

# New York Yearly Meeting Religious Society of Friends

## InfoShare

Volume 1

October 2002

Number

Editor, Paul Busby, paul@nyym.org

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### Upholding Action for Peace in Worship Spiritual Nurturance as a Context for Witness

The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most common form, its innate violence. To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender oneself to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything is to succumb to violence. More than that it is cooperation in violence. The frenzy of the activist neutralizes her work for peace. It destroys his own inner capacity for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of her/his own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom, which makes work fruitful.

*Thomas Merton*

The spirit of war has captured our nation. Friends, as individuals and as corporate bodies, can be tempted by this spirit. The first temptation is described by Thomas Merton as the frenzy of activism. The second temptation is to succumb to the spirit of war by denigrating those who see no alternative to war. We will know we have succumbed if Friends describe the Bush administration using the same absolutist, hopeless terms that the administration uses to describe Saddam Hussein. The third temptation is simply to oppose the war. Our testimony is not only that war is wrong, but more importantly, that there is power available that takes away the occasion of war. Our Yearly Meeting minute is entitled the Gospel of Peace. To preach that Gospel, we must study it in all its fullness, with our heads and with our hearts as well. To live in that Light and Power that takes away the occasion of war means taking time to open ourselves so that we can then do the rigorous work of loving a truth-telling as individuals and as meetings.

Farmington-Scipio Region is inviting its meetings to conduct the New York Yearly Meeting Spiritual Nurturance Program, not simply as a resource for individual spiritual development but as a support for discernment and action. The program involves three regional retreats and two local meetings per month over the course of nine months. One local meeting focuses on reading and discussion; the other focuses on mutual support and accountability for practice. Two, three, or more Friends from a local area are asked to attend the retreat together and to commit to the two meetings per month with each other at home.

The first retreat was held at Rochester Meeting, September 28, 2002. An alternative for that retreat was Buffalo Meeting's retreat at Finn's Inn October 11-12, to which Buffalo invited Friends from Fredonia, Orchard Park, and Collins. The second retreat was scheduled for

January but is being rescheduled for February 22, 2003, in order to bring Michael Green c North Carolina Yearly Meeting and the School of the Spirit as a resource. The third retreat scheduled for June 28, 2003.

The reading list and schedule for the twice-monthly sessions is available in the booklet distributed by NYYM Ministry & Counsel to each meeting in June 2001. A variant of the schedule, adapted for Farmington-Scipio, and the agenda for the first retreat are available e-mailing or writing Karen Reixach kreixach@prodigy.net, 1183 Park Avenue, Rochester, 14610.

### **New Brunswick Meeting Peace Activities**

New Brunswick Monthly Meeting has been actively working for peace since September 11, 2001. We have held special meetings for worship to care for and listen to each other's concerns about terrorism. We have attended CCCO (Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors) meetings to get information about the draft. We have organized and maintained weekly vigils every Sunday since September 11, 2001. Initially these vigils were inter-faith but currently they are attended by Quakers only (others have dropped out but we have not). We have attended meetings for peace held by NYYM and are keeping each other informed via various email correspondences. Individuals have contacted senators and legislators expressing our views. As part of an inter-faith ad hoc organization, we have met with local people of many faiths and in their houses of worship, including Jewish people, Muslims, other Christians, and secular humanists.

I only wish that all our activities would be having a demonstrable impact on the national level, but we are disappointed at the way the political arena is headed.

*Peace to y  
Robin Go*

### **Non-Quakers Join Poughkeepsie Peace Vigils**

Following up on a suggestion made at the Oakwood gathering, Poughkeepsie Meeting has now had four peace vigils on the meeting-house lawn, facing Hooker Avenue, a main thoroughfare. The first vigil was September 11, 2002, the others on September 24, October 2, and October 9. Another is planned for Wednesday, October 16, from 4:30 to 6:00. The first vigil had 15 participants, the second 26, the third 17, and the fourth 23. Eight vigilers had had no previous contact with the Meeting, and a few of these were passersby who joined us.

# Open the Door, Light the Light Inreach, Outreach, and Local Meeting Advancement

An Inter-Yearly Meeting Workshop

Cosponsored by  
Friends General Conference Advancement & Outreach Committee  
New York Yearly Meeting Advancement Committee

November 22–24, 2002  
Powell House

Explore connections between spiritual life, community, communication, witness, and meeting growth while also learning nuts and bolts advancement techniques. Learn how to work with your meeting to create a sound advancement plan. Topics include:

- Success Stories—What paths to growth have other meetings found?
- Communication, Community, Spiritual Vitality—Why are these aspects of meeting life central to advancement?
- Witness—In what ways can social witness play a role in meeting growth?
- Nitty Gritty—How do seemingly routine aspects of meeting life affect visitors?
- Visibility and Outreach—What are some of the ways a meeting can gain visibility on a limited budget? How can Friends best evaluate outreach efforts?
- Diversity—How can meetings make themselves more welcoming to Friends of Color and to seekers who are People of Color? What other kinds of diversity can Friends promote?
- Advancement Plans—What are they and how do we get there?

**Facilitators:** Deborah Haines, clerk, FGC Advancement & Outreach Committee and Jane Berger, clerk, NYYM Advancement Committee. Deborah and Jane have been traveling with a concern for outreach, offering workshops at monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings, and at the FGC gathering.

**Cost:** \$160 adults, \$80 children (2–17), \$40 infants. Childcare available with at least 3 weeks' advance notice. For information and registration, call or write Powell House, 524 Hall Rd., Old Chatham NY 12136; 518- 794-8811; fax: 518- 794-8815; [info@powellhouse.org](mailto:info@powellhouse.org). Register online at [www.powellhouse.org](http://www.powellhouse.org). Powell House is about minutes from Hudson, N.Y., Amtrak station, and a little farther from the Albany airport and the Albany Amtrak station. With advance notice rides can be arranged.

## Peace Witness in a Time of Crisis

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Section of the Americas has called a special conference to consider Friends' responses to the growing dangers of global war and terrorism. The conference, entitled Peace Witness in a Time of Crisis: A Friends' Consultation, will be held at Guilford College in Greensboro, N.C., January 17-20, 2003, t

weekend of the Martin Luther King holiday.

Participation in the conference will be limited to 200 people, with at least 50 to be young Friends age 18-30. All yearly meetings have been asked to name two or three persons to attend. In addition, each yearly meeting has been asked to sponsor young Friends who will attend. After October 1, the remaining places will be opened up to all Friends.

Information: FWCC Section of the Americas, 1506 Race St., Philadelphia PA 19102; 215-241-7250; (215) 241-7285 (fax); [fwccpeace@fwcc.quaker.org](mailto:fwccpeace@fwcc.quaker.org).

A Web site is planned to enable this to be a virtual conference. Financial contributions are sought to provide scholarship assistance.

## **A call to Quaker Women**

Endorsed by the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Women's Gathering Group

Endorsed by the New York Yearly Meeting Women's Concerns Committee

As Quaker women we are being called. We are being called to action. We are being called to action on behalf of the testimonies of equality and peace.

We believe that if we continue to rely on violence to resolve differences it is only a matter of time before we will ignite global catastrophe and ultimate destruction. We believe that we have a moral obligation to intervene here and now.

We believe that as human beings we already possess the ability to create a global culture of peace and nonviolence. What we lack is the will to do it. It is time for human beings everywhere to commit themselves to bring into being cultures of peace. We draw upon the first declaration of the Quaker peace testimony of 1660, "We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretense whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the whole world."

We believe there is a direct connection between the current culture of violence in the U.S. and elsewhere and the global oppression of women. We recognize that a commitment to peace requires us to acknowledge that women and children are the majority of victims of these wars. We believe that genuine peace requires radical equality. We commit ourselves to establishing a global culture of peace and requiring an end to the global oppression of women.

In making this commitment, we draw on the Quaker testimony of equality. We believe that women have a crucial role to play at this moment in human history. If humankind, on the brink of unthinkable world catastrophe, is to reverse the move toward increasing violence, revolutionary transformation must occur. We, women and men, have a responsibility to be instrumental in bringing about this transformation from a culture of war to a culture of peace and radical equality.

We call upon Quaker women and like-minded women across the United States to gather

on Sunday, October 20, 2002, in a nonviolent vigil at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., the beginning of United Nations International Disarmament Week.

Spiritual preparation, nonviolence training, and community-building will be offered, even of October 19 and the morning of the 20th. Vigiling and/or lobbying at the U.S. Capitol on Monday, October 21 will be possible. Hospitality is available if requested.

Gather beginning 7 P.M. October 19 or beginning 9 A.M. on October 20. Details from Judi Fetterly (New York Yearly Meeting), [jf@albany.edu](mailto:jf@albany.edu), 518-475-1773; Kaki Sjogren (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting), [kakisj@aol.com](mailto:kakisj@aol.com), 215-423-4115; Gail Newbold (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting), [gnewbold@kennett.net](mailto:gnewbold@kennett.net), 610-869-3455; J. E. McNeil (Baltimore Yearly Meeting), [jmcnrick@yahoo.com](mailto:jmcnrick@yahoo.com), 202-244-0594.

## **Connecticut Friends School's PoHo Retreat**

Connecticut Friends School held their annual all-school field trip to Powell House September 25–27. Powell House is a Quaker retreat and conference center in rural Columbia County, N.Y. Close to 90 students, teachers, staff, and parent chaperons participated in the three-day event that launches each new school year.

The head of school, Kim Tsochanos, explains that although there are pockets of academic pursuits, “the trip is as much about the ‘invisibles’ of our curriculum—the retreat contributes to the social, emotional, and spiritual growth of everyone who joins us on the journey. Given the importance of field trips to Friends philosophy and curriculum, we treat these field trips as integral components to learning, not as optional extracurricular activities.

“At Powell House, as on all our field trips, we get to be with one another beyond the confines of the school environment,” said Tsochanos. “All ages of children get to work, play, eat, and rest together in ways that develop deep friendships and give a taste of extended family that some of us may otherwise never experience. We are all given the opportunity to enhance and strengthen our feelings of community in a safe environment.

“Field trips also foster in students the desire to expand their knowledge about the world and the other people in it. Particularly at this time in history when so much is changing, the Connecticut Friends School feels it is appropriate for children to be comfortable with and enjoy that which is new and unusual. Whether it is food, speech mannerisms, concepts, or physical environments, it is important that children meet ‘newness’ with the spirit of opportunity, curiosity, and joy about the diversity of our planet.”

For further information about Connecticut Friends School, contact Judy Meikle Head of Admissions, 203-762-9860, or visit our Web site, [www.ctfriendsschool.org](http://www.ctfriendsschool.org)

*Sean Higgins, communications & technology coordinator, Connecticut Friends School*

## **Meeting for Worship at Quaker House**

A meeting for worship will be held at Quaker House, 247 E. 48th St. in Manhattan, Wednesday, October 23, in support of the work of Friends at the United Nations. This worship will be under the care of Ministry and Counsel of Morningside Meeting. Refreshments will be served at 5:00 P.M., and worship will be from 5:30 to 6:30.

## **George Fox's Legacy: Friends for 350 Years October 11–12, 2002, at Swarthmore College**

An international conference on the impact of George Fox and his thought on the Society Friends, sponsored by the Friends Historical Association and Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, will be held at Swarthmore October 11–12, 2002. On the occasion the 350th anniversary of the Religious Society of Friends, this meeting will bring together scholars from the United States and Great Britain. Topics include the ideas and influence George Fox, James Naylor, Isaac Penington, and William Penn; the Barbados Declaration the Hicksite-Orthodox Separation and the Holiness Movement in the 19th century; Liber and Evangelical Friends in the 20th century; Quakers and politics; Quaker education; the prophetic voice of Quaker women; and Perfectionism.

There will be a modest registration fee (waived for students) and meals will be available on the Swarthmore College Campus. Preregistration is required. For information and registration forms, write to Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, 500 College Ave., Swarthmore, PA 19081-1399, attention Charlotte Blandford; or e-mail [cblandf1@swarthmore.edu](mailto:cblandf1@swarthmore.edu) or call 610-328-8498. Information is also available on Friends Historical Library Web site, <http://www.swarthmore.edu/Library/friends>.

## **Quaker Meetinghouse Exhibit in Philadelphia**

Silent Witness: Quaker Meeting Houses in the Delaware Valley, 1695 to the Present is on view through December 31, 2002, at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, 219 S. 6th St. The exhibit displays the results of the Historic American Building Survey of the National Park Service, which traced the evolution of regional Quaker meetinghouse design as shown by meetinghouses in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Hours are 9:00 a.m to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

For further information call 215-241-7241 or visit [www.quakerinfo.org](http://www.quakerinfo.org). A catalog of the exhibit can be obtained from the Friends General Conference Bookstore (215) 561-1700; [www.quakerbooks.org](http://www.quakerbooks.org).