

THE NEW ENGLAND FRIEND

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Let us, as a peace church, say to this mountain...

Tom Jackson, Dover (NH) Monthly Meeting

AS INDIVIDUAL QUAKERS AND AS PART OF OUR FRIENDS Meetings, we look toward right action in response to our nation's turn toward war. We know many of the ways in which we must proceed. Pray for clarity. Pray for those in power, and for the powerless. Hold individuals and entire populations in the Light. Look for that of God in everyone. Leave time to listen for the still small voice within. It is easy to reel off the list—I state these things as though they are easy to do, but I know that especially in these times they can be very challenging.

As I travel around the Northeast, showing the documentary I produced about Iraq, and talking with people, I find that Friends are deeply concerned. Some have been active for a long time, others are just starting. Some are discouraged, because they feel that our government is simply not listening, and is out of our control.

As Friends, are we not called to pray for others—particularly our enemies? In my travels I have seen little problem among Friends in discerning who our real enemies are.

Time and time again over the last several months I have heard Friends say that they find it difficult to see that of God in George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, et al. I agree. It is extremely difficult, but we must pray for the strength to continue looking. We must pray for the insight to see that of God in everyone.

When I pray about and meditate on what to do, I am often reminded of the words of others who spoke out to Peace Churches. In 1984 Ron Sider [founder of Evangelicals for Social Action] challenged the Mennonite World Conference in Strasbourg, France. "Those who believed in peace through the sword have not hesitated to die. Proudly, courageously, they gave their lives. Again and again, they sacrificed bright futures to the tragic illusion that one more righteous crusade would bring peace in their time, and they laid down their lives by the millions." Mr. Sider suggested that those who live

their lives spreading the Gospel's call for peace must also be prepared to take risks in our pursuit.

I invite Friends to join me in praying for guidance for methods of resistance such as the many forms of non-violent civil disobedience. Perhaps tax resistance or war tax resistance are possibilities for us. Money is a language that the military-industrial-media complex understands. Estimates range from 40% to 65% of our federal taxes go to waging war. Perhaps in the tradition of Christian Peacemaker Teams who were

inspired to form after hearing Ron Sider's call, we could become part of a peace team that would work to protect the innocents in the event of a war. There are many other means for conveying our message of peace. Some require less risk. I believe we are called from where we stand today, and encouraged to push our boundaries from there.

In terms of speaking to a Peace Church, what better example do we have than in Jesus

Christ and the things he spoke of and showed in action to his disciples? He lived every day, fulfilling prophecy. He lived in utter material simplicity. He performed miracles. Yet, he told his disciples that they would perform even greater miracles!

I believe that the still small voice within is from God. I believe that the voice is hope. I close by offering a prayer for those who feel they can no longer hear that voice. Please don't give up. If we give up, that is when we can be sure that darkness will prevail. We have a mountain to move. With God's help, I believe it will be done.

Tom Jackson is available for screenings of his documentary video about Iraq, Greetings From Missile Street. The video shows interactions between a summer 2000 delegation from Voices in the Wilderness and the families who hosted them in Basra, Iraq. Greetings From Missile Street provides a rare glimpse into the day-to-day lives of ordinary Iraqis. Contact Tom at 603/868-5097 • coffeanon@yahoo.com



Photo: Skip Schiel

Seeking to do God's will in these times

Seeds of peace

Debbie Humphries, Hartford (CT) Monthly Meeting

MY CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON, DC ENDED EARLY, and I have to decide—do I go immediately to National Airport to try to get an earlier flight home, or do I go downtown and spend some time in museums? Neither option jumps out so I decide that it probably doesn't matter. I choose to head out to the airport rather than hauling my bag and laptop around a museum.

Sometimes it doesn't feel like an important decision, when I pause to listen, so I move forward with whatever my own inclination is. Other times I hold a question of whether to take a particular step for months before I'm clear on how to move forward. Last May I got the Pendle Hill catalog and found two, week-long courses I was very intrigued by, offered back to back in February 2003. I sat for months with the question of whether to register for one or both of those courses. I wanted to spend time with Bill Taber, who was leading one of the courses. But I kept thinking about the time it would take and the burden on my family for me to participate in those courses. And I was never clear to pick up the phone and call Pendle Hill. Finally last December my support committee reminded me of other times I had been clear to move forward, and I let go of the idea of going to Pendle Hill. Letting go of that option opened the way for me to consider other possibilities, and on the drive home from that meeting I reflected on the possibility of going to Barnesville. The next day I was clear to call Bill and Fran Taber and set up a time to travel to Barnesville to stay at the retreat center there for a few days.

Discernment for me is a process of listening—of holding different options up to the Light and sensing how I feel. Sometimes I only have one option to hold up, other times there are several. And most

times the answer does not come as quickly as I would like it to. As I wait for clarity on particular questions I listen both in my quiet time and during the day for any hints or help. Being clear for me is a feeling of rightness. Sometimes it is a faint pull in a particular direction, such as a willingness to go shopping at a Nordstrom's outlet with my sister-in-law, something I would not normally do. And I found a \$2 pair of shoes for my son, Cameron Jack, that were exactly what I had been looking for. Sometimes it is a ringing clarity like when I sat with the question of whether to serve on the NEYM *Faith & Practice* Revision Committee and got the answer to take up this task with joy. I don't always pause to listen, and I don't always follow the guidance when it comes. But that is what I work toward—listening at all times, and following as led.

Terry Tempest Williams told a high school graduating class that they would find no truths in the world that they did not already know in their bones. When I read that phrase for the first time my body recognized the truth, and I hold it dearly. As I listen for how to move forward in these challenging times I hold to what I know and wait for that physical recognition of truth before moving forward.

As I hold the questions of moving forward and listen for the truths my body recognizes, one clear recognition is of the seeds of war embedded in the way I live. I am holding the question of how to structure my life to decrease the seeds of war. What do I think the seeds of war are, and how am I called to address those that I find in my life? And I also find myself compelled to hold the broader question of what our society and culture will look like when the seeds of war are no longer embedded in everyday life.

The Deep

Peter Crysdale, Allens Neck (MA) Monthly Meeting

IN A SNOWSTORM THE OTHER DAY I READ DOUG GWYN'S BOOK, *Seekers Found*. It teems with little Quaker treasures. The frontispiece stopped me in my tracks.

From *A Voyage out of the Thick Darkness* (1650), by Isaac Pennington

If ever there was a time for tears without, and grief of spirit within, this seems the season: when after such an expectation of Light and Glory, of Settlement and Establishment in the things of God, such thick darkness, such universal shame, such dreadful Shatterings, have so apparently overtaken us, and are so likely daily more and more to overtake us. Not only our Superstructure, but our very Foundation is shaken; and when we have striven and tried to the utmost to settle again, we may be forced at length to confess, that there is no settling any more upon it, but we must come to a deeper bottom, or sink forever.

For me, the 'deep' is right up there with the 'light' as one of the defining characteristics of Quaker spirituality. John Woolman described Quaker silent worship by referring to Psalm 42:7, "deep calls unto deep...." And Rufus Jones raves about the deep: "We lie open on one side of our nature to God, who is the Oversoul of our souls, the Overmind of our minds, the Overperson of our personal selves. There are deeps in our consciousness which no private plumb line of our own can sound...we touch upon the coasts of a deeper universe...."

Quakerism reminds me that going to the deep is a human right and vital possibility. However, going to the deep often means experiencing with Pennington the "thick darkness."

These are times of thick darkness and finding a deeper bottom. There is something compelling about calling my spiritual life a journey to a deeper bottom. I have certainly experienced prayer and worship as thick darkness and from time to time I have found myself desperately hanging on for dear life unwilling to let go. But then—met by the Spirit—usually in a rather ordinary way, I let go of the rope and find myself on solid ground. Somebody described faith to me once in these words.

Most of us have a myriad of experiences in which we found a deeper bottom. Every wound we have recovered from; every time our broken heart has been mended; every experience of grief and suffering we have risen out of—these are all deeper bottoms—all the work of grace.

Every time a war ends or is averted; a wall comes down; or a new initiative for peace is undertaken, the blessed community witnesses a deeper bottom. Every effort for peace and justice, no matter how insignificant it might seem, is a movement in the thick darkness to a deeper bottom.

Purpose & Meaning

Susan Davies, Cambridge (MA) Monthly Meeting

HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE FOLLOWING GOD'S LEADING FOR US, what we are to do? For most of us, this question has a nitty gritty reality to it—our options are not grandiose and earth changing in their scope, due to our abilities, our personalities, our circumstances. But we are called as Friends to live that question daily.

Recently I reread *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily* by Joan Chittester. Her discussion of *purpose* and *meaning* has helped me to frame these questions in a different way. She summarizes: "Purpose determines what I will do with this part of my life. Meaning demands to know why I'm doing it and with what global results." Embedded as we are in a culture of *doing* rather than *being*, it is easy to be so busy in our purpose that we fail to examine the meaning. We need to leave space in our lives for connecting with God.

What does this mean for me? My temperament is that of a "doer," and it is hard for me to remember that how I am being in the moment is as important as what I am getting done. If I leave my Certified Public Accountant practice to manage a local nonprofit organization that clearly needs my particular skills and expertise, my purpose is clear. But what is the meaning, both initially and as I carry

out that purpose? What is my motivation and how clear am I about the implications? Why have I taken on that role in that particular organization rather than another? Was I just bored and ready for a change? Is it because it is comforting to be working in a local organization of people with similar values? Is it because the organization's mission and purpose is to house the needy, comfort the afflicted? Is it because I desperately want to follow Jesus' way and feel it will be easier in this work? And how has the answer to any of these questions changed as I accomplish the purpose? Am I listening to God as the weeks pass? I have to be very careful that at some point the will to win—to successfully restructure the organization—does not cause me to change *how* I accomplish that purpose.

The U.S. administration's march to war is so focused on purpose—prevent terrorism, avoid disruption of oil supply, rid the world of a despotic and evil man, etc. How clear it is to me that our leaders are not allowing themselves to focus on the meaning—why are we doing this, and what is the impact on the world?

My prayer is that if I make it part of my daily life to review my purpose and my meaning in the compartments of my life, God will help me to know what I am to do.

Take our fingers out of our ears, & stop yelling, "I can't hear you!"

Lindy Davies, Belfast Area (ME) Monthly Meeting

THE NOTION OF "DYING TO SELF" HAS ALWAYS TROUBLED ME. Religious life seems to entail that, in many different traditions—it is supposed to be the will of God that matters, not my own confused notions. In Zen tradition (another way of putting it), meditation is said to bring discovery of the illusory nature of the self. I thought of that the other morning, as I watched my daughter and son (two and a half and nearly six) and my wife playing together. There's nothing *illusory* about the delightfully obstinate *selves* that bloom in their faces! How can "dying to self" be anything like what I would want for them, or myself?

How do I handle the conflict between my will and God's will? It's not an easy question! I'm compelled to realize that I'm seldom clear about just what my own will is, or ought to be, or how it changes from moment to distracted moment. It seems that the only times I clearly know my own will—times when, let's say, I not only understand what to do next but how that task fits into the mysterious unfolding of my life's work—are exactly those times when I am quietly seeking God's will, those moments when I attend to the Light within.

Sitting in a Quaker Meeting years ago, I was shocked to realize that whether or not God is omnipotent, there is, nevertheless, *one* thing that we have and God does not: free will. God cannot sin. "Tao in the world is like water flowing to the sea." In other words, we can (foolishly) choose to separate ourselves from God's love, but God cannot abandon us, or hide from us. "Seek, and ye shall find." Do we want to know what God's will is in our lives? "Ask, and it shall be given."

Maybe that Zen business about the illusory nature of the self is

little more than an artifact of poor translation. Maybe it is not the *self* that is illusory—maybe what's really illusory is the *separation* of the self from the world, from God, from everything else. For it is blessedly clear that God delights in our individuality—why else would human beings be created so inscrutably nuanced that we can spend a lifetime with someone, and still be surprised by them? That means that my role in the world is to *be* an individual, and the way I discern the will of God in my life is to humbly and quietly sit with the question of *who I am!* When I know that, I will know the will of God in my life.

Moreover, I think it is not stretching the point too far to suggest that this insight applies to the life of a community as well. Our Meeting, like many others, struggled to draft a statement in response to the "war on terrorism" (we thought that "terror war" was a more apt name)—but, despite the passionate views of individuals and the general agreement on values, unity eluded us.

Recently, however, we have been meeting to consider how to strengthen our Meeting in general, which has led us to queries about the corporate "self" of our Meeting. And out of a meeting devoted to those questions came, with shockingly strong clarity, unity about an activity we would undertake to address our concerns about witnessing for peace and playing a more visible role in the local community. It seems now (in hindsight) that a rather panicky focus on *what we ought to do* produced disunity and frustration, while a calm consideration of *who we are* led us to meaningful action.

Not that it's the least bit easy, but to hear God's call, we must take our fingers out of our ears, and stop yelling "I CAN'T HEAR YOU!"

Going to Ramallah...

Katharine Clark, Framingham (MA) Monthly Meeting

Photo: Christel Jorgenson



A view of Ramallah from the Friends School

WATCHING THE STUDENTS AT THE Ramallah Friends School whirl and stomp, with their scarves and blouses billowing during a display of Debkah folk dancing filled me with joy. It made me proud to be a part of making a place—the Friends School—for youth to thrive and create a sense of their place in the world, in *that* place in the world. It gave me a sense of connectedness to another people as part of my humanity, of being part of something greater than myself.

The performance felt so normal, so teenage, and American in many ways. It was like watching any child or grandchild of yours in any school performance; and yet none of us could forget the gunshots we heard the night before. In the household where I was staying, the young women in their 20's got in their car and went looking for the action. It was so incongruent, and yet was so obviously normal for everybody there. The people in our delegation were all scared, and yet our hosts seemed to sleep well and get up the next day, just like I would have at home. Nobody complained, nobody talked about it much, except to mention that only one person was killed. To me it felt like both transcendence and denial at the same time. How do these people live with this fear everyday and hold onto hope?

I grew up going to Quaker meeting and attending Quaker school in the Philadelphia suburbs, and I spent many of my formative years with Jews. When I was in high school, it was the popular thing to do to go to Israel for the summer and work on a kibbutz. My

step-father was a Jew. I was horrified learning about the Holocaust. I had a strong sense that the creation of a Jewish homeland was the solution to the “Jewish problem.” I questioned things that seemed anti-Semitic, and yet the fear was always there—the fear that criticism of Israel was wrong and you would be labeled anti-Semitic. And then there was the fear that support for Israel was wrong.

As soon as I heard about the Friends United Meeting visit to Ramallah [see article, page 7], I was attracted like a magnet. I felt my high school years catch up and call to me. I felt the Passover dinners of my 20's and 30's call to me; and I felt the call of the “war on terrorism.” I felt nags from the years and years of stories on NPR about Israel and the Occupied Territories, from the news reports of the Intifada, and I needed to see it for myself. This call was stronger than the fear I have carried for years.

I needed to know it in my heart, to make it part of my life experience. The decision to go wasn't like a lightning bolt, although I have had that experience in the past. It was more like an “ah-ha” moment—one where you say to yourself, “Oh, this is what I am supposed to be doing!”

I immediately put this on my prayer list. I have a partner that I pray with three times a week. As I talked and prayed, even as my aunt was dying, I realized that going to Ramallah was the right challenge for me at this time. As I struggled to find my place in my family, to fulfill my role, I was also searching for my place in the bigger picture of how I as a Christian Quaker fit into a peaceful solution to the problems of the Middle East. I realized that directly or indirectly we are all a part of this conflict: American, African

or European, Christian, Muslim, or Jew. We are all invested in this land in one way or another—by our religion, our tax dollar, or our participation in the United Nations.

I cannot say that my fears for that part of the world have been put to rest. I can't offer any easy answers or solutions. Words may never help with a solution there; words eventually end up being rhetoric. One of the best things to do is to go there, and be with the people who live there. Facing the fear of facing the people you fear is the real battle—allowing your fears to have a human face. The way that humans act out of fear is the challenge. Yet, when we meet together, face to face, side by side, heart to heart, our fears diminish. When we allow God to be present in others who are not like ourselves, we can address these fears. This was what I was learning in Israel and the Occupied Territories—that God is everywhere and sometimes you have to look for God in the hardest-to-get-to places.

For most of our trip we traveled by bus. We had an Arab Israeli driver. On the way through any checkpoint, fear presents itself. Will we be allowed through? The soldiers in their bullet proof vests, full battle gear and guns walk through the bus. I was sitting in the front of the bus one time and a soldier came on who asked a few questions of our group leader, and she said she was from Indiana, and the soldier said he had been there he had relatives there and suddenly it felt like old home week instead of an interrogation. They connected and the fear dissipated.



Photo: Mary Lee Comer, Western YM

Preschool children from the Amari Refugee Camp at the Ramallah Friends Meeting's play center

Around the Yearly Meeting

Compiled from monthly meeting newsletters and correspondence by the Editors, Delia Windwalker and Jonathan Vogel-Borne

• **Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting (QM), Mt Toby & Northampton (MA) Monthly Meetings (MMs)** report the success of their Young Friends (YFs) joint First Day School meetings. At Mt. Toby the Young Friends Committee is planning a program for the spring QM and a residential program for Woolman Hill. At QM, Benigno Sanchez-Eppler, from Northampton, reported on the proposal for including YFs programs at QMs beginning with an intergenerational look at conscientious objection. The report was accepted with excitement and a core of volunteers rose to work with YFs on developing programs.

• **Hanover (NH) MM** minuted the work of Young Friends learning about the draft and conscientious objection (CO) and documenting their meeting's support of YFs seeking CO status. The business meeting noted the possibility of holding a called meeting on conscientious objection.

• **Acadia (ME) MM** published letters to the President, written by members, in their newsletter. These inspiring "Letters from the Heart" articulate deep convictions of Friends witnesses for peace and hopes for diplomacy. Copies, earthling@acadia.net

• **Hartford (CT) MM** held a special meeting to create affinity groups supporting Friends and others in the Iraq Pledge of Resistance movement. The pledge states, "if the U.S. sends combat troops, invades by proxy, bombs, or otherwise significantly escalates its intervention in Iraq, I pledge to join with others to engage in acts of nonviolent civil disobedience at U.S. Federal facilities, congressional offices, military installations, and other appropriate places. I pledge to engage in nonviolent civil disobedience in order to prevent or halt the death and destruction such U.S. military action causes the people of Iraq." The affinity groups may include both those who are prepared to engage in civil disobedience themselves and those who will support the participants.

• **All New Hampshire Gathering of Friends** peace activities included worship, workshops, and a keynote address, "Friends in a time of War and Terrorism," by David Culp, Legislative Representative for Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). The gathering in Concord also addressed state program funding constraints and leg-

islative issues related to the environment. After closing with meeting for worship Friends joined Carroll County peace activists demonstrating on the Capitol Plaza in single digit temperatures!

• **Worcester (MA) MM** minuted its recognition and support of Michael True, a long-time peace educator and activist, as a "Released Friend."

• **Fresh Pond (MA) MM** continues to consider ways to corporately support the prison ministry and work with Concord Prison Outreach of their member Nancy Shippen. Her clearness committee reports that her calling is prompting her to take a leave of absence from her teaching job. They have listened and offered encouragement and guidance as the call has expanded. Now they feel a need to engage the meeting community; the committee asks, How the meeting might stand behind this call?—including funding her support. In an article commenting on Released Friends, Will Taber notes that supporting those called to ministry is a testimony to Friends belief that spirituality is both individual and communal. The meeting continues to seek clarity around this gift of ministry. Fresh Pond invites others with experience releasing Friends into ministry to contact Will Taber, 781/643-6176 • taberhome@att.net

• **Wellesley (MA) MM Jr.** High group sold food, mostly between Meeting for Worship and Meeting for Business, to raise money for a project to destroy/remove land mines. The Meeting approved a matching grant of \$500. In a "Swords Into Plowshares" project, a younger group, with help, created a peace sign sculpture and gathered war toys which were fastened to it at a local ecumenical worship service.

• **Connecticut Valley QM** appointed a committee to formally address state legislators on issues of gender discrimination and gay and lesbian concerns.

• **Rhode Island-Smithfield QM** Prison Ministry Committee celebrated ten years of ministry at the Adult Correctional Institute of Rhode Island on 3/16/2003. **Wellesley (MA) MM**, who supports a worship group at Norfolk Prison, sent a minute of appreciation and thanks to the Quarter's Prison Ministry Committee, recognizing that "this ministry is not always easy and requires great

faithfulness to the leadings of those who are responsible for it, even while it gives great joy both to those from outside and those inside the prison who participate."

• **Monadnock (NH) MM** Ministry & Counsel is conducting a survey of the religious beliefs of meeting participants. The survey consists of 32 statements, such as, "prayer can make changes in the world," and "beliefs are fine, but actions and service really count." The survey asks for two responses to each statement along a "NoNo" to "YesYes" continuum—What do you believe? and, What do you think most of the meeting believes? The results of the survey will be circulated in late April.

• **Concord (NH) MM** young people have raised over \$2,000 to benefit the Lindi School located in an extremely impoverished section of Nairobi, Kenya. Darcy Drayton of **Weare (NH) MM** is organizing support for the school through Africa Quaker Vision, an organization founded by young adult Kenyan Friends. Money will be used for tuition assistance and to buy land for the school's permanent site.

• **Dartmouth at Smith Neck (MA) MM** youth have started "Change for Change," to raise money for the Aids Orphanage Project of Kakamega YM in Kenya. "The youth have distributed containers to area businesses so that people can empty their pocket *change* to make a positive *change* for these orphans in Kenya."

• **Smithfield (RI) MM** hosted a Public Forum on *Iraq: War or Peace?* sponsored by the Blackstone Valley Interfaith Community. The panel, invited by the meeting's Peace & Social Concerns Committee, represented diverse perspectives on U.S. policies with a professor from the Naval War College and another from Regina College's Graduate International Relations Program, along with a cleric from the Episcopal Peace Fellowship and a Congregational minister.



Smithfield (RI) Meetinghouse

In other Quaker news

Call for YFs and Jr. High Sessions Staff

Do you find adult business meeting to be lacking in youthful vitality? Do you wish you could sing loud, raucous songs everyday at Sessions? Have you always wanted to wear a cool T-shirt that identifies you as part of the "in" crowd? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you should think about staffing the Jr. High or Young Friends Program at Sessions this summer. Both programs have great youth, seasoned and organized coordinators, and are looking for staff. Contact: Lisa Graustein, Interim Young Friends Coordinator, 617/740-9377 • lisa_g@theworld.com, or Buddy Baker-Smith, Jr. High Coordinator, 508/997-0940 • baker-smiths@prodigy.net

New England Friends Peace Tax Fund

NEYM has reactivated the New England Friends Peace Tax Fund, established in 1979 to assist conscientious tax resisters (see NEYM *Faith & Practice*, pages 186 & 210). Like other peace tax funds, this Fund allows NEYM members and attenders to deposit unpaid taxes, to remove any personal profit from not paying the IRS. If the IRS later seizes the money owed, the Fund will reimburse the depositor. If the money is not seized, after five years it becomes a completed gift to NEYM for "life-affirming activities consistent with Friends principles." The Yearly Meeting and Permanent Board revised

the Trust Agreement and procedures and appointed Ruah Swennerfelt, Burlington (VT) MM, as Fund Administrator, 802/425-3377 • ruah@fcun.org

2003 BHFH Weed Lecture

Peace Through Transformation by Vanessa Julye of Philadelphia YM is scheduled for 1:30pm, 4/13/03 at Beacon Hill Friends House, 6 Chestnut Street, Boston, MA, 617/227-9118 • BHFHDirectors@aol.com

"Practice of Clerking" workshop

The Coordinating & Advisory Committee is sponsoring its annual workshop on clerking, 5/3/2003, from 9:30am-3:30pm at Westerly, RI. All interested Friends will gather for a time of nurture, sharing, and support. RSVP to the NEYM Office, 508/754-6760 • neym@neym.org

Upcoming events at Woolman Hill

Renewing Ourselves in Silence, Debbie Humphries, 4/18-20; *Focus on Families*, Kevin & Betty Ann Lee, 4/25-27; *Eldering Retreat: Renewal, Encouragement, Community*, Kenneth Sutton, 5/2-4; *Artists in Residence Week*, Arthur Fink, 5/4-9; *Woolman Hill Spring Workday*, 5/26; *Second Annual Woolman Hill "Friend-zy,"* 8/21-24. Woolman Hill, 107 Keets Road, Deerfield, MA 01342 • 413/774-3431 • info@woolmanhill.org

Quaker Missions Project

Brad Hathaway of Mattapoisett (MA) MM reports that as of 11/15/02 sales of donated postage stamps, postcards and historical papers have raised \$22,750. The funds are donated to over 40 organizations worldwide. Several collections were donated to support specific organizations. Proceeds from the late William Kriebel's stamp collection went to Costa Rica in memory of his niece Ann Kriebel to the fund named for her. As a young Quaker, Ann devoted herself to the people of San Luis. The Monteverde Institute's Ann Kriebel Fund continues that work improving the quality of life in San Luis. To support the Quaker Missions Project use commemorative stamps, encourage recipients and your Friends to participate by sending cancelled stamps and inquiries to Brad Hathaway, c/o Mattapoisett Friends Meeting, PO Box 795, Mattapoisett, MA 02739

Easter Books for First Day School

Did you ever wish for an Easter book that presents the resurrection from a Quaker perspective, or perhaps one that explores new beginnings without mentioning Jesus by name? Two First Day school teachers have written different yet wonderful Easter books that promise to inspire. For copies, *About Eastertime*, by Allison Randall, Keene (NH) Worship Group 603/878-2890 • AllisonJoyful@Juno.com. *Spring Beginnings*, by Jamie Taylor, Hartford (CT) MM 860/673-4185 • jataylor157@attbi.com

Eden Grace receives Knapp award

Massachusetts Council of Churches recognized Eden Grace of Beacon Hill (MA) MM with the Forrest L. Knapp Ecumenical Award. John Maheras presented the award describing Eden as "an avid ecumenist." He recognized her talents and leadership, her inspired and resourceful spirit, and her fluency in ecumenical understanding. See Eden's acceptance speech at edengrace.org

John Kellam Publishes Memoirs

An American Prisoner of Conscience in WWII. This self-published paperback, prepared for Quaker archives, is an edited transcript of an interview by Caroline Besse Webster of South Berkshire (CT) MM. Available for \$13 from John Kellam [Providence (RI) MM], 19 Firglade Ave., Providence, RI 02906-2623 • 401/351-5671

Registration for 2003 Sessions at Stonehill College, Easton, MA

Thinking ahead

Friends, I am so excited about the learning opportunities in my new job as the yearly meeting's Registrar/Housing Coordinator. We have a beautiful new gathering place and evolving new technologies to support our NEYM work. Those of you using the internet and e-mail may register earlier than ever for this summer's gathering. I will post registration materials on the NEYM website, www.neym.org when they are ready in mid-May. *Early discount registration ends July 5, 2003.*

Register early

I will send electronic confirmations to any registrations from households with an e-mail address. This e-mail response will contain links to all the documents previously printed in the NEYM office and sent out

by the registrar and volunteers via the USPS. You may then read and print out what you need—saving trees and postage!

E-mail the Sessions Registrar

Now is the time to give us your e-mail address to update our database. I will send out this announcement to the current e-mail list in the NEYM database, so if you don't get this electronically, then e-mail me a request for inclusion. As we post the Sessions registration materials I will send out additional e-mail announcements. Please forward this information through your meeting's e-mail lists and newsletters for both printed and electronic distribution to Friends and attenders who may not be receiving *The New England Friend*.

—Delia Windwalker, registrar@neym.org

A pastoral visit to Ramallah Friends School

Katharine Clark with Deana Chase, Christel Jorgenson, & Blair Tatman

THE WORLD MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT of Friends United Meeting (FUM) is developing avenues of service where Friends can walk alongside the people of Israel/Palestine in their grief and pain. To effectively implement this accompaniment, Retha McCutchen, FUM General Secretary invited leaders of FUM yearly meetings to experience this difficult situation first hand. Retha says that “visiting there has changed my life. It is my hope that upon return, you will sense the importance of this ministry and encouragement.... Listening will be our greatest contribution.”

In February, twenty-one American and five Kenyan Friends journeyed to Israel and the Occupied West Bank to witness the effects of these dangerous times on the Ramallah Friends School and Monthly Meeting. The ten day journey was riddled with questions—Would Friends get through passport control, the daily checkpoints? What might we learn? What would happen to us?

JERUSALEM, DAYS 1 THROUGH 4

Day 1: We were searched upon entering a coffee shop for a light supper and dessert. *Day 2:* Orientation, walking the Old City, visiting the Wailing Wall and listening to Christian Peacemaker Teams volunteers described their patrols focused on de-escalating potential violence in Hebron. *Day 3:* Bus tour with an Israeli guide of the annexed portion of East Jerusalem: recently “confiscated” land; a house that had been demolished and rebuilt three times; a 50-year old refugee camp; a tidy new Israeli settlement overlooking Palestinian land; and a portion of the wall (called the “security fence”) that

divides a Palestinian village. In the evening we heard a panel discussion that conveyed hope in the people’s resilience, but also discouragement at the demise of the grass roots peace processes. Rabbi Arik Ascherman, Executive Director of Rabbis for Human Rights, is outraged at the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the increase of settlements. Jeff Halper, Coordinator of the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions, shared his concern that the occupation is abstract to most Israelis, who are insulated from the destruction done in their name. Jonathan Kuttub, a leading human rights lawyer defending Palestinians, feels that this is a spiritual battle, to speak the truth and persist. *Day 4:* Visit to Bethlehem where we were told we were the first group of “tourists” in two years. The desertion of Bethlehem by the Christian middle class has demoralized the remaining population. In the evening we heard Ira Kerem, coordinator between Jewish Federations in America and Israel, and Father Naim Ateek, who preaches a liberation theology for Palestinians.

RAMALLAH, DAYS 5 THROUGH 9

We were emotionally tired as we prepared to cross the Israeli checkpoint into Ramallah. We waited at the checkpoint under guard towers, tanks within 50 yards. We watched ambulances and cars stopped and searched, some cars turned away. Soldiers with guns boarded our bus and later let us pass through. When we finally arrived at the Friends School we were warmly welcomed by staff and our host families. Our first night in Ramallah was interrupted by machine gun gunfire.

The next day we visited the Ramallah Friends Meeting Play Center in the Amari Refugee Camp where we were greeted by 42 lively preschoolers in a tiny building on land donated by the United Nations.

At the Friends School, students gave us tours of the upper and lower schools, where we met some of the 950 Muslim and



Walking through checkpoint on way to Bir Zeit University

Christian students. Staff, students, and the local community are grateful for the educational opportunities offered there. In the preschool class we watched a video showing the children in the aftermath of the long siege and curfew of Ramallah last spring. Many of us left in tears, after seeing the children in this video crying or numbly standing alone. The emotional and educational cost of Israeli Defense Force incursions is heavy. The School now has plans for continuing student lessons during curfews. We struggled to comprehend how families and young people keep hope alive.

Other destinations included the National School for the Blind, the Abu Raya Rehabilitation Center (for Palestinians injured during Israeli incursions), the Ka Kab botanical garden on the Friends School property, the American Friends Service Committee offices, and the Ramallah Friends Meetinghouse. We enjoyed a cultural evening of poetry, drama, song and dance performed by the Friends School students.

Before returning to Jerusalem, we visited Bir Zeit University. From the Friends School we took a Palestinian taxi to a point where the Israeli government had piled dirt and debris blocking the road. We walked a hilly kilometer in the cold rain past two Israeli jeeps with soldiers and guns to take another taxi to the University. This hour and a half of taxi negotiating, walking, and jostling, was once a 10-minute car ride.

What is the witness for peace we have to offer the world in Ramallah, where Friends have been for 135 years? How can we continue to support the school in the face of violence and economic deterioration? What would Christ have us do?



Upper school students

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Please send **ALL FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS** to the Yearly Meeting **DIRECTLY** to the Treasurer, Ken Hoffman, 343 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002

Please let the NEYM Office know of any address changes or monthly meeting membership changes

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THE NEW ENGLAND FRIEND

YEARLY MEETING CALENDAR

April 2003

- 4–6 Elementary Retreat – Westport, MA
- 11–13 Young Friends Retreat – Westport & Allen’s Neck, MA
- 11–13 FWCC NE Regional Gathering – Woolman Hill, MA
- 11–13 Women’s Retreat – Geneva Point, NH
- 12 Committee Day – Hanover, NH
- 13 BHFH Weed Lecture – Beacon Hill, MA [see p.6]
- 21–26 Young Friends Service Retreat – Boston, MA
- 26 All Maine Friends Gathering – S. China ME
- 26 Sandwich QM – East Sandwich, MA
- 27 RI–Smithfield QM – Providence, RI
- 27 Salem QM – North Shore, MA

May 2003

- 2–4 Young Friends Retreat – Mt. Toby, MA
- 2–4 M&C Eldering Retreat – Woolman Hill, MA
- 3 “Practice of Clerking” Workshop – Westerly, RI [see p.6]
- 4 United Society of Friends Women – Smithfield, RI
- 4 CT Valley QM – Northampton, MA
- 9–11 Elementary Retreat – Woolman Hill, MA
- 10 Permanent Board – Hanover, NH
- 16–18 Young Friends Senior Retreat – Monadnock, NH
- 16–18 Junior High Retreat – Friends Camp, ME
- 17 Ministry & Counsel – Hanover, NH

June 2003

- 7–8 Northwest QM – at Farm & Wilderness, VT

- 13–15 Young Adult Friend Retreat – Mt Toby, MA
- 14 Committee Day – Moses Brown, Providence, RI
- 21 Friends China Camp 50th Anniversary – S. China, ME
- 28–7/5 Friends General Conference Gathering – Johnstown, PA
- 29 Dover QM – North Sandwich, NH

July 2003

- 20 RI–Smithfield QM – Smithfield, RI
- 26 Falmouth QM – Oxford Hills, ME
- 26 Sandwich QM – Allen’s Neck, MA

August 2003

- 2–7 YM Sessions – Stonehill College, Easton, MA
- 31 Dover QM – Pittsfield, NH

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

2003 Sessions, August 2-7, at NEW LOCATION!
—Stonehill College in Easton, MA—

Theme: *To Build God’s Peaceable World* (Isaiah 11:6-9)
Keynote: Mary Lord (Baltimore YM)
Bible Half Hour: Evelyn Gonzales (Cuba YM)