

“Coming ’round right: our witness to these times”

We asked a few Friends to share their reflections on this theme for the 2001 Annual Sessions of the Yearly Meeting to be held August 4 – 9 at Bryant College, Smithfield, Rhode Island

’Tis the gift to be simple

Christine Holden, Lewiston (ME) Monthly Meeting

READING THE FIRST THREE WORDS OF THE THEME inevitably started the tune of the simple, unaccompanied line of the Shaker hymn running through my head. From there, my mind wandered off, to music and dancing, turning and whirling, usually inappropriate activities for Quaker Meeting, but an integral part of Shaker worship. Another distinction between the two faiths is that Quakers are more noted than Shakers were for their social action, or at least for their efforts to witness to their core beliefs.

At the Quaker-founded college I attended, folk dancing was a common recreational activity, as well as a welcome option for the required gym class, and I enjoyed the combination of the formal structure, and the free, individual ways in which people could perform the steps—and the music. With the tune to “Simple Gifts” running through my head, I pondered the connections between dance and worship, worship and action: how we know when we are led to speak (or sing, or dance), how we know when we are in “the place just right,” how we know when, in what manner, and to whom to bear witness.

Having recently attended a celebration where dances from various countries and traditions were taught, I recognized that “coming ’round right” required some pushing and pulling to get ourselves and our partners in the right position, at the right time. The teacher knew, and called out the rules, and we had to interpret them as best we could, trying to make the connection between our willing hearts and our less cooperative feet. Gradually, at different rates, we began to learn. Similarly, in worship and social action, we may need guidance from the fount of Quaker teachings and experience, whether spoken, read, or demonstrated by those who speak truth to power. This guidance may be sought out, or it may be given when

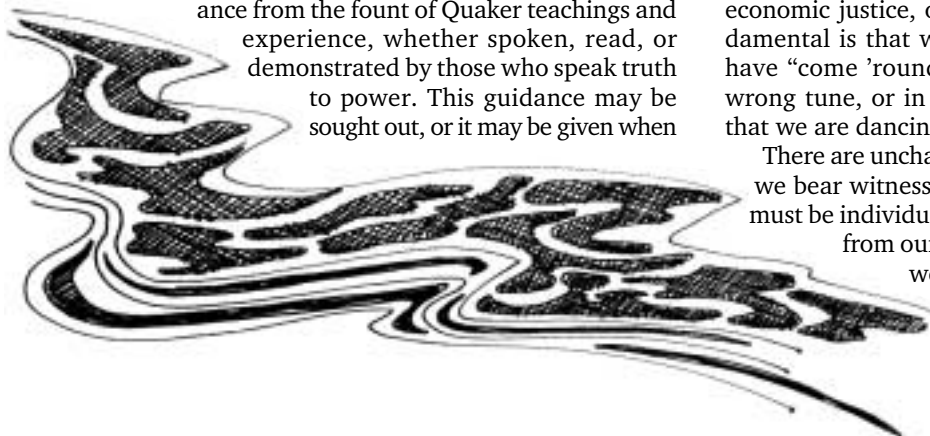
we least expect it; our readiness to receive is at least as important as a direct request for assistance. Similarly, in the dance a gentle push or outstretched hand helped put me in the correct place, whether I knew I was out of place, or even if I didn’t know I was heading in the wrong direction.

To “come ’round right” does not mean we will all necessarily be in an identical place: “in the valley of love and delight” there is presumably room for many dances and dancers. To me it means that we are taking part in collective worship and witness which are grounded in direct communication with God, in equality of all as seekers of the Light, in simplicity and peace. These times, perhaps like all times, are ones in which it is often difficult to live our lives “right;” we can be pressured by peers, or within our own families or circle of friends, to join the mainstream, to be less rigid, perhaps because whatever it is we are doing from our basis of faith makes others uncomfortable. Bearing witness in a society that seems divided between extreme secularism and narrowly fundamental religiosity is not easy, and choosing to follow our own path (or sacred dance) requires confidence.

For me, that confidence must come from faith, constantly tested to make sure that it is not pridefulness, or stubbornness. The witness it leads to may well be an unchanging one, like the set pattern of a dance, or the witness may focus on different issues at different times, as more skilled dancers may introduce variations in steps or gestures. A witness or dance may need to change, as the times change: plain speech and dress may seem to some Quakers less of an issue they wish to witness to than prison reform, racial equality, social and economic justice, or pacifism. What seems to me most fundamental is that we must always be checking whether we have “come ’round right,” whether we are dancing to the wrong tune, or in our single-mindedness have not noticed that we are dancing alone, in the dark rather than the Light.

There are unchanging verities in the Quaker faith, but how we bear witness to them, for how long, and at what cost, must be individual choices, nurtured by prayer and support from our community of faith. When we are “where we ought to be,” what a responsibility, and what a not-so-simple gift. Let us all join in the dancing!

Artwork: Nancy Marstaller



Coming 'round right

Jeff Russell, Storrs (CT) Friends Meeting

THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO JUDAISM GAVE US THE CONCEPT, “Do the best you can with what you have.” God does not ask more than that from anyone. Whenever I ask myself, “Am I doing the best I can with what I have?” the difficulty comes in assessing what is the best I can do and what are the resources I have. A test of good Quaker discernment.

The times I find myself in have many disturbing aspects. Twenty years ago Bertram Gross described the face of power in the United States as “friendly fascism.” He points out that a collusion between big capital and big government is a foundation stone of “classic fascism.” Since then the battle cry of deregulation “get government off the backs of the people” only seems to have gotten government off the backs of big capital. His observations of a decline in real wages, increased distance between rich and poor and other aspects of fascism have happened here.

Left unrestricted, big capital has a history of exploiting anything it can, without regard for the consequences to people, the environment, or the economy. We can see those consequences around us, and around the world, if we only dare look.



Last year, first hand reports from Seattle by David Morse [*John Woolman and the Global Economy* published by the NEYM Prejudice & Poverty Committee] and others paint a picture far too reminiscent of

fascist police actions of the late 1920s and 30s. The trend to sacrifice human rights for the benefit of capital is well established, world wide, and growing. We were concerned enough about this at Storrs Meeting to study “globalization” and its consequences. We studied two books, *One World, Ready or Not*, by William Grieder and *The Case Against the Global Economy*, a compilation by Sierra Club Books. I was surprised at how many of the negative aspects of what we see are a replay of history. From people being coerced into the wage economy by legislation or force, to working conditions that are a constant danger to life and limb. I am convinced there is truth in the old saying “those who refuse to learn from history are condemned to repeat it.”

These are trying times and I see worse to come. I empathize with our Quaker predecessors before the U.S. Civil War. Some worked ardently to prevent the calamity and its awful violence. Others were convinced it could not be stopped and worked toward readiness to pick up the pieces after the disaster. In hindsight, I think both movements were beneficial and necessary, in spite of the fact the efforts to prevent the war did not prevent the war.

I am personally pessimistic about these times and the foreseeable future. There are moments when it appears my very small income is a blessing. It means I am participating less in the evils of economic globalization, which far outweigh the benefits. I do the best I can, with low income and disability, to live as “green” a lifestyle as I can.

And when I put my best toward discerning the answer to “Am I doing the best I can with what I have?” even in the face of how little I am able to do, I have consistently come to the realization that I am doing the best I can with what I have.

Witness to God's love and truth in a broken world

Betsy Cazden, Concord (NH) Monthly Meeting

WHAT IS FRIENDS' WITNESS TO OUR TIME AND PLACE? Although Quakers claim to be a noncreedal church, we tend to slide into the habit of thinking about “our testimonies” as a list of political and social ideas or doctrines. Quaker schools and organizations talk about “Quaker values,” “the simplicity testimony,” “the equality testimony,” and of course, “The Peace Testimony” (in capital letters), as if everyone knew what that shorthand stood for. (Can you tell me exactly what the text of this “simplicity testimony” is?) The number—and vehemence—of paragraphs written about a particular social ideal often seems inversely proportional to how widely it is implemented in the lives of Friends. For example, in the twentieth century the number of written expositions on peace increased markedly at the same time that Friends increasingly tolerated members who participated in war. In other words, the more we say, the less we seem to show with our lives. I can't help but wonder whether if our lives were clearer, we would need far fewer words of explanation.

I believe “testimony” isn't plural. There is only one. It used to be

called “our Christian testimony.” As Friends, we bear witness—with our lives, more than our words—to the Truth (with a capital “T”) that God is in charge of our lives; that we are living under God's love, guidance and rule; and that same love and guidance are available to all willing seekers. Because we live under God's headship, we behave according to a different set of guidelines than the marketplace around us.

One witness I have seen powerfully in the lives of Friends in Cuba is the discipline of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. People dare to speak their differences, even vehemently, even at the risk of offending someone. But they are just as quick to apologize, ask God's forgiveness as well as their brother or sister's, and reaffirm their love for one another. The community can see vividly that God's healing love is real, and indeed overcomes our human anger and difficulties.

In Barclay's *Apology*, the peace testimony occupies a small section in a lengthy discussion of “vain and empty customs.” Each era, each generation, each subculture has its own list of vain and empty

customs, cultural fetishes that distract us and keep us from singleness of mind and heart. The list of possible distractions is varied and limitless. What is your distraction, your temptation, your idolatry, this year? Is it multiple body-piercings to hang jewelry from? Drinking only organic shade-grown coffee, or going out of your way for that special brand of latte? The latest jargon of the psychological-spiritual marketplace? The compulsive need to declare the solution for civil unrest in Serbia, the Gaza Strip, Iraq, or anywhere else far away? Or my current temptation, endless chatter with other parents of high school seniors about which prestigious colleges each of our offspring have applied to and gotten into. I do not mean that

any of these are bad, only that each has the potential to seize our hearts and minds and become barriers to God's love and truth.

I am not advocating a new system of corporate policemen to measure the fringes on our curtains, as Quaker elders are rumored to have done in past centuries. I do think Friends would do well to be more cautious about issuing lengthy declarations on issues of public policy, and more diligent about seeking together how to live more disciplined lives that witness to God's love and truth in a broken world.



To be in the world but not of the world

Amélie Scheltema, West Falmouth (MA) Preparative Meeting, Sandwich Monthly Meeting

“OUR WITNESS TO THESE TIMES.” The witness does not change, only the context changes in which we hold true to our witness of Truth and Love that can overcome all obstacles; the ocean of light that flows over the ocean of darkness. Perhaps at base even the context remains the same, for injustices of class, race, enslavement, economic violence, war, imprisonment have been with us since earliest recorded history.

There are, I believe, two profound moments of history that have changed how humans are able to perceive the possibility of achieving peace, goodness, love in society—if there is the will to do so. One is of course the life of Jesus, whose witness of a relationship to the divine became the witness of Quakers: that we live in the life and power that takes away the occasion, not just of war, but of violence in all its manifestations. The second is the outspoken words and actions of nonviolence, of satyagraha, in the century and a half just past, the witness of Thoreau, Tolstoy, Ghandi, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, the Berrigans, all too numerous to name—as well as all the Quakers we know. It is usual to consider the century just past as the most violent in human history, but I believe that this perception arises because of a vastly greater number of humans in the world who now participate in violence (as perpetrators or victims), technologically greater means for killing, and instant communication. But against this perception I see the century past as a real flowering of the means and, yes, methods for nonviolent action, and the will of multitudes to use nonviolence to bring about peace and justice. The will is worldwide; consider the international outpouring for world economic justice that began in Seattle and continues.

What is our witness now, in the context of the particular injustices and violence of our times? Foremost is that we must never forget to be in the world but not of the world, and that we do not lose our sense of belonging to the divine so that our compassion may always overcome our anguish. The great conflicts of our time are found in class, race and ethnicity, economic injustice, and environmental destruction. There are witnesses great and small that we can make.

Let us remember our forebears. John Woolman wore white clothing because blue dye for suits came from indigo provided by slave

labor. We can do no less than to find fair-traded goods; coffee and tea for our Meetings, clothing made in home industries or cooperatives. One can join Co-op America to discover businesses who trade fairly. We need not, should not consume unnecessarily. We can continue our prison work, now international in scope with the Alternatives to Violence Project, and we can work for practices of Restorative Justice in our local or state court systems. We can support Quaker and other organizations that do the work that we all wish we ourselves were able to do. Our schools need attention, bringing nonviolence programs into the schools and keeping out junior ROTC and exhibits on school grounds of the materials of war for young people to play with. We can write letters. We can help others to witness, as done by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting during the recent Republican convention. If one can travel, we can work as peacemakers in our own country and abroad. We need to live carefully (full of care) for our blessed planet, our physical and spiritual home. We can be inspired by each other. We can be public and speak Truth to power.

And we can strive always to be mindful of our home in the divine, which sustains and nourishes us and brings us joy in our witness.



Mattapoisett (MA) Meetinghouse

Quaker Books in New England Meetings

Teddy Milne, Clerk, Mosher Book & Tract Committee

TWO YEARS AGO, Mosher Book & Tract Committee sent a library questionnaire to all 77 monthly and preparative meetings in NEYM. A total of 51 responded (66%). The questionnaire itself seems to have sparked some new interest and energy for meeting libraries.

The number of books in meeting libraries varied from zero (several small worship groups) to 4,000 (Mt. Toby). The largest libraries (over 1,000 books) were in Mt. Toby, Vassalboro (1,700), Durham (1,600), Burlington (1,500), Cambridge (1,329), and Wellesley (1,000), with eight more having 500 to 999 books: Framingham, Smithfield, Beacon Hill, Worcester, New Bedford, Portland, and Dover.

The total number of books reported (many gave estimates) was 23,094. In general, meetings which did not have their own meetinghouse had no library. Some small meetings had limited room for books even though they had their own space.

The questionnaire tried to elicit where gaps might be, where certain basic Quaker books might be missing, in hopes of filling these gaps. However, there seemed to be no consistency to this. Most meetings seemed to have a variety of basic Quaker books, partly, perhaps, because Mosher Book & Tract Committee has been contributing books to meetings for 125 years.

One suggestion was to encourage the setting up of Quaker book shelves in local pub-

lic libraries. This would have several advantages, of being more accessible to both Quakers and non-Quakers; of being better supervised; and of relieving meetings of the necessity of finding space. We suggest that local meetings at least make the attempt to establish such a "shelf" or at least a category within a larger section on religion. We would like to encourage both small and larger meetings, if they wish, to think of donating Quaker books to the local public library, in the interests of outreach.

Many meetings had good ideas for getting good use out of their libraries: putting monthly reports in the newsletter about a new book or an old favorite; handing out bookmarks which let people know what's available; putting new books out on display; encouraging newcomers to browse.

Many libraries, however, are also rather lax about keeping track of their books, and books are not always returned in good order. One suggestion was to establish one month as a reasonable time to have a book out, and to make sure people sign out (with their phone numbers) so that the librarian has a proper record of where each book goes and when it should come back.

Children's libraries are often separate from the adult library at a meeting, as they are usually purchased by a different committee and kept in a different location. The questionnaire did not include children's books. Is there a better way to keep the two

libraries at least coordinated? Or isn't that necessary?

One idea we discussed was to establish an ad hoc NEYM Library Committee to 1) come up with a simple circulating system for meeting libraries, given their limitations of space and availability; 2) put this in booklet form for Mosher to publish and distribute; 3) arrange for teams of librarians to visit and help set up meeting libraries where needed; 4) find a good depository for the 19th century books meetings can't cope with. This committee could lay itself down when the work was completed. If there are librarians within NEYM interested in taking up this idea, the Committee would be grateful.

Mosher Committee's response to the questionnaire was to identify the 28 meetings with either fewer than 20 members or fewer than 200 books, and to fill in some of the blanks indicated on the questionnaire for some of the basic Quaker books and pamphlets. We also purchased 28 copies of *Friends for 300 Years* for these meetings to donate to their public libraries, and sent a packet of suggestions and supplies.

We hope that smaller meetings interested in Quaker literature will contact larger meetings in their area for perhaps some inter-library loans, that new acquisitions will continue to be publicized and displayed at meetings, and that members will spread the word, either in person or by newsletter, about Quaker books they have read.



Around the Yearly Meeting

Compiled from monthly meeting newsletters and correspondence by the Editors, William Kriebel and Jonathan Vogel-Borne

• **16 NEYM meetings** have minuted support for the Campaign of Conscience for the Iraqi People since those reported in the last issue: *Acadia (ME)*, *Belfast (ME)*, *Burlington (VT)*, *Keene (NH)*, *Monadnock (NH)*, *Midcoast (ME)*, *Mt. Toby (MA)*, *Middletown (CT)*, *New Haven (CT)*, *Norfolk (MA)*, *Plainfield (VT)*, *Putney (VT)*, *South Berkshire (MA)*, *Waterboro (ME)*, *West Falmouth (MA)*, *South Yarmouth (MA)*. The Campaign supports lifting of non-military sanctions against Iraq,

and donating water purification equipment with or without a license to do so. So far, shipments have been unimpaired. The Norfolk Recognized Meeting, which meets at Norfolk Prison (MA), resolved "that the withholding of food, medicines, water, or the methods needed to produce them, from the Iraqi people, especially women and children, is a 'stylized' form of ethnic cleansing, a 'silent' act of war, and is abhorrently wrong. Due to our present incarcerated condition,

we are unable to align with the Providence Meeting's potential act of civil disobedience; however, we find in Friends history there have been many occasions when, doing that which was Divinely Right, was, oft times, contrary to legal principle and standard. We encourage everyone to learn more about the Campaign of Conscience and communicate your concerns against these economic, life-threatening sanctions to your government officials."

• **Winthrop (ME) Monthly Meeting (MM)** held its first Neighborhood Night in October. Flyers were distributed inviting neighborhood people to come for a potluck meal, get together and know each other and the church community, and brainstorm ideas for how the church could serve the area. Those who were there were interested in further social gatherings of this kind, in games nights, a neighborhood yard sale, ways for children to get to know each other, and had various ideas for neighborhood safety and networking in case of emergencies. The church is seen like the presence of a college in a town, and it seems reasonable to reach out, welcome, and forge links with neighbors. The meeting holds an annual Christmas concert for the community.

• **Northampton (MA) MM**, and **South Yarmouth (MA) Preparative Meeting** have passed minutes calling for the abolition of the death penalty in Massachusetts and the United States. **Westerly (RI) MM** has been considering a draft minute on the subject.

South Yarmouth minuted: "The belief in the sanctity of human life can be confusing, especially within the context of the abortion debate. However, the prisoner on death row is by everyone's definition a human life." Westerly points out that the penalty has been shown to be discriminatory; there is evidence of racial and class disparity in indictments, sentencing, and imposition of the death penalty. In some cases, it is later revealed that innocent persons have been executed.

Northampton states: "Focusing our anger and fear on the accused murderer squanders energy and resources which could be used to build community and root out the causes of violence such as social injustice, poverty, alcohol and drug use, and despair. In our zeal for vengeance, we neglect to provide sufficient love and support to the victims families. Vengeance disguised as justice does not heal wounds or prevent murder."

• **Portland (ME) MM** has added a new committee on Earth Care issues. The founding minute asks, "Who will speak for the earth? Our planet earth has been, and is being, assaulted to a degree that jeopardizes the health, welfare and life of earth creatures." Their message about Quaker testimonies is that peace is threatened by struggles over resources, simpler living is a necessity, equality includes a fair share of

natural resources, integrity means living our values, and community means we act together or perish.

The Portland Meeting has also created a "Caring Calls Network" to ensure that people living alone do not remain unattended if they have an accident or medical emergency at home. All interested are asked to report their willingness to a point person, who keeps the list. People are matched with partners, responsible for communicating every day; if no answer, a neighbor on record is called. If no answer there, the partner, relying on common sense, then makes a visit or calls police. Those going away for a time inform their partner.

• **Beacon Hill (MA) MM** has formed a Quaker Social Education & Action Committee to seek out support for Friends who could use some help in their service work; to offer regular service opportunities for Friends to share volunteer work with other Friends; and to provide a clearing house for peace and social concerns information, bulletins, and events. They also seek to educate the meeting on specific actions and concerns.

• **Westport (MA) MM** has opened its enlarged community house. A small house not far away was donated to the meeting by Al and Albert Lees (a father and son), moved, and made part of their existing building next to the meeting house. They held a reception and celebration on 11/18/2000.

• **South Berkshire (MA) MM** held a Meeting for Feelings to share their hurts and joys about their meeting. The hope was that by deep listening they might bring some positive resolutions to conflicts that had arisen within the meeting and to go forward with a preserved community. The speaking out of silence brought evidence of deep hurt, appearing to be inadvertent and from miscommunication. "We hear from our own perspective and are unable to evaluate what was meant by the messages in worship, conversation, and letters."

• **Midcoast (ME) MM** has minuted commitment to the Maine Interfaith Climate Change Initiative. The Initiative is concerned with threats of species habitat destruction, inundation of low-lying areas, weather extremes, and that the most vulnerable people are the most burdened by the impact. The Initiative plan is to sponsor educational materials and efforts, conserve energy, urge governmental support of international and national initiatives, and reach out to others in the interfaith community.

• **Providence (RI) MM** is the base for a Rhode Island American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Support Committee, which is exploring with Rhode Island Friends the possibility of opening a Regional AFSC Office in that state. The contact is Erbin Crowell at erbin@earthlink.net.

• **Fresh Pond (MA) MM's** First Day School Committee held an after-meeting threshing session on 1/14/2001 on the questions: What is the spiritual life of our teens? How does the Meeting sponsor the spiritual growth of teens in our community? When they are old enough to stay home, what brings them to meeting and First Day School? Are adults (other than the parents of teens) in the meeting ready to respond to the requests of young people for meaningful activities and experiences that bring them closer to God and Friends?

• **Belfast (ME) MM** united in spiritual and material support of their member Lucinda Selchie, who feels called to spend time in solitary silent retreats. An oversight committee of four Friends was appointed.

• **Mt. Toby (MA) MM** held a day-long program on 9/16/00 to explore how we "live peace" in our lives. The keynote by Michael True of Worcester (MA) MM referred to the teaching of Jesus and the witness of early Friends, and led a workshop on the many recent movements for social change in the world. Other workshops dealt with living environmentally, civil war in Colombia, discerning and following a leading, recent non-violent social movements, and the work of local adolescents in conflict resolution, communication, and peer mediation. Members then shared Mt. Toby's own active history in relation to the peace testimony.

In addition, Mt. Toby has minuted its support for campaign finance reform. The current system silences candidates without exceptional financial resources, and, as a result, impairs work to improve the world in the areas of peace, social justice, education, health care, right treatment of people who are disempowered and proper care of the earth. Campaign finance reform is "the reform that makes all other reforms possible." The minute supports full public funding of federal and state elections.



Mt Toby (MA) Meetinghouse

In other Quaker news

New NEYM Treasurer

Permanent Board appointed Ken Hoffman of Mt. Toby (MA) MM, NEYM Treasurer to succeed Diana White of Farmington (ME) MM. Permanent Board expressed its tremendous gratitude for Diana White's four years of service.

New NEYM staff person hired

Josh Baker of Burlington (VT) MM was hired to fill the newly created, experimental position of Administrative Assistant/Young Adult Friends Coordinator. Josh begins work at the NEYM Office on 2/1/2001.

Third Emerging Ministries Conference

"Bringing Our Gifts to Life" is the theme of the third Emerging Ministries Conference, co-sponsored by NEYM Ministry & Counsel and Woolman Hill on 5/4-6/2001.

Recognizing that God is calling us in the world can fill us with joy and terror as we affirm the gift we have been given and as we doubt it and ourselves. Do we dare to step forward? What and who will help us to nourish our gift and bring it forth? This retreat will nurture persons who are at various stages of recognizing and responding to a call to particular ministry. All gifts of ministry are welcome: quiet support, presence and prayer as well as vocal, social action, healing or outreach ministries. The retreat will be a time to share deeply with others, some just beginning, others further along their path, with opportunities for worshipful reflection and sharing personal stories. We will explore processes of spiritual discernment, ways to overcome obstacles, and the joys of accountability.

Jan Hoffman of Mount Toby (MA) MM will lead the weekend, with members of the Spiritual Nurture Group of NEYM Ministry & Counsel (M&C) as elders. They and she hope to make visible the minister-elder relationship which can deepen any ministry. Jan has responded to a variety of calls in her life, some of which have been to "listen out" and support the calls of others.

Each attendee is asked to provide a short biographical paragraph describing his/her ministry which can be mailed ahead of time to other attendees, and a letter of support from the home meeting's M&C. Please arrange for these to reach Woolman Hill by 4/4/2001. After that time, please call to make sure there is space (maximum enroll-

ment is 25). Contact: Woolman Hill, 413/774-3431 • woolmanh@gis.net or your meeting's M&C representative.

Quaker Women's Retreat

This retreat, "Exploring our Spirituality," provides quiet worshipful space in a lovely setting where women may enjoy solitary walks along Lake Winnepesaukee and support each other's spiritual journeys through worship/worship sharing and by sharing their joys/concerns. All women who want to share in this search for the Spirit working among us are invited. Space is limited. To reserve your space, send \$10 deposit (payable to NEYM) to Patricia Shotwell, 416 Conant Road, Weston, MA 02493. • 781/899-5367 • shotwell@gis.net.

United Society of Friends Women

The spring gathering of NEYM USFW will be held at Durham (ME) MM on 5/6/2001. Come hear from the newly appointed FUM Field Secretary, East Africa Region, (our own Marian Baker!) who will be leaving right after Yearly Meeting Sessions for Kenya. Contact Minga Claggett-Borne 617/354-3808 • mingaborne@aol.com.

Visit the New England Friends Home

The New England Friends Home committee is eager to let Friends in New England know how the Home is getting along since its expansion and renovations. Your meeting will be contacted to learn when such a visit would be convenient. This visit is simply an opportunity to tell Friends how their assisted living facility in Hingham, MA is serving its community and representing Friends. There will be no fund raising at this time!

Rufus Jones film

A 30-minute film on the life and contributions of Rufus Jones will be completed this spring. The film is being professionally produced under the guidance of a group of New England Friends: Frederick Corneel, Betsy Cazen, Paul Cates and Dick Kelly. The object is to help Friends become more acquainted with Rufus Jones. The sponsors hope to show it at next Yearly Meeting.

Kenya book project

One of the delegates to the Friends World Committee Triennial last summer mentioned that his church library lacked basic Quaker

writings. Some Friends were moved to set up a contribution basket so that Kenyan delegates could choose a book to take home with them. Another leading was to begin a Quaker book-collecting campaign for the 2002 FUM Triennial to be held in Kenya. People in NEYM are willing to help ship books if they can be collected. Contact Jeanne Plo, 802/864-1888 • jeanneplo@juno.com.

Send Peacework to Prison

The U.S. prison population is soaring; at the same time, fewer and fewer resources are being made available to prisoners who want to get an education or change their lives. You can buck the trend by reaching out to a prisoner with *Peacework*, the monthly magazine published by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). *Peacework* offers in-depth reporting on peace and justice work in the US and abroad, with a perspective based in respect for all people and a deep commitment to nonviolence. With a contribution of \$15, you can subsidize 1-year subscriptions to two of *Peacework's* many incarcerated subscribers. Make checks payable to AFSC-*Peacework*, and send to AFSC, 2161 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge MA 02140.

FGC's Nurturing Quakerism Campaign

Friends General Conference (FGC) is in the midst of a campaign to raise funds to strengthen its ability to nourish new and isolated worship groups and meetings through its Traveling Ministries Program, and for related activities. Representatives from FGC are visiting meetings in New England to present the program. New Haven (CT) MM had a potluck and program on 12/2/2000. FGC held a dinner and presentation on 1/20/2001 in Cambridge (MA), and further programs on 1/21/2001 at the meeting.

Cultures of Peace Seminar

Tufts University hosts a seminar, 3/30 - 4/1/2001, to honor Elise Boulding, a member of Wellesley (MA) MM, focusing on her new book, *Cultures of Peace*. Sponsored by the Peace Studies Association, it will include three days of events and tributes to Elise's essential contributions to peace and conflict studies, with major scholars, human rights teachers, UN representatives, a special dinner, and a concluding event at the Peace Abbey. Contact: Michael True, 508/757-8228 • mtrue@eve.assumption.edu.

Introducing Woolman Hill

Daphne Bye and Mark Fraser, co-Executive Directors of Woolman Hill

Photo: Kevin Lee



Junior Yearly Meeting retreat kids playing in front of the Yellow Houses at Woolman Hill

AS I SIT LOOKING OUT over the meadow, rain lashes against the window and I wonder with anticipation how this will turn to snow, as forecast. Woolman Hill in the winter means joyful treks to the skating pond with the young-at-heart, warming talks over spiced cider, and reunion with Friends by a comforting fire for worship in its many forms. Year-round, Woolman Hill is a central gathering place for Quakers across New England. Every season offers the changing landscapes of nature, thought, and soul.

If you haven't been here yet, let me explain. Woolman Hill is a retreat, conference, and education center. It is a beloved meeting place for Quaker families, youth retreats, monthly meetings, and other organized groups. Here you'll find sanctuary for quiet meditation, community for nourishment and support, and gathering of the like-minded (and not so like-minded) for the evolving quest.

The 150 year-old farmhouse, with sleeping accommodation for 23, is nestled amidst

Photo: Kevin Lee



Anne Anderson, Framingham (MA) Monthly Meeting shares Bible stories with Junior Yearly Meeting

110 acres of pasture and woodland. Several cabins are available year-round for individual and family retreats. The cabins also provide up to 15 additional beds for conferences.

Programs

We follow our mission to "foster, develop, and strengthen the testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends" not only by maintaining premises where Quaker groups can meet, and by reaching out to other

travelers who may be nourished here; at the forefront of Quaker values, we create programs that address current needs of New England Friends. This year's programming includes workshops on food and nourishment in consideration of simplicity and stewardship; on American leadership in times of crisis from an informed and compassionate perspective; and on the emerging ministries within each of us. Other week-ends nurture families or specific interests groups such as spiritually-minded educators. For a complete listing, see the calendar of events in this edition or contact us for a brochure and registration forms.

The New Co-Executive Directors

We are Mark Fraser and Daphne Bye, the new co-executive directors living at Woolman Hill with our three children since March 2000. This is a distinct vocational detour for each of us. Yet, as members of Hartford Monthly Meeting, and as life-long seekers, we see this work as an opportunity to serve in unique and deeply meaningful ways.

Daphne steps out of her 18-year role as musician, teacher, and arts administrator to take on several aspects of Woolman Hill. She will work closely with the board, with NEYM committees, with FGC and with others to develop programming that will most vitally serve New England Friends. She feels strongly led to hold a place of simple sanctuary for Friends: a nest for solitary retreat and a central gathering place

for NEYM constituency.

Mark, who is currently the cellist with the internationally known Adaskin String Trio, has been an orchestral, chamber music, and solo performer for years. His experience in arts management and his love of nature have led him to Woolman Hill and his role as head of development. Expect to hear more music on the Hill as the conference center prospers!



The North Dartmouth (MA) Meetinghouse will be erected at Woolman Hill this summer

Photo: Courtesy of Woolman Hill

The North Dartmouth Meeting House

In the summer of 2001, the historic North Dartmouth Meeting House will be erected at Woolman Hill. This will be a momentous occasion for the Hill: it is the result of twelve years of planning and fundraising. A treasure awaits us all! The golden chestnut paneling and floorboards of the meeting house will breathe a century and a half of Quaker history. Look forward to resting on the aged benches and savoring the surrounding vistas: rolling pasture, woods, and distant hills. Every workshop and retreat will have this space for worship.

Woolman Hill has raised over one hundred thousand dollars from many sources towards the reconstruction. We are deeply grateful for these gifts. We are now launching a campaign for the final mile in this long journey that is the erection of the meeting house. Another twenty-five thousand dollars are needed. Please contact Mark to find out ways you can give. A note for handy types: we need volunteer help in the construction—pack your hammer and give us a call to join the communal raising of this building.

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 • www.neym.org • OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday–Friday, 9AM–5PM ■ **Administrative Secretary**, Katharine Clark ■ **Administrative Assistant/Young Adult Friends Coordinator**, Josh Baker ■ **Youth & Education Secretary**, Christel Jorgenson ■ **Field Secretary**, Jonathan Vogel-Borne ■ **THE NEW ENGLAND FRIEND: Editor**, Jonathan Vogel-Borne; **Editorial & Production Volunteer**, William Kriebel ■ **FRIENDS CAMP**, Susan Morris, Director, P.O. Box 84, E. 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 La., Hingham, MA 02043 ■ **YOUTH RETREATS**: Grades 2-5: Kevin Lee 508/994-1638; Grades 6-8: Cynthia Rankin 508/540-6570 & Nort Salz 508/263-0862; Grades 9-12: Christel Jorgenson 617/625-4494.

The New England Friend
901 Pleasant Street
Worcester, MA 01602-1908



**New
Treasurer**

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

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Worcester, MA
Permit No. 487

Address Service Requested

THE NEW ENGLAND FRIEND

YEARLY MEETING CALENDAR

February 2001

- 4 Vassalboro QM – Midcoast, ME
- 4 CT Valley QM – Hartford, CT
- 9-12 Friends United Mtg General Board – Richmond, IN
- 10 Committee Day – Worcester, MA
- 24 Permanent Board – *Location TBA*

March 2001

- 3 Northwest QM – hosted by Plainfield/Barton-Glover
- 10 Ministry & Counsel – Worcester, MA
- 11 Weed Lecture, Thom Hamm – Beacon Hill, Boston, MA
- 15-17 FWCC America's Annual Mtg. – Greensboro, NC
- 16-18 Young Friends Retreat – Westport, MA
- 24 Sessions Committee – Westport, MA
- 30-4/1 Jr. High Retreat – Wellesley, MA
- 30-4/1 Women's Retreat – Geneva Point, NH

April 2001

- 6-8 Elementary Retreat – Storrs, CT
- 20-22 Young Friends Retreat – Hartford, CT
- 21 Committee Day – West Falmouth, MA
- 22 RI-Smithfield QM – Westerly, RI
- 22 Salem QM – Framingham, MA
- 28 Practice of Clerking Workshop – Burlington, VT
- 28 Falmouth QM – Durham, ME
- 28 Sandwich QM – West Falmouth, MA
- 29 Dover QM – Gonic, NH

May 2001

- 4-6 Emerging Ministries – Woolman Hill, MA [*see p. 6*]
- 5 Vassalboro QM – Cobscook, ME
- 6 CT Valley QM – Mt Toby, MA
- 6 United Society of Friends Women – Durham, ME
- 12 Permanent Board – *Location TBA*
- 19 Ministry & Counsel– Portland, ME
- 11-13 JYM 6th Graders Retreat – Woolman Hill, MA
- 11-13 Young Friends Senior Retreat – *Location TBA*
- 18-20 Jr. High Retreat Friends – China Camp, ME

June 2001

- 1-3 FWCC NE Regional Gathering – New Paltz, NY
- 2-3 Northwest QM – Farm & Wilderness Camps, VT
- 9 Committee Day – Portland, ME
- 15-18 Friends United Mtg General Board– Powell House, NY
- 30-7/7 FGC Gathering – Blacksburg, VA

July 2001

- 15 RI-Smithfield QM – Worcester, MA
- 28 Falmouth QM – *Location TBA*
- 28 Sandwich QM – Allen's Neck, MA
- 29 Dover QM – Pittsfield, NH

August 2001

- 4-9 NEYM Sessions – Bryant College, Smithfield, RI
Keynote Speaker: Stan Thornburg, Northwest YM
Bible Half Hour: Marian Baker, Weare (NH) MM