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Minutes and Committee Reports

YM06 - 1 Worship and Letter from Britain Yearly Meeting

The 43rd Session of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting was held at Bluffton University, Bluffton, Ohio. We began with worship, during which we heard the reading of the Letter of Greeting from Britain Yearly Meeting. Friends in Britain are aware of the connections between Friends world-wide. They were grateful for our letter of fellowship following the London bombing last year.

YM06 - 2 Welcomes

Our Clerk, Michael Fuson (Granville), welcomed Friends and visitors to our yearly sessions, speaking of the value of this annual opportunity to be with Friends in the region. He also introduced Friends at the table, Shirley Bechill, Assistant Clerk (Pine River), and Thomas Taylor, Recording Clerk (Ann Arbor).

A traveling minute from Friends General Conference on behalf of Dave French (Madison, WI), who is visiting with us this year from the FGC Yearly Meeting Visitors Program, was read. Michael also read a minute introducing Elizabeth Oldham (St Louis, IL YM), our visitor from Friends World Committee for Consultation. We welcomed David Zarembka (St Louis, IL YM), here to introduce his work with the Africa Great Lakes Initiative; David was last with LEYM when he served as treasurer 22 years ago. Also representing AGLI was David Bucura, past Clerk of Rwanda YM. Susan Lee Barton, FWCC Midwest Coordinator, brought greetings from Clear Creek Meeting (Ohio Valley YM).

Those attending annual sessions for the first time introduced themselves: Ruth Carey (Ann Arbor), Joy Pryor (Grand Rapids), Aaron Scherb (FCNL), and Michael Wajda (Goshen Meeting, Philadelphia YM), our plenary speaker.

YM06 - 3 Roll Call

The Recording Clerk called the roll of Friends from our constituent monthly and preparative meetings and worship groups. The count (corrected against registration numbers) was as follows:

Monthly Meetings:

Akron	2	Kalamazoo	4
Ann Arbor	24	Kent	4
Athens	12	Mid-Ohio Valley	0
Birmingham	15	Monongalia	0
Broadmead	21	North Columbus	4
Cleveland	22	Oberlin	2
Delaware	0	Pine River	4
Detroit	5	Pittsburgh	14
Grand Rapids	2	Red Cedar	12
Granville	4	Wooster	8

Preparative Meetings and Worship Groups

Albion (under Red Cedar)	1	Grand Traverse (Pine River)	0
Circleville (N Columbus)	0	Holland (Grand Rapids)	0
Erie (Pittsburgh)	1	Indiana (Pittsburgh)	0
Fremont (Grand Rapids)	0	Manitou (Grand Rapids)	0
Gallipolis	0	Tustin (Pine River)	0

LEYM attenders	160
Other attenders	9
Total attenders	169

YM06 - 4 We mourned the death of two Friends in our Yearly Meeting.

Fran Elliot (Ann Arbor) died on November 15, 2005. She and her husband, Joe, were active in the civil rights struggle in Arkansas and peace activities in Ann Arbor. She lived a life of simplicity, honesty and justice, expecting her family to do the same.

Peter Collins (Ann Arbor) died on January 20, 2006. He was helpful to Friends in Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting and Friends School in Detroit with legal advice, pro bono.

YM06 - 5 Arrangements and Site Committee

Judy Greenberg (Broadmead) welcomed us and reported for the committee with practical information about the physical arrangements. The 169 registrants are a new record for the YM.

YM06 - 6 Business agenda

The Clerk outlined our business agenda for upcoming sessions and asked that we make our reports brief, submitting them in writing to assure accuracy and to save time in minuting. The Assistant Clerk will be responsible for reading out announcements to the meeting.

YM06 - 7 Epistle Committee

Phil Balderson (Wooster) and Abbey Pratt-Harrington (Athens) were approved to serve with Shirley Bechill, Assistant Clerk, on the Epistle Committee and to report back to us as way opens.

YM06 - 8 Naming Committee

We approve the names of Margie Liske, Sally Weaver Sommer and Peter Wood to serve on the Naming Committee to bring names of two Friends to serve three-year terms on the Nominating Committee. We ask them to report to us later this weekend.

YM06 - 9 Nominating Committee

Connie Green (Cleveland) reported to us that Youth and Children Committee is in particular need to be filled this year but there are several other positions that need to be filled. Nominating Committee brought us a proposal to restructure our committees. In order for us to study the proposal, we asked that it be typed, duplicated and distributed.

Nominating Committee Proposal - June 15, 2006

In considering the reality of our size and functions as a yearly meeting, the Nominating Committee would like to offer for your consideration a change in the approach to how we fill committee positions. We think it might be helpful to rethink the committee structure in terms of two categories: maintenance committees (Nominating, Program, Arrangements & Site, Ministry & Nurture, Finance & Budget, Youth & Children, Publications & Archives) and committees of concern (Peace, Earth Care, Advancement & Outreach).

The Nominating Committee would nominate clerks for all committees. All members of the maintenance committees would also be named by the Nominating Committee.

The committees of concern would have their membership made up of those yearly meeting attenders who feel drawn to those committees as well as members/attenders sent by their monthly meetings to represent them. The committees of concern would function as networks where monthly meetings could report on the work they are doing and exchange ideas. The committees of concern clerks would function as facilitators. Perhaps reports of these committees to the yearly meeting could be in the form of a summary of what monthly meetings are doing, as we believe the real work of these committees happens at the monthly meeting level. We suggest that these committees of concern could meet at a different time at yearly meeting sessions than the maintenance committees so there might be more participation in each. We also suggest that membership on the maintenance

committees be decreased to two-year terms for four members with the option of serving three terms.

We believe these changes in our structure would better reflect our size, function and energy as a yearly meeting. We invite you to hold these ideas in the Light. (See Minute 24.)

YM06 - 10 Visitors and first time attenders

The Clerk welcomed more visitors and first time attenders. The following Friends stood and introduced themselves: Ed Waisanen (Ann Arbor), Robbie Griffith (Wooster), Beth Amoriya (Athens), Laura & David Lockledge (Cleveland), Dustin Misosky (Pittsburgh), Trisha Lachman (Athens), Shelley Kotz (Broadmead).

The Assistant Clerk read the following announcements:

- a) 12-step meeting later today – all Anons are welcome.
- b) Friends School in Detroit display includes packets for people to take to their meetings – please check the table and take the one home to your literature table.
- c) The 2006 *LEYM Directory* needs attenders to check their names and addresses in a blue binder at the Registration table.

Reports from Wider Quaker Organizations

YM06 - 11 World Gathering of Young Friends

Becka Sommer reported on her attendance at the YM Gathering in Lancaster, England, in August 2005. Two young Friends were invited to attend from each yearly meeting. Visas were denied to a number of African and Indian Young Friends, so a second gathering was held in Kenya.

At both gatherings, Young Friends learned about Quaker history, overcame language barriers, and experienced the variety of Quaker worship styles from around the world, led by Friends from each region. Issues of Friends worldwide were discussed in small groups. The group understood the importance of building *puentes*, bridges between Friends in different areas. E-mail and pen-pal lists have enabled on-going dialogue. Young Friends want the connective energy to keep going – the growing and learning from other Quaker cultures. We appreciate Becka's report and the spirit with which it was brought.

YM06 - 12 Friends General Conference

Our representatives, Shirley Bechill (Pine River), Star Mary Castro (Athens), Valerie Groszmann (Kalamazoo), and Kri Burkander (Ann Arbor) reported about FGC programs on traveling ministry, couples enrichment, religious education, publishing, book tables, high school program, annual gathering, youth ministries, nominating, and long range planning. This year's gathering is to be held in western Washington this year – a bold step, which is working. FGC is striving to raise new money for all these projects.

Dave French (Madison, WI) spoke about his work as Assistant Clerk of the FGC Advancement & Outreach Committee. Search in [www. quakerfinder.org](http://www.quakerfinder.org) for the online Directory of Isolated Friends in North America if you want to be contacted by Friends. In a fundraising feasibility study, respondents felt that FGC was uniquely equipped to build bridges across different varieties of Quakerism in North America. If any organization could do it, FGC may be able to, because of the variety of programs FGC has developed over the last decade. Dave invited us to attend future FGC Gatherings in Wisconsin (2007) and Johnstown, PA (2008). He is assisting Katie Nolan (Red Cedar) in arranging a train trip to this year's gathering in Tacoma.

YM06 - 13 Friends World Committee for Consultation

Representatives Margaret Kanost (Birmingham) and Mike Hinshaw (Wooster) told us of the FWCC Section of the Americas annual meeting hosted by Guatemala Friends in March 2006. We learned of individual Friends they got to know during the meeting and on tours afterwards. They visited Friends

churches in Chiquimula during the meeting. Friends in Guatemala represent a large percentage of Protestant churches in the country. The main talk was given by Duduzile Mtshazo, FWCC Clerk, from Central & Southern Africa YM. Attenders learned about the Progreso Scholarship program in Guatemala for needy students, many of whom are Mayan. This is sponsored by Redwood Forest Meeting in Santa Rosa, CA. They sell Guatemalan woven products and receive annual donations to fund the scholarships.

The next FWCC Triennial meeting is scheduled for August 2007 in Dublin, Ireland. Mike Hinshaw and Raelyn Joyce (Kalamazoo) have been chosen to represent LEYM there. A regional meeting is scheduled for September 29 - October 1 in Wilmington, Ohio. Mike encouraged us to contribute to the campaign that FWCC is mounting to build its finances.

YM06 - 14 America Friends Service Committee

Mike Hinshaw, representative, attended the annual corporation meeting on our behalf. His report has been printed in the *LEYM Bulletin*.

YM06 - 15 Friends Committee on National Legislation

Thomas Taylor (Ann Arbor), past representative and member of the FCNL Policy Committee, reported to us on our Quaker lobby in Washington. The FCNL Policy Committee met last weekend and absorbed the responses from 200 meetings and churches to the call for priorities to bring to the 110th congress beginning early next year. The spiritual basis of our political work was evident from many of the responses, such as encouraging the U.S. to pull its troops and bases out of Iraq, but with care to the needs of the Iraqi people. Earthcare and a budgetary shift from military to human needs at home and abroad were also emphasized in the responses.

Thomas introduced Aaron Scherb, FCNL staff member working on nuclear issues. Aaron will be conducting a lobbying workshop this afternoon at 6:00. Friends are encouraged to come and learn how they might effectively bring their concerns to our senators and representatives in congress.

YM06 - 16 Epistle from Intermountain Yearly Meeting

Shirley Bechill read to us the Epistle from Intermountain YM, meeting at Ghost Ranch, NM. Friends gathered there listened to the voices, the birds, the sounds of prophecy. Like God, *prophecy* is really a verb – to move and transform ourselves into a new Peaceable Kingdom. They exhorted Friends to be bolder, to love more and to listen.

YM06 - 17 Prayers for Bassett Family

We have learned that our friend Miyo Bassett (Ann Arbor) is recovering from a serious operation in Rochester, NY. Miyo and the Bassett family are in our thoughts and prayers.

YM06 - 18 Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting

Don Nagler (Pine River) reported to us on the work of GPQM, an association of seven monthly meetings and four worship groups in Michigan's Lower Peninsula. GPQM holds two business meetings a year and one for worship, plus a picnic in August and a mid-winter gathering for fellowship and celebration. He told us of recent gatherings and upcoming events at Michigan Friends Center. The Michigan Area AFSC office in Ann Arbor, Friends School in Detroit and Michigan Friends Center are all supported by and report to GPQM.

YM06 - 19 Treasurer's Report

We are grateful to Connie Bimber (Oberlin) for reassuming the responsibilities of YM Treasurer after a nine-month hiatus. Connie reviewed the opening and closing fund balances and reported that some meetings' checks have not been received. This matter is being investigated. (See pp. 47-51 below for Treasurer's Report figures.)

YM06 - 20 Finance Committee

Sally Weaver Sommer (Broadmead) reported for the committee:

Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee reviewed the final financial report for 2004-05 and the preliminary report for 2005-06. The general conclusion is that the yearly meeting is financially sound.

We reviewed the list of meetings that have not yet contributed this fiscal year. Sally will contact these meetings to solicit their contributions. Those who are at the sessions from these meetings could help her by contacting her.

The high school youth program ran a deficit this year. This deficit came about because of an overpayment for the fall retreat which will be recovered in fall '06. We will transfer between \$250 and \$300 from this year's clerk's fund to the high school fund to make up this deficit.

The yearly meeting financial books are being reviewed, but the results are not yet in because of the transitions in the treasurer position over the past year.

Guidelines regarding honoraria and expenses for the yearly meeting annual gatherings were approved. These guidelines have been given to the Registrar and the Program Committee. We have added to the guidelines that the annual meeting financial report will be included in the fall *Bulletin* of each year.

The Finance Committee proposes that the budget for fiscal year 06-07 be identical to the budget for fiscal year 05-06, except that the high school youth fund be increased by \$500. (See attachment.) We want to encourage the high school program to grow and develop. The clerk of the Finance Committee will send a letter to each of the meetings discussing the budget, reporting that the new share per member will be \$35, and asking meetings to send checks to Connie Bimber.

YM06 - 21 Advancement & Outreach Committee

Mathilda Navias (Broadmead) reported for the committee.

Advancement & Outreach Committee Report

Supporting Meetings. A number of the smaller meetings and worship groups in LEYM have few active Friends. The Advancement & Outreach Committee continues to struggle to figure out ways that LEYM can support these meetings and worship groups. We have compiled a list of suggestions for ways a monthly meeting can support a worship group or preparative meeting under its care. Copies are available from the committee.

Re-design of the Yearly Meeting Web Site. A&O has been working with Bill Wartens on his re-design of the yearly meeting web site. A new design and new text went on-line in 2006. A&O will be adding brief descriptions of Quaker worship, business, and testimonies. We hope that these will encourage seekers to contact Friends.

The web site is a great way to make information available to interested Friends; we urge LEYM committees to consider whether they have information that would be useful to post on their committee's web page.

Helping Monthly Meetings Set Up Web Sites. A&O has been working to help monthly meetings and worship groups set up web sites. We encourage every meeting and worship group to have a web site that gives seekers the information they need in order to attend meeting for worship. Wooster Meeting reports that three families have walked in their door in the last year after finding them through their web site.

We have put together a pamphlet called "Is Your Quaker Meeting Thinking of Setting Up a Web Site?" It offers help to meetings in setting up or reviewing a web site. Copies are available on the A&O display table along with other outreach materials. Meetings that do not feel up to creating and maintaining their own web site now have the option of having a page of static information on the yearly meeting web site. Interested groups should contact Bill Wartens.

In this last year, four groups put up web sites: Akron MM, Circleville WG, Birmingham MM, and Kalamazoo MM. Birmingham's site is a static site hosted on the yearly meeting web site. Of the 22 monthly and preparative meetings in LEYM, 11 currently have web sites. Of the 9 worship groups, 3 have web sites. Any meeting that would like help in figuring out how to get a web site up can contact the clerk of A&O.

Gathering Information on Meetings and Worship Groups. Every year, LEYM asks each meeting and worship

group to send current contact information for meeting officers, tell how many members they have, and give the number of people at a typical meeting for worship. A&O has worked with Thomas Taylor, LEYM Recording Clerk, to revise the statistical report form we use for this in an attempt to collect unambiguous mailing addresses for meetings, to make the form easier to fill out, and to capture new information such as meeting web sites. The new form was distributed both by e-mail and by regular mail, and meetings had the option of sending in the report electronically.

The information gathered will be printed in the *Annual Records*, used to update meetings' information on the yearly meeting web site, and entered in the yearly meeting database. If anyone has feedback on the new statistical form, please give it to Mathilda Navias, Clerk of A&O (mathilda1@lycos.com or 419 448-0578).

Yearly Meeting committees and officers who want to communicate with meetings on yearly meeting business can get a mailing list or e-mail addresses from the manager of the yearly meeting database (Mathilda Navias).

YM06 - 22 Ministry & Nurture Committee.

Merry Stanford (Red Cedar) thanked the Friends serving on the Committee for their hard and valuable work.

Ministry and Nurture Committee Report

1. State of the Meeting Reports. The committee prepared for the Yearly Meeting Session before arriving by reading the State of the Meeting Reports that had been submitted. We then read, out of the silence, portions of the reports that jumped out at us. Our experience of reading these reports was deeply satisfying. We found them rich, full of detail regarding the spiritual conditions of our local meetings. Several meetings used the suggested worship-sharing format to glean a full sense of the spiritual state of the meeting. We are glad that the State of the Meeting Guidelines appear to have nourished such rich sharing among us.

2. LEYM Consultation. The committee is working with the Traveling Ministry Program of FGC to identify a leader for a Saturday consultation to be held in April 2007. The goal for the consultation is to help members of ministry and nurture committees of monthly meetings consider ways to deepen Friends' experience of Meeting for Worship and share ideas. Concerns that the committee identified that could be addressed include: enabling Spirit-led vocal ministry, dealing with ministry that does not appear to be Spirit-led, helping inexperienced attenders come to understand the process of Quaker worship, the role of a "holding ministry" in Meeting for Worship, being open to receive the call to minister, deep listening to messages, and preparation for worship. Two sites are being considered: Oberlin Friends Meeting and Perrysburg, both with overnight hospitality for those Friends needing it.

3. Executive Committee Request. At Representative Meeting, the Executive Committee made a request regarding each committee developing a set of queries relevant to its function. The committee discussed and agreed on the following, all to be provided to local meetings through the summer clerk's mailing from the Ministry and Nurture Committee clerk.

This year we will provide an annual query, focused on a significant issue facing our meetings, as we have for the last twenty years.

We will publish an updated booklet of the LEYM queries to be mailed in the summer clerk's packet to the monthly meetings. This will be published both in paper and on the website.

Local meetings will be invited to submit ideas for queries focused on pertinent topics of faith and practice, which will be considered next year by this committee. The committee agreed to accept topics and rough ideas, as well as polished queries.

Friends in local meetings will be invited to submit brief stories (up to 1,000 words) of their faith journeys, to be collected and published in an as yet undetermined way.

4. Query for 2006. The discussion and selection of a query usually takes a great deal of time. This year we discerned, with measured discussion and prayerful consideration, the query topic and queries in all of 1.5 hours! Our topic this year is Discernment.

What do I understand "divine guidance" and "discernment" to mean?

How do I experience divine guidance and discernment in my life and in our life as a Meeting?

What are we, as Friends, being called to do or to be in the world at this time?

5. Spiritual Formation Program: The Spiritual Formation Program has been under the care of Ministry and Nurture for several years. As this program grows, the benefits are observed in our monthly and yearly meetings. Some participants in the program shared that they are able to reach a greater depth and share more openly in Spiritual Formation worship than in that of their monthly meetings, and that this nourishes their spirits. The program next year will be led by Beckey Phipps and Phil Fitz of New England Yearly Meeting at the Leaven Center near Lyons, Michigan, September 8-10. Registration forms, brochures, and program flyers were distributed, and will be available on the LEYM website.

6. Nurture of New Clerks: The committee has noticed that sometimes meetings do not submit State of the Meeting Reports, and wonder if this might be due to the fact that incoming clerks may not be aware of these requests from the Yearly Meeting. We recommend to the Executive Committee the development of a packet of information, including a timeline indicating when things are requested, and the purpose they serve in the Yearly Meeting.

7. Seventh Guideline for SOM Reports: We were prompted to consider whether the local meeting's "ongoing connections to the wider Quaker community" should be added to the potential topics for consideration in the State of the Meeting Report Guidelines. The committee concluded that this is a valuable addition, and will add it to the document that is circulated to the clerks in late summer and post it on the website.

8. TMP Consultation: The FGC Traveling Ministries Program has requested two representatives of each Yearly Meeting to serve at a consultation to be held in November near Pittsburgh. It will be the role of our representatives to represent LEYM at the consultation, and to report back to the YM. Following a lengthy but faithful Strawberry Creek process, the names of Kri Burkander (Ann Arbor) and Dolores Avner (Pittsburgh) were put forward as representatives.

YM06 - 23 Costa Rica Intergenerational trip. John Barrie (Ann Arbor) has told us of the trip he and his wife, Karen Connor, took to San José and Monteverde, Costa Rica. They were interested to learn how effective Quakers have been in the area in starting such institutions as the national park system, a Friends school and a coffee cooperative. John and Karen have consulted with Kri Burkander about taking a group of YM high schoolers to Costa Rica to have a similar experience. With them, Kri is eager to help enable this proposal. We look forward to learning more about this exciting project as plans develop.

YM06 - 24 Nominating Committee

Connie Green has told us of the structural and personnel problems that led to their proposal outlined in Minute 9, above:

The Nominating Committee faces a challenge. We are seeking your help.

We have an average of about 120 attenders, including children, at Yearly Meeting sessions. Fewer than 60 attend Representative Meeting. We have about 92 positions of service in the YM to fill. It is not possible to serve on more than one committee at a time, regardless of level of interest or energy, because all committees meet at the same time. Some committee positions have been difficult to fill due to apparent lack of interest or energy.

Ideally, the work of the Nominating Committee should be one of spiritual discernment but, due to the sheer volume and time constraints, and numbers of available and willing attenders, it becomes a secular exercise of filling slots.

After thirty years of using the present committee formula, it might be time to reevaluate and re-vision how we might be faithful to the leadings of the Spirit.

In order to discuss this matter at our meeting tomorrow, the Clerk asked us to study the outline of problems and the proposal together and to consider the following three issues. Is it right to:

- a) change the size of our committees,
- b) have two different types of committees,
- c) structure our YM program so some Friends can serve on two committees at the same time? (See Minute 29.)

YM06 - 25 Plenary address

We have been inspired and encouraged by last night's plenary address from Michael Wajda (Goshen MM, Philadelphia YM) on "Expectant Listening." His words will echo for us for the remainder of our time together and beyond.

(See text of address on pp. 52-67 below.)

YM06 - 26 Peace Committee

David Lore (Granville) reported.

Peace Committee Report

This election year should signal "Ears Wide Open" in terms of Congressional and state legislative attentiveness to the concerns of the electorate. Members of the Religious Society of Friends, although often adverse to partisan politics, should take advantage of this window of opportunity to make our views known on issues of war and peace, human rights, and political and economic justice.

During Lake Erie Yearly Meeting in Bluffton, Ohio, Peace Committee members, Monthly Meeting representatives and visitors discussed concerns as well as opportunities to effect change. We ask individual Friends and Monthly Meetings to inform themselves and consider action on:

The U.S.-India Nuclear Pact: The Bush administration is proposing to waive restrictions on India under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, but there is growing Congressional and international opposition to such a deal, especially given sanctions being considered against Iran.

Permanent U.S. Bases in Iraq: In 2005, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting endorsed FCNL's proposal for the eventual withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq with no permanent U.S. bases left behind. This STEP (Sensible Transition to an Enduring Peace) plan has gained support, to the extent that both the House and the Senate this year included a ban on permanent Iraqi bases in the \$94.5 billion emergency Iraq War spending bill. This language was removed, however, earlier this month in Conference Committee. The issue of a permanent U.S. "boot print" in Iraq remains a concern for Friends and non-Friends alike.

Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund: House Resolution 2631 - the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Act - would require the Treasury to certify for record-keeping purposes those Americans who in their tax filings declare themselves Conscientious Objectors opposed to participation in war in any form. Although this would not constrain military spending - at least in the foreseeable future - sponsors feel it would alert Americans to the opportunity to register dissent to war spending through their tax filings and measure the scope of such opposition.

Palestinian Christians: Two Congressmen have drafted a resolution which claims to be intended to defend Palestinian Christians. The draft resolution, and its accompanying letter, badly misrepresent the situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, claiming that the emigration of Palestinian Christians is caused by their persecution by Muslims, promoted by the Palestinian Authority. It appears that those who drafted this resolution did not consult with Palestinian Christian leaders, who feel it reflects a pro-Israel political agenda. It is also clear that the resolution would hurt Palestinian Christians more than help them.

Dr. Salim Munayer, academic dean of Bethlehem Bible College, has written an incisive critique and response to this Congressional resolution. For a copy of Dr. Munayer's report, contact James Satterwhite at Broadmead Monthly Meeting (satterwhitej@bluffton.edu).

Peace Committee also is happy to announce that Clemence Ravaçon-Mershon, (Pittsburgh and Erie Worship Group) has agreed to serve as our committee representative and liaison to the Friends Peace Teams Advisory Board.

After discussion and a few edits, the Yearly Meeting **approved** the following Minute brought to it by the Peace Committee:

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting

Minute on Raising the Federal Minimum Wage

As U.S. citizens, we say we stand for economic justice: the freedom to work to achieve a

better life for ourselves and our families and receive fair value for our labor.

As Quakers, we believe in equitable sharing of the world's resources, the value of labor, and the lessening of disparity between rich and poor in terms of opportunity.

As a matter of fairness and economic justice, therefore, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting asserts that it is well past time for Congress to take up and adopt a substantial increase in the federal minimum wage. The current minimum wage, \$5.15 an hour (or about \$10,700 a year), has been in effect for nearly a decade and is simply inadequate to support an individual worker, let alone a family.

When adjusted for inflation, the current minimum wage is the lowest it has been in the last half-century, according to a study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research.

Currently, several states are considering raising their state minimum wages above this \$5.15 standard. In addition, the U.S. House Appropriations Committee recently voted 37-27 to raise the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour. But the full House is not expected to follow suit.

As a matter of economic justice, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting calls on state legislators and members of Congress to act quickly and responsibly to raise the minimum wage on behalf of all working people in the United States.

A proposed minute on closing the Guantánamo Bay Detention Center and like places of incarceration was referred back to Peace Committee for further seasoning.

YM06 - 27 Arrangements & Site Committee

Judy Greenberg (Broadmead) and Mary Igoe Meyers (Broadmead) gave us practical details about check-out and reported that:

Things seem to be going smoothly now, as Friends are adapting to what appear to be the normal annoying little bobbles of arrangements. Thank you, profusely, for your cheerful forbearance!

We are scheduled here next year for June 14-17 if this is agreeable to LEYM. The final count of attendance is attached. (See Roll Call above, Minute 3.)

The work of the site committee is complex but very rewarding. Thank you very much for the many expressions of appreciation we've received. It's a wonderful working group, responsible and fun.

YM06 - 28 Earthcare

Ann Sprague (Detroit) reported for the committee.

Earthcare Committee Report

The Earthcare Committee has reconstituted itself through outreach and has new members representing several monthly meetings.

The committee participated in this meeting by planning the workshop titled "Eat It As Long As You Can" that Jon and Sally Sommer will present today. As part of this the film, "Diet For a New America," based on the book by John Robbins, will be shown. One goal of the committee is to continue to present a workshop concerning the environment at future Yearly Meetings.

The committee previewed a film on climate change called *The Great Warming* that we considered showing at this meeting. Although the film conveys the urgency of our current situation, we came to the decision that it would be more useful in the context of a larger workshop where discussion and clarification could occur. This might be undertaken in the future as a program at Michigan Friends Center.

Our review of committee goals was deeply influenced by the Nominating Committee proposal that suggested our committee should function primarily as a networking group. We began to focus on how we might do that more effectively. The committee had already begun the process of outreach recently and plans to do that more

systematically this year. By identifying contacts in each meeting, gathering information from those meetings, and then integrating and sharing that information, we hope that we can identify environmental concerns, interests and resources within the LEYM community.

In our role as a conduit for information and networking we have also begun the process of establishing a presence on the LEYM website

We would also like to work this year toward identifying three, or possibly four, regional meeting clusters. Clusters that are close-by geographically could more easily meet for educational activities and would be able to work together on issues of local concern. Centering down in our own environments seems to be a particularly important grounding for work on earthcare concerns.

A significant awareness that emerged from our discussion is that some people view environmental action as needing special skills, knowledge or training. In fact, as in all other areas of service, a sense of caring and the nudgings of the Spirit are the only requirements for involvement.

YM06 - 29 Nominating Committee

Connie Green told us of the various YM responsibilities yet to be accepted. The Clerk opened the meeting for contributions concerning the committee restructuring proposal given in Minute 9 and the problems outlined in Minute 24. Several questions concerning practical implications of the proposal were raised and responded to. These are issues that will need to be clarified over time. In the meantime, we need to hold our Nominating Committee in the Light and step forward and take on responsibilities so the work of the YM can continue.

YM06 - 30 Friends Peace Teams/African Great Lakes Initiative

David Zarembka (St Louis, IL YM) reported on this work, which started in the early 1990s. We learned that more people died from violence in Africa than were killed in WWI. The African Great Lakes Initiative started when David and others on FPT went to Burundi and Rwanda to learn of the needs in peacemaking activities. The first program there was in the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP). African Quakers have also been working to heal the intertribal wounds of recent years, including healing companions: Tutsi and Hutu pairs who learn to forgive and understand each other. David encouraged us to attend the workshop led by David Bucura (Rwanda) on this work.

YM06 - 31 Book Display

Valerie Groszmann (Kalamazoo) communicated her joy and frustrations of arranging and staffing book sales at our YM sessions. She gave us clear instructions of how to purchase books while they are still available.

YM06 - 32 Epistle from Iowa YM (Conservative)

The Assistant Clerk read the Epistle from Iowa YM (Conservative). The young people at IYM(C) enjoyed working on a Habitat for Humanity project. The YM continues to explore what it means to be a group of Conservative Friends. They are in the process of revising their Book of Discipline into a book of Faith & Practice.

YM06 - 33 Newcomers

The clerk welcomed newcomers. Robert Marks (Bowling Green, attending Toledo Worship Group, Broadmead) introduced himself.

YM06 - 34 Quaker Earthcare Witness

Al Connor (Ann Arbor) reported.

Quaker Earthcare Witness Report

Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) continues to hold that we are called to live in "Right Relationship with Creation." We recognize that the entire world is interconnected and is a manifestation of God. As parts of God's Creation, humans need to work to restore the earth's ecological integrity. Doing that requires:

- * halting the accumulation of ecologically disruptive substances into the biosphere
- * limiting the amount of land used for human purposes
- * restoring degraded land to biodiversity and fertility
- * stabilizing human population
- * decreasing the production and consumption of energy and material goods
- * reducing the generation of waste
- * redesigning the institutions of government, enterprise and finance to be consistent with reality and the laws of nature
- * enabling people everywhere to strengthen and sustain family and community and live in ecologically, economically and socially sustainable ways.

QEW affirms:

- * the UN is the appropriate institution for governments and NGOs to advance this agenda
- * the principles of the Earth Charter and the Interfaith Working Group for international trade should be followed
- * trade should be promoted for purposes that protect and enhance local food security, the earth's biological productivity and general health
- * access to the global commons: healthy air, health soil, safe, fresh water and essentials of life

QEW is concerned that many YMs that are not members of FGC have not named representatives to QEW. It is making a concerted effort to reach out to Friends United Meeting.

Some members of QEW have been working on a curriculum for adults and high school youth. The curriculum is concerned with spiritual bases for social, environmental and economic justice and sustainability of the earth, communities and all forms of life on earth. Margaret Mansfield and Ed Dreby of Mt. Holly, NJ MM (Philadelphia YM) are leaders of that effort. QEW is now an official nongovernmental organization (NGO) observer at the UN. Our two observers attend open meetings of the General Assembly and Security Council. They also meet with representatives of other NGOs and with representatives of various nations and UN agencies.

QEW is inspired by the long-term environmental protection and energy policy adopted by Friends Committee for National Legislation as a legislative policy. We are concerned that there is not support for and input to FCNL from more individual Friends and monthly meetings. Via a standing committee, Quaker Earthcare Witness – National Legislation (QEW-NL), QEW has established a link with FCNL and its environmental lobbyist, Ned Stowe. This enables FCNL to provide QEW with updates and alerts on pending energy and climate change legislation and enables QEW to reciprocate.

We were reminded that QEW started 25 years ago as Friends Committee on Unity with Nature under the leadership of LEYM Friends, Bill and Isabel Bliss (Ann Arbor) – the FCUN office was in the Bliss home.

YM06 - 35 Program Committee

Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor) reported, first asking that members of the Committee stand to be recognized.

Program Committee Report

The Program Committee's work manifests itself in the skeleton of the Yearly Meeting gathering. Our hope is that, by creating a strong frame for the 72 hours we spend together each June, all who attend can use that frame for the basis of a sound structure of worship, fellowship, yearly meeting business, and spiritual growth.

In order to determine how we might create a better frame for our individual and corporate structures, we distribute an evaluation form at the end of each Yearly Meeting. We consider the feedback from the evaluation forms carefully, and have found them exceedingly useful. We ask that all attendees watch for the evaluation forms to appear Saturday night and Sunday morning, and fill them in before leaving Bluffton so that we can have as much feedback as possible.

The Program Committee notes that a recurring issue that has been brought to our attention is the fact that for

several years the Yearly Meeting has not followed its previous practice of inviting a report at business meeting from one of four national groups (AFSC, FCNL, FGC, and FWCC) each year on a rotating basis. We lift this up as a concern to be considered more widely within the Yearly Meeting.

YM06 - 36 Youth & Children Committee

Carla Pratt-Harrington reported, thanking all who have participated in the program and also the parents who brought young people to take part.

Youth & Children Committee Report

LEYM Youth & Children Committee had 31 young people in our program this year, ranging from one to eighteen years of age. Children were organized into five classes accord to age and grade. The Nominating Committee gave us a list of ten wonderfully competent and committed leaders and two co-conveners last June. We were then able to spend more time planning and being more available to the process this spring. Thank you, Nominating Committee. One parent volunteer created our T-shirt design again this year. (Several extras are available for purchase.) We borrowed wagons and a six-seater stroller for our youngest children, thanks to Macklin Intergenerational Center. These were greatly used and appreciated by adults and children.

On Friday we spent time learning a few folk dances, thanks to a parent volunteer. Some children did not want to dance but later commented that this was fun! As usual, we have crafts available Friday and Saturday evenings and swimming in the afternoons. Thank you, volunteer chaperones. And thanks to the Site and Program Committees for responding to our needs and for being flexible with our children. A special thanks to parents who are meeting and picking up children on time so that group leaders can have the time they need.

As we send these young people into adulthood we are aware they may need their own program and support in the near future. The teens are currently processing how this might come to pass. (See Minutes 41, 43.)

YM06 - 38 Publications & Archives Committee

Rosemary Coffey reported for the Committee.

Publications & Archives Committee Report

In order for the *Annual Records* of this Yearly Meeting to be complete, we need State of the Meeting Reports from the following eight monthly meetings: Akron, Birmingham, Delaware, Kalamazoo, Mid-Ohio Valley, Monongalia, North Columbus, and Wooster. We are also missing reports from Holland and Indiana Preparative Meetings. If anyone here can expedite the receipt of these reports, that would be very helpful.

Similarly, we would like to include obituaries of meeting members in the *Annual Records*. We have heard of two deaths in Ann Arbor Meeting, but have not received formal write-ups of these. There may be others in other meetings that should be included; we'll do so if you tell us about them.

Our *Bulletin* editor, Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor), would appreciate being on the mailing list for monthly meeting newsletters, so that he can draw on their contents for the *LEYM Bulletin*, as appropriate. Please see that he is on the mailing list for your Meeting's newsletter.

With regard to the deadline for the Winter *Bulletin*, we are changing that from December 15 to January 1, as the editor finds that he doesn't start work on it till after the Christmas holidays. We hope this will reduce the holiday stress on others as well.

We've been sending a certain number of *Bulletins* and *Annual Records* booklets to meetings without much feedback regarding whether this number is appropriate or not. Please let us know if your Meeting needs more of either of these or fewer.

We'd be happy to receive copies of photos of Yearly Meeting folk for the *Bulletin* and the LEYM website. Please send them to Jeff Cooper and Bill Warters, respectively. Also re the website: we want you to notice a new function, on the home page, that allows for "e-mail alerts" in the case of something you'd like to disseminate quickly; again, let Bill Warters know if you want to use this. Also, Bill is prepared to create web pages for monthly meetings who do not already have one.

Finally, we bring to you for action the issue of the *LEYM Directory*. Les Walden, who had been preparing a new edition for March 2006, has been unable to finish because of health problems; Mathilda Navias has felt called to take over. However, this has turned out to be even more of a job than she had anticipated, so she now

asks us to consider whether we really need such a publication. Originally, we wanted a current database in order to mail the quarterly *Bulletins* to individuals; now that we send them in bulk to the meetings instead, that purpose is no longer served. We have heard from Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting that they really appreciate the document; and yet, we're talking about just 7 meetings, and suspect that GPQM could readily get current copies of each of those meetings' directories every year and find them more accurate than ours. In terms of people active in the YM, the *Annual Records* have up-to-date information on attenders at Annual Meeting and committee members and officers.

So ... what do you think? Can we produce a directory for this year and then lay it down? Or are there people here who can't possibly do without it? We need your advice.

The question of laying the *LEYM Directory* down can be decided at a future meeting of LEYM, since it has been an every-two-years publication and the 2006 edition is still in the works.

YM06 - 39 Peace Committee

Further to Minute 26, we **approve** the following Minute, thank the Peace Committee and ask them to send the two Minutes they have brought to us for approval to our constituent meetings requesting that they be forwarded to appropriate members of congress and senators as well as to the local press.

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting

Minute on Closure of Guantánamo Bay Detention Center

The recent suicide of three detainees at the Guantánamo Bay detention facility operated by the U.S. military in Cuba has again exposed America to worldwide criticism as to the way suspected terrorists there are denied basic human and legal rights afforded under both U.S. and international law.

So far, only a handful of the more than 300 detainees at Guantánamo Bay have been charged or allowed hearings by military tribunal.

Attorneys have been outspoken in their criticism of U.S. policy at Guantánamo and even Allied governments have called for closure. President Bush says he'd like to see Guantánamo closed as well.

Yet the prison, even now, is being expanded rather than removed, and its operations remain cloaked under a thick veil of military security.

In keeping with our testimonies on peace and justice, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting (Quakers) calls on the U.S. government to close the Guantánamo facility while affording Guantánamo detainees – as well as others held in similar circumstances by the U.S. – both humane treatment and due process under U.S. and international law.

Closing of the facility would be in compliance with the laws and stated principles of the United States. By observing moral, legal and ethical standards, we invite others to do the same.

YM06 - 40 Nominations Proposal

Further to Minutes 9, 24 and 29, Friends have already shared a number of questions regarding our consideration of changing committee structure and the nominating process. The Clerk opened the floor to Friends to speak to broader concerns related to these issues. A number of Friends offered their thoughts and suggestions, including the need to stimulate wider involvement from all our meetings. The Clerk thanked the nominating Committee for stimulating this discussion. This is an important step in an ongoing process of testing whether our structures fit our needs and God's calling.

YM06 - 41 Young Adult Friends

Becka Sommer (Broadmead) and Abbey Pratt-Harrington (Athens) brought a concern to us regarding a

new program and/or space for young adult Friends at Yearly Meeting. It would be useful to have a chance to learn about the way LEYM works and how their energies might be used. This will require liaison with the Program Committee. The Clerk asked those who feel called to work on this process to make their interest known by the end of these sessions. We are heartened by this request – Friends asking for what they need. We are reminded that FGC has resources, including a new Youth Ministries Committee, to help meet this need.

YM06 - 42 Nominating Committee

Connie Green (Cleveland) and Dolores Avner (Pittsburgh) acknowledged those Friends going off committees. We are grateful for the contributions these Friends have made to the YM's work.

Connie Green then read the names of Friends who have agreed to take on new committee and representative responsibilities as well as the names of committee clerks. The full lists are posted outside the Banquet Room. (See below, pp. 43-46.)

A question about the membership of Earthcare Committee was raised as well as another about co-clerks of Site & Arrangements. The Clerk asked the Nominating Committee to revisit these two matters and report to the Executive Committee, which will act on behalf of the YM. The report and the Clerk's request to the Nominating Committee were approved.

YM06 - 43 Youth & Children Reports (See pp. 75-79 below.)

Carla Pratt-Harrington (Athens) read the epistle from the toddlers

The Elementary group's epistle was read and dioramas shown and described.

Upper elementary group told us who they were and showed us in action what they like to do.

Middle schoolers acted out their YM experiences as their report was read.

High schoolers entertained us with a talking epistle over bluesy rhythm and chords on Micah's guitar: "Did anyone hear what he said? I think it was about listening."

YM06 - 44 Naming Committee

Sally Weaver Sommer (Broadmead) laid the following names before the meeting to serve on Nominating Committee for three years: Judy Greenberg (Broadmead), Fred Feitler (Kent).

YM06 - 45 Epistle

Abbey Pratt-Harrington (Athens) read the Epistle. (See pp. 73-75 below.) Following brief edits from the floor, the Epistle was approved. We thank the Epistle Committee for its work on our behalf.

[The Recording Clerk plans to send this Epistle together with the Youth & Children reports to other YMs and Quaker organizations in the United States and to other selected YMs in other parts of the world. Insofar as possible, electronic media will be used. We hope to post these messages on the LEYM website.]

YM06 - 46 Thanks to Bluffton University

We are grateful to Bluffton University for hosting this meeting – the response to our various needs for space and quiet as well as improvements in the meal service were noticed and appreciated.

YM06 - 47 Clerk

We note that our Clerk, Michael Fuson, is ending his term of service as Presiding Clerk at the close of this meeting. We thank him for his patience and his calm nudging to stay on track, and for allowing time and space for the Spirit to work in our midst.

Michael Fuson, Clerk

LAKE ERIE YEARLY MEETING MINUTES
ANNUAL SESSIONS 2006

Shirley Bechill, Assistant Clerk
Thomas Taylor, Recording Clerk