

# New York Yearly Meeting Religious Society of Friends

## *InfoShare*

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Editor, Paul Busby, paul@nyym.org

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### **Nurturing First Day Schools**

The theme for the September 2008 *Spark* will be "Nurturing First Day Schools." Friends are invited to submit articles and photos related to this theme. First Day school drawings and artwork would also be appreciated. We would like this issue to serve as a First Day School Resource Guide, so please let us know about your best resources and FDS curricula. We are also interested in stories about teen programming. Articles written by children and teens will also be appreciated. **Deadline is August 7, 2008.**

Please let Helen Garay Toppins know if you plan to submit something for this special issue. You can e-mail her at office@nyym.org.

### **Perry City First Day School Peace Crane**

First Day School, Perry City Meeting

Perry City Friends' First Day School has a new project, and we invite all Friends to join in. We plan to fold a very large peace crane to hang in front of our meetinghouse just before the election to help people focus on thoughts of peace. The size of the crane will be determined by how many submissions of peace art and writings and letters we receive. Each one will be joined to the next, all glued down to create a very large sheet. We would love to receive work from all over the world.

Please consider sending us a drawing, a letter, a poster you have designed. We plan to make copies of everything to keep in a notebook. The original will be joined with works from everyone else. Everyone who is planning to write their statements of conscience, please send us a copy. Need a First Day school idea or something to do at a potluck? Draw or write together and send it to us.

We will be collecting submissions until fall. Please send to Perry City Friends, PO Box 291, Trumansburg NY 14886. And please pass the word.

### **Bedford Stuyvesant Worship Group Meeting for Worship**

The Bedford Stuyvesant Worship Group will have meeting for worship followed by a fellowship potluck on **Sunday June 15, 2008**, at 2:00 P.M.

We will worship at Redemption Center, 1186 Herkimer Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11233. The closest subway stop to Redemption Center is Rockaway Ave. on the C train. Rockaway Ave. is also the closest stop on the #25 Fulton Street bus. The number for MTA subway and bus information is 718-330-1234. A map of the area surrounding Redemption Center is at [www.mapquest.com/maps/1186+Herkimer+St+Brooklyn+NY+11233-3149/](http://www.mapquest.com/maps/1186+Herkimer+St+Brooklyn+NY+11233-3149/).

Redemption Center is a not-for-profit, faith-based, social service agency that provides safe, affordable, and drug-free transitional housing to formerly incarcerated individuals. In addition to hosting the new Bedford Stuyvesant Quaker Worship Group, Redemption also hosts AVP Workshops and Brooklyn Landing Strip meetings.

The Redemption Center was set up by Mark Graham. Mark was incarcerated in an adult state prison when he was 17 years old and served 22 years. While confined he was coclerk of the Quaker prison worship group in Otisville and a member of Quaker worship groups in Eastern, Sing Sing, and Green Haven. He helped coordinate AVP in Eastern, Sullivan, Fishkill, and Otisville prisons.

The Redemption Center building needs a lot of work. The basement needs to be renovated. The add-on room in the back needs to be completed. This summer we would like to have outdoor worship in the backyard but the backyard needs a lot of work and plantings. If you can help with any of the above, please let Mark know: Mark Graham, Executive Director, The Redemption Center, Inc., 1186 Herkimer St. Brooklyn NY 11233; 718-922-1627; fax 347-787-2919.

### **Plainfield Midweek Worship**

Mary Harpster, clerk, Plainfield Meeting Ministry & Counsel

Starting June 18 and continuing at least through the summer, the Plainfield meetinghouse will be open for silent worship on Wednesday evenings. In addition to the hour of silent worship, one Wednesday each month there will be an informal Bible study before worship and one Wednesday each month a book group will meet. If you are interested in attending the Bible study and/or book group, there is no obligation to attend all sessions. And if you just want to come for the silent worship those days, that's OK too.

The schedule so far:

June 18: 6 P.M. pizza and Bible study, 7 P.M. worship

June 25: 7 P.M. worship

July 2: 7 P.M. worship

July 9: 6 P.M. pizza and book group, 7 P.M. worship. Book TBA.

For those interested in the book group, there will be an opportunity at the first meeting on July 9 to help choose the next books to be read.

If you have any questions, e-mail me at mlharpster@optonline.net.

### **Christopher Sammond's Travel Calendar May 31–July 31, 2008**

#### **May**

31 Attend Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee Meeting,  
Powell House, Old Chatham, NY

#### **June**

17 Attend Ad Hoc Working Group on Support for Youth & Young  
Adult Friends, Oakwood School, Poughkeepsie, NY

22 Attend Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting, Poughkeepsie, NY

27–28 Attend NYYM Task Group on FUM, Powell House, Old Chatham,  
NY

29 Visit Old Chatham Monthly Meeting, Old Chatham, NY

29–30 Attend FGC Gathering, Johnstown, PA

#### **July**

1–3 Attend FGC Gathering, Johnstown, PA

8–13 Attend FUM Triennial, High Point, NC

18–20 Cofacilitate "Exercising Spirit: Reaching In, Reaching Out as One  
Body," a multigenerational retreat, Powell House, Old Chat-  
ham, NY

20–26 Attend Annual Sessions, Silver Bay, NY

### **Positions Available at Pendle Hill**

Pendle Hill, a Quaker conference center in Wallingford, Penn., has several full-time positions available. Immediate openings include director of hospitality and dining services, lead cook, and housekeeping. Cook and hospital-ity/housekeeping openings for fall are also available. Details on these and

other positions can be found at  
<http://www.pendlehill.org/about/employment.php#lc>.

Pendle Hill's resident community supports a residential study program for adults, weekend workshops and retreats, short courses, publications, a full-service bookstore, and leadership training for youth. Pendle Hill encourages the participation of all and seeks to appoint staff of diverse backgrounds, without discrimination on the basis of gender, race, color, age, sexual orientation, or national origin. Inquiries and résumés to Meg Meyer at Pendle Hill, 338 Plush Mill Road, Wallingford PA 19807; [mmeyer@pendlehill.org](mailto:mmeyer@pendlehill.org); 800-742-3150, ext. 144.

### **Living from the Divine Center: A Contemplative Retreat Led by Linda Chidsey, Powell House, June 20–23, 2008**

In *A Testament of Devotion*, Thomas Kelly writes:

Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a Holy place, a Divine Center, a speaking Voice, to which we may continuously return. Eternity is at our hearts, pressing upon our time-torn lives, warming us with intimations of and astounding destiny, calling us home unto itself. Yielding to these persuasions, gladly committing ourselves in body and soul, utterly and completely, to the Light Within, is the beginning of true life. (p. 29).

There are those who have found and those who are finding that a deep life of prayer and attentiveness to God can be genuinely compatible with an active and effective spiritual/Christian presence in the world. What canst thou say?

Come live into both questions and the promise as we seek to establish a more contemplative rhythm and practice during this extended weekend. There will be times of group discussion and reflection; opportunities for solitude and the practice of both individual and corporate disciplines – prayer, *lexio divina* (divine reading), journaling, walking the labyrinth. We will share overnight silent and a silent meal. Perhaps in these times, more than ever before, we long to touch the Divine Center and lay hold of the Source of our lives.

Linda Chidsey, a member of Housatonic Meeting, is a recorded minister in New York Yearly Meeting. She carries a concern for spiritual nurture and pastoral care. Linda recently served as clerk of NYYM.

Carolyn Moon, serving as Linda's elder, is a member of Gwynedd Friends

Meeting in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. She serves on the board of The School of the Spirit.

Cost: \$210 Adults, \$105 ages 13–22, commuters \$105

Note: No Children's Program or Childcare for this Conference

### **Other Upcoming PoHo Events:**

July 18–20 Multigenerational Retreat

August 8–10 Open 12 Step Recovery

August 1–3 Permaculture—A Toolbox for Sustainability

August 18–24 Handcrafters

September 12–14 Rediscovering Eldering

For more information go to [www.powellhouse.org](http://www.powellhouse.org), e-mail Buffy Curtis at [info@powellhouse.org](mailto:info@powellhouse.org), or call Buffy at 518-794-8811. You may also write to Powell House at 524 Pitt Hall Rd., Old Chatham NY 12136.

### **A Quaker Presence at the Clearwater Festival/ Great Hudson River Revival**

Friends, if you live locally or if you plan to attend the Clearwater Festival at Croton Point Park on Sat. & Sun., **June 21–22**, 10 A.M. to dusk, please consider lending a few hours of your time to help the AFSC (American Friends Service Committee). AFSC will present Eyes Wide Open—New York, a display of boots and shoes that highlight the human costs of the Iraq war, along with the Cost of War exhibit, consisting of large colorful banners that call attention to the economic costs of the war, and tables with Other Options: Youth and Militarism information, at the upcoming Clearwater Festival. With its music, entertainment, environmental activism, and food, the Festival regularly draws 10,000–12,000 people from the region each year. Quakers attending the Festival will join with AFSC interns to help staff the exhibit—listening to visitors' reactions, providing more information, and providing a grounding presence in this witness.

In the Activists Area of the festival, we expect 2,500 sq. ft. to be allocated for the name-tagged combat boots and Iraqi shoes and the Cost of War banners to be interspersed among them. Tables around the displays will provide information on the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and the region, frequently asked questions on Iraq, information for youth considering joining the military, as well as petitions to defund the war in Iraq and re-fund basic social services at home.

Plans for the event are under the supervision of Iris Bieri of AFSC. Anne Wright of AFSC and Scarsdale Meeting is administrative consultant. Charles Sirey of Chappaqua Meeting is volunteer coordinator. It will be a two-day event and there could be as many as 15 AFSC interns working rotating shifts throughout each day.

If you live locally or if you plan to attend the Clearwater Festival please consider helping in one of these ways:

- Friday evening set up: the AFSC needs up to 12 people to help set everything up on Friday evening before the Festival. Volunteers enter the fairgrounds free on Friday, June 20. Set-up time will be 6:00 P.M.
- Volunteer at the exhibit during the Festival: The AFSC needs up to 12 people to help staff the exhibit in 1- or 2-hour shifts during the day, each day. These volunteers will be listening to visitors' reactions (for which training is offered), providing more information, and collecting signatures for the Defund/Re-fund petition. Volunteers who work during the hours of the Festival performances will have to buy tickets to the Festival. Tickets are good for the entire day...not just the time spent at the AFSC exhibit. (Tickets are available at reduced rates at [www.clearwaterfestival.org](http://www.clearwaterfestival.org) until 5 P.M. on June 19.
- Sunday evening take-down: up to 12 people to help take down the exhibit on Sunday evening. Sunday evening volunteers will be admitted without charge. Take-down will begin at 7:30 P.M.
- Local hospitality is also needed: The AFSC has need of sleepover hospitality for the interns coming from New York for Friday night and Saturday night and possibly some transportation to the event.

This will be a wonderful opportunity for Friends from the wider region, from large meetings or small, to take part in an exciting and very powerful witness against the war...and to create a strong Quaker presence. Friends could do exhibit duty for a while, while spending the other hours of the day enjoying the events from the music to the sailing. Or you could just come by to lend support and be a Friendly presence as you enjoy one of the premier summer events of Westchester.

Interested? If you'd like to volunteer or would just like more information, contact Charles Sirey , 914-238-0961; [chass435@aol.com](mailto:chass435@aol.com).

## **AFSC Seeks Presiding Clerk for Corp. & Board**

Rich Van Dellen (Northern Yearly Meeting) for the search committee

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has begun the search for a new presiding clerk of the Corporation and Board. We hope this person will be chosen by November 2008, serve as assistant clerk for a year, and then become clerk in November 2009. Paul Lacey will have completed eight years as clerk of the Corporation and Board in 2009. Further information is available at [www.afsc.org/about/board-nomination.htm](http://www.afsc.org/about/board-nomination.htm).

Please send us the names of those that you think are qualified for this position. A recommendation form is available at the Web site above. We would like names submitted **by July 1, 2008**. The search committee will give thoughtful consideration to all names submitted. You can also help by holding our committee and our process in the Light.

The nominee must be an active member of the Religious Society of Friends. She or he should have good clerking skills, be willing to listen, be able to delegate authority, and be committed to work with the general secretary to accomplish the mission and maintain the health of the organization. The presiding clerk should have excellent speaking and writing skills. We would like the clerk to have a measure of grace and humility. The AFSC is committed to affirmative action.

## **Meeting for Worship at Historic Meetinghouse**

Suzanne Blackburn, Poplar Ridge Meeting

All Friends are invited to meeting for worship at the historic Quaker meetinghouse in Genesee Country Village and Museum, **Sunday, July 13, 2008**. Gather in the parking lot no later than 10:30. We will enter as a group. Worship is from 11 A.M. to noon. A dish-to-pass (potluck) lunch will follow worship at the picnic tables near the parking lot (bring your own table service and a few spares).

The Genesee Country Village is a living history museum in Mumford, about 20 miles from Rochester, N.Y. Among the village of relocated 19th-century buildings stands the refurbished Wheatland Meeting House constructed around 1854. The building was donated to the Genesee Country Village in 1967. This event is a wonderful opportunity to worship together while learning about our regional history.

We are offering a reduced-rate admission to those who sign up and pay in advance: \$8 for adults 18 and up, \$5 for kids 12–17, and kids 11 and under

free. Maximum rate for a family is \$25 (one or two adults and their dependent kids). This rate includes meeting for worship and the rest of the day at the living history museum. If you are a member of the museum, you can enter with your membership, but please inform the event registrar so your name will be on the list.

To register for this event or if you have questions, please contact Suzanne Blackburn at 585-468-5274 or [odonata@hughes.net](mailto:odonata@hughes.net). Make checks payable to Farmington-Scipio Region and include a list of names of all those attending the event and whether they are adults, children (12–17), or free (11 and under). Send the check and list of attenders by July 1 to Suzanne Blackburn, 9609 Riley Ln., Nunda NY 14517. For general information about the Genesee Country Village and Museum, visit [www.gcv.org](http://www.gcv.org).

### **Intergenerational Activities at Silver Bay July 20–26, 2008**

At Summer Sessions this year, some special intergenerational activities and events are planned in celebration of this year's theme, "Spiritual Community across the Spectrum of Age."

#### **Intergenerational Activity Clusters:**

Small groups of Friends of every age—parents and young children, teens, Young Adult Friends, and those who've been in all of those age groups and then some—will meet at Silver Bay, to do something fun or learn a new skill together while getting to know Friends of all ages across our Yearly Meeting. Groups may include drumming, knitting, singing, board games, tree identification, poetry reading, a service project, active games, sketching from nature, chess, and more. If you would like to be in a group, have an idea for an activity, or would be able to help by facilitating a group, e-mail Amy Obermayer at [aoberm2073@aol.com](mailto:aoberm2073@aol.com) or call Carol Rice at 845-266-5835. We will get back to you before Summer Sessions. Don't miss out on this opportunity to get to know some really cool Quakers of all ages you might never have met!

#### **Weaving Project—*throughout the week***

An intergenerational outdoor three-dimensional weaving project, in a tent in a highly visible and well-traveled spot on the lawn, will serve as a framework to integrate images of thoughts, memories, anecdotes, stories, artwork, and photographs of our personal and collective remembered and studied past as well as hopes and dreams for our children, our children's

children, and all yet to arrive. Bring things from home or create them on the spot. This area will also be used for a small worship-sharing group.

### **Games—Monday afternoon**

CYF will facilitate intergenerational games for all. What better way to get to know an unfamiliar Friend than to have a rollicking good laugh during non-competitive play?

### **Mix-It-Up Dinner—Tuesday dinner**

There will be signs on the chairs (made by the children at 15th Street Meeting) indicating the mixture of ages at each table. Voluntary, of course, but don't miss the chance.

- **Meetings with parents of young children:** During dinner and an after-dinner meeting, with childcare provided, on Thursday night
- **Brainstorm with ice cream** for middle-school students and their parents (details TBA)
- **Video and audio intergenerational oral-history project** (details TBA)

### **Worship Sharing Facilitators for Silver Bay**

Claire Simon & Vonn New, Worship Sharing coordinators

Worship-sharing group leaders are needed during Summer Sessions at Silver Bay. Worship-sharing groups will meet Monday through Friday, July 21–25, from 9:00 to 10:00 A.M.

Worship Sharing provides an opportunity to worship together near the beginning of each 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 would like to lead a worship sharing group, please reply as soon as possible to Vonn New [vonn.new@gmail.com](mailto:vonn.new@gmail.com); 845-633-0819. We hope you will feel led to contribute to the Yearly Meeting in this way.

### **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 Benge. His contact information is in the *Yearbook*.

### **To Friends of New York Yearly Meeting About the Meetings for Discernment**

Lee Haring, for the Steering Committee

Some meetings and individual Friends have inquired how the Meeting for Discernment went, when we held it in March at Rochester. The Steering Committee wants you to know that it went very well, and that we anticipate a still deeper and more inspiring time for the next Meeting for Discernment, to be held **at Silver Bay on July 22**. Our report to you is late in coming. As with any deep and powerful experience, it has taken the Steering Committee some time to put language to it. What we first want to convey is a sense of the power of the extended worship for discernment. We are clear that this was due in no small part to the work of fifteen Friends who served the group as elders, holding the gathered body in prayer throughout the day. We were blessed with a depth of worship and connection that Friends present found profoundly nourishing.

In the course of the day, Friends reported on the life of most of the 36 monthly meetings and worship groups represented in the body. These reports were clearly much more candid than our formal State of Society reports. Out of these disparate reports and concerns, we began to gain a sense of some threads that transcended the condition of our individual communities. These threads did not come into clear focus by the end of our day, but their intimation was enough to make us feel that we were beginning to get a sense of coming together as one body, and to reassure us that our endeavor was well led.

First and foremost was the theme of how we can better love one another. Related questions were, "How can we practice genuine hospitality? How can we better welcome the newcomer into our meeting? How can we truly integrate them into the full fabric of our community's life? How can we avoid making those we might see as so different from us into 'the other'?"

Intermixed with this theme were many heartfelt concerns about our relationship with the rest of Friends United Meeting. Some Friends brought minutes from their meetings. Some urged us to consider ending our association, or suspending our funding, or amplifying our expression of our concern over our differences in our sense of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans-

gender personhood and ministry. Listening to each other brought us some healing. Although we were not able to recognize a clear way forward, Friends felt that this topic would be a part of future Meetings for Discernment.

As before, four queries will be before us on July 22.

- **How is the Spirit moving in your monthly meeting?**
- **What concerns have been laid upon your heart and into the collective care of your monthly meeting?**
- **How is the Spirit moving in the yearly meeting?**
- **What are we as a body called to at this time?**

We hope all monthly meetings will have appointed one or more Friends. We welcome all Friends to attend.

### **Interest Groups at Summer Sessions**

Interest groups at Summer Sessions will be held Wednesday, July 23, from 7:45–9:30 P.M. This year, people will be able to sign up for interest groups on-site at Silver Bay. A list of the interest groups and their descriptions will be posted on the NYYM Web site in July, and paper copies will be mailed to those who request them.

### **Meeting for Marriage July 26**

**Heather Cook and John Cooley** announce their planned meeting for marriage, under joint care of Chatham-Summit and Central Finger Lakes Friends meetings, immediately following Yearly Meeting sessions at Silver Bay. The appointed meeting for worship will be held in the Auditorium at 2 P.M. Saturday, July 26. All are welcome to participate.

An ice cream social will follow the meeting. For those who can stay longer, games, swimming, and dancing are possible. Questions and comments can be addressed to John at [jhcooley@aol.com](mailto:jhcooley@aol.com) and/or to Heather at [burritolass@comcast.net](mailto:burritolass@comcast.net).

### **2008 Youth Empowerment Gathering July 10–13, 2008, Timonium, Md.**

AFSC Middle Atlantic Region invites youth to join in helping to empower youth by learning about different conflict-resolution skills. Get introduced to HIP (Help Increase the Peace) by taking Basic HIP training or brush up your facilitator skills in a HIP Refresher seminar. Learn how to take charge and

bring peer-mediation skills to your school or youth group from the region's best community organizers. Meet the new Middle Atlantic Region youth leaders and find out how the face of Help Increase the Peace is changing in the new millennium!

For further information go to <http://www.afsc.org/midatlantic/youth-empowerment.htm>, e-mail [bmattingly@afsc.org](mailto:bmattingly@afsc.org), or call 410-323-7348.

### **Bob Bacon Memorial Fund Reviewing Grant Requests**

The Bob Bacon Memorial Fund is currently reviewing grant requests. If you would like to be considered, please send your request to by **July 31, 2008** to The Bob Bacon Memorial Fund, c/o Old Chatham Monthly Meeting, 524 Pitt Hall Rd., Old Chatham NY 12136.

The late Bob Bacon, well known to members of NYYM, committed his personal and professional life to furthering the increase of peace and justice in our world. The mission of the Fund is to provide recognition, encouragement, and financial support to individuals and groups associated with the Religious Society of Friends who seek to act on leadings or convictions that move toward transformation of the self, the community, or the planet.

Contributions to the Fund, c/o Old Chatham Monthly Meeting, are always welcome, as are suggestions for future recipients of the small grants made each year to individuals and groups whose work is consistent with Bob's ideals.

Thank you!

### **Ministry: NYYM Prayer List**

Bobbi Sue Bowers, Manasquan Meeting

Up until a few years ago, I understood the term "ministry," within Quakerism, to refer primarily to "vocal" and "traveling." Lately, I prefer to ponder a broader idea of ministry—being God's hands (and voice and feet), doing God's work, when God calls. I have also learned to be more open, as God calls in a variety of ways. Via little whispers and nudges in my own heart and mind or, sometimes, through a messenger.

The idea of a NYYM Prayer List was not mine, but I was asked to develop and administer it. Facilitating the Prayer List called for a healthy combination of the use of skills I already possessed and the opportunity to stretch

and grow in ways that seemed consistent with other nudges I had been receiving from God.

My ministry is to provide support and care to those in need of prayer and to organize, update, and distribute the Prayer List to those providing prayer support for others. God called, and my work is to facilitate, but the list itself is not mine. The Prayer List is “our” prayer list, Friends, and I’ve come to see it as a valuable tool for us. The Prayer List provides a means for us to care for each other across the great geographical expanse that is NYYM. We can pray for others in need of support from wherever we may be and however we are led—solitarily, within a prayer group, or in a meeting for healing, and we can receive prayer support when we request it. I believe that caring for each other in this way helps nurture our sense of community and of being a whole body.

Many friends across the Yearly Meeting are called to a ministry of intercessory prayer and others are in need of prayer support for various reasons and lengths of time. The Prayer List provides a way for those called to provide prayer support to know about those in need of such support.

Are you called to a ministry of intercessory prayer or are you in need of prayer support? If so, please contact me, [bobbisue.bowers \[at\] juno.com](mailto:bobbisue.bowers@juno.com).

### **Ministry: Service to the Meeting**

Leif Anderson, Bulls Head-Oswego Meeting

After our beloved member Henry Wheeler, who lived next to our meetinghouse, became ill with cancer, he asked me as a favor if I would turn on the heat in the meetinghouse and gathering room as he had been doing for decades. Previously I had stood in for him when he was visiting another meeting during the winter months.

I look forward to dropping by the meetinghouse when I go out to get the Sunday papers. In winter, I will arrange for someone else (sometimes my wife, sometimes another Friend) to turn on the heat and electricity if I am out of town. Although it’s really not necessary, I usually drop by in the other seasons as well.

Invariably I think about Henry and often think of a message I heard him give at least twice. What does God require? Only that we do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with him. I also think that as much as many of us in his monthly meeting and throughout the yearly meeting appreciated Henry, he was underappreciated. I know because I get the gift of being

reminded of him and his passing through my life almost every week.

Although I often champion rotation in Quaker service activities, I wish to continue this small ministry as long as I can. Am I a hypocrite then? Yes, I think I am.

### **Singing in the Spirit**

Tom Rothschild, Brooklyn Meeting

Nearly two dozen Friends gathered during the last weekend of April to form a joyous community of song. Gathering at Mohawk Valley meetinghouse, we sang personal favorites and learned new songs, chosen from *Worship in Song* and *Rise Up Singing* and several pieces people brought along for the occasion.

For our meals, at the house of Liseli Haines, each of us brought a potluck dish to share, and we took turns cooking and cleaning up the kitchen. We ate some meals indoors and some out in the garden. There was a variety of flavors and delightful surprises in the food as in the music.

On Sunday morning, Mohawk Valley Friends came into the meetinghouse and joined in the singing, and several joined us afterward for our potluck lunch.

We were offered places to sleep at Liseli's and two other houses, all within short walking distance of the meetinghouse. One person chose to camp in a nearby field by a brook.

The weekend was formed after the pattern of Nightingales, a Northern Yearly Meeting group that has gathered in this way three times annually for many years. Several members of our group have participated in the Nightingales and brought that experience—and music—to season our gathering. One spoke of remembering what song does for the spirit, rejoicing in bringing back the songs he loves. Here, there are no technical distractions, simply the joy of being together. On such occasions, there is ecstasy in being alive.

Another weekend is planned, again at Mohawk Valley meeting, for the weekend of October 24–26, 2008. All who love to sing are invited. Put it in your calendar now, so you won't be disappointed later!

## **Martin Luther King's Call to Quakers**

Fifty years ago this June, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke to Quakers at the Friends General Conference Gathering in Cape May, N.J. *Friends Journal* is proud to reproduce, for the first time in its entirety, the text of Dr. King's remarks in the June 2008 issue. King's address is one of three major articles on racial justice in this issue. Individuals, meetings, churches, or other groups can order multiple copies at a special prepublication discount. For details, visit [www.friendsjournal.org/prepub](http://www.friendsjournal.org/prepub).

Readers will find a way to live up to the legacy of King and of our Quaker faith. "I think of the great work that has been done by the Society of Friends," King told the gathered meeting of Friends. "It gives all of us who struggle for justice new hope, and I simply say to you...continue in that struggle, continue with that same determination, continue with that same faith in the future."

To help Friends continue in that struggle, we offer a significant article by Jeff Hitchcock (clerk of Plainfield Meeting), "Quakers and Reparations for Slavery and Jim Crow," which considers why Friends might take up the issue of reparations as a means to heal our whole community.

This issue also includes a new analysis titled "The Power of Fearful Faithfulness: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy for Friends" by Steve Chase, and a powerful witness by George Lakey titled "52nd Street," the author's account of using methods learned from civil rights leaders to defuse a situation that threatened real physical violence.

Dr. King's speech will be a focus of the 2008 FGC Gathering this summer. The June 2008 issue of *Friends Journal* presents an excellent opportunity for all to reflect on the possibilities and imperatives of spiritually grounded, nonviolent social action.

## **Unprogrammed Friends in Latin America**

Paul Busby, Latin American Concerns resource person

The Second Gathering of Unprogrammed Friends in Latin America met May 2–4, 2008, in Mexico City, hosted by Mexico City Monthly Meeting at the Casa de los Amigos.

About 30 Friends attended, mostly from Mexico and the United States. Friends from San Miguel de Allende, Mexico; Costa Rica; Chile; Nicaragua; and Cuba, among other places, sent their regrets. Many were unable to at-

tend for financial reasons. Friends at the Gathering agreed to find ways to provide travel funds for such Friends, as well as to hold the next Gathering in a more central location.

I attended the Gathering as NYYM's Latin American Concerns resource person.

The theme, *Our Quaker Identity*, provided much fruit for worshipful discussion. One facet was our desire to be able to say who we are, while embracing those whose approaches (and other belief systems) are different from our own.

An AVP mini-workshop provided the opportunity to explore *Transforming Power*—the Power that can act through us to bring peace to ourselves and others.

Some attenders took a cultural trip to Xochimilco (Náhuatl for "Garden of Flowers"), whose canals and "floating gardens" continue to provide a haven of beauty amid the bustle of the metropolis.

The epistle from the Gathering reads in part:

Exploring the theme *Our Quaker Identity*, we addressed the recurring issues of isolation and exclusivism that form barriers to our growth, and the challenge of making ourselves known without falling into proselytism.

We asked ourselves what we can offer to our communities, societies, and countries and how we may strengthen our meetings. We explored our vision for the future of Quakerism and what problems, challenges, and opportunities exist for unprogrammed Friends in Latin America. We also discussed that which is shared by unprogrammed Friends on both sides of the Rio Bravo (Rio Grande) and in what ways we can cooperate with each other. A group was appointed to follow up proposals expressed in this gathering and to plan for the Third Gathering.

We have been reaffirmed in our conviction that our relation with God is central to our lives and practice, and that if we wish to grow and respond to the social realities that surround us, we must begin by strengthening our faith. We feel renewed in the knowledge of the

treasure that is present in silent worship, in which we surrender to the presence of the Spirit and the teachings of the Light, with complete confidence in God's love.

The entire epistle will be posted, in English and Spanish, in the Witness section of the NYYM Web site.

### **Report on FWCC/SOA Annual Meeting**

Judith Inskeep, Purchase Monthly Meeting

The Waycross Episcopal Camp and Conference Center near Morgantown, Ind., was the setting for the 2008 annual meeting of the Friends World Committee for Consultation Section of the Americas, whose theme was "So then, let us be always seeking the ways which lead to peace and the ways in which we can support one another" (Rom. 14:19). The keynote speaker was Rachel Stacy, a young teacher in Baltimore. She said, "God loves you just the way you are, but he loves you too much to let you stay there." She is part of the emergent church, a movement of progressive people from a number of denominations who strive to practice a radical discipleship, reclaiming the message of Jesus and living it. The movement seems to Rachel like early Quakerism—anyone can follow Jesus, be a minister, extend radical hospitality. It inspires her to make yet another effort to teach as she really wants to do, which is not easy in the school where she finds herself. Besides meeting for face-to-face conversation, the participants work in soup kitchens and other helping organizations.

Another speaker, Jay Marshall from Earlham School of Religion, observed that wars and ill-treatment are often carried out by people who have a deep commitment to God. Such a commitment is important, but it is not enough; out of it there needs to spring a commitment to hospitality, to welcoming our global brothers and sisters, for the sake of the One who hosts us.

On Saturday evening local Friends wearing sashes of their yearly meetings engagingly acted out set-offs and splits by walking through what looked like a London-Bridge-cum-line-dance. (A set-off occurs when, for example, NYYM was set off from New England YM in 1696. An example of a split is the Orthodox-Hicksite split.)

I attended a workshop on visitation, so central to FWCC's "face-to-face and heart-to-heart" mission, where we related some of our visitation experiences, and one Friend spoke of the role of language in understanding, hav-

ing clerked the Epistle Committee at the World Conference of Friends in Honduras in 1991; the committee worked in four languages, and some of its members were new to the concept of epistle writing.

An important focus of the Section has been the recent capital campaign, which has come close to meeting its goal. There is still a troublesome budget deficit. For the coming fiscal year two staff positions have been laid down, proposed salary increases eliminated, health insurance contributions reduced, and program expenses lowered to the point where it was felt that further cuts would compromise the essential mission of FWCC.

“Convergent Friends” were spoken of, Friends from various traditions who are all “blown in the same direction by the winds of the spirit” toward a more authentically spiritual life and are willing to experiment to see which spiritual disciplines still hold life and power. As one Friend observed, “Quakerism is not a finished product.” (For more, see [robinmsf.blogspot.com](http://robinmsf.blogspot.com).)

Two Cuban Friends attended, the first time in several years that they have been able to get visas. Friends from Bolivia and Peru, however, were unable to attend. A Friend from Aotearoa/New Zealand brought greetings from the Asia-Pacific section, which meets every three years. She told us that the Maori word for Friends means “church that moves with the wind of the spirit.”

### **Aging Resources, Consultation, and Help**

Barbara Spring, ARCH

ARCH: Aging Resources, Consultation and Help is active within the North-east Region providing consultation and workshops. The reason ARCH fills a need for NYYM seniors and adults with disabilities is reflected in the following story.

The daughter called with concerns about her parents. The sibs were in agreement that it was past time for this couple in their late 80s to move to an assisted living facility. Dad had memory issues; Mom had various problems that make getting around their split-level house increasingly difficult and painful. But the daughter thought her mother would probably refuse to allow us to make a home visit because of the condition of the house.

Anita Paul, a local ARCH consultant, made a call, asked some questions, described some services to which she might refer the couple, and was invited to come by the following week. Over the course of six months of visits

Anita suggested a hearing test for the wife and recommended the low-cost hearing-assistance phone from Verizon. She also began slowly to talk to the couple about next steps and what it would take for them to be ready to take them.

Anita also worked with the wife to identify what she wanted to move and what she could let go. Beginning the deciding and sorting was key to the couple's being able to imagine leaving. At the end of the third month of their working together, the couple's thinking about moving had progressed from "sometime," to "this summer," and finally, to "this spring." The next time an assisted-living apartment was available near one of the children, the couple took it. Such stories reflect the role of a local ARCH consultant in helping a senior and his or her family.

Another ARCH role is conducting workshops. Following is an example of an ARCH workshop.

On a beautiful May Saturday, 21 people from the Northeast Region gathered to discuss their end-of-life plans. The local ARCH consultant, Barbara Spring, facilitated. The group shared stories, gathered hospice information, reviewed legal advanced-directive documents, then framed the spiritual dimensions of this important time of life.

How can we best prepare to ensure that our end-of-life experience is an act of love to our family and the meeting? The meeting needs vital information on file to assist the family in its many decisions. In this medical and legal age it is highly important to have information clearly stated and a well-informed healthcare proxy, so each person's choices are honored. Completing life stories helps define opportunities where a person can say: Thank you, Please forgive me, I forgive you, I love you—in preparation for the final Goodbye. Allowing the meeting and friends minister to us through care teams, sacred music, and prayer vigils connects the practical with the eternal in acts of love.

Early Quakers gathered at the bedside of the dying for worship and especially to listen for messages from the dying person as they "crossed over." This image reminded us of the special ministry of the dying person as she or he prepares their soul for the next realm. Hopefully, expectations were raised for grace within each of us and for our caring circle as we die.

Contact Barbara Spring at [barbarakspring4@msn.com](mailto:barbarakspring4@msn.com) or Anita Paul at [anitalouisepaul@juno.com](mailto:anitalouisepaul@juno.com) for more information about ARCH.

### **Executive Director Sought for NCPTF**

The National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund (NCPTF) in Washington, D.C., is seeking an executive director to begin October 1, 2008. The executive director will lead lobbying, administration, and fundraising activities of NCPTF, and Peace Tax Foundation, a 501(c)(3) educational organization.

NCPTF lobbies for passage of Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill, to establish in law the right of conscientious objection to military taxation. For detailed requirements and salary information, and to submit résumé (do so before August 15, 2008), contact [searchcommittee@peacetaxfund.org](mailto:searchcommittee@peacetaxfund.org). Additional information at [www.peacetaxfund.org](http://www.peacetaxfund.org), or call 888-PEACETAX.

### **YSOP and UU to Join in Workcamp**

On October 17 and 18, 2008, the Youth Service Opportunities Project is planning an overnight Workcamp for Quaker and Unitarian Universalist youth to join together in serving homeless and hungry people in New York City.

Now in its 25th year at 15 Rutherford Place, YSOP Workcamps offer youth a great way to serve those in need, build team spirit, and give direction to a meeting's youth group. Begin the next school year with a meaningful service experience while helping people in need by coming to the October 17–18 Workcamp!

Please contact: Kimberly Tomaszewski, YSOP NY program assistant, [Ktomaszewski@ysop.org](mailto:Ktomaszewski@ysop.org); 212-598-0973 x103. A flyer for the event is available at [www.nyym.org/events](http://www.nyym.org/events).

### **Call for Submissions for the Quaker Youth Book Project**

The Quaker Youth Book Project is now accepting submissions of writing and art by Friends ages 15-35. The Call for Submissions, which includes submission guidelines and suggested topics and questions, is available now on the Project's website in English and Spanish. Go to <http://www.fgcquaker.org/qy/call-for-submissions> to read it or to download it as a PDF file.

Teenage and adult Friends ages 15-35 are invited and encouraged to submit their nonfiction writing and visual art for consideration and possible inclusion in the book. All submissions will be considered and the book will be assembled by an editorial board of young adult Friends from all branches of

the Religious Society of Friends and all over the world. To meet the editorial board go to [www.fgcquaker.org/qy/quipbook](http://www.fgcquaker.org/qy/quipbook) and click on "Meet the Editorial board."

Submissions will be accepted by e-mail or mail until **February 28, 2009**. Friends are encouraged to send submissions early if they can!

Please note the new e-mail address for the project, effective immediately: **QuipYouthBook@gmail.com**.

Information on writing and art workshops will be available soon. Check the project Web site often at [www.quakeryouth.org/quipbook](http://www.quakeryouth.org/quipbook)!