

## 21<sup>st</sup> Triennial of the Friends World Committee for Consultation

**W**ITH THE SUPPORT OF OUR YEARLY Meeting, quarterly meetings and our monthly meetings, four of us attended the FWCC Triennial in Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand as your representatives. In January, we left our day-to-day lives behind and traveled forward into time and summer to gather with more than 300 Friends from around the world. We worshiped in the many expressions of our faith, lived and ate together, shared our spiritual journeys and grappled with organizational issues. We learned. We grew in spirit. And as our pilgrimage returned us home, we discovered how a journey continues to unfold.

We hope you will join us at NEYM Sessions or at your quarterly meeting to hear our story and share in the dialogue. Until then, here are a few impressions.

**I**n lieu of waiting in line for meals, I “balanced.” Balancing is like group yoga where instead of finding your own body’s center as you breathe and stretch and position, you work with others to find a common center as you position and uphold each other. You find yourself able to hold a position that you could not do alone. You trustfully place your center of balance outside of yourself in the play of weights and counterweights between you. I was paired with Mamoru, a Japanese Friend in his 60s. In one balance, we were both standing, but he was standing on my knees with his arms outstretched like wings. It is called “Angel.” Our balancing sessions were the perfect counterbalance to too much Quaker sitting-around, yet still demanded intense communication and support. They were lessons in working together with utmost care. They were full of challenge and triumph. They were full of metaphor.

—April Claggett, Monadnock (NH) MM

**T**riennials offer many chances for spiritual sharing and the joy of community, but they also provide a place to examine together, lovingly, our difficulties and differ-

ences as a Society. Such occasions in Auckland included interest groups in which gay Friends witnessed to their lives and beliefs by sharing openly with Quakers for whom this subject is a profound barrier. Friends from Africa and Latin America who had never had the chance to ask questions about homosexuality spoke freely to gay and lesbian

Photo: Denise Hart



Group photo at the FWCC Triennial in Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand

Friends in one gathering. A gay Quaker theology student also addressed another dimension of the issue in a scholarly examination of the Bible and homosexuality (“Is the Bible Anti-Gay?”). Real change of course comes slowly. In these face-to-face, heart-to-heart hours, however, doors opened that had been closed before, allowing the gift of the Spirit to move.

—Carolyn Hilles, Beacon Hill (MA) MM

**T**he Young Adult Friends were a gift of cheer, as they “balanced” around us, climbing up on each other like acrobats, and effectively eldering us during business meetings when we lost our way. The Quaker process used in their business meeting to plan a World Gathering of Young Adult Friends in 2005, was the most deeply spiritual that I have experienced in years. By consensus, they chose this theme for their gathering: “Now let us see what love will do! I am the vine and you are the branches. What fruit shall we bear?” When this report was shared in meeting for business, the Young Adult Friend began with an enthusiastic, “It is SO nice to see so many OLD people here today!”

We all enjoyed a good laugh.

—Nancyrose Logan, Hanover (NH) MM

**O**ur gathering suffered from government bureaucracy as 26 Friends from African countries and 13 from India were denied visas, something I didn’t even need as a U.S. citizen. Our hosts worked diligently to resolve

this, while we prayed and longed for those we had yet to meet. Four days before the Triennial ended, all of the African Friends except one arrived; the Indian Friends never made it. I ended up sitting next to one of the African Friends who was “late” (a euphemism we often heard) at lunch. As we became acquainted, I said how much I admired her equanimity in the face of what had occurred. She turned to me and told me how it had taken a week to travel to her country’s capital to catch the plane. When she wasn’t allowed

to board, she stayed with friends. “We don’t have a lot of money, but we help each other,” she said. And then she told me how her trip was paid for by FWCC, so how could she say what she was really feeling? How could she upset her hosts who live in a country that doesn’t welcome Africans? It was a conversation that reshaped my experience at the Triennial. I began paying attention to who spoke and who didn’t at our meetings.

—Denise Hart, Cambridge (MA) MM

**A**n underlying theme throughout this Triennial was the question of money. FWCC is in terrible financial trouble. A large part of our Triennial was spent trying to solve this financial crisis. The organization will cease to exist in the next couple of years if donations are not increased by 12%. The FWCC Section of the Americas is one of the wealthier sections and yearly meetings that belong to it should donate even more. FWCC is one of the few bodies that unite us as Friends. FWCC is also the official voice of Quakers at the United Nations. They need our help. As Quakers, can we answer this call of matching our values with our finances?

## The wider Quaker family

## YouthQuake—Estes Park, Colorado—Dec. 27, 2003 to Jan. 1, 2004

*Iona Giddings, Monadnock (NH) Monthly Meeting*

Photo: Jonathan Vogel-Borne



*Young Friends worship in song at YouthQuake 2003*

**A**T AROUND 7:30AM ON THE FIRST DAY of 2004, I found myself on bus driving through a sunrise in Colorado. To my left the sun was turning the Rocky Mountains, a lovely, soft shade of purple. To my right the sun was pushing its way through some clouds on the distant horizon.

I watched the sky fade from gray to pink-orange, to green, to blue.

At NEYM Sessions in August I decided to participate in YouthQuake. I was hardly aware of what I was getting myself into. YouthQuake is a gathering of Young Friends from all over the U.S. working together on a particular theme. Coming from New England and a background of solely unprogrammed meetings, I suffered from a good deal of culture shock. As soon as we started talking there was an obvious difference between kids from unprogrammed meetings and those from programmed traditions (aside from the different accents).

At first, to me, the kids from the programmed meetings seemed to speak another language when it came to talking about their faith. I could see no place where our

beliefs united us into Quakers. I remember being shocked to hear someone say she was always a Christian first and a Quaker second. Another disconnect was the Bible. I don't believe that the Bible is the ultimate authority and the only way to hear God's voice. I encountered Quakers who believed the Bible is the Word of God and should be followed literally. My many years of Sunday school in no way prepared me to be (what I perceived as) a Bible-thumping Christian.

But although we spoke about it in a different way there was one thing that I could stretch into a bridge. One of the Quaker values I have been taught is that every person has that of God in them. One young programmed friend spoke about everyone's ability to accept Jesus Christ into their hearts. I can see a similarity there, can you? I must say that my definition of Quakerism and my own Quakerism have been radically expanded. It was perhaps one of the most spiritually challenging events in my young life.

*Emily Neumann, Fresh Pond (MA) Monthly Meeting*

**A**S YOUTHQUAKE APPROACHED I BEGAN to get very anxious. I knew that there would be programmed Friends there and that it would be a radically different experience from any meeting I had ever been to. The preparation meeting for NEYM participants accentuated the knowledge that it would be extremely different. I knew I should read the gospel of Mark since Chris recommended it, but I procrastinated until the night before. The next morning was very interesting. My father and I arrived at the airport 20 minutes early. Everyone trickled in and seemed energized, despite the fact

that it was still early in the morning.

When we arrived at Estes Park at around 5pm, it was dark and cold. It only became slightly warmer over the next few days. We were quickly moved over to the central building to check in and get all our schedules, water bottles (50% less oxygen at 8,000 feet in the Rocky Mountains). Even that first night there was an amazing amount of Jesus focus. At least it seemed that way to me. For the first two days, I was out of breath whenever I walked outside. In the first days the two different groups seemed to be very separated with beliefs and there was a lot of arguments. Most of the unprogrammed Friends found their beliefs questioned, even attacked! On the third day things came to a head, and the unprogrammed friends, including me, learned to let slide any statements that made us angry.

We had a really good pastor leading us during the programmed part of worship. He made it easy to listen to and very fun.

The hardest part for me to deal with was my family group. I had two people in my family group that were very set in their opinions. They tried to explain their beliefs to

me. I think they feared that I would not go to heaven (which I don't believe in) because of my beliefs.

The fourth day, Colorado day, I traveled to Boulder to go rock climbing and tour Celestial Seasonings. After we left the rock climbing facility my friend from Illinois and I learned that Jon Krakauer had been but 10 feet on our right. We both really like his book *Into Thin Air*.

That night we had an amazing family group. We were finally really able to understand where the other was coming from. We became friends after that. All it takes is time to really listen and not to judge.

The last day was very different from the first day. Everyone seemed pretty close. It was very hard to leave. On the last night, the relations seemed to deteriorate a bit. However, it was sad to have to leave. I gained so much from going to this conference. I really think that it was an important experience to have in my spiritual journey. Relations between the two different groups of Quakers should be worked at and kept. It is very important to understand the other side on anything.

Photo: Jonathan Vogel-Borne



*A "pig pile" before worship*

## FGC Gathering in New England—July 3–10

*Judy Hyde, Storrs (CT) Monthly Meeting, Clerk of 2004 Gathering Evening Programs*

**T**HERE ARE LOTS OF GOOD REASONS TO COME TO FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE (FGC) Gathering at UMass Amherst this summer—Friends • Great workshops • Interesting field trips • Music • Dancing • Interest groups • Profound and exhilarating worship—but even without all of that, the evening speakers alone would be reason enough. As Clerk of the Evening Program Committee, I am very pleased to announce this roster.

### Peter Blood-Patterson & Mary Ellen McNish—July 4

Two Friends of long standing who have helped to illuminate the Gathering over the years and whose light shines well out into the world will begin the week with a plenary that seeks to exemplify the theme of *Simple Lives—Radiant Faith*. We will hear from them about their personal journeys, their faith, their fun, or whatever is on their hearts. Peter is known in the Quaker world and beyond for his musical talent and for bringing to fruition, together with his wife Annie, the songbook *Rise up Singing*. Mary Ellen became General Secretary of AFSC in 2000. She administers programs and projects in 46 cities in the US and more than 21 other countries. She has been the assistant Presiding Clerk of FGC.

### Kevin Bales—July 5

There are more slaves in the world today than at the height of anti-slavery Quaker activism in previous centuries. Both *National Geographic* and the *New York Times Magazine* have had recent cover stories on modern slavery including the trafficking of women and girls to supply the sex industry. Both articles quoted Kevin Bales, a British Friend, as the leading world expert on the topic. He is a professor both at the University of Surrey Roehampton in London and the University of Mississippi, heads Free the Slaves, and serves as consultant to the UN Global Program on Trafficking in Persons. His book *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy* won the Vioreggio prize in 2000. As a Quaker, he very much looks forward to bringing his work to FGC for the first time. He will also lead an FGC workshop with his wife, Virginia Bauman.

### Bill Harley—July 7

This Quaker treasure for all ages has appeared all over the country, singing and telling stories. He is also a frequent commentator for NPR's *All Things Considered* because of his humor and wisdom on topics like T-ball game strategy, first jobs, and

dead groundhogs. As Bill says, "Anything is material to a desperate man." When he performs, children and adults are spellbound. Winner of two Grammy nominations and numerous other national awards including Parent's Choice and American Library Association, Bill is extraordinarily gifted.

### Renita Weems—July 8

Renita Weems is an accomplished speaker, author, on-line columnist and womanist Biblical scholar. Ordained an elder in the Methodist tradition, she has written on a wide range of topics from women's spirituality to the waxing and waning of faith. She was a panelist for Bill Moyer's PBS series on Genesis. Her book, *Listening for God: A Minister's Journey through Silence and Doubt*, won an award for excellence in communicating spiritual values to the secular media. She is Associate Professor of Old Testament Studies at Vanderbilt University and Visiting Professor of Humanities at Spelman College.

### Lester Brown—July 9

Long a fan of Worldwatch Institute's State of the World annual reports, I jumped at an invitation to hear its founder Lester Brown's commencement address at UConn a few years ago. Since that impressive speech, I prayed that one day he would be a plenary speaker at FGC for his is among the most vital work to rescue the planet from becoming uninhabitable. The Washington Post calls him one of the world's most influential thinkers. He gives hope. His many prizes and awards include the 1987 United Nations' Environment Prize, the 1989 World Wide Fund for Nature Gold Medal, and the 1994 Blue Planet Prize for "exceptional contributions to solving global environmental problems." The author of 21 books on the environment, his most recent works are *Eco-Economy: Building an Economy for the Earth*, and *Plan B: Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble*. So committed is he to raising awareness of what can and must be done, that he will donate a copy of *Plan B* to every FGC plenary attender.

### From the Gathering Co-Clerks

*Judy Brophy & Jim Glading,  
Monadnock (NH) Monthly Meeting*

AS CO-CLERKS OF THE GATHERING COMMITTEE of Friends General Conference, we joyfully extend a special invitation to NEYM Friends to attend the 2004 Gathering. This summer it will be held at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst the week of July 3-10, right in our own backyard! Our theme is "Simple Lives—Radiant Faith".

If you've never been to a Gathering before, you might think about it as an opportunity to experience a life of continuous worship. For many, workshops are the best place to develop a small community of like-minded Friends. They meet every morning for nearly three hours, giving the group a significant amount of time to discuss, practice skills and worship together. Evening Programs will present radiant lives whose ministries have touched thousands. Children will discover, sometimes to their astonishment, a large group of Quaker peers. Junior Gathering is a community of up to 350 children (newborn through eighth grade) and over 100 adults who feel called to be with them.

The FGC Gathering is a place where you can renew your search for simplicity and radiance among fellow seekers. You can live and participate in a faith community that is writing in each other's hearts. Please join us.



*Lester Brown of Worldwatch Institute*

### Think you can't afford to go to FGC? Scholarships may be available.

Check with your meeting to see if funds are set aside to support attendance at Quaker activities. FGC will match dollar for dollar any meeting funds used to support the attendance of a first-timer. For more information: 215/561-1700 • [www.fgcquaker.org](http://www.fgcquaker.org)

## What Quakers bring to the ecumenical table

*Eden Grace, Beacon Hill (MA) Monthly Meeting & member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches*

*This essay was originally written for presentation at the Massachusetts Council of Churches, as part of a series on the distinctive gifts of the member churches of the Council.*

THREE QUAKER DELEGATES ATTENDED THE FIRST CONFERENCE on Faith and Order, in Lausanne Switzerland in 1927. The Quaker position on sacraments—that we do not celebrate the sacraments in any outward way—was mentioned in a sub-section, and grew into a heated controversy in the plenary about whether Quakers could be considered Christian. The three Friends submitted a clear statement of our theological position, and then said no more, while the debate raged around them. As one of the Friends present reflected later, “large issues were involved—not simply the acceptance of the little Society of Friends as part of the organized Christian Church, but the far wider question of religious liberty and deep theological principles (Ferner Nuhn, *Friends and the Ecumenical Movement*, Friends General Conference, 1970, p. 21).” Finally, Bishop Charles Gore, of the Church of England, settled the question by stating with great authority that “God is not limited by His own sacraments.” (Nuhn, p. 21) Not only was way open for Friends to become part of the ecumenical movement, but the movement as a whole had taken an enormously significant decision—that there was to be no single criterion which would determine whether a church could be considered fully a church.

So why do we take the position we do regarding the sacraments? And what, really, is our position? We do not reject the spiritual realities toward which sacraments point. We recognize baptism as the transformation of life through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We recognize communion as the presence of Jesus Christ in our corporate worship. We recognize ordination as the diverse giftedness for ministry of all people. We recognize these things, and rejoice in them, but we do not believe that the church should seek to initiate them through ritual means.

Without getting too deep into theology, it is important to remember that our understanding of the nature of the church is based on a realized eschatology of the new covenant. The old system has passed away, and Christ is present among us to lead us into an experience of the kingdom, here and now. Therefore, we reject all interim structures of authority, and seek in all ways to be obedient to the immediate leadership of Christ. As the Friends in Lausanne stated, “We believe that a corporate practice of the presence of God, a corporate knowledge of Christ in our midst, a common experience of the work of the living Spirit, constitute the supremely real sacrament of a Holy Communion.” (Nuhn, p. 20)

Our position is that Christian faith does not require outward sacramental practice. Rather, Christian faith requires a spiritual experience of sacramental reality. Clearly, this poses a difficulty for the ecumenical movement. But can you see how it is also a gift?

Quakers in Britain, in response to the World Council of Churches’ document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, stated: “However valid and vital outward sacraments are for others, they are not, in our experience, necessary for the operation of God’s grace. We believe we hold this witness in trust for the whole church.” (paragraph 23 of *To Lima With Love*, London (now Britain) Yearly Meeting’s 1986 response to the WCC study document on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*.)

We have often been footnoted as the exception to the growing ecumenical consensus. Yet I would plead that our witness deserves more than a footnote—we hold it in trust on behalf of the whole church. It deserves to be heard, and its implications carefully considered. As my British colleague Janet Scott has said:



Artwork “Light & Shadow,” G.K. Bugbee © 2003

Are the other churches ready to hear what we have to say? ...For when we start to state our position positively we are putting forward a very serious challenge. For we are talking about Christianity as a way of life which puts God at the center and sees dependence on the Holy Spirit as a daily gift. Thus, baptism with water is unnecessary because the Spirit baptizes all those who respond to the Light; outward ritual in worship is unnecessary because true worship waits on God to receive the power and inspiration of the Spirit; the Spirit ordains those who are to speak and this ordination lasts for as long as the message is being delivered. There is no creed because the Spirit cannot be fettered by words; whether someone is a Christian is shown by the quality of a faithful life rather than by what is said or believed. ...Let us pull Quakers up from being the footnote and bring them to the center of the page. For once the Quaker perspective is recognized and accepted, the whole discussion of unity and diversity is changed, indeed turned on its head, for most of the former questions become useless and have to be replaced. The central questions then become: How do we recognise the Holy Spirit at work in this church? How is Christian witness manifest in its life?

—Janet Scott unpublished essay, *Silent or Silenced? The Religious Society of Friends and Ecumenical Dialogue*, 2001

Indeed, it is this emphasis on the witness of life that becomes the center of what Quakers bring to the ecumenical table. And it is through this witness that we serve as a reminder to the other churches of the true source of the church. “Jesus Christ is the center of a Gospel that is not primarily a creed or a doctrine but a life.” (Nuhn, p. 20) We believe we hold this truth in trust for the whole church, and that it is our gift to the ecumenical movement. The other churches need us, lest they forget that all ecclesial responses to God’s divine presence are provisional and subject to God’s judgment. We do not need to be tolerated and footnoted as some sort of Christian aberration. For the sake of all Christians, the truth we hold in trust must be welcomed by our ecumenical brothers and sisters, as a real gift to the ecumenical movement.

# Around the Yearly Meeting

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

• **Putney (VT) Monthly Meeting (MM)** is making plans to set up a draft counseling service at an easily accessible location, perhaps somewhere in Brattleboro, VT.

• **Plainfield (VT) MM and Durham (ME) MM** newsletters highlighted bills in the US Congress that would reinstate the draft. The Universal Service Act of 2003 (S89 and HR163) is designed “to provide for the common defense by requiring that all young persons in the United States, including women, perform a period of military service or a period of civilian service in furtherance of the national defense and homeland security, and for other purposes.” None of the bills being considered make provisions for conscientious objection. The Washington, DC based Center for Conscience and War is organizing a day of lobbying on Friday, May 14<sup>th</sup> and urges all meetings to meet with their representatives in their home offices to make the case for including conscientious objector provisions in these bills.

• **Amesbury, Beacon Hill, Cambridge, Fresh Pond, Mt. Toby, New Bedford, Northampton, South Berkshire, and Wellesley (MA) MMs and East Sandwich (MA) Preparative Meeting** have all signed the Massachusetts Declaration of Religious Support For the Freedom of Same-Gender Couples to Marry. See [www.ftmc.org/rcfm](http://www.ftmc.org/rcfm) for more info.

• **Durham (ME) MM** approved a minute on sexual orientation. The minute says in part: “As a faith community, we at Durham Friends Meeting embrace the teachings and action reflected in the life of Jesus Christ. As a community that seeks to follow the leadings of the Inward Christ, the Spirit of God, we look for that of God in every person. We celebrate and are enriched by diversity. Therefore we welcome as equals all who feel called to join with us regardless of sexual orientation.

“We are called to a love that goes beyond outer differences in race, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation and personal belief. It is love that unites us as one with no separation in the Eternal Spirit of God.”

• **Mt Toby (MA) MM** Friends formed an Affinity Group a year ago to respond to the threat of invasion in the Middle East. The group continues to meet monthly, in worship-centered planning and support for

a variety of actions including risking arrest in acts of civil disobedience.

• **Beacon Hill (MA) MM** Ministry & Counsel instituted a “Letters to Lucretia” section in their newsletter in order to remind Friends that “meeting for worship is precious and only benefits from shared discussion and care.” In this first issue, Lucretia addresses concerns about reading in meeting, promptness in attendance, and protocol in responding to peoples messages after meeting.

• **Belfast Area (ME) MM** organized a stone soup intergenerational meeting for worship. Friends were asked to participate in creating their potluck soup by bringing “any kind of vegetables, any amount, seasonings (herbs & milder spices), pre-cooked beans or grains, enough bowls/cups and spoons for your family, cutting boards and knives.” Friends were also asked to “donate the amount of money it would take to eat the soup, either at a four-star restaurant in New York City, or at home.” The money was given to create and send hygiene kits for the American Friends Service Committee project to help AIDS orphans in Mozambique.

• **Midcoast (ME) MM** reports that their hearing assistance devices are tuned to the same frequency as their Mormon neighbors. Friends wearing these devices were surprised one First Day to hear arias being sung at the nearby church.

• **Hartford (CT) MM** joined the Greater Hartford Interfaith Coalition for Equity and Justice (ICEJ), “an organization of 41 local Christian, Jewish, and Muslim congregations working for racial and economic justice. The ICEJ’s mission is ‘to effect community-wide, systemic change through legislative advocacy and reform, community action and renewal, uniting in cooperation with those groups and organizations in the region that share our faith-based values and commitments.’”

• **Dover (NH) MM** created a game of Secret Friends, to “get acquainted with a special person in Meeting, or to make a deeper connection with someone you already know.” People filled out forms with questions like “what is your favorite snack when you are starved?” and “If you had a magic wand to change something about Meeting, what would it be.” Friends were encouraged

not to take these questions too seriously. After filling out the forms, Secret Friends were assigned through the US mail. For the next five weeks, Secret Friends were asked to send one message per week to each other—a letter, poem, a drawing, etc. Messages were distributed on Sunday mornings after meeting by the Young Friends. After five weeks, on the day after Valentines Day, Secret Friends all got together for “revelations.”

• **Dartmouth at Smith Neck (MA) MM** sent a work team to help rebuild a Quaker family’s home in Achilles, VA destroyed by the 2003 hurricane Isabel. Smith Neck Friends joined about 70 other Friends from around the country to help out in this project organized by the Friends Disaster Service.

• **Cambridge (MA) MM** appointed an Ad Hoc Committee on Child Abuse Prevention and Response. The Committee is charged to research issues related to child abuse, evaluate current practices on the care and supervision of children and youth, and to develop new polices and procedures where necessary, articulating and addressing concerns related to ethical and legal ramifications of the plan. Concerns to be addressed include mandated reporting, criminal background checks, and training for adults who work with children and youth.

• **Providence (RI) MM** First Day School teachers created “Quaker Jeopardy.” The game is described as follows: “Players split into mixed-aged groups and chose a question from a ‘category’ such as ‘school skills,’ ‘happy home,’ ‘street smarts,’ ‘mall madness,’ and ‘meeting matters.’ Each question gave a realistic scenario asking the players what they would do in response. What would you do if you saw the class bully, who stole your lunch earlier that day, stranded after school with a flat bicycle tire? Have you ever been undercharged for an item that was too expensive to begin with?”



Providence (RI) Meetinghouse

# Yearly Meeting activities

## Nat Shed appointed new Director of Friends Camp



Photo: Jonathan Vogel-Borne

**A**FTER A PROCESS MARKED BY DEEP discernment in prayer, a Search Committee brought the name of Nath-

aniel (Nat) R. Shed of Waterville, ME to serve as the next Director of Friends Camp in China, ME. Permanent Board approved Nat's appointment, and he will begin a transition process by working with Susan Morris starting in April. I expect that Nat will have the chance to meet many Friends from around the Yearly Meeting in the coming months, but I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce him to you.

Nat has had a long relationship with the Camp, including serving on the Camp Committee, and sending both his daughter and step-daughter to Friends Camp. He has been active among New England Friends in Dover, Portland, Vassalboro and Mt Toby Meetings.

Most recently, Nat has been the Director of Camp Unirondak, a Unitarian Universalist camp in New York State. He has also directed a day camp, and a Boys and Girls Club,

and brings extensive experience with youth ministry and camping.

In a letter introducing himself to the current camper families, Nat said: "It is my hope that the young people who attend Friends Camp will learn new ways of looking at the world around them, and will come to understand and appreciate the unique way that the faith and the practices of the Religious Society of Friends has had an impact on their lives. I would also like young people to learn to speak about and act on issues of peace and social justice."

Susan Morris will work with Nat to make sure that the transition process is seamless, and that this summer's season is a success. I hope you will find an opportunity to greet Nat over the next few months, and to hold him in your prayers as he undertakes this new ministry among us.

—Eden Grace, Clerk of Permanent Board

## "Day of Discernment: Keeping the peace testimony central to our faith and witness" — Wellesley Meetinghouse, 2/14/2004

*Marguerite Helen, Wellesley (MA) Monthly Meeting, co-clerk NEYM Peace & Social Concerns Committee*

**M**INISTRY & COUNSEL AND PEACE & Social Concerns Committees invited those regarded as "activists" and those regarded as the "spiritual" among us to gather and share feelings and beliefs, hoping that this would lead to a melding of our faith and our witness. We were not seeking so much for unity but for understanding. 59 Friends from monthly meetings all over NEYM responded to our invitation. The entire day was one of worship, with periods of silence between periods of worship-sharing, all in a spirit of trust, mutual respect, honest sharing, and deep listening to ourselves and to each other.

On arrival, each Friend received a name tag, red or green depending on how they had identified themselves as being on the "contemplative" or "active" end of the spectrum. After opening worship, each participant read a quote about peace that they had been asked to bring. We divided into pairs,

"reds" with "greens," and with someone we did not know, answering the question, "Where am I in regard to the peace testimony now, and what has been my spiritual journey to get there?" Each pair then joined with another pair, introducing each other's partner, answering the same question. In comments to the whole group about this exercise, people spoke of feeling great power, both in listening and in being listened to. After lunch, Friends grouped into six's or eight's to respond to the question, "How do I treat every person as a child of God?" In the final gathering of the whole, we reflected on "What have I learned today?" and "What can't thou say to Yearly Meeting?"

We found great value in the small group process and suggest that it might be helpful if NEYM found a way to create smaller, mixed gatherings to thresh out weighty issues before they came to the floor of Sessions.

Although we came to no conclusions

about the existing polarity or how to eliminate it, we did bring it out more into the open, which is a first step in addressing it. The problem, as clearly stated, is that some Friends undervalue and mistrust the different ways that other Friends live their spiritual witness, especially in regard to the peace testimony. Those who consider that their ways of thinking and acting are "the right" ways, appear to believe that if only "the other side" would straighten out their lives in conformity with "the right" way of interpreting theology, they would come over to the "correct" side. These feelings exist and need to be considered, openly and honestly, in all our meetings. We should also acknowledge the quiet and intense work of peacemaking at all levels, which begins with family, neighborhood, and community. Contemplation and activism, faith and witness, represent and feed each other, and the casserole makers can be both.

## In other Quaker news

### 2004 BHFH Weed Lecture

Retha McCutchen, Friends United Meeting General Secretary, will give the 2004 Earnest & Esther Weed Lecture, *International Partnerships—A Shift From Traditional Missions*. Retha recently wrote in the British Quaker publication, *The Friend*, that “we are challenged to redefine the role of Friends United Meeting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century... Friends United Meeting is on the cutting edge, making visionary changes in our approach to missions that move projects toward health rather than traditional dependence on the home office.” This is a “paradigm shift away from traditional missions—North American Friends send, and ‘they’ receive—to partnerships where all member yearly meetings make decisions and ‘sending’ happens from all parts of FUM’s constituency to the world.” The Lecture is at 2pm, 4/18/03 at Beacon Hill Friends House, 6 Chestnut Street, Boston, MA, 617/227-9118 • [directors@bhfh.org](mailto:directors@bhfh.org)

### “Practice of Clerking” workshop

The NEYM Coordinating & Advisory Committee is sponsoring its annual workshop on clerking, 5/1/2004, from 9:30am to 3:30pm at Worcester, MA. All interested Friends will gather for a time of nurture, sharing, and support. RSVP to the NEYM Office, 508/754-6760 • [neym@neym.org](mailto:neym@neym.org)

### FDS Curriculum Workshop

A First Day School (FDS) Curriculum Workshop, sponsored by the NEYM Christian Education Committee will take place at Wellesley Meetinghouse, 5/1/2004, 8:45am to 4:30pm. This is the day you have been waiting for! A whole day of sharing and presentations on how to teach Quakerism to our children. Workshops include: • Identifying the goals and content of a Quaker Religious Education Program • The spiritual and cognitive development of children • Preparing an annual curriculum plan • Creating a racial justice curriculum • Buying and adapting pre-existing lesson plans • A curriculum writing lab. There will be plenty of time to share your experiences and challenges and gather support, insight, and inspiration from other Friends. Chris Jorgenson will bring a wonderful collection of resources and books. Save the date! A \$25 fee covers lunch and a terrific collection of take home materials. Ask your Meeting to sponsor your participation. Watch for the invitation in the mail.

Contact: Gail Thomas, 617/492-5035 • [thomasgail@comcast.net](mailto:thomasgail@comcast.net)

### Ministers & Elders Working Together

*A Deeper Service: Ministers and Elders Working Together*, at Woolman Hill, 6/4-6/2004, co-sponsored by NEYM Ministry & Counsel (M&C). The retreat is led by Jan Hoffman (Mt Toby MM) and Kenneth Sutton (Beacon Hill MM) who bring the experience of 15 years in a minister-elder relationship lived out in speaking, doing workshops, and teaching. This is a weekend to empower the creative partnership between ministers and elders. By “minister” Jan and Kenneth mean “one who is giving prophetic expression to God’s movement in and toward the world, whether acknowledged or not. The ministry may or may not be vocal in nature, and may or may not occur in the context of worship.” By “elder” they mean “one who is exercising the gift of discernment in support of a minister and the ministry.” Participants are asked to attach a letter of support from their meeting’s M&C or equivalent body to their registration, due by 5/4/2004. Contact: 413/774-3431 • [www.woolmanhill.org](http://www.woolmanhill.org)

### Summer “Quaker Peacebuilder Camp”

The Quaker Peacebuilder Camp is planned for 6/24 – 7/4/2004. A portion of the camp will be held at The Meeting School, in Rindge, NH, while the other portion will be in Hartford, CT, partnering with one or more organizations working with urban youth. The program, jointly sponsored by a group of Friends and the Northeast Office of the American Friends Service Committee, will help high school aged youth develop the skills, understanding and relationships to become better organizers of nonviolent action. Contact: John Humphries, 860/236-5175 • [jhumphries@igc.org](mailto:jhumphries@igc.org) or Brian Drayton, 603/654-6001 • [brian\\_drayton@terc.edu](mailto:brian_drayton@terc.edu)

### “Illuminating Our Divine Connections”

Teaching peace, creating a non-racist meeting community, Quakers and teens, a Montessori approach to spiritual formation (Godly play), exploring Christianity from a Quaker perspective—what great workshops! And intergenerational plenaries by Niyonu Spann and Marlou Carlson. Plus over a dozen interest groups on topics ranging from creating a safe space to expressing ourselves through movement and music. What is this amazing

event? The Friends General Conference Religious Education Institute—*Illuminating Our Divine Connections*—a coming together of parents, First Day School teachers and educators, 8/19–22/2004 at Camp Asbury, Silver Lake, NY (near Rochester). Perfect for summer—trees, cabins, a lake. There will be a full program for children as well as the workshops and interest groups for adults. Contact: Friends General Conference, 215/561-1700 • [www.fgcquaker.org](http://www.fgcquaker.org)

### Woolman Hill Retreats

4/18–23, *In Solitude Alone, In Silence Together* (week long), Sirkka Barbour; *I’m Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table: A Spiritual Journey in Song*. 4/30–5/2, Annie & Peter Blood-Patterson; *Artists in Residence Week*. 5/9–14, Arthur Fink. Contact: Woolman Hill, 413/774-3431 • [www.woolmanhill.org](http://www.woolmanhill.org)

### The Meeting School Open House

The Meeting School, a co-educational Quaker high school in Rindge, NH is holding its second annual open house/get away this summer, 7/10-25. Visitors are invited to share the joy of summer on our 130 acres of fields and forest, experience a bit of the community spirit that guides us in our academic and common life, and have your personal retreat. We invite you to work along with us in the garden, maintain and improve our physical plant, care for animals, pick berries, or make hay. You may take advantage of the opportunities that abound in the Monadnock region while camping or staying in our home like dorms. Contact: Zane Knoy, 603/669-0449 • [zaneknoy@earthlink.net](mailto:zaneknoy@earthlink.net)

### Woolman Hill seeks Program Director

Woolman Hill Conference Center seeks a Program Director to develop and market weekend programs centered in Quaker values, and to take responsibility for general office administration and some facilities management. 20 hrs/wk, starting June/July. Contact: Mark Fraser, 413/774-3431 • [www.woolmanhill.org](http://www.woolmanhill.org)

### Moses Brown seeks Teacher/Director

Moses Brown School, which operates under the care of NEYM, seeks a Religion and Human Values Instructor/ Director of Community Service and Friends Educational Resources. Contact: James T. English, 401/831-7350 • [jenglish@mosesbrown.org](mailto:jenglish@mosesbrown.org)

**Presiding Clerk**, Deana Chase ■ **Treasurer**, Ken Hoffman ■ **NEYM OFFICE**: 901 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01602-1908 • 508/754-6760 • FAX: 508/754-9401 • [neym@neym.org](mailto:neym@neym.org) • [www.neym.org](http://www.neym.org) • OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday–Friday, 9am–5pm ■ **Administrative Secretary**, Katharine Clark ■ **Administrative Assistant/Young Adult Friends Coordinator**, Karen Armstrong ■ **Youth & Education Secretary**, Christel Jorgenson ■ **Field Secretary**, Jonathan Vogel-Borne ■ **The New England Friend**: Editor, Jonathan Vogel-Borne; ■ **ARCHIVIST**, Marnie Miller-Gutsell, 121 Hope St., Providence RI 02906 ■ **FRIENDS CAMP**, Susan Morris, Director, P.O. Box 84, East Vassalboro, ME 04935 ■ **MOSES BROWN SCHOOL**, Joanne Hoffman, Head, 250 Lloyd Ave., Providence, RI 02906 ■ **NEW ENGLAND FRIENDS HOME–THAYER HOUSE**, Gretchen Condon, Administrator, Turkey Hill Lane, Hingham, MA 02043 ■ **YOUTH RETREATS**: Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) Elementary Retreats grades 2-5, [jymretreats.org](http://jymretreats.org); Kevin Lee 508/994-1638 and Gretchen Baker-Smith 508/997-0940; Grades 6-8, 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**



**Address Service Requested**

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 2004

- 2–4 JYM 6<sup>th</sup> Graders – Westport MM(MA)
- 3 Committee Day – Hartford MM (CT)
- 16–18 Young Friends Retreat – Mt Toby MM (MA)
- 18 RI–Smithfield QM – Worcester FM (MA)
- 19–21 NE & NY Pastors Gathering – Powell House, NY
- 24 Falmouth QM – Durham MM (ME)
- 24 Sandwich QM – New Bedford MM (MA)
- 25 Salem QM – Framingham FM (MA)
- 30–5/1 Stillness Retreat – Monadnock MM (NH) [For info: Kate Kerman, 603/876-4562 or [kkerman@phoenixfarm.org](mailto:kkerman@phoenixfarm.org)]

### May 2004

- 1 Clerking Workshop – Worcester FM (MA), [see p. 7]
- 1 Vassalboro QM – Cobscook FM (ME)
- 1 Curriculum Workshop – Wellesley MM (MA), [see p. 7]
- 2 CT Valley QM – S. Berkshire MM (MA)
- 2 United Society of Friends Women – Weare MM (NH)
- 7–9 Young Friends Senior Retreat – Location, TBA
- 7–9 Jr. High Retreat – Woolman Hill, MA
- 8 Permanent Board – Woolman Hill, MA
- 14–15 Spiritual Formation – Woolman Hill, MA
- 16 Ministry & Counsel – Woolman Hill, MA
- 21–23 Elementary Retreat – Woolman Hill, MA
- 30 Dover QM – W. Epping/Gonic MM (NH)

### June 2004

- 4–6 Ministers & Elders – Woolman Hill, MA, [see p. 7]
- 5–6 Northwest QM – Farm & Wilderness (VT)
- 12 Committee Day – Wellesley FM (MA)
- 18–20 YAF Retreat – Location, TBA

### July 2004

- 3–10 FGC Gathering – Amherst, MA [see p. 3]
- 8–11 United Society of Friends Women International – Greensboro, NC
- 18 RI–Smithfield QM – Providence MM (RI)
- 24 Falmouth QM – Location, TBA
- 24 Sandwich QM – Mattapoisett MM (MA)
- 30-31 Stillness Retreat – Monadnock MM (NH)

### August 2004

- 7–12 NEYM Sessions – Bryant College, Smithfield, RI  
**Theme:** “And who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29)
- 19–22 FGC RE Institute – Silver Lake, NY [see p. 7]
- 29 Dover QM – Location, TBA

### September 2004

- 10–12 Vassalboro QM Gathering – Friends Camp (ME)
- 11–12 Northwest QM – Farm & Wilderness (VT)

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