



# SPARK

New York Yearly Meeting  
*The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)*

Volume 50, Number 3

15 Rutherford Place, New York, NY 10003

May/June 2020

## Quakers Together While Apart

### Inch by Inch, Row by Row

Dan Truman  
Flushing Meeting

“Inch by inch, row by row, gonna make this garden grow,” begin the lyrics to “Garden Song” by David Mallett, and day by day is how the Quaker Daily Devotional is growing its garden of young Friends. Emily Provance, a traveller in the ministry who is currently living at Powell House, remembered, “In the first few days of the pandemic situation, when all was chaos for pretty much everybody, families with kids home from school seemed to be one thing that wasn’t getting addressed in the initial wave.” Although there are now many more resources for families online, Emily hopes that the daily devotionals “provide some sense of routine, connection, and grounding for both kids and parents. I know that they do that for me!”

The Quaker Devotionals encourage virtual intervisitation. Not so much as a breaking-of-bread but a crunching-of-cereal, it gives a welcome opportunity for both children and their families to reflect on their experience and gain strength and hope from their faith.

Quaker Devotionals are facilitated by a small group of Friends from several yearly meetings. In addition to Emily, devotionals are regularly presented by Regina Baird-Haag (Co-Executive Director of Powell House), Melinda Wenner

*continued on page 4*

### Reflections on Online Worship

Sue Tannehill  
Buffalo Meeting

Bear with me. I begin with Physics. Quantum entanglement is an observable phenomenon and occurs when two photons (light particles) interact with one another. Imagine that photons A and B interact and become entangled in Buffalo, NY. Then, photon B gets sent to California while photon A remains in Buffalo. Now, when you shoot photon A with a laser causing it to spin, photon B (in San Francisco) will instantaneously spin as if it too has been shot through with a laser. This occurs even though it is thousands of miles away from its entangled partner. This is real.

Some of my experiences of online meeting for worship are analogous to quantum entanglement. I experience a kind of entanglement that transcends the barriers of space and time. Online meeting for worship has advantages over in-person

*continued on page 5*

**Articles related  
to the pandemic  
pp. 4-5**

**Articles not  
related to the  
pandemic p. 6**



## Welcome to Summer Sessions 2020 New York Yearly Meeting’s 325th Year

Dear Friends,  
Although we cannot gather at beautiful Silver Bay this year, we have not canceled Summer Sessions. Our time together, even online, is of great spiritual value and includes important business. We must not cancel. This has meant that we have had to find alternatives to our usual practice.

Many committed NYYM servant leaders have been hard at work developing ways to meet online, and, where needed, by post, for business, for meetings for worship and for discernment, for as much of the important work and deep sharing of Summer Sessions as possible. Under the co-clerkship of NYYM Assistant Clerk Elaine Learnard and Sessions Committee member Dawn Pozzi, the ad hoc task group Re-Imagining Summer Sessions has developed a Two Week At-a-Glance plan, or “TWAAG,” that starts with Meeting for Discernment on Sunday, July 19 and continues with business and other activities through Friday, July

31. Details are not yet complete, but will be send out soon. Events will be online, with advance documents provided as they usually are. Our work will all be experimental and may require everyone’s patience as we go forward. We are aware that online gatherings cannot be the same as in person gatherings.

As we refine plans, you will be kept informed. Changes forced on us by the pandemic have also provided an unexpected opportunity. In the past, business decisions at Silver Bay were made by those who were able and led to attend in person, as is usual at Quaker meetings. Events and opportunities offered at Silver Bay were only available to those who attended. Now, we are reaching out to our entire yearly meeting membership of thousands to include NYYM Friends wherever

*continued on page 7*

**More on Summer  
Sessions pp. 7-8**

## Notices

### New Members

**Dorothea Jean Coiffe-Chin**—  
Fifteenth Street

**Ron Hogan** —Flushing

**Susan Clinch Jefferson**—  
Poughkeepsie

**Zuzia Kwasniewski** —  
Saratoga

**Dennis Rittenhouse** —  
Manasquan

**Claudia Sydenstricker**—  
Chatham-Summit

### Transfers

**Kay and James Fitzgerald**,  
from Abington (PYM) to  
Buffalo

### Deaths

**Arthur Berk**, member of  
Fifteenth Street, on April 7,  
2020.

**Bethea Brice**, member of  
Poplar Ridge, on March 11,  
2020.

**Wilma Campbell**, member of  
Rochester Meeting, on May  
26, 2020.

**Anneliese Garver**, member of  
Buffalo, on March 10, 2020.

**Joan Kindler**, member of  
Flushing, on March 27, 2020.

**Kathryn Mott**, member of  
Ridgewood, on January 22,  
2020.

## NEWS

Many of the local (monthly) meetings in the New York Yearly Meeting area are holding online meetings for worship every week. Visit [nym.org/online-worship-opportunities](http://nym.org/online-worship-opportunities) for the full list.

### NYYM Friend on Cover of Time Magazine

The April 20, 2020 issue of Time Magazine features a story on paramedic and NYYM Friend



## Around Our Yearly Meeting

Alanna Badgley, part of a special report: Heroes of the Front Lines. The story follows Alanna through her shift at the height of the COVID-19 epidemic in Yonkers, NY. “It’s often up to her to tell patients’ families that they can’t ride in the ambulance and can’t come to the hospital, and to stand there as they slowly realize that her arrival could mean a permanent goodbye... ‘I’m there to talk to them,’ she says, ‘and to provide some level of empathy and humanity in the moment in which they are truly terrified.’”

The story is harrowing, sad, frightening, and inspiring, as Alanna continues to do her work faithfully in the hardest conditions imaginable. Read the story here: [time.com/collection/coronavirus-heroes/5815747/coronavirus-paramedic-experience/](https://time.com/collection/coronavirus-heroes/5815747/coronavirus-paramedic-experience/)

### Young Peacemakers Week

Due to the corona virus threat, Albany Meeting’s Young Peacemakers Week will, unfortunately, not be held in its traditional form in 2020. Albany Meeting feels that the risk to children’s health is not one they want to take on. They look forward to hosting young peacemakers in 2021 instead. If anyone would like to receive a free packet of materials, which will include paperback books, arts and crafts supplies, a CD of peace songs, etc., please contact Anita Stanley at 518-441-7722, or [meridiancomm@earthlink.net](mailto:meridiancomm@earthlink.net).

In the meantime, all children and their families are encouraged to nurture peace and peace-making by supporting the Black Lives Matter movement and making their voices heard. Albany Meeting hopes to see you in August of 2021 for a new Young Peacemakers Week!

### New Powell House Youth Directors

The new Powell House Youth Program Directors are **Sarah and Martin Glazer**. They have both served as excellent adult presences and co-facilitators with the outgoing youth directors, Chris and Mike. Martin grew up in the program and Sarah arrived at Powell House as a young adult. Martin is great at making others feel heard. He is funny, kind and totally present. He is familiar with all the traditions and things that go into creating a youth conference. Sarah connects well with others and knows how to move the group to that deep place

of community. She has a light-filled laugh and great sense of humor and is not afraid to take on difficult subjects. Together they are creative, playful and spiritually curious. They are Quaker-savvy and open to continuing growth in themselves and the youth program. Both Sarah and Martin care deeply about the program and each person who makes up this wonderful community. Welcome, Sarah and Martin!

### Climate Justice Working Group Launches Web Page & Project Reporting Form

The Climate Justice Working Group (CJWG) encourages and supports “direct action to reduce global warming and other harmful human effects on the environment and to restore Earth’s ecosystems for the good of all life.”

CJWG is an open working group, and you are most welcome to join it. Please email Sylke Jackson, clerk of the CJWG, at [sylkej@gmail.com](mailto:sylkej@gmail.com) if you would like to join one of their Zoom meetings.

CJWG recently launched a new page on [nym.org](http://nym.org), which you can find by typing “CJWG” into the search box.

CJWG also created a form called “Climate Solutions around NYYM” for reporting projects, actions and events your monthly or regional meeting have completed or are working on. If you have ideas or projects you would like the working group to know about, please email Margaret McCasland, assistant clerk of the CJWG, at [mamccasland@gmail.com](mailto:mamccasland@gmail.com) and she will send you a link to the Climate Solutions reporting form.

### Friends United Meeting Triennial Rescheduled

Due to the coronavirus pandemic Friends United Meeting (FUM) has decided to reschedule the 2020 Triennial Sessions. Tentative plans are to reschedule the conference for the summer of 2021 in Kenya. Please direct your questions to [2020triennial@FUM.org](mailto:2020triennial@FUM.org).

FUM is committed to carrying forward the theme for the 2020 Triennial: the gospel message that Christ Jesus is inviting the community of Friends to *Come. Abide. Go.* The global community of Friends is invited to participate in the 30 Days of Prayer, beginning on Sunday, 12 July 2020 (the day the Triennial was

scheduled to begin). The unifying grace and power of prayer is needed during these critical days.

### NYYM COVID-19 resource page

Looking for guidance in a time of “social distancing” and physical separation? Consult NYYM’s curated and frequently updated COVID-19 resource page at [nym.org/COVID-19](http://nym.org/COVID-19)

## ONLINE EVENTS

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, in-person gatherings have been cancelled for now. Below are some online events you may wish to join.

### NYYM-led Meeting for Worship Sundays at 10 a.m.

For people without local online worship, NYYM is holding general worship Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. To request the Zoom link, email [communications@nym.org](mailto:communications@nym.org), or check the weekly NYYM email.

### Local Meetings Respond

Mondays at 7 p.m.

This weekly call is for people involved in their local or monthly meeting who are thinking about their meeting’s responses to current changes. Topics change weekly. The current topic and Zoom link, along with summaries of previous topics,

SPARK (ISSN 00240591)  
New York Yearly Meeting News  
Published five times a year:  
January, March, May, September,  
November by  
New York Yearly Meeting  
Religious Society of Friends  
15 Rutherford Place  
New York, NY 10003  
212-673-5750  
[office@nym.org](mailto:office@nym.org)  
[www.nym.org](http://www.nym.org)  
Editorial Board:  
Communications Committee  
*Editor:* Sarah Way  
*Spark* deadlines are the first week of  
the month preceding the publica-  
tion month. Permission is granted to  
reprint any article, provided *Spark* is  
acknowledged as the source.  
Periodicals Postage Paid  
at New York, New York  
*Postmaster: Send address changes to:*  
**SPARK**  
15 Rutherford Place  
New York, NY 10003  
Sarah Way  
[communications@nym.org](mailto:communications@nym.org)  
Chad Gilmartin  
[web@nym.org](mailto:web@nym.org)  
Walter Naegle  
[walter@nym.org](mailto:walter@nym.org)  
Steve Mohlke  
[gensec@nym.org](mailto:gensec@nym.org)  
Helen Garay Toppins  
[office@nym.org](mailto:office@nym.org)

can be found at [nyym.org/content/local-meetings-respond-series](http://nyym.org/content/local-meetings-respond-series).

### **Powell House Weekly Online Worship**

**Saturdays at 6:00 p.m.**

Powell House, the conference and retreat center for New York Yearly Meeting, holds a meeting for worship via Zoom every Saturday at 6:00 p.m. Contact Regina at [regina@powellhouse.org](mailto:regina@powellhouse.org) for information on how to join.

### **Family Devotionals**

**Monday-Fridays at various times**

These daily Zoom calls, organized by Emily Provance, are designed for adults and children participating together. The audience primarily in mind is elementary school and preschool. There's usually singing together, a story, a query, and a chance for some discussion. To get more information, visit [tinyurl.com/quakerfamilydevotionals](http://tinyurl.com/quakerfamilydevotionals). (Read an article on these devotionals starting on page 1.)

### **Events for Young Adults**

The Interim Young Adult Field Secretary, Marissa Badgley, has been organizing virtual get-togethers, workshops, and meetings for worship since the pandemic began. For an updated calendar of events, visit [bit.ly/NYYM-yafcal1](http://bit.ly/NYYM-yafcal1).



### **Powell House has gone virtual!**

Powell House, the retreat and conference center for NYYM, is facilitating a series

of **virtual workshops**, using the Zoom conferencing technology, on a donate-as-led basis. See [www.powellhouse.org/virtual-workshop-series](http://www.powellhouse.org/virtual-workshop-series) for the latest.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

### **COVID-19 Fund for Congregations**

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), Everence® and Mennonite Central Committee U.S. have joined together to launch a COVID-19 Congregational Relief Fund to aid churches/meetings and their families and individuals facing

financial crisis due to the coronavirus pandemic. The fund will accept grant requests of up to \$5,000 each from churches that might not have means to recover from this unprecedented global situation. Recipient churches may use the grants to meet their congregational financial needs (such as rent, mortgage, utilities, staff salaries, etc.) or to assist the families and individuals in their midst. Visit [www.everence.com/resources/covid19-congregational-relief-fund](http://www.everence.com/resources/covid19-congregational-relief-fund)

### **The Fund on Sufferings**

The Fund on Sufferings was established to provide aid and assistance to those who are suffering because of fidelity to Friends' testimonies. Follow these steps to request financial assistance from the Fund.

1. An individual experiencing a financial hardship as a result of living out Friends' Testimonies applies to their monthly meeting or, if no monthly meeting affiliation, to a yearly meeting committee with which they're affiliated.
2. The meeting or yearly meeting committee forwards the request to the Liaison, Carolyn Emerson: [ccemerson2@gmail.com](mailto:ccemerson2@gmail.com).
3. The monthly meeting or yearly meeting committee discerns its action and reports back to the Liaison.
4. The Liaison discerns a decision with the Sufferings Task Group regarding the request. If in unity to provide funds, they request the Treasurer to send the funds.

### **Resident Caretaker Needed**

Rockland Friends Meeting (Quaker) in Blauvelt, NY (NW suburb of NYC) is seeking a resident caretaker. The rent—\$900 including utilities and wifi—is low for the NYC metro area, and includes just a few responsibilities. The space consists of two rooms: a bedroom and a sitting room that includes your own refrigerator.

Outside of the apartment, the updated kitchen is shared with the meeting, as are the two bathrooms, which are not connected to the apartment. The surroundings are woodland/residential, very quiet; having a car would be helpful. Besides Sunday morning worship, several times a week other organizations hold meetings in part of the meetinghouse.

Rockland Meeting is looking for a mature, responsible individual or couple who wants to live simply and be a welcoming presence. Refer-

ences, resume, interview required. Could this be a possibility for you?

Contact one of the following:  
Peter Wade: [prsce5@icloud.com](mailto:prsce5@icloud.com)  
Sylke Jackson: [sylkej@gmail.com](mailto:sylkej@gmail.com)

## **Urgent—Write to Friends in Prison during COVID-19 Crisis**

As the COVID-19 crisis continues, we are faced with profound opportunities to deepen mutual ministry with one another. For me, this includes tending to the relationships I have with inside Friends.

Due to the pandemic, Quaker worship inside prisons has been suspended, and inside Friends are isolated from their Quaker family. So, too, are those incarcerated Friends who have at some time been connected to a worship group and now find themselves in prisons with no Quaker connections. Visits to prisons have also been suspended, but those of us who are not registered as volunteers can still write letters.

As my communication with inside Friends has continued, they have shared in their letters and emails a profound yearning for news from the yearly meeting. Often, they speak of support for and solidarity with their Quaker community; even as conditions within the prisons deteriorate, incarcerated Friends hold us in the light. They write of hope, and remind me to breathe, to be calm, and to spread love at this time. I have found that in this moment of uncertainty and fear, sharing correspondence with incarcerated Friends is an act of grace, a return to center.

At this crucial time, we need many more outside Friends to embrace the opportunity to develop a relationship with an inside Friend. Outside Friends can connect with incarcerated Quakers through the Inside Outside Letter Writing Collective. This program is under the care of the NYYM Prisons Committee and invites inside and outside Friends to correspond as fellow seekers in mutual ministry. Please consider joining.

To join the collective, email Judy Meikle at [InsideOutside@nyym.org](mailto:InsideOutside@nyym.org)

Inside Friends can join the collective by writing to Judy Meikle at PO Box 765, Norwalk CT 06852.

### **Editor's Note**

Welcome to the May/June issue of the printed NYYM newsletter, *Spark*. As I write this, our country is entering the third week of peaceful protests in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, sparked by the death of George Floyd. We're also at the end of the third month of pandemic quarantine, with all schools, sports, museums, gatherings, meetings, shows, etc. cancelled or moved online. The extent of the disruption we're now experiencing is extreme. But with disruption comes openings for change. The protests have already led to some policing reforms and restructuring, and a majority of white people seem to have woken up to the reality of systemic racism. On a smaller scale, the pandemic has caused many meetings to try worshipping online, enabling distant or homebound Friends to worship with their meetings once again.

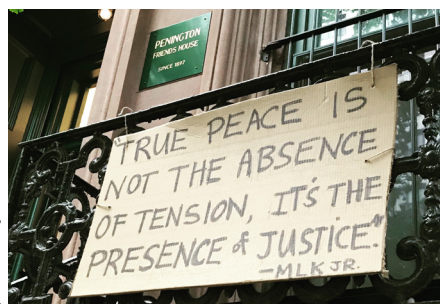
The next issue of *Spark* is in September and the submissions deadline is **August 1**. Consider writing an article or submitting images for *Spark*. Email submissions to [communications@nyym.org](mailto:communications@nyym.org). Please limit yourself to 400-600 words.

### **Upcoming *Spark* themes:**

**September: Reflections on NYYM's 325th Year.** NYYM held its first yearly gathering 325 years ago. We celebrate this every 25 years. Has NYYM changed since its 300th anniversary, in 1995? What do you think—or hope—will be different at the 350th or beyond? Please share your thoughts on the past, present, and possible futures of our yearly meeting.

NYYM's monthly email newsletter, InfoShare, has been laid down. Instead, a **weekly update** is now sent to the NYYM "global" email list every Friday. To join that list, email [office@nyym.org](mailto:office@nyym.org). Please send your meeting's news to [communications@nyym.org](mailto:communications@nyym.org) ASAP to have it shared in the next weekly update.

NYYM is on social media! NewYorkYearlyMeeting on **Facebook**; NYYM Tweets on **Twitter**; newyorkyearlymeeting on **Instagram**. —Sarah Way



Sign outside Pennington Friends House, NYC



# Quakers Together While Apart

## Pandemic Reflections

Joan Malin  
Brooklyn Meeting

During this time of pandemic, our lives are circumscribed to home and limited communications. Yes, I am grateful to have a home, and my heart goes out to those who don't, to those who have lost family and friends, and to the many who work on our behalf to keep us safe and healthy. But, in addition to gratitude, this experience leads me to think about what it means to grow older, and to grow really old. I am now 69 years of age. My birthday was during this lock down time, and so that, too, may have added to the depth of my reflections on aging.

These days I spend a good portion of my time working and doing Zoom calls in my roles as a Quaker clerk and a nonprofit consultant. Prior to the pandemic, and after retiring three years ago from a very demanding fulltime job, my life significantly slowed down. Now, even with my current responsibilities, the slowing down has dramatically continued. A fair amount of my time these days is spent reading, knitting, crafting, cooking, and only now, planting my garden. I still follow political and social activism, but all online. No longer can I get to events, museums, movies and concerts, as I frequently did before. I can't shop for books, so I explore my shelves for unread literary experiences, or purchase books by Kindle. I must note that I have discovered the joy of re-reading books—some are as wonderful or even better than on first reading. I am doing fewer activities, but still busy, though finding time for reflection, which is a good thing.

All this leads to the question of what do I want my life to be when age truly means "doing" less, and "being" more—what will matter to me then? What can I learn from this experience to guide me and perhaps enable me to be more accepting of age as it comes—in fact, to be grateful that I will age? Is there something that we can offer out of the pandemic experience to others? What is our wisdom and joy at this time?

I am part of a loving, trusting



group of Friends called the Committee with a Concern for Quaker Living that has been meeting for several years, looking at ways to ensure that Friends remain connected to our meetings as they age, and I brought these questions to them for further discernment. For some of us, the question of doing work as a calling still resonates. Others of us saw the question of "being" as not separate from "doing," and know that attention to "being" may help us "do" better. And others recognized that their identity with work will, by necessity, need to change, and wonder if they can allow that. Finally, we recognized that asking these questions is a luxury that not all share, as the need to survive can often override questions of integrating being and doing.

With no clear answers, I offer these excerpts from *The Gift of Years*, by Joan Chittister:

Meaning—the message of my life, the substance of my being—is left standing there bare, and shivering once all the titles and perks are gone. I'm me, just me... What does God see in me now? What do I see in me now? What am I doing with my time now?...

The world has been upside down for so long, it is almost impossible to believe anymore that the meaning of life is NOT about doing. The notion that it is about being—being caring, being interested, being honest, being truthful, being available, being spiritual, being involved with the important things of life—is so rare, so unspoken of, as to be obtuse. We don't even know what meaning means anymore...

But one thing is for sure: to be meaningful to the world around us means to provide something more than numbers. It means that we are obliged to offer important ideas, sacred reflection, a serious review of options, and the suggestion of better ideas than the ones the world is running on now...

*A burden of these years is that we might allow ourselves to believe that not being fast or busy as we used to be is some kind of human deficiency.*

*A blessing of these years is that we can come to understand that it is the quality of what we think and say that makes us valuable members of society, not how fast or busy we are.*



## Inch by Inch, Row by Row

Dan Truman  
Flushing Meeting

*continued from page 1*

Bradley (Youth Religious Life Coordinator of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting), and Kody Hersh and Beverly Ward of Southeastern Yearly Meeting.

The audience in mind is children six months to nine years and their families. Three generations of one family has been attending regularly.

Attendees log in via Zoom video conferencing from as far away as Georgia, Belize, and the United Kingdom.

Though separated by great distances, as many as 9 families and 20 participants are faithfully brought together in a given session.

Emily and Regina's meetings start with each participant, young and old, announcing where they are calling in from and how they are feeling. Several songs from a growing Quaker Devotional Songbook are spiritedly sung with accompanying gestures. Afterward, a reflective children's book is read. The books are wide-ranging in topic and often introduce children to places and cultures different from their own, while covering universal themes. The teacher then offers a query which all participating reflect on in expectant worship for a minute or two before a worship-sharing like experience of answering the query.

Regina shares, "I think the most surprising thing for me was the huge lift to my spirit and emotions each time I've done a devotional. I



am also amazed at the community that can be created through the online platform.... In an isolating and alienating environment, this platform has really strengthened a sense of unity and connection in participants and facilitators. My hopes include being able to continue this activity, beyond our pandemic, and getting to meet some of our participants at a time when we can actually be in the same place."

Melinda's devotionals are in the evening. "I took the evening time



intentionally, both because it's after my work day, and I was drawn to

the opportunity to create a space to wind down and reflect at the end of the day....Energy levels vary, but it's always joyful! I think what has surprised me the most has been that I went into the opportunity with the children centered in my planning, but seeing the parents—some are friends I have not seen in awhile—has been so wonderful. My heart feels very full when I end these Zoom calls and go rejoin my own family."

As to her devotional format, Melinda will "usually start with my Tibetan singing bowl, and gathering us around to listen to the sound it makes getting quieter and quieter. We read a story,

and it's been such fun to go through the many children's



books I have... I've tried to pick books with themes of listening, taking care of the earth, and mindfulness, but I'm adding in some silliness, too—we need that to feed our spirits as well! After the story, we'll wonder together about a couple of questions related to it, and then we sing a song."

On a personal note, in these uncertain times, my wife Ninon Rogers and I look forward to starting each day with the Quaker Devotional. While we sometimes struggle to plan and deliver curriculum in person, Emily, Regina, and Melinda make it look easy even in a new virtual format.

It is a joy for us to have our six and nine year old children among those children recognizing each other in fellowship and greeting each other warmly from across the country. Their spiritual growth is nurtured and their capacity for community-building and reflective and expectant worship expands. We look forward to attending more of the devotionals soon, and we wholeheartedly recommend all of them.

More information and a sign-up form can be found on Emily Provance's traveling ministry website *Turning, Turning* ([quakeremily.wordpress.com/connection-in-a-time-of-covid-19](http://quakeremily.wordpress.com/connection-in-a-time-of-covid-19))





## Reflections on Online Worship

Sue Tannehill  
Buffalo Meeting

*continued from page 1*

worship in several ways:

- Hearing ministry is easier.
- You see the faces of everyone who is worshipping with you.
- You can gaze at those faces without embarrassment.
- People who have moved or haven't attended for a long time can now attend.
- After worship, times of fellowship or check-in allow each person to be heard by all.

Hearing ministry is so important in meeting for worship. During Ministry & Counsel conversations about how to increase, decrease or deepen vocal ministry, someone always raises the issue of being able to HEAR ministry at all. The person trying to be faithful to his/her/their message may not stand, may look down at the floor, and drop their voice. These physical gestures make it almost impossible for some to hear the ministry. Using Zoom, vocal ministry is heard by all.

Online, it is possible to see everyone's face at worship. While this doesn't work as well on phones or tablets, most faces are visible on a desktop computer. The physical arrangements of circle and facing benches in our meetinghouses often prevent this.

During online meeting for worship I can gaze at my fellow worshippers without embarrassment. I almost always end my meeting by silently holding each person gathered up to the Light, and offer prayer for their well being. Being able to gaze at each one is a happy advantage.

Another advantage is that distance no longer prevents attendance. People who grew up in our meeting now join us from their homes far away. A man from South America who worshipped with us years ago now worships with us regularly from his home in Columbia. There is rich cross-fertilization as people from other meetings join our mid-week meeting for worship.

Finally, after the "rise" of

meeting, we often have a time of fellowship. At our meetinghouse, this takes the form of small knots of people chatting. On Zoom, each person speaks to all the others. This deepens the quality of relationships among us as much as, or perhaps more than a regular "coffee hour."

I do not want to use this platform exclusively—I miss the hugs, the sight and smell of the people around me, an awareness of the meeting gathered as a whole, the serving of food, the camaraderie and cheerful banter of corporate fellowship. But I think that Quaker entanglement is very real on the Zoom platform and I want to lift it up as a welcome option until we can gather in person again.



## Long Island Quarter Copes with Social Distance

Carolyn Emerson  
Conscience Bay Meeting

After metropolitan New York, Long Island has the largest number of Covid-19 cases in New York state, at about 40,000 as of Easter. Our meetings reside mostly in suburban areas and many usually drive a bit of a distance to reach the meeting house. In this time of social distancing, we long to be with our "blessed community" and if we can't be—in person—then we have tried to find a way to stay close. For all Long Island meetings (except two tiny ones) this has meant trying to meet in new and different ways.

In Nassau County, Manhasset Meeting is meeting remotely on Zoom. The members settle into silent worship. After a period of centering, a query is read, then they return to worship. The older children join in for the last 10 minutes of the 40 minutes. Following worship, afterthoughts and concerns are shared in a period of about 20 minutes of fellowship. First Day School has also been held via Zoom, with good participation.

Westbury Meeting has had 15-20 people in attendance for meeting for worship via Zoom. Following afterthoughts, the period of joys and concerns has become a regular "check-in." In addition, Bible study, Dialogue Across Differences and Tuesday Potlucks have been held

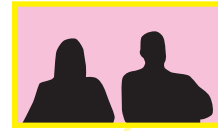
on Zoom. Ministry and Outreach has been going down the call list to reach out by phone to folks who are less tech-savvy.

Matinecock Meeting has referred its members to the Zoom meeting of NYYM. They keep in touch through several weekly emails a week, sent out by their clerk.

Jericho Meeting has just begun meeting online via Skype and found it a positive experience, with seven in attendance.

In Suffolk County, Conscience Bay meeting felt that in this time of social distancing, the opportunity to check in with each other was quite important, so they structured their time on Zoom to begin with each person telling how they are and perhaps sharing a reflection. This is followed by about 20 minutes of worship, ending with afterthoughts and announcements. This format has increased the usual attendance to about 12, encouraging some far-flung members to join in meeting, when they otherwise could not. Additionally, members are calling and emailing those who haven't recently been in attendance to check in with them, and they report back to the meeting.

For most of us, it has been a time of growth and learning as we adapt to using technology to join together as a community. Each meeting has approached it a little differently, but to be able to share our joys and sorrows through online meetings, face to face, has helped us grow closer as communities of faith.



## The Dark Side of Community

Karen Tibbals  
Rahway Plainfield Meeting

As we fight the COVID-19 pandemic, we could say that the dark side of community is that we are each disease vectors, spreading the virus through handshakes and hugs. Hopefully, we will get past this mess soon, and be able to experience one another in person again. There is something special about seeing people in person. While I like seeing people I know on Zoom, it doesn't really compare to the experience in person.

But a different dark side of

community is the type of belonging that doesn't feed our spirit, that doesn't feed the spirit of God in each of us. It's the type of community that needs an enemy to bind it together.

It is called "common enemy belonging."

It is not real community. It is fake, and it fades easily.

It's the fast-food version of belonging, the same as gossip. It feels addictive in the moment, but it doesn't elevate you. Such belonging is tainted and impure. It does not provide the same benefits of community as real belonging.

Twentieth-century black poet Langston Hughes articulated the effects of hatred on a person when he asserted, "Ever' thing there is but lovin' leaves a rust on yo' soul."

In the US, we have been socially sorting. We don't spend time with people we disagree with, except to protest or yell at each other. Even we Quakers socially sort. Several other Religious Society of Friends Yearly Meetings have split over cultural issues. When we do that, we don't learn about each other from talking to each other. Instead, we become frozen. Why? Because we don't know how to talk to each other. We are out of practice. So, we need a new way.

I believe there is a solution, a way for people to learn to talk to each other in a new way, a way that honors that spark of God in each one of us. And in doing so, we can learn about each other and form a different type of bond.

Peter Rollins talks about the creativity that was unleashed when the Protestants and the Catholics in Northern Ireland got together to come to the Good Friday Agreement there. If they can do it, when they were killing each other, so can we. Quakers want to work for peace, this is one way we can do it.

I am scheduled to run a virtual workshop at Powell House on June 27 on how to apply this new way of thinking and talking and relating. And to practice it.

Please join me in this new way of being with people we disagree with.

*Karen Tibbals is Communications Clerk of Rahway-Plainfield Meeting (NJ) and the author of the forthcoming book, Persuade, Don't Preach: Restoring Civility across the Political Divide.*



# Quakers Together

## Please Eat the Dandelions

Victoria Quesada  
Hamilton Meeting

I once watched a television commercial where a neighbor screamed “kill them all”—and the object of their wrath was a dandelion. The name dandelion derives from the French *dent de lion* meaning “lion’s tooth.” The dandelion is one of the most generous and useful plants to ever offer its gifts to mankind and yet, many folks put poison in our earth and water to kill it. Go figure.

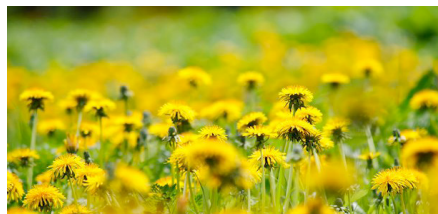
In *Greens* (Collins Publishers San Francisco), there is a chart showing nutrient levels of many plants including kale, spinach, lettuces, and dandelion greens based upon a 3 ½ oz serving of each. Dandelion greens have 14,000 IU of Vitamin A. The next closest is Kale at 8,900 IU and the lowest is Iceberg Lettuce at 33 IU. Dandelion greens show respectable levels across the chart in the remaining categories of Vitamin C, Fiber, Calcium, Iron and Potassium. Steve Brill, author of *Foraging New York* (Falcon Field Guides) adds that the plant “provides vitamins B1, B2, B5, B12, C, E, P and D, as well as biotin and inositol. Minerals include calcium, potassium, phosphorus and magnesium and zinc.” Impressive.

The entire plant is useful; leaves, flowers and roots. The dried root is used by herbalists in tea, and as a detox remedy and is listed in US Pharmacopoeia. Young leaves, before the plant has flowered, or mature leaves, later in fall and well after flowering, can be used as both raw and as cooked greens. Flowers and flowerbuds are edible but you must pick off the green sepals, which are quite bitter. The flowers can be eaten raw, sauteed in butter or even in fritters. Dandelion wine is made from the flowers.

Foraging is both a nature study and a way to get nutritious food touched only by your hand. It is exciting for young and old to identify, to harvest, and to bring home a plant that has value to yourself and your family. You can explore how to cook it together. We are in calamitous times but the one thing that I am grateful for is that spring has come to many affected

areas and we can forage, even in our own yards. One note of caution, do not use weed killer in your yard or forage where you believe some has been put down. Respect private property. If you are sensitive to bees, use your sense and do not go near flowering plants. Use a trowel to pick the entire plant by the root rather than try to pick the leaves outdoors. Dandelions are familiar to most of us but check out resources if you have any doubts. Beyond the distinctive lion’s tooth leaves remember the flower stalk is leafless, hollow and with a milky latex.

There are many books and websites on the subject. I mentioned a few and [www.wildmanstevebrill.com](http://www.wildmanstevebrill.com) is a start. A good field guide is *Edible Wild Plants, Eastern/Central North America* (Peterson Field Guides).



## Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Silver Bay

Carl Blumenthal  
Brooklyn Meeting

for Joan Malin

Dockside,  
in our wooden rocking chairs,  
we face the opposite shore  
where hills of white pine and red  
oak rise  
like high-backed benches.  
Herring gulls careen,  
ministers of wind and water.  
Clouds flee as if sinners on the lam.  
And the lake is as calm as  
babies sleeping and drooling.

Yet,  
in the sunburnt ball field behind us,  
Canadian geese face off against the  
hometown gulls  
like Hicksites invading the  
Orthodox stronghold  
in old-time Philadelphia.  
And we,  
now united,  
await the second coming—  
of the young Friend who returns  
those back-breaking chairs  
to storage.

## Thanksgiving

Liseli Haines

Mohawk Valley Meeting

The spring bubbles up out of the ground from a rock ledge behind my house. It is quiet, and beautiful. Lush and green in the summer, white snow melting into a pool of green watercress in the winter. I hear the songs of birds and the water running in the nearby stream. I watch the clouds overhead, listen to the wind as it bends the cedars and whispers through their boughs. A place to feel calm and peaceful. A place full of gratitude. But I don’t always feel that way when I get there. The pressure of life and relationships and the state of the world weigh down on me. So I go to the spring, especially when I feel that weight, and sit to see and speak aloud words of gratitude for all that is around me.

Many religions see the importance of gratitude. I remember words of Thanksgiving from my childhood, but they had little meaning to me then. Ten years ago, I learned the Haudenosaunee “Thanksgiving Address” during a Wilderness Awareness course and it set me on a path that has changed my life.

Though it is often known as the “Thanksgiving address” The Haudenosaunee call it the “Words That Come Before All Else” and open and close every gathering with it. At each gathering for business or pleasure, the people are reminded of all the things in this world that they are thankful for; the people, water, plants and animals, stars and winds, sun and moon in an oration that could last 15 minutes or several hours. Then all present “bring their minds together” and agree that these are the things that are most important to them in life. They respond “Yes,” yes we agree, these are the most important things. Haudenosaunee consensus decision making springs from that basis. Their business and spiritual practice cannot be separated.

Being grateful reminds us of “enough.” These are the things that provide life, health and even joy. Everything else is extra; everything else is luxury. What more do we need than the music of the birds, the songs of the stars on a dark night, the food that grows from the

earth, our tree built homes and the companions on this journey who walk beside us?

We don’t deny all the tragedies of daily life in this world. But when we focus on the death and destruction, we sap our energy, feel despair and hopelessness. By noticing what we are grateful for, we begin to shift the focus of our minds. We see more of the good that is going on around us. We feel joy and can be energized to make changes. Starting every day with remembering what we are thankful for; the water coming out of the tap, the smell of breakfast cooking, the rain that waters the plants, the words of a friend, even the car that seamlessly starts and takes us to where we need to go. There are so many things to be thankful for.

What would the world be like if we all could begin our day with these words, setting our intention for mutual respect, joy in existence and the idea of enough?

If you are interested you can find the words in the *Thanksgiving Address Booklet* by David Kanawahenton Benedict.

Excerpt from

## Where is the “Quaker” in 21st Century “Quaker Schools”?

Twelve Ways for Friends Schools to Reclaim Quaker Education

John Scardina

Purchase Friends Meeting

I am worried about Quaker education today. Might our Friends schools have become too comfortable in the elitist world of independent education as they strive to survive financially in the 21st century? Can we be true to our tradition of a “guarded education” and still attract families to our communities?

...I worry that being a “good independent school based upon Quaker values”—which is my unfortunate appraisal of many Friends schools today—is not really what we ought to be doing.

Read the rest of this article online at [nyym.org/quaker-schools-2020](http://nyym.org/quaker-schools-2020)



## Welcome to Summer Sessions

*continued from page 1*

they may be, asking all to consider participation in offered events by computer, as you are led. This is a welcome opportunity for our 325th anniversary annual gathering. We plan to consider how to retain these outreach opportunities for everyone for our future gatherings. We are aware that there are some Friends who do not have computer access and we will advise them by post if we know their names and addresses. There are not many that we currently know of. We ask that the yearly meeting office be advised of any not on our list so that we can reach them: email [office@nyym.org](mailto:office@nyym.org) or call 212-673-5750.

Because the time constraints of the week at Silver Bay no longer exist, we have extended summer sessions activities to two weeks, trying to keep in mind the various time limitations of Friends at home. Each individual will have the opportunity to select which business or other gatherings are of interest so that you can participate as time allows you. Some business meetings, for example, are afternoon, some evening, some weekend, to accommodate as many Friends as possible. We will try to make agenda items known in advance if they are provided to the clerk beforehand.

In this troubled time, we need to be aware what blessings we have at the same time that we hold in our hearts all those who are suffering for whatever cause. There may be many among us who are suffering from the pandemic, from a sudden loss of income, from the toxic political situation, and from the longstanding and continuing problem of chronic mistreatment of people of color. Some of us may be in a position to offer succor to others who may be in need, and all of us can stand up for human rights for all. We hold these concerns close in our hearts and continue to labor together as Quakers do, to make a better world for all people, however we are able.

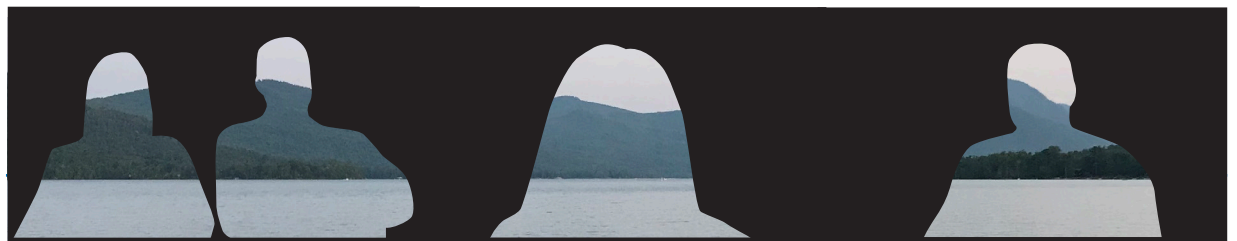
We will keep you posted as plans for our 325th annual Summer Sessions become clearer. Let us balance our labor to relieve suffering with the joy of laboring together to be a beloved and caring community.

Jeffrey Aaron, Clerk, NYYM



### At virtual Summer Sessions, you can:

- Start your day with Community Worship for all ages, with a song or story and a query to ponder with others
- Choose an interest group to attend—or lead one! Learn about issues you care about, meet other Friends, and share ideas
- Form a bond with other Friends in your worship sharing group
- Share a meal with other yearly meeting Friends, either while learning about a Quaker-related topic or just to socialize
- Watch talented Friends or share your own gifts at the Cafe Night talent show
- Join Friends for extended worship on a query during Meeting for Discernment
- Find out what's happening in the yearly meeting at meetings for worship with a concern for business
- Add to the discernment happening at business meeting and help decide the future course of the yearly meeting
- Spend time with other Quakers who share beliefs in justice, equality, and acceptance



## A Virtual Summer Sessions

### The Re-Imagining Summer Sessions Task Group

For Summer Sessions this year, Friends are planning ways to recreate and nurture our 325 year old blessed community using 21st century technology and drawing on our Quaker traditions.

Summer Sessions will be spread over two weeks, from **Sunday, July 19 through Friday, July 31**. Planning has been the work of the Re-Imagining Summer Sessions Task Group (RISS). The work started with the agreement that the core of the yearly meeting's purpose is corporate worship. Out of that worship comes our leadings and our discernment on business. We recognize that as we sit together in waiting worship, Spirit is not limited by space or time or by technology.

It is certainly a disappointment for many Friends who look forward to that week in July where we gather to worship, discern, live, and play together in a beautiful natural setting. But there is a silver lining. This is an opportunity to welcome Friends to Summer Sessions who might not have come to Silver Bay because of travel, time, personal, or financial constraints. The task group has tried to make activities as accessible to as many as possible. Some households do not have internet access. Those Friends can participate by phone, and we are planning to mail information to those who need it and to provide a way for them to respond. We are aware that some Friends may be working, either from home or on site, and not be able to take time off, so we are varying the times of day when activities are held. We cannot assume that internet-capable households have more than one device that is Zoom capable, so we were careful not to schedule simultaneous activities that might present a conflict. Many Friends experience 'Zoom fatigue.' So, the task group designed a Summer Sessions

schedule that is spread over two weeks and that will not demand intensive time commitments.

A Two-Week-at-a-Glance (TWAAG) schedule will be sent out by July 1. The Task Group is working on refining and defining the various activities to be scheduled. You can be sure that there will be Meeting for Discernment, meetings for business, Community Worship, intergenerational work and play, Bible Study, interest groups and unstructured time when Friends can see each other's faces and hear each other's voices. Friends who are so led will present activities and sessions for Junior Yearly Meeting and young adults.

This is an experiment. To paraphrase, we are inventing the wheel as we go, and there are ways that Friends can help make it happen and run smoothly. There is a need for folks who are comfortable with Zoom technology to help facilitate the different rooms and meetings we hope to offer. If you have those skills, please contact [tech-team@nyym.org](mailto:tech-team@nyym.org). If you know people in your meeting who don't know how to Zoom, perhaps you can call them and walk them through getting started, then practice with them. If you have an interest group idea, contact Martha Gurvich at [interest-groups@nyym.org](mailto:interest-groups@nyym.org). Ellie Rosenberg and Dawn Pozzi ([jym@nyym.org](mailto:jym@nyym.org)) welcome ideas for presentations to the different age groups.

The RISS Task Group is looking forward to this adventure. We are all learning as we go, and will forgive each other (and the technology) when things don't go just as planned. Keep a look out for more communication from the YM office as plans develop and gel.

In loving friendship,  
The Re-Imagining Summer Sessions Task Group  
*Jeffrey Aaron, Marissa Badgley, Chad Gilmartin, Adria Gulizia, Martha Gurvich, Lu Harper, Elaine Learnard, Steve Mohlke, Dawn Pozzi, Cai Quirk, Rebekah Rice, Ellie Rosenberg, Jennifer Swann, and additional Friends who have provided advice and support as they were able*



**Registration and More**

Registration for Summer Sessions will open soon. You will be able to choose what events you'd like to join, including worship sharing groups

and interest groups, when you register. Summer Sessions is Pay as Led. For the most up to date information and a link to registration, please visit the Summer Sessions 2020 website, below.

**Volunteer!**

Have knowledge to share or an activity to lead? Consider **leading an Interest Group**. Email Martha Gurwich at [interest-groups@nny.org](mailto:interest-groups@nny.org)

**Tech-savvy** or willing to learn? Volunteers are needed to help run Zoom meetings. Email [tech-team@nny.org](mailto:tech-team@nny.org)

Want to **share your gifts** by giving a presentation or leading an activity with **young people**? Email [jym@nny.org](mailto:jym@nny.org).



**[nny.org/summer-sessions-2020](http://nny.org/summer-sessions-2020)**

**Ice Cream, Anybody?**

At New York Yearly Meeting Summer Sessions, many Friends gather over ice cream, laughing and talking and sharing news. Will you join us for an ice cream, please?

Start by coloring your ice cream sundae. Include your favorite flavors, and add some toppings! You can do this any way you want: simple or complicated, with fancy art materials or just a pen.

Then, on the lines, write a letter to all of the Friends of New York Yearly Meeting. If you were sitting together having ice cream today, what would you say?

We will gather everybody's ice cream sundaes on the yearly meeting website. Scan yours (or take a photo) and send it to [communications@nny.org](mailto:communications@nny.org). You're also encouraged to post it on social media—use [#nny2020summer](https://twitter.com/nny2020summer).

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

