

2005—the year of nonviolence—a call to action

Michael True, Released Friend from Worcester-Pleasant Street (MA) Monthly Meeting

THIS YEAR IS AN IMPORTANT YEAR FOR NONVIOLENCE, and an appropriate time for Friends to call attention to the remarkable achievements of nonviolent direct action in recent history, including advances in nonviolence theory and strategy. This call to action offers a few suggestions for doing so, within the context of the peace testimony and Friends' attempts to integrate peace within and without—personal transformation and nonviolent social change.

The theory and practice of nonviolence (once known as “nonresistance” and “passive resistance,”) have informed our witness to the world over the past three and a half centuries, as represented by William Penn, John Woolman, Abigail Kelley Foster, Lucretia Mott, Rufus Jones, Kenneth Boulding, and other Quakers.

Although the world continues to be ravaged by violence and war, significant numbers of people have dramatized the fact that satyagraha (sanskrit for “truth power”) or “people power” is not only a realistic alternative to violence, but also a strategy for peace-making. From the Ukraine to Myanmar and from Burundi to Sri Lanka to Ft. Benning, Georgia, the power of nonviolence has proved itself as the way to peace and conflict transformation.

It is no coincidence that individuals and communities embracing nonviolence have been inspired and guided by the scholarship and research of Gene Sharp and his associates at the Albert

Einstein Institution, Boston. Since the publication of *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (1973), Sharp's work, translated into thirty languages and widely distributed in the former Yugoslavia and

Ukraine, has helped us to make the spirituality of the peace testimony practicable. For this reason, the publication of his new book, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential* (2005) offers a special opportunity to call attention to the achievements of nonviolence around the world, including the UN Decade for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010, World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence, 2001-2010, and the Nonviolent Peaceforce.

In addition to participating and supporting nonviolent movements, members of NEYM may wish to take advantage of this opportunity by 1) inviting Gene Sharp and his AEI associate, Hardy Merriman, a Friend, to give a workshop at NEYM; 2) publicizing the new book and ordering it for schools and libraries; and 3) sponsoring discussion groups and similar events.

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Michael True is offering a Quaker Studies Program, “The Testimony and Spirituality of Peacemaking,” 2/6, 2/13, & 2/20/2005 at Framingham Meeting. Contact Shearman Taber, 617/965-7042 • spencertaber@comcast.net. Contact Michael directly for presentations on nonviolence, 508/757-8228 • mtrue@assumption.edu

Photo: Jonathan Vogel-Borne



Good Friday Witness for Peace, Boston Common

So yesterday the phone rang...

Maxwell Dubler, Westport (MA) Monthly Meeting

SO YESTERDAY NIGHT THE PHONE RANG. It was 6:30pm on a Monday evening in July, the summer before my senior year. I get the feeling that the timing of this call was intentional. In any event, the caller ID said “United States Government.” I speculated for a few moments as to who it was and why they were calling. Was it the IRS? Was it the passport office? Was it the CIA alerting us that they had bugged our house before we moved in? My mother picked it up on speakerphone.

“Is Maxwell Dubler there?” said the

rather gruff male voice on the other end of the line, incorrectly pronouncing the ‘u’ in my name so it sounded like “Duh-bler.” The phone was handed to me. The man on the other end of the line introduced himself. He was a sergeant, calling from the army's recruiting office. After a few formalities, he asked me what my plans were for after high school.

I was raised Quaker. I sat on a bus for nineteen hours to go to Washington DC to protest the Iraq war. Twice. I've written articles on the false promises of free

education made by these recruiters. I've known since the Seventh grade how to become a legal conscientious objector or, if necessary, evade a draft. There was no way in hell this man could convince me to join the military, even if my homosexuality didn't automatically render me ineligible for service. “Well, I'm not entirely sure what I'm doing after my senior year, but it doesn't involve killing people for a living,” I said. I never have been one for pulling punches.

What do we do with a hate bred of fear and ignorance?

Lisa Graustein, Beacon Hill (MA) Monthly Meeting & NEYM Young Friends Coordinator

USUALLY, MY RESPONSE to this question has been to ignore the hate as best I can, or, occasionally, try to bridge it through personal relationship. As a Quaker, a white woman, and a lesbian volunteering as a peace keeper at the Massachusetts Constitutional Conventions last spring, my tactic has been to stand in the face of it, smile lovingly at the person behind it, and simply hold it so others don't have to. Using this spiritual discipline of separating the hate from the person and working to love the person is a political tactic that helps keep me effective as a peace keeper, keeps me whole as a person, and creates hope.

AT THE SECOND CONVENTION

We're standing inside the State House, across from the room in which the Senate and House are meeting to debate. The political tactic of Mass Equality is to fill the hallway and sing "God Bless America," "America the Beautiful," and "The Star Spangled Banner" until the session votes or recesses. I find myself explaining over and over again why we are singing these songs—many want to chant or yell. The strategy is to have a continuous, calm, and patriotic presence inside the chambers.

As the day progresses, churches begin bussing in members wearing "One woman, one man—God's plan" stickers. They pray and chant the slogan on their stickers. All but a handful of the pro-same-sex marriage demonstrators are white. Almost all of the "One woman, one man—God's plan" folks are people of color. A woman of color standing

behind me begins to cry and quietly says "Those are my people" as the chanting grows louder. This moment of recognition of the divide of race, sexual orientation, and racism is one of the most painful parts of the day, for it will last long after this specific issue of marriage rights is decided.

The chanting side grows larger in the afternoon. A

prayer circle is formed by a number of large white men and they are using the circle to try and push a group of pro-same-sex marriage demonstrators out of their space. I am sent to stand with the demonstrators. I am back to back with a man a good foot taller than me. He is pushing back against me and praying that the "sodomizing sinners will give up their demonizing ways, will repent and come to Jesus." I find myself tensing up and pushing back against him, railing in my head against his prayer. This is the first time today that I have gotten really angry.

I pause and just breathe. It is then that I remember a workshop I did on prayer with Young Friends—we did an activity where partners were asked to sit back to back after sharing prayer requests and just breathe together. I stop listening to the praying, the chanting and singing. I stop trying to push back. I try to align my breath with the man's breathing. With each breath I try to breathe kindness, compassion, and peace for myself and him. He continues to push against me, we are packed in with no where to move. I simply stand, and end up leaning against him. I am no longer pushing, I am no longer angry, and, with the support of his much larger frame, lean there for the length of the prayer circle. Eventually they leave. We reclaim the whole space and continue singing.

AT THE THIRD CONVENTION

I'm assigned to be outside today in front of the state house. A 30-something white man, dressed in suit and tie, walks into the crowd carrying a 4'x5' sign that proclaims that all homosexuals are possessed by demons. He walks through the crowd holding the sign above his head and yelling out Biblical quotations and preaching against the sins of homosexuality. He is so inflammatory that everywhere he goes, people engage—these quickly become angry and heated yelling matches. Many demonstrators try to use their signs to cover his, which he then yells about, bringing the police into the conflict. I am one of three peace keepers to tail him all day, trying to keep people from engaging him and blocking his sign.

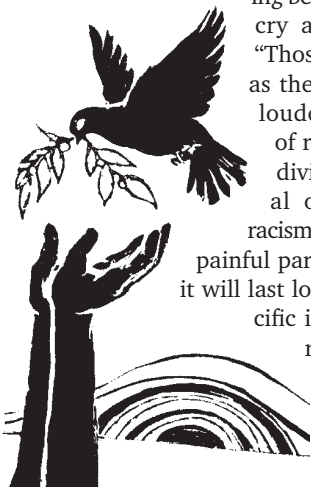
This man, who won't tell me his name when I introduce myself, begins to call me the "devil's daughter" or "devil's watchdog." By mid-afternoon, he is getting irate with

my presence. He yells at me to leave him alone. I respond that I am only making sure that people don't touch him or block his sign. He questions why I am doing this. I begin to explain that as a Quaker, I am committed to equality and peace. He interrupts me and begins demanding to know what a Quaker is. I am happy that we are finally talking, I begin to explain Quakerism. He again interrupts me, telling me that I am not a Quaker. I fall for the bait and reply that I am. He continues to talk at me, his voice rising to almost yelling. I am lowering my voice and slowing down, hoping to slow him down in turn.

By this point a bit of a crowd has gathered around us. I continue to explain Quakerism; he starts telling me I am a "faker, not a Quaker." I find myself getting angry at him and wanting to argue back. I am aware of those watching, many of whom I had asked earlier not to argue with him. I tell him that if he continues to interrupt me, I will have to stop talking to him and start praying for him. He yells back and I fall silent and pray. He goes off on some diatribe about the sins of homosexuality and the evils of false religions. I stand there and pray for peace and wholeness for us both. He eventually calms down and leaves to take a break.

The day after the last Convention, I found I couldn't remember the exact words of the man's large sign—even though I had spent more than 10 hours with him. The practice of letting the hate pass through had worked. I will remember him, the intensity of his emotion, and the gist of his message, but not his words that sought to deny me and others of our humanity. His image, and what he represents, no longer holds a visceral fear for me. If I had argued back, had pushed back, had engaged, I would not have been able to be at the Conventions for the twelve or sixteen hours they lasted. I would have left furious and hoarse and feeling ineffective. Instead, I left physically exhausted, but emotionally whole and sustained.

Note: This is part of a larger essay, the issues of race and sexual orientation are much more complex than portrayed here. I have experienced much more intense homophobia in predominantly white communities than in communities that are predominantly people of color.



Quaker Peacebuilder Camp begins 2nd year

Brian Drayton, Weare (NH) Monthly Meeting

THE QUAKER PEACEBUILDER CAMP, launched this past year with the support and partnership of American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and many New England Friends and friends, is now preparing for its second summer program. The outpouring of financial and prayer support provides evidence that the Camp is an expression of the need for joyful, constructive action in a time of war and doubt.

Our vision. The Peacebuilder Camp is intended to help participants develop the skills, understanding, and relationships that will help them become better organizers of positive, nonviolent action. We also seek to provide an experience of community that fosters spiritual practice and reflection as the foundation for faithful action.

We are committed to the belief that Quaker witness is rooted in a spiritual concern. While the initial focus of our work

is with youth, we hope that as the vision unfolds and our support grows, we will add intergenerational components, recognizing that we are all seekers and need to improve our skills for effective action.

What happened last summer. The camp curriculum includes the theory and practice of community organizing and non-violent action skills in group decision-making and discernment, outdoor recreation and physical labor, and hands-on experience with planning and implementing an action and/or a group service project. This is a lot to fit into a 10-day event, but a skilled and (apparently) tireless staff pulled off great things. Of the 15 campers, nine were Quaker youth from throughout New England. Five were inner-city youth from Hartford. We had eight young women and seven young men. Seven were youth of color. As you can see, we had a kaleidoscope of backgrounds and interests. These young people, plus our five equally diverse staff, came to form a real community for learning and support. The camp began and ended in Hartford, using facilities at Trinity College. Team-building activities included a morning at a ropes course, and three evenings of music

and African drumming. They also collaborated with a community organization working in the neighborhoods surrounding Trinity's campus in planning and implementing a community action as part of an ongoing campaign against slumlords. They spent the middle four days of the camp at The Meeting School (TMS) in southern New Hampshire, where they continued the skill-building curriculum while preparing for the community action. They enjoyed interacting with TMS staff in "outdoor work opportunities" (haymaking was the highlight of the camp for many of the campers).

What did they learn? The camp staff built in significant time for reflection, along with chances for the campers to give us feedback on their experiences. They told us that they felt more empowered to act, ready to join in groups organizing for change in their communities, and

ready to learn more about nonviolent action and community organizing.

Next steps. We are well on our way to crafting an even better program that will establish the Quaker Peacebuilder Camp as an ongoing opportunity for youth in New England. The 2005 camp will take place 6/30-7/10, again using facilities at Trinity College in Hartford, CT, and at The Meeting School. Our advisory committee has grown, including a new youth member. The committee now comprises Brian Drayton (Weare), Christel Jorgenson (Cambridge), Julia Riseman and Elias Sanchez-Eppler (both of Northampton), and Jeremy Brecher, an historian of social movements and alumni of AFSC youth camps. Finally, our gifted core staff will continue this year—John Humphries, assisted by Molly Higgins-Biddle.

In a very exciting development, we have joined in partnership with The Meeting School, providing our new financial and organizational home, as well as a wonderful location for potential expansion of our activities. The camp fits well with The Meeting School's mission, and we are excited about the opportunity to work more closely together.

"I loved that people of diverse backgrounds came together and formed a community. I loved all the stuff we learned. I loved the laughter and the music."

What you can do...

THE QUAKER PEACEBUILDER CAMP has been greatly strengthened by the blessings, prayers, and support of Friends and Quaker Meetings. We are gathering a list of names of Friends who are supportive and hopeful for this project and who are willing to hold this camp in the Light. Below is a sample statement and other ways you can further support this project.

- Add your name to the list of Friends who offer their blessings and prayers of support for this project (See below).
- Make a tax-deductible contribution to the project to ensure its success.
- Approach your meeting about making a contribution to the Scholarship Fund.
- Volunteer to become a mentor to a summer camp youth.
- Join the Peacebuilder Camp's e-mail listserve to receive updates.
- Include information about this camp in your meeting's newsletter.
- Share information about the this summer's camp with an interested Young Friend or young person.

[Sample Blessing Statement]

To Friends Everywhere,

We are offering our blessings and prayers of support to the Quaker Peacebuilder Camp, joyful in the knowledge that this intensive summer experience will provide young people with meaningful community, foster opportunities for spiritual discernment for faithful action, and develop skills in non-violence action and community organizing leading to group projects of social action and service.

This project gives us hope, and we will hold it in the Light.

Peace be with you,

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

- I would like to add my blessings to the Quaker Peacebuilder Camp.
- You may print my name as a supporter of this project.
- Please do not print my name, but know that I support this project.
- I would also like to give financial support to this project and have enclosed a tax-deductible donation of \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: Peacebuilder Camp and send, c/o The Meeting School, 56 Thomas Road, Rindge, NH 03461. Contact John Humphries, 860/236-5175 • jhumphries@igc.org

The blessing of marriages at Northampton Friends Meeting

Suzy Klein-Berndt, with help from other members of Northampton (MA) Friends Meeting

ON SEPTEMBER 12, 2004 Northampton Friends Meeting had a party to celebrate seven weddings that had either taken place recently or were about to take place. Of these wedding, five were marriages of same-sex couples who had been previously denied the right to a legal marriage.

None of these five marriages, nor the marriages of thousands of other same-sex couples in Massachusetts, would have been possible without the tireless work of Gina and Heidi Nortonsmith of Northampton Friends Meeting and the six other couples who were plaintiffs in the Goodridge lawsuit.

Gina and Heidi took the step of being part of this lawsuit as a spiritual testimony rather than in the spirit of political confrontation. They feel privileged to have the strength that comes from their love for each other and their children while feeling completely loved and supported by their families and their meeting community. Heidi said that her Quaker up-bringing helps her to "greet that of God in everyone" and feel that they can "touch a Godly place in everyone." Heidi told me of one African-American man from a military background who was at one of their presentations. He started out with his arms crossed and looking judgmental. As he listened to Gina and Heidi and watched them simultaneously tend to their young children his attitude changed. He told them afterwards that at first he did not look at them and see a family. While it pained him to say it, he came to see that they were more of a family than some of the more traditional families that he was related to. Heidi describes their work for the freedom to marry as a central part of their spiritual lives and we within the Northampton Meeting community have been blessed to experience their ministry firsthand. We hope that New England Yearly Meeting will take the opportunity to call upon and learn from their ministry as well.

To those of us who know and love Heidi, Gina and their sons Avery and Quinn Nortonsmith, it has been obvious that their relationship is based on a long history of deep love and commitment. Since our early

days as a worship group, Northampton Friends Meeting has been blessed by the active participation of people of both homosexual and heterosexual orientations. The long-term loving relationships that bonded many of these same-sex couples became for us the living testimony that their love had



Left to right: (back row) Elizabeth Armstrong & Stacey Dakai, Gina & Heidi Nortonsmith, Peg Arny & Janice Doppler, Diana Ditmore & Eli Cooper, (front row) Quinn & Avery Nortonsmith, Becky Jones & Macci Schmidt, May Saito (from another Meeting family)

Photo: Suzy Klein-Berndt

to be recognized as a gift of God. This testimony fed the individual leadings and the corporate clarity that compelled us to affirm the following minute on June 9, 1996.

Northampton Friends Meeting wishes to affirm that we extend to all members of our community, whatever their sexual orientation, the same quality of love and support. We are one community of faith; we experience the varieties of love in our community as gifts of God. We affirm that we are all children of God and that we all have the same potential to reflect the Divine Light in our lives. Our faith underlies these affirmations:

First, concerning the spiritual basis of our beliefs, as a group our hearts resonate deeply with the biblical injunctions to "love God" and to "love your neighbor as yourself." We experience all forms of loving relationships as manifestations of God's love on earth.

Second, we believe that Friends' testimony on equality is central to our Quaker faith. Just as Friends have historically witnessed for equality among all races and both sexes, so do we now witness for equality among people of all sexual orientations. We understand equality not as sameness

but as equality of respect.

Third, we affirm that our sexuality and sexual identity are integral components of who we are, not separate from who we are as spiritual beings. For lesbian, gay and bisexual members of the community, this allows for a wholeness of being, a feeling of personal unity within the context of the community. We bring our whole selves to our relationship with the Divine and find that sexuality within a loving relationship, whether homosexual or heterosexual, has the potential to bring us closer to God.

We as a Meeting feel we have been blessed by the presence and participation of lesbians, gays and bisexuals as individuals and, for some, as partners in same sex couples. We are committed to providing spiritual care and acceptance to all these individuals, believing that the spiritual growth of each person best ripens in the context of a community of faith and with the support and loving regard of that community. Furthermore, we are committed to seeking out ways to actively provide that love and support, being mindful of the oppression lesbians, gays and bisexuals face in our society.

At the first Meeting for business of the newly formed Northampton Friends Meeting in February, 1994, the following minute on same-sex marriage was joyfully adopted:

Northampton Friends Meeting affirms the goodness of committed, loving relationships and offers recognition and support to those who share this ideal and desire to enter into a permanent relationship based upon it. By tradition, the Meeting recognizes committed union in a celebration of marriage under the care of the Meeting.

The same loving care and consideration will be given to both same-sex and heterosexual applicants as outlined in *Faith and Practice*.

The Meeting shares a vision of a future that extends all the same rights to homosexual couples as are now enjoyed by heterosexual couples under the law. The Meeting's vision of marriage will not be complete until the unification of the legal and the spiritual is complete and available to all.

Around the Yearly Meeting

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

• **Keene (NH) Worship Group** became a **Keene (NH) Monthly Meeting (MM)** by action of the **Northwest Quarterly Meeting (QM)** on 12/4/04.

• **China (ME) MM**, after having not met for worship in a number of years, has been meeting at Lee and Ann Austin's home for about a year. Through Ralph Greene, who provides pastoral leadership two Sundays a month at North Fairfield (ME) MM, the two monthly meetings have published a joint newsletter, "I Have Called You Friends" (John 15:15).

• **Northampton (MA) MM** Young Friends presented a minute on the military draft that says in part, "witness of peace arises from an awareness of the divine in each person. Northampton MM recognizes the undersigned individuals who are deeply conscious of that of God in themselves and others. ... They believe that participation in war is not a service to their country, so they take on the work of healing and helping and ministering in their communities, both within this country, and without. We make this statement of affirmation so that in the future, these individuals will be recognized as peace makers by those who want them for war."

• **Framingham (MA) MM** working party against racism in conjunction with the NEYM Working Party Against Racism sends monthly postcards "Considering White Privilege and Racism Among Us," to meetings in NEYM with suggestions on what Friends can do to work against racism. Several meetings have published these suggestions in their newsletters.

• **Fresh Pond (MA) MM** minuted its recognition and support of Nancy Shippen's prison ministry. The meeting "affirms that Nancy's work is based on a true calling from God, and is true to Quaker principles and traditions. ... We encourage Friends everywhere to increase their knowledge of the underlying political, economic, and racial factors which too often lead to incarceration, and to increase their awareness of life-changing educational and spiritual growth many prisoners try to achieve." Nancy formed a non-profit organization, Our Prison Neighbors, to be a vehicle for prison ministry.

• **Hanover (NH) MM** Ministry & Counsel sponsored a series of pot luck suppers this fall to consider how the peace testimo-

ny is central to our faith. Some reflections from these gatherings: —"We found it helpful to think about contemplation and action as being two axes of a two-dimensional graph, rather than along two ends of a continuum." —"The most effective and valuable actions that Quakers have taken have been when they have been spiritually led. To be reminded of the source, and to let the Spirit shed light on the issue and those involved, and then to examine the issues and act on them, profoundly changes the dynamic. The notion of loving your enemy and looking for that of God in your opponent is very powerful."

• **Salem (MA) QM** adopted a minute on same-sex marriage which says in part that the Quarter "supports the right of all adult couples to join in legal marriage and to enjoy the full legal benefits of that state. ... We oppose any law or constitutional amendment which restricts the right of gay and lesbian couples to legally marry."

• **Mt. Toby (MA) MM** approved renaming their Overseers Committee, the Care and Counsel Committee. Friends had found "Overseers" a difficult word with racist connotations and that the name did not clearly speak to the Committee's work.

• **Concord (NH) MM** Young Friends are engaged in a video project, interviewing people in the meeting community about their spiritual experiences and beliefs.

• **Durham (ME) MM** reports that James Douglas has resigned as pastor. In a letter to the meeting, Jim states, "I am not leaving to pastor anywhere else. I felt called to pastor at Durham Meeting until such time as the meeting's needs and my gifts and ministry were no longer the best fit. I feel clear and faithful in discerning that the time has come. After stepping aside as pastor, I intend to continue to be an active member of Durham Meeting."

• **Northwest QM** asks its constituent meetings to consider a minute separating religious and state marriage ceremonies. The minute says, "It is the role of meetings to witness to spiritual unions of couples within our communities. It is not our proper role to document those relationships for the benefit of the state. We encourage monthly meetings to rescind their designation of officers for the purpose of signing state marriage

certificates. Couples who wish their unions to be recorded legally are encouraged to visit the appropriate civil authorities."

• **Storrs (CT) MM** Ministry & Counsel encourages Friends to extend their time of worship by beginning an hour earlier at 9am on Sunday mornings. This practice enriches those who come for the 10am appointed hour in that Friends can enter into an already gathered meeting for worship.

• **Farmington (ME) MM** reports that they have developed a short improvisational drama that speaks to the query, How do Friends interact in our communities at this time of war mobilization? The plot concerns a parent-teacher conference following persistent arguing between two fourth graders in a classroom, one a Quaker child and the other a child whose brother is a reservist in Iraq. Social action improvisation is a form of public presentation which has as its goal the involvement of an audience. After setting up the problem through the drama, the audience relates to the characters who stay in role during a question and answer session.

• **Putney (VT) MM**, in a special called meeting for business, approved moving forward with plans for a major renovation and expansion of their meetinghouse.

• **Smithfield (RI) MM** has received a Lilly Foundation Grant to support their pastor's, Marnie Miller-Gutsell's, sabbatical. From February to June 2005, Marnie will be following in the footsteps of New England Quaker minister Job Scott's last religious journey before his death in England, Wales and Ireland, 1791-1792. The grant includes money for two meeting-wide retreats and to pay for guest speakers to bring the message on some First Day meetings for worship during Marnie's absence.



Smithfield (RI) Meetinghouse

Introducing Jill Horton-Lyons, NEYM Accounts Manager

Ken Hoffman, NEYM Treasurer & Mt. Toby (MA) Monthly Meeting

Photo: Jim Lyons



Contributions—and the other day-to-day financial operations and record-keeping. Her title was changed to Accounts Manager this

JILL HORTON-LYONS IS the person in the Treasurer's office most people are likely to interact with for tracking down information or getting reimbursements paid. Since becoming the NEYM bookkeeper in the summer of 2001, she has taken on responsibility for most of our ongoing accounts—Student Loans, Retreats, Payroll and Staff Benefits,

past summer to acknowledge this increased responsibility.

Jill brings a lot of experience to this work. She has a Masters in Business Administration degree, and has been, among other roles, the Director of Financial Services at the UMass Health Services and the Bookkeeper at Woolman Hill. Since 1989 she and her husband Jim have turned much of their energy to running their small family-teaching farm (winterberryfarm.org), where they raise sheep, ducks, geese, chickens, a couple of cows, and the occasional pig and run a variety of workshops and retreats for adults and children. Jill's particular passion is weaving the wool they get from their sheep.

Jill has been an active member of Mt. Toby (MA) MM for many years. She is deeply involved in the First Day School. She and Jim hold a mid-week meeting for worship in their home and regularly offer programs for newcomers wanting to learn more about Friends. At the Yearly Meeting level, she has been a member of the Youth Programs Committee for a number years.

In other Quaker news

Pastoral Care workshop

Pastoral Care, with Cornelia Parkes and Nancyrose Logan, 4/1-3/2005, co-sponsored by NEYM Ministry & Counsel and Woolman Hill. "Pastoral care is the foundation of our meeting communities, but it is too often neglected and misunderstood. Participants will learn about prayer circles, share difficult pastoral care issues, and learn how to do pastoral care lovingly, without feeling overburdened." NEYM M&C would like each meeting to take on this challenge by sending two representatives to this retreat, supporting them financially whenever possible. Contact: Margaret Cooley, 413/774-3431 • margaret@woolmanhill.org

Recognizing Gifts workshop

Recognizing Gifts, with Jan Wood, 4/29-5/1/2005, co-sponsored by NEYM Ministry & Counsel and Woolman Hill. "During this weekend we will explore the many shapes of giftedness. We will identify some of the ways God's empowerment is flowing through our lives, and we will consider how we can intentionally celebrate and foster our gifts." Contact: Margaret Cooley, 413/774-3431, margaret@woolmanhill.org

Friends Home offers respite care

Often, caregivers are unable to leave loved ones alone for vacations or business trips. The New England Friends Home in Hingham, MA, now has some capacity for residents in need of short term respite care. We offer all

assisted living services in our beautiful, comfortable, and supportive environment. Contact 781/749-3556 • nefh@att.net

NEYM Reps report on Indian Affairs Cttee

Suzanne and Richard Frechette represented NEYM at the Associated Friends Committee on Indian Affairs annual meeting last spring. In their report, as it appeared in the NEYM Sessions Advance Documents, they raised significant questions about the Quaker basis of the Committee and the appropriateness of NEYM's representation. Given the press of the Sessions agenda, Friends never had opportunity to address the Frechette's questions. It will be taken up next year. Due to an oversight, the report did not get published in the 2004 NEYM Minute Book. Copies are available from the NEYM Office.

BHFH Workshop & Weed Lecture

Beacon Hill Friends House (BHFH) presents two events on the spirit and practice of Quaker activism: a Saturday, 4/16/05, workshop from 9am–2:30pm on how to influence your legislators, with David Culp, FCNL Legislative Representative, and the Weed Lecture, "Speaking Truth in Public Policy: A Quaker Perspective" given by Joe Volk, Executive Secretary of FCNL, on Sunday, 4/17/05 at 1pm. Contact BHFH, 617/227-9118 • www.bhfh.org

Friends urged to divest in prisons

At its annual gathering, 7/15–18/04, the

Fellowship of Friends of African Descent united on the following minute:

We, the Fellowship of Friends of African Descent, minute our opposition to investments in for-profit prisons and for-profit prison programming as they represent profiteering and exploitation of poor and disenfranchised people, particularly people of color, who lack access to adequate legal representation, rehabilitation, and restorative justice. We believe such investments conflict with Quaker testimonies, and we urge individual Friends and Friends Meetings and organizations to divest themselves of such investments."

World Gathering of Young Friends

This summer, Kristna Evans of North Shore (MA) MM, and Kara Price of Smithfield (RI) MM, will represent NEYM at the World Gathering of Young Friends (WGYF), 8/16-24/05 in Lancaster, England. Hundreds of young adults will meet in the birthplace of Quakerism to explore ways to invigorate our own modern Quaker witness within our yearly meetings and throughout the world at large. As part of the commitment to the diversity of Friends who will be attending the gathering, NEYM Young Adult Friends are raising funds for two Cuban Young Adult Friends as well as for Kristna and Kara. Please join in this collaborative effort by sending checks to the NEYM Office payable to NEYM, earmarked for the WGYF. Contact Kara Price, 860/423-5231 • pricequakes@hotmail.com

What's new on the Hill?

Photo: Jonathan Vogel-Borne



The hearth at Woolman Hill Conference Center

HERE IN NEW ENGLAND QUAKERDOM, when we mention “the Hill” we’re not usually referring to Washington, D.C. Instead we mean the ridgetop sanctuary of Woolman Hill, Quaker retreat center in western Massachusetts, where we embrace old faithfuls and newcomers alike. Woolman Hill’s connection to New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM), and its constituent monthly meetings, remains a vital part of our mission. This fall we hosted two monthly meeting retreats, Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting, NEYM Ministry & Counsel, Junior YM and Jr. High YM weekends. NEYM Ministry & Counsel joins us in co-sponsoring opening and closing Spiritual Formation retreats, “Pastoral Care (4/1-3/05)” and “Recognizing Gifts (4/29 – 5/1/05)” programs this year. We are excited about the prospect of a more clearly defined affiliation status, currently under consideration by the NEYM Ad Hoc Committee on Corporate Restructure, for several New England Quaker organizations (including Woolman Hill).

So what’s new on the Hill? This fall, after five years of faithful work, Daphne Bye stepped down as co-director. Daphne has decided to devote more time to teaching music and home-schooling her children. Grateful for her many years of dedicated service, we continue to be blessed with her warm presence on the Hill. Mark Fraser continues in his role as co-director, with phenomenally frugal management of our finances and environmentally conscious stewardship of our physical plant.

Margaret Cooley has been hired as our new co-director, to focus on developing Quaker programs and administrative aspects of non-Quaker events. Having grown up in New York YM, Margaret comes to us after eight years in North Carolina. There she

Margaret Cooley, Woolman Hill Conference Center Co-Director

helped to start Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting and served as a local site coordinator for Southern Appalachian YM and Association. Before landing at Woolman Hill, Margaret explored retreat center work at both Powell House and Rowe Conference Center.

Jude and Jontz Johnson remain vital caretakers of our guests and property. Jude coordinates, cleans, and provides a vibrant personal connection for weddings and non-Quaker groups. Jontz maintains our buildings and grounds, helps clean and host, and recently (back by popular demand!) led a Jr. High YM retreat work-project. Other familiar faces on the Hill are Pat LaMountain, who keeps our financial books straight, and Vickie Barber Flynn, who prepares delicious meals for our Quaker programs. Long-time peace activist Juanita Nelson still lives and gardens on the Hill, and the Traprock Peace Center is thriving.

In October, Mary Lee Morrison completed her term as clerk of the Woolman Hill Board. We deeply appreciate the sense of process that Mary Lee brought to her clerkship, and now brings to the Board as a member of the Personnel Committee. Along with David Ahlfeld donning the clerk hat, and Sue Reilly taking up the recording clerk quill, this fall we welcomed four new Board members: Barbara Sullivan, Marcianna Caplis, Jim Lyons and Tom Antonik (as liaison between Woolman Hill and NEYM Ministry and Counsel).

Our impact on the environment continues to concern us. Using ecologically sensitive cleaning supplies, encouraging guests not to use disposable plates and cutlery, installing photovoltaic panels for the Red House, and solar-heated hot water in the farmhouse are all steps toward keeping our Hill “green.” (And yes, on sunny days, the Bye-Fraser crew is more likely to have clean laundry...) In an ultimate homage to recycling, we continue to revel in our newly reconstructed North Dartmouth

Meetinghouse’s elegant simplicity. A worship group has been meeting there regularly on Sunday mornings, and Board members Scott Nielsen and Perry Norton seem to keep finding reasons to putter around in the meetinghouse basement.

We are actively looking at how to improve our offerings and facilities for less agile folks, for families, and for those who prefer more privacy, so we welcome feedback on these issues. We are also expanding our website www.woolmanhill.org, so check there for current retreat descriptions and registration forms, as well as recent photos and interesting tidbits. In another effort to help spread the word about Woolman Hill’s programs, we have recruited 21 “ambassadors” from monthly meetings around the New England region. Additional representatives are always welcome: if you know anyone not currently suffering from overcommitment, please pass their names on to us!

Woolman Hill is alive with natural beauty, human interaction, and spiritual awareness. Please join us as we explore how to stay attentive to the workings of the Spirit while navigating the current culture of fear and divisiveness. Worship-sharing under the magnificent maple tree, playing hide-n-seek in the brick baking oven, creating community artwork on the patio, performing Quaker fairy tales on our modest stage, sharing secrets while washing dishes, hiking up to the ridge-line view... In solitude and in community, time on the Hill enables us to renew our commitment to constructive, faithful living.

Woolman Hill contact info: 107 Keets Road, Deerfield MA 01342 • 413/774-3431 • www.woolmanhill.org



The North Dartmouth Meetinghouse at Woolman Hill

Photo: Jonathan Vogel-Borne

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Address Service Requested

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

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THE NEW ENGLAND FRIEND

YEARLY MEETING CALENDAR

February 2005

- 5 Vassalboro QM—Winthrop MM (ME)
- 6 CT Valley QM—Hartford MM (CT)
- 12 Ministry & Counsel (*rescheduled*)—Wellesley FM (MA)
- 11–13 Young Friends Retreat—Cambridge MM (MA)
- 26 Permanent Board—Providence MM (RI)

March 2005

- 4–6 Jr. High Retreat—Hartford MM (CT)
- 5 Northwest QM—Putney MM (VT)
- 12 Ministry & Counsel—Northampton FM (MA)
- 12 Youth Workers Training Day—*Location, TBA*
- 18–20 Young Friends Retreat—Hartford MM (CT)
- 20 Coordinating & Advisory—*Location, TBA*
- 26 Sessions Committee—*Location, TBA*

April 2005

- 1–3 M&C Pastoral Care workshop—Woolman Hill [*see p.6*]
- 1–3 6th Grade Retreat—Westport FM (MA)
- 2 Clerking Workshop—South Berkshire FM (MA)
- 9 Committee Day—hosted by Storrs MM (CT)
- 14–17 FWCC America's Annual Mtg— Tempe, AZ
- 17 RI–Smithfield QM—Westerly MM (RI)
- 18–23 Young Friends service week—FM at Cambridge (MA)
- 22–24 Women's Retreat—Geneva Point, Center Harbor (NH)
- 23 Sandwich QM—West Falmouth PM (MA)
- 24 Salem QM—South Shore PM (MA)
- 29–5/1 M&C Recognizing Gifts—Woolman Hill [*see p.6*]
- 29–5/1 Young Friends Retreat—Mt Toby MM (MA)

May 2005

- 1 CT Valley QM—Mt. Toby MM (MA)
- 1 United Society of Friends Women—Cambridge FM (MA)
- 6–8 Jr. High Retreat—Portland FM (ME)
- 7 All Maine Gathering—South China Church (ME)
- 9 Coordinating & Advisory—Worcester FM (MA)
- 13–15 Young Friends Seniors Retreat—Monadnock MM (NH)
- 14 Permanent Board—*Location, TBA*
- 20–22 Elementary Retreat—Woolman Hill, MA
- 21 Ministry & Counsel—Windham MM (ME)
- 29 Dover QM—Dover MM (NH)

June 2005

- 3–5 Young Adult Friends (YAF) Retreat—*Location, TBA*
- 4–5 Northwest QM—Farm & Wilderness (VT)
- 12 Committee Day—hosted by Mt Toby MM (MA)
- 26 Coordinating & Advisory—*Location, TBA*

July 2005

- 2–9 Friends General Conference Gathering—Blacksburg, VA
- 13–17 Friends United Meeting Triennial—Des Moines, IA
- 17 RI–Smithfield QM—Worcester MM (MA)
- 23 Sandwich QM—Allen's Neck MM (MA)
- 23 Falmouth QM—Durham MM (ME)
- 31 Dover QM—North Sandwich FM (NH)

August 2005

- 6–11 YM Sessions—Bryant University, Smithfield RI
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- Note: The *Faith & Practice* Revision Committee generally meets on the last Saturday of each month.