

Proposed Agenda
Permanent Board
June 26, 2021

Worship

Welcome (9:30)

Roll Call

Minutes

Presiding Clerk

 C&A Sabbatical Request

 C&A Sessions PP&C

Moses Brown Report and Nominations (10:10)

—break—

Secretary's Report (10:35)

Friends Camp update and Intro of Assistant Clerk nominee (10:55)

CWS anti-racism ad hoc group (11:10)

Board of Managers of Pooled Funds Report (11:30)

Funding Policy Approval, second reading (11:50)

Approval to send all Memorial Minutes to Sessions

Noticings

Closing Worship

**Permanent Board Meeting
Held over Zoom Video Conference
May 15, 2021**

21-29: Opening Worship

Friends opened with a period of worship.

21-30: Roll Call

The recording clerk called the roll.

Present: Leslie Manning, Clerk; Hannah Zwirner Forsythe, Recording Clerk; Kim Allen, Travis Belcher, Martin Zwirner Forsythe, Chris Gant, Beth Hansen, Ian Harrington, Rebecca Leuchak, Fran Lightsom, Ed Mair, Christopher McCandless, Jean McCandless, Bob O'Connor, Anna Raddochia, Carole Rein, John Reuthe, Sara Smith, Martha Schwope, Will Taber, Bill Walkauskas, Diane Weinholtz, Donn Weinholtz, Morgan Wilson, Kathleen Wooten, Tom Vargo, Mary Zwirner

Ex-Officio: Scot Drysdale (Finance Clerk); Noah Merrill (Secretary); Bob Murray (Treasurer); Bruce Neumann (Presiding Clerk); Elizabeth Reuthe (Secretary's Supervisor)

Visitors: Polly Attwood, LJ Boswell, Gail Charpentier, Marian Dalton, Susan Davies, Jeremiah Dickinson, Sarah Gant, Janet Hough, Becky Jones, Aiham Korbage, Anna Lindo, LouAnne McDonald, Jackie Stillwell, Nia Thomas, Pamela Terrien, Eleanor Warnock, Honor Woodrow

Regrets: Peter Bishop, Deana Chase, Darcy Drayton, Gina Nortonsmith, Elizabeth Szatkowski

21-31: Memorial Minute

Excerpts were read from the memorial minute for Marty Walton. The memorial minute will be forwarded to Sessions.

21-32: Recommendations on the Nominating Process

Jackie Stillwell, clerk of the Nominating Committee (NC), and Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary, presented a proposal from Coordinating & Advisory (C&A) for a restructuring of the nominating process in the Yearly Meeting (YM). The proposal is appended.

This proposal stems from the approved Clerking Structures and Practices report from 2019 which recognized the piecemeal and uncoordinated efforts of the various nominating bodies of the YM. The restructuring proposed aims to better uplift and support the gifts and leadings of all Friends.

C&A proposes combining the YM Nominating Committee, Internal Nominating Committee, and the Clerks' Table Nominating Committee, and proposes the creation of a Naming Committee (under the care of Permanent Board) to name the members of the Nominating Committee.

Friends had the opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns. Friends voiced a concern about the Naming Committee being sufficiently diverse in order to ensure diverse nominations. There are details of this proposal that need to be worked out, and this is an experiment that will be reviewed.

As part of approving this proposal for forwarding to Sessions, Friends were asked:

- To approve the integration of responsibilities and persons on YM Nominating Committee, Internal Nominating Committee, and Clerks' Table Nominating to the Nominating Committee
- To approve the creation of the Naming Committee
- To approve new Purposes, Procedures, and Composition for the Nominating Committee and the Naming Committee
- To approve laying down the Internal and Clerks' Table Nominating committees

Friends approved forwarding the proposal to Sessions, including the above actions.

21-33: Approval of March Minutes

The minutes from the March meeting were distributed for review. Friends approved the minutes.

21-34: Purposes, Procedures, and Composition Review

Bruce Neumann, Presiding Clerk, presented the revised Purposes, Procedures, and Composition (PPC) documents for Puente de Amigos, Legacy Gift Committee, and Youth Ministries Committee. These three documents have come to the Permanent Board earlier this year and return after previously requested revisions were made.

Friends approved the PPC documents for Puente de Amigos, Legacy Gift Committee, and Youth Ministries Committee.

Bruce then presented the PPC for the Archives Committee, Faith & Practice Revision Committee, and Coordinating & Advisory Committee. Bruce noted that the Coordinating & Advisory document now has explicit language about caring for inclusive leadership. Three more that we haven't seen yet.

Friends approved the PPC document for the Archives Committee with small edits.

Friends approved the PPC document for Coordinating & Advisory.

Friends approved the PPC document for the Faith & Practice Revision Committee with one Friend standing aside with concerns about how short the document is and whether further information about the committee is sufficiently accessible.

21-35: Presiding Clerk's Report

Bruce Neumann, Presiding Clerk, submitted a written report in advance of the Permanent Board meeting with information on the planning in process for Sessions this summer. This report is appended.

21-36: Treasurer's Report

Bob Murray, Treasurer, shared a brief update on Yearly Meeting finances after the end of quarter two. The balance sheets are appended.

21-37: Proposal on Endowment Funds

Bob Murray, Treasurer, shared a proposal to amend the Funds Policy for the use of rollover of income from our endowment funds. This change would help facilitate proper use of the funds. The proposal is appended.

The Treasurer requests that the Permanent Board approve a change to the Funds Policy to remove this statement dealing with endowment funds:

“Unspent income shall be reinvested in the fund where it originated unless the fund’s governing instrument instructs otherwise,”

and replace it with:

“Any unspent income remaining in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall remain spendable in the following fiscal year, unless the fund’s governing instrument instructs otherwise. The Treasurer will notify the designated NEYM spending authority and/or the Permanent Board if there is a pattern of unspent funds being built up in a particular fund over a period of years.”

In accordance with proper procedure, Friends preliminarily approved this and final approval will occur, if there are no objections, at the June meeting.

21-38: Secretary's Report

Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary, submitted a written report in advance of the Permanent Board meeting. This report is appended.

21-39: Mosher Book and Tract Fund

Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary, shared a request for use of the Mosher Book and Tract Fund to fund the publication, in print and digitally, of Cherice Bock's Bible Half Hours. The details of this request are appended. Publication of the Bible Half Hours, in collaboration with Barclay Press, is a new opportunity to more widely spread the work that occurs at Sessions.

Friends approved this use of the fund.

21-40: Funds for Nurturing Faithfulness Program

Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary, brought a recommendation to further fund the Nurturing Faithfulness Program. With the approval of the Finance Committee, the Secretary requests that the Permanent Board approve the use of up to \$30,000 of funding from New England Yearly Meeting of Friends to support a third offering of the Nurturing Faithfulness Program in New England. Because of the multi-year timeframe over which the funds would be spent, and because this is a one-time expenditure, funds for this purpose would be treated as a discrete expenditure from the Yearly Meeting's reserves, rather than an expense in the operating budget. More details about the Nurturing Faithfulness Program, and its role in the spiritual life of the Yearly Meeting, are appended.

Friends raised a question about this being discussed as a one-time expense because this seems to be a popular program of much value to the Yearly Meeting. Friends are supportive of funding the Nurturing Faithfulness Program but hope we can shift to funding this in a more predictable way. One Friend posed the question: how can we better orient ourselves to spiritual infrastructure funding?

Friends approved the funding for this program.

21-41: First Reading of the Budget

Scot Drysdale, clerk of the Finance Committee, presented the draft FY2022 for first review. The budget and prepared commentary are appended.

The proposed budget will return to the June meeting for preliminary approval and forwarding to Sessions.

21-42: Request from the Finance Committee

Scot Drysdale, clerk of the Finance Committee (FC), introduced a request from that committee for a working group to examine the donations Yearly Meeting makes to other organizations. The written request is appended. FC has frequently discussed the amount of money that we give to other organizations in relation to the deficit budgets that we continue to approve. It is clear to the FC that the committee isn't the appropriate group to evaluate who we give to, how much, and

why. But as this conversation continues to arise FC hopes that a working group could help establish guidelines and a more spirit-led understanding of our intention behind the donations that we make.

Friends approved the creation of a working group to assess the Yearly Meeting's donations to other organizations.

21-43: Funding of Honoraria for Volunteer Leadership

Noah Merrill, YM Secretary, shared the proposed Implementation Plan for funding honoraria for volunteer leadership. This Implementation Plan lays out details concerning the administration of the honoraria, how this experiment will be evaluated, and how we intend to avoid conflicts of interest. The proposal is appended.

Friends approved of the proposal.

21-44: Nominations

Clerks' Table Nominating brought forward the nomination of Rebecca Leuchak to serve as Rising Clerk for one year before serving as Presiding Clerk.

Friends approved forwarding this nomination to Sessions.

Internal Nominating brought forward 6 nominations:

Susan Davies to serve as Recording Clerk of Permanent Board, Class of 2024

Fritz Weiss and Judy Goldberger for Clerks Table Nominating Committee, Class of 2024

Will Taber for Internal Nominating Committee, Class of 2024

Conor Weiss for Yearly Meeting Nominating at Large, Class of 2024

Jackie Stillwell to serve as Clerk of Nominating Committee, Class of 2024

Friends approved these nominations.

During the approval of these nominations one Friend requested more guidance on how and when to raise concerns about nominations. The Nominating Committee has heard that request and is working on strengthening the process of distributing nominations earlier so that there is more opportunity for Friends to raise concerns and for the nominating committee to respond to them.

21-45: Funds for Sufferings

Leslie Manning, Clerk, reported that, after consulting with the Presiding Clerk and the NEYM Secretary, \$2,500 in funds was released to Friends Ugandan Safe Transport, under the care of the Olympia, WA Meeting. These funds will be used to provide safe passage for LGBTQ+ people whose lives have been threatened and are seeking refuge, pursuant to Minute 2016-62.

21-46: Tending the Soil Gathering

Jeremiah Dickinson, Interim Clerk of Ministry & Counsel, reported on the first gathering for supporting ministry and spiritual life. The gathering was well attended and many Friends appreciated the rich programming and time together. We look forward to the next gathering.

21-47: Challenging White Supremacy Update

Susan Davies, clerk of the Challenging White Supremacy Working Group (CWS), submitted a written report which is appended. Several Friends from CWS spoke to the work that has been done and the work that remains in front of us. Other Friends spoke to a concern that we not focus on accomplishing goals but rather on the necessary continuing revelation required to make our faith community the antiracist community we desire. There is a constant tension between the desire to move forward--a smaller group doing the work that facilitates the work by the whole Yearly Meeting-- and the need to be truly present in our current condition.

21-48: Closing Worship

Friends closed with a period of worship. We will meet again on June 26 via Zoom.

**Report to Permanent Board
From the Presiding Clerk
June 26, 2021**

At our recent Coordinating and Advisory meeting, we discussed several things of interest to PB:

- Sabbatical for Noah: Over the past year the timing of a Sabbatical for Noah has come up several times. I think I can speak for this body in saying that while we understand the need to postpone the timing from his initial thoughts, we have been encouraging, understanding that the opportunity for refreshment is well-deserved and important to sustain his on-going work. While I assume Noah will communicate the details of timing and planning, C&A has also discussed sabbatical remuneration, and I expect that we will have a proposal about this.
- As part of our continuing review of Purpose and Procedure docs, with the particular concern expressed by Sessions 2019 to *“pay attention to how committee structures can best facilitate effectiveness in the work of our Yearly Meeting”* we considered the form of Sessions planning and how it has evolved over recent years, in particular with changes necessary because of the pandemic. We are submitting a Purpose, Procedure and Composition for Sessions Planning which, if approved, would replace the P,P,&C for Sessions Committee
- We were asked by the FUM Committee to review a proposed minute they would like to bring to Sessions. The minute suggests several ways New England friends might engage with work for the benefit of LGBTQ rights and well-being, simultaneous to continued efforts to change the FUM personnel policy. C&A endorsed the minute, and you can expect to read it in the Sessions Advance Docs.

I'd also like to share some more about the relationship of presentations and discernment this year. At two recent Clerks' Table meetings, with the addition of two Noticing Patterns folks, we considered the weight of several of the agenda items, and the way they are connected, as I said last month, by a “legacy of straight, white people believing that they had or have the authority to exert control over those who do not look like them.” But the recognition of their combined legacies gives us an opening to pivot from reflection to aspiration - a consideration of who we want to become, who do we want to be? We have chosen a rather unusual approach, in that (after tending to a few other pieces of business) we will hear presentations about all the remaining business, initially without time for discernment. The remaining business sessions will be devoted to open discernment around the question “What is God calling us to do? Who is God calling us to be?” I imagine that the various agenda items will rise and be discerned, but that in considering them as a whole the discernment will reflect that awareness. It is also possible that some new minute or action will arise.

Years ago, in a clerking workshop I took with Gordon Brown, he said “Friends come together eager to engage in discernment,” and that they will exercise that discernment on whatever is on the agenda. While we need regular reminders to be tender with each other, I find that I am looking forward to Friends engagement with this year's agenda.

Bruce

**Request to Permanent Board
From Coordinating and Advisory Committee
June 26, 2021**

As Coordinating and Advisory Committee has consulted with Noah over the past year about the need for and timing of a Sabbatical, we have repeatedly considered the remuneration the Secretary is allowed during the time of the sabbatical. Current policy states that the Secretary will receive ½ funding.

But in our consideration we recognize that this may be a limiting factor to a candidate's hope for reflection and renewal. Assuming that a sabbatical is likely to include some travel expenses and such things as fees for retreat centers, in addition to standing expenses that do not vanish during this time (rent, car insurance, etc), the ½ pay could be a very limiting factor in the choice of what to do which will set the stage for true renewal.

Coordinating and advisory requests that PB:

- Authorize payment of the YM Secretary's full salary during his sabbatical (expected to occur during FY 22). This may require drawing on reserves.
- Suggest that the Personnel Resource Group consider a formal and permanent recommendation to this effect.
- Suggest that Finance Committee incorporate a line item such that funds for fully-supported sabbaticals are accumulated over a period of years.

On Behalf of Coordinating and Advisory,
Bruce Neumann, Presiding Clerk, NEYM

Purpose, Procedure, and Composition of Sessions Planning

Purpose:

The Sessions planning team exists to plan the schedule and events that make up the annual gathering of Friends in New England. The various events which comprise our annual sessions should reflect a careful consideration of the spiritual condition of the wider body, considering where there is life, where there is not, where there are breakthroughs, patterns and examples of the Spirit; what needs careful attention and care, and what needs lifting up and celebrating.

The purpose of annual sessions is understood to be the following:

Friends gather at Annual Sessions to encourage the ministry and spiritual life of the Religious Society of Friends in New England. We seek to gather in ways that are intergenerational, welcoming, and inclusive. We seek to share our experience of how the Spirit is moving, and the ways it is impeded, to learn from each other, to discern how God is leading us as a people, and to experience divine love as it appears in our midst and is revealed in our relationships.

We respond to this purpose through: worship, meetings for corporate discernment, workshops, and opportunities for connection, training, fellowship, play, and celebration. At the heart of these events are the meetings for worship with attention to business where we discern how God is leading us as a people.

Procedures:

- Sessions planning will occur by designated groups with differing primary functions, which work will be overseen and coordinated by the Sessions Coordination Team. In addition to more general oversight and coordination, the Sessions Coordination Team will draft a Sessions schedule for consideration by the other functional groups.
 - Theme and Speakers Team: This group discerns the theme for the following years sessions, and Speakers. It is clerked by the Sessions Clerk
 - Program Team: Focuses on Adult programming, typically including Business meetings, Plenary, Bible half-hours, small group opportunities, workshops, etc. Clerked by Sessions Clerk
 - Logistics Team: The Logistics Team will translate specific needs of Adult and Youth programs into physical (room size and numbers), communication (including advance docs, newsletters), and administrative (registration and housing) needs. Clerked by Events Coordinator.
 - Youth Programs Team: Focuses on the programming that will be offered for youth at Sessions, including recruitment of staff. Clerked by the Events Coordinator
- In September of each year, the Coordination Team, the Theme and Speakers Team, and any others they choose to invite will meet to consider the Sessions which just happened. They will consider sessions evaluation forms as well as personal experience, to learn from the recent event. What went well, what challenges were there? What changes might be useful or necessary? How was the spiritual life of Friends in New

England nourished and encouraged? How was the life and experience of monthly meetings considered and supported? The conclusions from this gathering should be the foundation and touchstone for all aspects of planning for the coming year. This meeting will be convened and clerked by the Sessions Clerk. The meeting should include those involved in the previous year's planning who are not otherwise continuing in service.

- Following this meeting, the Theme & Speakers team should meet to consider: their sense of the spiritual condition of the body of Friends who attended (informed by the meeting described above); their sense of how Spirit is moving (or impeded) in the wider body; and wider input, on both potential theme and suggested speakers. This team should distill that sense to a few words or a phrase for the theme, which will be a simple reflection of the work they believe the body needs.
 - This team will then consider what guests should be invited to speak to the gathered body. While most often over the years we have had a plenary speaker on Sunday, and a Bible Half-hour presenter, this group may be led to suggest a different configuration.
 - This team should present the suggested theme and proposed speakers to the Coordination team for approval. The Sessions Clerk should report these to PB for their awareness. Approval by PB is not necessary
 - Upon approval by the Coordination Team, the Sessions Clerk will contact proposed speakers to invite them, and upon their acceptance will assist those individuals in putting together a team of elders.
 - Once the theme, speakers, and elders are confirmed, this team (excepting the presiding clerk and the sessions clerk) can consider that their work is done for the year
- The Coordination Team may meet occasionally through the fall and winter months.
- Beginning in March, the functional teams and the Coordination team should begin to meet regularly to translate the perceived needs into specific events and fit those events into a schedule. Events should include
 - Opportunities to gather in worship
 - Business meetings
 - Opportunities for learning
 - Opportunities for sharing
 - Opportunities for performance, celebrations, special events, and play
- On recommendation of the Coordination Team and with approval of the YM secretary (because of financial implications) a variety of stipended positions may be established to hold a particular piece of work, (e.g. registrar, housing coordinator). Stipended positions will participate in the appropriate functional team, and will be supported by the appropriate staff person, as identified in their role description.
- The NEYM Office Manager will set the schedule for required submissions, including invitation to sessions, program schedule for publication, advance documents, etc.

- The YM Secretary has ultimate responsibility for and oversight of implementation, logistics, financial management, liability, legal and safety concerns for Annual Sessions.

Composition:

A Sessions Clerk should be appointed by the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee. This individual will clerk the Coordination team, the Program Team, and the Theme and Speakers Team. This person will work closely with the Events Coordinator, creating the planning schedule and the agendas for planning meetings in consultation with the coordination team. This person will hold an overview of the planning process and will facilitate significant decisions, where the Events Coordinator will be more involved in the implementation of those decisions.

The rosters of each of the following groups will likely include the roles below, but may change based on experience and needs. The Session Clerk, the Presiding Clerk, the Events Coordinator, and the YM Secretary will consult on whether there are personnel changes or procedural changes necessary

The Program Team consists of the Yearly Meeting Secretary, the Presiding Clerk, the Sessions Clerk, the Events Coordinator, the Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator, and one of the youth ministries staff.

The Logistics Team consists of The Events Coordinator, the Office Manager, and the Tech Team Lead, and the Sessions Clerk

The Youth Programs Team consists of the Events Coordinator, the Junior Yearly Meeting/Junior High Yearly Meeting Coordinator, the Young Friends Event Organizer, and the Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator.

The Theme and Speakers Team consists of The Presiding Clerk, the Sessions Clerk and 4-6 other Friends chosen by the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee, both for their connectedness to the wider body of Friends, and ability to listen to those Friends' condition.

The Coordination Team consists of representatives from each of the other teams.

Sessions Planning Teams and Composition

Theme and Speakers Team:

This group discerns the theme for the following year's Sessions, and speakers.

Clerked by the Sessions Clerk

Program Team:

Focuses on Adult programming at Sessions.

Clerked by the Sessions Clerk

Youth Programs Team:

Focuses on the programming that will be offered for youth at Sessions.

Clerked by the Events Coordinator

Logistics Team:

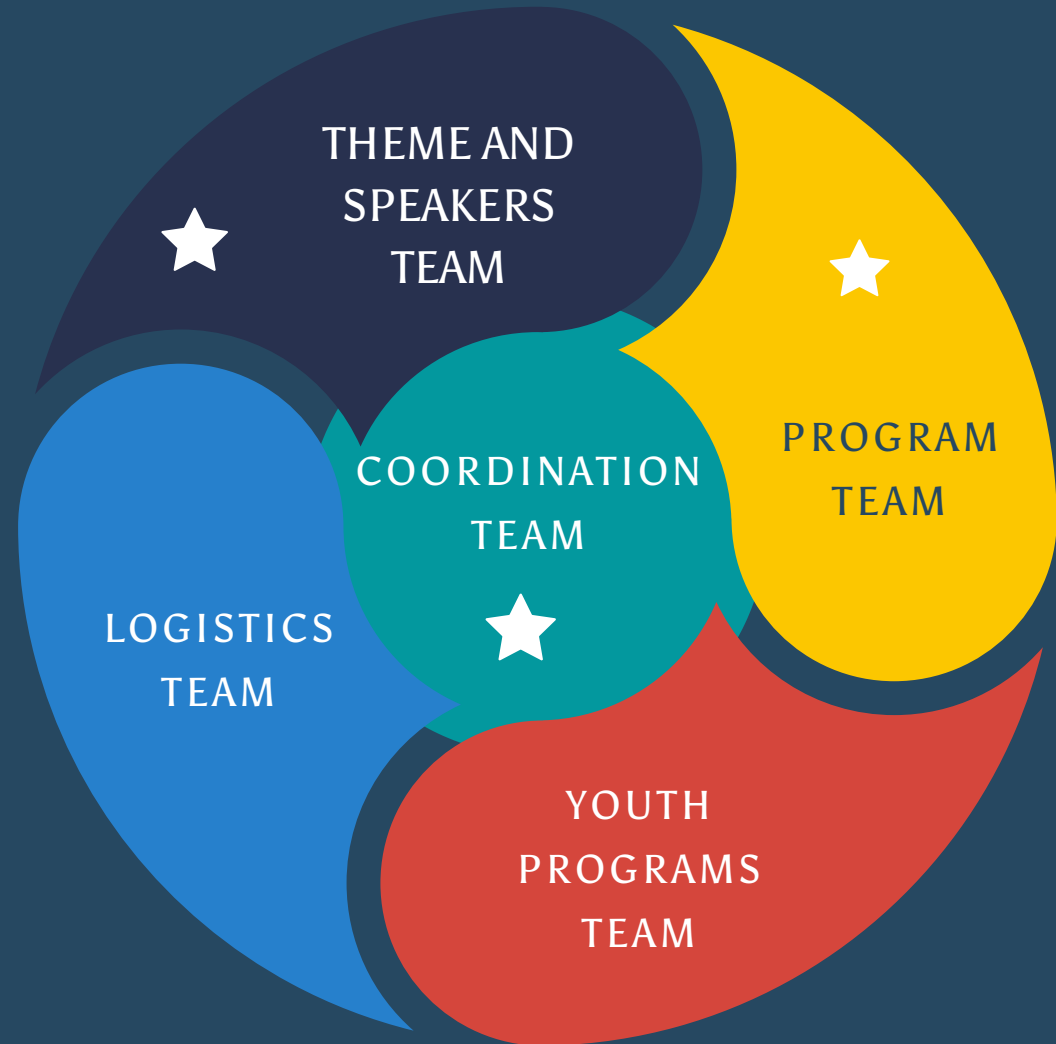
Coordinates space, communications, and other logistical needs for Sessions.

Clerked by the Events Coordinator.

Coordination Team:

Coordinates the activities of the various teams.

Clerked by the Sessions Clerk



For NEYM Consideration: (Information Only)

Proposed revision to MB bylaws allowing for remote participation in decision making Approved by Moses Brown Board of Trustees on May 25, 2021

Article 2, Section 9: Meetings

The Board shall hold an annual meeting at such time as the Board or its Executive Committee shall decide, or at such time and place as it shall determine from time to time. There shall also be not fewer than four regular meetings during the school year, to be held at such time and place as the Board may determine.

Other meetings of the Board may be called by the Clerk or the Recording Clerk or upon the request of five members of the Board, to be held in the State of Rhode Island, and for such purpose as shall be stated in the call and notice of such meeting.

Consistent with Quaker practices, it is the expectation that Members of the Board attend meetings in person in order to allow the spiritual energy created by attendees to lead the decision-making process. Nevertheless, the School recognizes that it is impractical to expect all members of the Board to attend all meetings and understands that situations may arise in which the Board would benefit from the involvement of members who are not physically present but who are able to participate in the school's governance work by remote means. For the purposes of holding a meeting, the Clerk of the Board may allow one or more Board members to participate in a meeting without being present, provided there is a quorum present in person. For the purposes of joining in discernment and decision making, there shall be no distinction between in-person and remote Members.

~~Consistent with Quaker practices, it is the expectation that Members of the Board attend meetings in person in order to allow the spiritual energy created by attendees to lead the decision making process. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the School recognizes that it is impractical to expect all members of the Board to attend all meetings, and further recognizes that situations may arise from time to time in which the Board would benefit from a discussion which included one or more members who were not physically present but who could participate by means of a telephone or video conference or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. The Clerk of the Board may, therefore, in special, extenuating or emergency situations as determined by the Clerk, allow one or more Board members to so participate in a meeting without being present, it being understood, however, that the member or members who do not attend the meeting in person shall not be included in the final discernment of any decision reached by the Board during such meeting.~~

For NEYM Consideration:

The following are recommendations we are seeking approval for by NEYM. This recommendations have been made by the Committee for Nurturing Friends Education at Moses Brown. They have been approved by the Moses Brown Board at its May meeting pending consideration by NEYM:

Friend Nominee for the MB Board:

- **Zona Douthit** – Trustee for the Moses Brown Board –

Zona, an attorney, is a member of Providence Monthly Meeting. She is active in the Peace and Social Action, Pastoral Care and Adult Religious Education Committees. She worked with NEYM to design and implement the Interfaith Pre-Inauguration Vigil on January 19, 2021. Zona has advocated for moving PMM to donate funds for local organizations that provide food and other assistance to families suffering from COVID-19's effects. She is a leading participant in the Alternatives to Violence Project and the PMM's Anti-Racism dialogue. Zona is a wonderful advocate for diversity and issues of justice, and caring for the local community.

Friend Nominees for the Committee for NFEMB:

- **Zona Douthit**

See bio above

- **Megan Smith**

Megan Smith is a member of Providence Friends Meeting and currently on the Board of Trustees and Moses Brown. She works at the House of Hope Community Development Center – a resource and support organization for the homeless. Megan is working towards her doctoral degree in Social Work at Boston University which she will have completed by the fall of 2020. Megan has been an activist, organizer, and leader in helping the homeless. She is clear minded, principled, and articulate. Her faith is deep and supportive of her humanitarian commitments.

Recommendation for Clerkship of CNFEMB:

Because of COVID and the inability for Friends to convene in person, the CNFEMB has recommended a slightly different path for the clerkship of Nurturing Friends for the 2020-2021 school year. We have selected a rising Clerk for this committee, **David Bourns**. David has indicated a desire to ease into the position, and is hoping to have the chance to connect in person with other members of the MB Board as well as the Committee through the fall.

Between now and when David assumes the position of Clerk of NFE later in the school year, **Dawn Tripp** (the current Clerk of NFE), along with **Mike McGuigan** (the outgoing Friends Coordinator) will co-clerk this committee. Dawn is also serving as the incoming Friends Coordinator of the Moses Brown Board. While Mike will no longer be a current trustee, he will be attending all

meetings of the Executive Committee at MB, and he will also partner with Dawn and a small working group to craft the MB Board Retreat in late September on Friends Decision Making and Clerking Skills.

David Bourns

David is a longtime Friend and Quaker educator. He is a member of Providence Friends Meeting where he has served as Clerk of Ministry and Counsel, as well as on a range of other committees. He is currently on the Board of Trustees at Moses Brown. He has served as Head of School at Oakwood Friends School and as Head of School at the George School, a Friends School in Newtown PA. He was the Founding Head of School at the Paul Cuffee School in Providence. David has served as a Board Member and continues to serve as an Honorary Board Member of Community Music Works. David's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as his wisdom and range of experience will be a tremendous contribution to the MB Board.

**Report to Permanent Board from the *Ad-hoc* anti-racism workgroup,
(members of Challenging White Supremacy, Noticing Patterns and Permanent Board)
June 26, 2021**

Purpose, Background and Policy:

At its March 20, 2021 meeting the Permanent Board requested that an *ad-hoc* workgroup comprised of members of Challenging White Supremacy wg (CWS), Permanent Board (PB), and Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness wg (NP wg) meet to explore how to proceed with the recommendation brought by CWS to the March 20th meeting: In short that recommendation was that NEYM affirm (in a minute or some different process) “*that Friends in NEYM intend and aspire for our Yearly Meeting to become an Anti-Racist Faith Community*”. This report shares some of the diverse ways we each have tried to faithfully hold this concern.

We note that NEYM *has already made a clear commitment to anti-racism* – Sessions approved the following minute in 2003.

New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends affirms its commitment to becoming an open, affirming, anti-racist Religious Society. Our understanding of racism is that it is a system that accords advantage or disadvantage based on racial identity. Racism is fundamentally inconsistent with the divine guidance that has led our Religious Society to testimonies such as Equality, Peace and Community. We seek divine assistance and the help of other friends of Truth to examine our individual and corporate complicity in racism. We aspire to a more perfect union with the Author of all, who shows no partiality in the diversity of creation. (second paragraph is not included here)

We, as a yearly meeting have lost sight of the 2003 minute to the extent that we did not even notice it was no longer on our website.¹

Review of workgroup activities:

1. In preparation for convening the larger group meeting, CWS met on April 19th with four members of NP wg who had all attended the 3/20/21 PB meeting.
2. The full workgroup has met 3 times since then, with Friends from CWS, PB and NP wg.
3. Because CWS initiated this concern, as Clerk of CWS Susan Davies has been serving as acting clerk of this *ad hoc* working group. The *ad hoc* working group has received, from some seasoned members, the sense that we are probably best viewed as a transitional body, whose most beneficial role is to shepherd Friends towards establishing a more experienced, knowledgeable, and likely more professionally skilled team, better equipped to help us, in NEYM to see ourselves more clearly, and to help us know how to change how we are with each other.
4. The PB antiracism wg sees little point in affirming another minute that we wish to “be antiracist”.

After our June 17th, 2021 meeting one Friend offered the following observations of patterns and possible responses that might help. We encourage those reading this list to hear this as a dialogue among patterns, not separating each one out, but working across them, to see a larger context:

Pattern: People experience harm and, depending on who they are, they do, or don’t, get support in the repair work needed.

¹ Some monthly meetings have prominently posted the minute in their places of worship. The NEYM Office has now made the 2003 minute more prominent on the NEYM website: <https://neym.org/social-justice-resources>.

Possible action: We identify a process for holding space for and healing harm when it is done that supports those harmed (and doesn't expect them to do all the emotional labor of teaching & managing the process while they are also trying to process their pain from the harm done). We will need this if we are truly to address white supremacy and racism among us

Pattern: When there is a working group or a committee holding the work, some things happen, when the working group or committee is no longer holding the work, it dwindles (for example, the Working Group on Racism, under care of M&C, wrote and worked on the 2003 minute and was laid down a few years later).

Possible action: There needs to be a group charged with helping us all live into the 2003 minute

Pattern: Minutes that we get excited about at Sessions and come to unity to approve don't always have legs beyond Sessions (2003 antiracism minute, 2013 Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery, 2019 minute on Climate Change, etc.) *

Possible action: We need a way keep these minutes alive in both our work between Sessions and in anchoring our work during Sessions (vertical and horizontal integration)

** One Friend responded to this noticing of a pattern in this way: "This does not match my perception when we have passed minutes at Sessions. My take on the 2013 minute of Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery is that it has had legs. There may have been no immediate actions but it seems to me that it was like a seed that was planted and it was growing out of our sight. It has been mentioned in our work on the Letter of Apology. It was a seed of awareness that was planted and when we came back to working on our relationship with Native Americans, the awareness of the history of the Doctrine of Discover was already present among us so that we have been able to proceed with a greater understanding of the larger historical context. Are we too impatient for immediate results that we do not appreciate the value of slow growing seeds?"*

Pattern: We don't quite know what to do and are also not in unity to ask for outside/expert guidance or help.

Possible action: Find and use internal expertise OR seek consultation from outside expertise around developing a process for moving forward

Pattern: The process needed to delve into deeper anti-racism work is not linear nor prescriptive so it is hard to envision or plan at this stage.

Possible action: Develop some shared vision and find Friends who have experience with iterative/adaptive change processes to support this work (for example, *Emergent Strategy* by adrienne maree brown provides an intro to this kind of process work)

The current group cares about this issue deeply, but is not the full group to carry this work forward (young people are missing, composition is mostly voluntary, etc.)

Possible action: Take some time to think about the composition needed to carry this work forward, and then form a new committee/working group

Pattern: We haven't done much and feel crummy about it.

Possible action: Concretely identify what has happened on the YM level, as well as the work around the MMs, and then look at how we build on our strengths and identify the areas we need to address.

Pattern: We talk a lot, write some minutes, and then ...

Possible action: Using the list from the point above identify action steps that have worked well recently and replicate/build on them

Another Friend observed:

“Racism is the greatest of our oppressions, but it is only one. I would like us to become an anti-oppression yearly meeting. The definition of anti-racism is not as important as living into practices that will build the Realm of God, the beloved community. It is both interior and exterior work. That means that I need to transform myself, to be more humble, to see clearly the harm being done, and to listen more deeply. We do not need to look at things as all good or bad, or to beat ourselves up. For me, I need to see the nuances and complexities. I need to see where my work, in my little areas of influence, can make the world a better place, especially for people who have traditionally been oppressed.”

And another Friends observed:

“... from Lao Tzu, “Have faith in those who are faithful. Have faith in those who are unfaithful, because faith is a virtue.” I realized that I have been judging myself because there is no star of Bethlehem over my head. This does not mean that I am unfaithful, or that I am faithful. I just do the best I can and take the next step. I am learning to let go of setting goals and I focus on what needs to be changed right here, at this current moment. What does this moment need? Most of my learning is unlearning. I get in trouble when I make assumptions. Be as a child. Let your faith be as a child. To do the right thing is not to do something wise or well-reasoned or clever. What matters is that I listen, then listen some more, and do what seems right in that moment, not what seems right in the final plan. I am grateful for this opportunity to work with the Noticing Patterns group, and the current clerks table which is willing to work in uncertainty and learning all that will have to be let go.”

Another Friend observed:

I feel like a beginner but, or so, I keep seeking experiences to stretch me. I have had plenty of opportunities to role model making mistakes and owning them without defensiveness. This keeps me coming back. I don't want to not do things because I am afraid. Being part of a group helps me. Seeing the YM engage in this work encourages me.

The meager evidence of action disappoints and discourages some: why does NEYM seem incapable of taking any big, bold action? Other Friends lift up the need for humility, stamina, and persistence, and striving to cooperate faithfully in the slow work of Grace. It is not about doing something different but being something different. Out of this will come a different thing. The structures are impenetrable until we have become something else, and then they will change because we have changed.

A Friend offered that a piece of the work is about framing the work that needs to be done, understanding that the YM has needs at different levels. Some of the work is urgent, some is intangible and we do not know when the seeds will sprout. Can we find a framework that has openings at the various levels of need in the yearly meeting? How can we call each other to be committed?

Final Report to NEYM Permanent Board

From Call to Action working group

Concerning *The Call to Urgent, Loving Action for The Earth and Her Inhabitants*

June 15, 2021

At New England Friends' Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions in 2020, Friends affirmed the *Call to Urgent, Loving Action for The Earth and Her Inhabitants*. The Call invited Friends into a year of intellectual and spiritual discernment regarding social injustice, including racism and the plight of Mother Earth, to discern actions that can address these systemic and interconnected challenges. A working group consisting of the Clerks of Earthcare Ministry (EMC) and Racial, Social, & Economic Justice (RSEJ) was convened to provide Monthly Meetings with the assistance and support they may need as they answered this call. Friends from the wider Quaker community enriched the Call by adding their thoughts and voices.

In the past year, we have undertaken a number of actions. We have contacted each Quarter and offered an opportunity for us to conduct a presentation on the Call to Action. To this date we have presented at 5 of the 8 Quarters. In October, FWCC also invited us to conduct a presentation on the Call to its northeastern regional meeting. Members of our committees have also taken part in supporting and heralding the call in their meeting communities.. Many participants have expressed a good deal of excitement and energy about the Call and some have articulated a great desire to meet and collaborate with others.

We have also created a set of resources on the NEYM web site for the Call, including the video and text versions of the Call, a number of queries for use in worship-sharing, and related reading materials. We led a worship-sharing at East Sandwich Preparative meeting, and are preparing a template for worship-sharing that can be used by other meetings. This template will also appear on the NEYM site.

There have been others in the Yearly Meeting who have taken up the Calls from Sessions. We particularly note the efforts of Beacon Hill Friends House to address these Calls. We also have heard of Monthly Meetings that have independently engaged in the work of the Call.

We have also made an attempt contact monthly meetings individually, offering our assistance, if needed, and ask meetings to share with us what they have done as individuals and corporately on racial and climate justice. That effort, however, led to only 2 responses to 15 letters sent to individual meetings. We await further opportunities to see how Spirit is moving in the monthly meetings on this critical set of issues.

Several things have given us great joy as we do this work. First, we have been uplifted by seeing how the Call has been received, both at Sessions and at individual quarterly and monthly meetings. Second, we have been inspired by the opportunity to help L.J. Boswell prototype their anti-racism workshop. Third, we appreciate the support of Bruce Neumann, Noah Merrill, and NiaDwynwen Thomas, who met

with us regularly to help provide guidance, particularly on issues of communication. And we gained real energy from the opportunity of having the Earthcare Ministry and the Racial, Social & Economic Committees work together in crafting and supporting the Call.

At this point we ask that the working group be laid down, not because the work is done, but because the remaining work needs to be done at the monthly meetings.

Memorial Minute for Katherine Stillman



Katherine Stillman moved to Wellfleet in 1972 and became a member of Sandwich Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends on April 7, 1996. She attended Yarmouth Preparative Meeting where she took on many roles, including once serving as Clerk. She also hosted a Mid-Week Worship at her home under the care of Yarmouth Preparative Meeting. Always sociable, Katherine's home was forever open, whether it be for conversation, companionship, to share a delightful meal, or to simply sit and savor the marsh that abutted her property.

Katherine loved to travel. Two of her many trips included traveling with Quaker Friends to Italy and to India and, as a young woman, taking a month-long trek in the Himalayas. If a Friend needed a traveling companion, Katherine was always willing and ready to accompany. Katherine was a member of Common Voices, a women's a cappella singing group. Friends who attended the concerts always made it a point to connect with Katherine at the receptions following the performances. Katherine's community involvement included serving as chair of the Wellfleet Library Development Committee.

Katherine was a potter with extensive training. Her repertoire included techniques learned from Acoma Tribe artisans in New Mexico. In her potting shed and shop, Katherine had a small tin where people could leave money for their purchase with a note stating, "If you are in need of money please take some." In 1988 the Wellfleet Public Library interviewed Katherine, captured in a documentary titled, "Katherine Stillman, The Potter."

Potting was not her only trade. At various times, Katherine taught at a school for children with special needs, created pastries for a local restaurant and worked as an Outreach Coordinator for the Truro Council on Aging,

Katherine remained active in the Meeting until her health declined. She died on July 20, 2020 at the age of 76 and will be remembered with love by those Friends who experienced her quiet presence in Quaker Meeting and her great joy for life.

Some information for this memorial minute was published in The Cape Codder, Dec. 19- to Dec 31, 2020 edition.

Electronic Signatures:

Approved by Sandwich Monthly Meeting for Business on 6th day, 6th month (June) 2021.

Serving as Clerk, pre tem, *Lee M. Hamilton*

Approved by the Clerk of Sandwich Quarterly Meeting in advance of the scheduled 24th, 7th month (July) 2021 meeting.

Clerk, *Lee M. Hamilton*



Memorial Minute for Margaret Eastman

Margaret (Peggy) Eastman came to Friends in the early 60s and became a member in 1965. She left her former religious affiliation after expressing her concern to the minister that she was not comfortable teaching “fire and brimstone” in Sunday School, and the minister suggested she should leave, so she did. Margaret eventually found her true home with Friends. When she first came to the Yarmouth Preparative Meeting, there were some very weighty friends in attendance as this was the only active year-round meeting on the Cape at that time (the meeting was officially reactivated in 1955 after having been “laid down” in 1909). Peggy reflected that the meeting was very active, although small in numbers, with a very lively First Day School where she often brought her three young daughters. Peggy remembers this as a very wonderful time and reminisced to when they all traveled to the grounds of the East Sandwich Meetinghouse for a summer picnic even though that meeting was not active at that time.

Peggy was considered a true “elder” and held in high regard by friends near and far who had the good fortune to know her. She served as Co-Clerk and then Clerk, and sat on committees at Yarmouth Meeting, and as Recording Clerk for Sandwich Quarterly and often traveled to Quarterly Meetings, and to NEYM retreats and Sessions events. While Co-Clerking Yarmouth Preparative Meeting (YPM), she and her Co-Clerk organized a protest on the grounds of the meeting house to stand against the invasion of Iraq; over 100 people showed up. For years YPM held gatherings in Friends’ homes to share hospitality followed by a presentation. Margaret often hosted such meetings; one memorial gathering was when her uncle Robert Leach, a well-known Quaker who was a conscious objector in WWII, and helped start Pendle Hill, spoke about the history of Nantucket Quakers. Margaret reflected on when she came to the Cape with her uncle when she was about nine-years old specifically to visit the East Sandwich Meetinghouse and this experience stayed with her.

During a lengthy career as a journalist Margaret held many roles such as editor and political columnist at the Cape Cod Times. She felt being a journalist was “somewhat of a calling” and viewed this as an opportunity to “make a difference.” Margaret attended the United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing, China in 1995 on behalf of the Cape Cod Times and noted there was a strong contingency of Quaker women in attendance. She often spoke publicly across the Cape about the conference. In her role as a journalist, Margaret was noted by colleagues as a mentor and matriarch by some and although she had a kind and patient demeanor, she “was not to be underestimated”.

When Margaret semi-retired she wrote a gardening column and often wrote a free-lance column summarizing her many travels across parts of Europe with traveling companions. One wonderful memory was at the annual New Year’s Eve gathering hosted by the East Sandwich Preparative Meeting is of Peggy meeting a Friend’s mother who discussed her appreciation for Peggy’s gardening columns. All of Peggy’s work be it for the newspaper and/or within the Quaker community reflected her strong belief in speaking truth to power and of her deep faith. As part of her faith, Margaret was a firm believer that there were “angels among us.”

In addition to being an active member of Friends and her calling as a journalist, Margaret also found time for advocacy work as a member of Cape United Elders, a former Community Action Committee of Cape Cod & Islands program. Members served as trained ombudspersons which allowed them to visit nursing homes unannounced to observe the facilities, talk to residents and staff, and to report issues of concern to the State's Department of Elder Affairs when necessary. She stayed involved in this program until it was terminated.

Margaret was truly a "weighty Quaker" and Friends often turned to her for advice and friendship. However, she was not beyond speaking up when she felt it was important to express her deep concerns. We could all aspire to and learn from such an example!

As Margaret's health declined, she spent her last two year in a nursing home where close Friends had the honor of participating in worship at her residence until the Pandemic made this impossible. She died of respiratory failure in the early morning of January 27 at the age of 89 leaving behind her three daughters, Barbara who was her caretaker (partner David), Susan Eastman, and Sheila Eastman Jeffrey (husband, David Jeffrey) and their two adult children (Kurt and Sara (husband, Christopher Damp)). Margaret was widowed in 2001.

Information taken from:

Profile of Margaret (Peggy) Eastman, conducted on October 14, 2003 by Lee M. Hamilton

Cape Cod Times article, *Journalist Peggy Eastman's life: telling stories, mentoring others*, by Denise Coffee, January 29, 2021 (pages 1A & 4A)

Electronic Signatures:

Approved by Sandwich Monthly Meeting for Business on 6th day, 6th month (June) 2021.

Serving as Clerk, pre tem, *Lee M. Hamilton*

Approved by the Clerk of Sandwich Quarterly Meeting in advance of the scheduled 24th, 7th month (July) 2021 meeting.

Clerk, *Lee M. Hamilton*

Memorial Minute
Jo Chickering
April 28, 1929-June 24, 2020

Even as we celebrate the light and love she brought us, we mourn the passing of Jo Chickering, beloved member of Plainfield Monthly Meeting. Jo was first part of our community in the 1960s, returning in the 1990s after she and Art, her husband and life partner, retired. She participated fully, listened deeply, and celebrated with a gusto and love that nurtured and inspired us.

In our monthly meeting as well as the wider community she was exuberant in supporting the movement of the Spirit in both mystical and practical ways. She encouraged the budding ministry of many Friends as well as supporting Friends who were more sure of their path. She served faithfully on Ministry and Counsel. She contributed the first check towards our Meetinghouse. In the community, along with other seasoned Plainfield Friends, she was active in the beginnings of the first Vermont bail fund, the reparative justice board, restorative justice, and later with integrating former inmates back into the community.

Jo's ministry grew from her warm, generous heart. She listened deeply. At her memorial meeting Friends remembered that when in a conversation you "felt as if you were the only person in the room." "She gets to know the life story of anyone she is around," one daughter remembers, "Jo's life story is about making deep connections, whether it be a brief encounter or a lifelong friendship."

In both her professional and spiritual life Jo's ministry empowered others: supporting blind students entering public school, drawing Headstart teachers into education, following student leads in learning, developing programs in women's studies and Title IX affirmative action programs for college students, and in recognition and inclusion of other races and cultures. The cover of *Sunlight & Shadow: Glimpses into the Life of Jo Chickering*, a memoir by Jo Chickering written with Rachel Walker Cogbill, best sums up Jo's ministry among us. "... Jo Chickering, Quaker, but also a Buddhist practitioner... A counselor, educator, and advocate for empowerment, Jo[was] active on many frontiers: education for the blind, women's issues, changes in the justice system, civil rights, and progressive education. She ... spent time in arts: painting, writing, poetry, and making pottery. Nature, outdoor activity, and travel weave through her narrative."

In an old farmhouse they renovated at the end of the road, Jo and Art raised four children together, celebrating and supporting them through times of joy and times of grief. Years later, Jo and Art returned to Chickering Road in a home their family built for them, not far from the old homestead, where a daughter still lives. Art described those later years: "For many years, Jo used her creative talents as a partner, parent, painter, potter, and Ph.D. On February 1, 1999, a stroke eliminated potting, as well as hiking, skiing, and tennis. Then during the 2000's failing vision shut down painting.....poetry became her creative outlet." Jo published two books of

poetry. *Saying Yes to Life*, was published in 2011, and recommended by Parker Palmer, and *Relationships that Matter*, in 2015. Jo said that “the point is that when love grows, fear diminishes” and all around her love not only grew; it blossomed.

Jo found a depth of the Spirit through nature. She wrote, “I sit on the screened-in back porch and savor the sounds of my surroundings: robins, the red-eyed vireo, the white-throated sparrow, finches, and wrens. I know this symphony is too beautiful to be chance. It is the song of the spheres or angels sharing their joy.” And dreams were also an important vehicle to Jo’s understanding and spirit. She recounted one dream where she was riding a bike with friends Jesus and Buddha walking beside her. We like to think of her that way now, grateful for sharing her path for awhile. She was a blessing.

—approved Plainfield Monthly Meeting May 16, 2021 Northwest Quarterly Meeting June 6, 2021

Edward Franklin Turco (1945-2021)

Truly a Renaissance man, Edward Franklin Turco lived a full and well examined life. He was voraciously interested in this world and the universe beyond, but also delved into the workings of the human mind. He shared those passions with his wife of forty years, Denise (Prive) Turco. She was constant in her support of him and his unique talents and keen intellect and together they were never at a loss for conversation about their learnings and wonderings. Ed creatively charted his own path in life and from this world. Edward, at 76 years of age, passed away peacefully with his wife by his side at their home in Lincoln, Rhode Island on March 28th, 2021.

Born in Providence, Rhode Island, on March 23, 1945, he was a son of the late Alfred and Delia (DiMeo) Turco. In this family of Italian American heritage, Ed spent his youth in Warwick and Cranston and later resided in Lincoln for many years. In addition to his wife, he is survived by his son David Bernard Greene Turco and his wife, Lisa, of Cumberland; his granddaughter Emma Rose Turco also of Cumberland; his brother Alfred Turco and his companion Maureen O'Dougherty of Portland, CT; a niece Ellen Schell, and a nephew Jeffrey Turco.

Edward graduated from Brown University with a Bachelor's Degree in Anthropology in 1967 and a Master's Degree in English in 1971 and later in life pursued course work in mathematics. He worked at the Brown University Mail Services after graduation and held various jobs before he moved to the United States Postal Service, where he was promoted to the engineering technical unit working with computer software applications as he was a self-taught programmer. As an adjunct professor in English at the Community College of Rhode Island and as a substitute teacher in secondary schools in the late '90s and early '2000s, Ed was a notable success with students even if not with bureaucratic administrators.

A meticulous craftsman and a scholar, Ed read widely and was fascinated by the world of numbers and scientific observation. Precision was Ed's thing. And he held strong opinions about things he cared deeply about. Astronomy was his lifelong hobby and passion. He was intrigued by the planets, stars, meteors, constellations, comets and especially eclipses. His interest with telescopes began when at thirteen he received a telescope as a gift and became so fascinated that he wanted another. His father said he could only have a second if he made it himself, and so he did and continued making ever more precise and aesthetically beautiful ones from his early teens onward. Avidly pursuing his interests in high school, he represented RI in the National Science Fair in his junior year at Cranston West. He was a life-long member of Skyscrapers Astronomical Society in Scituate RI, joining in 1961 when he was just sixteen years old. Ed gave many talks for the organization, wrote articles often for the Society's

publications, and shared his knowledge of telescope-making informally and in formal workshops for many people over the years.

With two high school friends he started RI Meteor Research Organization (RIMRO) and their observing data was sent to the American Meteor Society. Ed was a contributor to the magazine *Sky and Telescope* and *Amateur Astronomy* and continued to publish regularly. More than fifty years later, he titled his last piece "The Definitive Newtonian Reflector" -- a monograph-length technical essay published on *CloudyNights.com*

When Ed met his future wife, Denise, he wanted her to appreciate his passion for sky gazing and for crafting fine instrument telescopes. He extended a challenge to her when they were dating, asking her to build one. It was typical of Ed that the plan for it was completely unusual. Made of a bowling ball with coffee cans for the lens tube, a coat rack as its stand, the swivel mount made from a piano caster cup, and a handle fashioned from a porcelain door knob, the telescope nonetheless was a working instrument. Denise fortunately passed the test and they were married on February 14, 1981. Together they raised their son David, who today owns and runs a local landscaping business.

In his home, Ed constructed instruments that were works of art -- each requiring daunting microsurgical labor -- grinding and polishing mirrors, constructing tripods and (along with much else) crafting the tubes ranging from fine woods to brightly painted composite materials. Ed was an inventor as well as an exacting, highly skilled craftsman, pushing his expertise into new realms, for example with the creation of a projector-kaleidoscope made of fine brass, a present for his wife's birthday.

Not a scanner of the skies only, Ed had other enthusiasms as well. He was a pipe smoking inveterate collector of all sorts of things - of coins, of stamps, of stones, of shells, even old radios. An autodidact, he became interested in chaos theory and, combining his love of music and mathematics, he wrote a computer program that generated compositions of chaos created music which brought him to the attention of the Chairman of Brown University's Mathematics Department. He was impressed with Ed's work and deeply appreciative of the originality of his explorations.

A lover of both Classical and contemporary music, Ed had a keen appreciation for the life and creative work of the Russian composer and conductor Sergei Rachmaninoff, whose gravesite in Kensico Cemetery, Valhalla, New York, he and Denise visited and where he specially played a recording of one of his favorites of the artist's compositions, Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini.

It was Ed's love of history that brought him in mid-life to the Saylesville Quaker Meeting along the Great Road in Lincoln for the Christmas Eve candlelit worship in 2000. He was drawn to the early eighteenth century building and immediately noted the need for

significant repairs. While by temperament skeptical, in mid-life Ed began reading deeply about the Religious Society of Friends and a year later became a Quaker -- explaining that he liked the Sunday sermons at the Meeting House -- meaning that there weren't any. Being able to help drew Ed in and he spent months rehabilitating the Meeting House -- making improvements that extended from restoring small interior details to repainting interior walls that had begun to flake, to adding a built-in bookshelf and organizing the basement workshop area. He was a faithful attender and dedicated himself to service to the Meeting for as long as he was able. A hybrid memorial service for him was held there, both in-person and on-line, on May 1, 2021.

While he never achieved the stable teaching career that he desired, he was ultimately an educator through and through. Ed worked both formally and informally with students on those subjects that fascinated him. The physical challenges of advanced rheumatoid arthritis limited his mobility in recent years but led him to reach out in new ways to communicate those passions with others. When he became housebound, he continued his mentoring and teaching via the internet.

Ed's brother, Al Turco, in his comments at the memorial service, closed with this:

"In his own way, Ed could be a tough customer. He claimed that he did not suffer fools gladly. and thought he had seen quite a few of them. He felt that his achievements were neglected by persons who should have known better. But if he overestimated the extent to which he was ignored by some, he underestimated the esteem with which he was held by others.

"All in all, my brother was a creature of confident doubt. While uncertain that the emergence of life on planet earth was a good thing, he never ceased to value the good things in life. For this reason, among others, Ed Turco will be much missed but well remembered by all of us, because he has become an irreplaceable part of our own lives."

John Kevin Gaffney (May 15, 1949 – April 12, 2020)

John Gaffney, a life-long activist for justice and equality and a beloved member of Providence Monthly Meeting, died at his home in Providence, RI on Easter morning, 2020.

John was born on May 15, 1949, to John F. Gaffney and Doris N. Simsek Gaffney of Wayne, NJ, where he grew up with his younger brother, Richard. As a teenager John attended St. Francis Xavier High School, a Jesuit college preparatory school in Bronx, NY, where he joined the Junior ROTC program and graduated in 1967. He went on to earn a B.A. in political science at Fordham University in 1971, and his first job as a field representative for the Civil Rights Division of the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety set him on the path he walked for the rest of his life: resolute commitment to the protection of basic human rights for all.

John's work in civil rights law enforcement took him to Massachusetts in 1974, to serve as Executive Director of the Framingham Human Relations Commission. A year later, he moved to Providence, where he served for three years as Director of Affirmative Action and Civil Rights Program at Providence Human Relations Commission. John would serve the city as commissioner on the HRC many times throughout his life – his last appointment from Mayor Jorge Elorza would have expired on January 31, 2021.

The years between 1975 and 1980 would prove to be formative ones for John. During that time he became connected with Providence Monthly Meeting, eventually deciding to join as a member. From his earliest days among Friends, John was a strong, conscient voice in the meeting. It was during these years that he met and fell in love with Dale William "Bill" Brown, the man who would become John's soulmate, partner, and husband. And it was during these years that John experienced an accident that changed his life. In the summer of 1978, while on his way home from a Gay Pride celebration and fundraiser, the car John was riding in was struck by a drunk driver. John became paraplegic, and after nearly a year spent recovering in the hospital, he resumed his work for civil rights – but this time as a wheelchair user. His experiences and challenges navigating the world helped shape his passionate advocacy on accessibility issues and disability rights.

From June 1979 to spring 1980, John served as Executive Director of the RI chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, but the position could not accommodate his need for intensive physical therapy. He left that job to focus on his physical recovery, but soon he was engaging in volunteer work and consulting, building a career in advocacy that would leave lasting impressions across many states, communities, and industries.

One of the great commitments of John's life was the LGBT civil rights movement, and as he worked to regain his health, he volunteered for the National Gay Task Force (later known as the National LGBTQ Task Force). In his work there, John played a pivotal role in an early victory for gay youth in Rhode Island. In 1980, an eighteen-year-old at Cumberland High School, Aaron Fricke, asked to take another boy to the senior prom. The principal refused the request, as he had done with a similar case the year before involving a younger student. John learned of the case and reached out to Aaron, encouraging him to file a federal lawsuit and promising to pay

the court fees. John connected Aaron with a Boston-based attorney with experience in filing gay rights suits, and a case was brought against the school alleging violation of same-sex couples' first amendment rights. The case was successful, and the federal court judge demanded that Aaron Fricke and Paul Gilbert be allowed to attend their prom together in May 1980. The victory was a painful one, with both boys suffering harassment and verbal abuse from their community and their peers – but their court win was significant for gay rights in RI and nationwide. Many today know the names of Aaron Fricke and Paul Gilbert, but few know that it was John Gaffney who set their case in motion.

From 1986, John was deeply engaged in advancing, supporting, and monitoring accessibility initiatives in public life, especially in the domains of housing and transit. He served in the Governor's Office of Handicapped Affairs in Boston, worked as assistant to the manager of the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority, and became widely known as a consultant on paratransit issues after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. John really did (co-)write the book on ADA paratransit service – his 1991 handbook on implementation, published by the US Department of Transportation, ensured that transit operators and planners across the United States heard from the constituency they served: individuals with disabilities, whose voices and experiences had previously been discounted and overlooked in designing, maintaining, and evaluating transit systems. John knew that access to courts was one of the most important developments for people with disabilities; passage of the ADA meant litigation became a crucial tool for expanding access and inclusion. In April 1991, John moved to southern Florida to open an office for Katherine McGuinness and Associates, a Boston-based firm that provided consulting services on ADA compliance from collective bargaining to access to transportation. Over the next two decades, John's influence helped shape policies in the states of Washington, Florida, Virginia, New Jersey, numerous municipal and regional transit systems, universities and institutions, and the US Department of Transportation.

After their retirement, John and his partner, Bill, moved back to Providence from Florida. Their return coincided with important legal developments in Rhode Island and nationally. On May 2, 2013, when RI Governor Lincoln Chafee signed into law a bill legalizing same-sex marriage in the state, John and Bill had been living together for thirty-three years. The new bill would make it possible to wed legally in RI beginning on August 1 of that year, but John and Bill didn't wish to wait any longer. On June 14, 2013, they held a civil ceremony on the lawn of the Massachusetts State House, where a Friend from Providence Meeting, Debbie Block, officiated. The following afternoon, they became the first same-sex couple to marry under the care of Providence Meeting. Throughout their many decades together, their mutual devotion and steadfast commitment to one another was an inspiration – those who wanted lessons in how to love freely, fully, and well could do no better than watch Bill and John.

John was not afraid to push – and push hard – for the causes he believed in. His deep, gravelly voice diminished in volume over the years, but the messages he offered were no less resonant. As a gay, married Quaker and member of NEYM, John objected strenuously to Friends United Meeting's policy against employing openly gay staff. He found NEYM's financial support of FUM to be at odds with Friends' commitment to marriage equality, and he actively protested NEYM's continued relationship with FUM, pressing Providence Meeting to play a greater role in changing

NEYM's position on FUM's gender inequality. As the sole wheelchair user at Providence Meeting, he urged the meeting to give serious attention to the inadequacies of our meetinghouse. In response to his request for improved access, a wheelchair-friendly ramp was added to the front entrance and a brick walkway was added to improve access to our lower floor. These additions were necessary, but not sufficient - in the recent meeting house expansion, the design of doorways and bathrooms prioritized compliance to ADA Accessibility Guidelines, and thanks to the generosity of a NEYM Legacy Grant, the meetinghouse was finally equipped with an accessible elevator in 2018.

In his service on the Providence Human Relations Commission, the minutes of meetings show the same features of John's leadership and advocacy that Friends heard monthly in meetings: his thorough approach, his sharp ears, his incisive commentary, and his resolve to see problems named, diagnosed, and addressed – whether the topic was entrances, elevators, ramps, curbs, corners, doorways, slopes, fare hikes, route maps, response time, usage surveys, or service satisfaction, John insisted that the voices, perspectives, and experiences of the marginalized be a part of every discussion and decision. After John died, the Providence HRC released a statement containing this comment: "Commissioner Gaffney was a true warrior for equality and equity in the City of Providence, whose deep historical knowledge, passion, and leadership on the commission will be missed."

All of us are challenged in where we draw a line between active protest and divine leading. We often wince when reminders of injustices interrupt quiet meditation. But John knew that inaction can be a disability – and though he faced many challenges, passivity was never one of them. John invested his entire life in the causes he believed in – ensuring the right of all people to love, to marry, to work, to be safely housed, and to move freely through the world. His life and work left an indelible impression not only on those who knew him, but also on the many people who benefited from his advocacy without ever knowing his name. Through love, commitment, discipline, and action, John Gaffney shaped his world for the better and challenged those around him to do likewise. He was a catalyst for human dignity and equality, and we are enriched by his memory.