

NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING
Minutes of the 311th Session, Summer 2006

Sunday, July 23, 2006, 7:00 P.M.

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

2006-07-1. Friends gathered in song. Clerk Linda Chidsey welcomed Friends to the 311th Summer Sessions of New York Yearly Meeting and invited us to remember those who were not physically present. She introduced those at the clerks' table and pointed to this year's theme, "Unleashing the Blessed Community." She invited all present to go deep together, to open our hearts to God and to one another, and to rejoice and give thanks for the presence of the Blessed Community.

2006-07-2. Christine DeRoller (Old Chatham), Kristin Morgan-Davie (Mohawk Valley), Rosie Stillman (Montclair), Helen Staab (Purchase), and Eva Tsocanos (Wilton) led us in worship with song and silent prayer. Friends celebrated the presence of young, "wiggly" Friends, old, seasoned Friends, and everyone in between. Out of the silence, Margaret Obermayer (Binghamton Community) spoke to her vision of the blessed community and how she has experienced it in her own life. Returning to silent worship, Friends spoke to her message.

2006-07-3. The Clerk introduced Kathleen Lawson (New Brunswick), clerk of Junior Yearly Meeting Committee, who introduced this year's coordinators: Roseann Press (Housatonic), Martha Gurvich (Wilton), and Jennifer Lindop (Saratoga). Roseann Press explained the organization of the program. Then she and Martha Gurvich introduced the volunteers for each age group.

2006-07-4. The evening closed in silent worship, after which first-time attenders were invited to gather with the leadership of the Yearly Meeting for information and to ask questions.

Monday, July 24, 2006, 10:45 A.M.

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

2006-07-5. Friends gathered in silent worship. Linda Chidsey, Clerk, introduced those at the clerks' table. The Clerk spoke to the spiritual basis of Friends' practices and how we have worked to recover and reclaim our testimonies and practices since September 11, 2001. That day was a defining moment in the experience of the Yearly Meeting. In the years since, we have discovered

2006 Summer Session Minutes 2

again the precious importance of Friends' work in the world, as we relearn how to "live peace" in our families, our meetings, and the wider world.

2006-07-6. The Clerk reviewed the business of the week. She urged us to be mindful of good practice and open to joy.

2006-07-7. The reading clerk called the roll by regional and quarterly meetings and their constituent monthly meetings and worship groups. Friends rose in response.

2006-07-8. The Clerk introduced Christopher Sammond (Bulls Head-Oswego) of the Child Safety Task Group, who called our attention to the safety of our children at annual sessions beyond the hours when JYM meets. We must not imagine our time at Silver Bay as Brigadoon, a world kept safe by magic. Our children's safety from abuse, even here, depends on our willingness to be aware and to accept responsibility for the safety of all. Whenever we act, we should act out of prudence, not fear.

2006-07-9. The Clerk introduced Martin Fink, the new executive director of Silver Bay, who welcomed Friends to the special beauty of Lake George and the legacy of Silver Bay.

2006-07-10. The Clerk introduced Christine (Chrissie) Rizzo, the program director of the Upper New York State Area Office of the Middle Atlantic Region of the American Friends Service Committee, who introduced Clinton Pettus, the regional director of AFSC's Middle Atlantic Region. The Clerk also introduced Martin Beer, Kendal Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting; Eden and James Grace, from Friends United Meeting field staff in Kenya; and Erin Potter and Nicole Cousino of AFSC's New York City office, bringing us the Eyes Wide Open project which will be set up today on the lawn.

2006-07-11. The reading clerk read from a letter from Friends World Committee for Consultation introducing Sharon Frame, a member of Gwynedd Monthly Meeting of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, who is now on the staff of FWCC. Sharon wrote in her own letter of introduction that the experience of working with Vicki Cooley was one of the strong influences on her development as a Quaker. The reading clerk also read a letter of introduction from Gwynedd Monthly Meeting for Caroline Moon, who is traveling with Sharon.

2006-07-12. The reading clerk read a letter of introduction from Friends General Conference for Deborah Haines, who is attending our annual sessions as an FGC Yearly Meeting visitor.

2006-07-13. Introducing themselves from the floor were Cathy Sawyer from Friends United Meeting; Liberty Goodwin and Paul Klinkman, Smithfield Monthly Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting; and Vanessa Julye, Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

2006-07-14. The Clerk then turned the meeting over to Heather Cook (Chatham-Summit), Bowen Alpern (Scarsdale), and Annie Bancroft (Butternuts), members of the Coordinating

Committee on Ministry and Counsel, who read the State of the Society Report for 2005. Fifty-three reports from monthly meetings, preparative meetings, summer meetings, and worship groups contributed to the Yearly Meeting report, out of a possible total of 86. Friends received the State of Society Report and spoke in response.

2006-07-15. The minutes for Sunday evening and this morning were read and approved.

2006-07-16. Meeting ended in silent worship.

Monday, July 24, 2006, 8:15 P.M.

*Linda Chidsey, Clerk
Ernestine Buscemi, Assistant Clerk
Melanie-Claire Mallison, Recording Clerk
Anne Wright, Reading Clerk*

2006-07-17. Friends gathered in worship.

2006-07-18. Out of the silence, the reading clerk read a memorial for George Marvin Clark Jr., who died on July 1, 2005, at the age of 82. Marvin began life in Texas, where he studied mechanical engineering and joined the navy. He became a convinced pacifist at the time of the Kent State shootings. Marvin came to work at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y., and joined the Albany Monthly Meeting, becoming active in dispute mediation and the abolition of nuclear weapons. He was once arrested for praying for Richard Nixon on the sidewalk of the White House. Marvin and his wife, Sue, traveled extensively working against nuclear proliferation. A committee they formed for global demilitarization was instrumental in abolishing the military in Haiti. Marvin also enjoyed the natural world, spending time in the woods of Petersburg, N.Y. Out of the worship, Friends spoke of Marvin's welcoming presence, skill with ice cream, and willingness to listen closely to the movement of the ice on Lake George.

2006-07-19. The Clerk welcomed us to the evening session, introduced those at the clerks' table, and turned over clerking to Ernestine (Ernie) Buscemi. Ernie introduced Deborah B. Wood (Purchase), clerk of the Coordinating Committee for Ministry and Counsel. Debby in turn introduced Lee Haring (Bulls Head-Oswego), who brought the first reading of the revised Query #9, for the NYYM *Faith and Practice*.

Do we participate actively and intelligently in the political life of our country? Are we conscientious in fulfilling all obligations of state and society that are not contrary to the leading of God? Do we do all in our power to secure civil rights for all? Do we emphasize the single standard of truth, and are we free from the use of oaths? Do we exert influence for such treatment of prisoners as may help reconstruct their lives? Do we work for the abolition of the death penalty? Do we do all we can to see that our governmental practices respect the divine potential within every person?

Friends spoke to the revision and approved this first reading.

2006-07-20. Debby introduced Joanna Komoska (Peconic Bay), for the Committee on Conflict Transformation. Joanna reminded us that three years ago, NYYM approved the creation of a committee on conflict transformation (minute 30 of July 20, 2003), minuting that the Coordinating Committee for Ministry and Counsel would evaluate the need for the proposed committee toward the end of three years. Joanna summarized the work of the six-member committee since then, including the presentation of educational and experiential workshops to every level of NYYM Friends. The committee has developed materials on conflict transformation and distributed them widely. A measure of the committee's impact has been the trust given their work, as evidenced by recent requests from monthly meetings.

Friends approved the Committee on Conflict Transformation as a standing committee with six to eight members, with the purposes set forth in minute 30 of July 20, 2003.

2006-07-21. The assistant clerk introduced Christopher Sammond, NYYM general secretary. Christopher noted that one can never hear too much good news and pointed to the growth of our yearly meeting over the past year. He also noted that membership is but one measure of growth. Equally important are the energy and initiatives of NYYM Friends. Christopher then reported on many indications of new growth and vitality in Quaker work: new monthly meeting committees on advancement, programs for outreach and spiritual nurture, expansion of the Alternatives to Violence Project, and the power of a "testimony of freedom" developed by a prison worship group. Christopher urged us to take these examples and go further. We as a yearly meeting need to come to a common understanding of who we are, where we are going, and how God is calling us. We need to listen to our children and teach them the substance of our faith. We lose energy when we do not face and resolve conflict. We need to welcome and encourage newcomers. We are called to be one body, to burn brightly together. Now.

Friends received this report. Our assistant clerk asked us to sit with and take responsibility for the words spoken. She asked that we carry home both the good news and the challenges. We are one.

2006-07-22. The reading clerk read a travel minute for Ann Davidson, from Farmington Friends Meeting, endorsed by Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting, to the United Society of Friends Women in Kenya. Ann will attend workshops and conferences in Kenya in December. Friends instructed the NYYM clerk to endorse this minute.

2006-07-23. The reading clerk read a travel minute for Susan Regen, from Rochester Monthly Meeting, endorsed by Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting. Sue works with Friends on forgiveness as a spiritual practice. Rochester Monthly Meeting has appointed a support committee for Sue and has established a fund to support her ministry. Friends instructed the NYYM clerk to endorse this minute.

2006-07-24. The reading clerk read a travel minute for Mary Rothschild from Brooklyn Monthly Meeting, endorsed by New York Quarterly Meeting. Mary travels with a concern for parenting and healthy choices in media use for children. Friends instructed the clerk to endorse this minute.

2006-07-25. The minutes of the evening session were read and approved. Friends settled back into deep spirit-fed worship.

Tuesday, July 25, 10:15 A.M.

*Linda Chidsey, Clerk
Ernestine Buscemi, Assistant Clerk
Lee Haring, Recording Clerk
Rima Segal, Reading Clerk*

2006-07-26. Friends gathered quietly in worship.

2006-07-27. The reading clerk read a memorial minute for Victoria Baker (Vicki) Cooley, member of Central Finger Lakes Meeting and a former clerk of the Yearly Meeting. Vicki joined Friends as a graduate student at the University of Virginia, where she met John Cooley. After their marriage they settled in Rochester, New York, and raised their four Quaker children. There and in their subsequent home at Dundee, New York, Vicki was central to the life and activities of Friends, in the Yearly Meeting, the American Friends Service Committee, and the Alternatives to Violence Project. She helped form the Worship and Action for Peace Working Group after September 2001. She was also a gifted facilitator of AVP workshops inside prisons and an active prison visitor. Her work and pursuit of truth were grounded in worship; her every encounter, in every place, became an opportunity to connect with God. "We meet to worship," she wrote, "to seek love and truth, to rise up changed." Facing death from cancer, she remained focused on living to the end, and witnessing the commitment she expressed in the sentence, "I do not want to be dismissive in my attitude toward anyone, ever." Many Friends spoke tributes to the blessings that they received from knowing Vicki Cooley.

2006-07-28. The Clerk introduced Sebastian Tsocanos and Ana Oltman, reporting for the high school group of Junior Yearly Meeting. A "Quakerism 101" course, Original Play, a mini-mini-workshop of AVP, and contact with the Circle of Young Friends have been part of their program so far, and more activities are to come.

2006-07-29. The Clerk called on Deborah Haines, a Yearly Meeting visitor from Friends General Conference, who greeted Friends.

2006-07-30. Melanie-Claire Mallison, clerk of the Nurture Coordinating Committee, reminded Friends that this section is active and in need of new members. She introduced Herbert Lape (Westbury) to report for the Advancement Committee. This committee had a challenging year but has managed to initiate a youth intern program, in which Margaret Obermayer has participated with Long Island Quarter for three weeks, supporting youth in their faith journey.

Advancement also has provided grants to prison worship groups and helped support Quaker booths at a Social Justice Fair in New York City and at the Clearwater Great Hudson River Revival. The committee is carefully considering the balance of its various responsibilities, while continuing to give grants from the Lockport-Brinkerhoff Fund, the Lafayette Fund, and the Leach Fund.

2006-07-31. Melanie-Claire introduced Eden and James Grace, who live and work in Kenya as international staff of Friends United Meeting. Eden Grace described the large numbers of Quakers among the Luhya people of western Kenya and the six projects FUM is directly overseeing there. James Grace added details of their staffing and work. Three snapshots: Kenyan Friends raised funds to help Friends in Uganda, who are much poorer; Kaimosi Hospital, now in disrepair, has been taken over by FUM; in Samburu, the Friends Mission operates a health clinic to which everybody, both Samburu and the rival Pokot group, comes on Wednesday. On that day, a local preacher preaches peace; his message and the clinic itself are having beneficial effects on both groups.

2006-07-32. Carol Holmes reported as one of our representatives to the board of Friends United Meeting. She confessed that her differences with Quakers from pastoral meetings have challenged her from the beginning of her service. She reviewed the long history of FUM work in Palestine, so worthy of support in these difficult days; FUM work in the Caribbean; and the sending of funds to Friends in Cuba, where FUM serves as a bridge. Carol pointed to FUM work overseas as carrying out concerns expressed in our minute of April 20, 2006. In conclusion she provided a questionnaire that will allow us to express our views of FUM. At present the board of FUM is waiting, in tension and humility, for further wisdom about unresolved issues within the organization, including its personnel policy.

2006-07-33. The minutes of the session were read and approved.

2006-07-34. Friends ended the session in worship.

Wednesday, July 26, 10:15 A.M.

Linda Chidsey, Clerk
Ernestine Buscemi, Assistant Clerk
Karen Way, Recording Clerk
Anne Wright, Recording Clerk

2006-07-35. Friends gathered in silent worship.

2006-07-36. Anne Wright, reading clerk, read a memorial minute for Jean M. Cary of Easton Monthly Meeting and Northeast Regional Meeting. Born into a Quaker family of long lineage, Jean met her future husband at 16 at a Friends' camp and served as cook in the Civilian Public Service camp where he served in 1944 as a conscientious objector. In their five decades of marriage, they produced four children, ran a dairy farm, and built a rich family life filled with

Quaker activity. With a B.A. from Earlham, a master's from Russell Sage, and a career in teaching, Jean served at all levels of Quaker activity, clerking her monthly and regional meetings and serving on yearly meeting committees. She was a seasoned Friend who had the skill of creating and sustaining community. Easton Friends wrote, "Even in her absence, she continues to be an integral part of our worship." Friends spoke to her rare genius in connecting past and present, young and old, stranger and friend. Her generosity of spirit touched many.

2006-07-37. Eva Tsocanos and Allie Meikle (both of Wilton Meeting) read names of children absent from their groups and reported on the activities of the 7th and 8th Grade group. After worship each day, the group has sought a personal understanding of Quaker testimonies through discussion and games. They have drummed together, played together, and ended each day's session with the Roses and Thorns, a telling of the highs and lows of that session's experience.

2006-07-38. Anita Paul, clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee, introduced Frederick Dettmer (Purchase), who outlined the status of Daniel Jenkins's brief, submitted May 31, and NYYM's *amicus curiae* brief, submitted June 6. Fred introduced James Hamilton (Wilton), who outlined the content of the brief. Based on the theology of opposing war, the brief supports the nonpayment of war taxes for religious reasons. The responding brief from the commissioner of Internal Revenue is due July 31. There will be a reply brief from Dan Jenkins in August, and most likely the case will be argued to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in the fall. The work of the brief has taken many hours of work by a number of dedicated Friends.

Fred Dettmer also spoke to the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which was passed by Congress in 1993. The act was intended to balance the needs of a government to require support from citizens uniformly against requests for exception from individual citizens based on religious conscience. A recent Supreme Court decision opens the possibility that decisions about granting such exceptions will be considered one by one rather than dismissed as a group. The Clerk drew our attention to the fact that the filing of the amicus brief enacts our most basic testimony.

2006-07-39. Anita then introduced Steven Taylor-Roth (Albany), clerk of the Prisons Committee, who announced the formation of a new worship group in Fishkill Correctional Facility. He invited Friends to join this group in worship whenever possible.

2006-07-40. Anita reported on her experience as a delegate to the Quaker Initiative Against Torture (QUIT) conference held in June. She described the painful discovery that the United States government has been practicing torture as well as teaching it to Americans and to countries around the world for many years. Hearing torture survivors tell their unbearable stories was life-changing and traumatic. This is a sphere in which Quakers need to act. Anita will be asking the Program Subcommittee of the Sessions Committee to invite a torture survivor to next year's annual sessions and to sponsor a display of Art against War, Art against Torture.

2006-07-41. Anita Paul introduced Nadine Hoover (Alfred), who recently returned from Indonesia with Molly McLellan-Tornow (Central Finger Lakes), Stephen Slining Haynes (Central Finger Lakes), and Pamela Hawkins (Alfred). The travelers showed slides of a land

afflicted not only by tsunami, but also by a U. S.-funded war capping decades of conflict. Twelve-year-old Abe Kenmore (Buffalo) created a project to gather educational supplies, Paper and Pencils for All; these were delivered to Indonesia, along with scholarships and AVP workshops that trained participants and facilitators. The experience was transformative for the travelers and Indonesians alike. A short video showed a happy celebration affirming life and nonviolence despite the history of torture and trauma shared by the Indonesians.

2006-07-42. The minutes were read and approved.

2006-07-43. Meeting ended in silent worship.

Thursday, July 27, 10:15 A.M.

*Linda Chidsey, Clerk
Ernestine Buscemi, Assistant Clerk
Melanie-Claire Mallison, Recording Clerk
Anne Wright, Reading Clerk*

2006-07-44. Friends gathered in worship.

2006-07-45. The reading clerk read a memorial minute for Florence Stevens, who died May 1, 2006, at the age of 90. Florence was a birthright Friend and the last surviving member of Hartland Monthly Meeting. She received her undergraduate degree from Muskingum College and her library degree from Drexel University. She settled in Gasport, New York, where she was librarian of the Lockport City Library for 32 years. Over the years, Florence served her faith at every level. She promoted and enriched Farmington-Scipio Spring Gathering and served on nearly every committee in New York Yearly Meeting. She was the Yearly Meeting's assistant clerk during the rejoining of the two yearly meetings in 1955 and was recording clerk the next year. Florence loved to travel and was active in the Attica Worship Group, was an exchange librarian in England, and drove many friends to many Yearly Meeting annual sessions. In later years, Florence attended Buffalo Monthly Meeting, where they enjoyed her sense of humor, and she worked with the children and told wonderful stories. Out of the silence, Friends spoke to Florence's tiny stature but noted, her voice matched her spirit. She had a huge, deep spirit, and we are grateful for her many years of service and mentoring.

2006-07-46. The Clerk introduced our young Friends from the 9th and 10th grade, who told of studying the Quaker Testimonies, and read the list of those absent from their JYM groups.

2006-07-47. Martha Gurvich, JYM coordinator, spoke passionately to our need to care for our children—every one of us, but especially parents. Parents must be mindful of their children outside of JYM sessions, knowing where they are and letting their children know where they, the parents, are. Parents must be considerate of the JYM volunteers caring for their children, letting the volunteers know where they, the parents, will be and picking up their children at the proper time.

2006-07-48. The Clerk turned over the clerking duties to our assistant clerk, Ernestine Buscemi. Ernie introduced Paula McClure (Montclair), clerk of General Services, who told us NYYM has been notified that Florence Stevens named the Yearly Meeting as a beneficiary in her will, her annuity, and her insurance policy. When all the necessary paperwork has been completed, the Trustees of the Yearly Meeting will consider a plan for the use of these funds and will bring recommendations to the body for approval. Paula then noted some of the many ways we can save New York Yearly Meeting money and work together toward a balanced budget. Timely and accurate submission of vouchers, State of the Meeting Reports, advance reports, and registrations would save the Yearly Meeting money in staff follow-up time and rush-printing costs. Correct street addresses for our membership would reduce return postage costs for each mass mailing. We can assume more costs ourselves, as we are able, remembering that they are a tax deduction. Our committees can consider one-day meetings, and report more succinctly. For their part, the Yearly Meeting staff buys supplies on sale; uses e-mail and the NYYM Web site so that people print their own copies to further reduce postage and paper costs; and encourages Friends to use the FGC travel agent to get the best price and easiest arrangements. The expense can then be vouchered directly to NYYM rather than using a personal credit card. Friends received the report.

2006-07-49. Paula introduced Harold Risler (Buffalo), NYYM treasurer. Harold presented the current Treasurer's Report, which he noted is updated monthly and is available on the NYYM Web site under password protection. Each section clerk receives a detail for the accounts under his or her care. Harold pointed out that the next six months will determine if we meet or exceed our expenditures. Friends received the report.

2006-07-50. Paula introduced Lenore Ridgeway (Bulls Head-Oswego), clerk of the General Secretary's Task Group. Lee listed the main job responsibilities for Christopher Sammond and summarized his work toward each. First, the general secretary is to visit monthly meetings and help connect them to the larger body. Christopher has visited over half of our monthly meetings, and some meetings have asked Christopher back, thereby feeling less isolated and better able to speak of their conflicts. Next, the general secretary is to support and nurture emerging worship groups. Over the past years, new worship groups have formed and existing groups have grown stronger, and Christopher has visited many of them. He also released Helen Garay Toppins (Morningside), NYYM administrative secretary, to follow her leading to do visitation. Christopher has better connected NYYM to Friends General Conference and Friends United Meeting by meeting and working with them. Christopher has also worked with our insurance company to safeguard our children. Finally, since Christopher started working for us, staff satisfaction is higher and much good work is being done, even in the face of a sometimes debilitating temporary relocation of the office space. In summary, though the job description is huge, Christopher is a positive presence and his work has had a significant value.

2006-07-51. George Rubin (Manhasset), clerk of Personnel Committee, introduced Christopher Sammond, NYYM general secretary, who brought the staff report. To begin, he asked Helen Garay Toppins and Paul Busby (Fifteenth Street) to stand and be welcomed and acknowledged

for their leading and dedication to our Yearly Meeting. He then returned to the staff report. The Yearly Meeting staff is working as a strong team. Christopher could not travel to support monthly meetings and worship groups without Helen's strong presence and abilities in the office. Helen could not follow her leading in advancement without the support of Paul and the other staff. Paul could not pull together quality issues of *Spark* without Walter Naegle and Judith Inskip (Purchase) taking on some of his duties, and Christopher asking for articles as he travels. Christopher then summarized the categories of work and staff time. He noted that as we look over the percentages and chart showing work categories, we must remind ourselves that if we want our staff to do more in one category, they must do less in another. On a final note, George reminded us that the NYYM staff has been moved from its offices in order to make way for renovations at Friends Seminary. The staff has therefore been working out of what could be called a closet, and yet here they are, ready to continue to serve in dedication to this Yearly Meeting. Friends received this report.

2006-07-52. Paula introduced Thomas Martin (Wilton), clerk of Financial Services Committee. Tom led us in a "call and response" and invited us all to Budget Saturday, September 23. He urged us to watch for the preliminary 2007 NYYM budget and make sure our monthly meetings and regional/quarterly meetings consider it carefully before Budget Saturday. Friends received this report. In response, we were reminded not to "cling to deadwood" but instead be in conversation with long-missing members of our monthly meetings to support them and guide them to an active participation with the meeting or with Friends where they are. Our assistant clerk asked us to remember that the Spirit and Life of this Yearly Meeting begins in the monthly meetings and worship groups. In response, we were reminded that our own Testimonies speak to these issues—integrity, truth, and community.

2006-07-53. The assistant clerk turned over the clerking of the rest of the session to the Clerk, Linda Chidsey. The Clerk brought our attention to the consent agenda, posted on the porch of the Inn. She noted that supporting materials have been made available throughout the week. Friends approved the nominations, the requests for release from service, and the proposed guidelines for clerks and committees. Friends also approved that the committee for the Barrington Dunbar Fund be reconfigured to conform with other Yearly Meeting committees: there will be three classes, of two or three members each, and no member will serve more than six consecutive years.

2006-07-54. Ernestine Buscemi reported for the Transition Working Group (TWG). The TWG has turned its attention to the Ministry and Counsel section, including the Coordinating Committee and the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel. Working with these Friends, the TWG is clear that the Yearly Meeting on M&C is not supporting the life of worship groups and monthly meetings. The group is clear on what the responsibilities need to be for these Ministry and Counsel bodies. In the future, with much discernment, the TWG may recommend the laying down of the CC on M&C and the YM on M&C, and the raising up, in their place, of a structure which will serve the monthly meetings, worship groups, regional and quarterly meetings, and the Yearly Meeting. Friends received this report.

2006-07-55. The Clerk noted the confusion over the names of our Yearly Meeting gatherings. Some Friends have begun to use Spring, Summer, and Fall Sessions, and some use the present names of Representative Meeting and Annual Sessions. She asked that we continue to use the present names until such time as we approve a name change for any session.

2006-07-56. The reading clerk read a travel minute for Kathleen Slattery, endorsed by Orchard Park Friends Meeting. Kathy travels among NYYM Friends to offer presence and listening to end-of-life, death, loss, and grieving experiences, exploring how Quaker spirituality informs us in confronting loss. Friends directed the Yearly Meeting Clerk to endorse this minute.

2006-07-57. The reading clerk read a travel minute for Elizabeth (Buffy) Curtis, endorsed by West Falmouth Meeting, Sandwich Quarterly Meeting, and New England Yearly Meeting. Buffy travels among Friends to introduce and practice healing touch and spiritual ministry. Friends directed the Yearly Meeting Clerk to endorse this minute.

2006-07-58. The minutes were read and approved.

2006-07-59. Meeting ended in grateful worship.

Thursday, July 27, 2:30 P.M.

*Linda Chidsey, Clerk
Ernestine Buscemi, Assistant Clerk
Lee Haring, Recording Clerk
Rima Segal, Reading Clerk*

2006-07-60. The meeting opened as Friends gathered in worshipful silence.

2006-07-61. Jessica Haines-Stephan (Mohawk Valley) read a memorial minute for Emily Laura Richardson (b. 1981), an associate member of Poplar Ridge Meeting, who died in an automobile accident on September 25, 2005. Emily was a quiet, calm person who had a gift of making other people feel safe. A graduate of Hampshire College, she was a productive and creative photographer, finding beauty in simple things, who had plans of working on behalf of disadvantaged persons. She built lasting friendships by attending youth weekends at Powell House, New York Yearly Meeting at Silver Bay, and many Friends General Conference gatherings. Those who knew her say, "She really did love all of us, and cared about us all so deeply." Her vast heart dissolved differences among people. In deep sympathy with her family and the many young adults present, Friends shared their loving memories of Emily.

2006-07-62. Christine (Chris) DeRoller (Old Chatham) asked us to imagine the arrival of a group of adolescents at a meetinghouse on a Friday night, under the charge of some young adults. This image arises from the proposal of the PoGo Working Group to establish a year-long program in which junior high-age youth (seventh to ninth graders) will communally explore and experience

Quaker spirituality, under the ministry of two to four young adult Friends (18 to 25 years old) and under the care of a monthly meeting. Eight to ten weekend conferences per year would be held, in one or more regions of the Yearly Meeting. The young adults would develop their gifts of ministry and leadership, live together in community, reach out to local people, actively participate in monthly, regional, and yearly meetings, grow spiritually, and be released and trained to live as full-time Quakers. The younger people would learn to see that of God in themselves and each other, to hold one another in the Light, to practice corporate worship and discernment, and feel their deep connection with one another. Alexander Haines-Stephan (Mohawk Valley), Margaret Obermayer, and Karilyn Valesko (Buffalo), members of the working group, expressed their enthusiasm for the project.

2006-07-63. The Clerk introduced those at the clerks' table and turned over the clerking to Assistant Clerk Ernestine Buscemi.

2006-07-64. Linda Chidsey (Housatonic) reported as our representative to the New York State Council of Churches Collegium, an ecumenical body that gathers together bishops and officers of ten denominations. After an early period of getting acquainted, she has seen influence from Friends in the thinking and practices of the collegium, for instance in moving from voting to consensus. Explaining the spiritual basis of our Peace Testimony and participating in discussions of baptism are examples of the deep level of ecumenical exchange. She has witnessed an acknowledgment of the unity of disparate denominations. At a retreat held late in 2001 she introduced those present to worship sharing. As the only historic peace church represented in the collegium, she said, we are called out to bring our special gift. In a public-policy meeting, before the vote to go to war in Iraq, the collegium decided to send a delegation to visit personally with Hillary Rodham Clinton, senator from New York, who received them appreciatively. In addition, the collegium has developed a growing level of trust with the office of the governor of New York. On the national level, the collegium has endorsed a resolution of the New York City Council urging the United States Congress to support the Peace Tax Fund bill. Linda reminded us that each one of us has a voice and a message; a moment comes when we can no longer withhold the message, and she has experienced that moment. She led all present in the song "If I Had a Hammer."

2006-07-65. The reading clerk read a memorial minute for Mark Lincoln Seiler (1976–2005), a son and grandson of Quaker families. He was a summa cum laude graduate of the University of Maine in film and art. He was a musician, a computer expert, and an artist who produced music recordings, designed the audio portion of art installations, participated in making an independent film, and designed both Web sites and album covers. From early years attending First Day school in Montclair Meeting, he participated actively in Powell House events. He is remembered as a kind and caring Friend whose delightful sense of humor endeared him to people of all ages. Friends remembered Mark, out of the silent sorrow that all were sharing.

2006-07-66. Linda Chidsey resumed as clerk and called on Hugh Barbour, member of Cambridge Meeting visiting from Kendal-on-Hudson. He recalled his last visit, during our

tercentenary year, at the time of the publication of *Quaker Crosscurrents*, the history of Friends in New York.

2006-07-67. A group of young Friends brought to us a minute, read by Maizy Broderick-Scarpa and Barbara von Salis (Brooklyn), expressing a concern over the use of illegal substances, which they understand have been used at Silver Bay. "Apart from the legal ramifications," they write, "these actions put up walls between Friends and jeopardize the spiritual unity we strive for. We are concerned not only about the usage of drugs, but about the respect owed towards others, which has been lacking. As we labor with these issues, we ask for the wider community's continued support, love, and acceptance of all youth." Adult Friends welcomed this concern from our younger members and offered their help with deep feeling. One said that what we need is a dialogue on how we care for one another, and that it is the responsibility of the adults to labor with this question. Young Friends also spoke feelingly to the issue, hoping for dialogue with the adult community.

2006-07-68. The Clerk called on Hollister Knowlton, visiting as a representative of Quaker Earthcare Witness, who drew attention to their display and invited Friends to meet with her.

2006-07-69. The Clerk introduced Peter Baily (Poughkeepsie) to report as head of Oakwood Friends School. After noting our attention today to our losses through death, Peter reminded us that the blessed community is here, is in monthly meetings, and extends out into the world. He pointed to the wide range of Oakwood's outreach through students and their families. "We take very seriously our mission to nurture the spirit, the scholar, the artist, and the athlete in each student," he said. Oakwood is a member of Friends Council on Education as well as associations of independent schools, from which it receives valuable information and to which it acts as a voice for the Yearly Meeting. This year Oakwood has been asking what the academic and cocurricular needs of the school will be in future years, and how the physical facilities can enhance the work of the school. Alumni, students, and parents have participated in dialogue about these questions. An architectural firm with Quaker connections has developed a master plan for the campus. Peter Baily ended his message with thanks to the Yearly Meeting for spiritual guidance, financial support, and gifts of wisdom and time. Friends received Peter Baily's report.

2006-07-70. Kimberly Tsocanos (Wilton), cohead of Connecticut Friends School, reported on its eighth year of operation, bringing onstage trustees, students, parents, and members of Wilton Meeting. After reading a poem of Rumi, she described the ambitious project of acquiring a new site for the school. Property of some 18 acres in Norwalk, belonging to the former White Barn Theater, which appears ideal for this purpose, is being pursued. The school is raising funds for a down payment to the present owner. It offers the prospect of partnering with many groups and persons locally, who may help make of the property a visual- and performing-arts center, along with the newly envisioned school. Kim asked for help and support from Friends in developing this project, in which the school and arts center would point toward a healthier way of life by becoming stewards of this piece of the earth. Friends received Kim's report.

2006-07-71. The minutes were read and approved with corrections.

2006-07-72. The meeting closed in worship.

Friday, July 28, 2006, 10:15 A.M.

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

2006-07-73. The meeting opened as Friends gathered in worshipful silence.

2006-07-74. The Clerk introduced those at the clerks' table.

2006-07-75. Maia Murdock (Rockland) from the 5th and 6th Grade group of JYM read names of children absent from their groups. Peter Frisch (Brooklyn) reported on their activities during the week, which included Original Play, a beach trip with the 3rd and 4th graders, and learning about conscientious objection and Elizabeth Fry. They have also created personal banners and a community web out of yarn.

2006-07-76. Clerk Linda Chidsey turned over the clerking to Assistant Clerk Ernestine Buscemi. Ernie introduced Mary Kay Glazer and Mark Moss, both of Ticonderoga Worship Group, who have been traveling to offer workshops on Couples Enrichment for Friends under a travel minute from Rochester Friends Meeting (initially approved in minute #20, 12/8/02, renewed in minute #59, 7/29/04). Seeking to nurture the spiritual dimension of relationships, Mary Kay and Mark have traveled to Wisconsin, FGC, and in New England Yearly Meeting and in NYYM. Friends received the report and instructed the Clerk to renew the travel minute.

2006-07-77. Ernie introduced Deborah B. Wood (Purchase), clerk of Coordinating Committee on Ministry and Counsel, who announced the establishment of a Task Group on Racism in NYYM, with the goals of enhancing ethnic and racial diversity and eradicating racism within the Yearly Meeting and its constituent monthly meetings.

2006-07-78. Deborah described the ecumenical ministry of James Atwell (Butternuts), who works with Quaker groups, prison worship groups, and churches of other denominations. He believes that his calling among Quakers is to assist in deepening and enriching the spiritual lives of Friends. On Wednesday, July 26, the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel recorded James Atwell in his gifts of ministry. Friends received this report.

2006-07-79. Deborah read the Report on the Traveling Friends: Priscilla Berggren-Thomas visiting in the Farmington-Scipio Region and Butternuts Quarter; David Herendeen visiting mostly in the Northeastern Region, with several visits to Manhattan MM; Carol Holmes focusing on Stamford-Greenwich; Herbert Lape focusing on Long Island Quarter; and Denise Sherman spending her time in Nine Partners Quarter and Northeast Region. All told, these five Friends

made forty visits throughout the year, ranging from providing a ministry of presence at worship to facilitating workshops on weekends. For example, one traveling friend is helping a Ministry and Counsel reform and strengthen, and another is providing pastoral care to wounded Friends. Friends received the report.

2006-07-80. Ernie introduced Melanie-Claire Mallison, clerk of Nurture Coordinating Committee, who introduced Valerie Matthews (Shelter Island), assistant clerk of Friends World Committee on Consultation. Valerie gave an overview of NYYM's place in the Section of the Americas (SOA) of FWCC, and introduced George Rubin, who gave a more detailed history of this vibrant organization. After an initial international gathering in 1929, FWCC was officially born in 1938 with three main goals: to promote a worldwide society of Friends, to make known the spiritual values of Quakerism, and "to enable Friends more effectively to work towards the healing of the world." In the work that followed, a Quaker United Nations program was established, Friends of different countries gathered regularly, and the concept of international Quakerism flourished.

Judith Inskip (Purchase) reported on her experience over the years with getting to know Latin American Friends in the Section of the Americas. She described long and wonderful worship in Guatemala amid generous hospitality. She said, "We do have differences, and we are all God's people, and we need to be in touch."

Newton Garver (Buffalo), who is completing six years as an NYYM representative to FWCC SOA, spoke of the mission of intervisitation that led him to Northwest Yearly Meeting in Newberg, Oregon. Although the theology was sometimes at odds with his own, Newton was impressed by the variety of the people he met and the unity he felt with several speakers. Newton also mentioned a visit to Bolivia and Peru, where he and others met with isolated Quaker communities where the members are rural Indians with little money. They greatly need scholarship help for education and a chance to connect to a wider world. Newton emphasized the importance of these visits, adding that NYYM generally does not allocate enough money for the representatives it appoints. There also need to be more regular reports from the representatives and a better way to consider and distribute the reports.

Robert Baldrige (Fifteenth Street) spoke about his experience with the Wider Quaker Fellowship, where his work includes promoting the distribution of bilingual texts on Quaker topics.

Friends are invited to attend future FWCC gatherings, such as the Northeast Regional Gathering of SOA to be hosted by NYYM October 13–15, 2006, at Purchase Monthly Meeting. The next annual meeting of the FWCC SOA will be in Providence, Rhode Island, March 2007. The next Triennial will be held in August 2007, in Ireland.

Friends received the report.

2006-07-81. Melanie-Claire Mallison introduced Liseli Haines (Mohawk Valley), NYYM representative to Quaker Earthcare Witness, who described the organization and its core messages. She asked, "How can we be whole if we do not honor the body on which we walk—the earth?" She described how we are called not just to stewardship but to an experience of radical commonality with all living things. We cannot have "peace in the world if we do not make peace with the earth, our dearest friend." She urged us to feel our love for all the works of creation, greeting them as our brothers and sisters, treating them as family. Quoting a "wise woman" she knows, Liseli gently repeated, "I know that you know this, but I am going to remind you."

Janet Soderberg (15th Street) described a working of the spirit throughout this week in which thoughts and feeling about caring for the earth appeared in one venue after another. A community of Friends formed quickly around a profound love for the earth and a feeling of urgency. The group plans to come before the appropriate committee to request (1) establishment of a task group on Earthcare, composed of 6 to 10 members, to lift up the spiritual basis of Earthcare within NYYM, and (2) prayerful consideration of adopting "the Quaker Basis of Earthcare" as a theme of the 2007 annual sessions.

Friends received the report. They spoke in support, expressing the hope that Liseli's words will appear on the NYYM Web site. Melanie-Claire announced that Quaker Earthcare Witness will be brought before Nurture Coordinating Committee this afternoon.

2006-07-82. Norma Ellis (Scarsdale) and Dorothy K. Garner (Quaker Street), members of the Epistle Committee, each read through the first draft of the NYYM Epistle. Friends were instructed to write comments on paper for the Epistle Committee, or to seek out committee members during lunch.

2006-07-83. The minutes were read and approved.

2006-07-84. Meeting ended with quiet worship.

Friday, July 28, 7:30 P.M.

*Linda Chidsey, Clerk
Ernestine Buscemi, Assistant Clerk
Melanie-Claire Mallison, Recording Clerk
Rima Segal, Reading Clerk*

2006-07-85. Melanie-Claire Mallison began the Junior Yearly Meeting celebration with a call-and-response, "JYM rules... *all the time!*" She then reported that there were 687 registrations for this Summer Sessions, of which 151 were youth. She also reported that Wednesday's Fun(d) Fair raised about \$1,200, and the Thursday Café Night raised \$5,300, for a total of about \$6,500 for Powell House and the NYYM Sharing Fund. She then introduced the JYM coordinators, Jennifer Lindop, Martha Gurvich, and Roseann Press. Martha noted she was leaving as JYM coordinator

but is now the clerk of JYM Committee. Roseann listed for us the many resource people who help make JYM a wonderful and spiritual experience. Jennifer began the JYM epistles by inviting the 1st and 2nd Grade group to the stage. They were visited by Elizabeth Fry, Mrs. Different Hat, and Dorothy Garner. They led us all in a rousing "All God's Critters have a Place in the Choir." The 3rd and 4th graders learned about Africa from a young friend in the group. The group gave their epistle as a call and response: "What did we do this week? *Fun!*" The 5th and 6th graders reported on Original Play, Elizabeth Fry, and meeting with Bill Galvin to learn about conscientious objection to war. The best part of their week was learning to rip up their cups to look like spiders. The 7th and 8th grade did skits or songs for each of the Quaker testimonies.

'Tis a gift to be simple, 'tis a gift to be free,
and to live our lives uncomplicatedly
With people dying and getting shot,
we should be happy with what we've got.

The 9th and 10th graders reported that they had a great week, discovering that being gently in a pile of 20 people can be fun (Original Play), and they learned from Jaime Contois about the two-thirds world and talked about how to end poverty and hatred. The 11th and 12th grade Epistle presented Quaker history as a "mad-lib," in which certain words were missing, and the body were asked to provide those words. They then read the history with the mad-lib words inserted, e.g. "the Religious Society of Porcupines." They also thanked the Yearly Meeting for its warm reception of their minute on drug use, and appreciated the resource Friends who met with them. The Circle of Young Friends epistle reported on a full week of chuckles, friendships, attending the NYYM threshing session, running the Fun(d) Fair, taking part in Café Night, and looking forward to more COYF events.

2006-07-86. As the Junior Yearly Meeting and Circle of Young Friends departed, those remaining gathered in spirited worship.

2006-07-87. Our Clerk, Linda Chidsey, welcomed us to this evening's session, and reviewed the agenda. She let us know that Mary Benedict has died. Mary is a former member of West Branch Monthly Meeting and widow of Augustus Benedict, a NYYM recorded minister.

2006-07-88. The Clerk introduced Melanie-Claire Mallison, who, as interim clerk of Sessions Committee, reported again on the participant and fundraising numbers for the Summer Sessions. She also reported that the December Representative Meeting will be hosted by New York Quarterly Meeting and held in Brooklyn, N.Y., December 1–3, 2006. The April Representative Meeting will be hosted by Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting, and held at Chautauqua, N.Y., on April 13–15, 2007. Finally she reminded us to fill out evaluations and asked that we not just comment on the week, but offer suggestions for improvements.

2006-07-89. Melanie-Claire, clerk of Powell House Committee, reported on the vitality and growth of the NYYM retreat and conference center. Megan Myers-Hayes (Central Finger Lakes)

reported on the recent and first Powell House Youth Program Alumni Reunion, which has raised over \$35,000 so far to support the youth program, with donations still coming in. Megan and Elfriede Brennan (Scarsdale) organized the reunion, which had over 300 participants. Melanie-Claire noted that for 46 years, Powell House has served this yearly meeting's members and others in their spiritual journeys. And it is time for this generation to give back. Powell House needs to raise over \$600,000 to properly renovate the Anna Curtis Center, which needs to be made accessible and free of allergens, so as to be available to all youth. Margaret Lew has designed architectural plans for such renovations. Melanie-Claire urged us all to pick up a Powell House newsletter and fundraising brochure, and give of our time, experience, and money to ensure the future of Powell House.

2006-07-90. Patricia Sears (Housatonic) and Roger Dreisbach-Williams (Rahway-Plainfield), members of the Epistle Committee, each read the NYYM epistle for these Summer Sessions. With some changes, Friends approved the epistle.

2006-07-91. The minutes of the evening session were read and approved.

2006-07-92. Friends gathered back into worship.