



SPARK

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

Volume 49, Number 2

15 Rutherford Place, New York, NY 10003

March 2019

**PAY AS
LED**



Oakwood Friends School

**Spring AND
Summer Sessions
registration is
NOW OPEN!**

Welcome, Friends, to Spring Sessions at Oakwood Friends School!

It is always a joy to gather at our own yearly meeting Friends school in Poughkeepsie, where we can mingle with young Friends over excellent meals in their dining room and enjoy the lovely campus environment. It all starts with loving, Spirit-led, communal labor together. The choices, the decisions, are the responsibility of all of us, not of any one or two or ten or twenty of us.

We have both important business matters to discern and inspiring reports to consider from the valuable work of Friends that goes on all the time across our entire area. The more who can join us, the better will be our decisions, which will affect all of us. We will have a new budget proposal to

consider and there is a chance that we may begin to consider some yearly meeting structure revisions as well. Please consider joining us if you are able. Participant expenses are as you are able to pay, or as you are moved to spend if you are able to help by paying a little extra. **Pay as led** applies to all three of our gatherings: Spring, Summer, and Fall Sessions. Advance registration is important so that informed planning can be made with some accuracy. Please make a note in your calendars and try to join us if you can. We need input from as many of our Friends as possible!

—Jeffrey Aaron, NYYM Clerk

**Go to page 11 for Spring
Sessions info and registration!**

**It is also time to REGISTER for
Summer Sessions —
regular registration ends May 15!**

Register now at nyym.org/summer-sessions-registration
See page 9 for more information on Summer Sessions.

Transforming Conflict

**Guest Edited by Heather
M. Cook & Karen Reixach**
Committee on Conflict
Transformation

In this issue of *Spark*, different voices offer different perspectives on conflict: how it might be understood, learned from, and used to strengthen us as a community. Whether on an international scale or one-on-one, the wounding we experience often feels both unique and universal. Conflict points to the need for something to change, and it will keep pointing there until change comes. Usually that change has to do with shifts in relationship, with how we treat each other and ourselves. Addressing conflict openly and creatively requires faith and commitment.

For several years, the Committee on Conflict Transformation has been meeting most weeks by phone, in person at Sessions when possible, and once or twice a year for a weekend retreat. Invariably during the retreat, conflict surfaces among us. We stumble. It often feels scary and embarrassing (“Ack, I’m being called out on my stuff!”). Perhaps it’s something that happened months or years ago, and we may feel silly



© Wilma L. Campbell, 2019

for still carrying it, hearing an inner voice telling us we should just get over it. What is our own inward work to do, and what needs to be brought to the door of the person who has hurt us?

We take a big breath, hold hands with Jesus, and step in.

Once we’ve worked through the issue, there’s a feeling of relief and of heightened trust. We have shown up in an authentic way, offering up our layers of wounds and asking to be seen. We have acknowledged each other’s courage, both to speak and to listen. We come out the other side, full of hope and love.

And we will stumble again.

What an amazing laboratory! How great that we get to practice what we seek to assist others to do. We experience how hard it can be—and how rewarding.

More Inside:

 **Conflict** pp. 4-8

Summer Sessions
pp. 9-10

Spring Sessions
pp. 11-12

Notices

New Members

Rob Docters—Wilton
Richard Duffee—Wilton
Frances Gascon—Unadilla
Carl Peter Tulevech—
Rockland

Transfers

**Ron, Lisa, Charlotte, and
Jocelyne Brooks**, to
Chatham-Summit from Still-
water (SCYM)
Nadine Clare Hoover, to
Buffalo from Alfred
Ronald Rieder, to Morning-
side from Scarsdale

Deaths

Marguerite “Mig” Pronto,
member of Adirondack, on
February 3, 2019

UPCOMING EVENTS

NYYM Spring Sessions

April 5-7, 2019, hosted by Nine
Partners Regional Meeting at
Oakwood Friends School in Pough-
keepsie, NY. See pages 11-12.

Next Event in the Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series:

Clerking in the 21st Century May 3 (evening)–May 5 (lunch)

Powell House, Old Chatham, NY
This weekend will provide opportu-
nities for young adults at all phases
of their Quakerdom to learn about
clerking. Come if you know a lot,
know a little, know nothing, or
perhaps think you know something
but aren't sure. We will hear from
current and former clerks and
discuss how traditional clerking
translates into the 21st century. At
the end of this workshop, partici-
pants will know more about clerk-
ing and will have built skills to
move into clerking roles. Join us to
enjoy the beauty of Powell House in
the spring and to build and deepen
our skills in and knowledge of an
important Quaker practice! Visit
youngadultfriends.weebly.com to
register and for more information.

Reaching the Sacred Across the Divide

Come to Farmington Scipio
Regional Spring Gathering
May 17-19

Watson Homestead,
Painted Post, NY

Registration Questions:
contact Bronwyn Mohlke
FSRMSpringGathering@gmail.com
607-220-3219

Around Our Yearly Meeting

**The Friends General Conference
Gathering**—Peace in our Hearts,
Justice in the World

Early registration opens April 1!
June 30-July 6, 2019, at Grinnell
College, Grinnell, Iowa

The Friends General Conference
(FGC) Gathering is an amazing
opportunity to immerse yourself
in Quaker spirituality and to enjoy
yourself among new and famil-
iar F/friends. This year there are
deep discounts for children, teens,
and young adults—including no
program fees for children and
teens! Bring your family and come
this year! Visit [www.fgcquaker.org/
connect/gathering](http://www.fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering)

NYYM Summer Sessions

July 21-27, 2019, at Silver Bay YMCA
Conference and Family Retreat
Center, Silver Bay, NY. This, our
annual weekly gathering, is now
“Pay as Led.” Please register soon—
registration deadline is May 15. See
pages 9-10.

SAVE THE DATE:

Creating Generous Congregations
a workshop at Powell House
August 16-18, 2019

Facilitated by Colin Saxton

Does your meeting ever have a
hard time with conversations about
giving and financial support? An
exciting new workshop is coming to
Powell House this summer!

As Quakers, we sometimes
struggle to have conversations
about giving and our use of wealth,
especially as it relates to meeting
finances. Creating Generous
Congregations (CGC) is an inter-
active and practical workshop
focused on inspiring and equipping
meetings toward generosity and
faithful, financial stewardship.
Participants will explore the unique
mission/vision of the meeting,
current trends in giving, the spiri-
tuality of fundraising, and creative
ways to invite Friends into a fuller

partnership in the shared work and
witness of the fellowship.

Make a note on your calendar,
and watch for an invitation coming
through the mail to your meeting
treasurer soon.

OPPORTUNITIES

Join ARCH Visitor Training Online

Have you ever thought to yourself,
“One of these days I’m going to
make it to one of those weekend
ARCH training retreats, but
committing to a whole weekend
away just doesn’t seem practical
right now”? Well this is for you.

Participate in the new ARCH
Visitor Remote Training via Zoom
video conference this Spring 2019!
Yes, all of the great resources,
learning, community building,
spiritual deepening, and interper-
sonal connections of the ARCH
Visitor Training retreat weekends
are now available in a format geared
for today’s busy Quaker. We will
meet weekly via Zoom for seven
weeks for about an hour and a half,
at a time mutually agreeable to the
group. No experience with Zoom
or video conferencing necessary—
training provided.

Sign up today! Visit [nyym.org/
content/arch](http://nyym.org/content/arch) and click on “becom-
ing an ARCH Visitor.”

If you have questions, please
email ARCH@NYYM.org.

NYYM Meeting Houses & Properties Fund

The Trustees would like to remind
all about the Meeting Houses and
Properties Fund. From the New
York Yearly Meeting Trust Fund
Descriptions, August 2018 Version:

“This fund was established in
2017 at the direction of the Trust-
ees. The proceeds from the sale of
the Plattekill Meeting House was
deposited in this fund. The income
is directed to the Meeting Houses
and Properties designated use fund.

The income from the Brinkerhoff
fund is also directed to the Meeting
Houses and Properties Fund.”

Per the Trustees minutes of May
23, 2017, “...the approved uses of
that Fund are expanded to include
maintenance, repair and new
construction of meetinghouses and
properties.”

The Trustees will be reviewing
all applications to this fund at the
end of May, so it is our request that
you submit any requests prior to
that time. The link that follows
takes you to the NYYM Financial
Resources for Individuals and
Meetings page—please scroll down
towards the bottom to find the form
to complete and submit.
[www.nyym.org/content/nyym-
financial-resources-individuals-
and-meetings#properties](http://www.nyym.org/content/nyym-financial-resources-individuals-and-meetings#properties)

The Powell House Subscription Series

Powell House is the conference
and retreat center for NYYM. As we
begin to launch the second year of
offering a subscription series for
individuals and monthly meetings
at Powell House, let’s review the
specifics of the program.

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Snowy fire circle at Powell House, January 2019

Photo by Sarah Way


The individual plan: Any individual who pays \$720 is eligible to come to as many Powell House programs as they'd like for one year.

The monthly meeting plan: A monthly meeting that pays \$1440 can have one person at each Powell House program for one year.

Powell House subscriptions have some restrictions and guidelines. Please feel free to bring questions or concerns to Co-Executive Director Regina Baird Haag at regina@powellhouse.org or at 518-794-8811.

Here's a testimonial from a current individual subscription holder, Joanna Oltman Smith:

"The Powell House subscription plan lets me support a place that means a lot to my family, while also allowing me to attend conferences on a regular basis without second guessing. The more one attends PoHo, the better for heart and soul, and the subscription definitely encourages more frequent attendance. It also greatly simplifies the registration process. Found time! What a gift."

Visit powellhouse.org/index.php/have-you-considered-a-poho-subscription for more information and contact sharon@nnyym.org to purchase a subscription. 

Letter to the Editor

Submit letters of under 250 words to communication@nnyym.org or mail them to the NYYM office.

Friends,

The January *Spark* essay about atheists and agnostics ("Recent NYYM History: Atheists, Agnostics, and Non-theists"), by Tim Connolly of Purchase Meeting, brought up some good points. It made me look up my list of the names of God, compiled from reading and listening over the years: Heavenly Father, Allah, Holy Spirit, Divine Mother, Jehovah, Creator, Ground of Being, Atheism, Great Spirit, Primal Unique.... Since all energy and material is made of Spirit's consciousness, why quibble about the names? Friends fortunately have avoided the Dark Ages "theology" that still deludes many would-be Christians. In my experience, a Friends Clearness Committee for a new member asks questions, but does not require a loyalty test or creed. Anyone who is willing to sit in the silence with us and listen is welcome, regardless of the name of their philosophy. As far as defining that concept in *Faith and Practice*, I will leave that to others.

—Will Doggette, New Paltz Meeting

Join the Match

Commit to a Recurring Gift Before Summer Sessions

An enthusiastic supporter is offering a match to encourage us all to join in making sustaining contributions to New York Yearly Meeting.

\$50,000 is available to match new and increased recurring gifts offered before Summer Sessions 2019. This match is made possible by a generous gift from a fellow NYYM member. For your contribution to be eligible, all you have to do is indicate that your gift is recurring (monthly, yearly, etc.). If you'd prefer not to participate in the match, you can indicate that when you make your donation.

New York Yearly Meeting has programs and resources to help your meeting grow, connect with your community, nurture your population of Friends throughout different life stages, enrich the spiritual life of your meeting, and support your meeting through difficulties. Your gifts help support all of the work of NYYM, work that strengthens our communities and helps us continue to bring our Quaker faith to the world.

Your gifts to your own local meeting remain the backbone of support for our shared nurture of one another, and for our ministry in the spirit and witness to the world. With your direct support for NYYM, we can do more.



We hope that you will consider this request to be well-ordered and needed, and that you will make a donation in an amount that reflects both the value our yearly meeting has for you and your own capacity to give. Visit nnyym.org and click "Donate to NYYM" or call the NYYM office at 212-673-5750 to donate. 



photo by Jan McCracken

Can Children Lead the Way to Peace?

At Albany Monthly Meeting we believe the answer is an emphatic, "YES!" With the goal of bearing witness to our Peace Testimony, we are again holding our **Children's Peace Week**, now renamed **Young Peacemakers Week** (YPW). The scheduled dates are August 19–23, 2019, from 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m., with the option of supervised play from 3–5 p.m. YPW will be held at our Meetinghouse, at 727 Madison Ave., in Albany. It is open to all children entering grades 2–8 in the fall of 2019, with a final celebration for all children and their families on Friday, August 23, from 1–3 p.m. Although the suggested donation is \$85 per child, no one will be turned away for inability to pay. Each day will be devoted to a peace theme, such as peace within yourself, peace in the environment, peace in your family, etc. Activities will be planned with these themes in mind, in a summer day camp atmosphere. There will be music, art, drama, non-competitive games, a field trip to a nature preserve, walks to the park, as well as a variety of creative and child-led projects. If you have children of the right age, or know young people that would enjoy this peace-making experience, please consider joining us in August! We are also looking for teacher assistants and teen-age interns as paid staff, as well as volunteers—we welcome all who are interested. For more information, visit youngpeacemakersweek.weebly.com, or find us on Facebook. Individual questions can be answered by contacting Anita Stanley at meridiancomm@earthlink.net or 518-441-7722. We hope to hear from you soon! 

Editor's Note

Welcome to a jam-packed issue of *Spark*! This issue was guest-edited by Heather Cook and Karen Reixach of the Committee on Conflict Transformation. Learn how conflict can be useful, transformative, and necessary for change. Many thanks to Heather and Karen for all their hard work.

Don't miss the information for **Spring Sessions**, April 5–7 at Oakwood Friends School. See pages 11–12 for details and a registration form. Registration is open now. The deadline to register for hospitality and meals is March 20, so don't delay. I'll see you there!

Summer Sessions registration is OPEN! See pages 9–10. This year our annual, week-long, multi-generational gathering is "Pay as Led." Friends who need to pay less can do so, and Friends who can pay more to support our community can do so. The goal is to make Summer Sessions more accessible to everyone. Regular registration for Summer Sessions ENDS May 15, much earlier than in the past. Please spread the word.

You, Friend, are invited to write an article for *Spark*. Articles are considered a form of ministry. Please limit yourself to 400–600 words.

Upcoming *Spark* themes:

May: **Quaker Commonality.**

What binds Quakers together in a common faith? What threatens to keep us apart? What it is that makes us a Religious Society of Friends?

Sept. or Nov.: **Light Behind the Walls.**

On prison ministry, AVP, and more. Details to come.

Send article submissions to communications@nnyym.org by the 1st week of the month prior to the month of publication.

InfoShare is NYYM's emailed newsletter. **Share your meeting's news and events!** Send them to: communications@nnyym.org.

Engage with NYYM online! Follow New York Yearly Meeting on Facebook, NYYM Tweets on Twitter, and [newyorkyearlymeeting](https://www.instagram.com/newyorkyearlymeeting) (no hyphen) on Instagram.

Join or leave different NYYM email lists at www.tinyurl.com/nnyymconnect

And: Peace! —Sarah Way



Join NYYM's mailing lists at **NYYM Connect!** www.tinyurl.com/nnyymconnect



Transforming Conflict

Why Conflict Transformation?

Karen Reixach

Ithaca Meeting
Clerk of Committee on
Conflict Transformation

The more usual way of talking about responding to conflict is *conflict resolution* or *conflict management*. The New York Yearly Meeting Committee on Conflict Transformation bases its work on the sense that conflict is normal, that it is a doorway to deeper engagement with others, with self, and with Spirit, and that addressing conflict requires change. We use the word *transformation* to emphasize these aspects.

Conflict resolution or *conflict management* often focuses on the immediate issues and looks for solutions. For example, people have different ideas about First Day School for elementary school-age children. Some parents insist on the importance of education in Quakerism; others feel equally strongly that kids are in school 5 days a week and need time to connect with other children and adults, with Quaker values absorbed through interaction. The First Day School Committee decides on 20-25 minutes of free play as children arrive, 20-25 minutes of Quaker education and 15 minutes in meeting for worship. Conflict “re-solved.” Much good work has been done on approaches to conflict resolution; for example mediation has been used at individual and group levels with good effect.

Conflict transformation looks not only at the presenting problem but also for the underlying dynamics and the resources for change. The challenge of First Day School raises questions of theology: what, how, and even if Quakerism is presented. It may mean that teachers seldom get to participate in meeting for worship. There may be resentments about unrelated issues that are played out around the First Day School issue. Rather than seeing simply the presenting problem (which is not to minimize its importance), conflict transformation seeks to understand the particular episode not in isolation but as part of a network of relationships and embedded in structures that affect the ability to respond constructively

to the particular episode and to the underlying dynamics.

John Paul Lederach, a student and practitioner with a bias for conflict transformation, compares the two models—see table below.

Lederach observes, “Rather than seeing peace as a static ‘end-state,’ conflict transformation views peace as a continuously evolving and developing quality of relationship.”

Dialog is an essential part of conflict transformation. Quakers have particular resources in this regard—worship sharing, meeting for worship with a concern for business at the committee level as well as the meeting level, threshing sessions, and the work of AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project). Our committee engaged Kay Pranis, an expert in using circles processes, to train Friends and others in this ancient and contemporary approach to building community, celebrating, and transforming conflicts.

Friends who wish to explore conflict transformation more deeply might want to read John Paul Lederach’s *Little Book of Conflict Transformation* and Kay Pranis’s *Little Book of Circle Processes*. The Committee on Conflict Transformation is available to offer workshops for Quaker groups or to assist meetings and other Quaker groups experiencing conflicts they wish to transform. Please be aware that we do not have a magic wand to wave and make everything better, that it takes time to get into difficulty and time for transformation to happen.

Below: table by John Paul Lederach comparing two methods of responding to conflict. See “Why Conflict Transformation?” by Karen Reixach, above.

	Conflict resolution	Conflict transformation
Key question	How do we end something not desired?	How do we end something destructive and build something desired?
Focus	Content-centered	Relationship-centered
Purpose	To achieve an agreement and solution to the presenting problem creating the crisis	To promote constructive change processes, inclusive of, but not limited to, immediate solutions
Development of the process	Embedded and built around the immediacy of the relationship where the symptoms of disruptions appear	Envisions the presenting problem as an opportunity for response to symptoms and engagement of systems within which relationships are embedded.
Time frame	Short-term relief to pain, anxiety, and difficulties	Mid- to long-range and is intentionally crisis-responsive rather than crisis-driven
View of conflict	Envisions the need to de-escalate	Envisions conflict as an ecology that is relationally dynamic with ebb (conflict de-escalation to pursue constructive change) and flow (conflict escalation to pursue constructive change)

The Restorative Framework as a Pathway to Peace

Kay Pranis

Author, *Little Book of Circle Practices*

In August, 2018, I turned 70. Now it is 2019 and I realize I have been engaged with restorative justice for 30 years. The journey was never mapped or planned. It unfolded by its own logic. One of the joys of my work is the opportunity to be with young adults who are beginning their journeys and who offer so much hope because they are starting their journeys so much younger than I was and with so much more insight about the nature of this work. My understanding of the work I do has evolved significantly over the years.

For me the restorative justice framework was appealing around the ways that framework could be used to change communities, rather than for its application to individual experiences of harm and repair. My work in Brazil starting in 2010 exposed me to the concept of a Culture of Peace and deepened my sense of the potential of the circle process, in particular, to move us toward cultural transformation. I experience a meaningful conversation about a Culture of Peace in Brazil that I do not find in the US.

I believe that a Culture of Peace is a way of describing a culture in which all parts of the culture live well together. For me that includes the rocks and waters, plants and animals—every part of the interconnected community of a place.

For me the vision of restorative justice is a vision of *living together* in a *good way*. The emphasis here is on living together and on a good way. That means living in a way that attends to the well-being of each individual **and** the well-being of the whole. The collective needs to be aware of its impact on each individual **and** each individual must be aware of their impact on the collective. The well-being of everyone requires that everyone be treated with respect and dignity. It also requires that each person is valued for their unique gifts and that each person has sufficient autonomy to find their own purpose in harmony with the common good.

To create a community that achieves that vision I believe we will need to shift our habits and norms on several dimensions:

- From separateness to interconnection and interdependence
- From external controls to internal controls
- From deficit analysis to asset analysis, strength-based thinking
- From hierarchies to self-organizing systems
- From primacy of the mind and intellectual analysis to multiple ways of knowing and seeing
- From individual expertise to collective wisdom
- From having answers to not-knowing as a skill, having curiosity
- From human nature as the problem to human nature as the solution

The restorative justice framework provides a compass for guiding these shifts toward living together well. The peacemaking circle



process gives a concrete methodology for practicing the habits of living together well—so that we can internalize those habits and rely on them even when we are not sitting in circle.

These shifts—from separate-ness to interconnection; external controls to internal controls; deficit analysis to asset analysis; hierarchies to self-organizing systems; primacy of the mind to multiple ways of knowing; from individual expertise to collective wisdom; having answers to not knowing as a skill; human nature as the problem to human nature as the solution—are very hard work. They require an ability to look at everything with new eyes. Continuous self-awareness, feedback, reinforcement, and inspiration are necessary to make and sustain these shifts. And they cannot be done alone—community support is essential to making these shifts. We need each other.

A copy of Kay Pranis' Little Book of Circle Processes was given to every monthly meeting and worship group in NYYM in 2017.

Helpfully Preparing a Controversial Matter for Meeting for Business

Steve Mohlke

NYYM General Secretary

What does it take to prepare a potentially divisive matter for meeting for business in a way that allows everyone to do their best individual and corporate discernment? Based on my experience I have some suggestions.

When I was new to the process of bringing weighty matters to the meeting for business it sometimes didn't go well. The discussion would be frustrating and ineffective. The sharing occasionally led to disrespect, hurting the community.

The process often started in consultation with other committee members. We would create a report that covered all our points in a way that we hoped people would understand and agree to. As the date of the meeting approached, we would ask each other questions like, Will it be approved? Will anyone object? Will so-and-so object? We would present and see what happened. Sometimes someone would raise



Interface by Cherry Rahn, Central Finger Lakes Meeting

a concern that depended on an unknown piece of information. Rather than lay the matter aside, we might slog through for a while to see if anyone had the answer. We might even guess at answers. It was also reasonably common, as the group seemed to be moving toward unity, for someone to raise a new concern late in the process. This was jarring and usually took us out of a spirit of worship. Or, a concern might stir significant emotional response as people heard it for the first time. It's hard to practice good discernment while recovering from missing information or processing a big emotional response. When those things happen, unity is unlikely. Sound familiar? There is at least one better way.

Instead of bringing a committee report straight to meeting for business, think of the report as a draft. Circulate it in the newsletter or as a separate printed handout well in advance and in such a way that everyone has the opportunity to see it. There has to be enough time for people to respond but they don't need forever. At this point the committee members should seek feedback but not by asking whether others agree with the report. Instead, ask, "What questions or concerns would you want to see addressed when this matter comes to the meeting for business?" If a person has a question, answer it and then include the question and the answer in the next version of the report. If the person expresses an opinion, don't argue or defend the report. The idea is to collect contrary views, not squash them.

The contrary views need to be shared. If you think someone has expertise on the matter or is likely to hold concerns or strong opinions, don't passively wait for them to respond, ask them. Don't try to persuade anyone that their concern isn't worthy.

The committee may decide to continue its recommendation despite contrary views. However, it needs to rewrite the report to include all concerns. The meeting needs to know all the concerns in order to be able to adequately consider the committee's recommendation. The revised report should strive to explain any concerns clearly even if the person who originally expressed it wasn't clear. Before publishing the revision, ask the people who expressed concerns whether the written revision adequately explains what they were trying to share.

At some point during the preliminary work, it may become clear that people have strong emotional reactions about the matter. It helps to find a way to welcome the emotions, process them, and allow release before attempting corporate discernment. Consider presenting the draft report at a gathering for questions and sharing. Sometimes we

need to hear the emotion from each other in person. It is important to be explicit in advance that the meeting is not for reaching a conclusion. Shifting toward a conclusion closes down the sharing space.

When confidence is high that known concerns have been identified and explained in the report, it is ready for Meeting for Business.

While this process may seem like a lot of effort and time, it offers several benefits to the meeting for business and the community.

- Everybody starts the corporate discernment with all known concerns explained in writing.
- People feel heard—they can be fully present to the discernment knowing that the concern they raised is in the report and everyone is aware of it.
- Concerns are separated from individuals—It isn't so-and-so's concern anymore, the concern belongs to the group.
- The flow is improved—the corporate discernment can begin with the largest issues first.
- Emotion is dissipated—it's had a chance for expression and release.
- Trust is built in the group.

This isn't meant to be a prescription. I offer it as a model to be adapted to particular circumstances in order to promote good use of our precious corporate time, and to allow participants to open to the movement of the Spirit.

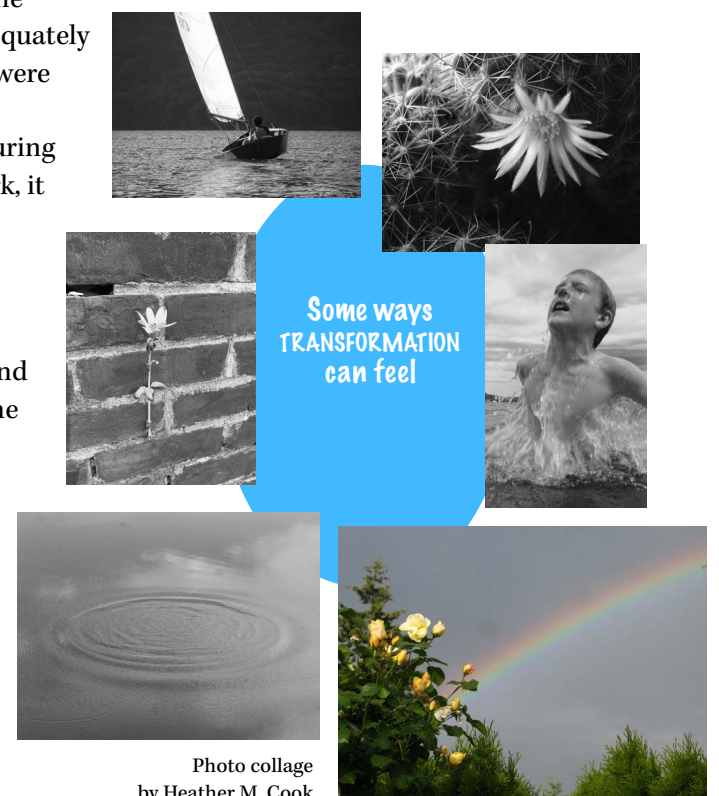


Photo collage by Heather M. Cook



Transforming Conflict

A New Approach to Engaging With Our Conflicts

Tom Rothschild

Brooklyn Meeting
(now attending Strawberry Creek Meeting)

It's time to take a fresh look at "conflict" and how we respond to it and engage with it—or all too often, run away from it and pretend it doesn't exist, particularly when it's within our meeting or involves us personally.

From almost our beginning as an organized religious group, Quakers have spoken out against "all outward wars, and strife, and fightings with outward weapons" and declared this to be "our testimony to the whole world." We have proclaimed this testimony far and wide, feeding, healing, and welcoming those whom our nation names as enemies, calling on those engaged in battle to make peace. We continue to carry this tradition of public witness today, "speaking truth to power," in the words of Bayard Rustin, on many issues and in many places.

At the same time, at least within our own community, Quakers today seem to be very conflict-averse. Confronted with unpleasant situations of conflict within our own meetings, we often tend to deny their existence, walk away, or put responsibility on others. When we do this, we miss opportunities to respond creatively, restore community, resolve issues.

Over almost two decades of working with meetings and other organizations trying to resolve conflicts and find a place of unity and community, I have found that many, not only Quakers, avoid seeking help because they are reluctant to acknowledge internal conflict. They may, however, be more open if the situation is framed differently. A recent experience underlined this for me. A religious organization needed to set goals and plan for use of assets and property. Opinions ranged from "sell everything and give to the poor," to renting space to other organizations, to long-term investments to cover future maintenance costs. They were sure they wanted my



Untitled (Conflict) by Barbara Menzel,
New Brunswick Meeting

help to begin charting their course, and equally sure that the organization had no "conflict." The process we created was not dependent on whether or not there was in fact any explicit "conflict," and at the same time addressed all the salient issues. This process left them feeling confident of their capability to continue the work on their own.

The sum of my experience leads me to propose a fresh approach, not insisting on the word "conflict" (or euphemisms), while still acknowledging the reality of the situation, whatever it may be. Let us be open to simply identifying matters and situations needing discernment, decision, finding unity, without necessarily requiring further categorization.

We Friends have understandings and tools that we have developed over the lifetime of our Society, for listening, for spiritual discernment, that can help us find resolution—and spiritual growth—whether or not we explicitly name the situation as one of "conflict." We understand this work as a spiritual practice, in which we can grow, individually and corporately, and we understand the need for patience.

This approach can render us more open to take the first step and face concrete issues directly. This does not mean avoiding or denying conflict; indeed, to do so would be extremely counterproductive, even potentially dangerous. We simply start working on what needs work, alert to whatever may arise. And once people are actually engaged, they will often be more open to recognizing and dealing with conflict, whether incipient, hidden or full-blown, if they find it standing in their way. Then our skills of discernment, of listening can lead us forward, until we can see the matter clearly; and the conflict, if there is truly a conflict, will emerge from the shadows to a place where all can see and acknowledge it—in which case we can respond to it with all the understanding we have.

Finding Potential in Conflict

Stuart Bartram

Genesee Valley Meeting

I am interested in the potential in conflict. I'll try to explain why. The following took place in an Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshop inside a prison. A young man had shared from his experience and his pain. He was finding his way, he was engaged. I was deeply glad he was with us. That's a piece of why I was there. AVP works!

The Department of Corrections imposes strict guidelines on what we may and may not do. An example is that we could offer few smoke breaks and only at designated times. On the second day of this workshop the same young man asked me for, then demanded an additional smoke break. I said we could not do it and did my best to explain why. In a near fury of nicotine withdrawal he left the room and the workshop. Did AVP not work?

My involvement in AVP has shown me that there's more potential in conflict than merely returning to neutral ground—that it offers growth in understanding of and engaging in human connection.

Much later, a year after that episode, the young man returned. He said to me, "I quit smoking—it was keeping me from what I needed." The conflict had been between us but also within each of us. I knew it as dismay. So I recognized the treasure!

In AVP we talk about "transforming power." We call it our foundation. It is a phrase a person of any faith or no faith may use. For me it is deeply steeped in Spirit. By the roots of the word the power to transform is the power to "change the shape of." Conflict is part of the human condition; violence is not. We may choose violence in any of its many forms but there are always other choices. We may change the shape of conflict into opportunity. I've seen it happen many times. AVP has helped me to find the faith that it may be so.

Conflict, Gospel Order, and the Covenant Community

F. Peter Phillips

Cornwall Friends Meeting

Quaker approaches to conflict within our spiritual communities are grounded on the notion of "gospel order." Historically, the concept of "gospel order" arose from strictly religious beliefs. Lloyd Lee Wilson defines "gospel order" as "that state of affairs which would prevail everywhere if the experience of the pure and holy birth of which Barclay speaks were universal." In that sense, "gospel order" might be understood as that way of living that approximates, and ultimately yields, the divinely inspired community.

The Society of Friends has always relied upon corporate discernment rather than individual meditation to determine the will of the Spirit. Sandra Cronk expressly links "gospel order" to communal society as practiced by early Friends. Early Quakers discerned that God, once attended to, propounds a new social order of reconciliation and community. Conflicts among Friends were therefore perceived as instances of departure from a divinely-inspired state—as violations of the divine will as discerned through "gospel order." Jesus's teachings in Matthew 18, to Cronk, set forth "an outline of a procedure to embody accountability within a community."

This concept of "accountability" is central to our dealing with conflict among one another. The monthly meeting has always been recognized as the core of faith-based authority among Quakers, and constitutes the basic "covenant community," with special relationships to each other and to the divine. The weighty concept of "covenant" is intentionally and inextricably linked with the Quaker concept of "gospel order." As Lloyd Lee Wilson put it, "Friends' understanding of the monthly meeting as covenant community is that in the Gospel Order, God is calling individuals to live in covenant with Him and through that covenant in community with one another."

This covenant relationship imposes consequences upon a






chronically disputatious spiritual community. Jerold Auerbach noted, “How people dispute is, after all, a function of how (and whether) they relate.”

The concept of Friends’ living in communities that are covenanted mandates that such communities be harmonious. “Gospel order” presupposes a harmonious state. It can be acknowledged that disharmony within the community is inevitable, while simultaneously accepting the religiously inspired obligation conscientiously to address and promptly to resolve such conflicts. Writ large, the implications of harmony in “gospel order” culminate in the Quaker Peace Testimony.

Thus, “gospel order” facilitates (or predicates) two dimensions of rigor: an individual’s covenantal relationship with God, and the proper and harmonious functioning of the monthly meeting—the core community of the Society.

These principles illuminate why the effort of the yearly meeting to assist monthly meetings in addressing internal conflict does not use the rubric of “resolution,” but rather of “transformation.” The goal—the charge, if you will—is to transform our meetings into the covenanted communities whose accountability to each other in individual relationships is necessary in order to achieve unity with the divine in corporate worship.


You can view the bibliography and references for this article online. 

Lean On Me Martha Gurvich Wilton Meeting

Caring for family during times of crisis can bring up many layers of conflict. Emotions are high, and each of us has a different way of thinking through the challenges that rise up. One of the most difficult things is to be able to remain clearheaded when we are so stressed and trying to grasp at any way to get control of what is happening. With nerves on edge, we lash out at one another when we expect someone to share our vision of what is happening, or how to manage care for someone we love. While there are so many places of conflict when our families

are experiencing hard times, one of the things that is not easy to remember is to be kind to ourselves. Family crises bring up a lot of internal issues, and it is important to notice and acknowledge them, and to accept yourself and your own emotional needs.

I have worked with a good number of people navigating their loved one’s illness or diminishment. The thing that seems most important at the start of this work is to help show each individual a place of emotional respite, a safe place where they can feel loved and accepted, as they second-guess their way through uncharted territory. Each situation is different; there are no rules, no way to predict what will come next. We can’t find ease in our decision-making process or in our relationships without inner peace. When working as a family community we need to come from a centered, grounded place, understanding that everyone involved has their own personal path, and those personal paths are very different from ours. If we disagree from a centered, consciously peaceful place, we are able to see the others as the humans they are, full of grief, fear, and anxiety, as much as we are. Once we are able to turn the focus to that, it becomes easier to be loving towards one another and towards ourselves.

So how do we do that? Take a deep breath; take a break, a walk, a nap. Journal without thinking too hard, scribble your thoughts, you don’t need to reread them. Don’t be afraid to talk about your fear, your sadness, your truth. Share, and as you do, listen, validate and love your people through their turmoil. Stay present and share the human condition, honor each response to how hard it is to witness the pain of others, and work toward a tender, honest place you can stand in together, then move forward from that safe place you create. And remember, always, to call for help! You are surrounded by a community of Friends who would be more than glad to be there for you and ARCH (New York Yearly Meeting’s Aging Resources Consultation and Help) with the many trained visitors, regional coordinators, and director is an amazing resource for you when you are feeling lost or depleted. 



Growing Through by Sarah Way

Power Among Us

by Heather M. Cook
and the Committee on
Conflict Transformation

Many Quakers echo Bayard Rustin about speaking “truth to power.” The context is usually obvious: government and business officials who control budgets and policies. But what about social power in our Quaker meetings, committees, and organizations? How does its imbalance spark conflict among us?

Many of us take pride in the non-hierarchical structure here in our yearly meeting. The core of decision-making is the local meeting. Leadership appointments are to be discerned and rotated. We identify as a people of peace who stand up for the oppressed. We talk about a shared value of equality. We don’t exert power over each other! Do we?

Viewing conflicts among us through the lens of power can be illuminating. Interpersonal power can be fluid, and is deeply connected to rank, also referred to as privilege. One moment one person may be “up” as they talk about a topic in which they have expertise. The next moment the other person is “up” when their rank of skin color or gender or class or education or sexual orientation or spirituality or reading ability or...comes forward. We are typically most aware of the power others hold, and less aware of our own power. Power can be claimed for oneself, ascribed to others, and given away, typically through silence or inaction.

Often the impact of imbalanced privilege/rank and power is the silencing of the “down” person. Consider the following scenarios.

In meeting for worship with a


concern for the life of the meeting, a new participant makes a suggestion related to the topic under discernment. Another participant immediately expresses their view of why that suggestion is a bad idea, including the phrase, “We tried that before. It didn’t work.” After an awkward silence, the meeting moves on.

Here the second participant has exerted the power of rank as the keeper of institutional memory and the insider. The first speaker feels shut down and dismissed. The meeting gives away its power, and acquiesces to the assertion of power, by ignoring what has just happened instead of confirming the value of the first speaker’s contribution.

A committee accepts a member’s offer to do a particular piece of work. As the deadline nears, knowing the member is experiencing a stressful time, the longtime clerk decides to quietly do the work herself. She is baffled later when the member is angry after reading a newsletter announcement about the task he’s been working on, with details he knows nothing about. “I just wanted to help,” says the clerk.

By secretly doing the new person’s task, the clerk strips him of his power and sends the message that she is more competent and powerful.

In an equitable relationship with power consciousness, the participants seek mutual understanding. When in conflict, they consider the power dynamics in their interactions: *What power have I used to be “up”? Where have I given away my power?* They make a loving invitation to each other: “Tell me more.” They listen, and they let the words sink in. In our communities, circle processes create the opportunity for us to listen to each other in this way. The promise of the talking piece is that every circle participant knows their turn will come, when they will have the full attention of the group.

Why think about power and rank? Since we are human beings, we will always have rank and power. Rather than deny or ignore them, perhaps our work is to become more aware and especially more self-aware so that we might use them consciously not to oppress others but to level the playing field, both in our Quaker communities and in the wider world. 



Transforming Conflict

Herding Cats: Are We in Conflict or Not?

Jeffrey Aaron

New Brunswick Meeting

In politics, social values, even religious values, traditional, widely accepted ideas seem on the right when parroted rather than considered in depth, while new thinking, progressive and less traditional, less widely accepted ideas seem on the left. Whether that analysis is accurate or not may not matter, but what seems to be constant across the world is that people with stated traditional values are often in power, even if they are a minority and their actual behavior is at odds with their words.

While these statements can be challenged, the fact is that those in power get there in part by minimizing their internal conflicts. Greater unity through broadly conventional statements regardless of actual behavior leads to greater group power. People who are more informed, thoughtful and nuanced often challenge each other over smaller concerns and are unable to present a unified body.

Statistics show that there are far more Democratic voters across the USA, but more unified Republicans have remained largely in power. In many countries across the world, the populace wants freedom, but many governments are run by abusive leaders who claim to be protectors and saviors of the people, and many people buy the words.

How does this apply to New York Yearly Meeting? You have heard the expression “herding cats”? We are a voluntary body of shared values, seeking to make the world a better place for everyone. So why do we experience what sometimes feels like hostility or anger or divisiveness when we are trying to discern a way forward as a body? We are a body of “cats”: independent minded, thoughtful, idealistic. Those are good qualities, aren’t they? Of course! But we often forget other qualities that make the Quaker way of discernment invaluable in an oppressive world: good listening, hearing behind the words, sensing the Spark in the speaker and in ourselves, letting the spoken words settle in Spirit-led silence before we respond emotionally.

There is a place for anger and disagreement when there are hurtful words or behavior, even unintended. But the expression that arises from these feelings needs to be tempered by understanding and by careful examination of our own gut responses before we speak. Even more important is the consideration of how our words may help or further hurt the group’s unity.

Too many valued Friends have withdrawn from our midst because they disagree with how we are proceeding or with what someone has said. We can all relate to that experience. Who among us has not at times felt annoyed by what someone has said or about a decision of gathered Friends? And that annoyance and our personal reactions to it are often expressed by the way we are socialized in the wider society where most of us spend most of our time. We can disagree yet remain in unity.

We need to remember when we are in conflict that we all share the same basic values, that we are all “on the same side” even when we disagree. Is it ever worth reducing the power of our unity, when “the other side”—the world at large—is acting destructively? When we disagree, the most important part of our response is its Quakerly components. Think “Friendly persuasion.”

The dehumanization of the Other that happens in war, racism, and genocide is no different from any reduction of the sacred to the profane.

The way we see and treat someone is a powerful invitation for them to be as we see them.

It starts with the question that defines compassion: What is it like to be you?

...we are all in the same boat; we are all facing situations that invite us to choose love over fear, to listen to the heart when it feels unsafe to do so. We need to help each other obey that call. In that, we are allies. We can be allies in calling each other to our highest potential.

—Charles Eisenstein, “Standing Rock; A Change of Heart,” an essay on charleseisenstein.org.



Some transformation styles



Photo collage by Heather M. Cook

Seeking Peace in the Poland-Ukraine Conflict

Hugo Lane
Flushing Meeting

Quakers dislike admitting that we have conflicts among ourselves. Yet, we are drawn to conflicts outside our community. The history of Quakers working to promote reconciliation among others is long. In that spirit, I have dedicated my adult life to studying a conflict not generally on Friends’ radar: the conflict between Poles and Ukrainians that has now endured longer than a century. Here I offer some thoughts I have gleaned about conflict and conflict transformation based on that work.

The Polish-Ukrainian conflict arose in the 19th century, as both peoples became caught up in nationalist political movements. Having lived in proximity to each other for centuries, mutually acceptable boundaries were hard to draw. Consequently, a significant Ukrainian minority ended up in Poland, just as a sizable Polish minority ended up in the Soviet Ukraine. World War I stirred the pot further. The other significant minority of the region, Jews, fell victim to the Holocaust, while Poles and Ukrainians fell victim to the promise of ethnic cleansing, forcing each other out from the border regions starting in 1943 against the larger scale slaughter of WW II. Loss of life and homes on both sides created symmetrical grievances that simmered underneath the ostensibly peaceful postwar order.

When I first began engaging in my research, I had the hubris to

imagine that an outsider like me had power and insight that Poles and Ukrainians themselves did not have. I believed a narrative that brought all the grievances together would supersede Poles’ and Ukrainians’ opposing stories. I soon realized that adjudication and healing are not the same. I gave up the idea of restoring a lost golden age and began to see that the conflict was only a symptom of other broader factors. The nations had emerged as vehicles to fill the void as old identities, based on the social hierarchy that had existed for centuries, lost their meaning.

I wish Polish and Ukrainian relations were transforming. Regrettably, as I write, Polish-Ukrainian relations are at their lowest point in ten years. Perhaps someday my scholarly efforts will help change that, but people on both sides find the conflict more comfortable than the prospect of change and renewal. I am grateful, however, for the lessons my research has brought me. They have been much more spiritually profound than this essay may suggest.

First, noble as it is to aspire to be a peacemaker, outsiders still enter the process with logs in their eyes even if they are not hypocrites. Second, the narrative of conflict helps sustain the conflict and inhibits transformation and growth. Third, conflict is transformed when the participants reframe the story to see the truth in the shared experience of the whole, rather than this side or that side. Third parties can be good at that, but in the end it is the people directly involved in the conflict who can be the peacemakers.

The experience has also changed me. I am less afraid of conflict and have become comfortable with the fact that unavoidable as conflict is, it does not have to lead to a final violent rupture; just as the resolution of one conflict only opens the way for a new conflict to enlighten us further. Indeed our Quaker way of listening to the different perspectives in loving discernment is not just about agreement, it is an admission that we need each other’s differences to find the truth. True, the way to unity can sometimes be obscured, but without those difficulties we would not experience the joy of division becoming unity again and again and again.



Registration is now open for Summer Sessions!

The deadline for regular registration is **MAY 15**

Go to nyym.org/session/summer-sessions-2019 for more information
and nyym.org/summer-sessions-registration to register!



NYYM Summer Sessions is an annual week-long gathering of Friends at Silver Bay YMCA, a conference and family retreat center on the shores of Lake George. This year's theme is **Friends Come in All Ages, Sizes, and Colors: Our Path Toward Being Inclusive**. This is a joyful, family-friendly, multi-generational event. Come celebrate what it means to be a Friend in a challenging time. All are welcome!

For the first time this year NYYM's Summer Sessions are PAY AS LED.

Friends will decide what amount they feel led to pay for Sessions. Some will pay more so others can pay less, as they are able. The Pay as Led plan is designed to encourage new people to attend Summer Sessions, and it relies on generosity from those who can afford to pay more.

Due to Pay as Led and our new contract with Silver Bay, NYYM has moved up the Summer Sessions registration dates from previous years. Instead of starting in May, regular registration will end on May 15. Registrations will be accepted after May 15, but lower Pay as Led amounts will no longer be available, and an on-campus room is not guaranteed. Please register as soon as you can.

About the location

Visit silverbay.org for more information about their beautiful campus. You will have access to swimming, boating, hiking trails, a craft shop, a gymnasium, archery, and shuffleboard, among other amenities. Friends often take advantage of these activities during their free time.

Daily schedule during the week Mornings after breakfast start with community worship, followed by worship sharing and meetings for business or discernment; children attend their Junior Yearly Meeting groups. In the afternoon, choose between committee meetings, special events, and free time. Evenings begin with Bible study (and singing on the Inn porch!) followed by the plenary, interest groups, contra dance, or another special event.

Worship at Summer Sessions There are many opportunities to worship and share with the Peaceable Community. **Opening and closing worship** book-end our week. You can start every morning with generation-inclusive **community worship**, followed by **worship sharing groups**.



The extended, open **Meeting for Discernment** takes place on Tuesday. **Waiting worship** will be available all day, all week. And your worship and discernment are needed at **meetings for worship with a concern for business**. Join us!

Plenary speakers **Chris DeRoller** and **Mike Clark**, the co-directors of the Powell House Youth Program. For almost two decades Mike and Chris have had the joy of creating an inclusive, accepting, yet

challenging space where Friends' testimonies and experiential spirituality come alive. When they first became the youth directors, kids had piles of CDs for their music. Homework was done on paper. Cell phones did not work in the Powell House area. Those things have changed, but the moving of Spirit has not. Chris and Mike will share insights they've gained, mistakes they've made, and the vision and practical steps they have for keeping Friends relevant.

Interest Groups These can consist of a presentation, slide show, film, discussion group, or other activity, and should align with the theme or with NYYM's Leadings and Priorities. For a list of interest groups offered last year, visit www.nyym.org/InterestGroups. Inspired to lead an interest group? See the next page for contact information.

Special Events Special events at Summer Sessions raise money for the NYYM Sharing Fund and Powell House. Junior Yearly Meeting presents the **Fun(d) Fair**, including games, crafts, and refreshments. The **Tagless Tag Sale** offers items donated by Friends at "pay what you wish" prices. Please bring used items in good condition to Summer Sessions to be sold at the Tag Sale. The senior high group produces **Café Night**, an all-ages talent show during which hats are passed to collect donations. Bring your instruments and props and join the fun!



STEPS TO SUMMER SESSIONS

- Decide if you will attend for the full week (July 21–27) or for fewer days.
- Determine who you will be rooming with, if possible.
- Choose your housing preferences. See the **Room Information** section on page 10. Children must room with parents/sponsors if possible, or in adjoining rooms if not.
- *Parents of children under 18:* Read the **Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM)** section on page 10.
- Read the Participant Expectations and Agreements on the nyym.org/sessions-committee page. By registering, you indicate your agreement with them.
- Register online at www.nyym.org/summer-sessions-registration. If you need assistance, email office@nyym.org and provide your phone number and times someone can assist you. If you don't have email, please mail in the form on the next page.

AFTER YOU REGISTER

- You will receive a confirmation email, followed by an email with the **Pay as Led** rate suggestions and a link to the online payment page. If you plan on receiving financial aid from your local or regional meeting you should request that now.
- Parents will receive a follow-up email with any additional forms they may have to fill out.
- Parents and children will receive information from their JYM group.



Room and Rate Information

Silver Bay YMCA is a campus of buildings with different levels of accommodations at a range of prices. Rooms are comfortable but basic, and lack air conditioning, phones, and television. Room fees include all meals and access to Silver Bay's facilities, including swimming areas, boathouse, gym, and craft center.

When you register, you will choose your room preference. Room rates vary. Silver Bay charges us around \$470 for a single person in a double room in a dormitory-type building. Rooms that are larger, more central, or have a private bath cost more. Rates are discounted for children and for having more than one roommate. Children ages 0-5 are free. **Room rates include all meals.**

If you will be staying with a roommate or in a family group, please name each other on your registration forms. If you need a roommate, NYYM will make every effort to assign one to you.

The full table of room rates is available at nnyym.org/content/summer-sessions-2019-lodging-rates and include **Pay as Led** rate options for each type of housing.

Camping and Staying Off Campus Visit nnyym.org/session/summer-sessions-2019/#roominfo for camping and off-campus options. Note that meals at Silver Bay must be purchased separately, and people staying off-campus must pay Silver Bay's daily user fee.

Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) is the program for children ages 3-18 during Summer Sessions. Groups are arranged according to grade, and meet every morning, Mon.-Fri., from the rise of Community Worship to lunchtime at 12:15 p.m. JYM volunteers plan a community-building week of games, discussions, art projects, and more. JYM is a time for young people to experience a community based on Friends' testimonies and practices. Age appropriate Quaker content will be part of the program.

For children under 3 years old, Silver Bay offers childcare on Mon.-Fri. mornings, 8:30 to 11:45 a.m. If you might use Silver Bay's morning childcare, complete the NYYM-Silver Bay camp form that will be emailed to you after you register.

JYM provides **afternoon and evening (PM) childcare** for children up to 10 years old, available whenever plenaries or committee meetings are scheduled. Parents who use this service are asked to volunteer to support it.

Your child can go to Silver Bay without a parent if they attend with a designated adult chaperone. They must room with the chaperone if possible or be in adjoining rooms. The chaperone should be named on the child's registration form and be at least 10 years older than the child. The chaperone and the child should know each other reasonably well.



Volunteer Opportunities

There are many opportunities to help support the blessed community during our week at Summer Sessions. On your registration form, you can indicate your interest in volunteering as a:

- **Special needs helper**
- **Golf cart driver** (for those at least 21 years old with a valid driver's license.)
- **Healing Center volunteer** (for those skilled in the healing arts).
- **JYM leader or resource person**
- **Microphone carrier**

Other volunteer opportunities:

- **12-Step meetings** Willing to facilitate a meeting? Contact Roseann Press at rpress123@gmail.com.
- **Interest group leader** Have knowledge to share? Contact Martha Gurvich (margurvl@aol.com) or Helen Garay Toppins (office@nnyym.org).

Travel: The address for Silver Bay YMCA is **87 Silver Bay Rd., Silver Bay, NY 12874**

See nnyym.org/session/summer-sessions-2019 for driving times, carpooling information, and public transit options.

**Register by May 15
at www.nnyym.org/summer-sessions-registration**

Monthly Meetings & Pay as Led

Even though Summer Session participants can Pay as Led (PAL), monthly meetings will continue to play a critical role in supporting their members and attenders. Friends seeking to pay less than the standard rate will be asked to approach their monthly meetings for aid, but it's likely that many Friends will opt to skip that step and just pay less. The PAL experiment may fall drastically short in funds if monthly meetings no longer help people attend. The solution is quite simple! Monthly meetings, worship groups, regions, and quarters are all encouraged to consider what funds they normally provide to members and attenders—and donate that amount to NYYM, with the memo "Summer Sessions." If your meeting does receive a request from an individual, please send the amount directly to NYYM with the person's name in the memo. We will use a combination of meeting aid, individual donations, and registrant payments to cover our final bill from Silver Bay YMCA. For our planning purposes, it would be helpful if all donations were made to NYYM by June 12. Thank you for your kind consideration.

REGISTRATION

This year, registration is entirely online at www.nnyym.org/summer-sessions-registration. If you are unable to register online, please ask someone to assist you. If you need other assistance, email office@nnyym.org or call 212-673-5750 and provide your phone number and times you can be called. If you don't have email, mail us the form below. We will have volunteers ready, willing, and able to provide online registration assistance.

After we receive your registration and place you in a room, we will send you three **Pay as Led** rate suggestions: the standard rate, which covers the cost of room and board; the full rate, which helps others attend; and the **Pay as Led** minimum rate, which is the lowest amount. Friends should carefully consider how much they can afford to pay. Please factor in any financial assistance that you will request from your local or regional meetings or YM committee.

Payments can then be made online, or you can mail payment(s) to the NYYM office.

The deadline for regular registration is May 15. If you register after that date, we can't guarantee there will be a room for you, and your **Pay as Led** options may be limited. So register as soon as you can! We can't wait to see you.

If you cannot register online, mail this form to NYYM, 15 Rutherford Pl., NY, NY 10003

PLEASE PRINT

Name: _____ Meeting: _____

Day phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

Best time for someone to call and help you register (days of the week, times of day): _____

New York Yearly Meeting SPRING SESSIONS Friday-Sunday, April 5-7

**Hosted by Nine Partners Regional Meeting
at Oakwood Friends School (OFS),
22 Spackenkill Rd., Poughkeepsie, NY 12603**

Nine Partners Quarter welcomes you to the 2019 NYYM Spring Sessions. These meetings, which carry on the business of the yearly meeting between the annual summer meetings, need the wide involvement of Friends to ensure that they reflect the diversity and depth of all our monthly meetings and worship groups. This spring we are again being warmly welcomed by Oakwood Friends School. All the sessions and committee meetings will be held on this beautiful campus. Below, please find information on registration, hospitality, youth programs, and a detailed schedule. The agenda and advance documents will be published online once available. We look forward to welcoming you to our region!

Registration is due Wednesday, March 20

Please do not let money stand between you and attending Spring Sessions! Pay what you can for registration and meals, and request Equalization Funds for what you cannot pay. All who feel led to attend will find welcome among us. See the next page for details on registration and payment.

Friday Evening Program for adults and teens, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

We will begin our Spring Sessions with a Friday evening program on The Spiritually “Led” Part of “Pay as Led.” Sessions Committee is still working out the details of the evening, but Angela Hopkins (Ithaca) and Emily Provance (15th Street) will lead us in presentations and discussions of not only the financial considerations of being led, but also how Pay as Led is one part of the overall work of New York Yearly Meeting becoming more inclusive—age, race, class, and more. Please do plan to join us from 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the Oakwood Friends School auditorium. Optional: you are invited to join Oakwood students for dinner at 6:00. The cost is \$8.00.

Youth Program (13-17 year-olds)

The theme for the youth program will be “Solutions for Our Planet!”

- Are you concerned about what is happening to the Earth?
- Are you wondering what Friends are doing about climate change, security of our food, and the possibility of economic disruption and the breakdown of society?
- Are your parents or an adult chaperone coming to Spring Sessions?

If so, please come and become part of the Spring Sessions Youth Program. The NYYM Earthcare Working Group is eager to share with you what we know about solutions to world-wide problems of hunger, natural disasters, and their possible local effects. Together, we will tour the Oakwood School greenhouse and see the energy installa-

tions at the school. Then we will have a session to hear your thoughts about how Friends should be responding to the critical issues of our times. Saturday evening, we invite you to be part of the deliberations of the Witness Coordinating Committee as they plan for Summer and Fall Sessions. We anticipate that this will lead to your further involvement at Summer Sessions as we do our part to create a world that works for everyone. Friends have always made a difference in the world. This is your time to step into that role.

Children’s program

Activities for children under 13 will be planned as registrations are received.

Medical Form for Children and Youth

A medical form must be completed for all children and youth attending sessions, in addition to the registration form. The medical form is available on the NYYM website: nyym.org/sites/default/files/NYYM-Youth-Medical-Form-2018August.pdf.

Committee Meeting Space

Requests for committee meeting rooms should be directed to Karen Snare (845-677-3021, karensnare@aol.com). Please make requests by March 20. Committee clerks should be aware that rooms will be scheduled only if we receive your request. Also, please remind your committee members to register to attend Spring Sessions!

Display Space

Requests for display space should be directed to Fred Doneit (845-297-5046, fwdoneit@optonline.net). Please make requests by March 20, 2019.

Meals and Snacks

Friday dinner is optional and not part of the Spring Sessions schedule, but you are welcome to join the Oakwood Friends School (OFS) students if your travel plans allow!

We have two breakfast options on Saturday and Sunday. Simple coffee, tea, and muffins will be available for free in the registration area in Collins Library. If you need something more substantial, Continental Breakfast is available in the dining hall for \$5 each day (bagels, toast, yogurt, granola, cereal, juice, tea, coffee, fruit).

For Saturday lunch and dinner, we will join Oakwood’s boarding students in the dining hall for buffet meals. Sunday you may choose an optional bagged lunch if you’d like to get on the road. OFS always has vegan and gluten free options at each meal. See the registration form for prices.

Overnight Accommodations

We have four options for your overnight accommodations.

First, you can just plan your preferred stay on your own.

Second, we have reserved a block of rooms at the Red Roof Inn (0.4 mile from campus) for \$79.99 per night. All rooms have 2 queen beds. Call 845-462-7800 and tell them you are with the Quaker Group. REGISTER SOONER RATHER THAN LATER to take advantage of this option.

Third, Nine Partners Friends are welcoming overnight guests. Please contact Jean Doneit (845-297-5046, jdoneit@optonline.net) with your specific needs regarding hospitality (allergies, etc.). Home hospitality requests will be honored on a first-come, first-served basis, and cannot be guaranteed, especially after the registration deadline of March 20.

Finally, we have a VERY limited number of dormitory rooms at Oakwood. Contact Karen Snare (845-677-3021, karensnare@aol.com) for more information if you are interested in staying on campus. (Note that stair climbing is required.)

Sustainability

We ask participants to consider their environmental impact when attending any NYYM gathering. Some ideas: Carpool with other attendees from your area, using the most fuel-efficient vehicle of the group. Bring a travel mug and water bottle with you—even your own utensils and plates! Bring a warm sweater, so that we don’t have to turn up the heat. Instead of printing out the advance documents, save them to your computer or tech device and read them electronically. Return your nametag holder when you last leave the venue, so it can be used again. Whatever ways you can think of to lower your carbon footprint, to reduce and reuse, will be greatly appreciated.

Volunteer!

We have many opportunities for participants to volunteer. Please consider spending a few hours of your time (or more!) to help us host Spring Sessions. We primarily need local folks to open their homes to our participants. As noted above, Jean Doneit is coordinating host offers and hospitality requests. If you are interested in any of the other volunteering opportunities (greeters, registration table, microphone runners, clean up, etc.) please contact Melanie-Claire Mallison at MsMellie@gmail.com—she has a volunteer Google doc to share.

Questions?

Host Task Group members are standing by to assist you!

Don Badgley: don51249@aol.com, 914-388-0382

Jean Doneit: jdoneit@optonline.net, 845-297-5046

Melanie-Claire Mallison: MsMellie@gmail.com, 607-280-8182

Karen Snare: karensnare@aol.com, 845-677-3021

Dare Thompson: darethompson@gmail.com, 845-454-2870

If you have questions about registration, please contact Helen Garay Toppins, office@nyym.org or 212-673-5750

For questions about hospitality, contact Jean Doneit (see above.)

For general questions on campus logistics, meeting spaces, transportation, directions, or the nearest motels, visit nyym.org/session/spring-sessions-2019 or contact Karen Snare (see above.)

During the weekend of Spring Sessions, if you get lost or need help, you may call Don Badgley, Karen Snare, or Dare Thompson (see above.)

NYYM Spring Sessions • April 5-7, 2019, at Oakwood Friends School

Registration for Spring Sessions 2019 • due Wednesday, March 20

You can REGISTER AND PAY ONLINE: nyym.org/session/spring-sessions-2019

PLEASE NOTE, we are asking for a "Suggested Registration Fee" in an effort to make Sessions more affordable. Those who can pay more than the suggested amount are encouraged to donate to the Equalization Fund to help offset costs for others. Please do not let money stand between you and attending Sessions! Pay what you can and request Equalization Funds for what you cannot pay. All will find welcome among us.

PAYMENT: You may register and pay your registration and meal costs online, or mail a check payable to "NYYM" with the note "2019 Spring Sessions" to the NYYM office.

Return one registration form per household to: NYYM Office, 15 Rutherford Place, NY, NY 10003

Call or email Helen Garay Toppins if you have questions: 1-212-673-5750, office@nyym.org

ADULT REGISTRATION

NAME(s)			
Address			
Home & cell phone			
Email address			
Meeting			
Are you a NYYM committee clerk?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency contact:	

CHILDREN AND YOUTH REGISTRATION

Children and Youth programs will be arranged only if registered by March 20. Parents may be responsible for youth registered late. The youth program is not residential; parents have to arrange accommodations for their children. **Find the mandatory medical form online at nyym.org/committee/sessions-committee**

Youth Name	Age	Arrival day/time	Departure day/time

HOSPITALITY • Please request hospitality by March 20.

I will make my own housing arrangements						
I have reserved a room at Red Roof Inn (call 845-462-7800)						
I'd like stay at the dorm at Oakwood		Fri. night		Sat. night		
I/we would like home hospitality for:		Fri. night		Sat. night		Can bring sleeping bag
I would like to be housed with:						
I am willing to room w/ another Spring Sessions participant:						
<input type="checkbox"/> Stairs a problem		<input type="checkbox"/> Allergies		<input type="checkbox"/> Smoker		
Special Needs:						
MEALS		Vegetarian/vegan		Gluten Free		Allergies? (specify)
Meal fees are per person, for adults and youth 11 and older. Younger children are free.						
Meal fee						Total
Friday evening dinner at Oakwood: \$8.00						
Saturday morning continental breakfast: \$5.00						
Saturday lunch: \$8.00						
Saturday dinner: \$8.00						
Sunday morning continental breakfast: \$5.00						
Sunday lunch: \$8.00 OR take-away box lunch: \$5.00						
Total Meal Costs:						
REGISTRATION FEES						Amount
Suggested Adult Registration Fee** (\$35 per adult/youth)						
Suggested Child Registration Fee** (\$15 for ages 0-12)						
AFTER 3/20: Suggested Late Registration Fee, add \$10 per person						
Contribution to NYYM Equalization Fund						
Assistance requested from NYYM Equalization Fund (subtract amount)						
TOTAL:						

Spring Sessions Schedule April 5-7, 2019

Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting

All events will be held at
Oakwood Friends School
22 Spackenkill Rd., Poughkeepsie, NY

Friday, April 6

6:00-8:45p.m. Registration; Library
6:00p.m. Optional: join Oakwood students for dinner; \$8.
7:00-8:30p.m. Friday evening program:
The Spiritually "Led" Part of "Pay as Led." Auditorium.

Saturday, April 6

8:00-9:00a.m. Registration, display set-up, and continental breakfast; Collins Library
8:00a.m.-9p.m. Youth Program throughout the day
9:00-9:45a.m. Meeting for Worship; Lane Auditorium
10:00-11:45a.m. Children's Program
10:00-11:45a.m. Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business; Lane Auditorium
12:00-1:00p.m. Lunch; Cafeteria
1:15-6:00p.m. Children's Program
1:15-3:15p.m. Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business; Lane Auditorium
3:30-4:45p.m. Committee Meetings* [Section 1]
5:00-6:15p.m. Committee Meetings* [Section 2]
6:15-7:15p.m. Dinner; Cafeteria
7:30-9:30p.m. Coordinating Committee Meetings
(Coordinating Committee clerks can begin meeting over dinner; let us know in advance)

Sunday, April 7

7:45-8:45a.m. Registration and continental breakfast; Library
8:45a.m.-12p.m. Children's and Youth Program
8:45-9:45a.m. Meeting for Worship; Lane Auditorium
10a.m.-12p.m. Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business; Lane Auditorium
12:00-1:00p.m. Lunch; Cafeteria (Box lunches will be available)
1:00-2:00p.m. Clean up, pack up displays, and head home!

*Committee clerks are responsible for reserving a meeting slot. Contact Karen Snare at 845-677-3021 or karensnare@aol.com.