Ad Hoc Communications Committee ideas & suggestions:

The quality of communication reflects the health of a relationship and thus is a vital sign of the YM’s health.

*How do we share our personal leadings, insights, and experiences so that all can learn and be guided?* What vehicles are available to do this task?

*How do we invite Friends to join in with all the activities and opportunities for connection in the YM? How do we facilitate individuals taking the initiative to involve others?*

**Deepening the Quality of Communication:**

Prioritize the Yearly Meeting mission “to strengthen one another in our search Divine Truth and Light.” Provide more opportunities for spiritual exchange and Divine-centered relationships throughout our region. Two examples of this could be a phone or on-line worship sharing, or a spiritual practice support group. Can we use YM structures better to help local groups minister more effectively among/to their members?

Reach out to and draw in newcomers, including possible use of materials like Quaker Quest (http://www.quakerquest.org/). This material would cost money and may be something the YM wants to make available. Outreach and Visitation Committee is already preparing to link our Website to the New Meetings program material at Friends General Conference, an example of one way to expand our reach and make use of materials economically.

Arrange visitations like the Brinton Visitor of the past and more inter-visitation among Friends throughout our region. This would require a volunteer committee to arrange this process and money for travel, which would need to be allocated from the budget of NPYM.

Encourage participation on a committee in NPYM as a way of deepening Quaker connections and community. We have all found that working together builds bonds both of friendship and spiritual understanding.

**System and Organizational improvements:**

Reassigning tasks that have been lost in the reorganization of NPYM, e.g., gathering information from MM newsletters and then widely sharing the new and good, the joys and sorrows [at one time done by Quarterly contacts for the Bulletin/Western Friend and later by FWCC staff]. Perhaps some of these functions, formerly done (informally?) by the regular contacts of the Steering Clerk, could today be vested in either the Presiding Clerk or the Clerk of the CC. In doing this, care would have to be taken to define or delimit overlapping areas of responsibility.

Training recording clerks in making standardized minutes which are clear, concise, and define who will carry out specified tasks and responsibilities, while providing enough narrative to explain the rationale for decisions.

Educating e-mail authors to simplify emails, to make them succinct and clear so that they will communicate effectively. An e-mail could be distributed which offered suggestions and useful frameworks for the writing of clear emails, including the following suggestions:
a) The subject line should clearly state the missive's content so that it is easier to retrieve in the future.

b) Each e-mail should state the responsibility of the recipient; what applies to whom, and what are the next steps to be taken.

c) Short and concise messages will be read more thoroughly by more people.

d) Important phrases, dates, and locations in **bold** will convey the most vital information quickly.

e) Make necessary adjustments if one's own e-mail account is bouncing communications.

Providing on our website opportunities for self-initiated forums and bulletin boards where Friends can make contact; this would require some monitoring [i.e. volunteer time] to prevent abuse. Overall we must work to make our website and other technological communications easily accessible, attractive, and affordable to all.

**Technological improvements**

These include making sure that the NPYM office has up-to-date and functional equipment that will allow the staff to disseminate information and maintain both the directory and the web-site to their potential and thus both create and serve demand for a stable source of information about both the YM and its constituents.

The Technology Committee needs to review many aspects of this and make recommendations. This will involve costs and time commitment changes. We will support anything that:

1) simplifies getting regular distribution on a wide basis of all the information that everyone in the YM needs to know; e.g. a quarterly newsletter (keeping aware that older technologies have certain advantages and are required for many individuals to be included);

2) facilitates individuals easily finding the answers to questions they may have, including contacting key committee clerks and officers, and even to questions they did not know they had [e.g. hotlinks on the website];

3) directs critical information and leadership data to the individuals who will take responsible action [e.g. improved mailing lists and actions that elicit compliance from those who receive information so they are not bottlenecks]

**Responsibility for System and Organizational Improvements**

1) Reassigning lost tasks should be decided upon by the Presiding Clerk, the Clerk of Coordinating Committee and the Coordinating Committee. Nominating Committee could also be involved. Clarifying procedures is the responsibility of all clerks. Please refer to Faith and Practice. Keep in mind the concept of institutional memory and pass on these practices to new Friends.

2) Training for recording clerks and standardizing minutes is in the purview of the clerks of the standing committees as well as the ad hoc committees that are formed. Support for these clerks can also be found in Faith and Practice as well as *Quaker Process for Friends on the Bench* by Mathilda Navies.

3) The suggestions to improve email communication are the responsibility of every Friend who sends an email.
4) Website improvements may require budget allocation and would be supervised by the Technology and Information Committee.