

**New York Yearly Meeting  
Religious Society of Friends**

***InfoShare***

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**Interest and Study Group Proposals for Silver Bay**

Proposals for interest/study groups for NYYM 2005 should be submitted by **February 21, 2005**. Individuals and committees wishing to offer interest groups or study groups during Yearly Meeting sessions 2005 must submit their proposals to one of the clerks of the four coordinating committees or to the Yearly Meeting office by February 21, 2005. The clerks are: Ministry and Counsel, Ann Davidson and Beatrice Beguin; General Services, Paula McClure; Nurture, Melanie-Claire Mallison; Witness, Anita Paul. Their contact information is in the Yearbook.

Interest/study groups are educational and spiritual opportunities. They will be offered in the afternoons to enable JYM staff and young Friends to participate. The May Spark will include a listing and brief descriptions of the offerings. F/friends may register for individual study groups and an interest group when they complete their Yearly Meeting registrations.

An interest group is a single educational opportunity to inform attendees about a topic or activity of importance to Friends. The time allotted is approximately one hour. A study group is an opportunity for corporate worship and exploration for spiritual growth. The time allotted will be approximately four hours spaced over three days.

- What is the application process? Write a description, of any length, about your topic, identifying whether you wish to offer an interest group or a study group. Anticipate that F/friends from age 10 through adult will be encouraged to participate, and plan accordingly.
- Provide an outline or lesson plan in the proposal. Indicate if there is a maximum number of attendees you can accommodate.
- Name the facilitator(s) and contact persons who will be working with you.
- Write an additional 50-word description of the program for reprinting in

Spark. Do not exceed 50 words. (Descriptions longer than 50 words may be edited).

- Forward the proposal to the appropriate coordinating committee clerk or the NYYM office, [office@nyym.org](mailto:office@nyym.org) or 15 Rutherford Place, New York NY 10003, no later than 2/21/05.
- If your proposal has been accepted you will be notified in April 2004. If you have any further questions contact: Dee Duckworth, coordinator of Study and Interest Groups, at [dduck.doc@gmail.com](mailto:dduck.doc@gmail.com) or Claire Simon, clerk of Sessions, at [quakerartist@earthlink.net](mailto:quakerartist@earthlink.net). Dee Duckworth's and Claire Simon's telephone numbers and addresses are in the *Yearbook*.
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### **Opening for Burtt House Resident**

The Burtt House will have one vacancy for a resident starting **Feb. 11, 2005**, and may have a second vacancy opening in the next couple of months.

The Burtt House is a beautiful old house situated near an overlook by Ithaca Falls, near the Cornell campus in Ithaca, N.Y. The downstairs is often used as a meeting place for Friends' committee meetings and other functions and includes a living room with a large fireplace, a dining room, a meditation room, a kitchen, and a piano. Residents may use the downstairs in a manner respectful and welcoming of Friends' activities there.

The upstairs, reserved for the use of residents and short-term guests, includes three partially furnished bedrooms, two sojourner rooms, a shared bathroom, and a common room with comfortable chairs, sofa, TV, VCR, and library. There is a large attic for storage, and laundry facilities in the basement. There is a wireless computer network with broadband Internet access in the house for the use of residents.

Rents are low, especially for being so close to the Cornell campus, and include utilities (except cable TV and long distance telephone) and off-street parking.

If you are interested or if you have any questions or comments, please contact Mike Pitzrick, Friend in residence, 607-273-5421.

### **Friends Seminary Peace Week Event**

Friends Seminary will celebrate its first annual Peace Week **Feb. 14–18, 2005**. One special evening event that is free and open to the public is a panel discussion, "Perspectives on Peace: The Academic, the Activist, and the Diplomat," which will take place on Thursday evening, February 17, at 7:00 P.M., in the Fifteenth Street Meetinghouse. The panel will feature Jessica Tuchman Mathews, president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Susan Sarandon, actor and activist; and Pierre Schori, past Swedish ambassador to the UN and currently on the faculty of Adelphi University. A reception will begin the evening at 6:15 in the Common Room. We hope that you will be able to attend and bring other interested guests. —*Bo Lauder, principal, Friends Seminary*

### **Executive Director Sought for Sierra Friends Center**

Sierra Friends Center, a Quaker educational community, seeks an executive director to begin July 1, 2005. Sierra Friends Center is on a 230-acre rural campus in the Sierra Nevada foothills in northern California. This beautiful site is the home of diversified programs, including the Woolman Semester, summer youth camps, and residential courses. The campus is within a 1-hour drive from Sacramento, 2.5 hours from the San Francisco Bay Area.

We are seeking candidates with vision who can exemplify the principles and values of Quaker process and spiritual leadership, have strong administrative and fundraising skills, and have effective communication skills and strong staff-development and leadership skills.

The deadline for completed applications is **Feb. 28, 2005**. For application packet please send résumé and cover letter to Sue Torrey, Executive Director Search Committee, 5393 Barrenda Ave. Unit A, Atascadero CA 93422; 805-466-9046; [sjtorrey@charter.netphone](mailto:sjtorrey@charter.netphone).

### **Launching Spiritual Biography: Pendle Hill Course**

Janet Carter of Bull's Head-Oswego Meeting and Helen Horn, Quaker poet and activist, will lead a five-day course, Launching Spiritual Autobiography, at Pendle Hill, **Feb. 27–March 4, 2005**. The cost is \$630/double room and \$680/single room. There are scholarships to match what a meeting or church

can contribute. For information visit [http://www.pendlehill.org/2004-2005\\_weeklong\\_course\\_descriptions.htm#Launching%20Your%20Spiritual%20Autobiography](http://www.pendlehill.org/2004-2005_weeklong_course_descriptions.htm#Launching%20Your%20Spiritual%20Autobiography) or call the registrar, Steve Jackson, 800-742-3150, ext.142, or e-mail [steve@pendlehill.org](mailto:steve@pendlehill.org).

I was privileged to be a participant in Janet and Helen's workshop last summer at the FGC Gathering and found it to be a wonderful entrée to a positive exploration of the past and a spiritually uplifting experience. —*Claire Cafaro, Saratoga Meeting*

### Selective Service and GI Rights Trainings

Save the Dates!

Saturday, **March 12**, 9:30–4:30: Information & Training session on Selective Service. What are your rights and responsibilities? What about the possibility of a draft being reinstated? Is conscientious objector status an option? Open to parents, teenagers, and anyone interested in counseling youngsters about their options.

Sunday, **March 13**, 10:30–4:30: Training session for those interested in volunteering as counselors on the GI Rights Hotline. Learn about assisting members of the military or potential enlistees in understanding their rights. Counselors are trained to speak with callers seeking information about registration, discharges, conscientious objector status, and other issues.

Sessions will be held at: 15 Rutherford Pl., New York, NY. For registration information contact: Naomi Paz Greenberg, [naomipaz@nyc.rr.com](mailto:naomipaz@nyc.rr.com); 718-261-9382.

### QUNO Summer School

The annual Quaker United Nations Summer School in Geneva, Switzerland, provides an opportunity for twenty five young people between 20 and 26 years of age to meet together to study the work of the United Nations at first hand as seen through the programs of QUNO, the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva. The 2005 school session will take place June 26 to July 8.

QUNO works on disarmament and peace, human rights and refugees, and trade and development. During summer school there will be talks by staff of

the UN, nongovernmental organizations, and diplomatic missions, as well as informal discussion sessions and visits to the UN itself.

The participation fee for the summer school is 360 euros, which goes toward the costs of accommodation, program, and meals. Travel costs to Geneva and spending money are not included. No formal qualifications are necessary. However an active interest in international affairs is needed, as well as the desire to share understanding with others.

Application forms are available from [www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk) or from Helen Bradford, Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QUNSS), Friends House, 173-177 Euston Rd., London, NW1 2BJ, UK; [helenb@quaker.org.uk](mailto:helenb@quaker.org.uk). Closing date for receipt of applications is **March 16, 2005** —*Helen Bradford*

### **Many Leadings, One Calling**

Long Island Quarterly Meeting will host Christopher Sammond for a day-long retreat at Westbury Meeting on Sat. **March 19**. The focus is "Many Leadings, One Calling." For information, please call Irene Goodman, 631-271-4672.

### **April Representative Meeting**

Spring Representative Meeting will be held at Oakwood Friends School in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., **April 2–3, 2005**. Details will be in March *Spark*

### **Nurture Coordinating Committee Mini-Retreat**

Nurture Coordinating Committee has arranged for a mini-retreat at Oakwood Friends School the day before April Representative Meeting; Friday, **April 1**, from 7–9 P.M. The topic will be the recommendations from the Committee on Committees (ConC) specific to the Nurture Section, which are online at <http://www.nyym.org/committees/ss/concjuly03final.html#nurture> and will be reprinted in March *Spark*.

While all Nurture Section committee members are especially encouraged to attend, anyone who would like to be included in the discussion is most welcome to join us. (I'm also planning to bring chocolate truffle as an added incentive!)

I look forward to a lively and thoughtful consideration of the ConC's hard work.

Please note that laying down the section is not the only issue to be considered—we must examine the ramifications and possibilities of all five recommendations.

Yours in the promise of renewal, *Melanie-Claire Mallison, clerk, Nurture Coordinating Committee*

### **AFSC Summer Youth Project**

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is seeking motivated volunteers for the 2005 Mexico Summer Project Semilleros de Futuros (Sowing Futures), June 26–Aug. 15, 2005. Semilleros de Futuros will provide a safe place where youth from the Americas, Europe, and Mexico can work together on community projects, share from their diverse cultures and experiences, and learn ways to address the political, social, ecological, and economic challenges of their present and their future.

This is an intensive, challenging experience for mature young persons concerned about justice and creative solutions to the challenges of building sustainable communities in the midst of an economic and ecological crisis. Participants are 18–26 years old and able to converse comfortably in Spanish, the language of the project at all times.

Participants pay the project fee of \$1,250, which covers food, lodging, and project materials. Participants are also responsible for travel to and from Mexico City, incidental expenses, and travel to and from Xilitla (\$20). A nonrefundable registration fee of \$150 is due upon acceptance and the remainder by May 16, 2005. Scholarships are available for low-income applicants.

Application deadline for regular applicants: March 18, 2005. Notice will be given by **April 8, 2005**. We will create a waiting list for the participants who did not make the first cut, and they will be contacted as space becomes available.

For additional information and an application please visit our Web site at [www.afsc.org/latinamerica/int/mexicosummer.htm](http://www.afsc.org/latinamerica/int/mexicosummer.htm) or contact Christina Repoley, recruitment coordinator, AFSC Mexico Summer Project, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia PA 19102; 215-241-7295, fax 251-241-7026; [mexicosummer@afsc.org](mailto:mexicosummer@afsc.org).

**New Mailing Address for Morningside**

Morningside Monthly Meeting continues to meet Sundays at 11:00 A.M. at Riverside Church, 10th or 4th floor, 91 Claremont St. (120th St. and Riverside Dr.), New York NY 10027. (Check at the information desk at the Claremont Ave. entrance for the exact room.) Visitors welcome! The meeting now has a new address for postal mail: Morningside Monthly Meeting (Quakers), The Riverside Church, 490 Riverside Dr., New York NY 10027.

### **Saratoga Quaker in MLK Celebration**

The Saratoga Peace Alliance, led by Lori Dawson of Saratoga Monthly Meeting, held a community-wide effort in celebration of Martin Luther King Day, Jan. 17, with participation by the NAACP, the Green Party, Film Forum, and city of Saratoga Springs. The film *Citizen King* was shown, and music, food, and speeches were featured at the library. An editorial in the town paper, the *Saratogian*, endorsed the idea and encouraged wide participation. —*Claire Cafaro, Saratoga Monthly Meeting*

### **Children Becoming Peacemakers**

The Nurture Coordinating Committee of New York Yearly Meeting is distributing a kit that includes various materials designed to help the Yearly Meeting begin a discussion around the question: **How can we support our children in becoming peacemakers in a violent society?**

Here are the contents of the kit:

*How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk* by Faber and Mazlich. The methods presented in this book can help offset the influence of popular culture.

*Let's Talk about Living in a World with Violence* gives a method for school-aged children to come to some independent understanding of why violence exists.

Creative Response to Conflict, Inc. has contributed materials on bullying and the catalogue of the workshops they offer.

Research material and articles relating to attention, consumerism, and violence.

### **From Lion and Lamb Project:**

*Toys for Peace: Violent Toy Trade-ins*—instruction manual.

Parents Action Kit: Three folders, each containing a section on What You Should Know and What You Can Do.

Videotape showing segments of video games available to children, though some are rated as adult.

Again, these items are meant to stimulate the exchange of information and ideas in your meetings, bringing the wealth of our religious experience and the depth of our concern for our children to the forefront.

We hope you find these materials useful, and we may be sending additional materials as we find items we think pertain to the discussion. Feel free to contact Mary Rothschild, creator of this packet, at [mary@ariadnes.net](mailto:mary@ariadnes.net) or me if you need more information: Melanie-Claire Mallison clerk, Nurture Coordinating Committee, 607-272-1761; [mallison@cnf.cornell.edu](mailto:mallison@cnf.cornell.edu)

(A fuller description of the kits will be in the March 2005 *Spark*.)

### **On Tsunami Relief and Right Sharing**

If ever God calls us to right sharing, that time is now.

Quakers are responding with heart and hand. Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR) is implementing a two-part response to the tsunami-related disaster in south India. First, funds will be provided immediately to help past RSWR partners who are on the coast and have been directly affected by the tsunami. Second, funds will be provided to support development after the work of immediate relief and clean-up slows. This work will be very similar to RSWR's regular support of income-generating projects, with those persons affected by the tsunami given particular consideration. The partnership projects of RSWR, which for many years have focused on the Tamil Nadu state of India, will become all the more important as the people of that distressed region rebuild their communities. Watch the Right Sharing of World Resources Web site ([www.rswr.org](http://www.rswr.org)) for periodic updates. —*Phil Harnden, RSWR Committee*

### **FGC Central Committee Minute on LGBTQ Friends**

The Central Committee of Friends General Conference met for its annual business sessions in Tenth Month of 2004 in New Windsor, Maryland. Over 150 Friends from more than sixteen yearly meetings and regional groups

gathered to worship and attend to the work of FGC. During the evening session of 22 Tenth Month, we considered the following minute, which had been seasoned and brought forth to us from Executive Committee:

Our experience has been that spiritual gifts are not distributed with regard to sexual orientation or gender identity. Our experience has been that our Gatherings and Central Committee work have been immeasurably enriched over the years by the full participation and Spirit-guided leadership of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer Friends. We will never go back to silencing those voices or suppressing those gifts. Our experience confirms that we are all equal before God, as God made us, and we feel blessed to be engaged in the work of FGC together.

As we heard this minute, we sensed God at work in our midst. We felt that truth and love had met, and we in turn were embraced by both. Out of deep worship, Friends spoke movingly of how they were tendered, liberated, and uplifted by this message of affirmation. Like the apostles at Pentecost, we felt filled with the Holy Spirit and emboldened to proclaim the good news: God's love is abundant; God's sharing of spiritual gifts is unrestricted. We united in this minute with joy.

We invite Friends to consider and share back with us their own experience. We invite Friends to dwell deep, to "know one another in that which is eternal," to consider the words of this minute and epistle, and to be open to the presence and guidance of the same Spirit who led us to this blessed experience.

In the Spirit, —*Marian Beane, presiding clerk, FGC Central Committee*

### **AFSC Calls for Immediate Withdrawal of Troops from Iraq**

The AFSC Board of Directors, gathered in worship in Philadelphia, adopted the following minute:

The Board of the American Friends Service Committee grieves at the ongoing and increasing deaths of Iraqis, Americans, and others in Iraq, including as many as 100,000 civilian deaths and many more maimed.

We believe that an immediate end to hostilities is essential to stem the carnage.

We are convinced that the presence of U.S. troops is a destabilizing force in the region and contributes to the increasing loss of life.

We are anguished by the damage and lasting scars we are causing to another generation of American soldiers who have been asked to serve in another war in a distant place for questionable ends.

Therefore, we urge the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops.

The AFSC statement on troop withdrawal is on the Web at <http://www.afsc.org/news/2004/iraq-troop-withdrawal.htm>, with a question-and-answer section at <http://www.afsc.org/iraq/guide/position-qa.htm>.

In addition, AFSC's Web site has a two-minute movie showing some of the human toll of the war and urging people to petition the president and Congress for withdrawal. See <http://www.afsc.org/iraq/movie.htm>.

### **AFSC Helps Freedom Seekers in Jail**

In the industrial district near the seaport in Elizabeth, New Jersey, up to 300 people from around the world exist in a converted warehouse, the largest detention center in the country. They wait for their fate to be decided by immigration judges, who will rule on whether they will be allowed to remain in the United States or be deported. Afghanistan, Iraq, Sierra Leone, China, Colombia, Indonesia, Algeria, Albania, Uganda, Rwanda, Sudan, Liberia—the war-torn countries of the world are all represented in this cross section of the world that is the Elizabeth Detention Center.

The vast majority of the detainees are seeking political asylum, claiming fear for their lives if they are sent back to their countries. Most of the individuals requested asylum upon their arrival at JFK, Newark, and La Guardia Airports. At the airports they were detained, shackled, and transported in vans to the warehouse where, living in uniforms without privacy or right to free counsel, they wait—sometimes years—while their claims are pending.

Seeking political asylum is no simple task. The detainee has the burden of proof to show the judge why he or she risks persecution if deported to their country of origin. Although they are incarcerated and facing deportation or even death, the U.S. government has no obligation to provide the detainees with counsel because they have not been charged with any criminal offense. The detainees

are allowed to secure their own legal representation, if they can afford private counsel or are fortunate enough to find pro bono counsel. A few organizations, such as the American Friends Service Committee, provide free legal services. Detainees are permitted to make free phone calls to these organizations. AFSC and other legal-service organizations give weekly Know-Your-Rights presentations at the detention center to every newly detained individual. These presentations serve to empower detainees with information about the legal procedures they face and with ideas how to secure pro bono counsel.

As an AFSC attorney, I prepare applications, obtain documents, and write descriptions of persecution experienced and feared. I role-play the asylum hearing in anticipation of difficult cross-examination, and I represent the individual before the judge.

It was through the rights presentations that I met Abdulai, an 18 year-old man from Sierra Leone, who was one of my first clients.

Abdulai had been surprised to learn that asylum seekers could be jailed upon arrival in the United States. Abdulai told me that when he first arrived at Newark International Airport, he was overjoyed because he had arrived in a safe country, far away from the brutal civil war in Sierra Leone. Unfortunately, Abdulai's joy at arriving in the U.S. immediately turned into confusion. Abdulai presented himself to the immigration officials at the airport with only his Sierra Leonean identity card as identification, explaining to the immigration officer that he had boarded the plane with a false passport. He was then handcuffed, strip-searched, and placed in the back of a white van, with his hands and feet chained. He found out the van's destination only upon its arrival at the Elizabeth Detention Center. At the detention center, he was again searched, ordered to take a shower, and given a uniform to wear. An officer then guided him to his dormitory in the detention center, where Abdulai saw many other men from all over the world. Abdulai told me that upon entering the dormitory: "Instantly I felt something different. I felt that I was now in a prison even though no one told me that."

Immigration officials have discretion to "parole" detainees, if they have community ties and a sponsor to provide them with a place to stay while their asylum cases are pending. However, even though Abdulai had several close relatives in New York willing to provide him lodging and financial and moral support, officials turned down his request for release. There is no appeal from a

denial of parole, and Abdulai had to remain in prison. After four months, Abdulai had his asylum hearing before a federal immigration judge. That same day, he was granted asylum and released. Since his release, Abdulai has spoken at the United Nations and before the New York State Legislature to advocate for immigrants. He plans to be a journalist.

Abdulai was lucky to have been in detention only four months. Another of my first clients, a young woman from Cameroon, spent 11 months before having her asylum hearing. Her hearing was repeatedly delayed due to immigration officials' failure to complete routine security checks. Immigration had also repeatedly denied her requests for parole. During the hearing, the judge found that she had been subjected to rape, torture, and horrendous abuse in her home country and granted her asylum.

Some of my clients spent more than one year in detention before being granted asylum and released. Indeed, out of 20 cases, my clients spent an average of seven months in detention. Several of them had relatives in the United States willing and able to provide them housing and support; yet they were obliged to remain in detention until the final adjudication of their cases. The detention center is run by the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), a private company that contracts with the U.S. government to run detention facilities. Under this system, each day of detention costs U.S. taxpayers approximately \$80 per person incarcerated.

New York University's Bellevue Hospital recently conducted a study at the Elizabeth Detention Center, on the effects of detention on the physical and psychological health of asylum seekers. The study concluded that the mental health of asylum seekers was extremely poor upon their arrival in the United States and worsened with detention, with evidence of high levels of anxiety, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder. The physical health of many of the study participants also worsened while in detention. Because there is no access to outdoor recreation, the detainees never benefit from fresh air or sunshine. My Cameroonian client lost 47 pounds during her 11-month stay in detention. One of my other clients described his physical and mental health by lamenting, "There is no peace inside here; everyone is so worried and anxious that I feel exhausted. Even if I walk from one end of the room to the other, I get tired." Upon being granted asylum five months later, he expressed that he finally had peace of mind to help cure his "asylum wounds." He indicated how

helpful it had been to his morale to have had counsel, as well as the moral support of his relatives and friends who visited him in detention. The very thought that there are people who care can make a huge difference to a detainee. Recently I had a client from Congo released from the detention center. The first thing he wanted to do upon gaining his freedom was to go to AFSC's Newark office and thank AFSC'S receptionist, Myrna. He said that whenever he had called AFSC from the detention center, Myrna's kind voice lifted him from despair and made him realize that there are people who want to help.

For further information, please contact: Marguerite Marty, 973-643-1924 or [mmarty@afsc.org](mailto:mmarty@afsc.org).

\*If you are interested in visiting a detainee at the Elizabeth Detention Center, please contact Suzie Marie Meta of First Friends (not Quaker), 908-965-0455.  
*Marguerite Marty, AFSC Detention Attorney, Newark, NJ*