



# 2019 Minutes

of the Annual Sessions  
of the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends

Three Hundred Fifty-Ninth Year  
Castleton State College | Castleton, Vermont  
August 3–8, 2019



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**Saturday, August 3–Thursday, August 8 • Castleton (Vermont) University**

6:30–7:00	Saturday, August 3	Sunday, August 4	Monday, August 5	Tuesday, August 6	Wednesday, August 7	Thursday, August 8
6:45–8:45	6:30–7:00 Early Morning Worship (See YM News** for locations)					
8:30–11:30	6:45–8:45 Breakfast (Huden Dining Hall)					
	9:00 Registration begins* (Fine Arts Center Lobby) 9:30 Permanent Board (Stafford Auditorium) & Ministry & Counsel (Jeffords Auditorium)	8:15–9:00 Registration* (Fine Arts Center Lobby) 9:00–11:30 Worship and Plenary, part 1 (Pavilion) – All-Ages Worship – Bible Half Hour – Plenary	8:30 Bible Half Hour with Colin Saxton (Fine Arts Center) transitioning worshipfully into... 9:00–11:30 Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business (Fine Arts Center)			8:30 Bible Half Hour transitioning worshipfully into... 9:00–11:00 Meeting for Worship for Business 11:00–11:30 Concluding Worship (all ages)
11:15–1:45	11:15–1:30 Lunch (Huden Dining Hall) 2:30 Registration closes*	11:15–1:30 Lunch (Huden Dining Hall) 12:45 Orientation for first-time attendees (Jeffords Auditorium)	11:15–1:30 Lunch (Huden Dining Hall)			11:30–1:00 Lunch and Room Key Return (Huden Dining Hall)
1:00–4:45	3:00 Shriners Parade on Main Street 4:30–6:00 Registration continues* (Fine Arts Center Lobby)	1:30–2:30 Anchor Groups 3:00–5:00 Memorial Meeting (Pavilion)	1:15–2:45 Anchor Groups (Leavenworth/Jeffords)	1:15–2:45 Anchor Groups (Leavenworth/Jeffords)	1:15–2:45 Anchor Groups (Leavenworth/Jeffords)	1:00–3:00 Permanent Board
4:45–6:45	6:45 Opening Celebration (all ages) (Fine Arts Ctr) 7:30 Children & youth staff leave 8:00–9:00 Anchor Groups (Leavenworth) 8:30–10:00 Registration Continues* (Fine Arts Center Lobby)	6:15 Vespers Singing for all ages 7:00–9:00 Plenary, part 2 followed by Meeting for Worship for Business (Fine Arts Center)	6:15 Vespers Singing for all ages 7:00–8:00 Workshops 8:00–10:00 Contradance (Pavilion) 8:15–9:30 Workshops	3:00–5:00 Meeting for Worship for Business (Fine Arts Center)	3:00–5:00 Meeting for Worship for Business (Fine Arts Center)	Youth Programs  Childcare: Times to be posted Junior High YM, Junior YM, Young Friends, Young Adult Friends: See respective schedules for Orientation schedules & locations check YM News** or neym.org/ sessions/youth
6:00–10:00	4:45–6:45 Dinner (Huden Dining Hall)					
			6:15 Vespers Singing for all ages 7:00–8:30 Pete Seeger Sing-Along with Annie Patterson and Peter Blood-Paterson; all ages (Fine Arts Center)	6:15 Vespers Singing for all ages 7:00–9:00 Coffee House all ages (Fine Arts Ctr) 7:00–8:00 Workshops 8:15–9:30 Workshops		
* Registration Hours: Fri, 5–7 p.m. & 8–10 p.m.; Sat, 9 a.m.–2:30 p.m., 4:30–6 p.m., 8:30–10 p.m.; Sun, 8:15–9 a.m., 12:15–1:15 p.m., 4:30–5:30 and 7–9 p.m.; Mon–Wed, 9:30–10:30 a.m., 5–6 p.m.   For registration needs outside these hours, please contact the Registrar well in advance at registrar@neym.org or 978-494-6396 to make alternate arrangements.						
** Yearly Meeting News   Published Saturday through Wednesday mornings at breakfast and on the web at neym.org/ sessions, with information about events at Sessions. Deadlines for submissions: Sunday, Monday and Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. Drop off materials at the Info Desk, located in the Fine Arts Center Lobby. Announcements, notices and flyers not specifically related to Sessions will not be included in the YM news. Please check with the Info Desk for where to post these items.						

## 2019 Sessions Coordinators, Officers, Speakers and YM Staff

Access Needs Coordinator	Jana Noyes-Dakota
Accounts Manager	Frederick Martin*
Bible Half-Hour Speaker	Colin Saxton
Bookstore	Sara Burke, John Fuller
Children's Bookstore	Jean McCandless and Karen Sargent (managers), Christopher McCandless
Clerks	Fritz Weiss (presiding), Peter Bishop and Rosemary Zimmerman (recording), John Humphries and Gina Nortonsmith (reading)
Events Coordinator	Elizabeth Hacala*
Family Neighborhood Coordinators	Betsy Kantt and Laura Street
Housing Coordinator	Kristin Wilson
Information Desk Coordinator	Chris Jorgenson
Office Manager	Sara Hubner*
Pastoral Care Team Leader	Abigail Matchette
Registrar	Martha Hinshaw Sheldon
Sessions Committee Clerk	Leslie Manning
Sessions Office Assistant	Cassie Schiffman
Shuttle Coordinator	Barbara Dakota
Special Needs Coordinator	Jana Noyes-Dakota
Treasurer	Shearman Taber
Volunteer Coordinator	Hannah Zwirner Forsythe
YM News Editor	Liz Yeats
Yearly Meeting Secretary	Noah Merrill*

## 2019 Youth Program Coordinators and Staff

### Childcare

**Coord:** Whitney Mikkelsen  
Sheila Brenner  
Darien Brimage  
Jerry Carson  
Colleen Crowley  
Debbie Humphries  
Rainer Humphries  
Holly Lapp  
Benigno Sánchez-Eppler  
Karen Sánchez-Eppler  
Martha Schwope  
Phillip Veatch  
Stefan Walker

### Junior Yearly Meeting

**Coord:** Betty Ann Lee  
Carol Baker  
Brad Bussiere-Nichols  
Margy Carpenter  
Janet Dawson  
Pamela Drouin

Rebecca Edwards  
Lisa Forbush-Umholtz  
Charlotte Gorham  
June Goodband  
Tyler Green  
Amy Lee-Vieira  
Laurie Maheu  
Theresa Oleksiw  
Jane Radocchia  
Lynn Taber  
Jay Vieira

### JYM Afternoon Choices

**Coords:** Cynthia Rankin and  
Helen Carpenter  
Isabelle Lippincott

### Junior High Yearly Meeting

**Coord:** Gretchen Baker-Smith\*  
Anne Anderson  
Buddy Baker-Smith  
Steve Ball

Dave Baxter  
Catherine Bock  
Lilly Campbell  
Emily Edwards  
Julian Fisher-Frank  
Adam Kohrman  
Doug Lippincott  
Kieto Mahania

### Young Friends

**Coord:** Maggie Nelson\*  
**Asst Coord:** Allon Dubler  
Tom Antonik  
Felice Lopez  
Philip Maurer  
Evan McManamy  
Anna Radocchia  
Wendy Schlotterbeck

### Young Adult Friends

**Coord:** Emi Link

## Minutes of the Annual Sessions

### Saturday Evening

#### 2019-1 Opening and Welcome

The presiding clerk, Fritz Weiss (Hanover), opened the meeting with vocal prayer. We often end our meetings with shaking hands, but this year let us begin that way. Let us remember that we are one body, gathered in God's presence.

#### 2019-2 Clerks' Table

Fritz Weiss introduced the rest of the Yearly Meeting clerks: Rosemary Zimmermann (Bennington) (accompanied by her five year old son, Arthur), Peter Bishop (Northampton), Gina Nortonsmith (Northampton), and John Humphries (Hartford). The clerk introduced the elders for Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness who are accompanying the clerks this year: Melissa Foster (Framingham), Polly Attwood (Cambridge), and Eppchez Yes (Northampton).

#### 2019-3 Roll Call

We called the roll of meetings by quarter. Each quarter was assigned a color, and as the name of each meeting from the quarter was called, Friends from that meeting waved a coordinating streamer in the air.

We noted that Lewiston Monthly Meeting in Falmouth Quarter has been laid down.

#### 2019-4 New Babies, First-Time Attendees, and Visitors

We celebrated the new babies among us and welcomed first-time attendees. Throughout the week the following visitors were introduced and welcomed:

Wendy Cooler, Baltimore Yearly Meeting  
 Laura Everett, Massachusetts Council of Churches  
 Carl MacGruder, Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting, Pacific Yearly Meeting  
 Mica Estrata, Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting, Pacific Yearly Meeting  
 Gail Thomas, Santa Monica Monthly Meeting, Pacific Yearly Meeting  
 Anne Collins, Stillwater (OK) Monthly Meeting, Quaker Religious Education Collaborative  
 Liz Yeats, Austin Monthly Meeting, South Central Yearly Meeting  
 Dancan Sabwa, East Africa Yearly Meeting North  
 Elaine Emily, Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting, Pacific Yearly Meeting  
 Lyle Miller, Mennonite, Everence Financial Service  
 Andy Albertini, Director of Development from Ramallah Friends School  
 Sarah Kennedy, Friends Committee on National Legislation  
 Su Penn, Red Cedar Monthly Meeting, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting  
 Ashliegh Dodd (no affiliation given)  
 Melanie Gifford, Adelphi Monthly Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting  
 Meg Boyd Meyer, Stony Run Monthly Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, former staff of Ramallah Friends School  
 Arthur Boyd, Stony Run Monthly Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, former staff of Ramallah Friends School  
 Judith Nandikove, Quaker Religious Education Collaborative, Nairobi Yearly Meeting  
 George Lakey, Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

Adrian Moody, Head of School, Ramallah Friends School  
 Gillian Hoskin, Ramallah Friends School  
 Gloria Thompson, FWCC, Manhattan Monthly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting  
 Esther Quispe Yujra La Paz, Bolivia-Holiness Yearly Meeting  
 Emma Condori, La Paz, Bolivia-Holiness Yearly Meeting, Executive Director of the Friends International Bilingual Center  
 Jim Fussell, Friends Meeting of Washington, Baltimore Yearly Meeting  
 Frank Barch, Schuylkill Monthly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, FGC visitor, presiding clerk of FGC central committee  
 Jean Marie Prestwidge Barch, Schuylkill Monthly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, FGC visitor, clerk of FGC's Committee for Nurturing Ministries  
 Mary Kay Glazer, North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative)  
 Mey Hasbrook, Kalamazoo Monthly Meeting, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting  
 Alan and Sharon Lightner, Gunpowder, Maryland, Baltimore Yearly Meeting  
 Anne Pomeroy, New Paltz Monthly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting  
 Jackie Stillwell, Monadnock Monthly Meeting, Right Sharing of World Resources  
 Susan Lofland (no affiliation given)  
 Marisa Egerstrom (no affiliation given)  
 Lacina Tangnaqudo Onco, Congressional Advocate, FCNL Native American Advocacy Program  
 Nils Klinkenberg, Beacon Hill Friends House  
 Nancy Shippen, Fresh Pond, Friends Peace Teams  
 Amanda Kemp, Lancaster Monthly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting  
 Angela Hopkins, Ithaca Friends Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting, Friends Center for Racial Justice

## 2019-5 Introduction to the Theme

Maggie Nelson introduced us to our theme this year, “Provoke one another to love.” This theme is drawn from Hebrews 10:4-5, as quoted in Margaret Fell’s “Epistle to Convinced But Not Yet Crucified Friends.” Fell writes, “Now Friends, deal plainly with yourselves and let the eternal Light search you, and try you, for the good of your souls ... It will rip you up, and lay you open, and make manifest that which lodges in you ... Therefore, dear Friends ... consider one another, and provoke one another to Love and to good works, not forsaking the Assembling of yourselves; but exhorting another, and so much the more ... Dwell in love and unity, in the pure eternal Light; there is your fellowship, there is your cleansing and washing.”

Maggie, expanding upon this passage, mentioned that at the time of Margaret Fell’s writing, the word “provoke” meant to draw out. Her epistle calls us to be vulnerable. It nudges us to bring out more of the love that is within us and reminds us that here, this week, we can do that for one another.

## 2019-6 Youth Programs

Four threads run concurrently through the week of Yearly Meeting Sessions: Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM); Junior High Yearly Meeting (JHYM); Young Friends (YF); and the adult Yearly Meeting. We gave thanks for the presence of our youth programs attendees and staff as they left us to go to their own Yearly Meeting programs.

Although we no longer formally appoint visitors to the youth programs, we have continued to be mindful of intergenerational connection, in ways both formal (intergenerational tables at meals) and informal (casual drop-ins at youth programs, arranged with youth staff).

## 2019-7 Secretary Reflections

Yearly Meeting Secretary Noah Merrill witnessed to how he has seen the Truth prospering among Friends over the past year, in New England and beyond.

In his reflections, Noah encouraged us to “live as if the Truth is true,” even though our society tells us to live a lie. We live society’s lies when we believe that we are alone, that we do not need each other, that the only power is power-over, that we are not all infinitely beloved children of God. We are invited into a greater truth: that death is not the end, that there is deep hope on the other side of despair, that we are deeply beloved, that the only real power is the transforming power of God.

## **Sunday Evening**

### **2019-8 Opening Worship**

Maggie Edmondson (Winthrop Center) prayed us into worship. She called on God, “whom we know by many names and no name,” to help us work faithfully as parts of a whole, to encourage one another, and to respond to news of violence and hatred in the world with fierce love. She called on us to listen to one another with open hearts and open minds, and to commit ourselves joyfully to the discipline and the love that is required of us.

### **2019-9 Greeting from Laura Everett**

Laura Everett from the Massachusetts Council of Churches greeted us, the “convicted but not yet crucified” Friends. She thanked us for the unique contributions of the Society of Friends and reminded us to avoid the pitfall of “terminal uniqueness,” of turning our uniqueness into idolatry. The challenges we face are the same as those faced in every church. She invited us to gather on September 20 to commemorate 400 years of black resiliency.

Laura also shared that the Massachusetts Council has organized an Ecumenical Prayer Calendar and that throughout this month they pray for New England Yearly Meeting. “We remember especially this day the New England Yearly Meeting. Bless them and their congregations. We give thanks for the spiritual gifts that these sisters and brothers in Christ share with all your people. Remind us that these ministries are for your whole church in your whole world. May the God of peace give us peace at all times and in all ways ...”.

### **2019-10 Elders for Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness**

The elders for Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness explained their purpose and roles to us. Their role is not to call people out or to propose solutions, but to open the way for the Yearly Meeting to discern the next faithful thing for us to do, as a body and as individuals. This will not be a comfortable experience, but Friends are urged to be not afraid.

### **2019-11 Faith and Practice Revision Committee**

Phebe McCosker (Hanover), clerk of the Faith and Practice Revision Committee, as well as members Doug Armstrong (Monadnock), Marion Athearn (Westport), Rachel Cogbill (Plainfield), Susan Davies (Vassalboro), Eleanor Godway (Hartford), Eric Edwards (Sandwich), and Maggie Edmondson (Winthrop Center), reviewed for us the charge of the Faith and Practice Revision Committee and the background of its current work.

They presented us with the chapter on Membership, asking for preliminary approval. This chapter came before Sessions last year. The committee is also working on a draft chapter on marriage and will be looking forward to our input on that for the next Sessions.

The chapter on membership, particularly the section on dual membership, has been rewritten after comments on the floor last year.



Dual membership is a difficult topic for our Yearly Meeting; the subject has come before us multiple times. Last year was the first time we had the opportunity to hear what each other thought about it. We did not find unity at that time.

Monthly meetings have reported a large variety of opinions on dual membership. Some have minuted approval of dual membership, others are profoundly uncomfortable with it, while some have come to reject the concept of membership entirely in order to be “welcoming to all.”

The clerk reminded us that in the preface to Faith and Practice which has been approved, it is clear that Faith and Practice is a “devotional resource and a handbook of procedures ... designed to be a helpful guide, Dad gave not a rigid instruction manual.” Friends expressed several concerns with the chapter, mainly having to do with the nature of membership. Individual cases will sometimes be difficult, but in each case the meeting is seeking the will of God for the individual and the community.

Friends approved the preliminary acceptance of the revised chapter on membership, aware that membership is a confusing and complicated topic and one in which there are differing understandings.

## **Monday Morning**

### **2019-12 Epistle**

We heard the Epistle from Britain Yearly Meeting, held at Friends House, London, on May 4–7, 2018.

Encouraged by the voices of younger Friends among us, we have united joyfully, to embark on a Spirit-led process of revision [of the book of discipline] from much-loved foundations. We know that this will take time and energy. We are clear that we have the resources to undertake this, while continuing our witness in the wider world.

In listening to one another we have been both inspired and challenged by our religious diversity. Viewed from a distance, our Quaker community may seem like a single body. Up close, it sparkles in its infinite variety. Diversity in our beliefs and language is a richness, not a flaw. We each choose our own words, and together our stories make a whole. We are not only individuals, but also part of a church. We want the language of our book to be accessible, and also to reflect the wealth of our tradition, and of our experiences today.

Making space to reflect our religious diversity may be painful. We should not shy away from expressing who we are. We accept our vulnerability. We need to be tender with one another, balancing truth in one hand and love in the other. By listening open-heartedly to one another, we will hear where words come from.

Change brings both excitement and apprehension. We have faith that our Quaker processes will help us follow the leadings of God, and take us where we need to be.

### **2019-13 Greetings from Cuba**

Our Friends from Cuba have again been barred from visiting, as our government refuses to grant visas to them. We therefore received their video greetings with mixed emotion—sorrow at their absence, and joy at the way the love of Christ, aided by technology, helps us maintain our Puente de Amor across barriers of distance and politics. We cannot be separated by governments or by oceans.

### **2019-14 Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness**

The Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness Working Group (elders Polly Attwood, Eppchez Yes, and Melissa Foster, and working group members Lisa Graustein [Beacon Hill], Lorena Boswell [Cambridge], Becky

Jones [Northampton], Pamela Terrien [Westport], and Heidi Nortonsmith [Northampton]) shared the work they have done thus far this year, as well as the work they will carry forward this week.

The working group isn't composed of experts. They are facilitating a process that encourages everyone's wisdom and gifts and celebrates inclusion and the shared work. They invited each of us to notice patterns of oppression so that we, as the corporate body and as individuals, can discern faithful next steps. The group invited us to participate in the many opportunities to engage in this work. They reminded us that this is an experiment and we will learn from both our messiness and from our faithfulness.

### **2019-15 Treasurer's Report**

Shearman Taber (Northampton) gave the treasurer's report. Those who wish to communicate with the treasurer should email [treasurer@neym.org](mailto:treasurer@neym.org).

He noted, with admirable humility, a significant error that he made in his report: Reserves are actually substantially below the numbers required by Yearly Meeting policy, and this fact was not correctly reflected on all lines of the balance sheets. He and the Finance Committee are working to ensure that such errors do not occur in the future, and concerned members are directed to that committee for further discussion. We appreciate and love our treasurer even when he makes mistakes, and our forgiveness for the error was expressed by the body.

Specifically, the "Net Surplus/Loss" amount for last year was not correctly transferred to the "Working Capital" line, which, along with our Quasi-Endowment fund, comprise our reserves. This "Net Surplus/Loss" line showed a loss of \$48,000. Thus, our reserves were actually \$176,000—which is \$38,000 below the \$214,000 required by policy. Based on the FY19 and proposed FY20 budgets, we will begin next year with reserves of \$168,000, or \$52,000 below the \$220,000 required by policy.

We remain on track with the projections that we made five years ago. At that time, we forecast that FY '19 was the year that our reserves would reach their lowest point, well below the amount required by policy. We had also projected that our finances would "turn the corner" this year, and indeed, we are close to balancing the budget—but only if giving stays on track.

The treasurer's full report is appended. (See page 47)

### **2019-16 Finance Committee**

Bob Murray (Beacon Hill) presented the FY '20 budget for the Finance Committee.

This is the first year that the newly adopted funding priorities process was used to create the budget. Therefore, the budget reflects some modest increases from last year in order to align the budget with those corporately discerned priorities.

We supported the priority of funding "learning, practice, and leadership" by shifting Nia Thomas' work to that of Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator, and including funds to continue the work of Maggie Nelson as Young Friends Events Organizer.

We supported full participation of parents at business meeting by extending the hours of childcare at Sessions, and we increased the funding for childcare concomitantly.

We supported Yearly Meeting communications by continuing funding for social media and graphic design.

We supported an increased capacity for financial management by funding a 3-hour/week increase in the account manager's hours.

The budget details are appended. (See page 27)

As we reflected on the budget, we gave thanks for the long years of service that Eileen Cummings (Winthrop Center) gave to this work.

### **2019-17 Good News from Africa**

Beth Collea (Wellesley) and Judith Nandikove brought good news about a growing shared ministry between East African and North American Friends. Judith expressed her gratitude for Yearly Meeting support of this work and for the sense of connection it fosters between Kenya and New England. Judith also lifted up the ministry of women in the three Swahili-speaking Friends Meetings in Quebec. Great appreciation was expressed for the years of service of Marian Baker (Weare).

### **2019-18 Nominating Committee**

Jackie Stillwell (Monadnock) gave the report from Nominating Committee. While many opportunities remain open, the committee will not be bringing further nominations for approval later in the week.

This is a conscious decision made both to facilitate more faithful discernment, and also to avoid a perceived pressure to “fill slots” rather than discern gifts. Therefore, Friends who begin a discernment process during the excitement and energy of Sessions are asked instead to complete that discernment process in the more reflective space of their home and local meeting. Additions to the slate will be brought to Permanent Board for approval throughout the year.

### **2019-19 Development Program**

Noah Merrill thanked us for our participation, prayers, encouragement, and contributions for our shared ministries.

This year we are charged with raising \$593,500. Friends who have already made three-year pledges or have become monthly donors will bring us to within \$56,000 of our goal. There are some who have suggested that this goal will be a stretch, but this is the number we are led to request in order to support our ministries. The Yearly Meeting does need more income. This isn't a problem to be fixed; it is a culture to be nurtured—a culture of abundance, of equity, and of joy.

## **Monday Afternoon**

### **2019-20 Opening Worship**

James Varner sang and prayed us into worship.

He asked our Heavenly Father to open our minds and our hearts and exhorted us to practice our belief that there is that of God in everyone. He asked God to inspire us to show fire in our hearts, fire of love, and reminded us that it is “I and thee” who need to carry this love and do what God wants us to do as Quakers.

### **2019-21 Epistle**

We heard the Epistle of the 91st Assembly of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, “Quakers” in Cuba, excerpted here:

The 91st assembly ... has for its theme: “A church that grows in love and seeks the Truth”; inspired by the text of Ephesians 4:15: “Rather, following the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who

is the head, into Christ.” The church feels the joy of a generational renewal which is beginning to evaluate in a critical way how it carries out its mission, with initiatives that help to improve our work and with a greater commitment to accept the challenges of our context. ...

We also feel joy at the presence of brothers and sisters from New England Yearly Meeting, with which we have built a “Bridge of Love” for the past twenty-six years, responding to the Voice of God. For us, this Bridge is a symbol of what humanity can do to build a world of peace, justice, unity, and love. ... This idea generated a minute which recognizes the value of the Bridge of Love between the yearly meetings of New England and Cuba, and opposes the measures taken by the government of the United States which limit the interchange between these two faith communities.

May the Lord of Love and Truth inspire us to be living testimonies of this understanding which, like the wind and the sea that can reach everywhere, may extend to all the men and women of the world.

### **2019-22 Absent Friends**

We called to our attention those Friends whom we usually see among us but who are absent this year. As is our custom, postcards expressing our affection will be sent to those Friends.

### **2019-23 Clerking Practices and Structures Working Group Report**

Last year the Yearly Meeting charged Permanent Board to look at clerking practices and structures. Nia Thomas (Northampton), Martin Zwirner Forsythe (Beacon Hill), Ed Mair (Amesbury), and Fran Brokaw (Hanover) of the Clerking Practices and Structures working group have brought to us a preliminary report (see “Clerking Structures and Practices Working Group” on page 49) and will come back to us later asking for approval of specific recommendations.

We accepted the working group’s report with gratitude.

### **2019-24 Witness Session**

Adam Kohrman (Wellesley) and Ben Guaraldi (Beacon Hill), as two of the three members of the Disruptive Behavior Committee, led us in celebration of witness done by Friends among us. In between messages, they played riffs from *Sunshine of Your Love*, *Stairway to Heaven*, and *Smells Like Teen Spirit* on two electric guitars. When this was perceived by some Friends as disrespectful, they switched to leading us in a chorus of “Praise God!” and “Hallelujah!”

Charles Simpson (Burlington) talked to us about the Burlington Meeting “deep time” project. Burlington has built a relationship with the local Abenaki band. The fruits of this relationship include public art, most noticeably an art installation at the Burlington Airport giving voice to the Abenaki story and experience of history. Burlington Meeting has established a garden growing heritage strains of corn and vegetables, and has participated in public forums and celebrations of the Abenaki in northwestern Vermont.

Diane Dicranian (Midcoast) told us about the Maine Poor People’s Campaign, a national call for moral revival. They have organized concerts, protests, and civil disobedience around the issues that cause poverty. Friends from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts who are active in the Poor People’s Campaign stood and were recognized. The Yearly Meeting is an endorsing partner of the Poor People’s Campaign (Minute 2018-52).

Maggie Fogarty (Dover) told us about Dover Monthly Meeting reaching unity on becoming part of a sanctuary network. Their work included reaching out to other faith communities and providing training in how to deal with Immigration Control and Enforcement (ICE). One day, a family with two young boys came to Dover Meeting seeking a “safe house” after agents of ICE had come to their home. It was with deep joy that the monthly meeting was able to say “You are welcome here. We have been waiting for you.”

Skip Schiel (Fresh Pond) of the Israel/Palestine Working Group told us about his decade long ministry using his photography to document the story of those Palestinians who have been internally exiled. The working group has been writing articles and hosting programs about Friends in New England who are carrying a concern for the people of Israel and Palestine.

Tim Wallis and Vicki Elson (Northampton) told us of Tim's work with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and their collaborative work to help secure passage of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. They worked with their own monthly meeting to divest from companies producing materials for nuclear weapons and are now traveling to other meetings. They are also distributing publications, *Warheads to Windmills: How to Pay for a Green New Deal* and *A Quaker Guide to Nuclear Ban Treaty Alignment*.

Judy Goldberger (Beacon Hill) told us of her work doing support and accompaniment of migrants and immigrants. Judy, an obstetric nurse, began by listening to the stories of Spanish-speaking mothers of new infants, and then branched out to working with the wider immigrant community. She is now the Director of a pastoral visitation program in a house of corrections. Mary Hopkins (Fresh Pond) told us of marrying an immigrant and then learning that she would not be able to get him a green card. (He has since become a citizen.) She shared with us the joys and the pain of her work with the Boston Immigrant Justice Accompaniment Network.

### **2019-25 Puente de Amigos**

Em McManamy (Amesbury) and Maggie Fogarty reported to us on behalf of the Puente de Amigos committee. Their annual report may be found in the Advance Documents. They led us in singing a song celebrating the Bridge of Love, composed this year by Cuban Friend Jesus Leyva. This was recorded and will be sent back to our Cuban Friends. The refrain in Spanish means "Bridges, build more bridges," and the song conveys a sense of how important our connections with Cuban Friends are to each of us.

We also heard four brief reports from Friends who have traveled to Cuba this year.

Erica Brinton and Lisa Solbert Sheldon (both of Hanover) traveled to Cuba in November. The group of five from Hanover Meeting spent a week with Hanover's sister meeting in Havana, and a week among Friends in eastern Cuba. They reported that their worship time in Cuba was full of heart and Spirit.

Macci Schmidt (Northampton) and Gina Nortonsmith went in January with two Amherst College students to assess and inventory Quaker archives in Cuba and to advise on curation.

Jackie Stillwell and Noah Merrill traveled to Cuba in February for Cuba Yearly Meeting annual Sessions and travelled among meetings in Cuba. Jackie was serving as Noah's elder as he traveled there in the ministry.

Mary Beth Toomey (Wellesley) and Nora Spicer (Beacon Hill) joined with some Friends from Framingham to travel in April to assist in rebuilding the Wilmington School, which is being rehabilitated to become a community center. They renewed and strengthened long-standing relationships with Cuban Friends.

Friends recognized the long service of the former clerks of the Puente de Amigos Committee, Len and Mary Anne Cadwallader (Hanover).

## Tuesday Morning

### 2019-26 Epistle

We heard the epistle from Aotearoa-New Zealand.

The climate emergency is a spiritual crisis for us and is exercising both our hearts and our minds. On the one hand we are concerned that in gathering and communicating locally, nationally, and internationally we enlarge our carbon footprint. On the other we wish to make our Quaker voice heard clearly and effectively at local, national and international decision-making forums.

“We drink from wells we did not dig. We warm ourselves at fires we did not kindle.” (Deuteronomy 6:11) In doing so we have a responsibility to take on the role of *kaitiaki* (guardians) for resources and leave the world a better place for those that follow.

### 2019-27 Permanent Board

Sarah Gant (Beacon Hill), outgoing clerk of Permanent Board, gave her last Permanent Board report in that role.

At Sessions 2018, we approved the following minute:

Permanent Board recommends laying down the Publications and Communications Committee, while directing Coordinating and Advisory and Permanent Board to consider how to better support publications in New England.

Publications and Communications had dwindled to one member: the clerk, Mark Barker (Concord). No other members were forthcoming. Currently the Moser Book and Tract fund is being managed by the Permanent Board until a new structure for supporting publications is approved.

Sessions is not in unity with laying down Publications and Communications. We ask Coordinating and Advisory and Permanent Board to discern how publication and the ministry of the written word could be more fully supported and to bring a proposal next year.

Permanent Board has done as requested, and presented this proposal for supporting publications:

Supporting the publication of Friends’ testimony to the transforming power of God in our lives—both in writing and in other media—is and will continue to be a vital aspect of the ministry of New England Quakers. The document below seeks to articulate policy and process for support of publishing projects by New England Yearly Meeting of Friends.

#### Process for Identifying and Coordinating Support for Publications

The Yearly Meeting office manager will serve as the primary point of contact for all prospective publications projects. The office manager will receive inquiries, assess scope, and match projects with resources as appropriate. The office manager will also welcome referrals or suggestions on publications projects, including from local meetings, quarterly meetings, Yearly Meeting committees, and Friends active in public ministry. The office manager or secretary may take initiative to approach prospective authors to encourage them to consider a publishing project.

- Friends who are interested in publishing relevant content (or suggesting that content created by others be published, or that content on a specific theme be created) are encouraged to contact the office manager, who will help the inquirer to determine what support is needed.
- After developing a sense of the scope and nature of support the project may involve, the office manager will consult with the Yearly Meeting secretary about the proposal to determine what support the office can offer.



- The Yearly Meeting secretary will coordinate and, if possible, approve Yearly Meeting support for publishing proposals in a manner consistent with the policy on grants, ensuring coordination, consistency, and consultation as appropriate, and seeking further discernment and counsel where helpful or needed.
- Depending on the complexity, purpose, and needs of the project proposed, the office manager may be able to offer editorial support or may refer the caller to individuals who proofread, edit, and design; to a print house; or to Friends publishing houses such as Barclay Press, FGC, FUM, and Pendle Hill.
- The office manager will be a participating member of Quakers Uniting in Publications (QUIP), maintaining that connection on behalf of Yearly Meeting.
- The office manager will maintain a written guide for format and style for print and internet content publications, such as use of abbreviations and acronyms, capitalization, and language conventions.
- Overall policy and standards for publications will be developed by staff, seeking expertise and input as needed, and presented to Permanent Board as needed for review, input, and approval.

#### Publications Resource Group

- The office manager will maintain a list of Friends with expertise relevant to publications projects who have agreed to be contacted by the office manager to consider offering their skills, experience, and gifts—either individually or as part of a small team—with specific projects.
- Friends serving as part of this “publications resource group” will serve (as called upon) as an ongoing resource for the office manager in identifying Friends to assist those seeking help with a publication, and for advising on publications-related matters as requested. The members of this group will be selected and supervised by the office manager. Though Friends serving in these roles may never meet together as a whole group, their meaningful service in this way will be publicly acknowledged. This group may include people who are not part of our Yearly Meeting (such as members of QUIP).

#### Promotion and Education Regarding Yearly Meeting Support for Publications

Proposals or recommendations for publications will be publicized and solicited through the Yearly Meeting website, social media, and the email newsletter. In these and other ways, Yearly Meeting will encourage writers to contact the Yearly Meeting office for help with developing publications and finding ways to share the message of Friends. Invitations to propose projects and information regarding the process will also be included in training for committees and other volunteer service.

Friends approved this proposal.

#### **2019-28 Mosher Book and Tract Fund**

As above, the Permanent Board took over management of the Mosher Book and Tract Fund until a new structure for supporting publications was discerned and approved. This has worked well. Of note, Permanent Board recently approved a disbursement from the Mosher Book and Tract fund for the purposes of marketing the Spanish-language edition of John Woolman’s Journal, which was translated by Benigno Sanchez-Eppler and Susan Furry (both of Northampton).

Coordinating and Advisory recommends that the Permanent Board retain this overall responsibility and oversight, delegating responsibility for proposal development and funding recommendations to the office manager and Yearly Meeting secretary. (See page 34)

Friends approved.

### **2019-29 Laying Down of Publications and Communications Committee**

The body was then asked whether we were ready to lay down the Publications and Communications committee.

Friends approved.

### **2019-30 Funding Priorities**

In May 2018 Permanent Board (PB) approved a “funding priorities process” to guide Finance Committee’s budget discernment.

In the current budgeting process, Finance Committee drafts a budget starting in January/February; brings the budget to the PB for comment in May; edits the budget; then brings the budget to Annual Sessions for approval in August. There is currently no formalized way to incorporate into the annual budget process the wide-ranging discernment ongoing in the broader Yearly Meeting.

In the newly proposed funding priority process, the Yearly Meeting secretary is asked to prayerfully integrate a wide range of ongoing consultation and discernment ... into a formal set of annual funding priorities. This annual workflow would be shepherded by Coordinating and Advisory Committee, and the resultant proposed funding priorities would be brought to the November meeting of the Permanent Board.

At that November meeting, PB would then further discern those proposed priorities. Based on that discernment, PB would give direction regarding financial priorities for the coming fiscal year’s budget to Finance Committee. ... The Finance Committee would receive this direction in advance of their January/February meeting, when the Yearly Meeting secretary would present the first draft of the budget. In this way, Finance Committee could better incorporate the priorities and discernment of the wider Yearly Meeting into its ongoing budgeting process.

This is the first full year that this process has been followed. As mentioned earlier in the Finance Committee report, the Board discerned priorities of funding increased financial management capacity, expanding child-care at Sessions, improving communications, and developing leadership practice and learning. Pursuant to our practice of transparency, PB lays before the body the fruits of this procedure.

Reflecting on her years as PB clerk, Sarah mentioned her deep gratitude for the prayers, love, and support of the “web of faithful friends” who have upheld her during times of grief and trial.

We accepted Sarah’s report with immense gratitude for her years of joyful and faithful service. We were grateful, also, for the way a pattern of oppression was noticed during this report, was received with grace, and immediately altered.

For further detail, please see her written report (page 48), including the reports of three Permanent Board subcommittees: the Ad Hoc Working Group on Challenging White Supremacy, the Clerking Structures and Practices Working Group, and the Student Scholarship Granting Subcommittee.

### **2019-31 FGC Report**

We heard the report from Frank and Jean Marie Barch, visitors from Friends General Conference (FGC), along with two of our appointed representatives to the FGC Central Committee, Eppchez Yes and Peter Nutting (Vassalboro).

We heard about FGC’s financial difficulties over the past several years, the subsequent cuts to staff and programs, and the struggle towards financial sustainability. However, FGC is clear that their purpose is not primarily to balance their books, but rather to support the life of Friends. Despite hardship, this work has



not ended. The current programmatic priorities for FGC include the FGC Gathering; the ministry on racism, including the Institutional Assessment on Racism; connecting constituent meetings; support of youth; and religious education, as carried out by the spiritual deepening program. We heard in particular about FGC's Institutional Assessment on Racism, and the ways this might apply to Yearly Meeting work. Many working groups of FGC meet virtually in an effort to "steward resources of time, talent and carbon." Friends are invited to become more involved in the work of FGC.

A detailed written report on FGC's activities over the past 5 years (see "FGC Activities Over the Past 5 Years: A Brief Annotated Listing\*" on page 29). We accepted this report with gratitude for the many ways that FGC has touched our lives.

### 2019-32 Jean Zaru

We heard a recorded video message from Jean Zaru (Ramallah Friends Meeting).

## Tuesday Afternoon

**2019-33** Jonathan Vogel-Borne (Friends Meeting at Cambridge) prayed us into worship, energizing us with a call-and-response of *Amen! Hallelujah!* and giving thanks for blessings, even those that don't feel good. He asked God, in this moment and in this time when walls are coming up everywhere around us, to hold us.

### 2019-34 Epistle

We heard the epistle from Wilmington Yearly Meeting.

We gathered this year, in Maryville, Tennessee, knowing that at the rise of Yearly Meeting we would be diminished. Through the course of discussions over the year since our last annual sessions we have wrestled with the expressed desire of several Meetings to disaffiliate from the Yearly Meeting, their Quarterly Meeting, or both.

Our way forward during these sessions was laid out for us:

... because there are Friends in our Yearly Meeting who cannot remain in fellowship with those holding other points of view related to scripture, it is time to consider moving toward separating peacefully and lovingly. If it's time to say goodbye to one another, then let's do it in love. If we cannot reconcile all opinions, let us endeavor to unite all hearts—by loving God and loving Jesus.

As we considered, by turn, the requests of five Meetings to disaffiliate with the Yearly Meeting, we were covered by a spirit of love and humility. Mixed within that worshipful love for God and brotherly love for one another, however, was deep grieving. How do we reach an understanding of what has happened to us? What do we do with our shared history? How do we part ways with kindness, forbearance, and blessing?

In the act of mourning our separation while blessing our disaffiliating Meetings, Friends surrendered our desire to lecture and judge, to make our own special points, to win over other Friends. We agreed that Biblical interpretation is at the heart of our uneasiness and distrust, and that we are not able to come to the same place in how we read the scriptures, or in how we view the autonomy of the Monthly Meetings and the authority of the Yearly Meeting. This is evidenced by our disagreement regarding the proper Christian understanding of marriage.

Both those remaining, and those disaffiliating, acknowledged that each group was acting with integrity, from a deeply-held commitment to faithfulness, striving to live the faith of Friends as they had learned it. Perhaps if we had been more surrendered to Christ's teaching, division could have been avoided.

## 2019-35 Staff Reflections

Nia Thomas has been serving as Young Friends and Young Adult Friends coordinator; this spring she took on the newly created role of Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator. She is trying to act as a map for people, letting them zoom out and see what lies past the edges of our Quaker world and to zoom in and let seekers find their way around their own small Quaker neighborhoods.

Maggie Nelson is serving as Young Friends Events Organizer, taking on many of the tasks that Nia carried until recently. She sees herself as a container, hoping to be empty enough to be filled by the lives of Young Friends. She reminds herself always that it is not her job to fill the container, but to trust the Young Friends to bring their Light to fill the community. There is a saying, “If you trust the people, they become trustworthy,” and that is especially true of high school students. She also sees herself as a bridge. The different threads of our youth programs can sometimes feel like isolated bubbles, and by being present, Maggie helps them all to feel part of the whole circle of Friends.

Gretchen Baker-Smith (Westport) is the Junior Yearly Meeting and Junior High Yearly Meeting Coordinator. Her ministry is one of being in the trenches over the long haul. She has been reminded this week of how longevity of relationships across someone’s growing up is an extraordinary gift and contains empowering, transforming possibilities. So many of today’s leaders were once children in her care, whose potential was clear to her even then, and some of those children now have children of their own in our youth programs. The dirt of her feet is a symbol of the ways that her work with children means getting down in the dirt and knowing their lives. She reminded us to pay attention to those around us, particularly the young people, and welcome them in. Belonging is about being seen and known.

Frederick Martin (Beacon Hill) is Accounts Manager for the Yearly Meeting. He spoke to us about integrity. He thanked our treasurer for his honesty and transparency earlier this week. He described the integrity of working together in the office, and also of re-membering, pulling things back together that have been dismembered, including working to include people who may face barriers to participation. The integrity of the Yearly Meeting gathering is also very important for him.

Sara Hubner (Gonic) finds that sometimes, “no matter the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees” [Victor Hugo]. As our Office Manager, she finds herself working with the database and recognizes the names of many people she knows from Sessions. This is a form of prayer as she holds each one in the Light. She is grateful for Friends around New England who keep in touch with her, and for the relationships she is developing with committee clerks, meeting clerks, recording clerks, and others who do so much volunteer work for Friends.

## 2019-36 Requests from Northwest Quarter Concerning Gaza and the West Bank

Carl Williams (Plainfield), clerk of Northwest Quarter, read us minute 2017-46, which Sessions approved two years ago. Northwest Quarter is asking us to reaffirm this minute.

2017-46 Friends gathered at New England Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions at Castleton, Vermont, August 6–10, 2017, attest to the following:

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) testimony on peace, justice, and nonviolence is based in our experience of the divine in all of creation and within all persons. Thus, we are deeply troubled by the suffering and injustice caused by the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and we are concerned that our government perpetuates that violence by continuing to send billions of dollars of military aid to the region.

We call upon our nation to:

- Cease sending United States military aid and selling weapons to the entire Middle East.
- Continue diplomatic efforts with all parties and remain in dialogue even with those who have acted violently.

- Join the international court system and accept its jurisdiction.

We call upon all nations to:

- Work with the United Nations Security Council to end military aid and arms sales from all outside countries to all parties in this conflict.
- Support the United Nations efforts to bring justice, peace, security, and reconciliation to all parties in the conflict.
- Take measures to assure that international laws are applied universally.

We call upon all individuals and communities to:

- Support and learn from the many organizations that bring Israelis and Palestinians together for justice and peacemaking.
- Examine how anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism, and privilege affect our understanding of the conflict.

Friends approved reaffirming this minute.

Northwest Quarter also asks us to request that monthly meetings and quarterly meetings consider whether they have lived into this minute, particularly as it applies to Gaza and the West Bank. This issue weighs heavy on the hearts of many here, but the request now is specifically for meetings to consider this, not to take it up ourselves at this time.

Friends approve making this request.

### **2019-37 Recommendations from Ministry and Counsel Regarding the Friends United Meeting (FUM) Personnel Policy**

Honor Woodrow (Framingham), clerk of Ministry and Counsel (M&C), played a segment of a recording from Pastor Mike Huber (West Hills Friends Church, Portland, OR) entitled “On Authority and Listening in Love,” reminding us that discernment in a meeting for business is the work of love, of listening for God’s spirit speaking through one another, even those with whom we disagree.

While M&C was not able to unite with the Racial, Social, and Economic Justice Committee’s minute regarding the FUM personnel policy, they found it had life and should be heard by Sessions.

#### **Minute from Racial Social and Economic Justice Committee Presented to NEYM M&C May 2019**

Racial Social Economic Justice Committee asks New England Yearly Meeting to minute formally its opposition to FUM’s conditions of employment. Let us be clear, the main issue is the moral injury of the hiring policy as it stands now, not with the Yearly Meeting’s policy of withholding contributions to FUM. We value our relationship with FUM, especially the good work it has done in many countries. However, we also value the equality and inherent worth of all individuals including members of the LGBT community. LGBT people are vital to the life of our Yearly Meeting. We hold the hope that the personnel policy will evolve to include the worth of all those who seek to do God’s work in the world.”

Friends approved affirming the life in this RSEJ minute and that the sexual ethics portion of the FUM personnel policy causes pain and suffering to LGBTQ+ Friends, and to all Friends by creating an obstacle to all fully being in the beloved community.

**2019-38** Ministry and Counsel recommended that Sessions direct the Yearly Meeting clerk to write a letter to the presiding clerk of FUM, expressing the pain and sorrow we feel in the FUM personnel policy, and recommending that the FUM governing board continue to explore a faithful alternative.

Friends approved so directing the clerk.

**2019-39** Ministry and Counsel recommended that Sessions request that our representatives to the FUM General Board, in consultation with representatives from other yearly meetings, including those who may have different opinions than our Yearly Meeting, work to develop a proposed alternative to the current policy.

Friends approved.

**2019-40** Ministry and Counsel (M&C) considered the possibility of making a direct recommendation in regard to the withholding policy. M&C was aware that if the policy is not approved for another year it will no longer continue and was clear that M&C could not come to unity on supporting the renewal or discontinuation of the policy.

Friends labored with the history of this withholding mechanism, shared feelings about the deep divisions within our community, and labored with the question of whether or not to extend the withholding mechanism. Friends divisions were clear and Friends did not name a clear path forward. Friends approved having the clerks preparing a minute of exercise, to be brought back Wednesday morning

## Wednesday Morning

### 2019-41 Epistle

We heard the epistle from Ohio Yearly Meeting Conservative.

God spoke to us through his servants. He has invested in us as a miracle. If we are faithful, we can see ourselves that way. God warned us that the enemy uses deception, distraction, discouragement and division. Of these, the most dangerous is division. We were also cautioned about pride, arrogance and self-centeredness. But all these dangers are dissolved when we look inward. It is through the inward search that we will find Him and His cross. Inwardly, we find the strength to pick up that cross and carry it ...

... Given the contentious climate in our country, Ministry and Oversight agreed to write a letter encouraging our nation to return to the ways of Christ. It was difficult to find wording that did not add to the country's divisiveness but instead promote the loving care of all humankind. When hope seemed to totally escape them, a Friend rose to propose language that united them and our Lord's hand became evident.

We also heard a quote from Toni Morrison, whose death was announced yesterday.

The conventional wisdom of the Tower of Babel story is that the collapse was a misfortune, that it was the distraction or the weight of many languages that precipitated the tower's failed architecture, that one monolithic language would have expedited the building and heaven would have been reached.

"Whose heaven," [the old woman] wonders, "and what kind?"

Perhaps the achievement of paradise was premature, a little hasty, if no one could take the time to understand other languages, other views, other narratives. Had they, the heaven they imagined might have been found at their feet.

**2019-42** The clerk extended apologies to the body for failing to recognize Marian Baker in the discussion about FUM on Tuesday afternoon. The clerk read excerpts from a letter from Marian:

Our theme is "Provoke one another to love." As one in New England who has been amazingly blessed by God to travel widely within our yearly meeting, within other FUM meetings across North and Latin America, and within East Africa, I have a different experience and viewpoint than many of you. I was one of your representatives on the FUM Board when the original personnel policy was approved. ... Through United Society of Friends Women I have also experienced the pain of many women who belong to other FUM meetings that have split over the issue. I know the pain that has been caused when Americans go to Kenya or Uganda and assume we know more than the Friends we are visiting in such a different culture. In

countries where one is dealing with fundamental issues like, “do we have any source of safe water?” ... Let us not try to control others with our money. Let [us] not judge and condemn others. May we humbly reach out in love, willing to listen with both North American fellow members of FUM as well as with African members of FUM.

Even more important is willingness to reach out to other FUM Yearly Meetings to ask to pray deeply together and to seek God’s will together and serve God in these issues, rather than serve our human desires. Let us reach out in humble love towards every human.

I will continue to hold you all in Christ’s Light throughout Wednesday. [Signed] Marian Baker

### **2019-43 FUM Withholding Mechanism**

The clerks brought back a draft proposed minute addressing the FUM withholding mechanism.

The clerk’s sense of the meeting is that the body accepted the following minute.

New England Yearly Meeting is not in unity to further extend the withholding mechanism. The mechanism was established by Minute 2009-54, which specifies that “this process is to be in force until September 30, 2010, unless explicitly extended by the YM in its Sessions next year.” It was extended several times, most recently in Minute 2014-69, which extended “... the FUM financial withholding policy for the next five years, to be re-assessed no later than NEYM Sessions in August of 2019.” Without unity on the floor of 2019 Sessions to extend it further, the mechanism ends.

Out of respect for the discernment of meetings that have approved budgets which incorporate the withholding mechanism, and in order to afford monthly meetings the time to incorporate this change into their annual budget discernment, we set the date for the expiration of this mechanism for October 1, 2020.

A number of Friends stood aside from this minute. Others were unable to unite with it.

The reading clerks presented a draft minute of exercise regarding the FUM withholding policy. After much discussion, the body did not approve. The clerks will continue to labor, and will bring a revised minute of exercise tomorrow morning.

### **2019-44 Unity Agenda**

Friends approved the Unity Agenda which includes accepting the reports from staff, boards, committees, representatives and other groups from the Yearly Meeting, the memorial minutes, and time sensitive statements.

The Unity Agenda also includes approving the revised committee purposes procedures and composition, approving Yearly Meeting clerks nominations, approving authorization to make edits and corrections to the minutes, approving the nominations brought to the body by the Nominating Committee, and approving the bank resolutions.

### **2019-45 Final Budget Approval**

Friends approved the FY’20 budget as proposed by the Finance Committee.

### **2019-46 Clerking Structures and Practices Working Group**

The Clerking Structures and Practices Working Group returned to us with several concrete proposals for discernment, all of which the body approved, as follows.

1. Endorsing the report and the detailed recommendations, moving the recommendations in the report forward to the appropriate parties for implementation.
2. The Yearly Meeting holds an ongoing commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity. We strive to nurture the gifts of all; to create pathways to leadership that are accessible to everyone; and to extend opportunities that will foster a broad exchange of diverse ideas and perspectives. We commit to supporting the leadership development of all Friends, without tokenizing them, regardless of economic background, education, race, age, gender, sexuality, or disability.
3. The Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator should give a progress report at 2020 Sessions. This will increase transparency and accountability, as well as help us keep up momentum even when we encounter obstacles. This will also help us remain accountable to our intentions even when changes take longer than one year.
4. The overall responsibility for responding to the concerns raised in the report rests with Permanent Board. We expect significant work to happen between Annual Sessions. Because Permanent Board interfaces with other working groups and committees, this will help ensure that changes made are integrated with other changes happening across the Yearly Meeting.
5. As possible within budgetary constraints, the Finance Committee, treasurer, and Yearly Meeting secretary shall ensure funding for the recommendations and incorporate these changes into planning for future budgets.
6. We ask Ministry and Counsel to offer support to Permanent Board in creating a working group charged with exploring and naming how our Yearly Meeting currently supports ministry and spiritual life. This working group will identify where support for ministry and spiritual life currently happens and where gaps exist, and then offer recommendations for structures, practices, and manageable leadership roles that would best serve the current needs of Friends.
7. During the triennial review of committee purposes and procedures, Coordinating and Advisory shall pay careful attention to how committee structures can best facilitate effectiveness in the work of our Yearly Meeting. In our current organizational culture it is often very hard for us to lay things down, and much easier to say “yes” to new things. We therefore end up with more structures and projects that we can responsibly maintain. We need to learn to let things go.

#### **2019-47 Faith and Practice Revision Committee**

We returned to consideration of the paper “Dying, Death, and Bereavement,” which is brought before us for preliminary approval.

Friends approved.

### **Wednesday Afternoon**

#### **2019-48 Prayer**

Abby Matchette (Burlington) prayed us into worship, asking God to help us let go and trust as we step into the hard work before us.

#### **2019-49 Epistle**

We heard the epistle from North Pacific Yearly Meeting.



Our Friend in Residence warned against seeking to be comfortable: white people should not confuse one's discomfort with lack of safety: at this the room quaked with a gasp of recognition. Language is often a sore point: we wish to be authentic and speak the truth of our experience, but in ignorance we use words that wound others. We know we will make mistakes even as we go forward in a brave way, and feel exasperated by that reality. In follow-up workshops Friends considered how to deal with the manifestations of cultural and systemic bias. We are thankful for the Friends of color that offered resources and open insights while supporting each other in healing. We began to look at a proposed minute supporting engagement to uproot racism. Our worship group discussions helped us look more deeply into the privileges of our educated, Euro-American majority, and to empathize with the sufferings of vulnerable people at the corner of invisibility and exposure.

... We are challenged to make effective witness, to uproot racism from our hearts and our communities now. This is not the time to talk about our ideals; it is the time to act to bring forth actions that manifest ideals we cannot yet see. The Spirit is working among our Beloved Community, leading us to recognize past failures, to acknowledge our progress, and to live up to the Light we now have.

### 2019-50 Visitors

Nancy Shippen, the Yearly Meeting's representative to the Friends Peace Teams, reported to us about the work of Friends Peace Teams. She invited us to get involved and to learn more on the Friends Peace Teams website.

### 2019-51 Report from Friends Camp

Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp director, and Achieng Agutu, a long-time counselor, told us about what is blossoming at Friends Camp and ways that Friends can become involved. There have been enough campers and camp sessions to put the Camp in good financial shape, and this year 100% of the leadership staff returned to their positions from last year. They had an on-time start to our summer in spite of a few hiccups, and it was very good that they had the financial reserves to make needed repairs. New initiatives include a leadership skills program, a developing relationship with Vassalboro Meeting, and a growing understanding of what diversity means to the Camp. There are opportunities for volunteers, and the continued financial support of Friends has been very important. Forty percent of families attending camp this year requested some degree of financial assistance, and this year Friends Camp was able to say yes to everyone who applied for financial assistance.

### 2019-52 Earthcare Ministry Committee Proposed Minute

Last year, Sessions approved a minute (2018-36) calling for us to reduce our carbon footprints by 10% over the ensuing year. Earthcare Ministry Committee has provided an online calculator ([climatecalculator.org](http://climatecalculator.org)) that individuals and meetings can use to estimate our carbon footprints. Friends have done a good job, but if we are to meet target CO<sub>2</sub> levels for the future, greater efforts will be required.

Emma Condori from Bolivia described for us the effects of climate change on the land and the people of her country, and a visitor from Kenya described the devastation she had seen caused by a cyclone.

Earthcare Ministry proposed a minute that sets a goal for us to reduce our carbon footprint by an additional 10% in 2020, and Friends of comfortable means to reduce by 15 to 20%. The minute also urges Friends to devote an hour a week to influencing others through such activities as letter writing, education, conversation, or art and music. They reminded us that as Quakers, we should be working not just toward practical steps but should commit to an inner transformative journey in our relationship with the Earth. Our loving actions can invigorate us as well as transform the world.

*See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create (Isaiah 65:17-18)*

As God's agents of the "new heavens and a new Earth," and Friends of Jesus, we are called into bold ministry in restoring a healthy and just place for all to live.

At 2018 Sessions Friends reached unity on a minute (2018-36) calling for each of us to reduce our carbon footprints by 10% over the ensuing year. This was, as far as we know, the first time a U.S. religious denomination has set such a goal, and it was in keeping with the 2018 Sessions theme of "to be bold in God's service."

Earthcare Ministry Committee recognizes that the climate crisis is ongoing, and requires even more urgent action from Friends. EMC therefore proposes the following minute for 2019 Sessions:

- Friends are encouraged to either begin or continue deepening the inner transition that makes it possible to fully embrace the changes required to reduce our carbon footprints.
- Friends in the Yearly Meeting are called upon to reduce their carbon footprints by an additional 10% during 2020. Friends with additional means are encouraged to reduce their footprints by 15 to 20% during 2020.
- Meetinghouses, where possible, should be examined for ways to reduce the carbon footprint by 10% in the coming year.
- Friends are encouraged to dedicate one hour per week on their "carbon handprint," i.e., in influencing others to take action on the climate crisis. Friends should discern how they are called to do this, but examples might include writing government officials, creating a song or art work on the climate crisis, and teaching each other and our youth about the crisis.

Understanding that this is not a commitment for individuals to each reduce our carbon footprints by 10%, but rather an encouragement to work together towards this overall goal, Friends approved the minute.

### **2019-53 Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness Working Group**

Friends approve continuing the work of the Elders for Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness through the coming year under the care of Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel.

The Working Group asked to continue in its current configuration for one more month. Friends approved.

A report from the Elders for Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness appears"" on page 35

### **2019-54 Ramallah Friends School**

Eden Grace (Beacon Hill), Global Ministries director of FUM, introduced Adrian Moody, Head of Ramallah Friends School (RFS). He shared with us stories of staff and students at RFS and told us of the school's accomplishments. RFS provides an education unparalleled in Palestine, using the International Baccalaureate curriculum, and has sent students to colleges around the world, including Ivy League schools. They were the first school in that part of the world to educate girls, they educate students with disabilities who are stigmatized elsewhere, and they offer subsidized education to the children not just of teachers but also of operational staff. Their students will be the adults engaging in the peace process in the future. RFS was founded by Friends from New England and continues to exist because of our support.

### **2019-55 First Reading of Epistle and Feedback**

LVM Shelton (Plainfield), Brianna Hallowell (Vassalboro), and Jay O'Hara (West Falmouth) presented a first reading of the Epistle. Friends were invited to give feedback directly to members of the Epistle Committee.



## Thursday Morning

### 2019-56 Epistle

We heard the epistle from Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting.

In our business and committees, we are working on establishing our organizational DNA and on holding space for healing from the traumas of the past. Our speaker for the weekend, Benigno Sanchez-Eppler, under the care of New England Yearly Meeting, shared with us in a way that spoke to our condition of bravely facing into the work of healing. His words were a balm to our souls, reminding us of the ways in which we can draw upon our experiences of wounding to better carry the healing light to others among us.

### 2019-57 State of Society

We heard the State of Society report, which included quotations from monthly meeting State of Society reports as well as queries for reflection.

As Friends, we are called to stand centered in hope and not despair. Divisions and obstacles have no power over the vision we share and the work we carry out with Divine Assistance. We are aware that we are and will be imperfect on this path but know that in our brokenness, Light enters and leads us through the power of Love to transformation and Grace. In the words of Margaret Fell: “Friends, let the Eternal Light search you, and try you, it will rip you up, lay you open. Provoke one another to Love.”

(See full report and queries on page 87.)

We received the report with gratitude for the faithfulness of these Friends. Others shared their experience of the joy and faithfulness we see around the Yearly Meeting.

### 2019-58 Minute of Exercise on the Yearly Meeting Relationship with FUM

We heard again the minute of exercise presented by the clerks.

We know that *every person* is deeply beloved in the eyes of God. We unite unequivocally in our love and care for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Friends, and hold a particular concern for their lives and ministries. We continue to seek the ways we can best support these Friends in New England, around the country, and around the world.

We are clear that the FUM personnel policy causes harm to LGBTQ+ Friends, as well as all Friends who are sexually active outside of heterosexual marriage. Furthermore, the personnel policy suppresses the ministry of these Friends, causing loss to the wider body. We seek forgiveness for the extent to which we are complicit in this.

All of this we hold to be true, and yet we *also* unite in our desire to continually engage with the wide diversity of Friends worldwide. We are a part of FUM, we love FUM, and we wish to live in our community with love and integrity.

In our struggle to hold these two unities in tension, for several years we have extended a temporary withholding mechanism (see minute 2009-54) that allows individuals to know that none of their money will go to FUM.

The withholding mechanism has served a meaningful and helpful purpose. For a decade it has supported the freedom of conscience of some Friends within our Yearly Meeting, and also given us a reprieve from the tension and division that the FUM personnel policy has created in our communities. During this period, significant work was done, seeking greater unity and understanding.

As the withholding mechanism expires, we have heard any number of proposed possible mechanisms that might allow us to hold in tension both the freedom of conscience of Friends exercised by the personnel

policy, and the deeply held desire to remain in community with FUM. Given our lack of unity, we are concerned that any alternative proposal drafted in haste on the floor of Sessions will not be seasoned, will not allow input from individuals not present at Sessions, and would be an obstacle to finding the opportunity that God is giving us. We hope that a properly seasoned proposal may rise through our established structures (e.g., a minute from a monthly meeting seasoned by the quarter) and be brought to Sessions 2020 before the withholding mechanism finally expires. What new opportunity, what new possibilities, are we now being called into?

As we move forward, let us listen to one another and to that of God within one another. In the words of Toni Morrison, let us “take the time to understand other languages, other views, other narratives.” Let us seek that greater place where God’s full measure of grace is poured out.

A number of Friends stood aside from this minute. Others were unable to unite with the minute.

### **2019-59 Events Coordinator Report**

Elizabeth Hacala gave the Events Coordinator report.

This is the first time she has felt like she could bring my whole self to her work. “Sessions is a vessel, and we can fill it; a map, and we can follow it. It is a 359-year relationship, and an opportunity to remember. It is a prayer, and we can pray it.”

Elizabeth reported that this year we had 638 attenders (slightly more than 2018), including 114 children and youth, and 69 “first-timers.” We had 54 visitors, compared to 38 in 2018.

Her report was received with immense gratitude for all of the work it takes to coordinate an event with as many moving parts as Sessions.

### **2019-60 Appreciation of Speakers**

Friends expressed their deep appreciation to Colin Saxton for bringing the Bible Half Hours; to Lisa Graustein for Presenting our Plenary; and to Jean Zaru of Ramallah Friends Meeting for sending a video message from Ramallah Friends Meeting. All of this ministry was recorded and will be posted on the Yearly Meeting website.

### **2019-61 Thanks to Castleton Staff**

Friends also expressed thanks to the Castleton University staff for their friendly and enthusiastic support. In particular, we extended gratitude to Olliver Young, our dedicated Clerks’ technical support person, and MacArthur Stine, Castleton’s Director of Technical Service.

### **2019-62 Epistles**

We heard the epistles from our youth programs: Childcare; Junior Yearly Meeting groups K–1, 2–4, and 5–6; Junior High Yearly Meeting, and Young Friends.

LVM Shelton (Plainfield), Brianna Hallowell (Vassalboro), and Jay O’Hara (West Falmouth) read the New England Yearly Meeting Epistle. With deep appreciation for the work of the committee, Friends received this reflection on our condition and our work together. (See “Epistles” on page 89)

### **2019-63 Closing Worship**

Friends closed in worship, purposing to meet again at Castletown University, August 1–6, 2020. Our new presiding clerk, Bruce Neumann, offered a closing prayer.

## Approved Budget

### FY20 Approved Budget

New England Yearly Meeting							
FY 2020 Operating (Non-Camp) Budget Proposal							
version 4-18-2019 approved Finance Committee 4-20-2019							
Category	FY2018		FY2019	△ FY19 to FY20	Proposed FY2020 Budget	Notes	Projection FY2021 Budget
	Actuals	Budget	Budget				
Income							
4010 Individual Contributions							
General Fund Contributions	179,850	180,000	191,000	3,500	194,500		204,000
Equalization Contributions	25,948	20,000	21,000	0	21,000		21,000
4010 Individual Contributions	208,015	200,000	212,000	3,500	215,500		225,000
4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions							
General Fund Contributions	305,475	353,115	350,000	0	350,000		350,000
Equalization Contributions	17,561	20,000	23,000	4,000	27,000		27,000
4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions	323,036	373,115	373,000	4,000	377,000		377,000
4025 Unallocated Income	7,275						
4030 Organizations Contributions	101		0	0	0		0
4050 Interest and Dividend Income	9,031	5,000	4,000	5,000	9,000	A	9,000
4070 Books and other Items	17,879	16,000	16,000	1,000	17,000		17,000
4080 Retreat Program Fees	38,290	50,000	50,000	0	50,000		50,000
4085 Sessions Program Fees	182,441	189,757	185,000	16,000	201,000		210,045
4090 Change in Fair Market Value	309		0	0	0		0
4099 Net Assets Released To/From	0		8,500	(8,500)	0		0
Total Income	786,376	833,872	848,500	21,000	869,500		888,045
Expenses							
5000 Staff							
5010 Salaries & Wages	312,829	309,999	267,426	38,494	305,920		313,568
5020 Payroll Taxes	23,364	23,715	20,511	2,892	23,403		23,988
Total 5030 Benefits	73,729	83,674	75,978	930	76,908		79,807
Total 5000 Staff	409,922	417,388	363,915	42,316	406,231	B	417,363
5100 General & Administration							
5110 Administration							
5120 Bank Expense	6,591	6,000	6,000	0	6,000		6,000
5130 Contracted Services	26,602	26,896	60,396	(28,500)	31,896	B	31,896
5135 Accounting Services	4,000	4,000	4,000	0	4,000		4,000
5140 Legal Services	7,750	7,750	7,750	(2,500)	5,250	C	0
5150 Liability Insurance	3,876	4,000	4,000	0	4,000		4,000
5160 Payroll Service	5,073	4,500	4,500	0	4,500		4,500
5170 Recruiting Expense			500	(500)	0		0
5180 Rent	9,350	9,350	9,350	0	9,350		9,350
5190 Misc. Expense	(751)		0	0	0		0
Total 5110 Administration	62,491	62,496	96,496	(31,500)	64,996		59,746
Total 5200 Office	22,397	25,615	37,015	(500)	36,515		36,515
Total 5100 General & Administration	84,888	88,111	133,511	(32,000)	101,511		96,261

continued on following page

Category	FY2018		FY2019	△ FY19 to FY20	Proposed	Notes	Projection
	Actuals	Budget	Budget		FY2020 Budget		FY2021 Budget
<b>5300 Travel &amp; Conferences</b>							
5310 Travel - Committee	2,730	3,000	3,000	(500)	2,500		2,500
5320 Travel - Clerk	3,050	5,000	5,000	(1,000)	4,000		4,000
5330 Travel - Programs	2,431	4,600	4,600	0	4,600		4,600
5335 Travel - Rep. Travel	4,865	5,000	5,000	5,000	10,000	D	5,000
5350 Travel - Staff	14,137	18,000	18,000	(500)	17,500		17,500
5360 Travel - Ministries	0	400	400	0	400		400
<b>Total 5300 Travel &amp; Conferences</b>	<b>27,213</b>	<b>36,000</b>	<b>36,000</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>39,000</b>		<b>34,000</b>
<b>6000 Programs</b>							
6110 Sessions Room & Board	168,746	175,100	170,000	5,950	175,950	E	183,868
6112 Retreats - Room & Board	35,924	38,000	38,000	0	38,000		38,000
6125 Program Expenses	23,673	29,200	32,800	3,000	35,800	E	35,800
6130 Committee Expenses	13,132	26,200	14,200	250	14,450		14,450
6160 Program Support	3,911	4,020	4,020	(1,800)	2,220	F	2,220
<b>Total 6000 Programs</b>	<b>245,385</b>	<b>272,520</b>	<b>259,020</b>	<b>7,400</b>	<b>266,420</b>		<b>274,338</b>
<b>Total 6140 Books and Other</b>	<b>15,441</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>15,000</b>		<b>15,000</b>
<b>6200 Support of Other Orgs</b>							
6310 FGC	13,075	13,075	13,075	0	13,075		13,075
6320 FUM	11,525	13,075	13,075	0	13,075		13,075
6325 FWCC	13,075	13,075	13,075	0	13,075		13,075
<b>6310-6325 FGC, FUM &amp; FWCC</b>	<b>37,675</b>	<b>39,225</b>	<b>39,225</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39,225</b>		<b>39,225</b>
6328 Ramallah Friends School	100	100	100	0	100		100
6335 AFSC	300	300	300	0	300		300
6340 FCNL	750	750	750	0	750		750
6345 QEW	300	300	300	0	300		300
6350 Friends Peace Teams	100	100	100	0	100		100
6355 FWCC 3rd World Travel	500	500	500	0	500		500
6360 QUNO	200	200	200	0	200		200
6362 Quaker Voluntary Service	100	100	100	0	100		100
<b>6330 Friends' Organizations</b>	<b>2,350</b>	<b>2,350</b>	<b>2,350</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,350</b>		<b>2,350</b>
<b>6590 Ecumenical Organizations</b>	<b>3,628</b>	<b>4,400</b>	<b>4,400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,400</b>		<b>4,400</b>
<b>Total 6200-6500 Support of Other Orgs.</b>	<b>43,653</b>	<b>45,975</b>	<b>45,975</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45,975</b>		<b>45,975</b>
6610 Directory & Minutes	4,171	5,000	1,000	0	1,000		1,000
6620 Invitation to Sessions	4,224	6,500	3,000	0	3,000		3,000
<b>Total 6600 Publications</b>	<b>8,396</b>	<b>11,500</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,000</b>		<b>4,000</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>834,897</b>	<b>885,994</b>	<b>856,921</b>	<b>21,216</b>	<b>878,137</b>		<b>886,937</b>
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>(48,522)</b>	<b>(52,122)</b>	<b>(8,421)</b>	<b>(216)</b>	<b>(8,637)</b>		<b>1,108</b>

**NOTES:**

- Increase in Interest Income reflects actuals FY16-17-18 and change in Pooled Funds Policy for distributions.
- Increase in Staff expense partly offset by corresponding decrease in Contracted Services as religious education and outreach are integrated back into Staff functions.
- We are reaching the planned goal for the Revolving Fund for Legal Services.
- A one-year increase to provide travel support for Yearly Meeting representatives to the 2020 FUM Triennial in Kenya.
- Support for increased Childcare at Sessions in both Sessions Room & Board (fee waivers for providers) and Program Expense.
- Line reduced because Religious Education & Outreach support moved to Contracted Services; line maintains funding for Friends Camp accreditation.

## FGC Activities Over the Past 5 Years: A Brief Annotated Listing\*

FGC has been busy and led by Spirit during the last 5 years, listening to the needs articulated by meetings and individual Friends to focus the work we are called to do on the needs Friends identify. Some elements of the work are ongoing, others represent a change in emphasis; all are aimed to help nurture the spiritual vitality of Friends.

**The Gathering** Traditionally held yearly during the first week of July with a broad range of workshops, activities and opportunities for Friends of all ages and relationships with Quakers; 800-1100 Friends from all over the world attend. (See [www.fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering](http://www.fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering) for more details.)

**Institutional Assessment of Systemic Racism** In response to ongoing experiences of systemic racism reported by Friends of Color over many years, FGC undertook a detailed and systematic study of systemic racism within FGC as an organization. The report details suggestions for way forward in addressing the documented concerns; a standing committee which will undertake implementation of the needed changes has been appointed and begun work. (See [www.fgcquaker.org/news/october-report-institutional-assessment-racism-task-force-recommendations-fgc-central-committee](http://www.fgcquaker.org/news/october-report-institutional-assessment-racism-task-force-recommendations-fgc-central-committee).)

**Help Your Meeting Challenge Racism** Materials and suggestions are available to support Meetings undertaking work toward eradicating racism in the meeting. (See [www.fgcquaker.org/services/help-your-meeting-challenge-racism](http://www.fgcquaker.org/services/help-your-meeting-challenge-racism))

**Welcoming Friend** This limited term pilot project, funded in part by the Tyson Memorial Fund and designed to collect, share and encourage best practices for welcoming people new to the meeting is just coming to an end; a report is forthcoming in the Fall and relevant materials will be available on the web in the Spiritual Deepening Library and as an E-Retreat. The Committee for Nurturing Ministries (CNM) hopes to continue this important work.

**Spiritual Deepening** This program, developed and contributed to by more than 100 volunteers from across the US and Canada includes two components: the Spiritual Deepening Library and E-retreats.

- **The Spiritual Deepening Library** includes hundreds of free resources, print materials and suggestions for their use by both meetings and individuals presented in an accessible, user-friendly format. There are materials suitable for children and adults individually and together, and many are newcomer friendly. Visit: ([www.fgcquaker.org/spiritual-deepening/library](http://www.fgcquaker.org/spiritual-deepening/library)) to explore the available materials and to see the many ways to take advantage of this rich resource.
- **E-retreats** on four different topic areas are now available and being facilitated on a rotating basis with several more in development for the coming year. Visit: ([www.fgcquaker.org/eRetreats](http://www.fgcquaker.org/eRetreats)) to see more details on the available retreats.

**Religious Education** The Sparklers continue to choose and design appropriate materials for use with children in First Day Schools and at home. They have provided topically focused, age-appropriate materials for the Spiritual Deepening Library.

**Online Toolboxes** These are collections of materials for focused use, helping individuals who want a pre-organized approach to building a new meeting or growing one that is already in existence.

- New Meeting: ([www.fgcquaker.org/deepen/outreach/new-meetings-project/new-meetings-toolbox](http://www.fgcquaker.org/deepen/outreach/new-meetings-project/new-meetings-toolbox))
- Grow our Meeting: ([www.fgcquaker.org/grow-our-meetings-toolkit](http://www.fgcquaker.org/grow-our-meetings-toolkit))

**Identification of Priorities by Central Committee** Central Committee in 2017 spent considerable time in discernment of FGC's top priorities. They are: The Gathering, the Ministry on Racism (including implementation of the Institutional Assessment), Youth, The Yearly Meeting Connector Role (which includes your Yearly Meeting Visitors), and the Spiritual Deepening Program.

**Matching institutional goals and financial expenditures to balance spending and crafting a sustainable budget** In pursuit of greater fiscal sustainability in the face of declining contributions, FGC has sought and implemented many ways to decrease expenditures while maintaining the integrity and value of the programs offered.

**Consideration of a Feasibility Study for a major fundraising campaign** Central Committee is looking carefully at FGC's organizational priorities and how these might underpin a campaign. You can talk to your FGC Representative or Yearly Meeting Visitor to learn more.

**Clerking workshop for High School & Adult Young Friends** Each year the AYF and HS Gathering Programs Clerks attend a weekend training to build the clerking team and develop their clerking skills. They are also supported during the Gathering by a Friend in Residence (HS) or Friendly Presence (AYF).

**Retreats for POC and their families** Each Fall, this weekend-long regional gathering serves to create opportunities for fellowship and sharing among People of Color and their family members. In order to fulfill the intention to create regional communities of support which can sustain these Friends throughout the year, these gatherings, like the FGC Summer Gathering, move around the country.

#### **Pre-Gathering retreats**

- **POC & their Families** This event is particularly intended for People of Color and their family members who are attending the Gathering. It focuses on the creation of a community of support to sustain these Friends throughout the week of Gathering.
- **Quakers & Business** This event provides an opportunity for Quakers who are in Business to share about the relationship between their work life and their faith.
- **AYF** This retreat has taken up topics particularly chosen by the AYF Community each year as speaking to their needs. This year, they will be looking at race, racism and white supremacy.

**Yearly Meeting Visitors Program** Part of the Connector function, the YMVP provides visitors to Yearly Meeting sessions. The role of the visitor is to learn of the YM's particular strengths and needs as well as to look at how these attributes might be shared across Yearly Meetings.

**Quaker Finder** A web-based directory of meetings. ([www.fgcquaker.org/connect/quaker-finder](http://www.fgcquaker.org/connect/quaker-finder))

**Quaker Cloud** A web-based service accessible to meetings which allows a repository for minutes, directories, etc., and a method of sharing information among meeting members (and to a lesser degree- others). Visit: ([www.fgcquaker.org/services/quaker-cloud](http://www.fgcquaker.org/services/quaker-cloud))

**Quaker Books of FGC (Bookstore)** Quaker Books of FGC is revitalized under the able hand of a group of dedicated volunteers and a very able part-time staff member. Services such as: the Gathering Bookstore, YM Book tables and online book sale continue to be available. (<https://quakerbooks.org>)

**FGC Publications** FGC Publications continues to make books available that might not otherwise reach public view and which are of special interest to Friends.

**Supporting attendance at the White Privilege Conference** The White Privilege Conference provides excellent and varied workshops to deepen understanding of many aspects of white privilege, white supremacy and institutionalized racism. It also provides Friends the opportunity to meet others who are engaged in combating racism in our society. In order to support Friends to attend, FGC negotiates a significant discount with the conference organizers each year and provides a dedicated Quaker space for worship and fellowship during the conference. Several years ago, FGC was one of the conference co-sponsors.

\*Activities laid down during this time have not been listed.



## Unity Agenda Items

### Bank Resolutions Minute

The following resolutions are brought by the Finance Committee:

1. That Shearman Taber be appointed New England Yearly Meeting treasurer for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified.
1. That Kathryn Olsen be appointed New England Yearly Meeting assistant treasurer for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified.
1. That Robert M. Spivey be appointed Friends Camp treasurer for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified.
1. That Shearman Taber, Yearly Meeting treasurer; and Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting secretary, be individually authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of New England Yearly Meeting as needed.
1. That Robert M. Spivey, Friends Camp treasurer; and Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp director, be individually authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of Friends Camp as needed.
1. That Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting secretary; Shearman Taber, NEYM treasurer; Kathryn Olsen, NEYM assistant treasurer; and Bruce Neumann, presiding clerk, be designated as alternate signers, individually, of all bank accounts of New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, except those checks for greater than \$10,000, which shall require the signatures of two signers from the list above.
1. That Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp director; Robert M. Spivey, Friends Camp treasurer; and John Reuthe, Friends Camp Committee clerk, be authorized, individually, as signers of the Friends Camp bank accounts, except those checks for greater than \$10,000, which shall require the signatures of two signers from the list above.

### Presiding Clerk and Clerks Table Nominations

The Permanent Board presents the following slate to begin service at the close of Sessions 2019:

**Presiding Clerk:** Bruce Neumann (Fresh Pond)

**Recording Clerk:** Peter Bishop (Northampton)

**Recording Clerk:** Rosemary Zimmerman (Bennington)

**Reading Clerk:** John Humphries (Hartford)

**Reading Clerk:** Gina Nortonsmith (Northampton)

### Minute to Authorize Edits and Corrections

Friends authorize the presiding, recording and reading clerks to make and approve edits, clarifications and corrections to the minutes of NEYM Sessions 2018.

### Time-Sensitive Statements

Listed below is the public statement issued by the presiding clerk and Yearly Meeting secretary since 2018 Sessions, in keeping with Minute 2015-57.

This was sent via e-mail to local meetings and shared on social media. It is also posted on our website.

### The Love That Overcomes

November 3, 2018

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God –Romans 8:38-39

This week, Quaker communities of faith across the six New England states are mourning with our Jewish neighbors the deadliest act of violence against Jews in this country's history. We mourn with all who are targeted by hate. We join our hearts in grief with the grieving. We search for ways to respond to the corrosive evils of anti-Semitism, white supremacy, and the persecution of those labeled as "other," even as we acknowledge our own complicity in these sins. We yearn for justice, for healing, for refuge for those most at risk. In town squares, in places of worship, in living rooms, in legislative offices and detention centers, we unite with countless others to protect people from further violence, violence fueled by false prophets preaching fear.

Each day brings further anxiety, violence, and vitriol, while some charged to be leaders incite the worst in us as human beings. We are surrounded by stories of hatred, division, and despair. And yet, we know this: The story of Love will endure.

This week, in the face of the mass murder of Jews at prayer, Jewish doctors and nurses treated the man who opened fire in the Tree of Life Synagogue. A stranger in a parking lot cradled the 12-year-old boy whose grandfather was one of two black people shot and killed by a white man outside Louisville, Kentucky. As some deny the basic humanity of transgender people and people seeking asylum, communities respond with acts of radical love, inclusion, and sanctuary. In these and so many unnamed acts, amidst such suffering, we see the infinite Love of God.

It is the testimony of the Religious Society of Friends that God is at work healing the brokenness of the world and the brokenness within each of us. Nothing can hold



back the unshakeable power of Love in this time, and throughout all time. What matters in this moment—in every moment—is how we choose to participate in this eternal story. Our lives must proclaim that this Love is stronger than all fear.

We commit to live today trusting in this Truth. The words we say and the choices we make in the coming days and weeks must bear witness to Love in concrete acts of connection and care, in our homes and neighborhoods, in our schools and workplaces, in the coming elections, as communities of faith, as people who call this country home, as those seeking refuge and those offering it. We must waste no opportunity to love.

We must seek the grace to keep free from the politics of rage, division, numbness and dehumanization, even toward those we may perceive as enemies. We must

nurture in each other the courage to come together across difference, to resist hopelessness, to renounce a worldview that treats anyone as disposable, to affirm that the Spirit of God dwells in everyone. With each person, in each moment, each place—this movement grows.

This is the time for a politics of presence, of radical relationship, of mutual aid and reconciliation. It's a time to be witnesses, storytellers of the broken-hearted Love that overcomes the powers of fear. Let the walls of separation come crashing down.

NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)  
FRITZ WEISS, PRESIDING CLERK  
NOAH MERRILL, SECRETARY

## Stewardship and Distribution of the Mosher Book and Tract Fund

The Mosher Book and Tract Fund is a permanently restricted fund of New England Yearly Meeting. Distributions from this fund are to be used for the purpose of “printing and circulating books and tracts inculcating and developing the principles of the Christian religion as preached and promulgated by the early Friends.” As a result of growth in principal from several years in which funds were not distributed but instead returned to principal, funds available for distribution in FY2019 total \$3096.30, with a principal of \$85,154.34.

Currently the Mosher Book and Tract Fund (MTBF) is under the temporary oversight of the Permanent Board. **This proposal recommends that Permanent Board retain this overall responsibility and oversight, delegating responsibility for proposal development and funding recommendations to the office manager and Yearly Meeting secretary.**

- As part of their ongoing work supporting publications, the office manager and secretary will consider prospective or ongoing publications projects of which they are aware which would substantially benefit from funds available for distribution from MBTF consistent with the Fund’s purposes.

- While there will be no formal widespread solicitation of proposals, the availability of MTBF funding will also be publicized on the Yearly Meeting website and periodically in the email newsletter, so that Friends can suggest further creative uses for these funds.
- At least once per fiscal year, the office manager and secretary will review potential publication projects and make a recommendation to Permanent Board regarding the use of MTBF funds available for distribution in the current fiscal year.
- In reviewing potential projects and developing proposals to Permanent Board, the office manager and secretary may consult with Friends with relevant experience, and with members of Coordinating and Advisory Committee for seasoning and discernment.
- Final approval from Permanent Board will be required before funds are dispersed.
- News of how funds are used will be featured in the Yearly Meeting newsletter (and in other media as appropriate), and will be reflected in the minutes of the Permanent Board and in other related communications.

## Report from the Elders for Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness

*Eppchez:* We have been asked to report to the body on what patterns we have noticed at Yearly Meeting sessions over the past several days. We recognize that the number of examples we have noticed is far too large to share in our brief report this afternoon, so we will talk about some overarching themes of patterns we noticed and offer examples to illustrate each one. We also intend to produce a written report that more fully captures the noticing work we did this week. Each “we” on this list carries the love of many Friends who registered gratitude or some reopened trauma and shared these with us. This work stretched and tested us, and we will speak hard truths to you, honoring our charge to notice patterns of oppression and faithfulness, and holding New England Yearly Meeting in unconditional love.

We have co-created a rocky time here. We are grasping in all manner of directions and hanging on for dear life.

*Polly:* We will start our report with examples of patterns of faithfulness that we noticed in our time together. Here is some of what we noticed:

- We hear Friends joining the experiment and using the suggested prompts to notice patterns of oppression and faithfulness.
- We see moments of learning happen in business meeting and we moved with grace to new patterns when a harmful pattern was named.
- We feel the faithfulness of our opening celebration which led us into deep worship.
- We heard faithfulness in admitting errors and the loving forgiveness freely given.
- We felt joy at the witness of our plenary speaker and the challenge to un-conform and resist Empire.
- We heard from Friends with ministry in Kenya who prepared for their work faithfully by building relationships and learning about Kenyan Friend’s culture before traveling there.
- We see faithfulness in the Nominating Committee’s decision to allow time for discernment of gifts rather than fill slots.
- We hear the faithfulness of the Clerking Structures and Practices Working Group completing the challenging work they were given to do.

*Melissa:* In looking at patterns of oppression that were noticed, we will present examples in 5 categories: Undermining and Erasure of Experience, Cultural Misappropriation, Avoiding Discomfort/Enabling Stagnation, Humor that Hurts, and The Tyranny of Time.

“Undermining and Erasure of Experience” is when our words or actions make a Friend question if they truly belong here or ignore a part of someone’s identity that is important to their life. Here is some of what we noticed:

We recognized a pattern of saying “us,” “our,” “we” when the surrounding statements were not inclusive of the whole body.

- We feel an assumption of economic and educational privilege among Friends in New England Yearly Meeting that is a barrier for Friends from working class backgrounds.

- We wonder about the need for repeated reminders from Friends with disabilities to use accessible language.
- We wonder why it is so hard for Friends to use the proper pronouns for non-binary Friends.
- We recognize patterns of disregarding the inherited trauma that Friends with black, indigenous, latinx, Asian and Jewish experience live with. We hear spirit's invitation to gain a better understanding of the behaviors that bring up these traumas so that, as much as possible, we are not adding to Friend's burdens.

*Polly:* "Cultural Misappropriation" means taking or using things from another culture that is not your own, especially without showing that you understand or respect cultural context. Here is some of what we noticed:

- We hear white people co-opting African American church culture with shouts of Amen and Hallelujah and we wonder if white Friends can't find spontaneous expressions of spiritual joy and affirmation from our own experience?
- The deeper call we hear is to honor cultures by using language or articles from a culturally specific context only where invited, when invited, and not assume that an invitation from one individual is license to use that culturally specific article however we want to.
- We hear God's invitation to build authentic relationships across cultures while respecting each individual's boundaries.

*Eppchez:* "Avoiding Discomfort/Enabling Stagnation" keeps us from staying with challenging emotions and dealing with difficult issues. Friends appear to expend a great deal of energy on this. Here is some of what we noticed:

- We notice instincts kicking in to protect the comfort of white, wealth-privileged Friends over the care and safety of beloved Friends who are directly impacted by hurtful policies. The tone of this presentation is probably playing into that pattern.
- We hear "change is painful" as a way to make change appear bigger and scarier than it needs to be, and prioritizes the discomfort of those of us who are content with the status quo over the current painful experiences of those who are not members of the dominant group.
- We see a pattern of setting constraints in advance of difficult discussions and moving on quickly out of fear of conflict.
- A way we see us using power is by shouting, "that Friend speaks my mind" to pile on to a statement, possibly preventing others speaking their Truth if it is not in agreement with the group.

*Eppchez* "Humor that Hurts." Keeping in mind that nearly all humor is culture-specific, humor used by the dominant culture can be hurtful, insulting, dismissive, and evade real engagement. Here is some of what we noticed:

- We hear laughter each time the idea of consent around touch is raised.
- We feel confused at jokes used to pull us out of tender holding in difficult moments, such as when members of the body notice and name instances of oppression.
- We hear jokes that lack cultural awareness trigger laughter among white/straight/able-bodied/cis-gendered people that are hurtful to those who do not fit these categories.

*Eppchez:* The “Tyranny of Time” manifests in perfectionism, values staying on schedule more than spirit moving among us, and blocks deep discernment. It also appears in the misuse of time by speaking in ways that take up more time than necessary and therefore prevents other Friends from sharing ministry. Here is some of what we noticed:

- We see a clerk’s table pressed to keep on schedule by an overload of agenda items fitting into limited business meeting time.
- We see power being used to guide the body’s discernment in order to stay on schedule and resolve agenda items that we feel would have benefited from further discernment.
- We wonder why Friends reporting to the body do not take care to honor the amount of time they’ve been asked to use.

*Melissa:* We know that this experiment makes some Friends among us uncomfortable and felt polarizing among the body. We know that our process was imperfect. And we know that, to the best of our ability, we were faithful to our charge. We are grateful to all of you for engaging in this experiment. Any of these patterns that hurt particularly to hear or you noticed yourself feel numb when thinking about, you are not alone. Please reach out to any of us on the working group; we want to hear you and learn from each other. We love you.

*Polly:* Some questions for reflection:

1. Many Friends noticed a pattern of white men dominating speaking from the floor. How can we work to overcome our society’s mainstream socialization which does not teach men to consider if their words will contribute something vital before speaking and allow other voices to come through?
2. What impact does the increased use of Christ-centered language, including references to the cross and crucifixion, have on our Jewish and non-Christ-centered Friends? How are we honoring our theological diversity in this Yearly Meeting?
3. What other ways of operating can we begin to cultivate that leave time and space for Spirit to work in us at Sessions and avoid the Tyranny of Time?

*Eppchez:* We love ourselves unconditionally. We forgive unconditionally. We feel ourselves loving ourselves unconditionally. We feel ourselves forgiving ourselves unconditionally. We thank you. We thank you. We thank you.

## Approved Committee Purposes, Procedures, and Composition

### Earthcare Ministries Committee Purposes, Procedures, and Composition

#### Purpose

The Earthcare Ministry Committee (EMC) envisions the Beloved Community with a new world view that rejects human exceptionalism and sees humanity as a part of and living in harmony with Earth. This new world view informs our awareness of the systemic interconnections between social and environmental justice and Earth's fragile human and natural ecosystems. Social injustice and the disruption of our natural ecosystems are diametrically opposed to Quaker beliefs and values. We believe that the Religious Society of Friends must take a Spirit-led, active stand against these injustices, inseparable from our other activities. We join with others who are led by the Spirit to support and strengthen "a vibrant and growing web of monthly meetings, quarterly meetings, and other Friends communities, helping us to do together what we cannot do alone." In our call to justice, "we strive to obey the promptings of the Spirit to bring healing, wholeness, and transformation to ourselves and to the world." We are all connected. (Quotations: Minute 2015-64)

#### Procedures

EMC, with the guidance of Spirit, will hold each other, Friends, and our communities in the Light, beckoning the Love, Wisdom, and Transforming Power of the Spirit as we:

- Educate Friends and others about the causes of human-induced climate destabilization, which is a spiritual and moral crisis creating global social injustice and environmental destruction.
- Challenge Friends to assess our personal and corporate lifestyles in just living, offering models of community that promote love, resilience, and sustainability.
- Empower Friends to create the Beloved Community through local and regional connections based on economic, social, and ecological justice; resilience; and sustainable living practices leading to a global social movement of interdependence and peace on and with Earth.

#### Composition

- The EMC will include Friends who are committed to the ongoing transformation to create a resilient, sustainable, inclusive, diverse, equitable, and just Society.
- EMC has 15 members serving up to two 3-year terms.
- The Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee in consultation with EMC brings names to the Yearly Meeting for approval.

- The Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee in consultation with EMC brings the name(s) for the clerk(s) to the Yearly Meeting for approval.
- We support EMC members who feel called to continue this work after their Yearly Meeting service is completed to do so, to continue building the Beloved Community for all as led.

### Racial, Social, and Economic Justice Committee Purposes, Procedures, and Composition

#### Purpose

The Racial, Social and Economic Justice Committee's purpose is to bring a spiritual approach to:

- Serve as a think tank collecting and curating resources—over decades—for Friends throughout the Yearly Meeting who are doing the work.
  - We address racism and oppression from a structural basis.
  - We recognize that systemic racism is intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional, and ideological, and especially we help Friends examine the institutional aspect of racism.
  - We gather information about the racial justice work that other yearly meetings and Quaker organizations are currently doing, nationally and internationally.
- Offer Friends multiple opportunities to learn about systems of oppression that intersect with systemic racism—sexism, classism, heterosexism, and colonialism.
  - We help individuals and monthly meetings gain awareness and take action and listen to Friends who feel they have experienced inequity or bigotry.
  - We create and provide tools to promote social justice.
- Provide strong presence at summer Sessions and a potential spiritual haven for Friends who may feel isolated or unsupported by their meetings when doing this work.
  - We encourage spiritual engagement in witness and ministry among Friends and the world focusing primarily on racial justice, prejudicial thinking, and discriminatory behavior.
  - We encourage and follow the leadership of Friends of color as we support and listen deeply to them and others afflicted by social and economic injustice.

#### Procedure

The Racial, Social and Economic Justice Committee organizes its work by:

- Organizing resources and coordinating Yearly Meeting-wide efforts to address systemic racism: We collect, organize, and promote educational resources, and we conduct workshops related to racial, social, and economic justice. We work with the office manager to maintain information on the NEYM website.
- Initiating meetings of representatives from racial-justice-related working groups and committees to plan regular gatherings of Friends who address systemic racism in our society
- Supporting the LGBTQ+ community and working party

#### **Composition**

- The Nominating Committee sends names to the Yearly Meeting in consultation with the committee. Friends and anti-racist activists throughout the Yearly Meeting refer names of potential members. It is helpful for committee members to be grounded in Friends tradition, be aware of the dynamics of power and racial inequality as they exist in our current society, and be gifted at modeling how transformation can happen while continuing to engage with their own ongoing internal work. We particularly invite Friends of color and people who are differently abled to join.
- The committee consists of eight to twelve members who represent diversity of age, geographic location, race, class, cultural backgrounds. We are eager to welcome and engage Friends at all levels of experience and gifts that they can bring to this work.
- Terms of membership are for three years which can be renewable for an additional term, after which a one-year sabbatical is required.
- The clerk is named by Nominating Committee in consultation with the committee and approved by the Yearly Meeting.
- RSEJ coordinates with and communicates with the NEYM treasurer, the NEYM office manager, the YM secretary, the Faith in Action Committee, the Ministry and Counsel Committee, Permanent Board and the ad-hoc Challenging White Supremacy group, the Earthcare Ministries Committee, and Sessions Committee.
- Having regular face-to-face meetings: We hold in prayer all who are caught in a system of oppression and disempowerment. We strive to listen and obey the promptings of the Spirit to bring healing, wholeness, and transformation of ourselves and the world.
- Taking responsibility for distribution of the following funds consistent with the financial policies of the Yearly Meeting:
  - Prejudice and Poverty Fund: We organize a working party which makes recommendations for the management of the Prejudice and Poverty Fund. Ideally the majority of this working group are people of color. Monies go to organizations and sometimes individuals addressing racial and economic justice.
  - Freedmen's Fund: We currently provide scholarships to descendants of enslaved people who are preparing for careers in education. We appoint a representative to the Freedmen's Fund committee in Atlanta to be approved by the Yearly Meeting.



## Approved Nominating Slate

### Permanent Board (50)

2020

Guaraldi, Benjamin (Bhill)  
 Radocchia, Anna (Law)  
 Rein, Carole (Nshor)  
 Zimmerman, Rosemary (Benn)

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2021

Allen, Kimberly (Durh)  
 Leuchak, Rebecca (Prov)  
 McCandless, Christopher (Burl)  
 Zwirner, Mary (Bhill)

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2022

Belcher, Travis (Mon)  
 Drayton, Darcy (Weare)  
 Forsythe, Hannah (Bhill)  
 Kantt, Elizabeth (Fpon)  
 Nortonsmith, Gina (Nham)  
 Smith, Sara (Con)  
 Szatkowski, Elizabeth (Port)

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2023

Bishop, Peter (Nham)  
 Forsythe, Martin (Bhill)  
 Mair, Edward (Ames)  
 McCandless, Jean (Burl)  
 Taber, Will (Fpon)  
 Vargo, Thomas (Nham)

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2024

Manning, Leslie (Durh), clerk  
**Reuthe, John (Vass)**  
***Harrington, Ian (Cam)***  
***Gant, Christopher (Bhill)***  
***Walkauskas, William (Nhav)***

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### Archives and Historical Records (9)

2020

Forsythe, Carol (Put), clerk  
 Quirk, Brian (Law)  
 Crosby, Eileen (Mtob)

2021

Macci Schmidt (Nham)

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2022

***Betsy Cazden (Prov)***  
***Tom Doyle (Mtob)***

### Board of Managers of Investments and Permanent Funds (10)

2020

McKnight, Jeanne (Well)  
 Spivey, Rowan (Brun)

2021

Chicos, Roberta (Cam)  
 Spivey, Robb (Brun)

2022

Hackman, Matthew (Prov)  
 Malin, Kathy (Smith), clerk

2023

Harrington, Ian (Camb)  
 Mair, Ed (Ames)

2024

***Joseph Tierney (Cam)***

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### Development (9)

2020

Bennett, Dulany (Han)  
 Gant, Chris (Bhill)

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2021

Chase, Deanna (West)  
 Moyer, Pat (Fpon)  
 Quoos, Thayer (Nhav)  
 Reuthe, John (Vass)

2023

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**boldface** - new appointment | ***boldface italic*** = re-appointment



**Earthcare Ministry (15)**

2020	2021	2022
Lightsom, Fran (Wfal)	Babb, Heidi (Con)	_____
Stoner, Kim (Nhav)	Gates, Stephen (WFal), co-clerk	_____
<b>Mary Bennett (Wor), co-clerk</b>	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Finance (9)**

2020	2021	2022
Gentile, Ralph (Law)	Savery-Frederick, Carol (Hart)	_____
Drysdale, Robert (Han)	_____	_____
Hanno, Elias (Nham)	_____	_____
2023	2024	
Forsythe, Hannah (Bhill)	<b>Murray, Bob (Bhill), clerk</b>	
Stern, Roland (Well)	<b>Mauer, Phillip (Nham)</b>	
_____	<b>Sprogell, Sarah (Dur)</b>	

**Friends General Conference Committee (15)**

2020	2021	2022
Nutting, Peter (Vass)	Yes, Eppchez (Nham)	_____
Riendeau, Michelle (Well)	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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**Friends United Meeting Committee (12 Tri Reps, 9 appointed)**

2022 (Triennial Reps)		
Weiss, Fritz (Han)	Blood, Peter (Mtob)	_____
Halliwell, Briana (Vass)	Olsen, Kathryn (Sand)	_____
Collea, Beth (Well)	<b>Sheldon, Martha Hinshaw (Dur)</b>	_____
Fogarty, Maggie (Dov)	_____	_____

**FUM General Board Representatives (3) term ending 2020**

Martin, Frederick (Bhill)	Keefe-Perry, Kristina (Fpon)	Tripp, Dawn (Allens)
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**Friends World Committee for Consultation (12)**

2020	2021	2022
Goldberger, Judy (Bhill), co-opt	Hopkins, Mary (Fpon), co-opt	_____
Grannell, Dorothy (Port)	Jorgenson, Christel (Cam)	_____
_____	Rodriguez, Yanire Zamora (Cam)	_____
_____	Woods, Greg (Cam)	_____

**Legacy Gift Committee (9)**

2020	2021	2022
McCandless, Jean (Burl), co-clerk	Evans, Kristna (Durh)	_____
Rockwood, Susan (Mid)	Link, Mary (Mtob)	_____
Schell, Suzanna (Bhill), co-clerk	Mair, Ed (Ames)	_____

**Ministry and Counsel At-Large (12)**

2020

Shelton, LVM (Plain)

Woodrow, Honor (Fram), clerk

2021

Brokaw, Fran (Han)

Cappa, Eleanor (Mon)

Hough, Janet (Cob)

MacArthur, Hugh (Han)

2022

**Callid Keefe-Perry (Fpon)****Puente de Amigos (9)**

2020

Kinsky, Deena (Matt)

Low, Diego (Fram)

McManamy, Em (Ames), co-clerk

2021

Groft, Andrea (Dov)

Smith, Jennifer (Con)

Fogarty, Maggie (Dov), co-clerk

2022

**T.C. Smith (Mon)****Racial, Social, and Economic Justice (12)**

2020

Morrill, Beth (Hart)

Rhodewalt, Scott (Mtob), clerk

Yes, Eppchez (Nham)

2021

Carey-Harper, Rachel (Barn)

Varner, James (Oron)

2022

**Dicranian, Diane (Wint)****Sessions Committee (Nominating appointments) (5)**

2020

Colby, Peter (Fram)

**Rein, Carole (Nshor)**

2021

**Christopher Haines (Fpon)**

2022

**Youth Ministries (9)**

2020

**Sanchez-Eppler, Karen (Nham)**

Matchette, Abigail (Burl)

2021

Heath, Harriet (Scho)

Stone, Carolyn (Well)

Woodrow, Honor (Fram)

2022

**Dawson, Janet (Fram)****Weiss, Fritz (Han)****American Friends Service Committee Corp. (4)**

2020

Foster, Melissa (Fram)

Rhodewalt, Scott (Mtob)

2021

Bennett, Dulany (Han)

Woodrow, Peter (Port)

**Friends Committee on National Legislation (6)**

2020

Cazden, Betsy (Prov)

Whinfield, Steve (Nhav)

2021

Gorham, Charlotte (Nhav)

Harrington, Ian (Cam)

2022

**Friends Peace Teams Project (1)**

Shippen, Nancy (Fpon)

**Quaker Earthcare Witness (1)**

Haines, Christopher (Fpon)

**William Penn House (1)**

## Staff Reports

### Yearly Meeting Secretary

Ye have no time but this present time, therefore  
prize your time, for your soul's sake —George Fox

As we prepare for Annual Sessions this year, I've been reflecting on the preciousness of the moment we've been given, living in these times. Despite the quickening pace and "connectedness" of our world, our time, energy, and attention can seem ever more scarce. I'm feeling a sense of conviction about discernment, and about choices.

I know that we're called to live with our whole hearts, wherever we are. Faithfulness in the small things forms the bedrock of our spiritual lives, and when we can return to our infinite belovedness as children of God, the depth of care we can offer and receive is boundless.

But without discernment, and without a disciplined practice of helping one another remember how we've been led to focus our energies, it's easy to get distracted. In our efforts to respond to the many demands on us—so many of them good and urgent—we can miss what's most essential. Our ears may be closed to the Still, Small Voice, leaving us overstretched, depleted, anxious. Without a shared practice that helps us to return again and again to Guidance, our communal life can be overtaken by other voices and we can find ourselves trapped in unexamined patterns that separate us from Love.

Every choice comes with a cost. This doesn't have to paralyze us, but it is vital to recognize that how we steward the resources in our care—including energy, time, money, and attention—matters profoundly.

As I visit and listen with Friends across New England and elsewhere, I'm more convinced than ever that Friends are at a turning point as a spiritual movement.

How can we help each other to focus on what is most essential?

I pray we will encourage each other to:

- Give as much care to supporting those led to start new Friends meetings—and to those living a vocation of ministry now—as we lovingly give to the legacy of those who've come before us
- Celebrate our successes as much as we help one another to learn from where we've fallen short
- Ask what the wider body of Friends needs from us, even as we give voice to our own needs and wants
- Reclaim and re-imagine ways of supporting those called to particular ministry—including vocal ministry, teaching, spiritual encouragement, and other forms of leadership—even as we affirm the ways we're all called to the universal ministry

- Articulate and transmit the heart of Friends practice and perspective, even as we celebrate the flexibility and openness we extend to one another

In this moment, the choices we make about where we place our attention—individually and corporately—are more important than ever. This means risking saying "no" to many things, so that we can say "yes" to the few things that are truly ours to do.

May we find the Way together.

In faith and friendship,

—NOAH MERRILL

### Accounts Manager

The most important part of my life this year was the birth of my son in November! Katherine and I were very thankful for the flexibility in NEYM's parental leave policy, allowing me to stretch out my leave on a part-time basis over four months, which worked better for our family—and happily, also worked well for the organization, allowing stability and continuity in our financial record-keeping as I worked a few hours each week to supervise and answer questions. Most of all I'm grateful to my leave replacement, Elizabeth Hacala, who stepped in with her own seasoned bookkeeping skills from her previous jobs, reassured me (and the treasurer and secretary!) with her persnickety attention to detail, and did it all with her customary cheeriness. In return she got the distinction of being the first person outside of hospital staff and family to meet our baby, when she came to the hospital so I could hand over the filing-cabinet keys!

My annual reports have consistently noted that the basic spiritual goal of the accounts manager is Truth—but truth without love is like faith without works. So the larger spiritual goal of my work is to support and sustain the loving work of Friends. As featured in my report in last year's Advance Documents, I have been starting to expand my work as accounts manager, extending NEYM's services to local meetings, or supporting others as they helped Quakers reach outward. As noted in the Finance Committee report, I am also taking on more transaction work which used to be done by the treasurer. These additions are possible partly due to a few additional hours in my work-week, and partly due to simple efficiency, as performing even the more esoteric bookkeeping in our fund-accounting system has become more routine. My parental leave put these projects on hold for a while in the winter, and even in a normal year my time in August through October is entirely taken up with Sessions and then closing the books on the fiscal year. But this spring we have been making progress on several fronts.

As of this writing, we are taking the final steps preparatory to filing an application with the IRS for a Group Exemption letter. Of course, NEYM is already recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization, but while it used to be easy for monthly meetings to refer to the NEYM EIN to prove their tax-exempt status, banking regulations have changed and in this era of “big data” it helps to have your own listing in IRS databases. Simply put, a Group Exemption Number (GEN) will allow every monthly meeting to be listed individually in the larger IRS database under the heading of NEYM—which would facilitate electronic searches verifying the tax-exempt status of local meetings. We look forward to working with each meeting to make it easy for them to transition gradually to this system—get in touch if you’d like to learn more.

—FREDERICK MARTIN

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### Events Coordinator

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“Community is society with a human face –  
the place where we know we’re not alone.”  
(*Optimism to Hope*, Jonathan Sacks)

Dear Friends,

With this Sessions, I will have completed my second year with NEYM. I helped manage events and gatherings before coming to NEYM and during that work learned something important. The first one is about survival, the second about learning, the third is about mastery.

Last year was the survival year. My main goal was to make sure my portion of the work of Sessions was done smoothly and effectively. Everything was new and loud; everything was a learning process. This year has been different in many ways. The comfort of working with familiar people and vendors, the clearer understanding about how to best bring my gifts to this work, my knowledge of the campus and gathering have all given me a familiar footing to set my feet upon. My understanding of Quaker process and discernment have enriched my understanding of Sessions.

We have now held three Living Faith gatherings since I joined the Yearly Meeting and plan for two more this coming year. The work now has a familiar pattern, a rhythm to help keep it moving forward. This year saw a great many changes. Lisa Graustein transitioned out of clerking the planning team after last fall and Hannah Zwirner Forsythe picked up the work of clerking for spring. The planning team doubled in size as well. It was a test of Living Faith and the model we had created. It not only held up but flourished on the foundation the past efforts had created.

This year I have come to see my work as building the scaffolding which supports others in their work. Sometimes it is a bridge, sometimes it is a tower, other times a trellis to support a tiny seedling in its growth. I have

begun to see how being of service in this way is a gift of its own and I am joyful to bring it to the community.

I have continued to be in awe of the wonderful staff of NEYM; they are truly some of the best people I have ever worked with. I continue to be more comfortable and connected to my adopted Quaker community and I look forward to another year of growth and work alongside you all.

Faithfully,

—ELIZABETH HACALA

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### Friends Camp Director

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The 2019 summer at Friends Camp will see the most campers we have ever had at camp, as well as the most staff. About half of our campers are from Maine, while our staff have more widely spread backgrounds. More than half of the Friends Camp staff members are returners this summer, including the entire leadership team. For the second year, our staff orientation at camp included an overnight camping trip to Acadia National Park and a community dinner.

We are especially excited this year about our new Counselor-In-Training program for 17-year-olds, called Rising Leaders. Eight Rising Leaders joined our youngest session this summer to explore their own leadership strengths and goals, talk about Quaker leadership, and practice leading effective programming for youth. This group also had an overnight retreat at Vassalboro Friends Meeting.

Along with other areas of the Yearly Meeting, we are continuing to work on growing in inclusivity and equity at camp. Lisa Graustein and Judy Williams spent an afternoon with our entire staff, strategizing and practicing how to interrupt moments of racism or white supremacy culture at camp. Friends in Maine have been very supportive of Friends Camp joining the Level Ground project—an effort by camps in Maine to welcome New Mainers (from refugee families). Friends Camp will host at least four New Mainers as campers in 2019, with scholarships funded by Friends in Maine.

I am writing this report on the heels of visits from Maggie Nelson, Nia Thomas, and Gretchen Baker-Smith. These members of the NEYM youth staff team visited to spend time with our Rising Leaders and our youngest campers. The web that connects Friends Camp and our youth programs continues to grow stronger, especially through the large number of campers who also attend retreats and through staffing overlap. Several of this year’s counselors at camp were JHYM Junior Staffers a few years ago, and many Youth Friends RPs serve as current or recent camp counselors!

We continue to encounter growing edges at Friends Camp. Caring for our property and buildings takes more resources as our facilities age. We were grateful to receive a Legacy Grant for work on our meetinghouse, which now functions as our art space. This year we also

built a new cabin for campers and made many needed replacements around camp, including roofs, floors, and appliances. Friends Camp is on solid financial footing due to robust enrollment, although as we look forward to our next several years of operation we must consider ways to invest in our property and possibly in more year-round staff.

This year the camp committee met four times, in addition to several sub-committee meetings. The committee has tackled many issues involving health and safety of campers this year, including water treatment on property and immunization requirements for the measles vaccine. Our camp committee reaffirmed our priority for mission-driven events in our short spring and fall rental seasons. We would love to host your Friends meeting, school, or group for a retreat.

Respectfully submitted,

—ANNA HOPKINS

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### Junior Yearly Meeting & Junior High Yearly Meeting Coordinator

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How to summarize such a full year? So much unfolded. So much got lighter. So much is still to be done. There has been a shift in my thinking and leadership style, from being a fully consumed, best-ever farmer in my own greenhouse-silo to being one of a circle working on a cooperative farm. There has been some loss of focus, but in return there has been much more collaboration, shared learning, mentoring, and a widening of what is possible.

I created and led 11 retreats in 10 months; nurtured and supported the staff, youth, and families in those communities; organized and oversaw the childcare and youth programs for two Living Faith Gatherings; and am now in sprint-mode preparing to lead JHYM and support three of the other four youth programs at Sessions this coming August. I remain unsure whether this is sustainable for anyone else—but I'm more hopeful now that I'm receiving monthly B12 shots and have a bit of a life hiatus from so very much personal grief. "Good enough" has become a mantra that I spent most of my life fearing—and now embrace. Not having every single thing be completely perfect allows for more time and space for wonder, collaboration, and ministry.

I continue to learn and seek to interrupt the many other ways that white supremacy and oppression show up in myself and in the programs I lead. I am committed to this work and am grateful for the many teachers and elders within NEYM and beyond whom I have been given. I have much to learn, but we have made some progress. Nia Thomas, Maggie Nelson, Anna Hopkins and I meet monthly to share resources, questions, and struggles, and to hold each other accountable in the work of creating more welcoming, less racist and oppressive programs and communities.

Our retreat themes felt particularly meaningful this year, including The Ministry of Trees, The More I Wonder the More I Love, Justice is What Love Looks Like in Public and You Don't Blame the Lettuce. We welcomed new staffers, including a few parents. Our crop of JYM junior staffers has been extraordinary. In JHYM, attendees took on more aspects of leadership—creating phone-use guidelines, making song lists, naming specific ways to decrease our carbon footprint, designating areas inside and outside of buildings for free-time fellowship. There is joy in trusting it's okay to experiment, that we learn the most when things don't work so well, that the beloved circle includes good humor, forgiveness, trust, and patience. We have a growing list of times when JHers' clear insights and visions led to a more vital, engaged community, too!

Young people in both programs grew individually in beautiful, courageous ways. From sleeping away from home for the first time ever (a record number), to sharing fears ("logical" or not) and tender struggles with friends, family, and classmates, we have been awed by the ways our children and teens have stretched and embraced their gifts and challenges. After a 4-year hiatus, we offered a new version of our Bodyworks Retreat for 6th and 7th Graders. I am deeply grateful to Maggie for co-leading this beloved retreat. We kept much but adjusted some formats to be more affirming, safe, and empowering. I am excited at the openings created by Nia and Maggie's new roles. We are hopeful that providing more cross-pollination will also make for smoother, more trusting, and joyous transitions from JHYM to Young Friends.

The number of retreat attendees who regularly go to meeting for worship at local monthly meetings is decreasing. I think a lot about what is lost, and I wonder what our culture's sports programs and other organized activities provide that is more appealing or vital. Fewer young people and families feel that our youth communities and connections to local meetings are essential, life-giving sanctuaries of respite and renewal for living out their Quaker faith. Are there ways that we can tweak our programs and monthly meetings so that they are a better fit without losing the essential gifts that these intentional, joy-filled, spiritual communities seeking and finding that of God in ourselves and each other provide? Are there ways that we can lovingly encourage each other to come, stay, be heard, be nurtured, be showered in Grace?

—GRETCHEN BAKER-SMITH

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### Office Manager

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Dear Friends,

My work tasks are pretty much the same from year to year (although in the past year I've been helping to build a new website for the Yearly Meeting), but the way those tasks get done is always different and there



are always opportunities for learning how *not* to do something the next time around.

I've learned some important life lessons this year:

- A typographical error is not the end of the world. Even the New York Times has to print corrections.
- I need to stop looking at all the work waiting to be done long enough to appreciate what has already been accomplished. (Actually I have to re-learn this one. Often.)
- Life is not a competition.
- I need to know when to ask for help.
- I can't know everything, and I'm not supposed to.

It's okay not to know what I'm doing sometimes and ask questions. I truly enjoy work sessions with Noah when I can ask the questions that help me better understand the task before us. I enjoy figuring things out—how do I get this data into a report; what is a records retention policy; why is Microsoft Word giving me such a hard time.

I've gotten a lot more comfortable saying "I don't know." I don't know where God is in my work. I don't know if anything I do makes a difference. I don't know what I can do to make this troubled world a better place. I like to think that what a nun told me is really true: Everyone is born with a purpose, and you don't have to know what it is.

One of the few things I do know is that I work with wonderful people who are also friends. I've never had a job where I prayed with the people I work with, people I can be more authentic with. It is an unexpected blessing to be with people who teach me about compassion, vulnerability, forgiveness, and faith. I don't mean just the other staff, but all of you. I only wish I got to know more of you better.

"God as love expresses the idea that the sacred is not found in a distant object towards which we focus our love, but rather is testified to in the act of loving itself." (Peter Rollins, *The Divine Magician*)

—SARA HUBNER

### Quaker Practice & Leadership Facilitator

Over the last few years the shape of my work has gradually shifted and, as of this spring, I am formally serving in a new role as your Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator (see the full job description at <http://bit.ly/2xABH37>). The title may feel clunky but the words were chosen to convey that while the tasks on my plate are wide-ranging, and the role I play in various projects differs, the desired outcomes that unite it all are faithful leadership and grounded spiritual practice for Friends across New England. In this role, I aim to connect, promote, integrate, support, and co-create purposeful engagement opportunities that feed our living movement. As your collaborator, I am paying attention with you to the many questions and insights we are collectively carrying about how to strengthen our spiritual journeys, local meetings, and ministries.

This year, I look forward to working on many projects that are informed by the rich findings of our multi-year Vibrant Meetings Project, where we worked with partner meetings to better understand what makes local meetings life-giving for Friends of all ages as well as the role meetings play in faith formation. As we now step into the "integration" phase of the Vibrant Meetings Project, I am excited to share the findings of the project with Friends in useful ways, including working with blogger and traveling minister Emily Provance to bring a team-based, skill-building course on multi-age inclusion to your meeting via a winter webinar series.

Beyond that series, my focus on inclusive faith formation across the life span is strongly influenced by my awareness of our need for both multigenerational and peer spaces. Multigenerational connections allow us to foster our sense of belonging to the wider Society of Friends, yet special opportunities geared towards single-age or peer groups often allow for experience-specific or life-stage-specific spiritual formation as well as powerful peer connections. We need both types of spaces and we need to be more intentional about which is needed in a given situation. In my ongoing work with the Young Adult and Young Friends retreat programs, we are expanding our "bridging" effort (making meaningful connections with the wider Friends community) as well as our emphasis on bringing a Quaker lens to the developmental questions of these key life stages. In conversations with Friends working with youth in their own meetings, many are re-evaluating how to best make use of youth-centered spaces as well as occasions to gather across the generations for worship and community building. As we become more skilled at recognizing the unique advantages of different ways of gathering, we are better able to achieve our goals and grow in our faith.

Bridging between life stages was also a theme in one of the biggest joys of this past year: planning and co-facilitating the "Partners in Spirit" retreat, which brought together a cohort of young adults and a cohort of aspiring mentors. A key takeaway from that powerful gathering was that the Quaker journey is not "one size fits all," and mentorship, accompaniment, and leadership development are most fruitful when we are able to see and respond to individual needs, gifts, and leadings. In this coming year, I look forward to many opportunities to collaborate with others, including Ministry and Counsel and the Nominating Committee, to increase our intentionality around supporting individual leadership development and ministry.

As we move into the next season, I am deeply grateful to have the opportunity to pay attention with you to the living ecology of the various Quaker ministries, meetings, organizations, individuals and events that make up the Quaker Movement in New England.

—NIADWYNWEN THOMAS

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### Treasurer's Report

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Because of the continued generosity of our membership, the Yearly Meeting continues to be in good financial health. Despite continuing to approve deficit budgets, the Yearly Meeting is operating with minimally adequate reserves. At the beginning of this fiscal year we had reserves of \$212,000, which were \$13,000 over that required by our policy.

Five years ago we began intentionally adopting a series of significantly deficit budgets to maintain our level of services as we started an effort to increase our income. The current budget provides for an approximate \$8,000 shortfall, as does the proposed budget for next year. The 5-year plan called for us to begin running operating surpluses this year to restore our reserves to a more comfortable level. This is not a warning of impending doom, but rather should be seen as a reminder that we do need to continue to increase our contributions to the Yearly Meeting to adequately provide for the programs and expenses we consider vital.

#### Pay-As-Led and Equalization

One of the most frequent questions I am asked is whether it was important that meetings continue supporting the Equalization Fund. The answer is YES!!! The continued success of the pay-as-led approach to registration fees depends on the continued support of the Equalization Fund by meetings and individuals.

Participating in Sessions is a vital way for each of us to experience the wider Yearly Meeting community and develop the ties with members of other meetings which helps to strengthen and expand the web of Quakerism in New England. The meeting contributions are a way for them to support their own members participation in Sessions as well as assisting meetings with fewer resources. Contributions to the Equalization Fund are the one tangible measure of support for the pay-as-led approach, making visible the support for those of us who cannot afford the total costs and helping them to participate in the life of our Yearly Meeting.

#### NEYM Contribution to FUM

In 2009, and in response to Friends concern about the Friends United Meeting (FUM) personnel policy, NEYM adopted a temporary policy of allowing monthly meetings to withhold the portion of their budgeted contribution to NEYM which would go towards the NEYM contribution to FUM. At that time a number of meetings implemented that provision, which reduced our contribution to FUM by about \$800 per year. In the past year two of our larger meetings have begun withholding, which I estimate will this year make our contribution to FUM \$1900 less than the budgeted amount.

That 2009 minute also established a restricted fund that would receive contributions from individuals and meetings which were to be used to make up the amount being withheld. Because of the generosity of a few individuals, the "make-up" fund has had sufficient monies

to cover the amount withheld. Thus each year we send two checks to FUM, along with a letter explaining the issue NEYM has with the FUM personnel policy and the reason for there being two checks. Because of the large increase in the total withholding, I expect there will not be enough in the "make-up" fund to cover the total withholding.

#### Funding Archives Activities

Last year I reported that Permanent Board, under the impression that the work related to moving the archives to the Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) at the University of Massachusetts had been completed, transferred the money from the sale of the *Bloudy Tenent of Persecution* to the General Fund. That action turned out to be a bit premature. There still were boxes with miscellaneous material which needed to have their contents inventoried. In November, Permanent Board approved making funds available to complete the work which has now been done.

Now that SCUA is ready to receive those records meetings have been holding during the transfer, we need to learn which records they are most interested in and the preferred formats. And that will be the first major task for the archivist as we reactivate that part-time position. As a regular contractor, the Archivist position will be funded through the general budget.

—SHEARMAN TABER

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### Young Friends Events Organizer

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Dear Friends,

This year in Young Friends was defined by transition and resilience. Smaller numbers and shifting staff roles found us in a state of flux in which there was a feeling of lingering uncertainty, and at the same time there was a depth of intention and care amongst all in the community. We took it one retreat at a time, bending and turning to fit each new circumstance, each time with the chance to reassert why it is that we keep doing this thing, why keep this wheel turning. It's one of the blessings of change that with every transformation comes the opportunity to create oneself closer to the image of God.

Young Friends began this year adjusting to smaller retreat sizes, taking stock of what felt hard and what continues to be joyous. Since last year, retreat sizes have hovered around 20 Young Friends, while many remember having 40 or 50 people at retreats only three or four years ago. I've noticed a sense of loss amongst some Young Friends when they consider who's no longer present and how that affects the energy of the group. It creates a challenge to Young Friends' ability to find meaning and joy in the work of building this community when it feels as if so few decide to commit to it. As both youth and staff, it causes us to wonder, "What are we doing wrong?" but instead we've chosen to ask, "What are we doing right? What can we do that's new?" Young



Friends have doubled down in their efforts to be intentional with how they are together, and respond to these changes with fresh eyes that look toward the future.

We're practicing abundance instead of scarcity. It's scary to think there might not be enough people, enough leadership, enough love, but this year has taught us that there is always enough of those gifts. Responsibilities continue to pile higher for high schoolers, and yet Young Friends still show up at retreats ready to share their gifts in meaningful ways. With a smaller group, we've relished the focus with which we're able to dive deep into hard work like unlearning white supremacy. We've become tighter-knit and nimble, ready to respond to our collective needs on a dime and become more involved in the wider community that surrounds us. Young Friends Ministry and Counsel made the diffi-

cult decision to propose laying down this committee for next year to instead create a new leadership structure that would involve the whole community in holding its own spiritual health. This felt like a true act of stewardship that demonstrates the transformation and vision alive in Young Friends right now.

It's so important for us to remember that this isn't just a Young Friends experience, but that Friends and people of faith everywhere are struggling to deal with scarcity and transformation. This is what gives me the most hope for the potential of this work, and the power of Young Friends. And all the while, we keep singing, and playing, and hugging, and shouting for joy and gratitude for all that we have.

—MAGGIE NELSON

## Committee and Board Reports

### Permanent Board

In your service, Permanent Board met six times since Sessions 2018, including our joint meeting with Ministry and Counsel in September. In worship, Permanent Board conducts the business of New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) between Sessions. The Board responds to discernment brought forward by monthly and quarterly meetings, as well as by NEYM committees and working groups. All meetings of Permanent Board are open; all are welcome to attend and to fully join in the worship and discernment of the Board. Dates of meetings (through Sessions 2020) are available on the NEYM website, as are advance documents in the week prior to each meeting of the Board.

At each meeting of Permanent Board, those gathered hear regularly from the presiding clerk, Yearly Meeting secretary, treasurer and two of Permanent Board's working groups: the Challenging White Supremacy Working Group and the Reparations Working Group. We regularly receive nominations, travel minutes, and memorial minutes from throughout New England.

Annually, we hear the report of the director of Friends Camp and review the upcoming fiscal year budget prior to Sessions. In May, Permanent Board Minute 18-26 outlined a "funding priorities process" to guide Finance Committee's budget discernment, making the process both more concrete and more transparent. At our November meeting, Minute 18-95 named the Board's guidance to prioritize funding for increasing financial management capacity, expanding childcare at Sessions, improving the reach of communications, and developing our capacity for leadership, practice, and learning.

Not incidental to NEYM's ongoing work to examine how white supremacy culture impacts our Society, Sessions Minute 2018-53 charged Permanent Board "to perform a formal re-examination of the structures and

practices of clerking in the Yearly Meeting." The final report of the working group established by Permanent Board to address this charge provides a road map for culture change in NEYM. You will hear a presentation of the working group at Sessions, with some initial guidance on who will carry out the recommendations of the report, how, and when.

Other significant reports brought to Permanent Board this year include NEYM's Data Privacy Policy and two documents in response to Sessions Minute 2018-34, "Support for the Ministry of Publications" and "Recommendations for Stewardship and Distribution: Mosher Book and Tract Fund of New England Yearly Meeting Friends." Coordinating and Advisory Committee (C&A) and Permanent Board have written and reviewed the two publications documents and will bring them to Sessions to seek approval, a precursor to seeking Sessions approval to lay down the long-dormant Publications Committee. If you have any questions or concerns about the publications documents, please be in touch (*pb-clerk@neym.org*) or find me at Sessions prior to Permanent Board's presentation on Tuesday morning.

I am delighted to report that the remaining balance of the Released Peaceworker Fund was transferred to the Legacy Gift Committee to be spent more readily, and that the Fund for Sufferings, re-conceived and refreshed with a \$25,000 grant from Legacy Gift Committee, was accessed for the first time in response to war-tax resistance.

Further, discerning that the Living Faith gatherings are no longer an "experiment," C&A together with Permanent Board designed a structure to support the gatherings as a regular programmatic aspect of NEYM's spiritual life. Finally, you will see in the Unity Agenda the revised purposes, procedures and composition for the Earthcare Ministry Committee and for the Racial, Social, and Economic Justice Committee for Sessions approval.

After 12 years of service to Permanent Board, the last 4 serving as clerk of the body, I will step down at rise of Sessions. Leslie Manning of Durham (ME) Monthly Meeting will be the next clerk of Permanent Board. Please hold her and the body in your prayers as we, throughout the year, seek God's guidance in the work before the Board.

I am available. I love Permanent Board. If you have any questions, concerns or prayers for the Board, please do not hesitate to find me at Sessions to share your wisdom.

—SARAH GANT, CLERK

### Ad Hoc Working Group on Challenging White Supremacy

In the past year, the work group on Challenging White Supremacy (CWS) held Zoom meetings monthly. Following the charge to “act as a resource for the Yearly Meeting to offer encouragement, inspiration and practical support for Friends to engage in this work of loving concern and right relationship,” CWS has facilitated workshops at five New England meetings or gatherings, supported Anna Hopkins (Friends Camp director) in holding a staff training, and run programs of engagement in members' home meetings. On January 5, 2019, CWS participated in a day-long gathering to bring together Friends' groups holding the concern of racism in different ways: Coordinating and Advisory, RSEJ, CWS, Reconciliation Working Group, Faith in Action, and Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness. More and welcome collaboration has ensued, including collaboration on Sessions 2019.

—SUSAN DAVIES AND FRAN BROKAW, CO-CLERKS

What does respect look like in practice?

How do I know when I have been shown respect?

How do I know when I am respectful of someone else?

Do I define respect for myself?

Do I accept others' definitions of respect?

How do I negotiate the language and signs of respect?

Respect is the warp and weave of our relationships and the grease that makes the world go round. However, respect is culture-specific. It is something we know how to do in our cultural group. White folks assume that the ways in which they interact with each other are respectful. We do not have to think about it.

Consider the supermarket ... in Augusta, Maine. I get my basket and do my shopping. It is a place of studied silence with my cart, my mind on my groceries, and what I will do later. I generally do not speak to anyone unless I see someone I know. I speak to the deli clerk and perhaps to the cashier, but that is perfunctory, and it is not in any sense genuine interaction.

In African-American culture, silence and lack of greeting are regarded as signs of disrespect. It is the silence that fails to recognize another as human, to greet that other person as an equal worthy of notice and

acknowledgement. The fundamental basis of respect is acknowledgement, recognition, noting the humanity of the other. While white people assume that is shown by silence, for African Americans, that very silence is disrespectful.

Again, consider the supermarket ... in Montgomery, Alabama. I greet the first clerk I see, smile at a person surveying the bread next to me, and talk with the other person examining the chicken. I answer the clerk stocking vegetables when he greets me, and the same as I go round the store. I speak, smile, or nod with a smile to 20 or more people. When I check out, I exchange pleasantries with the cashier and the person bagging, perhaps speak to the person behind me, perhaps discuss the sale on yogurt and whether this brownie mix is better than another. There are smiles and thank you's and have a good day all around as I leave. I have made eye contact with every one of these people in the store interactions.

That is what respect looks like in Montgomery, Alabama. But I am a Mainer. Do I have to adapt to a different culture? Can't I be who I always have been? I am not trying to be disrespectful. I am being respectful in the way I always have been. It is easier to be who I always have been. Why do I have to change because I am in a different culture?

Respect is a basic principle of human relationship. It is culturally bound. We need to negotiate the language and signs of respect when dealing with others outside those with whom we share culture.

Quakers have specific respect and communication patterns which are a subset of those white ways of showing respect. Quakers greet each other in silence, sometimes, without acknowledgement, just with a gaze. That is culturally appropriate for us white Quakers. We have not expected that someone else speak to us. We have used our silence to define our personal boundaries. We have not been intrusive. We consider that respect.

Consider how that appears to someone from another culture. Do we have to change, ourselves, to be more welcoming? Why don't new people adopt our ways? Aren't they in our culture now?

—DIANA WHITE, MEMBER OF THE CHALLENGING WHITE SUPREMACY WORKGROUP

### Clerking Structures and Practices Working Group

#### Introduction

In response to the charge of our working group, we have done extensive listening. We interviewed many Friends who are currently serving or have served in key clerking and treasurer roles within the last ten years, Friends who have done the work of nominating for these roles, as well as the Yearly Meeting staff who most directly interfaced with these leaders. We have also had some conversations with Friends who declined to serve in these roles as well as partners of those who have served, and have made attempts to find where these

conversations are happening in other Yearly Meetings. Throughout this process we listened for common themes and trends that tell a shared story of our current leadership structures and culture, as well as our potential for growth.

In this report, we hope to hold up a mirror that reflects current dynamics as well as offer suggestions for how to move closer towards the healthy, fully inclusive Society that we long for. We acknowledge that some of our recommendations are hardly new but are rather a strong affirmation of work we have already begun. We also recognize that not all of our recommendations are the same size. Some possibilities that we lift up are straightforward, requiring few resources, and we therefore expect that they may be implement-able in the short term; others are aspirational and may take years of sustained effort to fully fund and enact. Although we are well aware that the Yearly Meeting does not have a magic wand, we believe that in order to adequately respond to the gap between our current leadership reality and the vision that we heard our community articulate, we need to operate from a place of possibility, not an assumption of limited resources.

While some individuals may have a particular part to play in implementing new practices due to their formal role, effective change depends upon shared responsibility. Living into the vision of these changes will require sustained corporate effort with participation at many different levels of our Yearly Meeting. We exhort the body to receive these recommendations with an open heart and an eagerness to join many hands in the work of improving our structural, financial, and cultural systems for supporting leadership service.

### Overall Takeaways

*Things as they now are in New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM)*

Our leadership demographic does not fully reflect the diversity of our membership. As many are already aware, the key volunteer leadership roles in NEYM (by which we mean presiding clerk, clerk of Permanent Board (PB), clerk of Ministry and Counsel (M&C), and treasurer) are extremely demanding. They require many gifts and skills as well as a lot of time and flexibility. The dedicated Friends who serve in these roles are motivated by deep love for NEYM and are anchored by deep faith; but, they are also aware that their service is made possible due to their individual financial, household, and work situations. The bigness of our leadership roles – compounded by the lack of support that we give our leaders – greatly limits who can say “yes” to serving in this way.

In our exploration, it became clear that there are three interconnected areas where barriers to leadership emerge:

1. **Structure:** the way we structure roles to accomplish our shared work

2. Finance: the way we use our financial resources to support our shared work
3. Culture: the way we relate to our shared work and our leaders

**To truly eliminate barriers and enable more Friends to serve as leaders, we need to bring a lens that integrates the structural, financial, and cultural changes required.**

### Structure

#### Observation

One considerable reason why our leadership roles are so time consuming is that NEYM’s internal affairs are huge and complex. We have a tendency towards expanding our internal work. When we see a need or an issue to address, we add work (committees, work groups) without looking at the infrastructure support needed to accomplish this work well, or asking what should be laid down. Even when we ask what should be laid down, we often lack the structural mechanisms to approve these decisions or engage with resource prioritization questions in an efficient manner. We are afraid of change, particularly of letting go of old ministries that have outlived their context and are no longer fruitful or worth the resources they require to maintain. Maintaining outmoded structures is depleting and requires much energy that could be used elsewhere.

#### Recommendations

- Empower leaders to focus their energy on responding to the current life within NEYM, not maintaining structures that no longer serve us.
- Regularly review existing committees and ministries and only continue them if they are still life-giving.
- When creating new structures and ministries, build in periodic review practices and consider what old practices/structures/ministries are no longer needed.
- Embrace our priorities and celebrate the natural life cycle of ministries.

#### Observation

There are too many different nominating paths to important leadership positions in our Yearly Meeting (YM). This fractured set of processes sometimes results in the same individual being asked to serve in multiple roles. This structural deficiency in nominating makes it more difficult to share and maintain best practices for recognizing and nurturing gifts that could serve our community.

#### Recommendation

Redesign nominating processes in a cohesive, consolidated manner.

#### Observations

A major weakness of the nominating process is that committees tend to draw from the same pool of “known” people, who tend to be regular participants in NEYM Annual Sessions. Many, or most, of these folks

are older, white, and middle or upper middle class. This results in leaders who fit the same demographic. Though the distribution of male/female cis-gender representation among leaders is not generally a problem, people of color and LGBTQ+ folk, younger adults, and those of lower socioeconomic status are under-represented.

#### *Recommendations*

- Continue to seek ways to engage more Friends in the process of naming gifts and nominating, and to build skills in this important work in the body of Friends more widely
- Re-examine the membership structure of Nominating Committee and barriers to participation in the nominating process
- Allocate financial and administrative resources necessary for the success of the Nominating Committee consultations (these consultations which are in the planning phase have the goal of forwarding the shared conversation between Monthly Meetings and the Yearly Meeting about best practices for nominating and raising up Friends' gifts)

#### *Observation*

Nominating processes do not consistently seek input from those outside the committee prior to asking a candidate to serve. Some people were asked to serve without the nominators knowing the individual well and later found out that the Friend did not have the appropriate gifts or skills for the role. Failure to solicit input from those who will to work closely with the Friend serving in a particular leadership role can be particularly problematic.

#### *Recommendation*

- While the nominating process and conversations should be confidential, nominators should seek input from current individuals in leadership (this could include presiding clerk, clerks of M&C and PB, Yearly Meeting secretary), as well as monthly meetings, about Friends who are being considered for leadership roles. A broad view of the candidate's gifts, skills, prior experiences, and leadings, as well as their challenges, should be obtained prior to asking someone to serve in a leadership role.

#### *Observation*

There is an art to conversations between a candidate and a nominating member. This art has not always been clearly articulated to Friends serving in nominating roles. Some people reported being told they were "the only candidate," leading to a sense of obligation to say yes. Some people asked to serve in major clerk roles had no significant prior experience as clerks. Corporately, we are currently not consistent in clarifying the expectation that Friends considering significant leadership roles should engage in careful discernment and formal clearness processes before accepting the nomination.

#### *Recommendations*

- Create a handbook of "best practices" for nominating committee members to share the wisdom and art of inviting a Friend to service for the Yearly Meeting.
- Nominators should be well-informed and clear about the expectations and job descriptions for clerks and committee members, and should be able to articulate which gifts and skills that are needed.
- In conversations between nominees and nominators, name the gifts seen in the individual being invited to serve, and explain how these gifts are important in the role.
- Require all those considering serving in a major NEYM role to have a formal clearness process. If the Friend's meeting is small or is unable to provide this, the nominating committee should help to identify people willing to serve on the clearness committee. Support in finding this clearness committee should be regarded as "part of the job" of nominating for these leadership roles.

#### *Observation*

We do not currently provide much formal training to Friends serving in leadership roles; instead, we depend on leaders to come already equipped with skills or to learn "on the job". Sometimes volunteer leaders do not have technological skills and rely on YM staff or others to perform parts of their work, which requires additional coordination and communication.

#### *Recommendations*

- Require participation in a clerking workshop for all new clerks, either within NEYM or a training at Powell House or Pendle Hill. NEYM funds should be fully accessible for this training.
- Develop robust training materials for critical technological skill infrastructure: Google Suite, NEYM website, Zoom, Excel, Expensify, Quickbooks, etc.
- Provide volunteer training in leadership and management areas such as: agenda preparation, volunteer management, project management skills, and clerking
- Continue providing funds for participation in high-quality diversity training such as Beyond Diversity 101.
- Create and distribute simple orientation materials about how things work: how to get reimbursement for travel, how to set up meetings, and other nuts and bolts. Where these materials already exist, offer repeated reminders of their existence. Recognizing that we often nominate leaders who have been in our community for a significant period of time, individuals stepping into leadership may have outdated understandings of "how things are done."

#### *Observation*

The path to leadership roles is not always clear.



*Recommendation*

- Continue to utilize the recording clerk roles as mechanisms for leadership development. Since the gifts needed for recording are distinct, this must not be the only “track” towards leadership.
- Create additional roles for rising leaders such as rising clerk, assistant clerk, assistant treasurer, project leader, etc. The purpose of such roles would not be to further distribute the work of the clerk or treasurer, but to create opportunities for practical leadership development.
- Provide formal mentorship for new clerks and committee members; this mentorship should include explicit solicitation of feedback

*Observation*

In our leadership, we typically have an “all or nothing” model of service.

*Recommendation*

- Create more opportunities for people to meaningfully contribute at different levels of time/energy expenditure to cultivate more rising leaders. Developing a practice of soliciting participation in time-bounded projects or inviting people to lead a single workshop could be avenues for this opportunity creation.

*Observation*

Cultivating and maintaining a shared vision is foundational for effective interfacing between staff and volunteer leaders. When leaders are unclear on the sense of the body they struggle to prioritize. Additionally, administrative tasks (such as scheduling, venue planning, organizing childcare, YM communications) frequently require longer lead time than our volunteer committee structures anticipate, and add a significant component of managerial overhead to our volunteer leadership positions. Our volunteer leaders expressed a wish for more administrative support while recognizing that a barrier to delegating these administrative tasks is that dividing work requires additional communication, coordination, and shared understanding sense of priorities.

*Recommendation*

- Through the minuting process at Sessions, strive to articulate the body’s on-going sense of our shared vision. This articulation of vision is a guiding framework for volunteer and staff leaders as they prioritize and collaborate.
- Consider a role of “Special Assistant to the Clerk” who could manage some of the recurring administrative tasks that can be done without much additional coordination with the clerk.
- Regularly re-examine administrative staff work priorities to maximize the amount of administrative support available for key leadership functions.

*Observation*

The interface between staff and volunteer leaders is most stressed when there is ambiguity around responsibilities and accountability structures. This is particu-

larly apparent in the roles of the Treasurer (due to the financial operations/controller aspect of the Treasurer’s responsibility portfolio) and M&C Clerk (due to M&C being involved in programming).

*Recommendation*

- The expectations for the role of Treasurer should more clearly define the division of labor between the Treasurer and the accounts manager. In particular, we see opportunities to clarify the division of tasks that are frequently associated with a financial controller. There may be opportunities for financial leadership development if there are concrete, project-based tasks that can be delegated to members of finance committee or permanent board. Note: Concurrently with the writing of this report, Finance Committee has approved a new job description for the Treasurer which reflects these suggestions.
- The Yearly Meeting should more clearly articulate expectations for the role of the Treasurer to clarify what is expected from a communications and forecasting standpoint.
- Clarify roles between staff and volunteers related to programming and event planning.
- Establish timelines for major projects that allow for positive staff/volunteer collaboration.

*Observation*

One reason our leadership roles are so large is that there is an “accountability gap” between the expectations for the clerks/treasurer versus those for committee members and the body as a whole. The different temporal rhythms of involvement in the work of the Yearly Meeting (e.g. members of C&A meeting more frequently than at-large members of M&C or PB who in turn meet more frequently than the general body of Sessions) may reinforce this gap.

*Recommendations*

- Clarify the gifts needed as well as expectations for contribution for committee service. Nominating Committees seek people with specific relevant experience for committee membership. The calling of the Spirit is important but is not enough if Clerks and Leaders are to be really supported.
- Create accountability and feedback structures for committee members.

*Observation*

Another structural issue that leads to additional work for clerks is committee membership structure that does not reflect the work that needs to be done. Some Friends serving on committees do not have the necessary gifts, skills, willingness, temperament or ability to do the work of the committee.

The structure and scope of Ministry and Counsel, in particular, make the work unmanageable. Currently M&C’s charge encompasses an enormous range of responsibilities which require different gifts and skill sets (for example: programming and events, religious

education, pastoral care, maintaining many ongoing big picture conversations).

#### *Recommendations*

- Examine the variety of tasks currently assigned to Ministry and Counsel and explore what structures would best address those needs. Allow for the possibility of distinct and complementary structures to address specific needs (for example: “Pastoral Care Resource Team”).
- Establish guidelines for the membership of and service on M&C which reflect current priorities.
  - We see particular need for clarity regarding the term of service and mechanism for appointment on M&C.
  - Clarify the role of recorded ministers, elders and pastors in relation to M&C.

#### *Observation*

In the recent past NEYM has sometimes been unprepared to handle unexpected legal or human resources issues, such as the disposition of the Friends Home, and it has been an extremely time consuming burden on our leadership.

#### *Recommendations*

- Identify Friends who are willing to be called upon as a legal resource team for unusual circumstances. This team would serve to provide information and advice on identifying appropriate resources, with awareness of potential conflicts of interest.
- Continue to provide funds to pay a retainer for a lawyer serving as general counsel in order to address legal questions when they arise.
- Continue to allocate resources to the legal contingency fund.

#### *Observation*

We require a lot of travel of our leaders, particularly the Treasurer and Presiding Clerk. Some of the travel time currently perceived to be required may be unnecessary.

#### *Recommendations*

- Re-examine if both the Treasurer and finance committee Clerk benefit from serving on C&A (note: as of this writing, this is being explored by the Finance Committee).
- Re-examine the amount of travel time currently expected of the Treasurer (note: as of this writing, this is being done by the Finance Committee) as well as the Presiding Clerk.
- Examine whether it is possible to utilize the role of Rising Clerk to decrease the number of meetings the Presiding Clerk is expected to attend.

#### *Observation*

Planning for transitions in all major clerk roles, and ensuring that information is not lost in handoffs between clerks, is important. Without intentional communication, we end up “reinventing the wheel” and lose critical information.

#### *Recommendations*

- Stagger leadership transitions to ensure overlap of leaders whenever possible.
- Require Friends serving as Presiding Clerk, Rising clerk, clerk of M&C, Treasurer, and Clerk of PB to have a support and accountability committee, as support for the person, but also holding them accountable to the role as service to the Yearly Meeting. Members could include someone who previously served in that role, as well as members of the Friend’s home meeting. Nominating support in crafting this committee is important to ensure that it actually happens.
- Volunteer leaders and the committees that they lead should examine the possibility of naming a designated “second” or “shadow”. This position should *not* be a co-clerk, but rather an individual who is the go-to person for back-up in cases when the clerk needs to miss a meeting, or if there are specific tasks that can be delegated, particularly in areas of administration, follow-up/volunteer management, and coordinating with YM Staff.

### **Financial**

#### *Observation*

Our leadership roles are only possible for individuals with other sources of income, a sufficiently flexible schedule, a reliable car, and access to the internet. We sometimes wait for people to ask for financial assistance rather than providing it up front.

#### *Recommendations*

- Review and reorient all volunteers to our travel reimbursement process annually.
- Continually re-examine what travel is actually meaningful (travel may be a particular barrier for people with caregiving responsibilities at home and people who live near the corners of New England).
- Actively and proactively offer all financial support available. This may include providing financial assistance in obtaining transportation, reliable internet, or laptop computer access.
- Examine the possibility of providing a stipend to Friends serving as Clerk of Permanent Board, Presiding Clerk, Treasurer, and Clerk of Ministry and Counsel. While we recognize that this recommendation is a large potential commitment of resources, it has the possibility to make service possible for a broader population of individuals than are currently able to bring their gifts to leadership positions for our Yearly Meeting.
- Offer childcare for all committee meetings and communicate clearly about its availability

### **Cultural**

We often commit to big work while underestimating what it will require of us in the long-term. We have a hard time pruning responsibility. We do not easily support leaders in prioritizing and saying “no.” We need

these leaders to remind us that we (as NEYM) cannot do everything. Saying no, standing up to weighty Friends, and giving clear loving accountability feedback are critical skills that must be nurtured in our existing and rising leaders. In particular, we should seek to cultivate an awareness that work rises from many places to help developing leaders learn how we expect them to prioritize and prune, rather than allowing the work to continue expanding.

#### *Recommendations*

- Make the process of pruning an agenda more visible so that growing leaders can learn how to do this.
- Develop a culture of recognizing that it is healthy when we ask if we have the resources to do what we are proposing.
- Adopt a culture of communicating priorities for the work we expect to do each year; a culture where we respect the “no” of others and don’t judge the success of our leaders by their ability to say “yes” to everything. Push against the “more is better” mentality and trust that prayerful discernment has gone into decisions that lead to a “no.”

#### *Observation*

After serving some leaders feel that their service was not recognized and some fade from relationship with NEYM. By presuming that a leader is burnt out, we have a tendency to unintentionally isolate our former leaders. This is a major loss of gifts and skills from our community.

#### *Recommendation*

- Perform exit interviews with people in leadership roles. These interviews need to be done promptly and in a loving and appreciative way.
- Ask people who have served how they are led to serve next.
- Adopt a culture of publicly expressing our gratitude for the service of our leaders.

#### *Observation*

Leaders do not always feel the support of the body as a whole. Leaders receive “radio silence” or complaints and personal attacks more frequently than constructive feedback. Grappling with complex challenges is scary and taxing. Our leaders often feel alone in their struggles.

#### *Recommendations*

- We need a more formal and regular feedback mechanism for people serving in leadership roles. Giving and receiving this feedback is critical for growth on the path of leadership development.
- We need to recognize the connection between the work of undermining white supremacy culture and confronting the culture of conflict avoidance that exacerbates our leaders not feeling the support of the body.
- Every person in a major leadership role should have a Care and Accountability Committee put to-

gether by NEYM. These committees should understand the importance of personal spiritual practice as well as understand enough about the role, the work, and the context of the Yearly Meeting, to support accountability. It is vital that these committees feel empowered to tell the Clerk/Treasurer when they are straying.

- We need to develop a culture that leaders are grown over time—it is not just a matter of giving more tasks to those who are “natural leaders.”
- We need to emphasize, model, and explicitly teach the following skills which support effective leadership:
  - Discernment
  - Clerking
  - Servant leadership
  - Incremental risk taking and experimentation
  - Engaging constructively in conflict that is above and below the surface (note: this is generally not the norm in NEYM)
  - Effective communication
  - Giving and receiving feedback
  - Project management
  - Clear, compelling writing
  - Clear, compelling public speaking
  - Time management
  - Asking for help; delegating; humility

#### *Observations*

In our interviews, we were struck by the deep faith and commitment to service from our leaders. Many leaders identified this work as a form of discipleship, requiring both humility and selflessness, that rewards faithful service with joy, unity, love, and connection. Our leaders felt most effective when they had strong personal spiritual practices as well as support and constructive feedback from other leaders (for some, C&A provided this “peer circle”, for others a lack of sufficient accountability feedback was identified). When we have this foundation in our leadership, it allows us to move forward despite struggle, conflict, and uncertainty.

Leaders sometimes feel as though they are expected to do the work of the body or the committees. This may be a root cause of much of the burden placed on our leaders. This is addressable, but it requires deep culture change, commitment from the body, and humility.

#### *Recommendations*

- Normalize the expectation that committee service means doing significant “homework” between committee meetings.
- Be clear with all Friends serving on committees about the expectations for service. Expectations should reflect the work that needs to be done.
- Increase cultural norms that expect that people who have not prepared for business, will listen and trust others to do the discernment.
- Be more clear about what we expect of leaders, what we expect of people in other named roles,



and what we expect of the membership as a whole. In addition, be clear what the role of the leader is when the committee or body doesn't do what it said it would.

#### *Observation*

We have a tendency to be suspicious of things that are not perceived to be already extant in Quaker culture. This can be a sticking point when trying to innovate on what "good management" looks like in a Quaker context.

#### *Recommendation*

- Increase willingness to try, embrace and adapt to new leadership practices, including those originating from beyond the Quaker realm.

#### **Conclusion**

As Friends in New England, we seek to reduce the barriers to service that currently exist for individuals considering service in our volunteer leadership positions. We are not alone in this hope--our Quaker siblings the world over grapple with these challenges, too.

Addressing barriers to service requires a multidimensional approach. Our structural challenges impede effective leadership. Our financial challenges limit the population that is able to say yes to service. Our culture, especially the aspects of it which are reflections of White Supremacy culture, adds significant burdens to leadership roles which further limits the population able to serve. Only through an integrated approach will we see significant change.

We envision a Society in which our developing leaders are nurtured conscientiously, our current leaders are well supported, and our former leaders continue to be celebrated and involved. While this work is complex and long-term, we have faith that we have what we need to live into our vision.

While some of us have a particular part to play in this work, the changes needed are widespread and we all have something to contribute. We urge you: Do not be overwhelmed. Do not reject ideas that feel too expensive or too hard out of hand. Instead ask: What can we do now? What can we lean into going forward? What role is God asking me to play?

To our great benefit or to our detriment, we are each a living part of our ecosystem of supported leadership. The culture of the yearly meeting can and does change. Are we willing to accept continuing revelation when it comes to our way of organizing, relating to each other, and doing business?

—NIA THOMAS, CLERK

#### **Student Scholarship Granting Subcommittee**

Begun in spring of 2016, this is the fourth year of our student scholarship grant awards program. The Committee received 15 eligible applications and awarded grants to a total of \$27,236.75, which has spent the balance that was available in the account. The program, as was planned at its creation (Minute 2015-30), is now

at its end. This was the final award year. Awards were made to those who have connections with New England Yearly Meeting, applications coming from both young and old and for a wide variety of educational purposes. The Committee expects with its work completed that it may be laid down.

—REBECCA LEUCHAK, CLERK

#### **Archives & Historical Records**

Since 2018 Sessions this committee worked closely with the Permanent Board, the Treasurer and the Finance Committee to resolve the committee's concern regarding the remaining funds from the sale of the *Bloudy Tenent*. We are grateful for the strong sense of commitment and support for our work. The committee focused on ensuring that the backlog of unprocessed records can be processed as quickly as possible. With the approval of a one-time grant of \$7500, SCUA is able to hire students and a graduate student to systematically work through the approximately 50 uncatalogued boxes. This work is underway.

We look forward to meeting the needs of monthly and quarterly meetings with a part-time outreach archivist to answer questions and to work with SCUA (Special Collections and University Archives, UMass) and meetings to ensure that all are submitting records to the Archives. We have defined the work required and are working with the Yearly Meeting secretary to be in a position to fill this role in the new fiscal year.

The committee is also drafting a section of Faith and Practice as an update to the sections previously devoted to records for Yearly Meeting and quarterly and monthly meetings. The draft will be provided to the Revision committee.

After one year of operation under the Memorandum of Understanding with SCUA, both Rob Cox, Director of SCUA, and the Committee were happy to affirm that no changes to the memorandum are currently needed.

As part of this report, we include Rob Cox's annual report from SCUA from January 2019:

During the past calendar year, the staff completed the physical reorganization of the collection and pressed forward with verifying and reconciling the old Statler finding aid with the current collection. So far we have not found any glaring omissions or discrepancies, but as we continue with adding detail we will know more. Book cataloging was nearly complete at the time of last year's report, with a few remaining volumes added as time has permitted.

**Processing** A significant portion of the more detailed processing has centered on the records of individual monthly and quarterly meetings. We have compiled a standardized vocabulary for referring to the meetings (a "name authority list," in archive-speak) and we have developed a rough organizational scheme, in consultation with our peers at Swarthmore. Although each collection is unique in some regards, and the quantity

and quality of content varies widely, we are doing our best to develop an arrangement scheme that can be simultaneously consistent, comprehensive, and flexible.

With that plan in hand we are developing finding aids for the individual meetings. At last count, we have generated 52 finding aids for monthlies, including all of the Wilburite monthlies. Reflecting the nature of these collections, finding aids vary considerably in detail and extent, but we have endeavored to include a capsule history of each meeting and hope to be able to add images of meetinghouses, members, or other significant (photogenic) features. Ideally, we would solicit and would welcome help from individual monthlies in contributing to their own histories. We chose not to complete the physical rehousing for many of these collections, although that goal is on the docket. When we have completed the finding aids, we will turn to the backlog accrued while the NEYM collection was at the Rhode Island Historical Society. The integration of this material will greatly expand the monthly collections, and only when we have a more complete picture will we want to make decisions about physical rehousing.

In addition, we have made considerable inroads into processing the separate collections swept up in the NEYM archives. We had already reprocessed the collections of Moses Brown, the Providence Society for Abolishing the Slave-Trade, and several others, issuing finding aids for each and doing some token digitization. In 2018, we added an important collection for Henry H. Perry (supervisor of the three AFSC-run Civilian Public Service Camps in Massachusetts during World War II). We also processed and digitized the papers of Caleb Foote, a Quaker-influenced war resister during World War II who was incarcerated on the west coast

**Digitization** The processing work noted above is an essential first step to digitization. Support from the Yearly Meeting to hire scanners and/or metadata workers for this would be gratefully received. [This processing work has been funded with the \$7500 grant mentioned in the Archives Committee report. -ed.] Until we begin systematic work, we have been chipping away at smaller subprojects: digitizing two interviews (ca. 2004) with elderly members of the United Society of Friends Women, and other items as requests arrive. Henry Perry is queued up for digitization when we have staff available, and I have begun to explore digitizing records pertaining to the Quaker response to the Revolutionary War. A more systematic approach is needed and is the clear next step.

I again am grateful for a hard-working, dedicated committee.

—CAROL FORSYTHE, CLERK

### Coordinating and Advisory

The approved purpose of the Coordinating and Advisory (C&A) committee is to “shepherd the work of the Yearly Meeting.” This is a broad charge. In October we listed those tasks we knew of which we anticipated attending to over the coming year. We accomplished most of this work. This year the clerk of Nominating Committee and

the rising presiding clerk joined C&A. After Sessions there will be a new clerk of Permanent Board and a new presiding clerk; Sarah Gant and Fritz Weiss are concluding their service.

Our work this year began with a weekend retreat in August where we developed advices and queries and tests for discernment for the funding priorities process. After these were accepted by Permanent Board (PB) we brought specific funding priority recommendations to PB which, after discernment, were approved and forwarded to Finance Committee to inform the budget development.

Last fall C&A scheduled Zoom conference calls with the clerks of YM committees to answer questions, support them in their service, and invite them to access the resources available from the Yearly Meeting office. During the year we responded to several committees who requested assistance in the work before them. Sessions in 2018 directed Permanent Board to examine how the structures and culture of the Yearly Meeting create obstacles to service and perpetuate a leadership which is older, whiter, and more affluent than would best serve the Yearly Meeting. Sessions also directed Ministry and Counsel to create a process to observe and name patterns of oppression and faithfulness in our work together as a Yearly Meeting as one part of beginning the transformative journey required we have committed to. C&A supported both committees in responding to these directives. A clerking workshop was offered in April and another has been scheduled for September 2019.

We continued to respond to requests for advice, assistance, and support from quarters and monthly meetings. There were three Zoom conference calls with quarterly meeting leadership. All eight of the quarters in New England are exploring how to fulfill the “Purpose of Quarters” which was received at Annual Sessions last year. A common theme is that the transition of leadership at the quarters is challenging.

In the quarterly calls, and in the engagement with monthly meetings and Yearly Meeting committees, C&A hears and shares the news of deepening faith, and persistent witness among Friends in New England.

The review of committee purposes, procedures, and compositions informed by the minuted purpose and priorities of the Yearly Meeting has been completed. The revised documents for Earthcare Ministries and the Racial, Social, and Economic Justice Committees are being brought to Sessions for approval. Permanent Board will also bring a proposal to support the ministry of publication.

The committee is charged with the supervision of the Yearly Meeting secretary and for ensuring that the annual evaluation is completed. The secretary reports monthly to C&A on his priorities, concerns, and sense of where attention might be needed.

C&A meets at least once each month. The committee consists of those serving as clerks of Permanent Board, Ministry and Counsel, Finance, Nominating, and the presiding clerk, the secretary, the treasurer and the supervisor of the secretary. At each of our meetings we pay deliberate attention to ways we express the “Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture” described by Jones and Okem. We have felt excitement about the beginnings of the culture change and joy we are witnessing in NEYM. We have worked well together in love and have served well as servants.

—FRITZ WEISS, PRESIDING CLERK

### Development Committee

Our Yearly Meeting is alive and thriving. In surveying the landscape of our financial supporters, our collective record in recent years—including our current fiscal year—testifies to the new life and growth springing up each day in the Quaker faith across our region. This year, gifts from monthly meetings are up 15% compared to the same period a year ago (based on second fiscal quarter results at this writing), while household/individual contributions for the same year-on-year period have expanded 18%.

Often the future can look very different from the past. Historically a large share of contributions have come to the Yearly Meeting in the mid- to late summer (our final quarter of the fiscal year). We typically note a surge in the 8 weeks between Annual Sessions and the close of our fiscal year, September 30. We have every hope that—with your help—this pattern will repeat this year! If you or your meeting has already made a gift to the Yearly Meeting during the current fiscal year, thank you. If you are a donor who last year signed a 3-year “statement of committed intention” (some other churches say “pledge”), thank you especially for your sustained dedication to our shared ministry.

Over the past few years, we’ve made progress toward a balanced budget while sustaining vital ministries of New England Friends, and this year we’re very close! This is in part the result of robust and sustainable growth in gifts over recent years as we’ve clarified the purpose and priorities of the Yearly Meeting. We’ve been blessed with the opportunity to pause and reflect on the work we need to do and the best ways to organize, or perhaps reorganize, our resources to best advantage. The increasing clarity around our vision and the persistent call to minister to each other and to the world is improving our overall health and vitality. Our improving financial health is by no means the only indicator of this health, but it is an important one.

This year we began partnering with Everence, a Menonite-based financial services organization. With their help, and in partnership with Finance Committee, local meetings, and other Friends, we are hosting conversations around money and faith, and gradually perhaps

growing less uncomfortable thinking, talking, and praying about money and supporting the work of our faith community. An Everence team will be at Sessions to talk with individuals and families about financial planning at all stages of life, and with treasurers and finance clerks from monthly meetings and other NEYM-affiliated organizations to help manage the financial life of their community, including desires for growth, new projects, and new ministry. This will include discussion of Everence’s church loans, grant opportunities, and other topics of interest to local Friends’ meetings.

We’ve come a long way and there is much work still to do. In the past few years we have grown from a simple and dedicated volunteer fundraising effort to a more complex, ongoing Development program. In the coming year, it will be important for the Yearly Meeting in consultation with the Development Committee, staff, Coordinating and Advisory Committee, and the Permanent Board, to pause and consider how the ways we organize and coordinate our work to support financial stewardship and giving can best respond to the needs of Friends at this time, and moving forward.

—CHRIS GANT AND DEANA CHASE, CO-CLERKS

### Earthcare Ministry

Earthcare Ministry Committee’s charge at Sessions 2018, last August:

NEYM Minute 2018-36 We have minuted that “we will ... act with a focus and fearless [sic] appropriate to the urgency of the time.” We must do more than symbolic actions. As a blessed community we will act to reduce our contribution to climate dysregulation. To do this, we must be assessing our current impact and taking concrete steps to reduce this.

To assist with this transforming work, Earthcare Ministry Committee (EMC) members refined the carbon calculator mentioned in last year’s minute and called the project the Transforming Love Calculator Project (TLC Project) because this work requires an inner transition to a new way of relating to one another and to God’s creation.

To date, the response from monthly meetings to using the TLC Project is less than we had hoped; however, a Legacy Grant award to a Friend on the Committee and further actions planned by EMC and the Yearly Meeting will, we hope, sharply increase the number of Friends who participate. Monthly Meetings are encouraged to contact EMC at [scgates1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:scgates1@sbcglobal.net) to schedule a visit to begin the work with the calculator or schedule other programs that will help their meeting to engage in addressing the climate emergency.

We also gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Quaker Earthcare Witness, which provided funding for the database and for 12 tablet computers which we use in sharing the TLC with monthly meetings.

Our annual retreat was held at a Friend’s home in May 2019 to prepare for NEYM Sessions. Other EMC



meetings were held every 6 to 8 weeks via our committee's virtual meeting (Zoom) program. At our May retreat, we worked on our 1-, 3-, and 5-year plans, which we will share at 2019 Sessions. We all returned energized by the chance to plan and worship together, and optimistic about what Friends can do to help address the climate crisis (which we decided should be our preferred term instead of "climate change").

We gratefully acknowledge the foundational work of members of several monthly meetings to address the climate catastrophe and refer you to our website to find links to these resources.

We will continue to develop our repertoire of skills/tools for deepening the inner transition work needed to do the outer work necessary to reduce our carbon footprint and sequester carbon from our atmosphere. We are committed to connecting with other efforts in the Yearly Meeting to address racial and economic justice as integral parts of the climate emergency. We feel the power of the Spirit in this work towards creating the Blessed Community for all beings on Earth. We must not let the crisis immobilize and defeat us. Love calls us to act.

Please contact the clerks of EMC if you have any questions or would like to arrange a gathering for your meeting or a few meetings in your area to move forward with this faithful work.

—MARY BENNETT AND REBECCA MCKENZIE, CO-CLERKS

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### Ecumenical Relations

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Usually we gather as a committee for a lunch meeting each year at Sessions, but this past year we were all too busy. We will plan to meet over supper on Tuesday this year.

Here is some news from our representatives:

Maine Council of Churches (MCC) is busy and growing. The Public Policy Committee is involved with over 20 pieces of legislation. "Wins" this year included the banning of gay-conversion therapy, with no exceptions, and assistance in many forms for the opioid problem.

At this year's Advocacy Days, 77 people not only learned about various topics, from inclusion to climate change, but also learned ways to communicate effectively with legislators. Andy Burt from Midcoast Friends Meeting was on hand to teach, encourage, and support us.

Community Conversations continue, facilitating dialogue between "old Mainers and new Mainers"—with many thanks to Portland Friends for their involvement. This program is in its second year and continues to grow.

MCC recently co-sponsored a workshop on "The Faith Community's Response to the Opioid Crisis," attended by many denominations and service organizations. This included training in naloxone, something

every meeting should have available at their meeting-house.

—DIANE DICRANIAN, WINTHROP FRIENDS CHURCH

New Hampshire Council of Churches (NHCC) has been busy, thanks in part to its new, active young director, Jason Wells.

The big news is that we finally succeeded in getting rid of the death penalty! Thanks to Arnie Alpert and the many Friends from across the state who were active over the years on this issue. The NHCC helped gather broader support.

We are active in the Poor Peoples Campaign and are now in the midst of trials for those arrested during civil disobedience actions.

Last spring NHCC joined Lutherans in co-sponsoring a gathering on the opioid crisis; more than 70 people gathered in Concord at short notice. An interfaith opioid recovery organization was formed. We continue to find churches that are offering workshops and trainings, and invite others to join them.

This spring we had a person who portrays Dietrich Bonhoeffer perform in Peterborough on the anniversary of his death. Many found similarities with some issues we face today.

We have been expanding NHCC membership, reaching out to other churches. Marian Baker (Weare) serves as secretary. Dulany Bennett (Hanover) has stepped down and we are seeking a replacement from one of the N.H. meetings that is part of Northwest Quarter. Contact Marian or Dulany for further information.

The council helps spread information about church-related events throughout the state through its active website and Facebook page. Check it out.

We are looking into getting grants for a project on anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism and one to help small rural congregations find ways to be more relevant to today's issues. Our Board retreat will be hosted at Concord Friends meetinghouse on July 18.

We will be holding a Solidarity Walk for Immigrant Justice, walking from Concord to Dover from Wednesday through Saturday, August 21–24. All Friends are invited to join this event.

—MARIAN BAKER AND DULANY BENNETT

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### Faith & Practice Revision

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Faith and Practice Revision Committee began its year by mailing to our monthly meetings and worship groups the new work we had presented at sessions in 2018. Last fall we sent out draft texts on Pastoral Care and on Dying, Death and Bereavement. We are grateful to the many meetings and individuals who responded to the documents with thoughtful comments and concerns.

We began our work in the fall with a review of the dual membership section of the Membership chapter that has been a difficult topic in the Yearly Meeting. The chapter was brought to sessions in August 2016 and

2017 for input and for preliminary approval in August 2018. During 2016 and 2017 we received input from 17 monthly meetings and from many individuals:

- 7 meetings made no comment on the dual membership section of the text.
- 2 meetings responded that they were moving away from membership. They were trying to be welcoming to all.
- 5 meetings liked the text
- 2 meetings were uneasy with the text. Their responses seemed to indicate they saw the difficulty in the topic and realized they would need to proceed carefully in such cases.
- 1 meeting found the discussion very divisive, but didn't tell us in what way.

Sessions 2018 was the first time that the body reviewed the text within the business meeting. When agreement could not be reached within the time scheduled, it was noted that we were not in agreement with the text and we moved on. The Revision Committee rewrote and reorganized sections of the text in response to the discussion we heard at Sessions and responses from individuals as well. The revised Membership chapter (<http://bit.ly/2NjIpoK>) will come to Sessions 2019 again for preliminary approval.

The committee will also bring the revisions to the 2018 draft text on Dying, Death and Bereavement (<http://bit.ly/2IYLnlj>) to Sessions for preliminary approval. Before the Yearly Meeting is asked to give preliminary approval at Sessions 2019, the Revision Committee will offer opportunities for Friends who have read the documents to meet with committee members to suggest final changes. Before the Yearly Meeting is asked to give preliminary approval at Sessions 2019, the Revision Committee will offer opportunities for Friends who have read the documents to meet with committee members to suggest final changes.

This year the committee started a draft text on Marriage. The Marriage draft will go out to the monthly meetings and worship groups in late October, with a request for responses back to the committee by February.

We continue to be a committee of 10 members. Clearly, with a full committee of 16 members the work would progress more quickly and efficiently. We are grateful to the Permanent Board Nominating Committee for their efforts to bring new members to the committee.

We are looking forward to the Yearly Meeting's new website where we will be able to update the Interim Faith and Practice with texts as they receive preliminary approval. This will make it easier for Friends to locate new texts as they are approved.

We continue in faith,

—PHEBE MCCOSKER, CLERK

## Finance

This was the first year of the new budget process, in which Permanent Board approved funding priorities at its November meeting and sent them to the Finance Committee to aid in the budget development process. As we developed the FY2020 budget, we connected the approved priorities with relevant line items and added or shifted budget dollars where possible and prudent to respond to those priorities.

The Committee continued our tradition of holding workshops for monthly meeting clerks, treasurers, budget-committee clerks, and other interested Friends. At this year's workshop, titled "Money & Spirit: Integrating Faith and Finances," held at Gonic (NH) Friends Meeting, attendees shared about their meeting's financial practices, described challenges they are facing, and provided ideas for other attendees based in their meeting's experiences. In the afternoon presentation, Everence Stewardship Consultant Lyle Miller spoke about the many services available to monthly meetings and individual Friends through NEYM's partnership with Everence. Please consider whether you or someone from your meeting might join us for next year's Money & Spirit event.

The Committee approved a new job description for the NEYM treasurer position. In consultation with the recommendations brought forward by the Clerking Practices and Structures Working Group of Permanent Board, we reduced the ex-officio committee responsibilities (and the resulting travel) required of the treasurer and shifted most of the transactional work to the NEYM accounts manager. The new treasurer role is now more focused on oversight and reporting.

This year we approached the end of a multi-year project to update the Financial Handbook, which collects the financial policies and procedures under which NEYM operates. The Handbook will be presented to Permanent Board in August or September and, if approved, will be published in the policies section on the new Yearly Meeting website. The online copy will be updated as new policies are approved.

Although the accounts manager is doing the work, the Finance Committee is excited to see progress on the Group Exemption process. When done, this will allow local meetings that have obtained an Employee Identification Number (EIN) to use the NEYM group exemption to more easily document their 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

Now that we have accumulated sufficient funds in our Accounting Services revolving fund, we will prepare for a consultation and review of our accounts and procedures by an outside CPA in FY2020 and following years.

As part of our continuing effort to simplify the Yearly Meeting's finances and close inactive funds, we proposed a process to Permanent Board to close the

long-inactive Released Peaceworker Fund. The oversight of the Fund was transferred to the Legacy Gift Committee, which will use the remaining balance for one or more grants in accordance with the original criteria of the Fund.

The Finance Committee seeks to be a resource for all New England Friends. We are here for anyone (not only for Yearly Meeting staff and committees, but also local meetings) to provide help and guidance with financial matters. We look forward to hearing from you.

—BOB MURRAY, CLERK

### Friends United Meeting

The FUM Committee of NEYM has not met this year, but many NEYM Friends are involved in FUM-related activities. Kristina Keefe-Perry (Fresh Pond), Frederick Martin (Beacon Hill), and Ann Dodd-Collins (Portland) represented NEYM at meetings of the FUM North American and Caribbean General Board, while Rosemary Zimmerman (Bennington) continues to serve as the North American General Board's appointed recording clerk. On the FUM staff, Eden Grace (Beacon Hill) works as the Director of Global Ministries, and Kristna Evans (Durham) worked for a time as editor of the Friends United Press.

For Friends who are unfamiliar with FUM, it may help to understand that it is a global partnership of yearly meetings, which means that at the board level, we engage with fellow Quakers from very different cultures—and while the differences in context between the United States and Kenya are real, sometimes the different cultures within the United States can be the hardest to reconcile. The FUM personnel policy still does not recognize same-sex marriage, which all of NEYM has objected to for years, but making progress on the issue is more of a question of changing minds within the member yearly meetings of FUM. Several of our fellow member yearly meetings in FUM recognized same-sex marriage around the same time as NEYM did: New York, Baltimore, and Canadian Yearly Meetings. More recently, several yearly meetings in North America have had painful schisms, and in each split, one of the resulting yearly meetings has affirmed LGBTQI+ inclusion. Within FUM, the North Carolina Fellowship of Friends and the New Association of Friends are two such newly affirming yearly meetings. Most recently, Great Plains Yearly Meeting this year adopted a minute of inclusion. So each year, more and more member yearly meetings have become open and affirming; but Quaker process does not discern the Way forward by majority rule. Kristina and Frederick, and many of us on the Committee, will be available for conversations and questions during Sessions.

Working across cultures in FUM's global partnerships can also bring great joy. Ramallah Friends School in Palestine—founded by New England Friends—is begin-

ning to celebrate its 150th anniversary. Marian Baker (Weare) continues her travel in the ministry, under a minute endorsed by NEYM, in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, encouraging women's leadership and economic empowerment. Friends on the FUM East African General Board tell us of movements for reconciliation and unity among Kenyan yearly meetings. And preparations are under way for the 2020 FUM Triennial to be held in Kenya—the country with the largest number of Quakers in the world—in collaboration with the United Society of Friends Women International (USFWI) and Quaker Men International (QMI). It promises to be an exciting week of celebration and fellowship and all New England Friends are warmly invited.

—FREDERICK MARTIN, REPRESENTATIVE TO FUM GENERAL BOARD

### Friends World Committee for Consultation—New England

This past March, the Friends World Committee on Consultation (FWCC) Section of Americas met in Excelsior Springs, Missouri, on the theme of "Come and See!" based on John 1:46. Over 150 people from across the Americas attended the meeting, including 10 Friends from our Yearly Meeting. We had opportunities to share in small groups, hear about the Traveling Ministries Program, and to attend to the business of the Section. Documents from the Section Meeting can be seen at the Section website, [fwccamericas.org](http://fwccamericas.org). Also you can read reflections from NEYM attendees (<http://bit.ly/2LgF4E5>) and Minga Claggett-Borne's personal reflection (<http://bit.ly/2LdEFCB>).

The Traveling Ministries Program (now 3 years old) seeks to send Friends across yearly meetings and cultural divides within the Section. Three Friends from NEYM have been active with the program so far: Debbie Humphries (Hartford) served in the first cohort, Greg Woods (Cambridge) is serving in the second cohort, and Minga Claggett-Borne (Cambridge) is serving in the third cohort. Chuck Schobert, a member of the first cohort from Northern Yearly Meeting, made two visits to Friends within New England Yearly Meeting during his travels. Please consider inviting a corps member to your meeting and/or applying to serve in the fourth cohort. Applications are due September 30, 2019. More information is available at [fwccamericas.org/visitation/traveling-ministry.shtml](http://fwccamericas.org/visitation/traveling-ministry.shtml).

One of the fun things that we heard about at the Section Meeting is that FWCC has developed a Quakerese magnetic poetry kit. Robin Mohr writes:

Have you seen our new Quakerese magnetic poetry kit? We've been playing with it on a file cabinet in our office, and it is a lot of fun. 250 words, to compose a prayer, or a poem, or a joke, on your refrigerator.

To order, email [robinm@fwccamericas.org](mailto:robinm@fwccamericas.org) and tell her how you will use it to promote FWCC's mission. Or



Friends can donate \$25 to FWCC Section of Americas online and put “Quakerese poetry box” in the comment box of the online form.

Thanks to the work of Marian Baker and Beth Collea, four international Friends (Emma Condori and Esther Quispe Yujra from Bolivia, and Dancan Sabwa and Judy Nandikove from Kenya) will be visiting our Annual Sessions this summer. Please welcome these visitors! We hope to provide opportunities to talk about the work of FWCC in a workshop at sessions.

Sunday, October 6 will be World Quaker Day. This year the theme is “Sustainability: Planting Seeds of Renewal for the World We Love.” Our committee is eager to help meetings find ways to celebrate and we will host a time during Sessions to share ideas about celebrating the rich diversity of Friends. Ideas and examples can also be found on the World Quaker Day website ([world-quakerday.org/](http://world-quakerday.org/)).

Lastly, our committee is always looking for younger members to serve on the committee and as Yearly Meeting representatives to the Section of the Americas. This is a great way to connect with Quakers from across the Americas and to learn about other Friends and how they worship.

—GREG WOODS, CLERK

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### Legacy Gift Committee

Through supporting the ministry of New England Friends, the Legacy Gift Committee has experienced Holy Abundance.

With little or no experience in grant-making or in establishing a funding program, we could not have anticipated the Holy Abundance that would arise when we began this journey.

We aimed to create a funding program not based on traditional measures of success, but on faithfulness. Our guiding light has been an openness to experience and a willingness to experiment, such as the new “Time-Sensitive Application” added this year to respond to requests for workshops or travel that arise outside of our regular deadlines.

With the spring grants we have completed four years of funding from NEYM Future Fund—which was originally expected to last three years. We also completed the second annual cycle of the Witness and Ministry Fund. Visit [neym.org](http://neym.org) for a list of FY19 grants.

We experience Holy Abundance every time a Friend or meeting committee applies for funding. As each deadline approaches, our email overflows with the work of New England Friends in the world.

Where is the spirit moving in this work? How or when can an investment of money help nurture a leading? What gifts can emerge when a meeting takes a ministry under its care?

Holy Abundance is present in the stories from applicants and grantees.

Asking his meeting to take his ministry under their care so he could apply for a grant was the first time one applicant had to consider, “What is my ministry and why is it important to me?”

A member of the planning group for the second “At the Well” gathering told us, “I am so very proud and grateful that NEYM demonstrated the imagination and the faithfulness to support ministers to go where the leading took us.”

A small meeting in northern New Hampshire spoke of the energy they felt when a new Friend approached them with a leading, “We have been blessed to answer God’s call to join this ministry brought forward to us.”

We have felt deep connections form—as a committee, with our in-person site visits, in learning what is alive in local meetings throughout the Yearly Meeting, and with meetings working to reduce their climate footprint.

A wise Friend told us that the most important part of our work is not the money we grant, but the conversations we have about stewardship, faithfulness, ministry, Friends’ practices, leadings—and money.

We’ve chosen the subject “Funds and Faith and Fairness: the question of compensation and how it relates to equality and justice issues” for our annual workshop on September 24. What is right compensation and what guidance can we give to applicants? What is necessary to release someone to follow a leading?

This fall Legacy Committee will take a break from accepting applications to consider the remaining balance in the Future Fund (approximately \$50,000) as well as some of the questions that have arisen from our work.

The next deadline for the Witness and Ministry Fund is March 1, 2020.

—SUZANNA SCHELL AND JEAN MCCANDLESS, CO-CLERKS

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### Ministry & Counsel

Charged this year to “seek to be responsive to and to engage with the concerns and leadings of monthly meetings, quarterly meetings, and Annual Sessions,” Ministry and Counsel (M&C) has taken on two significant pieces of work, the fruits of which we hope are felt in local congregations throughout New England, and both of which will be presented in more detail at Annual Sessions. M&C meetings are open to all, and our minutes are available on the Yearly Meeting website.

At Sessions 2018 M&C was instructed to “develop a practice to appoint people who will observe, name and reflect back to us long-standing, unseen patterns and practices that result in our complicity in oppression.” It is clear from the minutes that the practice would begin as soon as possible, not wait until next Sessions for approval. At our first meeting, M&C held this charge in prayer and allowed names to rise of Friends grounded in our tradition and experienced in naming the patterns we are trying to address and in working with organizations to enact change. Twenty-one names were lifted



up, and there are more. One of the hopes for this work was, “that we keep love, unity, and healing at the forefront of our efforts ... to align ourselves more fully with the will of God.” After an initial meeting, a working group composed of Lisa Graustein (Beacon Hill), Lorena Boswell (Cambridge), Polly Attwood (Cambridge), and Becky Jones (Northampton) worked long and hard to come up with a few practices, and ran several day-long opportunities for Friends to try them. These Friends have done their best to contact and solicit feedback from as wide a range of people as possible. In my experience, those opportunities were full of honesty, connection, and learning, and the practices these Friends have put into place have helped us step more fully into God’s call. I look forward to our time together at Sessions, so that more Friends will have a chance to try these transformative practices and to grow together in the Spirit. I am grateful for the leadership of these Friends, for gifts the God has given them—for us all—and the Fruits I see them bearing.

The second big piece of work before us this year, at the request of the presiding clerk, was to prepare a recommendation concerning the continuation—or not—of the current NEYM withholding policy, which is coming back for discernment at this year’s Sessions. A working group created a presentation explaining the issues and how the policy works, which was sent to all meetings. M&C’s recommendations will be presented during the business sessions at Yearly Meeting. If you would like more information, please contact me at [mc-clerk@neym.org](mailto:mc-clerk@neym.org).

There is so much more I would like to share with you about the condition of our Yearly Meeting as I have witnessed it during this year of service, and I hope to have more opportunities to do so.

With gratitude for the many hands who are helping to prepare for our time together at Sessions, and for those at work throughout our Yearly Meeting each day, helping us all to step more fully into God’s vision for us,  
—HONOR WOODROW, CLERK

### **Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee has met in person and via web conference this year. With gratitude to staff, the database in the office is now the one place that records all committee memberships and terms. This avoids errors that resulted from duplicate record-keeping in the past. There has been increased communication between NEYM Nominating, Permanent Board Internal Nominating, and Clerk’s Table Nominating. In the coming year we hope to increase these coordination efforts and collaborate on creating a manual of best practices that includes the nuts and bolts of nominating work.

In light of the concerns raised at Annual Sessions in 2018, we are considering ways of approaching the scope of our work which include defining new pathways

to leadership, ways to mentor and support committee clerks, and encouraging all committees to include a new person (or several depending on the size of committee) who is growing into service. We also encourage all committees to consider ways to create opportunities for service other than full committee membership, such as serving on a working sub-committee or time-limited project. This is another pathway to service that provides rising leadership possibilities.

One clerking workshop was offered this year. We hope to increase this to two or three clerking workshops next year, to build capacity for healthy functioning of both monthly and Yearly Meeting committees and rising leadership. Additionally, we are planning a consultation of monthly and Yearly Meeting nominating committee members to share best practices for nominating committee work.

Thank you to each of you for sharing your gifts. We look forward to hearing from you and growing together during the coming year.

With gratitude and joyful anticipation,  
—JACQUELINE STILLWELL, CLERK

### **Committee for Nurturing Friends Education at Moses Brown School**

The committee has welcomed and enjoyed working with Barbara von Salis, who joined the school as Interim Director of Friends Education.

The loss of several Quaker faculty members at the end of last year has been an area of concern and examination through out this year. Strategies to be sure that more Friends are aware of job openings and feel encouraged to apply for positions have been discussed in the following areas:

Sharing more information about job postings through local meetings, and through NEYM’s central office.

- Sending job postings to Friends colleges, Guilford, Earlham
- Using Friends Council as fully as possible, and sharing job openings with Quaker study centers such as Pendle Hill, Woolman Hill.

Training for new Committee Clerks and Board Clerks has incorporated members of the Committee this year with the leadership of the Interim Friends Education Director.

During the week of public school vacations in April the Lower School spent several days involved in World Peace Games. This is the second year they have participated in this empowering curriculum, and it allowed interaction with students from other schools through the scheduling.

The Spring Tea, a time for connections between Providence Meeting Friends and School friends, returned to Providence Friends meetinghouse this year so that members of the school could see the expanded facilities

there. It was also a time to recognize graduating Friend Jack Tripp from Allen's Neck Meeting.

MB looks forward to co-hosting with Lincoln School FCE's two-day "Faculty New to Friends Education" workshop in September.

The committee is looking forward to working with the new Director of Friends Education, Jennifer McFadden, who is a member of Providence Friends Meeting.

We especially want to thank Barbara von Salis for her time with us during the past year. We wish her success in the next steps in her teaching career.

Lilly Simmers will also be leaving us as our staff liaison after many years, and Mary Lee Morrison is stepping down as her term on the Board of Trustees concludes. Their voices, and service, have been valuable to the committee and the school during their tenure.

—ELIZABETH ZIMMERMAN, CLERK

### Moses Brown School Report

The work of Friends Education at Moses Brown School (MB) is not always explicit instruction in Friends principles and practices, but rather an approach to education that seeps into the very core of what a school experience is like for a child growing into adulthood. It is about calling people to share the love they have with the rest of the world. Much of the work on campus this year has been to study the world with the express goal to improve it through building skills, aptitude, and passion.

Meeting for worship remains at the heart of the school's Quaker identity. Every student who attends MB participates in weekly meeting for worship, and special, programmed divisional and all-school meetings offered students a chance to reflect or share about themes or current events.

Professional development continues to be a central focus of our energies. In September, new faculty and staff took part in a Friends Education program, tailored to the experience of working in Friends schools, and more specifically MB. In March, faculty participated in a professional development workshop on implicit bias in the workplace; moreover, this summer, all MB employees will do significant reading about how gender is impacting the workplace and classroom, in preparation for a workshop in late August.

The school year commenced with the second annual trip of the entire 9th grade to Friends Camp in South China, Maine. In addition to faculty chaperones, these students were accompanied by 17 peer leaders, as part of our blossoming peer leadership program. The three-day orientation retreat included meaningful activities intended to build community, fun games to liven up the group, and a sunset meeting for worship atop the hill. For some new members of our MB community, this marked their first experience of Friends practice and

worship. We hope this tradition continues long into the future.

As part of a new, developing program, MB Immersion, the school engaged with the wider Providence area and its various communities. Ninth-graders conducted meaningful, week-long service projects with several community partners, including Amos House, the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, the Refugee Dream Center, and Plan International USA, to name a few. As an annual project, fourth-graders again navigated the complex, week-long project: The World Peace Games. Fifth-graders pursued a two-month training in non-violence and how to combat teasing and bullying, in partnership with the Center for the Study and Practice of Non-Violence. Sixth-graders completed a unit in their history class on Quakerism, which included a panel of local Friends who answered several student-generated questions. In Freshmen Studies, ninth-graders were instructed about and experienced several Friends practices, and also learned about and discussed the origin story of Quakerism.

Finally, MB wishes to thank Barbara von Salis of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting for her exemplary work this year as Interim Director of Friends Education, and to welcome Jennifer McFadden of Providence Monthly Meeting, who will become the new Director on July 1.

—ERIK WILKER, DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE & STRATEGIC AFFAIRS

### Puente de Amigos

Puente de Amigos is pleased to report on an active year of sharing love and connection with our Cuban Friends. Despite political challenges, four groups from New England Yearly Meeting visited Cuba Yearly Meeting (CYM) this year. Our relationships with Cuban Quakers have grown in both breadth and depth.

We have seen our relationships broadened by new types of visits. A group from Hanover Monthly Meeting visited their sister meeting in Havana, then traveled eastward across the island, where they visited the monthly meetings located in Oriente, the home of most Cuban monthly meetings. Benigno Sanchez-Eppler organized a team to assist Cuban Friends with digitizing all of CYM's minutes, a two-year task which they were able to complete this year. Two library experts from Northampton Monthly Meeting were accompanied by two Amherst College students for this trip to Havana and Oriente. A third group, from Wellesley and Framingham Monthly Meetings, traveled to Puerto Padre where they helped in the redevelopment of the Wilmington School into a community center. Cuban Friends plan to broaden their mission in the renovation of this building by teaching construction and other local employment skills to non-Quakers in their community.

The fourth delegation this year demonstrated the increasing depth of our connections with Cuban Friends.

Noah Merrill had been asked by the CYM President to help encourage the younger generation to take leadership roles, especially since the emigration of several younger leaders from Cuba. He traveled with Jackie Stillwell to Cuba for a week, and together they were able to continue discussions about Friends' ministry. They also answered Cuban Friends' request for a representative of NEYM to attend CYM sessions, an annual commitment of our Committee.

Our relationship with Cuban Friends has also become deeper and stronger with a project to raise funds

specifically to assist Cuban Friends communicate with each other and with us. Use of the internet is increasingly widespread in Cuba, but it is very expensive. Len Cadwallader initiated a successful project to raise funds for online access. Communication with Cuban Friends is now often through Facebook Messenger, allowing more frequent and informal communications, with specific tasks and documents being shared.

—EM MCMANAMY AND MAGGIE FOGARTY, CO-CLERKS

## Reports of Representatives to Other Quaker Organizations

### American Friends Service Committee

AFSC promotes "lasting peace with justice as a practical expression of faith in action" in 17 countries and 31 U.S. cities. Initiatives in 2018 included:

- "Love Knows No Borders" demonstration at San Diego border involving 200 faith leaders and echoed in 79 locations nationwide;
- "Gaza Unlocked" focused on Ahmed Abu Artema's national speaking tour and stories that children in Gaza wrote (Life Under Blockade);
- "Healing Justice," work with released prisoners to ban use of private prisons; and
- "Sanctuary Everywhere," educational tools and webinars aimed at creating safe communities for immigrants.

AFSC Corporation responded to a proposed Mission Statement in which Friends Relations Committee urges monthly meetings to accompany AFSC staff and communities. Our goal is to link meetings' ongoing anti-racism work with "de-colonizing practice."

At the annual meeting, Marc Lamont Hill discussed Palestinian rights and corporate media efforts to censor such discussion. Workshops offered included Healing Justice, Decolonizing the Future, The Great March of Return, Organizing for Migrant Justice, and Advocacy Arising from Community Needs.

FCNL Leadership and AFSC activists considered ways to be symbiotically effective at the legislative and grass roots levels, and we brainstormed ways AFSC might approach climate change in its current strategic planning for next ten years.—SUBMITTED BY SCOTT RHODEWALT AND CHARLES SIMPSON

### Friends Committee on National Legislation

We are glad to report that many NEYM Friends are actively engaged in the work of FCNL. A number of meetings contributed ideas to the biannual Legislative Priorities for the current Congress, which FCNL's General Committee approved at its annual meeting in November 2018. NEYM's appointed representatives, plus about ten other New Englanders, participated in the Annual Meeting, which includes presentations, worship, and fellowship as well as business sessions. While in Washington, they visited 24 members of Congress to advocate for the

SNAP program. During the year, 12 New England Advocacy Teams lobby members of Congress and educate the public; this year, their focus has been trying to repeal the post-9/11 Authorizations for Use of Military Force. Two FCNL Advocacy Corps members have been working in New England this year: McLeod Abbott, in Lewiston, ME; and Omar Hajajreh in Plainfield, N.H. Many other Friends and meetings support FCNL financially, read its newsletter, participate in webinars and conference calls with staff, and use the resources on its website. During NEYM Sessions, please take opportunities to meet with FCNL staff: Advocacy Team trainer Sarah Freeman-Woolpert, Major Gifts Officer Sarah Kennedy, and Native American Advocate Lacina Onco.

—BETSY CAZDEN, CHARLOTTE GORHAM, IAN HARRINGTON, REBECCA LEUCHAK, BOB SCHULTZ, STEVE WHINFIELD

### Friends Peace Teams

We suffer from a public crisis of faith brought on by the myth that human destructiveness is greater than the power of life. The concept of nuclear winter, that human beings can wipe out all life as we know it, was followed by the concept of environmental devastation—that we actively pursue environmental destruction for our own pleasure. Can we reclaim our faith in the power of life? Can we post a photo of Hiroshima today on our wall, where the grass, trees and birds are back, the people are back, and the city is bustling. This does not diminish the magnitude of the human tragedy of dropping an atomic bomb on a city, but the power of life is greater than any human destructiveness.

Friends Peace Teams calls people to trust and therefore rely on the Spirit of Life. To believe that not only peace is possible, peace with the earth and humanity is the only path to sustainable society. We testify that peace IS possible, reliable and essential, and call on everyone to stand up for and demand the end of state-sanctioned violence and the full commitment to peace with the natural world and humanity. Please join us.

—NANCY SHIPPEN (NANCYSHIPPEN@COMCAST.NET), REPRESENTATIVE

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### Quaker Earthcare Witness

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Quaker Earthcare Witness continues to grow. We continue to attract representatives from yearly meetings that have not sent reps before, and thus expand our community and increase outreach into the wider Quaker community. I have had the privilege of rooming with new reps at two recent meetings, assisted them to feel comfortable in the organization, look forward to returning, and make new friends in the process.

While I was unable to attend the steering committee meeting last fall near Tacoma, Washington, the spring meeting in St. Paul, hosted by the St. Paul and Minne-

apolis meetings, was particularly deep and meaningful. The connection to the local Quaker communities and the time spent with hosts was a real joy.

Our General Secretary, Shelley Tanenbaum has been active in representing QEW across branches of the Society and sharing our love and concern for the earth. She has also placed QEW in a position to sign on to a variety of position papers and legislative proposals to endorse meaningful change and build our visibility within the wider Quaker community. The dialogue across QEW on these proposals has also been useful.

—CHRISTOPHER HAINES, REPRESENTATIVE



## Memorial Minutes

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**Paul Barker Cates**  
**August 23, 1925 – October 21, 2018**

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Paul Barker Cates, 93, of Vassalboro, Maine, passed away on Sunday, October 21st, surrounded by his family in the same house in which he was born. In his last days, he required around-the-clock care from his family. However, he lived a life of service and altruism and never wanted to burden others. It was therefore only fitting that he passed away in the brief time when everyone in the house had fallen asleep.

He was born August 23rd, 1925, in East Vassalboro, Maine, the eighth child of Benjamin Harold Cates Sr. and Annabel Ingraham Cates. Paul grew up on his family's farm on the shore of China Lake during the Great Depression, and learned the value of hard work and community. A rogue spirit, young Paul was constantly running away from home. At two he was found by his uncle a mile from home wearing a red sweater with a chocolate-pudding-covered face. He was an avid rider of the dairy cows on the farm until his father caught him riding the prized milk cow and he was severely admonished. Heroic from a young age, he saved his nephew, Gerry who fell through thin ice on China Lake.

As a child he attended Quaker meeting with his family at the Vassalboro Friends meetinghouse, barely 500 feet from the Cates farm. Quaker values would find varied and prolific expression throughout his life. Paul's mother was his teacher at East Vassalboro Elementary School. The family relates that she held him back in kindergarten because he was distracted from her lessons by the view of his family farm outside the classroom window. Despite this early setback, Paul spent the rest of his life dazzling people with his brilliant mind and sharp wit.

Paul attended Haverford College. Ever enterprising, he earned his tuition by raising several hundred chickens in his parents' attic. His mentors at Haverford were Rufus Jones and Douglas Steere. With Rufus' great approval, he played the role of Rufus in a Haverford class play and was still sharing this inspiring impersonation in recent years. Like his mentor Rufus, Paul understood the power of Bible parables and used stories to teach and minister throughout his life.

While matriculated at Haverford, he was sentenced to prison because he chose to conscientiously object to the country's post-war draft. Conditions in the prison were unhealthy. While there, Paul contracted tuberculosis, and developed a cough which persisted his entire life. He was given the job of caring for the prison dairy cows, due to his childhood experience on a farm. This daily exposure to fresh air and outdoor exercise may have helped to prevent progression of the tuberculosis. The president of Haverford College made it his goal to have Paul's sentence commuted, and Paul ended up serving 7 months of a 2-year sentence.

After he graduated from Haverford in 1951, Paul joined the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) to serve overseas. He chose Germany—a decision which would profoundly influence the rest of his life. When he set off, his German vocabulary was limited to "Kiss me, quickly!" and "Help! Police!" He worked in Darmstadt, a medieval city which had been largely destroyed by American and British firebombing.

Upon his return to the United States, Paul took up a post in Iowa as a teacher at Scattergood Friends School, where he taught German and tended chickens from 1954 to 1958.

In 1958 Paul decided to return to Germany to learn to speak German better. He moved to Berlin, intending to work on a doctorate in German literature with a focus on the writings of Bertolt Brecht. However, after the Berlin Wall was erected in 1961, he received an urgent contact from the bishop of the West Berlin Protestant church, seeking a smuggler with a foreign passport. The people of East Germany were in need of vital medicines and documents that could not be delivered due to the oppressive East German government. The wall was porous for Paul, an American who could go back and forth, unlike West or East German citizens.

His "courier work," as he always referred to this period of his life, led to a drop-off point in East Berlin at the headquarters of Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP). Here, he met Elisabeth Gürtler, who would later become his wife.

Every time he would cross over into East Berlin, his overcoat was so stuffed full of medications and important documents that he almost looked pregnant. The stress at smuggling illegal contraband was taxing; he would collapse into a chair at the drop-off point, exhausted. Elisabeth was his contact at the ARSP office in East Berlin. Though he admitted on several occasions that the other secretary was much more vivacious,

when Paul would bring chocolate from West Berlin and then purchase baked goods, Elisabeth would brew the coffee which Paul brought with him. Many coffees later, the less vivacious but more loving of the two secretaries won his heart.

Paul's family relates that once, after Paul and Elisabeth said their good-byes at an S-Bahn train station, Elisabeth was questioned by two East German secret police. Later she was interrogated and her home was searched. Paul responded by befriending consul Julij Kwizinskij at the Russian Consulate in Berlin, a connection that helped to protect his future bride.

Ever a peace-maker and bridge-builder, Paul also set up youth trips through the Russian consulate, chaperoning West Berlin youth to the Soviet Union to help rebuild the fractured relationship between the countries through youth exchanges. Through these adventures, he also developed a friendship with Princess Kira of Prussia, who later attended Paul and Elisabeth's wedding.

Paul and Elisabeth tried for years to get married, and had a son, Martin, in 1967. Two years later, a Soviet spy was captured by the West German government. Fortuitously, Elisabeth (along with 99 other East German brides) and Martin were part of an exchange which the Soviets negotiated for the spy's release from custody. Elisabeth and Martin escaped the Eastern Bloc on February 26th, 1969.

Paul and Elisabeth were married in a state ceremony in West Berlin on March 20th, 1969, which was followed by a church ceremony on June 14th, 1969, at which little Martin was, as Paul would say, the guest of honor. On August 9th, 1969, the little Cates family arrived in East Vassalboro, Maine. Their passage was free—the captain wanted passengers who could entertain him with stories, and Paul and Elisabeth had plenty.

Paul continued in a life of Quaker service by taking up work for Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting, which required both him and Elisabeth to travel a great deal. He served as a Quaker pastor to the few programmed meetings in the state: North Fairfield, Winthrop, and Vassalboro meetings. He also drew on his own experience of incarceration, and visited local jails and the state prison to counsel inmates on their life choices.

Vassalboro Monthly Meeting was the beneficiary of Paul's wit and kindness. His conversations were peppered with colorful phrases such as "Good NIGHT!" and "Heavenly days!". He also had a profound faith in God and in the tenets of Quakerism. As pastor of Vassalboro Meeting, Paul perceived that other members had much to contribute to the meeting's ministry, and with his clear heart led the meeting to become an unprogrammed meeting around 1979.

Beginning in the summer of 1970, Paul sold cut flowers from the Cates family farm to florists throughout central and southern Maine. He was soon known as the "Glad Man" and his florist customers anticipated the weekly arrival of the Cates van loaded with beautiful blooms. He was proud that his growing business was a "family operation."

Paul and Elisabeth's union had so far produced four children: Martin, Christopher, Dorothee, and Winfried. In 1975, while pregnant with Douglas, the couple's fifth child, Elisabeth became gravely ill with a brain tumor, and Paul left his job with the Quarterly Meeting to care for the children while she recovered from induced labor and immediate transport to Boston for surgery.

Paul began work as a part-time Russian and German teacher at Oak Grove-Coburn School, a Friends school in Vassalboro. Daughters Margaret and Helen were born during this time. When Oak Grove-Coburn was closed in 1989, Paul was hired by Erskine Academy to teach German. He retired from Erskine in 2001, and again in 2002 (this time, it stuck). He retired from delivering flowers in 2004, but often went on the delivery trips to visit his favorite customers in the years that followed.

For many years Paul shared his wit and wisdom while serving on the Board of Corporators for Oak Grove-Coburn Friends School, as well as Haverford College.

At the age of 88, ever in search of a good story to add to his legendary life, Paul managed to run over his own leg with the family farm truck. It remains unclear how that happened, but it marked the end of his farm work.

Paul had a gentle way of coaxing others to a life of deeper service. He was an educator who reached out to students and teachers, broadening their world. Many of us were inspired by his teaching and his encouragement to live broader ministry. Such was the case with one Friend whom Paul invited to help chaperone a youth trip to the USSR in 1986, in honor of Samantha Smith. This led later to 13 independent trips abroad with students, parents, and members of the community over the next 27 years. Another Friend Paul encour-

aged to attend a conference on ending torture found that it planted the seed of a lifelong concern. Paul is greatly missed by many people.

APPROVED BY VASSALBORO MONTHLY MEETING OF FRIENDS, MARCH 1, 2019

ENDORSED BY VASSALBORO QUARTERLY MEETING ON MAY 4, 2019

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**Mary (Molly) Duplisea-Palmer**  
**May 13, 1935 – April 4, 2017**

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Molly Duplisea-Palmer, a sweet, loving, and gentle soul who embodied great joy and caring and endured many trials, died on April 4, 2017. In 2007 Molly was honored by the Woolman Hill Quaker Retreat Center for her devoted and inspired leadership through 20 years of journaling workshops. Her journaling prompts ranged from the whimsical: “Write a letter to a part of your body (a fat stomach? an aching back)?” to the profound: “Write an unsent letter [to a child, parent, mentor]” then “Answer the unsent letter.”

As a retreat leader, as in all she did, Molly was a devoted and gentle spirit. Her humility and authenticity, as well as her own self-disclosure, invited everyone into a loving and trusting container for deep sharing and beautiful writing—for those who were experienced, gifted writers as well as for those who had never done any journaling or serious writing before. In the words of one retreatant: “I believe that Molly’s gentle and loving ways profoundly affected many of those who attended those weekends.”

Molly’s gift for offering a transformative and healing ministry of presence, both in individual encounters and at her retreats, was born of her personal experience with shattering loss and unexpected joy.

Molly was born on May 13, 1935, in Waltham, Massachusetts. Although her mother had been raised Quaker, her father, an atheist, preferred long drives with the family on Sundays rather than letting them go to any church. Molly’s cousin, Margie Burckes, reflected on their growing up together: Molly sharing her tricycle with her, and them creating plays with puppets. Margie also recalled Molly’s life-long love of cats and kittens, gardening, puzzles, singing, music, dancing, and playing games. Molly loved to celebrate the holidays (particularly Christmas), and she even threw her own, balloon-filled 60th birthday party that ended with a contra dance.

Molly’s Quaker faith came to her through long family tradition. Her mother’s relatives were Friends in England who came to Pennsylvania when it was an English colony. Her ancestors had faced hanging for being Friends and were among the first Friends in Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. They were involved in establishing schools, in supporting the suffrage and abolitionist movements, and they helped plan the revolution against England.

Molly’s personal Quaker faith took root when she was teenager at Farm and Wilderness Camp in Vermont, where she and her future husband, Eric Duplisea, experienced and absorbed Quaker process and delighted in meeting for worship around the campfire. She held that delight in Quakerism in her heart as she finished high school and attended Wheelock College. Central to Molly’s spirituality was her belief that war was not the answer, and that young people and young adults deserved full attention and support from adults.

She married her first husband, Eric Duplisea, and began a family. They moved west to Ohio, and then to Indiana. Molly and Eric had three children: Catherine, Sarah, and Ric; five grandchildren; and one great grandson.

In 1969 Molly and Eric joined with Jack and Caroline Bailey to purchase a farm in Mount Holly, Vermont—Forest Echo Farm. Other families joined in this endeavor and—three generations later—this community continues to be a valued place for families to work together, relax, and conserve and enjoy nature.

In Indiana, Molly and Eric began attending Bloomington Friends Meeting. After Eric finished his PhD, the family moved to Bangor, Maine. In 1972, along with Ed Snyder’s mother (Mary Snyder) and Bob Coe, they established Orono Friends Meeting. Molly served Orono Friends, Vassalboro Quarter, and New England Yearly Meeting in many ways throughout her life. In the 1970s and 1980s, she oversaw a vigorous First Day school at Orono Friends, and she served as meeting clerk for many years. Later Molly helped to establish the still thriving fall gathering family retreat of the Vassalboro Quarter, emphasizing and elevating the vital role of children and families for our Quarter.

Molly also expressed her love and concern for children in her career as a dedicated, creative, and compassionate 1st- and 2nd-grade teacher. Ellen Fisher, a fellow teacher, recalled that Molly’s “calm demeanor and dry sense of humor made teaching look easy.” As a way of getting to know each of her students better, Molly



would “invite herself” to tea at each child’s home. Her kind and gentle manner opened many doors. Besides the traditional curriculum, her students were treated to spontaneous songs, poetry, many walks with nature, and decorations and costumes for all the holidays—especially Halloween, when she wore her complete black witch’s outfit and crept cackling down the hallway.

Molly’s husband, Eric, died tragically and unexpectedly in 1987. Molly’s response to Eric’s death and the family tragedy of alcoholism was to devote herself to transforming the loss through participation in Al-Anon, therapy, personal spiritual deepening, journal writing, helping others to write, and through humble, open-hearted service. Molly maintained faithful spiritual friendships devoted to one-on-one prayer and worship-sharing with friends from the School of the Spirit and other Quaker connections.

Molly’s service extended to New England Yearly Meeting with a nearly unbroken record of attendance at Sessions over 30 years. During that time, she offered many journaling workshops and served on eight NEYM committees, including Ministry and Counsel, Permanent Board, Nominating, and Correspondence.

Beyond the Yearly Meeting, Molly was also devoted to Friends of Kakamega and the Kakamega Orphans Care Centre in Kenya. When Molly met Kenyan Quaker Dorothy Selebwa and learned of the plight of AIDS orphans there, Molly was moved to action. In 2002, with two other Maine Quaker women, she founded Friends of Kakamega and traveled to Kenya to meet the United Society of Friends Women-Kakamega women who devoted their lives to the Project. Molly served on the board of Friends of Kakamega for a number of years, bringing wisdom and loving discernment to its early years. Support from Vassalboro Quarter and many Friends in New England Yearly Meeting has been vital to the Project from its beginning.

Great joy came into Molly’s life when she met Jim Palmer in 2002. He moved to Maine in 2003 to be with her. They were seen at Sessions laughing and beaming happily at each other as they used bright-colored chalk to draw huge hearts that said “Molly loves Jim” and “Jim loves Molly” on the sidewalk. In 2004 they were married in a quietly vibrant Quaker wedding followed by a potluck and a contra dance. Molly graciously wrapped her love around Jim’s four daughters (Donna, Naomi, Susanna, and Maureen) and his four grandchildren.

In her later years, Molly struggled with the onset of dementia. In 2012 she wrote: “I didn’t know losing my memory would be so hard and so painful.” In 2014, she lay down her Orono clerk duties: “I am noticing more and more that I am not comfortable leading a business meeting. I am noticing that it is difficult for me to keep on track—VERY different from decades ago when my brain was very sharp.” For years, Molly’s peaceful presence in silent meeting could be felt by many. She continued to attend Quaker meeting almost to the end. She is deeply missed by all who experienced the warm sunshine of her presence, kindness, and wisdom.

APPROVED BY ORONO FRIENDS MEETING, APRIL 8, 2018

ENDORSED BY VASSALBORO QUARTERLY MEETING, MAY 5, 2018

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**Philip Haines**  
**July 19, 1945 – September 23, 2017**

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Family and Friends recognize how much his deep Quaker roots shaped Phil Haines’ life and character. He was a birthright member of Moorestown (NJ) Friends Meeting in an area of Quaker settlement that included his own ancestors in the late 1600s. Phil went to Moorestown Friends School and later, in 1963, graduated from Westtown Friends School, as did Phil’s sons later. Phil enjoyed sharing reminiscences of his childhood meeting and Quaker upbringing. Both influences nourished an energetic and loving way of being in the world, both in Quaker activity and in the wider community. Phil’s parents also nourished the awareness of a loving presence in the environment, taking the family on trips hiking and exploring Maine, a state that would come to be central in his life.

Compassionate interest in a healthy environment and public resources was reflected in Phil’s studies. After high school, he obtained a BS from Union College (1967) in chemistry, and a Master’s in chemistry from Purdue (1969). Years later, a doctorate in public health from University of North Carolina enabled Phil to advance to greater responsibilities in his work in Maine public health.

The Vietnam era also led to further leadings in his life. His alternative service as a conscientious objector sent him to work in the Yale University biochemistry lab. Someone very important was completing her Master’s in biochemistry there at the time: a young woman from Connecticut named Susan Pitcher. Sue completed her work at Yale when Phil went on to another alternative service assignment, but they were married in

1970 and in 1972 made their move to Maine. "We knew that we liked it there already," Sue recalls. Earlier she had studied at Bates College. It was then Phil began a career as a chemist in Maine public health.

The birth of their two sons, Josh and Seth, gave the couple the opportunity to pass on their love of nature. The family enjoyed hiking, canoeing, and sailing. When their sons entered school, Sue volunteered there and soon pursued certification to begin a career in teaching.

Maine also brought them a new Quaker home, Vassalboro Friends Meeting. Here their loving presence was invaluable. As in their youth, their spiritual role was nourished by service. Phil served frequently as treasurer and member of the Property and Finance Committee. Phil met these roles with kindly energy.

His warm humor and spirit nourished their local community, as well. Echoing early family values, Phil served in the fire department, the board of selectmen, the ambulance board, and other activities. In this he was inspired by family models, such as grandfather Maurice Haines who served in the Medford, New Jersey, fire department and Rotary Club and even became mayor. Phil's Uncle Everett and other forebears served in many similar roles.

Phil's knowledge of his Maine community, its resources and history, was invaluable to Vassalboro Friends. If services were needed, Phil knew whom to contact. He was "the go-to guy," and "the Repository of Knowledge," committee members reflected. Phil also encouraged committees "to record what we know and what we did, so that others might better support future needs." Friends recall moments of physical-plant crisis when Phil appeared and calmly reflected that he thought he knew what was amiss. He then disappeared to spot and solve the problem. He knew the legal issues of building capacity, leach field limits, town parking regulations, and more. A Friend finds she still keeps thinking: "Oh, we'll have to ask Phil about that."

His contributions to the meeting were also spiritual. "He spoke with loving patience and feeling in worship, and afterwards," a Friend recalls; "his antennae were up regarding the needs of members," to be especially mindful of welcoming new attenders. Often he spoke first in opening a "Meeting for Worship in Celebration of the Life" of a departed Friend.

Phil gave his gifts with a Quaker spirit. As treasurer, he was consulted by a committee seeking to offer financial help to a Friend in need. The committee knew its own coffers were low. Phil did not pause to check a budget but simply answered, "Just tell me what you need. You'll have it."

Among those who spoke of Phil at his passing was Angus King who, in his administration as Maine's governor, knew Phil in his role as deputy director of the Bureau of Public Health. King's memories include a description of this dedicated and loving Friend that resonates with those who knew Phil. "His shoulder was always to the wheel, but with a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his lips ... The people of Maine (and I) have lost someone special."

APPROVED BY VASSALBORO FRIENDS MEETING, APRIL 29 2018

ENDORSED BY VASSALBORO QUARTERLY MEETING, MAY 5, 2018

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**Ann Cates Higgins**  
**November 24, 1936 – January 12, 2017**

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Friend Ann Cates Higgins passed away on January 12, 2017, at the age of 80. Although she had suffered several health crises during her last years, we were still, somehow, not fully prepared for her departure.

Ann Cates Higgins was a birthright member of Vassalboro Monthly Meeting. She was born in East Vassalboro on November 24, 1936, as the youngest of 12 children of Benjamin and Annabel Ingraham Cates. She, along with her many brothers and sisters, filled the meetinghouse with life and the town, including the Grange, with hard work and dedication.

She lived most of her life near the Cates family farm, completing her elementary education at the public East Vassalboro elementary school. She continued her high school education in the Quaker tradition at the Lincoln School in Rhode Island. Later at Earlham College in Indiana, she studied biology with an emphasis in education. She helped to support her family as a teacher in the towns of Bangor, Skowhegan, and Albion. Later she worked as a post mistress in Smithfield.

Ann and her first husband raised two children, Eric and Cathy, in and around the meeting. After their divorce Ann was fortunate to reconnect with a childhood friend, Guy Higgins, with whom she shared a loving marriage until his death.

Her love of music was her enduring gift to all of us at the Vassalboro Friends Meeting. She was a member of the “Waterville Kennebelles” for decades and she accompanied many musicals in the larger community. But for Vassalboro Friends Meeting, she was our organist and pianist. It is barely an overstatement to say she attended every First Day. Her absences were so rare that we came to rely on her without question.

She was familiar with most of the hymns in our various books. Occasionally we might have a spontaneous request for an unusual piece and she would look quizzically for a moment. Then the music began apparently without effort and never with agitation!

In the last year of her life she struggled with health challenges. She preferred to be independent and accepted little from us. She came to meeting to play the organ even when she was not well enough to stay for the meeting for worship. She was with us almost until the end of her life.

We are grateful for her service, so enriched by her musical gifts, and grateful for her life.

APPROVED BY VASSALBORO MONTHLY MEETING OF FRIENDS, MARCH 1, 2019

ENDORSED BY VASSALBORO QUARTERLY MEETING, MAY 4, 2019

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**Paul Emerson Hood**  
**December 19, 1926 – November 19, 2017**

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We rejoice in the gifts that the life of witness and service of our dear Friend Paul Emerson Hood gave to our community. At a large memorial gathering held under the care of Burlington Friends Meeting on April 7, 2018, people from the many parts of his life testified to the profound influence he had upon them. A full account of his more than 90 years was published for the occasion.

To be with Paul when he recounted in searing detail his experience of war and the taking of human life was to be in the presence of Truth. As a 17-year-old facing the call to arms in World War II, he struggled with whether serving in the military was consistent with his Christian faith, and his minister assured him that it was his Christian duty. He enlisted early in the Marines, with his mother’s permission, and was deployed to Japan. At the battle for Okinawa, after a buddy died in his arms, Paul’s shock precipitated a killing spree that, although sanctioned by his status as a soldier in battle, left him horrified and ashamed. He spent the rest of his life dealing with that experience, eventually becoming a proud Veteran for Peace.

Paul sometimes spoke of how much of his next two decades were shaped by the alcohol he used to deal with that guilt, but finding Alcoholics Anonymous and becoming sober in 1962 transformed his life and his faith. Our remembrance of Paul fittingly includes honoring his relationships and the many profound friendships in the AA community; for more than 55 years, he was a mentor and sponsor to many souls.

In mid-life, appalled by the growing injustice and militarism in American society, he found a place to stand in the nonviolent witness of those protesting the war in Vietnam. He was called to many acts of civil disobedience, some of which resulted in incarceration. Supported by Burlington Friends, who stood up at one such sentencing and spoke to the judge on his behalf, he turned his sentence into an opportunity for service: he created Small Potatoes, an interfaith project that continues to feed the hungry and homeless in our community every Saturday morning, when other services are not available.

God blessed Paul with many gifts of the Spirit, which he shared with Friends in Vermont, in New England Yearly Meeting, and beyond. His spoken ministry arose from a deep grounding of study and experience in many communities of faith: Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, and finally, Quaker. When we Friends struggled together to find unity in a Power beyond ourselves, his words often called us to lift up our hearts and see the greater Light. While Paul could certainly be stubborn and even seem arrogant in the clarity of his convictions, when asked to consider his actions he would engage and listen, letting the truth in the words of another speak to that of God within him. His indomitable spirit was tempered by the great gifts he was given that he shared with us all: humor, humility, gratitude, and generosity.

Being present at meeting for worship was a priority for this Friend. To sit with others on Sunday mornings and especially at our small midweek worship on Wednesdays, for which he held longtime care, was to be in the presence of those who shared his vision of listening and responding to that of the Divine in each of us. He loved silence and was comfortable in it; corporate worship gave him the grounding for his many acts of public witness.

Paul’s life was a testimony to the continuing struggle for simplicity. He did love things, especially his books and his tools, but he tried to live in simple housing, ride a bicycle, and take buses. His righteous anger at in-

justice and waste, particularly of the military/industrial economy, led him to an undying commitment to righteous action and to relationships based on openheartedness and love. He would accept anyone as his friend, no matter who they were or how society had labeled them. He transformed the burdens of his wartime experience into a life lived with empathy and attention to the pain of his fellows, particularly the downtrodden.

We are forever grateful that this life of love and witness was lived among us for so many years.

APPROVED BY BURLINGTON FRIENDS MEETING, FEBRUARY 24, 2019

ENDORSED BY NORTHWEST QUARTERLY MEETING, MARCH 3, 2019

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**Sanford Michael (Sandy) Isaacs**  
**March 18, 1930 – January 24, 2019**

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Sanford Michael Isaacs died on January 24, 2019, in his Jaffrey, New Hampshire, home. His four children and his friend Mimi Bull were by his side in his final days. It was a time of gratitude for a loving family, his charming engagement with caregivers, and a simple, quiet letting go of the rich life he deeply enjoyed. He died three years after Nancy, his beloved wife of 57 years, and is buried at home beside her, at the edge of a field facing Mount Monadnock.

Born March 18, 1930, son of Irving Isaacs and Frances Gerber, Sandy was a Bostonian in fact and in manner. A graduate of MIT, he fashioned a professional life that drew on his enthusiasm for and great facility with technology.

Sandy's life was guided by his commitment to peace and social justice, which led him and Nancy to find their spiritual home in the Religious Society of Friends. They were members of three successive Quaker meetings: Friends Meeting at Cambridge in the 60s, Wellesley Friends Meeting in the 70s and 80s, and Monadnock Quaker Meeting in their retirement. Sandy was an activist in many progressive causes. He offered draft counseling during the Vietnam War, helped support Quaker groups in prisons, advocated for NH Death with Dignity legislation, and he and Nancy harbored war resisters in their home in Weston, Massachusetts. He also helped start New England Yearly Meeting's Israel-Palestine working group, and was a long-time member of Permanent Board. Once they moved to New Hampshire, Sandy and Nancy helped found—and stayed active with—the Jaffrey Democrats.

When an older women's group called the Crones formed in the meeting, Sandy started the Duffers. Neither group had a sustainable number of participants, so the two merged into the Quaker Readers, a book group that meets in Friends' homes (it was often the Isaacs'). After Nancy died, Sandy maintained the level of hospitality they had both loved to extend. He happily invited anywhere from one to ten people for dinner several nights a week and enjoyed dazzling guests with his use of a blow torch to put finishing touches on an entrée. Their house remained a hub of the meeting through the rest of Sandy's life.

Sandy had interesting views on lots of things, and intriguing solutions to engineering and organizational puzzles. He relished a lively, challenging conversation, appreciating rather than taking offense when anyone managed to pull the rug out from under one of his ideas. His feistiness and strong opinions occasionally got him in hot water but, more often than not, he would reconsider and move to make amends.

He was known to lavish great thought and care on projects important to him. Wanting to fix a nice place where he could sit by Nancy's grave and look at the mountain, he asked a naturalist friend to help him find the best patch of moss on his property. Some of this he transplanted to cover the grave. His friend told him he would need to water the moss every day, which he did faithfully. Moss can be tricky to transplant, but by the following spring the site was covered with a soft, thriving carpet of green.

Sandy often addressed people (and dogs) as "Friend." One member of Monadnock cherishes a memory of how he had greeted her on her second visit to the meeting. "Hello, Friend," he said, which helped her know she belonged in this community.

It's impossible to talk about the final years of Sandy's life without mentioning his beloved sidekick, a black standard poodle named Jamie. Jamie was the last of a line of poodles who lived with the Isaacs over the years. Jamie served as a lifeline for Sandy after Nancy's death; where Sandy went, Jamie went. This led him to propose Monadnock create a welcoming space for well-behaved dogs in the meetinghouse, although unity wasn't reached.



Sandy was a true original. He lived with integrity and enthusiasm. His presence in Monadnock Quaker Meeting was a blessing.

APPROVED BY MONADNOCK FRIENDS MEETING, MAY 5, 2019

ENDORSED BY NORTHWEST QUARTERLY MEETING, JUNE 1, 2019

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**Ramona Moore**  
**August 20, 1927 – January 17, 2015**

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Her life was centered in the Quaker tradition. She embraced and gladly shared with others the ways of Friends, in quiet meditation as well as corporate worship. She was an active participant at Windham Friends Meeting, serving as clerk of the monthly meeting, assisting in its activities, such as the semi-annual bean suppers and other local projects, as well as playing the piano for worship services and leading the children's choir for some time in years past. She also participated in the historical aspect of her faith community during visits of third-graders to the meetinghouse during their history tours, where she appeared in the old traditional Quaker garb as she spoke to them.

Her endeavors included the greater Quaker community life in that she would, as often as possible, attend Quaker gatherings, including Falmouth Quarterly Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting, happenings at Quaker Bridge meetinghouse, and other faith-related groups, including the Quaker women's group and the Pastors and Elders Conference in New York.

Mona's life journey included the weaving of many threads in the fabric of her life—most noticeably music and faith, and appreciation of God's creation and the quiet, peaceful places. She loved to hike the mountains, enjoy a walk with a friend in a garden, and at the close of day, enjoy a lovely sunset.

She was a sister, a mother and grandmother, and a friend to the many who shared her interest in nature and in her community. She was also active in reading, studying, and learning in the academic world. She liked to write, and some of her observations went into print.

An unknown author once wrote these words which pretty much describe Mona, "When my hair is thin and silvered, and my time of toil is through; when I've many years behind me and ahead of me a few, I shall want to sit, I reckon, sort of dreaming in the sun, and recall the roads I have traveled and the many things I've done." Her own words, written for *Spiritual Senior Perspectives*, tend to encompass a summation of her life and philosophy. Considering that, and our own shared experiences and conversations with Mona, these thoughts come to mind:

*Though in her latter days she became frail and fragile she exhibited a strength and personal vitality. And like each of us she walked the rough patches upon life's path but always looked forward to the sunlight and smoother trails ahead. She wasn't one to sit idle and rue some displeasure. She would be an example and share the times she treasured. Life's experience gave her lessons to be learned and her faith was there to help along the way ... . She had a strong desire to bring others into an awakening of all that faith and spirit were compelling her to share ... that her fellow believers would sense the Presence of the spirit as individuals and to have that expand to maturity and insight and worship as well as in corporate endeavors.*

Her presence is missed but her memory lives on in the hearts of all who knew her.

APPROVED BY WINDHAM FRIENDS MEETING, JUNE 16, 2017

HEARD BY FALMOUTH QUARTERLY MEETING, OCTOBER 27, 2018

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**Stephen Gale Perrin**  
**October 4, 1932 – February 19, 2019**

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Stephen Gale Perrin, an active member of Acadia Friends Monthly Meeting for over 25 years, died at the age of 86 in Bar Harbor, Maine, on February 19, 2019.

Steve received his doctorate in education from Boston University, taught in private schools, and created and managed a photographic laboratory at Harvard College Observatory.



Steve moved to Maine in 1986 to dedicate himself to studying and safeguarding wild, 30-acre Burying Island in Taunton Bay, where he had spent summers with his extended family since he was 4. After living on Burying Island without electricity or running water for 18 months, he moved to Bar Harbor, where he worked several years for Acadia National Park.

In 1993, Steve attended and later became a member of Acadia Friends Monthly Meeting, where he introduced himself every Sunday as “Steve from Planet Earth.” His spirit was inspired by the immensity, mystery, and divinity of the universe.

In 1998, he organized and clerked Acadia Friends Living in Unity with Nature Committee. He drafted a brochure which was published to encourage efforts to decrease our carbon footprint, and purchased low energy light bulbs for distribution.

He served as Acadia Friends clerk, Finance Committee member, editor of the newsletter, and on most committees over the years. He wrote the Acadia Friends welcome brochure for visitors, in which he focused on the diversity of beliefs by including quotes from members and attenders.

Steve is well-remembered by Acadia Friends for the outdoor activities he organized. He established summer hikes after worship on fourth Sundays in Acadia National Park. As meeting members aged, hikes became less demanding, and one of the last he organized included three 80- and 90-year-olds.

He also led Friends in celebrating the seasons. For over 25 years, he organized Acadia Friends’ witness of the spring equinox sunrise on Ocean Drive in Acadia National Park, followed by a potluck breakfast with planting of marigold seeds and egg balancing at Friends’ homes. On the winter solstice, he led Friends to the summit of Cadillac Mountain, where they lit candles and made snow angels in the parking lot.

A prolific writer, Steve authored several books about Acadia National Park, including *Acadia: The Soul of a National Park*. Friends of Taunton Bay created and made Steve the first recipient of the Stephen G Perrin Award for “recognition of extraordinary service to the health and integrity of Taunton Bay.” Steve had spent two decades designing and presenting PowerPoints about the Bay, writing newsletter articles, sharing exquisite photos, and reporting on his research.

In 2009, the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment awarded Steve the Longarda Gulf Volunteer Award. The Council wrote: “A devoted and accomplished teacher, photographer, and writer of uncommon eloquence, Steve’s educational efforts successfully integrate scientific knowledge with subtler insights that can be obtained only through a lifetime marked by curiosity, keen observation, and a sense of wonder. How many people can claim they have chronicled the passing of a year, isolated in a log cabin on a 30-acre island, with the sole intent of experiencing nature unhindered by modern encumbrances and sharing these experiences freely with the public?”

Steve is survived by his partner, Carole Beal, his sons Jesse Perrin and Ken Perrin, and predeceased by his son Michael Perrin and his parents, Dorothy Merchant Perrin and Porter Gale Perrin. All of his extended family loved visiting Taunton Bay and Burying Island. A memorial meeting was held on Saturday, March 23, 2019, at Neighborhood House in Northeast Harbor, Maine, under the care of Acadia Friends Meeting.

APPROVED BY ACADIA FRIENDS MONTHLY MEETING, APRIL 28, 2019

ENDORSED BY VASSALBORO QUARTERLY MEETING, MAY 4, 2019

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**Kenneth Gale Potee**  
**October 2, 1924 – August 26, 2014**

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Kenneth Gale Potee was born October 2, 1924, on Mahatma Gandhi’s 55th birthday, to Esther Gale Potee and Kenneth Leon Potee, Disciples of Christ missionaries at Itarsi, Madhya Pradesh, India. His twin brother died at 48 hours. For Gale, home was Pendra Road, in the part of India where Kipling’s *The Jungle Book* took place.

Kindergarten was in West Haven, Connecticut, while his father was at Yale Divinity School. His next 12 school years were spent largely at the Kodaikanal School in Tamil Nadu, South India, from which he was evacuated in 1942. In 1946, under the Marshall Plan, he helped tend 1,700 pregnant mares on a ship to Bremerhaven, Germany. With his best friends, Chas Wilder and Bob Dudley, he spent summers climbing mountains in Colorado and working in silver mines and wheat fields in the west.

Gale graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Michigan in 1945 and Alpha Omega Alpha from Western Reserve School of Medicine in 1949. Medical training included internship and residency at Boston City Hospital, Mount Auburn Hospital, and Springfield Hospital. He became an internist and provided cancer

chemotherapy at Pondville Hospital, Walpole, Massachusetts. He was also an infectious disease Fellow under Max Finland at Harvard Medical School and Boston City Hospital.

He became an ardent pacifist after writing a term paper on Buddhism his senior year at Kodaikanal School and after reading John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. In early July 1950, he was jailed in the federal prison in Boston for refusing to register for the doctors' draft for the Korean War—making the front page of *The Boston Globe*. The American Friends Service Committee bailed him out for \$500, and in 1951 he joined Friends Meeting at Cambridge, becoming an enthusiastic Quaker. He remained active in Friends Meeting at Cambridge, but in his last years Gale attended Mount Toby Friends Meeting in Leverett, Massachusetts.

He married Joanne Koch in Cambridge in 1963. They raised their five children in Petersham, Massachusetts, a period he often proclaimed as his “happiest years.” He lived in this hilltop town for 33 years and 18 days. He worked as an internist at the Wing Memorial Hospital in Palmer, Massachusetts, for 27 years, retiring at age 71. He was greatly beloved by his patients and colleagues.

Gale had many passions, including building stone walls, collecting over 20,000 Massachusetts vanity plates, and traveling to 42 states as well as 24 countries. He returned to his beloved India three times. He prided himself as a bibliophile and surrounded himself with shelves holding more than 2,000 books. He loved numbers (his favorite was 17) and palindromes. He appreciated the humor of *Seinfeld* and National Public Radio's *Car Talk* and was an avid sports fan, with special love for the Red Sox. Summers, he spent at Chautauqua Institution in upstate New York, where in 2000 he began writing sonnets. At the time of his death, he had written more than 15,000 sonnets.

Most important, Gale Potee was the most loving, affirming, and positive father and grandfather imaginable. The ultimate optimist, he was kind, generous, and good-natured. He could be depended on in all circumstances and never let his children down. He took tremendous pride in all his children's and grandchildren's accomplishments. He remembered what it was like to be a child, was patient, and always carried a bouncy ball and mints in his pocket. He was an enthusiast about even the most mundane tasks, teaching his children that life is an adventure and that the glass is always half full. He never judged, was an understanding listener, and embraced all with goodwill. He was a man of peace, joy, and love. He is greatly missed by everyone who knew him.

APPROVED BY FRIENDS MEETING AT CAMBRIDGE, JANUARY 13, 2019

ENDORSED BY SALEM QUARTERLY MEETING, APRIL 28, 2019

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**Elizabeth Poynton**  
**July 4, 1940 – November 14, 2018**

Elizabeth, better known as Betty, was born to the late Hermann and Mildred (Maynard) Patt in Granville, Massachusetts, on July 14, 2018. Betty was 78 when she died of cancer on November 14, 2018. She is survived by her husband Brian Poynton; daughters Beth Bullerwell, Lorna Hubble, and Krista Mahaney; brother Robert Patt; and sisters Phyllis Allen and Helen Lapierre. Her sister Mary Wing died the same week.

Most of Betty's formative years were spent on the large family farm in West Brookfield, Massachusetts. She was actively involved in animal care and 4-H fairs. She also enjoyed summers working at a resort lodge in Maine.

Betty earned a B.A. in Education from the University of Massachusetts. Amherst, and an M.A. from Assumption College in Special Education. She had a successful career teaching students with special needs, including those on the autism spectrum. She taught at public schools in Vermont, as well as Lexington, Sturbridge, and Oxford, Massachusetts. Her patience and empathy were a blessing to a great many differently abled children.

After finishing school, Betty relocated around central Massachusetts, finding new homes in Billerica, Leicester, Auburn, and then the Overlook Retirement community in Charlton.

Betty was an active member of the Worcester Friends Meeting for most of her life. She served in virtually every office there, including treasurer, member of the Ministry and Counsel Committee and the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, as well as clerk for years. She was the last remaining link to the original Worcester Meeting at Oxford Street. Betty was the kind of hard-working, behind-the-scenes “glue person” every group depends on. Her kindness, along with a perpetually calm demeanor, helped everyone feel comfortable in her

presence. She was also a warm and welcoming presence in the First Day school, where the children always enjoyed her gentle guidance.

Also an active participant in New England Yearly Meeting, Betty was a long-standing member of Ministry and Counsel (2001–2010), Peace and Social Concerns, and Personnel (2004–2007) committees. She was a reliable contributor to Annual Sessions for decades.

Her hobbies included regular journaling, gardening, knitting, contra-dancing, reading, and a variety of outdoor activities. She joined numerous anti-war protests across New England. At 67, Betty joined a group of nearly 300 women from 29 countries bicycling for weeks across Palestine, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon for cross-cultural understanding and peace.

After she retired and married Brian Poynton, the pair moved to Greensboro, North Carolina, joining the community at Friends Home West in 2013.

Betty's life exemplified Friends' testimonies in many ways. She responded to all she came upon with respect and dignity, embodying what she believed about integrity, peace, and equality. Friendship Friends Meeting was enriched when Betty and Brian moved to Greensboro and became part of their meeting. There, Betty was a devoted member of the Care and Counsel Committee for several years. She was faithful in reaching out and spending time with several members who were unable to attend meeting, as well as supporting individual meeting members with specific needs. She had the gift of listening, of hearing under what was being said, and of being present to anyone she was with. Indeed, when one of our members was a new attender at Friendship Friends, Betty was the first person to come talk to them, and her kind welcome put the visitor immediately at ease. She always put the needs of others before her own and her deep sharing enriched the lives of each of us. Betty leaves a legacy of kindness, gentleness, and genuine caring.

In 2015, when Betty applied to and attended the 2-year Spiritual Nurturer Program at the School of the Spirit, several members of Friendship Meeting were fortunate to be on a support committee for her as she sought deeper spiritual resources through the program. Betty grew spiritually and personally during her time in the Nurturer program, and she continued to grow afterwards—seeking, learning, and listening. She felt the time in the program was very important to her spiritual development and opening. Soon after the Nurturer Program ended, Betty participated in an ongoing learning and practice group called the Wisdom Circle. This group accompanied Betty the last months of her life.

It is not easy to describe Betty, saying she was this or she was that. The reality of Betty was the live, in-person experience of Betty: being in her light, her field of grace, her deep well of kindness. Betty had a light, accentuated by the shock of light golden hair on her crown. First you felt the light, then saw the smiling visage with bright eyes—her eyes spoke—then the golden shock of hair completed the facial snapshot of Betty, the carrier of light. Centering Prayer was her daily spiritual practice; Bible study and spiritual reading materials were a constant companion in her daily life.

For the last couple years, the phrases often on her lips to describe her journey were statements of hope and faith: "Welcome what is" and "All will be well." She lived into these words. Though she lived in a great deal of pain her last year, she was unlikely to mention it except in passing. She made effort to be present to people and to the meeting whenever she could manage it. Brian was her constant and loving help-meet.

Two months before she died, Betty made the decision to enter hospice, and once her decision was made and shared, she lived into it with openness, humility, and grace, and one could even say hospitality. "Welcome what is" released her into all that life was to her at the moment: all the love and all the pain, living in what Friend Bill Taber called "The cross of joy."

APPROVED BY WORCESTER MONTHLY MEETING, APRIL 1, 2019

ENDORSED BY RHODE ISLAND SPRINGFIELD QUARTERLY MEETING, MARCH 17, 2019

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**Arnold Ricks**  
**August 23, 1923 – February 24, 2018**

Born on August 23, 1923, to James Hodge Ricks and Anne (Ryland) Ricks, Arnold attended an Episcopal day school before graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Haverford College (class of 1945, degree awarded 1948) and earning an A.M. in European history from Harvard University in 1954.

Arnold's Quaker roots stretch back to the 17th century when a forebear, Isaac Ricks, immigrated to Virginia and there served as the first co-clerk of the Virginia Yearly Meeting in the 1680s. Arnold's lifelong engage-

ment in affairs both of the world and of the spirit drew sustenance from examples in his own family, most immediately his father who, in addition to his role as clerk of the Richmond Friends Meeting and the Baltimore Yearly Meeting, was a pioneering judge in the field of juvenile justice reform. Arnold drew on that embedded history as he sought to live out Friends' ways in every aspect of his life.

Arnold brought the scholar's and teacher's insistence on precision to his deep Quaker knowledge and sensibility. He was insistent on accuracy of fact, name or punctuation. He also could draw on scripture or the writings of George Fox, Isaac Penington, or Thomas Kelly in a way that could anchor a meeting for worship or help root a quotidian discussion in the workings of the spirit. He had a craftsman's patience that could, for example, in his civic life as a village trustee of Old Bennington lead to the beautiful stone drainage for the streets of Old Bennington, or the slow consideration over many meetings of the evolution of the minute on same-sex unions. His ability to take on and patiently query a contentious or intemperate stance brought a peaceableness to any decision. He framed decision-making in the deliberative process of Quakerism, with a frequent invocation of the nature of the search for truth as one of "continuous revelation."

Arnold's experience as a conscientious objector in the Second World War signals the rigor with which he lived out Quaker testimonies. After alternate service stints dynamiting—the dynamite carried on his back—and planting trees, he volunteered for a hepatitis experiment, contracting the disease. But Arnold still saw these services as insufficient in the light of the great suffering of the war, and could offer the self-deprecating remark, "I think I had gotten off rather lightly." What then followed immediately after his graduation from Haverford was a two-year stint (1948–50) with the American Friends Service Committee under the aegis of the British Friends Service Council in Cologne, Germany.

Above all, Arnold lived with grace. He met everyone and every encounter with an open countenance, eager to understand and appreciate the person in front of him, or the idea on offer. His grasp was immediate and acute, but always used as a tool for understanding, alert to the many layers any view might embrace. He used that gift to move us beyond the merely pragmatic to a true achievement of unity.

Perhaps a most telling evocation of Arnold came from a young friend who has since moved to the west coast, who wrote,

*While I did not know Arnold well, I thought of him often as an example of what I would like to become. People who have met the Dalai Lama often write about the undivided attention [he gives] when listening. He listens with his whole body, people say, and the awareness that he is hearing, digesting and contemplating every word spoken to him has a profound impact on those with whom he meets. This is exactly how I felt when first meeting Arnold. Not only is Arnold fully present in the deepest sense, but humility and empathy are so fully engrained in his character that his words immediately indicate the reflection, compassion, and intention that formed them. I learned from Arnold a deeper meaning for these words— humility, empathy, reflection, compassion, intention—and how they can become embodied in both ideology and personality. I will miss him, but more than that, I will always be glad and grateful that his light touched mine.*

APPROVED BY BENNINGTON MONTHLY MEETING, APRIL 15, 2018

ENDORSED BY NORTHWEST QUARTERLY MEETING, JUNE 3, 2018

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**Robert Thomas Seeley**  
**February 26, 1932 – November 30, 2016**

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Robert Thomas Seeley was born on February 26, 1932, in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, to parents Marguerite Dauchy and Harold Seeley. As a graduate student at MIT, he participated in an American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) work camp in 1955 and became active with Young Adult Friends in Cambridge, becoming a member of Friends Meeting at Cambridge in 1956. Two years later he and Charlotte Bass were married under the care of the meeting. (Chuck Woodbury was on their clearness committee.) They had four children: Joe, Mara, Lauren and Karl. Joe predeceased his father in October 2012.

Bob earned his undergraduate degree at Haverford College in 1953 and his PhD in mathematics at MIT in 1959. He taught at Harvey Mudd College and Brandeis University, and moved to the University of Massachusetts at Boston in 1972, where during his long career he was as interested in the beginners as in the advanced students. After retirement, he volunteered as a teacher in the Prison Education Program and the MCI Norfolk Math Club. One of his students there wrote: "Not only did he teach us math, he developed within those of



us who were privileged to be called his students, a passion and desire for expanding our minds, and through this, a desire to be better human beings through advanced math.”

In the 1960s Bob made a significant contribution to theoretical mathematics, turning some earlier discoveries into the modern theory of pseudo-differential operators. Learning this confirmed our belief that there was always even more to Bob than we could see.

During his years at Friends Meeting at Cambridge, Bob served on almost every committee, both standing and ad hoc. Nevertheless, according to one Friend who knew him well, he “somehow never felt that he was doing as much as he could for the meeting. This, in spite of the fact that he was assistant clerk for at least eight years, and, as recording clerk was known for producing minutes that, in stately but efficient Quakerese, expressed the essence of what the community had been inchoately struggling with.

Bob also contributed to the meeting several examples of his expert woodworking skills: at least two tables, the box that holds our hearing- assistance devices, the box for contributions, and beautiful signs; these gifts alone would keep him in our memory. In spite of his obvious talent, Bob considered himself a woodworking amateur; one friend speaking at his memorial pointed out the root of amateur is “love, which is the way he lived his life.”

Quoting from reflections written by his family: “Beyond mathematics, Bob’s interests ranged widely. He sang in choruses, built simple but elegant furniture, learned many languages, reveled in the achievements of friends and family, played the French horn, the piano, and the guitar, and was a world traveler who spent sabbaticals with his family in the Netherlands, Italy, Peru and Mexico. He was also active as a sailor, backpacker, canoeist, cross-country skier and windsurfer. In spite of living in Newton, Bob managed to show up for most of the events at Friends Meeting at Cambridge, usually on his bicycle.”

Bob remained active into his early 80s, taking a biking trip in Belgium, attending a wedding in Uganda, running 5Ks, volunteering for the elderly, making and repairing furniture, and teaching math to prisoners and grandchildren. As his heart began to fail, he adjusted his interests, replacing runs with long walks in the woods or around a pond, taking classes in Arabic with his wife Char, and resuming his piano playing. In 2014, Bob stepped forward to serve the meeting as treasurer, a post in which he was actively engaged until the last few days of his life. A Friend remembers that, “In his many roles he was always in good humor and often a bit bemused when others felt stressed or annoyed by circumstances.”

Bob lived by his principles, with a moral compass whose true north was the belief that all people are equal, but also unique and irreplaceable. His presence remains in the equations he wrote, in the math he taught, in the Quaker community he served, in the furniture he crafted, and in the hearts and minds of family and friends who feel his loss keenly but are grateful for all that he shared. Although he was accomplished and penetratingly intelligent, the words F/friends consistently use to describe him are “kind” and “thoughtful.” Bob would be glad to know that this is how he is remembered, and we as a community are the richer for having known him.

APPROVED BY FRIENDS MEETING AT CAMBRIDGE, FEBRUARY 10, 2019

ENDORSED BY SALEM QUARTERLY MEETING, APRIL 28, 2019

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**Lucinda Selchie**  
**December 2, 1929 – August 12, 2018**

Lucinda Selchie was born December 2, 1929, and grew up in Middletown, Connecticut. Trained as a botanist, she did field research in Michigan was in littoral-zone (shoreland) freshwater aquatic plants,. Later she worked in a research lab. While in the Midwest, she made her first connection with Friends, and traveled to Pendle Hill for months of study which shaped and nourished her later years. She credited her Quaker studies as essential in developing a healthy identity as an adult. She went on to serve as clerk of Midcoast Friends Meeting for a time and later as clerk of the Belfast Area Friends Meeting.

When she decided to move to Maine, she settled first in China. She then moved to Swanville, where she built her own house, which she called Beaver River Hermitage. In 2009 she moved into Belfast, where she lived happily at the Deborah Lincoln House for 9 years. She passed away there on August 12, 2018.

A close friend recalls that at one point Lucinda took a workshop on Russian icon painting, making an icon she dubbed “Our Lady of the Apocalypse.” She often traveled to attend quarterly meetings and New England



Yearly Meeting summer sessions, and also to Vermont for retreats. In addition to poetry and Quaker writings, Lucinda also loved to read mysteries.

Over 20 years ago Lucinda asked a few Friends to serve as an oversight committee for her vocation of silence and solitude. The committee met monthly to share spiritual paths and offer support for Lucinda's vocation. During the fall, she spent 40 days in complete solitude. The committee brought fresh food and left it in her entryway without seeing her. We remember the quiet of her upstairs room in the Swanville house, and Lucinda's yearning to connect with the great mystery all around us.

We especially cherish the memories of the retreats or quiet days that Lucinda would host for the committee. In shared silence we would worship, read, journal, meditate, and eat. We would then separate, having time for individual silence, which some of us would use to meditatively walk the trails of her beautiful property. We would come back together and share what had come to us in the silence. From these occasions I learned the depth of shared silence in a shared space with a loosely shared intention, the intention of more deeply exploring the mystery.

Lucinda also generously allowed her friends to use her small cabin (down back) for silence and solitude. There was a deep comfort in that small, simple space, as well as in the richness of talking with Lucinda as a transition into and back out of those silent retreats.

Upon learning of her passage, many Friends wrote to share memories of her:

*Serving with Lucinda on Ministry & Counsel was such a learning experience. She brought up things worth attending to and I'm so grateful to her for that. Visiting her in her room and talking about her bird and squirrel activity are just some of the things I hold dear.*

*When we think of Lucinda, it is as a true and wise Quaker, who truly lived as one. At meeting in Belfast, we were often amazed by her message, thinking about it for the rest of the day.*

*Vassalboro Quarter was small [in the early 1990s] and there was no program for our young people at quarterly meetings. Molly Duplisea and Alice Hildebrand had strong leadings to start one and we became part of a small committee to help this idea mature and grow. Lucinda was an integral part of this committee and we met often in her home in Belfast. It was so important to bring our young people together and give them more grounding in their Quaker faith and its wider fellowship. Lucinda's strong faith helped this program grow and become such an important part of Vassalboro Quarter. I admired how she lived her life and her faith.*

*I met Lucinda when she participated in a workshop I was leading at Yearly Meeting ... I remember her sharing a story of walking the land she had just purchased, talking to the land, asking permission to settle and build her home there. What a treat it was to be present with her unique combination of joy, humor, and deep spirituality.*

*Lucinda's piercing and sparkling eyes caught me from the start. Our friendship began at our first meeting, but really took off when her mobility challenges prevented her from attending meeting for worship and she asked for a committee of care to help her with small errands and tasks in her room at the Deborah Lincoln House. In our weekly visits over tea we shared the joys and struggles of our lives, in addition to the more mundane care of plants, junk mail, and birdseed. One time I brought a plan before Lucinda with two things I was planning to do. She listened to me talk, then noted that while my face had been full of joy and excitement talking about the first piece, I was much more subdued in my presentation of the second. "I'd think carefully about whether that's really what you ought to do," she advised. My special delight, though, was to tease her, or to come up with some crazy thing to say that would make her laugh. At those moments I could see the old lady with aches and pains drop away and the inner Lucinda shine through.*

Lucinda often invited Friends to visit Beaver River Hermitage, with this note:

*Dear ones, I invite you to visiting days at my home, Beaver River Hermitage. There will be cider and snacks. Children welcome. Look around. Walk the trails. See the pond. Read the materials about silence and solitude, and the way of life of a hermit. Ask questions. Blessings, Lucinda*

After a four-week retreat in 2002, she wrote:

Query: How can I be a hermit, in silence and solitude, and connected in love with others at the same time? Is there a change coming in my life? From December 25, 2000 to January 22, 2001, I spent in silence and solitude. Silence and solitude are meat and drink to a hermit, a space with a minimum of distractions from a focus on opening to spiritual growth and transformation. One of the effects of a long period of silence and solitude is 'tendering', an expression used by early Friends to denote an increased openness, a sensitivity to the motions of Spirit, a permeability to the Divine. It makes reality look different. The depth and intensity of the inner work of this retreat would not have been possible without the Meeting's care and oversight.

APPROVED BELFAST AREA FRIENDS MEETING, SEPTEMBER 9, 2018

ENDORSED BY VASSALBORO QUARTERLY MEETING, NOVEMBER 3, 2018

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**Patricia Shotwell**  
**August 6, 1927 – July 27, 2018**

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As Quakers we hope to live in a state of grace, to be so close to God that it appears God is living through us at all times. Few of us are able to live in this way. Patsy Shotwell did so.

Patsy was born on August 6, 1927, in New York City and was adopted in infancy by a couple in Buffalo. Although she was an only child, she had several close cousins and she enjoyed their company and reported a happy childhood. In addition, she had a rich spiritual experience in a large Presbyterian church.

Patsy matriculated at Cornell University, served as editor of the *Cornell Sun*, and earned her Bachelor's degree in 1949. In her junior year she met Stuart Shotwell, a World War II veteran, and they married. Proving early on that a woman can have her education and a family, Patsy delivered twin girls one week after graduation.

Patsy and Stuart decided that New England was an ideal place to set up permanent housekeeping, and in 1954 they moved into a large Victorian house with a barn located in Weston, Massachusetts. By then they had two more children, with three additional children to come. It should come as no surprise that Patsy was a full-time homemaker during these years. After her divorce in 1985 she generally lived alone, though throughout the years various of her children came back for periods of time and were always welcomed.

Long active in the League of Women Voters and various churches in the area, Patsy was to find a true home for her commitment to spirituality and social justice as a Quaker, and joined Wellesley Friends Meeting in 1978. She liked that there was no minister to interpret religious experience; she was responsible for contact with the Holy Spirit and her religious experience. She found that she could not sit back passively. Once a Friend, Patsy could not imagine herself otherwise and she loved the close-knit Wellesley Friends community.

At two different times Patsy served as presiding clerk of the meeting. In addition, she worked on various committees. She helped found a woman's group which was a vital social and spiritual support to women in the meeting for many years. Later Patsy was active in calling our attention to the need for training and practices for child safety. And more recently Patsy helped institute our Crones and Cronies luncheons for Friends over 80. Wellesley Friends fondly recall her vocal ministry laced with humor as well as her concern with our youngest, most wiggly Quakers.

Patsy attended New England Yearly Meeting and served in a number of leadership positions. She was clerk of Permanent Board and of Sessions Committee. She served on Clerks Nominating Committee for 12 years. She enjoyed editing memorial minutes. For 10 years she joined and helped facilitate an annual New England Yearly Meeting Women's Spiritual Retreat held at Geneva Point Conference Center.

Meanwhile, Patsy earned a degree in communications at Simmons College. This led to a position as the manager of Brook Hill Apartments, Weston's housing facility for the elderly, where she served for 17 years. After her retirement Patsy delivered meals for Meals on Wheels, managed the care of an elderly Weston resident, ran a program for the Weston Public Library which takes books to the housebound, and served as warden for the town Election Board. In addition, she worked with Friends of the Weston Council on Aging.

In the inevitable times of discord in the life of the meeting, we could count on Patsy to have a grounded understanding, stated clearly. Her intellect was as great as her spiritual depth.

As Patsy loved the meeting, we loved her. Even when largely a shut-in, she kept in touch with frequent and welcome handwritten notes. When she stopped driving due to failing eyesight, members vied to give her rides. One person was heard to say, "Who wouldn't want a half-hour alone with Patsy?" We remember

the twinkle of her blue eyes, her humor, and her steadfast integrity. We feel privileged to have known Patsy, effortlessly spiritual, as she walked cheerfully in the Light of God.

*Psalm*

*Great Yahweh, be my constant companion  
Support me in my hour of need  
Show me the ways of thy love.  
Open the shining windows into thy work.  
Rejoice with me. Laugh with me.  
Share thy mischievous side with me.  
And help me through thy grace  
Flow through thy divine stream.*

(Patsy Shotwell, April 2016)

APPROVED BY WELLESLEY FRIENDS MEETING, FEBRUARY 10, 2019

ENDORSED BY SALEM QUARTERLY MEETING, APRIL 28, 2019

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**Edward Furnas Snyder**  
**November 13, 1925 – August 12, 2016**

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Edward Furnas Snyder, age 90, died at daybreak on August 12, 2016, at the Mount Desert Island Hospital. His body which had served him so well was failing, and death brought relief after a brief but rapid decline. In his last days and hours, he was surrounded by his four children, several grandchildren, and close friends. His mind was present and engaged until the end.

Ed was born November 13, 1925, in Belle Plaine, Iowa, to Edward F. Snyder Sr. and Mary Ella Blue Snyder. Edward Sr. was a lawyer and already a pillar of his community when he died at age 37, leaving his wife and three children, of whom Edward at 7 was the oldest. Edward's mother obtained a post-graduate degree at Iowa State College in Ames, Iowa. In 1936, the midst of the Great Depression, she accepted a teaching position at the University of Maine. She packed her mother, three children, and the family dog into a Model A and moved the family from Iowa to Orono, Maine.

Ed, known to his classmates as "Red," graduated from Orono Grammar School in 1939 and from Orono High School in 1943, where he played football and basketball. He attended an accelerated program at Bowdoin College, completing three semesters before joining the Army Air Corps in February 1944, where he served for 22 months.

Upon his return he attended the University of Maine on the GI bill, majoring in history. During summers he often worked on the University's farms. He graduated in 1948, member of Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, the student senate, and reporter for campus. He won the Percival Wood Clement essay contest with his 3,000-word entry "The Constitution and Individual Rights." During the summer of 1948 he hitchhiked west to work in the white pine blister rust control program in Glacier National Park, Montana. And in the summer of 1949 he worked for Charles and Katherine Savage as desk clerk at the Asticou Inn in Northeast Harbor. He followed his father and his uncle into the law, and in 1951 graduated from Yale Law School, having served on the *Yale Law Journal*. In the summer of 1950, he and a law school classmate hitchhiked across Europe. On the student ship bound for Europe, he met Dorothy Mae (Bonnie) Mumford. They fell in love and were married the following year on June 16, 1951. Bonnie and Ed shared 58 years of joyful, caring, and loving life together until she died in November 2009. They raised four children: Edith, William, Marjorie and Russell. Ed served as law clerk to Chief Judge Thomas W. Swan of the U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit, before joining the law firm of Cummings and Lockwood in Stamford, Connecticut, in 1952. During this period Ed and Bonnie became active members of the Religious Society of Friends. Their faith sustained them through life. In 1955, Ed left his promising legal career to follow a leading of the Spirit. He took a job as a lobbyist for the Friends Committee on National Legislation, a Quaker organization representing Friends' concerns for peace and justice in the nation's capital, and moved his young family to the Washington, D.C., area. In 1962, he became executive secretary of the organization, and headed its work until his retirement in 1990. He and Bonnie raised their four children in the caring Quaker community of Adelphi Friends Meeting in Maryland.

While in Washington, he often testified before Senate and House committees. He worked in support of creation of the Peace Corps, a nuclear test ban treaty, human rights, development assistance to needy countries, an end to the military draft, and other issues of concern to Quakers.

His work in opposition to the U.S. war in Vietnam was strengthened by a two-year experience in Southeast Asia (1967–1969) working for the American Friends Service Committee. During this period, with his family living in Singapore, he traveled widely in the region, supporting Quaker relief efforts in Vietnam and organizing five Quaker International Conferences and Seminars for Diplomats and Young Leaders. Ed recalled that the fruits of this work were evident when two young leaders from Malaysia and the Philippines, countries in conflict with each other at that time, told him what their new-found friendship with each other meant: “If my country goes to war against yours, I won’t join up myself and instead I will set up an organization of conscientious objectors.” This was peace work for the long haul. He saw first-hand the suffering of the people of Vietnam, and he brought that experience with him when he returned to lobbying on Capitol Hill.

In his 35 years working for the Quakers, he also participated in Quaker-related conferences in Eastern Europe, the USSR, and Cuba. In Washington, he helped to organize a number of coalitions on peace, human rights, United Nations support, and developmental aid. He served on the board of the American Friends Service Committee, the National Council of Churches, the Center for International Policy, and 20/20 Vision. Some of his work is detailed in a book he co-authored, *Witness in Washington: Fifty Years of Friendly Persuasion* (Friends United Press, 2nd ed., 1994).

Upon retirement in 1990, Ed was named Executive Secretary Emeritus of the Friends Committee on National Legislation. He and Bonnie moved from College Park, Maryland, to a solar house they helped design and build in Bar Harbor Maine. They became active members of Acadia Friends Meeting, which was a great source of spiritual enrichment and fellowship for them. Their home was a place of warm hospitality. It was a hub of many Quaker gatherings that included groups where Friends shared their spiritual faith and met for Peace and Social Justice and clearness committees. Friends met annually at sunrise to welcome spring followed by a pot-luck breakfast at the Snyder’s, where they planted marigold seeds and balanced eggs on end.

In Maine Ed helped to found the Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy, which has emphasized criminal justice and Maine Indian issues. He also helped found and chaired the board of the MDI Restorative Justice Program. Ed was a strong supporter of environmental causes and a representative to the 1999 Maine Global Climate Change Conference. He received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Haverford College in 2002 for “devotion and support for peace and justice throughout the world, and commitment to connecting Quaker beliefs with political education and action.” In his late eighties, he was an active member of the Occupy movement. He co-facilitated a class in the Acadia Senior College exploring the question *Does the moral arc of the universe bend towards justice?* and another on the moral issues presented by the development of artificial intelligence. Ed’s service as treasurer of Acadia Friends Meeting and clerk of the Peace and Social Justice committee set a high standard for the work of the meeting.

Ed introduced his family to his love of the outdoors, including a 10,000-mile camping trip visiting national parks coast to coast in 1966. But trips to visit extended family in Maine were always the highlight, especially camping and hiking in Baxter State Park and on Mount Desert Island. In 1993, at age 67, he fulfilled a life-long ambition and canoed the Allagash with his sons. At age 70 he climbed Mount Katahdin for the last time. He loved hiking and in the year he turned 89 proudly walked all the carriage roads of Acadia National Park within one season, faithfully highlighting each on the MDI map. He enjoyed cutting, splitting, and stacking his own firewood, working in the garden, and reading widely and deeply. He took great pleasure in his garden, and Friends recall the bountiful crop of cherry tomatoes he shared.

During his last years, Ed found great joy spending time with his grandchildren and following their accomplishments. He attended all the plays and musical performances by Francis and Bonnie Mae Snyder at MDI High School, and watched the *Bangor Daily News* for details of track meet successes of Roy and Sam Donnelly. Their 86-year age difference did not seem to matter when he read to his granddaughter Blue Snyder. As a boy, Edward persevered in the daunting task of giving the family dog a special daily bath to cure a skin condition, prompting his grandmother to say, “Edward has stick-to-itiveness.” This quality was present throughout his life, in all its aspects.

He was known to be strong-willed but fair-minded, always taking time to listen. His life and work were based in a deep faith. He had a passion for a future he believed to be possible. Many, many people were encouraged to take action for peace and justice by his example. Ed held high expectations for himself, his family, and the people he worked with, and these could sometimes be experienced as judgment and asking



too much. But these expectations came from a deep place of love and generosity, and the love always won out in the end. Ed rose to the challenges life presented to him. When his dear wife Bonnie suffered with progressing dementia in her final years, Ed was her devoted and loving caregiver to the end. And when his own end neared, he faced death with courage and faith.

Edward is survived by his daughter, Edith Snyder Lyman and her husband, Nicholas Lyman, of Bar Harbor, Maine; his son William Furnas Snyder and his wife, Laura Muller, and their daughter, Suzanna Blue Snyder, of Amherst, Massachusetts; his daughter Marjorie Blue Snyder her sons, Roy Mumford Donnelly and Samuel Blue Donnelly, and their father, Robert William Donnelly, of Hampden, Maine; his sons Russell Mumford Snyder and Francis Edward Snyder, and daughter Bonnie Mae Snyder, and their mother, Ellen Jane Finn, of Otter Creek, Maine; his brother, Ralph McCoy Snyder and his wife, Mary Dirks Snyder, of Belfast, Maine; and his sister, Mary Louise Snyder Dow of Marietta, Georgia.

A celebration of the life of Edward Snyder was held Saturday, October 15, 2016, at the Neighborhood House in Northeast Harbor, Maine, under the care of Acadia Friends Meeting.

APPROVED BY ACADIA FRIENDS MEETING, SEPTEMBER 9, 2017.

ENDORSED BY VASSALBORO QUARTERLY MEETING, NOVEMBER II, 2017

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**Shirley Feigel Stafford**  
**March 20, 1929 – August 14, 2017**

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Dr. Shirley Feigel Stafford, 88, died August 14, 2017 at her home at North Hill, in Needham, Massachusetts. Shirley had joined Wellesley Friends Meeting in 2006.

Shirley walked cheerfully over the earth. She was known as an extraordinarily kind, thoughtful, and gentle person who was even-tempered and good-natured. She always saw the best in people around her and could light up a room with her smile.

Shirley was born in Syracuse, New York, on March 20, 1929, to Richard and Estelle Feigel. Shirley was an avid angler as a young girl while spending summers in her family's home on the shore of Oneida Lake, which began her interest in freshwater lakes. She often provided her family's meals with her angler skills. Her mother, Estelle, performed professionally as a violin soloist and was an accomplished classical pianist, providing her daughter with a lifelong fondness for music.

Shirley received a BS in 1950 and an MS in 1952 from Syracuse University. After graduation Shirley conducted research as a bacteriologist with her colleagues in the Biological Research Laboratories, Department of Bacteriology and Botany at Syracuse University. While working as a microbiologist she completed her doctoral course work in microbiology at Syracuse University. Shirley was unable to finish her PhD when she and her first husband, Giles C. Dilg, moved to Massachusetts to start his career in electrical engineering with the Raytheon Corporation.

After raising her sons, Michael and Eric, as a supportive homemaker and mother, Shirley started a second doctoral curriculum, and in 1987 received her PhD from Boston University with a focus on environmental management. The title of her dissertation, which is available in research libraries today, is *Lake Management in Four States*. Shirley continued her environmental work as a water resources manager with the New England River Basin Commission and taught biology at Newton Junior College and Environmental Science at Cape Cod Community College as an Associate Professor.

At Wellesley Friends Meeting, Shirley carried her concerns for the environment into her work on the Peace Committee and participation on the Earth Quakers group who met regularly to discuss books and view videos on environmental issues and to learn how to live a more sustainable life. Many of us did not know Shirley's extensive academic achievements but enjoyed many discussions in which she shared her knowledge.

At her North Hill community, Shirley participated in a weekly public-affairs forum as a board member and by occasionally presenting information in the fields of chemistry and environmental affairs. Her research capability, keen intelligence, and careful listening were apparent and much respected. Shirley enjoyed entertaining family and extended family at her summer home and cottages on the shores of the Town Cove in Eastham, Massachusetts. She cherished her time with her family and was a loving grandmother to her granddaughters Hailey and Julianna.



In October 1985 Shirley and Richard E. Stafford were married at the Peace Abbey in Sherborn, Massachusetts, and celebrated their marriage at a called meeting at Wellesley Friends Meeting. Shirley was predeceased by her second husband, whom she regarded as her soulmate.

Her cheerful and peaceful acceptance of her own dying deeply impressed her North Hill Friends.

APPROVED BY WELLESLEY FRIENDS MEETING, JANUARY 13, 2019 ENDORSED BY SALEM QUARTERLY MEETING, APRIL 28, 2018

### Gudrun Helga (Schulz) Weeks January 25, 1935 – May 29, 2018

Testimony to the life of Gudrun Helga Weeks, née Schulz, born in Baden-Baden, Germany, on 25 January 1935, died in Hanover, New Hampshire, 29 May 2018

Gudrun's parents met at Woodbrooke, an English Quaker Center. Her grandparents' 300-year-old house in West Chester, Pennsylvania, was one of her childhood homes.

She and her three older siblings moved back and forth across the Atlantic between Germany and the United States during the pre-war years. They returned to Germany on the *Europa*, the last boat through Italy in 1940. They remained in Munich during World War II and were not able to return to West Chester until 1946.

Gudrun's Quaker education was at George School in Pennsylvania, graduating in 1953. She then spent a year studying music in Munich before matriculating at Sarah Lawrence College (1955–1959), where she studied with Dorothy Delay, one of the best violin teachers in New York City. It was there that she met her friend and mentor Esther Rauschenbusch and studied with Robert Koff of the Julliard Quartet. While at Sarah Lawrence, Gudrun first learned of the Holocaust. She had been unaware despite having spent the war years in Germany. This revelation deeply troubled her at the time and throughout her life. (For a history of the Schulz family, see *The Other Side of the Ocean* by Barbara Heather.)

After graduating from Sarah Lawrence, Gudrun worked in New York City at Brooklyn College and later the Guggenheim Museum. She also trained with the National Orchestral Association. She continued studying with Dorothy Delay until she moved to Kansas to the conservatory to study towards a Masters. A summer job teaching strings and chamber music at the Putney School in Vermont led to her marrying Larry Gay. They went to Zurich for his studies and their first child, Jenny, was born there. Their second child, Carl, was born in Eugene, Oregon, where they went for Larry to complete his doctorate. Marlboro, Vermont, became their home for the next decade starting in 1969. They homesteaded and Larry taught at the College. Gudrun made music with friends, and with others started the Brattleboro Music School in 1970.

In 1980, Gudrun joined Sheldon Weeks in Papua New Guinea. He was an old friend who had first brought her to Putney in 1956; then they had gone different ways. In Papua New Guinea she found some exceptional pianists to perform with and had many wonderful students at home. Their daughter Kristina was born there. In 1991, they transferred to Botswana, where they were to spend the next 22 years. There Gudrun spent several years training a string orchestra for the Botswana Defence Force. She made lots of music and had many wonderful students; she also participated in the work of SERVAS, Art of Living, and the Southern African Quaker community. She organized many fundraising concerts, particularly for the first shelter in Botswana for women and children who were victims of domestic violence. It was run by the Kagisano Society, where she served on the board.

In 2012 Gudrun wrote a testimony to her life which was shared through a performance of story and music entitled "Celebrating Life Through Music" at the Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting, and was printed in the *Southern Africa Quaker News* (April 2013, Number 233).

Gudrun and Sheldon left Botswana to return to Vermont in late 2013. They settled in Brattleboro, in a duplex with their daughter Kristina and grandson Niko. Gudrun joined the Windham Orchestra and many others in making music, but her life of teaching students had come to an end. Gudrun created a music room large enough for sextets and had the pleasure of regularly playing music with her many friends.

Sheldon and Gudrun transferred their membership in the Religious Society of Friends from the Botswana Monthly Meeting to Putney Meeting, but mainly attended West Brattleboro Quaker Worship Group. During the winters they were rejuvenated by adventures to the Virgin Islands; Sausalito, California; Loja, Ecuador; and Mazatlan, Mexico.

In the months before she died, Gudrun became involved with the Community Asylum Seekers Project (CASP). This local organization provides sponsorship, housing, and support for asylum-seekers so they can get out of government detention centers while awaiting their asylum court hearing. She took on a leadership role and went door to door in her neighborhood looking for support and for someone who would house one or more asylum-seekers. Her successful efforts led to two asylum-seekers from Honduras now being housed in Brattleboro.

Gudrun is survived by her sister, Sonia Segal; her spouse, Sheldon Weeks; her three children, Jennifer Odegard, Carl Gay, and Kristina Weeks; four step-children and one adopted child; 13 grandchildren, 5 great grandchildren, and many cousins, nieces, and nephews. We will miss her smile and laugh, passion for music, sense of adventure, zest for life, love of nature, and concern for social justice in the world.

*May wisdom shine through me  
May love glow in me  
May strength penetrate me  
That in me may arise  
A helper for humanity  
A servant of sacred things  
Selfless and true.*

(Rudolf Steiner [a favorite poem of Gudrun's])

APPROVED BY WEST BRATTLEBORO QUAKER WORSHIP GROUP, NOVEMBER II, 2018

ENDORSED BY NORTHWEST QUARTERLY MEETING, MARCH 3, 2019

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**Noa Hall Williams**  
**February 16, 1943 – May 14, 2014**

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Noa Hall Williams melded art, spirituality, teaching, family, community, gardening, and social activism into a life well lived. She died May 14, 2014, age 71, at her home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, from cancer. She was admired by all who knew her for her own unconscious beauty and her amazing capacities as a teacher, friend, and artist.

She was born in Boston on February 16, 1943. Her parents, the architect, designer, and painter John Hughes “Jack” Hall and her mother, Dorothy “Dodie” Merwin, were both long-time participants in the bohemian world which existed in the 1930s and 1940s. Her father, now known for his highly regarded Modernist building “The Hatch House,” was a friend of John Dos Passos, Edwin Dickinson, Marcel Breuer, and Serge Chermayeff. Her mother, Dodie, who modeled for Rockwell Kent and George Biddle, served in the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) Program in Oklahoma and in the Peace Corps in the Philippines after she was 65.

Noa spent part of her youth in Mississippi, living with her mother and stepfather before returning to New England for boarding school. Her father lived on Cape Cod and in his thirties had joined the Sandwich Friends Meeting. On visits with her father, Noa worshiped with Friends at the South Yarmouth Preparative Meeting.

Noa studied painting with Sidney Simon and her work was shown in many Provincetown, New York, and Boston galleries. As a young woman she attended the High Mowing School in New Hampshire (where she later served as trustee), the Sorbonne in Paris, and the Bellevue School of Nursing in New York. She taught four-year-olds at the Shady Hill School in Cambridge.

Noa and her husband, Ike (John) Williams, began attending Friends Meeting at Cambridge in the late 1960s. She became a member of the meeting in 1987. For Noa, meeting was a spiritual home and a nurturing community—a place where she and Ike brought up their three children. She made many friends, especially with other artists in the meeting. Noa served on a number of meeting committees, including Membership, Oversight, Exhibits, Gardening and Landscaping, and Care and Support. In the fall of 2004, as part of the meeting's ongoing art exhibits, Noa had a one-woman show of her paintings.

Noa's artistic and decorative tastes, both interior and exterior, created wonderful gardens and furnishings in Cambridge and at her family's house on Bound Brook Island in Wellfleet. Her sweet disposition belied a fierce devotion to her children, in whom she instilled a deep sense of love for the natural world, a strong belief in social justice, and appreciation of the arts and music.

As a long-time Quaker and Buddhist, Noa faced her death with equanimity, upholding the Buddhist precept, "Live Well, Learn to Die." Memorial meetings for worship were held at Friends Meeting at Cambridge and at her summer home in Wellfleet, Massachusetts.

APPROVED BY FRIENDS MEETING AT CAMBRIDGE, MARCH 10, 2019

ENDORSED BY SALEM QUARTERLY MEETING, APRIL 28, 2019

## 2019 State of Society Report

“We labor under the desire to listen always for the still small voice which is both available for solace and works deep in us for individual and communal guidance.” “We will fall short. Can we hold each other when we do? How can we change our practices as we seek to be more faithful?” “Spirit does not call those who are prepared; it prepares those who are called.” “[We] seek to live at our growing edge with a balance of passion and tenderness, work and love.” “We are all broken and have wonderful gifts to share.”

Many meetings are aging and yearn for younger members, children and the energy and vitality of those in their middle years. Smaller meetings with aging members lean on one another for connection and support, facing the realities of decreased energy and paying attention to “what wants to grow in their midst.” There are concerns around the “long-term sustainability” of some smaller meetings as their members age. One meeting observed that the busyness of modern life and increasing secularization of our society leads to concerns around declining numbers and the ability to take on the work of the meeting which often falls to a faithful few.

***Query: How do we reach out to our communities and find those who may not yet know they are looking for us? When they do come through our doors, how do we welcome them fully into our midst, even if it means doing things differently than we have in the past?***

Meetings are diverse in theological views but not as much in class and ethnicity. Both create challenges for meetings in welcoming and embracing differences. At times, we “experience a fear of judgment is preventing Friends from openly sharing their theological views. This undefined place where we wonder who we are, what we believe, or what we are can be rich, and yet we often shy away from it. We notice that in not having this conversation we then struggle to know what to teach our children.” As one meeting observed, “[w]e are Christian, Sufi, non-Christian and non-theist in this meeting, so we need to continue to listen to one another.” Our relative wealth and privilege are factors that perpetuate divisions from the wider community and are sources of pain for some meetings. The very existence of meetings on tribal lands or in areas of wealth underscores our privilege. We are challenged with “[h]ow to live the question and await God’s guidance for addressing the truth of our condition.”

Some meetings feel the pain of internal divisions. “Pain cannot be healed until it is felt; remorse and confusion cannot be transformed until they are confessed.” Some struggle with how to talk about deep differences; how to discover the “Love that casts out fear.” “Structures are not empty shells to hold the Life but an integral part of our witness to that Life.” “Knowing each other deepens our connections and experience of the Divine.” “Trust is built through encouraging vulnerability.” Embracing our differences helps us grow as a spiritual community. “We seek to listen each other into wholeness.”

***Query: How do we learn to talk about deep differences, to find and stand on common ground, to discover the Love that casts out fear?***

We are often challenged in how to unite around the seemingly disparate goals of working for social justice and seeking spiritual fulfillment. Meetings are supportive of members living out their individual leadings but find it difficult to discern a corporate leading. Some meetings are seeking for ways to engage with the wider community by making meetinghouses available to groups with similar values as a step towards “finding hope in the Light in the midst of the darkness.” Many meetings seek to deepen their spiritual life and sense of community through spiritual support groups, book groups, “after-thoughts,” retreats and gatherings that help to “enrich the tapestry of the community.” “Participation in meeting is steadying, a discipline that is anchoring.” There is a profound and general recognition that we are ministers to each other and share a common love of our worship, its silence and its message-- as the place, one meeting reminds us, “where we come to know each other in that which is eternal.”

***Query: What calls us into religious society? How do we grow together in faithfulness?***

In polarized and frightening times, Friends have always found inspiration from those on the benches around them and from the life and teachings of Jesus; have understood that we need no mediation between ourselves and the Divine; have recognized that our spiritual growth is best fostered by our belonging to a community of seekers whom we know well and by whom we are known; and that the simple and faithful life is formed by a seeking first for Truth, out of which flows and follows the way we live as Quakers in the world. We are “seeking to be a spiritual community working to support each other in drawing close to the Divine, living into and out of what we experience.”

As Friends, we are called to stand centered in hope and not despair. Divisions and obstacles have no power over the vision we share and the work we carry out with Divine Assistance. We are aware that we are and will be imperfect on this path but know that in our brokenness, Light enters and leads us through the power of Love to transformation and Grace. In the words of Margaret Fell: “Friends, let the Eternal Light search you, and try you, it will rip you up, lay you open. Provoke one another to Love.”



## Epistles

### General Epistle

*There is a tide in the affairs of men, Which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat. And we must take the current when it serves, or lose our ventures.<sup>1</sup>*

To Friends Everywhere,

Greetings from the 359th New England Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions. 638 Friends, including 114 youth, have gathered together on Abenaki lands, in a town today called Castleton. The University campus is abuzz with the gifts of summer, reminding us of the joy of this season of hope and renewal. Even as we rejoice in being together, we are acutely aware of the domination culture that appropriated this place many generations ago, and the ongoing oppression, both implicit and explicit, that continues to perpetuate pain among us.

Spirit has led us to begin a process of transforming our Yearly Meeting while abiding in its programs, structures, and missions. We are actively rebuilding ourselves into a religious society with the good news of liberation at its heart: one that is actively interrupting patterns of domination within and among ourselves and in our sphere of influence. We see this as a process of co-creation that is open-ended in time.

Our attempts at faithfulness to our testimonies and minuted concerns have drawn many Friends from meetings near, and as far away as Kenya, Ramallah, and Bolivia. Some of our sibling meetings are called to participate in our work. We are saddened because our Cuban Friends were again denied visas, preventing them from joining us in person. Yet we have been moved by their video visit.

This year we experimented with new ways of noticing patterns of oppression and faithfulness as they show up within and among us in our time together. Elders joined our clerks table for this purpose. We call each other in, provoking one another to support our corporate and individual spiritual growth, provoking us to love—agape.

As we are able, we adjust our behavior *in real time*. The learning is no longer confined to the mental realm, but is becoming a shared lived experience upon which we can draw strength and wisdom for the journey ahead.

Our plenary speaker, Lisa Graustein, has reframed our work as dismantling Empire. Quoting Margaret Fell, she asked us to “deal plainly” with ourselves. For years we have minuted our standpoints: deploring various institutions, actions, and systemic patterns of Empire, including destruction of our planet, domination of People of Color, the Doctrine of Discovery, domination of queer Friends by discrimination policies, and colonization of people and their cultures. Yet we have not fully or powerfully come under the weight of these minutes—we are stuck in the Empire, and we are the Empire. And the Empire is within us all.

Thus we are called not only to resist the outward Empire, but to liberate ourselves and one another from its bonds to become the fully formed, spirit-infused individuals and community we are called to be.

We are the Friends Margaret Fell wrote to: Convinced, but not yet Crucified. We waded into the deep water, breaking in a great unconformity both outward and inward, trusting that the water will hold us.

The tide is now at the flood. Can we listen, waiting in stillness? And act, in faithfulness?

We recognize that to follow this leading is, ultimately, to choose the ultimate condition of Faithfulness, known in many Christian belief systems as *the Cross*.

Our Bible half-hour presenter Colin Saxton brought us to it. In the words of Brian Drayton:

*Living in the Cross means participating in a process of liberation from concerns, feelings, and beliefs that may give us a sense of security, but that also keep us bound and compelled in need and fear.*

*In a spiritual sense, recovery implies carrying our own Cross to the point of the death of some aspects of ourselves so that God can raise up new Life in us.<sup>2</sup>*

1 William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar, Act 4, Scene 5.

2 Brian Drayton, *Getting Rooted: Living in the Cross, A Path to Joy and Liberation*. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 391 (2007)

We are reminded that to carry the Cross is not only a denial of self, but also a step into the divine wholeness that God calls us into. Living in the Cross means being “absurdly joyful, entirely fearless, and always in trouble.” We long for that place, and know that we as a people are not there yet.

This year we have minuted our affirmation of full inclusion of the ministry of LGBTQ+ Friends, and our concern with the Friends United Meeting personnel policy on sexual ethics. After ten years under a complicated course of action that allowed monthly meetings to withhold contributions to Friends United Meeting, we are no longer in unity on withholding. The course of action is, therefore, discontinued.

We entered discernment in fear and trembling, reminded of the pain and separation caused by the FUM discussion over these past years. And, while this labor together is not without pain, we found in our meetings together a deep humility and tenderness with one another, a hunger for unity, and a desire to take the tide at this flood.

Empire conquers by dividing those who confront it. As Religious Friends of *Truth*, we seek within ourselves communion, where differences are transformed and transcended by Love. We hope faithfulness to the truth we have discerned in these sessions right the errors we have made and that we can move forward in a spirit of co-creation, with compassion and care for those who suffer.

Our work has also included the following: We celebrated long standing ministries. We celebrated relationships with Friends in the Great Lakes Region of Africa that have borne fruit in religious education. We celebrated witness on immigration, the Poor People’s Campaign, disarmament, sanctuary, and more. We continued work on revising our *Faith and Practice*, giving preliminary approval to two new chapters. And we continued to labor over faithful response to the conflict in Israel and Palestine and to the climate crisis.

A storm is brewing. A mighty wind blows, shattering our resolve and shaking our foundation. Revelation continues, ungracious and unannounced. A collapse of the past, and a daring glimpse into a future predicated on hope.

We are awakening to new, yet timeless truths, buried beneath old masks, uncovering the past to uproot the present and plant the future in soil anew. The journey is long, the path ill-lit. And we trust in the Light to guide us.

*Truth is one and the same always; and though ages and generations pass away, and one generation goes and another comes, yet the Word, and Power, and Spirit of the living God endures forever, and is the same, and never changes.*<sup>3</sup>

Faithfully, your Friends of New England Yearly Meeting  
Fritz Weiss, Presiding Clerk

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### Childcare Epistle

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We bring you greetings from the 16 children of Childcare. We were delighted to hear that the Bible Half-Hour described us so well: “Absurdly Joyful; Entirely Fearless; and Always in Trouble.” Outwardly and inwardly, we stretched and stretched all week. Every day our transitions got smoother and smoother as we stretched ourselves into the Childcare space. Just during our short time together, one of us stretched from walking a few steps to many; another added two teeth. We unwrapped many new books, showed ourselves to be master puzzle-solvers, and figured out how to blow glistening bubbles like transparent butterflies. The power of the storm drain again showed itself as the pebbles went deep, down, down, down, kerplunk! We learned that saying “please” will get you a great, big tent to share. A previous staff report told us that belonging is about, “being known, laughed with, forgiven, and fed.” From all of those graces, we know that we belong, here with you.

The Childcare Children of 2019

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### Junior Yearly Meeting K-1

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Dear Friends,

Ten energetic and exuberant children ages 5 and 6 came from all corners of New England to NEYM at Castleton University. We played inside and outside, shared toys, and read stories. We had a visitor from Kenya who helped us to make ice cream. We explored the outdoors with a nature scavenger hunt and made fairy houses with our treasures. The children had their favorite books that we read often. The children created a community paper quilt and made calming glitter jars. We joined together to make hospitals, airplanes and a really tall tower from Legos. We played parachute games outside and in a play house. Watercolor paint butterflies were created and we gave the gift of being present to each other when we listened and paid attention. Ten children came together to play, grow and nurture each other in a blessed community for these six days.

In Peace and Light,

The New England Yearly Meeting Elementary kindergarten and first grade

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### Junior Yearly Meeting Grades 2 through 4

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Dear Friends,

23 children from grades 2, 3, and 4 attended New England's 2019 Junior Yearly Meeting at Castleton State University in Vermont, USA. The theme of our Yearly Meeting this year was "Provoke one another to love," and we were inspired by this to gather with old friends, meet new friends, and build our community. We worked together in teams building tunnels and chutes to send marbles down a hill outside our classroom. We also played games with marbles, made paintings with rolling marbles covered in paint, and built marble mazes. We are happy to report that no children or staff lost their marbles!

We also enjoyed reading books and playing games in the field. We had fun playing with the parachute. Some of us worked on making a mandala out of dried beans and grains. We got together with the fifth and sixth-grade group to play JYM ball and make ice cream. We also met in larger groups at the beginning and end of the day for singing, stories, and worship. We had visitors from Bolivia and Kenya who taught us songs. We read a book about a boy who immigrated to the United States and made two fleece blankets to welcome immigrant families to their new homes.

During our free time, we had fun swimming, riding bikes and scooters, and going to our afternoon choices program. On our last night, some of us performed at the coffee house. We are grateful for our community and our time together and hope to gather together again at next year's JYM.

With love,

The 2, 3, 4-grade group, JYM, NEYM

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### Junior Yearly Meeting Grades 5 and 6

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To Friends Everywhere,

We gathered in loving community from August 3–8, 2019. Our favorite activities included making ice cream, tie-dyeing tee shirts, capture the flag, clay meditation, yoga, playing with friends, singing before and after worship, and games. We had a visit from a Kenyan Friend and learned about what Kenyan Quaker children do. We also liked going to the concert with the rest of the Yearly Meeting and going to coffee house, which is a talent show where some of us performed.

Playing games helped us to get to know one another. It is easier to be ourselves here than in other places because we don't have to worry about being bullied or judged. It is like we are in our own bubble, away from the rest of the world. In the Yearly Meeting bubble we aren't affected by politics or arguments and everyone cares about everyone else. Everyone accepts everyone here; we are all Friends. We were able to hear and understand other peoples' beliefs. It is easier for us to help people here, and many of us volunteered to carry trays for people who needed help. It makes our hearts full to see people helping each other. We have an integrity of love here that helps us to be more vulnerable and more compassionate. We have an amazing and fun

staff who expressed concerns in a caring way. The college staff, including the amazing chefs at the dining hall and the lifeguards, were super nice.

Being together strengthens us to carry Divine Love into the world.

The Fifth and Sixth Grade of New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

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### Junior High Yearly Meeting

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Dear friends of all ages, nations, religions, races, sexualities, gender identities, political beliefs, and countries, We are 20 rambunctious junior highers of the Junior High Yearly Meeting (JHYM) of New England Yearly Meeting who met in Castleton, Vermont, at Castleton University from August 3 to August 8, 2019.

Our inspirational theme this year was to “Provoke one another to love,” a famous quote said by Margaret Fell, an early, important Quaker figure. Diving deeper into our theme we talked about our gifts and others’ gifts and how they can be shared with our Quaker community.

A new experience for JHYM this year, we spent the entirety of Sunday morning at a plenary with the rest of the Yearly Meeting. Lisa Graustein, the leader of the plenary, talked about how our gifts and the gifts of others can help us overcome the dangerous Empire in our world today. Some of these gifts include hospitality, healing, cross-culturalism, wisdom, etc. Here, Empire refers to the power that institutions have over our culture and lives as individuals in society. She also shared with us how the Yearly Meeting has adapted to changing culture and showed us that as a group we can accomplish much.

Late on Sunday night we had a fond experience with the younger Friends of the Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) singing traditional songs of our group such as “The Billboard Song.” During this time we felt as though we needed to set a positive example for the younger Friends following in our footsteps. After this, most of JHYM had an exhilarating time at the university’s pool for a late evening pool party.

On Monday afternoon with the high school Friends, known as Young Friends, we held a meeting for worship with attention to cultural inclusivity and norms, watching a *Quaker Speak* video about how primarily white meetings have prevented others from feeling they can worship in their own way. Noah Merrill, the Yearly Meeting secretary, came Monday evening to discuss a couple of personal stories about how to deal with tough situations involving Friends.

We also met with Lacina Onco, a Native American lobbyist with Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), who discussed with us how she and others work to mend relations with the Native community and how we can help in the fight against discriminations towards the first inhabitants of this land.

Lisa Graustein came to our group on Tuesday morning and gave us an activity using pillows as an example of how we use power in today’s society and how we can use it in positive and negative ways against Empire. Later that day we enjoyed our annual trip to Bomoseen State Park in Vermont and had fun playing frisbee, card games, and splashing around in the nearby lake.

During our spiritual journey this week we have learned much about how to fight Empire and help one another with our bountiful gifts. We have enjoyed growing fruitfully as a community and sharing our thoughts and feelings within this safe and welcoming setting which we are trying to create with all our friends. As we are sent off to the new year of experiences we will remember these fond times and deep emotions.

In reflection and hope,

Junior High Yearly Meeting of New England Yearly Meeting

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### Young Friends

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Dear Friends around the world,

This week, August 3–8, 2019, Quakers from all across New England gathered in Castleton University in Vermont for our annual New England Yearly Meeting Sessions. High-school-aged Quakers, or “Young Friends,” joined together in our very own set of dorms and programs in order to grow closer as a community and better share our explorations of our theme this year, inspired by Margaret Fell: “Provoke one another to love.”

Each Young Friend has their own unique and personal experience of Sessions, and their own things to share with the rest of the world about this week. Unfortunately, 24 epistles takes a very long time to read.

Instead, we all wrote down various highlights from the week in order to make a single epistle that better represented the experiences of our community as a whole.

The first important part of any epistle is bragging about how much fun we had this week. Some of the amazing things we got to do this week include: playing games like billiards, capture the flag, and penguin tag, singing songs as a group and with the middle-schoolers in Junior High Yearly Meeting (JHYM), our trip to the local Lake Bomoseen with JHYM, spending our free time together in the dorms, reconnecting with old friends, and meeting new ones. We also loved foosball, swimming, the contra dance, getting to know people outside of the Young Friends community (especially our graduated friends in the Young Adult Friends program) and, quote, “What, I’m supposed to pick one? Fine...”. As part of our planned programming here, we enjoyed Explorations such as helping out at the bookstore or playing with the younger kids, and workshops like creative writing or creating our own designs to transfer onto shirts using silk-screening.

Every year, Sessions is a particularly meaningful time for our community. When we talked about what was meaningful in preparation to write this epistle, we wrote about getting excited for the future of our community, feelings of belonging, spending time and deeply connecting with the Young Adult Friends, practicing vulnerability (especially through affirming ourselves and each other), examining our own leadership, and affinity groups, smaller groups of Young Friends who get together to check in with each other and learn about each other’s needs, especially in terms of support.

What many of us found especially meaningful was the way that Young Friends began to take their places in NEYM as a whole this week. On Tuesday morning, during our visit with the Young Adult Friends, we heard a panel on the role of spirit in transition, and then Callid Keefe-Perry, a member of Ministry and Counsel, came to speak with us about an issue that we would be participating in the discussion of during adult business meeting: NEYM’s relationship with Friends United Meeting, or FUM. We learned the details and history involved in FUM’s employee policies and the conflicts within NEYM as to how we acted upon the objections many in our community held. Together with the Young Adult Friends, we struggled with our feelings on NEYM’s policy, the policy’s history, what we believe should be done instead, and even the very methods that we as a meeting use to make decisions. On Wednesday morning, we attended “adult” business meeting (though we usually hold ours independently) and Young Friends encouraged, supported, and comforted each other as we claimed the community’s issues as our own and took a stand on behalf of our beliefs. After leaving business meeting, we and some other Young Adult Friends gathered in our program space to achieve greater clarity on the policy issues at hand and agreed for some of us to meet again after lunch. We met with guests more experienced in the workings and ministry of FUM and explored our frustration, reservations, and ideas for the future. Most importantly, however, we brought the community of Young Friends into the issues that all of NEYM grapples with.

When we come to NEYM every year, we are excited, but we never know exactly what to expect. Many of us did not expect to be thrust into the issues of the NEYM and FUM policies, but there were other surprises as well. For one thing, during our annual lake trip, it actually didn’t rain this time. Some people didn’t expect such a sense of belonging, while others were caught off-guard by how difficult it was for them to settle. We discovered new songs, the spirit in our worship, games within our affinity group, strawberry ice cream, and that we liked Young Friends a lot more than we were expecting our first year. There were obviously some disappointments.

There wasn’t as much singing as some of us would want, and there wasn’t any maple soft-serve in the cafeteria this year. Some of us didn’t expect our last year as Young Friends to be so hard.

In addition to the fun, the meaningful, and the unexpected, we have a few more things to share about this week. Our group being small allowed us to get very close. We knocked shoes from trees. We took part in oppression naming, found singing and deep conversations very enjoyable, learned the ways of the “flip phone,” sang Pete Seeger songs, sustained no less than five toe injuries as a group, and “stayed up too late writing last night and it was great.”

In conclusion, we’d like to leave you with this wisdom: “Everyone is so lovely” and, in all capital letters, “I AM HAVING FUN.”

Sincerely,  
NEYM Young Friends



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### Epístola de Los Amigos (Cuáqueros) en Cuba

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Gibara, 24 de febrero de 2019.

Saludos a los Amigos del mundo:

Se inicia la 92 Asamblea de la Junta Anual de los “Amigos Cuáqueros”, en Cuba, con el sentir en nuestras mentes y corazones de ser uno sólo en Jesús. El texto bíblico que nos acompaña se encuentra en Juan 17: 21: Para que todos sean uno; como tú, oh Padre, en mí, y yo en ti, que también ellos sean uno en nosotros; para que el mundo crea que tú me enviaste.

Compartimos con ustedes nuestras experiencias en la búsqueda del crecer; belleza lograda al estar unidos en el Señor. Sabemos que así es más fácil la vida porque nos centramos en el amor.

Los mensajes recibidos nos invitan a alabar a Dios, juntos, unidos y vivir el amor proclamado por Cristo. Recibimos mensajes de varios hermanos de la Junta Anual de Nueva Inglaterra, a través de un video, el cual ha sido de alegría, al escuchar palabras y ver sus rostros, sentimos la unión y recibimos su amor.

Nos preguntamos, ¿qué nos falta? Reconocemos que nos falta esforzarnos más al dedicar nuestros dones al servicio de Dios y es necesario estar despiertos para socorrer a la iglesia. Estar juntos en el amor de Dios para construir, edificar, respetar la igualdad, estar al lado del hermano entendiéndolo, es vivir en comunión en el Espíritu Santo, siendo modelos, ejemplos. Vivir de tal manera que las palabras sobren y sean los hechos nuestra verdad. Cristo nos ofrece su amor y en gratitud, debemos sacrificarnos sin límites. Cuando esto se haga realidad en nuestras vidas, no faltará la unidad en nosotros. Debemos procurar que nuestros frutos provengan del Espíritu, precisamos un crecimiento natural, autentico para que seamos uno. Ese es el propósito de Dios.

Se enriquece esta unidad con la presencia de los hermanos Noah Baker, Jackeline Stillwell de la Junta Anual de Nueva Inglaterra, y de Bolivia Jonatan Mamani, huellas de sencillez y testimonio. Palabras impregnadas de esperanzas y profundidad que llegan al alma: “... ni muros, ni guerras...podrán separarnos del amor de Cristo”

Los informes presentados muestran lo beneficioso de nuestros hechos y lo más importante, nuestros desafíos para hoy y el mañana. En este tiempo se jubilan los pastores Ramón González Longoria y Rosario Concepción Fernández quiénes muestran su fidelidad a Nuestro Señor, donde Él, los necesite. Muestra es que el hermano Ramón, continuará un año más como pastor de la Junta Mensual en Gibara.

Resaltamos el reconocimiento a los hermanos Yuliet Santi Fera y Michel Soberats Blanchard como nuevos obreros de nuestra Junta Anual y los dones pastorales de la hermana Miledys Batista Sintés y los ministeriales de Ramona Leyva González.

Hemos sido inspirados a descubrir la canción del Espíritu de Dios dentro de nosotros y cantarla, esta nos brinda liberación, justicia, dignidad, seguridad. También a vivir en atención dinámica, abrazarnos los unos a los otros con las diferentes perspectivas y ser capaces de cambiar.

Sintamos hoy la invitación a abrazarnos de William Penn: “Probemos pues, lo que el amor puede lograr.” Cuáqueros del mundo, proclamemos juntos el amor de Dios.

En la Luz,

Junta Anual de los “Amigos Cuáqueros” en Cuba

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### Cuba Yearly Meeting Epistle

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Gibara, February 24, 2019

Greetings to Friends in all the world:

When we began the 92nd gathering of Cuba Yearly Meeting (Quakers) we felt ourselves One in Jesus in our minds and hearts. The Biblical texts we walked with is found in John 17:21: “that they all may be one, as you, Father, are in me, and I in you; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.”

We are sharing with you our experiences in the search for growth; a beauty achieved when we are united in the Lord. We know that life in this way is easier, because we are centered in love.

The messages we received invite us to praise God together, united, and to live in the love which Christ proclaimed. We received messages from several brothers and sisters of New England Yearly Meeting by means of a video, which brought us joy, listening to their words and seeing their faces, feeling our union and receiving their love.

We ask ourselves, what are we missing? We recognize that we need to try harder to dedicate our gifts to the service of God, and to be alert to help our church. To be together in the love of God to build and grow, to respect equality, to be side by side with our brothers and sisters and understand them, is to live in the communion of the Holy Spirit, to be models, examples. To live in such a way that words are unnecessary and that deeds are our truth. Christ offers us his love, and in gratitude we should be willing to sacrifice ourselves without limits. When this becomes a reality in our lives, we will not lack unity among us. Our fruits should come forth from the Spirit, we should seek a natural, authentic growth so that we may be one. This is God's will.

This unity is enriched by the presence of our brothers and sister Noah Baker and Jacqueline Stillwell of New England Yearly Meeting, and of Jonathan Mamani from Bolivia, signs of simplicity and of witness. Words full of hope and deep meaning which touch the soul: "... neither walls, nor wars ... can separate us from the love of Christ."

The reports which were presented show how beneficial our deeds can be, and, more importantly, our challenges for today and tomorrow. At this time our pastors Ramón González-Longoria and Rosario Concepción Fernández are retiring; they have demonstrated their faithfulness to Our Lord wherever he needs them. One sign of this is that our brother Ramón will continue for one more year as pastor of Gibara Monthly Meeting.

We highlight the recognition of Yuliet Santi Feria and Michel Soberats Blanchard as new workers in our Yearly Meeting, and of the pastoral gifts of Miledys Batista Sintes and the gifts of ministry of Ramona Leyva González.

We have been inspired to discover the song of the Spirit of God within us; when we sing it, it brings us liberation, justice, dignity, security. We are inspired to live in dynamic awareness, to embrace each other with our different perspectives, to be willing and able to change.

Today we feel William Penn's invitation to embrace each other: "Let us then try what love can do."

Quakers of all the world, let us proclaim together the love of God.

In the Light, The Yearly Meeting of Friends (Quakers) in Cuba

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