

To Build God's Peaceable World Reflections on the 2003 Yearly Meeting Theme

Gail Thomas, Cambridge (MA) Monthly Meeting

THE MIND CREATES THE ABYSS. THE HEART CROSSES IT. This has been my meditation the past month. This year's New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) Sessions made it real for me. The abyss is one way to describe what happens in conflict—I have my ideas; you have yours. How can we come to unity? Our divisions disappear in the open heart. But the heart cannot cross, the Spirit cannot move, when our minds are closed. When our minds are closed, our hearts are, too.

Fear causes us to close our hearts and minds as we cling to what we think will save us. George Bush is afraid of another 9/11 on his watch, so he creates something called Homeland Security. The Israeli government fears another attack, so they build a so-called "security fence." We forget that our only protection is God. We may want to control, try to control, but there is no safety, no salvation, but in God alone. We want to do something; we think we can do something. "Be still and know that I am God."

This quote from Psalm 46 was at the core of the keynote address by Mary Lord. Be still and know; there is no other ground. Ultimately, there is only God. This is a scary thought! Our mind freaks, slams shut both itself and the doors to the heart. But, it is all an illusion—both trying to make our self into a fortress and the belief that we need a fortress. This urge to protect is based on fear, and fear is ultimately a lack of trust—in the presence of God, in the saving grace of God. God alone is our fortress and our strength.

"Be still and know that I am God." Conflict is a useless activity except as it makes us aware of our attachments. What are we holding on to? What stands between us and total trust in God? As Jan Hoffman noted in her Bible Half Hour, conflict can create the whirlwind out of which we may hear God's still small voice, but only if we are open. No one can by word or deed open another person's mind and heart. They both open naturally, like a morning glory unfolding in the sun, when fear is gone. I can say what

I see, speak truth to power, but the release is God's. As Brian Drayton observed in his Bible Half Hour, when asked, "How has the Spirit moved in your life?" he replied, "I am no longer afraid."

So, the only way to resolve any conflict is to be still; go deep; find that place of absolute Truth—God within—and rest there. Then the Spirit can move, opening our minds to truth, our hearts to love, our will to the actions that will perfectly express our minds and hearts acting together in obedience to the truth within. It may sound easy. What is hard is seeing the attachment. Because our attachments usually make us feel comfortable, it can

feel right and just to defend them. Maybe they feel part of whom we are. But they are only attachments, constructs of the mind. Be still. Real truth is grasped only in the moment. It fills the room.

Marian Greenspan in her book, *Healing Through the Dark Emotions*, says that there are really only three prayers: Thank you. Help me. I surrender. These are my prayers, especially in times of conflict. Thank you, God, for everything, especially this situation, which is helping me to see my attachments. Help me listen and to let go. I sur-

render; open my heart and mind to the movement of your Spirit. The mind creates the abyss, the sense of separation. The heart crosses it. Brian suggested our egos must become servants; submit. The Seed can then scour us; open us to the shining light within. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Several of our Bible Half Hour speakers grappled with these words. For me, they describe the movement of the Spirit. There is no other way across the abyss—only the open heart, only by truly trusting, totally surrendering. And that means *everything*—even our identities as Christians; even our concepts of God. These, although they guided us on the path, are only attachments. "For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will fall away (1 Cor. 13:9)." Finally, all must be surrendered. In the actual experience of being one with God, not just personally but also in a covered meeting, there are no words. Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, all know only one God. We get there by different paths. But in the moment, with our hearts and minds open and our will aligned in perfect submission, even that which got us there falls away.

At the Friends General Conference Gathering Bible Half Hours, Trayce Peterson brought new insight into the passage in Luke's

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Photo: Skip Schiel



Parade at the 2003 NEYM Sessions—Stonehill College, Easton, MA

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CDs of 2003 Sessions speakers available

To order CDs of Mary Lord's Keynote, and the Bible Half Hour talks by Gordon Browne, Betsy Cazden, Brian Drayton, Will Taber, & Jan Hoffman, contact the NEYM Office, 508/754-6760 • neym@neym.org

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Peaceable Kingdom (continued)

Gospel where Jesus says “I come not to bring peace but a sword.” We might think that accepting Jesus as our Savior, resting in Him, would bring us peace. But, no, because Jesus is not the ultimate resting place, or at least, not in any easy sense.¹ Jesus struggles to explain this difference to his disciples on the way to Jerusalem. The radical turning Jesus demands, the conversion, means bringing a sword, to our attachments. He asks us to let go—of all the explanations which we have devised to make us feel *we* know, that we have the answers, that *we* are in control. We are not. Be still and know that I am God. Ultimately that is all there is to know and all that can truly be known.

So what is our earthly job? Thank God for all that life hands us. As Bill Kreidler said, life is our “lab.” Start paying attention. Discover the attachments and offer them up. Help me. I surrender. As Christians, we have this assurance: “Fear not, for I am with you.” We have a companion in this perilous journey into the unknown. As Brian Drayton commented, unlike Buddhists, whose effort is to eliminate the ego, like the Muslims, ours is a path of submission. The end is the same—oneness with God.

The paradox, of course, is that we are already one with God. This is the true irony of our situation; we seek what is already ours. Be still and know. We can do it in this instant. But, for the most part, we don’t. As Betsy Muench said in prayer from the floor, like a child with ADD, we are easily distracted. For me, this human condition is why we need community. Our ego resists submission; it lures us away with the slightest pretense. It was constructed by our minds in childhood to protect us, to help us make sense of the strange adult world we had to adjust to, and it is fed and strengthened by our fears. Living in the 21st century, faith is hard; our culture, our media, our knowledge of the world situation, play into our fears. We need community. We need others to call us back into trust, to relight our candle when it grows dim, to hold us in love. One way God answers

our prayers for help is through other people. We can God. We can be Christ for one another. And we need to be.

Jan Hoffman offered this prayer in her Bible Half Hour: “Let our hearts be broken.” A broken heart is harder to close. A broken heart, therefore, keeps us more open to the leadings of the Spirit, more open to the opportunities to be present, both to God and to our neighbor. This is part of the paradox of the spiritual path. We fear to love because we fear being hurt. But the opposite is true. In risking our hearts being broken, in opening our hearts in love to our neighbor, the heart does not shatter and shrink, rather it opens and expands.

Will Taber said in his Bible Half Hour, “Sometimes I’m on the mountain top, sometimes I’m wandering in the desert.” This is the spiritual life as most of us know it. The Kingdom, Jesus said, is both now and coming. One moment we feel in the presence, a moment of grace; the next we are right back distracted by the ego, our hearts and minds slammed shut. “Repent” actually means turn around. Just try again. Thank you. Help me. I surrender. The paradox of submission, which is both incredibly easy—to let go, and incredibly hard—we cling to our attachments, is why God looks on with compassion, and why Christians believe Jesus was sent. Be still and know that I am God. Each moment offers a new opportunity to do just this.

¹ In two Christology classes, I’ve studied how for almost 2000 years Christian theologians have struggled to explain how Jesus can be both fully human and fully divine while at the same time reconciling these ideas into the Trinity—I should qualify that struggle to western theologians, burdened with a tradition of philosophy and rational thought inherited from the Greeks and Romans. George Fox departed from this tradition, as do all mystics, by relying on inward experience. Eastern theologians have rested more easily in paradox. The icon bypasses thought. Staring into the eyes of a painted Jesus makes Him a portal straight to the heart, opening mind, heart and will to God within.

From the 2003 Yearly Meeting minutes...

Minute on Racism

Forwarded by Ministry & Counsel

New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends affirms its commitment to becoming an open, affirming, anti-racist Religious Society. Our understanding of racism is that it is a system that accords advantage or disadvantage based

on racial identity. Racism is fundamentally inconsistent with the divine guidance that has led our Religious Society to testimonies such as Equality, Peace and Community. We seek divine assistance and the help of other friends of Truth to examine our individual and corporate complicity in racism. We aspire to a more perfect union with the Author of all, who shows no partiality in the diversity of creation.

Those of us who have grown up with a white identity in America have a particular challenge in that we have been conditioned not to notice the system of racism and white privilege. Our well-intentioned attempts at colorblindness can have the unfortunate result of blinding us to the system of racism in which we unwittingly participate. Let us remember Jesus’ admonition to remove the

log from our own eye before seeking to remove a speck from our brother’s or sister’s eye. We all pray for clarity of vision so that in the words of George Fox, we may “be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone; whereby in them you may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you.”

Christian Ed. name change

The clerk introduced Gail Thomas, Clerk of the Christian Education Committee, and asked members of the committee to stand. We held the work of the committee and those who serve on it in prayer. We deeply appre-



“The wolf & the lamb shall lie down together...”

ciate the work of this committee. Friends accepted the annual report, and considered the purposes and procedures which proposed changing the name of the committee to the Religious Education Committee.

Some Friends expressed deep dismay and discomfort at the proposed name change, while others welcomed it. At this time the meeting did not feel clear to accept the name change.

Automatic Draft Registration

Forwarded by Connecticut Valley & Rhode Island-Smithfield Quarterly Meetings

Friends at New England Yearly Meeting are concerned about the effects of a new program that Selective Service is initiating nationwide that would automatically register men for Selective Service when they apply for a driver's license. The effect of such legislation would effectively deny a driver's license to any man between the ages of 18 and 26 who cannot with a clear conscience register for Selective Service. We regard this as an effort to coerce young men into registering without an opportunity to reflect on the moral implications that service in the military entails.

We view with alarm the expansion and increasing severity of state and federal measures to penalize non-registrants who are religious conscientious objectors. We emphasize the responsibility of governments to uphold the free exercise of religion guaranteed by the United States Constitution, and the human right of conscientious objection recognized as derived from freedom of religion and conscience by the United Nations. We encourage young people to follow their consciences, and we stand ready to help, to the best of our ability, with information, counseling, and spiritual and practical support.

- We advocate for the repeal of, or amendment to, RI General Law 31-10-47, and the rejection of Massachusetts Senate Bill #1275 and any equivalent New England State law so that conscientious objectors are not further penalized by the state.

- We advocate for the establishment of central sites in each state for the maintenance of records documenting the legitimacy of individual conscientious objectors' cases.

- We urge Quarterly Meetings and Yearly Meeting to work with other organizations to establish these sites and also to actively participate in efforts to change state and fed-

eral laws to allow for individuals to register as conscientious objectors.

Friends considered the fourth action item, but were not clear to approve. This item was to encourage individual friends to consider applying for service on local draft boards in order to ensure that boards be sensitive to conscientious objection cases.

Genetically Modified Food

Forwarded by Young Adult Friends

There is a growing concern about the increasingly widespread use of genetically engineered foods. In 2001 over 85 million acres of genetically modified soybeans, corn, canola, and cotton were grown in the United States. Greater than sixty percent of processed foods are likely to contain genetically modified ingredients.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization reports that there is enough food produced to feed the world one and a half times over. The problem of world hunger is related to food access, distribution, and other social and economic factors. We believe that genetically engineered crops will worsen this situation. Farmers are often unable to reseed genetically engineered crops due to licensing agreements and single-generation seeds, impairing peoples' ability to feed themselves.

Research suggests that genetically engineered foods may pose health risks to humans including immune system effects, allergic sensitivities, and changes in organ development.

We discourage use of genetically engineered organisms. We urge Friends to contact our legislators to call for legislation to require the mandatory labeling of all genetically engineered products.

Friends asked representatives to the upcoming FWCC triennial to take this minute to share as a concern of our Yearly Meeting.

USA Patriot Act

Minute on the Curtailment of Civil Liberties and the act named the USA Patriot Act

Recognizing our continuing concern about the curtailment of civil liberties in our country, the New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends minutes its opposition to the Act named the "USA Patriot Act." This Act reflects a Spirit of fear and mistrust that is the antithesis of the Spirit of Love to which God calls all of us. Our true security comes from building a just society.

Friends are urged to contact their elect-

ed officials to encourage them to work actively to repeal the "USA Patriot Act" and to seek and protect the fundamental rights of all people. Friends are also urged, as occasions may arise, to support those in their communities who suffer the consequences of this law.

PYM War Tax Witness

New England Yearly Meeting has learned that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) is in difficulty with the Internal Revenue service because of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's support of the conscientious war tax resistance of one of its employees.

We reaffirm the minute that we passed in 1998:

New England Yearly Meeting reaffirms that conscientious objection to paying taxes for a military purpose is an appropriate and traditional individual expression of Friends' Peace Testimony. Consistent with this affirmation, and believing it wrong to force an employee to violate his or her conscience, New England Yearly Meeting will refuse to honor Internal Revenue Service levies which arise from an employee's conscientious refusal to pay taxes for military purposes. New England Yearly Meeting will urge the Internal Revenue Service to deal with the staff member directly.

Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends has as part of its Advices on Peace and Reconciliation the words:

Friends are urged to support those who witness to their governments and take personal risks in the cause of peace, who choose not to participate in war as soldiers nor to contribute to its preparations with their taxes.
(p. 210)

We ask Permanent Board to be in communication with Philadelphia Yearly Meeting regarding our concerns for their situation. We ask that Permanent Board communicate our hope that this is an opportunity for us to join in witness to God's will for Peace.



Plenary gathering tent

To All Friends Everywhere...

FRIENDS OF NEW ENGLAND YEARLY Meeting, of the Religious Society of Friends, send our loving greetings from the campus of Stonehill College, Easton, Massachusetts, where we gathered for our annual sessions, August 2-7, 2003. Our theme, "To Build God's Peaceable World," comes from Isaiah 11:6-9:

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (NIV)

In her keynote address, "Persevering for Peace: Centering and Sustaining our Peace Witness," Mary Lord reminded us that God calls us to the task of peacemaking, and the world expects it of Friends, particularly in time of war. Five New England Friends, Gordon Browne, Betsy Cazden, Brian Drayton, Will Taber, and Jan Hoffman, addressed concerns close to home in a panel on Quakers and Conflict. These Friends also blessed our gathering by presenting our daily Bible Half Hours, since the US government did not issue visas to our chosen speaker, Evelin Gonzales nor to other representatives of Cuba Yearly Meeting. We grieved for the absence of these beloved Friends.

We discovered common themes throughout our sessions. In the midst of tumult and fear, whether from world events or interpersonal conflict, we are called first to be still. By waiting on God, we can discern the actions we are called to take. By shedding

those burdens which are not ours to carry, we may find a singleness of purpose that allows us to overcome fear and to follow leadings of the spirit. Our speakers suggested that in situations of conflict, we must wait, and sink beneath the emotions of the moment to a place of stillness, knowing that God is our refuge — "Be still and know that I am God." Confidence that God is there to be relied upon allows us to speak our truth out of love, knowing that healing is available. We recognize that God alone is the source of transformation and we are only the instruments.

Conduct of business provided opportu-

dictably it generated stress.

Our financial reports emphasized that as we have been intentionally depleting surplus funds through deficit budgets, next year our budget will not be covered unless members and Monthly Meetings rise to the occasion. Having heard the Meeting's enthusiasm for ministry to youth, and its commitment to support this ministry, the Finance and Youth Programs committees labored together, sharing deeply. In worship, they set aside anxieties about financial risk, resulting in a new budget with more funding for youth activities.

Young Friends chose to join the adult business sessions during the consideration of a minute on racism, and their valuable input illuminated our discussions. We approved that minute and one in opposition to increasingly coercive practices around Selective Service registration. We hungered to hear more of the spirit of love in a minute opposing repressive laws, such as that known as the USA Patriot Act. We approved the minute when it came back, modified. During sessions, we learned that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had been fined by the IRS for its support of an employee's war tax resistance. We sent a minute of support to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and re-affirmed our own 1998 minute concerning our employees and war tax resistance.

Deep worship following the memorial minutes of several beloved Friends nourished us, as did their lives. We pray to be faithful. In these difficult times, we need to pay particular heed to how we are called to participate in building God's peaceable world.

Art thou in the Darkness? Mind it not, for if thou dost it will fill thee more, but stand still and act not, and wait in patience till Light arises out of Darkness to lead thee.

—James Nayler

Photo: Minga Claggett-Borne



Young Friends (high school age) at 2003 New England Yearly Meeting Sessions

nities to practice the counsel of the panel on conflict. We did not always stay with our differences long enough to reach a deeper place.

This year, we carried out a bold new experiment in our approach to business. Committees did not present oral reports; information was available before each session. We began by holding each committee and its work in prayer. From a place of worship, Friends then raised concerns, queries, or prayers for the work of each committee. While this change in procedure provided additional space for wonderful worship, pre-

Around the Yearly Meeting

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

• **Midcoast (ME) Monthly Meeting (MM)** mourns the death of Chouteau Chapin, 6/15/03. NEYM Friends may remember Chouteau leading a Quaker chorus that sang Ministry & Counsel's State of Society Report. A memorial was held at Chouteau's barn in Montsweag, ME, 7/19/03.

• **Portland (ME) MM** was saddened by the death of Bob Philbrook 9/30/03. Bob, a wonderful presence at New England Yearly Meeting Sessions, was active on the Prejudice & Poverty Committee, the American Friends Service Committee, and as a Friend released by his monthly meeting, advocating for the poor in Maine politics. A memorial was held 10/5/03.

• **Westerly (RI) MM** is exploring the possibility of putting an informational kiosk at the site of the old Dunn's Corner meetinghouse, which dates back to the early 1700s when Friends first settled in the Westerly area.

• **Vassalboro (ME) MM** Friends took part in the "Voices of the Kennebec" celebration in Waterville, ME in early June. Food, music, face-painting, storytelling and a number of booths featuring local civic and religious groups. The Quaker booth had peace posters, baked goods, and a display of the Friends meetinghouses in the area.

• **Fresh Pond (MA) MM** has minuted its support and recognition for two of its members: Melody Brazo in her ministry around issues of race, gender and sexual orientation, and Nancy Shippen in her prison ministry. The meeting "further recognizes that supporting ministers and ministries has been an issue that NEYM has been grappling with for some time, and that our on-going discernment of ministry among us may be of interest outside our meeting." Both Melody & Nancy are part of the NEYM Traveling Ministries program and are available for programs at local meetings.

• **North Shore (MA) MM** forwarded a "minute on war" to **Salem (MA) QM** on 4/27/03. Reaffirming our 350 year commitment to peace, the minute urges "all Friends, and indeed all people of the world... to oppose military conflict by whatever peaceful means God may lead us to." It goes on to say, "we are aware that some Friends and other spiritually motivated persons may be called to tax refusal, refusal of military ser-

vice, and other forms of civil disobedience in their commitment to ending war and violence. We offer the wisdom and spiritual discernment of our meeting to those persons, as well as material support, insofar as we are able, in their sufferings for conscience sake." After extensive labor over a response to the minute, the Quarter found clearness to send it to all meetings in the Quarter for further discernment.

• **Falmouth (ME) Quarterly Meeting (QM)** and **Portland (ME) MM** were ably represented by Portland's Dick Bowman for the visit of the replica slave ship *Amistad*. The boat was docked in Portland in early May with guides from Portland Meeting. The QM minutes note "Quakers in Portland have a proud history of anti-slavery activism, and a meetinghouse in the center of the city (no longer existing) was the one place where anti-slavery lectures were allowed from 1794 to 1849."

• **Wellesley (MA) MM** First Day School students presented a program called "Peace Passages," displaying a Peace Banner that they created and reciting the biblical passages on the Peaceable Kingdom, the Beatitudes from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, and the Fruits of the Spirit from the writings of the apostle Paul. Wellesley's Religious Education Committee received \$600 from the Grace Knight Babson Trust to be used for materials and programs related to the Bible.

• **Mt. Toby (MA) MM** has added two new appointments to its nominations, "e-mail minder" and "webservent" to manage electronic communication among the meeting. The meeting was also reminded "by a concerned Friend that the speed and convenience of e-mail may put us at risk for compromising our Quaker practice.

• **Dartmouth at Smith Neck (MA) MM** began a free Wednesday afternoon after school program for elementary age children. The program from 4-5:30pm includes snacks, singing, Bible lessons, games, and an occasional craft.

• **Midcoast (ME) MM** has taken on a project to raise money for a mediation service in a poor Cape Town, South Africa township. While visiting South Africa last spring, Midcoast's Claire Darrow was introduced to the project and given a heart to help sup-

port the work financially. The meeting has sponsored a benefit dinner and silent auction. For more information, contact Claire, 207/371-2447.

• **Durham (ME) MM** Peace and Social Concerns Committee held a successful fund raising dinner for the Kakamega (Kenya) Orphanage Project for Quaker children whose parents have died of AIDS. The Friends of Kakamega group sponsored a workcamp at the project in Kenya this past summer. They report that the first floor, including a kitchen and dining area, of the orphanage is completed. Work continues on the second floor dormitories. For information, contact Sukie Rice, 207/865-3768 • Ricesukie@aol.com

• **Putney (VT) MM, Plainfield (VT) MM, and Northampton (MA) MM** along with NEYM [see page 3] are among meetings who have united on minutes of concern over the curtailment of civil liberties and in opposition to the USA Patriot Act. Northampton states that "these Acts reflect a spirit of fear, mistrust, and prejudice that is the antithesis of the spirit of love to which God calls us." Plainfield "believes that security for the American people will be enhanced when the provisions, including those in our constitution, of equal respect for the dignity, rights and aspirations of all people prevail throughout the world of nations."

• **Middlebury (VT) MM** has moved to a new meeting place, Havurah House, 56 North Pleasant Street (Route 7), Middlebury. Meeting for worship is at 10:00am.

• **Weare (NH) MM** did renovations a few years ago on their circa 1799 meetinghouse, adding a winterized space for worship in cold weather and enclosing their out-house. They have now just put in a phone line for emergency use and have created a website neym.org/wearemeeting.html



Weare (NH) Meetinghouse—Henniker, NH

News from NEYM Clerks

Permanent Board

Greetings! I'm pleased to be serving you as clerk of Permanent Board this year. Many Friends in local meetings might be unaware of the work of Permanent Board, and its my goal to improve that situation. You can look forward to short updates from me in each issue of *The New England Friend*.

Permanent Board is the "legal entity" of the Yearly Meeting, empowered to make time-critical policy decisions between Yearly Meeting Sessions. The Board functions as the employer for our staff and the owner of all our assets. While this might seem like dry business, I have found, in my twelve years on the Board, that questions of the right stewardship of our corporate resources take us deep into the spiritual grounding of our faith community, and continually recall to us our fundamental reliance on the will of God in all matters.

Permanent Board is currently in the midst of several important projects, including: 1) a search process for a new Director of Friends Camp, to replace Susan Morris, who will retire this year; 2) a review of the NEYM "corporate structure," i.e. relationships with our "wholly-owned subsidiaries"—New England Friends Home, Moses Brown School, Friends Camp—as well as other Quaker institutions in the area, including Woolman Hill, Beacon Hill Friends House, The Meeting School, etc.; 3) implementation of the YM's decision to create a Development Committee; 4) transition of the Administrative Assistant/Young Adult Friends Coordinator position from a temporary to a permanent staff position

In addition, we engage in routine, but quite important matters, such as hearing regular reports from the Treasurer, receiving memorial minutes for deceased Friends, and approving minutes for Friends who are led to travel under a concern beyond NEYM borders. I would welcome any questions or comments from Friends! Please contact me at pbclerk@neym.org. I feel privileged to be serving you in this way, and pray that God will continue to lead us together in the paths of righteousness.

—Eden Grace, Beacon Hill (MA) MM

Ministry & Counsel

We start this year with much on our plate but grateful for the enthusiastic work of our members. It is such a blessing to come together at our meetings to share our faith and the concerns we bring from our meetings. Having brought an important minute of concern on racism to NEYM Sessions this summer [see page 2], our Racism Working Party is not resting on its laurels. As a follow up to the letter we sent last fall urging monthly meetings to consider racism in all its aspects, we are planning another letter asking them for feedback. During this past year we have had little response to the original letter, yet the committee has excellent reading materials and human resources to offer those who make requests. We hope this "nudge" will help.

The Spiritual Nurture working party is planning several retreats during the year, one in the winter 2/27–29/04 on *The Art and Spirit of Parenting* with Bill Harley and Debbie Block. Two more in the spring are

Pastoral Care 3/26–28/04 and *Ministers and Elders Working Together* 6/4–6/04. Monthly Meeting Ministry & Counsel (M&C) Committees will be requested to appoint two representatives to participate in each of these. All will be held at Woolman Hill.

As if they are not busy enough, the Working Party has arranged for the Spiritual Formation Program this year to be specifically reserved for members of the NEYM M&C Committee. The program has been altered somewhat to fit in to our meeting schedule. We are pleased that over 20 of our members will be participating. Our annual November M&C retreat this year will also be the kick-off retreat for Spiritual Formation. Since it will be held at China Lake Conference Center, we are hoping to have visitors from local M&C Committees join us. As all of our November retreats, but unlike the usual Spiritual Formation Retreats, it will be a "stand alone" experience for those who are not taking the Spiritual Formation Program.

In collaboration with NEYM Peace and Social Concerns Committee we are planning a one-day workshop on the centrality of the peace testimony in our faith and witness. Both committees had sent representatives to a Friends United Meeting conference this May who came back enthusiastic to share what they had experienced, exploring this issue with a theologically diverse group of Friends from other YMs. The workshop planning is in the very earliest of stages, but will be designed for representatives from monthly meeting P&SC and M&C Committees. Keep tuned for more information.

—Bonnie Norton, Wellesley (MA) MM

In other Quaker news

Susan Morris to retire

The Friends Camp Committee accepted Director, Susan Morris' resignation, "with regret and with gratitude for her 23 years of love, hard work, and commitment to bringing the practice of Friends testimonies into the daily lives of the youth of NEYM." Susan will continue to serve through a transition time this winter while the YM searches for her successor.

Friends Camp director sought

Friend's Camp, a co-ed, residential, Quaker

summer camp located near China Lake in South China, ME, seeks a full-time, year-round director. Serving youth between the ages 7 to 17, the camp seeks to build a non-competitive community, based on Quaker values. Operated under the auspices of NEYM, camp is open from June through August for four two-week sessions, with approximately 90 children attending each session. Additionally, the camp is available to groups prior to and following the regular camping season, for retreats, workshops and meetings. Applicants should have an

affinity for Quaker traditions and ways of doing business, as well as training and experience in youth camping and community living. The successful candidate will be able to plan and direct a youth program, recruit campers, and recruit, train, and manage staff, as well as relate well to parents of campers and the larger NEYM community. Creative thinking and resourcefulness are a must. Letters of interest and resumes by 12/15/03 to Search Committee, c/o Andrew Dewey, PO Box 590, Southwest Harbor, ME 04679 • andrew@acadiacomp.com

NE Friends Home fund raiser

New England Friends Home—Thayer House is sponsoring a Tanglewood Marionette production of *Sleeping Beauty*, 11/15/03, 10am at Hingham Town Hall. All proceeds from the show will benefit the Friends Home. Contact: Gretchen Condon, 781/749-3556.

First Day School resources/workshops

The NEYM Christian Education (CE) Committee plans to use the afternoons of their Committee Day meetings to invite First Day School (FDS) teachers from the local area to learn about resources and to share concerns and curriculum. Therefore, FDS teachers in Salem QM area are invited to the next Committee Day, 1/31/04, Framingham, MA, 1:30–3:30pm. The CE Committee is also sponsoring a curriculum workshop for FDS teachers 10am–4pm, 5/1/04, Wellesley, MA. Contact: Gail Thomas, 617/492-5035 • thomasgail@comcast.net

Conversations on Faith & Practice

In our continuing desire to involve the Yearly Meeting in the revision process, the *Faith & Practice* Revision Committee distributed a packet of materials to each monthly meeting in August. The materials include 1) a cover letter suggesting ways meetings might engage with the materials, 2) a report on the responses to the 2002 questionnaire, 3) a working document we have called “Peculiar People,” 4) a list of possible topics to be included in the revision, and 5) the 2002 questionnaire for meetings who did not respond to it. While we encourage Friends to ask their clerk about these materials, they are also available on the web at NEYM website, neym.org. Members of the committee—Marion Athearn, Elizabeth Cazden, Lee Noel Chase, David Coletta, James R. Douglas, Maggie Edmondson, Eric Hill Edwards, Arthur Fink, Lisa Gould, Jan Hoffman, Debbie Humphries, Eric Kristensen, Phebe McCosker, Marnie Miller-Gutsell, Scott Nielsen, Joyce Sutherland—are available for telephone or e-mail conversations and some are also available for meeting visits. Contact Jan Hoffman, clerk, 413/253-9427 • janhoff@earthlink.net

Materials on death & dying requested

The NEYM Committee on Aging is gathering materials that meetings have worked on relating to death and dying. As of now we have information from two meetings:

Burlington Friends Meeting/Information packet in Preparation for a Crisis (Health, Dying, Death) and Midcoast Friends Meeting / Final Choices folder. The Committee would like to know if other meetings have materials to share with us. We plan for the future to have a website and hope to make materials available to everyone. Questions and suggestions are welcomed. Contact: Deborah Haviland, P.O. Box 38, Cushing, ME 04563 • haviland@midcoast.com

Student loans available

The NEYM Student Loan Fund offers loans to members and children of members to attend college or graduate school. We can loan up to \$3000 per year with a maximum of \$7000. Simple 5% interest is charged on all loans. We also administer the Anna M. Brown Fund which has a small amount available for scholarships for children of Quaker farmers to attend high school or college. Contact: Nancy Marstaller, clerk, 32 Catlin Shore Rd. Harpswell, ME 04079 • 207/725-4294 • minotaur@suscom-maine.net

NEYM Quaker Women's Retreat

A retreat for New England Yearly Meeting Quaker women to “Explore our Spirituality” will be held 3/26–28/04 at Geneva Point Center, Center Harbor, NH. Jean Stine of Monadnock (NH) MM writes about last year's retreat: “It is our custom to determine the program on Friday evening as we share the concerns in our lives and our hopes for this weekend gathering. For those of us who have attended for many years we were able to see the spiritual growth in each other. We had several times of deep gathered silent worship, rousing singing one evening, and lots of individual time.” Space is limited—send \$15 deposit, made out to NEYM, to Patsy Shotwell, 416 Conant Rd., Weston, MA 02493. Contact: Patsy Shotwell 781/899-5367 or Marcia L. Mason, 802/863-5784.

“New Visions for Changing the World”

Save the Date! 4/17/04, 9am–3:30pm, location in Boston area TBA. “New Visions for Changing the World: Refocusing the Light in our Service.” A gathering of New England American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and the wider Quaker Community. Keynote Speaker will be Paul Lacey, Clerk of the National AFSC Board. New England AFSC staff will conduct workshops on current AFSC

programs and planned initiatives in the areas of urban youth, economic justice, criminal justice, immigration issues, international issues, and youth involvement. Meet New England activists and learn about AFSC programs and how you might get more involved. Contact: Marguerite Helen, 617/964-7932 • mugsm@mindspring.com

New Head, Cambridge Friends School

Mary Newmann, a former Head of Buckingham, Browne & Nichols School in Cambridge, became the 7th Head of the Cambridge Friends School this past summer. She brings 20 years of leadership experience in independent school education to the Friends School.

Young Quaker writers sought

Quakers Uniting in Publications (QUIP), an international trade association of Quaker publishers, booksellers, authors, academics, and webmasters, is celebrating Quaker youth with the forthcoming publication of a book of essays and poems by young Friends (ages 13-18) around the world. *Young Friends Experience of Quakerism* (working title) will give people of all ages greater access to young Friends voices from around the world. QUIP is asking young writers to write on such topics as how Quakerism affects my everyday life, prayer, my thoughts about God, why I am a Quaker, what I do in meeting for worship, matters I feel strongly about, how being a Quaker affects my relationships, how I became a Quaker. Submissions by 2/10/04. Contact: Barbara Mays, Friends United Press, 101 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond IN 47374 • barbaram@fum.org, or Lucy Duncan, QuakerBooks of Friends General Conference, 1216 Arch Street 2B, Philadelphia PA 19107 • LucyD@fgcquaker.org

ESR Access offers seminary degrees

Looking to finally get started on a seminary degree? Or have an urge to dabble in theological education? Or perhaps ready for a continuing education experience? Consider enrolling in one or more courses with ESR Access, the distance learning program offered by Earlham School of Religion (ESR). Courses include Introduction to Spiritual Formation, Christian Discipleship and Living in the Spirit, Educational Ministries in the Local Congregation, Introduction to Theology, and many more. Contact: Sue Axtell, 800/432-1377.

Presiding Clerk, Deana Chase n **Treasurer**, Ken Hoffman n **NEYM OFFICE**: 901 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01602-1908 • 508/754-6760 • FAX: 508/754-9401 • neym@neym.org • www.neym.org • OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday–Friday, 9am–5pm n **Administrative Secretary**, Katharine Clark n **Administrative Assistant/Young Adult Friends Coordinator**, Karen Armstrong n **Youth & Education Secretary**, Christel Jorgenson n **Field Secretary**, Jonathan Vogel-Borne n **The New England Friend**: Editor, Jonathan Vogel-Borne; n **FRIENDS CAMP**, Susan Morris, Director, P.O. Box 84, E. Vassalboro, ME 04935 n **MOSES BROWN SCHOOL**, Joanne Hoffman, Head, 250 Lloyd Ave., Providence, RI 02906 n **NEW ENGLAND FRIENDS HOME–THAYER HOUSE**, Gretchen Condon, Administrator, Turkey Hill Lane, Hingham, MA 02043 n **YOUTH RETREATS**: Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) Elementary Retreats grades 2-5, jymretreats.org: Kevin Lee 508/994-1638 and Gretchen Baker-Smith 508/997-0940; Grades 6-8, contact: Karen Sanchez-Eppler 413/253-8943; Grades 9-12: Christel Jorgenson 617/625-4494.

New England Yearly Meeting of Friends
901 Pleasant Street
Worcester, MA 01602-1908



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

November 2003

- 1 Vassalboro QM – Bar Harbor, ME
- 2 Coordinating & Advisory – Windham, ME
- 7–9 Ministry & Counsel Retreat – China Lake, ME
- 14–16 Elementary Retreat – Westport, MA
- 14–15 Stillness Retreat – Portsmouth, NH [*Charlotte Fardelmann's Home, 603/436-7652*]
- 15 Permanent Board – Portland, ME
- 15 NE Friends Home Benefit – Hingham, MA [*see p. 6*]
- 21–23 Young Friends Retreat – Hartford, CT
- 30 Dover QM – Concord, NH

December 2003

- 6 Northwest QM – Hanover, NH
- 27–1/1 YouthQuake – Estes Park, CO

January 2004

- 1–4 Young Adult Friends Midwinter – Hanover, NH
- 3 Sessions Committee – Bryant College, Smithfield, RI
- 10 Ministry & Counsel – Wellesley, MA
- 16–19 Young Friends Midwinter – Littleton, MA
- 17 All New Hampshire Gathering – *Location, TBA*
- 23–25 Elementary Retreat – Wellesley, MA
- 24 Falmouth QM – Portland, ME
- 24 Sandwich QM – Westport, MA
- 25 Salem QM – Fresh Pond, MA
- 31 Committee Day – Framingham, MA

February 2004

- 1 CT Valley QM – Hartford, CT
- 6–8 Jr. High Retreat – Wellesley, MA
- 7 Vassalboro QM – Farmington, ME
- 20–22 Young Friends Retreat – Wellesley, MA
- 27–29 *Art & Spirit of Parenting* – Woolman Hill, MA [*see p. 6*]
- 28 Permanent Board – *Location, TBA*
- 29 Dover QM – *Location, TBA*

March 2004

- 6 Northwest QM – S.Starksboro/Wilderness MMs, VT
- 12–14 Young Friends Gender Retreats – *Location, TBA*
- 13 Ministry & Counsel – Amesbury, MA
- 18–21 FWCC America's Annual Meeting – Ottawa, Canada
- 19–21 Jr. High Retreat – Monadnock, NH
- 25 Ecumenical Relations Committee – Concord, NH
- 26–28 Women's Retreat – Center Harbor, NH [*see p. 7*]
- 26–28 *Pastoral Care* – Woolman Hill, MA [*see p. 6*]
- 27 Sessions Committee – *Location, TBA*

April 2004

- 2–4 JYM 6th Graders – Westport, MA
- 3 Committee Day – Hartford, CT
- 16–18 Young Friends Retreat – Mt. Toby, MA
- 18 RI–Smithfield QM – Worcester, MA

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