

Morningside Monthly Meeting
Minutes of 4/3/2011

Present: Tom Goodridge, Kathy Wood, Jack Patterson, Corona Macherer, Charlene Ray, Buddha Pettiford, Ernie Buscemi, Vince Buscemi, Bart Dominus, Peter Beck, Susan Wells, Charlotte Ehrman, Pamela Wood, Nanacy Britton, Joyce Richardson, Dave Britton, Sally Campbell (clerk)

The Meeting begins at 1:00pm with silent Worship. From the silence the clerk reads a passage from Arthur Larrabee's *Clerking, Serving the Community with Joy and Confidence*, "Sense of the meeting is not synonymous with consensus. Consensus is a widely used and valuable secular process characterized by a search for general agreement largely through rational discussion and compromise. Sense of the meeting is a religious process characterized by listening to and trusting God. Both result in a course of action agreed to by all to the participants, but the sense of the meeting relies consciously on the Spirit. . . . When the sense of the meeting has been rightly discerned, those present will know that they have faithfully followed their Guide, and will feel continued affection for each other."

The agenda is reviewed and accepted.

20010403.1. Pamela Wood presents the Ministry and Counsel Committee report. The next meeting is scheduled for 4/28 at Pam's house; the next welcoming breakfast is scheduled for 4/24. A memorial for Liz Stone is scheduled for 5/22 at 1:00 pm. Ministry and Counsel recommends the Meeting send a letter of endorsement for Liberty Britton to the American Friends Service Committee for a summer intern position in their Healing Justice program. The date of 6/4/2011 has been set for the Meeting retreat to be held in Riverside Park at the volunteer house near 103 St. The report is accepted and attached.

20010403.2. Friends endorse Liberty Britton to the American Friends Service Committee in her application for AFSC's internships in the Healing Justice Programs (New York Region and National). Her working in one of these positions would make a valuable connection between the Meeting's Prison Ministry work (a Peace and Social Concerns priority of ours) and that of the AFSC, bringing us closer together in this shared concern.

20010403.3. Bart Dominus presents the treasurer's report. Our expenses are in line with our draft budget. Our contributions have reached \$6788 year to date. Friends recommend reporting on the number of different individuals who have made contributions, and the treasurer agrees to provide an approximate number as part of the report. The report is accepted and attached.

20010403.4. Friends reappoint Jack Patterson as the Meeting's representative to New York Quarterly Meeting's Joint Nominating

Committee. The clerk will so inform the Quarterly Meeting in our report at the upcoming Quarterly Meeting.

20010403.5. Buddha Pettiford reports for the Peace and Social Concerns committee on a regular meeting held 3/13/2011 and a called meeting held 3/37/2011. Two minutes in support of parole reform state legislation are presented for the Meeting's support. The committee has formed a task force on community economic development in support of formerly incarcerated people. The film Gaslands on hydrofracking will be shown at 15th St. on 4/8 and a demonstration against hydrofracking will be held in Albany on 4/11. Gretta Mickey and Val Liveoak of Friends Peace Teams will make a presentation to the Meeting on 5/15/2011. Meeting contributes to this group.

20010403.6. Friends discuss the proposed minutes on parole, as posted earlier on the website. Friends approve the Minute on the SAFE Act, and approve add the Meeting to the signatories of the P.A.N. letter in support of the SAFE Act. These minutes of support will be sent to the Quarter and the Yearly Meetings for their approval to raise awareness of these issues in the wider community.

The minute states:

20010403.6a: Friends who have been engaged in prison ministry are concerned that prisoners are denied parole despite having turned their lives around, due to the political and public reaction to the original crime. The following is approved by the Meeting:
[include the minute]

20010403.7. Tom Goodridge reads an advice and query from New York Yearly Meeting Earthcare Witness Committee to the Committee to Revise Faith and Practice. Friends respond out of silent Worship.

The Meeting ends at 2:40 pm with silent Worship.

In Friendship,

David Britton, recording clerk

Report of Ministry & Counsel to Meeting for Concerns

April 3, 2011

1. The next meeting of Ministry & Counsel will take place on Thursday, April 28, 2011, at 7:15 PM, at the home of Pamela Wood. Meeting members and attenders are welcome to attend the first, non-confidential part of the meeting. M & C requests that concerns be forwarded in writing if they are not to be presented in person. We ask the Meeting to hold our work in the Light.
2. Ministry & Counsel's next welcoming breakfast will take place on Sunday, April 24, at 9:30 am, in the Riverside Café. Pam Wood and Nancy Britton will host. People should look for the sign on a table close to the door of the Cafe.
3. We plan to have a memorial Meeting for Liz Stone on Sunday, May 22, at 1 PM. It is our understanding that the Peace & Social Concerns Committee would like the previous Sunday for a program.
4. Ministry & Council recommends that the Meeting send a letter of endorsement to the AFSC supporting Liberty Britton's application for a summer internship in the Healing Justice Program.
5. The Meeting is reminded to hold the date of Saturday, June 4, from 10 AM to 3 PM for our day retreat in Riverside Park.
6. We continue to review our address list and to contact absent members.
7. We currently have six support committees under our care, not all are actively meeting. There are three in formation.

Morningside Monthly Meeting

Of the Religious Society of Friends

April 4, 2011

To the American Friends Service Committee
15 Rutherford Place
New York, NY 10003

Dear Friends,

We would like to forward the following minute, approved at our Meeting for Business, Sunday, April 3:

“Friends endorse Liberty Britton to the American Friends Service Committee in her application for AFSC's internships in the Healing Justice Programs (New York Region and National). Her working in one of these positions would make a valuable connection between the Meeting's Prison Ministry work (a Peace and Social Concerns priority of ours) and that of the AFSC, bringing us closer together in this shared concern.”

Quite a number of people in our Meeting, including some who have been incarcerated, have concerns about our criminal justice system. Some already volunteer at the NY Office of the AFSC and at the Woodbourne Correctional Facility. Others are involved in the Campaign to End the New Jim Crow and the campaign to reform parole. Having Liberty participate in the internship program would be an extension of one of the important priorities of our Peace & Social Concerns Committee.

Liberty has been part of the Meeting since she was a baby. As a child she became a member at her own request and has remained committed to the Meeting since then. Members of the Meeting have known her as a student at Friends Seminary, a capable and responsible childcare person and, during her Junior and Senior years in high school, a member of our Ministry & Counsel Committee. She is thoughtful, intelligent and kind, able to handle many different kinds of circumstances. Her social skills are exceptional. We feel she would be a great intern.

In Friendship,

Sally Campbell, Clerk

**Morningside Meeting Treasurer's Report
Proposed 2011 Budget and March 2011 Results**

		Draft Budget	Jan Actual	Feb Actual	Mar Actual	1st Qtr Actual
EXPENSE						
Fixed	NY Yearly Meeting	13100.00		3275.00		3275.00
Overhead	NYQM (Rent)	<u>9888.00</u>		<u>2472.00</u>		<u>2472.00</u>
		22988.00		5747.00		5747.00
Outreach	P&SC/FUN	9850.00			0.00	0.00
& Support	Misc. Contrib.	400.00			200.00	200.00
	Scholarship/Relief	<u>1500.00</u>			<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
		11750.00			200.00	200.00
Operating	Communications	500.00				
Expense	1st Day/Childcare	750.00				
	Hospitality	750.00	167.40		139.50	306.90
	Clerk/ M & C	350.00				0.00
	Finance	450.00				0.00
	<u>Literature</u>	<u>200.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>		<u>57.50</u>	<u>57.50</u>
		3000.00	167.40		197.00	364.40
Total Exp		37738.00	167.40	5747.00	397.00	6311.40
INCOME						
	Contributions		3293.29	500.00	2995.00	6788.29
	Books		<u>5.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>	<u>10.00</u>
			3298.29	500.00	3000.00	6798.29
Assets	Bank Balance		32162.49	27865.49	30663.49	
	Cash		250.60	250.60	419.00	
(1500.00)	Crumlish Bequest		(1500.00)	(1500.00)	(1500.00)	
	Hope Lives for Lifers		(169.09)	(169.09)	(169.09)	
	Incarcerated Girls		(766.10)	(766.10)	(766.10)	
Net Worth			29977.90	25680.90	28647.30	

*Morningside Monthly Meeting
Of the Religious Society of Friends*

**Minute in Support of the proposed
Safe and Fair Evaluation (S.A.F.E.) Parole Act
A proposed amendment to New York State Executive Law §259-i**

Approved at the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business on April 3, 2011

Since the early Nineteenth Century, when they were instrumental in the establishment of the first American penitentiaries that aimed to rehabilitate offenders, members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) have held a concern for the inequities of the justice system.

Many Quakers volunteer in New York State Correctional Facilities, attending Quaker Meetings within the prisons and as volunteers for the Alternatives to Violence Project. We have heard the despair caused by the arbitrary and unpredictable parole process. Men and women who have made great efforts to turn their lives around feel that their successes are given little weight by the parole boards, which may deny parole without giving any indication of what a person needs to do to gain parole, or merely cite the nature of the crime, which, of course, may not be changed.

At Morningside, our concern has been strengthened during the past few years as a number of Friends who were previously incarcerated have become regular attenders at our Meetings for Worship. Through them we have been made particularly aware of such injustices.

The **Safe and Fair Evaluation (S.A.F.E.) Parole Act**, which is proposed by the New York State Parole Reform Campaign (Parole Action Network), would make it the explicit purpose of the discretionary parole process to promote the successful and productive reentry and reintegration into society (as called for in Penal Law §1.05) by specifying procedures in order to eliminate the humiliations that often accompany parole hearings and the arbitrariness of the decision to grant or deny parole. The Meeting adds its endorsement to the NYS Parole Reform Support Letter, which is attached to this minute, and urges that the legislature take up the amendment.

IN SUPPORT OF
The Safe And Fair Evaluation (S.A.F.E.) Parole Act

In support of the New York State Parole Reform Campaign (NYS PRC) we endorse "***The Safe And Fair Evaluation (S.A.F.E.) Parole Act***", a proposal to amend Executive Law § 259-i. At the core of this reform is the need to redefine the role of the Parole Board as an *evaluative one*. NYS PRC is a coalition of organizations and individuals who deal daily with the repercussions of repeated parole denials based on the nature of the crime – which can never be changed. **We are committed to reforms that require that parole applicants who have served their minimum sentences be evaluated on their readiness for reentry.**

Changing the parole board's responsibility from deciding the length of sentence to evaluating an individual's readiness to remain at liberty without breaking the law will bring the parole statute into alignment with Penal Law § 1.05, which was amended in 2006 to add a fifth sentencing goal to these existing four: 1. Punishment (retribution), 2. Deterrence, 3. Incapacitation, 4. Rehabilitation. **The fifth goal is this: Promotion of Successful and Productive Reentry and Reintegration into Society.**

Under New York State's sentencing scheme, the Judiciary, the Department of Corrections, and the Division of Parole play different and distinct roles to achieve the five sentencing goals outlined in Penal Law § 1.05—by either imposing or carrying out the penal sentence.

The Judiciary, when imposing sentences, is responsible for considering all of the sentencing goals contained in Penal Law § 1.05, including the seriousness of the crime and criminal history.

The Department of Correctional Services (DOCS), along with the Parole Board, is responsible for carrying out the judicial sentence, post-conviction. It implements the penal sentence. In doing so, incapacitation, rehabilitation, reentry and reintegration fall within its purview.

The Parole Board has the post-sentencing functions of determining rehabilitation and readiness for reentry and reintegration. **It must evaluate the sentenced person's progress while incarcerated and specify in detail what is expected of the parole applicant in the future.**

Although the Parole Board's implementation of discretionary parole release is not without shortcomings, it is necessary and can be an effective complement to our new awareness of the importance of promoting successful reentry and reintegration into society. In order to modernize and revitalize the functioning of the Parole Board, reform of the procedures the board follows are in order. At the core of this reform is a need to redefine the role of the Parole Board as an evaluative one. **The critical question is whether the parole applicant is ready for reintegration.** The sentencing goals of punishment (retribution) and deterrence are the sole purview of the judiciary, as described in the current sentencing scheme.

In addition, focusing on the readiness for reentry instead of the nature of the crime and the punishment can lead to **substantial cost savings for taxpayers**. The nature of the crime is now the most commonly cited reason for denial of parole; 63,768 persons were denied parole between 2005 and 2009, at a cost of **\$80,000 for each additional two years of incarceration per person for each denial**. **Because of these and other reasons, releases based solely on readiness for reintegration make practical as well as moral sense.**

In light of these facts, we add our name to the list of organizations calling for the changes described above and in the attached legislative proposal.

Albany Political Prisoners Support Committee
All Things Harlem
Binghamton Justice Projects
The Bronx Defenders
Brooklyn Defender Services
Buffalo Local Action Committee (BLAC)
Center for Community Alternatives
Center for Law and Justice
Citizens Against Recidivism, Inc.
Coalition for Parole Restoration (CPR)
College and Community Fellowship
Community Service Society of New York
The Correctional Association of New York
The Drug Policy Alliance
Erie County Prisoners Rights Coalition
Exodus Transitional Community
Exponents
Families Rally for Emancipation and Empowerment (FREE!)
The Fortune Society
Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC)
In Your Face
Inside Out Art, Inc.
Interfaith Coalition of Advocates for Reentry and Employment (ICARE)
Legal Action Center
Narcofreedom Inc
Nassau Inmate Advocacy Group
National H.I.R.E. Network
Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem
NYC Jericho Movement
New York State Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NYSACDL)
New York State Defenders Association
New York State Defenders Justice Fund
The Osborne Association
Prison Action Network
Prison Families Anonymous
Prison Policy Initiative
Prisoners Are People Too!
Prisoners' Legal Services of New York
RIFT SUCCESS
RIFT SUCCESS 2nd Chance Division
Riverside Church Prison Ministry
Second Chance Committee
The Sentencing Project
Social Justice Center of Albany
Social Responsibility Council of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany
SOhopeful of New York
Southern Tier Advocacy & Mitigation Project, Incorporated
Sylvia Rivera Law Project
TASC of the Capital District
The Think Outside the Cell Foundation, Inc.
VOCAL New York

Western NY Peace Center
WORTH Women on the Rise Telling HerStory
Youth Represent

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Minute in support of two amendments to New York State law relating to parole:

A03211: An Act to Amend the Executive Law, in relation to the composition of the state board of parole and parole hearing officers

AND

A02161 (S1284): An Act to Amend the Correction Law in relation to services for inmates of state correctional facilities upon their release therefrom

Approved at the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business on April 3, 2011

Since the early Nineteenth Century, when they were instrumental in the establishment of the first American penitentiaries that aimed to rehabilitate offenders, members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) have held a concern for the inequities of the justice system. Today Quakers volunteer in many New York State Correctional Facilities in Prison Worship groups and in the Alternatives to Violence Project.

At Morningside, our concern has been strengthened during the past few years as a number of Friends who were previously incarcerated have become regular attenders at our Meetings for Worship. Through them we have been made particularly aware of injustices associated with the granting of parole and of the fact that much more preparation for reentry following incarceration is needed. These amendments address aspects of these issues.

A03211: This Amendment requires that the membership of the state board of parole, and parole hearing officers, reflect the demographics of the state's inmate population. Currently the people determining the fate of prisoners are largely representative of the communities where the prisons are located (and hence tend to represent their interests), not the communities from which the prisoners come. Just as the prison population from New York City is now counted in the census as residents of that city, so the parole apparatus should reflect the same demographics.

A02161 (S1284): Currently, parolees are released with \$40, a bus ticket to the county they were imprisoned from—and no survival information about support groups, benefits, or housing. A02161 (Assembly) and S1284 (Senate) would remedy this situation by mandating that parolees receive information concerning the availability of medical, educational and other services, including alcohol and substance abuse treatment, and that arrangements be made for such services.

This email was sent by the clerk on April 11, 2011 to Joan Oltman, Committee to Revise Faith and Practice

We ended our meeting for business on April 3rd by reading the proposed advice and query and having folks speak out of the silence. A few people spoke and among the concerns were:

1. It is important to emphasize that we are not separate from nature. For instance using words "environment" and "stewardship" make it sound like the human is apart from rather than a part of nature's whole. Spiritually we are called to live in an integral way so as to nurture that whole.
2. Eating less meat would be such an effective way to stem global change it should be mentioned. (Livestock farming generates almost a fifth of the world's heat-trapping emissions according to a 2006 report from the UN)
3. A member who had just returned from the Middle East felt the minute needs to be stronger since she sees that we are now facing a matter of survival for humans as well as other animals.

We are very grateful that NYYM is turning its attention toward this central concern.
Sally Campbell
Clerk, Morningside Meeting

These are the proposed advice and query:

Advice # --

Friends are advised to nurture their appreciation of the natural world and to share their love and concern for Creation with others. We are encouraged to examine our personal life styles to see how we may reduce our impact on the environment. We are urged keep informed about environmental issues and to join with others to work for right sharing of natural resources, sustainable energy policies, and other environmental protection for the future welfare of our planet.

Query # ---

Are we engaged in nurturing and deepening our relationship with all Creation? Do we strive to live in harmony with the earth ? Does the tempo of our lives provide opportunity for enjoyment and wonder and for nourishment of the Spirit? Do we strive to lead more sustainable life styles and minimize the use of products that are destructive to the environment and ultimately to all species? Do we join with others in active stewardship, to create community and a deserving legacy for future generations?