

Memorial Minutes 2009

NEW ENGLAND YEARLY
MEETING *of* FRIENDS

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Hugh Stephen Ogden, 1937-2006

Every morning, Hugh began his day writing for at least two to three hours. His journals describe the simplicity and intensity of the life he lived in Glastonbury, Connecticut, and on his island in Rangdey, Maine. Hugh recorded the rhythms of people, places, and nature that surrounded and flowed through him, each morning writing in solitude on the dignity, disturbances, and divinity of life. His three children now have the legacy of over three decades of his journals. Hugh's poems were rooted in those writings, seeded by his inordinate capacity to be fully in the presence of whoever or whatever he was with.

Visiting Hugh's island, it is clear that closest to his heart was his family. He raised his three children as a single parent, and Hugh's first concern was the safety of his children. The island is a fragile ecosystem that was a constant worry for Hugh, where he built by hand a second cabin, sheds, and a boathouse; where every summer his three children came, with their own children, for long visits with Granddad. On his writing desk at the cabin, there were the same poems he had spread out before him the weekend he fell through the ice. One poem, written two months before his death, was titled, "To My Son", beginning with the line, "The son who knows his father will die also knows he will too..."

Hugh wrote of the extraordinary spirit he found in everyday humanity. A frugal man himself, Hugh was uncommonly generous with his heart and made friends with all willing to share ideas and thoughts with him. Though creating a peaceful world and ending the war was a primary concern of his, Hugh's best friends in Maine were a rainbow array of NRA defenders and ardent nature supporters. Hugh loved to argue and laugh hard with each of them.

Hugh always seemed to be teaching, not only in his literature classes at Trinity College where he taught for over 40 years, but in all his encounters. Hugh's iconoclastic look and lifestyle seemed to challenge everyone he met. He offered the world dissonance with his singular wild hair, often bound by a red kerchief. Along with his suspended jeans, he always seemed to be framing the famous George Fox question: "Here is what I have to say, what canst thou say;" Hugh was ready to listen, debate and deepen each person's perspective on humanity, earth justice, and our freedom and responsibility to choose.

Hugh found his way to Hartford MM sometime in the early

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1980s, when his two oldest children, Cynthia and David, were off to college and his youngest daughter Kathy was finishing high school. In the silent worship of meeting, with the wisdom of Moses Bailey and other guiding elders, Hugh found a spiritual home.

He was in his early forties then. Hugh was born to parents who were Presbyterian and he and his one sister were raised singing Protestant hymns, religiously attending church each Sunday. His own paternal grandparents were birthright Quakers, and he graduated from Haverford College in 1959 before attending New York University and the University of Michigan. Hugh later became an active member of the Haverford Corporation. Over the last three decades of his life, Hugh grew to be a beloved and cherished elder in the Hartford MM, often sharing mystical poems on abiding awareness and gratitude. His messages called upon all of us to know the grace and beauty of darkness as well as that of light, honoring all that is of life in ourselves and in the natural world. Out of the silence, Hugh's words sang us down to our roots.

In the summer months in Maine, Hugh also attended the Rangeley Congregational Church, where he sang the hymns he cherished from childhood.

On the last day of his life, Hugh was cross-country skiing across Rangeley Lake to get to church on time.

Each day life called and Hugh chose the totality of its offerings. His muse guided him to record his witness in seven published books of poetry. Many believe the enduring messages of his poems are yet to be fully discovered by the wider world. The one long epic poem he always hoped to write was in fact written not in words, but in 69 years of rugged, embracing life - sharing with all the knowledge we most need to live through our enduring questions. Hugh taught us, over and over again, that it is easiest to hear the answer when we hold ourselves, and others, in love.

—HARTFORD MONTHLY MEETING, CONNECTICUT VALLEY QUARTERLY MEETING

Graham Peters Chynoweth 1945-2008

After three years of living with cancer, Graham Peters Chynoweth, born Graham John Chynoweth, completed his 'journey to the other shore,' with his wife, Linda Chynoweth Peters, by his side, in the sun room at their home in Canterbury on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 2008.

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Graham was born in his mother's parental home in Portsmouth, England. His childhood was a world tour, with annual moves including stays in Germany, Washington, DC, Virginia, northern Japan, and California. Graham graduated from the United States Coast Guard Academy in 1968. His service in the Coast Guard included a tour of duty off Vietnam's Mekong Delta.

Graham married Judy Keller in 1968. They had three children: Kate, born in 1973, Gray, born in 1978, and Emo, a foster child who joined the family in 1981. The marriage ended in 1988. In 1990, Graham married Linda Peters and changed his name to Graham Peters Chynoweth. Their son Peter was born in 1993-

Graham later completed a Master's in hospital administration at George Washington University and moved to New Hampshire. His natural talents and a desire to grow roots into his community led him to the practice of law, which he began in 1983 after graduating from Franklin Pierce Law Center in Concord, NH. He focused his legal career on family law, finding professional and personal fulfillment in helping his clients through some of the most difficult times in their lives. An active member of the New Hampshire Bar Association, he served as a member of its Board of Governors and twice as chair of its Family Law Section. Through this work within the Bar, Graham played a pivotal role in helping tune state law to encourage more amicable settlements for divorcing couples. Posthumously, the New Hampshire Bar Association awarded him the E. Donald Dufresne Award for Outstanding Professionalism.

Graham was a wise counselor for his friends, for his professional clients, and for the voluntary committees and elective bodies upon which he served. Among these were a term as a representative in the NH State Legislature and a term as the first Board Chairman of NH Public Radio, having been the driving force of its creation.

One committee assignment was particularly rewarding and formative to Graham's experience and understanding of life as a Friend. That was the NEYM Long Range Planning Committee of the late 1970s. Having joined Concord MM in 1975 as a convinced Friend, he was tapped as the fresh new face to join a team "aglow with weighty Quakers" (his words). He knew the questions to ask that would aim for the root of the issue at hand. His contributions were insightful, ever encouraging, realistic, and honest. Graham added the levity needed to lighten things up at the right moments. These became his hallmarks as he applied his formidable energy to

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other projects throughout his life.

Working with the Long Range Planning Committee drew Graham right into the core of the yearly meeting, which led to multiple terms serving variously on Permanent Board and the Personnel Committee. And Graham always encouraged new members in Concord to delve into all that the yearly meeting had to offer. At Concord MM, Graham served as clerk for three different periods of time as well as recording clerk for several terms. He acted as recorder for many years and was also a member of the Ministry & Counsel committee. In fall of 2008, he was one of six incorporators when the meeting formed a corporation to own property for a new home to be built for the meeting.

From the late 1980s until his death Graham served on the board of the Obadiah Brown Benevolent Fund. He felt the significance of history and held his predecessors in high esteem. Graham enjoyed being able to trace the lineage of his seat on that board all the way back to William Rotch, a well-known Quaker of his day.

Graham delighted in the children of his community and worked tirelessly to support their growth. Graham volunteered in classrooms, annually judging spelling bees, and bringing the U.S. Constitution to life on Constitution Day. He famously and believably played the part of Benjamin Franklin in full costume before rapt young audiences. Graham served on the local school board for several terms and ultimately as its chair. He was the epitome of a public servant. His peers described him as a person of unquestioned integrity, boundless passion, and deep compassion. It was fitting that his memorial service on December 13, 2008, was held in the Canterbury Elementary School, a scant mile from his home.

Young people who found their way to Quaker meeting were nurtured, indeed treasured, by Graham. He chose to work with the elementary-aged children at NEYM Sessions and retreats. They brought out his inner child. He played hard at JYM Ball and everything else. He also mentored the young people, sharing his passion for language and precise expression, so important to the education of new clerks. Graham took great satisfaction in their development as leaders for our future. He also enjoyed role-playing leaders of our past at YM sessions, William Rotch among others.

So much of what Graham did arose from prayerful intention and his awareness of his place in the endless stream of life. He was aware that he had received many gifts and shared them generously

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with those who were fortunate enough to know him. Graham recognized the importance of life's passages and made a point to celebrate them with the essential community of family and friends just as this minute does now. His toasts, with flute of sparkling cider raised high, were renowned. A birthday, a special accomplishment, an anniversary, an award - all were significant to him, worthy of recognition.

Though he always returned to Quaker meeting, Graham sojourned with several other spiritual communities. With Linda he attended services at two Roman Catholic parishes. He entered into fellowship with Christian pastors and lay leaders during the formation of WVNH, a Gospel radio station. This was a transformative time of ferment and growth in Graham's spiritual life. He was also very much at home in the Canterbury Community Church where his spirit was nourished. His keen intellect and spiritual discipline challenged him to probe for answers and guidance while his heart and the Holy Spirit led him to search ever more deeply for God, and the seed of Christ within.

It is the custom at Concord Meeting, at the rise of worship, for each attendee to introduce him or herself. Invariably, Graham stated, "My name is Graham P. Chynoweth. I live in grace and reside in Canterbury with my wife Linda Chynoweth Peters and our son Peter Chynoweth." In large measure that grace was living in the awareness of what is fundamentally important. A young Friend wrote to thank him for being such a peaceful, steady presence through her childhood: "I will be holding you in the Light during all your transitions, and I firmly believe that wherever you reside, you will always live in grace." Graham never shrank from the truth. And he was blessed that he came to understand the truth of his own mortality. During Graham's last month of life his visitors found a man whose ministry was not done. He lifted their spirits even as they came to minister to him. He put them at ease. He inquired after their prayer life. His compassion demonstrated that he was at peace with the truth of his impending death. He passed from this life in the same manner in which he lived. We are so blessed to continue to share with him the great sea of love even as we miss so deeply the comfort of his physical presence.

—CONCORD MONTHLY MEETING, DOVER QUARTERLY MEETING

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Virginia Towle, 1922-2008

We give thanks to God for the life of Virginia Towle, who served actively among Friends in New England for many years.

Virginia Tripp Towle was born and brought up in Westport, Massachusetts. At age five she contracted polio, and spent a year isolated in a hospital before entering grade school a year early. She remembered failing only one question on the test for early entrance: "What color is a white horse?"

Her parents exposed their children to a number of churches. Virginia found a home in Westport FM three miles away and began attending on her own.

During her teens and college years, she earned room and board by working as a nanny. Her father lent her tuition for her first semester of college with the understanding she would be responsible for all future tuition. She obtained a degree in Home Economics at Massachusetts State College in Amherst, Massachusetts.

While working at Indianapolis Children's Museum, she attended the Five Years Meeting Triennial (now FUM). She was met at the Richmond, IN, train station by a Friend from Friends General Conference, who was accompanied by Phillip Towle. Virginia and Phil married in 1946. For their honeymoon, they bicycled throughout the British Isles on a tandem bicycle.

During their early years of marriage, Phil and Virginia lived in a castle in Luxembourg. Although she suffered from motion sickness, Virginia would fly to Brussels to greet and provide hospitality for young Americans coming to Europe to participate in post-World War II rebuilding efforts. She also took part in a Young Friends caravan that bicycled through Europe after the war.

Upon returning to the United States, Virginia and Phil lived in Philadelphia and were active in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. When Phil learned the research and development he was involved in at Leeds and Northrup was being used to develop rockets with military applications, he terminated his employment.

They changed life and career directions, moving to Hinckley, Maine, where they were active in North Fairfield Meeting. In Hinckley, they worked at The Goodwill School, a school for boys who came from broken families or who had lost a parent. While serving as a house-parent, Virginia gave birth to the first three of their five children.

In 1956 the family moved to Rindge, New Hampshire, to work

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at Hampshire Country School for bright, emotionally disturbed students. After living at the school for a year, they were encouraged by its founder to purchase a house in Rindge. There some of the most challenging boys could live with them as family members. Virginia and Phil's last two children were born in Rindge.

The Towles had close connections with The Meeting School, which was just starting up in Rindge. Virginia and Phil, along with other Meeting School families, founded Monadnock Monthly Meeting, which originally met in members' homes and later at the school.

In the 1960s Phil and Virginia were called to work for FUM in Kenya. Phil traveled ahead to begin teaching at Chavakali Boys School. Virginia followed on a freighter with their five children. While in Kenya the family attended Kaimosi Friends Church. Virginia held a leadership role in what is now the National Council of Churches of Kenya. She focused on the roles of women both in the Friends Church and within the Council of Churches. When traveling on church business, she broke with colonialist missionary tradition by insisting on staying in the homes of her Kenyan counterparts and friends.

Virginia served as headmistress of the Kaimosi Demonstration School, an elementary Friends school that her youngest children attended. She expanded the school's size, reinvented it as a boarding school, and opened it to Kenyans beyond Kaimosi. Every school holiday the family traveled widely throughout eastern Africa, taking an entourage that included friends, students, guests, and teachers from Chavakali. Later, Virginia would enjoy telling stories about car breakdowns, dealing with wildlife around their tent, and negotiating checkpoints and language barriers in Burundi and Rwanda.

Virginia remained active in women's issues when she returned to New Hampshire. Over the years she traveled extensively throughout North and Central America as a delegate to gatherings of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), FUM, and United Society of Friends Women (USFW). Within NEYM she served on FUM, and FWCC Committees, Nominating and Personnel Committees, Permanent Board, and as clerk of USFW-NE.

Virginia made a practice of attending meeting for worship faithfully, and of visiting other Friends' Meetings when she traveled. Even when near blindness curtailed her driving in later years, she attended whenever she could find a driver. Struggling with physical disabilities stemming from diabetes, she kept up with what she

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deemed necessary and important.

When Virginia moved to Meredith, NH, to live with her daughters, Monadnock Meeting (home of her longest membership) felt her absence. She had offered her gift of hospitality, welcoming newcomers, and hosting Friends in her home. She worked quietly behind the scene to help build community, storing little tidbits about individuals to link people with common interests.

Virginia always felt close to the earth, and loved gardening. She also loved to walk, collecting interesting objects to bring home as souvenirs. Many remember how she added a certain flare to her passion for simplicity and sustainability by driving a sporty red Honda CRX that got good gas mileage.

Never a proselytizer, Virginia allowed her life to exemplify her beliefs. She could be persistent (to the point of inflexibility at times), always basing her position on principle. She courageously advocated for others, particularly for school-aged children who were having difficulty with the system.

North Sandwich Friends Meeting benefited greatly from her long Quaker experience and her careful attention to correct process and proper recording, as well as her good humor. Lifelong, Virginia was a minister who responded to the needs of others in her home meeting and in the wider Quaker community.

—MONADNOCK MONTHLY MEETING, NORTHWEST QUARTERLY MEETING

Adelaide Dustin Nichols 1916-2008

We give thanks to God for the life of Adelaide Dustin Nichols who died quietly Tuesday, April 8, 2008 after a long illness. Adelaide began life on the family farm in Contoocook, NH, on Oct. 19, 1916. Her life on the farm included training oxen, pumping water, cooking on a wood stove, delivering milk before school, and riding a horse to school. She developed a lifelong love for animals and gardening.

When Robert O. Nichols drove his sister Rosamond to Contoocook to visit her Bates classmate and future husband Eldon Dustin, he met Eldon's sister, Adelaide. Robert and Adelaide married October 30, 1937. They celebrated their 65th anniversary shortly before Robert died. They had three children, Larry, Roberta, and Stan, ten grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren, all of whom she cherished.

Family and friends discovered in Adelaide a source of wisdom and assistance in life skills and child rearing. She welcomed young

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people into her home, she counseled them, and she supported them. This work, in turn, deepened her spiritual life. She reported a seminal moment in her spiritual life when a foster child had run away; Adelaide realized she could personally do nothing but pray and trust God. She also derived much spiritual strength from her connection with nature, enjoying gardening for its practical value and its spiritual value.

As a young mother she was part of a sewing circle that made sure no neighboring family fell through the cracks. She was highly pragmatic. When she saw that something needed doing, she did it. She was a strongly spiritual woman, active in Concord Friends Meeting and in New England Yearly Meeting. She took advantage of Bible study opportunities in both communities, often choosing Bible centered workshops at Yearly Meeting, yet sampling broadly from many spiritual teachers, as evidenced by her book collection donated to Concord Meeting Library. For example, she was deeply moved by the Letters of the Scattered Brotherhood. She was a faithful and active member of USFW- New England for many years.

Adelaide's family was central to her life. She brought her grandchildren to Yearly Meeting, and was thrilled when they became leaders. She supported her husband's volunteer work in the prisons and demonstrated great patience with him.

We all felt safe in Adelaide's presence. She taught many by example about kindness, forgiveness, and the power of love. As she lost her memory to dementia, she was never angry but still exuded gentleness. We miss her centered presence, her calm, humble bearing, and her joyful smile.

—CONCORD MONTHLY MEETING, DOVER QUARTERLY MEETING

Roberta Nichols 1944-2008

Born August 24, 1944, in Rockville, Conn., to Robert O. and Adelaide (Dustin) Nichols, Roberta Nichols graduated from Suffield High School, Conn. in 1962 and Acadia University in Nova Scotia, where she received a B.A. degree in biology in 1966. She did graduate work at Plymouth University in the field of elementary education and earned a Master's degree in counseling psychology from Antioch New England in 1988.

Roberta's long career in early education began in elementary schools in Fonda, NY, and Plaistow, NH, before she moved back to her grandparents' farm in Contoocook, NH, and began teaching at

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Merrimack Valley Day Care Service in Concord in 1970. She went on to spend 38 years at Merrimack Valley Day Care before retiring in 2008 for health reasons.

Roberta's kindness, patience, gentleness, and great love for children were conspicuous and well known to all who knew her. Throughout her career, she worked with disadvantaged children ages one to 12. Roberta became a lead teacher and mentored many new teachers. Over her decades of service, she led many teacher workshops dealing with issues in early childhood education. Sensitive to the needs of others and ever desiring to help them, she became a foster mother and eventually adopted one of the children. Her unconditional, selfless, and never-ending love of her adopted daughter, Angie, was inspiring to all who knew Roberta. Roberta had an openness and goodness about her that reminded us of the pure innocence of a child, yet was tempered by her life experience. She took great joy in the simple things in life. Roberta had an infectious laugh, coupled with a sometimes-wry sense of humor, and delighted in the company of her family, friends, and colleagues, all of whom she valued highly. She devoted much of her time to caring for her parents in their declining years, giving up her own home, and living with them to care for them. She delighted in all opportunities to be with her grandchildren.

She loved flowers and rarely missed a flower show. She also enjoyed the ocean, singing, swimming, travel, "letterboxing," browsing yard sales and flea markets, reading, and constructing. She took great joy in music and cherished any opportunity to attend a concert with friends or a gathering for singing. We miss hearing her lovely soprano voice in weekly singing before worship and at the annual Carol Sing, which she never missed.

She was a long-time member of the Concord MM and active in causes of peace, justice, and opposition to homelessness. Roberta truly lived the testimony of simplicity: she designed and sewed her own clothes; she lived frugally; she designed and built her passive solar home. Roberta was humble, ever gentle, ever sensitive to others, and looked always for ways to serve. We found her a great source of spiritual wisdom and comfort, much like her mother Adelaide. Her messages in meeting conveyed her sense of hope and belief in the power of goodness and love, and her understanding of her own culpability and weaknesses. She contributed her wisdom to the wider Quaker community by serving on the NEYM Ministry & Counsel and within her local meeting on Ministry & Counsel.

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When she learned she had only months to live, she embraced her days and made plans to do many of the things she had never had a chance to do before.

She got to swim with dolphins in Hawaii. She finally experienced the Grand Canyon and the northwest USA and western Canada, and she visited friends and family across North America. Roberta died quietly Oct. 28, 2008, at the Concord Regional Visiting Nurse Association Hospice House. In spite of her illness, her final months were as full of courage and grace and light as the rest of her life had been.

—CONCORD MONTHLY MEETING, DOVER QUARTERLY MEETING

Jean & Norman Constantineau 1928-2008

Jean and Norman Constantineau, members of Lawrence MM, died within three weeks of each other in January and February, 2008. Jean Patricia Constantineau was born in Lawrence, MA, on June 30, 1928, to Mary O’Kane & Eugene Forbes Tolman. Norman Albert Constantineau was born in Lawrence, MA, on May 18, 1928, to Alfred & Eloise Constantineau. These high school sweethearts were married on December 21, 1947, and enjoyed a joyous life together for sixty-one years. The love and light, which Norman and Jean reflected throughout their lives, came in part from their remarkably close marriage, often described as a marriage made in heaven—they were always happiest when they were together.

Jean and Norman joined Lawrence MM in 1951, after a deliberate and thoughtful search for a religious community. They raised their two daughters,

Karen and Jan, in the meeting and were strong supporters of Friends education, sending both girls to Lincoln School, particularly because of the advantages of a girls Friends school. The Constantineau home was a wonderful place to grow up in, serving as a crossroads for friends, neighbors, and the numerous visitors who came as the result of the many family committee involvements. One had only to enter the Constantineau home and receive Jean’s warm greeting to know that he or she was a treasured guest who would be valued and closely listened to. During the Vietnam War years, Jean served on the meeting hospitality committee and Norman on NEYM Peace & Social Concerns Committee, bringing the family into contact with the wider world of the peace movement, with all its diversity. Jean remembered one Japanese peacemaker bringing a special gift of

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live crabs to the noon meal, offering the family, “all you want.”

During the war period of the sixties, Jean worked in the Dean’s office of Merrimack College, where she also was studying library science, graduating with her degree at the age of fifty. Jean quickly became a focus for students interested in nonviolence, and students flocked to her for guidance. During this period, the Constantineaus participated in a sit-in at the draft board as part of a group of conscientious objectors engaged in passive resistance. The group was taken to the police station and detained, but not formally booked.

It was during this period that the Constantineaus organized an antiwar vigil on the Lawrence City Common with representatives from area churches, the first such peace vigil the conservative mill city had ever known. Jean’s concern for the race issue led the Constantineaus to help organize the first intervisitation Sunday between all-black and all-white churches, which included follow-up visits to each other’s homes.

Norman was appointed to the Peace & Social Concerns Committee soon after joining the meeting in 1951, and remained on this committee either at the monthly meeting or YM with some interruptions until the 1980s. Norman worked on Oaths of Allegiance, counseling for Conscientious Objectors, the local alcohol problem, preventing recruitment films from being shown to high school age boys, and showing AFSC peace films in area schools and churches. Norman and Jean had a lifelong concern for the United Nations, and Norman worked on local commemorations for UN Day held in Lawrence. In 1963, after more than a decade as representative to Salem Quarterly Meeting, Norman was named as its clerk. This was a difficult assignment, since the QM was asked to resolve a disagreement concerning Amesbury MM. Norman approached this challenging time with his characteristic diligence, patience, and gentleness.

This approach bore fruit in subsequent years when ultimately the dispute was resolved. Lawrence MM will long miss Norman and Jean—who showed us the way, the Truth, and the Light.

—LAWRENCE MONTHLY MEETING, SALEM QUARTERLY MEETING