

New York Yearly Meeting Religious Society of Friends

InfoShare

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Job Openings at FGC

Friends General Conference (FGC) expects to fill several positions by the end of 2006. All are full-time positions with excellent benefits.

Conference Associate beginning October 2006. Working closely with the conference coordinator and the Junior Gathering coordinator, this person supports the annual FGC Gathering and other smaller conferences. Application deadline 9/01/06

Major Gifts and Planned Giving Manager beginning January 2007. Duties in this new position include developing and implementing a planned-giving program, cultivating and soliciting major gifts and planned gifts, and assisting with major development campaigns. Travel approximately 50 percent of the time. Application deadline 10/01/06.

Youth Ministries Coordinator beginning January 2007. Working on FGC's exciting new Youth Ministries Program in close cooperation with a new committee balanced between youth/young adults (ages 16–30) and older Friends, the coordinator carries major responsibilities in providing appropriate programs and services to Friends and Friends' meetings. Application deadline 10/01/06.

Job descriptions are at www.fgcquaker.org/info/jobs.html. Send résumé & letter to General Secretary, FGC, 1216 Arch St. #2B, Philadelphia PA 19107, or Ellen Helmuth, ellenh@fgcquaker.org.

Internship at FOR Nonviolent Youth Collective

The Fellowship of Reconciliation seeks a Nonviolent Youth Collective intern to assist the Peacemaker Training Institute (PTI) program coordinator in developing a network of young activists through the youth task force, building on the PTI youth nonviolence training program as a vehicle for replacing racism, war, and poverty with justice and peace through nonviolence.

For further information see

www.forusa.org/programs/internships/YouthCollective.html.

Employment at Woolman Hill

Woolman Hill, a Quaker conference and retreat center in Deerfield, Mass., seeks an individual, couple, or family to serve as hosts (full-time residence and working 20–25 weekends a year required). Also looking for individuals to fill one or more of the following part-time duties: cleaning, maintenance, groundskeeping, cooking, office work, bookkeeping. Good people skills, versatility, and appreciation for spiritual and simple living desirable. Experience with Quakerism helpful. Salary, benefits, and hours negotiable. Review of applications to begin immediately and continue until positions are filled. Applicants should submit a letter of interest, résumé, and references to info@woolmanhill.org or 107 Keets Rd., Deerfield MA 01342. For more information, see www.woolmanhill.org, or contact Margaret Cooley or Mark Fraser, 413-774-3431; info@woolmanhill.org.

Eyes Wide Open Exhibit in N.Y. and N.J.

To reflect on the human cost of war to our local communities, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in the New York metropolitan region has developed N.Y. and N.J. versions of Eyes Wide Open, the widely acclaimed memorial to the casualties of the Iraq War. U.S. military from our area and Iraqi civilians killed in the war in Iraq are remembered in these regional versions of Eyes Wide Open.

The exhibit will be shown at the following places and times:

Buffalo—June 15, 10 A.M.–6 P.M. Bidwell Park, corner of Bidwell and Elmwood. Host: by Western New York Peace Center

Buffalo—June 16, 7 P.M.: Peace Has No Borders, A Festival of Resistance (Fundraising Event for the War Resisters Support Campaign), Kleinhans Music Hall. For more information visit www.peacehasnoborders.org. Hosts: Peace Has No Borders, Iraq Vets against the War, and the Western New York Peace Center

Rochester— June 17–18, 11 A.M.–8 P.M., Scio St. between Main St. and East Ave. in downtown Rochester

Hosts: Rochester Friends Meeting, First Unitarian Church of Rochester and the Rochester Area Mennonite Fellowship

Syracuse—June 20, noon–7 P.M., at Clinton Square. Host: Upper New York State Area AFSC Office

Troy—June 22, location to be announced. Host: Peace Action.

Albany— June 23, 8:30 A.M.–5:30 P.M., West Capital Park (rain: Albany Public Library, 161 Washington Ave.), Organized by Women against War, cosponsored by Albany Friends Meeting and Bethlehem Neighbors for Peace

New Paltz—June 24, 10 A.M.–4 P.M. Main St., downtown. Host: Women in Black of New Paltz.

Princeton—June 30, as part of “Peace is Patriotic” event. Host: Coalition for Peace Action

Princeton— July 1, Palmer Square. Host: Students for Peace

For more information please visit

www.afsc.org/nymetro/specialprojects/EyesWideOpenNYNJ.htm or contact Nicole Cousino, exhibit coordinator, 212-598-0957; cell 510-684-9892 or Ncousino@afsc.org.

Film and Events at Purchase MM

Purchase Meeting's Peace and Social Witness Committee will sponsor a showing of *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin* on Friday, June 16, at 7:30 P.M. at the Purchase meetinghouse. A light supper will be served at 7:00 P.M. Bayard Rustin was a mentor of Martin Luther King Jr. and influenced King in favor of nonviolence. The film is 83 minutes in length, and will be accompanied by popcorn. Childcare will be provided. All are welcome! Another film, to be selected, will be shown on Friday, July 14.

On Wednesday, June 21 at 6:30 P.M., Ministry and Counsel of Purchase Meeting invites Friends to a potluck supper and discussion of the minute on Meeting the Minimum Needs of All that was approved at Spring Sessions. The Witness Coordinating Committee recommends that we engage with the minute by taking it into worship to see where we are led. The minute reads:

Friends share a concern about meeting the minimum needs of all people, which we define to be: providing adequate drinking water, nutrition, clothing, housing, primary health care and five years of primary education, to be achieved by the year 2030. Friends are advised to raise the issue on all occasions where it is possible to influence individuals, groups, and organizations. We charge our Clerk and General Secretary to make a special effort to speak about this issue

with regional, national, and international groups. We encourage Radh Achuthan (Peconic Bay Meeting) to continue his ministry on this issue under his existing travel minute.

Clearwater Festival—Great Hudson River Revival

There will be a Quaker information table June 17 & 18 at the Clearwater Festival, on the shores of the Hudson River at Croton Point Park Croton-on-Hudson, Westchester County, N.Y. **Volunteers are needed to staff the table.** The more volunteers we get the shorter the shifts. If you would like to volunteer please contact Helen Garay Toppins at 212-673-5750 or email office@nyym.org.

For more information about the festival visit www.clearwater.org/festival.html.

Memorial Meeting for Jean Cary

A memorial meeting for Jean Cary (Easton Meeting) will be held on July 2 at 11:00 A.M. at Easton Meeting's South Meetinghouse, 227 Meetinghouse Rd., Easton, N.Y. For more information or directions to the meetinghouse, please contact Carol Kuhr at 518-638-6309.

A Resource for Isolated Friends

Friends General Conference's (FGC) online meeting directory, www.QuakerFinder.org, has a new feature. QuakerFinder will still show you the six nearest Friends' meetings, and now you will also see a prompt asking if the nearest meeting is too far away. If it is, you can register your location and find out whether anyone else has registered in the same area. The system puts nearby registrants in touch with each other through a double-blind e-mail system. The list is constantly updated as new registrations are received.

FGC hopes that over time, new worship groups will grow out of clusters of isolated Friends and seekers who find each other this way. Why not check out the QuakerFinder website to see if there is anyone registered in your area? You could even register yourself so you will be put in touch with people feeling isolated and looking for Quaker connections.

This new outreach tool opens a world of opportunities. If you would like to get in touch with isolated Friends and support new worship groups in the NYYM area, please contact Helen Garay Toppins, office@nyym.org. If you

are interested in contacting Friends outside the NYYM area, contact Martin Kelley at Friends General Conference, 215-561-1700; martink@fgcquaker.org.

Chautauqua Summer Meeting

Chautauqua Summer Meeting, under the care of Fredonia Monthly Meeting, meets at 9:30 A.M. during July and August at the Octagon Building of Chautauqua Institution. For information contact Eleanor Doud, Box 24, Panama NY 14767; 716-782-3570.

Meeting for Worship at Oblong Meetinghouse

"In 1767 the Quakers of the Oblong Friends Meeting abolished slavery, almost 100 years before Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. They reasoned that, since God is in every person, they could not enslave God. They used a similar logic when they chose not to fight on either side during the American Revolution." (<http://www.pawling.org/archives/history.htm>)

Plans are being made to open Oblong Meeting for worship on July 9, 2006, at 3:00 P.M. The meetinghouse, built in 1764 and now owned by the Historical Society of Quaker Hill and Vicinity, is on Quaker Hill in Pawling, N.Y.

See www.nyym.org/purchasequarter/oblong.html for more information about this historic meeting.

All are welcome.

Newsletter Editor's Conference

August 18–20, 2006

Facilitated by Melanie-Claire Mallison

Many monthly meetings have a newsletter or a way of sharing announcements and business meeting minutes. But newsletters can be so much more and reach so much further! Come and explore everything about monthly meeting newsletters! From the ways we create them, to the ways we distribute them. From paper copies to Web site HTML. From personal announcements to global Quaker activities.

We'll cover the main themes of newsletters—creation, gathering content, what to include, distribution, and . . . enter your concern here!

Melanie-Claire Mallison, a member of Ithaca Monthly Meeting, is responsi-

ble for several monthly entries into IMM's newsletter. She also formats the *Powell House News*. **Melanie-Claire will also be cooking** for the weekend, so expect lots of informal sharing around the kitchen table!

Cost: \$180 adults, \$90 for 13–22, \$45 infants–12, \$90 commuters. Child-care with 3 weeks' notice. To register, contact Powell House, 518-794-8811; info@powellhouse.org; www.powellhouse.org.

Observer Applications Available for FWCC Triennial

Bringing Friends together is the work of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC). The Triennial is the world business meeting of FWCC. In August 2007, Friends will gather in Dublin, Ireland, hosted by Ireland Yearly Meeting. 325 representatives nominated by their yearly meetings will gather to share worship, meetings for worship for business, interest groups, and working group sessions, as well as having time to relax with Friends and enjoy excursions to places in and around Dublin.

The theme for the 22nd Triennial is Finding the Prophetic Voice for Our Time, with 1 Corinthians 14:1 providing shape: "it is love, then, that you should strive for. Set your heart on spiritual gifts, especially the gift of proclaiming God's message."

325 Friends from all over the world will meet There are pre- and post-Triennial events in Ireland and Great Britain, for those Friends who are able to spend more time.

In addition to the spaces for yearly meeting representatives, there are some places for "observers" at the Triennial. All those present are full participants and should commit to the full week-long program. Preference will be given to those who are able to contribute to the work of the Triennial, and whose presence complements the balance of Friends' traditions, geographical spread, age, and gender.

Application forms and further information are available from FWCC World Office in London, world@fwcc.quaker.org; www.fwccworld.org. The closing date for applications is 30 September 2006. The clerk of FWCC is Duduzile Mtshazo of Central & Southern Africa YM and the assistant clerk is David Blamires of Britain YM.

Dan Seeger to Speak at FWCC Regional Gathering

Dan Seeger, former director of Powell House and former executive secretary of the New York Region of the American Friends Service committee, will be the keynote speaker at the Northeastern Regional Gathering of Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas, Oct. 13–15, 2006. Friends from New York, Philadelphia, New England, and eastern Canada are invited to gather at Purchase Meeting to focus on the theme Being a Friend in Today's World. (One does not have to be associated with FWCC to participate.) Local Friends will be asked to provide overnight hospitality. Childcare will be available. The cost of the weekend is \$70 for adults, \$40 for children under 12.

The Regional Gathering is hosted on a rotation basis by the FWCC committees of the four Yearly Meetings in the Region. For more information, contact Judith Inskeep, rjinskeep@earthlink.net; Newton Garver, garver@acsu.buffalo.edu; or Fred Dettmer, fdettmer@aol.com

Ann Davidson to Facilitate Workshop

Ann Davidson will cofacilitate a workshop on ministry at the Seventh Friends Ministers Conference, presented by Friends United Meeting and Evangelical Friends International, November 17–20, 2006, in San Antonio. The workshop will focus on how to stay in ministry over a lifetime and not burn out. Ann will discuss the importance of taking retreats and "doing" spiritual disciplines, and her cofacilitator, Ron Woodward, will be sharing his experiences of 50 years of ministry.

In the words of the conference organizers, "The Living Christ Today conference will emphasize the both the inward graces of becoming a person of the Living Word and the skills needed to effectively communicate our relationship with Christ to the world." For further information visit www.friendsministers.org.

2007 FLGBTQC Midwinter Gathering Many Voices, One Spirit

Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns (FLGBTQC) Midwinter 2007 Gathering has been scheduled for Friday, February 16, through Monday, February 19, 2007, at the beautiful Summit Retreat Center in Brown Summit, North Carolina (just north of Greensboro).

The theme for the gathering is Many Voices, One Spirit, reflecting the spiri-

tual and religious diversity among Friends, especially the multifaceted expressions of Quakerism in North Carolina. North Carolina has the second largest Quaker population in North America and is home to FUM, FGC, EFI, and independent meetings.

The theme of the gathering also embraces the deep history of North Carolina Friends that dates back to the founding of the Religious Society of Friends in North America. The story of Quakers in North Carolina has long been one of diligent and courageous work toward equal and just treatment of all people. That story continues to be written even today.

For more information about FLGBTQC, visit <http://flgbtqc.quaker.org/>.

On Your Way to Silver Bay

Adirondack Friends Meeting extends an invitation to all Friends to visit on Sunday, July 23, on their way to Silver Bay. Programmed meeting for worship will be held at 10:30 A.M. Anita Paul of Schenectady Meeting will bring the message. A coffee hour at the rise of worship will provide opportunity for Friends to share together and enjoy some light refreshments.

Adirondack is the meeting closest to Silver Bay, making this a convenient place to break your journey. The meeting is at 27 Saratoga Ave., South Glens Falls NY 12803. For information, you can call Regina Haag at 518-793-3755 or Diana De Blois at 518-798-1806.

Helpful People for Yearly Meeting Sessions

(Note: All these Friends are listed in the *Yearbook* and most are on the NYYM e-mail list.)

- Agenda items for the business sessions: Nurture, Melanie-Claire Mallison; General Services, Paula McClure; Witness, Anita Paul; Ministry and Counsel, Deborah Wood; Linda Chidsey, clerk of NYYM; or contact NYYM staff
- Display arrangements: Kate Lawson
- Financial assistance: Benjamin Frisch
- Food service coordinator: Martha Gurvich
- General scheduling: Kate Lawson, clerk of Sessions Committee
- Golf cart coordinator: Claire Simon
- JYM: Martha Gurvich, Jennifer Lindop, Roseann Press
- Off-Campus Liaison: Deb and Jim Henning
- Silver Bay arrangements: Rose Lynn, Silver Bay liaison

- Special needs: Sarah Faith Dickinson
 - Study & interest groups: Dee Duckworth, coordinator
- All registration questions: Helen Garay Toppins, office@nyym.org; 212-673-5750; NYYM 15 Rutherford Pl., New York NY 10003

NYYM Worship Sharing Facilitators Needed for Silver Bay

Joseph Garren and Elaine Learnard
for Coordinating Committee on Ministry & Counsel

We need worship sharing group leaders for Yearly Meeting sessions this summer at Silver Bay. Worship sharing groups will meet Monday through Friday, July 24–28, from 9:00 to 10:00 A.M.

Worship Sharing provides an opportunity to worship together near the beginning of the day, setting the tone for other activities as the day unfolds. Sharing insights, experiences, and prayer together refreshes the spirit. Your contribution, opening participants to be a channel for the Holy Spirit, would be invaluable.

If you will lead a worship sharing group, please contact Joe Garren at joe-garren@2ndstreetcafe.com; 718-768-2969 as soon as possible. We hope you will feel led to contribute to the Yearly Meeting in this way.

Sharing Fund Beneficiaries

Two venerable traditions pop up at Yearly Meeting annual sessions year after year. They both raise money for the Sharing Fund. One is Café Night. The creativity that bubbles up to the surface surprises and engages. The fare can be music, drama, stories, poetry, impersonation, even, last year, a fashion show, featuring a line-up of costumed Friends. (Did you ever see someone toss his hair back when he didn't have any?) An auction is a traditional part of Café Night. Among the items auctioned this last was one of the wooden double seats from the Powell House library, with a Powell House afghan to cover it. Café Night raised approximately \$7,000.

The other staple is the Fun(d) Fair, where one usually finds face and body painting, chocolate-kiss telegrams, caricatures, massage, and games. A large proportion of the Fair this time was the tagless tag sale, which drew a lot of stuff (that is, treasures). It raised about \$1,400, and the rest of the Fair raised a similar amount.

(If you wish to contribute items for the tagless tag sale, please carefully choose no more than 15 of the most sellable items you wish to donate.

Plan on storing them in the back of the Auditorium until Monday. When the sale is over **please repack, and return to the Auditorium, any unsold items. You will need to take them home with you.** We are not able to transport general merchandise to another location, and there is a charge for use of the trash disposal.)

Some beneficiaries of the Sharing Fund are the Witness Activities Fund, which supports monthly meeting peace programs; the Alternatives to Violence Project; the Barrington Dunbar Fund for Black Development; Right Sharing of World Resources; World Ministries; and the work of the Black Concerns, Indian Affairs, Peace Concerns, and Prisons Committees. Friends who contribute through Café Night and the Fun(d) Fair are helping to support the witness work of the Yearly Meeting. More work could be done if there were more income. Is there something you can do to make these events even better? Don't you have a secret desire to be on the stage? You may have talents as a performer that none of us has suspected! Or think about a table at the Fair. More massage would be welcome; snacks and cool drinks, easy craft projects, foot washing, haircutting, doing nails, and teaching juggling have been popular in the past. You have a few weeks to think about it!

12-Step Meetings at Silver Bay

This year meetings will be 6:30–8:00 P.M. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and 10:00–11:00 P.M. Tuesday and Thursday.

Nurture Coordinating Committee has oversight of this but needs to hear from people who would be willing to take responsibility for one or more of these meetings. To volunteer, please contact Boyce Bengé. His contact information is in the *Yearbook*.

Intergenerational Meetinghouse Workcamps

Liseli Haines, Mohawk Valley Meeting

Some meetings within New York Yearly Meeting find it difficult to maintain their buildings and grounds, because of older populations or small membership. To give support to these meetings, to involve people from around the Yearly Meeting in a form of intervisitation, and to further community within the Yearly Meeting, an intergenerational Traveling Meetinghouse Workcamp has been proposed.

A small group of Friends will be recruited to spend several days to a week

at a meeting that has requested volunteers for special projects or routine maintenance. High-risk jobs or jobs requiring a high skill level, such as roofing or electrical work, will not be attempted (unless one of the volunteers is a professional with that skill).

Several monthly meetings have been contacted, and positive responses from two meetings make it likely that we can have a meetinghouse workcamp toward, the end of August or the beginning of September.

Volunteers will be asked to provide food for simple cold breakfast and lunch and to come with an open mind willing to work and live in community during the workcamp. If you or someone in your meeting would be interested in participating in workcamps this summer please have them contact Liseli Haines, 2936 Austin Road, Clinton NY 13323 or liselih@juno.com; 315-853-8212. All ages are welcome, and encouraged, to participate.

High School Program at Spring Sessions

Liseli Haines, Mohawk Valley Meeting

Five teens participated in the High School program at Spring Sessions, March 30–April 2, 2006. This may not have been the first High School program during Spring or Fall Sessions, it was the first sponsored by NYYM. According to the teens some of the good parts were: the flexibility we had in time and space, being able to hang out outside, playing Jenga, the meeting for business, a bunch of teens just being together with awesome adults, and Nadine Hoover's pajamas (Indonesian style). For one participant, who has been the sole attender of her age group at Spring and Fall Sessions in the past, having other teens to hang out with in the down times was "fantastic."

The group was small and most people already knew each other, so we didn't have to spend much time getting acquainted. We started out discussing how we make decisions: both individually and in a group, and when we went into the afternoon business meeting and committee meetings, we were prepared with a Quaker Process Scavenger Hunt with questions such as: Was the meeting held in a worshipful manner? Did the decisions reached express the sense of the meeting? Are there individuals who are allowed to dominate the meeting? Does the clerk encourage those who are reluctant to speak? Does the clerk voice his or her opinion?

We attended most of one meeting for business and afterward split up to attend committee meetings of choice. Not until Sunday morning, outside in

the sun of the Plainfield Meeting cemetery, did we get to process what had gone on during the business and committee meetings. A comment from one of the youth, a coclerk of a high school group, was that Young Friends' business meetings are more likely to be a joyful, exuberant, informal experience of the spirit, while the meeting for business on Saturday of Spring Sessions, with its 100 years of tradition, appeared to be more stylized. This made me think of the stylization of a Japanese dance—a comparison that made sense.

It was a treat for me to hang out with this group for the weekend. Their thoughtfulness, insights, and patience were wonderful. I look forward to being able to do it again.

We already have plans for December, when Fall Sessions will be held in NYC. The Saturday field trip will have a multicultural theme. We will visit a stop on the Underground Railroad, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, and the African Burial Ground, walk over the Brooklyn Bridge, ride the Staten Island Ferry, and eat in Chinatown.

Christopher Sammond's Traveling and Visitation Calendar

June:

- 1–4 Facilitate Gifts Retreat "Becoming the Gift God Made You to Be,"
Stella Niagara, NY
- 7–10 FUM North American Ministries Committee and General Board Meet-
ings, Richmond, IN
- 11 Vicki Cooley Memorial Worship, Central Finger Lakes MM
- 17 Transition Working Group, Poughkeepsie Meetinghouse
- 19–25 Comp time and Vacation

July:

- 1–8 Friends General Conference 2006 Gathering, Tacoma, WA
- 12 Bronx Worship Group, New York, NY
- 16 Ridgewood MM, Ridgewood, NJ
- 20–29 NYYM Annual Sessions, Silver Bay, NY

NYYM General Secretary: Responsibilities and Task Group Report

Lee Ridgway, clerk, General Secretary's Task Group

Christopher Sammond has been with us as general secretary for nearly two years now. The General Secretary's Task Group wishes to share the list of responsibilities and their Advance Report. Friends are invited to contact Lee Ridgway, clerk of the Task Group, with comments.

Responsibilities of NYYM General Secretary

1. Visit monthly, quarterly, and regional meetings, seeking to connect our distant meetings with one another through sharing concerns and ministry.
2. Support and nurture emerging worship groups.
3. Work closely with the clerk of the Yearly Meeting and serve ex-officio as a member of the Liaison Committee for the purpose of nurturing the life of the Yearly Meeting community.
4. In conjunction with the Yearly Meeting clerk, maintain a liaison with wider Friends' groups. When necessary and appropriate, interpret the Religious Society of Friends to the wider community in statements and actions, including speaking to the press, which articulate our historic peace testimony and are in keeping with *Faith and Practice*, other Friends' testimonies, and relevant Yearly Meeting minutes. Whenever possible, reference should be made to these sources.
5. Supervise and evaluate the work of the administrative secretary. The general secretary will be ultimately responsible for the overall good functioning of the Yearly Meeting office.

Report of General Secretary's Task Group

Although this task group reports to General Services Coordinating Committee rather than to the Yearly Meeting body, it seems helpful to share what we do and how we are doing it with the body of the meeting. We have been working with the general secretary since his appointment in 2004, and we are charged to continue through the three-year period of his appointment.

During the first year, the task group served as a mentoring and support group to Christopher as he learned about the meeting and what was needed, and we learned about Christopher and what he needed. We all

needed to explore and to observe. We looked for feedback, mostly informal, from the monthly meetings, committees, and individuals who had had contact with Christopher. We endorsed his leading to improve the spiritual health of the various meeting entities, and encouraged his activities.

During the second year, we started to respond to the charge we had been given of evaluating the position of general secretary to report in 2007 as well as continuing to advise and sometimes critique Christopher's functioning in that role. It is clear that the role is larger than any one person can carry with equal attention to all aspects, and we have been working with him to further prioritize his tasks.

This coming year we will place even more emphasis on feedback. We continue to need the help of all meeting members to provide input to us: How have you experienced the general secretary's work? What do you feel is most valuable and going well; what do you feel needs improvement? What do we need more of and what is still lacking? We encourage Friends to provide instances of noteworthy interactions with the general secretary.

Our task group consists of Ruth Ann Bradley, Julia Giordano, Lee Haring, Herb Lape, Lenore Ridgway (clerk). Steve Ross joins us as a support person and adviser to Christopher. Any of us welcome your thoughts, stories, and perceptions. You can contact any of us or send information to the clerk, Lenore Ridgway, 19 Johnston Avenue, Kingston, NY 12401, telephone 845-339-4927, e-mail friendlenore@cs.com. We will try to respond and we will use your input to help us build a picture of Yearly Meeting function with a general secretary.

Impressions of a Retreat: Naming Our Gifts

Angi York Crane, Dover-Randolph Meeting

Hafiz, portal, unfinished pain, grief, gifting, flowering into love, tenderness, listening, that Friend speaks my mind, surrender, words made flesh . . . As Friends, we know that the truest experiences are often beyond words, and as I search for words to describe my time at the retreat on Spiritual Gifts, the first in the series Drawing Out Gifts sponsored by NYYM's Coordinating Committee on Ministry and Counsel, these are the words that come to mind. My husband, Len, and I arrived late at Powell House, after a hurried getting ready and a quick departure when our number on the waiting list came up Friday morning. From our late entry, to a final prayer of Thomas Merton's read at the Sunday morning meeting for worship, the retreat was

confusing, painful, enlightening, and rich.

By Saturday evening, I was wrestling with the Spirit, in a place of confusion, with undercurrents lapping against my core, and the words *unfinished pain* resonating within my listening. Speaking with Christopher Sammond, the retreat facilitator, I realized that my husband, Len, and I had missed some important information in our lateness: Christopher had shared with the group that, as we met over the weekend, his father was dying. And later, as I met with Friends to discern my own disruption, many pieces fell into place.

Saturday afternoon we had had the opportunity to look into each other's eyes and share a word—or none—that described how we perceived the other person. The exercise was so intimate and yet also somewhat painful, and I was left with this feeling of carrying pain, and a sense of incompleteness in the exercise. It was a sense of a physical manifestation of the process of unfinished grief, the pain of humanity we all carry with us that is part of the gift of who we are, and a portal being opened, in Christopher's unfinished, incomplete grief, for time to stand still and others to enter a space of healing, some with words, some without, but flesh being made real within all of us.

Rich, deep, cleansing, delightful, intense, gentle, tender, illuminating are more words that come to mind as I think back on this retreat about Spiritual Gifts. I know my experience of the weekend was different than Len's, and probably from others' there also. Yet I wonder if the commonality resides in this knowing, Life is gift, we are a gift, and the Light that we carry and live in is a gift also. As one young adult Friend stated, "What richness is this"—this way of faith, of seeking Spirit, of waiting for the One to speak to our condition. Both personally and communally, it is treasure we carry.

From *Through the Year with Thomas Merton*:

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. And I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always,

though I may seem lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

NYYM Events

New York Yearly Meeting events are updated frequently on our Web site. Go to our Calendar or Events sections. Please visit the site and print out items for your newsletter.

We need your help! Please send information on your Quaker events, for inclusion in the calendar and the Events section, to Paul Busby at the NYYM office, paul@nyym.org, or mail to 15 Rutherford Pl., New York NY 10003.