

Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) Elementary Retreat Program

Kevin Lee, Westport Monthly Meeting & JYM Elementary Retreat Coordinator

THE JUNIOR YEARLY MEETING (JYM) ELEMENTARY RETREAT program is in its 20th consecutive year of offering retreat weekend experiences for children in grades two through six. In essence we exist to build and maintain a spiritual community that children recognize and claim as their own. My leading back in 1988 was to offer our younger Quakers a safe and fun thematic weekend where they could reunite with their peers in the months following our annual Sessions in August. By the Grace of God and through the dedication and work of many gifted and spiritually grounded adults it is clear that we have succeeded in creating something new that endures.

Quaker parents frequently ask me how best to raise their young children in the manner of Friends. Certainly it begins by example in the home and meeting. As our children grow and begin to explore the wider circle of Friends around them, I tell parents that getting their children involved in all of our Yearly Meeting's youth programs, Elementary, Junior High, Young Friends and Friends Camp, will have a profound, lasting and positive impact on the lives of their children.

When the JYM Retreat program began, the Internet was just beginning. Today, I frequently hear stories of how young adults are now using social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace to reconnect with their retreat pals that they had lost contact with over time. I've even had a few contact me to ask if they could apply to staff a retreat. Talk about community!

Our weekends begin on Fridays at 5:30pm with supper, fellowship and singing. Each weekend evolves around a different theme which is further explored in small groups over the course of the weekend. Theme topics are rooted in one way or another to our book of *Faith and Practice*, Scripture, historical Friends or other spiritual disciplines. A sampling of themes that we have explored are: "Will the real Jesus please stand up!," "I am not a short adult," "Feeling your

Photo: Kevin Lee



A JYM circle at Wellesley (MA) Meetinghouse

Supreme Kitchen Goddess! Our retreat weekends end following worship with our host meeting and lunch on Sunday.

We select staff with great care. Adults who are interested in staffing with us must first exhibit a joy and love of working and being with children. Applicants must also complete a formal reference checking process before coming on board. I can say without hesitation that our JYM Elementary Retreat program has attracted and retained over many years some of the finest and most spiritually centered adults I have ever had the privilege of knowing.

Children who attend our retreats know and experience this too. They sometimes develop lasting connections and friendships with staff and communicate between retreats. Notes, emails, e-cards, drawings and photos are frequently exchanged among staff and children throughout the year, providing a deeper and wider sense of being connected and contained within our Quaker community.

Our retreat program, like others, functions under the care and oversight of NEYM's Youth Programs Committee. We remain grateful for the support of other committees and Friends within the structure of Yearly Meeting who assist us with accounting services and (partial) financial support. Special appreciation is expressed to Woolman Hill Conference and Retreat Center, and to Wellesley and Westport Monthly Meetings, who graciously share their facilities and host our retreats during the year.

Parents (and adults interested in staffing) should visit our Web site at www.jymretreats.org for complete information about upcoming retreat dates, locations and applicable forms. I can also be reached at 508/994-1638 or email at Kevin@jymretreats.org.

Over the years many notes, drawings and encouraging comments by parents and children have helped to sustain me in this ministry. Two quotes by children in particular, however, sum up why this work is important. "I feel better here than any place else on earth. Can we stay 'til Tuesday?" said one child last year. And, said another child in her final year with us, "I love JYM Retreats, they are my spiritual place!" It is an honor, blessing and privilege to be in the midst of these dear children, the future of our faith community.

Photo: Kevin Lee



Photo: Kevin Lee



Yearly Meeting programs for all ages

Junior High Yearly Meeting (JHYM) Retreats

Gretchen Baker-Smith, Westport (MA) Monthly Meeting & JHYM Retreat Coordinator

Photo: Buddy Baker-Smith



JUNIOR HIGH YEARLY MEETING (JHYM) Retreats are open to young people in grades 6, 7 and 8. Our entire purpose is to provide a safe and trusting spiritual community in which to seek and find that of God in ourselves and in each other within the traditions and practices of Friends. It is full of enormous joy, gales of laughter, and tender compassion.

Five JHYM Retreats are held between September and May in various locations around New England. The weekend's schedule tends to be predictable, but we strive to have each retreat's particular theme and program feel dynamic. Every weekend includes worship, music, group games, small group circles, chores and free time. Artistic and creative mediums are almost always part of the program. Occasionally we go on field trips. One retreat each year is focused on service. This year's themes have been "Exceptional Friends", "Honesty", "Sound & Spirit (our annual music retreat)", "Bumps in the Road", and "Feeling Light Within, I Walk."

Junior highers come to JHYM Retreats primarily for the community. Most are the only Quakers in their schools or neighborhoods, and they relish the rare opportunities to be together as "a majority." We work hard at being inclusive and welcoming every moment of our weekends. It is sad, but true, that for some of our dear hearts this is a very

different experience from their daily middle/junior high lives.

We honor and affirm that our junior high Quakers sincerely and beautifully strive to witness to their faith, while living in the wider world, on a daily basis. JHYM Retreats provide them with opportunities to share their experiences of that of God and their struggles to live out their faith, to receive support and affirmation, and to be inspired by the sharing of their peers and staffers. It also gives them a place

to be quiet, to listen for the Still, Small Voice, and to remember God's Love is within and around them always. Over and over I remind them that they are always loved.

The retreats are also havens from their witnessing—times when they can simply be in community, and in that fellowship and Spirit, find renewed strength, joy, and Light for Monday morning's walk in the outer world. So, when there is an exquisite snowfall happening, we are clear to postpone the start of program for an hour and a half and run outside to play—trusting that friendly snowball fights deepen our worship sharing and fellowship, too!

I am in awe of the open-hearted sincerity and vitality of our young people as well as our incredibly generous, grounded, and Spirit-led staffers. Nearing the end of my fourth year as the program's coordinator, I remain full of gratitude and light for all our community and is always becoming. The junior highers' trust and courage in daring to build their spiritual community by deeply hearing each other and allowing themselves to be heard and moved by those experiences is humbling and beautiful. As I wrote in a song about them, "My heart had hoped for front porch lights, but they showed me shooting stars."

The poem that follows is their words about our community. May they give you joy, hope, and laughter in the Spirit, too.

About our community...

It's a place where we are ourselves, can say whatever we want, and have someone listen.



It is such a loving and caring community. I never want to leave.



It helps distract me from an immediate problem so I can think rationally about it later.



It can be serious or it can be silly—you can decide.



Everyone is a friend. The group is so solid.



Something floats in our atmosphere that relaxes you when you're mad and cheers you up when you're depressed.



It is one of the most welcoming places you can ever imagine. I love it so much.



It is a community where I know the people really care about me.



It is peacefulness, serenity, and community, combined with crazy fun and amazing staffers. I count the days off the calendar until I get here.



JHYM listens.



It is a wonderful place for everybody. We are all loving and caring for everybody and everything around us.



The love that radiates off the staff and JH'ers is an inspiration to me.



I am heard and hear others. We talk about stuff we can't talk about anywhere else.



It gives gifts of wisdom to me every retreat.



I love JHYM. Why isn't there a retreat every weekend?

Photo: Robyn Churchill



Young Friends (YFs) High School Retreats

Kimberly Allen, Durham (ME) Monthly Meeting, Young Friends/Young Adult Friends Coordinator

THE YOUNG FRIENDS OF NEYM continue to rock on. We hold 8–10 retreats a year, and they are loads of fun, caring, and growth. Often we are a group of 30–50 teenagers and 10–12 adult staff packed into a meetinghouse for the weekend. We start off retreats with our sincere commitments, such as not being exclusive—but instead being actively inclusive. This is what makes us a community. It can be hard for outsiders to comprehend that we, a group of teenagers and adult staff, continue to feed this community which prides itself not on what we look like nor who is on top of the social pyramid, but on how we live our lives as Friends by our commitment and dedication to making sure we all are included and active in our community. Sometimes it can be hard for us to understand this community, too; for many of us, Young Friends is the only place in our confusing lives where we feel truly accepted for who we are, not what we are.

We appreciate and honor that we are all

children of God, or as Friends like to put it, there is the light of God in each of us. We all have gifts to contribute to our community, and the Young Friends community not only accepts that about each of us, but expects us to use those gifts. As we develop into adulthood, our gifts, and challenges, change. This too is accepted and expected.

Not only do Young Friends fully embrace each other as peers, but the community includes volunteer adult staff (Resource People = “RPs”) who love them and keep coming back for more. Young Friends do not view the RPs as those old people they have to put up with in order to have a retreat. RPs are every bit an important part of the community as Young Friends. Their gifts of

patience, love, silliness, wisdom, and mentoring are invaluable. It is such a gift to retreat together.

P.S. Should you have an emergency in the middle of the night and need to find one of these wonderful RP creatures, your best bet is to find a person sleeping on an air mattress, not on the hard floor.



Photo: Tom Antonick

Young Adult Friends (YAFs) Ages 18-35^{ish} Retreats

Kimberly Allen, Durham (ME) Monthly Meeting, Young Friends/Young Adult Friends Coordinator

TIMES IN YAFHOOD ARE A CHANGIN’! We have changed our retreat format to better suit our needs. We no longer hold a fall retreat as too many of us are unable to attend in the busy fall. We still hold our annual MidWinter retreat in early January, with much success. In the spring we gather in small informal interest groups (or mini-retreat, you might say) based on various social/political causes we are interested in.

This June, 7-13, in Starksboro, Vermont, we are trying something really radical—YAF CAMP! We are very excited about this one! We will gather for the week to cultivate community, have business meeting, and all around fabulous retreating/finding ourselves. We will be living in cabins, eating in a mess hall, playing in the fields, making art in the barn, and holding the largest game of capture the flag you have ever seen. Throughout all of this, and much more, we will be building our community and deepening our spiritual selves.

We also gather at NEYM Annual Sessions in August. Many of us find ourselves staffing the Youth Programs, serving on various committees, and experiencing Adult Yearly Meeting for the first time. We gather a few times throughout Yearly for fellowship, business meeting, and some occasional silliness (ok, more than occasional).

Throughout all of these gatherings, we are thankful for each other. We have an enormous range of age, experience, resources, and theology. Some of us are lifers of NEYM, and some of us are newly convinced Friends. Some of us are devout Christians, and some of us are agnostic. Some of us have just completed our first year of college, and some of us have children. Some of us are buying our first house, and some of us are living off of Ramen Noodles. We embrace these nebulous features.

We are thankful that we have such an endearing and caring community to nourish our path into full-on adulthood

and spiritual discernment. We are ever appreciative of New England Yearly Meeting for continuing to give us the resources and care which provide us with our beloved community.



Photo: James Gray

Older Adult Friends—a note from the Committee on Aging

Penny Yunuba, Beacon Hill (MA) Monthly Meeting, Clerk of the NEYM Committee on Aging

RECENTLY THE COMMITTEE ON AGING (COA) has been sorting through available statistics to learn which quarters and which monthly meetings are likely to be more in need of attention by the COA. So you can imagine the stir that the arrival of the new 2007 minute book caused.

But, take a look! This year there are only six people in all of NEYM over the age of 65.

We figure it must be time to disband the committee. Let's see now: six folks on the committee serving only six people! Sounds a bit foolish to us!

We had been suspecting that we are a bit different. Heck! We can't even find a yearly meeting in the country that has a committee on aging. But, it turns out that we are unique in NEYM too, having three of the NEYM's six Friends over 65, a full 50%!

Some might reasonably ask what happened to the additional 964 "over 65" Friends listed in the 2005 minute book! Have we lost hundreds of Quakers to some exotic illness or did they all move south in hopes of warmer winters?

OK, now maybe it's some type-setting error. But, what does it mean that 29% of our meetings didn't list any age breakdowns at all? Knowing how old our members are is certainly crucial and especially so for our members over age 65 whose data and contact information doesn't get captured in any group, like—for example—participants in First Day School (FDS) programs.

FDS and child care issues are key concerns especially in small meetings; and keeping accurate statistics help plan for retreats. The numerical information about the members in our monthly meetings helps those employees who focus on youth, and generally allows us to see our community in a full and truthful manner.

At the "senior citizen" end of life there are issues too. We hear all the time about

people too frail to get to meeting and people not coming to meetings because of frustrations caused by being unable to hear the ministry. Monthly meetings with a high percentage of folks over 65 sometimes have difficulty filling meeting positions and often such meetings disappear when there are not enough middle aged and younger folks to keep them going.

If the Yearly Meeting does not know where the members aged 65 and over attend Quaker meetings and what their needs are, we can easily ignore them.

We have paid staff for the young people; but we no longer count the elderly. Isn't this a set-up for us to slip into reflecting the outside world today? Is this the direction we want to be moving?

[Editors Note: There is indeed a typographical error in the NEYM Annual Statistical Report, (2007 NEYM Minute Book, pp. 168-170). The columns for "Number of Members 65 and Older" was switched with the adjacent column "Number of Junior Members Becoming Adult Members." The "Number of Members 65 and Older" as corrected is 868. And in fact, there is another error in the column "Number of Junior Members Becoming Adult Member." Instead of six, that number should be just one.]



Photo: Jonathan Vogel-Borne

Around the Yearly Meeting

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

• **Upper Valley (MA) Worship Group** writes, "We have a small but lovely First Day School (FDS) of five to six young people. Beth Collea [Christian Education Coordinator] has been working with us over the last six months, supporting our efforts, making suggestions, and loaning us materials from the Christian Ed. Library of NEYM. Last week, we received a box of brand new materials with which to start a FDS library for the worship group. We are thrilled! You see, it is a powerful thing (a) to have our efforts recognized as worthy, (b) to feel

embraced and supported by the benevolent spirit of a larger, guiding group of like-minded souls, and (c) to have tried-and-true resources at our fingertips, free of charge. Having [Beth's] personal help has made us feel this way, from the beginning."

• **Framingham (MA) FM** invited Peter Crysdale, pastor at Allen's Neck (MA) MM, to lead them in conversation about forming spiritual nurture groups within the meeting.

• **Monadnock (NH) Monthly Meeting (MM)** held its 2nd annual intergenerational "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner"

event. Meeting people decide whether they (and their family) prefer to be hosts or guests in a Friendly home. A host provides hospitality and a beverage for between six and ten persons, whose identity will be unknown until they arrive for dinner. Guests take either a casserole, salad or dessert to the home where they are assigned.

• **Megunticook (ME) Worship Group** is now meeting on the second Sunday of each Month through May at 9am in the home of Kathie & John Gass, in Camden, ME. Contact the Gass's at 207/236-0333.

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• **South Berkshire (MA) MM**, inspired by a recent **Wellesley (MA) MM** minute on gambling, approved the following statement: “We deplore the legalization of gambling by the state of Massachusetts including the use of slot machines in order to raise revenue for public services. This is wrong in principle. In light of the social and economic costs of gambling, we should tax ourselves for the services we require rather than depending upon social ills to finance social services.”

• **Putney (VT) MM**, nearing completion of its new meetinghouse addition, held a called meeting for worship for business to consider the question, “How does or can the life of the Putney Friends Meeting speak within the larger community?” The worship-sharing ranged from giving contributions to organizations doing good work, to use of the new meeting space, to the need to let God’s light shine through the Meeting.

• **Vassalboro (ME) MM** sponsors a Family Support Group that meets informally once a month. The group is open to anyone with family concerns such as aging parents, partners or relatives in ill health, and issues with children.

• **Dartmouth at Smith Neck (MA) MM** hosted two potluck luncheons “discovering the best of the past.” Friends created a timeline to look back over the 300 years of the Meeting’s life, realizing that “sometimes to move forward means looking back to remember our foundations, beliefs, good times, and bad times.” Also three Smith Neck Young Friends gave a public reading about the life of Frederick Douglass for the 9th annual read-a-thon, at the New Bedford Meeting house, sponsored by the New Bedford Historical Society.

• **North Shore (MA) MM** Peace and Social Concerns Committee hosted a potluck dinner and discussion, bringing the challenge from Martha Yager in the winter issue of *The New England Friend*: “As we move into election year madness, there is urgent need for Quaker voices to draw attention to the issues, instead of the political horse-race. We can help create the space for communities and individuals to talk about what we want our country to be, what we want it to value and how we want it to act in the world community.” To guide the conversation, the Committee developed questions such as, “Are growth and expansion essential to our way of life? How do shifts of public consciousness/expectations come about? Can

they happen non-cataclysmically? What is the relevance in public discussion of the Quaker values of simplicity, equality, integrity, stewardship, and peace?”

• **Cambridge (MA) MM** has set a goal of reducing carbon emissions in its Meeting facilities by at least 20% by the year 2020. As the Meeting works to reduce its carbon footprint, Friends can learn how to make the same kinds of changes in their own homes and lives. The Meeting also endorsed the mission statement of the Massachusetts Interfaith Climate Action Network, a group united “in seeing the world not simply as resources to deplete, but as a magnificent gift of which we are an integral part and for which we have an abiding responsibility.” More information on the Network is at mican1.wordpress.com

• **Middlebury (VT) MM** has streamlined its committee structure to be more responsive to the present needs of the community. They have divided the work into six committees: Worship and Study (including education for all ages), Pastoral Care, Fellowship, Outreach and Social Action, Finance and Budget, and Nominating Committees.

• **Mt. Toby (MA) MM** held a “Quaker Salad Day and Kenyan Benefit Dinner,” on 3/29/2008. “Quaker Salad” was a mix of events during the day, including sessions on nature and Spirit, the GI Hotline, Kenyan AIDS orphan care, climate change, and the like. Suki Rice of **Durham (ME) MM**, and founder of the Friends of Kakamega, an American group that supports a Quaker AIDS orphanage project in Kenya, gave a slide show and talk following the evening dinner.

• **Westport (MA), Allen’s Neck (MA) and Dartmouth at Smith Neck (MA) MMs** hold a monthly joint Peace & Social Concerns Committee. The agenda has included plans for a joint fundraising pancake breakfast to benefit the American Friends Service Committee, discussion on building a peace memorial, and “Winter Conversations” on various topics, the most recent being on prison reform.

• **Wellesley (MA) MM** responded to the Friends Church in Kenya’s Pastoral Letter, which reiterates our peace testimony in the face of the Kenyan election violence. Wellesley’s letter says in part, “we greatly admire your courage and faith and stand in solidarity and in prayer with you. We are inspired to learn from your example. With all our hearts we pray for the people of Kenya in this hour

of travail.” Furthermore, the Meeting sent their concern to Salem QM, to prepare a minute to forward to NEYM Annual Sessions, urging all meetings to carefully read the Pastoral Letter and to really do something to put into practice what can be learned from the Kenyan Friends example.

• **Plainfield (VT) MM** Ministry & Counsel invited the larger Meeting to consider a new opening they have had about recording gifts in the ministry. They proposed “minuting the gift of ministry to our Meeting, emphasizing the gift rather than the person. Our focus has shifted. We purposefully would not register the person through whom the gift flows with the quarterly and yearly meetings. ... We see this as a warmer, more inclusive approach. Rather than raising up one person as a minister, it focus on the gift given to all of us. We note that, as recipients of such a gift, we need to be nurturers of it and its bearer.”

• **Durham (ME) MM** Ministry & Counsel is sponsoring a mid-week Wednesday evening meeting for worship and study. The first Wednesday of the of the month is an open meeting for worship. The second and fourth Wednesdays are based on study and discussion. For the first topic, Friends explored the meaning of membership, using Tom Gates’ Pendle Hill pamphlet, “Members One of Another.”

• **Worcester (MA) MM**, planning a major renovation to its facilities, wrote to the NEYM Permanent Board asking the Board to consider ways in which NEYM could coordinate among its constituent meetings and individual Friends to financially assist meetings that wish to expand their meetinghouses. The letter prompted good discussion on how New England Friends can be more supportive of one other. NEYM Coordinating & Advisory Committee is contacting quarterly meetings for further discernment on ways to move forward with this concern.



Worcester (MA) Meetinghouse

In other Quaker news

Quaker Leadership Workshop

On Saturday, 4/19/08, 9:30am to 3:30pm, at Worcester (MA) meetinghouse, NEYM is sponsoring a workshop to nurture, train & support clerks of monthly meetings, quarterly meetings, & clerks of committees at all levels. Contact NEYM Office, 508/754-6760 • neym@neym.org

Wellesley to Celebrate 50th Birthday

On Saturday, 10/18/08, from 10:30am to 3pm, Wellesley Friends Meeting will host its 50th birthday party with a variety of special events. Friends throughout New England are encouraged to forward their own reminiscences of Wellesley to Birthday Clerk, Roland Stern, 86 Barrett Street, Needham, MA 02492 • rostern@verizon.net

Friends Meeting at Cambridge jobs

Meeting Secretary: Friends Meeting at Cambridge, seeks a Meeting Secretary. The position is full-time with benefits, to begin middle to late summer 2008. Office management, clerical and computer skills are required. Quaker experience, database and bookkeeping skills are desirable. In addition to running the office, the Meeting Secretary is the face of the Meeting, graciously receiving guests, responding to inquiries, and welcoming all those who come to the Meeting during working hours. Contact: Meeting Secretary Search Committee, 617/876-6883 • fmcquaker@iecc.com

Youth Program Coordinator: The part-time Youth Program Coordinator works with Jr. and Sr. High students. Duties include organizing social, service and worship activities, including weekend retreats, with youth and adults; ensuring compliance with the Meeting's policies on Child Abuse Prevention and Response and screening volunteers to work with teens and pre-teens; outreach and maintaining contact with Meeting youth; and participating in relevant committee meetings and other activities. Approximately 250 hours of work during the academic year.

First Day School Assistant: The part-time First Day School assistant purchases and organizes supplies and snacks for the First Day School classes, and assists with special events like the Christmas Pageant and Art Show. Typically 3-5 hours a week (less in the summer). The two above positions may be combined. Contact Rebecca Grunko, 617/666 8814 • rgrunko@yahoo.com

BHFH Residency Manager sought

Beacon Hill Friends House (BHFH), Quaker Center and cooperative residential community in Boston, is looking for a ¾-time Residency Manager to join our staff in June/July 2008. The Residency Manager will be responsible for the management of the 20-person residential community, and management of guest rooms. S/he will also have responsibility for the smooth operations of the office. Contact, Holly Baldwin, Director, BHFH, 617/227-9118 • hbaldwin@bhfh.org

New Cambridge Friends School head

Peter Sommer, former head of the upper school at Brooklyn (NY) Friends School, will begin work as head of the Cambridge (MA) Friends School on 7/1/2008. The Friends School Board "selected Peter for his leadership in the areas of educational and professional development and for his proven experience in integrating ethics education with an interdisciplinary curriculum." Peter succeeds Mary Newmann, who will be retiring at the end of this school year.

AFSC Peacework Magazine Internship

The American Friends Service Committee's (AFSC) *Peacework* Magazine seeks young activists of color, ages 18-24, with interest in writing as an important way to work for social justice. The Patricia Watson activist journalism internship for young writers of color is available this summer, 7/1-8/15/08. [Patricia was a former *Peacework* editor and long-time member of Friends Meeting at Cambridge.] Some experience with social justice activism is recommended. Preference given to candidates based in the greater Boston area. Contact, *Peacework*, AFSC, 617/661-6130 • pcohen@afsc.org

The Meeting School Summer Getaway

The Meeting School invites you, your family and friends, to visit campus for a day, a week, or as long as you like during the fourth annual Summer Getaway from 7/18-8/3/08. Come share the joy of summer on our 140 acres of fields and forest, experience 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. We encourage you to explore the Monadnock region by hiking, swimming,

canoeing and enjoying the many cultural offerings of the surrounding towns. Contact, 603/ 899-3366 • office@meetingschool.org

Baltimore YM invites intervisitation

Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) invites Friends from member YMs of Friends United Meeting (FUM), to join BYM at their Annual Sessions 8/4-10/08. BYM's encouragement of intervisitation among FUM Friends grew out of their concern with an FUM personnel policy that discriminates against gay and lesbian people. The FUM personnel policy, though, is not the focus. "Rather, as we faced the pain we felt as a result of that policy, we awoke to the fragility of the relations among the yearly meetings and monthly meetings of FUM. We realized that we have not sought the same deep and loving listening with other meetings in FUM that we seek and cherish among ourselves. Therefore, our goal is to encourage, prepare, and support Friends to travel among YMs with the faith that we can listen deeply, strengthen our relationships, and build our faith community. Our program assumes that intervisitation will be in all directions and those interested will offer and receive hospitality." Contact BYM at 800/962-4766 • bym@bym-rsf.org

New York YM war tax witness

On behalf of New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM) Ernie Buscemi, Presiding Clerk, wrote to Friends everywhere asking us to join with NYYM in bearing witness against the payment for war. At its 2006 Annual Session, NYYM minuted "the Living Spirit works in the world to give life, joy, peace and prosperity through love, integrity and compassionate justice among people. We are united in this Power. We acknowledge that paying for war violates our religious conviction. We will seek ways to witness to this religious conviction in each of our communities." In 2007, NYYM urged Friends to prepare a Statement of Conscience including, "1) your belief against paying for war and preparations for war, 2) major influences in forming your belief, 3) how it is demonstrated by the way you live, and 4) a request that our government recognize and accommodate our convictions." NYYM Office maintains a "Statement of Conscience" confidential repository. Contact NYYM Conscientious Objection to Paying for War, 212/673-5750 • office@nyym.org

Friends Camp: What makes it so special?

Nat Shed, Vassalboro (ME) Monthly Meeting & Director of the NEYM Friends Camp

Photo: Courtesy of Friends Camp



FIRST, LET ME SHARE WITH YOU A LITTLE ABOUT FRIENDS CAMP and our 2008 summer sessions. Each summer hundreds of young people, ages 7 to 17, attend Friends Camp; they live in a caring Quaker community, make friends, try new things, and learn about themselves and others. This summer Friends Camp will have four age-grouped traditional youth sessions and five sessions that have a special focus. The four traditional sessions are: Jones Camp, Dyer Camp, Fox Camp, and Fell Camp. They each run for two weeks and are full of activities that are unique, creative, and fun. Each of these sessions is designed to accommodate different ages: Jones Camp includes 7 to 12 year olds, Dyer Camp is for 10 to 13 year olds, and Fox and Fell Camps are attended by 12 to 17 year old campers. To provide a different kind of camp experience, Friends Camp now offers three drama camps, three outdoor experience camps, a leadership camp, and an aquatic safety camp. Because of these new focused-experience camps and the wider age range for regular camp sessions, youth can now attend Friends Camp for one, two, four, or six weeks. Regular camp sessions enroll up to 95 campers, while the theme-oriented sessions enroll between 6 and 14 youth.

The Mott Family Camp is a week-long session at the end of the summer that can accommodate twelve families. Volunteer leaders for the Mott Family Camp are Theresa Oleksiw, youth program coordinator, and Andrew Wright, adult workshop leader. New this year is a non-programmed Vacation Retreat Camp, from 8/24 to 9/1/08. It is designed for families who wish to have a basic Quaker camp structure—morning worship, evening vespers, and great food—as well as free time, either at camp or exploring Maine.

Perhaps the greatest thing I've learned over the past five years as director of Friends Camp is that it changes lives in very positive and tangible ways. This can come from one session of camp; but it is much more likely to happen from attending Friends Camp over several summers. In the developmental stages from ages 7 to 17, we all learn different kinds of important lessons as we move toward adulthood. We see this change in the way campers of different ages experience worship and vespers: fidgeting youngsters become reflective teen-age thinkers, and some move from there toward a thoughtful discernment of God's will. Friendships made at camp move from a special friend or group of friends in your cabin for just one session, to long-term meaningful connections that continue beyond camp and into college and adulthood. I think that teaching and learning moments happen more fervently and more intensely at Friends Camp. As insights come to young people, they build on each

other, and over many summers the idea of living a more deliberate and thoughtful life emerges, one that includes the Quaker values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community and equality. Quakerism becomes integrated into the way young people live their lives. Another example: Attitudes about chores that are part of making the camp community work at Friends Camp, move from downright annoyance or resistance to become a point of pride. And sometimes the foundation of work skills learned at camp help a young person get their first job. I have seen all of this personal growth in my two daughters and in the hundreds of campers who have attended Friends Camp over the last four summers; it does not all happen at Friends Camp, of course. But I think that the positive synergy—or one could even say mutual adoration between young people and their mentors—that comes from a combination of the experience of attending a home Meeting, youth retreats, NEYM Annual Sessions, and a few weeks at Friends Camp each summer has an overwhelmingly positive influence on the lives of young people. This idea of camp as an important place of change was made very clear to me when a camper parent told me that he always looked forward to picking up his children at Friends Camp: he knew that on that day they would present their best selves.

I am sometimes asked, "How can our Meeting help Friends Camp?" My first answer is that you can actively inform youth in your Meeting and your area about Friends Camp, and encourage them to attend. My second answer is that donations are always welcome for the general support of Friends Camp. We would also love significant donations for our current capital campaign to renovate Cardinal Hall. My third response is that it would be extremely helpful and very meaningful if each Meeting could have a fund or line item in their budget that would provide financial support for youth and adults to attend Friends Camp, Woolman Hill, NEYM Annual Sessions, and other Quaker conferences or retreats. It seems to me that one of the best and fairest ways to help families in your Meeting is to have this kind of fund pay for between a third and half of the tuition or fee for all family members. I feel that this kind of support for the members of your Meeting will, over time, help to strengthen your Meeting and will bring additional spiritual insights and inspiration to your Quaker community.

For more information call 207/873-3499 (winter office) or go to www.friendscamp.org



Photo: Courtesy of Friends Camp

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THE NEW ENGLAND FRIEND

YEARLY MEETING CALENDAR

April 2008

- 11–12 Puente de Amigos retreat with Cuban Friends —
 Monadnock FM (NH)
- 12 Committee Day—The Meeting School, Rindge, NH
- 15 *New England Friend* Deadline
- 18–20 Young Friends Retreat—Wellesley MM (MA)
- 19 Leadership Workshop—Worcester FM (MA) [see p. 6]
- 20 RI–Smithfield QM—Worcester MM (MA)
- 22 All School Meeting for Worship—Moses Brown School
 Field House, Providence, RI
- 26 Falmouth QM—Durham FM (ME)
- 26 Sandwich QM—New Bedford MM (MA)
- 26 *Faith & Practice*—Amesbury FM (MA)
- 27 Salem QM—South Shore PM (MA)

May 2008

- 2–4 Young Friends Senior's Retreat—Monadnock MM (NH)
- 2–4 Jr. High Retreat—Portland FM (ME)
- 3 Vassalboro QM—Pondtown/Winthrop (ME)
- 3 Nominating Committee—Lexington MA
- 4 CT Valley QM—Mt Toby MM (CT)
- 4 Ministry & Counsel Traveling Ministries &
 Intervisitation—New Bedford MM (MA)
- 16–18 JYM Elementary Retreat—Woolman Hill (MA)
- 17 Ministry & Counsel—New London FM (CT)
- 18 Coordinating & Advisory—Location TBA

June 2008

- 7–8 Northwest QM—Farm & Wilderness (VT)
- 7–13 YAF Camp—South Starksboro, VT [see p. 3]
- 14 Committee Day—Hartford FM (CT)
- 21 Permanent Board—Winthrop Center Friends
 Church (ME)
- 28–7/5 Friends General Conference Gathering—Johnstown, PA
- 29 Dover QM—North Sandwich MM (NH)

July 2008

- 7 Coordinating & Advisory—Worcester FM (MA)
- 9–13 Friends United Meeting Triennial—High Point, NC
- 20 RI–Smithfield QM—Providence MM (RI)
- 26 Falmouth QM—Brunswick FM (ME)
- 26 Sandwich QM—Mattapoissett FM (MA)

August 2008

- 2–7 YM Sessions—Bryant University, Smithfield RI

2008 Sessions, Sat. August 2 – Thurs. August 7
—Bryant University, Smithfield, Rhode Island—

Theme: War: God Help Us!

Keynote: Ernie Buscemi, New York Yearly Meeting

Bible Half Hour: Peter Crysedale, Allen's Neck (MA) MM

Tuesday Night: Anais Mitchell, Middlebury (VT) MM