

# Annual Sessions Minutes - Wednesday Evening, July 27, 2011

*Dear Friend:*

*These minutes are in draft form. We felt it important to post the minutes of our proceedings as soon as possible.*

*Our process for minutes are somewhat changed from our traditional manner of business minutes. There are two parts to our minutes - actions & narration. We will record all actions taken by Friends in each of the plenaries. These minutes will be read in the face of the Meeting for approval. These approved minutes will be a part of the full minutes.*

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*If you have any questions, please get back to me.*

*Thomas Swain,*

*Clerk, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends*

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The 2011 Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends convened Wednesday, July 27, 2011, at DeSales University in Center Valley, PA, with the theme "Powerful Beyond Measure: Trusting the Call to Leadership."

The clerk was Thomas Swain (Middletown MM, Concord Quarter). The Alternate Clerks were John Ellsworth (Gwynedd MM); Dana Kester-McCabe (Wicomico River MM); Sallie Jones (Birmingham MM); and Jada Jackson (Trenton MM and Burlington Meetinghouse Worship Group). The Recording Clerks were Jane Keller (Pennsdale MM); and David Rose (Lehigh Valley MM). General Secretary is Arthur Larrabee (Central Philadelphia MM).

The meeting opened with a period of silent worship.

Visitors from other Yearly Meetings were recognized: Jennie Isbell, Cear Creek MM of Ohio Yearly Meeting, Director of Outreach at Earlham School of Religion; Judy Lum, Atlanta MM, from Belize; Chris Mohr, San Francisco MM, Pacific Yearly Meeting and his sons, Silas and Henry.

The elders for the Meeting were introduced; they were Dorothy Reichardt (Media MM) and Chris Nicholson (Germantown MM). Michael Minnig, Director of Outdoor Education at Westtown School, and Irene McHenry (Chestnut Hill MM), Executive Director of Friends Council on Education, introduced themselves to the Body.

Michael Minnig led a multigenerational group to an alternate space to lead an activity with movement and music on *Leadership in Action: Realizing and Sharing Goals*. Michael led the group in two exercises with two different lessons. One demonstrated the importance of communication and the other the importance of observing others in the group.

Irene McHenry discussed leadership employing passages from the book *Leading From Within*. She told Friends that leadership is relational, like love. Penn established the colony dedicated to the Quaker principles of religious tolerance, participatory government and enduring love. We need to remember to lead with infinite love. In response to a poem from the book, Friends listened to each other in pairs, speaking out of silence. She also explained that neurobiology of We is planted in our brains; we want to be together. She spoke of gratitude, generosity and grace as the three G's of leadership. Gratitude is the ground; generosity is the practice; we welcome what comes our way; positive or negative events bring us opportunities to growth. Grace is God working with us. We can rest in grace. We are called to lead from the vastness of infinite love.

The intergenerational group re-entered and all joined in movement and song.

Paula Cell (Germantown MM), clerk of Sessions Planning Group, introduced the members of her committee: Bill Heinemann (Newtown MM); Amy Ward Brimmer (Fallsington MM); Margaret Mansfield (Mt. Holly MM); Ken Park (Providence MM), Nick Hoskins; Carla White (Chestnut Hill MM); Lane Taylor (Plumstead MM); Joe Elliot (Providence MM); and Sallie Jones.

Follow-the-leader activities were initiated by Ben Camp (Norristown MM). Christie Duncan-Tessmer (Chestnut Hill MM) led an activity in thread art, uniting the community physically and in spirit. Stephen Dotson led us in song.

The meeting closed with a period of silent worship.

# Annual Sessions Minutes - Thursday Morning, July 28, 2011

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*Clerk, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends*

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The 2011 Sumer Session of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends convene Thursday morning, 9:30 AM, July 2011 at De Sales University in Center Valley Pennsylvania. The announced theme of our 2011 Sessions is “Powerful Beyond Measure: Trusting the Call to Leadership”.

## **Meeting for Worship**

At the appointed time and place, the Meeting settled into worship prior to conducting the business of the session

## **Introductions**

The Clerk introduced himself and those on the Clerks Table. Clerk is Thomas Swain, (Middletown MM Concord Quarter). Alternant Clerks are John Ellsworth (Gwynedd MM), Sally Jones (Birmingham MM), Dana Kester- McCabe (Wicomico River MM) and Jada Jackson (Trenton MM Burlington Worship Group), Presiding this morning is Alternate Clerk John Ellsworth. Recording Clerks are David Rose (Lehigh Valley MM) and Rich Ailes (Middletown MM Concord Quarter) and Arthur Larrabee as General Secretary

Visitors from Other Yearly Meeting were recognized

Newton Garver (Buffalo MM of NY YM representing the Bolivan Education Fund)

The Meeting heard an Epistle from German Yearly Meeting which related that the focus of session being “Global Change” that they must seek first the kingdom of God.

### **Meeting Leadership Stories**

Clerk called on Louise Salinas (Fallsington MM) presented for the Meeting Enrichment Services Group, formerly the Deepening and Strengthening Group, JoAnn Seaver (Green Street MM) They related stories of Meetings that have experience a deepening and strengthen of the life of Meeting. Green Street MM is in the heart of Germantown and is a welcoming meeting. Outreach is assisted by Germantown Friends School which is located on the grounds and by being a place to eat and socialize. The meeting reviewed their structure and realized that they needed to bring new persons into leadership roles and consolidate some of their committees. A “Structures Committee” was created to facilitate this process. It was considered important that as part of these changes an event be created to honor those elders who had served for so long. Slides of this event were shown.

At this time Thomas Swain stepped down to allow John Ellsworth to assume Clerkship.

### **Appointment of Epistle Committee**

The Clerk presented the following names for the Epistle Committee: Johathan Snipes (Fallsington MM), Rich Schiffer (Swarthmore MM), Virginia Schiffer (Darby MM), Grethen Castle (Doylestown MM) Martha Bryans (Uwchlan MM). Meeting approved.

### **Standing Committee Highlights**

The Clerk called on Patricia Finley (Old Haverford MM) Clerk of the Peace and Concerns Standing Committee to present the highlights of the following Standing Committees: Education, Support and Outreach, General Service, Peace and Concerns, Worship and Care. She reviewed the commitment given of the members of the committees. Peter Lane (Westtown MM) gave the report from the Education Committee and read the queries to PYM from the Standing Committees. They are: What is God calling us to? A financial emergency is facing the Yearly Meeting. Is this the time to review or consolidate our Standing Committee Structure? What is your vision for our work, are you interested in participating in that vision? Is it possible to have systems and structures and remain faithful to the spirit or “way opening”? Should Standing Committees concern themselves with strengthening the Yearly Meeting community? What would you like to say to us? Joe Elliot (Providence MM) provided a report from General Services which detailed some of the issues that this committees has dealt with this past year. Peace and Concerns report was given by Patricia Finley and spoke of the losses that this committee is confronting with the current financial situation of PYM and the ways that they are attempting to cope. Support and Outreach given by Carter Nash (Harrisburg MM) and reviewed the projects, granting groups, and working groups. Jim Marr, (Reading MM) gave the Worship and Care report which described the process the committee engages in to experience divine guidance for their work. The presentation closed with an appeal for wider participation from members

Bill Hyman (Newtown MM) reported for the Arch Street Committee that Newtown MM has been designated as an National Historical Site. Arch Street Renovation Trust has been established.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Clerk called on TylaAnn Burger (Green Street MM) Yearly Meeting Treasurer to present information to support our consideration of the FY 2011 budget. Reference was made to the written report provided and overhead slides shown. Fiscal Year ends June 30th, currently July 28, 2011 and books are almost closed for FY ending 2011. Income declines and increasing costs were highlighted. Our current fiscal responsibilities are unsustainable. Graphs were displayed illustrating changes in income sources over time. Of greatest significance was the increase in the portion of the Annual budget dependent on meeting Covenants. Changes in the composition of the contributions to Annual Fund were illustrated. Cost increases due to external factors were explained. Differences between Working Groups depending on General Funds as opposed to Restricted Funds were illustrated. \$150,000 deficit is predicted. Total PYM assets of \$51 million were divided up and shown to be of no assistance helping overcoming our deficit. Almost half, 48%, was invested in restricted funds and even most unrestricted funds have trustees that are not part of PYM. A problem that the Treasure observed is that there is a disconnect between PYM and most of the members of the Yearly Meeting. She presented characteristics of a sustainable budget, most of which she said that we were not meeting. Our current financial situation is such that for the first time in her memory she has started becoming concerned about cash flow. She presented the fact that our current income will only support 21-24 FTEs, the new budget has 32+. She gave instances where Monthly Meetings were acting on incomplete or incorrect information and urged that those involved with decisions regarding support of PYM ask questions and then be open to the answers. Urged long term planning to avoid avoiding these issues in the future.

The Clerk opened the floor for responses: One meeting has lost many of their wealthier Friends who passed away or moved to retirement communities. Separation of personal and program was questioned. Clarification of presentation on responsibility for overall fiscal situation was asked. Would this material be available for those who will be coming tomorrow just for the decision on the budget? There will not be the time to provide the full presentation. But written report will be available. General Fund support of Restricted activities was asked for clarification. Asset fee of 1% was imposed to help cover the administrative support of these activities but does not cover the complete costs.

At this time, 11:15, session was led in a movement during a welcome break

### **Nomination Committee Report**

The Clerk called on Paula Cell (Germantown MM) Clerk of Nomination Committee to present the Nomination Committee Report (see Handout) . She introduced the members of the Committee and spoke some of the changes that are occurring. She noted that are three Quarters that lack any representation on the committee. "We Can Do It" day is scheduled for October 4th. A new position this year is the Rising Clerk. Thomas Swain has been clerk for five years and has achieved the limit for reappointment. The Rising Clerk will serve for a specified term alongside the outgoing clerk. This year the Rising Clerk will be in the position for one year and

then will assume the clerkship for one additional year, after which the clerk can be asked to continue. During this period this experimental position of rising clerk will be reviewed for its usefulness and may be continued if the YM approved.

The following appointments were presented and approved:

**Nominations, Annual Sessions, Thursday, July 28, 2011**

**Clerk**

Thomas Swain: Middletown Concord            Aug. 11 -July 12

**Rising Clerk**

Jada Jackson: Trenton Burlington            Aug. 11 - July12

**Alternate Clerks**

Sallie Jones: Birmingham Concord            Aug. 11 -July 12

Dana Kester-McCabe: Wicomico River Southern            Aug. 11 -July 12

Steve Olshevski: Radnor Haverford            Aug. 11 - July12

**Recording Clerks**

David Rose: Lehigh Valley Bucks            Aug. 11 - July 12

Jane C. Keller: Pennsdale Upper Susquehanna            Aug. 11 - July 12

Jim Her:r Lancaster Caln            Aug. 11 - July 12

John G. Hope: Harrisburg Caln

**Worship and Care Standing Committee**

Chuck Devers: Salem Burlington            Aug. 11 - June 14

Tom Rie: Gwynedd Abington            Aug. 11 - June 14

**Friends Committee on National Legislation**

Linda Jeffreys: Woodstown Salem            Aug. 11-June14

Hollister Knowlto: Chestnut Hill Philadelphia            Aug. 11-June 14

There was an explanation, in response to a question from the body, why the context for decision would not be reviewed at the meeting. It was noted that they will be available for comment within twenty four hours and that Interim Meeting follows a similar process.

**Announcements** were given by the Clerk of the PYM Sessions Planning Group.

At this time meeting settled into a period of worship. During worship the children entered and sat quietly until the end of worship. Christie Duncan Tessmer gave a report on the activities of the children. Children in the lower grades prepared helping hand stickers which indicate that they are willing to engaged as helpers for anyone needing help. Other children discussed their sense of community and leaders, learned about Margaret Fell. Older Young Friends are currently going on a hike.

**Meeting adjourned** at 12:20 pm.

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## **Meeting for Worship**

At the appointed time and place, the Meeting settled into worship prior to conducting the business of the session.

## **Introductions**

The clerk introduced himself and those on the Clerks Table. The clerk is Thomas Swain (Middletown MM Concord Quarter). Alternate clerks are John Ellsworth (Gwynedd MM), Dana Kester-McCabe (Wicomico River MM), Sallie Jones (Birmingham MM) and Jada Jackson (Trenton MM, Burlington Meetinghouse Worship Group). Presiding this evening is alternate clerk Sallie Jones. Recording clerks are Ellen Skilton-Sylvester (Central Philadelphia MM) and Jim Herr (Lancaster MM) and Arthur Larabee as General Secretary (Central Philadelphia MM).

Visitors from other Yearly Meetings were recognized:

Jon Watts (West Philadelphia Worship Group; originally from Baltimore Yearly Meeting).  
Diane Randall, New England Yearly Meeting, FCNL



First time attenders to PYM Annual sessions were asked to identify themselves and approximately 40 people were recognized.

### **Meeting Leadership Stories**

Clerk called on Terese Miller (Lewisburg MM), Program Coordinator for Meeting Enrichment Services Group (formerly called Deepening and Strengthening Group) to introduce Irvin Schorsch (Abington MM) to talk about a leadership story in his meeting. Abington Meeting wanted to enhance their work in increasing social action. This was an outgrowth of an existing program of making sandwiches for the needy/homeless. This was a great meeting activity, but the experience of going from making the sandwiches to giving them to the homeless was not a part of it. This year, Abington MM partnered with a program in Germantown called Face-to-Face and brought the sandwiches to homeless community members there. Over the past year, the number of sandwiches and the number of volunteers have greatly increased. Even more, the meeting has been enriched by this multigenerational activity that has allowed meeting members to step outside of their comfort zone into an unfamiliar community. Key outcomes of this meaningful work have been overcoming fears that divide us from people and places that are different from us and enhancing collaboration and sharing within our meeting community. As Quakers, we want to see the “inner light” in others. Abington MM has found that when we can do that with strangers, it is very exciting for all ages.

### **Review Process for Approving Minutes at Yearly Meeting Sessions**

Yearly Meeting approved an experiment to change the way minutes of our sessions are approved during these sessions. Minutes of action will be approved in the face of the meeting and all other background considerations will be available online and in print within 24 hours. Suggestions for changes can be made via email or in the suggestion box.

A few questions were raised:

- Will there be a signature? Should it be the Recording clerk?
- There is often an important summing up when minutes are read at the end of sessions that really captures the spirit. There is something beautiful we will be missing if we go in this way.

### **More Meeting Leadership Stories**

Rick Howe (Doylestown MM) discussed a concern arising from the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. After eloquently describing his own lived experiences in relation to understanding the potential role of nonviolent action as a response to terrorism, he has, with the support of Doylestown MM, is encouraging meetings and individual Friends to plan free public forums around the 10th anniversary of 9/11 that would give people in various PYM communities a tangible sense of nonviolent responses to terrorism. Rick discussed two books and an useful FCNL pamphlet that have assisted him greatly in designing a forum he is planning to offer and he is very willing to share these resources as well as a press release for inviting others to these events.

There are viable nonviolent responses to terrorism; it is important to make these possibilities visible to the wider world. (A request was made for Rick to make resources available for others on Abington website).

## **Appreciation to Stenographer**

The clerk noted appreciation for the work of Rob Hemingway, the stenographer who is doing voice to text transcription.

### **More Meeting Leadership Stories**

Viv Hawkins (Central Philadelphia MM) introduced a new project named “Called to Action” (formerly the Witness Formation Program). Several other Friends introduced the need for this group as well as its goals: Ann Yasuhara (Princeton MM), Emily Higgs (Lancaster MM), Wade Wright (Millville MM), Michael Gagne (Central Philadelphia MM), Amy Kietzman (Central Philadelphia MM). This group’s presentation began with an inspirational video focusing on Paul Hawken’s book, *Blessed Unrest*, in which he focuses on the scope and power of the current global movement toward environmental justice. Each of the Friends present called passionately for continuing and enhancing a Quaker witness to ecological justice. Can we work together to build the Peaceable Kingdom or, as one Friend called it, a Peaceable Kingdom? There is a new way to look at this time that is not so full of anger and pain. It is an amazing opportunity to be alive today. We are all in this together. This vision for the Yearly Meeting comes out of love. As we love one another and the earth, there is a vision for the Yearly Meeting that is renewed and excited to get the skills to take action in the world with a deep grounding in the spirit.

The group would like to focus on transformational group work and nonviolent direct change. Quakers and non-Quakers will begin working together on Called to Action starting in January 2012. The goal is to meet once a month for 6 months working on particular direct actions – to get better at “loving the world non-violently.” Called to Action is an invitation to dialogue, a new way of thinking, and direct action.

The goals of the group are to stay spirit-led, to experiment, to begin with love.

## **Exercising Our Citizenship**

The clerk called on Margaret Mansfield (Mt. Holly MM) to introduce Diane Randall (Executive Secretary, FCNL). Diane will be with us until Saturday evening and we are invited to engage with her while she is with us. In her talk, Diane began by saying “Everything I learned about leadership, I learned from Quakers....and my Mom” Using examples from her work with FCNL, she discussed 3 key leadership practices: 1) Listening, 2) Trusting and 3) Acting. Deep listening is an act of love. Deep listening is what makes FCNL be able to do their work. The very nature of corporate worship is based on trust. This is power beyond measure. The common factor that makes a company a great place to work is trust. The media loves to highlight the lack of trust. FCNL successfully builds trust across traditional divisions. In terms of action, FCNL is working in pragmatic steps for seeming impossibilities, engaging activists in meaningful spirit-led lobbying, and reaching youth (e.g. young adult spring lobbying weekend).

She described her recent trip to the Middle East and meaningful comments that came in asking what FCNL should be communicating to Congress. One Palestinian woman said that the important message to Congress should be: “Tell them we’re human.” Another Palestinian man said “You have much work to do in talking to Congress.” The talk ended with Diane encouraging us not to make the mistake of talking to each other and thinking you we have

addressed the issue. Our elected officials need to hear from us, especially if we disagree with them. We need to trust our call to leadership and exercise our citizenship.

**Closing Worship**

At this time, the meeting settled into a period of worship.

**Announcements** were given by the Clerk of the PYM Sessions Planning Group.

Meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.

# Annual Sessions Minutes - Friday Morning, July 29, 2011

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The 2011 Summer Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends convened Sixth Day morning, July 29, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. at De Sales University in Center Valley, PA. The announced theme of our 2011 Sessions is “Powerful Beyond Measure: Trusting the Call to Leadership”. **The following minutes of action were approved in the face of the meeting:** 1. We agreed in 2007 that we would release the income of the Yearly Meeting designated funds to the General Fund over a period of 5 years. The schedule of release for these funds was approved in 2008. In order to balance the budget of FYE 2012 we now agree to release the remaining funds at this time, ahead of this schedule. It should be noted that three funds removed from the classification of designated funds last year are not included in this release because they are structured funds. There are six funds that remain on the list of designated funds scheduled for release whose status as restricted or unrestricted is being reviewed by the Financial Oversight Working Group. When this review is finished, income from those funds found to be designated will be released to the General Fund in accordance with this minute. The six funds being reviewed are: the Michener Fund, the Dewees Funds, the Ridgeway Fund, the Charleston Fund, the Anna T. Jeanes Fund, and the Thomas/Yarmak Fund. 2. We approved the Budget proposed by the Financial Stewardship Committee for fiscal year ending 2012. Meeting expressed great appreciation to the Committee and the Yearly Meeting staff who have labored beyond the call. Anguish was expressed for the loss of extremely valuable and important staff as a result of

reduced funding this year. **The following record of our narrative is open to change and correction:** 1. Out of the silence of worship, the Clerk, Thomas Swain (Middletown MM, Concord Quarter), asked others at the clerk's table to introduce themselves: Alternate Clerks Jada Jackson (Trenton MM, Burlington Worship Group); John Ellsworth (Gwynedd MM); and Dana Kester McCabe, (Wicomico River MM); Recording Clerks Jim Herr (Lancaster MM) and David Rose of Lehigh Valley MM; and Arthur Larrabee (Central Philadelphia MM) General Secretary. Our visitors included Mary Stata staff of Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) and Renetta Holloway new staff of Pendle Hill. 2. Allison Anderson, Central Philadelphia MM, told us we received 23 epistles from other Yearly Meetings. Allison, with four others, lived with the epistles for two weeks. From this they found it easy to find common messages for our Yearly Meeting in sessions. These include: We have a tradition that we will live with and help us through our challenges. We will never be abandoned by the Holy One. 3. As a Meeting Leadership Story, Jonathan Snipes of Fallsington MM, told of the opening that came to their Meeting as a result of the Deepening & Strengthening process. They found that too few friends were shouldering too much of the work of the Meeting. This was particularly true of the financial work. After five years of working on it they are now in a new pattern with much more participation. Change does not come without conflict—with eight new members on the committee and an insistence on computerization, the treasurer quit, though she stayed on the finance committee. A new treasurer was found. Jonathan became the new clerk of the committee, though he admits he would have previously been very surprised to be in that position. He found that leadership is available in all of us. Using small groups at a potluck the Meeting came to some very new and unusual solutions to their financial challenges. 4. As the clerk began our consideration of our budget he reminded us that we continue in worship and urged us to release our truth to the body when we speak it. He also reminded us to speak once, speak to the clerk, and avoid applause. Thomas then introduced Jack Mahon, Woodstown MM, to bring us the work of the Financial Stewardship Committee on our budget. Jack said that his six years with the committee have been the longest period of spiritual growth of his life. And the Committee has worked hard to stay open to the movement of the Spirit. He then went on to give us an overview of the major changes in the budget compared to the one offered in April. These include a decision to maintain the Burlington Conference Center with substantial increase in income from the Center, higher rent for Friends Center, decrease in fee income from Friends Education Fund, and reduction from four to two issues of PYM Today. Personnel changes include reducing youth program staffing from 3.7 FTE to 3.0 FTE. The total FTE staff is increased to 32.2. To balance the budget, as directed by Interim Meeting, somewhat generous contributions and income from the newly released funds were included. However, this budget is not sustainable. Jack suggested that later today and tomorrow we need to consider the future work, having established the basis with approval of this year's budget. To give us direction on this, he quoted from the minutes of the Committee of March 24, 2011. This was a reminder that the YM began a process in 2003 of discernment of the work of the Meeting's staff. He concluded by suggesting that the budget was not the most important issue that we as gathered Friends must consider. Clerk then instructed the meeting to settle into silent worship prior to asking questions. A question about the restriction of the continuation of the eco-justice coordinator's position for only 9 months brought a promise that if significant funds can be found the position may continue. But Jack reminded us that the eco-justice work of the YM will continue with or without a staff support. The Covenant goal for 2012 is about \$90,000 more than what was received in 2011. The Annual Fund for 2011 brought in \$461,000 and the 2012 budget expects \$450,000. A Friend reminded us that our worship this

morning brought forth the concept of transformation. He urged us to not stay with the status quo. As we are now, 80% of the YM does not contribute. To become more relevant for our membership, we must return to our Monthly Meetings to ask what the Yearly Meeting can do to be important. The Friend expressed his feeling of being as spiritually renewed by participation at Yearly Meeting as he is in worship weekly in his Monthly Meeting. He will attempt to excite others in his Meeting to this relevance, to the richness we have in coming to this gathering. A young adult friend talked about the financial stress his college experienced with the collapse of the stock market. He told us that, happily, the college continues with much of its previous spirit though it was forced to make radical cutbacks in staffing and in many other areas. A question about the ad hoc Long-Range Planning Committee revealed that names were never brought forward. Clerk expressed that we will talk about Long Range planning in our meeting tomorrow. A Friend told us that she feels privileged to be alive at this time, a time of global crisis, but a time of inevitable transformation. She expressed appreciation to the Committee for bringing us a budget with painful and hard choices. Because of this we will be forced to move from our status quo. A Friend asked about disposing of assets—our three properties. Jack Mahon said there was no real possibility of disposing of either Friends Center or Arch Street, and the suggestion of shuttering Burlington Center brought forth so much energy that this revised budget keeps it open. A Friend urged us to change the dates of our Fiscal Year, since we are considering approval of a budget that has been in use for a period of nearly a month. In order to resolve the question of unsustainability, TylaAnn explained that because of increases of personnel cost, property cost, loss of income from our investments, and release of designated funds ahead of schedule, we will need approximately \$360,000 next year to have a balanced budget. Several Friends urged us to recognize the importance of our youth, including our Young Adult Friends. A Young Friend suggested they could give up half of their FTE staff so the YAFs could have a half. A friend asked us to express our faith that we can, and will, be changed as a Yearly Meeting through God's Grace. A Friend expressed his view that the process of developing this budget has been unsustainable. He felt that this year has been overly difficult and has not been loving to the people involved. Sadie Forsythe urged us to recognize the pain and difficulty of the Young Adult Friends in the loss of her position, their staff support. They have not seen this as correct. She urged us to recognize that things must change. Many Friends expressed unity with Sadie's anguish. And another asked us to consider what we will do. A Friend lifted up the names of Wright Horne and Mary Anne Crowley as two others who were extremely valued staff members who have lost their jobs in this budget process. Clerk urged us to be generous with our love as a salve to our pain as we move into our consideration of our future. 5. A question of release of designated funds brought an explanation of the difference between restricted and designated funds. Restricted funds, the status of which was determined by their grantors, will not be considered for anything other than the uses as directed. Some unrestricted funds were designated for uses in the past by members of PYM. These will be released from their designations and the profit from them will be used wherever needed in the budget. The release of these funds was planned to take a few years. However, this process was accelerated when other income has not been as plentiful as anticipated and expenses have increased faster. 6. A wonderful mob of children joined us. Clerk gave a brief explanation of the adult activity. We heard that the children made lanterns, performed a freedom play, discussed the qualities of leadership, made reflection signs, had water play, got stickers, played with balloons—holding them carefully as one holds things in one's heart. Middle School Friends played games, did chalk drawings, and talked about

responsibility. 7. Our speech-to-text was done by Becky Tallarico 8. We adjourned, intending to meet at 6:45 this evening for worship.

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*Clerk, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends*

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The 2011 Session of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends convened Friday evening, 7:00 p.m., July 29, 2011 at De Sales University in Center Valley Pennsylvania. The announced theme of our 2011 Sessions is "Powerful Beyond Measure: Trusting the Call to Leadership". At the appointed time and place, the Meeting settled into worship prior to conducting the business of the session. The Clerk was Thomas Swain (Middletown MM, Concord Quarterly Meeting). The Alternate Clerks were Dana Kester-McCabe (Wicomico River MM), John Ellsworth (Gwynedd MM), Sally Jones (Birmingham MM), and Jada Jackson (Trenton MM and Burlington Worship Group). Presiding this morning is Alternate Clerk Sallie Jones. Recording Clerks are Rich Ailes (Middletown MM Concord Quarter) and Jim Herr (Lancaster MM). General Secretary is Arthur Larrabee. Visitors from other Yearly Meetings were recognized: Paulette Myer is a member of Community Monthly Meeting in Cincinnati. The clerk read out a minute of travel for Paulette who is traveling under a leading to share her music as ministry. The Meeting approved the clerk endorsing Paulette's letter. Scilla Wahrhaftig of Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting also introduced herself. Scilla is the AFSC program director for Pennsylvania. Becky Tallarico is our transcriber this evening **Staff Introduction** Arthur Larrabee asked all PYM staff present to come to the front of the room and introduce themselves. The following staff members were present: Priscilla Adams, Pam Anderson, Josh Birchard, Tricia Coscia, Christie Duncan-Tessmer, Sadie Forsythe, Michael



Gagne, Lola Georg, Beth Lawn, Holly Olson, Martin Reber, Greta Rech, Marie Ryan, George Schaefer, Jennie Sheeks, Kathy Singer, Greta Stone, Carol Strawson, Carol Walz, and Wade Wright. Our staff members were given a warm round of applause by those in attendance. **Earth Quaker Action Team** Ingrid Lakey of the Earth Quaker Action Team announced an action that was held this afternoon at PNC Bank in Allentown. 20 Friends, varying in ages from 2 to 92 years participated in the demonstration. The group of Friends sang in front of the branch and then met with employees in the building and informed them about PNC's involvement with Mountain Top Removal. **Meeting Leadership Stories** Louise Salinas (Fallsington MM) and clerk of the Meeting Enrichment Services Group introduced Jennifer Bowman (Camden MM in Delaware), who reported a Meeting Leadership Story. Noting Paul's teaching to the Corinthians that "we are all given one spirit to drink from" Jennifer told the story of her Meeting being healed. She related her experience of growing up with the Meeting and her awareness of divisions in the Meeting as she grew older. After a period of time away she came back to a Meeting that was dysfunctional but ready to be helped by an outside group. A way opened for the Meeting to engage the Meeting Enrichment Services Group which provided spiritual tools for the members to address conflicts that had been festering for years. The experience allowed members to deal with one another more tenderly creating a deepening in their worship and their business sessions. "When you hit bottom, Jesus is waiting there with open arms." The Meeting has learned to move forward in love and healing, letting the spirit into their community. **Interim Meeting Report** Alternate Clerk Dana Kester-McCabe assumed the clerking of the Meeting. She introduced Thomas Swain who rose to present the report on Interim Meeting. Thomas asked all those in attendance who attend and participate in Interim Meeting to stand and about 30 at the session stood. Thomas reminded us that the clerk of Yearly Meeting, also clerks Interim Meeting which has met 8 times since annual sessions on the 2nd Saturday of each month. The report explained how Interim Meeting handled the regular business of Yearly Meeting this year including budget and property concerns, activities of Standing Committees, and various minutes brought forward from Monthly Meetings and Quarterly Meetings. This year a special experience was our youth being involved in a Junior Interim Meeting, occurring at the same time as the adult sessions. The transition to Saturdays from Thursdays has been successful. A proposal will be brought forward in September to lessen the amount of Interim Meeting sessions from 8 to 5. **Leadership in the Yearly Meeting Talk** Dana then introduced Arthur Larrabee, General Secretary of PYM and a member of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, who presented a talk on Leadership in the Yearly Meeting. Arthur acknowledged the theme of these sessions Powerful Beyond Measure - Trusting the Call to Leadership. A critical point of his talk was "a community that will be powerful beyond measure is a community that trusts its leadership". Noting that the conventional model usually promotes a "power over" strategy which Quakers mistrust, Arthur presented an alternative Quaker model that contained these 6 points which stressed a relational connection between leader and community. 1- Our leaders need to think globally about the Meeting community - What is God's big idea for us? All of us. 2- They must share their big picture and then release it to the Meeting. Speak and release and allow the Spirit to work that vision into a community vision. 3- Leaders need to take risks and be vulnerable in service to the Meeting. Be fearless with ideas but if those ideas are not accepted - release them. 4- Be spiritually grounded and be open to spiritual guidance. It is critical that the community experience the leadership's spiritual concern for its life. 5- Ideas and visions must be tested and seasoned with the community. The community's impact has to be the most critical part of the relationship. 6- Satisfaction must be received from the success of the community. There is no

room for self congratulations. Be lifted up by what the community and the leadership have achieved together. Leadership that follows these guidelines will prove trustworthy to Friends, gaining their respect and acceptance. It is that relationship, ultimately, that can move a community to become powerful beyond measure. Arthur spoke with a particular passion and clarity. When he sat down those gathered entered into a respectful silent worship. **Emerging Leaders Scholarship Program** Stephen Dotson, of Baltimore Yearly Meeting and Middle School Friends coordinator for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, presented the Meeting with information on the Emerging Leaders Scholarship Program. This program was developed by the Young Adult Friends coordinator to help integrate YAF into the life of the Yearly Meeting. The program provides grants to Young Adult Friends to assist them in their work as youth coordinators with the Middle School and Children's programs of the Yearly Meeting. Kamali Bush of Downingtown Meeting and Richard George each received \$500 grants this year. They served as middle school and children's staff working for a period of 6 weeks, learning the particular mix of physical, spiritual, mental and social activities which the children in the Yearly Meeting program experience. Richard spoke to us via a prerecorded video. Kamali spoke to those gathered in the face of the Meeting. Both were filled with enthusiasm for the work opportunity they have been given. **Junior Interim Meeting** Ben Camp, the Yearly Meeting Children's Program Coordinator and member of Norristown Monthly Meeting, helped present the report from Junior Interim Meeting, introducing various younger Friends who had participated in this year's JIM. Two summers ago, at Annual Sessions where Priorities were approved, a Children's Program priority was created at a threshing session that ran concurrently with the Adult threshing session on Priorities. The following children's priority was approved: "to share games and food with homeless children". This year's work with St. Barnabas Shelter in Philadelphia was a direct result of that Children's Program priority. At various times in the year while Adult Interim Meeting met, the Junior Interim Meeting shared meals and play with low income children at St. Barnabas Shelter. Sports equipment for the shelter was collected from members of Westtown Meeting. Over 250 pieces equipment was collected and the equipment was delivered to the shelter along with \$70. Participants also kept a personal journal about their experiences at the shelter, where they built friendships with others less fortunate; finding themselves opened to a part of Philadelphia which they didn't know existed. During the presentation the Meeting accepted reports from the following children: James Bradley of West Chester Monthly Meeting, Brie Schanno of Springfield Monthly Meeting, Daria Brandt-Moses and Lilli Brandt-Moses of Chestnut Hill Monthly Meeting, Benjamin Waterhouse of Westtown Monthly Meeting, and Julia Carrigan of Mickleton Monthly Meeting. **The Thread of Our Stories Artwork** Christie Duncan-Tessmer presented the ongoing Yearly Meeting Thread Art work where colored threads coming from shared stories amongst participants at this gathering have been woven onto a large board in a large circular interconnected pattern. Meeting ended in silent worship to meet again on Saturday July 30 for morning sessions.

# Annual Sessions Minutes - Saturday Morning, July 30, 2011

*Dear Friend:*

*These minutes are in draft form. We felt it important to post the minutes of our proceedings as soon as possible.*

*Our process for minutes are somewhat changed from our traditional manner of business minutes. There are two parts to our minutes - actions & narration. We will record all actions taken by Friends in each of the plenaries. These minutes will be read in the face of the Meeting for approval. These approved minutes will be a part of the full minutes.*

*The second part, the narration, will not be read in the face of the Meeting. We will post them online and make hard copies available during sessions. Friends are invited to review our minutes and to offer suggestions for change to the Clerk as soon as possible. Friends who were in attendance at these sessions are invited to make suggestions by writing to the Clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting at [clerk@pym.org](mailto:clerk@pym.org). We hope to have official minutes completed by September 10, 2010.*

*If you have any questions, please get back to me.*

*Thomas Swain,*

*Clerk, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends*

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The 2011 Session of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends convened Saturday morning, 9:00 a.m., July 30, 2011 at De Sales University in Center Valley Pennsylvania. The announced theme of our 2011 Sessions is “Powerful Beyond Measure: Trusting the Call to Leadership”.

Minutes approved:

**MINUTE I: The body approves meeting this evening for continued consideration of the creation of a discerning and planning process.**

**MINUTE 2: We as a meeting want to move forward with a discerning and planning process and will return this evening to discuss what form it will take.**

At the appointed time and place, the Meeting settled into worship prior to conducting the business of the session.

The Clerk was Thomas Swain (Middletown MM, Concord Quarterly Meeting). The Alternate Clerks were Dana Kester-McCabe (Wicomico River MM), John Ellsworth (Gwynedd MM), Sally Jones (Birmingham MM), and Jada Jackson (Trenton MM and Burlington Worship Group). Presiding this morning is Alternate Clerk Sallie Jones. David Rose (Lehigh Valley MM) and Jim Herr (Lancaster MM). General Secretary is Arthur Larrabee.

There were no new visitors.

Minute for Newton Carter leadings' to travel on behalf of Bolivian Quakers from Buffalo Monthly Meeting, NYYM read by the clerk and endorsed by the body.

#### Meeting Leadership Stories:

Therese Miller (Lewisburg MM) and member of the PYM Meeting Enrichment Service introduced the service which helps meetings deal with issues such as a culture of avoidance. Tom Gates and Faith D'Urbano of Lancaster MM were introduced. Tom spoke of the themes which emerged from the meetings' participation in this service. First was the urge to preserve what we have. Second is to go deeper as a faith community. Faith explained the process which involved having over 100 Friends fill out a questionnaire and then have a "covenant retreat" to deal with the issues raised. The first series of issues dealt with children in the community, the second dealt with conflict resolution. "Seeing beyond our differences: Seeing Ourselves as a Covenant Community" was the outcome of the process.

#### Clerks' Announcements

The Clerk reviewed the Minute process. Minutes approved by the body will be read back at the time of approval. The body of the minutes which contain the context of the discussion will be available both on line and in written copy. Process for submitting suggested revisions given.

#### Incoming Epistle

Epistle from Baltimore YM read by Therese Miller. Stated goal of YM Session was to deal with Racism. Lessons from the past were provided and current attitudes were examined. Speakers encouraged each person to make a difference. The level of support required for the work of the Yearly Meeting was addressed with the topic "Are You Ready?" This question was also made applicable to the wider issues confronting us as Friends.

A Friend from Atlanta Friends Meeting also thanked PYM for their assistance in starting the meeting in Atlanta back in the 1950's.

#### Introduction of Topic for Morning Session

The Clerk framed the discussion on the life of the Yearly Meeting with a review of the lessons provided by speakers at this Annual Session, reports received, and decisions arrived at.

Focus of this session to be whether this body is ready to undertake discernment and planning process. Process prior to this session involved reviewing strengths and challenges by the Clerks. Challenges included seeking clarity, sustaining ways of spiritual connections, creating spaces to speak and listen, and knowing the right relationship with our resources. Strengths included the blessings of an efficient staff, strong commitment of Friends who are able to volunteer, financial

resources, willingness to be faithful, humbleness to be led by the spirit, God's abiding love to help us.

Session Topic: Is the Yearly Meeting ready to undertake a discerning and planning process? The clerk then opened the session for other responses. The following points were made by Friends:

Financial Stewardship has offered us a way to become financially stable. We need to ask what we need to sustain. We need to speak our truth in a delusional society and not move in our delusion as well. The process of transformation is likely to involve more than we have yet absorbed.

We need a great deal fewer visionaries and more worker bees to get dirty and clean the stables.

A dream from last night of a gathered meeting (in New Jersey?) had different colors depending on whether they were speaking from ego, fear, or from the spirit. We need to hear spirit based messages.

I have no idea about how we can move forward. An obstacle is our delusions, not just society's. The ongoing economic crisis is finally affecting us. We have been living under a delusion, both in Monthly Meeting and in Yearly Meeting. We are the custodian of many things as a YM and need to ask what we want to be custodians of. Can we get past the delusion?

Greatest challenge as a YM is our structure of staff and administration and also our Quarterly and Monthly Meeting. We had priorities which created the structure. Priorities and structures cannot be separated and therefore structure becomes a constraint on changing our priorities.

It is difficult to prepare for a journey without a destination and knowing what to take on the journey. PYM has been aware of the treasure of our financial resources. Yet there is another resource that we do not always care for as well, and that is our people resources. Personal lesson of having others to do work caused her to do things without thinking about others. Rather than wasting this capital, we need to cultivate it. A challenge is that we do not put a dollar value on humans, but that we value each and the wisdom that they can bring to us.

A Friend was reminded while driving of the eternal here and now. Past is what we have done, the future is what God will open to us. We must live in the here and now.

One of the great resources is the families that struggle to educate and empower their children. Some see value in our witness to the world, other see that what is most important is raising of our children.

Support expressed for long range planning, however, we are at our worst when we sit around and talk and at our best when we get out and do something.

We need to dwell in possibilities and not play small. We have heard of transformation and yet do not yet know how to get there. God's abiding love, which was mentioned as one of our strengths, is not strength if we do not look to it.

Young Adult Friend from West Philadelphia Worship Group spoke that the Young Adult Friends are "ready to unclench" but that we need to acknowledge the pain that they are experiencing. YM has often spoken of the youth being one of its strengths and yet has not acted that way. Friends need to individually take on this task.

Clerk brought before the body the question: Could a discerning and planning process be of a benefit to our Yearly Meeting?

Restructuring done before in the early 90's considered the question: What is Quaker Governance? What could be done to make the Monthly Meetings the powerful part of the YM? Suggested that the minutes be reviewed.

We need to leave here with a long range strategic plan otherwise the work being done will be wasted and will cause this Friend to resign. A proposal for long range planning is ready to be offered. The Clerk asked if the meeting was in unity to hear a proposal. Meeting was not in unity. Proposal was asked to be held.

We need to know how to be Friends in the 21st Century and this will need to involve a multi-generational process. We cannot afford to fractionalize.

Review of experience of past Friends regarding Quarters. Her experience with lack of Young Friends at Quarterly Session led her question their benefit in drawing Young Friends into the work of Friends.

Planning and Review process could be just a euphemism for kicking the can down the road. Experience of visiting Friends in Cuba led to the suggestion that we have had too close of an association with "Empire". We need to acknowledge that we are too comfortable and need to stand and be counted.

Time for Planning and Discerning may be long past. Minute from last year of the proposed ad hoc long range planning committee is one way of moving forward to consider the same question.

Long Range planning is essential. Minute of instruction has been brought before Interim Meeting a number of times and is ready for approval. Disappointment was expressed that it is not being offered for consideration.

It was pointed out how many times we have tried to restructure, revise and reconsider priorities. The Children last night showed us how to establish priorities and accomplish them. Perhaps we should follow their lead.

The idea of a long range committee should not mean that it should take a long time to get together. We could trust our leadership to undertake this task rather than try and get another committee in place. There is urgency. "Free our Prisoners" comes to mind when those who are most affected are unwilling to speak to the issues.

At this time the Clerk asked the Meeting to settle into worship while Clerks gathered to seek a way forward.

The Clerks have prepared a minute for our consideration to see if there is unity.

**Proposed Minute:** Is the Meeting willing for the Clerks to carry this concern forward, reporting to Interim Meeting, and asking Interim Meeting to continue this spiritual discernment and Interim Meeting will report to Yearly Meeting in our 2013 sessions as to its progress and decisions made? Friends were not in unity to accept the minute.

The Treasurer said that we have taken on more than we can take on. There is no long range planning solution to fixing the budget next year. Problem is simple. We have no structure that assigned responsible for the long range view. How can we reach clarity on issues that we need time to consider with good process. A committee is needed to prepare the options and do the research. Need to avoid the mistakes of involving people too close to the issues or attempt regional representation. Long Range issues need a Clearness Committee type of group to deal with these issues.

Friends may have a stop because the group may not ready to release it to a committee. We need to have a clear mission for this committee.

We need to clearly express what it is we are approving.

We need to express our priorities, many of which we do not express. We often do not name our priorities. This may be an opportunity to name our priorities.

We could have spent more time to discuss what we mean by long range planning. After all the things that we have been through, and all the things we want to do, it would be irresponsible not to have long range planning.

The Clerk asked. Does the body approve considering this question further this evening. **Meeting approved.**

**MINUTE I: The body approves meeting this evening for continued consideration of the creation of a discerning and planning process.**

Do we recognize the need to undertake discernment and planning process but do not yet know what it would be like.

What are the questions that need to be resolved. Budget problems are a symptom. We need to acknowledge that we have been losing membership. We need a group to consider these questions.

“Member of PYM” spoke. PYM is where we bring people together to form a critical mass and to create the roads and bridges for the rest to use.

Suggestion made that facilitators from Meeting Enrichment Services be involved in any process.

The question was asked what happened to the minute that had been brought before Interim. Clerk expressed that his sense was that the meeting was not ready to move forward with the process but that he has the minute and that it could be presented this evening.

It was suggested that we as a meeting are ready to move forward with the following:

**MINUTE 2: We as a meeting want to move forward with a discerning and planning process and will return this evening to discuss what form it will take.**

**Meeting approved.**

Suggestion that a group of friends to prepare a proposal this afternoon to bring back to meeting this evening.

An Assistant Clerk asked for another chance for the current group to get it right. A friend hoped that they would be willing to ask for assistance.

At this time the Children entered to the sound of the meeting singing “Dona Nobis Pachim”.

There are many things that we cannot get when we aim directly at them. Happiness is a case in point. Transformation is like grace, it happens when we are doing something else.

Concern expressed of the use of the term “process”. It is a mechanical term and that we think that the way that we interact with each other is not a process, and that we need to rise above a mechanical mentally to a place where we receive the inspiration that the spirit can offer us and meet at a level that is higher and deeper than just a process. Then we will find out what we are called to act upon.

Reports from Young Friends

Groups reported learning how to share, teaching about respect, and finding out where God Is.

Children’s Priority presented:

The children engaged this morning in a process to determine their priority for next year. “God’s big idea for us resulted in the following priority: Make the world a better place and share our Quaker Faith by treating ALL as our brothers and sisters. We will do this by raising money and helping those who are hungry and homeless.”



Minute of Concern presented from the Children Program (Kindergarten through fifth grade):

**A minute of concern and support from the Children's program about PYM staff: The longer the Yearly Meeting the more Friends we will have. We wonder how we can help them find new jobs. The children's program hopes we can think about these needs again next year**

Meeting adjourned at 12:35 PM to meet again this evening.

# Annual Sessions Minutes - Saturday Evening, July 30, 2011

*Dear Friend:*

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*If you have any questions, please get back to me.*

*Thomas Swain,*

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The 2011 Session of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends convened Saturday evening, 7:00 p.m., July 30, 2011 at De Sales University in Center Valley Pennsylvania. The announced theme of our 2011 Sessions is "Powerful Beyond Measure: Trusting the Call to Leadership".

At the appointed time and place, the meeting opened with a period of silent worship and song. Alternate Clerk Jada Jackson opened the proceedings with a recognition that we are standing in an unfamiliar place and we must work in faith and trust to a new place. We will need to be tender, truthful and responsive.

The Clerk was Thomas Swain (Middletown MM, Concord Quarterly Meeting). The Alternate Clerks were Dana Kester-McCabe (Wicomico River MM), John Ellsworth (Gwynedd MM), Sally Jones (Birmingham MM), and Jada Jackson (Trenton MM and Burlington Worship Group). The Recording Clerks were Jane Keller (Pennsdale MM) and David Rose (Lehigh Valley MM). General Secretary is Arthur Larrabee.

The agenda has been amended Thomas Swain will forego his talk which will be presented tomorrow. Our speaker will shorten his talk by 30 minutes so that the Body will have time to continue the discussion of this morning related to the planning process. The Alternate Clerk gave a brief background on the Minute of Instruction presented to Interim Meeting and asked Friends to set it aside for tonight. The meeting will be extended until 9:15 p.m.

Friends **approved** the amended agenda and the extension of the time period for meeting for business until 9:15 p.m.

Friends were asked to read the PYM Epistle and give comments. The epistle will be read tomorrow.

Arthur Larrabee introduced the speaker, Jay Marshall, Dean of the Earlham School of Religion, who spoke on vital Friends' leadership. He sees a new willingness among Friends to envision and discuss Friends' leadership. Monarchy, authority, and power by office have a potential for coercion. These lead to inequality and injustice. But while leadership is not an anathema, it should bear the imprint of our convictions. He noted three contexts for Friends' leadership: Friends' meetings-- leadership gets lost in the quicksand of tradition; Quaker organizations -- are often founded by Friends but modifications are made in the moment. Some are run by a combination of Friends and non-Friends. He mentioned also the challenges we face: the cyclical nature of consultations; making peace with our past; dealing with our theology (Quaker process, community, "I haven't been heard," consensus vs. sense of the meeting; challenges specific to organizational purpose). The challenge of communication involves clarity and awkwardness with directives.

There are opportunities before us. We are conditioned to listen deeply to one another; we have a non-anxious presence; we are given to plain-speaking; and we have a willingness to consult and discern before decision-making. It is a dynamic faith because we believe in the Inner Light. Good Quaker leadership reclaims that internal power; it is spirit-directed. We need to trust those we invite to lead. With that of God in every person, can we trust that the other will hear us?

It is key to ask for what purpose one is leading. The leader is the contributor to the fulfillment of those holistic goals. Good Quaker leadership also understands the importance of relationship to task. We need to take care of each other but also implement action. Trust, authority, structure and process are the hidden issues which we must acknowledge. A communal-based culture dedicated to discernment is needed to thrive.

After a brief break, the Clerk asked Michael Gagne to help us to move forward. He explained that tonight will be a listening session and no decisions will be made. He reminded the body that the planning process is needed for clarity, but we need to listen from a place of love for one another. Invite love, joy and playfulness into the room. Viv Hawkins served as scribe.

What are the outcomes we are hoping for and what is the process that is supporting us into those outcomes-- what and how? The work we do tonight will be brought forward to the full body of the YM. Let's go to the Light Within.

**What do we want from the planning process? What outcomes do we want?** The following comments were received from the body: We want to be released from our burdens; simplify so we can do the things we want to do; we want to be prepared to act together well; we want a sense of direction; an understanding of sustainability; the plain vision of our goal; feel spirit acting through us and do it communally; we want to be whole and be sure the decisions we make are good for the whole; a pro-active process to be well prepared to work on the big questions together; let the excellence rise up and treasure each other; find a way to engage and re-engage the 80% of our members who are not invested in YM; stop focusing on minutia of process; genuine sharing; let's do what we CAN do and do it well; we will trust our leaders, we will know where we are going; a shared understanding of the purpose of PYM; not be encumbered by past decisions; be surprised; clearer vocabulary; a structure which incubates and cradles the spirit moving through us, but does not encumber us; be relevant to the challenges in the world around us; create something we can share with all the children so they can see their place in the Meeting now and in the future; a clarity of use of both our financial and human resources; we become experts at discernment of God's light so others can see that light; a clear understanding of what God calls us to do to make the world a better place; staffing structure that supplies long-term security to our staff; step courageously into radical change; be less enslaved to our dead people's money; a structure reborn on the possibilities of what we can do today, especially in light of new technologies; build a structure that we can use tomorrow, that will allow us to do what we say and open our Meetinghouses to all of God's children; involve people in Monthly and Quarterly meetings in our decisions and keep them advised; leave our individual baggage at the door and create a corporate message for the world; that we have a time to work on who we are and where we came from in order to know where we want to go.

Michael set the stage for next steps. What is the best that we can imagine in five years? What's the fundamental purpose, call? What are the goals? We need to do an environmental scan of what is needed in the world around us. **What do we want our planning process to produce for us?** A support system to help us adjust to the inevitable changes; flexibility and budget; communication plan so we are all on the same page; plan for engaging people so all feel plugged in; keep our vision foremost; flexible organization open to continuing revelation so that we can change it every 5 years; provide a way to act quickly; to know the role of the Meeting and the role of the staff; know who we are and have the tools and the knowledge to use them; be clear about whose decision this is to make and as a consequence of what process; make this a YM that everyone wants to contribute time and money to; monthly meetings strengthened by engagement in this process; resource allocation models that support our chosen outcomes; process needs energy by having specific, short questions; engage creatively all the diversities and make the road by walking; a vision that goes beyond 5 years; some sense of measuring the result.

**What type of process will help us to live into what we have envisioned? What will the process look like?** Have this process (the one used here tonight) used in each of our Monthly Meetings; including the staff and asking the staff to visit monthly meetings; ask young Friends' cohorts how they want to be involved in the process; structure our committee and budget on the four lines of our mission statement; look at meeting structures and our finances and develop a manageable list of priorities and begin with a threshing session; develop trust and faith in what we do together; worship more together without an agenda so we can receive a clear message;

resources are available to help us make a long range plan, especially those who have already done so.

Michael asked Friends to consider **which voices really need to be in the room? What are the voices we don't hear?** Our hope is that we can provide a new model for the Religious Society of Friends.

The body of Yearly Meeting has the authority for this concern. The Clerk asked that, in recognition that we have made many steps toward unifying our corporate gatherings, Interim Meeting and Sessions, and sensing that the body wants this process to continue between Sessions, is the body easy for this work continuing at Interim Meeting? **Friends agreed that a planning process proposal will be brought to Interim Meeting in September or as soon as it is ready. The process proposal will be developed by a group named by the clerks in consultation with others and will build on previous work.** A Friend suggested that young Friends chose a person to serve on this committee. We need to involve all the members and inform them about this process. Interim Meeting is scheduled for September 10, 2011.

Meeting adjourned planning to meet Sunday morning, July 31.

# Annual Sessions Minutes - Sunday Morning, July 31, 2011

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*If you have any questions, please get back to me.*

*Thomas Swain,*

*Clerk, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends*

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The 2011 Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends convened Sunday morning, July 31, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. at De Sales University in Center Valley, PA. The announced theme of our 2011 Sessions is “Powerful Beyond Measure: Trusting the Call to Leadership”.

## **The following minutes of action were approved in the face of the meeting:**

1. We agree that the two year experiment in location of Sessions be extended for one more year so that the Yearly Meeting, with experience of Sessions in Philadelphia in 2012, can begin the discernment necessary for a longer range plan. To provide the time necessary for this discernment, Sessions will be held in a campus setting in 2013.
2. Among the Body, there arose the desire once again to take up the issue of GLBT, queer, and other equality concerns in some way. We ask the Sessions Planning Group to keep these concerns in mind as they decide on a venue for Sessions in 2013 and as we move forward in other ways that may address this issue.

3. We approved allowing the clerk to write a letter about the recent tragedy to Friends and others in Norway YM on our behalf.

4. We approved the outgoing epistle. We also approved appending the Young Adult Friends, Young Friends, Middle School Friends, Fell Group, Fisher Group, and Fox Group epistles to this outgoing epistle.

At the appointed time and place, the Meeting settled into worship prior to conducting the business of the session.

The Clerk was Thomas Swain (Middletown MM, Concord Quarterly Meeting). The Alternate Clerks were Dana Kester-McCabe (Wicomico River MM), John Ellsworth (Gwynedd MM), Sally Jones (Birmingham MM), and Jada Jackson (Trenton MM and Burlington Worship Group). Presiding this morning is Alternate Clerk Sallie Jones. Recording Clerks are Rich Ailes (Middletown MM Concord Quarter) and Jim Herr (Lancaster MM). General Secretary is Arthur Larrabee.

Last night, our visitors included Barry ... from Dallas Friends Meeting. There were no other visitors today.

Our speech-to-text was done by Becky Tallarico.

Thomas asked us to recognize the following Friends for their service as they leave their volunteer positions with YM: Patricia Finley, Susan White, Jack Mahon, Suzanne Day, Richard Morse, John Ellsworth and Paula Cell. We also recognized the following YM staff who will no longer be employed: Ginny Connolly, Wright Horne, Mary Anne Crowley, Sadie Forsythe, and Rita Varley, who has retired after 30 years of wonderful service as our librarian.

The clerk called on Gretchen Castle, Doylestown MM, clerk of the *Faith and Practice* Revision committee, who asked the members of the committee to introduce themselves. They are hoping to complete their project in less than 10 years and are very enthusiastic about their rich and wonderful time together. Given their task by Interim Meeting to revise the piece about YM structure, the committee realized it has been 20 years since the last revision of the entire book, and about time to consider doing it again. The committee is determined to update and consider factual matters, update the changes in PYM organization, discern important information that is missing, and revise the queries and advices. They will be revising the book by sections, which will be sent to Monthly Meetings, posted on the web, brought to Interim Meeting, and all will be brought to Sessions for approval. The email address for comments and suggestions is [fnp.pym@gmail.com](mailto:fnp.pym@gmail.com). As the YM now begins to consider alternative structures, this piece appears most difficult.

We were given a draft revision of text that is found on pp. 16-21 of *Faith and Practice*. A Friend suggested the center of the Society is both worship and business. We were told the quote from George Fox about “walking cheerfully over the world” is taken out of context and the committee agreed to correct it. A Friend told us that, as a new Quaker, she carried her *Faith and Practice* for the years of college when there was no Quaker Meeting nearby. And she knows her Meeting

gives copies of the book to newcomers to introduce them to Quakerism. She urged the committee to show the revised version to people unfamiliar with Quakerism to make sure it's clear.

The clerk called on Paula Cell, Germantown MM, Clerk of Sessions Planning Group. Having been given the charge to plan sessions for two years in 2010 as an experiment with the first year here at DeSales and the next in Philadelphia, the committee now wishes to have another year to clarify plans, with the year 2013 to be held in a campus setting. A question about coming back to DeSales met with concern about the Catholic owners of this campus discriminating against GLBT and queer folk. The clerk asked us to consider a dialog with the owners of this university on this issue. Our rising clerk said, as a queer, black woman, she wished our Monthly Meetings would be more open to diversity. A member of the Planning Group said we would have to raise the cost of participation in Sessions if we eliminated Catholic Universities. Paula told us the selection of a venue for Sessions is a difficult, time-consuming task, but the Planning Group will take into consideration the concerns arising in the body.

A Friend expressed concern that our testimony is to love one another, and that some of the messages this morning have not been very loving for the people within the sound of our microphone. A Friend, very familiar with people on this campus, expressed conviction that many here are very glad to see us Quakers at DeSales. Another Friend expressed concern for some attenders here she overheard talking with great disrespect for Catholics. She has been rejuvenated by our discussion today, knowing Quakers recognize that of God in *everyone*.

A Friend asked about our approval of the minute, which makes no mention of concerns for the owner of the campus to be considered for Sessions in 2013, when there was vocal opposition on the floor. Grayfred Gray, Lancaster MM, stood aside in approval of that minute.

Our outgoing epistle was read by Jinny Schiffer (Darby MM). Changes were suggested, and the committee left the room to make them. Cindy Palmer (Central Philadelphia MM) stood aside from approval due to mention of death and rebirth.

Clerk read his minute of exercise, in which he focused on some of the new and unusual aspects of these Sessions. He talked about the organic nature of leading from our gifts. Some of the efforts involved during these Sessions were "difficult beyond measure." However, he expressed his feeling of great joy and love in the work and the people here, with the over-arching reality of our time together being "powerful beyond measure."

There were 49 children in Sessions this year, far more than ever before. Appreciation was expressed to the Education Standing Committee, which made it possible for all children up to middle school age attend for free.

We heard epistles from all groups; where possible they are appended to these minutes. The Fox Group (rising kindergarten and first grade) sang their epistle. Middle School Friends made a video epistle. There were three times as many Middle Schoolers here this year as last.

Appreciation was expressed for the clerk and his team. Also appreciation to Becky Tallarico for her wonderful work in speech-to-text.



We adjourned, intending to meet July 25, 2012 in Philadelphia.

Recording Clerks: Rich Ailes  
Jane Keller  
Jim Herr  
David Rose

Thomas Swain, Clerk