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July 26-29, 2012

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Minutes of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting

49th Annual Sessions

July 26-29, 2012

Bluffton University, Bluffton, Ohio

Thursday Evening Session

YM12 - 01 Opening Worship, Reading of Epistle from Illinois Yearly Meeting

Friends gathered at the appointed time and began the 49th annual sessions of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting with worship. Becky Morehouse (Ann Arbor) read from an epistle from Illinois Yearly Meeting written at its 138th Annual Session, June 2012, which asks the question, "Who are we as Friends?" This Epistle is available at www.fwccamericas.org.

YM12 - 02 Clerk's Table

Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor), Clerk, introduced the clerk's table: Becky Morehouse (Ann Arbor), Assistant Clerk, and Peter Dale (Detroit), Recording Clerk.

YM12 - 03 Calling of the Roll

The calling of the roll of Friends from constituent meetings and groups provided the following count (corrected against registrations):

<u>Monthly Meetings</u>			
Akron	1	Holland	0
Ann Arbor	23	Kalamazoo	10
Athens	11	Kent	0
Birmingham	5	Mid-Ohio Valley	0
Broadmead	27	North Columbus	10
Cleveland	13	Oberlin	0
Delaware	0	Pine River	4
Detroit	6	Pittsburgh	17
Grand Rapids	5	Red Cedar	4
Granville	2	Wooster	6

<u>Worship Groups</u>	
Erie	1

Visitors
8

Total in Attendance: 153

YM12 - 04 Introductions

Our clerk invited visitors, guests, and newcomers to introduce themselves. Two visitors from Tsuchiura Monthly Meeting, Japan Yearly Meeting, Toshiko Kawata and Machiko Takeda, were introduced and welcomed to the Meeting. A letter of introduction from Japan Yearly Meeting for the Japanese visitors was read to the Meeting. Eric Evans, of the Friends General Conference Nurturing Ministries staff and member of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, was introduced and

welcomed. A traveling letter for Eric from FGC was read to the Meeting. Katherine Philipson, outreach staff person from Friends Committee on National Legislation, was introduced and welcomed to the Meeting. Katherine briefly described her work and invited members to join her at a table for lunch to discuss issues having to do with FCNL. Mike Holoday of Grand Rapids and Martha Harris of Pittsburgh introduced themselves and were welcomed.

YM12 - 05 Epistle Committee

The Clerk called for people who are led to do so, to join with our Assistant Clerk, Becky Morehouse, to write the Epistle for the current Annual Sessions. Micah Sommersmith, Broadmead, and Paula Deming, North Columbus, stepped forward to assist on the Epistle Committee.

YM12 - 06 Reports on Sixth World Conference of Friends in Kenya

Five Friends from Lake Erie Yearly Meeting who attended the recent sixth World Conference of Friends in Kenya organized by the Friends World Committee for Consultation spoke. Three served as our representatives and two filled open spots at the event. Our representatives Jerry Knutson (Pittsburgh), Jana Norlin (Grand Rapids), and Robb Yurisko (North Columbus) all expressed thanks for the support given by the Yearly Meeting and read brief reports. Rosemary Coffey (Pittsburgh) and Clemence Ravacon Mershon (Erie Worship Group), both filling open spots at the conference, also read reports. The full reports are attached.

Jerry Knutson Report

First, I'd like to thank Friends for the opportunity to be one of your representatives to the 6th World Conference of Friends at Kabarak University in Kenya. As a preconference tour I visited Friends in the Bware Yearly Meeting and I gave my first sermon to a Quaker Meeting. Bware Yearly meeting asked me to ask LEYM if they'd like to be partners with them. I said I'd ask LEYM.

The most moving event for me was to wake up one morning during the preconference trip. The tent was silent and I thought my other five tent mates had gone to breakfast. However, as I started getting out of bed I noticed a Central American Quaker kneeling beside his bed in silent morning prayers. The humility, discipline and faith I felt in that act of worship was astounding. I also see these three qualities in the writings of early Friends. How can I as a liberal Friend rediscover the humility, discipline and faith that was found in early Friends and is still found in some of the Quaker branches?

The topic of the conference was "Being Salt and Light: Friends Living the Kingdom of God in a Broken World." I wrote a 20-page manuscript on the exegesis of salt and light and presented a three session workshop on this topic at the conference. On Saturday from 3:30 to 5:15, I'll be presenting a workshop on a summary of my research.

I also wanted to let friends know that FWCC Section of the Americas is meeting March 13-17 in Indianapolis. I understand that visitors are also welcome.

Jana Norlin report

My family can trace its Quaker ancestry to before 1680, so I truly feel a part of the long world-wide legacy of Friends. Therefore I am deeply humbled to have had the opportunity to represent LEYM at this historic World Conference. After voluntarily attending the FWCC annual meeting of the Section of the Americas in Guatemala in 2006, I have since participated for the past six years as a LEYM representative to the Section of the Americas of FWCC, serving on the Spanish/English Bilingual Committee. Most recently in 2010 I served as an interpreter for the United Society of Friends Women International Triennial in Mombasa/Nairobi, Kenya.

Because this was the second time in less than two years that I traveled within the country and spent time with Kenyan Friends, I perhaps felt less distracted by unknown surroundings and more like I was coming home with Friends from all over the world. During the conference I may have been more comfortable than some Friends with the differing worship practices and beliefs that many times represented some of the varied experiences I've had as a Quaker in the larger Society of Friends. The diversity of Friends represented reflected my personal reality of worshipping with a full spectrum of Friends during my lifetime. Growing up in FUM, moving into FGC as a young adult and traveling internationally among Friends since I was 16, I relished and

yet like everyone else had to work through many challenges to attempt understanding. Spirit worked through me to make connections between Friends of different languages, cultures and religious references in ways that taught and enriched us all. I reconnected with Friends from other countries to strengthen our ties and had so many blessed new encounters that I pray will bear fruit in the future, including relationships with diverse Friends in the United States. We had eight days during the conference to worship, fellowship, celebrate, explore, discuss and labor over the spiritual essence of revealing ourselves to one another, as Spirit worked through us. This was an opportunity we would like to have shared with all Friends everywhere. The richness of concord and conflict is difficult to express. In addition to daily meetings with my Home Group, I interpreted for two Thread Groups and generally at all other times throughout the conference. I was holding all of us in the Light as we tried to express ourselves and listen to each other asking God for enlightenment. While our diversity was at times a mixed blessing, I witnessed how as individuals, we were led to seek Truth and Light. In opening ourselves to understand others as we wished to be understood, we often relinquished our own egos and agendas to seek God's will and move forward as a spiritual family, seeking a better world society for all.

My name Jana means yesterday in Swahili. I learned to say juzi, jana, leo, kesho, kesho kutwa, kesho ingine, mtondo, mtondo goo which means "the day before yesterday, yesterday, today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, the day after the day after tomorrow, the day after the day after the day after tomorrow, and the day after the day after the day after the day after tomorrow". Let us praise God for all of the forthcoming blessings yet to be revealed from this world gathering of Friends. I thank you all for your prayers and support.

-submitted to Lake Erie Yearly Meeting most gratefully and humbly, with the intention of continuing shared revelation

Robb Yurisko Report

I want to take this opportunity to first and foremost give thanks to LEYM for allowing me to serve as one of the representatives to the World Conference of Friends in Kenya and financing this once in a lifetime Opportunity not only with money but prayer, love and support! Thank you! Once again LEYM has served and ministered to me in a way that has blown me away. I am so grateful.

I could talk all day about the deep and intimate worship and sharing that took place there but in the interest of simplicity of time I will share only a few things: The most moving event was the dancing worship of Kenyan Friends which touched me deeply and moved me emotionally. The most surprising element was the incredible preaching that took place there! Each and every speaker spoke from that deep well of Spirit I have found within our Unprogrammed Worship, proving George Fox's awakening and vision has been carried forth in all branches of Friends. The deepest learnings I gained was to look beyond the initial hurt of a painful situation and see those who have hurt you with eyes of compassion and that while our testimonies are ideals, we cannot use them to judge one another by.

I made connections there with Friends from all over the world and hope to stay in contact with them for a lifetime. I am planning a visit to Ireland Yearly Meeting and hope to visit friends in Australia and New Zealand one day. Each day, new and blessed Opportunities for Worship came in unexpected ways and the Worship and Ministry spanned across the boundaries each of us makes within our own traditions thus making my experience there rich and alive - reviving an old but new understanding of expectant waiting together on God who is ready to burst forth at every moment if we would just yield to letting it out of the box of our usual experience.

I would be delighted to share my experiences in further detail with any and all Friends who are interested! Again thank you LEYM for this beautiful gift of a life changing experience!

Rosemary Coffey Report

For me, this was mostly eight days of working very hard. This is not to say that I didn't enjoy and learn from the often moving plenaries, conversations with my previously unknown companions at mealtime, interactions with my Kenyan roommate, and so on, but I was busy. Very busy!

In the period preceding the conference, I spent many challenging hours translating the registration documents, as well as a couple of the plenary speeches and the descriptions of available tours, from English into French. Once I arrived at Kabarak University, I was assigned to co-facilitate a French-speaking "Home Group," which met for 90 minutes a day on six days, featuring mostly Francophone Africans (from Congo, Cameroon,

Rwanda, and Burundi.) In addition, I co-led a "Thread Group" on Diversity Among Friends for three sessions; co-led an interest group on Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR), a Quaker micro-granting organization of whose Board I am Recording Clerk; and summarized the financial situation of the Section of the Americas of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) in my capacity as Clerk of the Finance Committee.

So what did I do for fun? I visited one of the sites where the Leakeys did some digging, uncovering lots of axe heads along with some very old human bones. I reconnected with a number of our Friendly Folk Dancer hosts from Australia, Ireland, Kenya, Rwanda, and Cuba. I talked a lot with old F/friends and new. I figured out how to stay clean for ten days with no hot water. And I had a great time with old friends in Paris on the way to Nairobi and in London on the way back!

Clemence Ravacon Mershon Report

I expected the experience of an open space at the World Conference in Kenya to be more like the FUM Triennial near Nairobi which I had attended in 2002. However, I found myself occupied with preparations and surprises at the much more inclusive conference, such as being named a bi-lingual facilitator of a home group.

Prior to the Conference, I helped with English to French translations of some Pre-Conference documents. Then, I immersed myself in the English and Spanish surveys and documents which two of us had helped to prepare as members of the Section of the Americas' Executive Committee. At the conference, we assisted a selected small group of Latin American Friends in the evaluation of the Section's 35-year-old COAL (Comite de los Amigos in America Latina) program.

At the conference, during the home group sessions (usually morning), we two North American unprogrammed Friends co-facilitated French-speaking Friends from France, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo-Kinshasa and Congo-Brazzaville. Three challenges soon arose. We co-facilitators met daily at breakfast to choose both a Biblical passage and the appropriate translation. Since neither of us had anticipated leading in French, we did not have a French Bible. We depended on two non-English Bibles, one in French, the other in Kinyaruanda.

Needless to say, adding several English Bible translations to these other languages created plenty of opportunity for misinterpretation. Further, when I sensed that we were losing a few Friends' participation because the discussions were in French, of which only one of us was a native speaker, I sought counsel from an African F/friend. He suggested that the Burundian pastor facilitate in French, Kirundi and Kinyaruanda (mutually intelligible). Although more laborious, it allowed several Friends to participate more fully. Finally, since most of these Friends were from programmed traditions where worship sharing and other co-equal activities are not common, we all had to learn to be both assertive speakers and good listeners. Listening to the true Spirit of a person's words, not just the standard biblical quotation or interpretation he or she gave, turned out to be the most important Conference lesson for me.

For me, the greatest joy was the large group worship and its accompanying music, led each day by a different World Section. Those melodies and the accompanying words of wisdom from mostly-younger speakers continue to provide me with a lasting message of hope.

YM12 - 07 Memorials

The Clerk invited worship and brief memories of those in their meetings, or those who would be known to the Yearly Meeting who have died in the past year. She explained that full memorial minutes will not be read, but will be printed in the minutes.

1. Don Nagler (Pine River) shared that Vern Bechill had died October 24, 2011.
2. Phil Balderston (Wooster) shared that Cecil Rockwell and Ella Rockwell had died in the past year.
3. Rosemary Coffey (Pittsburgh) shared that Sue Axtell (Richmond, IN) had died in the past year.
4. Jim Crowfoot (Ann Arbor) shared that Sol Metz had died in the past year.
5. Valerie Groszmann (Kalamazoo) shared that Miriam McConnell had died during the past year.

Friday Morning Session

YM12 - 08 Worship, Reading of Epistle from Britain Yearly Meeting

The session opened with silent worship at the appointed time. During worship Becky Morehouse (Ann Arbor), Assistant Clerk, read from the Epistle from the 2012 Britain Yearly Meeting. The epistle centered on how “We have begun to explore what it means to be a Quaker today....” The complete epistle is available at www.quaker.org.uk/ym-updates.

YM12 - 09 Introductions

The Clerk Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor) asked for first-time attenders and visitors to make themselves known. Paul and Kathleen Helbling (Broadmead), Joseph and Kathleen Ossmann (Kalamazoo), Pam Kuhn (Wooster), Vaughn Peebles (White Rose Monthly Meeting, Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting), Claire Cohen, MaChere Cohen, Henrietta Cusin, Norma Cusin, Wesley Peters and Wynston Peters (all of Pittsburgh), stepped forward and were welcomed by the Meeting.

YM12 - 10 High School Teen Retreat Program Report

Robb Yurisko (North Columbus) presented a report from the High School Teen Retreat Program. Robb is Coordinator of the program and presented a report which was prepared together with Merry Stanford (Red Cedar), Clerk of the Committee overseeing the program. The report described the program’s current goals and recent activities, challenges, and accomplishments, as well as its hopes, plans and needs for the future. The program is planning to conduct a Retreat/Service Trip to a Quaker Retreat Center, Camp Neekaunis, in Ontario, Canada. The Clerk, Peggy Daub, expressed thanks for the work of the program. There was support for the program in Ontario. The complete report is attached.

Report of the High School Youth Program Retreat Committee

This report was prepared by Merry Stanford, Clerk of the Committee, and Robb Yurisko, Coordinator of the Program. Robb is presenting the report on behalf of Merry and the Committee. The following persons serve on the Committee: Joyce Balderston, Meghan Diffenderfer, Clemence Ravacon Mershon, and Ana Reichenbach.

The LEYM High School Teen Retreat Program is staffed by a contractual youth worker, who plans and implements four retreats during the program year. Three retreats were conducted prior to annual sessions, on a college campus and in monthly meetings, and these were reported about at Representative Meeting. The fourth retreat, held in the summer, is occurring right here at annual sessions. This is the first time LEYM has integrated the teen retreat program and the High School Program held at annual sessions.

We had three goals in integrating these two programs:

- To increase teen attendance at annual sessions.
- To increase teen attendance at the Teen Retreats.
- To integrate the two communities of teens which have, until now, been separate: some teens attend only the teen retreats, and some teens attend only the annual sessions. We know of only one teen who has, until now, regularly attended both.

Our first goal has been well met! Last year there were six teens attending these sessions. This year there are 16! Our teen retreats have also been attended by five or six (different) teens. We hope that this increase in attendance will continue into the fall. We know from previous experience and the presence of Adult Young Friends here at annual sessions every year, how vital it is to provide an active teen retreat program in order to nurture Quaker community!

The fall retreat is being sponsored by Red Cedar Friends Meeting, in Lansing, Michigan over the Veterans’ Day weekend, November 9-12, 2012. The program will begin on Friday evening and extend at least through Sunday lunch, and possibly through Monday lunch, depending on school schedules.

Further retreats will include the famous ‘Quake the Rocks the Midwest’ sponsored by ILYM and attended by various yearly meetings and Friends Schools which be held in Evanston Illinois over MLK Jr Day weekend in January 2013 and then a second Quake sponsored by LEYM which will be held in May 2013 on Earlham’s Campus and attended by various Yearly Meetings including ILYM, OVYM and IYM with Scattergood and Olney Friends Schools being invited as well.

Some of the work we have been doing this year is collecting data from young Friends about the benefits and challenges of attending the LEYM Teen Retreats. We have collected some of that data online, and some of it at Retreats.

Our online survey revealed that the primary factor that keeps teens away from the retreats is transportation, although some are also challenged by their busy schedules or the cost of getting to the retreats. We are happy to say that we received clarification at Representative Meeting from Finance Committee that teens can apply to the Presiding Clerk for travel reimbursement for attending the Teen Retreats, in the same way that Friends may apply for travel reimbursement for attending LEYM committee meetings. So we hope that cost for transportation is not an inhibiting factor for families. However, even when cost is not a factor, teens have trouble getting rides to the retreats. Car pools are often arranged, but even then teens may have a hard time getting a ride to the pickup point.

It appears that in most of our moderate and larger meetings where there are teens, the number of active teens in the Meeting is only one to four. Our meetings are distant from each other, and teens can feel pretty isolated in their communities. Parents have busy work weeks and cannot always leave work early to drive their teen on a Friday afternoon or evening to a pickup point. We are therefore asking nonparent Friends with flexible schedules to assist families by volunteering to drive teens to their retreats. There is also a need for a volunteer to coordinate the transportation of teens in the monthly meetings. More information will be coming to meetings about this in the fall.

A testament to the power of these retreats can be felt when we hear comments like: "I have finally found a place where I can be myself" "Now I know why my parents are Quaker" and "I have really never laughed so hard in my entire life". The larger joint Retreats seem to have the most impact hence we are working this year to create a second larger joint retreat or "Quake" in the Spring and those plans are flowing smoothly! Being witness to and part of the deep sense of community that our Teens create when they come together across States, Yearly Meetings and even different branches of Friends is always a distinct privilege and a beautiful example for adult Friends.

Next summer we are hoping to participate in a week-long Retreat/Service Trip and an Opportunity has presented itself for our Teens to volunteer at a Quaker Retreat Center, Camp Neekaunis, in Ontario Canada. Whether way opens more fully in that regard or another, this feels an important endeavor for our Teens and we hope to liaise with Finance Committee to make this possible, as it would require additional funding.

Your support whether in prayer, helping financially or offering transport for teens to retreats is greatly appreciated. Thank you for helping to make this last year spectacular! Please spread word of this program around your Monthly Meetings, even if there are only one or two teens there. From what we have seen Quaker Teen Programs can make a huge difference in the lives of young Friends and it is our responsibility to make sure that they have these Opportunities to be together and grow into their measure of the Light. Thank you.

YM12 - 11 Clerk's Report and Executive Committee's Report

Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor), Clerk of the Yearly Meeting, reported on the state of the Meeting, relating some of the accomplishments and transitions occurring during the past year. An ad hoc Committee made up of Peter Dale (Detroit), Mike Hinshaw (Wooster), Nancy Taylor (Ann Arbor), and Sally Weaver Sommer (Broadmead), has been established to investigate how to offer service projects in which LEYM might participate. She asked if there is support for exploring the possibility of developing a service project in Detroit in the next year. There is already a member of Detroit Friends Meeting who is experienced and willing to work with us on this project. After considerable comment and with many expressions of support and suggestions for cooperation with other groups, the Clerk sensed that there was support for exploring the development of such a service project The group approved carrying this project forward. The Clerk asked that if people are so led, they offer whatever support they can to the development of the project. The full report is attached.

Clerk's and Executive Committee's Report

Next year, we will be saying happy fiftieth birthday to Lake Erie Yearly Meeting. Friends meetings in this area created a loose association of themselves as soon as there were unprogrammed meetings founded anew in this

region in the 1930s. But it was in 1963 that the grouping took the name Lake Erie Association and Yearly Meeting. A number of special events are being planned, such as a big musical event engaging many performers from the yearly meeting and an opportunity to hear stories of earlier years in the meeting. The Adult Program Committee and Publications and Archives Committee, as well as others will be working hard on these festivities during the coming year, and I'm sure it will be a great occasion. If you have additional ideas for celebrating, please share with me.

Our Representative Meeting next spring will be on Saturday, April 6, 2013. Discussions on the location are ongoing, and will be announced in the fall.

In the next part of my report below I will be talking about responses of the Yearly Meeting to declining membership. I don't want anyone to be alarmed by this – the decline is slight -- but there does seem to be a trend downward over the last five years or so in the reports we compile for both the numbers of members and the average number of those attending worship at each monthly meeting and worship group.

Last fall the Executive Committee met with members of the Ministry & Nurture and Advancement & Outreach committees to discern our priorities in light of decreasing membership in our constituent meetings. At the end of a half-day of hearing reports, brainstorming ideas, and discerning how we were led, we concluded that the three areas of work that could best support our local meetings were: 1) youth and children's programming, 2) providing opportunities to both youth and adults for service projects, and 3) working to improve communication between monthly meetings and between monthly meetings and the yearly meeting.

As a first step in addressing these priorities, I have appointed a task force to work on youth and children's issues. Their mission is "to build a sense of community among LEYM First Day School teachers and other youth volunteers, and to establish concrete means to support and encourage them in communicating with and supporting the work of each other." Members who have agreed to serve are Becky Morehouse of Ann Arbor (Clerk), Diane Mott of Broadmead, and Carla Pratt-Harrington of Athens.

The task of improving communication was begun in our Bulletin over this past year by Lesley Walden (Detroit), Editor. Lesley took special care to bring personal stories to the pages, along with our organizational news, and included articles with practical tips for monthly meetings. Unfortunately, he has had to resign his position as Bulletin Editor because of health issues, but the intent is for the Bulletin to continue to serve as a vehicle for sharing of ideas at the personal and monthly meeting level as well as serving the yearly meeting's needs. Intervisitation among meetings is also seen as a key component of communication, and one that will be given additional attention by the Advancement & Outreach Committee, perhaps with the assistance of others.

Finally, the third priority, providing service opportunities, is generating excitement among us. The High School Teen Retreat Program is investigating a service project at Canadian Yearly Meeting next summer in cooperation with their teens. There is also the possibility of adults and youth being invited to engage in a service project as early as next summer in Detroit. I have identified a group of four people who are willing to work on organizing such a project: Nancy Taylor (Ann Arbor), Mike Hinshaw (Wooster), Sally Weaver Sommer (Broadmead), and Peter Dale (Detroit). The Executive Committee felt a great deal of excitement about this, but in order for it to move forward in right fashion, I would like to take a moment to season it in this group as well. The concept is strong but at the moment the details are vague, and this is a project that will not succeed without broad support. Service projects were identified last fall as a priority because there is a sense that they have been a way to draw new people into Friends and to deepen the experience of those who are already Friends. We feel called to live *in* the world and to extend assistance to those around us whenever we can. Some of us have knowledge of a person in Detroit who is experienced in organizing work parties there, and he has inspired our trust. It feels as though the time is right to take this step forward, trusting that Friends will volunteer to participate and that the work will fulfill our goals of helping people in Detroit and building fellowship among ourselves. Friends, I ask you now to prayerfully consider whether the yearly meeting is in support of going forward with this work.

YM12 - 12 LEYM Worker Report

Mathilda Navias (Broadmead), Meeting Worker, gave her report on usage of the new web site (LEYM.org). She provided an extensive analysis of the hits the web site had during the past year. The full report is attached.

LEYM Worker Report

As in previous years, my tasks as LEYM Worker this year included maintaining a listserv for clerks of monthly meetings and conveners of worship groups, another listserv for LEYM's Executive Committee, and preparing materials for LEYM's web site. Starting this year, I also took on all of the webmaster functions. Additional tasks such as services to yearly meeting committees are assigned from time to time. My work is done under the direction of the yearly meeting clerk.

In May, the old web site was taken down so that searches and bookmarks would not take people to out-of-date pages. I quickly discovered that the meeting and worship group web pages created and hosted by the yearly meeting were only on the old site. After about two weeks of scrambling, and with help from both Bill Warters, LEYM's previous webmaster, and Russ Nelson, who hosts the old site at www.Quaker.org, the deleted meeting pages were recreated from backup files. The affected groups were notified and asked to check if updates were needed. For technical reasons, those pages are still on the old site, but this should not be apparent to users.

My anticipated work in 2012-13:

- Perform the annual updates to LEYM's website based on information from meeting and worship groups' Annual Statistical Reports
- Perform the annual updates to the listservs based on information from meeting and worship groups' Annual Statistical Reports
- Solicit and implement requests from committees and officers for website changes and additions
- Maintain the website
- Maintain the listservs
- Lots of communication via e-mail
- Assessing the possibility of moving LEYM's web site, or just adding functionality, from FGC's new web modules and hosting services, QuakerCloud

YM12 - 13 Nominations

Thomas Taylor (Ann Arbor), reported as Clerk of the Nominating Committee. He reported that Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor) is willing to continue as Clerk of the Yearly Meeting for one more year. Sally Weaver Sommer (Broadmead) is willing to act as Assistant Clerk for this coming year and then become Clerk the next year entering the normal four-year rotation. Mike Hinshaw (Wooster) has agreed to be nominated as Treasurer. These nominations were **approved**.

The Yearly Meeting needs a new Bulletin Editor to replace Les Walden (Detroit), who has been forced to resign due to ill health. His work was much appreciated. Joe Mills will edit the Annual Records for this year. The rest of the report detailed the positions, both filled and unfilled, for the rest of the committees and representatives to other organizations. Thomas asked for people to step forward to fill open positions. The finished report will be brought forward for approval at a later session.

YM12 - 14 Publications & Archives Committee Report

Rosemary Coffey (Pittsburgh) offered a report from the Publications & Archives Committee. The full report is attached.

Report of Publications & Archives Committee

With regard to the 2012 Annual Records, Joe Mills of Kalamazoo Meeting will be putting the booklet together this year. Please note that any documents to be included should be sent to millrae@juno.com by the end of August – that is, four weeks from the close of this meeting. Joe will work on it during the month of September and plan to have copies in your hands within a week or two after that. He will let your Meetings know soon if he does not have your State of the Meeting reports, most of which have already been forwarded to him by the Ministry & Nurture Committee, and would also like to urge you to see that your Meetings send him obituaries or memorial minutes for members who have died, even if they were not mentioned at Thursday's meeting for business.

As for the Archives, this is just a reminder about sending Meeting documents to Swarthmore College. The Historical Library there would love to have your newsletters, minutes, and other memorabilia sent to them **once a year**. Aran Reinhart will send a reminder to Meeting clerks, but feel free to mention it to them in person as well. We understand that LEYM's Bulletins and Annual Records are sent automatically when they are mailed to constituent Meetings. Thank you.

YM12 - 15 Grand Rapids Monthly Meeting's Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration

Mike Holoday (Grand Rapids) invited everyone to Grand Rapids Monthly Meeting's Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration on September 8th and 9th. More information is available at their website, GRfriends.org.

YM12 - 16 Announcements

Announcements related to this gathering were shared with Friends. Valerie Groszmann (Kalamazoo) described the bookstore and some of the changes it has undergone over the last year. She was thanked for her many years of service to the Yearly Meeting in maintaining the store.

Friday Afternoon Session

YM12 - 17 Worship, Reading of Epistle from Monteverde Monthly Meeting

The meeting resumed with silent worship at the appointed time. Becky Morehouse (Ann Arbor) read from a Fifth Month, 2012 epistle from the Monteverde Monthly Meeting of Friends (Costa Rica). The epistle described the spiritual basis for the Meeting's on-going efforts to work and maintain a community based on leadings from the Light.

YM12 - 18 Treasurer

Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor) presented the Treasurer's Report. Eric Starbuck (Pittsburgh) has ended his term as Treasurer. Sally Weaver Sommer (Broadmead) has signatory rights and will sign checks for the Yearly Meeting until the new Treasurer, Mike Hinshaw (Wooster), becomes a signatory. Eric's service was noted with gratitude. The report was accepted. The full report follows.

Treasurer's Report

Jeff Cooper reported for the treasurer.

- A. Here at Annual Meeting we are in transition from one treasurer to another. Eric Starbuck announced some time ago that he would not be coming to Bluffton, but he has carried out his responsibilities of writing checks and submitting monthly financial statements. With the approval of a new treasurer, his term is over; we on Finance Committee are grateful to Eric for his faithful service over the last four years.

The new treasurer is not yet authorized to sign checks. Fortunately, Sally Weaver Sommer is able to write checks on the Yearly Meeting account. Until the new treasurer has been confirmed as a signatory with the bank, requests for payments should be given to Sally. More on this in the Finance Committee report (below).

- B. Eric provided a financial statement as of July 1, which completes the fiscal year 2011-12. (It actually includes a few transactions from early July, which we have not attempted to back out.) We are grateful to have received contributions from all monthly meetings but one, and from one worship group as well. These totaled \$29,998.50, which is the figure reported for General Fund income. General fund expenses were \$26,242.67, a difference of \$3,755.83.

Three travel-related expenses are worth noting:

- 1) In the Travel budget line, we spent only \$2961.47 of a budgeted \$6500. We don't know why expenses were so low this year. This underspending by \$3538.53 nearly equals the difference between General Fund revenue and expenses.
- 2) As planned, we spent a lot of money on FWCC travel – over \$6200. Using the FWCC Travel budget line of \$2480 (doubled for one year only) and monies from the FWCC Travel fund, we were able to

give our three representatives to the World Conference nearly \$1700 apiece. In addition, we sent \$1200 to the FWCC Section of the Americas for disbursement to enable other Friends in the Section to attend the World Conference.

- 3) We spent \$1562 from the Youth Activity Fund enabling young Friends to attend the FGC Gathering (mainly) and Friends Music Camp.

In addition, we intentionally spent down two funds that had needlessly high balances: the High School Youth Fund and the Spiritual Formation Fund. Too, the Consultation Fund was used to cover unbudgeted expenses for the FGC Quaker Quest workshop last fall.

YM12 - 19 Finance Committee

Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor) presented a report as Co-clerk of the Finance Committee. Since there is a change in treasurers, the Committee has named Susan Hartman (Ann Arbor) as Auditor to examine the Yearly Meeting's books for the last two fiscal years. Jerry Knutson (Pittsburgh) asked if this might not be better described as a financial review. Mike Hinshaw (Wooster), the new Treasurer, and Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor) will replace Eric Starbuck and Merry Stanford (Red Cedar) as account signatories. The committee recommended that Sally Weaver Sommer continue to be a signatory. Friends **approved**. A new checking account will be opened in Bluffton to make it more convenient to do banking. The Budget for 2012-2013 was presented with explanations of how it is different from last year's. It will be brought forward for approval later at these sessions. The full report follows.

Finance Committee Report

- A. Audit: When treasurers change, we are expected to conduct an audit. We are delighted that Susan Hartman (Ann Arbor) has agreed to audit financial records for last two fiscal years (2010-12). We have asked her to do so within two months from end of Annual Meeting, and will pay her a modest stipend.
- B. Signatories for Yearly Meeting Accounts: We have had a hiccup with the issue of signatories, who should be the treasurer, presiding clerk, and clerk of Finance Committee. We expected just to replace the retiring treasurer with the new treasurer, but then realized that Merry Stanford, the previous presiding clerk, was still listed as a signatory rather than Peggy Daub. Our other signatory is Sally Weaver Sommer. On inquiring about changing signatories, our bank, Lorain Bank, told us that one of the current signatories would need to visit in person. Lorain Bank has branches only in Lorain County (Ohio).

After some discussion, we decided to open a new checking account in Bluffton, and, when activity is safely ended, close the account with Lorain Bank. Sally Weaver Sommer will arrange to have the new treasurer and Peggy Daub replace Eric Starbuck and Merry Stanford as signatories; s/he will almost certainly need a confirming minute from the recording clerk. We hope to begin this process this weekend, while the new signatories are here in Bluffton.

We recommend to Yearly Meeting that Sally, who is nominated to become assistant clerk, continue as a signatory, so that she can carry out the change in signatories. Moreover, she is expected to become presiding clerk after Peggy, and there is some risk in having both Peggy Daub and Jeff Cooper as two of the three signatories. Thus, the signatories would be Mike Hinshaw, Peggy Daub, and Sally Weaver Sommer.

- C. Youth Activity Fund Application for Assistance Form: We have created a new form to be used by young Friends applying for financial assistance from the Youth Activity Fund. It will be available from the treasurer and posted on the website.
- D. Finance Manual: There has been for some years a Financial Handbook, but it has not been kept up to date. We would like to see this updated and made available to our committee, officers, and other interested Friends, eventually posting it on the website. We on Finance Committee will take on the task of exploring how it can best be updated, being prepared to consult others for help as needed. We can report on this task to Executive Committee in the fall, and hope to have a draft prepared for Representative Meeting.
- E. Proposed 2012-13 Budget. Please note the following:
 1. It maintains the travel reimbursement rate at 35 cents/mile (where it has been since 2008).

2. In conjunction with the clerk, we agreed to raise the hourly rate paid the Meeting worker to \$17.00/hr (from \$15/hr). This increases the budget by \$240.
3. Otherwise, the following adjustments are proposed:
 - a. Travel down \$500 to \$6000
 - b. Finance up \$150 to pay the auditor
 - c. Publications up \$400 to \$3400, to cover the expected cost of printing LEYM Advices & Queries
 - d. Clerk's fund down \$200
 - e. FWCC One-Time Travel line of \$1200 is deleted
 - f. FGC Special Program line of \$500 is deleted, as this fundraising campaign is completed
 - g. FWCC Travel down to \$1000, as the next international gathering is not for another four years
 - h. Subsidy for Youth Activity Fund up \$1000 to \$1000
 - i. Subsidy for High School Youth Fund up \$1600 to \$4900 (returning to its normal level)
 - j. Scholarship Fund for Ministry up \$500 to \$1500 on request of Ministry & Nurture Committee

This brings the total expected expenses to \$30,450 (\$10 more than last year), which allows us to keep the recommended contribution per member at \$40. We are grateful to Mathilda Navias, Meeting worker, for providing us with current figures on monthly meetings' numbers counted in making contributions to LEYM. Our expected revenue from meetings is \$30,000, and the increase in the level of the General Fund this past year makes us comfortable with this \$450 difference between budgeted expenses and expected revenue.

4. In addition, not a part of the budget, but related, we decided that the cost of additional teens coming to Annual Meeting for the Teen Retreat should be charged to the Annual Meeting fund (rather than the High School Teen Retreat Fund), as we do encourage more young Friends attending Annual Meeting.
- F. Thanks to Committee members completing their terms: We are immensely grateful to Barb Warrington, who has served for six years, and Sally Weaver Sommer, who clerked the committee from 2006-2011, and last summer generously agreed to stay on an extra year as co-clerk to help the new co-clerk learn the ropes.

YM12 - 20 Earthcare Committee

Phil Clampitt (Birmingham) presented the Earthcare Committee report for the past year. The report described the many activities of the committee, both as individuals and as a whole. The committee paid particular attention to the impact of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, on the environment. The complete report is attached.

Earthcare Committee Report

The LEYM Earthcare Committee (EC) has again had a busy year. Highlights:

- Earthcare concerns were reflected in a reformulated Ad Hoc Committee on Advices and Queries after it was concluded during the 2011 LEYM annual sessions that the document needed further work. Phil Clampitt, co-clerk, accepted the invitation to participate in the spirit-led and productive deliberations of this fine new committee during the fall, winter and spring of 2011-2012.
- Judy Greenberg, co-clerk, participated in the fall LEYM Executive Committee Meeting in Bluffton, Ohio, and both Judy and Phil Clampitt, the other co-clerk, participated in LEYM's Representative Meeting in late March in Perrysburg, Ohio. We were pleased to have a lively EC meeting during the latter event.
- We were happy to welcome Valerie Groszmann, Tom Small and Kyo Takahashi in their first meeting as new members of the Earthcare Committee, held on January 21st at the home of Judy Greenberg in Toledo. It was in part a valuable get-acquainted meeting, and in part a planning meeting for the future.
- We held a second lively meeting at the Greenberg home on March 2nd in which we came to a sense of the meeting that an Earthcare workshop entitled "Discernment on 'Fracking'" should be held during the 2012 LEYM annual sessions. Parts of a remarkable documentary film, "Gasland," would be shown, followed by worship-sharing around specially formulated queries. The workshop title fits into the theme of discernment, this year's Yearly Meeting theme. "Fracking" is the nickname for hydraulic fracturing, a relatively new but controversial method for extracting natural gas from shale formations deep beneath the Earth's surface. We have learned during our planning process that the topic we chose is a particularly

difficult and challenging one. However, we remain firm in the conviction that Friends who care about our Earth and all its life should welcome the challenge to explore this topic, with all of its implications.

- Individual committee members remain active in their particular environmental interests, as well as other activities.
- We continue to seek the involvement of younger adult Friends in our Earthcare activities, including as members of our committee.

To illustrate the dilemma Friends face in discernment on ‘fracking,’ we quote two knowledgeable, thoughtful people, both of whose views we respect, who have come to rather different conclusions:

Fred Krupp, President of the Environmental Defense Fund, says this: “Let’s be clear: We can’t ask people to trade away their health and quality of life in exchange for cheap energy. And there are some places, where shale formations are too close to aquifers that supply water for drinking and farming, where drilling should be banned. / But the truth is, hydraulic fracturing and natural gas are not going away. The genie is out of the bottle and the abundant new supply of energy that hydraulic fracturing has made available can benefit the nation.” (EDF Solutions, Summer 2012, p. 2.)

Sandra Steingraber, biologist and member of the Ithaca (New York) Friends Meeting, in a beautiful and powerful essay, “Why I Am a Fracking Abolitionist,” says this: “Collective despair, in my experience, is the biggest obstacle to environmental justice. Little wonder. Our problems are overwhelming and entrenched: our economy is now ruinously dependent on fossil fuels in the same way that, in the 1830s, it was ruinously dependent on slave labor. And both are homicidal abominations.”

We invite you to attend our Earthcare workshop on Saturday to learn more.

YM12 - 21 Quaker Earthcare Witness

Alan Connor (Ann Arbor), representative to Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW), also spoke on the issues surrounding fracking, emphasizing the many significant risks involved with fracking, all for an unnecessary increase in natural gas production.

YM12 - 22 Adult & Family Program Committee

Clémence Ravaçon Mershon (Erie Worship Group), reporting for the Adult & Family Program Committee, announced a few changes for the remainder of this year’s program. Clemence also asked for those who feel led to assist the caregivers at this Annual Sessions to make themselves known to the Program Committee. The Committee is setting up opportunities for discussion of issues of concern to attenders of the Yearly Meeting and is trying to accommodate different dietary needs.

YM12 - 23 Friends General Conference (FGC)

Eric Evans (Friends General Conference Nurturing Ministries Associate and Yearly Meeting Visitor) presented a report. He asked us all to consider, “How am I connected to FGC?” followed by a series of questions that illuminated just how broad the contact actually is between each of us and FGC. He emphasized how FGC is made up of Quakers like us, throughout the country. He mentioned some of the many programs FGC maintains. Sally Weaver Sommer (Broadmead) reported on an FGC program to help Quakers manage their financial planning in a socially conscious way. Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor) read a letter from FGC announcing the launch of a New Meetings Project.

Saturday Morning Session

YM12 - 24 Worship, Epistle from Australia Yearly Meeting

The meeting opened with silent worship at the appointed time. Becky Morehouse (Ann Arbor) read from the epistle of January 2012 from Australia Yearly Meeting. The epistle asked the question “...what does love require of us as individuals and as a community of Friends?” in the context of our attempts of managing the competition for time. This epistle is available at australianfriend.org/af774.

The Clerk, Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor) said that several people have commented to her on the palpable

presence of the Spirit during our Meetings for Business. She is grateful for that presence and wanted to remind the Meeting to appreciate the special character of our meetings.

YM12 - 25 Advices & Queries Ad Hoc Committee

Thomas Taylor (Ann Arbor) reported from the Advices & Queries Ad Hoc Committee. He reminded the Meeting of the long history of the Committee and its objectives in developing Advices and Queries for the Meeting. Tom completed the report and laid the matter before the Meeting. His entire report follows.

Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor), Clerk, asked the Meeting to consider proposed Advices & Queries in its Fourth Version (July, 2012). Friends offered support, while a concern was expressed that there may not be enough reflection of the Spirit working through some of the queries as written. Peggy asked the Meeting if they are ready to accept the July 2012 Version and also establish a method for gathering suggestions, concerns, and new insights regarding the Advices and Queries in the future. There was **approval**. Valerie Groszmann (Kalamazoo) asked to be recorded as standing aside from the decision to accept this version. We thanked all the people who worked on the committees and gave input in any way. The Clerk will work with the Executive Committee and Ministry & Nurture Committee to develop a mechanism to receive future comments.

LEYM Advices & Queries Ad Hoc Committee Report

This is our baby – all of ours. This project has enjoyed a long gestation period (elephantine? – no, Quakerly!) Since 1985, 23 years ago, when our yearly meeting began its annual query process, through the years of choosing and writing special queries to answer our condition, a growing number of Friends have longed for a full set of general queries for Friends in our meetings to use. Work started officially on this effort in the annual sessions of 2008, when yearly meeting clerk, Merry Stanford, was asked to name an ad hoc committee to study and develop a set of queries for on-going use. (YM08 -25.5-6) The Ad Hoc Committee - Raelyn Joyce (Kalamazoo), Josephine Posti (Pittsburgh), Ellen Barnes (Birmingham), David Snyder (Oberlin) and Thomas Taylor (Ann Arbor) - presented its first draft at our 2010 Annual Sessions (YM10 – 29). Preparation for this took nearly two years and was reported on in Representative Meeting in early March, 2009. (RM09 – 21) This included a set of objectives and a procedure they intended to use.

The first step was to answer the question, besides responding to the annual yearly meeting queries, what are the practices of queries within our constituent meetings and by individuals? Also, what are the hopes, fears and suggestions from Friends. So, well-attended interest groups on queries were organized through the next three annual sessions in which we also shared what we were learning from reading the advices and queries of several other yearly meetings. The list of resources on pp 23-4 [in the July 2012 version] shows those which we found the most useful for our purposes. Committee then met face-to-face in October, 2009, to share the fruits of our listening and reading, and to discern the general form and contents of the document we had been asked to produce. It was then that the form of several topic sections developed with discrete numbers to speak to concerns within that section. It was also clear that a short history of advices and queries – including practice within our own yearly meeting - should be included as well as a section on the purpose and uses of advices and queries. A draft was produced over the next months and copies were distributed to Friends and meetings for testing during the next seven months – through March, 2011.

Responses to the draft were received and the nature of them reported to the Representative Meeting. (RM11 – 19). They were many and extremely disparate. Clearly, every part of the set was not going to please everyone. The return to the historical practice of including advices as well as queries seemed right, as there were some who felt that was essential, although others didn't want to be preached to. The use of quotes at the beginning of each section to frame the topic – long a practice in our annual query tradition - served that need and perhaps feels less like a stern father. The Committee edited the advices within our own text with care to assure that they read more like gentle advice from a caring friend, or from one's inner voice. For the most part, they come at the beginning of the section to flow out of the quotes. A second draft was prepared and distributed to meetings in early June.

July 2011 – Purple cover. This version was presented to the Annual Session and the nature of the suggestions and changes was described. (YM11 – 12). Later, at the same Annual Sessions, an interest group on the Advices

& Queries reported and its suggestions were minuted. Friends were clear that the document need further seasoning. It was also asked that our concerns around care of the Earth be more widely represented in several of the booklet's sections. The clerk was asked to reformulate the Ad Hoc Committee, ensuring that Earthcare concerns be included more widely in the document. (YM11 – 24).

Clerk, Peggy Daub named a new Ad Hoc Committee, consisting of Carol Meyer-Niedzwiecki (Kalamazoo), Don Nagler (Pine River), Paula Deming (North Columbus), Phil Clampitt (Birmingham and Earthcare) and Thomas Taylor (Ann Arbor, Clerk), asking them to continue the work of developing the Advices & Queries and taking into account the suggestions made at this session.

Third Draft: January 2012 – Green cover. The new Ad Hoc Committee met face to face in a truly gathered meeting in October, 2011, worked further by e-mail and phone, and distributed a new draft to all meetings and groups and on the yearly meeting website in January, 2012, with a deadline to receive suggestions and comments by Representative Meeting (early April, 2012). Here, the section on Earthcare was considerably rewritten and more quotes brought in as well as ecological aspects within other sections. The growing significance of Earthcare in the yearly meeting's concern was also included in the section on Advices and queries on LEYM to demonstrate the passion behind this which we all experienced when the first Earthcare annual query was read in 2004, and then last year when the Earthcare committee voiced its desire that the concern be better represented in our advices and queries.

Fourth Draft: July 2012 – (white, no cover). The Committee worked on these suggestions, made a number of changes, particularly in the Meeting Community and Outreach sections, and distributed a fourth draft to meetings and groups and on the website by 15 June with a cover letter reporting on the places in the draft where further changes had been made. This is the draft we bring to you today. The letter to meeting clerks and a list of criteria for advices and queries that has emerged during this work could be attached (if so desired).

(Criteria were shown on screen.)

Criteria for Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Advices & Queries

Advices & Queries are most effective if they:

- Serve as an aid to spiritual grounding and focus.
- Encourage deeper reflection when considered corporately or by the individual.
- Open heart and mind to the universal Spirit of Christ and/or Divine guidance.
- Connect faith to personal experience.
- Elicit honest responses, bringing a clearer picture of our condition.
- Encourage progress or improvement.
- Focus concisely on a central concern or topic.
- Are clearly written so they communicate effectively.
- Connect us to Friends in other places and/or times who also value(d) this process.

Advices & Queries are less effective if they:

- Preach or instruct.
- Make unlikely assumptions about belief or experience.
- Imply that there is one "right" answer.
- Make the Friend feel unfairly judged.
- Use jargon phrases or clichés.
- Are too long or try and include too much detail.
- Are redundant.

(These points are taken from the responses to various drafts received from meetings and individuals, and from the discussions of the Ad Hoc Committees during the LEYM A&Q process, 2009 – 2012. Additions and corrections are welcome.)

As you consider this latest draft, we are aware of the value of having 66 advices and queries rather than 12, as there are plenty that should speak to us. I, and others on the committee, turn it over to the meeting with this from #8: "Do I receive the spoken ministry of others in a tender and understanding spirit, recognizing that what may not be helpful to one listener may speak to the condition of another?" We bring this to you, having heard from those among us whose conditions have been spoken to by each of the 66 items.

YM12 - 26 Advancement & Outreach Committee

Mike Hinshaw (Wooster) reported for the Advancement & Outreach Committee. The Committee expressed thanks for the participation of Eric Evans (FGC) in its work at these sessions. Mike explained the goals and objectives of the Committee. They want to encourage monthly meetings to do Quaker Quest, especially the first part, which is a kind of self-evaluation. He also described some of the resources the Committee and the Yearly Meeting have available on the web site and reminded monthly meetings to publicize their events, particularly to nearby meetings. Mathilda Navias can provide contact information for nearby meetings.

YM12 - 27 Ministry and Nurture Committee

Don Nagler (Pine River) reported for the Ministry and Nurture Committee. The report outlined the Committee's work with the Ministry Scholarship fund, the Spiritual Formation Program, the State of the Meeting Reports, and the LEYM Annual Query Report. The Annual Query for 2012 was announced:

Has our Meeting sought the guidance of the Spirit about the future life of the Meeting?
What changes do we need to consider? Do regard children and youth as being integral to the spiritual life of the Meeting? How may we offer support to families in our Meeting?
How might we, as a Meeting, use a process of discernment to find a path into the future?

The entire report follows.

Ministry and Nurture Committee Report

This report will cover five topics: the Ministry and Nurture's Scholarship Program, the LEYM Spiritual Formation Program, State of the Meeting Reports, the responses to the Annual Query for 2011-2012, and the proposed Annual Query for 2012.

Ministry Scholarship Fund

Jerry Knutson, of Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting, received \$1000 from the Ministry Scholarship Fund again this year which he used to help with finances for the fall and spring semesters at Earlham School of Religion. He took 2.5 credits in the fall and 2.5 credits in the spring. He has to take 6 more credits for the Masters of Divinity Degree in the next academic year (2012-2013). He expects to graduate in May 2013. A letter requested from Jay Marshall, director of ESR, complements him on his performance and outlines his program. It also states the appreciation that they have of the several students from LEYM who have enrolled in their programs.

Jerry has been worshipping with the Friendsville, MD Worship Group, Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting, and Orlando Friends Meeting. He has presented workshops at West Richmond Friends, Pittsburgh Friends Fall Gathering, South Hills Worship Group, Sherwood Oaks Worship Group, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Wooster Friends Meeting, Orlando Monthly Meeting, Tallahassee Monthly Meeting, Savannah Monthly Meeting, Space Coast Friends, Palm Beach Monthly Meeting, SEYM Half Yearly Meeting, a meditation group in Oakland, Maryland, and the Prisoner Visitation and Support Annual Conference in Leavenworth, Kansas. In April, he traveled to Kenya as one of LEYM's representatives to the 6th World Conference of Friends. He facilitated a three-day workshop on the exegesis of "salt and light" which was based on the conference theme on "Being Salt and Light: Friends Living the Kingdom of God in a Broken World". At the 2012 LEYM, Annual Gathering, he facilitated a workshop on the exegesis of "Salt and Light", drawn from the workshop on this topic he conducted in Kenya. Last year Jerry Knutson's anchor committee expressed strong support for his request for a second year grant from the LEYM Ministry and Nurture Scholarship and this was given him by the Committee. That committee has submitted another letter of support for this, his final, year at the Earlham School of Religion.

Two other requests for scholarship support have been received by the Committee in letters from the applicants and from their Monthly Meetings, both applying for the School of the Spirit, 2012-2014 program: Donna Rodriguez, a member of Broadmead Meeting and Karen Hooker, member of Red Cedar Meeting.

The Ministry and Nurture Committee approved of grants to all three of these applicants.

Spiritual Formation Program Report

(by Mathilda Navias, Clerk of the Spiritual Formation Planning Committee)

In 2011-2012, we held a weekend retreat in the fall at the Weber Retreat Center in Adrian, Michigan, and a one-day retreat in the spring at the Michigan Friends Center. We plan to continue holding the fall retreat at the Weber Center and to find different meetings to host the spring retreat each year.

The retreat leader was Richard Lee of Red Cedar Meeting, accompanied by two other Friends from Red Cedar. The theme was "Healing in the Manner of Friends", and the retreats focused on hands-on meetings for healing (pun intended). There were 38 participants in all, plus the leader; 22 in the fall and 16 in the spring. They were from 7 meetings: 5 in Michigan (Ann Arbor, Detroit, Kalamazoo, Pine River and Red Cedar); Broadmead in northwest Ohio; and North Columbus. Last year we had a total of 30 participants; the previous two years we had 17 and 28.

This was the third year that we used the one-day format for the spring retreat. Michigan Friends Center and its beautiful setting helped the retreat to go well. Ann Arbor Friends acted as hosts, allowing us to use one of their contracted days at the Michigan Friends Center at no charge and providing meals and hospitality.

The evaluations filled out at the fall retreat indicated the following:

- Most Friends come to the retreat for fellowship, spiritual nourishment, and /or interest in the healing process.
- Everyone felt their needs /goals were met through fellowship and experiencing healing for worship in a peaceful, quiet setting.
- Highlights were daily worship, opportunities to share with each other, being able to check out the books on the FGC book-table, and spiritual activities
- Suggested changes included more experiential exercises and small group times.
- The facility continued to receive very positive responses, with especial appreciation for the rooms, outdoors, meals and the welcoming environment.
- Friends' responses to Richard's leadership and the program were wonderfully positive.
- One Friend wrote, "Have come for years for rest, fellowship, time to "recharge" spiritually –need the time away to get perspective on my life, my challenges, my joys and blessings". There were no evaluations for the spring retreat.

The retreat leader for the 2012-2013 year will be Merry Stanford of Red Cedar Meeting. The theme will be: "The Spiritual Practice of Dialogue: Speaking Our Truths and Hearing Where Words Come From". Those especially encouraged to attend include:

- Friends who feel alone in their spiritual orientation
- Friends who are eager to listen deeply to the diverse experiences of other Friends
- Friends who would like help speaking with other Friends who may use different language in describing their experiences of the inner life, e.g. God, Jesus, Universe, Inward Teacher, Mother, Christ, Living Presence, Peace, Unity, etc.
- Friends who have experienced, or yearn to experience the gathered meeting in the midst of theological diversity

The fall retreat will be held September 7-9 at the Weber Retreat Center in Adrian, Michigan. The spring retreat will be May 4. We still need to find a meeting to host this retreat. We encourage members of LEYM Ministry and Nurture to participate in the program.

State of the Meeting Reports

State of the Meeting Reports were received by the Committee from eleven Monthly Meetings and three Worship Groups prior to the Annual Meeting, 2012. The vitality of the spiritual life and the concern for the enhancement of the intergenerational fellowship within meetings were evident in those statements, as well as the strong expressions in action for social justice by individuals and meetings in society at large. Several meetings have members working as appointees in the Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting, the Michigan Friends Center, Friends School in Detroit, Friends General Conference Committees, and the Committees of the AFSC, FCNL and FWCC. Many meetings are experiencing growth in attendance and several in membership as well.

In general, there is reduced participation by children and youth, but there are notable exceptions.

LEYM Annual Query-2011 Report

The Committee has received responses from eleven meetings: Ann Arbor, Athens, Birmingham, Broadmead, Cleveland, Detroit, Kalamazoo, Kent, Oberlin, Pine River and Wooster. The responses were carefully done and expressed work that was deeply felt.

LEYM Annual Query for 2012-2013

- Has our Meeting sought the guidance of the Spirit about the future life of the Meeting?
- What changes do we need to consider? Do regard children and youth as being integral to the spiritual life of the Meeting? How may we offer support to families I our Meeting?
- How might we, as a Meeting, use a process of discernment to find a path into the future?

YM12 - 28 Nominations

Becky Morehouse (Ann Arbor) reported for the Naming Committee consisting of herself and Michael Fuson (Granville). The naming of Linda Mills to a place on the Nominating Committee was **approved**. The naming of Ann Sprague to a second term on the Nominating Committee was **approved**. The naming of Thomas Taylor as clerk of the Nominating Committee was **approved**.

Saturday Afternoon Session

YM12 - 29 Worship, Epistle from Intermountain Yearly Meeting

Meeting opened with silent worship at the appointed time. During silent worship Becky Morehouse (Ann Arbor) read from the 2012 Intermountain Yearly Meeting Epistle and the Intermountain Yearly Meeting Senior Young Friends Epistle. The theme of the Yearly Meeting was "Nurturing the Next Generation of Quakers". The epistles touched on what it means to be a Friend and how Quaker values and morals may be instilled in Young Friends. The Young Friends iterated that they have been given the foundations of Quaker values and ways to live their lives and those foundations will never be lost. It is not how often you practice, but how you live your life. The full text can be found at www.fwccamericas.org.

YM12 - 30 Peace Committee

Nancy Taylor (Ann Arbor) introduced several members of the Peace Committee who spoke on various issues in which the Committee is involved.

Mike and Carmen Kelly (Detroit) described the troubling aspects of U.S. policies on immigration and the injustices that result. Friends were encouraged to seek information on these issues (web sites of FCNL and AFSC are good initial sources) and work to remedy the injustice in a way that would reflect Quaker values. Contact with immigrant communities was encouraged. The committee will offer a workshop, "Immigration 101 for Quakers: What Would Woolman Do?", in 2013.

Katherine Philipson, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), listed some of the priorities of FCNL, but stressed the campaign to maintain the current cap on projected growth in the Pentagon budget. She urged individuals and meetings to contact their senators and representatives to urge them to support this legislation. The Committee offered the following minute for consideration on this issue:

We endorse FCNL's call to all Friends meetings and churches, and all individuals committed to a peaceful world to make their voices heard and their opinions clear to Congress as well as to all available media and local avenues of influence.

The Minute was **approved** with additional beginning and ending paragraphs to be written in order to explain the context of the Minute. The Peace Committee will send the Minute out to monthly meetings. Max Heirich (Ann Arbor) encouraged individuals and meetings to bring this issue to their representatives and senators during the August recess. He also described efforts by Friends in Michigan to study the implications of this change on employment and to work toward a Green Economy in Detroit and

Michigan.

Nancy Taylor reported for Kathleen Peabody (Ann Arbor) on the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (www.nrcat.org). In particular she asked that we petition the federal government to sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT), which would help protect all prisoners by setting up mechanisms to ensure that U.S. laws prohibiting torture are followed in all detention facilities, including prisons, mental hospitals, jails and immigration control centers. Friends are urged to act to end all torture and to watch for events around December 10th, Human Rights Day.

Nancy Taylor also reported on a Minute Ann Arbor Meeting approved in 2011, urging our federal government to support a U.N. resolution recognizing a Palestinian state, withhold U.S. tax dollars that support the Israeli military, and enforce U.S. tax law regarding charitable organizations that support Israeli settlements. She announced that the Friends Fiduciary Corporation (FFC) divested from Caterpillar Corporation at the request of Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting. Ann Arbor has also asked the FFC to divest from other similar corporations and to set up a screen for investment similar to that used by AFSC.

YM12 - 31 Youth & Children's Program

Olwen Pritchard (Broadmead) reported for the Youth & Children's Program Committee. There are a total of 34 registrants, aged 2 through 18 years, this year. The program seems to be going very well. We thanked all those who worked with our Youth during Yearly Meeting.

YM12 - 32 Olney Friends School

Heather Best reported for Olney Friends School, Barnesville, Ohio. She described a focus by the school on a program with a triangle of Learning, Land and Friendship. In this program the school integrates learning, working with the land, and Quaker values. Claire Davis (Broadmead) reminded us that LEYM used to meet at Olney Friends School.

YM12 - 33 Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting

Kyo Takahashi (Pine River) reported for Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting (GPQM). GPQM conducted meetings for business in the Fall and in the Spring, as well as holding a Mid-Winter Gathering and a celebration of Grand Rapids' 50th Anniversary. He reported that Friends School in Detroit is still facing severe financial pressures, in spite of successful fundraising. Efforts are being made to solicit other funds from three community foundations. There was a called meeting of GPQM earlier this month to discuss the future of the School. At this meeting the administration, members of the Board, and Friends, as well as parents expressed their concerns. The parents were extremely supportive of the School and strongly urged the Board to keep the School open. A few days later the administration and the Friends School Board decided to continue operations for the coming year. Joe Mills (Kalamazoo) added that, at the end of June, the School was in terrible debt and prospects had looked particularly bleak. The stress of these pressures has caused some divisions in the Quarter and there is need for healing. Kyo presented a new logo for GPQM, which had been approved at the Spring Meeting.

YM12 - 34 Finances

Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor) reported for the Finance Committee. A new checking account has been opened at Citizens National Bank in Bluffton. Mike Hinshaw (Wooster), Sally Weaver Sommer (Broadmead) and Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor) are now the signers for checks. The Budget was brought forward for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. After discussion the Budget was **approved**. [The full Budget appears in the Annual Records.]

YM12 - 35 Friends World Committee on Consultation

Mike Hinshaw (Wooster) reported for Friends World Committee on Consultation. The name Friends World Committee for Consultation and the acronym FWCC will soon be abandoned, as the name is changing to simply Friends World Committee (FWC). A new General Secretary, Gretchen Castle (Philadelphia), will begin in January. Mike expressed thanks to those from LEYM who attended the 6th

World Conference in Kenya and reported back to us. A new program, named Living Water and trying to build on the energy created by the 6th World Conference, is under development and should be offered in the region beginning in September. A new web site, Voices of Friends, is under development. The next Section of the Americas Meeting will be in March of 2013, probably in West Virginia.

Sunday Morning Session

YM12 - 36 Worship

The meeting opened with silent worship at the appointed time.

YM12 - 37 Nominating Slate

Thomas Taylor (Ann Arbor) reported for the Nominating Committee. Thomas expressed deep thanks for the 23 people whose particular service is ending. A minute of thanks was **approved** for those whose appointments are ending. Thomas also thanked Peggy Daub for agreeing to another year of service as Clerk.

The slate of nominees for the coming terms was presented as a whole and **approved**. [The full slate appears in the Annual Records.]

YM12 - 38 LEYM Database Manager

Mathilda Navias (Broadmead) reported as the Meeting's Database Manager. Mathilda explained what the Database Manager does on an on-going basis, annually, and on special projects. She mentioned that her work gathering updated information on children and youth was incomplete and she asked that members inform their meetings that she will be asking for information from them soon. She also presented a detailed statistical analysis of the Yearly Meeting. The full report follows.

LEYM Database Manager Report

What does LEYM's Database Manager do? It's much more than number-crunching. Currently, this volunteer position includes the following tasks.

Annually:

- Prepare, disseminate, and collect (oy!) the Annual Statistical Reports from meetings and worship groups; enter the data in the database and separate word-processed files; update the database to compile the new year's reports; produce the reports; and format them in word processed files. Most of these are sent to the editor of that year's Annual Records. Sections of the Annual Records thus created are: the directory; meeting statistics (Recorded Members, Average Attendance, Members Gained and Lost, and Marriages); information on finding a meeting for worship; and the list of meeting officers, committee clerks, et al. Another file is used by LEYM's webmaster to update the information in the "Find a Meeting" section of the website. Two other files are used by the webmaster to update the e-mail lists for Executive Committee and meeting clerks and worship group conveners. I make sure that LEYM's policy on privacy is incorporated in all information on individuals.
- Create a mailing list of individuals in the requested format for use by FGC.

Throughout the year:

- Process changes to individuals' and meetings' information.
- When e-mail addresses used bounce back, try to obtain updated information.
- Create files of information as requested by yearly meeting clerks and committees and convert them to spreadsheet or database format.
- Refine and streamline the inner workings of the database and add to its functionality as requested.
- Create mailing lists of individuals in a suitable format for use by groups such as Detroit Friend School as approved by LEYM.

Special projects:

- Obtaining updated information from meetings and worship groups on their members and attenders. At Representative Meeting this year, I was asked to get updated information on children and youth. Due to a series of e-mail glitches, that work has only been begun. I hope to complete it in the coming months. This depends on meetings and worship groups responding to my requests for the information.
- Last year, out of my observation that the numbers of people in the yearly meeting appeared to be declining, I compiled data on numbers of recorded adult members and average attendance at meetings for worship beginning in 2003. I presented the results to Executive Committee at Representative Meeting, which was very interested. On the clerk's request, I did further investigation and analysis. I plan to update this information annually as appropriate. A graph of average attendance at worship from 2003-present and a chart of recorded members from 2010-2012 are attached.

YM12 - 39 LEYM Epistle

Becky Morehouse (Ann Arbor), Assistant Clerk, read the Yearly Meeting Epistle. It was **approved**. The full Epistle, signed by Peggy Daub, Clerk, follows.

2012 Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Adult Epistle

To Our Dear Friends Everywhere,

The forty-ninth Annual Sessions of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting were held July 26-29, 2012, on the campus of Bluffton University in Bluffton, Ohio. We were blessed with comfortable, warm temperatures—a welcome change from the extreme heat of the last several weeks. A bit of rain one evening brought some relief for our thirsty earth.

One hundred fifty-three Friends gathered for business and fellowship in the Spirit on the theme of “Finding Our Way: The Process of Discernment.” In Bible study, we followed this theme in such stories as Moses and the Israelites in the desert, and Mary and Joseph after the Annunciation. In worship sharing, we considered how we discern the difference between our will and God's will. Workshops allowed us to study discernment in real-world issues such as violence and environmental degradation.

Our plenary speaker, Brent Bill of Western Yearly Meeting, captured our attention with humor and personal stories as he invited us to consider an interesting approach to the discernment process. He gave four criteria useful for testing a leading, presented as queries for action: the presence of Beauty, Truth, Life, and Love. Friends carried these queries with them, applying them to challenges both in our individual lives and as a corporate body.

Our Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business were held in a deep, worshipful mode, in which we heard reports from our Yearly Meeting committees, our Quarterly Meeting, national Quaker organizations, and two Friends Schools in our vicinity: Friends School in Detroit (Michigan) and Olney Friends School (Barnesville, Ohio). We welcomed the presence of staff members from Friends General Conference and Friends Committee on National Legislation as they participated fully in the long weekend of worship, business, and play. We were enriched by the visit of Friends from Tsuchiura Monthly Meeting of Japan Yearly Meeting.

In our deliberations, we labored tenderly with one another; our affirmations of each other and our Yearly Meeting body were gentle and Spirit-filled. Several visiting Friends shared with our clerk that they had noticed how the Spirit was moving among us as we conducted our business. This was particularly true as we wrestled with the report from

the ad hoc committee on Advices and Queries. As Friends expressed both support and concerns, the quality of the silent spaces in the meeting continued to deepen. Creation of our own set of Advices and Queries was a four-year project, developed under the care of a committee bound together by Love in God, with ongoing assistance from Friends across our Yearly Meeting. With the approval of these Advices and Queries, we recognize that it is a living document, and our meeting will create a system for collecting insights to guide us in the future.

We heard reports from our representatives to the sixth World Conference of Friends in Kenya. Their experiences included being “moved and surprised,” finding “concord and conflict,” and witnessing “deep faith and discipline.” They expressed their sincere gratitude for being given this life-changing opportunity. Two other members of our yearly meeting were chosen to fill open places at the conference; both used their gifts in translating to help Friends to communicate and understand better and to listen behind the words.

We were enlivened this year by expanded numbers of teens in our midst, as the high-school teen retreat program met here during our annual sessions for the first time. In all, 34 children ages 2 to 18 came to Yearly Meeting; 17 of these were in the teen retreat program. Many dedicated adults joyfully gave their time and energy to the children’s program.

As our time together comes to a close, we return to our homes and monthly meetings, eager to share Brent Bill’s tools of discernment for finding our way. As you test your own leadings, may you also ask yourself, “Where is the Beauty? How is it True? Will it bring Life? Does it come from Love?”

Peggy Daub, Clerk

YM12 - 40 Arrangements and Site

Jon Sommer reported for the Arrangements and Site Committee. This year there were 153 attenders, with 34 of those being 18 or under. The Annual Sessions for 2013 are scheduled for July 25-28 at Bluffton University.

YM12 - 41 Youth and Children’s Epistles

The Pre-School Epistle was presented and accepted. The epistle follows.

What we’ve done is run, run, run.
We painted tee shirts with our feet.
 It was neat.
 It was fun.
It was part of run, run, run.
Building Duplo towers tall,
 Pushing them over to make them fall.
 Get to start over, so we’re never done.
Very close to run, run, run.
Number blocks, letter blocks, so much fun
 Even missing the number one.
We play a game, the Snail’s Pace Race
 Match the colors, snail to dot.
 Move the snails from start to stop.
This for a moment slowed our pace

Then back to run, run, run.
We went for a walk to the climbing stones
They're so big they must weigh a ton!
This was part of run, run, run.
Then on a few blocks a playground was found
We climbed all the way to the sky
We ran back and forth so way up high
Then slid back down to the ground
So much fun. Another part of run, run, run.
Pipe cleaner—pink and purple, yellow and green,
Twisted into animals never before seen!
This short rest was quickly done,
Then back to run, run, run.

Thanks was given to Ellen Barnes (Birmingham) and Kate Spry (Cleveland) for all their work with the Pre-school children.

The Early-Elementary Epistle was presented and accepted. The epistle follows.

We found our way to our classroom, under the bridge and along the creek; to the farmers' market and to treasures through a treasure hunt set up for us by the middle school group. We found our way to each other blindfolded. We were not sure where we were going. We found our way to somewhere we did not even know we wanted to find (the playground). We found our way to fun games, to the lake and bowling, to the cafeteria and the ice cream machine, to our dorms and the enjoyment of creativity with the crafts.

Thanks was given to Conleth Crotser (Cleveland) and Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham) for all their work with the Early Elementary Children.

The Upper-Elementary members presented what they did during their time at Yearly Meeting. The report was accepted.

Thanks was given to Peter Crowley (Cleveland) and Timothy Damon (Cleveland) for all their work with the Upper Elementary Children.

The Middle-School Group Epistle was presented and accepted. The full epistle follows.

We are the middle school group for Lake Erie Yearly Meeting. We are staying the Bluffton Beaver Dam in Ohio. On the first day we made a treasure hunt for the early elementary group. The prize was a cool homemade paper airplane for each person. We went swimming with demon fish in turquoise blue water. On Friday evening we did a lot of crafts. We made popsicle stick and pipe cleaner people, shadow boxes and kaleidoscopes. We ate all the snacks for the weekend on the first day.

On Saturday we added another Friend to our group. We made t-shirts with bursts of color. We had worship sharing about Finding our Way. We went bowling and had to patch a sock. Noah was king of bowling. We did more crafts and played air hockey and foosball.

We are lots of ice cream and other desserts. We found that we are all friends and have a great sense of humor. We formed LINDA, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Inspection & Detective Agency. We found out we have a lot in common and we are made of pure awesomeness. We have awesome fun Friends.

Peace to all. DFTBA (Don't forget to be awesome)

Thanks was given to Mary Takahashi (Pine River) and Diane Mott (Broadmead) for all their work with the Middle School Children.

The High School Youth Group Epistle was presented and accepted. The full epistle follows.

We, the teens of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, met over the weekend of July 26-July 29, 2012. Since Annual Sessions last year, we have met four times. Our time together has been fun. We have met with other yearly meetings for retreats, including Illinois Yearly Meeting and Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting.

We have met in Cleveland, Chicago, on Earlham's campus in Richmond, Indiana, and, finally, in Bluffton, Ohio for Annual Sessions. We are a passionate and sleepless community of young Friends.

To us, being a Quaker means acceptance of everyone. We found that our time together, though brief, has offered us many things. But most precious of all has been the opportunity to be fully ourselves. In the coming year, we have several retreats planned, which again cross yearly meeting boundaries as well as including Friends from other Quaker traditions. We find our commonalities outweigh anything that would divide us. We hope that the passion we feel for spending time in community will serve as a testament to adult Friends.

Walk in the Light,

The teens of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting

Thanks was given to Robb Yurisko (North Columbus), Abby Pratt-Harrington (Athens), Michael Fuson (Granville), and Linda Dangelo (Broadmead) for all their work with the High School Teens.

YM12 - 42 Minute of Appreciation

The following minute was **approved**:

With grateful hearts and revived spirits we thank Bluffton University, members of our Program and Arrangements and Site Committees, and all other friends who supported our programs and fellowship during these annual sessions of 2012.

The annual sessions closed for the year.

Submitted by

Peter Dale, Recording Clerk

Peggy Daub, Presiding Clerk