

**New York Yearly Meeting
Minutes of the 312th Session, Summer 2007**

Monday, July 23, 2007; 10:15 A.M.

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

2007-07-1. Friends gathered together in worship. Ernestine Buscemi (Morningside), Clerk of New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM), welcomed us again to our 312th session, noting that she and Martin Fink, director of Silver Bay YMCA of the Adirondacks, officially welcomed us all Sunday evening. Ernie told us of our theme this year of “Stewardship,” saying, “How we treat this Earth and its inhabitants is a basic part of our relationship with God.” She noted that we Quakers “carry in our souls the power to create the world we want to see.” And she asked that our time together be an exploration of stewardship and faithful community.

2007-07-2. The reading clerk introduced our visitors: Carol Sexton, Pendle Hill; Emily Stewart, Friends General Conference (FGC) Youth Ministries, Durham MM, North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative); Ruah Swennerfelt, Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW); Louis Cox, QEW; Ray Treadway, Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC); Carole Treadway (Friendship Monthly Meeting (MM), North Carolina Yearly Meeting Conservative); Margery Rubin, Medford MM, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM); Vanessa Julye, FGC Staff, Central Philadelphia MM, PYM; Christine Rizzo, American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)-Syracuse; Clinton Pettus, AFSC-Middle Atlantic Region; Martin Beer, Kendal MM, PYM; Hollister Knowlton, QEW (Chestnut Hill MM, PYM). For the roll call, the reading clerk read the names of the small and preparative meetings and prison worship groups. Friends rose in response. She then read the names of the half, quarterly, and regional meetings. Friends rose in response. Finally, she asked first-time attenders to stand and be welcomed. Many, many rose in response. Our Clerk encouraged first-time attenders to take advantage of this community and become an integral part of our sessions, but she also reminded those who have attended for two years or sixty years to open our arms and welcome new attenders, making space for new voices and new joys.

2007-07-3. The reading clerk read a memorial minute for Milford Dowd Lester, who died December 31, 2006. Milford was known for his avid support of boy scouting, for his time served in the navy, and for his dedicated service to Saratoga Friends Meeting. In order to maintain the presence of worship, Milford many times worshipped alone in the meetinghouse. He was active on every level of his Quaker community, serving his monthly meeting, regional meeting, and Yearly Meeting with a friendly, welcoming hand and wonderful sense of humor. Friends spoke of his cheerful presence, “letting his life speak,” his sense of adventure and gentle, tender kindness.

2007-07-4. Ernie introduced the clerks’ table, and the clerk of the Witness Section, Frederick Dettmer (Purchase). Fred, in turn, introduced Linda Chidsey (Housatonic), NYYM’s representative to the New York State Council of Churches Collegium. Linda spoke of the mission of the Collegium and a recent advocacy meeting on their peace and poverty mission, which she and Fred attended. Members of the Collegium met with many members and representatives of Congress. They brought a spiritual response and concern to national and global issues, working as an ecumenical body to be both prophetic and pastoral. Linda spoke a proverb that came to her in worship, “Without delay, open your hearts, so that we may love without reservation.” Friends received this report.

2007-07-5. Fred introduced Patricia Chernoff (Morningside), who reported on the recent conference as part of the Quaker Initiative to End Torture (QUIT). The conference gathered around seven queries which

the QUIT Committee wrote and she read for us. Patricia reminded us that the United States of America is the number one country researching torture, disseminating what we learn to other countries. She invited us to take this information back to our meetings and consider approving minutes against these practices. Patricia also noted that QUIT has a listserv and she welcomed everyone to join. Friends received the report. Fred noted that QUIT has a Web site, which is where one can find information on the listserv and other resources against torture (<http://www.quit-torture-now.org/>). He brought copies of "QUIT: Teaching about Torture," a curriculum on torture, and he urged everyone to take a copy home to their meeting. Fred and members of QUIT also offer their services to any Meeting in discussing the issue of torture.

2007-07-6. Our Clerk turned the meeting over to the Coordinating Committee on Ministry and Counsel. Deborah Wood (Purchase), clerk of CCM&C, introduced Julia Giordano (Bulls Head-Oswego), Annie Bancroft (Butternuts), and Richard Townsend (Fredonia), who read the NYYM State of Society report for 2006. Fifty-three meetings and worship groups (of a possible 91) submitted reports answering such queries as; "Are there places where your meeting feels stuck?" "Where do you see new life emerging?" "How do you attract newcomers and integrate them into the life of the meeting?" Friends received the report and offered their insights and concerns.

2007-07-7. The minutes of the morning session were read and approved.

2007-07-8. The Clerk asked us to continue the discussion on the state of our meetings. Meeting ended with worship.

Tuesday, July 24, 2007; 10:15 A.M.

*Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Lee Haring, Assistant Clerk
Elaine Learnard, Recording Clerk
Anne Wright, Reading Clerk*

2007-07-9. The meeting opened in silent worship.

2007-07-10. Out of the silence, the reading clerk read a memorial minute from New Brunswick Monthly Meeting for John E. Brush, who died this past February at age 87. The son of Baptist missionaries, John was born in Pennsylvania but grew up in India, where his love of cartography began with mapping his boyhood hikes in the Himalayas. After returning to the United States for college, he interrupted his education to do earthquake relief work with the AFSC. He served in the Civilian Public Service as a conscientious objector from 1943 to 1946, completed a Ph.D. in geography in 1953 and traveled for professional and personal interests to places as diverse as Africa, China and Scandinavia. A member of the Religious Society of Friends from the 1940s, he and his wife, Miriam, were among the families with young children who founded New Brunswick Monthly Meeting in 1954. He was a founder and supporter of Powell House Retreat and Conference Center, and of Quaker House, an international, interracial, cooperative house for students in New Brunswick. His hand-drawn maps to the meeting houses of NYYM and his map of the Powell House grounds, which are still in use, combined his devotion to Quakerism and to his profession as a geographer. A life-long learner and journaler who loved to share what he learned with others, he told a friend that he was "not concerned with the afterlife" and that he would be "content to have completed my life and contributed to the Society in practical ways." Friends remembered John's tenderness and his chuckle and spoke of him as a wonderful mentor, for adults and for children, who could touch any heart. The carp in the pond at Powell House remain a living legacy, a lasting lesson in stewardship.

2007-07-11. Michelle Eskin (a regular attender at Powell House) and Madeline Roos (Rahway-Plainfield)

from the 5th and 6th Grade group at Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) read the names of the children absent from JYM today. With evident pleasure, they told us they had become friends yesterday during their morning session, “one of the great things you can do here.”

2007-07-12. The Clerk introduced those at the clerks’ table.

2007-07-13. The reading clerk introduced visitors: Rosetta Webster-Graham, Baltimore Yearly Meeting; Penelope Wright, FGC; Roland Kreager, Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR). The visitors stood and were welcomed.

2007-07-14. Melanie-Claire Mallison (Ithaca), clerk of the Nurture Coordinating Committee, introduced the business of that section. She reported that Nurture is bursting with new growth and new directions. Melanie-Claire introduced Sylvia Graves, General Secretary of Friends United Meeting (FUM). Having grown up within the FUM community, Sylvia says she is now learning the work of FUM from the inside. She sees FUM’s service as an extension of ministry that Friends in NYYM, individually and in monthly meetings, feel called to support because it follows the teachings of Jesus to “feed my sheep” and to love our neighbors. She sees the main work falling into two categories of outreach: first, disseminating information on Quaker thought and work by publishing FUM books, *Quaker Life* and DVDs such as Landrum Bolling’s “Searching for Peace in the Middle East”; and second, working with communities in locations such as Kenya, the Palestinian territories, Belize, Cuba and Jamaica. Among these aid projects is support of the Friends School in Ramallah. Sylvia reported that FUM has carried on this work while making good progress in staying within its financial means. She urged us to recognize that we are all sincere in carrying out our faith even though that faithfulness may sometimes look different on the outside.

2007-07-15. Melanie-Claire introduced Margaret Obermayer (Binghamton Community Friends), from the PoGo Working Group, which is developing a program to offer youth retreats for 6th to 9th graders in their home regions. The Working Group envisions a project in which four young adult friends (18 to 25 years old) will live in a deeply spiritual intentional community in which they can help each other and the wider community grow and prosper in the Spirit. The young adult friends would serve an internship of about two years, during which time they would deepen their Quaker faith, improve their leadership skills and receive mentoring from Friends in the local monthly meetings. The working group is still exploring how funding for the project can be structured and other specifics. Meg reported that this is a strongly felt leading for the young adults in the working group, and that they hope to have a pilot project up and running by the fall of 2008.

2007-07-16. Melanie-Claire introduced Peter Baily (Poughkeepsie), head of Oakwood Friends School. He thanked the NYYM for its long and on-going support, noting that there are many alumni, board members, and donors within the NYYM. Enrollment is at a high point, the budget is balanced and the school has no current debt. The students and their families, who are predominantly not Quaker, learn about Quaker values and practice by their participation in the school community. Peter provided some examples of the school’s success in maintaining an inclusive community.

2007-07-17. Melanie-Claire introduced Emily Stewart (Durham, NCYM), Youth Coordinator for FGC. Emily reported on several youth-oriented activities, including Young Quakes, which will be taking place at Oakwood Friends School this year, and a conference in May 2008 gathering young Friends from many branches of Quakerism. FGC is planning a consultation on emerging gifts of ministry with attention to young Friends.

2007-07-18. Melanie-Claire introduced Mary Rothschild (Brooklyn), coconvener of the Task Group on Youth. Mary noted that although the Religious Education Committee was laid down several years ago,

innovative programs at the monthly, quarterly and regional meeting levels have continued or sprung up in the intervening period. The Task Group needs to know what resources meetings have to offer and what meetings need. They have been listening to the concerns of parents of young families and especially have tried to focus on hearing from the young people directly. Mary asked us to consider the question of what a yearly meeting would look like if it had the youth woven into its fabric, and asks that Friends hold the question: "What about the youth?" This week, there will be brainstorming sessions, with ice cream on the side, and a display where an exchange can happen about what the stereotypes are that adults have regarding youth. For on-going communication, an e-mail listserv has been established to share curriculum and other information, and a web page of resources will be available soon through a link from the NYYM Web site.

2007-07-19. Friends entered into silence, with attention to two queries that had been made available on Monday in preparation for the morning's Listening Session: 1. How do we as NYYM understand our own differences in theology that undergird our different understandings of gender? 2. In FUM, as in other yearly meetings including our own, the Orthodox/Hicksite split has never been truly resolved. What does this lack of resolution mean to us at this time? What work might it call us to? Friends spoke out of the silence.

Wednesday, July 25, 2007, 10:15 A.M.

*Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Lee Haring, Assistant Clerk
Karen Reixach, Recording Clerk
Rima Segal, Reading Clerk*

2007-07-20. Friends gathered in expectant worship. Out of the silence, the reading clerk read a memorial minute for Hazel Haines, Mohawk Valley Monthly Meeting. Hazel was born September 6, 1920, and died at the age of 86 on April 18, 2007. She is remembered as a vibrant and creative mother, who taught her six children by word and by example that nothing is impossible and that life is full of magic. Hazel was a citizen of the world, having lived a year each in northwest Pakistan, Kenya, and Turkey, and having taught English as a second language at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. She was an anchor of the communities of which she was a part. She helped to found Rockland Meeting in 1950 and was a driving force behind the building of a meeting house on the site where the New Swarthmoor community—a vibrant offshoot of Young Friends of North America—had gathered in the late 1960s and early 1970s. She clerked Mohawk Valley Monthly Meeting for many years, and Butternuts Quarterly Meeting. Hazel's service to the Yearly Meeting was reliable, wise and serene. She treasured Powell House, NYYM's conference and retreat center. She served for many years on the Coordinating Committee for Ministry & Counsel, at times as clerk. She also was a stalwart clerk of NYYM Nominating Committee. She said in later years that creativity was her special pathway to God. As she aged and her health declined, her spiritual life deepened—a blessing to both herself and others.

Out of worship Friends celebrated her legacy in her children and remembered how Hazel was larger than life with her ability to put things into perspective and bring Friends back to the center, her warmth and hospitality, her quilting ministry, her lively humor.

2007-07-21. The Clerk introduced the clerks' table and welcomed Daniel Angell (Germantown, PYM) and Adam Dorcher (Princeton, PYM) from JYM, who described the activities of their group, including a visit from Roland Kreager, RSWR, and a really fun beach day. The Clerk then reviewed the agenda.

2007-07-22. The Clerk introduced Christopher Sammond (Bulls Head-Oswego), general secretary of NYYM. Christopher reminded Friends that a written report outlining his work in releasing others' gifts and building the community of faith is available in the *Advance Reports*. Out of the silence, Christopher then gave a message to the body about renewal, noting that the first renewal report was prepared 40 years ago. He affirmed that this renewal is present here in our annual session as well as working in the body of our Yearly Meeting, pointing as an example to the presence of 125 new attenders and many more young adults at Yearly Meeting this year. He cautioned against complacency and against the sense *we* are responsible for the renewal that we have sought so long and of which we are now seeing some signs. Rather we have responded to the Spirit, which is with us in our deep ache and hunger. As Goethe said, "What kind of a God would it be that only sought us from without?"

He observed that religious education and spiritual nurture are interrelated needs of the body of Friends in meeting our hunger for spiritual growth, naming several areas of opportunity. He indicated that it is not clear how we should structure a body or bodies to address the needs of religious education and spiritual nurture, but that the time is at hand to do so.

He also named the work with Friends United Meeting as an opportunity to dig deep, live out our faith and practice, deepening our business practice, listening, and opening hearts and arms. Then, he turned to questions from prison worship groups regarding parole and the need for a more energetic response from more than just a few Friends.

The Clerk asked the body to hold the words of the general secretary, observing that we are being invited to deeper stewardship, to finding not just what we can say but what we can do.

Friends received the report.

2007-07-23. Paula McClure (Montclair), clerk of General Services Coordinating Committee, reminded Friends of the charge of the General Secretary's Task Group to evaluate the position of general secretary based on the first three years' experience. She also recalled that the Task Group presented its report for first reading at the 2007 spring sessions at Chautauqua (2007-04-24). Paula introduced Julia Giordano (Bulls Head-Oswego) of the General Secretary's Task Group, who summarized the report, and its recommendation that the position of general secretary be continued, with the same job description. Friends approved the recommendation.

2007-07-24. Paula brought the name of Christopher Sammond to continue to serve as general secretary. Friends approved.

2007-07-25. Paula, on behalf of the NYYM Trustees, introduced James Whitely, president of the board of the McCutchen, who reviewed the reasons for the decision to close the Yearly Meeting Friends Home (the McCutchen). Jim updated Friends on progress in closing and selling the facility and working out ways to use the endowment to assist the elderly. He urged Friends to offer ideas for ways of using these assets. He introduced Warren Witte (PYM), interim executive director of the newly formed Friends Foundation for the Aging, and outlined Warren's extensive experience. Warren underscored the mission of the Foundation and the desire to listen to Friends. Friends received the report.

2007-07-26. Paula, as clerk of GSCC, informed Friends that the child safety document has been slightly revised and the new procedures are posted on the NYYM Web site, www.nyyym.org.

2007-07-27. Paula introduced Harold Risler (Buffalo), NYYM treasurer. Harold summarized the Treasurer's Report for the first six months of 2007, compared with that same period in 2006, noting that the financial condition remains "no better (and no worse)" than 2006. He noted that the report includes

the financial position of the NYYM for the first time. A detailed report with line items is posted on the Yearly Meeting Web site. Friends received the report.

2007-07-28. Paula then introduced Arlene Reduto (Easton), who reported for the Financial Services Committee on the progress of drafting the 2008 budget. She described the process for building the budget, and celebrated the increased activity in the Yearly Meeting, which necessitates increases in the budget, particularly in travel lines. She reviewed specific line items where changes were significant, explaining the reasons.

Paula reviewed the budget process before the fall sessions. The proposed draft budget will be posted on the NYYM Web site and mailed to individuals with responsibility for revenue or expenses. She invited Friends to Budget Saturday (September 29, 2007, 10 A.M., at Bulls Head-Oswego). She urged monthly meetings to inform Financial Services of the amount of their anticipated covenant donations for 2008 before Budget Saturday, so that planning can be based on realistic income levels. The proposed budget developed out of the September meeting will be posted on the Web site and will be brought for approval at the fall sessions in November.

2007-07-29. The minutes were read and approved.

2007-07-30. The meeting closed in worship.

Thursday, July 26, 2007; 10:15 A.M.

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

2007-07-31. The meeting opened in silent worship.

2007-07-32. A group of young Friends, witnesses of yesterday's accident, addressed the Meeting to clarify what had happened at Diver's Rock, which resulted in a serious injury to JYM volunteer Franklin Crump. They were able to report that Franklin has responded well to medical treatment thus far. They asked that Friends continue to hold in the Light all who were involved with the accident, and thanked all those who helped and made it possible to save a good friend's life. The Clerk thanked the young Friends, saying we are all a community, tender to one another, and when one hurts we all hurt.

2007-07-33. Out of the silence, the reading clerk read a poem to honor the life of Thor N. Rhodin, who was born December 9, 1920, and died February 17, 2006. The poem, written March 19, 2006, by his daughter Ann, describes winter winds and snow outside, a fire within, each stanza ending with the words of the title, "as my father sleeps." We heard the grief and the loss and the love felt by his family in such lines as these: "He whom we loved and lost/Is no longer/Where he was before/He did it in his own way... Now at peace/His failing mind/Settled as the logs shift/Freed from demons of distress/As my father sleeps." Friends remembered Thor's capacity to listen and to be a loving presence, his passion for his work, his pure and powerful intellect, his great stores of knowledge that he wore lightly and shared freely.

2007-07-34. Alison Meikle (Wilton), Joy Meikle (Wilton), Schuyler Gurvich-Loth (Wilton), Lucia O'Barr (Philipstown), and Joshua Smith (Saratoga), from the 9th and 10th grade group at JYM, read the names of the children absent from JYM today. They reported on the many resource people who worked with them this week about earthcare, right sharing of world resources, and conscientious objection, and are looking forward to doing yoga and theater games and meeting at the Boathouse for final worship.

2007-07-35. The Clerk introduced those at the clerks' table.

2007-07-36. The reading clerk read the names of additional visitors: Eden, James, Isaiah, and Jesse Grace, FUM; Alan Stockbridge, Salt Lake Monthly Meeting, Park City, Utah.

2007-07-37. Deborah Wood (Purchase), clerk of the Ministry and Counsel Coordinating Committee, introduced the business under the care of the Coordinating Committee for Ministry and Counsel. Deb introduced Bowen Alpern (Scarsdale), clerk of the Task Group on Racism in NYYM. Bowen began by quoting Paul: "Among you, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28), and said that though NYYM aspires to be a place free of the deadening weight of racism that pervades the wider culture, we are not there yet. He reviewed the mission of the Task Group: to promote racial healing; to raise awareness of white privilege; to increase racial diversity; and to help end racism. He spoke about the Meetings for Worship for Racial Healing and other activities during this annual session. The Task Group is developing a roster of those who consider themselves to be under the weight of the need to end racism. The Task Group is planning a series of weekend retreats/workshops, entitled "Becoming the Beloved Community," with the first scheduled for December 14–16, 2007, at Powell House. He urged us to enter into open and honest conversation about racism and how to end it in our YM and in the world, to make safe space to have this conversation, to resist the temptation "to listen past each other," to face up to all the implications of the testimony of equality, and to wrestle with the pain "until it blesses us," saying, "Friends, the time has come."

2007-07-38. The Clerk next turned over the clerking to Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick) and she and the assistant clerk, as members of the Transition Working Group, left the clerks' table. Deb reported for the Transition Working Group, outlining proposed changes to revitalize the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel (YMMC) and the Coordinating Committee for Ministry and Counsel (CCM&C) and bringing recommendations to effect those changes. The Transition Working Group proposed that the YMMC be replaced by twice-yearly gatherings for a full day of extended worship, called "Meetings for Discernment." These meetings would allow us to listen to how the Spirit is moving among us in NYYM, provide opportunities for deeper consideration of concerns the Yearly Meeting has agreed to focus on, consider minutes from monthly and regional meetings that reflect their concerns, and support individual leadings that have been seasoned by monthly and regional meetings. Monthly meetings would be asked to appoint at least one representative to these sessions, though all would be welcome. Additionally, the Transition Working Group proposes three major changes to the CCM&C. First would be changing the name to the Ministry Coordinating Committee. Second would be changing its membership to include one member from each region (two from Farmington-Scipio), three at-large members appointed by the Nominating Committee, and a representative from each committee in the section. Third would be changes in the committees under its care as follows: forming four new committees (Ministry and Pastoral Care, Spiritual Nurture, State of Society, and Worship at Yearly Meeting Sessions), retaining two committees (Conflict Transformation and Traveling Friends Advisory Group), moving Advancement to this section, and moving Bible Study and Epistle Committee to Nurture Coordinating Committee. A detailed written report of these proposed changes has been made available. This is the final report of the Transition Working Group, although the Transition Working Group is aware that additional details will need to be articulated. Deb cautioned that this will be a process that will take some time to bring to completion. One Friend urged us to remember that God is in the details.

The Transition Working Group brought specific recommendations to begin implementing these changes. On the recommendation of the Transition Working Group, Friends approved:

A. The YMMC is suspended for 2008, replaced by twice-yearly Meetings for Discernment. The first Meeting for Discernment will be held in March 2008 and the second during summer sessions in 2008.

The March meeting will be planned by an interim steering committee consisting of the clerk and the assistant clerk of Yearly Meeting, the general secretary, and the clerks, or their representatives, of the four sections. At that March meeting, a steering committee will be appointed. The interim steering committee will work with the newly appointed steering committee to plan the second Meeting for Discernment. Monthly meetings are asked to name representatives in time for inclusion in the 2007 *Yearbook* and to consult with the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee.

B. The Coordinating Committee for Ministry and Counsel is renamed the Ministry Coordinating Committee (MCC). The MCC is to be proactive and responsive in addressing the needs of monthly meetings and worship groups, and to be responsible for administering and coordinating the work of its constituent committees.

C. For 2008–2009, the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee is directed to nominate three at-large representatives to MCC, and each region shall appoint one representative, two from Farmington-Scipio.

D. Four new committees are established under the care of the MCC: Ministry and Pastoral Care, Spiritual Nurture, State of Society, and Worship at Yearly Meeting Sessions. The structure and job descriptions will be presented by MCC at the spring sessions in 2008.

E. The Advancement Committee is moved from the Nurture section and brought under the care of the MCC.

F. The Transition Working Group is laid down.

2007-07-39. Ernie returned to the clerks' table and Friends entered into a period of open worship.

2007-07-40. The minutes of the morning session were read and approved.

2007-07-41. Friends returned to silent worship.

Thursday, July 26, 2007, 2:30 P.M.

Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Lee Haring, Assistant Clerk
Karen Reixach, Recording Clerk
Rima Segal, Reading Clerk

2007-07-42. Friends gathered in worship. Out of the silence, Reading Clerk Rima Segal read a memorial minute from Unadilla Monthly Meeting for Stanford Aston Mighty. Stanford Mighty was born September 4, 1939, in Jamaica, West Indies, and was educated in Kingston, Jamaica, and in England at Bristol University. On one of his hiking trips in the Lake Country of England, Stanford saw a vista that brought an epiphany which was to be the touchstone of his life. "I didn't have to own any of that. I was free of its burden, and yet it was mine to enjoy." He and his wife, Cora, lived with minimal concern for possessions and maximum concern for loving service to others. Active in Unadilla Friends Church, Butternuts Quarter, and NYYM, Stanford was an impassioned advocate for meeting the minimum needs of all. His magnificent voice was often raised in song. When, toward the end, he was bedridden and wasting away, a group of Friends would visit to sit with him in Quaker silence, to read Bible passages, to sing. Only at the very end was he unable to join them in song. Stanford died May 21, 2007, after a long illness. Out of worship Friends recalled the gift of visiting Stanford during his final illness. He was a great soul, whose fondest wish was that one day we could look in each other's eyes and see the Light. The refrain of Stanford's favorite hymn goes "It is well. It is well with my soul!" It certainly was. And is.

2007-07-43. The Clerk introduced those at the clerks' table and reviewed the agenda.

2007-07-44. The Clerk introduced Frederick Dettmer (Purchase), clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee, who in turn asked Bobbi Sue Bowers (Manasquan) to update Friends on developments since NYYM adopted the minute (2007-04-9) calling for the abolition of the death penalty in New Jersey. A letter from the NYYM clerk and the minute were sent to 90 New Jersey legislators whose districts lie within the geographic area of NYYM. The moratorium continues. On May 10, 2007, the N.J. Senate Judiciary Committee approved a bill for elimination of the death penalty. The legislature will reconvene in November. She urged Friends to write letters to the governor, to the newspaper, and to the legislature in September and October 2007, and send copies to her.

2007-07-45. Fred introduced Jens Braun (Old Chatham), clerk of the Committee on Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation (COMT), which is currently a subcommittee of the Peace Concerns Committee. Jens delivered a message about the movement of conscience. He observed that the theme of Yearly Meeting is stewardship, and asked, "What about the stewardship of our souls?" He invited Friends to prepare statements of conscience and post them on the panels outside the auditorium. Brief statements were brought from David Bassett, Dan Jenkins, Jens Braun, Karen Reixach, Naomi Paz Greenberg, and Serena Blackburn.

Jens reported that COMT has held two conferences in a series that seeks to further this commitment in the face of the unending wars of the post-9/11 world: one in February 2007, at Purchase Meeting in conjunction with both the visit of Robin Brookes of the British Peace Tax Seven and the argument in *Jenkins v. IRS*, and a second conference in Rochester, N.Y., June 15–17. A summary of the June conference has been submitted to *InfoShare* (available at www.nyyym.org) for Friends who want more details.

2007-07-46. Frederick Dettmer, as attorney for Daniel Jenkins, reported that Dan is petitioning the U.S. Supreme Court to hear his appeal for governmental accommodation of conscientious objection to paying for war. On June 4, 2007, the petition for certiorari was filed, and on July 5, 2007, the Yearly Meeting submitted an amicus brief in support of this cert petition.

2007-07-47. Frederick Dettmer, as clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee, reported that Witness Coordinating Committee recommends full committee status for COMT as the Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War. Friends approved the following minute.

Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War

History

A subcommittee of Peace Concerns Committee was formed in the late 1990s out of the work of Witness Coordinating Committee in developing an amicus brief in support of Rosa Packard's tax witness. In addition to support of individuals, the subcommittee circulated a survey to monthly meetings and issued a gentle guide to tax witness. In April 2006 the Yearly Meeting adopted a minute acknowledging that paying for war violates our conviction in the Power of the Living Spirit to give life, joy, peace, and prosperity through love, integrity, and compassionate justice among people and approved preparation of an amicus brief in support of the case of *Jenkins v. IRS*. In 2007 that amicus brief was submitted, the subcommittee sponsored two conferences as part of a planned series on conscientious objection to paying for war, and continued to be a vehicle for helping individuals find clarity and act on issues of conscientious objection.

Purposes & Objectives

The purpose of the committee includes being vocal about the failure of violence and the blessing of nonviolence, as well as exploring with Friends in our Yearly Meeting the multiple avenues of being true to our consciences in not paying for war.

Functions & Activities

- increase the body of written and video resources on conscientious objection to paying for war
- promote preparation of statements of conscience by Friends
- bring together Friends from meetings and regional meetings within NYYM and Friends from outside our yearly meeting who are working on issues of conscientious objection to paying for war
- advocate for governmental accommodation to conscientious objection to paying for war through support of legal challenges to military taxation and legislative efforts to change taxation laws
- be a visible and helpful presence in meetings and the Yearly Meeting as we strive for integrity in our lives

Organization & Method of Appointment

The Yearly Meeting appoints up to nine members to the committee on recommendation of the Nominating Committee. Members are appointed for three-year terms, with about one-third appointed each year. The committee appoints its clerk and other officers as desired. It names a representative to the Witness Coordinating Committee. Subcommittees may be formed as needed.

Meeting Times & Places

Meetings are customarily held at the call of the clerk during the sessions of the Yearly Meeting and Representative Meeting and at such other times and places as the clerk may find desirable. The committee may organize occasional conferences as well.

Finances

The work of the committee is currently supported through the Witness Activities Fund and would become a separate line item in the Sharing Fund.

2007-07-48. Fred then asked Shirley Way (Central Finger Lakes) to describe her recent service in Colombia. After a clearness committee with Friends from Farmington-Scipio Region, Shirley continued her witness for nonviolence in areas of conflict, especially Latin America. In December 2006, Shirley traveled to Colombia with Christian Peacemaker Teams, and in June 2007, she spent six weeks in Colombia, facilitating eight Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops for 103 participants. In addition to Shirley and Sam Estes of Friends Peace Teams, there were two Colombian facilitators and eight apprentices. She said Friends Peace Teams hopes to expand this effort. Today most Colombians know nothing but war. There are half a million armed forces in Colombia. She described displacement from war and from unemployment, the drug trade, and governmental corruption. She said firmly, “We are funding this war.”

She expressed gratitude for the support of her faith community—Central Finger Lakes, Farmington-Scipio Region, the faithfulness group. “Without my faith community I cannot hear, I cannot follow.”

2007-07-49. Fred then introduced Nadine Hoover (Alfred), who described her work with Centers of Conscience in her local community and in Indonesia. She testified that although the work is difficult, when we yield to the Spirit, we receive gifts that bear us up. The Indonesian initiative has been accepted as a project of Friends Peace Teams. She reported on the work in education, community reconstruction, and nonviolence training using AVP. A dozen AVP workshops have been held, including one in a refugee camp in an international bioserve that is being devastated by international corporations. She said being in Indonesia, we see how we pay for war and the sources of war.

She closed by quoting William Penn:

To the Supreme Authority of England,

TOLERATION has not been the *Cry of some*, than
PERSECUTION hath been the *practice of others*, though not on *Grounds equally rational*.

The present cause of this *Address*, is to solicit a *Conversion* of that *Power* to our Relief, which hitherto has been employed to our Depression...

This has been often *promised* us, and we as earnestly have expected the *performance*; but to this time, we labor under the unspeakable pressure of *Nasty Prisons* and daily *Confiscation of our Goods* to the apparent ruin of entire families.

She prayed for a faith community in which the joy of conscientious living is manifest.

2007-07-50. Friends approved the following minute.

New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends invites all of our members to consider our minute of last year acknowledging that paying for war violates our conviction in the Power of the Living Spirit to give life, joy, peace, and prosperity through love, integrity, and compassionate justice among people.

Friends now wishing to explore how conscience moves them with regard to the payment of war taxes are asked to prepare a Statement of Conscience including 1) your belief against paying for war and preparations for war, 2) major influences in forming your belief, 3) how it is demonstrated by the way you live, and 4) a request that our government recognize and accommodate our convictions.

We encourage you to send your statement to your monthly meeting and to the Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War.

The NYYM Office is asked to maintain a confidential repository of Statements of Conscience.

The Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War is asked

- to counsel Friends preparing Statements of Conscience
- to report annually on the numbers of statements filed
- to work with those who have submitted Statements and others with this concern on ways of obtaining governmental accommodation to conscientious objection to paying for war

The Clerk of NYYM is asked to issue a call to conscientious objectors to paying for war everywhere to join us in this action.

Relevant contact information accompanied the minute: New York Yearly Meeting, Conscientious Objection to Paying for War, 15 Rutherford Place, New York, N.Y. 10003, (212) 673-5750, office@nyym.org; National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, 2121 Decatur Place NW, Washington, D.C. 20008, (202) 483-3751 or (888) PEACETAX; more information on writing a statement of conscience: <http://www.consciencestudio.com/index.php?conscience-state>.

2007-07-51. The consent agenda was presented for approval.

A. Friends approved renaming Representative and Annual Meetings to Spring, Summer, and Fall Sessions.

B. Friends approved placing Junior Yearly Meeting, currently under the care of General Services, under the care of Nurture Coordinating Committee.

C. Friends approved placing the H.H. Mosher Fund, currently under the care of Nurture, under the care of the General Services Coordinating Committee.

D. Friends approved the nominations as posted. Nominations for representatives to the Board of Friends United Meeting and to the FUM Triennial will come to Fall Sessions.

2007-07-52. The minutes of the session were read and approved.

2007-07-53. Continuing in worship, individual Friends responded to a query from the Young Adult Concerns Committee: What is the role of young adult Friends in the yearly meeting body and how can we nurture it?

Friday, July 27, 2007; 10:15 A.M.

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

2007-07-54. The meeting opened in silent worship.

2007-07-55. Out of the silence, the reading clerk read a memorial minute for Franklin Pineo, who was born in 1917, and died June 22, 2006. A long-time member of Ithaca, N.Y., and Southampton, Pa., meetings, he was active in NYYM, Powell House, and FGC. After the removal of a brain tumor when he was eighteen, Frank overheard doctors saying he had only three years to live. He began living life to the fullest, taking risks, "riding the rails," and living out his passion for life. He and his wife, Caroline, lived in France after WWII, working for AFSC to help war victims to develop their communities. They experienced life in intentional communities in Trevoise, Pa., and Odessa, N.Y. Frank taught special education, helped form the Wonderland Puppet Theater, which visited schools with performances that had a message of goodwill and understanding, and participated in Quaker peace actions and disarmament demonstrations. He loved to be outdoors and at one point directed a summer camp where he and his wife taught outdoor skills and, through example, how to be Friends in word and deed. He was a creative person of wide-ranging practical skills, a gifted storyteller who gave his full attention to whomever he was with. He inspired many who are still active in Ithaca Friends and in work for peace. He lived his life with courage and an abiding faith in that of God in everyone. Friends gave thanks for Frank's life and shared memories of him as a true elder who would accompany a Friend on the path.

2007-07-56. The reading clerk read the names of those absent from JYM this morning.

2007-07-57. The Clerk introduced those at the clerks' table and welcomed Friends to this last full business session, saying we will walk cheerfully this day, our hearts opened by God.

2007-07-58. The Clerk introduced Melanie-Claire Mallison, clerk of Nurture Coordinating Committee,

who brought additional business from the Nurture Section. Melanie-Claire introduced Janet Soderberg (15th Street) to present a minute from the Earthcare Working Group. This minute began with Friends in 15th Street Meeting and then was seasoned further in 15th Street Monthly Meeting, New York Quarter, the NYYM Earthcare Working Group, and Nurture Coordinating Committee. Friends approved the following minute.

Eco-Spirituality & Action Minute

In our 1660 peace declaration, Friends declared, “We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretense whatever: this is our testimony to the whole world.” That statement is still true, but its meaning has deepened beyond what those early Quakers would have understood. Can we now commit ourselves to ending humanity’s war with the Earth?

The Religious Society of Friends has witnessed for peace for almost 350 years. Over that time, our witness has grown and widened; we have worked for the end of war, for the end of the African slave trade, for equality of women, civil rights for African-Americans and for human rights around the world.

Now we are led to widen our witness again to work for peace between humans and our sacred earth community. Our culture has considered the Earth our property to be exploited, and we have all, knowingly and unknowingly, been complicit in this violent appropriation of world resources. We must now search for the seeds of this war in our possessions and our lives and work to nurture a new, mutual relationship with the Earth in all of our actions. The spirit is calling us to hold in reverence this miracle that God has given us. If we are connected to our source, our lives are richer and deeper.

We are asking that this minute be forwarded to all monthly meetings and worship groups in New York Yearly Meeting with a “call to action.” We suggest that each monthly meeting worshipfully address the following queries:

1. What are God and the Earth asking of our meeting at this point in time?
2. How do we respond in ways appropriate to our Meeting, our community, and the wider world?
3. How does this response build on previous or ongoing Earthcare work our meeting has already done?
4. What further specific changes are we willing to make in our spiritual practice, meetings, and individual spiritual lives to reflect a strong witness for the Earth?

It is our hope that this prayerful consideration of our responsibility to the planet that sustains us will generate the actions necessary to bring us into deep harmony with our beloved Earth.

2007-07-59. Melanie-Claire introduced Valerie Matthews (Shelter Island), assistant clerk of the NYYM representatives to Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), Section of the Americas. Valerie announced that she, Robert Baldrige (15th Street), Judith Inskip (Purchase), and Helen Garay Toppins (Morningside) will attend the FWCC Triennial in Dublin, Ireland, in August 2007. Valerie presented a minute from the Nurture Coordinating Committee recommending that a new line item be added to the Nurture annual budget for allocations and donations, in the amount of \$150, to support FWCC Third World representatives to attend sessions of FWCC Section of the Americas. Friends approved this new line item.

2007-07-60. Valerie then reported that the Nurture Coordinating Committee recommends a change of budget category for one item relating to the FWCC, namely, that the “Section Meeting” line item become a provision, allowing for fund carryover year-to-year to assist with variable travel expenses based on section meeting locations. Friends approved this change.

2007-07-61. Melanie-Claire introduced Ann Davidson (Farmington), director of Powell House, and Christine DeRoller (Old Chatham) and Michael Clark (Old Chatham), the youth directors of Powell House. A quick exercise demonstrated the impact Powell House has had on the NYYM community. Ann named different ways of participating at Powell House—from attendance at youth or adult programs through Board service and financial donation—and Friends rose in response to those they had participated in. Nearly all the assembled Friends were standing at the end of the exercise—a powerful visual representation of the great impact and support of Powell House. Ann reported that Powell House programs are vibrant, with frequent adult, youth, and intergenerational programs scheduled, and that Powell House has, again, ended the fiscal year in the black. She said some of the best things about Powell House were standing behind her, our youth directors. Chris stepped to the lectern, saying that she brought not a report but a thank-you for support that has allowed development of an expansive and exhilarating time at Powell House. She noted that there are waiting lists for every youth conference and that they are shrinking the age groups so they can get more conferences scheduled, enlisting the help of young adults who have been through the Powell House experience

She then turned to Mike, and he told Friends about taking 12 high school students to Aldea Suyapa, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, where they built 22 fuel-efficient cookstoves to help to improve health and family life and to reduce deforestation. Mike was joined by Amy Savage (Syracuse) and Rebecca White (Quaker Street), young adult Friends who were on the trip. Saying that it was good to feel useful and appreciated, they commended those who were with them and who supported them. One said that it meant a lot to her to see people from the U.S. coming to Honduras to do needed work, play games, and get to know people, and that it meant a lot to those they visited. Mike said that on the trip they felt joy and challenge, and that our young people were *enjoyed* by the people they came to know in Honduras.

Mike briefly spoke about the capital campaign for major renovation of the Anna Curtis Center to make the ground floor accessible and to improve air quality. He asked us to consider not just what it means to make the building accessible to all, but also to ask what it will be worth to us as a community, and what it will take, to make the human and spiritual process as accessible as the building. Friends received the report.

2007-07-62. Melanie-Claire introduced Herbert Lape (Westbury), clerk of the Advancement Committee, noting that after tonight’s session Advancement will no longer be under the care of the Nurture Section. Herb reported that the committee has been focusing its efforts on finding and supporting individuals who have an energetic calling to the twin tasks of advancement: outreach and renewal. In hosting an Advancement Consultation this past March (with another planned for the fall), encouraging meetings to try outreach booths at community events, and advising meetings about improving their physical and Web-based visibility, Advancement is offering models for improving outreach. The committee has brought Friends together to share their spiritual grounding for the work and their experiments with outreach techniques (such as T-shirts, business cards to hand out, and displays for festivals). The committee has supported renewal by providing financial support to the Traveling Friends Program, making vouchers available to monthly meetings to support Summer Sessions attendance by members or attenders who had not previously been, and exploring and sharing ways to strengthen connections among meetings. Herb noted that committee members are excited and energized by the response.

2007-07-63. Herb reported that the Advancement Committee recommends a Lockport- Brinkerhoff

request of up to \$3,000 for Easton Meeting for money to repair the meetinghouse. The clerk of Easton Meeting is directed to contact the treasurer of the NYYM Trustees to determine the specific amount to be granted. Friends approved this request.

2007-07-64. Patricia Sears (Housatonic) and Nancy Britton (Morningside), coclerks of the Epistle Committee, read twice through the first draft of the NYYM Epistle. Friends were asked to write comments on paper that has been provided rather than to offer comments from the floor.

2007-07-65. The minutes of the morning session were read and approved.

2007-07-66. The minutes of the Tuesday morning, July 24, session were read and approved, and the meeting adjourned.

Friday, July 27, 2007, 7:45 P.M.

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

2007-07-67. Friends gathered together in worship. Out of the silence, the reading clerk read a Philadelphia Yearly Meeting epistle from Seventh Month 2006. Rima also listed many of the epistles we received, and noted they are all available for reading at the NYYM conference desk.

2007-07-68. Our Clerk introduced the clerks' table, and reviewed the evening's agenda. She introduced Kathleen Lawson (New Brunswick), clerk of Sessions Committee. Kate said 709 registered for Summer Sessions; 528 adults, 181 Junior Yearly Meeting attenders, and 73 members of the Circle of Young Friends. Of the 709 participants, 126 were first-time attenders (82 adults and 44 youth). We took part in 22 interests groups, and raised; \$1,078.50 through the Fun(d) Fair, \$1,341.09 at the Tagless Sale; \$8,126.70 at Café Night, plus a \$5,000 gift for Powell House; for a total of \$15,546.29 for the Sharing Fund and Powell House. She suggested that Friends thank the Silver Bay employees for their care of us, and for the sound system, which arrived the day before we did. Kate spoke to us about the miracles which gathered together this week to transform the tragic accident of Wednesday. Just the right people were here to do just the right healing in our community.

2007-07-69. Timothy Johnson (Schenectady), clerk of NYYM Nominating Committee, submitted the remaining names for nomination and corrections to the consent agenda nominations. The recording clerk read the nominations, and Friends approved.

2007-07-70. We received and read an epistle from the Circle of Young Friends, which is attached in its entirety.

2007-07-71. Ronald Peterson (Fredonia), for the Epistle Committee, read the 2007 New York Yearly Meeting Summer Sessions Epistle. Friends approved.

2007-07-72. The minutes were read and approved.

2007-07-73. Friends settled into worship.