



SPARK

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

Volume 49, Number 4

15 Rutherford Place, New York, NY 10003

September 2019

The Spirit Is Moving

My Feelings About Summer Sessions

Peter Beck

Morningside Meeting

Every year that I'm able to attend Summer Sessions, I feel uplifted by the opening worship. The Junior Yearly Meeting groups are introduced, and the grade- and high-schoolers are obviously "pumped-up" over their upcoming week together. I am uplifted again at the Friday night worship, when they exuberantly tell us all about their experiences during the week!

I was very glad to hear about this year's milestones, which included how well the yearly meeting staff handled the entire registration process—after Silver Bay handed them the responsibility for it for the first time. And we "broke even" for our FIRST "Pay As Led" year!! I was heartened to learn of the significant increase in first-time attenders this year.

During the Meeting for Discernment I became aware of the "Membership Under the Care of

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Listening at Summer Sessions

Yana Landowne

Brooklyn Meeting

The first thing I noticed is that NYYM is filled with dynamic individuals. Like modern art in a museum, there is depth, beauty, inspiration, and intricate worlds in each person one gets a chance to connect with.

The drama I experienced revolved around my impression of a separation between young friends and older ones. The week began with a thoughtful presentation by young adult Friends about a year of exploration and points that they would like addressed. (You can read their report at bit.ly/YAFreport.) I was impressed by their clarity, inclusion, longing for community, and thoughtfulness. The room was silent. I wanted to jump up and celebrate them for their visionary work and beautiful perspective, but that was not the reaction in the room. My heart sank. What was this world I had entered?

I proceeded to attend all the business meetings to try to get a sense on what was going on here. And I heard a lot. I also heard what was not being spoken.

In Meeting for Discernment, there was pain expressed around not feeling a spiritual home and looking at what membership means to us and how do we make people feel welcome, beyond just being friendly. I noticed that there are a lot of unspoken rules and ways that people feel judged or put down, even when others may not have that intention. I noticed how some

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It's time for
Fall Sessions!
see pages 7-8

A large group of Junior Yearly Meeting youth and parents joined with the rest of the body of the yearly meeting at the end of Friday morning business at NYYM's Summer Sessions, Silver Bay, NY.

Invitation to Fall Sessions November 1-3

Fifty years ago, then NYYM Clerk Miriam Brush quoted Ralph Waldo Emerson on the front page of the first *Spark*, March 1970:

Religion ... is not form. It is a life. It is the order and soundness of a [person]. It is not something else to be got, to be added, but is a new life of those faculties you have. It is to do right. It is to love, it is to serve, it is to think, it is to be humble.

At Summer Sessions 2019, our first pay-as-led session, we welcomed more first timers and Friends previously long absent than possibly ever before. And there was a strong sense of this new life that Emerson spoke of. As a result, we expect to hear reports and proposals at Fall Sessions at our own beloved Powell House on how to move forward with confidence into our future, addressing our needs and concerns.

Although the agenda is very much a work in progress as I write, we—New York Yearly Meeting Friends—are hoping to hear of ways to address concerns that are important to all of us, including efforts to address the needs of the young adults in our community, new concepts of membership, ways to live better into our ideals of true diversity of all kinds, and creative ways to address the financial constraints that we face.

Although we all hear frightening reports every day from the world at large, among Friends we work together as a beloved community to find constructive answers for our community's needs. Welcome to Fall Sessions. Bring your ideas and your loving presence. Know that you will be welcome; that your presence will make us more complete!

Jeffrey Aaron

Clerk, New York Yearly Meeting

You can find Fall Sessions information on pages 7–8 and online at www.nyym.org/session/fall-sessions-2019

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Fall Sessions info!
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Notices

New Members

Sylvia Skaggs McTague—
Chatham-Summit
Susan Niculescu—
Chatham-Summit
Gail & John Russo—Westbury

Deaths

Horst Berger, member of
Purchase, on May 5, 2019
Elizabeth (Liza) Trent Savory,
member of Dover-Randolph,
on July 12, 2019
Nancy Sunshine Seroff,
member of Flushing, on
March 27, 2019

NEWS

Peacemaker Awards

Veterans for Peace and the Binghamton Community Friends Meeting (Quaker) presented \$350 Stu Naismith Peacemaker Awards to four graduating high school seniors, two at Chenango Valley and two at Chenango Forks High Schools. Kayla Ferris, Breanen Rought, Lindsey Russell, and Samuel Forker received the awards, which are given annually in memory of Stu Naismith (1927-2011), who served in the Navy in World War II, taught in both school districts, and was a founder of the local chapter of Veterans for Peace. The students earned the awards by working for peace in everyday life, preparing for further education, and writing an essay on peacemaking.

World Quaker Day is October 6!

Join the Quaker family around the world in worship and celebration! This year's theme is *Sustainability: Planting seeds of renewal for the world we love*. Across our churches, meetings, countries, and sections of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, we feel the power of God connecting us into a faithful family. We celebrate all expressions of Quaker worship! Visit www.worldquakerday.org for ideas on how to get involved.



Joyce Thomas of Binghamton Meeting, Kayla Ferris, John Patterson of Veterans for Peace, and Breanen Rought, at the Stu Naismith Peacemaker Awards, June 10, 2019.

Around Our Yearly Meeting

UPCOMING EVENTS

Save the Date for the Nightingales weekend!

Please mark your calendars for October 11-13, for a Nightingales weekend in Ithaca, NY. This is a weekend for everyone who loves to sing. If you know of other Friends who would like to receive messages about upcoming Nightingales weekends, or if you would like to be added to the email list, please send email addresses to Bronwyn Mohlke, bjqmohlke@gmail.com.

NYYM Fall Sessions is Nov. 1-3! See pages 7 and 8.

Powell House Conferences

Powell House is NYYM's retreat and conference center in Old Chatham, NY. Upcoming adult and family conferences include:

Fall Work, Contradance, and Storytelling, Oct. 25-27. Enjoy learning new skills? Like to work among 57 acres of God's creation in Columbia County, NY? Bring your favorite tools, old clothes and hearty appetites. Our cooks will have lots of good, nutritious, and yummy food for us. We have plenty of work projects, both inside and outside our buildings.

Peace Witness: Turning Quaker Testimony into Action, November 15-17. There are many ways to foster the harmonious world we seek, and this conference will explore ways that we, as Quakers and non-Quakers, can be for peace and bring about peace through both upstream work and direct action. This conference is for anyone who is ready to develop, deepen, and share their peace witness with the world.

Quaker 12-Step Weekend, Nov. 22-24. Led by facilitator Juliet Wright, the weekend will include many 12-step activities including 12-stepping a problem, the patterns of codependency and characteristics of recovery, meeting in a bucket, gratitude boxes, individual sharing, writing and sharing on program literature from your 12-step program, singing and more!

Upcoming youth conferences: **FUTURE SCAPE** for 9th-12th grade. Sept. 27-29. In these middle-teen years of your life, people start asking you about the future—like you have answers, right? A Quaker practice is to ask queries rather than give answers to seekers. So we'll practice that practice and start

to focus our visions for our future selves. **Tag, Not Tag**, for 4th-5th grade. Oct. 4-5. Tag games can be fun, but they can also turn "not fun" pretty quick. Small groups will invent and teach a new tag game to the rest of us. How will we settle disputes? How will we adapt to the needs of the other players? How do we win, yet not have losers? Come find out!

Falling Up, for 6th-8th grade. Nov. 15-17. Falling down is seldom fun, so what if we could choose to fall up instead? How far would you fall up? How would it feel? We will practice some ways to keep our bodies safe even when we are unstable and trip, as well as ways to help our minds and spirits fall up instead of down in times of trouble or turmoil.

Visit powellhouse.org for more!

Spiritual Deepening E-Retreats

Friends General Conference offers spiritual deepening e-retreats, opportunities for sustained, grounded exploration of a particular topic through Internet interactions on your schedule at home. "Understanding and Healing White Supremacy" will run from September 22 - October 18, and "Weaving a Wider Welcome" is scheduled for October 27 - November 22. Check the link below for additional information: www.fgcquaker.org/deepen/spiritual-deepening/spiritual-deepening-eretreats

OPPORTUNITIES

ARCH Local Coordinator

ARCH (Aging Resources, Consultation, and Help) is hiring! Do you have a heart for older Friends in your area? Do you like to visit with Friends and make personal connections? Please consider this opportunity. New York Yearly Meeting's ARCH program for older Friends seeks two ARCH Local Coordinators to serve any of the areas of Butter-nuts Quarterly Meeting, Long Island Quarterly Meeting, Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting, Northeastern Regional Meeting, and NYYM's Prison Worship Groups. Friends from these geographic areas, or with an interest in ministry related



Participants at the reunion of the Sohagapur Girls School in central India on June 2, 2019. Photo provided by Dr. Sanjeev Shukla. For more, see article on page 6.

to aging while incarcerated, are encouraged to apply. This is a part time position with an expectation of approximately 10-15 hours a month.

Friends with the following gifts are sought: ministry of presence, gifts in facilitating and organizing others, spiritual listening and accompaniment, recognizing and investing in the gifts of others, and traveling among Friends. For the job description, email arch@nyym.org.

Friends Meeting House Fund

Friends General Conference provides both grants and loans for meeting-house-related financial needs. Find more information about those options here: www.fgcquaker.org/friends-meeting-house-fund

SPARK (ISSN 00240591)
New York Yearly Meeting News
Published five times a year:
January, March, May, September,
November by

New York Yearly Meeting
Religious Society of Friends
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New York, NY 10003
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www.nyym.org

Editorial Board:
Communications Committee

Editor: Sarah Way

SPARK deadlines are the first of the month preceding the publication month. Permission is granted to reprint any article, provided *Spark* is acknowledged as the source.

Periodicals Postage Paid
at New York, New York
Postmaster: Send address changes to:
SPARK

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Editor's Note

Welcome to an issue that reflects the Spirit moving at Summer Sessions, the same Spirit that continues to move in Friends around the world. Articles in *Spark* are written by Friends like you, and are considered a kind of written ministry. Aim for 400-600 words and include your full name and meeting with your submission. Please email articles, photos, poems, and news from your meeting to communications@nyym.org.

The theme for the November issue of *Spark* is **Light Behind the Walls: Quaker Worship in Prison**, guest-edited by Jill McLellan and the Prisons Committee. Submissions deadline is **October 1**.

Please send meeting news to communications@nyym.org to be shared in NYYM's monthly emailed newsletter, InfoShare. Sign up to receive InfoShare or other NYYM communications at www.tinyurl.com/nyymconnect.

NYYM is on social media! We're newyorkyearlymeeting on Facebook and Instagram, and NYMYMTweets on Twitter.

Thank you! —Sarah Way

Nuclear Weapons & Abolition 2000

Missy Conrad
Wilton Meeting

74 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear weapons are still around. They're even being "modernized" at great expense, in spite of our nation's promise to eliminate them. In 1995, a global network to abolish nuclear weapons was formed: Abolition 2000. We of the New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends/Quakers have been and are part of this network.

Our Friends Committee on National Legislation in Washington, DC, has been devoted to nuclear disarmament and cutting spending by the Pentagon. Anthony Wier now heads this endeavor. Presently, the focus is to stop the deployment of the so-called "low-yield" nuclear warheads on US Navy submarines. Similar warheads are already deployed on American jets, in our bombs and cruise missiles. But placement on submarines is especially dangerous because subs are more independent. The weapons

are made to be used quickly, so the time a potential adversary has to decide on retaliation is shortened.

The US House of Representatives has cut the funding for this deployment, but the US Senate and the Administration favor it. The House and Senate will have to get together to approve the final 2020 National Defense Authorization Act.

Another Quaker organization, the American Friends Service Committee, is working in the Abolition 2000 group United for Peace & Justice. Joseph Gerson, director of the northeast region of AFSC, has been promoting awareness of and action on nuclear weapons for years, having coordinated the last big anti-nuclear rally at the United Nations. He has been planning this year's campaign for awareness, which will be from September 21, the United Nations (UN) International Day of Peace since 1982, until September 26, the UN International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (Nuclear Abolition Day), declared in 2013.

Too many people put their faith in nuclear weapons to keep us safe. Or they rely on an idea that God will intervene, ignoring our free will. Call this what it is: modern idolatry. In addition, it is apostasy to threaten to destroy Creation. What good is retaliation on our one Earth? We have to point out the stupidity of using nuclear weapons in this time when every nation has to work together to address climate change and sustainability. Our uniqueness was seen by the astronauts—we are one human race, sharing our one beautiful Earth.

Quakers are inherently for Peace. Please visit www.MayorsforPeace.org, the US Conference of Mayors' Resolution on Nuclear Weapons. Contact legislators, post on public forums, and witness in public places, particularly this September. And from October 24-30, join the international campaign to Count the Nuclear Weapons Money! Visit www.nuclearweaponsmoney.org/count-the-money for more on this action.



NYYM CONNECT!

There is an easy way to connect with all that NYYM has to offer! At www.tinyurl.com/nyymconnect you can sign up to receive news from NYYM and Powell House and manage your email list options.



Elaine Learnard facilitated a threshing session at Summer Sessions on the query "What can we do to overcome the obstacles to our goals for the yearly meeting?" The goals include hiring a Youth and Young Adult Field Secretary and divesting from fossil fuels, both of which will cost money that is not yet available in our budget.

Read the Report on Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series

At the beginning of 2019 Summer Sessions the yearly meeting received a report on the Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series, a series of retreats and workshops held for young adults over the past year. The report includes 8 needs of young adult Friends, as discerned at a gathering held immediately before Sessions:

- Sustainable infrastructure to support, encourage, and nurture them at the yearly meeting level
- Access to meaningful opportunities to connect and be in community beyond monthly meetings and yearly meeting sessions
- Mentoring, eldership, and spiritual accompaniment
- Investment and resources to build their capacity as Quaker leaders, ministers, elders, and community builders
- Quaker spaces to be safe for all, but especially for those people who are not in positions of power and/or privilege
- Attention to be paid to accessibility in all its forms
- Quaker spaces to center joy and authenticity, and allow for fluidity, creativity, curiosity, spontaneity, and play
- Our yearly meeting to be open to continuing revelation and to trust that young adults are grounded and Spirit-led

The full report is available online at bit.ly/YAFreport. Friends are invited to read the report and consider its recommendations.



Announcement of Actions Being Taken to Nurture Young Adult Friends

Written by Yana Landowne, Leo Quirk, and Holly White, on behalf of several NYYM committees, on the Friday of Summer Sessions, 2019

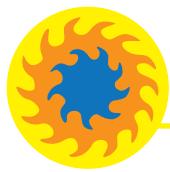
Throughout this week, many concerns have been raised related to the nurturing of our youth and young adult Friends.

We hear you.

We are taking active steps to support you.

Several concrete action items rose out of conversations today. Spiritual Nurture Working Group, in partnership with Youth Committee and Aging Concerns Committee, is creating a spiritual mentorship program serving young adults and new Friends. They are also developing a mentorship workshop at Powell House. A working group formed to look deeper into the money and job description needed for a Youth and Young Adult Field Secretary. Ministry Coordinating Committee committed to addressing the 8 concerns raised in the report from Young Adult Friends, one concern at each of their meetings this year. Another group is contacting youth to ask them to state their needs in their own voices. Many other committees discussed concrete ways to nurture the gifts and leadership of young adults and learning Friends. Monthly and quarterly meetings are also encouraged to further this discussion. We can all take a part in nourishing our Quaker community.





Spirit Is Moving



Chris DeRoller and Mike Clark, the youth program leaders at Powell House, presented the plenary session at NYYM's Summer Sessions. The plenary, titled "Being Quakers in a World that Needs Us," was structured a bit like a youth conference, and included silly walks, small group discussions, name poetry, the power of listening, and the importance of nurturing little islands of love.

A First Timer at 2019 Summer Sessions

Bryan Wigfall
Morningside Meeting


Melanie Claire and Jeffrey did an amazing job with conducting the orientation for friends attending Summer Sessions for the first time. The orientation was welcoming and well detailed. They explained the program for the week. It was very helpful that a slide show presentation was incorporated into the orientation because it helped to ensure that we would be able to remember where all the buildings are at Silver Bay. They also gave an opportunity for the Whisper Buddies coordinators to speak about the important work they do to include Friends in the business meetings who have not attending business meetings for Friends before. Likewise, they gave the Junior Yearly Meeting coordinators a chance to introduce themselves.

Marissa Badgley gave an excellent report during business meeting on the work done by the young adult Friends that participated in the Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series with her. She very effectively conveyed to the entire yearly meeting what our needs are and how we can work with other Friends within the yearly meeting to ensure that our needs will be met. I deeply appreciate Elaine Learnard for agreeing to clerk the threshing session that Friday regarding the issue of employing a young adult

field secretary. The threshing session was the first step in the right direction for addressing this issue.

Ron Peterson and Kathy Slattery did a great job coordinating the healing services in Sproul Pavilion. The Healing Center felt like home. The music played in there was very soothing. The healers were very knowledgeable about a broad variety of ways people can naturally address some sicknesses. The healers were very open to sharing information and putting Friends in contact with other healers in their network.

It was wonderful to learn from other Friends about the history of the Mohawk nation's connection to Silver Bay. Also, there are still Mohawks that live in that area, and they are willing to educate other people about their culture. Throughout my time there I grew to appreciate more that we were in a place that is immensely rich in history. The rich history adds to the beauty of Silver Bay YMCA.

The worship sharing groups were fantastic. They served as great outlets for Friends to help each other grow personally and as leaders. They were transformative. 


A Rousing Success

Brendan Glynn
Brooklyn Meeting

Summer Sessions 2019 at Silver Bay was full of energy brought by newcomers and the return of old-timers. There was a total of 501 attenders which represented an increase of 74 from last year. Of that, 95 were first-time attenders (!), 40 returned after a long time away (self-defined), and 103 were JYM participants. Thanks are owed to the Pay as Led subcommittee and all the Friends whose generous payments allowed those of us with fewer resources to attend. As folks return to our regular monthly meetings, please spread the word that yearly meeting is a special experience and a chance for spiritual and physical renewal. Let's make next year even bigger!

It was expressed by a first timer how much he admired the Quaker's practice of self-evaluation: we are willing to critique ourselves, acknowledge our mixed past history (in areas such as relations with Black and Native American people, or in the development of prisons) and act based on these reflections. It was also expressed that the Quaker decision making process can take longer than one might wish, but the process tends to go in the right direction. An example of this was the issue of fossil fuel divestment, where a sense of the meeting could not be reached but the discussion was healthy and productive. The issue of the possibility of offering membership in the yearly meeting as an alternative to a monthly meeting was similarly discussed. We hold our Quaker community in the light so these important issues can be resolved.

We rejoice in the diversity of the New York Yearly Meeting participants but realize there is room for improvement. This year's theme—

Friends Come in All Ages, Sizes, and Colors: Our Path Toward Being Inclusive—highlights our need to do better but reminds us how far we've come. Pay as Led can lead to even more change in the future and will hopefully plant the seeds to allow Quakers to thrive in the yearly meeting area in the future. We also recognize that if it wasn't for the stewardship of The First Peoples we wouldn't have the beautiful Lake George. 


My Feelings About Summer Sessions

Peter Beck
Morningside Meeting

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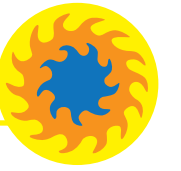
NYYM" concept. I remembered MY post-college-age life, and how helpful it would've been for me had there been help "navigating" it, instead of simply having to "go it alone!!" Between a belated master's degree, getting my career in social work moving forward, dealing with the increasing infirmities of my aging parents, etc., and NOT willing to give up on my life as a Quaker or time with other Friends, I tried to attend every Summer Session I could. Having been in JYM for 2-3 years certainly helped. However, I always felt a pang of sadness whenever I'd look at my name badge, reading "Chatham-Summit," because, through NOBODY'S "fault" or "cause," I was hardly ever there! It wasn't until Summer 2001, when I was Led to attend, and soon join, Morningside Meeting, that I REALLY felt I BELONGED!! What I'm trying to say here is I realize that the "monthly/quarterly/yearly" membership progression is the norm, but a yearly meeting-sponsored membership option SHOULD be available to those it would benefit.

On the subject of a "Young Adult and Children Secretary" position, I can't say how much it should cost, but my main concern is that ALL Young Adult Friends be encouraged to join us Older Friends (I'm 72) so that, as we age, Quakers can continue to be a vital religious presence in the future.

Finally, I appreciated very much being invited to "elder" Thursday afternoon's business meeting! 



Left: An older and a newer edition of a book by Catherine de Hueck Doherty, quoted by Chris DeRoller in the plenary: "I realize more and more as I travel, as I keep vigil, as I pray, that what the world needs is not more projects, more apostolic works. More works of mercy, more social works, more community development programs. What it needs most today is communities of love, little islands flung everywhere ... millions need spiritual homes, need to find themselves, to be accepted as they are, loved, welcomed." Photo from Ann Kjellberg



Listening at Summer Sessions

Yana Landowne
Brooklyn Meeting

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messages were sometimes unintentionally suppressed. There was a lot of passion and thoughtfulness. The room listened deeply, and was moved.

Experiencing Barbra Spring's Memorial Celebration and her wisdom, in a beautiful church with chilled water offered as we left, also moved me.

The young people were inviting us to join them, wanting to join our journey, and calling out to be heard. I wept in the doorway. How could we not let them surge in or rush out to join them?

In the penultimate business meeting there was a moment that metaphorically encapsulated the age separation in NYYM. Outdoors the kids sang "River." They had arrived and needed to wait till it was their moment. Indoors we were reading the Epistle. Outdoors sounded almost like a protest: Old River keep moving. The young people were inviting us to join them, wanting to join our journey, and calling out to be heard. I wept in the doorway. How could we not let them surge in or rush out to join them? What was more important than having them feel loved, appreciated, and empowered? The room was focused on listening but not hearing what was right there.

That afternoon we held a rushed Threshing Session to brainstorm steps to divest from fossil fuels and




Junior Yearly Meeting waits to be invited into meeting for worship with a concern for business.

find funding for a Youth and Young Adult Field Secretary. It felt dismissive. There was despair in the room. When it was over, the Nurture Working Group and the Aging Concerns Committee held a joint committee meeting to create doable actions.

I raised my hand to be on a mentorship working group, and again to help design a workshop on mentorship for Powell House, and again to help write up a message to acknowledge the young Friends' requests. Many other hands rose as well. There was a real sense in the room of action needing to be taken, and that we couldn't allow the yearly meeting to end without having young people feel heard.

On the last night after everything was finished, ice cream devoured, I got a joyride on a golf cart to the fire and was reminded of my last giant Quaker gathering: FGC in 1985. That week and the friends I made there changed my life. I grew through conversation, connection, focused spiritual clarity, and by giving many new friends punk haircuts.

On the last day, I found myself moving from chair to chair in the sunglow of the room like a cat appreciating the light of all of you and knowing that I would return. 

Herding Cats

Jeffrey Aaron
New Brunswick Meeting

I love cats and currently have three. Or they have me. Because of my strong personal relationship with each of them, they often respond to me in ways that surprise people. Although they are very independent, they are also very responsive and loving.

Friends remind me of cats: independent, responsive and loving. Some Friends have said that clerking is like herding cats. They do what they want to do and what they firmly believe is the right thing to do. As clerk of our yearly meeting, I do not think of myself as a shepherd—or a catherd—but the

analogy works, especially for creating agendas for our business sessions. That lesson became abundantly clear to me during Summer Sessions 2019. As clerk, I take most of the responsibility for problems that may arise when the agenda gets out of hand. But everyone also needs to do their part.


Liaison Committee and I are working on agenda guidelines, priorities, and time guidance to create good agendas so that we can labor on what is most important to all of us and make time for important reports and readings. Although this process will take some time, Fall Sessions begins November 1. That is not very far away. You need to be aware that if you have an item that you would like to have on the agenda, you should advise your committee or coordinating committee clerk as far in advance as possible, knowing that the best laid plans of people are subject to what arises in what we may call "God's time."

Some suggestions for now:

1. As soon as you know that you expect to have an item for the agenda, please advise the appropriate coordinating committee clerk. Most agenda items, especially ones that are for consideration for approval, are seasoned by a coordinating committee.
2. Please include 1) a "handle" for the item, e.g. "membership concern," 2) what committee or other body the concern is coming from, 3) who is the contact person, 4) who is expected to make the presentation, 5) how much time you would like for the presentation, aside from responses from gathered Friends, and 6) whether the item is for consideration for approval, or only a report.
3. If there is an item for consideration for approval, please provide a specific minute if possible, with a separate explanation if appropriate.
4. If you do not have all this information, a "heads up" will do, with the rest to follow when it is available.
5. Please try to provide a written report no later than two weeks before the session is scheduled to begin, if at all possible, much earlier if available. Advise at that

time if the written report may be used as an advance document or not. The primary purpose of providing a written report is so that your clerk can provide it to the recording clerks so that their minutes can be carefully prepared in advance with correct details, although of course they will modify them as needed during the session. Providing written reports in advance to the recording clerks makes approval of minutes much easier and less tedious for everyone.

6. Never assume that anyone is aware that an item is expected to be on the agenda.


Thank you for your help. Being a Friend means working in collaboration. 



Parents and children chat and play in the morning light after Community Worship.

Excerpts from the NYYM Epistle

As always our gathering was very rich and diverse in experience—with visitors, interest groups, exhibits, play, Bible Study—but everywhere we felt informed by the fresh breath of promise that growth and change in our body offered.

When we come together in Silver Bay, the power of our gathered love, amidst the grandeur of our natural setting, fills us with a sense of awe and promise, even amidst dire threats to peace, security, and our beloved earth, here and around the world, and fears for the fragile future of our Society. We gather in wonder at the power of God's love to transform us inwardly and unite us in pursuit of a more compassionate world. 



The Epistle Committee (Ann Kjellberg and Rima Segal) celebrated with ice cream after the epistle was completed.

Quakers Worldwide



The author of the first testimony in the article below, at an Alternatives to Violence Project workshop in Kenya on healing from trauma and breaking the cycle of revenge. by AVP Kenya Trust

Tears of Pain, Struggle for Hope

Romano Iluku
Program Officer,
Alternatives to Violence
Kenya Trust

Violent extremism and radicalization have been on the rise over the recent past. If the war against terrorism is to be won, we must help people to deal with trauma, which is a key aftermath of violent extremism and radicalization. Trauma brings feelings of hopelessness, bitterness, rage, anger, and eminently a cycle of revenge which is used to justify their violent acts and feelings. Therefore, helping victims of violent extremism to become trauma conscious and resilient is vital to promoting healing and countering violent extremism narratives in our societies.

Alternatives to Violence Kenya Trust is drawn to provide a platform for the victims to become trauma conscious—to learn how to deal with and heal from trauma. The project work targeted families and victims affected both directly and indirectly by violent extremism in Kamukunji Sub County in Kenya's capital city of Nairobi. This was done by first helping people feel secure. The Trust understood that if the traumatic situation is ongoing, getting help to make a traumatized person feel safe is a first priority, especially in an environment of self-denial, self-pity, isolation, prejudgment, and discrimination.

Once they felt safe, trauma victims willingly came and talked about their stories of pain, anguish, and anger. They spent valuable time with other participants and facilitators

in the workshops doing pleasant things, creating a sense of belonging—the workshops included breathing and relaxing exercises, energizers and activities encouraging people to share in their struggle, which have proved to be successful therapy for healing and encourage resilience among those who were adversely affected by trauma and extremism.

The majority of the people directly affected by violent extremism and radicalization are young mothers. Most have lost their husbands, sons, or daughters to the terror groups or by the hands of a special unit called Anti-Terror Police Unit (ATPU). Furthermore, the group of young mothers had many other related problems, including being victims of rape, incest, domestic violence, and child neglect, which they said coerced them towards radicalization and violent extremism.

The project, dubbed **Promote Psycho-Social Support to Men, Women and Youth in Kamukunji Sub County Affected by Violent Extremism through Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities**, attracted many participants, who shared personal stories and gained courage as highlighted below:

“My tears of pain and struggle for a sense of belonging are attached to the loss of my son, who died as a suicide bomber in 2015. Life changed. The young boy was very close to me, and the way he ended his life, no parent, especially a mother like me, would wish that to happen to them. With all that, the community still sees me as an informer, accomplice, and sympathizer. I chose to share this for the first time to free myself from the traumatic anger that I have suffered all this time. I also felt that I have never felt more secure and loved the way I have in this workshop, which is why I am encouraged to share my hidden self.”

“I am 32 years old. I was married and lived in Majengo Kamukunji Sub County. I divorced my husband, with whom I have sired children, because of his suspicious activities

with the terror group (Al-Shabaab). I moved out of the house and started living with my children. I later learned that my divorced husband joined Al-Shabaab and he was planning to “punish” me by recruiting my own son to join him as Al-Shabaab! This tore me apart. I have developed rage and traumatic anger with any small trigger causing me to react explosively. I share this because I have listened to other people in this training who have suffered just like me and even more than I. I also chose to use the experience of others to heal from my trauma. I similarly chose to become trauma conscious and resilient.”

Visit avpkenya.org or contact Romano Iluku at romluku@gmail.com for more information.



Speakers at the Sohagapur Girls School Reunion on June 2, 2019. Photo provided by Dr. Sanjeev Shukla.

Reunion at Friends Girls School Sohagapur, India Dr. Sanjeev Shukla Principal

The Friends Girls School Sohagapur in central India was begun by Harriet Mender in 1875, recognized by the Board of State Education in 1930, and expanded to middle, high, and higher secondary school in the year 1958. In those days there were almost no girls' schools in the surrounding area. Now, due to development, there are many government and commercial private schools open. Parents are now regularly diverting their children from Friends Girls School to other schools. Enrollment of Friends Girls School decreased gradually, declining to 140 students. The survival of the school was in question.

Then the school management launched the Free Education Project for poor and needy girls. Staff members, former students, and local people donate school fees and

sponsor poor children. Last year the school's enrollment increased to 190 students. Many events and activities have taken place to promote the school, including an Annual Day celebration, BioSand water filter workshop, reunion of Friends Alumni, door to door campaigning, and news articles published in leading newspapers. The mission of the school and the vision of charity it represents will continue in the forthcoming academic year.

By God's grace and efforts, the Friends Girls School in Sohagapur, India, organized a reunion of former students on June 2, 2019.

The reunion program started with worship, followed by the school song, “mitron ki kanyashala ka soubhagy niralai hai” (“The Fortune of the Girls School Founded by the Friends Is Awesome and Bright.”) Then, a welcome and brief remarks from Principal Dr. Sanjeev Shukla. After the welcome, Manager Mrs. Doreen Robert, Chairman of Governing Board of Schools Mr. Devdas Shrisunder, and the principal shared views of the present condition of the school and the Free Education Project for poor and needy girls, which started last year.

An open session started with the speech of friend and alumna, ex-MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) Mrs. Savita Diwan Sharma, and continued with speeches from Mayor Mr. Santosh Malviya, former student Miss Rajo Malviya, and many more. They all promised to help and support Friends Girls School Sohagapur. After this session, students shared their experiences of student life.

In total, 81 alumni (55 girls and 26 boys) and 50 other people, including parent representatives and media reporters, participated in the reunion. Among the Friends alums were Mrs. Gaur (an industrial tribunal judge), Mr. Satyam Vyas (a merchant navy engineer), Mr. Pratpal Singh Khanuja (a businessman), and other professionals, including teachers and nurses.

On behalf of the Friends School family, thanks were given by the principal to all for their presence.

With Kind Regards,
Dr. Sanjeev Shukla, Principal
sk_shukla1@yahoo.co.uk
friendsschoolsohagapur.com



Fall Sessions 2019 • November 1–3 • Powell House (Northeastern Region)

2019 NYYM Fall Sessions

Friday–Sunday, Nov. 1–3

**at Powell House
524 Pitt Hall Road**

**& Old Chatham Meetinghouse
539 County Road 13**

in Old Chatham, NY 12136

YOU ARE INVITED!

**Northeastern Regional Meeting
invites you to Fall Sessions 2019.**

When Friends from all worship groups and meetings participate in our sessions, we bring the wisdom of a variety of Friends to our work together and ensure that the decisions we make will be reported back to each meeting represented. Please join us! Fall Sessions will be held primarily at Powell House, in both the Pitt Hall and the Anna Curtis Center buildings, but the Saturday meetings for worship will be held in the Old Chatham Meetinghouse—just a short walk from Powell House. We will also be trying an experiment with Eco-Eating! See the article on page 8. An agenda, advance documents, and the full schedule will be online at nyym.org/session/fall-sessions-2019

We'll begin on Friday with dinner at 6:00 p.m. followed by a Friday Evening Program. Powell House and Old Chatham Meeting are near the Quaker Intentional Village in Canaan (QIVC). Jens Braun, a member of that community, will lead the Friday evening session by sharing about QIVC's main challenge of living our faith at a deeper level, given we live in a larger culture that is very effective at providing us with convincing excuses to not do so. We will explore some of the barriers to spiritual community the QIVCers have discovered, focusing on the hidden nuances of the dominant culture and language that lead soft values such as comfort and convenience to take priority over the longing of our souls. The session will be highly interactive and appropriate for older adults as well as youth.

Schedule

Fall Sessions will begin on Friday at 5:30 p.m. with the primary registration opportunity in the ACC, and then dinner at 6:00 p.m. The Friday evening program, presented by Jens



Friends prepared for a presentation in the Pitt Hall Ballroom during Coordinating Committee weekend, January 2019.

Braun, will start at 7:45 p.m. in the Pitt Hall ballroom.

The rest of the weekend will contain opportunities for gathered worship, meeting for business, committee meetings, display spaces, and creating the Blessed Community one hug at a time.

Overnight Accommodations There are three options for overnight accommodations.

1. Powell House: Friends may stay at Powell House on a first paid for, first served basis. Register directly with Powell House by calling Sharon Koomler at 518-794-8811 or visiting powellhouse.org. There is not a residential component for the youth program. All children and youth must room with their parents.

2. Friendly Hospitality: You may request hospitality with local Friends for Friday and/or Saturday night. Indicate your needs and special needs on your registration. David Herendeen will contact you with particulars. Hospitality cannot be guaranteed after the October 21 registration deadline.

3. Local Hotels and Motels: The Powell House staff recommends Chatham Travel Lodge (\$86.00 a night), 598 NY-295, Chatham, NY 12037 (approx. four miles from PoHo), phone: (518) 392-4066. Or take a look at hotelguides.com/interstate-hotels/i-90-exit-9-ny-hotels.html Reserve a room directly with your chosen location.

Meals

Meals will be served in the Anna Curtis Center (ACC). We have a (tentative) plan to experiment with Eco-Eating for Saturday dinner; see article on page 8. Meal prices will be available on the registration form.

Committee Meeting Space and Display Space

Requests for committee meeting space and display space should be directed to Melanie-Claire Mallison, MsMellie@gmail.com, by the registration deadline. Please remind your committee members to register to attend Fall Sessions!

Host Task Group

Jim Ralston (clerk), Sheree Cammer, Nat Corwin, David Herendeen, Sunfire Kazmayer, and Melanie-Claire Mallison.

Emergency Contact

For emergency contact during the weekend of Fall Sessions, call Jim Ralston, clerk of the Host Task Group, at 518-863-4041.

Sustainability

We ask participants to consider their environmental impact when attending any NYYM gathering. Carpool with other attendees from your area, for instance, using the most fuel-efficient vehicle of the group. Bring a travel mug and water bottle with you. 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 tech device and read them electronically. If you do print them out, be sure to share! Return your nametag holder when you leave 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. We primarily need folks to open their homes to our participants. Many of our attenders cannot afford to stay



The front exterior of Pitt Hall at Powell House.

at a motel and so they depend on our generosity in sharing our living spaces. David Herendeen is coordinating host offers and hospitality requests; questions about those appear on the registration form. There are also options to gift a few hours of your time (or more!) to help us host the Yearly Meeting Sessions. If you are interested in any of these 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.

Youth Program

Youth Program for all teenagers (13-17 years old); **Sunfire** (Easton Meeting), **Robin Mullaney** (Old Chatham), and members of the **Earthcare Working Group** are eager to help the youth who are coming to Fall Sessions develop a program that grows out of their vision and meets their needs. Young people who want to work on this should contact Sunfire by writing to sunfirequaker@earthlink.net or by calling him at 518-692-8023 ext. 216. The deadline for registering for the youth program is **Monday, October 21**. After the 21st, Sunfire will contact the teens who have registered to develop a program that works for them and includes a service project, along with time for fellowship, discussion, and games. There will not be a residential component to the Youth Program, even though we are at Powell House. Young friends must room with their parents. Also, a **Children's Program** will be created and **Childcare** will be available for the 0-12-year-olds if their registrations are received by the deadline.

Please do register all children and teens by the registration deadline (**Monday, October 21**) to ensure we have an appropriate number of childcare providers and adult presences.

A **Youth Medical Form** must be completed for all children and youth attending sessions in addition to the registration form. The medical form is available for download on the NYYM website at <https://www.nyym.org/content/nyym-youth-medical-form>

Registration deadline: Monday, October 21, 2019 • nyym.org/session/fall-sessions-2019

EcoEating at Fall Sessions

Sheree Cammer
Albany Meeting

Friends, we are embarking on an experiment. Perhaps it will be contagious. We hope so!

Quaker process may seem cumbersome and slow, but I have been learning there are no short-cuts to the various levels of group discernment in Spirit. Much interest about the food we eat was apparent at 2018 Summer Sessions. The NYYM Earthcare Working Group (EWG) brought a proposal to the Witness Coordinating Committee and to the Fall Sessions Host Task Group. Both approved the initiative, in which the EcoEating Task Group (EETG), a subgroup of EWG, is to collaborate with Powell House to see what can be done about eco-eating at Fall Sessions.

And so it came to pass that the EETG met with Powell House staff. Farm-to-Table dinner plans are in the preliminary stages. Planned ingredients are to be seasonally available, local, and sustainably raised (using only natural fertilizers and pest controls, and organic or biodynamic methods which optimize soil health). The EETG plans to source ingredients for the chef's menu and to coordinate deliveries. The EETG is committed to keeping costs within the usual limits. Anticipated additional labor and ingredient costs are planned to be covered, thanks to a grant from EWG, food donations, and likely another grant. We will strive to offer one entrée option that includes grass fed, grass finished meat as a minor ingredient.

Looking at the longer term, the Drawdown Project promoted by the EWG includes several agriculturally related initiatives that can draw carbon out of the atmosphere and sequester it

in soils. Such actions increase soil fertility, hold moisture during droughts, and reduce runoff during extreme rainfalls. Farming practices that accomplish carbon sequestration include tilling as little as possible, never leaving soils bare, avoiding synthetic fertilizers or pesticides, and keeping roots alive in the soil. These practices allow microbial communities to thrive underground. Such communities can keep the carbon in the microbial ecosystem for centuries. Desertification can be reversed with wise use of this regenerative agriculture.

Animals raised on pasture from these soils add their organic poop to the loop, and trample plant matter into the soil. When the grazing animals are moved at optimal times, the pasture regenerates. Each year more and deeper roots carry carbon further down into the soil. Thus, soil health increases. Feedlot meat results in far more greenhouse gas emissions than animals raised on pasture and fed hay during the winter, because the production of grain and soy are major culprits in greenhouse gas emissions. Pastured animals, raised for meat or dairy products, are able to engage in normal animal behavior while grazing. Since much land is too hilly for growing crops, pasturing animals in such areas need not take desirable cropland.

The EETG welcomes your offers of help for the Fall Sessions Farm-to-Table dinner. If you are interested in food donations or delivering produce, please talk to Sheree by September 18. For more information on EETG, or to volunteer, contact Sheree Cammer at sheree4614@gmail.com or text/call 518-951-5953. Check the NYYM EWG webpage (nyym.org/committee/earthcare-working-group) to sign up for Google Group discussions on this and other EWG topics.

Fall Sessions Schedule November 1-3, 2019 Northeastern Regional Meeting

**Powell House, 524 Pitt Hall Road;
Old Chatham Meetinghouse (OCM),
539 Co. Rd. 13; Old Chatham, NY**
ACC = Anna Curtis Center, Pitt = Pitt Hall;
both are part of Powell House

Friday, November 1

- 5:30-6pm Registration, ACC
- 6:00-7pm Dinner, ACC
- 7:30-9pm Friday Evening Program on the Quaker Intentional Village and Living our Faith, Pitt Ballroom

Saturday, November 2

- 7:15-8:15am Registration and community breakfast, ACC
- 8:15a-9:45pm Youth Program throughout the day, ACC Library
- 8:15a-12:15p Children's Program, Pitt Children's Room
- 8:45-9:30am Meeting for Worship, OCM
- 9:45-10:45am Committee Meetings [Sec. 1]
- 11:00a-12:00p Committee Meetings [Sec. 2]
- 12:15-1:15pm Lunch, ACC
- 1:30-6pm Children's Program, Pitt Children's Room
- 1:30-3:30pm Coordinating Committee Meetings
- 3:45-5:45pm Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, OCM
- 6:00-7pm Eco-Eating (tentative) Dinner, ACC
- 7:30-9:30pm Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, OCM

Sunday, November 3

- 7:15-8:15am Registration and community breakfast, ACC
- 8:15a-12:15p Youth Program throughout the morning, ACC Library
- 8:15a-12:15p Children's Program, Pitt Children's Room
- 8:45-10:30am Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, location TBA
- 11am-12pm Meeting for Worship with Old Chatham Friends Meeting
- 12:15-1:15p Lunch, ACC
- 1:15-2pm Clean up, pack up displays, and head home!

Chatham Meetinghouse all day, the Host Task Group has reserved two golf carts for shuttling back and forth. If you'd like to be a **golf cart driver**, be sure to bring your valid drivers license with you.

Registration is online at nyym.org/session/fall-sessions-2019. You can also pay online or mail a check to the NYYM office (see below for address.) For registration help, call the NYYM office at 212-673-5750. Please register by **Oct. 21**.

If you cannot register online, either mail this form to NYYM, 15 Rutherford Pl., NY, NY 10003 OR call 212-673-5750

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): _____

Transportation

Powell House is at 524 Pitt Hall Rd., Old Chatham, NY. For **Driving Directions:** powellhouse.org/about-us/written-directions If you get lost, you can always call Powell House at 518-794-8811.

Public transportation: Friends may take the Amtrak train to either the Hudson or Albany-Rensselaer stations. Megabus and Greyhound/Trailways service is also available. Local Friends may be available for some station pickups, but Friends may choose to use one of the following local **taxi services:** Green Bee We, 518-392-0461; Hudson City Taxi, 518-822-8880; John's Taxi, 518-392-3642; Pronto Taxi, 518-822-9500. ALL taxi companies should be called and a reservation made before the day of need. Uber and Lyft are also available in the Albany area.

Also! Because we will be moving between the Powell House campus and the Old



Registration deadline: Monday, October 21, 2019 • nyym.org/session/fall-sessions-2019