along with a contingent from Bermuda. Participants networked and compared different models of organizing white people to oppose racism. Following the summit, an e-mail list was created for participants to continue the dialogue.

We have also encouraged the ongoing work of White Friends Working to End Racism (WFWTER). They continue to meet several times per year to study and discuss what white Friends can do about

racism. Meetings include self-assessment, study of relevant topics, and consideration of actions to take in the NYYM community. In January 2008 WFWTER published an apology for the transatlantic slave trade and associated activities of oppression directed to Afro-descendants (term for a UN-designated protected class) during slavery and leading up to contemporary times. WFWTER will offer an interest group, sponsored by the Black Concerns Committee, at Silver Bay to discuss the apology and how NYYM might take it as a starting point for examining its own historic involvement in slavery.

To increase awareness among Friends of the history and contributions of Blacks and other ethnic groups both within and outside the Religious Society of Friends, we have continued to provide financial support for publicity efforts on behalf of *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship: Quakers, African-Americans and the Myth of Racial Justice*. The authors, Vanessa Julye and Donna McDaniel, focus on the relationship of Quakers of European descent and African Americans in North America from precolonial times to the present. Please visit their new Web page at www.fitforfreedom.org for the progress on the forthcoming book as well as news and events related to Quakers and slavery. The site includes brief bios of African American Quakers, and links to related articles, publications, and Web sites. Due to circumstances beyond their control, the publication date had to be pushed back. As soon as the book is published the Black Concerns Committee would like to promote a book tour for Donna and Vanessa, and hope that quarterly and regional meetings will sponsor book signings. If you are interested in promoting the book, please inform a member of our committee.

The Black Concerns Committee is helping to sponsor Vanessa's attendance at Silver Bay. She is the FGC coordinator for their Committee for Ministry on Racism. The CMR Committee seeks to provide vision, leadership, and support (including human and material resources) for enhancing racial and ethnic diversity and eradicating racism among Friends, and, with God's guidance, to help Quakers transform themselves institutionally and individually into a beloved community — whole and enriched by its diversity. Visit their Web site, www.fgcquaker.org/cmr, for more information.

Again, this year at Silver Bay we will provide a safe space for Friends of Color to explore racial healing. Vanessa Julye facilitated our time together last year, and she will do so again in 2008.

We have expanded our efforts to provide materials from the AFSC Youth & Militarism Program for distribution to Black and Latino inner-city high schools and neighborhoods. We have purchased and distributed dozens of copies of *It's Your Life*. This publication details

alternative options to military service that still satisfy a taste for adventure and a commitment to high ideals. Specific ideas for travel, adventure jobs, youth exchange, skills training, career training, and paying for college are explored in this 92-page book. We have also distributed materials that educate students and their parents about the realities of signing up for military service, and we will continue to do so. If you or anyone from your monthly meeting would like some of these materials, for distribution to economically poor inner-city neighborhoods, please let us know.

The Black Concerns Committee has begun to explore race and ethnicity in the criminal-justice system and has set up a working group to explore the institutional underpinnings of the prison system in New York. Recent work suggests that in New York, the criminal-justice system has social, political, and economic features that channel material benefits from downstate communities of color to upstate white communities. The working group is exploring this situation, sometimes referred to as “the new slavery,” by collaborating with existing policy-study groups and compiling a body of documentation into a report. The group will publicize the findings through release of the report and development of an interactive program that can be offered to Quaker meetings and other interested organizations. Friends who are interested in participating in this project should contact Jeff Hitchcock, jeffhitchcock@euroamerican.org, 908-241-5439, or any member of the Black Concerns Committee.

The Black Concerns Committee welcomes the participation and support of concerned Friends in NYYM. If you are interested in working with the Committee, contact any member of the Committee. Committee work is often immersed in hugs, tears, and laughter, and there is much work that still needs to be done. For more detailed disbursement information contact one of the coclerks.

Evelyn Kennenwood, Helen Garay Toppins, coclerks

Bolivian Quaker Education Fund

Bolivian Quaker Education Fund (BQEF) had a good year in 2007. BQEF, which started with NYYM Friends reaching out to Friends in Bolivia, now has board members in six additional Yearly Meetings. Nine programs now support the goal of strengthening ties between Bolivian and North American/European Quakers through programs that enhance the educational opportunities of Andean Quakers, strengthen their schools, nurture their service, and bring this activity to the attention of Friends in North America and Europe.

Higher education scholarships numbered 40 in 2007. This was the original BQEF activity and continues to be its signature program. Since the stipends are paid each month in cash, there is regular face-to-face contact with each student each month, providing an opportunity to nurture their studies. Sponsorships of specific scholars have come from meetings and individual Friends in several states from New York to California and in the UK.

Computer labs and English language labs have been established in the three urban Quaker K–12 schools.

Internado is a supervised residence in Sorata, organized and operated by Quakers, for preteens and teens from outlying hamlets who would otherwise have to walk hours each way to attend secondary school. The Internado has received generous support, especially from Irish Friends, and expects to complete the purchase of its home this fall.

Quaker Education Workshops—The Friends Council on Education regularly offers workshops in the U.S. for teachers new to Quaker schools. In 2007 a Spanish version of these workshops was offered for the second time in Bolivia. Materials have been translated into Spanish, and there are now local workshop leaders in La Paz.

AVP Workshops—Through BQEF, AVP is now firmly planted in Bolivia.

Interns in the U.S.—Plans are under way for two young Bolivian Quaker teachers to intern for at least a semester at Oakwood School and one other U.S. Quaker school.

Volunteers—In 2007 there were a dozen volunteers. Volunteers pay their own way, help with school and adult-education classes (especially English), and come home amazed at the richness of their experience.

Health & Dental Program—In 2007, scholarship program graduate Ana Callisaya approached BQEF about initiating a new health-screen-

ing program for Quaker schools in Bolivia. Ana and three current scholarship students have formed a Committee on Health and have submitted a Good Health for Good Education proposal, to provide basic health education and examinations and basic dental education, examinations, and care to 1,000 children in six Quaker Schools in the Department of La Paz. The young adults making the proposal will volunteer their time.

Although BQEF has greatly expanded since its origins five years ago within NYYM, individuals and committees of NYYM are still a valued part of our support base.

For more information about BQEF please go to www.bqef.org.

Jane Simkin

Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War

The Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War (COPW) evolved this past year into full committee status. We had been a subcommittee of Peace Concerns, known as the Subcommittee on Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation (COMT). This past year we have continued to invite Friends to write a personal statement of conscience and shepherded a minute through YM Summer Sessions to this effect. Our emphasis on statements of conscience stems from our experience that in the processes of setting down on paper the sentiments of our souls, we gain experience in listening to the Spirit, and we encourage a discipline of taking action (and the action of finding enough clarity, and the time, to write about our beliefs is a significant action). A repository for statements of conscience has been established at the Yearly Meeting office, and procedures have been set in place to keep track of these.

Also at Summer Sessions, the committee sponsored the construction of a wall of statements of conscience. Designed by Dan Jenkins, the wall placed the short statements of conscience in a color- and age-of-the-writer-coded pattern that was both beautiful and full of wonderfully worded statements. That wall has “traveled” to other locales since then.

On several occasions the Committee has sponsored sessions in specific meetings that have requested assistance in examining the options for those seeking to not pay for war. With the assistance of work done by Nadine Hoover we have put together a workshop that provides information about the many ways Friends and others have responded to their consciences. Options range from earning below

the taxable income level, to challenging laws in the courts, as well as withholding portions of one's taxes and either placing these funds in an escrow account or using them for some life-affirming activity. The workshops also include a time of reflection and writing where individuals are invited to explore their personal leadings on this topic.

The committee sponsored another conference, held at Flushing Meeting in September 2007, that focused on both significant historical and legal precedents to our current situation, as well as focusing on national and international opportunities for continuing to pursue the right to not pay for war.

When Dan Jenkins sought to appeal his case to the U.S. Supreme Court, the Committee helped produce an amicus curiae brief to accompany the petition for a hearing. The case was not taken up at the Supreme Court level, but the brief is a document well worth reading: www.cpti.ws/court_docs/usa/jenkins/in.html. A small team from the Committee are working with Pendle Hill, which is considering publishing a modified version of the brief as one of their pamphlets.

Members of the Committee also developed a set of articles that were published in the March *Friends Journal* under the heading "Praying for Peace, Paying for War."

The committee has been operating well, with frequent phone conferences as well as meetings during the various Yearly Meeting sessions. As we move into the role of a full Yearly Meeting committee, we hope to be helpful to regions, monthly meetings, and individuals in their wrestlings with how to both hold our peace testimony and respond to the demands of a government at war.

Karen Reixach, clerk

Friends Committee on National Legislation representatives

The Friends Committee on National Legislation, the oldest registered religious lobby in Washington, is a nonpartisan Quaker lobby in the public interest. FCNL works with a nationwide network of tens of thousands of people from every state in the U.S. to advocate for social and economic justice, peace, and good government.

FCNL has continued to work on the priorities set last year. A listing of these priorities is in the FCNL report in the 2007–2008 *Yearbook*, or may be found on the FCNL Web site: www.fcnl.org.

The FCNL Annual Meeting is the annual gathering of its General Committee, made up of Quakers appointed by 26 yearly meetings and several dozen individual Friends chosen because they are particularly

active on lobby issues. A record 232 people from 36 states were present at the November 2007 annual meeting to hear a keynote speech by civil rights leader Representative John Lewis. “Some of you have been inspired to get into trouble, to get in the way. I am here tonight to say thank you for getting into trouble for peace. Sometimes I feel like the American people are a little too quiet, too silent. It is time for all of us to make a little noise, to get in the way to bring this madness of the war in Iraq to an end.... It is our responsibility to leave the earth a little greener and a little more peaceful than we found it.”

Another speaker, David Goldstein, codirector of the Natural Resources Defense Council Energy Program, talked about the policy changes that will be necessary to save energy effectively and address global climate change. He argued that the technology exists today that would cut U.S. consumption of nonrenewable energy by 40 percent. But in some cases government regulation is standing in the way of application of this technology, and in other cases government needs to act to provide the proper incentives to make that technology commercially available.

One of the themes of the meeting was on reaching out to other faith groups. “Hope is not a noun. It is a verb. Hope is not something you have. It is something you do.” Another quote we heard: “The *good* news is that Quakers are the largest faith-based peace lobby in Washington. The *bad* news is that Quakers are the largest faith-based peace lobby in Washington.”

We also listened to a panel of congressional staff from both the House and Senate and both political parties who briefed us on some of the best practices for communicating with Congress.

NYYM appoints six representatives to FCNL; their principal responsibility is to attend the annual meeting in Washington and help make decisions about FCNL’s goals and operations. Other interested Friends, who are not appointed representatives, attend as well. Some of those are on various FCNL committees.

FCNL seeks to follow the teachings of Jesus and the leadings of the spirit.

We seek a world free of war and the threat of war.

We seek a society with equality and justice for all.

We seek a community where every person’s potential
may be fulfilled.

We seek an earth restored.

Ronald Inskeep, clerk, FCNL representatives

Friends Peace Teams Representatives

Friends Peace Teams is Quakers doing Quaker service and witness in the world. Conscientious service does not start after a draft or declaration of war; it starts today. Friends Peace Teams gives you endless opportunities to support and engage in alternative conscientious service in the world.

Friends Peace Teams provided extensive relief to those affected by an outbreak of violence in Kenya following the general election this year. Youth did not initiate this violence, but were central in its expansion. In the immediate aftermath, the African Great Lakes Initiative conducted forty mini Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops. There has been a burst of requests for full AVP workshops, so additional staff have been taken on and facilitators supported to do this. About 200 workshops have been arranged. Facilitators attending the Alternatives to Violence Project International Gathering in Kenya on September 14–20 are offering to support facilitation teams the week before and after the gathering. We still receive donations to Friends Peace Teams, with Kenya Relief noted in the memo line.

Indonesia is continuing to conduct AVP workshops among refugees, in the “heart” of the war and with young children who were victims of the war. Indonesians are just beginning to be able to do their own basic workshops, so we have begun translating and introducing the advanced workshops. NYYM Friends continue to support seven Indonesian preschool teachers to receive their bachelor’s degrees, and we sent six other teachers to Jakarta for a two-week intensive training in developmental activities for young children. We are training potters from Papua, Borneo, and Aceh to make silver-treated ceramic filters for clean drinking water. We hired a half-time coordinator in Indonesia for more continuity.

Sarah Mandolang received an Elise Boulding Fund grant and monthly, regional, and yearly meeting funds to travel in Rwanda with the Friendly Folk Dancers; to Uganda to work with returning child soldiers at UNIFAT, a K–7th grade school; and to Kenya to attend the AVP International gathering and volunteer for AVP workshops. While in Africa she will attend a Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC) workshop that she intends to bring to Indonesia. Meetings in Delaware and Florida are raising additional funds for her to return via India to attend the FWCC Asia West Pacific Gathering and the following young adult Friends gathering. She returns in November and will be available in the spring to speak to meetings.

The Latin American/Caribbean program is bringing HROC to Colombia and continuing to support Alternatives to Violence workshops

in that region as well. The semiannual *PeaceWays* magazine will bring you inspiring witness from our work! Do you receive it? Ask your meeting about putting Friends Peace Teams in your monthly meeting budget and receiving bundles of *PeaceWays*, and become a donor yourself. Beyond donations to the operating fund of Friends Peace Teams, each region of the world and activity must raise their own funds, and appreciate earmarked funds for specific work in specific regions. We make every dollar go a long way!

Nadine Hoover

Committee on Indian Affairs

As a committee, we are now focusing our efforts on the geographic area covered by New York Yearly Meeting rather than being too far-flung. Two of the charges for our Indian Affairs Committee are informing Friends and others of the present problems facing Native Americans and aiding in improving ways by which our American society treats its Native American members.

We are working to incorporate more of a Native American presence at Yearly Meeting Sessions, and we listened carefully to Henry Lickers speak about the problems of environment and society at Spring Sessions 2008. An environmental biologist working over thirty years for the Mohawks, he was brought up by his Seneca grandmothers to be an orator. The young people have asked him to share with them his philosophy of being “one with the earth.”

When the Onondaga Nation received a hearing with Judge Kahan on October 11, 2007, in federal court in Albany, one of our committee members attended. The Onondagas had filed a land-rights action March 11, 2005, seeking healing of relationships with other people and with the land. The filing named the State of New York, for its illegal land takings, and several corporations, which they identified for their environmental abuse.

The modest stipends through our committee stipend program make a great difference in so many lives. Many are older students returning to school while raising families as well as working. Thank-you letters and e-mails inspire us with each student’s journey.

We met with Jennifer Roundpoint, the 2007–2008 recipient of the Marjorie Sexton Memorial Native American Scholarship. She is an enrolled member of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, was accepted into the Art Program at Onondaga Community College, and plans to pursue graphic design.

We are exploring new ways to help the American Indian Community House in Manhattan. Founded in 1969, it is a community-based organization and multifaceted social-support agency that serves 27,000 Native Americans from 72 tribes, all living in New York City.

A member of a NYYM worship group contacted our committee about the escalating antagonism between Native and non-native Americans over property rights in his area. One friend described this as a “scary situation.” We were able to facilitate his taking his concerns to his monthly meeting rather than acting independently.

We continue to support the Blossom Garden Friends School in western New York, the Akwesasane Freedom School, which plans to expand with a high school program, and Kanatsiohareke, a Mohawk community near Albany. Our funds also help the Akwesasne residents, who are at the forefront of efforts to preserve the Black Ash trees in preparation for the coming invasion of the emerald ash borer. Tree seedlings are now being planted in Haudenosaunee communities in Canada, and seeds are being saved for future seed banks, which will be entrusted to the chiefs.

We note that for the first time in human history, indigenous peoples have been given the right to exist! On September 13, 2007, the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples—a historic victory! The coordination needed to achieve this goal helped build a global indigenous-advocacy movement.

Sybil Perry, clerk

Committee on Indian Affairs Financial Report for year 2007

Income 2007	
Mae Barton Fund	\$1,456.79
Levinus Painter Fund	168.03
Lindley Murray Fund	2,000.00
Other	<u>1,684.99</u>
Total, fund specific	5,309.81
Sharing Fund	<u>5,587.23</u>
Total income to 12/31/07	\$10,897.04

Expenses 2007	
Column notes	(1) (2)
American Indian Community House	500 325
Kanatsiohareke	500 250
Akwesasne Freedom School	850 150
Blossom Garden Friends School	500
AFSC, Northeast Region, Akwesasne Project	750 200
FCNL, Native American Project	750 200

Stipends	
16 of 20 students from 9 different nations studying at 15 different colleges in a variety of majors.	3,100
4 of 20	900
Marjorie Sexton Memorial N.A. Scholarship	1,500 1,500
The 2007–2008 recipient is Jennifer Roundpoint, (St. Regis Mohawk) majoring in graphic design at Onondaga Community College	
Total	8,450 3,525

Total expenses approved by IAC for disbursement in 2007	11,975
Change in IAC funds, 2007:	-1,077.96
Operating Budget	
Administrative expenses	112.05
Travel expenses	<u>379.80</u>
	491.85

- (1) IAC expenditures approved and disbursed in 2007.
- (2) IAC approved expenditures of November 2007, that were disbursed in 2008.

Latin American Concerns resource person

This has been another difficult year for many Latin Americans, in Central and South America and in the United States. Farmers and workers in Latin America continue to find it increasingly difficult to sustain themselves, and many immigrate to the U.S. in search of the “American dream.”

“Immigration reform” measures still have not passed the U.S. Congress. The militarization of the border between the U.S. and Mexico continues. Poor people continue to die while trying to reach the “American dream.”

As Latin American Concerns resource person, I try to have at least some knowledge of these and other situations involving Latin Americans, and to share this knowledge with others.

This year I attended two performances of *Nowhere on the Border/En ningún lugar en la frontera*, a production of Repertorio Español in New York City. The play dramatized a man of Mexican descent who is accosted by a vigilante while searching the desert for his daughter, who disappeared trying to enter the United States. During the course of the play, the essential humanity of all the characters was demonstrated in a moving way.

Another aspect of immigration is human trafficking. Thousands of women and girls cross the U.S.-Mexico border into the United States, or pay “coyotes” to transport them, only to end up as sexual and/or domestic slaves. A 2007 film, *Lives for Sale*, available from Maryknoll, documents human trafficking. The hour-long film also highlights churches and programs that are helping some of the 20,000 people trafficked to the U.S. each year. I recommend the film to meetings and individuals.

On a more pleasant note, in May 2008 I attended the Second Gathering of Unprogrammed Latin American Friends, in Mexico City. This was a worshipful and enlightening experience. A brief report on the Gathering is in June *InfoShare*, on the Web at www.nyym.org/spark/is2008.6.shtml. The epistle from the Gathering is on the NYYM Web site at www.nyym.org/witness/latam.

I hope that in the next year I can bring consciousness of Latin American concerns to the Yearly Meeting in an effective way.

Paul Busby

Meeting the Minimum Needs of All

At the April 2006 sessions of New York Yearly Meeting, the Body approved the following minute regarding a concern to “Meet the Minimum Needs of All” raised by Radh Achuthan (Peconic Bay Meeting) and brought forward from Peconic Bay Meeting, Long Island Quarterly Meeting, and Witness Coordinating Committee:

Friends share a concern about meeting the minimum needs of all people, which we define to be: providing adequate drinking water, nutrition, clothing, housing, primary health care and five years of primary education, to be achieved by the year 2030.

Friends are advised to raise the issue on all occasions where it is possible to influence individuals, groups, and organizations.

We charge our Clerk and General Secretary to make a special effort to speak about this issue with regional, national, and international groups.

We encourage Radh Achuthan to continue his ministry on this issue under his existing travel minute.

The concern to Meet the Minimum Needs of All (MMNA) was placed under the care of Witness Coordinating Committee at Fall Sessions in 2006. Since then, WCC has sought to nurture and broaden this leading. At its October 2007 and March 2008 meetings, WCC approved the formation of a MMNA Working Group and contingently allocated a portion of the Sharing Fund for the witness of the working group upon its formation. The working group currently is under formation and expects to begin meeting during 2008.

Radh Achuthan was an Observer at the Friends World Committee on Consultation’s 22nd Triennial Gathering, held in Dublin, Ireland, during August 2007, and presented an interest group on meeting the minimum needs of all to the international representatives at the gathering. He also led an interest group presentation at the FWCC Section of the Americas Annual Meeting, at Waycross, Indiana, in April 2008. He also will lead a session on meeting the minimum needs of all at the Summer 2008 Friends General Conference gathering as part of a new Call to Action program of interest groups.

Radh Achuthan, MMNA Working Group

National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund & Peace Tax Foundation

The National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund (NCPTF), a nonprofit organization, located in Washington, D.C., advocates for U.S. federal legislation that would enable conscientious objectors to war to have their federal income taxes directed to a special fund to be used only for nonmilitary purposes. The bill in the U.S. House of Representatives is called the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Act (currently H.R. 1921). Because the NCPT functions as a lobbying organization it is classified as a 501(c)4, nonprofit organization. Contributions to it are not tax-deductible.

The Peace Tax Foundation functions as an education tool to inform the public on religious, moral, and ethical basis for conscientious objection to war and nonpayment of taxes for war. It also serves as a liaison to the international peace tax movement. The Foundation does not lobby and it is a 501(c)3 organization. Donations made to it are tax-deductible.

The NCPTF continues to grapple with the loss of its longtime former executive director, Marian Franz, in 2006. Alan Gamble, who replaced Marian as director, stepped down from that position this May, due to difficulties he had permanently relocating his family to Washington, D.C. The NCPTF board had launched a search for a new director last fall and had selected a candidate, only to have that person eliminated because of their spouse's inability to transfer their job to Washington, as had been planned.

Due to the lobbying that must take place in Congress it is strongly felt by the board that permanent residency in or near Washington is an absolute requirement for anyone taking the position of executive director. A search committee has initiated the processes of finding a new director. It is hoped that applicants will have submitted their résumés by mid-August and the search committee will have made their selection by October, in time for approval by the board in November.

Less than two weeks before the May board meeting came the sad and shocking loss of John Randall, who served on the board for ten years. John, who was active in New York Yearly Meeting, was also active in the Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI) and created and maintained their Web site for many years. John played important roles in both NCPTF and CPTI, and his presence will be deeply missed.

In spite of these setbacks, the May board meeting ended with an optimistic feeling in the air. Several new members were appointed to

the NCPTF board and seem likely to play active roles in the board's activities. We appointed Melani Hom as interim director until a new executive director is appointed in the fall. Melani came to the NCPTF as a volunteer from the Brethren Volunteer Service. Melani has worked at the NCPTF office during the past year in various capacities. Though young, she brings intelligence and energy to her position. She should fill her role as interim director well. J. E. McNeil will assume the role of temporary chair of the board until December. As an attorney representing military tax resisters, she brings a deep understanding of the issues of conscience and war and, as the executive director of the Center on Conscience & War, the practical knowledge of running a nonprofit organization.

Significant events involving the Campaign and the Fund during the past year were:

- A new edition of the Peace Tax Foundation's video, *Compelled by Conscience*, was produced and readied for distribution as a DVD. The DVD presents the case for a Peace Tax Fund. Copies are available at the NCPTF Web site www.peacetaxfund.org.
- As of June 2008, the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill (H.R. 1921) has 38 Congressional cosponsors in addition to John Lewis, the bill's sponsor. Lobbying continues, in part, through the efforts of our part-time legislative advocate, Ronnie Lowell.

Please consider making a personal or meeting donation to the NCPTF. It is very important that we nurture this endeavor and keep it on a firm financial footing for the work ahead.

Jeffrey Bird, NYYM representative

New York State Council of Churches Collegium

The Collegium, comprising the bishops or executives of member judicatories, is the governing body of the New York State Council of Churches. Since 1999, either the current or a past presiding clerk has represented the Yearly Meeting on the Collegium. This past year Ernestine Buscemi has served as representative and Linda Chidsey has served as alternate.

The Collegium met three times for business this past year, and as is our practice, the December meeting was preceded by a retreat. The retreat topic this year was "Something Extraordinary" and grew out of the recognition that in the struggle for peace and social justice, there are times when "something extraordinary" is needed. Collegium members took up the question of what extraordinary thing God may be asking

of the churches in these times. In doing so, we returned often—as a touchstone—to the extraordinary gift of God’s love for all creation and the gift of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

The Collegium approved and adopted the Public Policy Committee’s advocacy priorities for the year 2008, and in early May traveled to Washington to meet with New York delegates to Congress. Ernie, Linda, and Frederick Dettmer, clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee, participated in this year’s annual Peace and Poverty Mission.

Briefings were held on the topics of immigration, the budget and poverty, the Middle East, the environment, and civil/human rights. Jim Fine of Friends Committee on National Legislation provided the briefing on the Middle East. As a full group we met with Senator Charles Schumer and with Senator Hillary Clinton’s chief of staff. In small groups we visited with 14 representatives or an aide.

In February Collegium members traveled to Albany to meet with Governor Eliot Spitzer, Senator majority leader Joseph Bruno, and a representative from assembly speaker Sheldon Silver’s office. The topics covered included healthcare, economic justice and poverty issues, chaplaincy, and criminal justice. Immediately following the departure of Eliot Spitzer, we began to reach out and establish relationships with the new governor and others so that we may continue our tradition of an annual meeting with key legislators.

At each Collegium meeting and advocacy visit we experience and acknowledge anew the importance of being present at this table. We see how each denomination brings its particular charism and how together we are able to gain access to elected officials’ offices; speak out for peace and justice with a collective voice; do what no one denomination alone could do. The Religious Society of Friends brings the perspective of the historic peace church, and this coming year the Collegium will take up the matter of conscientious objection to military taxation, adding support of a Peace Tax Fund bill to the issues we cover.

As we do this particular piece of work that God has laid upon us, we remember that the struggle for peace and social justice must take place in all of life’s venues—in the writing of social policy, in family and community relations, within each of our hearts.

*Ernestine Buscemi and Linda Chidsey,
representatives to the Collegium*

Peace Concerns Committee

Laid down.

Prisons Committee

Light Inside and Outside the Walls

Last year we shared with you that Quaker prison worship group members were not only coming home but staying connected with Friends. We shared our joy of having them worship with us and participate in our Prisons Committee business. Again we want to emphasize that former Quaker prisons worship group members continue to come home and continue to walk hand and hand with Friends.

As a committee we have tried to address the numerous obstacles and challenges people face when they are newly released from prison. Some are destitute. Many have no money for clothing, transportation, or food. Almost all are in need of decent, affordable, safe housing. In order to address these issues we have used Prisons Committee resources to support Redemption Center, which was opened in July 2007 by Mark Graham.

Mark was incarcerated when he was 17 years old and served 22 years. While confined he was the coclerk of the Quaker prison worship group in Otisville and a member of Quaker worship groups in Eastern, Sing Sing, and Green Haven. He helped coordinate AVP in Eastern, Sullivan, Fishkill, and Otisville prisons. Redemption Center is based on Quaker and AVP principles and hosts the Bedford Stuyvesant Quaker Worship Group, community AVP workshops, and Brooklyn Landing Strip meetings. The center provides safe, affordable, and drug-free transitional housing to formerly incarcerated people. (See *New York Times* 4/7/08 article.) The facility needs a lot of work. The basement needs to be renovated. The add-on room in the back needs to be completed. The backyard needs plantings. There is always a shortage of materials and supplies. If you can help Redemption in any way please let a member of the Prisons Committee know.

Last year we listed as one of our goals the establishment of a database for all of our prison worship group attenders. We needed this because sometimes our members, are transferred to a facility that does not have a Quaker worship group, and they want to stay in contact with the Friends. We created and used the database for the first time last Christmas when the clerk of NYYM, in conjunction with Prisons Committee members and YM staff, sent Christmas cards to all incar-

cerated current and former members of our prison worship groups.

At Spring Sessions the NYYM Prisons Committee began a discussion concerning membership procedures in NYYM for those attending our prison preparative meetings. This agenda item was brought to us because there seemed to be some confusion about what it meant to be a member of a prison preparative meeting and how that related, or did not relate, to applying for membership in the Religious Society of Friends. We agreed to continue the discussion at Silver Bay. As part of that continuing conversation we will consider insertions for *Faith and Practice* suggested by Lee Haring.

Those who worship with us behind the walls tell us that Quaker prison meetings provide a safe haven and a foundation for positive life changes. (See May 2007 *Spark*, “Light behind the Walls” www.nyy.org/spark/2007.5.shtml.)

Two of our worship groups are only meeting every other month; they would like to have meetings for worship more often, but we don’t have enough outside Friends who can help facilitate our worship groups. We also have two new worship groups in formation. The Prisons Committee needs *you!* If you would like to visit a Quaker prison meeting on a one-time basis to share how the Spirit is moving in your life, or be a regular attender at a worship group, please contact a member of the Prisons Committee.

For more detailed disbursement information contact the coclerks.

Jolene Festa and Helen Garay Toppins, coclerks

Committee for Right Sharing of World Resources resource person

Roland Kreager, general secretary of Right Sharing of World Resources, Inc., was a guest speaker at Summer Sessions at Silver Bay on July 24, 2007. Funds had been allocated in 2006 from the RSWR fund to cover Roland’s traveling expenses to Silver Bay. In April 2008, a \$5,000 donation was made to RSWR, Inc. Moving forward the goal is to make semiannual or quarterly donations to RSWR, Inc.

Bobbi Sue Bowers, RSWR resource person

Rural and Migrant Ministry

Rural and Migrant Ministry (RMM) is a multifaith organization which, since 1981, has served disenfranchised rural residents and agricultural workers in New York State through programs of education, witness, advocacy, youth empowerment, and leadership development. New York Yearly Meeting became an RMM Covenanting Denomination in 2001, joining 10 other New York communities of faith in supporting the work of the Ministry morally, institutionally, and financially. At its most basic, institutional support consists of NYYM representation on the RMM board of directors.

The mission of RMM—“to overcome the prejudices and poverty that degrade and debilitate all members of our society, by building communities that celebrate diversity, achieve true mutuality, and offer dignity and opportunity to all”—is primarily accomplished in three program areas: Youth Empowerment (the Youth Arts Group, summer camps, Leadership Institutes, mentoring, etc.); Education (educational immersion programs, internships, forums, workshops, the Pedro Cruz Scholarship Fund); Accompaniment (the Justice for Farmworkers campaign, farmworker delegations, legislative advocacy, litigation).

Following are a few of the many and diverse activities and accomplishments of RMM over the past year:

- More than 200 children participated in the 2007 summer day camps and the 18th annual week-long Leadership Camp.
- The Sowing Seeds for Justice Dinner, a celebration and fundraiser, hosted by acclaimed actor Sam Waterston, was held at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in New York City on October 18.
- The “Justice For All” speakers forum, a monthly series of talks sponsored by RMM, began its fourth year on September 23 with a talk on barriers facing the formerly incarcerated by Rima Vesely-Flad, director of the Interfaith Coalition of Advocates for Reentry and Employment (ICARE).
- Rev. John Fife, of Tucson, one of the founders of the Sanctuary Movement, and former moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), was the featured speaker at RMM’s Harvesting Justice Conference, in Batavia, on November 8.
- RMM’s Rural Women’s Conference, “Destiny,” was held November 30 and December 1 in Binghamton.
- The Youth Arts Group participated in at the Somos el Futuro Conference of the NY State Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force, April 25–27.
- The fifth annual Youth Arts Group “Just Us” Youth Conference

was held in New Paltz on May 3. The purpose of the conference is to inspire youth from across the region to work for social change in their communities.

- Farmworker Advocacy Days, featuring press conferences, processions, vigils, and legislative lobbying in support of the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act (A7528/S3884), were held in Albany on February 24, March 4 (in collaboration with Domestic Workers United), and May 20 (with AFL-CIO President John Sweeney).

Friends who might be interested in or feel called to the work of the Rural and Migrant Ministry, and would consider appointment to the Ministry's board as a representative of the Yearly Meeting, should contact the NYYM Nominating Committee, or James O'Barr at jobarr@hrhcare.org.

James O'Barr, NYYM representative to RMM

Torture Awareness Working Group

The Torture Awareness Working Group was formed in 2006 under the care of the Witness Coordinating Committee to respond to the deepening concern among Friends that our government is participating in brutal and immoral activities that violate Friends' testimonies and U.S. commitment to international agreements to which we are signatories: the 1949 Geneva Conventions, their 1977 Protocols, and the UN Convention against Torture.

Members of our working group have attended the two QUIT (Quaker Initiative to End Torture) conferences held in 2006 and 2007 at Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina. Participants at the conference learned from testimony presented by survivors of torture and from legal and academic experts the extent to which our government's practices have strayed from these agreements and our moral standards.

The working group focused in 2007 on ways to educate monthly meetings on this issue, specifically through screening the award-winning HBO documentary *Ghosts of Abu Ghraib*. The film was made available free of charge by the National Religious Campaign against Torture (NRCAT), an interfaith organization formed in January 2006 to address these concerns. Many monthly meetings obtained the documentary and subsequently wrote minutes decrying torture and our nation's practice of it, which are available on the QUIT Web site (www.quit-torture-now.org).

Monthly meetings have been encouraged to sign onto the National Religious Campaign's statement, "Torture is a Moral Issue" (see www.nrcat.org) and to support the organization as participating or endorsing members. New York Yearly Meeting is a participating member.

NRCAT holds monthly conference calls to inform its members throughout the United States of their activities, campaigns, and opportunities to become involved with national legislation. Members of our working group participate in these conference calls as representatives of NYYM and communicate with monthly meetings about current and planned activities to advocate for ending the use of torture by the United States. June 2008 has been designated Torture Awareness Month. We have been encouraging Friends to display banners on their meetinghouses as part of the NRCAT banner project and to raise awareness in their communities.

We continue to work to convince more Friends to join us in our work on this important issue, which has had such a profoundly injurious effect on citizens who have been involved in these illegal practices and on our image throughout the world.

Patricia Chernoff, clerk

William Penn House

William Penn House continues to be a strong Quaker presence on Capitol Hill. They host a monthly Potluck/Dialogue evening on a wide range of topics, as well as continuing to sponsor the only daily meeting for worship in the Washington area.

The Washington Quaker Workcamps are thriving under the care of William Penn House. In 2007 they conducted over 60 workcamps with over 500 participants. They hosted a group of 18 students from the Jiangsu Province of China. One of the workcamps with the New Garden Friends School in North Carolina evoked this response from a participant: "This is the first time I felt powerful and important."

William Penn House has made major improvements to its physical plant in the last year. They have replaced the ancient furnace with a state-of-the-art high-efficiency system. The rooms have been newly painted in a warm color, and ceiling fans and new furnishings have been added. The conference room too has been painted, and new lighting and upgraded wiring have been installed, as well as new carpeting. These improvements, along with an enthusiastic staff, have resulted in a much improved occupancy rate.

Clean and green: William Penn House has transformed its housekeeping regimen by using low-impact household recipes for cleaning. This has resulted in less cost to the environment. They have put together cleaners that are safe, effective, and cost effective. The recipes for disinfectants, mopping solutions, and scrubbing agents were obtained from a Web site that might interest others: www.cities.com/heartland/prairie/8088/clugrn.html.

Contributions are always welcome to continue this vital Quaker presence on Capitol Hill. So please consider adding William Penn House to your contributions list, if you haven't already done so. And while you are at it, why don't you plan on coming for a program or visit? You can check out their Web site to see all the wonderful things that are going on: www.williampennhouse.org.

Ronald Inskip, William Penn House representative

Committee on World Ministries

Because of the death of John Randall, clerk of World Ministries, no report was available at press time.

Liaison Committee

The Liaison (“Linking”) Committee consists of the clerk, assistant clerk, and general secretary of the Yearly Meeting, along with clerks of the four sections: Ministry, General Services, Nurture, and Witness. During our Summer Sessions we are joined by the reading and recording clerks to help better integrate our work together. The committee meets every morning during the Summer Sessions, for the purpose of worship, holding the day’s events in prayer, and discerning direction when items or issues arise. At other times of the year, the Liaison Committee has a brief check-in during the Coordinating Committee weekend. We have also implemented a conference call once a month, which provides us time for worship as we answer, “Where is the Divine in your life, right now?” We talk about the ways to help each other and our committees seek ways to identify leadings and respond in right order. We continue to look at how we conduct our business within our committees as well as in Yearly Meeting sessions. We are about God’s business, listening, discerning, waiting, and responding to what God would have us do.

As a committee we continue to discern how to deepen our meetings for worship with attention to business:

1. We are working toward sending advance reports to monthly meetings, so that Friends can be prepared with the business that will come before our Sessions.
2. We ask that written reports tell among other things a story of a leading and faithfulness to the response of that leading.
3. We ask that committees bring items that require action from the body of Friends gathered, or reports that bring some new clarity as an act of God's obedience.
4. Written and oral reports should include information that will engage and inform the body, bringing everyone into the process.
5. Our oral reports are offered as messages telling a story of faithfulness, bringing Friends to listen into a deeper place of listening and speaking.
6. We seek not to fill time for business. Rather, we seek to have space to be faithful to God's leadings.

Liaison Committee is in a position to have a strong sense of the fruits and life of the spirit, as we interact and communicate with each other about the work. We continue to seek new ways to connect with regions as we move, waiting in the stillness, listening and praying for the voice of the Divine to guide us as New York Yearly Meeting.

In faithfulness and service,

Ernestine Buscemi, clerk, Liaison Committee