

**2009
ADVANCE REPORTS**

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

**Prepared for Summer Sessions
July 19–25, 2009 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 2009–2010 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 2008 calendar year.

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NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING

Fall Sessions

November 8–9, 2008

Hudson Valley Community College, Troy, New York

Saturday, November 8, 2008

Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Heather Cook, Assistant Clerk
Elaine Learnard, Recording Clerk
Norma Ellis, Reading Clerk

2008-11-01. The Meeting gathered. Out of the silence, the reading clerk, Norma Ellis (Scarsdale), called the roll, asking Friends to rise by regional meeting.

2008-11-02. The assistant clerk, Heather Cook (Chatham-Summit) read an excerpt (Leonard Kenworthy, 1991) from *Daily Readings from Quaker Writings Ancient and Modern*, Volume II, that describes the meeting for business as “a mood, an atmosphere, a spirit” that is as simple—and as difficult—as the Quaker Meeting for Worship; it is a rare form of democracy especially suited to a religious fellowship that believes in the availability of Divine Guidance in the transaction of business. Ernestine Buscemi (Morningside), Clerk of New York Yearly Meeting, then asked if we were ready to do business and when the body responded “Yes!” she reminded us that the challenge is to be open, to listen fully and discern the will of God.

2008-11-03. Boyce Bengé (Brooklyn) read the 2008 epistle from Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative).

2008-11-04. The reading clerk read a memorial minute for John Randall of Scarsdale Meeting, who died suddenly on April 29, 2008, at his home in Yonkers, NY. As had his father in World War II, during the Vietnam conflict John became a conscientious objector, based on his clear understanding of the futility of war. His Peace Corps service and work with war tax resistance and the Peace Tax Campaign were among the many ways that he demonstrated his commitment to the belief that “a Christian follows the example of Jesus.” John and his wife, Nana, often brought people together for good dinners and good work. He was much loved and respected for his living of the peace testimony. Friends spoke of John’s commitment to getting the work done and of how he was remembered at his memorial meeting, by people from all parts of his life, Quaker and other, with a great and encompassing love.

2008-11-05. The reading clerk read a minute of travel for Greta Mickey, from her monthly meeting, Central Finger Lakes Friends Meeting, and endorsed by Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting on September 20, 2008. Greta travels with a concern to lift up work for peace and social justice. She serves as Peace Concerns Coordinator for New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM) and works with the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Greta spoke of her understanding and central leading that the work of peacemaking begins within. Friends approved the Clerk's endorsing Greta's minute, which also asks us to share with her meeting how the Spirit leads Greta in her concern for peacemaking.

2008-11-06. Vonn New (Bulls Head-Oswego), reporting for the Communications Committee, provided a brief history of how, when there is a perceived need for action or communication arising between regular sessions, the Clerk and the general secretary are empowered to take whatever action they deem appropriate, with the advice of senior staff and members of the Liaison Committee. The Communications Committee finds that, because there are Friends who have expertise in some areas and who may be better able to explain particular witness work and other activities, it would be beneficial for others to also be empowered to speak on behalf of the Yearly Meeting. Friends approved giving the Clerk and the general secretary the discretion to appoint other Friends to speak on an as-needed basis to the media on behalf of the Yearly Meeting.

2008-11-07. Patricia Chernoff (Morningside) brought a request from the National Religious Campaign Against Torture that monthly meetings and individuals endorse the Declaration of Principles for a Presidential Executive Order on Prisoner Treatment, Torture and Cruelty. (See also www.tortureisamoralissue.org and www.nrcat.org.)

2008-11-08. Susan Bingham (Montclair), NYYM Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Report as of October 31, 2008, which is available in full on the NYYM Web site (www.nnym.org). There is a closing balance of \$190,049 with a net change of (-\$13,362. This is about \$30,000 ahead of where we were at this point last year. Friends received the Treasurer's Report.

2008-11-09. Steven Mohlke (Ithaca) presented the proposed budget for 2009, which he noted is a balanced budget. He described how the process of developing the budget was different this year, as the Finance Committee prepared a detailed expense description of the programs of the Yearly Meeting, using detailed information on staff

time, making clear the “fully loaded” costs of doing all we do. This was made available to monthly meetings, inviting—and generating—full discussion of the budget as it relates to our work. Friends approved the proposed 2009 budget of \$540,825, which includes expected income of \$540,825, including the anticipated covenant donations of \$487,225.

2008-11-10. Paula McClure (Montclair) brought business from the NYYM Trustees concerning a minute proposing a relationship between and among New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM), Friends Foundation for the Aging (FFA), and the Aging Resources Consultation and Help (ARCH) program.

Paula provided some background for the minute. At Spring Sessions 2007, Friends approved the sale of the McCutchen Friends Home in North Plainfield, N.J., and understood that the McCutchen board was working on ways to use its assets, which would include the sale of the facilities, seeking ways to continue to assist the elderly. By Summer Sessions 2007, the transition to the Friends Foundation for the Aging had begun, and the McCutchen’s facilities had closed. Anita Paul, a member of Schenectady Monthly Meeting, and Barbara Spring, a member of Missoula Monthly Meeting in Montana now living in the Albany area and attending Albany Monthly Meeting, developed a pilot program in the Albany area called ARCH, which was funded by FFA. At Spring Sessions 2008, NYYM Friends approved the creation of the Committee on Aging Concerns under the Nurture Coordinating Committee. Friends also approved setting up a fund line to receive, hold, and disburse funds received from FFA under the care of the Committee on Aging Concerns. Summer 2008 found Barbara and Anita now paid consultants for FFA, eager to help ARCH change from being a pilot program funded by the FFA to become more a part of NYYM and with the hope of expanding beyond the Albany area. Friends Foundation for the Aging would like NYYM to become fully engaged with the ARCH program by the end of the year. NYYM found itself in a unique position because this would be the first time we as a body would have Friends who would not be staff, not volunteers, but paid consultants, and we needed to work to define how such a relationship could work and provide legal protection to both the individual ARCH consultants and to the corporate structure that is NYYM.

After consultation with lawyers and insurance companies about several possible structures, it was proposed that the consultants, Barbara and Anita, be considered part-time employees of NYYM, paid for with the funds deposited by FFA into the Fund for Aging Concerns maintained in the NYYM treasurer-managed accounts but not part

of the operating budget, and supervised by the Committee on Aging Concerns, which is part of the Nurture Coordinating Committee. The description of this committee would need to be expanded in the NYYM Handbook to include the significant new responsibilities. The Fund could also accept grants and contributions from sources beyond those from FFA. This Fund would pay all of the expenses involved, including the additional costs to NYYM for employers' taxes, insurance, and any additional staff time necessary to process administrative responsibilities such as vouchers and bookkeeping. The consultants would be covered under the workers' compensation policy of NYYM and also under the Directors' and Officers' liability policy maintained by the Trustees of NYYM that would cover Errors and Omissions (Malpractice) insurance for the consultants.

The Nurture Coordinating Committee would have the responsibility of the accountability issues involving both the Committee on Aging Concerns and ARCH. The Committee on Aging Concerns would also have the responsibility of reporting to FFA on an annual basis; this report would include an evaluation of the project's effectiveness and a funding proposal for the next year. While it is hoped that the ARCH program will expand to serve other regions of NYYM, it is understood at this time that FFA cannot commit to unlimited funding for extensive expansion and that other sources of funding may be needed for this support. After further consideration of the appropriate terminology, it was determined that the individuals carrying out this work would be "staff members" who are "part-time employees of NYYM". In order to create this proposed structure, the Trustees of New York Yearly Meeting proposed and Friends approved the following minute:

New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM) proposes engaging with Friends Foundation for the Aging (FFA) in support of the Aging Resources Consultation and Help (ARCH) program to assist elderly NYYM Friends and their families with the issues they confront as they age and to assist Friends in NYYM to consider issues of aging and end of life from a Quaker perspective. Friends Foundation for the Aging would deposit funds into the Fund for Aging Concerns maintained by the treasurer of New York Yearly Meeting and under the care of the Committee on Aging Concerns. These funds will be used to pay part-time staff members working with ARCH, including travel expenses, as well as additional costs to NYYM for employers' taxes, insurance, and any additional staff time necessary to process administrative responsibilities such as vouchers and bookkeeping. These staff members will be part-time employees of NYYM and will be covered under our workers' comp and Directors' and Officers' liability policies. Pending acceptance of this proposal by the Friends

Foundation for the Aging at its next meeting, it is expected that the new relationship could begin in January 2009. It is our understanding that Friends Foundation for the Aging is committed to an on-going funding relationship of senior programs under the care of New York Yearly Meeting, based on annual proposals from the Yearly Meeting and on evaluation of the program's effectiveness.

2008-11-11. The reading clerk read a minute of appreciation for Irma Guthrie from the Executive Committee of the Middle Atlantic Region of the America Friends Service Committee for her long, faithful and effective service.

2008-11-12. The minutes of the day's session were read and approved.

2008-11-13. The meeting closed in silent worship.

Sunday, November 9, 2008

Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Heather Cook, Assistant Clerk
Karen Reixach, Recording Clerk
Norma Ellis, Reading Clerk

2008-11-14. The meeting entered into worship at 9:00 A.M. From the settled silence, Christopher Sammond (Bulls Head-Oswego), general secretary of the Yearly Meeting, delivered a message of hope that began with the song "Set My Mind on Freedom." Speaking of the recent election he said, "When I focused on what a growing throng of people were trying to create, I could feel the life and power in that. When I focused on the lies and smears, I found myself losing hope. There is great power in what we want to create."

We are called as a yearly meeting to see where we are and where we are going. We have done so piecemeal on Friends United Meeting, racism, how we are not incorporating our youth. He stressed that we need to address this intentionally and in a sustained fashion.

There are signs of life—new worship groups are forming throughout our region. New youth groups and stronger youth groups are evolving. Newcomers are arriving.

We are good at welcoming. We are less able to integrate new life and change, so that people stay. We are reluctant to ask people to join, so newcomers feels like ours is a closed circle.

We have much work ahead. We need to move forward with the intention of finding God's vision for us.

2008-11-15. The Clerk welcomed Friends and urged us to speak to each other about what rises for us as a yearly meeting, as a region, as a monthly meeting, about what is on our hearts and about the good news in our lives. She reviewed the items of business on our agenda.

2008-11-16. Frederick Dettmer (Purchase), clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee, recommended Naomi Paz Greenberg (Flushing), Greta Mickey (Central Finger Lakes), and Sara Mandolang (Alfred) as representatives of New York Yearly Meeting to the peace conference "Heeding God's Call," sponsored by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, the Brethren and the Mennonites, to be held in Philadelphia, January 13-17, 2009. Friends approved these appointments.

2008-11-17. Fred provided an overview of the work of the Sharing Fund and urged Friends to dig deep. He stressed that the Sharing Fund is not a pass-through to other organizations other than the Alternatives to Violence Project and Right Sharing of World Resources, which are children of this yearly meeting with active participation of NYYM Friends. He announced that the Witness Coordinating Committee has discerned that the goal for the Sharing Fund should be raised in light of the increased needs and has been set at \$60,000 for 2009.

2008-11-18. Nadine Hoover (Alfred) articulated that her commitment for at least twenty years has been to be faithful. Letting the truth work within us may be uncomfortable and challenging but it brings great power. The Indonesians with whom she works, whatever their religious background, have been reached by the truth and come alive. Their interfaith companionship is a miracle and ground for peace available for all of us. She described the tensions between human rights advocates and those who fear the destruction of the rain forest. She told of the possibilities of bringing together these different concerns and described the commitment to truth of the people she is working with. She plans to return to Indonesia in early 2009 and to bring back further news on a speaking tour after that.

2008-11-19. The reading clerk read the letter written by the general secretary and the assistant clerk of NYYM to Friends in the Republic of Georgia after violence erupted there this past summer.

August 21, 2008

Dear Friends in Georgia,

Our hearts go out to you as we hear of the violence in your land. We are grieved to hear of the deepening divisions along ethnic lines, and hope that you can help people from all sides of the conflict to remember your common humanity and destiny.

We will be holding you in our prayers as you do the difficult work of tending to the needs of refugees. We trust that service will be a gift to you and to those you serve, ground all of you more deeply in God's love and compassion. We hope that this work strengthens your fellowship and opens doors to your testimony about how God works through you in this service.

You are not alone in this work. Friends from around the world support you. You are in the hearts and prayers of many, and we will be publicizing how Friends from this yearly meeting can send funds to support you in your ministry. Please let us know if we can help you in other ways, as well.

In God's love,

Christopher Sammond, general secretary

Heather Cook, assistant clerk

New York Yearly Meeting

Religious Society of Friends

2008-11-20. The Clerk reported that Greta Mickey, in her role as Peace Concerns coordinator of New York Yearly Meeting, was invited to communicate with the Friends from the Republic of Georgia on behalf of NYYM. Greta then reported on the situation of the fourteen F(f)riends in Georgia who are working with the United Nations High Commission on Refugees to respond to the 60,000 people displaced by the conflict. These Friends have established a nongovernmental organization (NGO), Friends House Georgia, and have asked us not just for material aid but for skills in conflict transformation. Greta has reached out to a wide variety of people with expertise and concern. She plans to visit Friends in Tbilisi in January with funds provided by Witness Coordinating Committee and will bring a grant from the World Ministries Committee to assist with refugee relief administered by Friends House Georgia. She hopes to learn from these people with such depth of character and spirit, and expressed gratitude in being sent in our name to do this work. We pray that the seeds keep growing.

2008-11-21. Helen Garay Toppins (Morningside), coclerk of Prisons Committee, described the history of the Doing Justice Interfaith Coali-

tion. This coalition was inspired by Lawrence (Larry) White, who was active in Quaker worship groups while incarcerated for many years. Larry had given up hope of parole and planned not to appear before the parole board, when a corrections officer urged him not to give up hope. When Larry unexpectedly received parole, he vowed that he would never forget the people who are incarcerated for life without parole. The coalition is working on hope for lifers, higher education for people in prison, spiritual programs in prisons, and change in prison and parole policy, and he has asked Friends to help.

2008-11-22. Naomi Paz Greenberg, clerk of the Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War, updated Friends on several developments. Naomi reported that the Friends who plan to edit, as a Pendle Hill pamphlet, the amicus brief to the Supreme Court in the case of *Daniel Taylor Jenkins v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue* expect to begin work in the late spring.

She reminded Friends that previously the committee had asked the YM to consider a minute approving an expanded Call, and that this proposed minute had been returned to the committee for further seasoning. The committee feels that they are carrying out this work in other ways. For example, Dan Jenkins (Saranac Lake) is working on a group complaint to an international body and will give a more detailed report at a later date. Almost 100 individuals from various traditions of faith and morality are ready to join in pursuing conscientious objection to paying for war as a human right through this vehicle.

2008-11-23. John Cooley (Central Finger Lakes), clerk of Sessions Committee, witnessed to the housekeeping adventures connected with Fall Sessions. He indicated that Anita Paul, who clerked the Northeast Region's host committee, reports 127 registrants. He noted a youth program was held in conjunction with Fall Sessions.

He then reported on the experience with soliciting comments from attendees at Summer Sessions this year without using a formal evaluation page. Copies are available, and further comments and thoughts are always welcome.

Summer Sessions are scheduled for July 19–25, 2009.

2008-11-24. Timothy Johnson (Schenectady), clerk of the Nominating Committee, offered new nominations, corrections, and resignations.

New Nominations

World Ministries Committee

Class of 2011

Larry Coulthurst	Somerset Hills
Radh Achuthan	Peconic Bay
Susan Weisfeld	Scarsdale

Class of 2012

Noel Palmer	Westbury
Deborah Wood	Purchase

Sessions Committee

Class of 2011

Mary Eagleson	Scarsdale
Carol Rice	Bulls Head-Oswego

Powell House Committee

Class of 2010

Margaret Morgan-Davie	Mohawk Valley
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Class of 2013

Birdie Condon	New Paltz
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Black Concerns Committee

Class of 2011

Helen Garay Toppins	Morningside
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Ministry Coordinating Committee

Class of 2012

Kathleen Gale	Elmira
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Witness Coordinating Committee

Class of 2012

Greta Mickey	Central Finger Lakes
Linda Chidsey	Housatonic

Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War

Class of 2011

Andrew Mead Von Salis	Brooklyn
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Epistle Committee

Class of 2011

Gale Swiontkowski Amawalk

Friends Peace Team Representative

Class of 2010

Susan Nowelsky New Brunswick

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Class of 2011

Ron Inskeep Purchase

Personnel Committee

Class of 2011

Susan Bingham Montclair

Ministry & Pastoral Care Committee

Class of 2011

Amy Willauer-Obermayer Binghamton

Advancement Committee

Class of 2011

Chad Dell Manasquan

Nurture Coordinating Committee

Class of 2011

Roseann Press Housatonic

Yearbook corrections noted

Oakwood School Board of Managers

Class of 2009

Betsy Eschallier Doylestown (PYM)
[Should be Class of 2009, not 2008]

Class of 2010

William Nichols
[Omitted in error, approved 2006 Fall Sessions]

World Ministries Committee

Class of 2010

Timothy Johnson (07) Schenectady
[Year of initial service should be 2007, not 2002]

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Class of 2011

Judy Messier Conscience Bay
[Delete this representative—not a NYYM member]

New Resignations

Nominating Committee

Long Island Quarter

Radh Achuthan Peconic Bay
James Darragh Westbury

JYM Committee

Class of 2010

Charley Flint Rahway-Plainfield MM

Faith and Practice Revision Committee

Class of 2009

Kathie Scanlon Purchase

Class of 2011

Joanna Komoska Peconic Bay

Personnel Committee

Class of 2011

Larry Coulthurst Somerset Hills

Friends General Conference Representative

Class of 2010

Virginia Prenot Bulls Head-Oswego

Nurture Coordinating Committee (at large member)

Class of 2011

Nancy Sunshine Flushing

Prisons Committee

Class of 2010

Anthony Nocella Syracuse

AVP Committee

Class of 2010

Anthony Nocella Syracuse

Witness Coordinating Committee

Class of 2010

Bobbi Sue Bowers Manasquan

Powell House Committee

Class of 2010

Amy Savage Syracuse

New Jersey Council of Churches

Class of 2009

Elizabeth Savory Dover-Randolph

Friends approved the nominations. Friends received the corrections and resignations.

2008-11-25. The minutes of the morning session were read and approved.

2008-11-26. Boyce Bengé read the epistle from the young adults from New England Yearly Meeting about the Sabbath time they experienced at the Young Adult Friends Camp in Starksboro, Vermont. Friends ended this session in silent worship.

NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING

Spring Sessions

April 4–5, 2009

Friends Academy, Locust Valley, New York

Saturday, April 4, 2009

Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Heather Cook, Assistant Clerk
Elaine Learnard, Recording Clerk
Jeffrey Aaron, Reading Clerk

2009-04-01. The meeting gathered in rich silence. A message was offered asking that we hold in the light those in the communities near Binghamton, NY as they come to terms with the death by violence of 14 people in a public building and that we in all our communities consider how we view “the other.”

2009-04-02. The Clerk spoke of getting a message, clearly and persistently, that we must, in this time of economic stress and difficulty in the world, slow down, sink deeper and deeper, so that we can hear what we are being asked to do. She said that as we approach our work today, we will hear it, sit with it and as we go slowly through, we will do what God wants us to do. Let those in the room take back to those not sitting in the room the work that is ahead of us. These are trying times, we are Friends of the Truth and we have hope.

2009-04-03. The Clerk introduced the clerks’ table and outlined the order of worship.

2009-04-04. The reading clerk read a Minute of Endorsement from Central Finger Lakes Monthly Meeting, for Astuti Bijlefeld, a long-time member, who has worked as a chaplain at St. James Mercy Hospital in Hornell, NY since 2003. Astuti has become a member of the Association of Professional Chaplains and is now considering working in the Veterans Health Administration hospitals in the area. She recognizes the spiritual as well as the psychological and physical wounds of war that may affect veterans in these institutions and feels a calling to help in the role of chaplain. She sees this as work for peace. Central Finger Lakes Meeting commits to continue reflecting with her on her response to her calling. This minute was approved by the Farmington-Scipio region on January 17, 2009. Friends endorsed the minute from Central Finger Lakes Meeting and also approved that the Clerk shall complete and file the forms required to meet the

requirements of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and carry out the following responsibilities indicated by the VA:

Register with the VA that New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends is a legitimate religious organization, and renew this registration every three years; provide each year a listing of individuals endorsed by NYYM for VA Chaplaincy to the VA National Chaplain Center; and agree that NYYM will notify the VA National Chaplain Center of any withdrawal of any ecclesiastical endorsement.

2009-04-05. Christopher Sammond (Bulls Head-Oswego), NYYM general secretary, offered a report that was a message about our condition. He said, in part, that “We are growing together into one body. We are healing. We are opening. We are deepening. We are coming together.”

He told us that he still experiences us as being in the pausing point that he named at our Fall Sessions, not a place of inactivity, but one of fruitful pause:

We have been looking at our conflict and owning that.

We have been looking at our children and owning them.

We have been looking at our young adults, and owning them.

We have been looking at how we care for our aged, and owning them.

We have been looking at our spiritual diversity, and owning that about ourselves.

We have been looking at our racism, and owning that that is part of who we are.

We have been looking at how we are related to the rest of FUM, and what this teaches us about ourselves and how to be peace-makers.

We have work to do in more fully owning that our Friends who are currently or formerly incarcerated are a part of us. We had 9 and now have 11 and soon will have 12 prison worship groups or preparative meetings, and this is a vital part of us and we have not been acting as if this is true. We have work to do there, to fully own these Friends as being a part of who we are.

He told us that he has been having a pull to talk about overfunctioning/ underfunctioning systems, though that sounds dauntingly clinical. This occurs when one or more people are feeling overburdened, overwhelmed, put upon, resentful at carrying the whole load, or too much of it and a larger group of people feel a little or largely out of it, shut out or left out of the process, not feeling a way in to use their gifts or energy. And they feel resentful. He suggested that if these descriptions

sound like you or your meeting or your committee, perhaps it is time to name what you are experiencing. Friends received this report.

2009-04-06. The Clerk introduced Susan Bingham (Montclair), NYYM Treasurer, who provided the 2008 year-end Treasurer's Report: January 2008 opening balance was \$203,422; budget was \$537,400; receipts were \$522,563; disbursements were \$521,969; the closing balance was \$204,004; and the net change was +\$594. This report is available on the Web site.

She then gave the February 2009 Treasurer's Report: the January opening balance was \$204,004; budget was \$540,825; receipts were \$36,870; disbursements were \$67,619; the closing balance was \$173,255; and the net change was -\$30,750. This report will be on the Web site shortly. Friends received the Treasurer's reports.

2009-04-07. Paula McClure (Montclair), clerk of General Services Coordinating Committee (GSCC), brought a minute for consideration and offered some background. All of the Yearly Meeting's accounts, with the exception of the Mosher Fund accounts, are included within either the treasurer-managed accounts or the NYYM Trustee accounts. This makes it possible to conduct comprehensive yearly independent audits of both treasuries and all Yearly Meeting monies. The Mosher Fund was not included in this arrangement because it was thought to involve many transactions and a relatively small amount of money and would put too much burden on the Yearly Meeting office. In the past few years it has become apparent that not only would we be able to include the Mosher Fund transactions within the treasurer-managed accounts but that we would no longer have the need to conduct a separate audit of these funds. Audits are conducted both for the protection of the treasurer and of the Yearly Meeting; it should be noted that the treasurer of the Mosher Fund has done an excellent job for many years.

The General Services Coordinating Committee recommends to the Yearly Meeting that the action proposed by the Audit Committee regarding the transfer of monies from the Committee for the Expenditure of the H.H.Mosher Fund's treasurer to the NYYM Treasurer as a treasurer-managed account (which would not be part of the Operating Budget) be approved. We further recommend the establishment of a Mosher Fund account line to receive and disburse monies for this account. Friends approved these actions.

2009-04-08. Paula introduced Heloise Rathbone (Brooklyn) who reported for the Personnel Committee. Christopher Sammond had asked

to have the ministerial nature of the work he does in his role as general secretary acknowledged at an institutional level by the Yearly Meeting, so that he is eligible to use the alternate set of tax codes available to individuals who work in a ministerial capacity for different religious institutions, as part of his effort to reduce the amount he pays for war and its accompanying horrors. These alternate tax rules allow for some of an individual's compensation to be in the form of a housing allowance, which is not subject to federal income tax. (That same portion is then not eligible for employer contributions for social security; the employee must pay for that out of pocket.) While we acknowledge that as Friends we all minister to each other, not all Friends are paid for their ministry. Christopher made it clear to us that he is not seeking to be recorded as a minister. The request for this change in the written job description has been discussed by the General Secretary's Supervisory Task Group and on December 11, 2008 that group approved a minute supporting Christopher's request and stating that "The Task Group is in unity that the position of general secretary is ministry as understood by Friends" and requesting addition of language to this effect to the general secretary's job description. The request has been considered by the General Services Coordinating Committee and vetted by the clerk of the Ministry Coordinating Committee. It was clear to the Personnel Committee that they support the witness that prompted Christopher to seek this designation. Equally important, the committee was clear that making such a designation was an accurate portrayal of the work he has been doing with us. The Committee will make this report available on the Web site and asks that Friends consider this request prayerfully in preparation for consideration of a minute on this matter at Summer Sessions in 2009.

2009-04-09. Susan Bingham reported for the Personnel Committee that they have adopted changes in the level of health insurance coverage for NYYM staff to reduce the costs of benefits, effective January 2010. Deductibles will be increased from \$250 to \$400, spousal coverage will be reduced from 100% to 50% and the option of a flexible spending account will be offered.

2009-04-10. Heather Cook (Chatham Summit), NYYM assistant clerk and clerk of the Steering Committee for the Meetings for Discernment reported on the recent meeting. On Saturday, March 14th, 106 Friends from 44 meetings and worship groups gathered in Poughkeepsie Friends meeting house for a day of extended worship and discernment. Friends were asked to consider "What is your sense of how Spirit is moving in your meeting or worship group?" Just over half of the group

was there by appointment from their meeting. Twenty-two Friends from around the yearly meeting served as elders, holding the group in prayer and helping us stay grounded. Two Friends recorded their sense of the themes that rose up in the spoken messages. The meeting was clerked by Heather Cook of Chatham Summit as assistant clerk of the yearly meeting. Angi York Crane of Dover-Randolph and Mary Kay Glazer of Ticonderoga served as assistant clerks. The hospitality that Poughkeepsie Friends worked hard to provide was deeply appreciated. We settled into silent worship for an hour before Friends spoke to their perception of the condition of their faith community. We were privileged to gather, to listen deeply to Spirit speaking through each other, to honor the joys and concerns that were raised up about our communities. At times our collective energy flagged, but on the whole the six hours we spent in worship passed without our noting its passing. We received some powerful ministry. Themes that rose up conveyed meetings' difficulty in naming and being transformed by conflict; disagreement with Friends United Meeting's personnel policy while feeling love and unity with Friends who uphold it; a sense of optimism and renewal, of being called to greater faithfulness; and of wondering how to share what we are given with the wider world. In response to what was heard during the meeting, the Committee on Conflict Transformation sent a letter to the participants, speaking of the importance of conflict in spiritual growth and offering listening, support, and training. The meeting approved the nominations brought forward by the naming committee of five Friends to start service on the steering committee. They are Janet Hough (Chappaqua) serving 3/2009–7/2009; Ann Davidson (Farmington) and Bill Webb (Butternuts) both serving 7/2009–7/2011; Carolyn Emerson (Conscience Bay) serving 3/2009–7/2012; and Lu Harper (Rochester) serving 7/2009–7/2012.

The next meeting for discernment is scheduled for Tuesday, July 21st, at Summer Sessions in Silver Bay, NY. These extended meetings continue to offer opportunities for individual growth through deep worship and listening, and for our deepening as a gathered people. Friends received this report.

2009-04-11. Helen Garay Toppins (Morningside), coclerk of the Prisons Committee, spoke about the work of the Prisons Committee on the parole system. A Minute on Parole has previously been approved (Minute 2007-04-06, approved April 14, 2007) and the committee has been considering how to move forward to use this minute most effectively. Recently, the committee has observed that there is a more humane attitude on the part of the state government

toward those who are incarcerated. The committee has benefited from advice from a former member of a NYYM prison worship group who is on the White House Criminal Justice Summit Planning Committee. They have identified the following concerns that should be included in discussions of parole:

1. Definitive parole release criteria should be established that eliminates arbitrary release decision-making and establishes specific things a person must accomplish to be released.
2. Parole preparation should begin at the beginning of a sentence.
3. Based on the pre-sentence report, a program prescription should be formulated for the person to accomplish while in prison.
4. If a person completes the prescribed program, all others things being equal, the person should be “presumed” to be granted parole.
5. A comprehensive risk assessment instrument, including the release criteria, should be created to measure progress and evaluate release eligibility.

Friends approved that the Clerk and the general secretary will write a cover letter for the minute on parole that includes these issues and will send it to the officials identified by the Prisons Committee and to faith-based communities to urge them to work toward a more humane parole policy in NYS.

2009-04-12. Boyce Bengé of the Epistle Committee read extracts from the August 2008 epistle from the New England YM.

Sunday, April 5, 2009

*Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Heather Cook, Assistant Clerk
Karen Reixach, Recording Clerk
Rima Segal, Reading Clerk*

2009-04-13. The meeting settled into silent worship.

2009-04-14. The Clerk updated Friends on the health of our staff member Paul Busby and asked for Friends to continue to hold him in the Light.

2009-04-15. The reading clerk called the roll by regions.

2009-04-16. The reading clerk read a letter of introduction for Christopher Sammond, from Bulls Head-Oswego meeting, endorsed by Nine Partners Region. Friends approved the Clerk of NYYM endorsing the letter on behalf of the Yearly Meeting.

2009-04-17. Melanie-Claire Mallison (Ithaca), clerk of Nurture Coordinating Committee (NCC), reported that the Coordinating Committee approved the creation of two new committees under the care of NCC. She described the work of the Young Friends in Residence (YFIR) program to foster spiritual growth of teens and young adults, and brought the recommendation of NCC that the Young Friends in Residence Working Group become a committee under the care of the Nurture Section. The purpose of this committee is to establish and support a young adult intern program hosted by a monthly and/or regional meeting. The interns will design and facilitate youth conferences, as well as work with the host meeting in ways to be determined by the needs of that meeting. The YFIR Committee will consult with General Services, New York Yearly Meeting Trustees, the Treasurer, and others on the details of creating this youth program. Friends approved the creation of this committee.

2009-04-18. The Nurture Coordinating Committee requests that a new treasurer-managed fund line, called the “YFIR Fund,” be established to allow the Young Friends in Residence Committee to receive and disburse funds. This fund, under the care of the YFIR Committee, will receive grant money and other donations for the YFIR program. The committee, in consultation with the NYYM Treasurer, would determine how to distribute the funds which would be used specifically for YFIR-related intern expenses and program costs. General Services Coordinating Committee and the Treasurer have been consulted on the establishment of this fund. Friends approved.

2009-04-19. The Nurture Coordinating Committee requests that a donation line be established under the Nurture Section’s “Allocations and Donations” for the YFIR Program, and that \$1000 be donated to that line, matched with a commensurate reduction in the Nurture Section Expense line, so that the 2009 NYYM Budget remains the same. Friends approved.

2009-04-20. Melanie-Claire offered the first reading of the Handbook description of the Young Friends in Residence Committee. It will be placed on the Nurture Section portion of the Consent Agenda for consideration at Summer Sessions.

2009-04-21. Nurture Coordinating Committee has co-opted the following Friends, who have served on the working group and agree to continue on the YFIR Committee as co-opted members till the 2009 Summer Sessions: Donna Beckwith (Perry City), Christine DeRoller (Old Chatham), Alexander Haines-Stephan (Mohawk Valley), Gabriel Obermayer (Binghamton Community), Amy Willauer-Obermayer (Binghamton Community).

2009-04-22. David Eskin (Purchase) brought forward a recommendation from the Nurture Coordinating Committee for the formation of a Youth Committee. Friends approved.

2009-04-23. David brought the Youth Committee description for the Handbook for first reading. He indicated that five youth have been present at Spring Sessions and have reviewed this Handbook description material.

2009-04-24. Four Friends have been co-opted by Nurture Coordinating Committee for the Youth Committee: David Eskin (Purchase), Margaret Lew (15th Street), Mary Rothschild (Brooklyn), and Peter Close (Purchase). The committee plans to co-opt youth members.

2009-04-25. Assistant Clerk Heather Cook (Chatham Summit) introduced Timothy Johnson (Schenectady), clerk of the Nominating Committee, who brought forward Lily Dahlke (Radnor, PYM), who attends Brooklyn Meeting, as Representative from NYYM to the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund. Friends approved.

2009-04-26. Frederick Dettmer (Purchase), clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee (WCC), introduced a video produced by Chad Dell (Manasquan) and Patricia Chernoff (Morningside) of Friends reading the New York Yearly Meeting minute on torture approved at Summer Sessions 2008 (Minute 2008-07-53, approved July 25, 2008). This video is available on YouTube and on the NYYM Web site www.nyyim.org. The Torture Awareness Working Group asked WCC to consider a Call from the National Religious Campaign Against Torture for a Commission of Inquiry on the practice of torture by the United States. The NYYM representatives to the National Campaign Against Torture and Witness Coordinating Committee recommend that NYYM endorse this petition. Additional copies of these petitions are available from Patricia Chernoff, clerk of the Working Group; individuals and meetings are encouraged to circulate the petition for signature.

The United States must never again engage in torture. Torture

is immoral, illegal and counterproductive. It causes profound and lasting harm, especially to its victims but also to its perpetrators. It contradicts our nation's deepest values and corrupts the moral fabric of our society.

We call for an impartial, nonpartisan, and independent Commission of Inquiry. Its purpose should be to gather all the facts and make recommendations. It should ascertain the extent to which our interrogation practices have constituted torture and "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment". Understanding the causes, nature and scope of U.S.-sponsored torture is essential for preventing it in the future and eliminating it from our system without loopholes. U.S. law will determine the extent of any criminal culpability.

As people of faith, we know that brokenness can be healed – both in individual lives and in the life of the nation. All religions believe that redemption is possible. Learning the truth can set us on a path toward national healing and renewal.

The United States must never again allow itself to be driven by blinding fears and bitter resentments in responding to national tragedy. The use of torture only serves to undermine our security in a dangerous world.

Nothing less than the soul of our nation is at stake in confronting U.S.-sponsored torture and completely renouncing its use. Let the U.S. reaffirm its values by establishing a Commission of Inquiry.

Friends approved endorsing the Call and sending it to the officials who received our endorsement of the National Campaign.

2009-04-27. Greta Mickey (Central Finger Lakes), in her capacity as a person deeply concerned with peace and as NYYM Peace Concerns Coordinator, distributed a written report on her journey to the Republic of Georgia, January 20–29, 2009, in response to a request by the Tbilisi Friends Worship Group for assistance with their work in responding to the refugees from the August 2008 war, as well as their desire to obtain skills in conflict transformation. In her message to Friends assembled, she read a letter of gratitude from Friends House, Georgia:

We thank you very much for the financial help and support which you had sent to help the refugees in Georgia, via Friends House Georgia. With your funding we were able to provide aid and assistance for the refugees from South Ossetia living in the shelter "collective centers" in Georgia. We wish you success in your work and we hope that our cooperation will continue on into the future.

With great respect, Mikheil Elizbarashvili

After providing some information on Georgia, known as Sakartvelo to its citizens, she stressed how she had been moved by the power in seeing a worship group of 14 people, stepping out in faith into the work of refugee aid and conflict transformation. She was struck by the extreme poverty, especially among the thousands of refugees who live crowded into crumbling dormitories called “collective centers” often distant from sources of work and help. The UN High Commission provides food assistance. The \$3000 that NYYM World Ministries Committee sent for refugee aid was spent to provide hygiene items, diapers, and medical supplies. When a member of the worship group said that it made him feel good to help, and asked her how it felt to deliver aid, Greta replied that she too was glad to help but that “it also made me feel that I have way too much. As we left, a woman hugged me and thanked us for remembering them. I replied that I wished we could do more and, as I said it, I realized that we can.”

Resuming and expanding AVP in Georgia (Sakartvelo) was also part of Greta’s response to the requests from Tbilisi Friends. AVP was active in this area from 1995 to 2002, but is not currently active. Greta was able to meet with two Georgian AVP facilitators, who want to hold an AVP basic in April 2009. She also met with the President of South Ossetia in Exile and briefed him on AVP, expressing the hope that in time his people will sit with Georgians and learn how to use the skills they already carry within to live in peace. She received an encouraging response from him as well. Another breakaway region, Abkhazia, is not accessible to Georgians, so she hopes to reach out to AVP facilitators from Ukraine. The experience of being in this ancient and suffering land and the relationships built during her stay were compelling. Greta now hopes to return in September to continue moving forward with AVP and with supporting Friends in aiding refugees. The Witness Activities Fund and the Sharing Fund supported her January trip and will assist in the fall trip as well.

She closed by reading a report from the Friends Worship Group in Georgia, describing the use of our funds, the conditions of refugees, and their hopes for peaceful change. Friends received these reports from Greta.

2009-04-28. Naomi Paz Greenberg (Flushing), Greta Mickey (Central Finger Lakes) and Sarah Mandolang (Alfred) were named as representatives from NYYM to the interfaith gathering on peace “Heeding God’s Call” in Philadelphia January 13–17, 2009. Sarah Mandolang, who was not present at Spring Sessions, has submitted a written report to Witness Coordinating Committee; copies were available at Sessions. Naomi Paz Greenberg distributed a written report and offered some

remarks on the experience.

Naomi expressed gratitude for sending the representatives to this diverse gathering, which included not only the three traditional peace churches, mainline Protestant, Catholic, black and Hispanic churches, but also Jewish and Muslim observer-participants. She described her joy that Pentecostal Christians are rediscovering their pacifist roots, the workshop on war tax witness, and the important role of Vincent Harding, a colleague of Martin Luther King, who closed each day with reflections and benediction. She indicated that the powerful plenary sessions are available on-line at <http://www.peacegathering2009.org/audio>. This Gathering was only a beginning. She plans to attend a follow-up planning session in May on next steps.

Following ministry on the Gathering, Friends received the report.

2009-04-29. The Clerk reflected that for many this is the season of Holy Week and Passover. She observed that for Friends, every day we step into these sacred waters. We seek the truth and transform from within. This time together has been a time of sinking down, slowing down, listening to that so-still voice; may it continue. The meeting moved into a period of worship beyond business.

2008 OPERATING BUDGET

General Services	2009 budget	2008 budget
Section expenses:		
Audit	3,050	3,000
General expense & travel	2,200	2,200
NYYM officers' expenses	2,700	2,700
Total section expenses	7,950	7,900
Committee expenses:		
Communications Committee	23,000	23,500
Junior Yearly Meeting	—	0
Nominating Committee	450	200
Records Committee—donation	3,000	3,000
Sessions Committee	10,200	12,000
Total committee expenses	36,650	38,700
Office operations:		
Administrative expenses	14,800	15,500
Computer consultation	800	800
Office equipment	1,500	1,800
Insurance	3,700	3,700
Rent & utilities at 15th St., incl. elec.	24,500	25,500
Office staff travel	9,000	9,500
Total office operations expenses	54,300	56,800
Personnel expenses:		
Hourly staff compensation	22,950	21,000
Staff employees salaries	181,900	178,700
Salary and wage-related expenses	51,625	43,000
Staff development	1,400	1,500
Volunteer support	500	500
Total personnel expenses	258,375	244,700
Bookkeeping services	31,200	30,000
Total General Services	388,475	378,100

Ministry and Counsel	2009 budget	2008 budget
Committee & task group expenses:		
Advancement	7,000	7,000
Conflict Transformation Committee	1,250	1,500
Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee	250	0
Section expense & travel	1,600	2,550
Spiritual Nurture Working Group	0	0

Task Group on Racism	–	0
Total committee expenses	10,100	11,050
Program expenses		
Bible study leader Summer Sessions	500	800
Meeting program assistance	0	300
Prov. Meeting visitation	1,000	2,000
Pastors Conference	1,500	1,500
Spiritual Nurturance Program	0	0
Total program expenses	3,000	4,600
Total Ministry and Counsel	13,100	15,650

Nurture	2009 budget	2008 budget
Committees' expenses:		
Committee on Aging Concerns	500	–
FWCC Committee of NYYM	150	200
Junior Yearly Meeting	23,000	21,000
Young Adult Concerns	1,500	750
Total committee expenses	25,150	21,950
YM appointees' expenses:		
Quaker Earthcare Witness—rep to brd.	800	800
FGC Central Committee—reps to brd.	1,200	2,000
FUM—reps to brd.	3,000	2,500
Provision, FUM reps to Triennial	500	750
Provision, FWCC Quadr reps to brd.	50	100
FWCC—Section meetings	1,200	2,000
Provision, FWCC Triennial sessions	900	1,400
Total YM appointees' expenses	7,650	9,550
Allocations and donations:		
Friends LGBTQ Concerns	150	150
Friends General Conference (FGC)	7,000	8,000
Friends Council on Education	150	150
Friends United Meeting (FUM)	7,000	8,000
FUM—Third World attendance to Triennial	600	1,000
FUM Triennial—Third World Board reps	200	300
Friends World Comm. for Consultation	3,500	4,400
FWCC Section of the Americas— Third World reps	150	150
N.J. Council of Churches	150	150

N.Y. State Community of Churches	150	150
Oakwood Friends School	11,000	12,000
Powell House	65,000	64,000
Quaker Earthcare Witness	150	150
Total allocation & donations exp.	95,200	98,600
Section expense & travel	2,650	4,000
NYYM Resource Library	300	500
Total Nurture	130,950	134,600

Witness	2009 budget	2008 budget
Section expense	4,750	4,250
Sharing Fund Campaign expense	2,300	2,300
Bolivian Quaker Education Fund	—	250
Wm Penn House donation	—	250
Total Witness	7,050	7,050

EXPENSES CONSOLIDATION

	2009 budget	2008 budget
General Services	388,475	378,100
Ministry & Counsel	13,100	15,650
Nurture	130,950	134,600
Witness	7,050	7,050
Meeting for Discernment	1,250	2,000
Contingency	—	—
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET	540,825	537,400

REVENUES

Revenue Source	Expected 2009	Expected 2008
Unrestricted Income from Trustees	13,000	13,000
Income from other sources	12,000	13,000
Registration fees	28,600	28,100
Income subtotal	53,600	54,100
Covenant subtotal	487,225	483,300

COVENANT DONATIONS

Approved 2008 Approved 2007

All Friends	59,700	62,500
Butternuts	6,500	6,500
Farmington-Scipio	68,000	67,000
Long Island	58,500	62,000
New York	77,625	75,200
Nine Partners	36,900	34,600
Northeastern	30,000	30,000
Purchase	101,000	98,000
Shrewsbury & Plainfield	49,000	47,500
Total covenant donations	487,225	483,300
Total operating expenses	540,825	537,400
Total revenues	540,825	537,400
Expected deficit, if any	0	0

MEETINGS FOR DISCERNMENT

During Summer Sessions of 2007, the body of NYYM approved the gathering of Meetings for Discernment, while temporarily suspending the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel. By the end of our sessions in July 2009, four Meetings for Discernment will have been held: Rochester in March and Silver Bay in July of 2008, and Poughkeepsie in March and Silver Bay in July of 2009.

The question rising before us is whether to continue with Meetings for Discernment and whether to reinstate the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel.

As of this writing, in April 2009, the steering committee for the Meetings for Discernment has been working for just over one year, and has undergone many transitions. We have bi-monthly conference calls, and try to meet together as a body at least four times a year, separately from the meetings for discernment, though we have yet to get everyone in the same place at the same time. The steering committee supports the host committee in arranging for the spring gathering, which has in effect become like hosting Spring or Fall Sessions.

The steering committee feels as much like an experiment as the meetings for discernment themselves, as we try to sort out exactly what our work is and how to do it. We have had a range of understanding. The committee and its work can benefit from this tension. At times when most of the group wants to hold hands and skip through a meadow, it is helpful to have someone calling us back to work, or challenging the group to consider a new perspective or clearer language. We have not always handled conflict and disagreement as beautifully as we would want, in part because of conflict aversion, in part because of the difficulty in resolving issues when we deal with each other primarily over the phone and by e-mail, and in part because we don't know each other well.

The sense of the steering committee is that the meetings for discernment have been about building up our muscles. We are learning individually and as a body how to sit in worship together for extended, uncrowded periods. We are coming to know and appreciate gifts of all kinds of ministry from around our yearly meeting. We are deepening in patience and faithful listening.

Vital connections are being made. Friends are moved to hear each other's stories of the struggles and joys of community life. We feel the enormous relief of knowing that others have the same problems we do—not that misery loves company, but that we are somehow strengthened in realizing that it's okay, it's normal to be in conflict, to be muddled, and that it doesn't make us bad Quakers. We can encour-

age each other with stories of being transformed by those struggles, of being patient and faithful and open-hearted. Friends are taking the practices of extended meeting for worship and corporate discernment back to their monthly meeting or worship group or regional/quarterly/half-yearly meeting. Yearly Meeting committees are starting to respond to what rises up in the meetings for discernment.

Some Friends have felt frustrated by the lack of product: Where are the decisions, the calls to action? The steering committee senses that for now, learning the process of corporate discernment is the product. In time the other things may come, but that is God's will and not ours. We are called to prepare, to pay attention, to be patient, and to obey if a call comes to us.

*Heather M. Cook, clerk
steering committee for Meetings for Discernment*

Ministry Coordinating Committee

The Ministry Coordinating Committee (MCC) has recently been re-organized to be “the administrative body for the work of the Ministry Section, which is composed of the committees and task groups that are concerned with the spiritual life and pastoral care of the Yearly Meeting.” As we have begun our work under the new structure, we are learning how to provide administrative support along with guidance and care to our constituent committees and task groups.

The committees are: Advancement; Committee on Conflict Transformation; Committee to Revise Faith & Practice; Committee on Sufferings; Worship at YM Sessions; State of the Society; Ministry and Pastoral Care; and the task groups on Ending Racism in New York Yearly Meeting and Spiritual Nurture.

Representatives from these committees and task groups are members of the Coordinating Committee. It has been a joy to hear about the work of our committees and task groups, and we begin to see that this is where the real work of ministry is done. This year we have been wondering whether we can reciprocate this pattern of representation by asking a member of MCC to attend the meetings of each of these groups as a Coordinating Committee representative to help and support them in concrete ways. We have yet to come to a resolution of this issue as we keep wrestling with the many demands of Yearly Meeting work, but we trust that if we stay faithful to the problem, way will open.

In order to facilitate the work of the Coordinating Committee,

we have also begun to use a “consent agenda” to allow members to consider carefully selected items of business (such as nominations, certain expenditures, handbook pages for our committees) outside of our limited time together. The clerk sends out a consent agenda, and if anyone responds with concerns, then we take up the matter at our meetings; if everyone can unite, then the matter is resolved. This has made for less pressured meetings together.

We have also begun an experiment with a Google group for the Coordinating Committee to provide and edit material for the new NYYM Web site. So far, we have not had much activity in this group, but perhaps this will change as we become used to the idea.

Julia Giordano, clerk

STATE OF THE SOCIETY REPORT 2008

Summary of Monthly Meeting Reports

Each year, we of New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends labor together to report on the state of our society. We ask that God, Spirit, the Inner Light—that which joins us beyond our individual human intellect and is not cumbered by time and space—reveal to us what is, informed by the past and by that which is yet to come. We ask for the wisdom to hear beyond the words, to hear both what is spoken and what is not spoken, as we seek to unite in one Body under the Holy Spirit.

Faith and Practice urges us to undertake a “searching self-examination” of the spiritual health of each meeting and of the Society as a whole. Holding ourselves up to the Light can be an uncomfortable, sometimes painful process, requiring discipline and a willingness to submit to God’s time. As our hearts and minds are opened we hear the words of our foremother, Margaret Fell, in the 1656 Epistle to Convinced Friends: “Consider one another, and provoke one another to love and to good works . . . And dwell in love and unity, in the pure eternal light; there is your fellowship, there is your cleansing and washing.”

At the end of 2008, we asked Friends to consider our spiritual health by responding to four queries sent to more than 90 monthly meetings, preparative meetings, summer meetings, and worship groups in New York Yearly Meeting. 54 meetings wrote in return.

Query 1: *How does love manifest itself in your meeting, in your communities and in the world?*

Love is manifested “by our patience, perseverance and endurance,” by tender caring through large sorrows and small shared chores, by quick response in personal emergencies and the steady repetition of meetings held and promises kept. “Love does not fail but strengthens the more we love one another.”

Many meetings spoke of dear Friends lost to death or distance; grieving their absence was part of love’s deepest work. “We feel love manifested in our celebrating the lives of members whose loss we mourn, even as the living spirits still speak to us.” A prison worship group reminded us that change is part of the journey: “Change, just as the Creator, is in us and around us. Whether we choose to embrace it or ignore it, IT will BE (thy WILL BE DONE).”

All across the Yearly Meeting, Love sings in the expectant silence of worship. For many meetings, “Meeting for worship arose consistently as the most important aspect of meeting life, in many ways defining one’s entire experience of our meeting.” The best worship—whether it consists of a deep and centered silence out of which vocal ministry may or may not emerge, or a service that is informed by the work of a pastor and enriched by a ministry of music—is full of vitality. Adults are not the only speakers: “A child in our meeting has helped us stay accountable to [our] goals with her questions, her warm love, and her own open sharing. Our shared stories have brought to our quiet worship a deepened sense of love for each other.”

Pastoral meetings wrote of being enriched by the vocal ministry of their pastors, by the pastors’ gifts in nurturing care, by music programs “strong with joyful and willing volunteers”; by gatherings where the Bible and other inspirational materials are read together. Many meetings are blessed by the active participation of children in meeting for worship. Though many struggle financially, they seek to use the full spectrum of their resources in abiding by Jesus’ admonition to “love each other”: “We follow Jesus’ teachings of ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Many Friends from non-pastoral meetings lifted up the importance of their worship, expressing appreciation for the quiet, for “the search,” and for being part of “a group that listens for that still small voice.” “During Worship there is usually a deep and comfortable silence—a quiet sharing as each person listens for divine leading and holds in the light the concerns we have for one another’s needs.” Sometimes, however, there is a discomfort with the silence or with unseasoned messages. “Our meetings for worship are most often totally silent.

This is welcomed by many, but some spiritual nourishment before we center down would be a help to worshippers.” Another meeting wrote, “Though few messages may be expressed in the silence, it is during ‘after thoughts’ that friends frequently reflect on an expressed message or on recent events in their lives or community.”

In the meeting family we find humor, solace, and a place to turn when we are lost, a “house of love.” Friends from many parts of NYYM “repeatedly lifted up the need for closer connection to others in the meeting.” Friends are actively searching for ways to seek the Spirit in the company of others, not just in the First Day’s meeting for worship, but in spiritual friendship groups, worship sharing groups, support groups, care committees, clearness committees, meetings for healing, retreats, potlucks, movie nights, and more. Across the Yearly Meeting, there has been interest this year in mid-week meetings for worship. One meeting found that “mid-week worship has been deep and spirit filled in a way that is different from Sunday worship. . . Is it because we ‘choose’ to be there, without the obligation of Sunday work?” One meeting invited children to come with their parents to a newly formed spiritual friendship group, “giving them the opportunity to listen as adults speak their faith.” Other meetings have formed intergenerational committees, and several meetings asked children to help answer the State of the Meeting queries.

Love pulls in against the stretching out of geography. “Because of our small numbers and wide geographic area, we continue to find it difficult to create and maintain a sense of community.” Web sites, e-mail, phone calls, and car pooling reach across space.

Again and again, Love rises up in response to anger and rupture. “Like a family, we do not always understand one another and may not get along.” But then, as another meeting wrote, “perhaps we become more aware of the spirit when we are wrestling with something difficult.” Still, for the most part “the love that connects us comes before all of our differences.” One meeting put it this way: “We need to find a way to forgive each other, to forgive ourselves. How can we expect the world to do it if we can’t?”

Clearness and support committees lift up not just the individuals they are centered on, but the whole meeting. One meeting nurtures its spiritual community through a structure of eleven clearness and support committees. In holding each other up they feel a radiating love that is a source of the meeting’s vitality.

Understanding the diversity of people and ideas was a frequent example of Love’s work. Although shared theology can focus a meeting, disputed theology can open new understanding. “We’ve accepted spiritual diversity as strength in our meeting, not weakness . . . We’re

learning that the process of working towards unity takes a long time.” “Sometimes this is hard to swallow! Being in unity can sometimes mean that we are not yet in unity.”

Much threshing has been underway regarding sexual orientation and marriage. Minutes have been approved, such as the one stating, “The spirit and light of God can be found equally within heterosexual and homosexual persons and their relationships.” One meeting expressed its embrace of diversity through a posted greeting in multiple languages: “We welcome everyone into our fellowship and do not discriminate on the basis of color, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, handicap or other worldly attributes.”

Truly embracing diversity requires truly knowing the other, no short-term task. As one meeting said, “We are laboring with these issues, and trying to treat each other with tenderness. We regret that we do not always succeed in this regard.” The same meeting wrote, “We pray that we may continue to work together, laying aside differences, so that we may seek the living Spirit fully, as one body.”

Query 2: *Does the spirit of worship extend into our committee work and into meeting for worship with a concern for business?*

Meetings understand the challenge of making practical decisions in a spirit of worship. Certainly it is a widespread practice to begin and end business and committee meetings with a period for centering worship—although one meeting added dryly, “That said, it seems that the meetings themselves proceed on a secular basis.”

Friends have several methods for preserving the spirit of worship during complicated or contentious business. Some meetings use one or more elders to sit with the clerks and silently hold the meeting in the Light. One meeting found that gathering around a large table enables “a sense of deeper intimacy, openness and honesty.”

At times, intervals of “secularity” may preserve a larger spiritual goal: “We sometimes find it helpful, in the middle of a business meeting, to move into an informal, time-limited exchange of ideas on a topic before returning to what we see as the prayerful consideration of a meeting for worship with a concern for business.”

Throughout the Yearly Meeting, Friends try to “hold issues up to the Light when clearness is not apparent.” Sometimes, “In a business or committee meeting, momentum ... leads to making a decision in haste without allowing Quaker process to take place. Aware that emotions can cause the meeting to fall out of worship, we are rigorous about calling ourselves and one another back to worship by going back into silence until the process is restored.”

Another meeting wrote, “We are often challenged to not override

the length of time it sometimes requires. Reducing the length of meeting for business, in particular, is an on-going effort.” Many meetings have worked to deepen their understanding of Quaker process, saying that “there should be a heavier reliance on *Faith and Practice* in our committee work.” And repeatedly, “gentle humor often enhances our efforts to speak directly and respectfully to each other.”

Query 3: *What efforts are you making to reach out to people in your community and grow your meeting? Is advancement a priority?*

Meetings were divided about whether advancement should be a priority. In one meeting, “Several Friends expressed discomfort with the term ‘advancement.’” Another wrote, “Proselytizing is an uncomfortable option.” One meeting stated, “Advancement is not a priority. Quaker Meetings seem to us to have a natural life of their own. As long as we are not trying to hide our light under a bushel basket, people will find us.” If, “to the best of our ability, we live out testimonies,” then it will happen that “those around us learn that the source of who we are is our faith.” By “letting our lives speak, we call others to Truth.”

It may be, however, that NYYM Friends are more divided in their definition of advancement than they are in actual practice. Even meetings that renounce advancement have new guest books and procedures to follow up with interested visitors. Web sites, newspaper ads, and better signs are placed where seekers might find them.

Witness itself can be a form of advancement, as when a meeting hosts the Eyes Wide Open project or displays a prominent banner stating that Torture Is a Moral Issue. Sponsoring a high school peace prize and a week-long peace week camp brings the word “Quaker” into local prominence. A meeting that holds a craft fair writes: “Besides the money, the Fair is our way of showing ourselves to be a living church in the community.”

Meetings with old historic meetinghouses use them for outreach and advancement, holding book fairs, ice cream parties for the neighborhood, and historical celebrations. Space within meetinghouses is offered to the local community. One meeting has made its restoration project a public event, participating in historic tours and giving community presentations. “In all of these, we are interpreting Friends’ history, explaining the Friends’ testimonies and beliefs, and seeking support for our restoration efforts.”

Some meetings are willing to embrace advancement by name. “A new committee for advancement was formed this year.” From another: “We are especially anxious to attract young families with children in order to enhance our First Day school.” An active advancement

committee may organize a Friendly contingent in a local parade, add a letterbox with Quaker literature for outside the meetinghouse, or sponsor movie nights open to the community. Several meetings seek to reach out to nearby universities and schools. And outreach is also in-reach—“Whether or not we attract folks from outside the meeting, the gatherings sponsored by Advancement are a time of connection and fellowship.”

One meeting explained the balance between worship and outreach this way: “There was a sense that big numbers may not be so important; instead we want to discern together what God is calling us to. Even so, we find ourselves doing outreach and education, talking to anyone who is interested about Quakers.”

More humorously: “Advancement is important to us. Ministry and Oversight has spent quite a bit of time reviewing various approaches, and while we’ve been so engaged, we’ve found to our surprise and delight that the Meeting has advanced on its own behind our backs.”

Query 4: *Especially in this time of economic uncertainty, are you taking stock of the meeting’s financial health and planning for ways to help those in need?*

While some meetings reported rising membership and stable budgets, many others worried about numbers. “We rejoice in new members; at the same time, we are concerned about diminished participation overall.” “The decline in active participation has impacted fulfilling routine obligations. Individuals have to perform multiple duties and serve on multiple committees. The dedication of regular attenders has allowed us to continue forward.” “Sometimes it seems as though it’s the same people who end up doing the work.”

Another meeting wrote, “Although we feel stretched beyond our practical means, we are grateful that the spirit of worship is often present.”

Quaker budgets were tight well before the economy tightened. For some, prudence and community suffice: “We haven’t many resources, we must carefully consider our budget and we look to other ways to share with each other, from responsibilities and interests, to toys and children’s clothing.” Another meeting wrote: “Our annual budget has had to be tightened as we have been challenged by the death of Friends and a shrinking donation base.”

Property—where we meet, how we take care of it, and whether satisfying its demands on resources unduly limits our ability to contribute to other, perhaps more worthy, causes—is of great concern to many meetings. Pastoral meetings struggle not only with maintaining properties and supporting ministries to the needy of the community

and to NYYM, but also with paying pastors' salaries and the expenses of the parsonage.

However, meetings facing too little space or too much crumbling plaster have found unity and new vigor in the effort of deciding to remodel or rebuild. "We are challenged to continue to think creatively, rather than to be discouraged." And from another: "Even our discussions about selling the meetinghouse and finding another location are an avenue for us to consider the needs of various individuals."

Those without meetinghouses also found reason to rejoice: "Our meeting is not encumbered by the costs of maintaining a meeting house, which allows us freedom to think about ways to direct our monies to those in need." Although it may be vexing to have no home for a library or First Day school, "reviewing the situation reminds us of what we hope to create, and nudges us out of the complacent ease of just doing what we've done before."

A number of meetings had to take more strenuous measures when 2008 budgets failed to balance. "Our 2008 budget exceeded our funds and that became increasingly critical as the year progressed. The budget shortfall mandated a spending freeze in the last quarter and suspended printing of the newsletter, a cherished communication within our community." One meeting entered a period of profound self-examination when, "faced with another budget shortfall, the meeting found itself unable to unite around an austerity budget."

Lack of money has driven plainer speech: "This year, the meeting reached unity on sending an annual letter reminding Friends of the meeting's financial needs, and asking for help in the form of anticipated giving." Another meeting wrote: "Certainly financial planning is needed as well as love."

Many meetings were firmly optimistic: "So far, we have always been able to find necessary funds through the generosity of our members and attenders, the wider Quaker community, and the Spirit." Others have funds set aside in advance for assistance to members and attenders, should the need arise.

Whether or not funds arrive as we wish, there are old-fashioned virtues to be found in austerity. As one meeting reminds us, this difficult economic time is a "'teachable moment' for living in simplicity."

Conclusion

New York Yearly Meeting is in the process of being re-formed. In our Meetings for Discernment, we sit in extended worship, sinking into the stillness and listening with compassion to messages that speak to the condition of each meeting. We are learning trust and empathy. Our coming together is not without struggle, and sometimes not without tears. Nevertheless, as we hold ourselves up to the Light and are pruned by the Holy Spirit, new growth emerges and the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control—become more and more visible.

Some meetings are experiencing growing pains that manifest as shrinking pains. All meetings struggle to some degree to live out our basic tenets of tenderness, compassion, patience and persistence as we learn to speak our truth and act as one. Sometimes as humans we mangle this effort. We can explode over any issue close to the heart, revealing deeper conflicts among us. But wherever we are in the ebb and flow of our meetings, we remember to unite in worship

One meeting, referring to a quote by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, said they are “grateful for whatever measures, large or small, of ‘spiritual knowledge, experience and love’ that have been given us. And we are just as grateful for revelations of our ‘weakness, small faith, and difficulty.’ We accept both as gifts from that spirit who is also called Love.”

As we learn to accept and love the other within ourselves and within the New York Yearly Meeting community, we are able to embrace the stranger without. We then radiate an irresistible, boundless love that makes possible the Peaceable Kingdom—a beloved community, welcoming to all.

Spiritual Nurture Working Group

Mission

The working group is called to encourage F/friends' growth in love and F/friends' deepening in their direct experience of the Divine.

We understand the work of the working group to be:

- to discern needs for spiritual growth, support and accountability within New York Yearly Meeting and to respond with opportunities for spiritual formation, nurture and connection;
- to foster the recognition of gifts of the Spirit at work in our meeting communities, and to support and nurture individuals and their meetings in the development and faithful use of those gifts;
- to respond to F/friends' needs for spiritual nurture at all stages of their spiritual journeys.

We seek to be faithful to this work through working with individuals, worship groups, monthly meetings, quarterly/regional/half-yearly meetings, and the yearly meeting as a whole.

Report, March 2009

The Spiritual Nurture Working Group, created in 2007, has met twice since Annual Sessions at Silver Bay in 2008. Since 2007, we have moved from supporting one another as F(f)riends carrying a concern for the work of spiritual nurture to becoming ready to offer ourselves in service to the Yearly Meeting. We defined our mission, above. By Annual Sessions, we expect to have prepared an interest group on spiritual direction, a plan for a workshop for teens on meditation, a list of resources offered to the YM (including individuals offering workshop opportunities), and information about the Working Group for the YM Web site. We are developing a series of workshops for Powell House as a followup to the Gifts workshops offered several years ago.

Meetings of the Spiritual Nurture Working Group are open to all who share a concern for the work of spiritual nurture and formation. We meet at least twice a year, and as the work requires. Additionally, the group has an annual retreat to ground our work in worship, to nurture ourselves, and to deeply consider the work ahead of us. We will meet next at Farmington-Scipio Spring Gathering, on Saturday May 17th. Friends interested in the work are invited to contact Anne Pomeroy or Lu Harper, coclerks for more information.

Anne Pomeroy and Lu Harper, coclerks

Task Group on Racism in New York Yearly Meeting

Over the past several years, NYYM has taken on an increasingly active position in addressing racism and racial concerns within the yearly and monthly meetings. The Task Group on Racism in NYYM (TGR) was created within the Ministry Coordinating Committee (MCC) in 2005, and is currently under its care. We are charged with enhancing racial and ethnic diversity; helping to end racism within the yearly and monthly meetings. We seek to become a welcoming environment for everyone. We can only make this dream a reality through working together with God's guidance.

TGR is essentially a catalyst for implementation of movement to end racism in NYYM: whereas the responsibility is held by the yearly meeting itself and every monthly meeting where the actual ministerial work is done. In June 2007 MCC sent a letter to all our monthly meetings expressing our deepening concern with racism amongst us, the need for monthly meeting engagement in Spirit-guided worship sharing around the issue, and asking what they have done or are doing in this area. Fourteen meetings responded and TGR has begun relating with each one.

At the beginning of this year, MCC through its TGR, communicated with its remaining monthly meetings so that now, all of the meetings in NYYM have been called. The "Call to End Racism in NYYM" letter included TGR materials to help them get started. There are others being prepared.

1. A self-facilitated workshop entitled "Fostering Inclusion in our Meetings." The intention of this workshop is to have meetings be more welcoming, and for them to reach out to people of color communities wherein we get to know each other. Knowing each other deeply will end prejudice and shake racism at its core.

In the workshop you will find ways to examine yourself and discover what you may not consciously know about racial privilege and racial pain, and what you can do to change these attitudes within your monthly meeting. We include Asian Americans, African Americans, Latinos, American Indians, European Americans, and those of mixed heritage as we respect and are inclusive of self-identifications.

The six sessions are self-explanatory and the process is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The workshops involve:

- Worship Sharing focused on a query,
- Distributing the appropriate appendix page for examination,
- Considering potential changes in your monthly meeting practices.

The crux of this methodology is that we first heed the Spirit, then

supplement with letter in order not to outrun the Guide.

2. A Resource Packet: It is detailed to be a comprehensive anti-racism source, not that you will make use of all that is included. Choosing a book or video is made easier because descriptions of each are included. Two articles are included in their entirety so that you can immediately absorb their content. Some meetings have printed the two papers in the Resource Packet (White Privilege and Black Pain) for distribution. They cover the introduction section of the workshop and clearly illustrate the systemic racism that we want to overcome in NYYM. We are not accusing Friends of being racists, or putting a guilt trip on anyone

The monthly meeting responses are very heartening. Some individual meetings have been involved for years and they responded by preparing minutes and reports on racism. As expected at this point, the recent responses are under the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we see innovative approaches, differing stages of entering the process, and resistance like Friends asking “What does this have to do with me?” Ending racism is God’s concern and TGR is responding with faith that it is doable. We see the movement to end racism building momentum in NYYM because of Friends’ desire to be faithful to our Testimony of Equality. We do not want to let the issue languish.

The path has been illumined by the experience of Rahway and Plainfield Monthly Meeting. They have been actually involved in anti-racist work for quite a while and in February 2002 they approved a minute that was forwarded to their half-yearly meeting. After clear discernment, a related minute was approved by the Shrewsbury and Plainfield Half-Yearly Meeting in March 2006. It has been sent to NYYM for consideration at its 2009 Summer Sessions.

Vince Buscemi, clerk

Advancement Committee

Advancement is alive and well in NYYM—particularly at the local level. But that energy is not reflected to the same degree on the Yearly Meeting Advancement Committee. There is a place for you here!

Advancement has shepherded two issues of *Spark*. The November 2008 issue gathered together articles that spoke to the twin callings of advancement: inreach and outreach. Friends wrote of the creative events they have staged, and efforts to increase Quaker visibility, whether through signs, Web sites, or simply by living our faith out loud. In May, we turned to the subject of how to weave new attenders into the fabric of our meetings. Friends and attenders alike spoke of the joys and challenges of finding a place at meeting, and of the crucial work this presents.

We released a video, “New York Yearly Meeting Statement on Torture,” in which nearly thirty F/friends gave voice to the Minute on Torture passed at Summer Sessions in 2008. The video has thus far been seen on YouTube by over a thousand people in 32 countries.

We 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.

To encourage newcomer involvement at Silver Bay Summer Sessions, we gave out a number of financial assistance vouchers. We continue our effort 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.

We also can speak of new efforts that energize us. For example, Quaker Quest speaks to us as a powerful means of facilitating both outreach and inreach, and we continue to plant seeds that we have faith will take hold and grow. Chatham-Summit is exploring whether there is energy to mount this ambitious program, and other meetings contain sparks of interest. NYYM staff members are committing staff time to explore how we could put together regional teams of interested Friends who would be trained in Quaker Quest, who in turn would train and facilitate monthly meetings interested in bringing QQ to their region. We are excited about the rich potential of this endeavor and want to encourage other meetings and regions to consider sponsoring a Quaker Quest program. For more information on Quaker Quest visit www.fgcquaker.org/quakerquest.

There is energy growing to do outreach on nearby college campuses. We have formed a working group tasked with leading this initiative,

and the initial work of the group holds real promise. If meetings have a college or university nearby and would like to explore this avenue of outreach, we would welcome your interest.

We are seeing the opportunities that community events can provide. Town fairs, festivals, environmental events of all sorts have been fertile ground for our presence. We plant many seeds at these events, knowing that some will grow and flower. And each event we attend with a table, brochures, videos, signs or simply with Friends at the ready, tells citizens in the communities in which we live that Quakers are a vital bunch.

We are energized by the Communication Committee's work on redesigning the NYYM Web site, and see considerable potential in the creation of a new Advancement site as part of the effort. We hope to house a wide array of examples of Friends' advancement efforts, including flyers, cards, bulletins, and more. We see this as a site where Friends from across the region can gather to share their stories, their efforts and their successes.

In sum, we are pleased to see many Friends step forward and act upon a leading in the area of Advancement. We stand ready to facilitate these efforts and support individuals who are called to action. We also invite you to join us in our efforts to do this important work at the yearly meeting level.

Chad Dell, clerk

Committee on Conflict Transformation

No report submitted.

Epistle Committee

The Epistle Committee receives copies of all epistles sent to the Yearly Meeting from other Yearly Meetings and Friends Organizations. At the direction of the Yearly Meeting Clerk, we select epistles to be read during Business Sessions.

During Summer Sessions the Committee is responsible for preparing the outgoing Epistle of the Yearly Meeting. This involves quickly discerning the essence of what is taking place as the Sessions are occurring, preparing a draft epistle for consideration on Friday Morning, and a final epistle for Friday Evening. We also make available epistles from other Junior Yearly Meetings to Junior Yearly Meeting.

During most of the year there is little activity, and then Wednesday of Summer Sessions arrives and for the next couple of days we go through an intense experience of discernment, articulation and editing, distilling the essence of who we are and what is happening among us as a yearly meeting in 1,000 words. It is a unique spiritual experience.

There are three of us on the committee with space for several more. Please contact Nominating Committee if interested.

Roger Dreisbach-Williams, clerk

Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee

Over the past year, Ministry and Pastoral Care (M&PC) has slowly begun its work to provide support to regional and monthly meetings and worship groups. We finalized the M&PC page for the *NYYM Handbook*, which was then approved by the Ministry Coordinating Committee (MCC) in 2/09. We met three times to consider issues in the following areas: work with the Traveling Friends Advisory Committee, meetings with clerks of regional Ministry and Counsel committees, recommendation for disbursements from the Stevens Fund, and continued financial support of Pastors' retreats.

M&PC's membership consisted of two of six at large members until Fall Session 2008, with a third member appointed at that time. Three additional members have yet to be appointed. Our hope is to become more active in supporting the work of ministry and pastoral care that is already being done throughout NYYM. We ask that Friends review our *Handbook* page on the NYYM Web site, www.nyym.org. It suggests many additional areas of concern than the ones listed above, about which meetings may wish to consider contacting us.

Rachel V. Ruth, clerk

Committee to Revise Faith and Practice

At this time the committee does not have any business to bring forward to New York Yearly Meeting. There are issues currently being discussed within the committee but as of yet there is no unity as to when to bring business forward to NYYM.

There is still 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.

Boyce Benge, clerk

State of the Society Committee

It was rather overwhelming for all of us, I think, with the number of reports that kept showing up in our mailboxes. We finally decided to divide up the reports among the three of us, (Karen Way, Kathy Wood and I). Each of us wrote a synopsis of the reports designated to us, keeping in the spirit of the report and endeavoring to get a sense of the important issues and threads running through them. We also worked to record “Quotable quotes” to put into the report. We met via teleconferences. Karen Way took the reports the rest of us provided, and under a tight pressure deadline wrote the entire State of Society summary. We worked together as best we could, with our own strengths and weaknesses bearing on the work, and putting our minds and hearts together to complete it.

Janice Ninan, for the committee

Committee on Sufferings

The Committee on Sufferings has had no requests for assistance in the past year.

The Committee met at Silver Bay and used e-mail to communicate with each other during the year.

The charge of the committee is to provide assistance to those who are suffering because of Friends testimonies. This charge 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, quarterly meeting or Yearly Meeting.

Examples of where the committee can provide partial financial assistance are:

- 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
- Emergence 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.

Annie Geiger, clerk

Traveling Friends Advisory Group

The New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM) Traveling Friends Program originated in 2002 with a concern to support the life of the Spirit in small meetings and worship groups. The travelers would, by their presence, counter feelings of isolation and offer the potential for grounding the meeting in deep worship.

As the program has evolved, the vision for it has been expanded to cover larger meetings—in practice, any meeting where there is a need for support and for grounding the meeting for worship. We believe that the program has also been quite helpful in strengthening ties between meetings in quarters and regions, and across the Yearly Meeting as well. Regional gatherings have been helpful venues to deepen relationships and extend this listening ministry. Some seasoned travelers maintain contact with several meetings or worship groups. Others travel more widely. The program complements work of this kind in some of our quarters and regions. The very active Long Island program, reported in *Spark* (November 2008), is seen as spiritually part of the Traveling Friends program.

The responsibility for proposing and scheduling travelers lies with the Traveling Friends Advisory Group (TFAG). In practice, travelers schedule their own visits and check with the clerk, TFAG to be sure there is no conflict.

TFAG is under the care of the Ministry Coordinating Committee's Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee (MCC, M&PC). However, fiscal and administrative responsibility for it is not delegated and currently lies with the clerk, MCC. TFAG has requested that these functions be transferred to the clerk, M&PC who is, *ex officio*, a member of TFAG. Other members of this Group are: general secretary, NYYM; clerk, Advancement Committee; clerk, Committee for Conflict Transformation. The clerk is appointed by MCC.

As a matter of policy, travelers are accompanied by elders and are expected to file reports. Both travelers and elders receive a modest stipend. Funding is from the Meeting Visitation Fund.

TFAG is a “work-in-process.” For the past nine months, 8/08–4/09, it focused on redefining its role and related processes (to be expressed in a document for the MCC *Handbook*) and on the activities and responsibilities of the travelers. Currently there are thirteen Friends approved for travel under this program. (List below.) Six have been active under it. Five travel under the care of their monthly and quarterly or regional meetings and two have had to deal with health or life change issues. There have been two meetings and a retreat—all three open to travelers and TFAG members.

Currently approved travelers: Jim Atwell, Mary Ellen Blakey, Heather Cook, Anji York Crane, Irene Goodman, David Herendeen, Carol Holmes, Claire Howard, Herb Lape, Vonn New, Callid Keefe Perry, Kristina Keefe Perry, Denise Sherman.

John Perry, clerk

Committee On Worship At Yearly Meeting Sessions

The Committee on Worship at Yearly Meeting Sessions is a new committee under the Ministry Coordinating Committee. We are a small committee of three persons, serving staggered 3-year terms. We met for the first time in person at Fall Sessions 2008 and have communicated by e-mail and telephone conference call since then. We look forward to meeting again in person during Summer Sessions at Silver Bay.

At Fall and Spring Sessions, the committee supports the regional/quarterly host committees by inviting additional elders from the wider yearly meeting body to join local Friends sitting on the facing chairs during Meeting for Worship and Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, to prayerfully ground and hold the body in the Light.

At Summer Sessions at Silver Bay, the committee does the logistical work for Ministry Coordinating Committee, which has under its care a wide range of worship opportunities. The committee helps plan and coordinate the opening and closing Meetings for Worship. At Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business, the committee assists the yearly meeting by inviting Friends to sit on the facing chairs as elders, providing a prayerful presence and reminding us that we are all in worship, connected to the Divine Center.

In addition, the committee serves as a hub to help coordinate and support the other unprogrammed and programmed worship opportunities under the care of MCC at Silver Bay, including the Healing Center. We named two Friends to coordinate the Worship Sharing Groups. We have worked to identify Friends to bring the message for Monday and Tuesday vespers, and to serve as liaisons for hymn singing in the Chapel and for morning Meetings for Worship at the Boathouse, as well as for Meetings for Worship organized by groups such as Friends in the Spirit of Christ and Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns.

Janet Hough, clerk

GENERAL SERVICES SECTION

General Services Coordinating Committee

The committee met twice at Summer Sessions 2008, at Fall Sessions 2008, and at the Coordinating Committee Weekend in 2009. Many of the reports of individual committees in the section will provide more details of the work of each committee referred to in this report.

The Committee continues to provide members for the General Secretary's Supervisory Task Group (three classes of two members each, appointed for two-year terms) and the Abuse Investigation Committee (two members in addition to those who are ex-officio members).

The Office Study Task Group continues its long-range work and at this stage is looking at comparative costs of various cities within the New York area, such as Albany, Syracuse, Binghamton, and New York City. When cost comparisons are available, then other comparisons such as transportation access, staff availability, and volunteer support will be considered before a final determination can be reached.

Staff travel rate was approved to be tied to the current IRS business travel rate and to be adjusted as that rate changes.

The Personnel Committee is working on ways to reduce the continually rising health care costs. The Committee is also proposing a minute, approved by General Services in February 2009 and introduced at Spring Sessions 2009. This minute and some background material will be posted on our Web site prior to Summer Sessions when it will be brought to the body for consideration. The minute proposes a change in the job description of the general secretary, at his request, for purposes of tax witness. The original job description was approved at Summer Sessions 2003. If this change is approved, which would include reference to ministry as part of the general secretary's work, it would allow the Personnel Committee to consider setting aside a portion of the general secretary's salary as a housing allowance which would have various tax implications for both the general secretary and the Yearly Meeting.

The Financial Services Committee worked diligently on a new method of presenting the budget by program expenses. This does not replace the traditional presentation, but rather augments our understanding of how our money is working to carry out our witness.

We approved the recommendation of the NYYM Trustees concerning the new ARCH program (Aging Resources Consultation and Help), to be funded by the Friends Foundation for the Aging (formerly the McCutchen Yearly Meeting Friends Home) under the care of the Committee on Aging Concerns and the Nurture Coordinating Com-

mittee. Part-time hourly staff workers in the ARCH program will be considered employees of the Yearly Meeting and as such will be covered under our various insurance and liability policies.

Our finances are closely managed by the office staff, the book-keeping service, and volunteers to insure that we are making the best use and accounting of our funds. We are continually seeking ways to minimize expenses while still carrying out the work of the Yearly Meeting.

More information about the work of the General Services Section can be found in the following committee reports.

Paula R. McClure, clerk

Audit Committee

As we stated last year, “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 account standards.”

We meet once a year with the auditor, treasurer, NYYM staff, and clerk of General Services

Coordinating Committee, after the auditor has prepared the review of the YM accounts. We discuss the audit results and review our accounting systems. Changes to our accounting systems are made if necessary.

The 2008 audit should be available by Summer Sessions.

Harold Risler, convenor

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee continued this year to seek better ways to serve the New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM) community of Friends. In particular this year the committee undertook several new initiatives for dealing with the Yearly Meeting’s communications with monthly and regional meetings. These included a total revamping of the YM Web site, with options that will allow committees to maintain their own sections of the site.

One challenge of this very important work was a lack of committee members and volunteers to help update content and upload it to the new site. We urge Friends who have communication, computer and/or Web skills to join this committee and help with this massive

undertaking.

The Committee also wrote a minute on the appointing of spokespeople for press interaction when deemed appropriate by the NYYM Clerk or general secretary, and developed policy concerning the dissemination of publicity and press releases on specific issues of importance to Friends.

The Committee continued to carry out the thematic format of the Yearly Meeting publication *Spark*, with subjects including Nurturing First-Day Schools, Welcoming Newer Friends, Friends and the Arts, and Advancement. Upcoming issues will focus on the Diversity of Friends Beliefs; Friends, Money and Social Class; Death and Dying; and a Potpourri issue with a bit of everything. Friends throughout the Yearly Meeting continue to respond very positively to the themed issues of *Spark*.

The Web-based newsletter *InfoShare* continued to offer information between issues of *Spark*. *InfoShare* is e-mailed to the NYYM global e-mail list of over 1,000 names, to monthly meeting newsletter editors, 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 also asked that we continue to include news from around the Yearly Meeting, and we have expanded our Around NYYM section to comply with that request.

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*.

Also this year, the committee helped the Financial Services Committee in framing its message to the monthly meetings, and helped the YM to disseminate its minute opposing torture to the press and the general public.

Eleanor Novek, clerk

Financial Services Committee

When the Financial Services Committee reported at Summer Sessions last year, we promised a tool to help Yearly Meeting constituents better understand how money is spent. Shortly thereafter we delivered this in the form of a Programmatic Interpretation of the Budget. To create the Programmatic Interpretation, we first worked with staff and other committees to name each of the programs in which NYYM engages. This alone was no small feat. We then correlated each budget line to one or more of the programs. In another tremendous feat, NYYM

staff recorded all of their time for the year into categories based on their job descriptions. This allowed us to calculate a dollar amount for staff time in each of the programs. Finally, budget lines such as rent and insurance don't directly correlate to things we think of as programs of the Yearly Meeting. We added those up and distributed the amount proportionally over the programs. The result was a dollar amount for each program with a grand total that adds up to the same amount as the budget itself. Many people found this a very helpful way of looking at the budget.

Throughout the fall, members of the Financial Services Committee made ourselves available to meet with constituent meetings of the Yearly Meeting. We developed a presentation that we used as we travelled to the various meetings. As part of our presentations we also listened. Our goal is to have constituent meetings participate in setting priorities for the Yearly Meeting. Some individuals and meetings gave us feedback but many meetings were not able to do so at the time. We reported the feedback at Budget Saturday but were not able to effectively use some of it. Work remains to be done to more effectively solicit feedback and then use it to set priorities.

Partially because of our direct contact with so many meetings we knew most of the covenant donation amounts at the beginning of Budget Saturday. This allowed us to use most of our group time that day for meaningful listening and very little of it collecting covenant information from constituent meetings. We completed Budget Saturday with a task list that, with some difficult expense cuts, resulted in a balanced budget that was approved at Fall Sessions.

We continue to hold two major goals:

- We want monthly meetings to make informed covenant donation decisions
- We want the Yearly Meeting to frame its budget based on realistic covenant donations and priorities articulated by constituent meetings

Each of these goals depends on the other. Monthly meetings need some sense of how NYYM spends money in order to make informed covenant donations and articulate priorities. Yearly Meeting needs to know monthly meeting's covenant donations and priorities in order to frame a reasonable budget. This is not a linear process, but cyclical or iterative. Over the coming months and year, we plan to continue to improve this process.

Steve Mohlke, clerk

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 \$5193 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, located just inside the front door to the lobby at Silver Bay to replenish your monthly meeting's libraries' shelves with up to \$50 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 \$50 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

General Secretary's Report

It is hard to believe that it has been almost five years that I have been serving this Yearly Meeting as its general secretary. It doesn't seem like it has been that long. This work continues to feel fresh and challenging, stretching me to use all my gifts and compelling me to grow in the process.

The leading which brought me to this work, responding to the Yearly Meeting's clarity to have someone serve in this capacity, was to foster community grounded in faithfulness. A key aspect of that work has been to help release Friends' gifts in ministry. We are called to a work much larger than any one individual is capable of. My work is to inspire, empower, enlist, support and nurture other Friends in the specific work God calls each of them to. It is deeply satisfying to witness the Divine at work in us, and to see lives transformed in this service.

A great deal of my time is spent on the road. Between visiting meetings, attending our Yearly Meeting sessions and meetings of committees, representing us in the wider Religious Society, leading retreats, attending board meetings of FUM, etc, I was on the road for 99 days in the course of 36 trips this past year. That does not include my weekly trips to the Yearly Meeting office in New York City.

The largest portion of my time is spent visiting monthly meetings

and worship groups. Visitation gives me a chance to witness how the Spirit is at work in our individual communities and to see first hand the struggles and successes of local Friends in building healthy community. It also opens opportunities for helping to connect Friends with the resources they need to further the life of their meetings, for helping individuals with their spiritual journeys, and giving counsel to communities in distress. Being thus in touch with the grassroots of this Yearly Meeting helps me to hold the big picture of where we are and where we are going, and to do what I can to support that movement. And I try, as best I can despite my frequent failings, to do that while being grounded in faithfulness and prayer.

I have also spent a lot of time this past year in supporting committees and task groups in their work, applying my knowledge of grassroots conditions to the varied tasks of Friends working at a Yearly Meeting level. I have put considerable time in supporting the work of the Meeting for Discernment Steering Committee, the Traveling Friends Advisory Group, the Spiritual Nurture Working Group, and the NYYM Task Group on FUM. In addition, I worked to support the Financial Services and Communications Committees in their efforts to better communicate to Friends at a local level as to how their covenant donations support the work being done at a Yearly Meeting level, and with the Communications Committee as they have worked to create a new Web site.

I spent smaller amounts of time this year supporting the Task Group on Youth in its birthing the new Youth Committee, working with the Young Adult Concerns Committee to envision what kind of staff support might be helpful to their work, and furthering the work of the Advancement Committee.

I work on an ongoing basis with the Personnel Committee in managing our staff. I help them to evaluate performance, adjust salary and benefits levels so that they are fair and competitive, set priorities, and envision what staffing structures may best serve the Yearly Meeting as it grows and changes. This year we did major work revising job descriptions and the *Personnel Handbook*.

Another part of my work is to represent NYYM in the wider Religious Society and beyond. In this capacity I helped plan, and then co-facilitate, the third Quaker Leadership Consultation. This was a gathering of a broad spectrum of Friends in leadership positions, devoted to supporting a coordinated effort at increasing the vitality of our Religious Society. I also attended the annual Superintendents and Secretaries Retreat, a gathering of General Superintendents and Secretaries from United, FUM and EFI Yearly Meetings, as well as from umbrella organizations such as FGC, AFSC, FCNL, FUM,

etc. That gathering builds bridges between the different branches of Friends, helping us to see where we can support each other in our common struggles, and building trust that has been crucial when working through the conflicts within FUM.

I served my fourth year on the FUM board, which has continued to be very difficult work, calling for great patience and the hard work of peace-making in an area of conflicting, deeply held values. I continue to learn deeper and deeper levels of what it means to live into the power of the Spirit amidst the currents of divisiveness and strong emotions, and the dramatic affect such faithfulness can have on the group as a whole.

I also represented NYYM in the second faith dialogue with Iranian President Ahmadinejad. These gatherings are aimed at keeping open “second tier conversations” when our government was refusing to have “first tier conversations.” They are small, but vitally important, efforts at keeping channels of communication and understanding open at times when there have been no openings elsewhere.

My work of supporting gifts in ministry extends to our staff, as well. I continue to seek ways to support our staff in sharing their many gifts with this Yearly Meeting and beyond. This has involved shifting job descriptions to make room for work more closely aligned with individual leadings, strategizing how to better use volunteers where possible, and supporting staff in training opportunities which will equip them to better follow their leadings and share their gifts.

It is a tremendous gift to be able to do the work that I feel called to do. I feel blessed and grateful for this opportunity to serve.

Christopher Sammond

Nominating Committee

Nominating Committee members are appointed by each regional or quarterly meeting, and there is a continuing need to achieve full membership on the committee. This reduces workload on current members, but more importantly, ensures that these regions are well-represented on Yearly Meeting committees. The Nominating Committee nominates about 100 NYYM members per year to serve on about 50 NYYM committees or representative positions. During 2008, the Committee continued to be responsive in filling mid-year vacancies through Consent Agendas posted at each Yearly Meeting Session.

During 2009, a focus of the Committee has been to transition to increased use of e-mail communications in the nominations process, while still recognizing that not all NYYM members have current e-mail addresses. All of the traditional nominations correspondence and committee descriptions have been updated to electronic form from paper formats. This process revealed gaps in the descriptions of several committees and representative positions, and these are being addressed in the ongoing NYYM *Handbook* update.

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 or 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

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee witnesses the hard work and good spirit with which our staff, Paul Busby, Walter Naegle, Christopher Sammond and Helen Garay Toppins, fulfill the necessary work of the Yearly Meeting.

We review staff evaluations. Again the words understaffed and overcommitted are adjectives that apply to the staff. Under the best of circumstances they work very hard to complete the work of the Yearly Meeting. They also work to enlist volunteers to help in the Yearly Meeting's work. This year Paul Busby had surgery and has been out for quite a long time. Paul is in the process of recuperating. The rest of the staff has put enormous effort into fulfilling the work of the Yearly Meeting. We are grateful for all the work they have done for us.

We have made an analysis of our wages and salaries and benefits and found that our salaries and benefits are comparable to similar organizations. The salaries next year will be the same as last year.

The committee labors to keep our costs down, especially given the economic challenges. Personnel Committee has adopted changes in the level of health insurance coverage for NYYM staff to reduce the costs of benefits, effective January 2010. Deductibles will be increased from \$250 to \$400, spousal coverage will be reduced from 100% to 50% and the option of a flexible spending account will be offered

We have substantially revised and updated the *Personnel Handbook*.

The Personnel Committee continues to reorganize itself. The Committee has moved through the phase in which it had to be supported by members of the General Services Coordinating Committee. We still have one co-opted member from the GSCC. There is a sense of the committee that having six good, working members on the Personnel Committee would be sufficient and are advising the Nominating Committee.

Heloise Rathbone, clerk

Yearly Meeting Staff

Paul Busby, communications director

Paul's report was not available at press time due to his extended sick leave.

Walter Naegle, administrative assistant

The 2008–2009 work year has gone by quickly—a sign, I think, that it was a busy and productive one.

I continue to manage the NYYM database, adding and updating membership records, preparing the statistical report for the *Yearbook*, and collecting the information sheets from the Monthly and Quarterly meetings. I made some revisions in the information sheets this year to provide more room for the responses. The database provides the information I need to coordinate the committee section of the *Yearbook* and the alphabetical index of Friends under appointment.

I also use the database program to process registrations for Fall, Spring and Summer Sessions, as well as other events such as the Pastors' Retreat, the Nightingales singing weekends, the Gifts Retreats, and the Meetings for Discernment.

Working on financial matters with my colleague, Helen Garay Toppins, I prepare payment vouchers, record and make bank deposits for both the Operating and Sharing Fund accounts, prepare the Sharing Fund IRS letters, and review bank statements. I revised and updated all of the voucher forms this year, making them more efficient and readable.

I continue to help research photos and illustrations for use in *Spark* and *InfoShare*, and with the recent sick leave of my co-worker, Paul Busby, I have worked closely with Helen in preparing the April *InfoShare* and May *Spark*.

Periodically I am called upon to work on special projects. A few of those during the past year have been

- Locating NYYM members who might be in a position to assist with establishing a worship group at Gouverneur Correctional Facility.
- Coordinating delivery of a message of concern about our government's policy towards Iran.
- Sending holiday cards to current and former members of NYYM Prison Worship Groups.
- Helping to organize information for NYYM presentations at public gatherings, particularly concerning the GI Rights Hotline.

- Sending out messages from Yearly Meeting Committees—Advancement, Task Group on Racism, Torture Awareness Group, et al.

Routine tasks include answering the telephone, checking and responding to e-mails, opening and distributing mail, ordering office supplies, and shipping via UPS. A long-term project I am currently undertaking is reorganizing the NYYM filing system.

Helen Garay Toppins, associate secretary

When the going gets tough the tough get going. From the day that Paul Busby was hospitalized for open heart surgery more than two months ago, NYYM volunteers started jumping out of the woodwork. Dozens of volunteers from near and far stepped up to the plate to compensate for his absence from work. Volunteers assisted with everything from *Spark* to *InfoShare*, Spring and Summer Sessions preparation, finances, phone calls, correspondence, e-mails etc. etc. etc. In addition, my colleague Walter Naegle, and our typesetter Georgianne Jackofsky, not only expanded their workloads but did so with grace, dedication, and efficiency. They are truly team players.

My administrative and supervisory duties that I have cited in previous reports are still ongoing so I won't repeat them. My biggest problem continues to be 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 and staff supervisory duties accomplished. I continue to support youth and young adult Friends in NYYM. I participate with the new First Day School Committee. As associate secretary I help nurture emerging worship groups, an aspect of my job which I absolutely love. I took the Quaker Quest training and can't wait for NYYM Friends to share with seekers and the general public that Quakerism, "a spiritual path for our time," is simple, radical, and contemporary.

I truly enjoy working with the entire NYYM staff. It's like an extended family. My mother says that you can pick your friends but not your family so I am fortunate indeed! I am also thankful for my meeting, Morningside, for providing the undergirding of spiritual nurturing that keeps me going.

Records Committee

Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College reports that there have been 14 deposits of records by 11 meetings and committees in the past year. These deposits range from the 1920's to 2008 in the time period reported on. The Committee hopes to provide revised Guidelines for records in the next year, but we encourage meetings to deposit their records with Friends Historical Library. With the rapid turnover of monthly meeting clerks (many two year terms), it is possible and likely that minutes will be lost in the transitions. Although many copies are produced, a record copy may or may not be created and saved for transfer. Please note that the records need not be in bound volumes to be transferred to Friends Historical Library.

The Hazard index to personal names in New York Yearly Meeting records is now available online through the Friends Historical Library Web site. This index was compiled in 2005 of records that were deposited by 2001. The URL is www.swarthmore.edu/Library/friends/hazard. This index is most useful for genealogy, but could also be used for tracing life events of members of meetings.

The staff at Friends Historical Library are not yet ready to recommend a preferred storage format for digital/electronic records created using a computer. At this time, they continue to request that meetings deposit print copies of minutes and newsletters. Records Committee requests that meetings maintain, as they are able, digital records in the expectation that they will be useful as we move forward.

Bridget Bower, clerk

Sessions Committee

Sessions Committee works in two fairly distinct sections—planning for Fall and Spring Sessions, and for Summer Sessions—and our committee handbook will soon reflect this reality by being published in two separate volumes. The Fall-Spring Sessions Subcommittee works with regional host committees to plan the sessions, now held in mid-November and early April. We schedule as far in advance as possible, hopefully finalizing regional hosts and sites at least three years in advance. Regional host committees do most of the work, with support and assistance of the subcommittee and staff of the Yearly Meeting. High school group participation is now under the care of Nurture Coordinating Committee's Youth Committee.

Planning and carrying out details of Summer Sessions, held in the

last full week of July, occupies the rest of Sessions Committee attention. Policies need updating, the Silver Bay contract is negotiated, program and other subcommittees have to be formed and do their work, coordinators must be enlisted. Silver Bay staff work closely with our conference to accommodate to our needs. During the week of Summer Sessions our committee, JYM, and the YM staff must work together with the 600 to 700 attenders who share residential space and a variety of interests. It is fun and rewarding at times but also a big challenge for the committees and for the staff.

We are forming an ad hoc working group to begin reviewing (again) the question of a site other than Silver Bay. A previous ad hoc group was unable to locate a suitable site that was both large enough and otherwise satisfactory for Friends' concerns, but we will take on the concern anew. Much as we love the surroundings and traditions of Silver Bay, our concern to include all potential attenders from our monthly meetings calls us to examine other venues. First, what are the major goals of Summer Sessions and how could these be achieved in a way that includes more of our community: plenary and committee business, fellowship, education, children's and youth programs, interest and worship groups, recreation and rest? Second, how many of the features of our present Summer Sessions could we find elsewhere, and how much would it cost all participants, directly and through the Yearly Meeting budget? Looking at these questions will take time and patience, and no change in site is anticipated soon, if at all.

Meanwhile we are aware of the cost of attending a six-day summer session, wherever it may be held, and the burden it can present attenders in terms of cost and vacation time. Scholarship assistance funds (available through the Advancement Committee) are limited, and monthly meetings can afford to help only a few of their members to attend. We have no immediate solution to these issues, but we take them seriously and will continue to work

John Cooley, clerk

TREASURER'S ACCOUNTS
Statement of Operations 1/1/08 to 12/31/08

	2008 Budget	2008 Actual
Disbursements and Transfers:		
General Services		
<i>Section expense</i>		
General expense & travel	2,200	328.87
NYYM officers' expense	2,700	3,136.35
Audit	<u>3,000</u>	<u>3,075.00</u>
Total section expense	7,900	6,540.22
<i>Committees</i>		
Communications	23,500	25,268.97
<i>Handbook</i>		0.00
Other		225.00
<i>Spark</i>		16,984.97
<i>Web site/Yearbook/Adv Reports</i>		8,059.00
Nominating	200	430.76
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	8,779.46
Fall/Spring Sessions		3,122.40
Summer Sessions		5,307.40
Other		349.66
Total committee expense	38,700	37,479.19
<i>Office expense</i>		
<i>Office operations</i>		
Administrative expenses	15,500	12,809.21
Insurance	3,700	4,148.01
Rent & utilities 15th St.	25,500	25,500.00
Office staff travel	9,500	9,028.01
Computer consultation	800	360.00
Office equipment	1,800	1,602.33
<i>Personnel</i>		
Staff employee salaries	178,700	177,451.92
Hourly staff compensation	21,000	24,685.50
Salary and wage related expenses	43,000	45,374.24

Staff development	1,500	402.44
Volunteer support	500	347.03
Bookkeeping service	<u>30,000</u>	<u>30,000.00</u>
Total office expense	<u>331,500</u>	<u>331,708.69</u>
Total General Services	378,100	375,728.10

Ministry

<i>Section expense</i>	2,550	1,945.74
Programs		
Advancement Committee	7,000	6,947.23
Bible Study leader at YM	800	833.00
Conflict Transformation	1,500	835.00
Epistle Committee	0	0.00
Faith & Practice	0	0.00
Meeting program assistance	300	315.71
Ministry Task Group	0	0.00
Pastors' Conference	1,500	1,048.44
Provision for Friends Travel in Ministry	2,000	2,000.00
Rep to Council on Ministerial Advisors	0	0.00
Spiritual Nurturance Program	0	0.00
Total program expense	<u>13,100</u>	<u>11,979.38</u>
Total Ministry	15,650	13,925.12

Nurture

<i>Section expense</i>	4,000	1,942.26
NYYM Resource Library	500	361.82
Total section expense	4,500	2,304.08

Committees

Disability Concerns	0	0.00
FWCC Committee	200	0.00
Junior Yearly Meeting	21,000	17,830.64
Planning		1,693.17
Silver Bay		16,137.47
Religious Education	0	0.00
United Society Friends Women	0	0.00
Women's Concerns Resource	0	0.00
Young Adult Concerns	<u>750</u>	<u>308.75</u>
Total committee expense	21,950	18,139.39
<i>NYYM appointee expense</i>		
FGC Central Committee	2,000	321.80
Quaker Earthcare Witness	800	523.00

FUM Board Representatives	2,500	2,854.51
Provision for FUM Triennial Sessions	750	750.00
FWCC Section Meetings	2,000	2,007.00
Provision for FWCC Triennial Sessions	1,400	1,400.00
Provision for FWCC Regional	<u>100</u>	<u>100.00</u>
Total NYYM appointee expense	9,550	7,956.31
<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	4,400	4,400.00
FWCC Section of the Americas	150	150.00
New Jersey Council of Churches	150	0.00
NYS Community of Churches	150	150.00
Oakwood School	12,000	12,000.00
Powell House	64,000	63,999.96
Quaker Earthcare Witness	150	150.00
Total allocations and donations	<u>98,600</u>	<u>98,449.96</u>
Total Nurture	134,600	126,849.74
Witness		
<i>Section expense</i>		
Coordinating Committee expense	4,250	3,464.34
Sharing Fund Campaign overhead		1,175.79
	2,300	2,288.55
<i>NYYM appointee expense</i>		
Friends Comm. on Nat'l Legislation		0.00
Friends Peace Teams		0.00
Peace Tax Fund		<u>0.00</u>
Total NYYM appointee expense	2,300	0.00
<i>Program Expense</i>		
Rural & Migrant Ministries		0.00
Bolivian Quaker Education Fund	250	<u>250.00</u>
Total program expense	250	250.00
<i>Committee expense</i>		
Barrington Dunbar		50.64
Black Concerns		0.00
Indian Affairs		366.32
Peace Concerns		822.52

Prisons		0.00
Right Sharing		0.00
William Penn House	250	250.00
World Ministries		<u>0.00</u>
Total committee expense	<u>250</u>	<u>1,489.48</u>
Total Witness	7,050	5,203.82
Meeting for Discernment	2,000	262.49
Contingency	<u>0</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total Disbursements	537,400	521,969.27
Receipts		
Meetings		
All Friends Regional	62,500	58,875.00
Butternuts Quarterly	6,500	7,100.00
Farmington Regional	67,000	66,853.50
Long Island Quarterly	62,000	62,088.00
New York Quarterly	75,200	73,225.50
Nine Partners Quarterly	34,600	35,613.00
Northeastern Regional	30,000	27,852.00
Purchase Quarterly	98,000	98,841.00
Shrewsbury & Plainfield HY	<u>47,500</u>	<u>48,167.50</u>
Total Meeting income	<u>483,300</u>	<u>478,615.50</u>
Other sources		
Registration fees	28,100	23,865.47
Staff services	0	0.00
Trustees	13,000	12,567.48
All other	<u>13,000</u>	<u>7,514.86</u>
Total other sources	<u>54,100</u>	<u>43,947.81</u>
Total receipts	537,400	522,563.31
Year 2008 opening balance		203,410.64
+ receipts		522,563.31
- disbursements		521,969.27
Closing balance		<u>204,004.68</u>
NET CHANGE		<u>594.04</u>

FUNDS REPORT (unaudited)

	Balance as of 1/1/08	Sharing Fund Campaign Income	Other Income	Dist.	Closing Balance 12/31/08
Sharing Fund					
AVP Donation	0.00	5,914.97	0.00	5,914.97	0.00
Barrington Dunbar	5,812.69	13,206.21	0.00	12,200.00	6,818.90
Cons. Object to Paying for War	0.00	2,997.77	0.00	796.73	2,201.04
Friends for Black Concerns	2,361.05	3,521.65	0.00	3,192.77	2,689.93
Indian Affairs Committee	8,224.60	4,702.06	4,952.05	16,555.28	1,323.43
MMNA Working Group	0.00	440.22	0.00	0.00	440.22
NYYM Named Representatives	0.00	1,320.58	0.00	0.00	1,320.58
Peace Concerns Committee	4,054.36	2,501.04	0.00	2,602.16	3,953.24
Prison Committee	1,141.35	3,621.65	0.00	2,309.50	2,453.50
Right Sharing	7,113.33	2,451.04	0.00	5,000.00	4,564.37
Torture Awareness Working Group	0.00	440.22	0.00	0.00	440.22
Witness Activities	8,413.99	4,402.06	0.00	5,111.90	7,704.15
World Ministries	<u>17,114.85</u>	<u>3,081.46</u>	<u>21,775.81</u>	<u>38,900.00</u>	<u>3,072.12</u>
Total Sharing Fund	54,236.22	48,600.93	26,727.86	92,583.31	36,981.70

Total Sharing Fund Income less Trustee income	48,600.93
2008 Sharing Fund Goal	50,000.00
Percentage of Goal	97.2%

FUNDS REPORT (unaudited)—cont.

	Balance as of 1/1/08	Transfers from Oper. Budget	Other Income	Dist.	Closing Balance 12/31/08
Other Funds					
Advancement — Lafayette	565.33	0.00	1,892.00	92.00	2,365.33
Advancement — Leach	1,717.60	0.00	3,155.00	2,807.00	2,065.60
Advancement — Women	675.48	0.00	473.25	435.00	713.73
Aging Concerns	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Faith & Practice</i> fund	4,038.30	0.00	1,285.23	3,600.45	1,723.08
Sufferings fund	4,700.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,700.00
FWCC Triennial NYYM attendance	0.00	1,400.00	0.00	0.00	1,400.00
Gospel Order packets	286.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	286.69
FUM Triennial NYYM attendance	2,269.27	750.00	0.00	2,895.68	123.59
Records preservation	1,391.72	0.00	0.00	50.00	1,341.72
FWCC Quadrennial Operating	1,560.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	1,660.00
Meeting visitation	13,761.28	2,075.00	0.00	4,188.15	11,648.13
Youth/Young Adults	6,015.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00	7,015.00
Fall/Spring Sessions	0.00	0.00	6,175.60	6,175.60	0.00
Total other funds	<u>36,980.67</u>	<u>4,325.00</u>	<u>13,981.08</u>	<u>20,243.88</u>	<u>35,042.87</u>
Total funds	91,216.89	52,925.93	40,708.94	112,827.19	72,024.57

Trustees, Lindley Murray Fund

No report submitted.

Trustees, New York Yearly Meeting

Last 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 investments in harmony with Friends Testimonies.” Because the NYYM trustees use a 36-month rolling average to compute their dividend rate, the dividend paid by NYYM Trustees’ Unit Trust in 2008 was \$3.18 and as compared to \$3.19 in 2009. It should be noted that Friends Fiduciary pays out on a five year rolling average on the income that they earn. What that means is that even though the market was horrible a strong payout was able to be maintained.

The trustees received a bequest from the estate of Moh Lien Tsai for the benefit of the NYYM Sharing Fund and worked with Fred Dettmer, clerk of the Witness Coordinating Committee, to invest the funds in bank CDs until the committee can decide on how to best use the funds.

Last year the trustees worked with the McCutchen Board to gain approval from Yearly Meeting to close and sell the McCutchen Senior Residence. In 2008 the trustees worked with Yearly Meeting again to gain approval for the ARCH (Aging Resources Consultation and Help) program which will receive operating funds from the Friends Foundation for the Aging, the corporate successor to the McCutchen. To aid ARCH in its goal to serve older Quakers to remain in their home, NYYM has authorized the part time employees of ARCH to be covered under NYYM’s insurance at no extra cost to NYYM.

We gave grants to Anita Paul and Nadine Hoover to attend conferences that would help them in their work on behalf of Friends.

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

Todd Tilton, clerk

*NYYM Trustees Financial Report
Distribution of Funds for Year 2008*

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	25,404.07
Oakwood Administrative	48,965.60
H.H. Mosher	4,133.05
Powell House	12,309.24
Advancement Committee	3,628.25
Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting	1,886.48
World Ministries	21,775.81
New York Yearly Meeting	12,567.48
Friends Foundation for the Aging	5,338.26
Manasquan Monthly Meeting	2,629.70
Indian Affairs Committee	3,452.05
Friends Historical Library	7,209.82

Funds Under Management

Scarsdale Monthly Meeting	1,166.08
New Brunswick Monthly Meeting	1,187.43
Montclair Monthly Meeting	22,840.30
Farmington-Scipio Region	2,069.24
Cornwall Monthly Meeting	4,780.63
Buffalo Monthly Meeting	<u>2,221.37</u>

TOTAL	183,564.86
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NYYM Retained Income Funds—2008 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 1-1-08	Income	Disbursements	Bal 12-31-08
Haines	1,291.43	1,768.68	1,185.00	1,875.11
Sutton	266.66	353.00	0.00	619.66
Monkton	12,182.06	1,907.68	579.50	13,510.24
Yorktown-Underhill	901.44	1,103.36	0.00	2,004.80
Stevens	11,963.38	6,747.68	6,750.00	11,961.06
Beers	220.56	286.12	0.00	506.68
Smith	540.40	699.60	0.00	1,240.00
Morris Cemetery	14,840.69	652.60	473.05	15,020.24
Lockport	1,637.70	894.68	1,150.00	1,382.38
Brinkerhoff	628.42	775.92	1,150.00	254.34
York	8,000.26	10,707.08	8,500.00	10,207.34
Sufferings	<u>4,500.24</u>	<u>1,045.36</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>5,545.60</u>
TOTAL	56,973.24	26,941.76	19,787.55	64,127.45
Funds Under Management				
Lindley Murray	33,106.52	36,613.04	30,624.00	39,095.56
Unrestricted Funds				
General	1,749.12	640.08	0.00	2,389.20
Florence Stevens	4,481.46	6,374.24	0.00	10,855.70
Trustees Administrative	16,978.55	13,458.03	6,630.00	23,806.58

NURTURE SECTION

Nurture Coordinating Committee

In preparing this report and also preparing to move on from the Nurture Coordinating Committee, I read over NCC annual reports from 1994 to now. The nurture section has changed quite a lot over so few years. Critical issues have come and gone; concerns have been researched and answers found; some committees were laid down. Something else struck me as interesting—in 1994, a Task Group on Youth was laid down, unsuccessful in finding a path to address concern for our youth. As I thought on that, I remembered—I was on that task group!

Seems like an example of the “circle of life” that NCC found their particular path this year, bringing to NYYM the recommendation to create the Youth Committee, a liaison committee of sorts, with representatives from all the committees and groups under Nurture who carry a concern for youth, including a new First Day School Working Group. The Yearly Meeting approved the Youth Committee and it’s a fabulous step forward. Another is the creation of the Young Friends in Residence Program and its committee, also recently approved by Nurture and the Yearly Meeting. Even though I personally will no longer be on the Nurture Coordinating Committee after this Summer Sessions, I look forward to hearing many good things coming from these committees, and seeing the ripples of their good work moving through the Meetings.

A wonderful Light is also shining as the Committee on Aging Concerns works to bring the ARCH Program to all of NYYM. They are creating a whole new way of supporting Friends, both elderly and not so elderly. And again, I cannot wait to hear how they fare.

Obviously, as the clerk of NCC, I really should not play favorites, so let me say that I have been energized and encouraged by the work of all the committees and Quaker entities under the care of Nurture. That is why it has been an honor to be NCC clerk for the past four years. While there have been frustrations—the term “herding cats riding on kangaroos” comes to mind—I have been uplifted by the commitment and creativity shown in the work of the Nurture section.

My lingering concern, which I hope will be carried by the next clerk, is respect for the people we name to represent us in the wider Quaker world. There must be a better way to support these Friends whom we send out into the world, asking much of them emotionally and physically, and too much of them financially.

Finally, I hope that, as you read the reports of the Nurture section, you will also be inspired and energized. Join us in this wonderful work!

Melanie-Claire Mallison, clerk, Nurture Coordinating Committee

Earthcare Working Group

No report submitted.

Friends United Meeting Task Group

Friends United Meeting Task Group

Following the 2008 Fall Sessions of the NYYM, the FUM Task Group sent out a letter, which included five queries, to members, meetings, and churches throughout NYYM. Friends were asked to consider the letter and queries in worship and, hopefully, minute their concerns to the YM. Friends did so, and between November 2008 and May 2009, there have been meetings for worship to carry forth this effort. There have been numerous minutes and an epistle. The task group and Friends throughout the YM read and discussed these.

Under the weight of this effort the FUM Task Group assembled during 2009 Spring Sessions and began their deliberations. The result of these deliberations is a report that we hope will be received by the YM. During Summer Sessions, we will also offer a panel discussion and threshing session. Please review the information that follows in preparation.

Minute Creating the NYYM Task Group on FUM

2007-04-18. The Clerk introduced Christopher Sammond (Bulls Head-Oswego), who presented a moving report from the New York Yearly Meeting representatives to Friends United Meeting regarding its February 2007 general board meeting in Kenya, the first ever held there. Christopher told in some detail of the conditions he observed among Friends in Kenya. He reflected that, even in the United States, Friends too often fall into “us and them” arguments. He emphasized that there is a mixture everywhere of Friends who identify more with Orthodox leadings or Hicksite leadings. Friends reflected on the importance of “staying at the table” while we all labor with our attitudes toward human sexuality and the source of spiritual authority.

The NYYM representatives to FUM request that Nurture Coordinat-

ing Committee appoint a task group to be under the weight of helping NYYM consider a series of queries about our responses to the issues that divide us. We will expect the group to report back periodically to the Yearly Meeting on how to proceed in our ongoing relationship with FUM. Friends approved. One Friend stood aside.

Query from FUM Task Group

Our testimony of equality reflects God's love for all persons. Do we maintain witness to equality regardless of differences that human weakness and limitations often accept as valid and absolute?

FUM Task Group Sense of Our Condition as a YM

We of the NYYM FUM Task Group look for divine guidance as we seek that of God in everyone. We long to align our hearts and actions with the spirit of peace. In the past two years or more, we as a community have labored over the sexual ethics portion of FUM's personnel policy. Friends recognize the prejudice and discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer Friends. Some feel strongly that by continuing to support FUM we are complicit in that discrimination.

Yet we value and respect FUM in its great diversity and worthwhile work in the world. Those among us who work on FUM projects testify to the love in which the work is carried out. Some of us feel we are called to continue to support FUM and continue to witness that God loves all people equally, regardless of sexual orientation. We cannot make peace in the world unless we stretch our hearts to be in peace with our fellow Friends.

We offer our sense of our condition as a yearly meeting as a means of facilitating our seeking as a body. Being able to name where we are is a good place from which to discern where we must go. We are clear that where we have not heard clearly, Friends will offer us correction:

- It is our experience that, at a grass-roots level, we as a body do not fully comprehend our own theological diversity.
- We are in the midst of what may be a long process. We may not find clarity or closure for some time.
- As monthly meetings have worked on our relationship with the rest of FUM, in light of this policy, we have noticed that over time their response has grown less reactive, more thoughtful, and more focused on who we are and less focused on a demand that others change.
- We are a family with differences to work out, but we are also struggling to be a loving community. We are consistently hearing clarity that NYYM is a part of FUM and should remain so. We

hear continued support for FUM at all levels, sharing our human and financial resources.

- FUM policies which restrict eligibility for employment and volunteer service are not consistent with the teachings of Jesus as we understand them, nor are they consistent with our testimony of equality.
- We see a connection between how we walk with Friends with whom we disagree, both within this yearly meeting and in the wider Religious Society, as being intimately connected with our aspiration to learn how to be a force for peace and reconciliation in the world.
- There is unity that our representatives to the FUM General Board should continue to do all they can to make clear to other board members that many among us are deeply pained and concerned about the sexual ethics portion of the personnel policy. However, we do not have unity as to how to address this concern with the rest of FUM. Most Friends we have heard from feel very strongly that this policy needs to be changed, but absent a clear way to effect that change, Friends are unclear as to how we should proceed as a body. There is no clarity to make a minute objecting to it; there is no unity on withholding funds, either as an act of moral conscience or as an attempt at leveraging change; there is no unity to leave the organization.

We hope that Friends throughout the Yearly Meeting can unite with the following statement:

Our experience as Friends that there is that of God in every person is the basis for our clear understanding of the equality of all persons. We treasure our diversity. We are called to love one another, accepting our differences in all their forms: in race, theology, sexual orientation, manner of worship, and financial means. We know that the richness of our different experiences gives us a strength and vitality we hold as a blessing and as a sign of God's manifold expression.

Young Friends in Residence Working Group

The Young Friends in Residence (YFIR) Working Group was formed three and half years ago to develop a young adult Friend intern/youth program and find a monthly meeting home for it. Since its beginning we have worked on plans for a program that involves four or so young adult Friends living in intentional spiritual community for one or two years. Out of this intentional life will come monthly youth programs for 6th to 9th graders. The young adults will facilitate these weekend

programs. The youth programs will offer a stable, long term, accepting, and affirming space in which pre-teens and young teens are able to experience Quaker spirituality and nurture one another.

Additionally, it is a young adult program to develop leadership and gifts of ministry, to foster spiritual growth, to encourage intentional community and active participation in monthly meeting, regional meeting, and yearly meeting. It is also a means of outreach to local communities. It is also a program that will help re-vitalize and strengthen monthly meetings through mutual care and naming and utilizing of gifts between the young adults and the host meetings.

Although we hope that someday this might be a program that is available in many parts of NYYM, we plan to start with a single pilot program. Perry City Monthly Meeting has been selected to be the host meeting for this pilot. We are now working closely with Friends from Perry City in launching the program and are working to involve other meetings in the Farmington-Scipio region. As preparation for the program, Perry City MM will be hosting an eldering workshop in June 2009.

At Spring Sessions 2009, the YFIR Working Group became a committee under the care of the Nurture Section. The purpose of the committee is to establish and support a young adult intern program hosted by a monthly and/or regional meeting. A "YFIR Fund," was established to allow the Young Friends in Residence Committee to receive and disburse funds. This fund, under the care of the YFIR Committee, will receive grant money and other donations for the YFIR program. The committee, in consultation with the NYYM treasurer, will determine how to distribute the funds, which will be used specifically for YFIR-related intern expenses and program costs.

The committee will be meeting with the clerk of General Services to work out the details of insurance and employment status for the interns. We will also seek approval from the Financial Services Committee to apply for grants to cover the program costs for a two-year pilot period. We have completed a detailed grant proposal and have identified possible grant sources. We have received a number of inquiries from young adult Friends about the positions and two applications. Those of us on the working group and now the committee feel truly inspired to do this work. We continue to receive encouragement and support from a diverse and wide group of Friends. We have had the opportunity to strengthen ties with Perry City Friends. We have seen the enthusiasm of young Friends as they help to bring this program into existence. We have felt a leading grow and unfold.

This coming year will be a busy one as we work to get the program up and running. We invite interested Friends to join us in this spirit-

filled work. There are many opportunities to give and to help, from the small to the large. We welcome them all.

Chris DeRoller and Amy Willauer-Obermayer, co-clerks

Committee on Aging Concerns

The Committee on Aging Concerns met formally three times since its creation at summer sessions 2008 and had several small group working sessions with ARCH (Aging, Resources, Consultation and Help) consultants and NYYM trustees to clarify issues of liability. As of fall of 2008 sessions, ARCH consultants became part time employees of the Yearly Meeting for reasons of insurance coverage. The focus then became redefining the committee's role as supervisory, to begin Jan. 2009. We began to look at changing the *Handbook* to include this expanded charge. We quickly realized the need for additional committee members. We asked ARCH to "slow down" regarding planned training sessions (to replicate the current program throughout the Yearly Meeting) until adequate support, guidance, evaluation, policy, and procedures can be put in place. Our goal for 2009 is growth of the committee and sustainability and expansion of the ARCH program. We need committee members with skills in personnel, financial management, program development and evaluation, clerking, and recording.

ARCH completed a nine month pilot program in 2008 serving eight Quaker meetings in Northeastern Regional Meeting. We made presentations to five monthly meetings, conducted nine workshops at monthly, regional, and yearly meeting levels, and had numerous contacts with Friends, meetings, and families in person, by phone, and e-mail. In that time the ARCH consultants, Barbara Spring and Anita Paul, shepherded ARCH through NYYM approval for both the concept of workshops and training consultants and the renewal of our funding through Friends Foundation for the Aging (FFA) for 2009.

Early in 2008 at the invitation of FFA, ARCH began developing relationships with those in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting working on similar concerns. That led to a collaboration on a funding proposal to the Thomas Scattergood Foundation and FFA for a Quaker Senior Web site and other resources, such as DVDs, books, and dissemination materials addressing a plethora of aging issues. We move into 2009 with confidence that this grant will be funded.

Sarah Miller, clerk

Friends General Conference representatives

We are happy to serve our Religious Society of Friends in our roles with Friends General Conference. We have grown beyond measure from being part of this special organization. I will highlight a few of the FGC ‘happenings’:

Quaker Quest is an inreach outreach program, a series of public meetings on Quaker topics. Within the U.S. and Canada 15 meetings have had workshops to learn how to do these events. We have another 15 meetings signed-up for these transformative gatherings. For more information go to QuakerQuest.org. Its focus on the Quaker way as a spiritual path for our time is one that is radical and contemporary.

The Youth Ministries Program is all about listening, learning, and sharing each other’s ministry. The goals of our Youth Ministries Committee are challenging and lead to nurturing our youth. We support and encourage programs for our younger generations at the monthly and yearly meeting level. We promote, support, and sponsor gatherings and events. The Youth Ministries Program is active throughout the FGC membership. There is a concern for supporting youth spiritually and financially through life changes and transitions. The program upholds the contributions of our youth on their own merit and without particular attention to their age.

Stoking the Spiritual Fire of Quakerism Campaign is all about donating to support FGC’s programs. Our ambitious campaign to raise 7.25 million dollars is doing well despite the challenges of the current market. To find out more about the campaign to take to your meeting, go to www.fgcquaker.org/spiritualfire.

One of the most vital services FGC offers is the bookstore. Keeping this resource available is challenging. It’s important for us to make use of the diverse inventory. Keep your meeting’s catalog handy to find gifts, song books, and many offerings for spiritual renewal.

The committee closest to my heart is the Religious Education Committee. You can go on line to get *Lessons In A Book*, designed for youth. *Faith & Play* is a wonderful resource for ages 3-12. Montessori inspired, it is lessons with ‘I Wonder’ queries and brings the experience of the holy mysteries to our youth. There are six stories in the first *Faith & Play* series. It is great for working in mixed age groups and multigenerational settings. Go to www.faithandplay.org and find out more about this wonderful resource. These two resources are just a sample of what we do in the RE Committee.

It is an honor to serve New York Yearly Meeting in this manner. Please join us in our labors for this transformative organization.

Sally Lawson, clerk

Friends United Meeting representatives

New York Yearly Meeting's representatives to the Friends United Meeting General Board for the 2008–2011 triennium are Christopher Sammond (serving a second term), Beatrice Beguin and Steven Ross (serving initial terms). Regina Haag serves as alternate and Carol Holmes, formerly a NYYM representative, continues to serve as recording clerk and as a member of the executive committee by appointment of FUM.

Since the summer 2008 triennial sessions, the General Board has met twice. Christopher and Steve have attended both of these sessions, and Beatrice and Regina, one each. Each representative serves on at least one committee of the board. Steve also serves under a separate appointment as a trustee and Regina on the planning committee for FUM's 2011 triennial sessions.

In addition to continuing questions around FUM's hiring policy, the board is also working with issues arising as a result of shortfalls in unrestricted financial support and reduced investment income. There have also been concerns raised by leaders of some other yearly meetings about whether FUM's future is in jeopardy because of an absence of unity on questions regarding biblical authority and interpretation, and on the person and role of Jesus.

Meanwhile, work continues in the direction of establishing a greater measure of parity between the part of FUM that's based in North America and parts that are increasingly coming into their own in other parts of the world, particularly eastern Africa.

Among the many programmatic developments commanding the Board's attention are the revitalization of the hospital at Kaimosi in Kenya, the work toward accreditation of Friends Theological Seminary, and the possibility of developing the revenue-producing potential of land owned by and adjacent to the Friends Schools in Ramallah.

Each of these items and several others remain "works in progress" as we look forward to the General Board sessions in June 2009. No doubt there will be more to report when we return.

Steve Ross, clerk

Friends World Committee for Consultation

Our Quaker community spans the globe, with Friends in the Philippines, Latvia, Indonesia, Peru, Nepal, Croatia, Uganda, and many other places. The Friends World Committee for Consultation strives to increase awareness of the worldwide family of Friends and build understanding of the diversity of regional cultures, beliefs, and styles of worship.

FWCC's international plenary meeting in 2007 established working groups to respond to concerns submitted by various yearly meetings: environment and sustainability, civil liberties and human rights, HIV/AIDS, violence, and outreach. As we all know, Friends in many locations are addressing themselves to these concerns.

FWCC's Section of the Americas sponsors the biennial Quaker Youth Pilgrimage for young people ages 16–18. The deadline for applications for the 2010 pilgrimage will be in December.

New York Yearly Meeting sends representatives to the Section's annual meeting, which moves around the hemisphere. Latin American representatives attend this meeting (when they are able to get visas), and it is a wonderful opportunity to meet them and learn some things about them and their communities.

Like so many other organizations, FWCC must respond to budgetary constraints. Staff have been laid off, committees have been reorganized, and expenses have been reduced, as carefully as possible so as not to hamper FWCC's core mission of bringing Friends together.

The Northeast Regional Gathering this year, May 15–17, will be the first cross-cultural, bilingual event organized by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting FWCC Friends, and the two Hispanic Friends congregations in Philadelphia, which belong to the Evangelical Friends Church Eastern Region. There will be presenters in both languages, worship in the programmed and unprogrammed traditions, music, a bonfire, and joint preparation of meals. All interested Friends are welcome to attend FWCC Regional Gatherings.

Other aspects of the Section are visitation and the Wider Quaker Fellowship. FWCC visitors go to various yearly meetings to increase face-to-face contact among Friends, and staff make visits for a variety of purposes. Nancy Irving, general secretary of the World Office, visited our annual sessions last year, and I was a visitor to Lake Erie Yearly Meeting. WQF publishes and disseminates pamphlets on Quakerism and spirituality, in English twice a year and in Spanish annually. The Section office adds Friends to the mailing list on request, and the pamphlets are on line at

fwccamericas.org.

See also the World Office Web page at fwccworld.org for the global distribution of Friends, service projects, and the “River of Friends.” And don’t forget quono.org, the site of the Quaker United Nations Office in New York and Geneva (FWCC is the sponsoring organization).

Judith Inskip

Junior Yearly Meeting Committee

The Junior Yearly Meeting Committee supports the JYM volunteers, who are dedicated to providing a quality program for children at Summer Sessions. Both feedback and consistent attendance show that the program is well regarded. The committee has been successful at finding a full complement of members, and its clerk is active and committed to the work. It is well represented at Nurture Coordinating Committee by the clerk of Nurture, who is also the representative from Nurture to the JYM committee.

We feel that the life of the Spirit would lead us to engage children, and especially teenagers, more fully in the life of the yearly meeting. By providing a place for young people to gather and focus, we allow for the growth of community among them. We greatly value the leadership provided by the Circle of Young Friends, who have been providing a bridge into adulthood for the teens. Worship sharing with the adults was enthusiastically received by many of the high school youth. To some extent, the possibility of volunteering as JYM group leaders when they are old enough is also providing a bridge into adult participation.

Currently, the JYM committee is working towards ensuring that all high school clerks are given clerking training and working towards establishing JYM business meetings led by those clerks. Going forward, we might ask High School clerks for a full-year commitment, holding youth business meetings at spring and fall sessions as well.

The work of this committee has a direct impact on monthly meetings through our adult volunteers. Because of its structure, JYM provides community for these volunteers that lasts year round. The week at Silver Bay allows for the formation of friendships among people of many different ages; for many, it is the best week in their year. This strong connection at the yearly meeting level can spill over into connection to the monthly and regional meetings.

The spiritual nurture provided children in the JYM program is es-

pecially important for those from small meetings that have only one or a few children and thus cannot maintain vibrant First Day Schools. The parents of these children also are nurtured by being able to attend Summer Sessions. In this way, JYM does support the life of monthly meetings, both directly and indirectly.

Peter Close, clerk

Oakwood Friends School

Oakwood Friends School has again enjoyed a year of optimism and energy, healthy student enrollment, strong academic programs, and meaningful community worship against a backdrop of challenging local and world events. Faculty and students have worked together to strike a balance among conceptual study, experiential learning, creative expression, physical skills and athletics, engaged service, and reflective worship, all within the context of Quaker principles.

Our Board of Managers, which includes many members of New York Yearly Meeting, has welcomed several new members, both Quaker and non-Quaker, alumni, parent, and “at-large,” 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, and of co-opted subcommittee members, the Board has thoughtfully and prudently addressed the financial challenges associated with the current economy while planning for Oakwood’s future direction and needs, always keeping the school’s mission at the center of its deliberations. In the past three years, twelve 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 year, Board members participated in a series of on-line “webinars” on governance and financial sustainability, again organized by the Friends Council.

Two significant service projects have continued to have ripple effects across the Oakwood community and beyond. This year, the school sponsored our fourth and fifth trips to New Orleans to help with on-going post-Katrina rebuilding efforts. This year’s trips included faculty members, Oakwood alumni, current students, and our Board of Managers president. Students and faculty also participated in our ninth border witness trip to Texas and Mexico, under the auspices of Oakwood’s “No Sweat” club and the New York State Labor-Religion

Coalition. These trips have become increasingly complex, given the drug-related violence of the region, but our students and faculty continue to report powerful learning. The No Sweat club actively continues its mission of educating our community about fair labor practices and the effects of global trade on under-resourced populations.

This year Oakwood has been graced by the presence of Ruben Hilaré, our exchange teacher who came to us under the auspices of the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund. Ruben has lived here on campus for the entire year and has participated in a variety of teaching and extracurricular activities. He is an accomplished musician and artist, as well as linguist, and he has shared his talents and culture with us in a variety of ways. In addition, he has been a regular attender at Poughkeepsie Meeting, and he has participated in AVP activities, Pendle Hill workshops, community service work, Friends General Conference programs, not to mention activities of New York Yearly Meeting. Oakwood and Carolina Friends School each participated in this exchange program this year, and we hope to continue our involvement in the future. The participating school and BQEF share in the cost of the exchange visit.

Oakwood engaged in another new venture in Quaker life this past year. Together with Poughkeepsie Monthly Meeting, the school organized a “worship experiment” in which the meeting worshipped on the Oakwood campus each first day during the months of April and May. Poughkeepsie Meeting held its committee meetings, first day school, and adult classes at Oakwood and used our meeting room as its worship space. Worship in this different location encouraged more members of the Oakwood community to participate—faculty, student, and parents—and it created a stronger sense of collaboration between the meeting and the school. Each week after the rise of meeting and a period of after-thoughts and announcements, we continued our fellowship over brunch in the Oakwood dining hall. Oakwood has been blessed by our visitors, and we look forward to further such experiments in the future.

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. This year, we have been especially privileged to participate in the work of the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund, and

to have Poughkeepsie Monthly Meeting as our worship partners. Both of these initiatives have created new circles of strength and nurture between Oakwood and the Quaker community beyond our campus.

*Peter F. Baily, head of school
William F. Bogle, Jr. '76, president, Board of Managers*

PoGo Working Group

See Young Friends in Residence report.

Elsie K. Powell House Inc.

From the Powell House Program Evaluations:

*How did this weekend increase your understanding and/or
experience of Quakerism?*

Or how did this weekend nurture or strengthen your spiritual life?

- I learned a lot about Quakerism from all the participants. The openness for interpretation in the concept of God was not something I was aware of, but like a lot. I think Quaker meeting is a good place for me and I feel more comfortable with it since discussing non-theism with this group.
- Meeting others from various meetings. The inclusion of rich history and faiths . . .
- This weekend really focused my attention on community and stewardship and made me examine the role integrity plays in my life.
- Wonderful to have the chance to integrate my spirit life with my professional life. People shared many heartfelt and helpful ideas for self-care and for nurturing a better health care system.
- It reinforced my understanding of the awesomeness of God and how God has provided everything we need to heal ourselves and heal the earth. We “just” need to re-discover it / listen within and to creation.
- Where else but at a Quaker retreat would everyone’s *different* stories be, not only accepted, but embraced with such tenderness? I feel my resolve strengthened to follow what I believe to be God’s guidance, with a more compassionate regard for what may be my resistance.

- As always, I walk away with a lot to process and sit with. This naturally leads to deeper understanding and connection for me. I feel more grounded in the Spirit and look forward to sitting with this.
- I got a clearer sense of the power I consider to be God. I felt a link between how I experience God in meeting and in daily life: “walk cheerfully over the earth responding to that in God in every person,” “practicing AA principles in all my affairs.”
- Helped me see even more the connection between Quakerism and my own Catholicism. This retreat created a span for God to speak to me at an important transition time of my life.
- It increased my awareness of how complex the peace testimony can actually be.
- Are you kidding? I have arthritis (Arthur-it is) in my hands!

Comments like these reflect a truth that many many people have known for close to 50 years—Powell House is a special place outside one’s daily life, a special place to really examine one’s spiritual life and come away richer.

I encourage you to reread those evaluation comments above from our adult programs and then check out the conferences listed in the Powell House News or online at www.powellhouse.org. What calls you to travel to this special place and test your spiritual life for a weekend? What are you waiting for? Come! No matter what your interests, Powell House is here for you.

One reason for the decades-long success of Powell House is the location itself. The land is deeply peaceful and that rises up through the buildings and informs the very air. But the second and most important reason is the staff—the people who, day in and day out, create a warm, safe, and intentionally thoughtful environment. This past year has been a real test of the Powell House staff; Ann, Buffy, Jacki, Jen, Katherine, Liseli, Peg, Chris and Mike. So much has happened, so many challenges and unbelievable circumstances. The Powell House staff has taken on the Anna Curtis Center (ACC) renovation, the boiler break-down in February, the problems brought on by the economic downturn, and only just yesterday, the breakdown of the walk-in cooler! Just the one overwhelming, complicated renovation would have brought down the average person. But these amazing people took on every problem and turned it into an opportunity to grow and improve. And as if that was not enough, they invited others (a legion of volunteers and donors) to come and play with them and be a meaningful part of the next successful 50 years of this wonderful place. I cannot say how awesome these people are—living out the

very epitome of stewardship. Thank you.

Personally, I have been honored to have been on the Powell House Committee for the past ten years, and beyond honored to have been the clerk of PoHoCo for the past three years. While I've done my part to steward Powell House, I think my (and the committee's) smartest role is to support the staff and stay out of the way! Well, and bring a chain saw to committee weekends.

PoHoCo toured the new spaces in the Anna Curtis Center at our last committee weekend and just as there are final touches needed to the renovations, there are final touches needed to our ACC capital campaign. Please take a look at the children and young people who attend the Youth Program, learning the tools for and gaining the strength to grow into their religious selves, and give a little something—your time or your cash!—to make sure the building is as supportive of the program as our dedicated staff is. We need to pay for that new boiler too! As you'll see in our financial statement below, we ended our fiscal year in the red (for the first time ever to my memory) due to unexpected expenses in the Powell House “infrastructure”—so think about dropping a check into the mail or dropping your spare change into the jar at Powell House. Every penny and prayer counts.

The one final reason I'll give for Powell House's success over these many years is our faithful New York Yearly Meeting. Whether it's a monthly meeting coming for their retreat; or a committee sponsoring a workshop; or the generosity of our donors; or the parents who drive their kids to conferences then stay to paint—the Powell House Conference and Retreat Center exists for and because of NYYM's bountiful support. Thank you.

Melanie-Claire Mallison, clerk

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
for the fiscal year April 1, 2008–March 31, 2009

Ordinary income/expense

Income

Support & revenue

Contributions—solicited	82,691
Contributions—unsolicited	<u>7,940</u>
Contributions total	90,631
Guest fees	191,716
Investment income	27,069
New York Yearly Meeting	64,165
Rental income	7,250
Other revenue	<u>2,976</u>
Support and revenue total	<u>383,808</u>
Total income	<u>383,808</u>
Cost of goods sold	<u>1,795</u>
Gross profit	<u>382,013</u>
Expenses	
Administration	20,986
Adult programs	21,707
Buildings & grounds	49,972
Fundraising	3,573
Housekeeping	32,508
Office administration	8,062
Personnel	252,742
Youth program	4,660
Annuities payable	<u>765</u>
Total expense	<u>394,976</u>
Net ordinary income	<u>(12,963)</u>

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
for the years ended March 31, 2009 and 2008

	3/31/09	3/31/08
Assets		
Current assets		
Checking/savings		
Ordinary funds	8,086	23,303
Restricted funds	<u>670,525</u>	<u>899,569</u>
Checking/savings totals	678,610	922,872
Accounts receivable	(12,584)	0
Other current assets	<u>3,219</u>	<u>78,160</u>
Total current assets	669,245	1,001,033
Total fixed assets	<u>274,887</u>	<u>274,887</u>
Total assets	<u>944,132</u>	<u>1,275,920</u>
Liabilities and equity		
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable	4,171	12,393
Other current liabilities	<u>62,987</u>	<u>27,124</u>
Total current liabilities	<u>67,158</u>	<u>39,517</u>
Total long term liabilities	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total liabilities	<u>67,158</u>	<u>39,517</u>
Equity		
Endowment		
Board designated restricted	484,952	493,738
Donor designated restricted	<u>82,844</u>	<u>112,670</u>
Total endowment	567,797	606,408
Operating funds	10,254	317,610
Net ordinary income last year	59,486	4,930
Net ordinary income this year**	(12,963)	59,485
Retained earnings	611,830	318,807
Net income***	<u>(359,428)</u>	<u>(70,837)</u>
Total equity	<u>876,974</u>	<u>1,236,403</u>
Total liabilities and equity	<u>944,132</u>	<u>1,275,920</u>

* adjustments done since 3/31/2008 affecting prior two years

** Net Ordinary Income is the loss from ordinary operations of Powell House, not including ACC fund

*** Net Income includes expenses for ACC that has not been capitalized yet.

Quaker Earthcare Witness representative

No report submitted.

Young Adult Concerns Committee

YACC felt motivated and inspired when we were together for our Spring conference at Powell House. However, the conference was small and we lose momentum quickly when we are apart. Sometimes we are very far apart (e.g. different continents)! Not feeling connected can be hard, but those Friends in other places are close to our hearts and most often doing important work in the world. We still experience great joy in each other's company at conferences and other gatherings.

We are planning an intergenerational camping weekend (18+), which we see as a beautiful turning point in linking young Friends to older Friends. This is an exciting opportunity!! We will be welcoming a new clerk this year and also welcome guidance from seasoned Friends about the logistics of NYYM.

Amy Savage, clerk

WITNESS SECTION

Witness Coordinating Committee

Paul wrote to the Ephesians:

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. . . . Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith. . . . Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

Ephesians 6:11-18 [NIV]

In 2008, New York Yearly Meeting Friends continued to wear “the full armor of God”: to speak out and to act for peace and reconciliation; to witness to the power of the Spirit and love to overcome evil.

At Summer Sessions, Witness Coordinating Committee brought forward a Minute on Torture, through which New York Yearly Meeting “join[ed] with the voices of people of conscience everywhere to decry the use of torture by the United States and to work for its end.” Friends proclaimed that “Torture betrays our faith”; it “debases our ethical and moral ideals”; and it “corrupts our respect for the rule of law and our standing in the community of nations.” We recalled Jesus’s query (Matthew 16:26; Mark 8:36; Luke 9:25 [NIV]): “What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?” And we “call[ed] on the United States to honor its constitutional and treaty obligations, and our moral, ethical and religious principles, by ending immediately the use of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of prisoners and detainees.” The Yearly Meeting approved the minute for wide distribution to political, Friends and faith institutions and organizations, and to groups working to end torture and directed the Clerk to sign, on behalf of the NYYM, the National Religious Campaign against Torture’s Statement of Conscience and its Declaration of Principles for an executive order banning torture. (NYYM Minute 2008-07-53.)

At Spring Sessions, NYYM approved laying down the Peace Concerns Committee (NYYM Minute 2008-4-15) and Witness Coordinating Committee appointed a Peace Concerns coordinator to carry Friends’ continuing concern for nonviolent conflict resolution. WCC supported the coordinator’s work in visiting monthly and regional meetings and facilitated the attendance of three named representatives

from NYYM at a peace conference, “Heeding God’s Call,” sponsored by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, the Brethren and the Mennonites to be held in Philadelphia in January 2009.

War broke out in the Republic of Georgia during the summer of 2008. New York Yearly Meeting sent a message of prayers, hope and support to Friends in Georgia, and received back a request for aid and assistance. (See NYYM minutes 2008-11-19 & 20.) Our Peace Concerns coordinator responded to Georgian Friends’s plea by traveling to Georgia, visiting and working with Friends there, and bringing financial assistance. WCC supported and facilitated her efforts, and through the Sharing Fund provided funding for this work.

During all sessions of New York Yearly Meeting in 2008, Friends heard reports of the witness work of our brothers and sisters. At Summer Sessions, WCC presented a panel on “Many Roads to Peace,” offering the stories of Friends’ work for peace and reconciliation in the African Great Lakes Region (Rwanda, Burundi, Congo), Indonesia, Kenya, Colombia, and Bolivia. During Fall Sessions, Prisons Committee described the mission of the Doing Justice Interfaith Coalition, which focuses on sustaining the Spirit in persons incarcerated for life without parole (lifers), higher education and spiritual programs for people in prison, and change in prison and parole policy. During the course of the year, the Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War spoke repeatedly of their continuing work in supporting rights of conscience and those engaged in witness against war taxes, and in carrying NYYM’s Call to Friends to Prepare Statements of Conscience to meetings in NYYM and other yearly meetings and to people of faith everywhere.

New York Yearly Meeting has been blessed by bequests to our Sharing Fund. As part of its responsibility to provide financial stewardship of the Fund, WCC developed guidelines for the handling of these bequests, which were approved by the Yearly Meeting (NYYM minute 2008-04-16), and has continued discernment of the best practices for managing and applying these gifts.

During the 12 months of 2008, the Sharing Fund received donations totaling \$48,600, 97.2% of the goal of \$50,000. Witness committees disbursed over \$92,580 of Sharing Funds (including funds from other sources and carryover from the prior year), and reduced the year-to-year carryover balance by almost \$18,000. The Sharing Fund goal for 2009 was increased to \$60,000 in light of the increasing challenges facing our society because of the current depressed economic realities.

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 engaging our world with “the full armor of God.”

Frederick Dettmer, clerk

Witness Activities Fund 2008 Disbursements:

Assistance for attendance at gathering of Friends in Latin America (Latin American Concerns Resource Person)	300
Assistance for offering session on meeting the minimum needs of all at Friends General Conference gathering (MMNA Working Group)	377
Printing and distribution of booklet on prison release (Syracuse MM)	250
Peace and Justice Film Series (Old Chatham MM)	150
Community youth activities (Albany MM on behalf of Tryon Worship Group)	350
Peace Camp intern support (Albany MM)	600
Witness with “Mothers of the Disappeared” in Latin America (Brooklyn MM)	500
Travel to Republic of Georgia and assistance of Friends there (Peace Concerns Coordinator)	1,500
Attendance of NYYM Representatives at “Heeding God’s Call” Gathering	1,000
Support for work with the Redemption Center in Brooklyn, NY (Housatonic MM)	500

Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), Inc.

The year has been extraordinarily full and rich for AVP-NY. In spite of a difficult financial climate, our new leadership team has trusted the process and we have been blessed with many positive outcomes.

At the heart of our program are our prison workshops and we maintain active programs at 14 prisons in New York State. In 2008, 135 prison workshops were conducted for 1,479 participants. This continues to represent an enormous opportunity for men and women to experience the transforming power of being in community, where they are held up as who they are now, not what they once did.

We continue our positive relationship with DOC's (Department of Corrections). Each year our leadership team is able to meet with the administration and raise concerns that we are having at individual facilities. In 2008, the meeting resulted in a memorandum being issued to all facilities with language highly supportive of the AVP program and new facilities contacted us requesting AVP workshops. In some remote geographical areas, we were unable to meet the requests immediately due to lack of facilitators. (The memo has been re-issued after our Spring 2009 meeting)

Other features of our prison programs include recognition days and special seminar days with Forum Day—when inside facilitators provide a day of activities for outside facilitators—a particular highlight. In 2008 it was hosted at Sing Sing and the men learned about our youth workshops and requested support in starting a youth program for teens and young adults. A full series of youth workshops was run over the summer and fall and there is now a core of youth facilitators and a strong support group operating at Sing Sing. Youth workshops have also started at Green Haven. In Spring 2009, Forum Day will be hosted for the first time at the women's facility at Bedford Hills.

Our reentry support group (Landing Strip) for AVP facilitators coming home continues to operate twice a month at 15th Street in Manhattan and also twice a month at the Redemption Center in Brooklyn.

In the community, we have been active in a variety of settings with youth, adult and multi-generational workshops running 28 workshops with 269 participants. The settings include the First Presbyterian Church in Delhi in the Catskills, Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence in Buffalo, The Performing Arts Academy in Buffalo, Purchase Friends Meeting House, Powell House, Alfred University, The Sports Foundation in the Bronx and the Redemption Center in Brooklyn.

We currently have 186 inside facilitators and 112 outside facilitators who were in at least one workshop in 2008 and we have new com-

munication tools to help us to grow the program in New York State. We will launch a Web site in the spring of 2009 (www.avpny.org) —to connect outside facilitators and participants with workshops and provide resources for facilitators. Our newsletter gives voice to AVP people inside and outside the walls three times a year and reaches 275 inside facilitators. This year we also completed an important training document—an *Orientation Handbook for Volunteers*, which will be available on our Web site.

The strength of the program and the AVP-NY Region was clear at our October annual meeting at Long Point Camp on Seneca Lake. Attendance at 51 was nearly double that of last year with new faces in the circle and a dynamic and positive energy. It has been this spirit, which has carried us through difficult decisions. Our overall financial picture has been hit with our small reserves impacted. Recommendations by our financial oversight committee led us to set reserves aside and to discontinue ongoing funding of the Flight Path to Freedom project beyond our 2008 commitment. (We continue to offer a Committee of Care to Mark Graham at the Redemption Center). With reserves set aside, a fund raising goal was set at \$24K and an individual donor fund raising drive took place in the fall with printed materials to assist facilitators in their outreach to friends and family. We came very close to meeting the goal and significantly increased our donor base.

Finally, the New York region is anticipating the hosting of the 2009 AVP national conference over Memorial Day weekend at Adelphi University, Long Island—an opportunity for the region to present workshops and plenary sessions on a variety of topics. There will be tracks on Restorative Justice, Youth and Re-entry with a performance of *The Castle*—a searing, first-hand look at the lives of four formerly incarcerated New Yorkers and their re-entry into society, and a presentation by Eddie Ellis, participant of the original Green Haven Think Tank, host of WBAI radio show *On the Count* and adviser to the Obama reentry team.

It's been a good year!

Workshop numbers for 2008

179 workshops (135 prisons, 28 community, 13 mini)

1,923 certificates of completion

Judy Meikle, clerk

Alternatives to Violence Project, Inc. (AVP-NY), Financial Report, 2008

Income

Direct public support	
Contributions—individual **	12,208.00
2008 Fundraising Initiative *	6,729.50
Contributions—churches/meetings ***	1,490.00
Area councils & workshop revenue	1,950.82
Legacies & bequests	<u>907.78</u>
Total direct public support	23,286.10
Indirect public support	
Contributions—NYYM Sharing Fund	2,949.79
Contributions—NYYM Lindley Murray Fund	<u>1,100.00</u>
Total indirect public support	4,049.79
Program service revenue	
Manual sales	1,578.08
Dividends & interest-securities	<u>3,224.49</u>
Total program service revenue	<u>4,802.57</u>
Total income for operating & program expenses	32,138.46
Special projects revenue	
Annual Gathering	3,270.00
2008 Fundraising Initiative (Flightpath to Freedom)	<u>0.00</u>
Total special projects revenue	3,270.00
Total income	35,408.46
Transfer from investments	<u>13,000.00</u>
Total adjusted income plus fund transfer	48,408.46

Expenses

Operating expenses	
Payroll expenses	14,760.38
Payroll taxes	1,292.20
Payroll service fees	1,134.88
Health insurance****	4,978.32
Accounting fees	1,425.00
Supplies	663.48
Telephone & telecommunications	2,553.06
Printing & copying	305.66
Newsletter	1,813.51
Postage	1,648.10
Bank service charges—checks	13.32
Rent	1,450.00

Utilities—(propane & electric)	493.93
Travel & meetings expenses (staff)	250.35
Insurance—liability	499.33
Insurance—Workman’s Comp.	250.43
Filing Fees—NYS	30.00
Miscellaneous expense—NYS Dept. of Charities	100.00
Fundraising expense	1,489.09
Equipment purchases	
Web site	<u>815.63</u>
Total operating expenses	35,966.67
Program expenses	
Grants to other organizations	0.00
Awards & grants—individuals	0.00
Manuals	0.00
Scholarships	0.00
Certificates & T.P. cards	573.26
Volunteer expenses	192.45
Workshop expenses	121.34
Bill Leight Colombia Project	<u>0.00</u>
Total program expenses	887.05
Total general & program expenses	36,853.72
Special Projects	
Landing Strip	
(12/31/08 fund balance - \$2,234.47)****	3,394.39
Flightpath to Freedom—2008	18,220.00
Annual meeting	<u>3,441.49</u>
Total special projects	25,055.88
Total expenses	61,909.60

American Friends Service Committee

Representatives to National Corporation

No report submitted.

Middle Atlantic Region

No report submitted.

New York Metropolitan Regional Office

No report submitted.

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, 85 families were served at the annual tree and seed giveaway. The black ash preservation project collected 30 pounds of seed from trees around Ontario and New York. Two trainings were conducted to teach people how to collect, clean, and propagate the seeds. Black ash is used in traditional basket making in many Native cultures. Students from the Akwesasne Freedom School helped to harvest a record crop of apples in the orchard. They turned the apples into cider, applesauce, and pies for a fundraising dinner.

The Community Advocates for Family Empowerment (CAFFE) project served low-income families in Onondaga County. The CAFFE Women's Leadership Development Workshop trained 17 women in two sessions during 2008. Each session consisted of eight weeks of classes in topics ranging from public speaking to meeting facilitation to leadership styles. Additionally, 38 people participated in one-hour advocacy classes.

The Youth Empowerment Project used Help Increase the Peace

(HIP) to teach nonviolent conflict resolution and leadership skills to young people. 88 students participated in HIP trainings. Intensive work has been done this year with a group of students at Corcoran High School in Syracuse. Each member of this group has lost a loved one to gun or knife violence. They have each committed themselves to learning how to live more peacefully, but have needed help in overcoming the trauma that they and their families experienced as a result of their loved ones' murders.

With the support and assistance of many Friends in New York and around the Middle Atlantic Region, the Upper New York State Area Office of AFSC advanced its efforts to address economic justice and peace building issues in our community. If you would like to assist the Upper New York State Area Office, or if you have questions, you may contact Chrissie Rizzo at 315-475-4822, or crizzo@afsc.org. You may also view our Web site at www.afsc.org/syracuse.

Chrissie Rizzo, UNYS Area director

Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development

The charge of the Barrington Dunbar Fund is to reach out to the Black and Hispanic community in an effort to help meet the educational needs of disadvantaged members of that population. We are also charged with assisting grassroots organizations that nurture and support these communities. To that end the committee sent out invitations to every monthly meeting in our yearly meeting inviting them to apply for funds from the NYYM Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development. We received requests from far and near and have tried to address those needs with the funds that were allotted to this committee. Indeed it is a difficult task especially during these trying economic times. The committee met four times in 2008 and prayerfully considered each request.

We provided scholarship support for Black and Latino students at Brooklyn College, Brooklyn Friends School, City College of NY, Earlham College, Friends Seminary, Hudson Valley Community College, Northeastern Academy, Oakwood Friends School, Friends Seminary, and Norwich University.

We provided summer camp scholarship support for children of migrant farm workers through Rural and Migrant Ministry.

We allocated funds to the NuLeadership Policy Group which is involved in public policy formulation, community organizing and advocacy. Their public policy priorities are (1) the question of parole,

developing a definitive release criteria and reducing or eliminating the arbitrary decision making power of the current Parole Boards; (2) the return of eligibility for financial aid and tuition assistance for people in prison wanting to enroll in college level programs; and (3) eligibility of all currently incarcerated people for work release programs.

We also provided support for Redemption Center which provides transitional housing for those coming home from prison. Redemption also hosts the Bedford Stuyvesant Quaker Worship Group, community AVP workshops, and Brooklyn Landing Strip meetings.

Robert Martin, Marvea Thompson co-clerks

Friends Committee for Black Concerns

The higher you build your barriers
The taller I become
The further you take my rights away
The faster I will run

from "Something Inside So Strong" by Labi Siffre

This year's Summer Sessions theme is Equality: Living into the Testimony, something our committee has been trying to do since its inception as the Race Relations Committee. Featured speakers will be Vanessa Julye and Donna McDaniel, co-authors of *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship: Quakers, African-Americans and the Myth of Racial Justice*. The NYYM Black Concerns Committee was acknowledged in this recently published comprehensive exploration of American Quakers and racial justice from the colonial period to the present. We were acknowledged for our work against racism. For years we have supported the research and publication of this important text with committee time, effort and funds. It is our committee's goal to promote book tours for Vanessa and Donna throughout NYYM. We hope that meetings will help us sponsor public book signings.

The Fit for Freedom Study Guide, published by Friends General Conference's Committee for Ministry on Racism and Wren Almitra is designed to help readers explore issues discussed in the book. It is filled with quotes, queries, and suggested activities. The guide can be used in meetings, reading groups, or individually. The Black Concerns Committee urges everyone to order the guide and the book. To do so visit www.fitforfreedom.org. or contact Quaker Books at FGC.

This year we will sponsor the Racial Healing worship group at Silver Bay which will be co-facilitated by Elizabeth Gordon, Vanessa

Julye and Donna McDaniel. During Summer Sessions we will continue to provide a safe space for Friends of Color to explore racial healing. Vanessa Julye facilitated the Friends of Color space at Silver Bay for the past two years, and she will do so again in 2009.

One of our priorities has been enhancing the multiracial character of the family of Friends. We support the Bedford Stuyvesant Worship Group which meets at Redemption in Central Brooklyn, New York, one of the largest Black neighborhoods in the United States. Redemption Center allows us to worship there rent free and we in turn have given money, time and energy to a physical space which still needs a lot of work. All the Bed-Stuy worship group meetings have been multiracial.

We continue to provide materials from the AFSC Youth & Militarism Program for distribution to Black and Latino inner city high schools and neighborhoods. *It's Your Life* is a publication that details alternative options to military service. 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 sent copies of *It's Your Life* to every monthly meeting in NYYM with a suggestion that they purchase additional copies from AFSC for distribution to economically poor inner city neighborhoods.

We encourage the ongoing work of White Friends Working to End Racism. They 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.

We highly recommend that meetings purchase copies of the *Anti-Racist Cookbook* which is a facilitators' guide for conversations about race. Many of our meetings have discussion groups and we think that this guide would be an excellent resource for monthly meetings, prison meetings, and worship groups. Our committee has purchased and distributed copies for White Friends Working to End Racism and for the NYYM Task Group on Racism.

Black Concerns 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. Research 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 continues to explore this situation, which is often referred to as "the new slavery."

The Black Concerns Committee welcomes the participation and support of concerned Friends in NYYM. If you are interested in work-

ing with any of our projects please contact us. For a financial report contact one of the coclerks.

Evelyn Kennenwood, Helen Garay Toppins, coclerks

Bolivian Quaker Education Fund

The Bolivian Quaker Education Fund had a good year. In Bolivia we have seen many scholarship recipients moving on to productive professional positions in the wider society with a number returning to share their skills in Quaker circles. We have sponsored two Quaker Bolivian English language teachers in gaining valuable experience in Friends education through facilitating internships this past school year at Carolina and Oakwood Friends Schools. We have purchased land and a building for an “Internado” or boarding home in Sorata where youth from outlying rural areas can stay and have access to a high school education. The AVP workshops have spread to four cities. Computers have been provided to two rural Quaker schools and internet access provided to three La Paz schools. This current year we are initiating a program of rural health services including medical and dental training, which will be implemented by ex-beccarios (scholarship recipients). Our local coordinator, Bernabé Yujra, has assembled committees to oversee these new programs as well as the old ones, so the organization in Bolivia is stronger and is increasingly recognized by Friends in Bolivia as an important factor in Bolivian Quakerism. For the remainder of this year, given the current economic downturn, BQEF has had to trim some valuable programs, and we are pinching pennies in others, but we still anticipate a year during which the overall program will gain in strength and stability. Nevertheless we have maintained staff compensation (in spite of 12–15% inflation in Bolivia). We expect to soon (finally) have legal status as a Bolivian not-for-profit organization.

In the US we continue to visit Friends gatherings, and we expect to have two more young Bolivian teachers working as interns in U.S. Quaker schools in 2009–2010. This past winter we have been helped by articles in *Friends World News* (London) and the newsletter of the Friends Council on Education (Philadelphia). We plan to increase both our electronic and postal mailings this year, in the belief that more Friends will support BQEF when they know about the programs.

We began the year with a cushion of funds, so we are not in a crisis. Rather we have a strong faith that things will come together if we go forward carefully and with a little extra effort. We are living

through a crisis, but our work is nurturing aspirations rather than responding to disaster. The aspirations are sparks of divinity, and it is a delight to see them grow into steady lights. That is why BQEF deserves our priority even in these times of crisis.

Jens Braun, clerk

Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War

2006-04-11. Karen Reixach (Rochester) presented the following minute from Alfred Monthly Meeting and approved by Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting, asking for New York Yearly Meeting's endorsement:

The Living Spirit works in the world to give life, joy, peace and prosperity through love, integrity and compassionate justice among people. We are united in this Power. We acknowledge that paying for war violates our religious conviction. We will seek ways to witness to this religious conviction in each of our communities.

The Yearly Meeting approves endorsing this minute and circulating it within the Yearly Meeting, to other Quaker bodies, and to our federal representatives. Individuals may feel led to include this minute with their tax forms.

According to the latest calculations by Friends Committee on National Legislation, 43 cents of every dollar in the federal budget pays for current or past wars. War-making is woven into the economic fabric of our nation. This committee works to help individuals discern how they are led on the matter of paying taxes and making investments they know will be used for destruction of lives and property, and connects with others nationally and internationally to build a movement of conscience.

Currently, the committee has seven members, an e-mail list of over 30 individuals within and beyond the yearly meeting, and five to ten participants on its regular conference calls. We were deeply saddened by the death of John Little Randall, whose faithful work in the United Nations and in Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI) has been picked up by others on the committee.

There has been some decline in active participation, perhaps because Friends are using other vehicles (CPTI, National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund (NCPTF), local meeting and regional committees, their own networks) to pursue the issue of not paying for

war. Individuals on the committee are active in working on judicial recognition of conscientious objection to paying for war, in continuing to raise the issue of COPW in international bodies, in pursuing governmental accommodation through the NCPTF and in promoting the movement of conscience. One member of our committee, David R. Bassett, together with Steve Ratzlaff, edited *A Persistent Voice: Marian Franz and Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation*, a book of essays by Marian Franz spanning the 23 years she spent lobbying Congress to enact the Peace Tax Fund Bill. This book is now in print and available.

We have changed strategy on publication of the amicus brief in the case of *Jenkins v. Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service*. Instead of adapting the amicus brief as a Pendle Hill pamphlet, we are now exploring reproducing it as a pamphlet in conjunction with British Friends' amicus brief on behalf of the Peace Tax Seven.

The committee is a source of information and support for those who are exploring questions of conscientious objection to paying for war. We continue to maintain the repository for statements of conscience.

Individual Friends have published their personal Statements of Conscience About Paying for War in their home meetings, in *Spark* and in local newspapers. Old Chatham Meeting has established files recording Statements of Conscience for young people in that meeting. Rochester has received statements of conscience from at least six members, and has held two workshops on preparing statements of conscience.

Some Friends have written Statements of Conscience About Paying for War as a private spiritual exercise in response to our work. Not all of these were brought to our attention.

Nadine Hoover and Dan Jenkins have written articles in *Friends Journal* over the past five years and the March, 2008, issue of *Friends Journal* was devoted to the theme of Conscientious War Tax Resistance to which several of our committee members contributed articles. Since the publication of that issue, all but two issues of *Friends Journal* have had letters or articles addressing this manner of witness. These, too, are Statements of Conscience About Paying for War.

At Silver Bay during NYYM Summer Sessions in 2007 and again in 2008, Friends were invited to write one-sentence, anonymous Statements of Conscience About Paying for War on an interactive display. Another interactive display was installed at Friends General Conference 2008 Gathering and yet another was put up in Washington, DC, in March, 2008, on a Lobbying Day by the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund. This interactive installation still exists on their Web

site and all are invited to contribute to it still, at: www.peacetaxfund.org/statementsofconscience4.htm.

At least 99 Statements of Conscience About Paying for War were collected in these interactive installations. Some were written by people who had already written others.

Some Friends have never submitted a Statement of Conscience to this committee and have borne this witness for decades and lifetimes, long predating the existence of this committee. Some Friends prefer to live below a taxable income level for this express reason but have never submitted Statements of Conscience. Some Friends are regular depositors to the Purchase Quarter Peace Tax Escrow Fund, rather than paying war taxes and write regularly to the government in explanation of why they are not paying their taxes in full. These, too, are Statements of Conscience.

Our committee work has led several members to work internationally with www.cpti.ws CPTI, or Conscience and Peace Tax International, which advocates for the recognition of the right not to pay for war as a human right, and also advocates for the recognition of the human right to conscientious objection to military service. This organization has made immediate the witness borne for the sake of conscience by people around the world and it has also brought home to members of this committee just how little of this penetrates through our major media to Americans.

One by one, the sufferings of people for the sake of faithfulness to the dictates of their conscience, whether in matters of war tax resistance, conscientious objection to military service, or other witness in obedience to conscience, borne by Quakers as well as people from many other faith traditions, are coming to our attention. It becomes more apparent that our manner of witness is less important than the testimony of peace each of us bears witness to when we take the opportunity.

Naomi Paz Greenberg, clerk

Friends Committee on National Legislation representatives

More than 200 Quakers from about 40 states gathered in Washington, DC, November 13–16 to approve the legislative priorities for the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) and plan strategies for promoting that agenda in the 111th Congress.

Veteran White House correspondent Helen Thomas, cautioned that the press and the public must remain vigilant and engaged with government to ensure that real change takes place. A panel of congressional staff offered specific strategies for building long-term relationships with members of Congress that can lead to policy change.

A major focus of the weekend was preventing a new war with Iran. More than 60 participants went to Capitol Hill on Thursday morning and urged legislators to support direct talks between the United States and Iran. On Friday evening of the annual meeting, author and journalist Barbara Slavin reviewed the history of missed opportunities for improving relations between the two countries and talked about the importance of people in the United States understanding the Iranian perspective.

Slavin and Rep. Wayne Gilchrest both noted FCNL's key role in preventing Congress from passing legislation that effectively called for an embargo on Iran, a step both said would have increased tensions to even more dangerous levels. Gilchrest, who received the Edward F. Snyder Award for National Legislative Leadership, urged members of the audience to continue their work to promote dialogue with Iran and to address climate change.

Among the specific results of the gathering were the following:

Participants agreed to lobby new and returning members of Congress to begin the long-term work of reducing military spending and shifting those resources to education, health care, and energy conservation;

In FCNL's 65th year, the Friends gathered this weekend set a goal of organizing 65 house parties to talk about FCNL's work and urge financial contributions;

After meeting in smaller groups by region, participants coordinated plans for action and change in their states;

Many discussions focused on how to channel the energy and enthusiasm generated by new voters in the 2008 election into lobbying for change in the next Congress.

The Annual Meeting of FCNL's General Committee brings together Quakers appointed by 26 yearly meetings and other Friends' organizations, as well as several dozen individual Friends chosen because they are particularly active on lobbying issues. New York Yearly Meeting

appoints six representatives to FCNL, whose charge is to attend the annual meeting in Washington and help make decisions about priorities and operations.

The principle item of business for this year's gathering was setting legislative priorities for the 111th Congress. Friends meetings and churches participated in the priorities-setting process this year by convening special sessions to discuss the issues most important to them. Their input was critical to establishing the priorities document that the General Committee approved on November 15. The final priorities document defines the core work of the staff and FCNL's network around the country for the next two years. Following guidelines set forth in the organization's mission statement, FCNL will work to persuade Congress to reduce the size of military budget, restore and assure full civil liberties and human rights to all persons in the United States, promote global security through active diplomacy, and take steps to protect the environment and reduce energy consumption.

A highlight of the meeting for most participants was the reunion of former interns on Saturday afternoon and evening. Former FCNL interns recounted their experiences at FCNL and since. The most talked-about session of the entire weekend occurred on Friday, when new interns spoke about their own personal journeys to FCNL and Washington.

The Friends Committee on National Legislation, the oldest registered religious lobby in Washington, is a non-partisan 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. For more information visit www.fcnl.org.

Jill McLellan, clerk, FCNL representatives

Friends Peace Teams representatives

No report submitted.

Committee on Indian Affairs

We looked forward, with great anticipation, to Henry Lickers' evening presentation to the Yearly Meeting at 2008 Spring Sessions. A member of the Seneca Nation and an environmental biologist, he was a wonderful speaker, talked about his growing up years, and provided endless information that engaged us all, particularly the young attenders. After his talk, a group of young people met with him around a campfire.

This past year a group of Native American people representing a "foundation" approached two Mohawk groups with whom we have ties and offered large sums of money to further much-needed programs. Through a personal visit by one of the committee, we were distressed to find out that these offers were actually veiled attempts at hostile takeovers. Ties with this foundation have been severed.

The Onondaga propose a radical new vision of property rights. They have approached their land rights action as a reconciliation process, not wanting to evict anyone. Sid Hill, the Tadodaho, or spiritual leader, said they know the pain of displacement all too well to inflict it on their neighbors. Against the backdrop of Euro-American thinking, which treats the land as a bundle of property rights, the Onondaga are asking for freedom to exercise their spiritual responsibility to the land. (This is unheard of in American property law.) They seek title not to exclude but for the purpose of ecological restoration—to have mines reclaimed, toxic waste removed, and Onondaga Lake cleaned up. The land rights action will enable the Onondaga to exercise their traditional role as stewards of their homelands, so the land can become whole and healthy.

Our outreach to Native American students seems firmly established as the stipend program continues with increased success. Students from all Nations and locations within the NYYM geographical area are able to reach out to us for assistance with modest stipends to pay for books, gas money or babysitters to enable them to continue their classes. Outreach for these stipends is in newsletters at Amerinda, American Indian Community House, Native American SUNY Western Consortium, and now recently the Seneca Nation has asked for information.

The Onondaga Community College Foundation announced the newest (2008–2009) Marjorie Sexton Memorial Scholarship recipient. His name is Shawn Christopher Darrow, Jr. and he is a member of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte Band. Enrolled at Onondaga Community College, he is studying the field of Criminal Justice, and plans to earn his associates degree and then transfer to LeMoyne College in Syracuse. His career goal is to become a police officer. We

look forward to meeting him over lunch this June.

We have significant contact with the Kanatsiohareke Mohawk community near Fonda, NY, which has just celebrated its 10th year of language immersion in Mohawk. Tom Porter reported that an 8-week summer program was taught by two teachers with eight enrolled students, four of them Ph.D people. Also with our help the American Indian Community House in Manhattan will be setting up a brand new educational program, which they have long needed, to access individual tutoring for GED preparation and give remedial assistance for college entrance exams. They will hire the instructor from their own pool of recent college graduates.

We continue our work with the AFSC Akwesasne Project, which strengthens Native American enterprise. Chrissie Rizzo, who keeps us informed at Summer Sessions, told us about how the Girl Guides came from Cornwall Island to discuss with Native families the importance of seeds and gardens. Everyone took home some open-pollinated non-hybrid seeds as well as tiny trees to plant on their family land. 153 families attended a cookout to eat healthy food they had grown—thus bringing their traditions and roots alive in passing these values to their children.

To further our charge, the committee is feeling led to reach out to and create better communication with all NYYM monthly meetings. We want to establish a connection, so that monthly meetings can share about their work with Native Americans near their homes, and we can encourage each other. What are Friends' concerns today, and how do they relate to Native Americans?

We welcome concerned Friends and others to come and work with us. We particularly invite young Friends and young adults to consider sharing their enthusiasm, energy and fresh ideas. We were thrilled when a group of young Friends joined us at our committee meeting in November of 2008. They suggested several projects that we might work on: having a youth fundraiser to help the Akwesasne Freedom School complete their high school building; having a youth work camp at the Akwesasne Freedom School; having a group of Yearly Meeting youth and Native Americans camp out together; or holding a joint JYM/Native American youth conference at Powell House.

We are willing to partner with the Yearly Meeting youth in realizing these plans and dreams, but we cannot undertake these actions as a committee. There is a need for leadership from within the Yearly Meeting to bring any plans to fruition. It will be important for all of us working on these ideas to stay in touch with one another. There is much to learn and contribute as we follow our leadings together.

Sybil Perry, clerk

Committee on Indian Affairs Financial Report for year 2008

Receipts

Levinus Painter & Mae Barton Funds	3,452.05
Lindley Murray Fund	1,500.00
Total, fund specific	4,952.05
Sharing Fund of NYYM	4,702.06
Other	300.00

Total receipts 9,954.11

Disbursements

Program

Henry Lickers, honorarium	500.00
Aid for Ctte/Witness work	99.79
Speaker's travel expenses	180.49

Total 780.28

Other, Contributions

American Indian Community House	1,375.00
Kanatsiohareke Mohawk community	1,800.00
Akwesasne Freedom School	1,800.00

Total 4,975.00

Donations, outside organizations

Blossom Garden Friends School	500.00
AFSC Akwesasne Project	2,100.00
FCNL Native American Project	1,300.00

Total 3,900.00

Scholarships/stipends

Stipend program

22 stipends to 9 students from 6 different nations studying at 9 different colleges	3,900.00
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Marjories Sexton Memorial Native

American Scholarship	1,500.00
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Total 5,400.00

Total dispersed funds \$15,055.28

balance on hand, December 31, 2008 \$ 1,323.43

Meeting the Minimum Needs of All

This MMNA advance report reflects concerns and queries raised at Peconic Bay Quaker Meeting, and at a spiritual discussion on “Reaching that of entrepreneurship in everyone: how can we have a spiritually informed economy?”

“Meet the Minimum Needs of All” (MMNA), seeks legitimate economic legs in the social design of the global political economy. Spiritual life would acknowledge that the solacing institutions of kindness and charity available in all religious practices are capable of alleviating suffering in some measure, but are not equal to the task of eliminating global poverty when it is intrinsic to global social design.

The recent global economic collapse, long in the making but experienced in 2008, has alerted consciousness to subject social design to intense scrutiny: must we confine the right to create a credit line to private banking? Doesn't their heritage of 'boom and bust' economic cycles and their provision to care only for the workers needed to keep the economy functioning, constitute cruel and inhuman treatment of those kept out and a hindrance to human progress?

Doesn't nature bestow each person with creativity and the will to satisfy, and should we not design anew, making provision for a “line of credit for each child at birth” through governments, by setting aside past errors in this context disallowing them to mature into a mistake?

Since “my own mind is my own church” (Thomas Paine), and “money exists not by nature but by law” (Aristotle, Ethics, 1133), human spirit is well endowed for the task, as we heed the query: What canst thou say? (George Fox).

In Peace,

Radh Achuthan, liaison

National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund & Peace Tax Foundation

No report submitted.

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, and this representation has proved fruitful for all member denominations. This past year Ernestine Buscemi has been the named representative and Linda Chidsey the alternate. The Collegium traditionally meets three times a year for business, with the December meeting preceded by a retreat.

In February 2008, 19 leaders from nine denominations met with Governor Spitzer and were impressed by his grasp of the issues discussed. We looked forward to working with him to advance Collegium priorities. Shortly after our visit, we were surprised to learn of Governor Spitzer's resignation, and outreach efforts began immediately to establish a relationship with the new Governor.

April 14–16, 2008 16 religious leaders representing seven denominations traveled to Washington for the 8th Annual Peace and Poverty Mission. We heard briefings by staff of denominational offices and met with NY members of Congress. Traditionally the entire delegation meets with the Senators and small groups meet with House members on the Committees that deal with our issues—immigration, Middle East, poverty, environment, human rights. Ernestine Buscemi, Fred Dettmer and Linda Chidsey represented NYYM Friends on this annual pilgrimage.

The Public Policy Commission met for its annual two day planning event in late October. It is here that Council priorities for the year are discerned and passed along to the Collegium for approval. The parable of Lazarus and the rich man provided the scriptural basis for our discussion and discernment. Participants Jay Lewis and Petero Sabune, prison chaplains at Fishkill and Sing-Sing respectively, spoke movingly to the group about their ongoing forgiveness and reconciliation work in Rwanda.

The December 2008 meeting was preceded by a retreat with the theme “A Thrill of Hope, the Weary World Rejoices...” The theme felt especially fitting given the recent presidential election. For three years Linda has served as convenor of the Collegium, with responsibility for planning or leading this event which is a time for nurture, networking, discernment and visioning. Collegium members reflected on the meaning of hope and their experience of rejoicing—in their own lives, the lives of their faith communities, in our society and in the wider world. The retreat included an overnight silence which extended through breakfast.

On March 26, 2009 Linda Chidsey and Heather Cook, assistant clerk, attended this year's meeting with Governor Paterson where we were warmly received. The governor was well briefed and sympathetic with the issues we brought to discuss—hunger/poverty, budget decisions, criminal justice and health care. At the same time, he spoke of the State's need to cut costs and the difficulties this would pose for so many. Meetings with Assembly Majority Leader Canestrari and two officials in the Senate Majority Leader Smith's office were also encouraging in terms of willingness to work together. This being said, no one downplayed the severity of these economic times.

Both the Public Policy Commission and the Collegium's gatherings this past year have been marked by a deeper sense of listening as well as grounding in scripture and prayer. In the midst of grave budgetary concerns, there is a robust sense of hope as well as the commitment to peacemaking and ongoing work on behalf of "the least of these."

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

Peace Concerns Coordinator

2008/2009 has been a time of great openings and surprises; of blessings and challenges; of hopes and dreams born and realized. I am now in my second year as your Peace Concerns coordinator. I am both grateful for the work and humbled by the trust that you have placed in me. When Witness Coordinating Committee first envisioned this work it was to be the work of networking and lifting up the work of peacemaking being done throughout our yearly meeting by individuals, meetings, and regions. I have worked hard to live into that work and have now had the great privilege of meeting with and talking to many Friends across our yearly meeting who are deeply involved in the work of peacemaking. There are still many to talk with and many links to be made. Above all, I try to let it be known that I am available and hope that you will call upon me to come to visit with your meeting or quarter or region or just call me.

I frequently find myself in a place of lifting up the work; of helping us, as a yearly meeting; as Friends; to be open to the work of peacemaking in light of our testimonies. Of helping us to remember that the work of peacemaking begins in our hearts and minds and souls. Of raising up and talking about those things that we prefer not to speak of. Work for justice, for equality for all, is the work of peacemaking and is often the crux of earnest questioning in meetings. On several occa-

sions I have met with meetings, quarters and regions and created and facilitated programs and depth discussions around difficult issues.

In January the Yearly Meeting sent me as a representative to Philadelphia to attend a gathering called “Heeding God’s Call: A Gathering on Peace.” The gathering was created by the historic peace churches; Friends, Mennonites, and Brethren and brought together over three hundred in an ecumenical gathering. We met for almost a week and each day heard powerful plenary speakers and panel discussions. We shared workshops and smaller gatherings. It was a time of coming together. A time of gathering. A time of beginning. I felt the power of the Spirit grow among us and draw us together as the week drew to it’s climax. We have begun. Where the path will lead is still unknown. I believe that it will take significant effort to sustain this ecumenical path to peacemaking while I simultaneously acknowledge that the simple act of working together is peacemaking.

In 2008, as Russia and the Republic of Georgia were in armed conflict, our general secretary, Christopher Sammond and Heather Cook, NYYM assistant clerk, sent a letter of support to Tbilisi Friends Worship Group in the Republic of Georgia. Friends in Tbilisi responded enthusiastically that they were happy to have our support and, could we please help them with aid for refugees and to learn conflict transformation skills. Ultimately, I was asked, in my role as Peace Concerns coordinator to step into this work. The story is long and wonderful. I corresponded with Mikheil Elizbarashvili, clerk of Tbilisi Friends Worship Group. I have been deeply moved by what I learned. This tiny group of seven Friends and seven “friends of Friends” had been clear that they were led to actively help to care for the then 62,000 refugees in the Republic of Georgia and to undertake the work of finding a way to bring conflict transformation skills to their people. I studied the Republic of Georgia’s long and war torn history and acknowledged wonder at the willingness and the faithfulness of this undertaking. I worked at length with Witness Coordinating Committee and World Ministries Committee to coordinate a trip to Tbilisi in the end of January 2009. On that trip, I carried \$3,000 of NYYM funds which was dispersed to aid refugees.

From 1995 to 2002 an Alternatives to Violence Projects facilitator, paid by the United Nations had been active in Georgia. This UN employee had trained Georgians as AVP facilitators and then paid them to facilitate workshops. When she left and funding ended, so did AVP workshops. I met with two former Alternatives to Violence Project facilitators, Maia Gonjilashvili and Ketevan Chigogidze who had not done AVP work since 2002. After long talks, and much laughter I felt clear that they truly understand the core principals of AVP and we

agreed to work together. Maia and Kete are clear that new facilitators should not be paid as they agree that that appears to be the only viable path to a long term sustainable AVP network. I have committed to return to the Republic of Georgia this fall to continue this work. Friends in the Republic of Georgia, (Georgia is known as Sakartvelo to her people) are clear that I have come to them as a representative of New York Yearly Meeting and express their thanks and gratitude to you all.

As New York Yearly Meeting's Peace Concerns coordinator I am excited by the work that we are doing. We have not lost sight of concerns of racism, or of sexism, we continue to work with prisoners and those less fortunate than ourselves, we labor together for understanding of and clarity around issues that seem foreign to us like the FUM hiring policy. We remain open to looking deep within ourselves as individuals; as monthly, quarterly, regional, and as a yearly meeting to confront those "isms" that remain deeply and silently seated in our midst. I am inspired by the faithful and dynamic Friends of Tbilisi Friends Worship Group and feel clear that the work that we do in Sakartvelo helps to feed and open the work that we do here at home. We are fed and uplifted in our own strengths as our weaknesses open to us and as we look deeper into our own hearts as we do the work of peacemaking in NYYM.

Greta Mickey, Peace Concerns coordinator

Prisons Committee

Light Inside and Outside the Walls

For the past two years we have shared with you that Quaker prison worship group members were not only coming home in increasing numbers but staying connected with Friends. We are delighted that they walk hand and hand with Friends as they worship with us and participate in Prisons Committee business.

At Spring Sessions, Friends approved that the Clerk and the general secretary write a cover letter for the minute on parole to be sent to officials identified by the Prisons Committee and to faith-based communities urging for a more humane parole policy. The letter will address the following parole concerns:

1. Definitive parole release criteria should be established that eliminates arbitrary release decision-making and establishes specific things a person must accomplish to be released.

2. Parole preparation should begin at the beginning of a sentence.
3. Based on the pre-sentence report, a program prescription should be formulated for the person to accomplish while they are going to be in prison.
4. If a person completes the prescribed program, all other things being equal, the person should be “presumed” to be granted parole.
5. A comprehensive risk assessment instrument, including the release criteria, should be created to measure progress and evaluate release eligibility.

The NYYM Prisons Committee is involved in an ongoing discussion concerning membership procedures in NYYM for those attending our prison preparative meetings. There still seems to be some confusion about what it means to be a member of a prison preparative meeting and how that relates, or does not relate, to applying for membership in the Religious Society of Friends. This discussion is ongoing and we welcome comments and opinions from NYYM members and attenders.

As a committee we continue to focus on the lack of affordable safe housing for those returning home. We continue to support the Redemption Center, which was founded by Mark Graham in 2007. Mark served 22 years and was active in Quaker prison worship groups in Otisville, Eastern, Sing Sing, and Green Haven.

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 facility needs a lot of work. The basement needs to be renovated. The backyard needs plantings. Redemption needs cleaning supplies, twin sheets, pillowcases, towels, and personal hygiene items for men. Please let Mark know if you can help in any way. You can call him at 718-922-1627 or e-mail him at mgraham@theredemptioncenter.net. Redemption’s potluck birthday party will be held on July 5. Redemption will be two years old! The center is located at 1186 Herkimer Street, Brooklyn NY 11233.

The clerk of NYYM, in conjunction with Prisons Committee members and NYYM staff, once again sent Christmas cards to current and former members of our prison worship groups. The response was uplifting. For many of the men, the Christmas card from our yearly meeting was the only correspondence that they had received during the holiday season. We are also contacting our prison worship group members inviting them to send in their ideas and suggestions to the White House Criminal Justice Summit Planning Committee.

Those that worship with us behind the walls tell us that Quaker prison meetings provide a safe haven and a foundation for positive life changes. 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 us. The Prisons Committee needs you!

Jolene Festa and Helen Garay Toppins, coclerks

Committee for Right Sharing of World Resources

Where is Right Sharing now? Physically, the office is in Richmond, Indiana (address below). Programmatically, Right Sharing is exploring some new territory. Our long-term relationship with Dr. Kannan of the Madurai Institute of Peace Science has moved to a new level: we have hired him to serve as our field staff in India. Dr. Kannan has pioneered a new aspect of our work, that of training the leaders of new, small non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on how to develop viable projects and get funding for them. He reports in the second-quarter, 2009, issue of Right Sharing News (http://www.rswr.org/newsletter/pdf/2009_2.pdf) on some of the reasons this training is badly needed and on the results of offering it.

Right Sharing is in the midst of a capital campaign that will allow us to establish in-country staff arrangements in Kenya (negotiations underway) and Sierra Leone (in future). It will also permit us to make better use of the Internet to bring our message to more people. Currently, RSWR is supporting some 30 small NGOs in India, Kenya and Sierra Leone, each of which is supporting 50 to 100 of the very poorest people on earth through microcredit. RSWR makes grants to its NGO partners, and the partners make loans to the people, usually women, with whom they work. Because these loans revolve within the NGO, each grant from RSWR eventually will reach hundreds of people.

The contact information is: Right Sharing of World Resources, 101 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond, Indiana 47374, phone 765-966-0314, FAX 765-966-0325, e-mail: rswr@rswr.org, www.rswr.org.

Mary Eagleson, 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 ten 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, and an annual financial contribution.

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 summer day camps in Dutchess, Columbia, and Sullivan Counties, and the 19th annual week-long Leadership Camp. A Walk-a-Thon, to raise money for the 2009 Leadership Camp, was held on June 6 at St. James Episcopal Church, Hyde Park.
- The Sowing Seeds for Justice Dinner, a celebration and fundraiser, was held at Riverside Church in New York City on October 18.
- RMM’s Western NY Film Festival, a monthly film series focused on the lives of migrants, immigrants, and refugees, was held in Batavia from October 2008 to January 2009. Films viewed and discussed included *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Stolen Childhoods*, *The Guestworker*, *The Invisible Mexicans of Deer Canyon*, and *The Invisible Chapel*.
- Destiny, RMM’s annual Rural Women’s Conference, was held December 5 and 6 in Binghamton. Sandy Oxford, social activist and union organizer for the United Food and Commercial Workers, and Terri Gerstein, the New York State deputy commissioner of Labor for Wage Protection and Immigrant Services, were featured speakers.
- The 6th annual Youth Arts Group “Just Us” Youth Conference

was held at Vassar College 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 Day, featuring press conferences, processions, vigils, and legislative lobbying in support of the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act (A7528/S3884), was held in Albany on May 12. Kerry Kennedy was the keynote speaker at the opening convocation.

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

Torture Awareness Working Group

The Torture Awareness Working Group continues to work on ending U.S. sponsored torture.

At Summer Sessions NYYM approved a strong minute on torture. Following its approval a group of Friends gathered to read the minute for a video which has been posted on YouTube. Both the minute and the video can be viewed by going to the NYYM Web site.

NYYM also approved endorsing the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT), www.nrcat.org, which President Obama signed shortly after his inauguration.

At Spring Sessions NYYM approved signing endorsing NRCAT's Call for an impartial, nonpartisan and independent Commission of Inquiry to investigate U.S. sponsored torture, its causes, nature and scope. Individual Friends and monthly meetings were also encouraged to endorse this call.

NRCAT continues to hold monthly conference calls in which we participate as representatives of NYYM. These calls describe the work of NRCAT, its campaigns, legislative work and how we as members can participate. We are heartened by the number of monthly meetings across the U.S. who are participating in the calls.

June 2009 was once again Torture Awareness Month and we were encouraged to display banners and engage in some activity to raise awareness in our communities of this important issue.

We continue to work to involve more Friends in this issue. Check the NRCAT Web site regularly to find out you and your meetings can

work with people of faith throughout the U.S., our President, our attorney general, and our legislators to end torture.

Patricia Chernoff, clerk

William Penn House

I attend the annual National Consultative meeting in November, and I continue to be inspired by the William Penn House staff and the work they do.

Following are excerpts, slightly edited, from the report of Byron Sandford, the House's executive director:

Through our doors pass the most extraordinary cross sections of the world population: young people on school trips, Washington Quaker Workcampers seeking the transformative experience of service; people of all ages who are engaging their elected representatives in their efforts to transform society; families and individuals who come as tourists to experience the culture and history of this wonderful city. We have a tremendous opportunity to serve.

During one period we hosted the fourth grade class from Plymouth Meeting Friends School whose teacher, Will Starr, has brought his classes annually for 21 years; two groups of women, many retired, who were lobbying Congress to control nuclear technology; eighth graders from Thornton Friends School who were engaged with Washington Quaker Workcamps on issues of hunger and homelessness; and a group of developmentally challenged young people and their sponsors from England who were completing a six-weeks tour of the U.S.

We administer Washington Quaker Workcamps, which offers service opportunities in New Orleans, the hamlets of West Virginia, and inner-city Washington. We work with Capitol Hill Village, which helps the elderly to be secure as they "age in place"; we feed the homeless, transform parks, and work with other agencies to reduce storm runoff by building rain gardens. We study and seek to reuse, recycle and improve our ecology.

Through our programs, we address issues related to peace, social justice, global warming and the environment. We seek to improve dialogue on gender and HIV/AIDS. We prepare seminars on human rights, lobbying and greening existing buildings. Through our monthly Potluck and Dialogues series we are engaged in the lives of our fellow Quakers and other activists who share their leadings with area Friends.

And we host young and old, activists and tourists, U.S. and interna-

tional travelers, groups and individuals, who are drawn to the District of Columbia for many reasons and who seek a safe, comfortable, affordable and convenient place to stay.

The staff of William Penn House reflects the concept of service and dedication that makes this place so special. On our current staff are Greg Woods, a recent graduate of Earlham College whose life was transformed through his high school service with an AFSC work camp; Faith Kelley, an Evangelical Friend who has worked with Friends to develop dialogue and opportunities among Quaker youth; Wambani Lusinaka, a Kenyan Quaker completing her master’s degree so that she can return to Kenya to help improve the lives of women there; Ben Self, also a recent Earlham graduate who was raised overseas and is engaged in all of our programs as he prepares to continue his education; and Kelli Mansure, a future psychologist who savors each moment of life. Helping to provide opportunities for growth and exploration is Brad Ogilvie, who has taken his life-challenging illness as catalyst to seek unity and dialogue among all people of faith on issues that are too controversial for most. Patricia Newkirk, anchor and staff member extraordinaire, moved to Seattle at the end of the year to enjoy her first grandchild.

This chart puts numbers to our service:

Detail of activities in 2008

2008	groups hosted	workcamps held	programs held	potlucks & dialogue	monthly occupancy	beds occupied
January	0	0	0	1	45%	419
February	5	1	2	1	70%	588
March	10	2	2	1	89%	828
April	7	3	1	1	87%	783
May	6	3	1	1	81%	753
June	5	5	2	1	86%	774
July	3	2	2	0	67%	623
August	5	3	1	1	82%	763
September	6	3	5	1	84%	756
October	8	3	1	1	61%	567
November	4	0	0	1	52%	406
December	4	0	1	1	39%	293
Total	63	25	18	11	70%	7,552

In-house efforts to reduce our carbon footprint have included installation of a highly efficient furnace, fluorescent light, plumbing fixtures

that use less water, and ceiling fans. We have landscaped the front with native plants and, with the help of young people, transformed our ratty backyard into a rain garden of beauty and simplicity. We are currently seeking bids and funding to install a vegetated roof on our Carriage House to reduce runoff into the troubled Anacostia River.

And by following the Quaker testimonies of simplicity and integrity we seek to provide all these services with a balanced budget:

If you or a group you know are planning a trip to Washington, please consider using William Penn House as your base of operations.

Ronald Inskip, William Penn House representative

Committee on World Ministries

2008 was a difficult year for the World Ministries Committee. The year started on a promising note, when the new clerk, John Randall, brought careful and detailed information to the meeting of the committee at spring sessions, and we were able to complete all the pending business. Within a month, however, John died and there was difficulty finding a Friend to succeed him. His example was daunting. At summer sessions Newton Garver agreed to clerk the committee, and some seasoned Friends were added to the roster. Subsequent scheduled meetings, however, were only minimally productive. At the meeting when he became clerk, for example, he was the only named member of the committee present, and his appointment was therefore made by the WCC rather than by the WMC itself. Attendance was comparable at a second meeting at summer sessions and at the scheduled meeting at fall sessions in Troy. By the time of fall sessions there were substantial funding requests pending. The group assembled therefore decided to act as the WMC and approved various well-seasoned requests.

To deal with the problem of conflict of committee meeting times, the clerk intends to schedule the next few meeting for teleconference calls. By that means we should nearly eliminate scheduling conflicts and greatly reduce traveling costs. The downside will be the loss of face-to-face meetings. We will see how it works.

During summer sessions the WCC asked WMC to take the task group on Meeting the Minimum Needs of All under its wing. Action on that request is still pending.

Finances. WMC receives funds from the Sharing Fund and from the NYYM Trustees, the latter being income from trusts established for ministry (largely overseas ministry) prior to the reunification of the the yearly meeting. As of January 1, 2008, WMC had a \$17,114.85

credit balance and received an additional \$10,801.63 in the early months of the year. Grants of \$19,900 were disbursed in the first ten months of the year, as a result of actions taken at spring sessions. As a result of additional income (mainly from the Trustees) the balance at our disposal at the time of the fall sessions in Troy NY was \$20,797.66. At that meeting nine grants were approved for a total of \$20,500, leaving a disposable balance at the end of the year of \$297.66. (NOTE: Since the disbursements were not actually made until January of 2009, this disposable balance differs from the balance in the Treasurer's report.)

Newton Garver, clerk

Liaison Committee

The Liaison Committee consists of the clerk, assistant clerk, and general secretary of the Yearly Meeting, along with the clerks of the four sections: Ministry, General Services, Nurture and Witness. The Liaison Committee expands during Summer Sessions getting additional assists from our reading and recording clerks. I see the Liaison Committee purpose covering four major areas of life in New York Yearly Meeting:

1. Connecting, building relationships and grounding the work before us in prayer.
2. Discerning how to deepen our NYYM meeting for worship with attention to business.
3. Communicating with one another as we each listen and feel the life of the Spirit in our committees as well as around the Yearly Meeting.
4. Learning how to acknowledge the needs (right order, good clerking, committee responsibilities...) as we discern the gifts and challenges of our committees.

The Liaison Committee seeks way forward that engages New York Yearly Meeting to connect, wait, listen, discern and answer the call of the Divine's guidance.

Ernestine Buscemi, clerk