

## Holy Obedience: From Worship to Witness

The following articles are individual responses to the theme for the 2006 NEYM Annual Sessions to be held Saturday, 8/5 to Thursday, 8/10, at Bryant University, Smithfield, RI

### Trust God's power with gratitude and love. Be ready to change.

*Rachel Carey-Harper, East Sandwich (MA) Preparative Meeting, Sandwich Monthly Meeting*

“AND THE LORD PASSED BY. There was a great and mighty wind, splitting mountains and shattering rocks by the power of God, but the Lord wasn't in the wind. After the wind—an earthquake. After the earthquake—fire. But the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire a still small voice.” (1 Kings 19:12) This was the experience of Elijah hearing and accepting God's call. It's one thing to hear a voice. It's another to hear what is being asked and trust in the power. What did and does this voice ask? It did not say to Elijah that he should return and sit quietly in his cave or in my case a Friends Meeting simply connecting to the power of love and peace. He was told to make a huge nuisance of himself; charged with bringing the people to God or else they would perish. The prophets had intense struggles, they were ridiculed, attacked, many times having to flee for their lives. Prophetic mystery-ministry involves embracing the struggle. Not only what is seen in the outer world but the internal struggle as well.

Listening to “a still small voice” has been central to my being a spiritual person raised in a Quaker family. While the social concerns of Friends were important, I saw a sharp divide between those Friends who were peace activists and those who were mystics. I clearly and unequivocally identified with the latter. The first message I gave in a meeting for worship was in the beginning years of Framingham Friends Meeting when we were meeting in peoples living rooms. I was twelve and simply said “God is love.” This was so real to me. My spiritual obedience was and to a large part remains simply to love

the Lord my God with all my heart with all my soul and with all my might and do my best to love my neighbor as myself. It hasn't been easy and I fail much of the time, but being obedient, being faithful, means to make the attempt even with all our sometimes way too humanness.

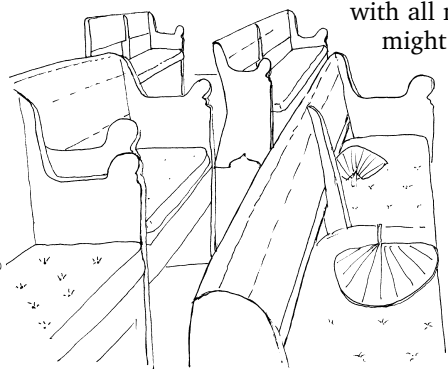
Twenty-four years later after attending

George School and worshiping in Friends Meetings up and down the east coast I returned to the Friends Meeting in Yarmouth where as a child I worshiped with my family during the summer months. I had an opening and gave the second message of my life. It was essentially the same. God is in essence love and it's our job to manifest this in the world. What is wanted from us is to do our part to build a world of peace. The ultimate wish for us is that we live in such a world; a world of harmony, faith, beauty and joy.

I heard that alleviating the suffering of the oppressed is vital—that we are joined together; as one suffers so do we all. I needed to take appropriate initiative and provide unconditional support for others; to learn and model being an ally. The impossibility of achieving a world of peace when any group has to deal with discrimination and violence grew over the next four years into a conviction that the necessary healing can not take place until the oppressor, and those who let hostility happen, learn they have a spiritual disease. It is an unfelt, invisible but soul-obscuring attitude. Thus in 1990 began the Clothesline Project, to bear witness to violence against women.

I devoted myself to this issue for five years but the still small voice was not finished with me. There was a repeated call, an opening waiting for me to unlock my heart. When I did I had a very rude awakening about oppression. The perpetrator was me. I was steeped in a culture of racism and benefited without awareness of white privilege. It was time for me to embrace the struggle in a different and scary way. The witness became twofold, a witness in the world and a self witness.

For me, now at East Sandwich Friends, the journey from worship to witness travels like a circle. Witness leads back to worship, worship to witness, all embraced in a mantle of holy obedience. All I have to do is get out of the way. Too often I am trying to lead the Light into my activities rather than let the Light lead me. Being obedient means surrender to a particular spiritual path, united through the heart, sustained through the breath, the voice. If ever there was a time to work together it's now. Our time is short. We are joined together in Light; in oneness, to heal in order to fully connect with that which is eternal. Trust God's power with gratitude and love. Be ready to change.



## What does my privilege afford me?

*Katharine Clark, Framingham (MA) Friends Meeting & NEYM Administrative Secretary*

**H**ARRY CAME BY THE OFFICE TWICE THIS WEEK. He hasn't been by in a while. He is probably a little younger than I am (in his early forties). He has three children. He has drug and alcohol problems that sometimes get him into trouble, and he is sometimes homeless. He has served time in prison more than once. He has been coming by for 10 years or more. He comes around with sob stories and wants money, but he is often too proud to ask for it directly. I have certainly given him a lot of money over the years he has come by, but I often ask myself, is that enough?

Every time he comes by I listen, but I didn't always. The very first time he came by I was surprised and scared. What should I do? The next few times I felt annoyed and inconvenienced, but for the last three or four years, I have invited him into the meetinghouse. I give him something to drink. I listen, and I empathize and I have gotten to know him a very tiny bit. I have worked at uncovering the human connection between us, even though our lives are so very different. Our education levels, our job skill levels, our housing situations and ultimately our class levels are very different. Even if I could take him into my home (which is completely impractical, I mean how would he get around? What about his kids or his current girlfriend, or the job he expects to get?) I cannot begin to really help him in the ways he needs help. I don't know any one person who could, and yet he makes his rounds of the faith communities in Worcester. I know that many of them are tired and drained by Harry. I have heard it from the Lutheran Church down the street, as well as Worcester-Pleasant Street members. I understand that personally when he comes by at 4:30pm and I want to leave the office at 5pm.

Twice in one week is unusual for Harry. He usually makes the rounds every few months or so. On his first visit this week, he looked cleaned and smelled fresher than I have seen him. He even had headphones on. He was really chatty and just wanted to talk. His housing situation wasn't great, but, he would be starting a new job on Monday. And he was really proud to announce that he would be having his first grandchild. He imagined, like I think we all imagine, his daughter would name him Harry. In this moment I felt really connected to Harry—this was a common human bond I found.

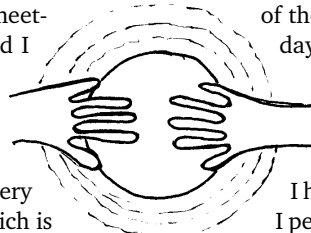
He was so happy, he barely even hinted at wanting money, but I gave him some anyway.

He came by again the next day, he was slumped over and smoking. The coat he had on the day before was missing, as were his headphones. He started crying right away and said he had lost his housing or would immediately unless he could come up with some money. I had given him the cash I had the day before and had no more to offer. He never understands why the Quakers don't have some emergency fund that I can dip into for him. Harry has a need that just does not relate to the way we work/operate. I asked if I could drive him somewhere else. Did he want to use the phone to call around for help? I spent some time on the phone with one of the church secretaries he called from my office the other day and she said the pastor would be too upset to see him, I should not bring him by. I took him downtown, somewhere else.

I pray for Harry. I also think about Harry for weeks after he comes by. I ask myself, what is the lesson that I have to learn from Harry's visits? What inhumanity have I perpetrated on Harry indirectly by being white, by having a house, by having the same steady job for 12 years, by being married to the same person for 23 years, by having money that he does not? What does my privilege afford me that I should also be helping to provide for others, with my actions, not just my words? What is holy obedience in this? What can I do that is more than just an intellectual exercise?

Harry makes me remember why I vote or campaign for people. Harry makes me remember that sometimes the truth is ugly. Harry makes me see how important community can be, but also how important individual strength, change, and determination is. Harry also makes me realize that we are responsible for ourselves, but we are also responsible for our brothers and sisters. We must do both. Harry makes me hope that I will never be a bystander.

"I realize now that to believe in pluralism means I need the courage to act on it. Action is what separates a belief from an opinion." —*Eboo Patel, founder and Executive Director of the Interfaith Youth Core, a Chicago-based organization fostering the international interfaith youth movement.*



## Faithfulness

*Carl Williams, Plainfield (VT) Monthly Meeting*

**I**NCREASINGLY I LEAVE MY LIFE DECISIONS TO FAITHFULNESS. Living close to the Center is a visceral connection with the Presence—a relationship with the Divine that changes nothing, and everything. It is a bond frustrating and nurturing. It is my Truth. I offer each day up to God and I end up each day with the understanding of where I've failed and where I've succeeded. My prayer time, my focus, and my life decisions are around the ways I can be God's eyes, hands, feet, and mouth.

A nudge comes to me, often in prayer. It may spring from a Psalm or a bit of reading. It may be as simple as 'God only has thee' or be a response to something specific. It hangs on, reshaping itself like an amoeba always the same and always different, eventually changing the lens through which I look at the day. It grows and expands until it is a forest of bushy undergrowth and I am lost in it. Then, frequently during worship, a path in the forest opens. Often it seems too silly or too difficult or too removed from my daily life. Having

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formed though, it does not let go. Pushed aside, it will wait and reemerge. I need to submit.

Being an American male, the idea of submitting is foreign and hard and angst producing. It is, though, what God requires. Sometimes I am given a quiet witness, meant to go largely unnoticed. I have practiced submitting to God some. Other times it is a witness that needs to be tested—traveling, opening myself to being a bit more public in sharing my understandings of the Divine and Friends call. Submitting a call to my Meeting's discernment, impossibly awkward and something I would avoid if left to my own devices, brings a gift of witness to full bloom. It becomes a witness that belongs to the faith community.

I treasure Friends traditional understanding regarding witness—to be authentic we must be consistent over time, based in traditional Friends/Biblical truth, and submitted to and recognized by the Meeting. Witness grows in the Meeting's soil. It is nurtured and pruned and bears fruit in the community of Friends. That is my experience. Meeting is my home, a place to serve, to be nurtured and to take risks—a place to remain steadfast and remain faithful. It is the place where my witness is supported and challenged. It provides me with clearness, with support and with oversight.

Since my first clearness discussion around faithfulness on a screened porch overlooking a lake on a summer's afternoon when Friends gently, lovingly asked incredibly hard questions of God's Truth, I've been led to a staff position with Friends World Committee on Consultation and then back again to Vermont. That same understanding leads me to facilitating weekends and retreats, to talking with Friends from other traditions, other hemispheres. Those Friends

sat with me seeking clearness. They didn't let me side step; they were as patient as they were firm and they led me to a crystal clear understating of what I needed to do to remain faithful. Faithfulness and service have become synonyms in my faith life. It has manifested itself in gifts and leadings I never would have imagined.

Clearness and subsequent oversight has convinced me that I am walking down a path led not by my ego but rather by a manifestation of the Presence. What I have to share is not so much mine as belonging to my faith community. When I share what God is asking of me—of celebrating our differences to search out common ground, of rejoicing in God in worship and in daily life, of facilitating Friends coming together to find the unexpected gifts that wait to be opened—I am sharing the best of my Meeting. When I share what God is asking of me—being a centered presence in places where God isn't

spoken of, being “an example, a pattern”—I am only a representative of a Religious Society that currently and historically does just that. The corporate life of the Meeting community benefits from this witness. When I am in Cleveland or in Houston or being a Quaker talking with Episcopalian camp kids about Catholic Brother Lawrence, I bring my Meeting to them and bring back fodder for our community's growth and deeper understanding.

In a cadence as old as time God whispers—we answer—God whispers—we answer—or not. God whispers. I answer. God whispers. There is no coercion, no impatience. I answer with the one thing I have—myself. God whispers an offer, a threshold to step through—or not. Obedience to God has the manifestation to “Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you.... When you're joined with me.” (John 15:4-5 *The Message*)

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life decisions are around the  
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## On large meetings for worship

*Will Taber, Fresh Pond (MA) Friends Meeting*

**M**EETINGS FOR WORSHIP AT NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING Sessions, especially those early in the week, are often disappointing. Many of us come hungering for spiritual depth and seeking nourishment for our souls but many times our early worship experiences do not feed us. By the end of sessions we have often gone down to those deep places and our worship together is fruitful and deeply satisfying but there are many who do not stay for the whole time. Can we share this deep experience with those attending only for the first weekend? Clearly we are capable of deep worship. How can we go deeper earlier on?

Part of our difficulty can be explained by the dynamics of the gathering. When we first gather we are excited about seeing old friends again and the prospect of spending time together. This excitement and expectancy is wonderful and it helps to draw us into community but it can work against sinking down into the Spirit where we are joined in the eternal. Because we see each other so rarely it takes time for us to reconnect with each other. Newcomers may be feeling overwhelmed, but it can even take old-timers a little while to get settled. Until we start to weave our community together, it is

a little harder for us to feel that safety and trust that will allow us to open ourselves to each other and to the Divine. We all need to be mindful of this challenge. When we gather in worship and let the froth die down, we can find the calm waters underneath.

Another part of the problem is that we are not used to being in large meetings for worship. I had a Computer Science professor once who said, “A change in order of magnitude is a change in type.” What he was saying was that if something is ten times bigger than it was, it has become a whole new thing. Two inches of snow in your driveway is certainly a much different thing from 20 inches of snow. So even if we are used to worshiping with 50 other people on Sunday morning, a meeting for worship with 500 people at Sessions is a very different thing. It requires a higher level of discipline than a smaller meeting and the structure is more formal.

In some small meetings for worship people remain seated while giving vocal ministry. At NEYM Sessions, not only are we expected to stand, we are expected to wait for someone to bring a microphone. Without the microphones our messages could not be heard. The people carrying the microphones serve to provide a minimum

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### On large meetings for worship (continued)

of space between messages and, when two or more Friends stand to speak at the same time, they decide who speaks. This is different from our usual practice at our weekly meetings but this discipline provides order to our assembly. We need to remember that this discipline applies to all forms of vocal ministry, including singing. While a song may be well heard by everyone even without amplification, waiting for the microphone places the offering on an equal basis with other spoken ministry. In a large meeting it is often not possible to know that someone else is rising to speak at the same time you are. If you just start singing, you may prevent a message from someone who has risen before you and was waiting in good order.

Advice to Friends on how to discern when they are moved to speak is often very general. Such advice often relies on physical symptoms such as a rapid heartbeat or a sense of having to speak. While these may be useful hints for people new to the vocal ministry, they are only a starting point. Often clarity on whether a vocal offering was rightly offered only comes after sitting down. This being the case, development in the ministry is a process of trial and error as we learn what the call to speak feels like in ourselves. A rapid heartbeat can just be a sign of adrenaline or it can come from the excitement of being together. Likewise, a sense of "having" to speak can come from the same place as the school child who is waving their hand for the teacher, unable to sit still, begging to be called on because they know the right answer and want to be recognized by the teacher and their classmates as being smart and a good student. It can come from a need to unburden oneself of something that one has carried to Yearly Meeting Sessions. In some cases it can come from a lack of impulse control. In a large meeting, the sense of "I have to give this message" is often a sign that this message is not from God. Most often an authentic leading to speak is accompanied by a sense of rightness, solidity and calm. As Paul says (1 Corinthians 14:32-33), "And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets, for God is a God not of disorder but of peace." Discerning when to speak in meeting, and when to stop speaking, is a major spiritual discipline among Friends. Like all spiritual disciplines, it comes easier with practice. We need to practice this discipline in all of the meetings we attend throughout the year. We need to make our monthly meetings a place where gifts in the ministry are encouraged and nourished. This means both providing encouragement for those just emerging in the ministry and providing gentle feedback for those Friends who appear not to be staying close to their Guide.

In a large gathering there are likely to be many people who are easily moved to speak. These Friends can easily take all of the time available for ministry and leave no room for those who are not so forward in their speaking. When Elijah had slain the 400 priests of Baal and was fleeing from King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, and after the earthquake, wind and fire, God's still small voice asked, "Elijah, what are you doing here?" And Elijah answered that he had been zealous towards the Lord, that everyone had forsaken God, and now they were seeking his life. And God told Elijah that there were still

7,000 in Israel who were faithful and who had not bent their knees to Baal. It is easy for us to be like Elijah and think that everything depends on us. This is often our pride. There is always the faithful remnant of which we are not aware. In a large meeting with many potential ministers it is useful to spend extra time testing your leading to speak.

During the course of the meeting there may be a period of waiting as the body gathers itself into the Divine presence. Then as the body settles down into the truth, the time will come at which it is ready to hear a message. At such a time, several people may feel a prompting to speak, and one may speak, or even several may rise together and one will be given a microphone to speak. If this happens, it does not mean that the body gathered needs to hear all of those messages. Sometimes you have the experience of hearing someone else give a message on the same theme that was exercising you. But even if the message given is far removed from your prompting, give careful consideration to the possibility that your willingness to carry a message was all that God is asking of you at this time.

For all of our talk of the Inner Light and waiting on God in the silence, we are often quite ambivalent about the actual experience of God. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living

God." (Hebrews 10:31) Being with God will sometimes take us out of our comfort zone. We may see things in ourselves we would rather hide. We may experience emotions we would rather suppress. Like Jonah, we may wish to book passage in the opposite direction from that which God would have us go. Of course, sometimes when we sink deeply, we come through the ocean of darkness to the ocean of light and feel joy and peace. Our work, when we gather in worship, is to wait humbly upon the Lord. We seek to find that palpable sense of God's presence and stay in that presence no matter how it manifests to us. We need to seek to sink deeper into it, whether it is breaking us open or binding our wounds. At its best, vocal ministry will take us deeper into the silence and draw us closer to God. The words do not interrupt the silence so much as they float across its surface. At other times, spoken messages can draw us away from God, out of the depths and back to a more comfortable and mundane level. We need to remain sensitive to what direction our words are tending and in what direction they are drawing the meeting.

In a large meeting for worship there is not time for more than a small fraction of the people present to speak. The service rendered by most people there is to listen as deeply as they are able. This collective listening can draw out the messages that are needed. Deeper listening can draw out messages from a deeper place. When we are gathered all together in worship several hundred strong, we should expect to feel God's presence much more strongly than in most of our regular meetings. When the Presence envelopes us, we need to listen even more deeply and intently. This is an opportunity we don't have often and we should treasure it and hold it tenderly in our hearts. It is our blessing and our birthright as Quakers. Let us hold to the Light.

Photo: Skip Schiel



*Friends Meeting at Cambridge Meetinghouse*

# Around the Yearly Meeting

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

• **Cambridge (MA) Monthly Meeting (MM)** mourns the loss of Patricia Watson, longtime Friend, activist, and former editor of *Peacework* magazine. Patricia died 2/6/2006. A memorial meeting was held 3/11/2006.

• **Dover (NH) MM** was saddened by the death of Silas Weeks on 2/27/2006. Silas was one of a number of Friends who revived the Dover MM in the mid 1900s.

• **Bennington (VT) MM** is supporting Anna Radocchia, an NEYM Young Adult Friend, who is working in New Orleans with Momma Dee (Dyan French Cole). Momma Dee's home in the Seventh Ward has become base of operations for distributing food, water, clothing, household items, cleanup supplies, information and community. As of 3/6/06, tap water is still unsafe to drink, electricity is produced 6 hours a day with a generator, and they cook over an outdoor grill. All basic supplies are in short supply or don't exist at all. Bennington Friends are acting as a conduit for money to support this work. Contributions earmarked "New Orleans" can be sent to the Meeting, PO Box 221, Bennington, VT 05201.

• **Vassalboro (ME) MM** donated their ornate pastor's chair and pulpit to a local historical society. The chair and pulpit had remained in their worship space since the Meeting became unprogrammed in the early 1980s. One of the treasures discovered in the pulpit was a mysterious bear bank. Longtime attenders identified it as the "Birthday Bear." Each time your birthday came round in the Meeting you put in the number of pennies that corresponded to your age. The money was then donated to various good causes.

• **Durham (ME) MM** Peace & Social Concerns Committee has decided to support a student connected to the AIDS orphanage run by Kakamega Yearly Meeting in Kenya. In addition to sending money, the Committee is looking for other ways to support this student. They are creating a display so that the Meeting can learn something about the student and his school life.

• **Hanover (NH) MM** has circulated the following public statement to "Friends and Colleagues in Faith Communities in Vermont and New Hampshire: In our names, our government has pursued a war in Iraq,

initially justified by falsehoods, and subsequently rationalized as liberation. We have been responsible for the deaths of many thousands of innocent people. Hanover MM of the Religious Society of Friends, mindful of its spiritual responsibility, finds itself compelled to speak out against the immoral actions of our government in the war in Iraq. We abhor the policies of the current administration and can not be silent in the face of the injustice being perpetrated in our names. We call on fellow faith communities and individuals to join us in speaking publicly, in the pulpit and the streets, against the well-documented atrocities of our government, which violate our experience of the truth and the life to which we are called."

• **Portland (ME) MM** had a Quaker Fun Day at their meetinghouse. As an opportunity to get to know each other better, the all age event included dance, song, games, and, of course, food.

• **Cambridge (MA) MM** united in the following minute on child abuse prevention: "We cherish the children and youth in the Friends Meeting at Cambridge community and the trust that they show in us as caring adults. We believe that children and youth need a whole community that cares about them and actively engages them. As a result, we welcome and encourage loving engagement between adults and young people of our Meeting. We are sadly aware that sexual abuse of children and youth occurs in religious communities as well as in the wider society. We are therefore committed to policies and procedures that will help us reduce the risk of harm happening to our beloved children and youth while in our care and elsewhere. Our work as a meeting includes raising awareness within the community, including adults, youth and children, about sexual abuse risk reduction and response."

• **Belfast (ME) MM** held its annual "Stone Soup Potluck and Fundraiser." Friends bring their own place settings, a contribution to soup ingredients, food making utensils, money, and material aid for an AFSC program to help displaced people.

• **New London (CT) MM** held a benefit concert to help them raise money for unexpected asbestos abatement expenses uncovered in the last phase of their meetinghouse renovation. Lorcan Otway, a mem-

ber of 15<sup>th</sup> Street (NY) MM, temporarily working in the New London area, graciously offered to perform his original songs and Irish pipes and flutes.

• **All New Hampshire Gathering of Friends** united in a minute of exercise on globalization. The minute says in part: "We strongly encourage Friends and all people of conscience to seriously investigate globalization processes as they affect the health, employment, and community life of people's around the world.... We repudiate the purely economic values that predominate in the planning and implementation of global policies... When common resources of earth, and the labor and intelligence of individuals, are regarded primarily as commodities to be exploited for profit, the result is a burden of material and spiritual poverty for many, as well as the enrichment of some. The spiritual health of those who profit is degraded, and their sensitivity to the cause of justice is diminished. In the spiritual weakening of the well-off, and the suffering of the poor, lie the seeds and fuel of strife and war, among many other evils. Such a system is not consistent with the Gospel message of Light and Life..." For the full minute, contact Brian Drayton, 603/654-6001 • [brian\\_drayton@terc.edu](mailto:brian_drayton@terc.edu)

• **Smithfield (RI) MM** held a meeting-wide gathering on religious education, facilitated by Beth Collea, NEYM Christian Education Coordinator. As they explored ways to revive their religious education program for both children and adults, they were particularly moved by the opportunity to share their personal experiences of Sunday School.

• **Worcester-Pleasant Street (MA) MM** is working with Christel Jorgenson (former NEYM staff member) in her capacity as an architect and facilitator to assess the physical needs of the Meeting, as well as an overall vision for the community. Friends in Worcester want to grow and expand both spiritually and physically.



Worcester-Pleasant Street Meetinghouse

## In other Quaker news

### NEYM seeks full-time youthworker

NEYM seeks full-time Young Friends/Young Adult Friends Coordinator, beginning 9/06, to minister to the spiritual needs of high school and college-aged young people. Requires grounding in Quakerism, experience in youth work, skills in communication and retreat organizing. Applications accepted until the position is filled. Interviews begin in May 2006. Contact Jonathan Vogel-Borne 508/754-6760 • [fieldsec@neym.org](mailto:fieldsec@neym.org)

### NEYM M&C/Woolman Hill Weekend

*Nurturing, Sharing And Inviting The Mystical Experience* with Susan Davies and Tom Antonik. 4/21-23/06. Susan Davies is a member of Vassalboro Friends Meeting. Through her writing and workshops at NEYM she encourages deeper communication about mystical experiences. Tom Antonik, an artist and aspiring Quaker monk, is a member of Portland Friends Meeting, and on the board of Woolman Hill. The retreat is co-sponsored by NEYM Ministry & Counsel. Contact Margaret Cooley, 413/774-3431 • [www.woolmanhill.org](http://www.woolmanhill.org)

### NEYM Women's Retreat

This year the annual weekend of worship and renewal will again be at the Geneva Point Conference Center, Center Harbor, NH, Lake Winnepesaukee, 4/21-23/06. "The uniqueness of Quaker women gathering in the Spirit in the safety of acceptance and love—in coming to understand the magic of going from disconnect to connect as we bond in community, in truth telling and sharing our pains and joys—restores our souls." Send \$20 non-refundable deposit to Patsy Shotwell, 416 Conant Rd., Weston MA 02493 • 781/899-5367 • [pshotwell@comcast.net](mailto:pshotwell@comcast.net)

### Quaker Leadership Workshop

On Saturday, 4/29/06, 9:30am to 3:30pm, at Allen's Neck (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](mailto:neym@neym.org)

### FDS Curriculum Workshop

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual First Day School Curriculum Workshop will be held at Hartford (CT) Meetinghouse, Saturday, 5/6/06, 9am-4pm.

The theme is *Learn to be Peacemakers: Teaching the Peace Testimony in First Day School and Home*. Workshops topics include: History of the Peace Testimony, Quaker Involvement in the American Peace Movement, Teaching the Peace Testimony in First Day School, Teaching the Peace Testimony at Home, Helping Children to Become World Citizens. Curriculum, book displays, posters of Religious Education projects, good lunch and snacks provided. Contact Beth Collea, 781/784-3471 • [BethCollea@aol.com](mailto:BethCollea@aol.com)

### JYM staff opportunities

Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) is seeking three energetic, playful, compassionate, creative and child friendly "worker bees" (youthworkers) for Afternoon Choices at NEYM Sessions 2006. Afternoon Choices is a period for crafts and play under the tent from 1:15-4:15pm from Sunday 8/6/06 to Wednesday 8/9/06. **Responsibilities** include signing children in and out, fetching and serving snacks, contributing your gifts to the daily opening circle time, assembling activities from the many trunks of supplies, and participating in activities. **Positions:** *One Assistant to the Coordinator*, includes full room and board. *Two Assistants* to the Assistant are primarily engaged with playing with the children and, in addition to the sheer joy of JYM children, will receive \$100 reduction from their sessions costs. All three Assistants must participate in the JYM preparation and orientation meeting on Saturday 8/5/06. Contact Afternoon Choices Coordinator Patience Thomas, 207/563-8177 • [thomaspa22@yahoo.com](mailto:thomaspa22@yahoo.com)

### Concern for MOWA Choctaw

We are attempting to organize a gathering of Friends with a concern for the future of the MOWA Choctaw Friends Center in Alabama. Contact Richard or Suzanne Frechette, NEYM Representatives to the Associated Friends Committee on Indian Affairs, 401/769-4433 • [Richard.Frechette@cox.net](mailto:Richard.Frechette@cox.net) or [Suzanne.Frechette@cox.net](mailto:Suzanne.Frechette@cox.net)

### New England Friends Peace Tax Fund

The New England Friends Peace Tax Fund, established in 1979, assists conscientious tax resisters (see NEYM *Faith and Practice*, pages 186 & 210). Like other peace tax funds, this Fund allows NEYM members and atten-

ders to deposit unpaid taxes, to remove any personal profit from not paying the IRS. If the IRS later seizes the money owed, the Fund will reimburse the depositor. If the money is not seized, after five years it becomes a completed gift to NEYM for "life-affirming activities consistent with Friends principles." Contact, Ruah Swennerfelt, Burlington (VT) MM, Fund Administrator, 802/425-3377 • [ruah@QuakerEarthcare.org](mailto:ruah@QuakerEarthcare.org)

### Quaker Peacebuilder Camp

Learn community organizing and nonviolent action skills with a diverse group of inner city, suburban and rural teens. 6/29-7/9/06. Contact John Humphries, 860/236-5175 • [jhumphries@igc.org](mailto:jhumphries@igc.org)

### Co-housing at The Meeting School

The Meeting School, a Quaker High School in Rindge, NH, is seeking information about Quakers in co-housing efforts, especially those in rural settings. Contact Sheila Garrett, 603/899-6508 • [sheila@meetingschool.org](mailto:sheila@meetingschool.org)

### AFSC New England Annual Gathering

Come take part in the 2006 American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) New England Region Annual Gathering, 9:30am to 4:00pm, Saturday 4/29/06. Find out more about AFSC programs and how to get involved. See next page for details. Contact Phyllis Cohen Gately, 617/661-6130 • [PCohenGately@afsc.org](mailto:PCohenGately@afsc.org)

### Quaker Initiative to End Torture.

Jennifer Harbury, author of *Truth, Torture, and the American Way*, will be the keynote speaker at the Quaker Initiative to End Torture conference to be held at Guilford College, Greensboro, NC 6/2-4/06. With this conference, "Friends can begin to take their rightful place in a broad, long-term work to end torture. This is a burden of our time, which we dare not shirk." Other speakers, schedule, workshops, and registration information are available at [quit-torture-now.org](http://quit-torture-now.org)

### BYM General Secretary sought

Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) is seeking to fill a position recently vacated by its General Secretary. An ad hoc Search Committee is convening 4/7/06 to discern how the Yearly Meeting will proceed. Contact the Baltimore YM Office at 800/962-4766 • [bym-rsf.org](http://bym-rsf.org)

# Is the government spying on you too?

Jonathan Leaning, Outreach Coordinator, American Friends Service Committee – New England Region

Photo: Courtesy AFSC-NERO



Peace vigil before US-led invasion of Iraq, 3/2003

**T**HE GOVERNMENT IS SPYING ON THE American Friends Service Committee, Quakers, and, well... perhaps you too. The good news is that all this attention means that we must be doing something right!

The story broke in the papers in a big way only recently, but the spying and harassment have been going on for years. Right before the Republican National Convention in the summer of 2004, a helicopter, three shaded SUVs, and about ten rather ominous-looking Homeland Security agents showed up outside AFSC's New England office in Cambridge. They hovered out there for a week.

In Maine, someone has been spying on Quaker meetings. In Boston, undercover agents have been attending peace coalition meetings. In New Hampshire, secret service agents are monitoring our staff's emails....

In fact, across the country, AFSC offices have witnessed at least eight instances of spying or harassment over the last few years. This includes one incident where a SWAT team armed to the teeth unexpectedly paid a visit to the home of a peace intern at AFSC's Denver office.

Unfortunately, we have seen it all before during the J. Edgar Hoover and Nixon eras. In a country at war, people working for peace seem naturally to ruffle the feathers of those who support military solutions.

As a Quaker-based organization, AFSC is busy sowing the seeds of peace, and this is threatening. However, surely to the chagrin of the White House and Homeland Security, stories of the security agents harassing Quakers and their organizations have wound

up on the front pages of major newspapers around the country and the world.

But working for peace is what we are called to do. And this is perhaps why Quakers and AFSC are being scrutinized so closely.

Undoubtedly, the efforts to stop the flow of fresh young recruits to the war in Iraq are not appreciated in certain circles. Across New England, AFSC staff, Quakers, students, teachers, and many others are going into schools to get to young Americans before the recruiters do. Last fall, many people in this part of the country joined in vigils to sound the alarm on the 2,000<sup>th</sup> US military death, part of the nation-wide campaign AFSC helped



AFSC Urban Youth's "Critical Breakdown"

Photo: Courtesy AFSC-NERO

organize. Public support for the war has continued to drop since then.

In Vermont, an AFSC-sponsored town meeting campaign resulted in over sixty towns and cities passing "bring them back home" resolutions calling for an end to the war. Currently in Maine, our volunteer counter-recruitment committee is mounting a freedom of information effort to pry open the lid on the government's secret spying and harassment of Quaker meetings in that state.

Sowing the seeds of peace also means sowing peace at home: in immigrant communities, among youth, in Native communities where we are helping to build new models for peacemaking that can be replicated elsewhere. New England is unique in that it is the only region in the country where AFSC has an office and presence in each of the six states, working together with coordinated strategies for peace and justice.

With all that is going on nobody needs to spy on the AFSC to find out what we are up to; we are more than happy just to tell you. In fact, you don't have to wait for the FBI stories to surface in the media to get the real picture; you can just come down for our annual gathering event on April 29<sup>th</sup> in Cambridge to meet with us in person and find out first hand. We will all be there, with lots to tell: stories of conviction and victory, stories of humor, passion and integrity, but above all, stories of the power of love in action. All are invited.

## American Friends Service Committee – NEW ENGLAND REGION ANNUAL GATHERING

### Quaker Service in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Saturday, 4/29/06, 9:30 am–4:00 pm, Cambridge Friends School

Curious about the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) programs in New England, or how you can get involved with the AFSC activities? The New England Regional Office of the AFSC is holding a daylong gathering of staff, committee members, and interested F(f)riends around the theme "Quaker Service in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Prophetic Voice and Witness in our World."

Intended for the wider New England Quaker community, this gathering will provide an overview of AFSC programs and planned initiatives in the areas of economic justice, criminal justice, issues affecting urban youth, immigration issues, international issues, and youth involvement. Moreover, the gathering seeks to foster dialog, and to explore ways in which both individuals and monthly meetings can contribute their talents to support AFSC programs, and for the AFSC to connect to the work going on across NEYM. Lunch will be provided. Young Friends and Young Adult Friends are encouraged to attend. Contact Phyllis Cohen Gately, 617/661-6130 • [PCohenGately@afsc.org](mailto:PCohenGately@afsc.org)

If you've been spied upon, we'd like to know. Email info to [jleaning@afsc.org](mailto:jleaning@afsc.org)

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



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# THE NEW ENGLAND FRIEND

## YEARLY MEETING CALENDAR

### April 2006

- 7–9 Elementary Retreat—Westport FM (MA)
- 8 Committee Day—Monadnock MM at The Meeting School (NH)
- 21–23 Young Friends Retreat—Mt Toby FM (MA)
- 21–23 Women’s Retreat—Center Harbor NH [see p.6]
- 22 Falmouth QM—Durham FM (ME)
- 22 Sandwich QM—New Bedford MM (MA)
- 23 RI–Smithfield QM—Smithfield MM (RI)
- 23 Salem QM—Amesbury MM (MA)
- 29 Quaker Leadership Workshop—Allen’s Neck (MA) MM [see p.6]
- 30 Dover QM—Location, TBA

### May 2006

- 5–7 Jr. High retreat—Portland FM (ME)
- 5–7 Young Friends Seniors—Monadnock FM (NH)
- 6 Curriculum Workshop—Hartford MM (CT) [see p.6]
- 6 Vassalboro QM—Belfast/Orono
- 7 CT Valley QM—Northampton FM (MA)
- 13 Permanent Board—Quaker City Unity FM (NH)
- 19–21 Elementary Retreat—Woolman Hill, MA
- 20 Ministry & Counsel—Location, TBA
- 21 Friends Camp Open House—S. China ME

### June 2006

- 2–4 Northwest QM—Farm & Wilderness (VT)
- 10 Committee Day—Location, TBA
- 25–7/8 Mary Dyer Camp (Ages 11–13)—Friends Camp, ME

### July 2006

- 1–7 FGC Gathering—Tacoma WA
- 9–22 George Fox Camp (Ages 13–17)—Friends Camp, ME
- 15 RI–Smithfield QM—Westerly MM (RI)
- 22 Falmouth QM—Durham FM (ME)
- 22 Sandwich QM—Mattapoisett FM (MA)
- 23–8/5 Margaret Fell Camp (Ages 13–17)—Friends Camp, ME
- 30 Dover QM—Location, TBA

### August 2006

- 5–10 YM Sessions—Bryant University, Smithfield RI

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

**2006 Sessions, Sat. August 5 – Thurs. August 10**  
**—Bryant University, Smithfield, Rhode Island—**

**Theme:** *Holy Obedience, From Worship to Witness*

**Keynote:** Lloyd Lee Wilson, North Carolina YM (Cons.)

**Bible Half Hour:** Tracey Peterson, Earlham College (IN)

**Tuesday Night:** Peterson Toscano, Hartford (CT) MM