

NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING
THE 324TH NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING
SUMMER SESSIONS—MINUTES
July 21–27, 2019

Silver Bay, NY

Sunday, July 21, 2019; 6:45 p.m.

Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Clerk
Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Assistant Clerk
Mary Eagleson (Scarsdale), Recording Clerk
Robin Alpern (Amawalk), Reading Clerk

2019-07-01. Friends gathered into a period of waiting worship. Out of the silence, Barbra Bleecker, Montclair Monthly Meeting, offered a prayer of celebration and thankfulness for this gathering of the Religious Society of Friends. The prayer (attached, see page 95) expresses gratitude for our deep sacred places within, for our traditions of peace and simplicity, and for our growing ability to discern our own ignorance and lack of acceptance of those we may have considered “different.” Buffy Curtis, Mohawk Valley Monthly Meeting, gave an acknowledgement of the Native land we stand on (see page 96). Though known as the “Mohawk Hunting Grounds,” the hunting lands were shared by a number of native nations. We thank them for the care they took of these lands and this lake, and for the tradition of caring for the Earth they passed down to their descendants, who live among us to this day.

2019-07-02. Jeffrey Aaron, New Brunswick Monthly Meeting and serving as clerk of the yearly meeting, welcomed us to the 324th gathering of New York Yearly Meeting. He noted that our first gathering, held in 1695, predated the formation of the United States of America. He asked those who are here for the first time, or returned after a long absence, to stand. Friends greeted them with joy.

2019-07-03. Robin Alpern, Amawalk Monthly Meeting, read the roll call, by region only. All regions were represented.

2019-07-04. Two of the coordinators of Junior Yearly Meeting, Dawn Pozzi of Rochester Monthly Meeting and Sylke Jackson of Rockland Monthly Meeting, introduced the program of Junior Yearly Meeting. The leaders of each group were introduced, and left leading the children in their groups for their preliminary group meetings.

2019-07-05. Those remaining in the auditorium settled into waiting worship once again.

Monday, July 22, 10:45 a.m.

Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Clerk
Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Assistant Clerk
Mary Eagleson (Scarsdale), Recording Clerk
Marvea Thompson (Brooklyn), Reading Clerk

2019-07-06. The meeting began with waiting worship. We gathered for the first time in the newly constructed Wishard Room of the Boyd Conference Center at Silver Bay. Out of the silence, our presiding clerk welcomed us, commenting on the blessings of abundance, in reports of good works Friends have been doing, and in visitors. Jeffrey Aaron introduced those at the clerks' table; visitors: George and Marjory Rubin, (Medford Monthly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting), Judith Nandikove, (Nairobi Yearly Meeting), Arthur Boyd and Meg Meyer (Baltimore Yearly Meeting and Ramallah Friends School); Steven Donahoe (FCNL); LVM Shelton (Plainfield Monthly Meeting of New England Yearly Meeting, and Friends General Conference); David Male (Ohio Yearly Meeting and Olney Friends' School); Liberty Goodwin and Paul Klinkman (Providence Rhode Island).

2019-07-07. Visiting Friends were asked to stand and introduce themselves.

2019-07-08. Minutes of the opening gathering last evening were read and approved with corrections.

2019-07-09. The attached memorial minute for Mia Tatiana Kissel Hewitt, Chatham-Summit Monthly Meeting, was read by

her daughters Allison and Rachel Hewitt. (See page 97.) Mia will be remembered as one who lived her life fully, with energy, intensity, a fierce passion for the causes and people she loved, and a deeply held Quaker faith that nourished all that she did. All her life, Mia was an active member of Chatham-Summit Meeting, and also regularly attended yearly meeting sessions and Powell House events. Among Friends, she was known as someone who built community and who was gifted in pastoral care, showing up when people needed her. She treasured family times spent with her husband Mark, daughters Allison and Rachel, and step-daughter Sarah, and she made her home in Bernardsville a place of casual warmth and comfortable gatherings.

Ministry followed.

2019-07-10. Marissa Badgley, Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series coordinator (YASNS), reported on the YASNS. The seventeen young adults and elders who gathered at Powell House July 20-21, 2019 to discuss and discern what young adults across New York Yearly Meeting need offered the following testimony.

Young Adult Friends from New York Yearly Meeting are grateful to the Yearly Meeting, the Spiritual Nurture Working Group, Monthly Meetings, and Friends of all ages for their support of the Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series between October 2018 and July 2019. The time we have spent together in community has been precious, offering us myriad opportunities to explore our Faith, build our skills, connect across differences, and exist fully as our most authentic selves. We have been nurtured, lifted, challenged, coached, loved, and accepted by each other, our elders, and our facilitators. We are enriched and encouraged by the deep diversity of those choosing to participate in the retreats and appreciate growing and learning with Friends of varying races, ethnicities, genders, sexual-orientations, abilities, backgrounds, and other identities. We feel Spirit moving and shaking and living and working within us and around us, and we sense that we are closer to existing in a Religious Society that sees us, hears us, knows us, and invests in us. We have faith that Way will continue opening for our ministries and gifts to be supported and uplifted in meaningful, sustainable, and mutually beneficial ways. We have faith that our voices will be heard.

Eight needs of young adults were lifted up:

- Sustainable infrastructure to support, encourage, and nurture them at the yearly meeting level
- Access to meaningful opportunities to connect and be in community beyond monthly meetings and yearly meeting sessions
- Mentoring, eldership, and spiritual accompaniment
- Investment and resources to build their capacity as Quaker leaders, ministers, elders, and community builders
- Quaker spaces to be safe for all, but especially for those people who are not in positions of power and/or privilege
- Attention to be paid to accessibility in all its forms
- Quaker spaces to center joy and authenticity, and allow for fluidity, creativity, curiosity, spontaneity, and play.
- Our yearly meeting to be open to continuing revelation and to trust that young adults are grounded and Spirit-led.

The full report crafted by the group is on page 99. Marissa asked those who had participated in the series to stand; then in addition, those young adults present who had not participated in the series. [Report is also available at bit.ly/YAFreport]

Ministry followed.

2019-07-11. Minutes approved to this point.

Wednesday, July 24, 10:45 a.m.

Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Clerk
Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Assistant Clerk
Karen Way (New Brunswick), Recording Clerk
Marvea Thompson, (Brooklyn), Reading Clerk

2019-07-12. Friends gathered in meeting for worship. Clerk Jeffrey Aaron quoted Alan Alda on the difficulty and hope of communication.

Jeffrey then introduced the clerks' table. He reminded us that Quakers are not tolerant, but accepting, and that the fact we have always done something in the past is not sufficient reason to continue doing it. Specifically, he proposed that Friends who wish to speak should give their names, and, if so led, whatever else they wish to provide as an affiliated meeting or group. He

asked anyone who is uncomfortable with that change to let him know after our summer business sessions are done.

Jeffrey announced a threshing session for Friday to explore how to overcome obstacles in the path of what we want to do—at this time we will be focusing on the stumbling block of finances in the path of hiring a field secretary for youth and young adults, and in divesting from fossil fuels.

He also reminded us that in each session we share a finite amount of time.

2019-07-13. Jeffrey noted that we have received many delightful letters of introduction from visiting Friends. Although we would like to read all of them, we are instead going to post them in the Inn where we can read them individually. Jeffrey listed:

- Letter from Medford Monthly Meeting introducing George Rubin, former clerk of NYYM, and Margery Rubin, clerk of Haddonfield Quarter of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.
- Travel minute for LVM Shelton from Plainfield Monthly Meeting in New England Yearly Meeting
- Letter of introduction from FCNL for Stephen Donahoe
- Travel minute from Baltimore Monthly Meeting for Margaret Boyd Meyer and Arthur Meyer Boyd

2019-07-14. Jeffrey introduced Sylke Jackson (Rockland), who reported on behalf of the Friends World Committee on Consultation (FWCC). Sylke introduced Gloria Thompson (Manhattan) who gave the first part of a 3-part report.

Gloria described World Quaker Day, which is scheduled for Sunday, October 6, 2019. Each meeting can upload their celebration of the day to an FWCC website. FWCC has also organized a Traveling Ministry Core, a group of Friends of many ages who visit meetings and describe their personal journeys as Friends. There are resources on the FWCC website that facilitate inviting or joining the Traveling Ministry. There are many resources on the FWCC website for young adults.

Martin Glazer read a report written by Sarah Glazer, describing a week-long FWCC conference in Kansas City titled “Come and See.” The conference brought together American Quakers of all types, encouraging mutual learning.

Sylke gave the final section of the report, reminding us that last year in NYYM's Summer Sessions we described ourselves as resonating with a call to take action against climate change, including divesting funds connected with fossil fuels (minute 2018-07-34). This is a 5-year project across many yearly meetings, and progress can be explored on the FWCC website. Sylke offered a minute calling for divestment of NYYM funds in 3 years.

The ad hoc group for ecological investment recommends that NYYM begin the process of divesting a percentage of at least 25% of current holdings from the Friends Fiduciary Corporation Growth & Income Fund and investing these monies into the Friends Fiduciary Green Fund or Geos Essex Fund, both funds that are divested from fossil fuels. We recommend that NYYM be totally divested within three years. This process will be closely monitored and will be modified as needed.

She also presented a chart of financial results suggesting that losses or gains from divestment would vary but might not be unbearable.

2019-07-15. Roseann Press (Housatonic), Clerk of Trustees, said she supports divestment, adding that a very small percentage (1.2%) of our Friends Fiduciary investments are connected to fossil fuels. This concern is on the agenda for the Trustees meeting on Friday, and will also be raised at the Threshing Session on Friday.

2019-07-16. Anne Liske (Albany) and Anita Paul (Schenectady) presented the State of Society Report for 2018 (see page 107). The report synthesized 42 State of the Meeting reports from constituent meetings and worship groups. Six meetings reported growth; many described the challenges and joys of finding ways to expand community and outreach. Meetings continue both to witness to Quaker testimonies and deepen their spiritual lives.

The individual State of the Meeting reports are gathered in a binder for Friends to read at Silver Bay and will be available online at nyym.org/content/nyym-state-society-report-2018

2019-07-17. Jeffrey introduced LVM Shelton, visiting from Plainfield Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting. LVM spoke of Friends General Conference, which is much more than the

annual Gathering. FGC has a mission to understand the needs of Friends and their meetings on all levels. With that in mind, FGC has gone through two years of self-examination of the ways in which FGC is a white supremacist organization. This process is offered as a model for other organizations planning such a journey. In a future session, Karen Snare (Bulls Head-Oswego) will review how we can access the resources of FGC via their website.

Thursday, July 25, 10:45 a.m.

Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Clerk
Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Assistant Clerk
Mary Eagleson (Scarsdale), Recording Clerk
Robin Alpern (Amawalk), Reading Clerk

2019-07-18. The clerk welcomed those present, commenting on how this is our community of affirmation. He introduced the clerks' table.

2019-07-19. Lindsey Butler, from the Silver Bay YMCA, welcomed us and reported on improvements in the parking lot, treatment of wastewater, and holding basins for stormwater runoff. The William Boyd Center was completed in September, 2018. Although not LEEDS certified, it includes many environmentally friendly features. The money spent on these improvements has contributed almost \$40 million to the local economy.

One Friend commented on the "meat focus" in the menu and lack of composting. Another asked about blue-green algae. Lindsey took both comments under advisement.

2019-07-20. Stacie Faraone and Janet Poole, of Albany Monthly Meeting, read the attached memorial minute for Barbara Spring (page 111). Before they began, the clerk noted that a memorial meeting for Barbara was to be held at the Chapel in the afternoon, and that her daughter and granddaughter would be present. Barbara lived in many places throughout her life, arriving in Albany in 2006. She is perhaps best known to Friends in New York for her work with Anita Paul in founding the Aging Resources, Consultation and Help program (ARCH), originally under the sponsorship of the Friends Foundation for the Aging

(FFA) and now under the care of our yearly meeting.

In addition to her passion for helping Friends age and die well, Barbara was deeply committed to countering racism. She served for many years as clerk of Albany Meeting's Friends for Racial Justice Committee. Under Barbara's leadership, the committee reached out to other faith organizations to plan together a community conference in 2017, Building the Beloved Community: Beyond Racism.

After moving to Albany, Barbara became active in the Iran Project of Women Against War. In 2007 she traveled to Iran as a member of a citizen diplomacy delegation of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, speaking about the need for a peaceful US-Iran relationship on her return. She was also deeply concerned about living with respect for the environment and for her retirement built a very small, very green, house.

In all of her projects she saw herself as a bridge person, making connections and bringing people together. She did this to enrich the lives of others and for the pleasure she got from seeing connections made. She taught by example how to live into our dying with verve and wisdom.

Ministry followed.

2019-07-21. George and Margery Rubin, now of Medford Monthly Meeting of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, shared the following minute from their monthly meeting, and forwarded from Haddonfield Quarterly Meeting. It has also been forwarded to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for their consideration.

Haddonfield Quarterly Meeting joins with people of good will everywhere in affirming the way of love. We denounce the normalization of hate and violence in society and within ourselves. We commit to working with others to build trust and understanding in our wider community.

The minute was referred to Witness Coordinating Committee.

2019-07-22. Laura Cisar (New Brunswick) gave the Treasurer's Report as of June 30, 2019 (see www.nnym.org/sites/default/files/TreasurersReport-2019-06.pdf). She explained that the treasurer's reports are posted every month on the yearly meeting website (see nyym.org/content/nyym-treasurers-reports-2019); they are also emailed to monthly meeting clerks and treasurers.

Laura explained where Friends can find specific information about various parts of the budget and invested funds.

The surplus shown on the June report reflects the money collected to pay Silver Bay for lodging at Summer Sessions, but not yet paid. Also, grants are received at the beginning of the year and expended during the year. To date, we have received 38% of the anticipated covenant donations from monthly meetings. This is lower than expected, as are individual contributions at 19% of the goal.

2019-07-23. Doug Way (New Brunswick) and Steve Mohlke (Ithaca) reported on the Pay as Led program initiated this year (attached, page 115). Doug reviewed the history of Pay as Led, which we began to plan 2 years ago. We will not have final numbers until week's end but the overall status is WE DID IT.

WE DID IT means that the dollars we received from people attending summer sessions equals the dollars we need to pay to Silver Bay, plus the amount Friends paid last year for registration. The bottom line is that Pay as Led has had zero impact on the operating budget of the yearly meeting.

Doug showed a pie chart showing that $\frac{1}{4}$ of the people were led to pay the standard fee, a $\frac{1}{4}$ paid less, and half paid more.

In addition, the downward trend on the number of registrants was reversed. About $\frac{1}{4}$ of the registrants were either attending for the first time or returning after a long absence. 74 young adults attended. At Fall Sessions, there will be a final accounting and a plan for next year.

This year, for the first time, we did "master billing," in which our staff and volunteers collected payments and assigned rooms. This was required by Silver Bay, and would have had to be done in any case. This absorbed much staff and volunteer time, and translates also to real costs to the operating budget.

A Friend expressed concern that Friends who paid more than the full cost for their rooms at Silver Bay might not have made as much financial contribution to the operating budget as they might have otherwise. Others expressed gratitude to the yearly meeting for the feeling of inclusivity generated by Pay as Led.

2019-07-24. Minutes approved to this point.

Thursday, July 25, 2:45 p.m.

Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Clerk
Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Assistant Clerk
Karen Reixach (Ithaca), Recording Clerk
Suzanne Blackburn (Genesee Valley), Reading Clerk

2019-07-25. The meeting opened with expectant worship. The clerk introduced those at the clerks' table.

2019-07-26. Barbra Bleecker, clerk of Montclair Monthly Meeting, read the memorial minute for Madeline Schwinge McClure (April 4, 1927–May 22, 2018). Madeline attended Antioch College, where her interest in interracial activities began and where she first experienced a Quaker meeting for worship. She joined Montclair Meeting in 1958 and over the next 50 years served her meeting and NYYM, focusing especially on black concerns. In 1965 and again in 1967, the McClures welcomed into the family two sixteen year old African-American daughters to attend the local high school with her daughter Kit: Emily from Mississippi and Mary Jane from Tennessee. When daughter Emily faced open racial discrimination at the local high school, Madeline successfully ran for the Regional High School Board of Education in her community, to deal more effectively with the situation. Madeline McClure went back to school when she was 51 years old. After completing her degree in computer science, she was employed by AT&T. She and her husband George retired in 1994 and in 1997 moved to Arbor Glen CCRC in Bridgewater, NJ, where they remained active in their community and attended Plainfield Friends Meeting. Madeline was predeceased by her husband George McClure, a marriage marked by mutual support and service.

Ministry on the life of this quiet and effective Friend spoke to the moments of connection, her quiet consideration, the appreciation of the role of memorial minutes as a way of deepening connection with a Friend, and the strong, kind model that she offered. Minute is attached on page 116.

2019-07-27. Frederick Dettmer (Purchase) is the attorney for the Green Haven Preparative Meeting lawsuit against DOCCS's (NY's Department of Corrections and Community Supervision)

termination of Quaker quarterly meeting at Green Haven Prison, which had been regularly held for over 30 years. At Summer Sessions 2018, Friends approved a minute (2018-07-46) “to support any legal action initiated by individual members of the Green Haven [Prison] worship group against the NY [Department of Corrections and Community Supervision][“DOCCS”] in pursuit of their religious rights under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act.” [“RLUIPA”] The lawsuit asks the court to order DOCCS to reinstate quarterly meetings and meetings for worship with a concern for business at Green Haven Correctional Facility on the same terms as previously existed. A motion for a preliminary injunction, reinstating the quarterly meetings and meetings for business, was filed in March 2019.

A settlement offer by DOCCS has provided opportunity for deep discernment. Friends found renewed faith in our practice, in the words of *Faith and Practice* (page 31 in the 2018 edition), “to speak the truth as we know it, honestly and forthrightly, speaking plainly from our own lives.” Whether we could carry on under the system proposed by DOCCS isn’t the right question. *Faith and Practice* (page 30) counsels that “We are called to a genuineness of life and speech that leaves no room for deceit or artificiality.” If we are to be faithful, we cannot pursue a typical litigation settlement negotiation. We can only speak our truth as we know it, test it, and reaffirm it.

Friends seek dialogue and a common way forward. An active prison ministry requires an active, dynamic working relationship with the corrections system, and at bottom that is what we seek. DOCCS’ arbitrary actions can grind volunteers down. Nonetheless, our prison ministry is in need of support if it is to survive. Green Haven Prison Meeting needs the active care of outside Friends if it is to survive and flourish. If we insist that DOCCS permits Green Haven Meeting to hold weekly meetings for worship with a concern for business, we must also commit ourselves to guide and support those seekers behind bars, and to participate in their sessions consistently and robustly. If we insist on quarterly meetings held over 5-6 hours on a Saturday, we must commit ourselves to prepare for and to participate in them consistently and robustly. We owe that to the inmates, to

DOCCS, and to ourselves, to support, to bolster, to expand the ranks of Friends laboring with this ministry.

A hearing on the preliminary injunction will be scheduled before the judge; Friends will be alerted and are urged to attend that session to demonstrate that this is not an individual suit, but a suit on behalf of our Religious Society.

Questions and accounts of experience with DOCCS arose from the body.

Fred distributed a report on the lawsuit and reminded us that the legal papers are on the NYYM website.

2019-07-28. Leo Quirk (Ithaca and Bloomington, Indiana) read a report on the changes to structure from minute 2018-04-06.

They summarized the status of each component, and also noted that changes include not only structure but also practices, such as distributed clerking. They invited comments and suggestions for innovation. The report is attached (see page 117) and is on the NYYM website.

2019-07-29. Leo Quirk then offered the following background and minute from Liaison Committee:

Nurture Coordinating Committee (NCC) and the Nurture Section were suspended at Spring Sessions 2018 (see minute 2018-04-06), as an experiment, with the plan for a report at Summer Sessions 2019. All constituent bodies in its care were transferred to other CCs or to Liaison.

In light of the many prior years of difficulty for NCC and the successful functioning of our Yearly Meeting despite its suspension, Liaison Committee proposes that Friends lay down Nurture Coordinating Committee (NCC) and the Nurture Section. The current arrangement for the entities formerly under its care may yet be revised as the review of our structure continues.

Friends approved.

2019-07-30. Karen Snare (Bulls Head-Oswego), clerk of NYYM Representatives to Friends General Conference Central Committee, described FGC's institutional assessment on racism. In the course of the process begun in the fall of 2017, and reported in fall 2018, FGC has moved from awareness of the difficulties to enthusiasm about becoming an actively anti-racist faith community. Awareness of leading edge and trailing edge

dynamics supports leaders and helps “trailers” to move. An implementation team of 10 members with diverse membership will assist FGC in making the recommendations a reality and provide direction moving forward.

Karen then listed elements of the FGC website (www.fgcquaker.org), including the membership of the implementation team and the full report as well as a summary, a 6-minute video, the Quaker Cloud, the FGC bookstore, the Gathering, news, Quaker Speak, Quaker Finder, and e-retreats (4-week online opportunities). The next FGC Gathering is June 28 to July 4, 2020, in Radford VA, with the theme Way Will Open. She urged Friends to consider service as a representative to FGC and reminded Friends that FGC is not *they* but *us*.

2019-07-31. Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay) clerked the remainder of the meeting for worship with attention to business. Roseann Press (Housatonic), Clerk of the New York Yearly Meeting Board of Trustees, reported that the anticipated sale of the Yorktown property will derive an estimated \$135,000 in net income. The Trustees offered the following minute:

The Yearly Meeting authorizes the NYYM Trustees to place the monies derived from disposition of the property known as the Calvary Bible Church and parsonage in Yorktown Heights, NY, under management by the Trustees (as has been done with previous property sales, most recently the Plattekill and Stamford-Greenwich meetinghouses).

After clarifications, Friends approved.

In the spirit of transparency the Trustees reported that they intend to place \$100,000 of the proceeds into the Meeting Houses and Properties Designated Use Fund, raising the fund’s principal from about \$50,000 to \$150,000 (and producing annual distributions in the future of approximately \$5,550 as compared to \$1,850 in 2018 distributions) and to place the remainder in the Trustee Reserve, whose use will be determined by the Trustees in the future.

Friends offered suggestions for the use of the funds.

Spee Braun, financial clerk of the Trustees, summarized the use of funds from Meeting Houses and Properties Designated Use Fund to assist meetings to maintain and improve their facilities.

2019-07-32. Roseann Press then introduced the first reading of the changes to the by-laws by explaining that our yearly meeting is a legal entity defined by the laws of New York State. In summary, Trustees propose revising the yearly meeting's by-laws to accomplish three goals: (1) clarifying and distinguishing between the identity of the "officers" of the corporation for certain legal and financial matters and the "officers" of the Society for the spiritual concerns of the body; (2) increasing the maximum size of the Board of Trustees from five to seven trustees to five to ten so that a broader diversity of Friends and skills can be represented on the board; and (3) shortening the length of a trustee's term from five years to four years and reducing the number of terms a trustee can serve consecutively from three terms to two terms, which will reduce the total number of consecutive years a Friend can serve as a trustee from fifteen to ten years, in order to increase the transparency of and opportunities for participation in the work of trustees. (See attached, page 121, for full summary of changes.)

2019-07-33. The meeting closed in waiting worship.

Friday, July 26, 10:45 a.m.

Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Clerk
Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Assistant Clerk
Karen Way (New Brunswick), Recording Clerk
Suzanne Blackburn (Genesee Valley), Reading Clerk

2019-07-34. Friends gathered in Meeting for Worship. Clerk Jeffrey Aaron quoted President John Adams regarding the essential function of mystery and humility in human understanding. Jeffrey then introduced the clerks table and reviewed plans for the session. Said Jeffrey, "Every day is an experiment."

2019-07-35. Jeffrey introduced visitor Peter Cook, Executive Director of the New York State Council of Churches.

2019-07-36. Sunfire Kazmayer (Easton) reported on his travel minute to the 2018 Parliament of the World Religions. The gathering dealt with difficult topics, including climate emergency, climate refugees, and despair. Nevertheless, partic-

ipants generated hope that there could be a better world. Acknowledging that he was “speaking to the choir,” Sunfire said the message to the choir is “SING LOUDER.” There is danger ahead and the challenge is urgent. Friends spoke in support.

2019-07-37. Steve Mohlke (Ithaca), General Secretary of NYYM, gave his annual report. He addressed the complex issues of bias and inclusion. Steve has realized some of his own internal biases. We all have biases—how do they get in the way of making the YM inclusive? He described his own process of developing goals that are neither too vague nor too numerous. He finally came up with three goals: staffing, anti-racism, and clerking/decision making.

1. Staffing faces the restriction of funding. Do valuable staff need to leave in order to make room for a Youth and Young Adult Field Secretary?
2. Racism is both an individual and systemic problem.
3. Good clerking and decisions can make it possible for staff to work and for the YM to address racism and inclusivity.

Steve spent much of his time this year on Pay as Led, a new policy which has an anti-racist potential. Decisions about how to discern and administer exceptions to policy also have implications for racism. Quakers struggle with policy. Is it more important for me to get my way than to live in community? Steve developed several queries:

- Do our policies adequately protect against bias?
- Are our policies strict enough to be meaningful and flexible enough to be followed?
- Is it reasonably feasible to update our policies?
- Is the process for updating our policies accessible and inclusive?

The best part of this week for Steve was a meeting with young adults and not-so-young adults on financial issues. The meeting led to young adults volunteering to be nominated to Development and other committees. A new energy is moving on so many levels. Steve mentioned that envelopes in the Inn are available for donating to the yearly meeting. We can do this.

2019-07-38. Dennis Haag (Old Chatham), Executive Co-Director of Powell House, reported on the most recent year. Powell House is more than its excellent youth program. There are also adult conferences, including monthly meeting retreats, and rental groups such as a recent retreat for former gang members trained by Alternatives To Violence. All participants in the Powell House experience are given space to play, to connect, and to grow. Dennis stated that great change in a person’s life can come from 5 minutes of intervention. He left us with a query: What will you do with your 5 minutes?

2019-07-39. In accordance with our practice with Seasoned Business Items (formerly consent agenda), the clerk asked for approval of previously posted contents which required no amendments. Friends approved:

2019-07-40. Adjustments were made to the practice of “first and second readings” (attached, page 124).

2019-07-41. Changes were made to the Consent Agenda process, including the new name “Seasoned Business Items” (attached, page 125).

2018-07-42. Previously posted nominations for appointment to service were approved. (See the Friends Under Appointment section of this *Yearbook*.)

2018-07-43. Deb Wood (Purchase), clerk of the Nominating Committee, read the names of individuals whose nominations must be approved separately, because they are not members of a monthly meeting in NYYM, or were asked to serve for a 7th year of service. Friends approved:

<i>Board of Oakwood Friends School</i>		class of 2022
Patrick Crowley ('13)	Pacific YM	
Robert Heidel	Baltimore YM	
Philip Richmond	Baltimore YM	
<i>Elsie K Powell House Inc.</i>		class of 2024
Matthew Lindop	Saratoga (attender)	
<i>Committee to Revise Faith and Practice</i>		class of 2020
Tim Connolly	Purchase (attender)	

Communications Committee class of 2020
Jennifer Swann ('17) South Berkshire, NEYM

Supervisory Committee for General Secretary class of 2020
Ileana Clarke ('17) co-opted Cornwall (attender)

Deb also read nominations received too late to be included in the Seasoned Business process. Friends approved:

Records class of 2022
Hans Jergen Ridgewood

American Friends Service Committee class of 2022
Hans Jergen Ridgewood

Prisons Committee class of 2022
Phyllis Bunker Poplar Ridge

Conflict Transformation class of 2022
Kirsten Cole Brooklyn

Sessions class of 2022
Emily Michaud Old Chatham

Ann Nunes Wilton (attender)

Robin Mullaney Old Chatham (attender)

Black Concerns Committee class of 2022
Jerry Leaphart Wilton

State of Society Report class of 2022
Joanna Oltman Smith Brooklyn

2019-07-44. Rima Segal (Rochester) presented the first reading of the Epistle.

2019-07-45. As Rima completed her reading, the children and grown-ups of Junior Yearly Meeting entered the auditorium, playing guitars and singing "River." As we sang together, the yearly meeting community was completed by their presence.

Friday, July 26, 7:00 p.m.

Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Clerk
Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Assistant Clerk
Karen Way (New Brunswick), Recording Clerk
Marvea Thompson, (Brooklyn), Reading Clerk

2019-07-46. Friends of all ages gathered in meeting for worship.

2018-07-47. Jeffrey introduced Melanie Claire Mallison (Ithaca), clerk of Sessions Committee, who reported the numbers for the week. There were 501 total participants; 400 adults and 101 children. 95 people came for the first time; 74 identified as young adults. A total of \$7,278.79 was raised; Fun(d) Fair raised \$789, Tagless Tag Sale, \$1,689.79, and Café Night \$4,800. (Note: each of those numbers is higher than last year.)

Melanie Claire invited Friends to Fall Sessions to be held November 1-3 at Powell House, Old Chatham, NY.

2019-07-48. Leo Quirk (Ithaca) spoke for several yearly meeting groups in addressing the needs of young adults:

Throughout this week, many concerns have been raised related to the nurturing of our youth and young adult Friends.

We hear you.

We are taking action steps to support you.

Several concrete action items rose out of conversations today. Spiritual Nurture Working Group, in partnership with Youth Committee and Aging Concerns Committee, is creating a spiritual mentorship program serving young adults and new Friends. They are also developing a mentorship workshop at Powell House. A working group has been formed to look deeper into the money and job description needed for a Youth and Young Adult Field Secretary. Ministry Coordinating Committee committed to addressing the 8 concerns raised in the report from Young Adult Friends, one concern at each of their meetings this year. Another group is contacting youth to ask them to state their needs in their voices. Many other committees discussed concrete ways to nurture the gifts and leadership of young adults and learning Friends. Monthly and quarterly meetings are also encouraged to further this discussion. We can *all* take a part in nourishing our

Quaker community.

2019-07-49. Dawn Pozzi (Rochester) and Sylke Jackson (Rockland), Junior Yearly Meeting Coordinators, thanked the high school group for their fine work and success with Cafe Night. Dawn urged Friends to consider the joys of working with the children. JYM needs to know by May if you can volunteer.

Next year's coordinators will be Dawn Pozzi and Ellie Rosenberg. Bryant Henning is going to be the Apprentice Coordinator, following the steps of Dawn and Ellie. "Thank you for blessing us with your children. We love them."

2019-07-50. Sylke Jackson introduced the Pre-Kindergarten group, which gave its report wearing amazing hats. A beautiful rainbow was unrolled as a backdrop for a list of all the good things the children remembered:

I remember...how we were new to each other; now we know everyone sits together; our group changes every day with different children.

I remember...a frog, and a toad, and a snake; a turtle splashed the water, at the Nature Center.

I remember...Don came singing, dancing, drumming, and instruments in the game with toucans.

I remember...everybody had a turn; I love dolls because they are soft; I remember my mommy and my daddy; I really love my family and they care all about me.

I remember...we ate snack every day; we played in the playground; we jumped in the pool; we explored colors and light and rainbows; we sang songs about being the same and different.

The rest of the community joined them in singing "This Little Light of Mine."

2019-07-51. 1st through 3rd graders sat in a neat row to act out the activities of their week. As their report was read, they acted out each game.

When we met on Monday, most of us didn't have a lot of friends. We broke the ice by sharing how we wanted to be treated, wrote our group agreements, and played a lot of games. Red light/green light made some of us really mad, so we listened to each

other and tried to make the game more fair.

Snakes in the grass was one of our favorite games but we had to be gentle with our snake friends to make sure all of us had fun.

Angel Ramos challenged us to reach out and include others even if they don't walk or talk or look like us. We all agreed to try to make new friends this week.

We had lots of special guests that played games with us. Chris and Mike taught us how to turn into animals and take care of a dragon's egg. The high schoolers talked with us about gender and pronouns. Melissa Keeley led us in a cool scavenger hunt at the nature center and we dug for dinosaur bones in the sand pit.

The high schoolers played parachute games and taught us Marco Polo during beach day. We each met our own high school buddy and became fast friends. We had a blast at Fun(d) Fair and some of us even performed at Café Night. When we played the blanket game on Wednesday, we started remembering each other's names. After a week together, we can't wait to come back to Summer Sessions next year as good friends!

2019-07-52. The 4th-6th graders reported that they learned how to be INCLUSIVE while having fun:

The following are the things we accomplished over the course of this week:

- We played games as we got to know each other and discussed how to include people in our community. We also learned about committees and formed committees for games, Fun(d) Fair, and epistle.
- We gathered and went canoeing, learning to work together through paddling our boats.
- We enjoyed games and laughter in the sun at Slim Point Beach. Our face painting and cup game booth were a big hit at the Fun(d) Fair.
- The games committee taught many of us a new game called Yoshi and we used our awareness to complete a nature scavenger hunt.
- We ended the week with community building games with Chris and Mike before gathering for community singing.

Our epistle committee developed five topics to demonstrate for you how to be inclusive in our community.

1. Treat others how you would like to be treated.

2. Give advice to people who need (and want) it.
3. No one has to sit alone. Invite them to join.
4. Active listening.
5. Smile, smile, smile.

For each of the five topics, the group performed a short skit, showing the wrong and then right behavior.

2019-07-53. The junior high group (grades 7-9) sang a song describing their week, to the tune of Rise and Shine (the Noah's Ark song.)

On Monday we learned each others names (x2)

Talked about identity

Here at Silver Bay

(CHORUS)

We love J-YM-mmm

Every day is tons of fun

here at Silver Bay

On Tuesday we read about global warming

Tuesday we discussed inclusivity

Played some games with Chris and Mike

Here at Silver Bay

We love J-YM-mm...

On Wednesday we went down and swam in the lake (x2)

got sponges thrown in our faces

Here at Silver Bay

We love J-YM-mm...

On Thursday we discussed Quakerism (x2)

went outside and looked at organisms

Here at Silver Bay

We love J-YM-mm...

On Friday we gave affirmations (x2)

sang some songs in celebration

Here at Silver Bay

We love J-YM-mm...

2019-07-54. The high school group took turns in reading their epistle (sadly, the enthusiastic illustrations won't fit in the minute):

Monday: Introduction, name whips, expectations, and a few

games. Mike and Chris visited and played more games. Then we made personality maps and discussed them.

Tuesday: We talked about divesting and our environment with Diane Keefe, then we discussed immigration with Steven from FCNL. After discussion we wrote postcards to our senators addressing our issue with the treatment of immigrants.

Wednesday: We went out for worship on the water and sat peacefully in silence, until Eamon fell off his kayak. We only judged him a little bit. We then had a talk about our impact on the climate with Reb, Paul, and Alice. Then we panicked about the end of the world...and what to put in the epistle.

Thursday: We gathered in worship outside the boathouse and ventured out on a nature hike to Slim Point. We settled in a field and played games, then met with the 1-3 graders and briefly played parachute games. We partnered with beach buddies and together we marched back down to the beach. We spent the rest of the day having beach fun and eating fruit leather.

Friday: We met outside the boathouse once more for silent worship with attention to the theme of inclusivity. Angel Ramos came to sit with our group and speak to us about living with power, finding ways to include people, and confronting racism by living as an example. We talked about being brave as Quakers with integrity, speaking out against hate. We kept this in mind as the group gathered for games and the epistle committee met. Holding the idea of community close, Quakers of all ages joined us in the boathouse for singing.

Next year's high school clerks were announced: Maia Mascari and Jasper Smith, with Eamon Glynn as an alternate. Additionally, the HS group has two new members of Community Response Team (CART): Trinity Lawson and Eddie Laughter.

Copies of *Faith and Practice* were presented to this year's graduating seniors: Abby Byrtus, Majesty Hopkins, Analea Blackburn, Kayleigh O'Keefe, Stephanie Lane, Rachel Hewitt, Lucien Alexander-Ray, and Micah Clay.

2019-07-55. Deb Wood read a list of additional nominations received since the previous business session.

<i>Personnel</i>		class of 2022
Marissa Badgley	Poughkeepsie	

<i>Friends General Conference</i>		class of 2022
Helen Mullen	Brooklyn	

<i>Elsie K. Powell House</i>		class of 2024
Louise Tiano	Rochester	
<i>Black Concerns</i>		class of 2022
Jerry Leaphart	Wilton	
<i>Sessions</i>		class of 2020
Bryant Henning	(attends Powell House)*	
<i>Prisons Committee</i>		class of 2022
Gary Barnes	Buffalo	
<i>Development</i>		class of 2022
Mary Hannon Williams	Bulls Head-Oswego	

Friends approved.

2019-07-56. Rima Segal gave a second reading of the New York Yearly Meeting Epistle. With slight changes, Friends approved; see attached, page 129.

2019-07-57. The Reading Clerk read an explanation and a minute from Liaison Committee to change the status of reading clerks to conform with the by-laws. (The explanation is attached, see page 128.)

From date of approval of this minute, reading clerk will become a volunteer position, to be sought by Sessions Committee as a part of their regular list of necessary volunteers for each gathering. Reading clerks will no longer be officers of New York Yearly Meeting. They will no longer be nominated by NYYM Nominating Committee. Changes to the NYYM *Handbook* and *Yearbook* will be made after this approval by the appropriate bodies with no further approvals needed by gathered Friends.

Friends approved.

2019-07-58. Jeffrey reviewed three interim actions taken between Spring and Summer sessions:

1. Letter to New York Legislative leaders joining with “Faith Leaders Urging New York to Enact HALT Solitary Confinement.” HALT (Humane Alternatives to Long Term Solitary Confinement) is a bill calling for an end to solitary confinement.
2. Letter to His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith,

Archbishop in Sri Lanka, offering condolences for recent terrorist attacks in his country.

3. Letter congratulating Marion Cole, Choir Director of Farmington Friends Church, on the occasion of a celebration of her 50 years of service.

2019-07-59. Jeffrey then re-introduced visitor Peter Cook, Executive Director of the New York State Council of Churches. The council certifies chaplains to work in prisons, and Peter Cook would like to include Quakers in that certification program. The council also does extensive social justice work, addressing problems in budget policy, immigration, the cash bail system, farm workers, and other situations that oppress vulnerable people. The council is preparing seminars to help faith communities with burdensome buildings repurpose them to better fulfill their mission. In a last observation, Peter praised the range of ages in the Auditorium, unequalled in his experience with other denominations, urging us to nurture that aspect of our community.

2019-07-60. Jeffrey shared words on the topic of Quaker practice. "Like worship itself, these Quaker practices are often subtle and easily thwarted, though they are powerful and well worth the discipline and well worth careful study."

2018-07-61. After approval of the minutes, Friends entered expectant worship to close the 324th business portion of Summer Sessions of New York Yearly Meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

Thanksgiving Prayer

(see minute 2019-07-01)

Thou who hath led us to gather here in prayer to celebrate this annual gathering of the Religious Society of Friends, we give humble thanks. We acknowledge the depth of our religious traditions and how you have called us together as Friends, as Family.

Thank you for those deep sacred places within that honor simplicity and peace, those places of Light and Love.

Let us find such a place within ourselves, in each other and in the world.

Places where we all may find acceptance and belonging.

Let us create these places, let us restore them. Let us strengthen them and let us protect them. May these places within be nourished by Divine eternal wisdom.

We give thanks because Thou hath given us the wisdom to discern injustice and the courage to stand for peace, integrity, truth and freedom.

Give us the strength to stand against the ignorance of sexism, the promotion of racism, and the condemnation and defamation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people.

Today as we pray together, we embrace the Oneness that connects us all. Cleanse us from bigotry, racism, intolerance and harsh judgment of others. We rejoice that our practice of sitting in receptivity enables us to be imbued with Truth and Divine understandings.

We rejoice that so many of us are called to serve in ways that strengthen our global community. Let Your Light shine through our lives; that in each and every community we come from, we can be beacons of Peace and reconciliation.

May we be forgiven of our transgressions against the African-American, the Native American, and those we have warred against.

May we learn from our mistakes, that the people who have died from them should not have died in vain.

May hatred no longer find fertile ground in which to grow here. May all of us feel Grace upon us. May anything that is not like Grace be cast out of our midst.

Reignite the Spirit of truth in our hearts. That Spirit that found sacred fire in the heart of George Fox.

We cherish the memories of those who have gone before us, all of those Friends who paved this path of Peace. We honor their commitment and their sacrifices. And we pray to continue their work.

May we be repaired.

May we be forgiven.

May our children be blessed.

May we be renewed.

We surrender our destiny to the Divine.

Amen (And so it is)

—Barbra Bleecker

Acknowledgement of the Land

(see minute 2019-07-01)

We wish to acknowledge that the land we stand on today, though sometimes known as the Mohawk Hunting Ground, was used for hunting by many Native Nations under the treaty or wampum of “The Dish with One Spoon.” This Wampum between the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and many other neighboring Native Nations is an agreement that there is only one dish, Mother Earth. We will take only what we need from her, leave enough for others and keep the dish clean. No knives shall be used as we eat from this dish, only a spoon, so that there will be no risk of blood being spilt, or wars started. The hunting lands are shared by all.

These and many other New York lands were taken by settlement of Europeans, as well as wars and unfair treaties, destroying and displacing the peoples who lived and hunted there. In making this acknowledgement, we revive their presence here

and we thank the Mohawks and other Nations for the care they took of these lands and this lake and for their wisdom passed on to their descendants who live amongst us today.

Memorial Minute

Mia Tatiana Kissil Hewitt (1966-2018)

(see minute 2019-07-09)

Mia Tatiana Kissil Hewitt will be remembered as one who lived her life fully, with energy, intensity, a fierce passion for the causes and people she loved, and a deeply held Quaker faith that nourished all that she did.

Born on April 14, 1966, Mia was an active member of Chatham Summit Monthly Meeting throughout her life. As a child she came to meeting with her parents Don and Claire and attended First Day School with her brother Matthew. In June, 1996, the meetinghouse was the site of her joyful marriage to Mark Alan Hewitt, and in 2002 and 2004 the Meeting celebrated the births of their daughters Allison and Rachel. As an adult, Mia contributed her energy to many tasks in the Meeting, including editing the newsletter and serving on the committees for Religious Education and Ministry and Counsel. At the time of her death she was looking forward to moving into the role of clerk of the meeting.

Mia was also active in the wider Quaker world. As a teen, she enjoyed youth weekends at the Powell House Conference Center and later passed that love to her husband and daughters, all of whom became Powell House boosters and frequent attenders at PoHo programs. Mia was active and visible throughout the yearly meeting; she enjoyed attending Sessions with her family, especially Summer Sessions at Silver Bay, and held several leadership positions in NYYM, including Clerk of the Advancement Committee. Among Friends, she was known as someone who built community and who was gifted in pastoral care, showing up when people needed her. One Friend described her as having the gift of “helping people hear each other and knowing what it is we need to be listening for.”

When Chatham Summit Meeting gathered sorrowfully to

mourn Mia's loss and celebrate her life, memorial services were held at the same time at Powell House and at Brooklyn Meeting to accommodate all those who wanted to attend.

Mia was a devoted wife and mother and took unending delight and pride in her family. She wore her "Marching Band Parent" sweatshirt proudly and never missed a concert or school production. She treasured family times spent with Mark, Allison, Rachel and step-daughter Sarah, and she made her home in Bernardsville a place of casual warmth and comfortable gatherings.

Mia both received and gave joy through music. With her parents and husband, she shared a love of bluegrass music festivals, and she fostered a love of music in her daughters. A gifted singer, Mia was a long-time member of the Harmonium Choral Society of Morris County. She served on the choral society board, and it was at Harmonium that she met her husband Mark and many of her closest friends. For over twenty-five years of concerts she radiated joy from her place in the soprano section. In tribute to her life, Harmonium collaborated with the Alumni of the Yale Russian Chorus to produce a marvelous memorial concert in spring, 2018.

In addition to being dedicated to peace and equality, Mia practiced and advocated for stewardship of the earth. She savored the natural world and enjoyed hiking with her dog Trixie and camping in New Jersey parks. Photos of Mia often show her outdoors, smiling and rosy-cheeked. It was one of life's unexplained contradictions that, despite being a non-smoker and living a healthy lifestyle, she was stricken with lung cancer.

A graduate of Morristown High School, she received a B.A. in 1988 from Guilford College and later pursued graduate work in English at Drew University. Using her communication and writing skills, she began her career as a communications professional at Lucent Technologies. Later, aligned with her convictions about equality, she worked for ten years as an administrator at the Rutgers University Race and Ethnicity Institute and five years at the Institute for Education Law and Policy at Rutgers Law School in Newark.

In mid-life, led by a deepening faith and an understanding of her own gifts, Mia enrolled in a Master of Divinity program

at Earlham School of Religion with the goal of becoming a hospital chaplain. She dove into her studies eagerly and filled her bedroom with books on church history and scripture. She took great joy in discussing theology, women in the ministry, and Biblical interpretation. Though her dream of becoming a chaplain was interrupted by illness, she in fact ministered to many in the course of her illness through her courage, optimism, and steadfast faith.

Mia passed away on February 28, 2018 at her home in Bernardsville. Her caring, intuitive, and joyful spirit could not be stilled by her illness. In the last year of her life she wrote a blog for friends and family that chronicled her ferocious battle with cancer. The entries were humorous and insightful, often with an embedded link to a piece of music that encapsulated Mia's struggle and hopes. Her voice and spirit came through clearly in the one-word affirmation that concluded each blog entry and that expressed her intent to move ever onward, ever higher. "Excelsior!"

Approved by Chatham-Summit Monthly Meeting in a meeting for business on January 13, 2019. Jeff Bird, Clerk.

Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series Final Report, July 2019

(see minute 2019-07-10)

"The largest impact from the Series has been the opportunity to meet more young Friends from across the Yearly Meeting. Sharing our faith and experiences have been invaluable. I would love for the series to continue going forward as we search and experiment on what shape Quakerism works for us." —Bruce Steinberg, Brooklyn Monthly Meeting

Overview

The Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series was offered through New York Yearly Meeting and under the care of the Spiritual Nurture Working Group between October 2018 and July 2019. The six-part series included three day-long retreats and three weekend-long retreats and provided over fifty young adult Friends (ages 18-35ish) with opportunities to connect with each other in Faith and community, build skills related to Quaker

process and practice, and enrich their faith and understanding as Friends. The final retreat culminated with a joyful caravan of fifteen participants and three elders to NYYM Summer Sessions at Silver Bay.

Workshops and retreats were developed based on the expressed needs of young adults from across the yearly meeting and included:

1. Living Faithfully in and as Community, Quaker Intentional Village-Canaan
2. The Intersection of Faith and Everything Else, Fifteenth Street
3. What is Discernment? Quaker Decision-Making in the 21st Century, Poughkeepsie
4. Clerking in the 21st Century, Powell House
5. Why Am I? An Exploration of Authenticity, Integrity, and Courage, Fifteenth Street (moved from Farmington)
6. What Do Young Adults Need?, Powell House

Results

Total Attendance: 140 participants

Total Individuals Served: 50

Participation Average: 2.7 workshops/person, with 14 people attending four or more workshops

[The Series] was vital and uplifting. It exercised parts of my intellect, laid bare my emotional state and freed my spirit to be seen and valued amongst my community! –YASNS Participant

I appreciated meeting so many others and finding trusted spiritual community with them. I loved the presence and role of the elders in the group. –YASNS Participant

When participants were asked about how participating in the Series impacted them:

- **100%** now have a stronger Quaker community
- **100%** would definitely or likely participate in a Series like this again
- **94%** have built skills related to Quaker process and practice

- **94%** feel more connected to other Young Adults in NYYM and beyond
- **94%** feel more connected to Quakerism
- **89%** strengthened their own spiritual practices
- **83%** feel more connected to NYYM
- **83%** feel more supported and/or nurtured on spiritual journey
- **78%** increased their participation in Quaker events and activities (at any level)

Participation in Other Yearly Meeting Events

- 16 participants attended Meetings for Discernment in February 2019 (10 first-time attenders)
- At least 22 participants attended Summer Sessions at Silver Bay (5 first-time attenders)

Our Testimony

This testimony is offered by the seventeen young adults and elders who gathered at Powell House July 20-21, 2019 to discuss and discern what young adults across New York Yearly Meeting need. As a subset of the Young Adult Friends who live and worship across our yearly meeting, we present the following with one voice and a shared commitment to the strengthening and nourishing of our yearly meeting's spiritual condition.

Young Adult Friends from New York Yearly Meeting are grateful to the yearly meeting, the Spiritual Nurture Working Group, monthly meetings, and Friends of all ages for their support of the Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series between October 2018 and July 2019. The time we have spent together in community has been precious, offering us myriad opportunities to explore our Faith, build our skills, connect across differences, and exist fully as our most authentic selves. We have been nurtured, lifted, challenged, coached, loved, and accepted by each other, our elders, and our facilitators. We are enriched and encouraged by the deep diversity of those choosing to participate in the retreats and appreciate growing and learning with Friends of varying races, ethnicities, genders, sexual-orientations, abilities, backgrounds, and other identities. We feel Spirit moving

and shaking and living and working within us and around us, and we sense that we are closer to existing in a Religious Society that sees us, hears us, knows us, and invests in us. We have faith that Way will continue opening for our ministries and gifts to be supported and uplifted in meaningful, sustainable, and mutually beneficial ways. We have faith that our voices will be heard.

Acknowledgements of Conditions

We recognize, name, and affirm that not all young adults can actively or even passively participate in traditional Quaker contexts including but not limited to monthly meetings, the yearly meeting, and even series such as the one we just completed. We recognize, name, and affirm that inaccessibility to such Quaker spaces and/or events sometimes translates to a sense of spiritual homelessness that can be alienating, uncomfortable, and spiritually traumatizing for some young adults who live, worship, work, and/or gather in community as Friends. We recognize, name, and affirm that these Friends are part of our Beloved Community and are fundamental to the future of Quakerism.

We recognize, name, and affirm that this work of supporting young adult friends cannot be delegated or siphoned to any one committee, person, or staff member. We affirm that it is the job of every person within the yearly meeting, including us, to create and sustain inclusive, accessible, loving, authentic, accepting, supportive, grounded, innovative, safe, and open-minded spaces for Young Adult Friends and all Friends.

We recognize, name, and affirm that resources of time, money, and energy are limited, and that Young Adult Friends are not the only marginalized population needing or deserving of additional resources. We appreciate transparency from the yearly meeting and other bodies around these decisions.

What do Young Adults Need?

In the spirit of these three acknowledgments, we offer the following eight needs. The first four include specific action items and the second four are principles that we are holding in the Light.

- 1. We need sustainable infrastructure to support, encourage, and nurture us at the yearly meeting**

level. We believe that the community that we have built is a strong first step and also know that true stewardship of and care for the young adult community requires the yearly meeting to invest in us and in our futures by funding a full-time, multi-year Field Secretary position devoted exclusively to building and sustaining young adult Friends. We would like to be included in conversations about how to fairly compensate and recognize the work of this important position.

2. **We need access to meaningful opportunities to connect and be in community beyond monthly meetings and yearly meeting sessions.** These formal spaces are vital to our yearly meeting and we are enriched when we have the opportunity and ability to participate fully. We yearn for more spaces, both physical and virtual, to learn, grow, and share in our experiences of life and God both as young adults and across generations. Our spiritual energy increases when we are together, especially when we are together outside of business meetings and meeting-house walls. We crave community grounding and support and seek opportunities to be more interconnected across the entire yearly meeting. We are open to the many ways that this might happen and encourage further exploration of how to continue programming like the Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series and how to support other Quaker spaces in being more inclusive and accessible to people in the young adult stage of life.
3. **We need mentoring, eldership, and spiritual accompaniment to support our personal journeys, to develop our Divine gifts, and to nurture our leadings and ministries.** Throughout the Spiritual Nurture Series, we appreciated having the space and comfort to open our hearts, and it was a great relief to have elders who were willing to listen and hold us. Young adulthood is a unique time, brimming with transitions, identity exploration, challenges, and spiritual questioning. We seek help in navigating the light and the shadows by creating official mentoring and eldership structures that include a

system for identifying people within the yearly meeting who may walk with us on our spiritual journeys and help us remain connected to our Faith and community when we cannot be together in person or when we feel distant, separate, or alone. We encourage exploration of how to effectively use technology to create grounded, Spirit-centered spaces across distance.

4. **We need investment and resources to build our capacity as Quaker leaders, ministers, elders, and community builders.** We are humbly aware of how much we don't know and feel tremendous responsibility to learn and build our skills so that we can fully participate in and continue to uphold Quaker traditions and practices. Just as we seek to be in community, so too do we want to learn how to build that community. Just as we seek elder-ship, so too do we want to learn how to serve as elders and learn more about how elders have developed on their own spiritual journeys. During the Series, some of us had the chance to learn about discernment, clerking, and eldering and realized that we have gifts and strengths in these areas. We desire opportunities to safely practice these and other critical skills so that when the time comes, we can step up in service to our committees, meetings, and yearly meeting.
5. **We need to feel that when we enter a Quaker space, it is safe for all but especially for those people who are not in positions of power and/or privilege.** Some of us hesitate to enter or participate in more formal Quaker spaces because we or our peers do not feel comfortable being our most authentic selves. We experience the damaging impact of power and privilege in the yearly meeting, including experiences of tokenism, exclusion, and devaluing of marginalized voices, including those of young adults. We worry that Quakers' tendency to lecture or preach about history and quickness to defend practices and ourselves pushes some Friends (further) into the margins or completely off the page. We recognize that these dynamics happen more to some than to others, in

some meetings more than others. We seek a yearly meeting that is committed to equity and liberation in both word and action, where we can each be loved as who we truly are.

6. **We need to pay attention to accessibility in all its forms.** Some Friends have greater access to Quakerism and the yearly meeting than others. Physical disabilities, geographic distance, language barriers, finances, caregiving, life transitions, incarceration, culture, transportation, language, and modes of ministry rise for us as barriers that jeopardize full participation for all Friends, and young adult Friends in particular. We seek to participate in a Faith that is accessible and penetrable, welcoming and alive for all.
7. **We need Quaker spaces to center joy and authenticity, to allow for fluidity, creativity, curiosity, spontaneity, and play.** We hunger for spaces where leisure and structure are equally embraced, where there is time for deep sharing and deep conversation, authentic connections and personal discernment. We appreciate opportunities to break bread together, to be outside together, to experiment and be vulnerable together. We need spaces to share our music, art, poetry, dance, and vocations as the ministries that they are. We wonder how meetings for worship might adapt to include nonverbal ministry and how we might provide space for creative expression in yearly meeting business.
8. **We need for the yearly meeting, *our* yearly meeting, be open to continuing revelation and to trust that we are grounded and Spirit-led rather than lazy, entitled, or naïve. The source of our desire for change and our foundation as a community is profound love, mutual understanding, and hope for a vibrant yearly meeting that addresses the real needs of Friends in the twenty-first century.** Many young adults in New York Yearly Meeting feel that our needs and voices don't matter, especially when they do not fit into traditional forms or official practices. We hear that we are loved and appreciated but it is hard to hear

the love when we feel belittled, dismissed, or unimportant. We yearn for a yearly meeting that trusts our ministries, our leadings, and our discernment, that names and uses our gifts and listens deeply to our joy and to our pain. We yearn for a yearly meeting that hears and acknowledges our concerns and works actively to address those concerns even when not convenient, expedient, or perfectly aligned with how things have always been. This requires each of us to listen and love harder, to trust and dream bigger.

With humility, gratitude, and prayerful optimism, these Young Adult Friends wish to communally drop the veil, to encourage us all to see each other with fresh eyes and fresh hearts, to become one body that is welcoming and supportive of all its parts. We recognize and celebrate our place in this Beloved Community and understand that we cannot expect our needs to be met without our own faithful participation. At the same time, we ask for help in constructing a container and vessel for our continued growth and nurture as young adult Friends. The Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series was just the beginning. We hunger, in Faith and in Love, for more.

We are aware that we have named needs for spiritual support and accountability that are needed in all corners of our yearly meeting and not exclusively for young adults. We also recognize that expressing our needs in this form could serve to further divide us from the body of which we are an integral part. Our intention is to build bridges, to create wholeness, to increase consciousness, and to strengthen our community. Over this week and in the months to come, we invite Friends of all ages to consider how the needs young adults have expressed might translate to other Quaker contexts and challenges. We also invite you to get to know us, to listen with us, to hear and experience how God is alive in our lives right now. And finally, we invite you to start today. We do not need permission to do this important work of building and nurturing community. We must simply start. We invite you to the starting block. Ready. Set. Let's go.

State of Society Report

(see minute 2019-07-16)

The 2018 collection of annual State of Meeting reports is a gift infused with wonder and wisdom shared from around the yearly meeting. The forty two reports submitted this year vary widely, from the way information was gathered and threshed to the style and format of the final documents. This year's committee of two was a wee bit late out of the starting gate with the annual guidance document and yet the responses from meetings, prison worship groups and their members are collectively Spirit-filled with ideas to challenge and uplift us all.

Six meetings reported being bigger this year; enriched with new and more diverse membership, “we are thriving” and “the buoyancy of youth brings optimism for our future”; others are smaller, older, having lost long-time members, finding the need to reduce committee work and struggling financially. Most reports describe one way or another the love and appreciation for the sustained rhythm of worship, meaningful relationship with children and families, community projects and concerns, shared readings, advocacy and outreach, caring for one another, and shared time together. One report states, “Love gathers us up. We hope to continue growing in ways we may not even know,” another celebrates “the quality and collegiality of our meeting,” and, another that “Spiritual nourishment is strong and steady!” One notes “[we] remain small and intimate, expressing the fundamentals of searching for the truth, centering down and focusing on the inner light;” a second reports “we feel the power of transforming love in our worship” while describing that there are differences in the words used by those who speak to express that experience.

In another report a meeting celebrated the value of “our strengths—our worship, our witness, and our desire to improve our relationships.” One prison worship group explains “understanding situations and comments from different perspectives helps us find that which is the good and true in whatever comes our way...being honest with God first and having that honesty carry on to others.” A member of one meeting asked the meeting to hold a conference to focus on the query “What would it take

to achieve a world where every human could lead a decent and dignified life?” Some reports are shorter—one wrote: “In the spirit of Simplicity and Integrity, this report doesn’t need to be long, just say what we want it to say.” This year’s shortest and simplest reads:

The snow melts
and is washed away
by clear cold streams.
And we are still here.

The average length is a page or two; some longer with more reflection on both the process and time spent together creating the report as well as the results. One meeting conducted a survey to gather individual input, another held a Community Worship session using a query about three of the testimonies, a third asked committees to think about the testimonies as it was reflected in their work across the year (this was the longest of the reports—nearly four pages!)

Many reports describe trying new approaches to sustaining and enriching the meeting—new ideas for worship, outreach activities, social gatherings, and other practices; illustrating the life of the Spirit within the meeting and the wider community. These include: a welcome flag; a Seeker’s corner in the meetinghouse; “third day” evening worship time; using queries from Britain and New York Yearly Meetings to start worship; a contemplative singing group; a monthly meeting to engage in civil discourse over public issues; a “Quaker Activism” group that meets periodically to determine projects to make the Quaker “message” more visible in the community; hosting a monthly multi-faith racial justice gathering and a “What Canst Thou Say” spiritual journey sharing group.

One meeting used “listening posts” during which participants gather in small groups to “listen intentionally and deeply to what is on our hearts and minds” and “vision together what kind of meeting we want to be.” One smaller meeting mails monthly devotionals to members, they stay in touch with one another by phone and hold a monthly conference call for healing prayer and worship; another meeting has established a regular schedule of online worship with a growing fellowship; another holds once a month Community Worship; and another established a

worship group in Spanish for area farm workers. In one meeting the December holiday season included a play written by a member and a cookie-decorating day organized by one family. Two meetings, nearby to one another, share responsibility for hosting worship on campus at a local college every two weeks. Another meeting stressed the importance of providing childcare for all events, paid as needed. One meeting schedules worship with a concern for business every other month; an alternate idea that is “working well” for a smaller meeting is to restructure to a “committee of the whole” for all but two committees—Ministry and Counsel, and Buildings and Grounds. A third meeting shared the value and meaningful use of a restorative process in support of a concern affecting the meeting.

Throughout the reports are rich and varied ways to describe how the Quaker testimonies anchor aspects of community practice and form the basis for individual members’ witness or ministry. One meeting wrote that the testimonies “give us a well to draw from, reminding us to be simple people, peaceful people, and people of integrity;” another declares “our testimonies are the waters that sustain us; our meeting is the vessel that holds them,” and others that “community is a verb” and “living the Testimonies is being who we are—seekers who try to know and live what is true.” One recognized that “our collective worship plays an important part in fueling individual activism” and described the unique ways their individual members felt supported in their leadings.

Meetings wrestled with the discussion of the testimonies—“meeting for worship helps us approach the source that gives rise to our testimonies” at the same time that “we struggle to live out the testimonies in a world that doesn’t share our values.” “Testimonies must be tested and lived into, not simply professed.” “We are reminded that the testimonies are the outward expression of an inward transformation. We feel cautious about framing testimonies as a credo, a checklist of goals or qualities to be adhered to, rather than as fruits of the Spirit.” One meeting began their report by stating “This has been a year of deep reflection and inward work for our meeting” as we “continue to move closer to our Quaker roots,” and are “seeking consistent community-wide messaging that reflects

our inward journey and testimonies.”

Simplicity and care of the earth are evident in descriptions of how both meetings and individual members choose sustainable stewardship for their buildings and properties and work on behalf of local environmental issues. Peace work is central to many long term efforts around the yearly meeting, letter-writing and visiting elected officials, regular vigils and demonstrations on local, national and international issues, and support of refugee and immigrant issues in many communities. Other meetings support local food cupboards, soup kitchens, donate gently used furniture, and a variety of other service projects.

Our prison worship groups shared deeply the value of their time together, reminding the wider circle of the yearly meeting that within those walls is the “hardest place to live out being a Quaker and living the testimonies.” Their wise and Faith-rich words included: “In an oppressive environment, the Spirit in us can break down and die....But the Light within cannot be extinguished. In our circle, we offer affirmation—a reflection of how far we have come as individuals and as a community.” Another group wrote: “There are many people in prison who make maintaining Integrity very difficult....Friends help us check when we are in danger of hiding our self or succumbing to the prison culture....We understand that an important part of Integrity is intent. No matter how an interaction turns out, we and those who support us, focus on our intent to decide whether we are maintaining our Integrity.” “We can bring insight into how our environment has impacted and continues to impact the choices we make. There is a Yin/Yang to life in prison and one of the gifts we have to give is helping others see that and being aware when we need that insight ourselves.”

At the end of completing their report this year, one meeting concluded “there was agreement that the process, and the report itself, have been tremendously valuable to us, in ways known and yet to be known” and indicated they continue to welcome the process of creating their “State of the Meeting” report. On behalf of the Ministry and Counsel Coordinating Committee for New York Yearly Meeting, the writers of this year’s State of Society report invite each of our meetings and worship groups to consider this statement, and to be open to the value of the

annual opportunity for shared community conversations.

*Compiled and respectfully submitted
by Anne Liske and Anita Paul, State of Society Committee*

Memorial Minute

Barbara K. Spring (1943-2019)

(see minute 2019-07-20)

Barbara K. Spring was born on March 17, 1943, the third child and only daughter to Robert and Leola Bayles, then of Colorado Springs. Her family lived in many places including camping for a year in Gallup, New Mexico, and she characterized her childhood as “simple living.” She figured that by the time she died, she had lived in 46 different homes throughout her life. Barbara often attributed her drive to make community to her relatively unsettled childhood.

For high school, Barbara attended a Brethren in Christ academy in California and, against her mother’s wishes, went on to college, graduating with a Bachelor’s Degree in education. She earned a Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Education at Indiana University at Bloomington, and later, a Ph.D. in Gerontology from Union Graduate School at the age of 50.

In her late 20’s, Barbara moved with her husband to Zambia for two years of mission teaching with the Brethren in Christ Church. It was here that she had her daughter Tabitha. Two years later, after returning to the United States, she had her son, Jeremy.

Barbara and her family first attended Friends Meeting at Harrisburg Monthly Meeting, Pennsylvania in about 1975, becoming active members shortly thereafter.

Barbara moved with her family to Billings, Montana in 1981. She became a member of Billings Friends Meeting, which convened for many years in the living room of local Friends, Tom and Ruth Towe. In the early 1980s, Barbara was part of a group of Montana Friends that started Montana Gathering of Friends, including northern Wyoming, under North Pacific Yearly Meeting. MGOF continues to have semi-annual meetings.

In 1990, she moved to Missoula, Montana and became a

member of Missoula Friends Meeting. She used her training and experience as a real estate agent to assist and advise the purchase of Missoula Meeting's meeting house in 1993, financing the costs using rental income and personal contracts with Friends.

Along with cherishing her relationships in whatever community she resided, Barbara loved traveling. She often stated that her two years in Africa were some of the best years of her life. Barbara took great delight in all of the varied children of God, and loved to travel, to see and celebrate diverse cultures. She traveled frequently, often internationally, including a six month round the world trip with a dear friend, collecting many treasured memories that she recounted over her remaining years.

At the heart of Barbara's community were her children and grandchildren. After her grandchildren Jack and Nora were born, she moved to Albany, New York from Missoula in the Fall of 2006. For the next twelve years Barbara took a very active role in the lives of her grandchildren, and made her home with them for several years.

Upon moving to New York to be with family, Barbara immediately became active in Albany Monthly Meeting, which received her transfer of membership in 2008.

In her work life and community, Barbara started many groups and projects, and rejoiced in passing them along to others to continue. She also liked to work in teams because it enriched her work and provided for strong foundations to grow.

She worked with Ira Byock to start The Missoula Demonstration Project, a community-based program to collect stories about and provide solutions and guidance for support during the dying process. Ira used the work they did together to write the books *Dying Well: The Prospect for Growth at the End of Life* and *The Four Things That Matter Most*. Barbara often reminded people of these four things to remember to say at the end of life, "Please forgive me," "I forgive you," "Thank you," and "I love you," usually adding a fifth: "Goodbye." She used these herself many times in the last few months of her life.

In 2007 she and Anita Paul of Schenectady Monthly Meeting embarked on another such project. At that year's New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM) Summer Sessions, they attended an interest group with representatives of the newly formed Friends

Foundation for the Aging (FFA), and promptly launched a pilot program to offer consultations on aging and end of life to Friends in the Albany metro area. The success of that pilot became the ARCH (Aging Resources Consultation and Help) Program of NYYM, funded by FFA and under the care of NYYM's Committee on Aging Concerns (CAC). With persistence and help from the CAC, she and Anita grew ARCH into a volunteer-fueled ARCH Visitor Program, offering training for ARCH Visitors to gain a sense of confidence in making referrals to appropriate services, spiritual listening, and building meeting capacity to care for one another as we grow older. In the last few years the ARCH program has begun to expand beyond the borders of NYYM, creating sister programs among Friends in other places. Many Friends remarked at the end of her life how this training she had provided to others came back to her as Friends turned their capacity to organize their care to her dying process.

Barbara led ARCH trainings for Albany Meeting members and recruited several to be ARCH Visitors. Barbara reminded Friends to ask for help when needed and to be available to help others. She helped the entire meeting develop a loving, caring culture for one another. Her work with positive aging also extended beyond the Quaker community. She organized and nurtured two Seasons groups of Quaker and non-Quaker older women in the Albany area, which both have continued for over ten years meeting monthly to share support and perspectives on the experiences of aging.

In addition to her passion for creating cultural change in our society's ageism and death denial, she was passionate about racial justice and healing. Barbara often spoke about how moving to the more racially diverse Albany area opened her eyes to new aspects of racism. She quickly volunteered to support the community's Underground Railroad History Project, joined Albany Meeting's Friends for Racial Justice Committee and was its inspired clerk for many years. She was deeply involved in developing the committee's Stories for Racial Justice Program which offered listening and learning experiences to the wider community.

Under Barbara's leadership, Friends for Racial Justice reached out to other faith organizations to plan together a community conference in 2017, *Building the Beloved Community: Beyond*

Racism. The conference created an ongoing network which facilitated discussions about racial history and racial justice. The group has educated itself and others about implicit bias, white privilege and how to be a good white ally. Barbara and others in the Beloved Community group participated in rallies and other events supporting racial justice and were involved in educational initiatives organized by the Institute for Racial Equity and Healing at the Macedonia Baptist Church.

In the fall of 2017, an African American friend asked Barbara to read *Gather at the Table*, a book written by a descendant of a slave and a descendant of a family that held slaves. Barbara formed a book group to read it together, after which Barbara and several others attended a national Coming to the Table Conference, resulting in the creation of an Albany Coming to the Table group in the summer of 2018. She was also on the Board of Albany's Grand Street Community Arts organization, helping to create a low power radio station to serve a largely African American area of Albany. Barbara involved others in lobbying on behalf of racial justice issues in the state legislature. At the end of her life she brought her concerns about aging and racism together through exploring providing ARCH services to those who are growing old while incarcerated.

Barbara put into practice other Quaker testimonies as well. After moving to Albany, Barbara became active in the Iran Project of Women Against War. In 2007 she traveled to Iran as a member of a citizen diplomacy delegation of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, speaking about the need for a peaceful US-Iran relationship on her return. Barbara was also deeply concerned about living with respect for the environment and for her retirement built a very small, very green, house.

In all of her projects she saw herself as a bridge person, making connections and bringing people together. She did this to enrich the lives of others and for the pleasure she got from seeing connections made. She taught by example how to live into our dying with verve and wisdom.

She died on June 11, 2019 surrounded by her family at her home in Voorheesville, New York.

*Approved at Albany Monthly Meeting business session
July 14, 2019, Anne Liske, Clerk*

Pay as Led Report to Summer Sessions 2019

(see minute 2019-07-23)

Two years ago we started discussing Pay as Led, and last year we decided to try this experiment. We approved offering options to people who attend Summer Sessions to choose how much to pay for their stay with a minimum below the real cost. The motivation was to make Summer Sessions more affordable to those who find the cost a burden and encourage more people to attend. Others, we hoped, would be willing to pay more than the real cost in order to help make up the difference.

What about the money?

We will not have final numbers until later—probably after the end of this week—as final payments and refunds are still being processed, but the overall status is: we did it. We rose to the challenge that we accepted last year. More specifically, we took in enough money to cover our costs to Silver Bay plus an amount similar to what we collected in registration fees last year. So, there is no additional impact on NYYM operations expenses compared to prior years.

About $\frac{1}{4}$ of attending families (24.4%) paid the standard amount (covering the Silver Bay charges and the registration charges), another $\frac{1}{4}$ (26%) paid less than the standard charges, and $\frac{1}{2}$ (49.6%) paid more.

Adults and Children Attendance Rates

While it is difficult to absolutely ascribe changes to PaL it seems likely that it had a significant impact on attendance rates. After several years of declining attendance, 2019 showed a significant increase in adult attendance. There was a slight increase in the number of children.

Attendance History

20% of us are first time attenders, and over $\frac{1}{4}$ are either first timers or people who have not attended in a long time (self-defined).

Attendance by Age Group

We don't have good statistics from prior years, but roughly 15% of us this year are young adults.

Next Steps

Expect to see final accounting reported at Fall Sessions along with a recommendation for continuing PaL (or not) for 2020.

Memorial Minute

Madeline S. McClure (1927-2018)

(see minute 2019-07-26)

Madeline McClure, Racial Justice Advocate and Quaker

Madeline Schwinge McClure was born in Yorktown, NY to Myrtle and Henry Schwinge, and raised in Secaucus, NJ. She attended Antioch College, a sister college to Wilberforce College, named for the British abolitionist, in Dayton, OH. This was where her interest in interracial activities began and where she first experienced a Quaker Meeting for Worship.

Madeline Schwinge married George McClure in 1948, and they settled in Little Falls, NJ. During her days as a home-maker, Madeline served as president of Verona League of Women Voters and a member of the New Jersey State Board of the LWV.

Madeline became a member of Montclair Monthly Meeting in 1958. While her daughter was growing up, Madeline served on the Religious Education Committee. During her over 50 years of active participation in Montclair Monthly Meeting, she served on Ministry, Peace, Nominating, and Peace Committees. She was also active in New York Yearly Meeting as clerk of Junior Yearly Meeting committee, clerk of the Race Relations, Sharing Fund, Black Development, Black Concerns, and Witness Coordinating Committee. Her interest in the Friends testimony for Black Concerns was supported by her husband George and daughter Kathleen (Kit). Madeline took Kit to the historic 1963 civil rights movement March on Washington.

In 1965, and again in 1967, the McClures welcomed into the family two sixteen year old African-American daughters to attend the local high school with Kit: Emily from Mississippi and Mary Jane from Tennessee. Both daughters have loving extended families of their own. The McClures and both daughters' families have life-long connections made over the years.

When daughter Emily faced open racial discrimination at the

local high school, Madeline successfully ran for the Regional High School Board of Education in her community, to deal more effectively with the situation.

Madeline McClure went back to school when she was 51 years old. She took Computer Science courses and received her B.S. in Computer Science from Montclair College in 1984. After completing her degree she was employed by AT&T. She and her husband George retired in 1994 and in 1997 moved to Arbor Glen CCRC in Bridgewater, NJ where they remained active in their community and attended Plainfield Friends Meeting.

Madeline was predeceased by her husband George McClure, daughter Emily Smoot Borom, and brother Henry (Buddy) Schwinge. She is survived by her sister Virginia Schwinge Degraw, daughter Mary Jane Johnson and John Johnson of Dayton, Ohio, daughter Kathleen McClure and Peter Matsoukas of NYC, beloved grandson Trevor Chase Johnson and Tasia Johnson of Chicago, and a large extended family.

*This minute has been approved by
Montclair Monthly Meeting, Barbra Bleecker, Clerk.*

Liaison Report on the Evolution of NYYM Structure

(see minute 2019-07-28)

At Spring Sessions 2018, Friends approved the beginning of an experiment in revisions to our yearly meeting structure, with the expectation of a report to come to Summer Sessions 2019. This approval was memorialized in minute 2018-04-06, which is available in the 2018-2019 Yearbook, pages 24 to 26. This is the expected report from Liaison Committee.

The experiment included the following specific provisions, noted in the minute of approval:

- Suspension of Nurture Coordinating Committee (NCC), its constituents transferred as follows:
- Aging Concerns Committee to General Services Coordinating Committee (GSCC),

- Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) to become a subcommittee of Sessions Committee, a part of GSCC,
- Epistle Committee, Powell House, and Youth Committee to Ministry Coordinating Committee,
- Reps of FGC, FUM, and FWCC to an “affiliate group” linked with Liaison Committee,
- Oakwood Board to the care of Liaison Committee.

It is appropriate to provide some clarifications why this experiment was undertaken and the concerns that were expressed, as well as how it now stands.

- NCC was suspended because there was little life in the committee, which had been struggling for some years. There was no appropriate rising new clerk and few committee members and reps attended the most recent meetings. A concern was expressed about suspending “nurture itself,” but of course, there is nurture in all that we do, and certainly in the work of the other CCs.
- Aging Concerns seemed to be a good fit in GSCC, particularly in light of the fact that the ARCH Coordinators, who have a close supporting and nurturing relationship with Aging Concerns, have been integrated as staff into our yearly meeting structure. This arrangement seems well suited.
- JYM also seems well suited as a subcommittee of Sessions in light of the fact that their exclusively Summer Sessions related work is closely related to the work of Sessions Committee. The current clerk of Sessions Committee enthusiastically approves of this relationship.
- Epistle, Powell House and Youth Committee seemed like a good fit for MCC; however, MCC members expressed concerns that they would need more meeting time to address the concerns of all their constituent bodies. This arrangement so far seems to be working out, along with creative new ways that that committee has begun to use to meet its needs. From the committee minutes: *Many of us feel that the question isn't just about whether the slightly modified new structure is working well enough. We need to seek actively for what structure we need to have.*

- Moving FGC, FUM, and FWCC to Liaison as a group of “Affiliates” seems to be functioning at least as well as it did as a part of NCC, but questions and concerns remain. The designated contact person on Liaison for these bodies is the Assistant Clerk of our yearly meeting, currently Elaine Learnard, who has reached out to them. They tend to function on their own and are as much reps to their wider Quaker bodies as they are a part of our yearly meeting. They are being invited to report on a rotating basis to our gatherings, which is a positive step forward. We may wish to consider whether other bodies of reps to other wider Quaker bodies, currently mostly on Witness Coordinating Committee (WCC), should also become a part of this structural change, but whether or not the current and other entities belong in the care of Liaison Committee or elsewhere is a question yet to be considered further, as well as the specific relationship to our Yearly Meeting Assistant Clerk.
- The move of Oakwood Board to Liaison was separated from the other affiliates because Oakwood, though also a separate entity, is very much NYYM’s “own” school, and is recognized and cherished as such by both NYYM and Oakwood. The relationship through Liaison Committee, however, is another matter to consider further in the future.

There was a sense of the meeting that the establishment of “yet another” ad hoc committee on the structure of our yearly meeting was not how we should proceed in light of the many prior such committees over recent decades. Therefore, Liaison Committee has asked Friends to make suggestions to committees they serve on and to consider that the CC clerks would welcome any specific recommendations. In addition, appropriate informal experiments and small changes could be undertaken by committees and others.

There have been few such specific recommendations to this point; however, there are experiments that are very promising, including the referenced new practices within MCC itself.

One such experiment has been referred to as “distributed clerking.” The role of clerk, in particular for some committees, is extensive enough that it is difficult to find new clerks who have all the experience and skills, as well as the availability and

willingness to commit to the extensive work involved. Breaking the work down and distributing them to more than one person already began at Summer Sessions 2018. WCC and Financial Services Committee each distributed the workload to three committee members in order to find a replacement for the retiring clerk. Both committees seem to be functioning well since then, and the idea, now referenced as “distributed clerking,” may well become an important concept as we move forward in the future. In fact, there are other yearly meetings in which there are two yearly meeting clerks, one for the annual gathering and one for the interim gatherings. NYYM may wish to consider that approach as well. The current clerk of our yearly meeting has already had our assistant clerk do some clerking at our gatherings and expects to do so more as time goes on.

Other specific concerns are being considered by Liaison and perhaps by others, though not yet reported to Liaison, such as small study groups of volunteers to assist where there appear to be problems. One such problem is NYYM’s Nominating Committee, whose membership is currently entirely by appointment from the regions, weighted by regional membership numbers. This system has not been functioning well for many years and is a critical problem. Four of the nine regions have no representatives and most of the others are underrepresented or represented by one individual who has served for perhaps too many years. The committee has been much too small and with insufficient knowledge about potential individuals to serve from those regions that do not have representatives.

Another study group may be formed to consider revising our *Handbook* to be more descriptive than prescriptive, which is to say, make it more flexible and descriptive of best practices than a rule book, which in effect it currently is. This is currently how some other yearly meetings handle their handbook.

Another study group may recommend so-called permanent committees and semi-permanent committees with “sunset dates” to review if there is insufficient life to continue when they are reviewed—or some other process to enable easier laying down of committees that no longer have life.

Other ideas include possible merging of some committees or converting a committee into an appointee or an appointee with

an assistant.

We are also experimenting with revisions to the so-called “consent agenda,” as Friends are aware from our discussions during Spring and Summer Sessions 2019. That process was never formalized by minute or specified as to structure, which we are doing at this time.

Changes are also being made to Interim Actions by the Clerk and/or General Secretary. This process was approved by minute in 2014. We are in process of making a revision to the process of reporting all interim actions by dissemination at time of action *and* by report at the next gathering.

Friends are asked to consider all such ideas and to make known their thoughts, both as to the ideas and to where they may apply in their committee work. In addition, Friends are invited to make new suggestions at any time to any member of Liaison Committee.

At this time, there are no specific proposals for consideration for approval other than the proposed laying down of NCC, which will follow.

Summary of Changes to 2017 Version of NYYM By-Laws

(see minute 2019-07-32)

Article II. Board of Trustees

Paragraph 1. Appointment: The number of members of NYYM to be appointed to serve as trustees is sought to be changed from between 5 and 7 trustees to between 5 and 10 trustees as the Board of Trustees feels the need for a larger Board in order to properly conduct the regular business of the Board.

Also, the Board of Trustees seeks to reduce the number of years each trustee serves from 5 years to 4 years in order to encourage more members of NYYM to consider appointment as trustees. It is felt that whatever is lost by reducing the number of years of each term is outweighed by the likelihood that more members of NYYM will consider serving as trustees when asked to do so by Nominating.

Further, the Board of Trustees seeks to reduce the number of

consecutive terms a trustee may serve on the Board from 3 terms to 2 terms as the Board feels that the more frequent addition of trustees to the Board outweighs any benefit of having trustees serve more than two consecutive terms.

Additionally, the Board feels that, in the event of a vacancy, a trustee can serve up to 2 years to fill the vacancy of a trustee who is unable to complete the balance of his term and still be considered eligible for the subsequent appointment of 2 consecutive 4 year terms.

Last, for its more effective functioning, the Board of Trustees is seeking the input of the Clerk of NYYM and the Treasurer of NYYM in the business before the Board whenever possible or necessary and seeks to make them ex-officio members of the Board of Trustees in order to facilitate their input.

Paragraph 3. Officers of the Trustees: The Board of Trustees seeks to appoint an Assistant Clerk in order to conduct the regular business of the Board in the absence of the Clerk of the Trustees.

The Board seeks to re-title the Secretary of Trustees as the Recording Clerk and the Financial Officer as the Financial Clerk in keeping with the usual practice of Friends.

The Board seeks to delete “The Clerk of the Trustees shall act as President of the Corporation when the acts of such an officer are required”. In order to understand the reason for the deletion of this sentence here, see the changes to Article III. Officers below.

Paragraph 4. Meetings: The Board seeks to change the title of Secretary to Recording Clerk.

Paragraph 5. Quorum: Although it is hoped that the Clerk of NYYM and the Treasurer of NYYM will be able to attend a significant number of meetings of the Board of Trustees, the Board recognizes that this will depend more on their time availability and whether they feel the need to attend a particular meeting. Therefore, the Board seeks to have their inability to attend a given meeting not affect the quorum requirement necessary for the Board to transact business at that meeting.

Paragraph 7. Limitations on Responsibilities and Liabilities: Add at the end of Paragraph 7 “, nor do the Trustees have authority over the spiritual concerns and the programs of the Corporation.”

The Board seeks to further clarify its role in the functioning of the Corporation by setting forth these additional limitations in Paragraph 7.

Article III. Officers

Paragraph 1. Officers of the Corporation: The Board seeks to specifically identify the additional officer(s) the Corporation may appoint in the future by adding at the end of the second sentence of Paragraph 1. “, including one or more assistant treasurers.” The NYYM Treasurer has identified this as a need of NYYM going forward and the Board of Trustees agrees.

Further, the Board seeks to include a third sentence at the end of Paragraph 1. “The Clerk of Trustees shall serve as President of the Corporation, the Assistant Clerk of the Trustees shall serve as Vice President of the Corporation and the Recording Clerk of the Trustees shall serve as Secretary of the Corporation.” Trustees seek this additional sentence in response to the concerns of our NYYM Treasurer that the practice of Friends in its titling of its Officers of the Corporation is confusing to the banks NYYM does business with, NYYM’s investment manager and NYYM’s insurers. In the secular business world as well as in the nonprofit universe and with other religious corporations, it is the usual practice more often than not that the officers of a corporation are titled as President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. However, it is the practice of Friends and NYYM to call our “officers” clerks, assistant clerks, recording clerks and treasurers. The term “officers” doesn’t translate completely into the terminology of “clerks” as practiced in NYYM. By having the Clerk of the Trustees serve as the President of the Corporation, the Assistant Clerk of the Trustees serve as the Vice-President of the Corporation and the Recording Clerk of the Corporation serve as Secretary of the Corporation, it will make our banks, insurers and investment manager more comfortable doing business with us and make it easier for our NYYM Treasurer to have contracts signed and generally conduct our business with

the secular, outside world.

Paragraph 2. Clerk of the Corporation: In the first sentence, insert after “The responsibilities of the Clerk” the words “of the Corporation”; in the last sentence, delete the word: “necessary”.

Paragraph 5. Treasurer of the Corporation: Replace the title “financial officer” with the title “Financial Clerk” both times that it appears in Paragraph 5.

Article V. Meetings of the Corporation (“Sessions”)

Paragraph 4. Presiding Officer: After the words, “unavailability to serve”, insert “or a conflict of interest,”

First and Second “Readings” or First and Second “Presentations”

(see minute 2019-07-40)

Draft concept for possible change of practice

Sometimes, changes traditionally require first and second readings. Recently, there were proposed changes to the legal language of the trustees’ bylaws. At the time of first “reading”, we found that a reading of the legal language would have been difficult, very time consuming and tedious, and we agreed at that time to a “summary presentation” of the recommended changes in lieu of a full “reading,” for the “first reading.” The second “reading” has not yet come before gathered Friends because the trustees are in the process of ongoing language discernment. A similar concern could arise for other changes, such as for Handbook changes or extensive changes in *Faith and Practice* language.

Liaison proposes a change in our process:

We recommend permission for the possibility that there be first and second “presentations” where considered appropriate by the Clerk in lieu of first and second readings. In the event the Clerk so decides, the entire proposed wording will be printed in the Advance Reports, subject to reversion back to a full reading

on request of anyone up to the actual anticipated presentation, similar to the current process for consent agenda items. If there are provisions in *Faith and Practice* for first and second readings, and this recommendation is approved, it will go to the Committee to Revise *Faith and Practice* for a formal change.

Proposed Changes to the Consent Agenda Process 2019

(see minute 2019-07-41)

Background

1. Concerns about the title “consent agenda:”
 - a. not clear without explanation
 - b. term “consent” implies passivity, current concerns about unwanted sexual advances emphasize that passive consent is insufficient; the term is misleading and not in keeping with Quaker concern for integrity
 - c. we do not generally consider approval of “agendas,” but of concerns, minutes, nominations, etc.
2. Concern about the specifics of timing for presentation of the final version of consent agenda, which was changed too frequently and too late in the view of some Friends at Summer Sessions 2018.
3. Concern about nominations perhaps needing to be a separate process so that other items can be presented earlier and considered without the timing pressure that exists for the Nominating Committee.

Proposal

1. Liaison plans to experiment with changing the term “Consent Agenda,” using the term “seasoned” instead of “consent” and dropping the word “agenda” in this context. The use of the term “seasoned” is proposed to indicate that, in the opinion of the clerk, these items are ready for action by gathered Friends at sessions and need no further seasoning; if any Friend feels additional seasoning is

merited, the item will be removed by contacting the clerk in advance of the list's presentation. An explanation of the process will be provided in writing on the heading all uses of the process.

2. For spring and fall sessions, the final version of the list of **Seasoned Business Items** including any nominations will be published in advance no later than Monday of the week of the gathering, with copies also made available on paper for Friends when they arrive. Anything to be added after the deadline will be added to a regular business agenda. Approval by gathered Friends will be sought at the second or third business session.
3. For Summer Sessions, there will be two lists of seasoned items: for general business, the list of **Seasoned Business Items**, and for nominations the **Seasoned Nominations List**. The name changes and the new processes will be presented at Spring Sessions 2019 and an explanation will be available in advance of both Spring and Summer Sessions 2019.

a. General business:

- i. The list of **Seasoned Business Items** will be made available as early as is feasible, and no later than Tuesday of Summer Sessions. It will be made available on paper, if possible in the Quaker Update, and electronically.
- ii. Anything to be added after the deadlines will be added to the regular agenda.

b. Nominations:

- i. **Preliminary Nominations List** will be made available for first review no later than the Tuesday of Summer Sessions at 1:00 p.m. It will be made available on paper to be posted and, if feasible, also electronically. Announcements will be made in advance by the clerk as to its availability.
- ii. There can be changes to and deletions from the Preliminary Nominations List up until 1:00 p.m.

of the Wednesday of Summer Sessions. This review period provides everyone the opportunity to consider the proposed nominations and to speak with the Nominating Committee if there are questions or suggestions about the nominations. As of 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, the Preliminary Nominations List, with any amendments made thereto, will become the Seasoned Nominations List.

iii. Any nominations to be made after the Wednesday 1:00 p.m. deadline will be added to a regular business agenda.

c. All seasoned business lists will include contact individuals and their contact data in case of any concerns that could lead to a request for the item to be removed from the Seasoned Business Items list. Items can be removed from the list up until the beginning of the meeting for business at which the list is considered for approval. Consideration for approval of both lists will be requested at a Friday business meeting.

4. All future written use of **Seasoned Business Items** lists will include the following explanation in writing:

Seasoned Business Items lists are similar to “consent agendas” of the business world. The list of items is published in advance with an expectation of approval without discussion at an upcoming business session. These are items that the clerk believes need a decision or need to be recorded in our minutes but do not require any consideration during the business session. Anyone may seek clarification from a contact person in advance, if one is designated by an item on the list. Anyone may request that the clerk remove any item from the Seasoned Business Items list. This can happen up until the time when we are ready to approve the list. The clerk will first ask if any items need to be removed from the list. The clerk will then ask for approval of the entire list. No explanation is needed when asking for an item to be removed from the list just before approval. When asking for an item to be removed from the list in advance, it would help the clerk to know why. Items removed from the Seasoned Business Items list are added to the regular agenda.

Proposed Minute to Change Status of Reading Clerks

(see minute 2019-07-57)

Explanation:

- Reading clerks have been listed as “Officers of New York Yearly Meeting” in the annual *Yearbooks*. They are nominated for one year terms by NYYM Nominating Committee, to serve at the three annual gatherings: spring, summer, and fall.
- At many spring and fall gatherings, some appointed reading clerks can not attend and volunteer replacements need to be found. In many cases, this provides an opportunity for Friends of all ages to serve our yearly meeting in an “entry level” capacity, in particular from among Oakwood Friends and from the given host regions. These opportunities have been enthusiastically welcomed both by the volunteers and by gathered Friends.
- It is difficult for Nominating Committee to find Friends willing to serve in this capacity, in part because of the expectation that they will attend and serve at all three gatherings.
- The proposed bylaws to be presented for consideration for approval at these Summer Sessions includes a detailed specification of the officers of NYYM, the wording of which does not include reading clerks.

Minute, proposed by Liaison Committee in consultation with Nominating Committee:

From date of approval of this minute, reading clerk will become a volunteer position, to be sought by Sessions Committee as a part of their regular list of necessary volunteers for each gathering. Reading clerks will no longer be officers of New York Yearly Meeting. They will no longer be nominated by NYYM Nominating Committee. Changes to the NYYM *Handbook* and *Yearbooks* will be made after this approval by the appropriate bodies with no further approvals needed by gathered Friends.

Epistle

The 324th New York Yearly Meeting Summer Sessions • July 21-27, 2019

To Friends Everywhere:

We send loving greetings from Silver Bay on Lake George in New York State, where we have gathered as a yearly meeting since the 1940s. We sit on lands that were once Mohawk hunting grounds, shared by treaty with many nations. We thank the Mohawks and other nations for their care of the lands and the lake. For this our 324th gathering for Summer Sessions, we are 501 Friends, including 103 Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM), from babies to high school. We are queer and straight, trans and cis, young and old, differently abled, people of all colors, with origins in many lands, bearing legacies of dispossession and harm that we struggle to redress, along with bounties of love and care and gratitude for the diverse truths that we bring together. We join in thankfulness for the divine love that infuses at once our joyful gathering and our shared striving for justice and renewal.

The theme of our Sessions this year was **Friends Come in All Ages, Sizes, and Colors: Our Path Toward Being Inclusive**. Our theme marked two important landmarks in the life of our Yearly Meeting. This year we implemented a Pay-as-Led program. Half of the attenders contributed above the basic rate, to provide financial support for others to attend. We had seventy-four more attenders than last year. We struggled with expanding our understanding of membership. In both initiatives we look to a future in which the gifts of the spirit among us can be embraced in ever widening circles. We celebrated in particular that our Meetings for Discernment, which we have been cultivating for twelve years, provided a vessel for this unfolding truth.

It was fitting that the plenary session that opened our gathering was led by Chris DeRoller and Mike Clark, the longtime youth directors at Powell House, our retreat center. Chris and Mike led us in group activities that grew our sense of togetherness and mutual awareness. Chris read to us from a book that

had once inspired her, “What [the world] needs most today is communities of love, little islands flung everywhere...to answer without words the million and one questions that arise in the hearts of people—to witness by being.”* For many of our younger Friends, the Powell House youth program has been vital to their experience as Friends—it drew us together to gather under the mantle of that practice. Chris and Mike quoted young people from Farmington-Scipio Meeting and Powell House high school seniors about their experience of Friends. As Chris and Mike observed, quoting Joan Baez, in a time of crisis we must, “arm up with love and come from the shadows.”

As always our gathering was very rich and diverse in experience—with visitors, interest groups, exhibits, play, Bible Study—but everywhere we felt informed by the fresh breath of promise that growth and change in our body offered. Each morning we gathered before business for Community Worship, hosted by different groups. A Friend named Nikki Holland, the new Director of the Belize City Friends Center, sounded the new note of inclusion by describing how, living in Mexico far from a Quaker Meeting, she learned about Quakerism and sought out the New Association of Friends in Indiana to support her membership.

Among the many issues of passionate concern to Friends: we seasoned a recommendation to divest as a yearly meeting from fossil fuels; we heard urgent calls to rise together to protect immigrants and refugees; and we were reminded anew of the pressing need to undo white supremacy both structurally in the larger society, in our religious society, and personally. Margery Rubin, clerk of Haddonfield Quarterly Meeting of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and her husband George Rubin, former clerk of the New York Yearly Meeting, were sent by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, where they now reside, with a minute against hate. We were reminded of the importance of serving our monthly meetings, particularly remote meetings, and understanding their needs. We feel a tender call to embrace and nurture our prison worship groups and heed the witness of those damaged by mass incarceration. Our young adult Friends organized a Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series of gatherings this year; they call on us to support vital infrastructure for building our community and including them in the conduct of business. We

considered how to provide staff support for young adults in a threshing session.

Behind the scenes, under the guidance of our priorities process, our staff and committees have labored to make the works of our yearly meeting more transparent and accountable.

When we come together in Silver Bay, the power of our gathered love, amidst the grandeur of our natural setting, fills us with a sense of awe and promise, even amidst dire threats to peace, security, and our beloved earth, here and around the world, and fears for the fragile future of our Society. We gather in wonder at the power of God's love to transform us inwardly and unite us in pursuit of a more compassionate world.

Jeffrey Aaron, Clerk

* *I Live On an Island* [a.k.a., *Welcome Pilgrim*], by Catherine de Hueck Doherty (1979)