



March 2018

Minutes & Reports

Friends Meeting at Cambridge

Meeting for Business in Worship

February 11, 2018

Inside this issue:

Minutes, February MBW	1
Library Committee Annual Report	5
Fellowship and Outreach Committee Annual Report	7

Friends Meeting at Cambridge (FMC) gathered in a Meeting for Business in Worship on Sunday, February 11, at 1:15pm. The Meeting was convened by Deborah Colgan, Co-Presiding Clerk, after a period of silent worship, with 58 people present. The Clerk opened the Meeting by reading a quotation from Barry Morley's *Beyond Consensus: Salvaging the Sense of the Meeting*. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 307.

When we seek the sense of the meeting we allow ourselves to be directed to the solution that awaits us. It is a process of surrender to our highest natures, and a recognition that, even though each of us is possessed of light, there is only one Light. At the end of the process we reside in that Light. We have allowed ourselves to be led to a transcendent place of unmistakable harmony, peace, and tender love.

Whether we wish to admit it or not, the sense of the meeting is a Quaker equivalent of communion. We reach, if only momentarily, that place beyond time where we taste tranquility. We have slipped beyond issues and answers to a place where peace and love are the same words. We are immersed in a mystical moment even though we might not consider ourselves mystics. We take to ourselves the gift of experiential faith which the early Friends promised us. And we make decisions which feel good to us long after they cease to be germane. . . ."

Announcements

2018-010

Memorial Meeting: The Memorial Meeting for Jonathan Fine will be Saturday, March 3, at 2:00 pm. Friends held Jonathan, Chris Connaire, and their family in the Light.

Resident Friend: Lorena Boswell made several announcements concerning the database calendar. She asked individuals to be certain to record events and committee meetings, so that conflicts can be avoided. Lorena also reminded Friends that if they schedule a room in the database, then it will be heated; otherwise they

may be meeting in a cold room. David Dunphy, the Facilities Manager, has requested that if committees know what their meeting times will be next year to let him know.

Lorena then introduced Greg Woods, the new Youth Ministries and Education Coordinator. Greg thanked individuals for being so welcoming thus far.

NEYM School Grants: Ian Harrington announced a New England Yearly Meeting Grant that is intended to help those with educational expenses after high school. Friends who are interested should apply through New England Yearly Meeting (neym.org) or pick up an application in the office at Friends Meeting at Cambridge. Deadline to apply is May 15, 2018. If Friends need a letter from the Co-Presiding Clerks, they are asked to provide some advance notice.

Beneficial Cycle Coordinating and Financial Discernment Planning Groups: Ian Harrington, Assistant Clerk, reported that listening sessions are now being planned by a single unified group consisting of Friends from BCCG and the Financial Group. Friends can expect announcements of threshing sessions in March and April of 2018; all of the threshing sessions will include a meal.

MAAP Inc. Jo Ellen Hillyer reported that MAAP Inc. (Material Aids and Advocacy Program) had applied for tax-exempt status on December 26 and received acknowledgment from the IRS of their receipt of the application on January 29. Jo Ellen reported that MAAP Inc. had received \$9,000 from the New England Yearly Meeting Legacy Gift Fund. In addition, the AFSC (American Friends Service Committee) Board has decided to liquidate the Louisa Alger Fund—valued around \$43,000—and transfer the proceeds to MAAP Inc.; that process is in motion and it is hoped the transfer of funds will take place by the end of the month. Thanks to everyone who has donated to MAAP Inc. Please note that urgent needs of individuals supported by MAAP Inc. are for cold weather gear.

Treasurer's Six-Month Report

2018-011

Jane Jackson, Treasurer, reported that as of December 31, 2017, halfway through the fiscal year, FMC was running a deficit of about \$120,000. She reported that this is less than the budgeted deficit because expenditures have been much less than anticipated. Jane said that contributions were \$25,000 under budget in December; however, many more contributions were recorded in January, and by the end of that month, contributions were over budget by \$14,800, or 11%, for the seven-month mark. It was noted that being ahead of budget in the end of January does not indicate that people will continue to give at the same rate.

The Meeting's total investments had a cost value of \$1,008,385, and a market value of \$1,497,143.

Friends thanked Jane for all of her hard work.

Membership Annual Report and Update

2018-012

Wendy Sanford and Catherine Preston Connolly, Co-Clerks of Membership Committee, presented their Annual Report in the shape of the following query:

We find on Membership Committee that people who are considering membership often hesitate because they feel they aren't good enough. Our question is: what would you say to someone who asks "am I good enough to be a Quaker?" In addition, if this is a question you

have asked yourself, has it been a useful question for you? Friends were encouraged to think further on these questions.

Friends held the Membership Committee in the Light and thanked them for all of their hard work.

Erin Bumgarner for Membership Committee reported that Andrea Condit has been found clear for membership. Erin spoke briefly regarding Andrea's participation in the Meeting and Andrea discussed her journey to FMC. Friends joyfully approved Andrea's membership.

Wendy and Catherine reported that Ann Foster and Homer Franck have requested membership and clearness committees will be formed for them. They then reported that Sam Solish requested a transfer to Portland (ME) Friends Meeting. Friends approved this request.

Library Committee Annual Report

2018-013

Alasdair Post-Quinn, Co-Clerk of the Library Committee, presented their annual report, which will be published in the March *Minutes and Reports*. Friends held the Library Committee in the Light and thanked the Committee for their work.

Friends suggested that the Committee consider e-books and that a periodic announcement be placed in the *Newsletter* regarding new acquisitions. It was noted that it would be wonderful to record other types of events, including Forums and memorial services, for our archival records. As the report indicated, the presence of a young Friend on the Committee has been valuable. It was suggested that further inclusion of young Friends on committees would be a benefit to all.

Ad Hoc Sign Group for Witness and Inclusion

2018-014

Polly Atwood for the *Ad Hoc* Sign Group described the process and learning that has occurred thus far. She highlighted some of the specific themes that have arisen, including a concern for visibility, for inclusivity, for witness, for simplicity, and for integrity to Quaker practice.

She asked Friends to discern how the Meeting was led regarding public displays of witness and inclusion.

Friends pointed out:

- that we are living in a difficult time and there is so much hate and venom in the public domain against various groups of people that it is time to make a different type of statement than we have done in the past;
 - that if we were to use the "encasement model" (signs inside a glass case outside the Friends Center) then we could switch out the message as needed;
 - that we could think about a Quaker-related statement that would help people recognize our message;
 - that people need to be invited to go deeper and we need to reach out a hand and show people that they are welcomed and wanted here;
 - that we consider how to be patterns and examples in our daily lives and how that would help us figure out what to do here;
 - that it was important to let our lives speak regardless of the signs;
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- that the question of whether there is a direction for this meeting is not about these signs but about our money and where we are located;
- that this conversation is also an invitation for us to think about another sign in another place;
- that it would be important to be able to change the signs so that they reflect current thinking;
- that this is our place of worship and we need to reach out to everyone, not just to the oppressed, and these signs might make someone else not feel welcome;
- that this is the way we present ourselves to everyone and we need to consider how we are going to feel about them in a year;
- that we don't put our beliefs out there and there is a question of whether we really need something so transient as a sign;
- that this is really a question of how we let our lives speak and there is a need to stay away from the wall of words;
- that we need to do the work of welcome and to honor our own tradition of silence;
- that there is a question of having a way to hold out our hand but also to limit how much language we put out there for others to trip over; and
- that there might be a middle ground.

The Clerk noted that it is clear there is much interest in a public sign or symbol that is welcoming, affirming, and speaks of our testimonies. She said that we are in the process of a deeper discernment of where we need to go so we can show our Light to the world. The Meeting approved that the Clerk(s) would have a conversation with the *Ad Hoc* Group to address next steps, with a view to having this brought back to Meeting for Business in Worship next month.

Nominating Committee Update

2018-015

Nancy Cirillo, Clerk of Nominating Committee, requested that the Meeting remove term limits for members of the Personnel Committee.

She noted that term limits are required on those committees that have a great influence on the Meeting as a whole, carry grave responsibility, and thus have an authority that could be overreached. Nancy explained that the Personnel Committee was formed approximately twenty years ago to supervise paid staff, and to recommend hiring and firing decisions to the Meeting for Business in Worship. Due to this difficult and powerful responsibility, six-year term limits were applied to the Committee. Nancy pointed out that the Committee's character has changed as the Meeting has asked the Resident Friend to take over the responsibility for supervision, hiring, and firing; the Personnel Committee still has work to do, but not the same type of responsibility.

Friends asked questions regarding what other committees have term limits. It was noted that the only two other committees that presently have term limits are Ministry and Counsel and Nominating Committee. Friends explained that the reason for term limits was to avoid a consolidation of power. One Friend cautioned that it is important to remember that the administrative work of the Meeting is also spiritually led. Several Friends pointed out the importance of having some conversations regarding length of service on other committees that do not have term limits. A Friend pointed out that nevertheless, at this time, the Meeting should trust the discernment of Personnel and Nominating Committees.

Friends approved Nominating Committee's proposal to eliminate term limits for membership on Personnel Committee.

Ministry and Counsel Update

2018-016

Catherine Rush and Gail Rogers, for Ministry and Counsel, presented a report concerning an attender.

Friends discussed their concerns. Friends pointed out that while the calm of the Meeting is important, calmness is not always the goal. Several Friends thanked Ministry and Counsel and the Response Committee for their hard work, effort, and tenderness in this matter. It was noted that if the attender's behavior comes under control, then the attender will be welcome to contact members of Ministry and Counsel through provided e-mail addresses. A Friend noted this situation was absolutely not about having a mental health diagnosis, but rather about a certain set of unacceptable behaviors.

Friends accepted the report and the limitations that have been set for the time being.

The Meeting for Business in Worship adjourned at 3:40 pm, with Friends purposing next to gather in a Meeting for Business in Worship on Sunday, March 11, at 1:15 pm in the Meetinghouse.

Deborah Colgan, Co-Presiding Clerk
Lili Schwan-Rosenwald, Recording Clerk

Library Committee Annual Report, 2017

In the Library Committee, we like to tell ourselves that, next to the building itself, the Library's collection is the second most valuable asset belonging to Friends Meeting at Cambridge. As librarians, we are led to care for the collection, make sure it is accessible to all, and to advocate for its benefit to the community.

For the past couple of years at least, the Library Committee has been meeting almost solely for the purpose of working on the Oral History project, with long-time Committee members Chris and Patty doing the routine work of cataloging and shelving. 2017, however, was a year of comparative excitement in the FMC Library.

In 2017, Oral History project member Alasdair Post-Quinn was nominated as Co-Clerk of the Library Committee, accepting additional responsibilities to assist Patty Huff with clerking duties. The Committee met more regularly and more business was undertaken. Donations were processed and sorted, either to become part of the collection or to fundraise as part of the book cart. At the end of 2017, the Library had 4,691 items cataloged, 81 of them newly acquired, including new Pendle Hill pamphlets.

In mid-2017, it was brought to our attention that Nathan Benjamin Gilbert was interested in joining our Committee. While the Library Committee is always happy to have more enthusiastic members, this new member was notable because Nathan was a 5th-grader in the First Day School (FDS). We accepted his nomination to our Committee on a yearly basis.

We hoped that, with the guidance of Patty and Ray (Committee members who have been involved with FDS), we would be able to find a meaningful place for Nathan in our Committee, and that possibly through our example we might encourage other young Friends to join committees (and other committees to accept young Friends).

However, 2017 was not without its challenges.

Due to technical difficulties, Alasdair was unable to digitize the oral history cassettes for most of the year. He has since solved these difficulties and has begun to pick up where he left off. Approximately 2/3 of the oral history and related recordings collection has been digitized; Dan Fitzmartin has been slowly processing the files to clean up noise and make them more listenable. Some of these files are posted on the Library Committee's page on the website. It is our hope that we will complete the digitizing in 2018, at which point both Alasdair and Dan can proceed with the audio processing.

As we had our final meeting of 2017, it became clear that Nathan Gilbert was mostly interested in working with the FDS collection, which is only tangentially related to the Library and is not cataloged or managed by the Library Committee. We trust that Gail Rogers and Patty Huff have been helping him find work to do related to that collection, and we remain open to having Nathan more involved with the main collection at some point when he feels led to be.

We began the process of a full collection inventory, a process which should be yearly but has not been done over the past couple of years. Chris and Alasdair collaborated to generate a spreadsheet from the raw catalog data, but due to the frigid temperatures over the last week of 2017, we were unable to begin the process. Alasdair has created a collaborative online inventory process that will allow multiple people to work on the inventory at the same time, and minimize the need for transcription later. It is our hope that we will gather a small group of volunteers to help with this process at some point in the spring.

Aside from the projects we have already mentioned for 2018, we have a couple of other projects we'd like to undertake, with the support of the meeting.

In the interest of making the collection more accessible, we'd like to retire the old and outdated (not to mention no longer maintained) card catalog, in favor of an online system that would be accessed via a terminal similar to the iPad-based one outside the Office. Exact logistics for this system need to be worked out, but the ResourceMate software Chris currently uses for cataloging does have an online public access catalog (OPAC) we could use for this. There would be an extra yearly expense, which the Committee would submit for approval to the Meeting for Business in Worship later.

Our Resident Friend Lorena Boswell has made some suggestions for new acquisitions and we will be evaluating the titles she puts forward from a Quaker publisher on the West Coast. If Friends have any other suggestions for titles we might want to acquire, feel free to bring them to the attention of any Library Committee member.

In light of new acquisitions and a collection already pushing at the edges of feasibility given the space we have now, we are evaluating some ideas for additional shelving. These ideas will be brought to the appropriate committee(s) at a later date.

Finally, the Library Committee would like to see the Oral History project expand beyond its current limits. As it stands, we have oral histories from the 1980s almost exclusively. In a

time when many of us have recording devices in our pockets which are far superior to what was being used 30-40 years ago, it should not be so difficult to have meaningful conversations with our meeting's elders recorded for posterity. Alasdair plans to put together a series of resources to be posted on the FMC website to enable any aspiring historian to make such a recording and submit it for processing to the Oral History project.

Committee members: J. Christina Smith, Raymond Aucoin, Patty Huff, Alasdair Post-Quinn, Ella Lasatele, Nathan Gilbert, Dan Fitzmartin (Oral History Project only)

Co-Clerks: Patty Huff, Alasdair Post-Quinn

Fellowship and Outreach Annual Report, 2017

Fellowship and Outreach continues to be a small committee with many tasks. We joyfully greet folks at Sunday morning meeting, but are not able to greet regularly at 5 o'clock worship. The coffee-hour rotation works well, thanks to twenty-six regular volunteers and twenty-two alternates. We organize three breakfasts, one dinner, three holidays and a weekend retreat.

As this goes to press we have brought to fruition our *Let Your Lives Speak* project, after two years. There are buttons and bumper stickers to let the world know that Quakers are alive and active, and to identify ourselves as Quakers as we live and work in the world.

There is now material available every week to make a permanent nametag and the nametag board has been reorganized.

We have not had time or energy to initiate outreach projects, though one of our members will be working with Kathleen Wooten to learn about Quakers and social media.

We hope in the future, with new energetic members, to expand our role within and beyond the FMC community.

Sandy Sweetnam, Clerk

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To receive newsletter write to:

office2@FMCQuaker.org

Friends Meeting at Cambridge

Return Service Requested

Meetings for Worship at FMC

5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge

Sundays 10:30 am
5:00 pm
Wednesdays 8:30 am to 10 am

South Shore Preparative Meeting

155 Washington St. (Rt. 53), Pembroke
Sundays 10:00 am
Joanne Heffernan
781-337-9337

Worship Group at Brookhaven

1010 Waltham Street, Lexington
Sundays 10:30 am
Elisabeth Cotten
781-862-7578

Other Nearby Worship Opportunities

Acton Friends Meeting,

Contact Clerk, acton@neym.org

Amesbury Monthly Meeting, 120 Friend St., Amesbury

Sundays 10:00 am

Beacon Hill Friends Meeting, 6 Chestnut St., Boston

Sundays 10:30 am

Cambridge Friends School, 5 Cadbury Rd., Cambridge

Tuesdays 8:30 to 9:00 am

Framingham Friends Meeting, 841 Edmands Rd., Framingham

Sundays 10:00 am

Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting, CFS Cambridge

Sundays 10:00 am

Lawrence Monthly Meeting, 15 Forest St., Methuen

Sundays 6:30 pm

Nashoba Worship Group, nashobaquakers@gmail.com

Sundays 10:30 am

North Shore Monthly Meeting, 74 Hart St., Beverly Farms

Sundays 10:00 am

Wellesley Friends Meeting, 26 Benvenue St., Wellesley

Sundays 10:30 am