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Minutes of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Representative Meeting March 31, 2012

Hosted by Broadmead Friends Meeting

Morning Session

RM12 - 1 Opening Worship, Reading of Epistle from Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

The session opened with silent worship at 1:15 pm. Out of the silence the Assistant Clerk read the Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Epistle from 2011 (<http://quaker.org/ovym/YMSessions/2011Epistles.pdf>). The central theme of the epistle comes from Micah 6:8, "What does the Lord ask of us: Our Everyday Ministry of Love and Service". (KJV "He has showed thee, O mortal, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.") We are reminded to humbly seek what is good, to do justice, and to be kind. The full humanity of all individuals, including those who are lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgendered, is recognized and leads to the loving recognition of same sex relationships and marriage.

The Meeting also expressed deep concern for the continuing degradation of the Earth's environment, with dire consequences facing us if things such as chemical pollution and climate change are not promptly addressed. An epistle from the Young Adult Friends group in Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting described its efforts to discern its mission and to organize effective action.

RM12 - 2 Agenda & Clerks

The Clerk presented an agenda, and introduced the clerks' table.

RM12 - 3 Roll Call

The roll call of Friends from constituent meetings and worship groups gave the following count, for a total attendance of 58:

Akron	2	Kalamazoo	2
Ann Arbor	7	Kent	1
Athens	0	Mid-Ohio Valley	0
Birmingham	2	North Columbus	4
Broadmead	16	Oberlin	1
Cleveland	2	Pine River	4
Delaware	0	Pittsburgh	4
Detroit	7	Red Cedar	1
Grand Rapids	0	Wooster	3
Granville	2	Worship Groups	0
Holland	0		

RM12 - 4 Executive Committee

Peggy Daub, Clerk (Ann Arbor), reported.

The LEYM Executive Committee met November 12 in Bluffton and March 30 in Perrysburg. At our fall meeting we approved a name from the Nominating Committee to serve as our third representative to the AFSC: Seth Reichenbach of North Columbus meeting. The Executive Committee does not usually take action on appointments of this kind, but an exception was made in this case so that our yearly meeting would be well represented at this year's meeting of the AFSC Corporation.

At both meetings we heard updates from our Meeting Worker, Mathilda Navias, on her work with the new Yearly Meeting website (leym.org). That work has gone very well, and we invite all committees and

individuals to explore the site, think about whether they have information to share that should be on the site, and work with Mathilda on further additions.

The usual afternoon session of the fall meeting of the Executive Committee was replaced by a time of sharing ideas with members of the Ministry & Nurture and the Advancement & Outreach committees on how we can best support and nurture the monthly meeting and worship groups within Lake Erie Yearly Meeting. A report from Mathilda on membership figures within our local meetings and worship groups had shown that there was a slight, but steady decline in overall membership in the Religious Society of Friends within LEYM. I would like to share with you a slightly shortened report from the work we did that afternoon, as I think it sets out many valuable ideas on how we as a yearly meeting can support our constituent meetings. First, we brainstormed on the questions “what makes a monthly meeting attract new members and keep its current ones?” and “what are factors in the larger culture that draw people away from attendance and membership in the Religious Society of Friends?” In that context we considered “What can Lake Erie Yearly Meeting do to nurture and support our monthly meetings and worship groups?”, and after gathering numerous ideas, we broke into three groups to discuss and prioritize them, then met together and found consensus around the following three priorities for our Yearly Meeting:

Better communication about and within the Yearly Meeting.

Additional support for youth and teen activities at both the local and Yearly Meeting level.

Provision or coordination of opportunities for service activities for all ages.

Some activities in support of these initiatives to Strengthen Quaker Community (SQC) have taken shape and begun. Les Walden, editor of our Bulletin, featured several stories about monthly meetings in this winter’s issue. He welcomes further contributions. Mathilda Navias continues to build a strong array of materials helpful to monthly meeting clerks on our website. I have asked Becky Morehouse to lead an ad hoc committee charged with facilitating stronger ties among all the people working with youth and teens in our local meetings. We are seeking people to serve with her, and welcome your suggestions of names. The third priority, to provide service opportunities, is a seed of an idea still looking for a way to sprout and grow. At last night’s executive committee, I invited all committee clerks to think with you today about how each committee might play a role in these initiatives. I look forward to hearing some first reactions to this charge today.

[end of report]

In response to this request, various suggestions were brought forward on how to inform and engage seekers when they approach us. These suggestions ranged from the service projects and work camps aimed at teens as well as adults, involvement with Friends School in Detroit, to bringing in seasoned Friends to revitalize meetings. There was general support for carrying these sorts of suggestions forward.

The report was accepted.

RM12 - 5 Clerk’s Report

The clerk presented a request from Mary & Kyo Takahashi to use a list of LEYM members and attenders on behalf of an appeal from Friends School of Detroit. Friends approved this one-time use of the list.

The clerk presented the names of Michael Fuson and Rebecca Morehouse to serve as a Naming Committee. Friends approved these names. The full report follows.

I have received thank you letters from Friends General Conference for our annual contribution and our special contribution to their campaign “Stoking the Spiritual Fire of Quakerism.” I have also received two letters from the Friends World Committee on Consultation, thanking us for naming delegates to that conference and for our special contribution to the Travel Fund.

I have received a letter from Kyo and Mary Takahashi informing us that two Friends from Tsuchiura Monthly Meeting in Japan will be visitors to our annual sessions in July, and also asking to bring to you a request to use our mailing list on behalf of a financial appeal for the Friends School of Detroit. Mary will share with us some of the circumstances behind this request.

The date of our next Representative Meeting will be Saturday, April 6, 2013. The clerk will welcome an invitation from a monthly meeting to host us.

The Clerk recommends that the following people serve as members of the Naming Committee, responsible for bringing forward names, as needed, to serve on our Nominating Committee: Michael Fuson and Rebecca

Morehouse.

The report was accepted.

RM12 - 6 Adult & Family Program Committee

Nancy Nagler (Pine River) reported that the theme for this year's Annual Sessions is "Finding Our Way: Seeking Discernment". Brent Bill, pastor and author of several books on Quakerism and spirituality will deliver the keynote address. In response to requests, the committee is trying to arrange additional workshop time for Friday and Saturday afternoons. The committee is striving to add the additional time without significantly decreasing time for worship. Input on how to achieve this balance is appreciated. A presentation on the FWCC world gathering is expected. The report was accepted.

RM12 - 7 Youth & Children Program Committee

Olwen Pritchard reported. The committee asked that parents who plan to bring children to the coming Annual Session register by Sixth Month 29, so the committee can plan children's groups. The committee is looking into having service projects for the various groups of children. Projects being considered are: planting flowers; cleaning up trash; making cards for seniors in the Mennonite Memorial Home; and the baking and selling of items, with the proceeds to go to Friends School in Detroit. The committee hopes to have children and adults make and decorate T-shirts with designs of painted feet and printed "LEYM 2012" and/or "Finding Our Way" on Thursday night. The committee will contact the families of all children aged 0-14 years in LEYM and encourage them to attend the Annual Sessions. The report was accepted.

RM12 - 8 Arrangements & Site

Jon Sommer (Broadmead) reported. The Annual Sessions this year will be held Seventh Month 26-29 at Bluffton University. The Sessions for 2013 are scheduled for Seventh Month 25-28. The report was accepted.

RM12 - 9 Nominating Committee

Thomas Taylor (Ann Arbor) reported. The committee has opportunities available to serve on the following committees: Earthcare; Ministry and Nurture; Arrangements and Site; and Peace. It also has opportunities available to serve as representatives to FGC and FWCC. Members are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities.

In order to return to LEYM's regular, prescribed schedule of clerking, the committee proposed that Peggy Daub serve a third year as clerk, with Sally Weaver Sommer starting her clerking rotation this coming year. This was approved. The report was accepted.

RM12 - 10 Treasurer's Report

Jeff Cooper reported for Eric Starbuck. [To see the complete detailed financial report, please see the attached document, headed 3/28/2012 Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Treasurer Report]

Thank you to the many monthly meetings (nearly all) that have made their full contribution already. This timely payment may be partially attributable to reminders from the Treasurer and the Finance Committee.

There is a healthy balance in our checking account (currently \$19,137, updated beyond the attached form).

Expenses (updated to \$25,205) are on their expected pace for the year, and slightly less than our income.

Looking ahead, there are three expenses this year that we will not have next year:

- a. For 2011-12 we doubled the usual amount budgeted for FWCC Travel to \$2480.
- b. We budgeted an FWCC One-Time Travel Fund (\$1200) to help Friends within the Section of the Americas travel to the World Conference.
- c. This year's contribution to "FGC Special Program" (\$500) is the culmination of a multi-year contribution.

The report was accepted.

RM12 - 11 Finance Committee

Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor) reported.

A. Annual Meeting Fees

1. The 1/3 discount on all fees for first-time attenders will continue.
2. The recent practice of inviting children through age 18 to attend for free will also continue. This year, however, we ask Arrangements & Site Committee to include in the registration form an invitation to sponsor a child's attendance by covering the cost (\$100 for 3-7 years old, \$150 for 8-18 years old). Sponsorships might come from the child's own family, if able, or from other Friends; partial sponsorships of any amount are welcome.
3. To cover costs, the registration fee for adults will increase by \$5, thus \$45 for "early bird" registration, \$55 for later registration. Arrangements & Site tells us the costs for room, board, and linens for the entire four days will increase by \$4. The total increase of \$9 keeps the cost for four days with an air conditioned room under \$200 per person for those who register early.

B. Arranging an Audit

YM policy is that an audit should be arranged every four years or whenever the Treasurer changes. The Treasurer will change after Annual Meeting this year, and our last audit was arranged in 2005, so we are overdue. No one on the current committee was involved in the last audit, so we are exploring the appropriate process, including the number of years to audit and the level of honorarium for the auditor. We seek recommendations for a person qualified to audit our financial records; please contact the Finance co-clerks, Sally Weaver Sommer and Jeff Cooper.

C. Providing Support for Youth and Teen Activities

All committees were invited to explore how the YM can provide additional support for youth and teen activities, and Finance was asked specifically about subsidizing expenses for teens attending YM teen retreats. The committee confirms that assisting attendance at teen retreats falls within the purposes of the Youth Activity Fund, and invites requests of up to \$300 per person per event from teens or youth wishing to participate in retreats or other Friends' events. Requests should be sent to the presiding clerk. The committee intends to develop an application form for such requests.

The report was accepted.

RM12 - 12 High School Teen Retreat Program

Robb Yurisko, Coordinator (North Columbus) and Merry Stanford, Clerk (Red Cedar) reported.

Since LEYM's annual sessions last summer 2011, there have been three Teen Retreats, as planned, and three meetings of the committee. The retreat program usually includes a business session, a workshop on an issue that is relevant to Friends practice or testimonies, and an out trip. There is a lot of time devoted to "hanging out" - developing the caring relationships and having the informal conversations that young Friends feel are critical to building their community.

What Has Been Accomplished

The Fall retreat was held at Cleveland Friends Meeting, October 21-23, 2011. There were six teens in attendance representing Kalamazoo, Birmingham, Red Cedar, North Columbus, and Cleveland Meetings. LEYM's own Abbey Pratt-Harrington of Athens MM, currently in graduate school at the Earlham School of Religion, led a workshop called, "Zoning Out 101: Ways to Meditate during Meeting for Worship." The teens also went to Cedar Point and worshipped with Cleveland Friends, who graciously hosted a final meal for the group before they set out for home.

The Winter retreat, fondly referred to as "The Quake That Rocked the Midwest," was held in Evanston, Illinois, January 13-16. This was hosted by Illinois Yearly Meeting (ILYM), with thirty teens attending from ILYM, Northern Yearly Meeting, LEYM, Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting (OVYM), and Scattergood. Five LEYM teens attended, representing Kalamazoo, North Columbus, and Red Cedar Meetings. Vanessa Julye, of

Friends General Conference, facilitated a retreat on racism, and the out trip involved a tour of downtown Chicago. The kids sang, danced, stayed up late, and played in the snow. The group worshiped with Evanston Friends, and left Monday around noon for the long drive back home.

The success of the Quake inspired Robb to join with the Coordinator of the OVYM program for the Spring Retreat, held at Earlham College, March 2-4. The coordinators and the teens felt that the workshop on Discernment, facilitated by Emma Churchman, of the Earlham School of Religion, was amazing and highly experiential. Earlham College hosted the group in a small cottage for this weekend. The teens swam at the new athletic center on Earlham's campus, and worshipped with West Richmond Friends (affiliated with Indiana YM and Friends United Meeting). There were a total of 15 teens who attended from OVYM, Indiana YM, and LEYM.

Reflections

The teens who have participated have all reported having a good time at these events. Some teens have indicated that they feel a great disconnect with teens at their schools, and that these retreats are the *only place they can really be themselves*. One of the parents reported that their teen remarked, on returning home from a retreat, "Now I know why you are Quaker."

The committee has been impressed with Robb's depth of care for the spiritual and communal lives of these Friends. We are pleased that our young Friends are having the opportunity to explore those aspects of themselves that are not always so welcome in mainstream teen culture, and to develop ongoing relationships with each other, with Friends in other yearly meetings, and with Friends in other Friends' traditions. We are hopeful that these relationships will last well into these young Friends' adult lives, as we have seen with others.

Plans for the Future

The Summer 2012 Retreat will occur for the first time at Annual Sessions in Bluffton, OH. It is our hope that holding the retreat at YM will help make the retreat accessible for more teens, and help the teens experience their community as part of the larger LEYM community. The Fall retreat will also be a joint Retreat with ILYM, LEYM, and OVYM. In keeping with the YM's priorities, Robb is also discerning with the committee about the feasibility of sponsoring a week long service project for the teens in summer 2013.

Challenges

One of the issues that we know sometimes prevents teens from attending is transportation. We are pleased that Finance Committee discerned way open for the YM to provide financial travel assistance to teens to attend the retreats from the Youth Activities Fund. This is not a complete solution, however, as some teens are not yet ready to travel alone by bus or train. So the committee also seeks the assistance of willing adults to provide rides to and from the retreats.

We are thinking together about how to encourage more young Friends to participate. Robb is implementing a web-based survey to collect needs assessment data from the teens who have participated, and from those who have not. We hope that these survey results will shed light on the reasons some teens are not attending.

Another issue that can prevent a teen from attending is a schedule conflict with another activity which is important to them. As adults, and as teens, we are all heavily scheduled, and we all make our own choices based on our own discernment. No one can judge another person's or family's discernment in this regard.

Historically, Friends have posed queries to help us examine our attitudes and behavior. So the committee would like to raise up some queries for all of us, young and old, single and in families, to explore. We offer these in the spirit of exploration and discernment; not in judgment.

For parents: To what extent is my child's relationship with the Inward Teacher being nurtured?

When my family members and I prioritize the use of our time, to what extent are Quaker or other spiritual activities part of that prioritization? Am I, or are we, satisfied with the priority that we give to these activities?

To what extent are my family members and I aware of the rewarding, challenging, short-term, and long-term impacts of including spiritual priorities in our calendar?

Thank you for the opportunity to serve young Friends in this Yearly Meeting. We feel blessed to witness their growth as individual Friends, and as a community of Friends.

The report was accepted.

RM12 - 13 Ad hoc Advices & Queries Committee

Thomas Taylor (Ann Arbor) reported. The committee met as a group in Tenth Month and via email after that. A draft of the Advices & Queries was generated in First Month. Particular attention had been paid to queries 20, 64 and 68. The draft is available for review on the LEYM website and hard copies are available. As the committee continues to work on text to present at the Annual Sessions for consideration, it will continue to consider further suggestions for revision.

It was asked whether the draft presented at the Annual Sessions will be open for wording changes from the floor. The clerk responded that her sense is that the Advices and Queries should be considered for approval as a whole. It is important that people be advised of this expectation.

The report was accepted.

RM12 - 14 Earthcare Committee

Valerie Groszmann (Kalamazoo) reported. The committee is working on the following four issues:

- Legislative food bills
- Fracking (Annual Sessions workshop)
- Doctrine of Discovery (Quaker Earthcare Witness)
- Canterbury Commitment

The report was accepted.

RM12 - 15 Publications & Archives Committee

Rosemary Coffey (Pittsburgh) reported. Copies of the *2011 Annual Records* have been distributed and more are available. Joe Mills is going to prepare the *2012 Annual Records*. Meeting clerks were asked to make sure all copies of the *Annual Records* and the *Bulletin* have actually been taken. If they have not, the committee should be notified, so that it can adjust distribution accordingly.

The committee is considering whether it should continue creating scrapbooks of the Annual Sessions.

The last membership directory was compiled in 2009. The committee is considering if it should create a new one.

The report was accepted.

RM12 - 16 Peace Committee

Nancy Taylor (Ann Arbor) reported.

AFSC

The AFSC Board has approved the rearrangement of the national AFSC from nine regions into four: West; Midwest; South; and Northeast. The corporation approved the proposal that members should serve for three-year rather than one-year terms.

There are four main focus areas this year for AFSC:

Work in Israel/Palestine and why divestment is important

AFSC and Occupy/Unoccupy Together: Supporting the movement's commitment to nonviolence, economic justice and inclusion

Immigrant Allies: Coloradans for immigrant rights and ways our meetings can be involved in the work

Religious intolerance in Indonesia and the USA: Ways that AFSC and your meeting can create more welcoming communities

Connect yourself to the AFSC blog at www.afsc.org/friends.

Your meeting should have received two copies of *An Introduction to Quaker Testimonies*. Each meeting should have an appointed liaison with AFSC. Lucy Duncan, the new Meeting Liaison Secretary at AFSC, can be given the contact information at lduncan@afsc.org.

FCNL

This is the year for responding to FCNL's request for priorities for lobbying the 112th Congress. Its

deadline for receiving the responses is Fourth Month 16th.

Recent successes at FCNL are:

- Growing bipartisan support in Congress for a responsible US withdrawal from Afghanistan
- Building the movement to reduce military spending
- Preserving US investments in war prevention
- Preventing atrocities and genocide
- Protecting the EPA
- Working to secure loose nukes and to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
- Closing the last US military base in Iraq
- Protecting Native American women from violence
- Steps toward reform in immigration law and practice

Katherine Philipson, the new FCNL Campaigns Network Building Associate is on a mid-west tour to encourage us to contact our senators and representatives about the federal budget. Sample letters are available.

The committee met and came up with three workshop topics it hopes to have prepared in time for the Annual Sessions this Seventh Month:

- Alternatives to Violence (David Snyder, Oberlin)
- Immigration Reform (Mike and Carmen Kelly, Detroit)
- Palestine/Israel: how to move toward peace and justice (Anne Remley, Ann Arbor)

The report was accepted.

RM12 - 17 Ministry & Nurture Committee

Don Nagler (Pine River) reported.

Ministry Scholarship Fund

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

Jerry has been worshipping with the Friendsville, MD Worship Group, Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting, and Orlando Friends Meeting. He has presented workshops at West Richmond Friends, Pittsburgh Friends Fall Gathering, South Hills Worship Group, Sherwood Oaks Worship Group, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Wooster Friends Meeting, Orlando Monthly Meeting, Tallahassee Monthly Meeting, Savannah Monthly Meeting, Space Coast Friends, Palm Beach Monthly Meeting, SEYM Half Yearly Meeting, a meditation group in Oakland, MD, and the Prisoner Visitation and Support Annual Conference in Leavenworth, Kansas. In April, he plans to travel to Kenya as one of LEYM's representatives to the 6th World Conference of Friends. He has been accepted as a facilitator of a workshop on the exegesis of "salt and light" which is based on the conference theme on "Being Salt and Light: Friends Living the Kingdom of God in a Broken World". At LEYM, he plans to facilitate a workshop on the exegesis of Salt and Light, based on his presentation in Kenya. Last year Jerry Knutson's anchor committee expressed strong support for his request for a second year grant from the LEYM Ministry and Nurture Scholarship and this was given him by the Committee. Review of the Policies and Procedures and other directives for the committee suggest that the application process should each year be accompanied by a letter of support from the appropriate Monthly Meeting. It has been further suggested by some that the monthly meeting should each year assess its own financial responsibility for the individual's support.

Spiritual Formation Program

The fall retreat was entitled: Healing in the Manner of Friends. It was held September 9-11 at the Weber Center in Adrian, Michigan. Richard Lee from Red Cedar Monthly Meeting led the retreat and was assisted by Sally Lloyd and Gretchen Morse. Once again, an excellent pamphlet was prepared for participants. 21 Friends attended. The two and one-half day session from Ann Arbor, Broadmead, Detroit, Kalamazoo, North

Columbus, and Pine River Monthly Meetings. Only one person participated from a Meeting east of Broadmead Monthly Meeting. The evaluations were uniformly enthusiastic in approval of the leadership and process as enriching spiritual experience. Appreciation was expressed for the warm hospitality of the Weber Center.

Richard Lee will lead the spring retreat on "Healing in the Manner of Friends" at the Michigan Friends Center near Chelsea, Michigan on May 5th.

The LEYM Spiritual Formation program for 2012-2013 has been outlined. Mary Stanford from Red Cedar Monthly Meeting will lead two sessions on the theme: "The Spiritual Practice of Dialogue: Speaking Our Truths and Hearing Where Words Come From". The retreat in the fall, from September 7-9, will be at the Weber Retreat Center in Adrian, Michigan. The Spring session will be held on May 4, 2013 hosted by a Monthly Meeting (TBD).

LEYM Annual Query for 2011

The Committee has received responses from Ann Arbor, Athens, Birmingham, Broadmead, Cleveland, Detroit, and Pine River Meetings. These responses were carefully done and expressed work that was deeply felt.

After consultation with the Executive Committee, it was determined that the LEYM Annual Query should be continued to be offered by the Yearly Meeting. The Committee will select two responses each year to be printed in the Bulletin and/or the Website.

The report was accepted.

RM12 - 18 Advancement & Outreach Committee

Mike Hinshaw (Wooster) reported.

A&O organized the Consultation on Quaker Quest held in October, 2011 at Oberlin with 18 attenders representing nine meetings, all in LEYM. Some evaluations have been received and the others will be requested. So far it does not appear that any meeting in LEYM plans to do the public sessions. However, there does appear to be increased interest in meetings to do the in-reach or self-evaluation type of work advocated by QQ. A&O would like to thank Eric Starbuck, Mathilda Navias and Connie Bimber for their invaluable help in conducting the consultation.

The committee heard a report from Robb Yurisko on his attendance at the FGC consultation on Intervisitation. Robb reminded us of the great value in this simple time honored Quaker practice to knit together community and build spiritual bonds among us all. He reminded us that today WE are the stewards of the Religious Society of Friends, responsible for our spiritual growth and for this beloved family. A&O has facilitated visits to smaller meetings on its own but wants to involve all members of LEYM in the future. We ask anyone who has a calling to do intervisitation within or beyond the Yearly Meeting to contact A&O if we can be of help. In any case we would like to hear of visits made.

In order to improve our outreach to new attenders we offered two suggestions:

- a. Meetings should move more quickly to consider and possibly accommodate the ideas of new attenders.
- b. Meetings should move quickly to confront and deal with divisions within the meeting. Do not let these divisions linger and fester.

A&O will lay down the work of monitoring the websites of each meeting, the Quakerfinder.org website, the FWCC website and the LEYM website. Meetings seem to be doing a better job of keeping these site up-to-date. Meetings are requested to continue good housekeeping/vigilance.

The report was accepted.

RM12 - 19 New book on Quaker Process

Mathilda Navias announced the availability of her new book, *Quaker Process for Friends on the Benches*, published by Friends Journal.

RM12 - 20 Minute of Appreciation

Becky Morehouse, Assistant Clerk, suggested a minute of appreciation for the use of St. Timothy's Church, and for the abundant hospitality provided the group by Broadmead Friends. Friends approved.

Peter Dale, Recording Clerk

Peggy Daub, Presiding Clerk