
Permanent Board

The Permanent Board has met five times since last year's Sessions and will be meeting on Saturday at this Sessions; all are welcome to attend. There is a complete record of our discernment and decisions on the neym.org website at <https://neym.org/who/governance/decisions-discernment>, which includes minutes and advance documents for each meeting.

We have had full agendas, as we undertake the work given to us by Sessions, heard regularly from our various working and resource groups, and received regular reports on our programs, spiritual nurture, finances, and the care of our community. We approved Carl Williams of Plainfield, VT, meeting as clerk of Ministry and Counsel, and Susan Davies of Vassalboro, ME, as the incoming clerk of the Permanent Board. The Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness working group is also under our care and is an active part of our meetings, as we are all invited to participate in the practice of noticing and interrupting patterns that hold us back and affirming those which lift us up. Yet, to seek to stop oppression is not enough, Isaiah reminds us in Chapter 58; we must actively engage in the business of liberation and justice for all creation.

We are bringing to you this year the requested laying down of the Earthcare Witness Committee and a transition to a new form for this essential work, as proposed last year and approved by Permanent Board in our Minute 22-62:

- that the new working title of the ongoing team of Friends called to this work be "Earth Quaker Justice Team"
- that PB recommend to Sessions 2023 to lay down the Earthcare Ministry Committee and to affirm and lift up the new Earth Quaker Justice Team and its work.

Other business before the Board includes our financial situation and proposed budget under the care and attention of the Finance Committee; a comprehensive restatement of fund balances by our Treasurer and Accounts Manager, and a three-phase plan for the review of our governance agreement with Friends Camp. This review invites us into a visioning session and celebration of the work of and our relationship with the Camp.

We are responding to the request from the Finance Committee to determine a process for discerning how financial contributions to other Quaker organizations is made. Finance determines how much in total is available to contribute but not how the organizations are chosen or how much to award to each. We have also approved the disbursements of the new Bodine-Rustin Fund, with thanks to the members of the Legacy Gift Committee for their stewardship of this endeavor and to those who suggested recipients.

We have been given the responsibility to care for the disposition of two meetinghouses no longer in use (N. Fairfield in Vassalboro Quarter and S. Pittsfield in Dover Quarter) and, as Salem Quarter is on sabbath and as approved at Sessions in 2022, to consider the recommendation from Fresh Pond Meeting that Three Rivers Worship Group be approved as a new monthly meeting.

We have also requested, and in many cases, received, updates from some of those traveling in the ministry beyond our yearly meeting under the endorsement of their home meeting, their quarter and the Permanent Board on behalf of the yearly meeting.

All of this work, and more, is undertaken with preparation, attention and deep listening, with the care and support of trusted staff, conscientious volunteers, and open meetings where all are invited to participate in the discernment. None of this work is separate from what is the uncertainty and incipient chaos present in the outer world, nor from the tensions and conflicts present in our own communities of faith. We remain seekers of unity, of wholeness, through being present to each other and to Divine will.

It has been an honor and a joy for me to to serve our community in this way, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity.

Updates from Working Groups

The Israel-Palestine Resource Group has hosted conversations with Friends who know and love the region, Jennifer Bing and Max Carter, as another way for Friends in our region to learn more about life "on the ground." Here's a link to the conversation with Max: <https://neym.org/israel-palestine-resources-engagement>.

We remain concerned that a third human rights organization has reported that Israel is an "apartheid state" (<https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>) and <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/>) as well as by the ongoing detention of Palestinian youth, including a student at the Ramallah Friends School.

We are cognizant of how much financial support to Israel is included in the federal budget, which is addressed by both the American Friends Service Committee and Friends Committee on National Legislation. We look forward to a time of discernment and discussion as we consider the "No Way to Treat a Child" minutes coming back to us from 2021.

The Antiracism Consultation working group has been meeting regularly and has still not found a consultant to work with on behalf of the Yearly Meeting. We hope to have an update at Sessions about our ongoing discernment.

Please contact me directly if you have any questions before Sessions at pbclerk@neym.org and please continue to hold the Board and our staff in the Light.

May we continue to be blessed with open hearts, inquiring minds and the gift of grace. May we take none of it for granted.

—Leslie Manning, clerk

Indigenous Boarding Schools (IBS) Research Group

Since February, we have co-opted four additional Friends to the working group: Gordon Bugbee, Emily Neumann, Evan McManamy, and Andy Grannell have joined Andrew Grant, Betsy Cazden, and Janet Hough. While sufficient for now, we look forward to welcoming engagement with Friends with Indigenous perspectives, when and as appropriate.

Focus of our Work: Since February Andrew spent three weeks at Haverford College, reading records held there at the Quaker and Special Collections Archives. These included records of the Associated Executive Committee of Friends for Indian Affairs (AECFIA), in

which NEYM-Gurneyite participated, and personal papers of Enoch Hoag, a New England Friend who moved to Iowa and became an early superintendent of the Central Superintendency (now Kansas and Oklahoma) in what was then known as Indian Territory. There were some letters, general agency accounts, and reports from New England Friends, but we have not yet located class lists or detailed records of the schools under the collective care of Orthodox Friends or the particular care of New England Yearly Meeting. Janet spent three days with Andrew looking through records at Haverford. As clerk of the working group, she helps keep the group grounded and focused, while being open to what arises. Gordon's earlier reading of the digitized reports from Quakers who served on the Federal Indian Commission, and other published materials, has brought useful insight in considering the Yearly Meeting minute books for the President Grant era. Emily has joined in reading the early printed minute books, and helping organize an inventory of what we have found. Evan has focused on transcribing handwritten minutes. Andy Grannell had previously digitized NEYM minute books from 1945 onwards. From these, he has extracted Indian Affairs committee reports. Betsy continues to focus consideration of possible Wilburite involvement with Indigenous individuals and communities.

Going forward: In sharing our research questions, processes and findings with the Yearly Meeting, and in further refining our focus for reporting and interpreting what we have found, we see a need to include Indigenous participation, as well as to continue to build relationships with the wider web of Quaker yearly meetings and institutions. We welcome input from the Right Relationships Working Group as well as from interested individuals in the wider yearly meeting.

Visibility: We will be working to make sure that our research questions, process, and findings are visible both within and without the yearly meeting, and in ways that respectfully include Indigenous perspectives.

Updated plan of work

Gathering Phase (March–July 2023)

Inventory primary texts from NEYM sources, starting with NEYM minutes and committee reports

Tabulate relevant financial records; consider intangible assets as well

Be alert for names and tribal identities of children enrolled in schools under the care of NEYM, as well as children from the NEYM region who were taken to Quaker boarding schools and children sent from NEYM managed schools to other boarding schools, such as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School.

Identify key New England Quaker individuals who were teachers or who were involved in other aspects of the boarding school initiative

Reporting Phase, Round 1 (July and September 2023)

Report to NEYM Sessions 2023, followed by ongoing regular reporting to Permanent Board.

Work with others (Paula Palmer and other yearly meetings) to report of relevant findings to the U.S. Department of the Interior and to the National Native American Boarding Schools Healing Coalition (NABS), possibly as a lead-up to Orange Shirt Day, 30 September 2023, a day in honor of the Indigenous children who were sent to residential schools and forced to assimilate into the dominant culture, and to remember the children who perished.

(<https://www.orangeshirtday.org/about-us.html>)

Interpretation Phase

Consider publication of the findings, especially how relevant and sensitive information is conveyed to tribal partners, following a trauma-informed practice.

Develop stories/narratives to move NEYM toward acknowledgment and repair.

Expanded Research

Involve monthly and quarterly meetings in filling out information—personal biographies, artifacts, family stories—from the boarding school era.

Use lists of NEYM Friends involved in this work to seek out correspondence, journals, artifacts, etc. to further illuminate the experience of Friends, and additional detailed information about the schools and students.

Right Relationship Resource Group

The Right Relationship Resource Group (RRRG) serves as a “resource to support local meetings in following their leadings to initiate and/or further develop relations with their Indigenous neighbors, and to help Friends learn from the ongoing experience of local meetings.” We are under the care of Permanent Board.

We were formed following the distribution of the “Apology to Native Americans” (in July 2022) after the working group charged with shepherding that work was laid down. Many members of that group have continued on the RRRG as new members joined us.

As we have endeavored to understand our new charge, we continue to have questions about what body is charged with responding to openings from the Indigenous community as a result of the Apology. Many of us were involved in the work of the Apology and we continue to carry a deep concern for how Friends prepare spiritually for this journey. How can we be a bridge between NEYM Quakers and our Indigenous neighbors now that the Apology has been delivered?

Many of us have been attending weekly meetings of Quaker Indigenous Boarding Schools, convened and facilitated by Andrew Grant, which bring together Friends from around the U.S. and Canada to share their research and learnings as we uncover more about our history and complicity in cultural genocide and erasure.

For Indigenous Peoples Month in November, we collaborated with Friends Peace Teams and the Beacon Hill Friends House to offer a hybrid, interactive workshop that was attended by more than 145 participants. The workshop, “Quakers and Indigenous Boarding Schools: Facing Our History and Ourselves” (<https://lu.ma/qibs22>), was created and led by Paula Palmer with Gail Melix (Herring Pond Wampanoag, East Sandwich) and Andrew Grant (Mt. Toby). It was supported by a grant from the Legacy Gift Funds and pay-as-led registration fees. The funding structure also provided for a contribution to the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project,

<https://www.wlrp.org/> in Mashpee, MA. The recording of this workshop is available on the Beacon Hill Friends House website and has been used, especially by Paula Palmer, to bring this material to Friends in various settings—colleges, yearly meetings, local workshops.

We supported Southeast Quarterly Meeting in welcoming the chiefs of the Allied Tribes to their March 19 meeting in Providence. The program included a presentation about the Pocasset/Pokanoket Land Trust's food access program, Indigenous Roots Forever, based in southeastern Rhode Island and Massachusetts. (For more information:

<https://www.pocassetlandtrust.org/quaker-community-shows-historic-support-for-new-england-tribes/>)

We helped facilitate a dialogue between Worcester meeting and the Pocasset/Pokanoket Land Trust for possible use of office and/or meeting space at the Worcester Meetinghouse.

In June, some of us joined with Quakers from Quaker City/Unity, NH, Meeting at the Ko'asek PowWow and were warmly welcomed by the chief and other tribal members.

We encourage Friends to attend a powwow this summer and offer these suggestions for how to show up: [bit.ly/42OZZSw](https://www.bit.ly/42OZZSw); and powwows in the Northeast: <https://www.wanderingbull.com/events/>.

Members of the RRRG are available to visit with your monthly meeting and we are eager to learn how meetings are engaging with our Indigenous neighbors. Please contact us at rightrelationship@neym.org.

We look forward to connecting with Friends at Sessions. As of this writing we are planning two workshops and a meeting for listening: "What are Friends and Meetings doing? What do Friends need?" Check the *YM News* for time and location.

Suzanna Schell, clerk; Gordon Bugbee, Andrew Grant, Don Campbell, Sara Smith, Kim West, Emily Neumann, Lisa Graustein.

Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness

The Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness Working Group has been living into a charge from Annual Sessions 2018: "to develop a practice to ... observe, name, and reflect back to us long-standing, unseen patterns and practices that result in our complicity in oppression," and which soon after expanded to include "to take up an active, persistent and loving practice of noticing and interrupting patterns of oppression and cultivating and affirming new patterns of faithfulness" across the yearly meeting. Staying engaged with this work when we bump into each other's tender feelings is a challenge for New England Friends. The working group tests our leadings in love and is aware of tensions expressed by the corporate body around the practice of noticing. We ask Spirit's guidance in seeking way forward with this transformative work.

There are some who respond to the noticing practice from a place of feeling really thirsty, and who experience this practice as bringing them water.

It has felt to others as if this practice is bringing them something poisonous. It can feel threatening to our beloved community to be asked to acknowledge unintended and unrecognized consequences of actions that reflect our complicity with systems of oppression.

All of us need to hold each other with compassion. This work is long, messy, difficult, and nowhere near complete. Let's consider together the following queries:

**What have been the unmet needs
that are starting to be met by the
noticing practice?**

**What is being lost or disrupted in
the noticing process?**

**What can we learn from the
answers to these questions?**

The Working Group looks forward to hearing how Friends are being led in this practice. We are eager to engage with your ideas, leadings and concerns during Sessions and throughout the year.

Thank you,

—Members of the Noticing Patterns Working Group Polly Attwood (Clerk), Melody Brazo, Melissa Foster, Lisa Graustein, Janet Hough, Becky Jones, Pamela Terrien. Also, Susan Davies (Elder from Permanent Board) and Mey Hasbrook (Elder for PB with the Noticing Practice)