

# Care and Counsel Committee Procedures Manual

Always a draft  
October, 2015



# Mt Toby Care and Counsel Committee Manual

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## Preface

The work of the Care & Counsel Committee involves many different aspects of the life of Mt. Toby. Over the years, the Committee has evolved a number of procedures and structures for carrying out this work. Since the membership on C&C tends to turn over fairly rapidly, though, human memory can't always be relied upon to tell us what we've worked out earlier. To keep us from reinventing the same wheels too often, this *Procedures Manual* tries to collect in one accessible source the many different insights developed by previous incarnations of C&C. It is obviously not intended to be viewed as immutable scripture, to be carefully handed down unchanged to future Committees. Rather, it simply attempts to capture the current approximations to the best ways for handling the work given to us. Continuing revelation will undoubtedly keep on unfolding, and modifications to, or even wholesale replacements of, various parts will be developed, requiring new editions of this *Manual* on a regular basis.

By and large, this *Manual* only deals with the technical aspects of the Committee's work. Given the often heavy press of business confronting us in our meetings, an ever-present pitfall is to see the work of Care & Counsel as primarily the efficient application of these procedures. Underlying the exercise of these techniques, though, should always be the awareness that we are acting, not as bureaucratic functionaries, but as members of a Spirit-led community, striving at all times to listen patiently and in a spirit of worship for the way to unfold. Our success is not measured by how efficiently we dispatch our agendas, but how rightly we are led.

## Queries

Do we take care that each member of our community is held in sensitive awareness, with respect for personal dignity and privacy? Are we tender of one another's feelings? Do we maintain confidentiality, avoid gossip, and refrain from unnecessary and inappropriate exchange of information?

As we offer pastoral care, do we each maintain awareness of our own needs and motivations and the effect these may have on our own care giving? Are we careful to distinguish personal feelings about individuals — positive or negative — from our charge to care for them? In striving to help others, do we seek the Spirit through prayer and silence?

Are we sensitive to the limits of our capacities and the limits of our responsibilities? Are we prepared to express these limits and recommend professional resources?

[Intermountain YM F&P notes: Adapted from material developed by Strawberry Creek Meeting]

## General Structures

### *Committee Description in Handbook*

#### **Care and Counsel**

Created 5/72 when Ministry & Counsel split. Originally called Overseers. The Care and Counsel Committee offers pastoral care to the Meeting and has general oversight of the functioning of committees. It meets monthly. The Committee

- holds members and attenders in the Light and may organize assistance, with particular concern for the elderly and children and for those whose names arise or who are known to be dealing with health, aging, conflict, possible leadings, or other life issues;
- receives requests for clearness or support on personal/spiritual matters and for marriage;
- greets members, attenders, and visitors each First Day, initiates contact with visitors living in this area, and tends the guest book in the lobby;
- maintains liaisons to all committees and oversees their functioning;

Specific duties of Care and Counsel include:

- assisting family members in arranging a memorial meeting. One C&C member is appointed by C&C to be a member of the **Burial Committee** (page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** of Handbook);
- writing memorial minutes or seeing that they are written;
- planning occasional discussions of Friends' beliefs and practices for newcomers;
- overseeing jointly with Ministry & Worship: meeting for business, the annual State of Society Report, the children's summer program, and other mutual concerns, meeting twice each year with Ministry and Worship for such business;
- acting on requests for financial aid from the Assistance Fund and the Scholarship Fund. They may solicit contributions for the Assistance Fund if the Fund is running low (7/09);
- lending one of the quilts in its care to Friends thought to appreciate. e a bit of extra nurturing in time of trouble or sorrow. See also **Quilts** (page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**).
- overseeing
  - the hearing amplification system
  - the lobby bulletin board in conjunction with the clerk (10/97);
- providing ongoing discernment for how the Meeting will carry forward GLBT issues (1/10).

(Based on duties assigned by meeting for business 1981-2010; reorganized and approved by Care and Counsel 6/12).

Care and Counsel members are encouraged to attend meetings for worship and business regularly. Six members are appointed for staggered three-year terms. Membership in Mt. Toby Meeting is not a requirement (04/76). Minutes of the

Committee are sent to Ministry and Worship, Meeting Clerks, and the History and Records Committee.

## ***Role of the Clerk***

(Adapted 9/26/2011 from Margaret Cooley handout)

### **Primary Responsibilities**

- Convene Committee meetings
- Set and distribute agendas for meetings
- Facilitate meetings
- Review minutes with recording clerk after meetings
- Follow up on items needing attention between meetings
- Serve as primary contact for those needing to communicate with C&C
- Keep meeting clerk informed of any items needing attention at meeting for business
- Follow up on items referred to C&C by meeting for business
- See that Committee follows through on duties as described in *Handbook*
- Work with M&W clerk(s) and others on joint efforts
- (Attend, or designate representatives to attend, monthly clerks' gatherings)
- Administer Assistance and Scholarship Funds, or designate other Committee member to do so

### **Helpful Qualities**

- is organized
- easily accessible by phone and email
- keeps meetings focused and constructive
- understands and is committed to appropriate level of confidentiality
- tracks all the items; makes sure the tasks are assigned to someone and that the work gets done

### **General Comments**

It is important to realize that the clerk does not need to do all the work. An ability to distribute the work of the Committee among the members is important, not only to the mental health of the clerk, but to developing a strong and effective committee. A Committee with a clerk that tends to do everything often flounders when that clerk's term ends.

At the same time, though, it is important that the clerk be kept fully informed of the activities Committee members are pursuing on behalf of the Committee.

### ***Responsibilities of the Recording Clerk***

- Takes minutes of the C&C Committee meetings; goes over a draft with the clerk, then sends a draft to the Committee, to the Clerk of Ministry & Worship, and to the Meeting Clerks.

- After the minutes are formally approved at the next meeting, final copies are sent to the above list and a copy is given to the History and Records Committee.
- Makes sure an up-to-date list of greeters is posted outside the meeting room door.
- Takes minutes at the spring joint meeting with Ministry and Worship.

## **Minutes**

Minutes are usually not approved at the meeting they cover, except for instances where the Committee has worked out very careful wording on some topic. In general, the Recording Clerk takes notes during the meeting then prepares a draft which is sent to the Clerk for comments and suggested modifications. When the Clerks are agreed, draft minutes are sent to the other Committee members and to the clerks of the Meeting and of Ministry and Worship. Final changes and approval are made at the next C&C meeting. Copies of these approved minutes are sent to the previous recipients and to the History and Records Committee.

## **Calendar**

**September** Organizational meeting; select Clerk and Recording Clerk; distribute copies of the Handbook and the *C&C Procedures Manual* to new members; designate an overseer of the Assistance and Scholarship Funds; name C&C member of the Burial Committee; assign liaisons and review their roles; review Committee description in the Mount Toby *Handbook*; discuss major tasks for the year ahead; publish our statement on “Seeking Help at Mt. Toby” in the Newsletter; set a date for the joint meeting with M&W.

**October** Consider agenda items for joint meeting with M&W.

**November** C&C convenes and clerks the joint meeting with Ministry and Worship. The M&W recording clerk takes minutes. Decide on a process for writing the State of Society report. Decide joint meeting time for Feb-March.

**January** Perhaps 11:40 Hour program (with M&W) around State of Society; decide whether to have a Newcomers workshop in the spring and, if so, who will run it and what kinds of support they will need; begin organizing spring 11:40 Hour Program – topic and publicity. Determine agenda items for joint meeting with M&W

**February** M&W convenes and clerks the joint meeting. The C&C recording clerk takes minutes; primary focus is thinking about SOS report; appoint 2 or 3 people to draft report. Either at this meeting or later nominate two people to serve on the Mt. Toby Nominating Committee beginning in September. Any *Newsletter* article needed for the spring?

**March** Approve draft of SOS report in time for April meeting for business.

### **April**

**May** Apply for fall and spring 11:40 Hour slots and a slot at the end of January for the SoS discussion; prepare annual Committee report to business meeting.

**June** Annual report to business meeting; work out care of children in the summer with M&W and Religious Ed.

**July** Review the *C&C Procedures Manual* to see what

changes/additions/updates are needed in the next edition

**August** Transition meeting with new members and those completing terms; distribute copies of the Mt. Toby *Handbook* and the *C&C Procedures Manual* to incoming members.

## ***Pastoral Care***

Care and Counsel does not need to provide all the pastoral care in the Mt. Toby community; there are many Friends not on C&C who are gifted in prayer and visitation. What Care and Counsel should try to do is to maintain a conscious oversight of the Meeting to ensure that needed pastoral care is taking place. From time to time, the Committee should set aside time to reflect on the meeting and see if there are any who need to be tended to in some way.

## ***Care of the Elderly***

As Friends age, some will gradually slip out of sight. They may no longer serve on committees; they will find attendance at meeting increasingly difficult – either because of transportation issues or because of the physical discomfort of sitting for an hour. C&C should try to see when this is beginning to happen and devise ways of helping them maintain a sense of connection to the Meeting. This might be done by ensuring that they have rides to attend meeting for worship or other meeting programs; providing appropriate seating at meeting for worship (arm chairs, reclining chairs, etc.); regular visitation; perhaps an occasional meeting for worship at their homes.

It may be useful at the beginning of each year to assign specific members of C&C to keep in touch with these individuals, or to check to see that some other member of Mt. Toby is providing this kind of oversight.

## ***Care of the Sick***

When Friends are ill or recovering from illness/surgery, they may need meals brought by, visits, help with shopping, or other kinds of support. Some will ask in advance for such assistance, but, in other cases, the Committee may need to take the initiative in suggesting the kinds of help that the Meeting could offer. This will often require that someone (not necessarily from C&C) be designated as the coordinator for meals and for being the contact person to keep the rest of the Meeting appropriately informed about the sick Friend's progress. As with any support committee, those involved need to remain aware of the limitations in terms of time and expertise that the Meeting can provide, discerning when outside professional help is appropriate.

## ***Phone Contacts***

As we come to rely more and more on the internet to announce special events or to inform the community of births, deaths, or illnesses among us, we need to remember that some members of Mt. Toby still lack regular access to this kind of communication. To ensure that such Friends don't feel excluded from the life of the Meeting, Care and Counsel should make sure that there is someone who will call such Friends promptly when there is news that should be shared.

## ***Lending of the Quilts***

Care and Counsel has custody of a few hand-made quilts, including one sized for a child, that it lends to Friends who may appreciate a bit of extra nurturing in a time of trouble or sorrow. Friends are asked to bring the names of such people to the attention of the committee. When they are not on loan, these quilts adorn the walls of the Champney Room.

## **Specific Kinds of Support**

### ***Clearness And Support Committees -- General***

#### **Introduction**

Friends, since the time of George Fox, have responded as a worship community to the needs of individual Friends for clarity about a concern or spiritual leading and, also, to offer support in following a leading. Early Friends supported those who were jailed and the families and those who were suffering because of their Quaker beliefs.

In recent years, Friends have, on request, formed committees of support to assist a Friend (or regular attender) when illness, family issues, or some other hardship or complication has created a stressful situation that our community is capable of addressing (i.e., spiritual and personal support or practical assistance that does not include therapy, social services, marriage counseling, or legal advice).

Both marriage and joining a monthly meeting have, as a first step, appointment of a clearness committee to meet with the individual(s) making the request. Clearness committees are also used to help a requestor to discern a specific issue.

We have outlined, below, a process for initiating a request and some guidelines for discerning whether a Clearness Committee or a Support Committee is more appropriate.

#### **Initiating a Request**

1. Clearness committees for membership and for marriage have their own structures. In these cases the process is initiated by writing a letter to the Clerk of Mt. Toby. The Clerk will read the letter in business meeting, then forward it to Ministry and Worship (membership) or Care and Counsel (marriage) for further consideration.
2. In all other cases, speak to someone on Care and Counsel and discuss your situation.
3. Get as clear as you can whether there is a need for clearness or support (see below).
4. Write a letter of request to the Clerk of Care and Counsel.
5. The Clerk will talk with you about next steps and a probable time line.

#### **Clearness Committee**

A committee of 2-4 usually meets with the requestor 1 to 3 times to seek clarity about a particular issue or concern. The usual format poses questions to requestor confident that, with Divine assistance, one can discern one's own leading.

For example one might be seeking clearness around:

- becoming involved in some concern
- changing career or livelihood
- changing in family situation
- joining meeting
- marrying

## **Support Committee**

A committee of 2-4 meets to offer spiritual, personal or practical support. The duration of the committee is determined by the committee and the requestor – usually a year or less. If support is needed beyond a year the committee members may choose to extend their service or the requestor can write a request to Care and Counsel for a new committee.

Support may be appropriate if there is basic clarity on the nature of the underlying issue, but dealing with the accompanying stress, complexity, or desire for deeper spiritual grounding can be assisted by the worship community. Examples where support might be useful:

- following a leading or some form of service
- coping with a significant health problem
- dealing with difficulties within a family
- managing work or career issues

## ***C&C procedures for handling requests for clearness/support (other than marriage)***

1. The person desiring a committee sends a letter to the clerk of Care and Counsel detailing the request. The letter is acknowledged by the clerk; additional clarification may be sought.
2. Copies of the letter are distributed at a Care and Counsel meeting. These copies are collected and destroyed at the end of the meeting.
3. Our minutes will not give the name(s) of those making the request, but only the general nature of the request.
4. Care and Counsel may turn down a request if it appears to require a level of expertise or a time commitment beyond what our membership can reasonably provide.
5. We cannot offer professional counseling or therapy, nor can we provide social services or specialized care.
6. When we received a request from someone who had not attended for many years, we turned down the request and minuted “that the creation of such committees had to be within the larger structure of the gathered community of people who meet regularly for worship and know each other in that context.” (9/5/2011)
7. If Care and Counsel feels that Mt. Toby can appropriately respond to the request, they will generate a list of people who might be appropriate, being mindful of the need not to burden friends with too many requests for such service. Care and Counsel will determine an ideal committee size and rank the names in the order they will be contacted.
8. Care and Counsel will appoint a liaison for the committee. The liaison will ask people in the suggested order if they would be willing to serve. The liaison will ask one person to convene the first meeting. If it is a support committee, the liaison will make sure all participants have a copy of The C&C 2004 Support Committee Guidelines. If it is a clearness committee, the liaison will make sure all participants have a copy of Guidance for a Clearness Committee for Personal Discernment. The liaison will check with the committee from time to time to see that it is functioning well.

## ***Guidance for a Clearness Committee for Personal Discernment***

A clearness committee meets with a person who is unclear how to proceed in a keenly felt concern or dilemma, hoping that it can help this person reach clarity. It assumes that each of us has an Inner Teacher who can guide us and that the answer sought can be found by the person seeking clearness. It also assumes that a group of caring friends can help draw out the Spirit's guidance from and for that person. The committee members' purpose is not to give advice or to "fix" the situation; their task is to listen, setting aside their own prejudices or judgments, to help clarify alternatives, to help communication if necessary, and to provide emotional support as an individual seeks to find "truth and the right course of action." The clearness committee works best when everyone approaches it in a prayerful mood (which does not exclude playful!)

### **Organizing the clearness committee**

1. The person seeking clearness always initiates formation of the committee, though a friend may ask, "Would a clearness committee be helpful?" The focus person may choose several trusted friends or ask Care & Counsel to form a clearness committee for them. In either case, formation of the committee should happen through a discernment process, taking care to have variety among its appointed members.
2. A clerk and a recorder are appointed. The clerk opens and closes the meeting and keeps a sense of right order in between, making sure that agreed-on guidelines are followed and that everyone who wishes to speak may do so. (Any member of the committee may intervene if necessary to ensure that guidelines are followed.) The recorder writes down the questions asked and perhaps some of the responses and gives this record to the focus person after the meeting.
3. In advance of the meeting, it is helpful for the focus person to write up the matter on which clearness is sought, identifying it as precisely as possible, giving relevant background factors and any clues there may be to what lies ahead. This should be made available to committee members. This exercise is valuable not only for the committee members, but especially for the focus person.

### **Conducting the clearness committee**

1. The clerk invites the committee to prepare for its work, reminds everyone of the guidelines to be followed and makes sure there is a common understanding of the degree of confidentiality about the meeting.
2. All settle into a period of centering silence.
3. When the focus person is ready, s/he begins with a brief summary of the question or concern.
4. Members of the committee hold to a discipline of asking brief, probing question as led by the Spirit, resisting urges to present solutions or give

advice. It is crucial that these questions be asked not for the sake of satisfying the questioner's curiosity, but for the sake of drawing out the focus person's clarity. The pace of questions should be kept deliberately gentle and relaxed to encourage reflection. Committee members should also trust their intuitions. Even if a question seems "off the wall," if it feels insistent it should be asked.

5. The focus person normally answers the questions in front of the group and the response generates more questions. It is always the focus person's absolute right not to answer, whether because s/he does not know the answer, or because the answer is too personal or painful to be revealed in the group. The more often a focus person can answer aloud, the more s/he and the committee has to go on, but this should never be done at the expense of the focus person's privacy or need to protect vulnerable feelings. It is a good idea for the focus person to keep answers fairly brief so that time remains for more questions and responses.
6. Do not be anxious if there are extended periods of silence. It does not mean that nothing is happening; in fact, the Spirit may be powerfully at work within the focus person and the committee members.
7. Well before the end of the session, following at least half an hour of questions and answers, the clerk pauses to ask the focus person how s/he wishes to proceed. This is an opportunity for the focus person to choose, if it feels appropriate, a mode of seeking clarity other than questions. The recorder continues to record during this time. Possibilities include:
  - a. Silence out of which anyone may speak under the same discipline as in other meetings for worship
  - b. Silence out of which people share images which come to them as they concentrate on the focus person
  - c. Continued questions from the committee
  - d. Reflection on what has been said
  - e. Affirmation of the focus person's gifts
  - f. Questions to the committee from the focus person.
8. Before the session ends the focus person may wish to share any clarity which has come to them. S/he and the committee consider together whether another meeting is needed and, if so, schedule it at this time. It may be that the focus person will not need to meet with the committee again or it may be clear that a support or oversight committee should be appointed to help the person remain clear and/or be accountable to the clarity reached. Members of the clearness committee are free to release themselves from further commitment or to offer to serve on such committees.

*(Excerpted from a 1996 brochure by Jan Hoffman)*

## ***Queries and Advices for Those Asked to Serve on Clearness Committees***

### **Queries**

Is this your work to do at this time?

Can you devote sufficient time and energy to this committee, knowing that it may take several meetings and many weeks or months to clarify the problem and provide support while the decision is made and carried out?

Do you feel sufficiently at ease with the focus person and with the other members of the committee to work with them? Can you engage with them to provide an atmosphere in which divine guidance can be sought?

If it is a decision to be made by more than one person, can you set aside your own prejudice or bias as you listen to each person involved?

Are you willing to keep the committee discussions confidential and avoid gossiping or referring to them outside the committee unless those requesting the help of the committee are comfortable with a wider sharing of their problem?

Can you keep an open heart and an open mind about the outcome?

### **Advices**

While the convener takes care of the practical details of setting up the meeting and keeps a sense of right order while it is in progress, remember that each member of the committee shares responsibility for maintaining a prayerful presence, asking for times of silence when needed, and asking questions as led by the Spirit. It is not an occasion to provide counseling but a spiritual exercise which aims to help the focus person or people to hear the Spirit's guidance for themselves. Don't offer solutions or advice but ask honest, probing questions to assist them in this process. Listen deeply to all that is said.

If the meeting is for more than one person, try to give equal attention to each person present, whether adult or child.

Remember that people are capable of change and growth. Do not become absorbed with past excuses or reasons for present problems. Focus on what is happening now that is perpetuating the situation or causing the need for a decision to be made.

*(Appendix 8.C. Pastoral Care from draft NEYM Faith and Practice)*

## **Support Committee Guidelines**

(10/5/04; amended 2011)

### **Purpose**

A Support Committee is Monthly Meeting's response to a specific written request to Care & Counsel from a member or attender, hereafter referred to as "requestor", who needs some care, prayer and spiritual support to assist her/him through a difficult period.

The person requesting support will make their needs known by letter to Care & Counsel and Care & Counsel will determine whether the concern would best be addressed by a Clearness Committee or a Support Committee.

It is the intent of Meeting to prayerfully support and nurture the requestor in the context of Quaker values and within the capabilities, energy and time of those giving support. We are mindful that, as a spiritual community, we can assist and nurture each other in many ways depending on the requestor's needs and the capabilities of the Committee. However, we cannot offer professional counseling or therapy, nor can we provide social services or specialized care.

### **Size and Duration of Committee**

Normally 2-4 persons would be asked to serve from 3 to 12 months. In some cases (e.g., support for an issue related to a court calendar) support may be needed beyond that time. If so, there should be some discussion of this at the outset and at 12 months. The frequency of meetings will be determined by the Committee. Within the first month of its appointment the Committee should reach consensus with the person seeking support on a probable duration for the Committee. This ending date and the expectations of the requestor and the Committee would be reported back to Care & Counsel.

Support may extend beyond the original ending date if all members of the Committee are in agreement and willing to continue for an additional set period of time. Should the difficulty persist and members of the Committee are unable to serve, the requestor may submit a new written request to Care & Counsel.

### **Liaison with Care & Counsel**

A liaison person from Care & Counsel will be designated. Normally this will be the person who first contacted members. The liaison should be informed of the expected duration and should also be advised if the Committee or any member of the Committee becomes inactive prior to that time or if the requestor feels some change ill the Committee is necessary.

## **Process**

1. A convener/clerk should be chosen by the Committee. The clerk, with the requestor, should set an agenda either prior to a meeting or at the beginning of a meeting. Some Committees chose to rotate clerks. In such cases it must be clear by the end of each meeting who will act as clerk in the interim and for the next meeting.
2. Prior to first meeting. Each member should know the nature of the concern. Care & Counsel recommends that the Committee meet for a short time without the requestor before the first meeting and thereafter as it may be useful.
3. At the beginning of each meeting clarify roles of clerk (if necessary) and recorder. The recorder checks to see what level of detail may be most useful to the requestor. At a minimum, decisions, logistics and plans should be recorded and brought to the next meeting. It is important that everyone leave the meeting with a clear understanding of what was agreed and it is helpful if the recorder writes down the *who, what, when* of logistics decisions.
4. Before entering worship, review the agenda and agree on estimated time allocations and ending time. The clerk will monitor the time or ask someone else to act as "timekeeper".
5. Opening worship. Requestor speaks from silence about the current concern.
6. Before ending worship be clear about decisions, responsibilities, expectations and next meeting time. If minutes (or a list of tasks) are to be shared the recorder tells everyone when and how they will be forwarded.
7. Ending worship.

## **Advice and Concerns**

Silence can help the process. Especially if there are difficult or emotional issues, falling into silence can deepen the process, open us to spiritual guidance and assist with clarity.

If the clarity that initiated the support committee begins to vanish (i.e., the primary reason that support was requested has changed and/or different needs have arisen) Care & Counsel should be informed.

A written record can be useful to the requestor and it may help members to be clear about task responsibilities. Normally, committee notes are given to the requestor. It is important to be clear about confidentiality and what is okay and not okay to talk about. If resources beyond the committee are needed it is helpful if the confidentiality agreement is explicit.

## **Possible Pitfalls**

It has been our experience that Committees can be burdened or ineffective if there is

- Open-Ended Commitment (unclear about frequency of meetings, duration, etc.)
- Lack of Focus (issues/needs change and expand over time)
- Expectation of Professional Support (e.g. therapy, marriage counseling, legal advice)
- Unclear Boundaries (Committee "on call" whenever needs arise)
- Taking Sides (e.g., in a family dispute or breakup)
- Burnout (from expecting/promising more than can be sustained)

## **Spirit-Led Care and Support**

We, who feel led to be on a support committee, look to the Light to give us clarity about the nature of our service and to sustain us when difficulties are encountered. We greet the challenges that are sure to arise with loving care for each other and for ourselves. We are called to be attentive and to be loving, and to look upon this effort as an opportunity for spiritual understanding and growth. While support is directed to the person who requested it, it is possible for nurturance to move in many directions. One of the challenges of a support committee is to stay spiritually centered so this becomes reality.

Care & Counsel is always available for consultation.

We thank you for your part in this loving endeavor.

## ***Financial Support – Assistance and Scholarship Funds***

Care and Counsel has two funds it oversees:

- The **Assistance Fund** is set up to provide small emergency loans and grants to the members of the Mt. Toby community. It is not meant to address chronic financial needs. While grants are typically under \$500, larger grants have been made. Loans have run to several thousand dollars.
- The **Scholarship Fund** provides grants to members and attenders of all ages who wish to go to retreats, conferences, workshops, or other programs sponsored by Quaker organizations such as Woolman Hill, monthly meetings, yearly meetings, or national organizations that encourage spiritual growth. Following on discussions about race and class at Mount Toby, we are concerned to make these funds available in a manner that is the least demeaning and burdensome for the applicant. We advertise these funds in advance of events such as Friends Camp and NEYM and encourage those who need the help to ask freely. We also remind friends of other funds such as the NEYM's Equalization Fund that can supplement Mt Toby's support. Checks for grants are usually made out to the organization sponsoring the event, not the individual requesting assistance. While grants of \$100-\$200 for an individual are typical, there is no limit to the request.

### **Fund Structure**

- The operations of the Funds are confidential. Typically, only the Fund overseer (see below) knows the details of a request. Requests are not generally discussed in meetings of C&C.
- Each Fund is an ongoing account whose balance carries over across the end of the fiscal year. In its annual operating budget, Mt. Toby includes an amount to be transferred to the Fund to begin the year with around \$2,000 in it. If a Fund is running low during the year, C&C can request that additional money be transferred to it by monthly meeting. C&C can also request contributions from individuals for the Funds.
- If a loan is made from the Assistance Fund, loan repayments are returned to the Assistance Fund.

### **Operation of the Funds**

- One member of Care and Counsel, usually the Clerk, oversees the Funds.
- Requests for financial assistance are made in writing to the overseer of the relevant fund, who will decide on a response – the amount, whether it should be a loan or a grant, schedule of repayment. The Fund overseer will maintain a permanent record of this information. In general, the overseer of the Fund will make the decision on responding to the request. In complex cases, the overseer may want to consult with one or more other Committee members.
- There is no ceiling to how much anyone can request from either fund.
- Once a request has been responded to, all documents, aside from the summary record noted above, are destroyed. We do not keep permanent files of the correspondence generated by a request.

- The Fund overseer sends a letter to the Mt. Toby Treasurer, simply saying that a check is to be made out for such and such an amount payable to the designated payee. The details of the request are not shared with the Treasurer.
- From time to time, the Assistance Fund overseer will check on the status of any outstanding loans, discussing with the payee whether the specified repayment schedule still seems realistic. If not, suitable modifications in the schedule can be made.
- We do not desire loans to become a severe burden. If this seems to be developing, the Assistance Fund overseer should always feel free to change the loan to a grant.

## Death

When a f/Friend is dying, Care & Counsel needs to

- Provide appropriate care and support for the Friend and the family. This will vary widely, depending on the other sources of support the family has. Support may consist of physical support like providing some meals, or it may be the providing of information about possible resources in the wider community, or it may simply be a comforting presence either to talk with, or, often, to share silence with.
- Provide an interface between the family and the rest of the Mt. Toby community. This is both to protect the privacy of the family and to ensure that the rest of the Meeting is appropriately informed. There is a wide range in how much visitation is desired, and how much detail the Friend and family want to share with the rest of the Meeting
- To facilitate these goals, it is helpful if the family and C&C agree on a single person who will be the primary intermediary between the dying Friend and the rest of Mt. Toby.

When a Friend dies, the bulk of the responsibility for organizing the memorial meeting falls upon Ministry and Worship, with Care and Counsel providing some assistance (see the following section). For a time after the death, there may be much for Care and Counsel to do in support of surviving family members in the way of providing meals or even helping to set up a formal support committee. Care & Counsel also has the responsibility to see that a memorial minute is written when one is appropriate.

### ***Considerations in Planning a Memorial Meeting***

(Approved by Ministry and Worship and Overseers 4/98; revised 11/98, 4/05, 10/1, 11/11)

Sections I and II are to be discussed with the family; sections III and IV are responsibilities of people from Mt. Toby.

#### **I. Care of dying person and/or family**

When there is an impending death, Ministry and Worship needs to discern whether the dying person and/or family members wish to discuss the memorial meeting with someone from the meeting. Such a discussion might consist of:

- showing examples of the printed memorial program with explanation of possibilities (poetry, obituary)
- sharing the possibility of some programmed elements in the meeting such as music, readings, etc.
- inquiring about special requests

#### **II. After the death: visit and planning**

This visit to the family would include a member of Ministry and Worship, a member of Care and Counsel, and someone else if appropriate. In what follows, carrying out of the specific responsibilities is divided between M&W (M) and C&C (C). Discussion would cover:

- **the meeting for worship (M):** Are there any particular wishes for readings, music, particular persons who have been asked to speak, etc.? Would the family like to sit

together and have benches set aside for this? Since the meeting room should be cleared 30 minutes before the memorial meeting begins, the Champney Room and the nursery are available for rehearsals or family gathering. Ministry and Worship has care of the Memorial Meeting and will designate someone to open and close.

- **the printed program (M):** take samples of the program in two parchment colors and ask which the family would like. Do they have an estimate of how many programs will be needed? The copying is done at Collective Copies in Amherst and charged to the Mt. Toby account; cost is not mentioned to the family. Err on the side of printing too many. The text of the program is currently on the Hoffman computer with a paper copy in the file marked *Memorial Services* in the file cabinet in the Library. Ask Hoffmans to print out what is needed or follow the pattern and do it yourself.
- **refreshments (C):** Mt. Toby offers beverages and cookies or crackers/ cheese. Will the Hospitality Committee be involved and take responsibility? If not, a core group needs to be assembled.
- **guest book (M):** Does the family wish to provide one or would they like Mt. Toby to provide it? [Meeting should be sure to provide a permanent ink pen.]
- **childcare during the memorial meeting (M):** Are there family members who will need it? Should childcare be provided for other attenders beyond the family? This is best done in the First Day School Room.
- **memorial display:** Would the family like to have a display of mementos, photos, etc?
- **overnight hospitality needs (M):** What are the needs of the immediate family? Care must be taken not to overextend the Meeting, offering more than can be reasonably provided.

### III. Logistical responsibilities

*Preparation:* check with

- **scheduler (C)** -- to confirm date and check about necessary heat. THEN, if Champney Room will be in use during the memorial meeting, see that stacks of chairs are moved from there to foyer if extra seating will be needed.
- **meetinghouse cleaners (M)** -- to ask that week's cleaners to complete their work before the memorial meeting.
- **plowing (M)** – Call the treasurer to make sure snowplowing or sanding will be done in a timely fashion.
- **sheep (M)** – check with Brad to make sure the sheep won't be grazing nearby
- **grounds (M)** – to make sure grounds are ready
- **Confirm:**
  - refreshments (C)
  - table (cloths, napkins, cups, plates) (C)
  - flowers (C)
  - person to set up sound system if foyer is to be used (C)
  - person to tape meeting if family has requested it (C)

*Building setup*

- A **Meeting host** (M) with a key needs to come 1 1/2 hour early so building is available to family, florists, caterers or Mt. Toby kitchen and setup people. The phone should be answered during this time, since it will likely be people wanting information about the service or directions to the meetinghouse.
- If the meeting host is occupied elsewhere in the building, a person should be assigned to **answer the phone** during the half hour preceding the service.
- **Greeters:** (C) generally two people from Care and Counsel
- **Parking:** (C) Two people need to arrive *at least* an hour before the service to direct parking and set an early sign to mark the second parking row on the north side of the parking lot, if necessary.
- **Seating:** (C&M) At least 1 hour before the service, two or three people should arrange seating, especially if chairs in foyer are needed, and set up tables for refreshments. Seats in the meeting room reserved for family (if they have requested it) should be marked with ribbons found in storage in foyer.
- **Radio speaker** needs to be set up at least 30 minutes before meeting, if there is to be seating in the foyer.
- A Meeting host needs to stay as late as the family lingers and **clean-up people** need to be designated.

#### **IV. Burial Ground**

There is a Burial Ground Committee, currently clerked by Carol Coan.

- **A map of the burial ground** with plot numbers can be found in the file labeled *Burial Ground: Maps and Records* in the file cabinet in the Library.
- **Written procedures regarding burials** can be found in the Appendix “Guidelines for the Use of the Burial Ground” in the Meeting *Handbook*.

### ***Writing a Memorial Minute***

See Appendix VI for detailed guidelines.

# Marriage

## Outline

It is important for a couple wishing to be married under the care of the Meeting to read carefully the chapter on “Marriage Procedures” in *Faith and Practice* and to start the procedure in time for all steps to be completed in good order; six to eight months is not too much to allow. The couple declare their intention to the Meeting in a letter addressed to the Clerk. This is read in meeting for business, but is also forwarded to the Care and Counsel Committee without waiting for the next meeting for business (5/82). At their next meeting, C&C appoint a Committee on Clearness for Marriage (5/82, reconfirmed 1/93). This Committee – usually two men and two women for a heterosexual couple – meets with the couple, separately and together, to “make inquiry as to the qualifications for marriage, such as clearness from other engagements, to make sure as far as possible that there is nothing to interfere with the permanence and happiness of the marriage, and to offer guidance and counsel” (*F&P*).

The Committee reports to the next meeting for business; the couple should be present if possible. If the report is favorable the Meeting sets a date for a meeting for worship during which the marriage will take place, and appoints a Committee on Oversight, suggested by Care and Counsel, to help plan and oversee the marriage. The couple may suggest the time and place of the meeting, and the names of those they would like to have on the Committee on Oversight. The couple is then free to proceed with its plans. Invitations must not be sent out until meeting for business has set the date.

Although members of clearness and oversight committees do not have to be members of the Meeting, meeting for business in 4/93 suggested it is important to have several members who are seasoned in Friends' practices, and that non-members might be appointed in addition to four members who are Friends.

The couple is responsible for getting a marriage license, which in Massachusetts is obtained from the town clerk in any town, and must be returned to the same town clerk after the wedding. Town clerks have information sheets, which outline the legal requirements, including time limits and blood tests. Massachusetts statutes allow specifically for marriages after the manner of Friends. Current law requires that one signer must be the Clerk or Recorder, and that any signer must be a resident of the state. Since Quaker couples marry themselves and are not married by the clerk or any other third party, clerks have coped in various ways with the language in the license that says, “I hereby certify that I solemnized the marriage of the above-named persons.” Some clerks simply sign anyway, while others cross out the word “solemnized” and replace it with “witnessed” or the like. The Committee on Oversight is responsible for seeing that all legal requirements are met.

Massachusetts has a unique law called “Designation to Solemnize a Particular Marriage on a Particular Day.” Anyone may legally officiate at a marriage after filling out the proper forms and paying a \$25 fee. (Legal information from the Town Clerk of Amherst, 1995). Meeting officers do not need to fill out such a form.

Some Committees on Oversight have felt strongly that a wedding rehearsal is always advisable, especially when some of the wedding party are not familiar with Friends' ways (7/88).

Meeting has had some hesitation about overseeing marriages of people who are not members of the Meeting, especially if they are not Friends (5/77). This can only be decided case by case, as the occasion arises. An alternate arrangement might be for the couple to arrange to use the meetinghouse for their wedding, but not to have it take place under the care of the Meeting. In this case, the license would be signed by a Justice of the Peace or some other authorized person.

## **Details**

(September 13, 1992)

All aspects of a wedding in the manner of Friends serve to emphasize that the basis of marriage is spiritual relation between the couple, supported by the community. The traditional Friends' marriage affirms this in a few words:

In the presence of God and these Friends, I take thee, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my (husband, wife, partner), promising, with divine assistance, to be unto thee a loving and faithful (wife, husband, partner) as long as we both shall live.

Each partner seeks and speaks to that of God in the other. The ceremony takes place in the context of a meeting for worship. At the close of the meeting for worship all those present sign the marriage certificate, affirming the community's participation in the wedding and responsibility for its nurture.

Queries such as the following may be useful in helping a couple decide whether marriage under the care of the Meeting is appropriate for them:

- Are we prepared to affirm our hope for and expectation of divine assistance in our marriage?
- Do we see Mt. Toby Friends Meeting as our faith community?
- Do we wish to be married in the manner of Friends in a meeting for worship, conducted on the basis of silent waiting on God?
- Do we see this as a spiritual or a legal union?

Not all members of the Meeting community are married under the care of the Meeting. For example, a member or attender may marry a partner who is not in unity with Friends' beliefs about the spiritual bases of marriage. In such a case, a marriage in the Quaker style, but not formally under the care of the Meeting, may be appropriate. But in any case, the community extends its love and support whenever one of its members marries.

## **Letter of Intentions**

When a couple has decided that they wish to be married under the care of the Meeting, they should notify the Meeting by writing a letter addressed to the clerk. (A sample letter of intentions is included in New England Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice*.) The clerk reads this letter at monthly meeting and forwards it to Care & Counsel.

When either member of the couple is a member of another monthly meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, that Meeting should send a letter to Mt. Toby Friends Meeting requesting that the marriage be taken under the care of Mt. Toby.

## **Clearness Committee**

When Care & Counsel receives a copy of the letter, it will appoint a clearness committee to meet with the couple and explore the appropriateness of marriage under the care of the Meeting. The membership of the clearness committee is reported to the next monthly meeting for business. If the couple are not well known to the Meeting or to the Care & Counsel, a member of Care & Counsel may meet with them first for a preliminary

discussion.

When the clearness committee has been approved by the Monthly Meeting, it will meet with the couple one or more times. It is helpful if the clearness committee meets beforehand to develop a set of possible queries to explore with the couple. Two sample sets of queries are contained in the Appendices. Additional queries are contained in the book *Living with Oneself and Others: Working Papers on Aspects of Family Life*, published by New England Yearly Meeting of Friends. The sections on marriage in New England Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice* also provide important information and are recommended to couples and clearness committees.

Couples should be aware that the search for clearness is an open-ended process, and may require several meetings. In some cases, unity as to the couple's clearness may not emerge, and the request for marriage may be laid aside temporarily or permanently. When the clearness committee is ready to recommend that the couple be married under the care of the Meeting, it reports this to Care & Counsel. Care & Counsel considers this recommendation and then, in turn, reports its endorsement to the Monthly Meeting, which will normally take the marriage under its care. It is good if the couple can be present at the monthly meeting at which their marriage is approved.

The clearness process is confidential. Care & Counsel reports to the Monthly Meeting simply that it does, or does not, find the couple clear for marriage.

Occasionally a couple may be found clear by another monthly meeting. That meeting should write a letter to the Clerk of Mt. Toby Friends Meeting certifying that the couple have been found clear for marriage.

### **For All Couples**

As part of the clearness process, Mt. Toby has asked all marriage clearness committees to include the following query:

Are you seeking a spiritual union, a legal union, or both? If you cannot have or do not want a state-recognized union, are you aware of the many legal contracts which can be drawn up to provide rights similar to those that are part of a legally-recognized union?

An excellent resource for all couples contemplating a marriage which is not state-recognized is the *Legal Guide for Gay and Lesbian Couples* by Hayden Curry and Dennis Clifford.

### **Wedding Oversight Committee**

When Care & Counsel has decided to recommend taking a marriage under the care of the Meeting, the couple should set a date and time for the wedding and, with the help of Care & Counsel, select an oversight committee composed of at least four Friends. This committee is responsible for helping the couple plan their wedding and for seeing that the wedding itself is conducted in good order. Since many practical details are involved in planning the wedding, at least one member should have served on a previous oversight committee. The oversight committee must be approved, and a meeting for worship appointed, by the Monthly Meeting for Business. Often the oversight committee is approved and the wedding appointed at the same monthly meeting at which the clearness committee's recommendation is accepted.

## **A Note on Timing**

Couples should note that the process described here, from the initial application to the wedding, can take several months. They should make their wedding plans accordingly. Two monthly meetings may be needed to meet procedural requirements, and the clearness process may take longer than one month. Couples should not fix a date for the wedding or send announcements until they have been found clear and a date has been approved by the monthly meeting.

## **Advices on Wedding Procedure**

A wedding is a meeting for worship on the occasion of marriage. Every effort should be made to ensure that the spirit of worship prevails throughout. In particular, it is not appropriate for photographs to be taken or texts sent during the meeting.

The guests gather in silence. The couple enter together and take their seats. When the guests have gathered and the couple are seated, it is good to have one of the wedding overseers or other designated person stand, welcome guests, and briefly explain what will happen during the wedding. (Guests who have never attended a Quaker wedding may be confused and uncomfortable if they are not prepared for the silence.) The introduction will also indicate to guests that the “ceremony” has begun.

After a period of silent worship, the couple rise together and, taking one another by the hand, make their promises in words to this effect:

In the presence of God and these Friends, I take thee, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my (husband, wife, partner), promising, with divine assistance, to be unto thee a loving and faithful (wife, husband, partner) as long as we both shall live.

If rings are used, they are exchanged immediately after the promises. The couple then take their seats. As soon as the couple are seated, the marriage certificate is placed before them for their signatures. (This is a good opportunity to involve family members.) When the couple have signed the certificate, the table on which it is laid is returned to its place, and a guest or wedding overseer reads the certificate aloud. (This is another opportunity to involve family members.)

A longer period of silent worship begins, during which guests give spoken messages if they feel so led. This period should be long enough that a “gathered” spirit prevails and continues until there is a sense of completion. (This does not necessarily mean waiting until absolutely everyone who might have spoken has done so.)

The meeting can be closed in several ways. The couple may stand and leave the room, after which the wedding overseers break meeting. This gives the couple a chance to place themselves to greet guests as they leave. The couple themselves may wish to break meeting, or to remain while the overseers do so. At the rise of meeting, an overseer should remind all guests to sign the marriage certificate.

## **A Few Comments**

Most couples choose to have a hand-lettered marriage certificate prepared. Care and Counsel can recommend calligraphers. The traditional wording of the certificate is given in *Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends*. The certificate should

be signed in permanent ink.

It is advisable to have a rehearsal before the wedding. While a Friends' wedding involves less ceremony than the usual wedding, the participants are more responsible for what ceremony there is, and everyone will be more comfortable if they have rehearsed. The person who will read the certificate should practice doing so before the wedding.

To preserve the wedding's character as a meeting for worship, no photographs should be taken during the meeting, and all cell phones should be turned off. The meeting room is, however, equipped with an audio loop, which allows for the unobtrusive taping of the meeting for worship. If this is to be done, some notice of that should be given.

If many guests are unfamiliar with Friends, the couple may wish to include a brief description of a Quaker wedding in their invitations. Care & Counsel can provide samples of statements other couples have used. The couple may also wish to have a brief program available as guests enter the meeting room.

The fellowship room in the meetinghouse may be used for receptions. Alcohol is not to be served at the meetinghouse. Food and drink are not allowed in the meeting room. People may smoke outside, but not in any of the buildings. Arrangements must be made to put the meetinghouse in good order after the wedding and/or reception.

### ***Legal and Archival Matters***

If a couple chooses to marry legally, it will be necessary for them to obtain a marriage license. It is easy to confuse the terms marriage license and marriage certificate. The marriage license is a legal document issued by a local jurisdiction to register a marriage. The marriage certificate is the traditional Quaker document recording the accomplishment of a marriage after the manner of Friends. It is kept by the couple, and a copy is kept by the meeting. It has no legal status.

The couple is responsible for obtaining a marriage license. Care and Counsel can provide information and literature on how to do so. After the wedding, the couple should see that the marriage license reaches the clerk of Mt. Toby promptly. The Clerk will sign it and return it to the city or town in which it was issued.

### ***Ongoing Care of the Marriage***

A reunion meeting of the couple with their clearness committee about one year after their wedding is encouraged. This provides an opportunity to explore together how the marriage is prospering and whether the committee can be of any further assistance.

The couple should feel free to contact Care & Counsel any time that they feel that it can help them. All Friends, at all times, are responsible for the nurture of the committed relationships among us.

# **Greeting**

(Approved 12/28/2011)

## ***Role of the Greeter***

The greeter fosters the meeting for worship by welcoming attenders, particularly newcomers, and ensuring that the environment is one that helps attenders settle quickly into worship.

There are a number of details the greeter sees to prepare the physical space. These are listed below under Duties of the Greeter.

The greeter should also be attentive to ways to create an environment that assists attenders in moving quickly into a settled space. Some suggestions to keep in mind:

- Friends should be encouraged to move promptly into the meeting for worship room and not use the foyer as a place to socialize.
- In particular, the greeter should be brief in greeting attenders and avoid the temptation to engage in conversation.
- It is important to realize that the greeter is greeting people on behalf of Mt. Toby, not him- or herself. The greeter should avoid greeting attenders who happen to be personal friends more effusively than others. To give one attender a big hug and the next a formal handshake is liable to make the one feel less welcome, less part of an “in group.”

## **Duties of the Greeter**

### **Before Meeting**

1. Arrive by 9:40am.
2. Open doors to meeting room.
3. Hang out the “New to Meeting?” sign on the front door
4. Close the doors to Fellowship room.
5. Turn on the amplification system (for the hearing amplifiers). Do this by turning on the power strip. Adjust the volume for the Foyer via the knob on the speaker.
6. Set out box of hearing amplifiers on small table to right of meeting room door. Test the battery of each amplifier by turning on the switch and seeing light. Replacement batteries can be found in the box.
7. Open windows (and side door) in meeting room, as needed. Window-opener is left near door in the "fresh air corner."
8. Put the “reserved for greeter” sign on bench near the door.
9. Greet attenders warmly and equally.
10. At 9:45, make sure the "Enter by Other Door" sign shows the arrow pointing to the right!
11. Close the doors to meeting room at 10:00 am.

**During meeting**

1. Sit outside the door in silent worship, in presence of late-comers, until 10:10 am.
2. At 10:10, open right-side door for kids to come out, then greet late-comers and let them in. You may enter worship then.
3. A member of M&W will sit in the foyer to hold worship.
4. When it approaches 11 o'clock, stand in front of doors, awaiting arrival of children.
5. At the handshake at end of meeting, allow children to enter.

**After meeting**

1. Depending on air quality and amount of noise in foyer, you may want to open the doors while announcements are being given.
2. Open the door when closer asks those who are leaving to leave silently.
3. Close the door to the meeting room for those who remain in worship.
4. Sit/stand at the table in the foyer to answer questions and to encourage visitors to sign the guest book.
5. Send note of welcome to anyone who has signed the guest book during the week after visit. (Mt. Toby notecards are available in cabinet to right of meeting room door.)
6. Switch off the sound system after all Friends have left the meeting room (and worship sharing is over). Return box of amplifiers to side shelf. Check that the amps are turned off.
7. Bring in any signs that have been placed outside.
8. During the heating season, make sure all windows are shut. During the summer, make sure the side door is shut. Windows may be left open if it will not be going below 50° during the coming week.
9. Check that the foyer door is locked and closed firmly.

Note: The recording clerks of C&C and M&W are responsible for seeing that up-to-date lists of the meeting greeters and meeting closers are posted outside the meeting room door.

## ***Amplification System***

### **Model**

In the lobby we have a Williams Sound system

The handsets are Personal PA's; replacements are Model R35 – cost of \$82.50 each including battery and earbud in 2012.

### **For Service:**

Wassman Audio Visual  
92 State Road (Rte 5/10)  
Whately, MA 01093  
665-8835

[wassmannav@aol.com](mailto:wassmannav@aol.com)

(Long red building, on left, ¼ mile south of I-91 overpass. Sign on end of building; no sign out front.)

### **Check problems:**

Test/replace batteries. The old receivers take a 9-volt battery, the new ones take two AA alkaline batteries; replacement batteries should be in basket where handsets are stored. If not battery, test instrument with a plug-in cord from an operating instrument. The wire at ear bud or plug may have been bent too often and broken; if so, replace at Wassman: about \$13.00.

If not battery or cord, open case and adjust yellow knob, while listening. If no result, check at Wassman.

### **Operation:**

The system is preset. Use the toggle switch. The portable microphone block has its own on-off battery switch. Use one system at a time; with both on, listener will hear the meeting room foyer and the location of the portable.

### **Recording:**

Contact 11:40 Hour Committee for CD recorder.

## **Other Responsibilities**

### ***GLBT Concerns***

The Meeting used to have a Committee on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns. The GLBT Committee was charged with keeping gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues visible to the Mt. Toby community; providing a forum for deepening the Meeting's involvement with issues related to sexual diversity; serving as a clearinghouse for information; facilitating a visible presence at Community events in support of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons and their families. In January 2010 it was felt that we no longer needed a separate committee devoted to these issues, and the Committee was laid down. As part of laying down the Committee, Care and Counsel was asked to provide ongoing discernment for how the Meeting will carry forward GLBT issues.

## **Liaison with Other Mt. Toby Committees**

The *Handbook* says only that “The Care and Counsel Committee ... has general oversight of the functioning of committees.” In recent years we have done this by, at the beginning of each new term, assigning each member of C&C 3 or 4 committees to be a liaison with. Usually the liaison will be a member of C&C who is not also on the committee in question. In general, the liaison person will work through the clerk of the committee, meeting with the clerk at the beginning of the year and checking with the clerk every few months to see how things are going. Some questions and points:

1. Is the committee able to function and carry out its mission?
2. Is the committee meeting regularly? (not always necessary—but if not, why not?)
3. Are all members actively participating? If not, has the clerk had a conversation with those who are not?
4. Are there any concerns to be carried to Nominating or any other concerns?
5. Each committee should also be reminded of its duty to make an annual report to meeting for business.

If things are going well, this may be the extent of the liaison’s work. If a committee member resigns, the liaison should double-check that Nomination Committee has been informed..

A major function of the liaisons is simply to give the committees the sense that the Meeting actually notices, and cares about, what they are doing. It is easy for some committees to feel isolated.

If the committee has a clerk who is new to clerking, it may be helpful for the liaison to discuss with the clerk some of the points to keep in mind during the year. Most of the points listed in the role of the C&C clerk (see page 7) apply equally well to clerking any committee.

If, during the course of the year, the clerk mentions a problem in the committee functioning, the liaison can help the clerk explore solutions.

Occasionally, larger issues may arise. Committees do become dysfunctional, conflicts arise within committees, committee clerks are ineffective. Word of this may come from the committee clerk, members of the committee, or “through the grapevine.” Again, the first response of the liaison should be to explore the problem with the clerk, to see what steps can be taken. It is rarely a good idea to circumvent the clerk by talking directly to committee members.

Always, if the liaison feels a problem to be serious, the matter can be brought to a meeting of Care and Counsel for discernment.

NOTE: C&C has both a liaison to Burial Committee and a representative who serves as a full member of Burial.

## **Appendix I – Committee List: See MT website, Members section.**

## **Appendix II – List of Recent Clearness/Support Committee members**

(C) = Clearness (M) = Marriage (S) = Support

2010

- (M) Snyder, Muller, Bishop, Chapin Bishop
- (S) Harris, Eccleston, Stones
- (S) A. Levinger, Turriago, P. Jones
- (S) Cousins, K. Hoffman, Kent

2011

- (C) Hazzard, D. Stone, Eccleston
- (S) Eccleston, G. Munger, Tinto
- (S) Jim & Jill, Gatti
- (S) Weyl, Davies
- (C) S. Powers, Conger, Ahlfeld
- (S) Peter & Carol Letson, David Scott
- (S) Janee, Miryam, Nicola

2012

- (C) George Munger, Gatti, Turriago
- (S) Roger Conant & Dorrie Merriam
- (S) Jim Lyons, Ann McNeal
- (S) Alan Tschetter, Grace Edwards, Parker Cleveland
- (C) Melissa Perot, Carol Lewis
- (C) Dorrie Merriam, Andy Grant, Jan Hoffman
- (C) Susan Conger, David Ahlfeld, Newell Pledger-Shinn

2013

- (C) Ann McNeal, George Munger
- (S) Kathleen Winkworth, Kathy Dyer

2014

- (S) Mary Ellen Preston, Parker Cleveland, Nicola Metcalf
- (C) Ken Hoffman, Anne Hazzard, Cynthia Jacelon
- (C) Dorrie Merriam, David Ahlfeld, Margaret Cooley, Will Snyder
- (S) Mary Ellen Preston, Kate Green, Eduardo Reyes

**2015**

- (C) Ann McNeal, Hal White, Audrey Barker-Plotkin
- (S) Ken Hoffman, Anne Hazzard, Nicola Metcalf

(C) Andrea Cousins, Annie Walton, Adele Smith-Penniman  
(C) Patricia Crosby, Margaret Cooley, Carlos Turriago

## Appendix III – List of Recent Marriage Clearness/Oversight Committees

**Marriage Clearness Committees**  
(date committee appointed, or, more  
recently, date committee reported to MM)

**Oversight Committee**  
date of marriage

John Ridgway/Cynthia Jacelon (2/18/93)  
George Munger, David Ahlfeld  
Jenny Foster, Patricia Crosby

1/8/94  
Steve Ball, Patsy Myers-NYYM  
Carol Letson, Bev Cowdrick

Kathleen Moran/Richard Konicek (1/20/94)  
Leslie Archer, John Foster  
Martha Kenworthy, David Ahlfeld

5/21/94  
William Spademan, Kathleen Winkworth  
John Foster, Suzie Klein-Berndt,  
Leslie Archer

Linda Harris/Alan Eccleston (4/16/95)  
Jan & Ken Hoffman  
George Munger, Jane Porter

9/2/95  
Peter Letson, Ken Hoffman, Mary Link  
Mary Ellen Preston, Laurie Rizzo

David Nixon/Carol Coan (2/9/97)  
Mary Link, William Spademan  
Peter Letson, Jan Hoffman

8/16/97  
Sarah Neelon, Ken Hoffman  
Jill Horton Lyons, Jim Lyons

Martha Kenworthy/Harlan Thompson (2/8/98)  
Dodie Jones, Trevor Robinson  
George & Ann Levinger

2/20/98  
Dodie Jones, George Munger  
George & Ann Levinger

Hunter Kratt/Mark Skinder (5/11/03)  
Jan & Ken Hoffman  
Alan Eccleston, Linda Harris

8/30/03  
David Nixon, George Munger  
Kathleen O’Kane, Barbara Snoek  
(N’hampton)

Karl Davies/Susan Benoit (9/14/03)  
John Preston, Jim Lyons  
Phyllis Loomis, Holly Iglesias

Karl died before wedding could take place  
Oversight committee same as clearness

William Savage/Kelly Howland (5/8/05)  
(Will and Kelly Savitri after wedding)  
Don & Jane Stone

8/20/05

George Munger, Hazel Dawkins

Laura Muller/Will Snyder (4/9/06)  
Shirley & Roger Conant  
Linda Harris, Steven Snow Cobb

8/7/06  
Ann and George Levinger  
John and Mary Ellen Preston

Sarah Thayer/Eric Wasileski 4/9/06  
Jill Horton Lyons, Jim Lyons,  
Sarah Neelon, Paul Lacinski

9/1/07  
Victoria Dickson, David Ahlfeld  
Kelly Savitri, Claude Tellier

Dawn Kennedy/Levin Sibley-Schwartz 3/14/10  
Will Snyder, Laura Muller  
Peter Bishop, Cat Chapin-Bishop

legal marriage, not under Mt. Toby

Sorrel Hatch/Isaac Bingham 9/8/13  
Carol Letson, Peter Letson,  
Dorrie Merriam, Will Snyder

10/12/13  
M E Preston, K. Winkworth  
N. Pledger-Shinn, G. Munger

Nancy Slator, Dan Grubbs 4/14  
Peter Bishop, Linda Harris, John  
Ridgeway, Cynthia Jacelon  
Dickson

6/14  
Ken Hoffman, Kathy Dyer,  
David Ahlfeld, Victoria

Alice Posner, Morgan Rhodewalt 6/14  
Don Campbell, Jim & Jill Horton-Lyons,  
Ruth Hazzard

legal marriage, not under MT

Lisa Appleton, Tom Doyle 2/16  
Kate Green, Philip Helzer, Linda Harris,  
George Munger

legal marriage, not under MT

Appendix IV: Sample Questions to be asked at a marriage clearness committee meeting

**Example 1 -- NYTimes**

**Questions Couples Should Ask (Or Wish They Had) Before Marrying**

Published: December 17, 2006

*New York Times*

1. Have we discussed whether or not to have children, and if the answer is yes, who is going to be the primary care giver?
2. Do we have a clear idea of each other's financial obligations and goals, and do our ideas about spending and saving mesh?
3. Have we discussed our expectations for how the household will be maintained, and are we in agreement on who will manage the chores?
4. Have we fully disclosed our health histories, both physical and mental?
5. Is my partner affectionate to the degree that I expect?
6. Can we comfortably and openly discuss our sexual needs, preferences and fears?
7. Will there be a television in the bedroom?
8. Do we truly listen to each other and fairly consider one another's ideas and complaints?
9. Have we reached a clear understanding of each other's spiritual beliefs and needs, and have we discussed when and how our children will be exposed to religious/moral education?
10. Do we like and respect each other's friends?
11. Do we value and respect each other's parents, and is either of us concerned about whether the parents will interfere with the relationship?
12. What does my family do that annoys you?
13. Are there some things that you and I are NOT prepared to give up in the marriage?
14. If one of us were to be offered a career opportunity in a location far from the other's family, are we prepared to move?
15. Does each of us feel fully confident in the other's commitment to the marriage and believe that the bond can survive whatever challenges we may face?

**Example 2 – From an actual Mt. Toby clearness meeting**

1. What are the questions you want to be asked during this clearness process? What questions do you have for the committee?
2. Tell us the story of your relationship – how you met, how it developed, etc.
3. Tell us about your spiritual lives. How important is your spiritual life to you? To your partner?
4. What role does religion have in your lives? In your relationship?

5. Why did you decide to get married? Why not just continue to live together? What are the reasons that caused you to hesitate?
6. Why are you asking the approval and oversight of the Meeting? Are you aware that oversight of your marriage by the Meeting involves a continuing concern for your life together and the values established in your home? Will you welcome the continuing concern of the Meeting? Under what circumstances could you see yourself turning to the Meeting for help or support?
7. How do you think it will change things to be married?
8. Describe your role models for a marriage relationship. How do you think they will affect you and your marriage?
9. Look at the marriage vows in *Faith and Practice*, page 266. Do you want to say these vows? Do you have any problems with them? Would you change any of it? Why? What would you mean with these vows (or whatever vows you feel are more accurate to your intent)?
10. How significant to you are the promises made in the presence of God and your family and friends as stated during the meeting for marriage?
11. Are you seeking a spiritual union, a legal union, or both?
12. What have you learned from previous relationships that you bring to this relationship?
13. How do you resolve differences? How do you argue? Describe a recent argument. What was it about and how did it get resolved? Is there such a thing as a fair fight?
14. What are the forces that hold you together? Could split you apart?
15. Are you content with each other as you are now? What do you hope will change in yourself? What do you hope will change in your partner?
16. What gifts does each of you bring to each other and your marriage? How do you show appreciation to each other for these gifts? Why is Hunter/ Mark lucky to get you?
17. How do you work out cooperation on day-to-day living chores like cooking, cleaning, laundry, etc.? If you already have patterns working for you, please describe them.
18. Imagine yourselves 15 years from now. What do you hope for? What do you think the major challenges will be? Joys? Sorrows?
19. Do you each bring roughly equal financial resources to the relationship? Where are your attitudes towards saving and spending harmonious? Where are they not? Do you have the same attitudes towards financial planning? Do you have separate or joint bank accounts?
20. How do your ideas and attitudes about work impact your relationship? What are your expectations of your partner in terms of work? What impact does your work and your partner's work have on the relationship?
21. Do you agree on the number or absence of children?

22. What do you think of each other's friends? How do you feel about spending time with friends without your partner? Would it be all right if one or both of you wanted a regular night out alone? How do you spend your time together? Apart?
23. How is your relationship seen in your extended families? Will getting married change that?

## Appendix V: Sample Handout at Wedding Service

### *Celebrations of Marriage After the Manner of Friends*

*When a Quaker couple is ready to make a public commitment to each other, they write a letter to their monthly meeting declaring their intentions. The meeting appoints a clearness committee to meet with the couple, seeking to establish their readiness for marriage. If the committee so recommends, and the meeting agrees, the marriage is taken under the care of the meeting. This allows the wedding itself to take place, and also means that the couple is surrounded by a loving community which may take action as necessary to support the well being of the two individuals and their relationship.*

*On the appointed day, the celebration takes place within a meeting for worship, which begins as soon as one or more participants are seated in the worship room. When the group has gathered together in silence, the couple enters and is seated at the front of the room. After a period of further worship, in an atmosphere of quiet and reverence, they rise. Taking each other by the hand, they make their promises to each other. No third person pronounces them a couple because Friends believe that the couple marry themselves, in the presence of God, with the rest of the participants serving as witnesses.*

*After the vows are said and the couple is again seated, a certificate describing what has occurred is brought to them to sign. This certificate is then read aloud, and the meeting for worship continues. Out of this silence, those who feel moved to speak may rise and share their message with the couple and all who are gathered.*

*The meeting closes with everyone shaking hands and greeting each other. All those present should sign the certificate as witnesses and participants in the wedding. This certificate becomes a cherished possession, recalling the celebration and the loving friends and family who took part in it.*

*The meeting room is equipped with an audio loop. If you have difficulty hearing in large gatherings, speak to one of the greeters, and they can show you how to use one of the small receivers.*

*Since this is a meeting for worship, participants are asked to refrain from taking photographs until after the close of meeting.*

## Appendix VI: Writing a Memorial Minute

(From the NEYM *F&P* Revision Committee's Appendices Working Papers)

### Where to start:

The process of writing a memorial minute starts in your meeting's Ministry and Counsel. The committee may choose other members of the meeting to do the writing, but Ministry and Counsel should read the minute before it is presented to meeting for business.

### Purposes of the Memorial Minute:

- To let Friends know the person memorialized, to help Friends benefit from the spiritual lessons of the life memorialized.
- To comfort the bereaved family and the Meeting by honoring their beloved Friend.
- To give thanks to God for Grace as expressed in the Friend's life.

### Some Do's and Don'ts for Memorial Minute authors:

#### Don't:

- Polish the life and hold up the person as a shining example.  
("Saint, n.: A dead sinner, revised and edited." -Ambrose Bierce)
- Include information just because it's factual. "Served on Permanent Board, the Yearly Meeting Finance Committee and as Reading Clerk" needs context to inform us.

#### Do:

- Remember that memorial minutes require a tender sensitivity as well as a disciplined focus.
- Give clearly and succinctly the flavor of the life as well as illustration of how the person's qualities and achievements were demonstrated in his/her life among Friends. Go far: failings, weaknesses, needs, are part of Friends gifts to us. Remember "the general killeth, the particular giveth life"; that's where dates and places can help. "*She used her skills as a lifeguard to serve Young Friends*" is very weak, compared to "*for the opening sessions of the newly united New England Yearly Meeting at Andover Academy in Massachusetts in 1945, Ginny was the Senior Red Cross lifeguard for the Young Friends at their swimming beach*".
- Consider the following queries:
  - How does the inclusion of this information in the memorial minute reflect the movement of the spirit in this Friend's life?
  - What gifts of the spirit did this Friend bring to the meeting?
  - How did this Friend's service in the Yearly Meeting reveal the light within and/or the light in others? When we consider our spiritual journeys what part did this Friend play in them?

- Are there meetings, institutions or individuals in the Yearly Meeting who might be able to share with us ways in which this Friend exemplified testimonies which may not have been foremost in interactions at our meeting?

**Before you write a memorial minute:**

**Line up your resources:**

- Talk to people in your meeting and other local meetings.
- Call the Yearly Meeting office and ask how this Friend served the Yearly Meeting
- If this Friend is a transfer, ask prior meetings.
- Talk to family.

**Work as led.** Spirit will move you in the right direction – to know what to include or omit – to know how to present facts so that truth is served.

**Allow time** for your meeting's Ministry & Counsel to season the work.

**Expect changes.** Your monthly meeting is likely to ask for changes. Try to be grateful for their interest.