

New York Yearly Meeting
Summer Sessions
July 19–25, 2009
Silver Bay, New York

Sunday, July 19, 2009, 6:45 P.M.

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

2009-07-01. Young Friends led the body in singing before meeting; Friends settled into worship.

2009-07-02. The Clerk, Ernestine (Ernie) Buscemi (Morningside), welcomed Friends to the 314th Session of New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM), and talked about the theme for this year, “Equality: Living into the Testimony.” Ernie said she had spent hours pondering what that “living into” really means. She found no easy answer but saw that we all have a piece, a responsibility, from the youngest to the oldest, to “live into” the passionate, radical, glorious nature of each one of us, to “live into” the community and reflect God’s love, to “live into” waking up to the presence of God in each other and all living things. She invited us to “live into” all this and into the delight—and sometimes the fear—of recognizing the voice and the will of God (“You want me to what?”) and to remember that it is not just about telling each other our story, it is about our listening deeper and deeper, trusting, “living into” faithfulness. She welcomed us to be participants in the fullness of this week, in the fullness and presence of God, as we walk into the vastness of the Light that knows only equality.

2009-07-03. Ernie introduced those at the clerks’ table.

2009-07-04. The reading clerk read the roll by region; Friends rose in response.

2009-07-05. Ernie drew our attention to some of the materials for the week: the printed program, the *Advance Reports*, guidelines for participants, and the daily *NYYM Minute*. She noted some of the resources available if needed: a behavioral committee, the Conflict Transformation Committee, and a nurse on the Silver Bay staff.

2009-07-06. Heather Cook (Chatham-Summit), clerk of the Steering Committee for the Meetings for Discernment, spoke about the fourth Meeting, which will take place in three separate sessions on Tuesday. She invited everyone to take the opportunity to be part of what can be, with God’s help, an extraordinary experience. She then noted that Wednesday morning will be the plenary session, with speakers Vanessa Julye and Donna McDaniel, authors of the book *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship: Quakers, African Americans, and the Myth of Racial Justice*.

2009-07-07. Rima Segal (Rochester) read aloud the book, *The Other Side*, by Jacqueline Woodson, asking that we put on our imagination hats because we would not be able to see the pictures. This book relates to the theme for this week, the testimony of equality. It is told by an African-American girl named Clover. Her mother says she mustn't go to the other side of the big fence that divides her and her friends from where the white people live and "that's the way it's always been." One summer a little white girl in a pink sweater begins to sit right on the fence. Clover notices everything she does and wonders whether she would want the little girl to play with her and her friends. The little girl, Annie, says that even though her mother has also told her not to go on the other side of the fence, the fence is just made for sitting on and her mother hadn't said not to do that. Clover begins to sit on the fence, too and after she and Annie join Clover's friends in a game, all the children sit on the fence together. As we listened to the story, we could feel how brave the children were in trying to overcome fears to be friends together. So we felt hopeful when, at the end of the book, Annie says, "Some day someone will come along and knock down this old fence." When Rima closed the book, she said, "And I think, Friends, that that is what we are about doing."

2009-07-08. Karen Way (New Brunswick) reported for the State of Society Committee. Four queries had been sent to the more than 90 monthly meetings, preparative meetings, summer meetings, and worship groups in NYYM to help them in reflecting on their spiritual health. Fifty-four meetings replied and the State of the Society Report is based on these responses. The full report is available in the *Advance Reports*. Karen summarized themes that came out most strongly in the answers to the queries.

Query 1. "How does love manifest itself in your meeting, in your communities and in the world?" This query drew the most responses. Meetings wrote about "love that comes before all our differences" and that "love does not fail but strengthens the more we love one another."

Query 2. "Does the spirit of worship extend into our committee work and into meeting for worship with a concern for business?" Most responses were positive, finding that business and committee meetings begin and end in worship and that meetings take care to call one another back into silence to preserve that space of worship while conducting business.

Query 3. "What efforts are you making to reach out to people in your community and grow your meeting? Is advancement a priority?" Meetings were divided on this question. Some did not consider advancement a priority and some expressed discomfort with the term or compared it to proselytizing. Friends laughed at Karen's report that one meeting found that while they were engaged in considering how to carry out advancement, "The meeting advanced on its own, behind our backs."

Query 4. "Especially in this time of economic uncertainty, are you taking stock of the meeting's financial health and planning for ways to help those in need?" Meetings expressed worry about meeting budgets and experiencing shortfalls, and this has been the occasion for soul-searching and plain speech. There is a general trust that God will

provide; financial hardship is not new, and gives “a teachable moment for living in simplicity.”

The State of the Society Report concludes that NYYM is in the process of being reformed, that we are learning trust and empathy, and that our coming together is not without struggle and sometimes tears as we learn to speak our truth and act as Friends.

2009-07-09. Friends settled into worship. Out of the silence, one Friend noted that it is a miraculous thing when we stop and examine ourselves, and hardly anything is more powerful than a really good question.

2009-07-10. The Clerk introduced Peter Close (Purchase), clerk of Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM). Peter said he was looking forward to a good week and hopes to see everyone at community events. He then introduced Jennifer Lindop (Saratoga), assistant clerk of JYM and registrar for this summer, and the two coordinators, Roseann Press (Housatonic) and Susan Stillman (Montclair). The coordinators reminded parents that a reasonable bedtime will help everyone have a good time. They introduced the group leaders for JYM, and business meeting closed as preparations began for a meeting of parents and sponsors.

Monday, July 20, 2009, 10:15 a. m.

*Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Heather Cook, Assistant Clerk
Lee Haring, Recording Clerk
Norma Ellis, Reading Clerk*

2009-07-11. The session opened as Boyce Bengé (Brooklyn) of the Epistle Committee read an epistle from Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) from August 2008. Iowa Conservative Friends met in concern over the destruction caused by the flooding of local rivers and the suffering of immigrant groups. They worshipfully considered what response to make to such events in the world around them.

2009-07-12. The Clerk expressed hope that in our time together, we can as a body hold our hearts open and seek the vastness of the Light. Let us seek love, respect, and a sense of being who we all are, allowing each of us to *be* as God has created us. That is the practice, for us all, of walking in community as we seek that of God. Then, after introducing those at the clerks’ table, she invited Peter Close, clerk of Junior Yearly Meeting, to introduce Matthew Lindop (Saratoga) and Nora Mattson (Brooklyn). These two young Friends reported on this morning’s absentees and on some activities planned for the 3rd and 4th grade groups at JYM.

2009-07-13. The Clerk explained the order of worship for the morning. Norma Ellis (Scarsdale) read a letter of introduction for S. Jean Smith (now a member of Kaimosi

Meeting) from East Africa Yearly Meeting, over the signature of Ephraim Konzolo, its general secretary. Jean Smith is traveling among Friends to speak about the situation and needs of Kenyan Friends. Norma then read a letter from the Committee for Ministry on Racism of Friends General Conference, over the signature of Miyo Moriuchi, clerk, introducing Janice Domanik, member of Lake Forest Meeting, who is visiting us this year with a special concern for racial justice. Finally, Norma read a letter from Bruce Birchard, general secretary of Friends General Conference, introducing Vanessa Julye, member of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, who is with us this year as an FGC staff visitor.

2009-07-14. Norma read a minute of travel from Chatham-Summit Monthly Meeting, endorsed by All Friends Regional Meeting, for their member Peter Lang, who is traveling among Friends' meetings to bring to mind the relevance for today of the ministry and writings of Thomas Kelly. Friends authorized the Clerk to endorse this minute of travel.

2009-07-15. Norma read a minute of travel from Flushing Monthly Meeting for Naomi Paz Greenberg, who is traveling among Friends with a concern for the conscience of Friends and the payment for war. The minute was endorsed by New York Quarterly Meeting. Friends approved the Clerk's signing this minute of travel.

2009-07-16. Melanie-Claire Mallison (Ithaca), clerk of the Nurture Coordinating Committee, reminded Friends that there are three new committees in that section. She urged Friends to attend the committee's meeting this week and to join its work. Shifting into the role of clerk of the Powell House Committee, Melanie-Claire announced the success of the capital campaign, which raised \$710,000 for renovation of the Anna Curtis Center; \$27,000 more is needed. Contributions are strongly encouraged. She then introduced Sylvia Graves, general secretary of Friends United Meeting, and four Friends to speak to their perceptions of our relationship to Friends United Meeting (FUM). She invited Friends to attend the threshing session on this topic on Thursday.

2009-07-17. Sylvia Graves gave us a PowerPoint presentation on the history, purposes, goals, and current work of FUM (available from her at sylviag@fum.org). Its 29 member Yearly Meetings (12 are in North America) include as many as 350,000 Friends around the world (40,000 in North America). She reviewed the General Board business of FUM, its several publications, and the "global partnerships" which have replaced the old missionary approach in Belize, Ramallah, Kenya, and elsewhere in Africa. Earlier this year, Sylvia Graves went to Kenya to visit FUM's seven partner projects there. The hospitals at Lugulu and Kaimosi have undergone some improvements (water tanks for Kaimosi, for example), but the needs are still great. She reported on Turkana and Samburu Friends missions and on Friends Theological College, which is on its way to accreditation. She expressed willingness to answer questions about FUM while here for the rest of this week.

2009-07-18. For the panel presentation, Julia Giordano (Bulls Head-Oswego), Mary Pagurelias (Brooklyn), Greta Mickey (Central Finger Lakes), and Donald Badgley (Poughkeepsie) took the stage. Julia posed a query: What is our responsibility, if we

expect to go on being part of FUM? She recalled saying years ago, “When will I, as a lesbian, be a loved member of this meeting?” and answered, “We need each other, for FUM to become whole.” She read a minute from her meeting from January this year, affirming the traditional Friends testimony of equality, including in it those who identify as lesbian, gay, queer, or transgender. Bulls Head Friends, reflecting on the irrationality of prejudice, called for more profound thinking about the complicated issues of sexuality. Julia concluded that she expects the same from New York Yearly Meeting: that we go to Friends United Meeting witnessing what we know to be true and just, committed to doing “whatever it takes to get there.”

Speaking next out of the silence, Mary Pagurelias called up the vision of a united New York Yearly Meeting, faithful to its testimonies, embracing all our diversity, finding strength in love that embraces differences. She advised refusing to help anyone in any act of discrimination. When we open ourselves to the true light, we will hide nothing of who we are. “I am so much more than a woman,” she said. “As a lesbian I have often been the object of discrimination, in subtle and not-so-subtle ways,” even within her family. For her, the question is not about gay and straight or about any single person, but about the integrity of the body of New York Yearly Meeting: who we are, how we witness to each other. She compared the subtle discrimination within New York Yearly Meeting to justifying “a little bit of torture, or war, or racism.” She concluded, “We cannot be a unified yearly meeting if we continue to be complicit in the hiring practices of Friends United Meeting; so in my view we need to leave the table.”

At this point, from the body of the meeting, a Friend stood and spoke of his history as a Quaker and a product of missions and three Quaker schools in Jamaica, then quoting 1 Corinthians 13 (“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels...”). As he reminisced about his school days, several Friends stood in silence. Mission work, he said, has been turning the lives of thousands; if we as children of God know how to practice the love of God, it is impossible for us to have division on this or any matter, because God is able to teach us to love.

The Clerk called the body of Friends into community worship, as young Friends came to join us, and reminded us that we shall all have opportunity to speak. Worship resumed.

Greta Mickey then took up the query “How are we called to be in relationship with the rest of Friends United Meeting?” She recalled a spring session of several years ago, where a member of the Haudenosaunee nation cited a prayer thanking the creator for the presence of all; for the earth, grass, water, birds, and creatures in the water and on the earth. Each time, the people respond, “We agree.” The speaker continues until he or she is clear that all have found unity together, and does not conclude before then. Greta said we become so focused on what makes us different that we forget what makes us the same: what is eternal—the measure of light and truth each of us carries—and that none of us carries all the light or truth. Only when we come together, listen, and labor with one another do we feel that which is truth and love. When we do that, the truth is multiplied and the light grows. When we are hurt in a relationship, we have responsibility to say so, but also to listen with open minds and open hearts. In relationships we also have choices;

we can choose to labor in love, or to walk away—but when we make that second choice, we close the door on the possibility of growth or love. She ended by recalling one spiritual counselor’s criterion for action: In a difficult situation, what’s the most loving thing to do? Finally she recalled another teaching from the First People: “I have two wolves inside me. One is full of anger and agitation, the other full of love, healing, and kindness.” “Which one will win?” “Whichever one I feed.”

Donald Badgley read out a list of words relevant to the query that opened the panel, the last being “love.” We have an opportunity to trust, he said; we are called to love one another. It is as if we are swallowing camels and choking on fleas. He added that we are struggling about policy, and cited George Fox: “Do nothing for the Lord by earthly policy, but wait in the power . . . you will never be right till then.” This policy we are struggling over cannot touch our love; we are called to model the truth, to love one another as one family. We have an opportunity, he said: We need to trust the love and make it the only authority. Then policies fall away. That’s all the Source of all love, present among us, ever wanted. He concluded that we are called to do nothing else.

2009-07-19. Ending the morning session, Clerk Ernestine Buscemi said, “We are tender. When I am tender, everybody else around me is going to be tender. We are being held. Do not be afraid of being there.” She closed the session with all Friends “sitting there in our tenderness,” because, she said, she knows we are being held, and we will find a way of being. “God has given us some stuff. We need to sit, to talk, to pray, and pray some more, because we are called to do this work this week.”

It was understood that minutes of this session would be read later for approval.

Thursday, July 23, 2009, 10:15 A.M.

*Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Heather Cook, Assistant Clerk
Karen Reixach, Recording Clerk
Jeffrey Aaron, Reading Clerk*

2009-07-20. The meeting settled into silent worship.

2009-07-21. Boyce Bengé (Brooklyn) of the Epistle Committee read from the epistle of New England Yearly Meeting of 2008, which expressed the need for reconciliation and wholeness, forgiveness and patience. “Beneath our joy and love, we are conscious of our brokenness. The call to love weighs heavy on us. There is no minute that is going to resolve our problems; we need to learn to love one another again and again.”

2009-07-22. The Clerk welcomed Friends, inviting them to rejoice in the day. We have soared and time seems to be endless. We have prayed and we will continue to pray. We are continuing to live in community. We will continue to listen to our Guide, to listen to each other, to feel, to know where Spirit is leading us as New York Yearly Meeting. Sink,

and sink some more into those crevices that feel comfortable and also feel strange. We are being held by God.

2009-07-23. Marian Hrechka (Catskill) and Jessica Chapman (Wilton) reported on JYM activities. “We played games, and went into groups and talked about equality. Rubén from Bolivia taught us some songs. We had Original Play and went to the beach. Tomorrow we will meet with the rest of JYM, and tomorrow night we will have a bonfire to which you are all invited.”

2009-07-24. The Clerk reviewed the agenda. She reminded Friends that community worship begins at 11:55, as the rest of those present for Yearly Meeting join us.

2009-07-25. Elaine Learnard (Bethpage), recording clerk for Sunday’s business session, read the minutes of that meeting. Friends approved.

2009-07-26. Lee Haring (Bulls Head-Oswego), recording clerk for Monday’s business session, read the minutes of that meeting. Friends approved the minutes. One Friend stood aside.

2009-07-27. The Clerk indicated that the threshing session previously scheduled for this morning will occur as a called session from 1:45 to 2:45 this afternoon.

2009-07-28. The Clerk presented the consent agenda for approval. Friends approved the nominations. Friends received the requests for release from service. Friends approved the *Handbook* page for the Young Friends in Residence Committee.

The nominations and requests for release can be found following the minutes and epistles of these Summer Sessions. The revised sections of the *Handbook* can be found at www.nyym.org or paper copies may be requested from the Yearly Meeting office.

2009-07-29. The Clerk reminded Friends that a consent agenda means that no further discussion is needed. Therefore, the *Handbook* page for the Youth Committee has been removed from the consent agenda and has been referred to Nurture Coordinating Committee for further seasoning.

2009-07-30. Timothy Johnson (Schenectady), coclerk of the Nominating Committee, provided a further report from the Committee. Friends approved the nomination of Elizabeth Eschallier (Doylestown, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting) for Oakwood Friends School Board. Friends approved the nomination of Marie Hickey (New England Yearly Meeting) for the Alternatives to Violence Project. Tim read several corrections to the nominations, which are incorporated into the full report. He presented the names of John Perry (Bulls Head-Oswego) to be an at-large member of Ministry Coordinating Committee and of Kathleen Lawson (New Brunswick) to be an at-large member of General Services Coordinating Committee, for approval at a later business session.

2009-09-31. Susan Bingham (Montclair), treasurer, summarized the status of the income and expenses for the operating budget as of June 30, 2009 (see

www.nyym.org/committees/treasurer/tr30jun09.pdf). She also reviewed the Sharing Fund and the Other Funds. These reports follow the minutes and the full report is posted on the Web site. Friends received the report.

2009-07-32. Steven Mohlke (Ithaca), clerk of the Financial Services Committee, reminded Friends of the two goals of this committee: for monthly meetings to make informed decisions about covenant donations and for the Yearly Meeting to make decisions based on realistic estimates of covenant donations. He recalled the budget analysis by program offered to meetings last year. He indicated his efforts to eliminate the use of “them” and “us” in talking about finances. (“Did *my* program get funded?” “What did *they* ask for?”)

Coming into 2010, we have a budget under stress. This means that priorities become even more important, and those priorities need to come from the monthly meetings. Later this summer, the Financial Services Committee will circulate a draft expense budget to monthly meetings, asking meetings to indicate their covenant donations. Further, he issued four invitations to Friends: Notice your language as you talk about the budget, both in committees and monthly meetings; have someone from Financial Services visit and explain the budget and program priorities; send more than just a covenant donation figure, give feedback as well; come to Budget Saturday in October [October 10, 2009].

2009-07-33. Friends approved the minutes for this session.

2009-07-34. The assistant clerk called us into community worship, observing that JYMers will join us shortly and we welcome their presence. After a period of silence and ministry in word and song, the meeting concluded at 12:15 to reconvene in a threshing session at 1:45 P.M.

Thursday, July 23, 2009, 1:45 P.M.

Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Heather Cook, Assistant Clerk
Karen Reixach, Recording Clerk

2009-07-35. The meeting settled into silent worship.

2009-07-36. Following a threshing session that responded to queries: “What does it mean to be a unified yearly meeting?” and “How might we dare to dream into our wholeness?” the Clerk read the following statement from the Task Group on Friends United Meeting and offered it for a first reading:

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

hold as a blessing and as a sign of God's manifold expression.

This statement, with a cover letter, will be circulated by Nurture Coordinating Committee to the monthly meetings for prayerful consideration, to see if unity can be reached around this statement. Friends approved its distribution.

2009-07-37. The meeting closed with a brief period of worship.

Friday, July 24, 2009, 10:15 A.M.

Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Heather Cook, Assistant Clerk
Lee Haring, Recording Clerk
Norma Ellis, Reading Clerk

2009-07-38. The reading clerk read a memorial minute forwarded by Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting, for Margaret Marlon (Marge) Currie (1907–2008). Born in Philadelphia, having lost her mother at an early age, Marge Currie always quenched her thirst for family by making friends. As a young teacher of home economics, she reached for new experiences. During World War II she served in the Women's Army Corps in the Pacific theater and came to see all war as wasteful and futile. She took a degree in social work and worked with the American Friends Service Committee. She was enthusiastic about Friends' social commitment, and impatient of too much worship with too little action. As a longtime, zealous member of Bulls Head-Oswego Monthly Meeting, she was actively involved in peace work, women's issues, and Native American concerns; her true calling was to prison ministry. She carried on extensive correspondence; at the time of her death last year, she was still in touch with about 100 present and former incarcerated persons. At Yearly Meeting sessions she enlivened women's worship sharing every year. Until 2008, she never missed a summer session. Until her death she was still in touch with friends she had made 60 years before: a supervisor from one of her first social work jobs, her garden club, the Prisons Committee of Nine Partners, and many other people near and far. Full of zest, laughter, adventure, and commitment, Marge Currie gave and received love for 101 years. She is greatly missed.

2009-07-39. The Clerk welcomed Peter Frisch (Brooklyn) and Andy Haag (Adirondack), who announced absentees from JYM and described their experiences of the week, including Original Play and improvisation exercises. This year's theme of equality had special impact for them.

2009-07-40. Before outlining today's order of worship, the Clerk observed that even in our tiredness at the end of a week together, we are still being held, and as we walk through the remaining time, we can still be tender with one another. "So again," she said, "good morning, Friends!"

2009-07-41. Karen Reixach (Rochester), recording clerk for the Thursday afternoon

session, read those minutes. Friends approved the minutes.

2009-07-42. As clerk of the Steering Committee for the Meetings for Discernment, Heather Cook (Chatham-Summit) reported on the fourth Meeting, held on Tuesday, July 21. A report on the session has been prepared and circulated. The body of the Meeting for Discernment approved the reappointment of Janet Hough (Chappaqua) to the Steering Committee. For the Steering Committee, Heather proposed that the Meetings for Discernment be continued for another year, and that for another year the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel be suspended. In addition, she proposed that as approved by the body [on July 25, 2008, minute 2008-07-54], the responsibility for recording ministers continue as a task of the Yearly Meeting body, on recommendation from the Ministry Coordinating Committee. Friends approved these two proposals.

2009-07-43. The assistant clerk took up the clerking of the session and introduced those at the clerks' table. Julia Giordano (Bulls Head-Oswego), clerk of the Ministry Coordinating Committee, brought forward, with approval of that committee, a minute, originating in Shrewsbury-Plainfield Half-Yearly Meeting. Friends approved the following wording:

Friends know, by our experience, that there is "that of God" in every person. Today, we in NYYM seek to live into this truth and the testimony of equality.

We recognize that the concept of race and the practice of racism are created by society at large, to which we belong, and that some of us have benefited from an economic and social system that has exploited others of us. We regret the damage these practices have caused, whether intentional or through ignorance, to others and ourselves.

We affirm the necessity for each of us to examine racism and white privilege, and the fear underlying these divisions among us. In going forward together we may make mistakes, and we understand that our only hope is to love one another. We will move with the Spirit to seek justice, healing, and reconciliation within our Yearly Meeting.

Donald Badgley stood aside.

2009-07-44. For the Epistle Committee, Roger Dreisbach-Williams (Plainfield) read the draft of this year's epistle. After some suggestions, Friends were encouraged to write and hand their comments to the committee, so that the final version can come to a later session today.

2009-07-45. After about 150 JYM Friends came in singing and distributed themselves among the rest of the body, the morning session closed with ministry and song.

Friday, July 24, 2009, 4:15 P.M.

*Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Heather Cook, Assistant Clerk
Karen Reixach, Recording Clerk
Jeffrey Aaron, Reading Clerk*

2009-07-46. The meeting settled into silent worship.

2009-07-47. The Clerk introduced the individuals at the clerks' table and reviewed the order of worship.

2009-07-48. Lee Haring, recording clerk for the morning session, read those minutes. The minutes were approved.

2009-07-49. Jeffrey Aaron read the following minute, originated by Fifteenth Street Meeting and forwarded by New York Quarterly Meeting:

The Peace Committee asks that Fifteenth Street Meeting support the landmarking of the Hopper Gibbons Underground Railroad site, at 339 West 29th Street, between 8th and 9th Avenues, New York, New York.

Abigail Hopper Gibbons and James Sloan Gibbons were Friends and Abolitionists, and lived there from 1851 to c. 1880s. Her father was Isaac Hopper, who was a founder of the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia, in the 1790s. This home is to be part of the Lamartine Place Historic District.

Friends approved the Clerk's endorsing this minute.

2009-07-50. Jolene Festa (Brooklyn), coclerk of Prisons Committee, presented the following minute, with the approval of Witness Coordinating Committee, for consideration:

The New York State prison system follows a practice of shackling incarcerated pregnant women during childbirth. The New York State Senate and Assembly have passed bill S1290-A3373, which would forbid the use of restraints on incarcerated women during labor, delivery, and postpartum recovery, and would restrict the use of restraints during transport to and from the hospital.

The Clerk and General Secretary are directed, on behalf of New York Yearly Meeting, to convey to Governor David

Paterson, with copies to faith-based communities, that we as members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) are opposed to this practice of restraints on incarcerated women, and petition the governor to sign this bill and to end this practice immediately.

Friends approved.

2009-07-51. Messages were delivered by Angel Ramos (Rochester), regarding the openings he experienced in prison and upon release with Friends and AVP; from Mara Komoska (Brooklyn), regarding her experience in El Salvador; and from Greta Mickey (Central Finger Lakes), as peace concerns coordinator for NYYM. Their remarks can be found on the NYYM Web site www.nyyym.org.

2009-07-52. The meeting closed at 5:45 P.M.

Friday, July 24, 2009, 7:45 P.M.

Ernestine Buscemi, Clerk
Heather Cook, Assistant Clerk
Elaine Learnard, Recording Clerk

2009-07-53. As the appointed time approached for the evening meeting for worship with attention to business, in celebratory commotion and high spirits, Friends filled the auditorium. The Clerk and assistant clerk rose and stood in silence at the rear of the stage and Friends began to center for the evening worship, all ages together.

2009-07-54. The Clerk greeted us, saying she wished that we could see her view of all of us together. She explained the order of worship for the evening. She offered thanks to those who took tender care of our children all week.

2009-07-55. Representatives of the Young Adult Concerns Committee offered the epistle from the Circle of Young Friends, outlining their activities and their concerns during this week and their plans for future activities (including a much-mentioned Powell House gathering). They concluded by noting that they had decided that their epistle is not the place for them to express their concerns about the cake auction at Café Night.

2009-07-56. Clerk of JYM Peter Close was introduced. He thanked assistant clerk Jennifer Lindop and recording clerk Mary Eagleson (Scarsdale) as well as all the volunteers, saying that the interest and energy offered to JYM from everyone made for a great week with no big emergencies or difficulties. He explained the order in which JYM would give their epistles and that the groups would remain on the stage when they had finished.

He introduced the outgoing and incoming clerks by age group [outgoing for 2009: 9th/10th grade clerks—Joy Meikle (Wilton), Chris Angell (Poughkeepsie); 11th/12th grade clerks—Josh Smith (Saratoga), Rachel Hickson (Rochester). Incoming for 2010:

9th Grade clerks—Jennifer Morgan-Davie (Mohawk Valley), Carolyn Beer (Old Chatham); 10th grade clerks—Zoe Shitemi (15th Street), Rob Oltman Kellner (Purchase); 11th–12th grade clerks—Joy Meikle (Wilton), Kai McGiver (Quaker Street)] and the outgoing and incoming coordinators [outgoing for 2009: Amy White (Quaker Street), Roseann Press (Housatonic), Susan Stillman. Incoming for 2010: Susan Stillman, Ginny Haines (Mohawk Valley)]. He then turned the program over to the coordinators.

2009-07-57. The 11th and 12th grade group came to the stage and arranged themselves in rows across the stage. Their epistle included their reflections on joining in worship sharing and their discussions on their own prejudices and “-isms.” They were struck by the new relevance of the conscientious objection presentation by Bill Galvin of the Center on Conscience and War; although Bill has spoken with them during previous sessions, they realized that they are now reaching the age for potential military service.

2009-07-58. The 9th and 10th grade group reported that this week they read Tolstoy’s “Three Questions,” learned about the language and culture of Bolivia from Rubén, and learned about the fun to be had at Powell House.

2009-07-59. The 7th and 8th grade group told us that this week they welcomed new friends as well as those they already knew. The theme of equality was echoed throughout their week as they learned about being leaders and not followers and to pass the Frisbee to girls. They reported that “We leave for home more aware of ways we can promote equality for all people.”

The stage began to fill with JYMers and a growing sense of the Spirit and the spirit of our Yearly Meeting.

2009-07-60. The 5th and 6th grade group reported that when they came to community worship on Monday, they felt unwelcome because they could feel a tension in the air. They demonstrated their rain sticks and they told us about learning about conscientious objection. Happily, later in the week, they felt a warm and welcoming greeting when they joined community worship. They ended by inviting everyone to join in singing “Magic Penny” while some of them “sang” it in American sign language.

2009-07-61. Everyone on stage demonstrated how well they could work together by moving back to make room for the 3rd and 4th grade group and their fabulous cardboard constructions of the Empire State Building and the Twin Towers. All of the 3rd and 4th graders took turns reading from their epistle. It described their activities, and had quotes that began “I feel equal when...” each concluding with a different thought: “...when everyone is peaceful...when people look at me when I am talking...when everyone is included...when my brother gets in trouble instead of me for a change.” They ended by reading words that mean equality in other languages, a list so long they couldn’t finish reading it aloud and several of the children walked through the auditorium with copies of their list, “distributing equality.”

2009-07-62. Susan Stillman thanked the resource people: Kim Tsocanos of Wilton MM

and Connecticut Friends School, with Original Play; Bill Galvin of the Center on Conscience and War, with information on conscientious objection and the Quaker Peace Testimony; Leigh Strimbeck (Old Chatham), with movement and theater games; Franklin Krump, with theater games and exercises; Christine DeRoller (Old Chatham) and Micheal Clark (Old Chatham), of Powell House, with PoHo information, games, and lore; Rubén Hilare, visiting Quaker teacher from Bolivia and Oakwood Friends School, with the rich music, language, and story of Bolivian Quakers

2009-07-63. One of the leaders read the epistle from the 1st and 2nd graders, a group that shrank some during the week. They made beaded fidgets to help them remember what we are doing in meeting for worship.

By now, the stage was filled with seated JYMers, and many adults rose to take pictures of this youngest part of our Yearly Meeting. Before leaving the stage, the children led us in singing “Simple Gifts.”

The full text of all the JYM written epistles can be found following these minutes.

2009-07-64. John Cooley (Central Finger Lakes), clerk of the Sessions Committee, reported the statistics for this year. There was a total registration of 620 people, of whom 160 were in JYM. There were about 20 off-campus attenders. The Tagless Tag Sale raised \$1,395.29, the Fun(d) Fair \$943.50, and Café Night \$6,504.66.

He thanked the many people who worked on or with the Sessions Committee to make this a successful week. He announced the dates reserved with Silver Bay for 2010 are July 18 to 24. He then reported that Sessions is mindful of the concerns about the cost of Summer Sessions and has decided to try, as an interim experiment, changing Summer Sessions in 2010 to a five-day schedule. This will reduce the costs for those who come for the whole week by 16% and will hold down the costs for the Yearly Meeting as well. This is only an interim plan, and Sessions will be analyzing the surveys completed by those in attendance this week, as well as surveys to be sent to those who were not here (to be returned by September 15, if possible) and working on a plan to make Summer Sessions more affordable for all.

Many Friends rose from the floor to express concern with the decision to shorten the Summer Sessions for 2010. Some said that they did not feel heard. Others affirmed the importance of hearing all the voices, including those of people not here. The Clerk indicated that her sense of the meeting is that we need more time for this decision, but that she was aware that the Sessions Committee must begin, before Fall Sessions, to do what it needs to do to plan for summer 2010. She reminded us that we must find ways to meet the needs of all in the Yearly Meeting, and we need to gather some choices. She reminded us that Friday night of our long week is not the time when we can make this decision, and she cautioned us against becoming “dug in.”

John said that it is still possible to stay with the six-day schedule for 2010, as plans with Silver Bay are not yet final. We know how to do a six-day schedule and will not give up

the sixth day of the schedule yet, but Sessions must begin planning for the five-day plan if it is to be a possibility.

2009-07-65. Roger Dreisbach-Williams read the epistle, noting that it is different from what was heard this morning. Friends approved the epistle. Roger took the stage again to say that the epistle this year is very different from one he worked on five years ago. He thanked the Clerk for her leading us in deepening our faithfulness.

2009-07-66. The assistant clerk read an announcement from Financial Services that Budget Saturday will be held on October 10, 2009, at a location to be arranged.

2009-07-67. Friends approved the minutes. The meeting ended following the Clerk's warm remarks on her experience of love and trust to and from the body over the last five years and of her feelings as she leaves the position of Clerk.

Visitors

Susan Corson-Finnerty, Germantown (PYM); Steven Davison, Yardley, (Philadelphia YM); Janice Domanik, Lake Forest (Illinois YM); Liberty Goodwin, Smithfield (New England YM); Sylvia Graves, general secretary, Friends United Meeting; Vanessa Julye, Central Philadelphia (Philadelphia YM); Paul Klinkman, Smithfield (New England YM); Donna McDaniel, Framingham (New England YM); Noah Marshall, Stony Run (Baltimore YM); C. Lisimba Montilla-Smith, Washington, DC (Baltimore YM); Jessica Montilla-Smith, Washington, DC (Baltimore YM); Megan Oltman, Princeton (Philadelphia YM); Daniel Porcher, Princeton (Philadelphia YM); Rachel Porcher, Princeton (Philadelphia YM); Chrissie Rizzo, AFSC; George Rubin, Medford (Philadelphia YM); Margery Rubin, Medford (Philadelphia YM); Tim Seid, First Friends (Indiana YM); S. Jean Smith, Kaimosi (East Africa YM)

Interest Groups

Aging and Spirituality
First Day School: Creating Engaging Religious Education for Children
Forgiveness as a Spiritual Practice
Friends with a Concern for Israel/Palestine
Mirrors of Privilege: A Video Dialogue About Racism
Quaker Bolivia Link
Quakers in Bolivia
Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy
Spiritual Direction
Women's Leadership Workshop