

THE NEW ENGLAND FRIEND

To All Friends Everywhere...

WITH THE CONTINUING VIOLENCE IN THE WORLD HEAVY on our hearts, the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends met on the campus of Bryant University in Smithfield, Rhode Island, from August 6–11, 2005, for our 345th Annual Sessions.

Not only the US-led war in Iraq but the violence that pervades so much of our nation and world gave a feeling of urgency to our work and worship together, sometimes opening our hearts and humbling us, sometimes lifting up our hearts and emboldening us. We must do all in our power to change the direction of a world rushing toward destruction, and many among us expressed a yearning for our Yearly Meeting to step out into the world with a visible, muscular, and irresistible witness. Yet Friends also reminded us of the need to trust God and to center ourselves in worship.

The tension between these two perspectives challenged us, and at times we were distracted by feelings of fear and despair and anger. We struggled to speak with compassionate hearts and are grateful for the many ways God’s grace moved through our meeting and helped us to proceed in love.

Our plenary speakers told how, in their own lives, they had learned to be open to uncomfortable situations and ideas and to feel the pain of others who are suffering. In our study of the Parable of the Sower, we learned of the need to churn up our hearts, so that the seed of God, already sown within us, can grow. Then we are called to “...hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.” (Luke 8:15)

Young Friends brought a minute to the adults, reminding us that worship must be centered and not full of talk. When we are grounded in our community and in the Holy Spirit, we can begin to hear the voices of those who differ from us. When our hearts are tender, we are able to trust each other and to hear what God would have us do.

Individual Friends spoke of their active witness in racial equality and inclusivity, tax resistance, environmental stew-

ardship, community organizing, peace education, and spirited radical economics, and invited others to join them in seeking ways to engage our meetings more fully in this work. Some spoke eloquently of how deeply their witness depends on the support and spiritual health of our meetings. We thank God for the witness and example of these Friends. We also value those who maintain the spiritual health and the practical work of our Yearly Meeting and especially those who work with the young and nurture the next generation, which is our hope and our delight.

After years of struggle and prayer, we have found unity to send a word to the Quaker world based on our experience:

we know that the Divine Light is present in all persons and that the gifts of the Spirit in ministry and service are given without regard to sexual orientation. We have been blessed countless times by the ministry and leadership of gay and lesbian Friends. We acknowledge that much remains to be done within our own Yearly Meeting to care for all who feel pain because of these issues and to bring our practice more fully into obedience to God’s command of love.



Photo: Skip Schiel

Grateful for the movement of the Spirit among us, hopeful that we may grow into deeper and more effective witness, we closed with the intention of laboring together in love throughout the coming year.

—Friends of New England Yearly Meeting

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CDs of 2005 Sessions speakers available
To order CDs of Skip Schiel’s Keynote (images and text available at teeksaphoto.org/writing/carried.html), Max Carter’s Bible Half-Hour talks and the United Society of Friends Women’s presentation “Stopping Violence in the Family,” contact the NEYM Office, 508/754-6760 • neym@neym.org
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Highlights from the 2005 NEYM minutes...

Christopher McCandless, NEYM Presiding Clerk, Burlington (VT) Monthly Meeting

For the full text of Christopher McCandless' letter, minutes, and epistles ask your meeting clerk, go to neym.org, or contact the NEYM Office, 508/754-6760.

AT OUR 345TH ANNUAL SESSIONS, *New England Friends* were challenged by our keynote speaker to "be carried where we do not wish to go: out from our pleasant benches and into the needy world." In lively, well-attended discernment groups during our first full day together, we wrestled with what it is that God is calling us to be and do, both individually and corporately. We struggled to understand how we can remain part of the wider family of Friends represented by Friends United Meeting, when we believe their personnel policy to be discriminatory. And as our epistle notes in its opening words, the continuing violence in the world was always heavy on our hearts, especially as we considered the actions of our nation, undertaken with our money and in our name.

Yet our days together were also joyful and refreshing, filled with the hopeful voices of our children. At times, they called us back into worship and forward into witness in the most profound and powerful ways. If you were unable to attend Sessions, talk with someone in your monthly or quarterly meeting who did; try to get a sense of their experience of NEYM as a gathered people. Please consider whether your light and leadings might be shared more widely in the coming year, including joining us next August!

Day of Discernment

Minute 05-16 summarizes the responses of Friends to the discernment process initiated by the ad hoc Procedural Review Committee, which occupied us for much of Sunday afternoon and evening at Sessions. The committee will continue to consider the information they gathered, and they intend to make intervisitation an important part of their work during the coming year. Perhaps you would like to invite some of them to your meeting to continue the discernment of who we are and what we are called to be.

...Friends were most engaged with three themes: 1) Programs for our youth are vital!; 2) How do we do business together as a lov-

ing community? 3) How do we witness to the world; in our social action and with our faith?

...Friends responded to the report by affirming the value of the youth programs of the Yearly Meeting. ...We also heard calls for immediate action with less talk, as well as calls for more discussion. We were exhorted to attend to prayer and faithful living, attending to Christ our Teacher. We are to be patterns, examples, and witnesses to our beliefs. We are to love God, heal the sick, visit prisoners, feed the hungry, and lay up spiritual and not economic treasure. We need to open sufficient time in our overly-busy lives to do the hard and careful work of listening to where the Spirit will lead us, to receive the vision that will guide us into individual and corporate witness. We also need to accept the risks. We are hungry to do God's work, but often too busy to feed ourselves from the spiritual feast that is always available to us. The Kingdom is here. We need to choose to live in it now.

Yet we are also moved by the urgency of our despair in these times of war, and our frustration that we cannot seem to stop it. We begin to feel that our spiritual community—so renowned and proud for its peace testimony—is letting us and the world down. Our frustration leads to a hunger to do something visible, muscular, and irresistible.

Faith and Practice Revision

Minutes 05-21 & 05-56 report on the continuing work of the Faith and Practice Revision Committee, as they strive to bring us new understandings of that vital resource. Your meeting will have received a report from them and a request for your ongoing participation in their process.

Young Friends on Worship

Minute 05-23 contains within it the minute brought to us by Young Friends after their experiences of our open worship, following the intergenerational worship they had planned and led on Sunday morning. We were humbled by the love and clarity of their concern for the whole community.

...Hannah Zwirner [representing Young Friends] read the following minute...

You are our mothers and fathers, our men-

tors and caregivers. You are the people we look up to, though you may not believe it all of the time. You are the people that held us at Hampshire, played tag with us at Bowdoin and staffed our JYM retreats. It is with love and respect that we bring these issues to your attention. For some of us our days as fellow adults begin at the end of Sessions on Thursday; others of us will not officially join you for a few years. But together we are worried about this Yearly Meeting and our ability to worship together.

Sunday morning we shared our gifts with you. When we are alone as Young Friends we have some of the most inspiring, spiritual, and centered worship many of us have ever experienced. We want to share with you our silliness, our love, and our appreciation for the silence and centeredness that we know you are capable of.

Sunday morning you witnessed many of us leave part of the way through worship after Max Carter's Bible Half Hour. Many of us finished listening to Max's inspiring talk ready for some silence and deep contemplation of his message. Though some people benefited, many left worship feeling empty and spiritually unfulfilled. It is hard for us when we experience such an un-centered meeting after sharing our centeredness with you. We had trouble with how personal many messages felt, and wondered if the ideas of making sure that messages are meant for the whole group and are coming from the spirit have been forgotten. We also noticed that the lack of silence between messages made it difficult to focus or appreciate them. We don't know exactly how to help this seemingly growing problem in the Yearly Meeting. We hoped that by demonstrating our ways of worshipping that they might catch on. We know that they did for many people. We know that many of you are frustrated about this as well. We hope that by sharing our concern with you that you will be aware that we too want change. We love you and would not bother with this if we did not care deeply about you and this issue. We know that it is possible for the whole Yearly Meeting to sit silently and pray for each other; we did it for fifteen minutes this morning and we are sure that it can happen again.

Eldering is helping each other to be faithful. Gifts come from God. We thank God for the ministry and spiritual leadership of our Young Friends.

World Gathering of Young Friends

Two official representatives and seven other Young Adult Friends were sent forth in prayer and song to attend the World Gathering of Young Friends, held in England during the week following Sessions. These gatherings, under the care of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, occur only once every fifteen or twenty years. We were able to fully support the needs of our YAFs for assistance with travel and conference costs, as well as those of two representatives from Cuba Yearly Meeting. This was possible because of the very generous response of Friends to the fine fundraising efforts of our NEYM Young Adult Friends group.

Same Gender Marriage

Minute 05-55 is Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting's minute in support of same gender marriage. Friends are invited to take it home to share with our meetings to enrich the discernment process on this matter.

The Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting of New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) supports the right of all adult couples to join in marriage and to enjoy its full legal benefits. We base our stand on our long-held testimony of equality, that there is "that of God in every one," and in our understanding of marriage, that marriage is a spiritual union not imposed or defined by us. "For the right joining in marriage is the work of the Lord only, and not the priests' or magistrates'; for it is God's ordinance and not man's; ... for we marry none; it is the Lord's work, and we are but witnesses," as George Fox, one of the first generation of Friends, wrote in 1669....

Six of the Quarter's nine monthly meetings have seen many gay and lesbian couples among them live out their commitment to one another in ways that have enriched the meeting. Four meetings have had the opportunity to take ten marriages under their care in the same manner as for heterosexual couples. It has been a gift to us to see how love is evident in the strength of these unions and families, despite the lack of legal support until recently. Indeed,

such discrimination places a burden on the affected couples and on our community as a whole as we support them, especially in adoption, parenting, and end-of-life issues.

We will continue to work for equal rights, and strongly oppose denying rights to some of our families that are freely granted to others. We are heartened by the current existence of legal same-gender marriage in Massachusetts and by the Connecticut decision to recognize civil unions. We oppose any law or constitutional amendment that restricts the right of gay and lesbian couples to legally marry. We feel the institution of marriage can only be strengthened when states extend privileges, rights, and responsibilities to same-gender couples.

FUM Personnel Policy

Minutes 05-37, 47, 49 & 60 record our struggles and our final approval of the new minute brought forth by the Ministry & Counsel working party on the Friends United Meeting (FUM) Personnel Policy.

05-60 ...Friends in New England believe the Divine Light is present in all; we have learned that gifts and leadings of the Spirit to ministry and service are given without regard to sexual orientation. As our 2004 Minute of Exercise (04-74) says, "...we have been blessed countless times by the ministry and leadership of those who would not be allowed to serve under the FUM policies." For many reasons, we are deeply pained by the exclusion of some in our midst and by the implied condemnation contained in the FUM policy.

Despite this pain, we intend to remain a full member of Friends United Meeting. Our connections with Friends throughout the world help us to experience the common ground of our Quaker faith and call us to seek more deeply in those areas where we disagree. We affirm our intention to work with the General Board and other yearly meetings to change the current personnel policy to allow all Friends to be considered for full participation in the work and ministry of FUM.

We have more to do in New England.

- We encourage monthly meetings whose discernment is not complete to continue their work.
- We encourage intervisitation among Friends within NEYM. The key to grappling with concerns regarding FUM's per-

sonnel policy is to come to know each other in a deeper, richer, fuller way and to support each other in our lives.

- We need to care tenderly for gay, lesbian and other Friends who feel pain because of the current policy. We also need to care tenderly for Friends who feel this policy does reflect their spiritual and ethical guidelines. We likewise need to care for Friends who feel uneasy about expressing their views about this concern because they are not in agreement with most Friends in their monthly meeting, whether their meeting supports FUM's policy or wishes to see it changed.
- We need to explore a common sense of sexual ethics.

We also have more to do in our ongoing relationship with other yearly meetings of FUM.

- We encourage intervisitation among yearly meetings in FUM, as suggested by the FUM General Board. To better recognize the Light in each Friend, we need to know one another on a personal level. We will build trust through bringing love, humility, tenderness, clarity and truth to our relationships.
- We need to seek common ground, appreciating the good intentions of others who have different practices and understanding of God's will.
- We need to learn how to witness with love, patience and openness.

We ask the Ministry & Counsel working party on FUM's Personnel Policy, in consultation with both M&C and the NEYM FUM Committee, to continue its work and to report its progress to Sessions 2006. We send this minute to the General Board of FUM, and to all its member yearly meetings.

05-61 To support intervisitation with other yearly meetings within FUM, we authorize the establishment of a contributory fund to receive gifts to support such travel. We ask the Finance Committee to recommend an appropriate transfer to this new fund. We ask Permanent Board to develop an oversight structure for administration of this fund...

Please bring the concerns expressed in these minutes to the appropriate committee or persons in your meeting.

The sense of the meeting

Heather Moir, North Sandwich (NH) Monthly Meeting

THE YEAR 2000 WAS THE LAST TIME I attended NEYM Sessions, and I returned home to be hospitalized with a deep vein thrombosis resulting at least in part from the long drive and from long sitting, but I have described NEYM Sessions as too contentious for my comfort and have felt guilty that I have not addressed the reasons why. This is an attempt to explore my reaction and to suggest some ways we might be more open to our part in determining the “*sense of the meeting*.”

South Eastern Yearly Meeting, in which I served as clerk, before we retired to New Hampshire, was much smaller than NEYM, and as a new Yearly Meeting was still finding its way and discovering itself. This was an exciting experience and one in which we learned a lot from each other about our differences and what held us together. We knew it was important to find unity in our decisions but we realized that this did not necessarily mean unanimity or uniformity. We had to trust that the *sense of the meeting* might not be exactly in accord with our preconceived notions, but could be a larger and deeper accord, resulting from the thoughtful, prayerful input of many. Some of us might have to restrain our enthusiasms to bring others into comfortable unity. We had the advantage in smaller size of knowing each other fairly well, and of the confidence such acquaintance can bring. The smaller size of the room in which we met was also an advantage since we sat closer together and had a sense of the spirit moving amongst us bringing us together into the Light.

Some of the venues in which NEYM Sessions have been held have not been conducive to finding our unity. I remember meeting in vast gymnasiums with far too many chairs and Friends sitting with wide spaces between them, and getting impatient with waiting for a turn at the microphone, and even sighing as an outspoken Friend would get up yet again! NEYM Friends have chosen to call it “meeting for worship for business,” which is probably what it should be, but one doesn’t see needlework going on in meeting for worship. I know some feel it helps them to concentrate to have busy hands, but I am concerned that “heads down” makes discernment of the *sense of the meeting* more difficult.

Discernment of the *sense of the meeting* is the business of everyone present. To be sure, the clerk has to articulate and record it, but unless everyone participating is trying to tune in to what is emerging, not just consensus, but that finely tuned balance that all can share, the effort will fall short of the best we can do. When I hear the clerk say “let me try a minute,” I sometimes get the image of using a dip-stick on a motor to determine the lubricant-level. This is putting too heavy a load on the clerk; why aren’t we all involved in that discernment? Some treat the clerk’s proposal as something requiring an up or down approval, not realizing that what has been offered is what appears to be the *sense of the meeting* in which all have already (supposedly) participated. It doesn’t have to be exactly what you or I wanted, but what has emerged from our prayerful consideration. Yes it should be something we can all live with, but we are a non-creedal faith community and we are allowed to interpret and grow according to the light we are each given.

If we are being true to our Quaker heritage, our decisions will need to be in accord with our testimonies to truthfulness, equality, simplicity, justice, and peace. For some of us these are all joined as one in caring for God’s world and all that dwell therein. How we do this as individuals is a matter for our daily consideration and judgement. We are not always all going to see it the same way because we live in a world of communities where some levels of compromise are bound to occur. However, when we collectively make a decision, it does need to reflect our common values and uphold our Quaker heritage. Sometimes people join the Religious Society of Friends for one of its testimonies in particular, and they will need to be careful not to try to limit community action or expression to their own one particular issue. Some who are “refugees” in flight from other more constraining doctrines, may lose sight of our being the *Religious Society of Friends* and attach significance from which they were trying to escape to some of our language, but they too need to look to the Spirit behind the words, (as George Fox said we should do with the Bible) and not try to limit others to their own comfort zone.

The most uncomfortable contentiousness

I have witnessed in NEYM Sessions has concerned issues of gender¹, of war taxes², and of gambling and minority opportunity in that enterprise³. As John Woolman perceived in issues of slavery, it is worth the effort of trying to persuade others, but not to condemn or lambaste those who see matters differently. It is the testimony of our own lives that will ultimately make the difference. Perhaps we sometimes want the Religious Society of Friends to take a stand on an issue where we ourselves have not yet raised our voices in the public arena. Never underestimate what you yourself can do even if the Yearly Meeting is not yet ready to take a stand. Or were you hoping that NEYM’s voice would speak for you?

Another subject that has been contentious is Middle East Peace. The fear that we have not equally addressed all sides of the issue has sometimes kept us from affirming our belief that all violence and retaliation is wrong and not the way to peace, that peace is the way.

When these difficult issues are under discussion we all need to try to discern the *sense of the meeting*. When we realize that we are alone or in a small minority in our position we need to ask ourselves why, and what would be a truly Quaker response? Are we the ones out of step with the *sense of the meeting* and is it a matter of deep concern, or superficial, or is it oneself that needs to consider more deeply? Only if one’s conscience is really compromised should one obstruct the unity that is developing and only then with humble heartsearching.

¹ Affirming our testimony to equality and enabling the same opportunity avenues for all surely cannot undermine the sanctity of marriage for others. Prejudice must be recognized for what it is.

² We need to keep our distinctions clear between our support for taxes to pay for education, health, and all kinds of important public services, and those used for war and destruction.

³ Difficult, I cannot condone gambling, and I regret that we have made it one of the only possible income sources for indigenous people. Also the native American casino operators need protection from exploitation by corrupt business conglomerates. A whole new approach to this is needed.

Around the Yearly Meeting

Compiled from monthly meeting newsletters and correspondence by Holly Lapp and Jonathan Vogel-Borne

• **Many NEYM meetings** responded generously, helping people displaced by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Friends raised money for the American Friends Service Committee's relief efforts, sent clothing and food to Otis Air Base on Cape Cod, and made supportive contacts with the Friends meetings in the area.

• **Middlebury (VT) Monthly Meeting (MM)** approved running a small newspaper classified ad. The text said "In this time of war, sorrow and uncertainty, come quiet your mind and spirit in the silence of our Quaker Meeting Sundays, 10-11am, Havurah House, 56 N. Pleasant, Middlebury."

• **Still Waters (ME) Conservative Meeting (Preparative)** under the care of **Orono (ME) MM** was laid down on 4/10/05.

• **Framingham (MA) MM** First Day School Committee sponsored a Secret Friends program. Most children had two adult secret friends with whom they exchanged letters. At the end of the program, everyone got to meet each other at a party after meeting.

• **Durham (ME) MM** sponsored a Conscientious Objection Awareness weekend workshop attended by twelve youth. Several youth expressed their appreciation for a mock draft board trial facilitated by Rob Pfeiffer from Veterans for Peace and a former soldier in Vietnam. Five of the attendees expressed great interest in putting together a Conscientious Objector file.

• **Cambridge (MA) MM** Child Abuse Prevention and Response Committee has introduced a screening process for all those (including volunteers) who work with the meeting's children and youth. The screening involves an application form, two references, and an interview.

• **Smithfield (RI) MM** approved allowing their meetinghouse to house a new Hispanic Friends Church that pastor Carlos Moran hopes to form under the care of Evangelical Friends International (EFI).

• **Wellesley (MA) MM** held a *meeting for worship for remembrance* for those who had lost a spouse, parent or someone else special during the past year. All were invited to attend. Also, \$600 was raised for the Religious Education Committee by participating in a program with 10 local houses of worship. Eight FDS students performed "A

Quaker Among the Indians" on a local college campus with meeting adults helping with costumes and coaching.

• **Storrs (CT) MM** endorsed the Earth Charter which states principles to guide us in the decisions we make as individuals and at all levels of society. In 2002, NEYM endorsed the same charter and encouraged monthly meetings to work more with it to see how they would be led to respond further.

• **Fresh Pond (MA) MM** continues to explore difficulties in their First Day School (FDS) which continues to have difficulties in recruiting teachers and experiences inconsistent class size and make up. Many sense that children are not fully engaged. There is a perceived need for adults to learn more about Quakerism in order to be effective teachers. There are FDS Committee attendance and clerking concerns as well. Various individuals and committees are actively trying to discern the best way to proceed. The meeting will be identifying goals and available resources and will consider whether a restructuring of the FDS program is appropriate. Also, the meeting has introduced a three-month trial where, about 10 minutes before the end of the worship, the Friend who has care of meeting asks those present if there are any joys, sorrows or concerns to be shared out of the spirit of worship.

• **Hartford (CT) MM** endorsed the Friends Committee on National Legislation's STEP resolution (Sensible Transition to an Enduring Peace) on ending the Iraq war. For text of the resolution go to fcn.org

• **Northampton (MA) MM** Youth Concerns Committee has developed a handbook for families and helps to create clearness committees to meet with Young Friends before they start college or life away from home. This year their focus will include exploring questions of how to address the decline in involvement of older children and Young Friends and whether to continue the practice of hiring two paid First Day School teachers.

• **Allen's Neck (MA) MM** arranged a three-week visit for Katie Aven who recently graduated with a Masters of Divinity degree from the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax. During her visit she participated in all aspects of the meeting and worked closely with Pastor Peter Crysedale to learn

as much as she could about what it is like to be a pastor in a small rural meeting.

• **West Falmouth (MA) Preparative Meeting** approved and sent on to NEYM a travel minute for their member Elizabeth (Buffy) Curtis who is lead to travel among Friends in the coming year to practice healing touch and spiritual ministry.

• **Hanover (NH) MM** has approved the creation of a subcommittee of Ministry & Counsel with concern for Pastoral Care. Subcommittee members will be drawn from various committees and the meeting at large. Specific tasks for the subcommittee were identified and the new arrangement will be evaluated after 18 months.

• **Westport (MA) MM** hosted "A Conversation with Congressman Barney Frank" on Sunday June 12. The public event was well-attended by area residents and received local and regional media coverage.

• **New London (CT) MM** is celebrating the renovation of their buildings and grounds after several years of hard work. Improvements include a new roof, solid foundation, repainted exterior, new kitchen, modern bathroom and handicapped-accessible entrance. Landscaping work will be done by all in the final phase of the project.

• **Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy** is working to get Maine Quakers to take an active role in trying to defeat the 11/8/2005 referendum that would repeal the law LD 1196 enacted in March 2005 that extended civil rights protections to all people regardless of sexual orientation. For info: mainewontdiscriminate.com

• **Portland (ME) MM** has adopted a minute of support for a new Friends day school to serve the Greater Portland area. Many of the members and attenders of their meeting have experienced significant leadings to make this new school a reality.



Portland (ME) Friends Meeting

In other Quaker news

NEYM Bookkeeper/Accts. Mgr. sought

Part-time Bookkeeper/Accounts Manager to manage the accounts of the NEYM. *Qualifications:* At least three years professional experience in bookkeeping and in use of accounting software and spreadsheets and a bachelor's degree in accounting or related field or equivalent professional experience. 12-15 hours a week. Hours flexible, but must be available to work 1-2 days in the Worcester (MA) office. Familiarity with Friends' organizations is preferred. For information treasurer@neym.org

Friends talk about *Faith and Practice*

[From the *Faith and Practice* Revision Committee] We were delighted that the extensively revised preface was given first approval at sessions 2005. In early September we mailed out to monthly and quarterly meeting clerks the next installment of *Faith and Practice* to be considered: a draft chapter on worship. We hope this draft will lead to much sharing and discernment about worship among NEYM Friends, and we encourage the same careful consideration given to the draft preface last year. The comments we receive guide us as we revise the text to present a chapter on worship for first approval at the 2006 sessions. We welcome all responses, both individual and corporate.

Friends' feedback on draft texts is essential to our work of revising the 1985 *Faith and Practice* in a way that reflects the spiri-

tual state of NEYM today, but it is not the only reason for responding. Yearly Meeting also hoped the *Faith and Practice* revision process would encourage New England Friends to engage with each other on matters of faith. This engagement was evident throughout the corporate responses to the draft preface in 2004-2005, and we encourage the conversations to continue in the coming years.

The preface given first approval and the draft chapter on worship are available at neym.org/faithandpracticerevision We welcome wide distribution and discussion of them. Please email comments on the draft chapter on worship or the preface to the *Faith and Practice* Revision Committee by 2/1/06, to Jan Hoffman, clerk, 343 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002, or, preferably, fandp@neym.org

Earthcare Ministry Listserv

New England Earthcare Ministry Committee invites anyone who would like to exchange questions and ideas about caring for the Earth from a Quaker perspective to join the brand-new NEYM Earthcare Listserv. Send a blank email to neymearthcaresubscribe@yahoo.com and a confirmation email will be sent back to you.

NEYM Women's Retreat

This year the annual weekend of worship and renewal will again be at the Geneva

Point Conference Center, Center Harbor, NH, Lake Winnepesaukee, 4/21-23/06. "The uniqueness of Quaker women gathering in the Spirit in the safety of acceptance and love—in coming to understand the magic of going from disconnect to connect as we bond in community, in truth telling and sharing our pains and joys—restores our souls." Send \$20 non-refundable deposit to Patsy Shotwell, 416 Conant Rd., Weston MA 02493 • 781/899-5367 • pshotwell@comcast.net

Quaker initiative to end torture

The Quaker Initiative to End Torture (QUIT) Conference on Torture will take place 6/2-4/06 at Guilford College, Greensboro, NC. The conference has the dual intentions of education and action for the long term. Programming is just beginning to take shape. Friends are encouraged to send ideas for workshop topics, and names of potential presenters. home.ix.netcom.com/~quit

Woolman Hill weekends

Silent Year-End Retreat, 12/30/05 - 1/1/06; *Sex, Drugs, Rock-n-Roll*, a workshop for teens and parents with Lisa Graustein & Debbie Block, co-sponsored by NEYM Ministry & Counsel 1/20-22/06; *Couples Enrichment* with Mark Moss & Mary Kay Glazer 2/3-5/06; *Creative Dialogues About Imprisonment* with The Performance Project 3/17-19/06. Contact Margaret Cooley, 413/774-3431 • www.woolmanhill.org

An experiment moves forward: a growing role for individual giving

Carolyn Hilles, Beacon (MA) Hill Monthly Meeting and member of the Development Committee

AT SESSIONS 2004 NEYM ASKED THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, which was in its second experimental year, to raise \$65,000 from individual contributions. This amount represented a huge leap in individual giving in the yearly meeting, where the average annual giving from individuals in the previous five years (with the exception of a one-time large gift) had been \$23,500. The Yearly Meeting responded wonderfully to our fundraising efforts! We were greatly aided by anonymous Friends who provided a \$21,000 challenge match grant which energized our fundraising as the fiscal year closed. Encouraged by this challenge, almost a hundred new donors gave for the first time. We exceeded the goal of \$65,000 from individuals by about \$10,000.

This year's sessions approved Development as a standing committee within the Yearly Meeting. While this decision represents increased expectation on individual giving for the yearly meeting's

support, the greatest part of our budget base remains the contributions from monthly meetings.

Why is this shift necessary? When meeting members already give to the yearly meeting through their monthly meeting contributions, why will they also be asked to give directly to the yearly meeting?

Comparisons with other yearly meetings and Quaker organizations have convinced the Finance and Development Committees that the yearly meeting has grown beyond a size, staffing and activity level that can be funded as it has in the past. Michael Wadja, Director of Development for Friends General Conference, observes that typically smaller yearly meetings, or medium-sized yearly meetings with a smaller annual budget, do not rely on individual contributions to any great extent. The larger the yearly meeting and/or the more staff they employ, the more likely they are to have donations from individuals as a significant part of their budget, and the more

likely they are to do development work.

NEYM now has an annual budget of \$393,420 and employs four full-time staff and six part-time or contract employees, including three youth coordinators. Salaries absorb approximately 60% of this amount, with publications, office and administrative costs, and our obligations to umbrella organizations (chiefly FGC, FUM and FWCC) accounting for the rest. While some monthly meetings contribute more than the suggested amount per resident member (approx. \$ 95), some small meetings have not been able to reach this guideline for giving and others have had to lower their previous contributions. Ken Hoffman, long-time NEYM treasurer, has found that overall income from monthly meetings has typically been able to increase by about three to five percent annually, whereas NEYM program expansion has required a higher rise in income.

This year about 250 of New England's 4600 Quaker households supported the yearly meeting through direct giving, whereas in fis-

cal years 1999 through 2004 and average of 161 households contributed. That's wonderful news, and we hope these new donors will continue to support us. But heads up! We will need to continue to build on our numbers of individual donors in the future if we are to carry out the yearly meeting's commitments. You will continue to be asked to support your yearly meeting directly so that its work can be carried forward.

Let us sustain what we have shown we can do.

In the coming year, please help us consider how giving regularly to your yearly meeting best fits you.

If you aren't participating in the **GiveMonthly** program, please consider it. Others have found that writing a check or transferring securities once a month works best for their budgeting. Go to neym.org and click the "donate now" link, or contact the NEYM Treasurer, treasurer@neym.org

Yearly Meeting Calendar

November 2005

- 5 Vassalboro QM—Vassalboro/N. Fairfield
- 6 NE United Society of Friends Women—Concord, NH
- 11–13 Ministry & Counsel retreat—China, Maine
- 18–20 Young Friends retreat—Hartford FM (CT)
- 18–20 Elementary Retreat—Westport FM (MA)
- 19 Permanent Board—Windham FM (ME)
- 20 Coordinating & Advisory—Location, TBA

December 2005

- 3 Northwest QM—Wilderness FM (ME)
- 27–30 Young Friends Midwinter—Littleton, MA
- 30 Dover QM—Location, TBA

January 2006

- 7 Sessions Committee—Location, TBA
- 14 Ministry & Counsel—Location, TBA
- 20–22 Parent & Teen Workshop—Woolman Hill [see p.6]
- 20–22 Elementary Retreat—Wellesley FM (MA)
- 22 Salem QM—Acton MM (Concord, MA)
- 23 Coordinating & Advisory—Location, TBA
- 28 Falmouth QM—Portland FM (ME)
- 28 Sandwich QM—Westport FM (MA)

February 2006

- 4 Committee Day—Providence, RI
- 4 Vassalboro QM—Eggemoggin/Narramissic
- 5 CT Valley QM—Hartford FM (CT)
- 10–12 Young Friends Retreat—Location, TBA
- 25 Permanent Board—Location, TBA

March 2006

- 4 Northwest QM—Burlington FM (VT)
- 3–5 Youth Worker Training—Woolman Hill
- 11 Ministry & Counsel—Location, TBA
- 16–19 FWCC/Americas Annual Meeting—Guatemala
- 17–19 Young Friends Retreat—Location, TBA
- 25 Sessions Committee—Location, TBA
- 3/30–4/1 Associated Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs—Marlboro FM, Sophia, NC

April 2006

- 7–9 Elementary Retreat—Westport FM (MA)
- 8 Committee Day—Location, TBA
- 16 RI—Smithfield QM—Smithfield MM (RI)
- 21–23 Women's Retreat—Center Harbor NH [see p.6]
- 21–23 Young Friends Retreat—Mt Toby FM (MA)
- 22 Falmouth QM—Durham FM (ME)
- 22 Sandwich QM—New Bedford MM (MA)
- 23 Salem QM—Amesbury MM (MA)
- 29 Quaker Leadership Workshop—Location, TBA
- 30 Dover QM—Location, TBA

May 2006

- 5–7 Young Friends Seniors Retreat—Monadnock FM (NH)
- 6 Christian Education Workshop—Hartford MM (CT)
- 6 Vassalboro QM—Belfast/Orono
- 7 CT Valley QM—Northampton FM (MA)
- 13 Permanent Board—Location, TBA
- 19–21 Elementary Retreat—Woolman Hill, MA
- 20 Ministry & Counsel—Location, TBA

June 2006

- 2–4 Northwest QM—Farm & Wilderness (VT)
- 10 Committee Day—Location, TBA

July 2006

- 1–7 Friends General Conference Gathering—Tacoma, WA
- 16 RI—Smithfield QM—Westerly MM (RI)
- 22 Falmouth QM—Durham FM (ME)
- 22 Sandwich QM—Mattapoisett FM (MA)
- 30 Dover QM—Location, TBA

August 2006

- 5 Permanent Board meeting at Sessions
- 5–10 YM Sessions—Bryant University, Smithfield RI
- 10 Permanent Board meeting at Sessions

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Note: The *Faith & Practice* Revision Committee generally meets on the first or last Saturday of each month.

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Bryant University, Smithfield, Rhode Island