



SPARK

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

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15 Rutherford Place, New York, NY 10003

November 2022



**Fay "Honey"
Knopp,
1918-1995**

Judy Meikle
Wilton Meeting

Fay Honey Knopp described herself as a Jewish-Quaker-feminist-activist. A believer in Gandhian non-violence, she was drawn to Friends and became a member of Wilton Quaker Meeting in 1962. Honey was a powerhouse of activism fueled by her sense of injustice in the world; the poverty and suffering that she witnessed on a visit to Cuba in 1940, Hitler's actions in Europe, the treatment of Jews turned away from the U.S.A. In the 1960's, she protested the effects of nuclear testing on children's health and was involved in racial justice work in Mississippi. She accompanied survivors of Hiroshima on a tour of the U.S., supported peace efforts in Vietnam, and was also involved with the American Friends Service Committee in various capacities.

Honey's prison work is well known among prison activists. During the Vietnam war, she visited conscientious objectors in federal prisons. She became a Quaker "minister of record," which gave her access to visit incarcerated people

continued on page 4

Famous Quakers

**Was Walt
Whitman a
Quaker?**

Howard Nelson
Poplar Ridge Meeting

When asked if he was a Quaker, Walt Whitman said "No," and added, "I was never meant to live inside a fence." But he had strong Quaker roots and connections. His maternal grandparents were Quaker, and his mother was greatly influenced by her Quaker background. She brought that influence with her when she married and became the mother of a large family—eight children, the second of which was Walt. Walt's father, also Walter, was more of a free-thinking anti-religionist, but that didn't stop him from being an admirer of the most well-known Quaker of his day, the traveling minister and reformer Elias Hicks. Quakers will recognize Elias Hicks as the namesake of one of the factions of the schism in Quakerism that began in the 1820s and in some ways carries down to this day.

Hicks surfaces in Walt Whitman's life very early and very late. When he was almost seventy, he wrote an essay on Hicks, which begins with a memory from when he was ten. The family had moved to Brooklyn, where Father Whitman was working building houses: "I can remember my father coming home toward sunset from his day's work as

continued on page 4

**Messages
from NYYM
Friends**

**Ain't No Man's
Best Friend Here**

Michael Rhynes
Attica Prison Worship
Group

On April 29, 2022, Attica was put on facility-wide lock-down for so-called gang warfare. It was first reported through word of mouth, then backed up by the prison alarm system, that gangs were attacking each other all over the prison.

Facility-wide lock-down means all prisoners are kept in their cells 24 hours a day. We were fed cold food in our cells. Normally all men who wanted a hot meal would be allowed to go to the mess hall.

Prisoners are allotted two showers a week. From April 29, 2022, thru May 9, 2022, we were not allowed to take showers. Showering is a precious act to an incarcerated individual. It gives us respite from the daily accumulation of psychological smut that clings to our bodies.

We are supposed to receive at least one hour of recreation per day. For 10 days we humans were caged in kennels like dogs without handlers to walk us.

To add insult to injury we were shook-down and searched by a special unit dressed like SWAT without the helmets or weapons.

continued on page 7

**FALL SESSIONS
DEC. 2-4, 2022
ONLINE**

**Being Changed
Living Faithfully**

**NEW YORK
YEARLY MEETING
SESSIONS 2022**

An Invitation

Greetings, Friends—I hope you will be ready to spend some time with Friends at Fall Sessions, December 2nd-4th. We will get to try out a virtual space on Friday night and I hope many of us will join in this new way to be together to get more out of virtual meetings. Of course, we will have the now-familiar Zoom versions of meetings for worship and for worship with business and social meals. No surprise, a major business item will be consideration of the budget proposal for 2023. The agenda is still a work in progress,

continued on page 8



**Famous
Quakers**
pp. 5-7

**Messages from
Friends** pp. 3, 7-8

Fall Sessions p. 8

Notices

New Members

Michael Jones—Cornwall

Deaths

Nathan Aldrich, member of Farmington Friends, on September 10, 2022.

Donna Beckwith, member of Perry City, on September 9, 2022.

Ann C. Beebe, member of Fredonia, on July 24, 2022.

Richard E. Brewer, member of Manasquan, on August 29, 2022.

Donald Bybee, member of Conscience Bay, on June 23, 2022.

John Cooley, member of Central Finger Lakes, on August 20, 2022.

David Fletcher, member of Morningside, on September 12, 2022.

Peter Jolles, member of Ithaca, on June 19, 2022.

Nancy S. LaFountain, member of Manasquan, on August 1, 2022.

Rima Segal, member of Rochester, on October 20, 2022.

Clifton Thomas, member of Rochester, on September 20, 2022.

Around Our Yearly Meeting

on diversity also produced an exquisite array of skin colors, as well as all kinds of languages and ethnicities. Our goal of family involvement was a hit with the moms and dads, including a simple communal meal every night, group singing, and activities that all ages could participate in. We appreciate the help of so many volunteers who drove our children from families without transportation, as well as those who supported our children with special needs. Our campers reflected the Quaker Peace Testimony in their interpersonal relations, their cooperation on our many projects, and their awareness of the need for peace in our environment and in the world. It was wonderful being back in our lovely old Meeting-house, following our two years with a “reduced” camp due to COVID, and our towering and strong elm trees in the backyard welcomed us back with open arms. We’re already looking forward to next year’s rainbow of campers! Please call Anita Stanley at 518-441-7722, or e-mail at meridiancomm@earthlink.net, for more information.

Opening of New Friends School in Sohagpur, India

From Dr. Sanjeev Shukla, Principal, Friends Girls School Sohagpur

On the occasion of World Quaker Day and Gandhi Jayanti (a celebration of Gandhi’s birthday), in the graceful presence of God, we conducted the grand opening of the newly constructed building and Friends English Medium Play School on Saturday, October 1, 2022 at Friends Girls School Sohagpur. The program started with a prayer followed by hymn singing and a Bible reading. Governing Board members, invitees from Sohagpur, retired principals, staff of the school, and old and present students blessed this occasion with their presence. Speeches were given, the contractor and supervisors were thanked, and a beautiful dance

program was presented by children and students. Finally, all guests walked to the newly constructed building and a ribbon cutting ceremony was conducted. Everybody admired the design, construction, and painting of the teaching and learning materials in the new building.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Reflection Sessions on the Life Cycle of Meetings

November 7 at 2 p.m. and November 15 at 8 p.m.

Wanting to talk more about something you’ve read in the Life Cycle of Meetings issue of Spark? Register for an upcoming reflection session led by Emily Provance: Monday, November 7 at 2 p.m. (Eastern) or Tuesday, November 15 at 8 p.m. (Eastern). Open to Friends everywhere. For more information or to register, visit tinyurl.com/meetinglifecycle

Celebration of John Cooley’s Life

There will be a celebration of John Cooley’s life on Saturday, November 19, 2022, at 1:00 p.m., at Seneca Lake Event Center, 586 East Fourth St., Watkins Glen, NY. John’s family intends to stream the memorial online and to have a celebration at Silver Bay, NY on Saturday, July 29, 2023. Visit jhcsr.samcooley.com for more and to RSVP.

Fall Sessions

December 2-4, 2022, Online

Please see page 8 for more details.

POWELL HOUSE WORKSHOP

Powell House is the retreat and conference center for NYYM. Visit poho.org to see the full list of upcoming events and to register.

Brent Bill: Hope and Witness in Dangerous Times

December 2-4, 2022, at Powell House
In this workshop, we’ll explore the themes of Brent Bill’s book *Hope and Witness in Dangerous Times: Lessons from the Quakers on Blending Faith, Daily Life, and Activism* — from how the first testimonies (peace, equality, etc.) sprang from the daily life and faith of the early Friends to how to be a people of hope in dangerous times. We’ll look at the hope and witness of Friends through the ages and how those lessons inform our hope and witness today.

Friends’ Decision-Making and Clerking: Participating in Meetings for Business with Joy and Confidence

November 18-20, 2022, Friday 4:30 p.m. through Sunday at noon
At Pendle Hill, PA

An in-person weekend workshop with Steve Mohlke on clerking skills and principles. Read more and register at pendlehill.org/learn/workshops-courses-events/

Friends Committee on National Legislation Annual Meeting and Quaker Public Policy Institute

November 16-20, 2022

You’re invited to attend FCNL’s Annual Meeting and Quaker Public Policy Institute. You can join us online or in person in D.C. for worship, learning, fellowship, and action. Register: www.fcnl.org/events

FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

Upcoming Powell House Youth Conferences

OH MY GOURD! for 6th-8th Grade

November 18-20, 2022

Squash! Pumpkins! Cucumbers! Melons! All of these fall under the category of gourds. At this confer-

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NEWS

World Quaker Day at Bethpage Meeting

A wonderful gathering of around 22 persons was held at the heated Bethpage Meetinghouse on October 2, 2022, for worship, a celebration of World Quaker Day, and a discussion session on a Quaker version of “deep canvassing.” The pastor of a local Methodist Church also attended for a few minutes to understand Quakerism. Some strangers also stopped by when they saw 11 cars in the Bethpage Meetinghouse parking area. Friends dispersed after 3 hours after a light potluck lunch.

Young Peacemakers Week in Albany

Albany Friends Meeting is pleased to announce that another successful Young Peacemakers Week has concluded on the Meetinghouse grounds. A fruitful collaboration with the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) resulted in a wonderful variety of little faces from all over the world. Our focus



Photo of dance performance at the Friends English Medium Play School in Sohagpur, India

ence we will be doing a variety of food projects involving gourds. Think delicious pumpkin dishes, juicy melon delights, and tasty cooked squash. We'll talk about the importance of food and cooking. And of course we'll play games and enjoy each other's company at this good, gourdy conference.

WINTERSONG for 7th-12th grades
December 9-11, 2022

Wintersong is a yearly wintertime celebration of our PoHo Youth Program community. Visit poho.org to find out more and to register.

FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Mending, Healing, Growing

Young Adults (older than high school age) at Powell House
January 20-22, 2023

Living through the pandemic has changed us. What we were needing before is different from what we are needing now. At this conference, we will explore the ways we have changed individually and as a community. We will go deep with our conversations and incorporate fun and movement in our exploration. Our glowing young adult community will surely make this conference both boisterous and grounding. Visit poho.org.

OPPORTUNITIES

Job Openings at American Friends Service Committee

AFSC has a number of positions open in their Philadelphia office. In addition AFSC seeks a Sr. International Human Resources Manager (flexible location) and Staff and Supervising Attorneys for the Detention and Deportation Defense Initiative in Newark, NJ. Visit www.afsc.org/job-center

Job Openings at Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR)

RSWR seeks an Associate Secretary of Operations, Associate Secretary for Advancement, and Associate Secretary of Programs. Visit rswr.org/careers

New NYYM Directory

For many years, the New York Yearly Meeting office has printed a *Yearbook* containing information from the past year. Now, most of that information — this year's minutes and reports and the current Friends under appointment committee list—is available online at nyym.org/yearbook.

The parts of the *Yearbook* that contained personal contact info—including the local meeting directory with clerk information and the contact list of Friends serving the yearly meeting—will not be posted online but will be printed in a yearly *Directory*. Each local meeting and Friend on a YM committee should receive this *Directory* by the end of this year.

If you'd like to receive printed versions of some of the material that used to appear in the *Yearbook*, please visit nyym.org/request-print or call the NYYM office at 212-673-5750 with your request.

Callie Janoff Steps Down as ARCH Director

We are sad to announce that Callie Janoff will be leaving her position as Director of ARCH (Aging Resources, Consultation and Health) as of November 15, 2022. ARCH Coordinator Kevin Lovelady will serve as interim director until a permanent replacement is found.

Callie has worked with the ARCH program for ten years, starting under the mentorship of Anita Paul and Barbara Spring and taking on the full time Director role in 2015. Through her years of stewardship the ARCH program

has expanded to include local coordinators throughout our yearly meeting. The ARCH Visitor Training has transformed from an in-person, weekend-long workshop to the four week, online

ARCH Foundations Workshop, and the curriculum is now focused on mutual accompaniment, cultivating our capacity for vulnerability, and developing a community of practice to grow older in community.

Callie has facilitated countless events on aging and pastoral care for our yearly meeting community, and has provided support for the Mentorship Program, the Parent Mutual Support Groups, the "Second Thirds" program, Joy Meikle's Meeting for Feelings and Illuminations Newsletter, Mattie Johnson's Listening to Parents and Youth project, and many other places in the yearly meeting. At the same time she has continued to

support Friends who participate in the ARCH network and to manage and mentor the ARCH coordinators. Her gifts of ministry, organization, spiritual groundedness, intuition, knowledge, humor, generosity, and compassion were well used by our community. She counseled many Friends through difficult transitions, holding them with love during moments of deepest grief. She devoted the past several years of her life to caring for every member of our community, and her presence on staff will be deeply missed.

We are grateful for Callie's years of service to our community and wish her the best in her future endeavors.

—Elaine Learnard, Clerk of NYYM
Steve Mohlke, General Secretary

Editor's Note

Welcome! Please consider writing (up to 600 words) for *Spark*. Upcoming theme: **January 2023: Mindful Eating: Nourishing all life while nourishing ourselves.** Guest edited by **Rebekah Rice and Margaret McCasland**. We invite you to tell us how YOU choose which foods to eat, and why? What are your considerations, and how is Spirit leading you? Topics could include: Carbon-storage and Farming; Compassion for Animals; Food and Climate Change; Food & Fair Labor; Food Justice; Food & Stewardship (Honorable Harvest); Grateful Eating/Simplicity; Regenerative Farming; and Spirit-led Food Choices. **Submissions due December 1.** Email articles to Margaret and Rebekah at mindful-eating@nyym.org and include "Spark article" in the subject line.

Please share news and events with the rest of NYYM. Email submissions to communications@nyym.org. Your news may appear in *Spark*, the weekly email, or both.

To join the email list, visit nyym.org/subscribe. To join the mailing list, email walter@nyym.org or call 212-673-5750

NYYM is on **Facebook** (NewYorkYearlyMeeting), **Twitter** (NYYM Tweets), and **Insta** (newyorkyearlymeeting).
—Sarah Way, NYYM
Communications Director

Welcoming Young Friends

Heather Buchan
Brooklyn Meeting

I'm inspired to write because of an—actually, several—incidents at Summer Sessions. My impression is that many assumptions are made about young Friends. There seems to be a lot of fuss made about welcoming new people into meeting, but not so much about tending to people already here. I want to remind older Friends of that and encourage a little consideration. Maybe the next time Friends wonder why young people "leave the fold" or "don't step up" we might instead ask if maybe a little prevention, a little more welcoming, might help. What if instead of generalizing "teens are like that" or "kids these days," Friends can remember a more personal recollection of their own rebellious tendencies. Whether birthright or convinced, all Friends need to seek and answer questions for themselves.

I know this age friction issue is a recurring one; I know some Friends are concerned and are doing things to address this. Here's my hint of an idea. I was a bit disappointed attending the intergenerational Meal with Meaning at Summer Sessions—sparsely attended! It does seem like a good start though. Bring together people of different ages—what do we have in common? We all eat.

Beth Kelly's report is also echoing in my mind. She's the Children, Youth, and Young Adult (CYYA) Community Director, and she reminded Friends how important it is to make time to simply have fun. I wonder if that could be built on and expanded.

Friends of all ages have things in common beyond food. Perhaps we could come together to generate a few random acts. A Friend in our meeting makes mini-quilts and displays them in random public places. Perhaps that's a model for a collaborative project for all ages. Personally, I like randomness and creativity, but Friends who are more interested in directed Social Action could come up with their own collaborative, multi-generational projects for their meetings.

NYYM.org/donate



Famous Quakers

Fay "Honey" Knopp, 1918-1995

Judy Meikle
Wilton Meeting

continued from page 1

throughout the federal system. In 1968, together with Bob Horton, she founded Prisoner Visitation and Support which to this day provides qualified visitors to visit in every federal and military prison across the country.

Visiting people in prison had a major impact on Honey. She became aware of conditions of confinement and deep systemic issues of injustice within the carceral system. She began to explore alternatives to punishment which led her to collaborate with others in writing *Instead of Prisons: A Handbook for Abolitionists*, published in 1976. In the epilog to this handbook, the authors write:

"Prison, we have been taught, is a necessary evil. This is wrong. Prison is an artificial, human invention, not a fact of life; a throw-back to primitive times, and a blot upon the species. [...] We say, 'No more.' Imprisonment is slavery. Like slavery, it was imposed on a class of people by those on top. Prisons will fall when their foundation is exposed."

Honey believed that there was no way to abolish prisons unless effective alternatives were devised for all incarcerated people. In developing an abolitionist perspective, she began to focus on reconciliation and restorative justice approaches to the prevention and treatment of sexual violence. When asked to contemplate a world without prisons, many people's knee jerk response is to ask 'but what about punishing the rapists and the child molesters?' Honey wrote that she was advocating for more appropriate responses than "warehousing the perpetrators (of sexual violence) in prisons, neglecting sexual assault victims, and abdicating our responsibility to prevent such assaults". From this thinking emerged the Prisoner Research Education/Action Project (PREAP), originally founded under the care of the New York State Council of Churches. Honey believed in the treatment of people convicted of

sex offences. She researched all 22 treatment programs inside and outside of prisons and published the first nationwide survey of such programs. She advocated for intervention and accountability, while also showing care and concern for the victims of abuse. The work of PREAP continues today as the Safer Society Foundation and is perhaps Honey's major legacy.

I have often thought about Honey Knopp when I have worshipped at Wilton Meeting. My journey to identifying as a prison abolitionist also began when I went behind the walls and connected with the humanity of incarcerated people. It is powerful to be reminded that we stand on the shoulders of the people who came before us. Honey's words about the challenges of being a social change agent resonate with me and comfort me:

The struggle for most of us has never been whether to continue or give up, but rather: how to lead a life of integrity with the fewest of contradictions in a culture that often devalues, inhibits, negates, or co-opts the principles we support; how to stay rooted in the spiritual while actively pursuing justice, while being oppositional and confrontational, while being outraged, while all the time trying to reduce the pain in pain-filled people and a pain-filled society. Oftentimes I tell myself that may be my only mission: to reduce pain, and not increase it.

(From 'An article about Fay Honey Knopp', Licence & Johnson, Peace Education Fund)



Was Walt Whitman a Quaker?

Howard Nelson
Poplar Ridge Meeting

continued from page 1

carpenter, and saying briefly, as he throws down his armful of kindling blocks with a bounce on the kitchen floor, 'Come, mother, Elias preaches to-night.' Whitman adds, "As I had been behaving well that day, as a special reward I was allowed to go also." What the ten-year-old boy saw and heard stayed with him for life. In the essay he presents

Hicks as 'Exhibit A' for the religious element in humanity, pointing to "the fountain of all naked theology, all religion, all worship, all the truth to which you are possibly eligible."

Back to the fence. Was it Quakerism itself that Whitman objected to, or was it religion in any form? Or that thing that many people don't like to think of themselves as being part of—even as they are partaking of it, participating in it, perhaps planning the next potluck supper—organized religion?

It might have been Quakerism itself. One of the things that Elias Hicks had strong feelings about was whether Friends should be involved in the world of worldliness. His image was not of a fence but of a hedge, and he was in favor of keeping the hedge that surrounded Quakerism well maintained. He wrote: "I fear there is a considerable number under our name of this description, who not only love the world, but also its friendships, manners, maxims, policies, customs, fashions, vanities, pleasures, and amusements, yet like to bear the name of Quaker because it has become honorable among men. Alas! How much better would it be for the Society and the promotion of Truth if it was still a name of reproach among men!" Whitman was a boy when he was mesmerized by Hicks' preaching, and when he was an adult he loved to be mesmerized by all of those things on Hicks' list. You could find him in Pfaff's beer cellar, a Manhattan restaurant that was a gathering place for writers, artists, and bohemians. You could find him at the opera, about as far as you can get from simplicity and silence: "I hear the chorus, it is a grand opera,/ Ah this indeed is music—this suits me....The orchestra whirls me wider than Uranus flies,/It wrenches such ardors from me I did not know I possessed them...." Not for Whitman a lifestyle that denied such pleasures and amusements, and not for him a Society that defined itself by being set apart, a reproach among men.

Elias Hicks died almost 200 years ago, and Quakerism has taken down many (most?) of its hedges. Hicks had other qualities beside his tendency to sternness and moral judgment. Whitman always admired him, and when he came

to set down his old-age thoughts about religion, he set him alongside George Fox as a paradigm of the essence of it. Where was that "fountain of all naked theology"? Whitman said, "in yourself." It is "the light within," the "inner light." He struggles a bit in his essay to define it, but he believed, as fervently as Hicks and Fox, that we all have it.

Quakers and Quakerism are not mentioned much in Whitman's poetry—hardly at all. In his big poem "Song of Myself," in Section 33, one of Whitman's long lists, he gets on a roll with the word "pleas'd," and right after the line "Pleas'd with the homely woman as well as the handsome," comes "Pleas'd" with the quakeress as she puts off her bonnet and talks melodiously." A little later, in Section 43, Whitman gives a truly wild account of the history of religion world-wide, and in it, among references to things Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and Christian, and to traditions and practices older than any of them, quietly slip in the lines, "sitting patiently in a pew" and "waiting dead-like till my spirit arouses me." I think those are Whitman's nods to Quakerism.

He was not a Quaker, did not belong to any denomination, and was not a church-goer. (If you want to see Whitman in church, see "Sunday with the Insane," in his prose collection Specimen Days.) But Whitman honored the religious impulse, and when he mentions or evokes Quakerism he does so with respect and affection. In the introduction to the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, he gives what we might call his "advice." Some have a Quaker ring to them, such as "take off your hat to nothing known or unknown or to any man or number of men," and "nothing is better than simplicity." Another one—not sure if this is Quakerish or not—is, "Argue not concerning God." That might be one where the practice of silence is especially helpful.



The Deeds of Mahlon York

Benjamin H. Shaw
Unadilla Meeting

Mahlon D. York of Unadilla is

continued on next page



continued from previous page

the designer of what is known as a York stone rake and drag combine. The machine was (and is) a scraper, stone rake, and drag in one machine. The machines were originally built in Earlville, N.Y. Eventually the company moved to Unadilla, N.Y. The York Rake business became very successful and is still in operation to this day. The original York rake is displayed alongside the company's Unadilla manufacturing plant.

York was a Birthright Quaker and dedicated to his faith and community minded. With all he accomplished, he must have been a "high energy" person. It was his foresight that recognized the need for a church in Rogers Hollow and Rockdale. Thus, through his leadership both churches were established.

According to an article written by Grace Nichols, the business of the church was started off as a Preparation Meeting on September 23, 1896. Butternuts Quarterly Meeting was held for the first time in Unadilla in August 1897. The Unadilla Monthly Meeting was established on January 27, 1904, through the efforts of Mahlon York.

Mahlon York headed the list for the founding of a church. York was clerk of the meeting from the founding of the church except for one or two short intervals until his death. He was a very substantial giver.

There is no way of knowing how many people and organizations have benefitted from Friend York's success and generosity. One continuing benefit is the Mahlon York Fund managed by New York Yearly Meeting. The Mahlon York Fund was written into his will in 1933. "All the rest, residue and remainder of my property....I give, devise and bequeath to the New York Yearly Meeting in trust.... to invest and keep to be used for education.... in particular of The Butternuts Quarter."

The Mahlon York Fund has been well managed and done very well over the years and the scholarships are still available. Dozens of students have enjoyed the benefits of the York scholarship funds including some from the Rogers Hollow Friends Church.

Mahlon York was an astute businessman, a man of deep faith,

and dedicated to the church and community. It is always interesting to find a word that describes a person. There are numerous words that

could be used to describe Mahlon York; however, it seems that the word "deeds" most aptly applies. A concordance to the New International Bible references Colossians, Chapter 3:17 under Deeds. Colossians Chapter three gives rules for Holy Living and verse 16 and 17 says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Finally, Revelation 14:13 & 14 says "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

These scriptural verses most certainly describe Mr. York. His deeds have followed him through his time, talents and resources, and through business and church leadership his legacy lives on. 🏡



Mahlon D. York

Richard Nixon's Quaker Witness: Contributing To The Complete Context

Tim Connolly
Purchase Meeting

Richard Nixon was the 37th President of the United States from 1969 to 1974. He was a birthright Quaker (on his mother's side) from Whittier, California. Was he "admirable," or "infamous"?

Many Quakers vilify him for many reasons, including but not limited to his prolonged and bellicose exit from the Vietnam conflict, his questionable and profane dealings with others, his resistance to alternative points of view held by what he perceived to be a minority

and not a "silent majority" of Americans, his cover up of the Watergate burglary and ultimately his resignation from the Presidency to avoid impeachment for Watergate-related legal offenses.

When considering Nixon, I've discovered that many Friends condemn the man without having any knowledge of what appear to me to be his colossal accomplishments in direct alignment with Quaker witness. Accordingly, these are set forth below so as to furnish a component mostly missing from this and all other dialogues in our contemporary culture wars: the complete, as opposed to the incomplete, context.

Quaker Witness Of Richard Nixon:

1. World Peace Maker

- As Vice President under Eisenhower, he was the first American foreign state official to visit Japan since the end of World War II. His efforts contributed to normalization of relations with a previously hated enemy.
- As President, he initiated an era of improved relations with China by visiting that country in 1972, becoming the first president from the United States to do so. His diplomatic overtures began the process of normalizing relations and advancing peaceful diplomatic intercourse between the two countries.
- He ushered in a new era of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, resulting in the mutual signing of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks Agreement (SALT I) and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABMT). Both agreements, signed on May 26, 1972, helped to lessen the threat of nuclear war between the two countries.
- As President, he ended U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. His means and schedule to do so were disagreeable to many. But he did what his immediate two presidential predecessors and the U.S. Congress from 1964 to 1975 failed to do: he got us out.

2. Early Advocate For Racial

Justice

- As Vice President and thus a leader of the Senate under Eisenhower, he was instrumental in pushing through the Civil Rights Act of 1957.

3. Steward of the Natural World

- Jan 1, 1970: Signed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the first formal declaration of national environmental policies and goals. To date, more than 100 nations have enacted national environmental policies modeled after NEPA.
- 1970: Signed the Clean Air Act of 1970
- 1972: Signed the Marine Mammal Protection Act
- December 2, 1970: Following execution of an executive order by Nixon, the Environmental Protection Agency was created and began operations—centralized. Previously, environmental programs and operations were undertaken by federal governmental entities in a diffuse, independent, uncoordinated and incomplete manner, if at all.
- December 28, 1973: signed the Endangered Species Act
- 1974: Proposed the Safe Drinking Water Act, subsequently signed into law by President Gerald Ford

4. Steward of the Health of Millions Of Americans

- December 29, 1970: Established the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), whose aim is to "assure safe and healthy working conditions for working men and women by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education and assistance."
- October 27, 1970: Signed the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970.
- December 23, 1971: Signed the National Cancer Act, thereby beginning the national American effort to eradicate cancer as a major cause of death.

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Famous Quakers

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Would it be too much to ask that when we seek to assess, dare I say judge, Nixon and other noteworthy Quakers, that we do so following consideration of the complete historical and factual context related to those people?



Sir Arthur Eddington's Eclipse

Fred Harold Jensen
Orchard Park Meeting

Quaker and physicist Sir Arthur Eddington's work is particularly relevant to us in Western New York, right now, expecting a total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024. Astronomically speaking, we are living in a time like no other time. We are expecting a total eclipse of the sun, and we should be expecting eclipse-chasers to come as guests. How does this expectation connect to Sir Arthur Eddington? He was an eclipse-chaser, and a Quaker one at that.

In order to prove that the theory of general relativity was correct, Eddington had to travel to a place where he could witness and photograph a total eclipse of the sun. The necessity for the scientist's solar eclipse expedition arose from a strange prediction from Einstein's theory. Odd as it was, Einstein predicted that light would bend near extremely massive objects—objects like our sun. This bending of light toward the earth would make the stars shining "around" the sun appear closer to the sun than we would expect. If you find it hard to believe that light could be "funneled" toward the sun, well, a lot of people in Einstein's day also found it hard to believe. But Eddington could tell Einstein's equations made sense, and being

a "Seeker after Truth," the Quaker wanted to see if Einstein was right. The only way to prove the reality of the light-bending was to photograph the stars that appear around the sun in the sky. But, obviously, the light from the sun usually overwhelms these stars. So, the only way to photograph the stars "around" the sun is to do so at the exact moment of a total solar eclipse, when the light of the sun is blocked. Eddington thus had to chase an eclipse.

Every given patch of real estate on Planet Earth only gets a total solar eclipse once every three-to-four centuries, and there was not one happening over England that year. So, Eddington had to travel from England, first to West Africa, and later to Brazil, where he could witness and photograph eclipses. One of the amazing things about solar eclipses is that, at totality, the stars shine at midday. Therefore, as planned, when totality happened, Eddington photographed the place in the sky where the moon was blocking the light of the sun. He thus captured an image of the stars that would normally be invisible during the day, and the image showed that, indeed, these stars seemed to be closer to the sun than one would normally expect. Eddington thereby proved Einstein correct.

Eddington, who was not only a Quaker and an astrophysicist, but also a poet, wrote this verse to celebrate the discovery.

Oh leave the Wise our measures to collate

One thing at least is certain, light has weight

One thing is certain and the rest debate

Light rays, when near the Sun, do not go straight.

—Arthur Stanley Eddington

We Quakers have a tradition of pro-science faith to maintain, and we honor Eddington when we celebrate an eclipse. Actually, just the fact that we are "Seekers after Truth" should be sufficient reason to eagerly anticipate the

approaching eclipse in Western New York. However, while we expect an event in the sky, the grounded, human-centered aspect of our faith calls us to action as well. The approaching eclipse could bring in a torrent of tourists. So, what is to be done? Of course, we should be hospitable to sojourners in whatever ways we can. One project all the people of Erie County could do together would be to address what has been a perennial problem in our region, the problem of abandoned and vacant houses. It seems to me the county needs an initiative to restore houses well enough that the houses could be hostels for eclipse tourists, or domiciles for umbraphiles (fans of eclipses).

The approaching eclipse resonates with the testimony for peace, in fact, it IS a testimony for peace, for it is for all people, and is thus a unifier. The solar system does not care about the petty little wars that happen when we bipeds stop using our big-brains. With the right kind of mentality in expecting the eclipse, we can also see the very rare moment we are living in as a time for spirituality.



Quaker Daisy Douglas Barr: Imperial Empress of the Women's KKK

Susan Weisfeld
Scarsdale Meeting

White supremacy, xenophobia, intimidating school officials, lies about political candidates... Those sound like a description of what goes on today, but American society in the early 1900's had all of those as well. Fear of "the other" increased as immigrants poured into the country from Southern Europe. Catholics and Jews were suspected of wanting to take available jobs, as well as to control both the economy and school curriculum. Mormons, socialists, and labor unionists were considered threats to traditional American values. Blacks migrating to the north were feared on many levels. The pseudoscience of eugenics was accepted as basis for many xenophobic beliefs. Women throughout the country banded

together demanding political rights, but also protection from alcoholic spouses and immoral practices which threatened domestic life.

Traditional

Protestant religion was being displaced by evangelical formats, including a number of Quaker meetings within midwestern states. Uniquely to Quakers, women were readily accepted as ministers in these meetings.

A gifted Indiana Quaker minister, Daisy Douglas Barr, began to preach at evangelical revivals; this attracted many to join her current meeting in Muncie, especially women. She became a passionate advocate for temperance and set up a home for prostitutes. Her talents as a speaker resulted in her being solicited to speak throughout the state.

Soon Barr became the most famous woman evangelist in Indiana. A special tabernacle was built for her where hundreds came to listen, including the press. She used her popularity to help elect "dry" candidates who, when they won, allowed her to influence them while in office. The Indiana Republican Committee appointed her as its first female vice-chair.

During this time, inspired by the film "Birth of A Nation," the Ku Klux Klan was revived by William Simmons. Its ideology for racial and religious purity, as well as appealing to those desperate for temperance, morality, and stable family life, made it popular among many middle class mostly small-town "respectable" Protestant Americans, including Quakers. Local KKK chapters sponsored community events, donated to Protestant charities and even built hospitals for Protestant patients. Intimidation practices were common but often overlooked by those anxious to belong.

Thanks to excellent marketing practices, many felt joining the Klan was patriotic. The efforts of a dynamic organizer, D.C. Stephenson, resulted in Indiana having the largest Klan membership in the country. Some weeks up to 2,000 people would join for a membership fee of \$10. Protestant ministers were

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Daisy Douglas Barr



A map showing the "path of totality" — the area where the sun will appear fully eclipsed — for the solar eclipse on April 8, 2024. Map from www.accuweather.com



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given free membership.

Although the Klan was limited to men, D. C. Stephenson, then Indiana KKK Grand Dragon, asked Daisy Barr to organize a women's auxiliary, called Queens of the Golden Mask, which she did and served as its "Imperial Empress" while still serving as pastor of her Quaker meeting. She preached widely throughout the state, attracting women who were related in some way to current Klan members.

As women began to exercise their political power, women who had no Klan familial affiliation wanted to join. Barr's current organization became the Women of the KKK, with her as leader in Indiana. The WKKK copied the regalia and political stances of the KKK, but uniquely used their newly acquired political power to call for supremacy of white native-born Protestant "Americans" to protect women and children, what they called "pure womanhood."

There was much opposition to the Klan nationwide and a notable opponent in Indiana was the editor of the Muncie Post-Democrat who called Barr "Little Eva" and "She-Klucker."

New WKKK recruits paid a portion of their membership to Daisy, as well as purchasing robes and hoods from her. This money should have gone to the Klan, but after years of doing this, it was discovered that Daisy was keeping a significant portion. This was her downfall and she was forced to resign from the Klan.

When her active affiliation with the Klan became known, she also had to resign from her Republican political post. She was not sanctioned by her Quaker meeting, but her preaching ceased outside the meeting.

Quakers in Indiana interviewed in the late 20th century recall seeing Klan sheets hung in their relatives' homes when visiting. Older Quakers and others who had been Klan members insisted that their

membership had more to do with social life and reinforcing morality, rather than hate and prejudice. The combination of empowered feminism and xenophobia can easily be repeated. As an historian of that era, William Pinar, stated: "...those of us committed to a more just and egalitarian society [must] acknowledge the apparent ease with which racism and bigotry appealed and still appeal to mainstream American citizens."



Quakers To Know

George Rubin

Medford Meeting, PhYM

Here are a few of the Quakers, some famous, some lesser known, that I feel Friends ought to know about.

Buried in the Friends cemetery in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, is the actor Montgomery Clift. Both his parents were well known Quakers. Also buried there is the Quaker novelist and mystery story writer Stanley Ellin. Some of Ellin's books

were also made into movies; *The House of Cards* was one of them. Then there is Nancy Sorel, the writer and at one time active NYYM Friend with her husband the *New Yorker* illustrator Edward Sorel. They met at Morningside Friends Meeting. Then there is the Quaker novelist Robert Morse, whose book *The Iron Bridge*, the story of the Quaker Darby family, is both about history and a bit of science fiction. Also, I would add F. Murray Abraham, actor and Academy Award winner who came with his wife a number of times to NYYM. Not to be forgotten is Jan De Hartog, the Quaker writer and his wife Marjorie who was active in FWCC. His books *The Peaceable Kingdom* and *The Lamb's War* were nominated for the Nobel prize. I know Friends will have others like Bonnie Raitt and the astrophysicist Jocelyn Burnell. Our Quaker legacy in science and the arts is well grounded in our spiritual life.



Messages from NYYM Friends

Ain't No Man's Best Friend Here

Michael Rhynes
Attica Prison Worship Group

continued from page 1

What made them even more frightening is they had no names, just numbers. Numbers don't possess an ounce of humanity. Hence, the reason why prisoners' names are replaced with identification numbers.

After the lock-down was rescinded, reports from all around the prison recounted how men were brutalized by irrational "numbers" wearing black uniforms.

For the first time in almost 40 years I saw a dog. I was kind of glad to see something other than cruel humans. Until I was ordered to strip down to my underwear. I was then ordered to pick up my mattress, and to keep it pressed to my chest. Then I was told to back out of the cell. I was then commanded to walk down the

housing unit in front of all the men in the housing unit. Just like they were made to walk in front of me.

When I reached the front of the housing unit, I was ordered to turn right. I was told to unfold my mattress, place it at my side and walk through a machine that could detect weapons. I was commanded to turn right, drop the mattress and extend my arms to my sides. To be honest, I was scared to death, it felt like I was being fitted for a cross. The next thing I felt was a dog's nose sniffing up my ass.

Going back to the cell I didn't think about anything. Until I made a phone call on May 11, to a friend. I told my friend what occurred. My friend said, "I am sorry." I said, somewhat defensively, "Sorry for what?" My friend responded with, "I am sorry you were humiliated." I brush my friend's empathy off with an invisible shrug.

On May 14 I went to Quaker worship service. Two outside volunteers were there along with another inside member. It was like

homecoming week. I hadn't seen my community members in 2 1/2 years, because of Covid.

Before we Quakers at Attica went into silent worship, we did what we call community sharing. As we sit in a circle a member checks in about their life since the last we worshipped together. Since it's been two and half years there was a lot to say, but not enough time to say it.

It became my time to share. When I got to the point where I encountered the dog, I broke down and started to cry. At that moment I realized all the years I've been humiliated at the hands of the state and the nose of a mutt.



Some Good Signs of the Times

Regina St. Clare
Shrewsbury Meeting

Did you read and maybe remember this last paragraph in the NYYM September *Spark*?

"We have so much to learn from

other traditions... and probably wisdom that we could share with them. How do we connect more frequently like this?"

I was immediately delighted and surprised and wondered how that question came about.

I emailed to ask Emily Provance, guest editor of that issue, *The Life Cycle of Meetings*. She said it was from an ecumenical exchange between Friends and Christians of other sects who knew much about the expiration or laying down of congregations/meetings.

Emily, not sure who said that ending paragraph, agreed that to her, it was more than Christian ecumenism; it was, as I hoped, universal. We also agreed that this was not giving up Quaker practice or mixing theologies. No one faith is necessarily the best faith. (Emily's blog Turning Turning...Holy Experiments Among Friends, quakeremily.wordpress.com, is a testament to Quaker enrichment for Friends far and wide.)

To find out what other Friends

continued on next page

continued from previous page

thought about this, in answer to the worship sharing question at a recent gathering of Shrewsbury and Plainfield Half Yearly Meeting, “what would bring you joy in the future at meeting?” I quoted the paragraph. In a later chat, a couple of Friends thought the time had come to be more open and engaged in exchanges with other traditions. The next day I went to my home meeting, Shrewsbury, and was reminded that we had a local Monmouth Center for World

Religions and Ethical Thought that I helped get going in the early days. They continue to offer an excellent evolving program. And universal ecumenism is growing by the day.

Georgina, my writing buddy in Wales, and I were grieving Queen Elizabeth’s recent death. She reminded me of the Bahá’í faith’s principle of the Unity of Religions: there is The Faith; not a particular faith, but all faiths. We are all of One Source, and we need to appreciate the full range of diversity and learn with and from each other. I think

this gives hope to all those grieving losses—personal or political. We are more than any one religion....we have a huge family to love and learn with. I was amazed that Queen Elizabeth’s funeral was said to have attracted five billion viewers—60% of the world population. Talk about unity!

How can we learn from other traditions? As a tutor for Bahá’í Ruhi classes, and a docent for the Connecticut Asian Cultural Center, I have a dream of a Zoom hybrid gathering where Friends, Bahá’ís,

and others share their experience—for what we have in common, how we are distinct, and even to work together to make the world more unified, intergenerationally.

Bahá’í Nancy Wetstein and I are working on finding a location and a selection of speakers, musicians, and a tech team for this gathering. We plan to have a gourmet vegetarian Chinese dinner from Taste of Tao. It’s to be in central New Jersey, hybrid over Zoom. If interested, please email me at reginastclare@gmail.com



NYYM FALL SESSIONS • DECEMBER 2-4, 2022 • ONLINE

An Invitation

continued from page 1

but I plan to keep you in the loop as that begins to shape up. It will be all Zoom, all the time, and this allows us to be together without travel or expense, so it is a great way to join in and try it out, if you have not been to Sessions before. Please come, even for a little while...and bring some Friends.

Hope to see you.

Love, Elaine

Elaine Learnard, Clerk of NYYM

Friday Night Virtual Space

On Friday night, Friends will explore an interactive virtual space from a simple website address. Imagine this space is like your meeting house replicated online. You will be able to greet people as you watch them enter, choose where to sit in the room, step out to have a conversation with someone you cherish, and share different forms of art in a digital space that can be expanded upon. Come prepared to experiment and to exercise your creativity as we look through what opportunities this virtual space can bring to our community.

Facilitated by Guelmy Neris.

The tech team sets up for a meeting in the Auditorium at Summer Sessions 2022, Silver Bay, NY. Photo by Steve Mohlke



**NEW YORK
YEARLY MEETING
SESSIONS 2022**

Registration

Visit nyym.org/Fall-Sessions-2022 to find out more details and to register. Note that you must register in advance to receive the Zoom links for Fall Sessions. Zoom connection information will be emailed to registrants a day or two before Sessions begins.

Though the costs associated with online sessions are lower than in-person sessions, there are still direct costs and a great deal of staff time spent preparing. When you register, you will be asked to consider making a registration contribution. Registration contributions are “pay as led.” That means you choose the amount, if any, that is appropriate for you. Please know that your presence is more important than your dollars.

nyym.org/Fall-Sessions-2022



Fall Sessions Schedule

December 2-4, 2022 • Online

Friday evening, December 2

7:00-9:00 p.m. Gathering in an interactive virtual space facilitated by Guelmy Neris

Saturday, December 3

8:30-9:30 a.m. Meeting for Worship

9:45-11:45 a.m. Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

12:00-1:00 p.m. Social Meal

1:30-2:30 p.m. Meeting for Worship

2:30-4:30 p.m. Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

5:00-6:30 p.m. Social Meal

Sunday December 4

Morning off so that folks can join the worship of their choice. If your meeting is not hosting a virtual meeting, find the list of other meetings for worship around the yearly meeting at nyym.org/NYYM-online-worship-opportunities

12:30-1:30 p.m. Social Meal: Getting to Know Us—A Time for Community. Friends are invited to share their hobbies, what they are reading, what podcasts they are listening to, what music they are dancing to, and their lunch at this Fall Sessions social meal.

1:30-2:30 p.m. Meeting for Worship

2:30-4:30 p.m. Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. *Closing at discretion of clerk as she determines that all business has been addressed.*