



SPARK

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

Volume 55, Number 1

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February 2025



The New York Yearly Meeting Times

*"That of God
is in Every
Person"*

An Special Issue of Spark, Serving the New York Yearly Meeting Community Since 1970



December 2024 — Friends from Scarsdale Meeting packed hundreds of packages of warm clothes, toiletries, and other supplies that might be useful for men, women, and children living in shelters or otherwise unhoused.

SCARSDALE FRIENDS BRING HOLIDAY WARMTH TO THOSE WITHOUT HOMES

By SUSAN WEISFELD (SCARSDALE MEETING)

January 1, 2025, Westchester County NY — Scarsdale Friends Meeting's annual Shelter Project was completed just before the Christmas holiday with almost 400 packages delivered to men, women and children living in shelters or to those who regularly come to shelters for meals and overnight beds. The shelters are in White Plains, Yonkers and one in Manhattan.

The distributed packages include warm hats, gloves, scarves and socks as well as appropriate toiletries, tooth brushes, nail files for the women, small toys and anti-anxiety tactile items for the children, and rain ponchos and hand warmers for those who spend much time on the street.

While this is a uniquely Quaker

project, it is also an outreach to others in the community, and involves many people who give time, money and a great deal of love. The project begins with a fund-raising meal at the Scarsdale Meetinghouse, and is supported by individual contributions and generous grants from NYYM committees and the Scarsdale-Hartsdale Interfaith Women's Council. Items are also donated via an Amazon wish list from people throughout the country. One former Yonkers resident now living in Vienna sent string backpacks for the younger children and a number of people in Florida joined together to collect toiletry cases for the women in the Samaritan House shelter in White Plains.

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Quakers in New York Share Their Beliefs, Opinions, and Personal Experiences

See "Opinion," page 3

The People Are Waking Up

By LISA PELLEGRINO
(CORNWALL MEETING)

Growing up Catholic, it took me many many years to even consider coming back to any organized religion. The Quakers have won me over with our consistent approach of using inquiry to seek truth. Any kind of preaching or proselytizing is frowned upon. We do not ascribe to any doctrine or dogma. Hallelu, ama'am! It's been enlivening to awaken to questions as the answer.

What a growing number of us in the working class are realizing is that our political and economic systems are corrupt. In grad school, when I was studying business and sustainable systems, they would say how the system isn't broken—it's working exactly as it's designed to work. Case in point: if you're poor, you pay interest; if you're rich, you collect interest. Both are reinforcing feedback loops that keep one in their socio-economic status.

I recently watched online a panel discussion at the New School with bell hooks, where she shared how she thinks being in conversation is one of the most effective learning

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SPRING SESSIONS

APRIL 4-6, 2025
AT OAKWOOD &
ONLINE

Spring Sessions 2025 will be hybrid, accessible both online and in person at Oakwood Friends School in Poughkeepsie, NY. If you care about the Quakers and meetings in New York State and nearby parts of Connecticut and New Jersey, this gathering is for you. This is a great opportunity to find out what Friends are doing and to get to know other Quakers from around the state.

See page 8 for more

Notices

New Members

Kaya, Dalia, and Mila Chwals

— Brooklyn

Matthew Turner — Brooklyn

Sara Moore — Rochester

Transfers

Anne Collins transferred from Stillwater, OK to Saratoga, NY, Oct. 6

Linette Jenkins from Quaker Hill, St. Mary, Jamaica, to New Brunswick, NJ, Oct. 20

Released

Mary-Kay Belant — Syracuse

NEWS

Query for State of Meeting Reports

The **State of Society** query is intended for all meetings, worship groups (unprogrammed, pastoral, prison etc.) and at-large members of the yearly meeting. By responding to this query you help us to reflect on how Spirit moves among us.

What is shaping your spiritual life and how are you being led to respond?

Meetings and individuals are asked to return responses by **April 15, 2024**, to state-of-society@nyym.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The next gathering of New York Yearly Meeting for business will be **Spring Sessions**. See page 8 for more information.

Winter Meeting for Discernment March 1, 2025

Meetings for Discernment are periods of extended, waiting worship and deep listening to discern leadings and strengthen connections in our yearly meeting. At the Winter 2025 Meeting for Discernment, we will be seeking Light collectively in extended worship and deep listening using these queries:

How do we welcome and share the experiential essence of Quakerism with the people who are newly coming to our meetings to assure that they are receiving the spiritual part of our faith tradition as well as the visible witness part of our tradition? How do we deepen the spiritual lives of those in the community?

Register at nyym.org/event/winter-meeting-discernment-2025

Summer Sessions 2025

The dates and location for Summer Sessions 2025 have not been finalized. It will likely take place at Oakwood at the end of July. Details will be announced via the Weekly Update email, on the nyym.org

Around Our Yearly Meeting

website, and in the May *Spark*. To join the Weekly Update list, visit nyym.org/subscribe.



Powell House Workshops

Powell House is the retreat and conference center for NYYM. Visit powellhouse.org/event-list/ to register, or call 518-794-8811.

From Sorrow to Celebration: Cultivating Lament and Joy in our Journey

March 21-23, 2025

With Lynette Davis. Join us as we embark on a journey of self-expression and a deeper exploration of how we understand both lament and joy in our lives.

Over the weekend, we will delve into the transformative power of expressive writing and the arts for creating openings for healing and spiritual depth. Together, we will navigate emotional highs and lows, discovering the “joy unspeakable joy” that can be found in even the most challenging moments.

Stepping Forward Faithfully: Answering the Call and Becoming the Solution

April 25-April 27, 2025

With Lu Harper and Anne Pomeroy.

In this retreat we will explore our call today to live in ways that demonstrate justice, integrity, inclusion, equality and wholeness. We will deepen our understanding of individual and systemic barriers to faithfulness.

Prophetic messages call us individually and collectively to turn back to the Truth and move into new patterns of being. The prophetic experience of early Friends led to and committed them to building a new social order based in truth, equality, and justice. We will explore ways in which our faithfulness can be supported by our communities today.

FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Children, Youth and Young Adult Community Director Beth Kelly maintains a list of upcoming YAF events at nyym.org/yaf-events.

Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Spring Lobby Weekend

March 22-25, 2025, in Washington, DC and online

Join FCNL at Spring Lobby Weekend, the yearly young adult lobbying conference, and lobby Congress to prevent millions of people from losing healthcare and

food assistance. Visit www.fcnl.org/events/spring-lobby-weekend-2025. Register for in-person lobbying by March 3, 2025.

FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

Powell House Youth Conferences

Visit powellhouse.org/event-list/ to register, or call 518-794-8811.

Secret Ingredients: 6th-8th Grade February 28-March 2, 2025

How do we show our love for others? How do we like to be shown that people love us? What ingredients are essential for healthy relationships (friendships, family, or romantic connections)? At this conference we will discuss these questions and figure out key ingredients for happy, healthy ways of connecting. We will spend the weekend cooking delicious heartfelt concoctions and add plenty of love to fill our bellies.

Sticky Situations: 9th-12th Grade March 28-30, 2025

Relationships are all around us. From our classmates, to our family, to our friends, to our Powell House community. How do we relate to the people (and communities and living things) around us? What can we learn from different models about the way we connect to each other and support each other?

Creativity! 6th-8th Grade April 25-27, 2025

Creativity is a gift that everyone can share! At Powell House, we believe that creativity isn't about being perfect—it's about expressing yourself and having fun! This weekend, we'll explore all kinds of creative activities like drawing, writing, dancing, making piñatas, and more. No experience or special skills needed—just bring your curiosity and an open heart! Come join us for a weekend full of art, fun, and connection with Friends.

Wiggle & Think: 4th-5th Grade May 9-11, 2025

When is the last time you wiggled or giggled? Stuck in a chair all day is a drag. What movements does your body, heart, and mind need to feel free? Is there spirituality in movement? Let's explore looking inward at what we think about all of the ways, places, and spaces we move and groove. We will explore different ways of moving our bodies with dance, games, improv, and more. We will be having lots of fun with old and new friends!

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Photo of Jim Atwell by Anita Paul

Celebrating Jim Atwell

F/friends celebrated with Jim Atwell on his 86th birthday on 8/17/24 at the Fly Creek Grange, just down the lane from where Jim and his late wife, Anne, lived for so many years. The occasion was coordinated by Deb Dickinson and other friends and neighbors and featured funny and moving stories, singing, a pot luck, and general merriment. Jim is remembered for his neighborliness, humor, and deep spirituality. Among the 60 plus in attendance was the mayor of Cooperstown, who read a proclamation recognizing Jim's long time involvement in the betterment of the community, and declaring it “Jim Atwell Day.”

— Anita Paul, Schenectady Meeting

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**EarthSong 2025: 7th-12th Grade
May 23-25, 2025**

EarthSong is a time of celebration and care for our community. It includes our annual send-off ceremony for our seniors as they enter a new phase of life. You can expect deep conversation, fun activities, and joyful games. We hope you join us for this warm and vibrant conference!

OPPORTUNITIES

Job Openings

These Quaker organizations often have job openings posted online:

Friends General Conference:

www.fgcquaker.org/work-at-fgc/

American Friends Service

Committee: afsc.org/careers

Friends Committee on National

Legislation: www.fcnl.org/about/work-fcni



Editor's Note

I hope you enjoy the first (and possibly last) issue of the *NYM Times* newspaper. Many thanks to the contributors who bravely shared their work.

You, too, can submit items to *Spark*. *Spark* accepts articles of **400-600 words**, artwork, photos, poetry, shorter news items and announcements, and letters to the editor.

Upcoming *Spark* themes:

May 2024: Memories of Remarkable Friends

At Quaker Memorial Meetings we celebrate the lives of the amazing Friends we have known through stories and ministry shared by those present. This issue is a chance to share those stories beyond a Memorial Meeting. Let's get inspired by the lives great Friends have lived!

Submissions are due by **April 1** to communications@nyym.org.

Please send your meeting's news and upcoming events for the NYM weekly email update or *Spark* to **communications@nyym.org**. Join NYM's weekly email list at nyym.org/subscribe.

NYM is on **Facebook** (NewYorkYearlyMeeting) and **Instagram** (newyorkyearlymeeting).

In unity and community,
*Sarah Way, NYM
Communications Director
communications@nyym.org*

Keep Low: Reminders for the daily work

By LU HARPER (ROCHESTER MEETING)

Keep low. When I am feeling outraged or upset, I am not able to clearly hear Spirit. I need to re-ground myself in love, in being low and humble.

Think it possible you may be mistaken. Britain Yearly Meeting *Faith & Practice*, Advice and Queries 1.02.17, advises us in listening to and responding to ministry from others that “when words are strange or disturbing to you, try to sense where they come from and what has nourished the lives of others. Listen patiently and seek the truth which other people’s opinions may contain for you. Avoid hurtful criticism and provocative language. Do not allow the strength of your convictions to betray you into making statements or allegations that are unfair or untrue. Think it possible that you may be mistaken.” **Think it possible that you may be mistaken.** I need this reminder whenever I get on my high horse.

Was thee faithful? Did thee yield? Spirit speaks to us directly in the immediacy and uniqueness of our condition in the moment. Spirit’s messages may be tiny nudges, calls to action, experiences of oneness and anything in between, differing by individual and from moment to moment. Spirit sees us in our wholeness, and calls us into the individual and collective process of becoming more whole, more wholly and integrally ourselves. When we receive an opening from the Spirit, our job is to accept it, to yield to it, to sit with it and see how it resonates within, what actions it moves us to. We are invited to be mindful, asking ourselves and others: **Were you faithful to the promptings of love and Spirit in your heart? Did you yield?**

Daily manna—“Give us this day our daily bread...” Don’t hold on to the teachings of one day past the day it was given. But open thyself to the message of the new day, the new moment.

What canst thou say? Sometimes a message is not for ourselves, but we are not the judge of that. We can only hold it up to others to see whether and how it resonates in their hearts, when they experiment with it and test it. We can rightly say, this has been my experience, but cannot with integrity say this is another’s experience or our collective experience, without inviting others into the experiment of testing to see if it is their experience also. Testimonies are formed when we turn “**What canst thou say**” to “**What can we say**” by that testing.

Do not mistake union for unity. Mystical union is a consolation given to us in the moment when we need it. Unity is the tangible experience when in our diversity we can yet agree on a sense of the condition of the meeting in the moment. **Do not mistake difference for disunity.** We are wonderfully different, our experiences are different, our understandings are different. Yes, we are united by the Spirit in our experience of Love, and yes, suffering and harm are real and exist. Both are true—and focusing on the first to the exclusion of the second can be a balm to some of us and simultaneously be experienced by others as a rejection of their suffering and identity. What are we called into when we try to hold both of these?

Being Gathered. Just as light is phased simultaneously as wave and particle, we are simultaneously scattered and gathered, simultane-

ously unique individuals and the body of Friends, wonderfully diverse and capable of experiencing unity. There is no division or opposition between being gathered or scattered—it is a both/and.

Seeds of War. At the same time, we live in an ocean of interlocking systems of oppression whose purpose is to reward and maintain power. These “seeds of war” are in the very air we breathe, the water we drink, the planet that is warming, in our institutions, in our personal and social relationships, and in how we think. Some of us are rewarded by these systems and others are oppressed by them; many of us are both. Naming this reality is not divisive; the systems are inherently divisive; that’s one way they maintain power. John Woolman advises us to look for the seeds of war in our lives and possessions and reminds us that: “Oppression in the extreme appears terrible; but oppression in more refined appearances remains to be oppression; and where the smallest degree of it is cherished it grows stronger and more extensive. To labour for a perfect redemption from this spirit of oppression is the great business of the whole family of Christ Jesus in this world.”—John Woolman, 1763.

Quench not the spirit [1 Thess. 5:19] in self or others. In Epistle 275, George Fox warns us to “quench not the motions of [Spirit] in yourselves, nor the movings of it in others; though many have run out, and gone beyond their measures [2 Cor 10:14], yet many more have quenched the measure of the spirit of God, and after became dead and dull, and questioned through a false fear: and so there hath been hurt both ways.” **Keep the fountain clear.**

Reflections on 2024 FGC Fall Retreat for Friends of Color

By GESSIE PEREZ (WESTBURY MEETING)

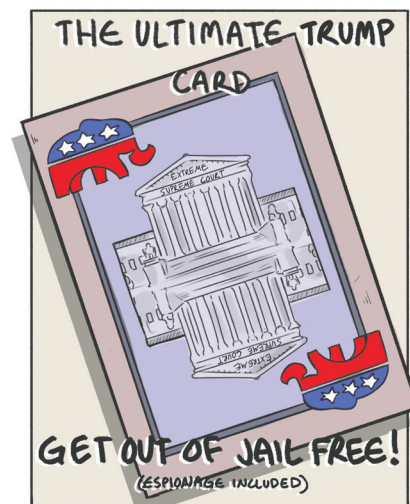
The weekend of November 1-3, I attended the Friends General Conference Fall Retreat for People of Color. This retreat changes location each year, and it happened to be held at Powell House in 2024. Multiple factors aligned in my favor allowing me to attend, and I’m so grateful to have had that opportunity.

I’m mixed race; my mom is white, and my paternal grandparents were Filipino immigrants. But I without a

doubt identify as a person of color — I have brown skin, a surname of Spanish origin (as many Filipinos do), and I certainly don’t outwardly present as white.

I never thought my race played much of a role in my identity, but attending this retreat opened my eyes to just how much it does indeed shape who I am, and I want to embrace and honor that, rather than

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The Ultimate Trump Card: Get Out of Jail Free! (Espionage Included). Concept Design Joseph Olejak; Artist Kaya Durlley

NYC Quakers Hold Historic First Retreat

By TED BONGIOVANNI (BROOKLYN MEETING & NYQM EXEC. DIR.)


OLD CHATHAM, NY—51 Quakers, representing every meeting in New York City, gathered at Powell House on November 15-17, 2024, for the first ever New York Quarterly Meeting Retreat. “Joy leaps into the future, and triumphantly creates a new present of it,” proclaimed Pidgey, the unofficial New York Quarter mascot, inviting friends from Manhattan, Morningside, 15th Street, Brooklyn, Flushing, and Staten Island to join in the fun.

The New York Quarterly Meeting, founded in 1974, turned 50 this year. A warm fire greeted travelers from the boroughs as they wandered in and considered a curated collection of historical artifacts, from copies of the original deeds for the Quaker cemetery in Prospect Park and photos of past Brooklyn members gathered at Silver Bay to a newspaper clipping from the *New York Times* in April, 1986, which reflected on “What The Friends Have Taught.” The article concludes, “What is extraordinary about the Quakers is how often they have risked their good names and personal fortunes to help people who were not Quakers.”

After supper, participants gathered, settled into silence, and

checked in with this deeply spiritual community. nova sturrup, New York Quarterly Meeting’s Community Organizer, centered pastoral care. 15th Street’s Luisa Giugliano and Morningside’s Scott Blumenthal guided us as we connected to our feelings around the recent election.

Weekend activities included games like “The Bible is Funny,” and early morning hikes to savor the sunrise from Dorson’s rock. Friends shared stories about their journey to Quakerism. We also had structured conversations, such as a space jam where we considered the query, “How might we use our spaces to grow into our future?” This generated inspiring ideas around outreach, sanctuary, activism, spiritual nurture, and creative collaboration.

When looking back on the weekend, one friend commented that we need more opportunities like this to eat and play together. In an evaluation, another said, “we should do this retreat once a quarter!” What is clear is that this spiritual community felt deep, connected, and filled with possibility. Though this was the first gathering of its kind it will not be the last for this group of joyful, enthusiastic and spirited Friends. 

Scarsdale Friends Bring Holiday Warmth


FROM PAGE 1

Packing takes several weeks because there are so many different recipients. Scarsdale Meeting’s children traditionally begin the process by sorting items and placing them into appropriate string bags for the children at the Passage of Hope shelter in Yonkers. Days later the main packing begins at one Friend’s living room where many join for hours with joyous camaraderie and a bit of confusion — then, despite pandemonium and an overwhelming amount of items, it all results in wonderful individual packages for all. When all is done, and the packages are placed into huge boxes and enormous carry bags, and then they are delivered with the help of neighbors and friends — so those without permanent homes and families have a special Christmas gift to be enjoyed and used for the cold months ahead.

This is the twelfth year that Scarsdale Meeting has coordinated this project, and it seems to grow

each year. In February it is planned to continue with needed underwear to the men at Open Arms, tee shirts to the teens at Passage of Hope, and linens to the women of Samaritan House.

Scarsdale Meeting is the only organization that every year gives individual packages to every resident in those shelters served by the project, and planning has already begun on how the meeting will make the project a bit more efficient next year. The Amazon wish list will be available by October 15 for anyone who wishes to participate.

The true message of the holidays is not about gifts, it is about giving and sharing. When the items were delivered, one Friend said that “by connecting to people we don’t know, and sharing with people who have need, Scarsdale Friends feel they have found a special way to bring this season of Light to many, and this also brings love and Light to us all who participate.” 



nova sturrup read *My Father’s Shoes* to Friends of all ages at the NYC Quakers Retreat, Nov. 16, 2024. PHOTO: SARAH WAY

Annie Oakley, Sharpshooting Quaker


By MILA CHWALS LEE
(BROOKLYN MEETING &
FRIENDS SEMINARY)

Hello! My name is Mila and I’m a 7th grade student at Friends Seminary, a Quaker school in Manhattan. Outside of school, I attend the Brooklyn Meeting with my family on Sundays. In this article I’d like to explore the life and ideas of a famous Quaker, Annie Oakley.

Annie Oakley, born Phoebe Ann Mosey on August 13, 1860, was best known as a famous sharpshooter or marksman. Her parents were Quakers and her father died when Annie was six. Her mother could barely pay the farm’s mortgage so she sent Annie to live with a family that Annie later called “The Wolves.” The family promised her 50¢ a week (about \$13 today) and an education, which she did not get. The Wolves were extremely cruel to Annie and made her work long hours every day.

Annie, however, refused to accept this lifestyle and fled after two years when she was 11. She returned to her mother’s home and started hunting and selling game to pay off the farm’s mortgage. She persevered in times of hardship and built a future on her terms. I was amazed that Annie carried her family through hard times as a young child (even younger than me!).

She developed into a skilled marksman, which was extremely uncommon and difficult for a woman in that time, let alone a teenager. I suspect that her sense of equality likely came from her Quaker beliefs.

I encourage you to think about how you can make an effort to stand up to unfairness and issues in the world, however big or small. 

BOOK REVIEW

A Tender Time Makes Great Tinder for the Last Flames of Life

Review by CARL BLUMENTHAL
(BROOKLYN MEETING)

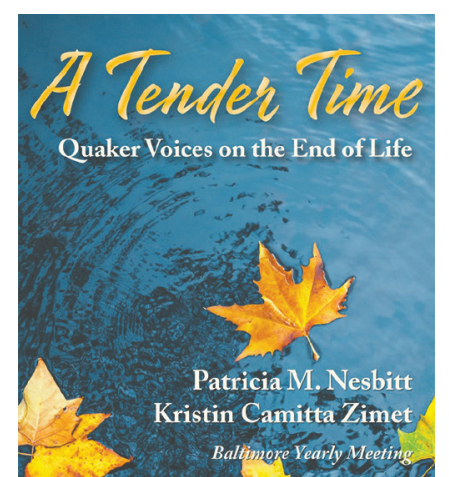
My motto as an end-of-life midwife (“death doula”), who ferries people from the shore of life into the ocean of infinity, is “save the best for last.”

Ideally, death should be “way open” rather than closed. Because every life and death is unique, my way of paying homage to Patricia M. Nesbitt and Kristin Camitta Zimet, of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, for writing *A Tender Time: Quaker Voices on the End of Life*, is to start at the end of the book and work backwards. Why?

Quakers, being a studious lot who tend to believe, like Descartes, that we think, therefore we are, may want to first mine the authors’ *A Treasury of Resources*, including queries for aging and dying well and for discerning a leading to die, checklists for survivors and the meeting’s roles, as well as considerations for laying the body down, plus an extensive annotated bibliography. The latter adds to the Quaker voices of the subtitle that Nesbitt and Zimet sprinkle throughout as inspiring epigraphs and other testimonies.

The spoiler alert as the reader proceeds from chapter six to one is that Nesbitt and Zimet, palliative care nurse and EMT, respectively, among other preparatory roles, fully explicate the concentric circles of care needed from and for every one of us. Given that “walking the talk” is never easy, their empathetic prose helps the medicine go down. This backward gaze also means that the reader follows the authors from the outside in, with the meeting’s,

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Taiwan:

An Ironic—and Precarious—Oasis of Peace, Equality, and Accountability

By IAN HANSEN (15TH STREET MEETING)

Taiwan has received steady attention over the decades, particularly recently, as a potential flash-point for superpower conflict, with any invasion of Taiwan by China potentially upending global stability even more than Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Israel's invasion of Gaza. Discussion of this issue usually gets funneled into one of two standard viewpoints: U.S. imperial apologist or expansionist Chinese nationalist apologist. Working from my own experiences in Taiwan particularly (and also "Greater China" more broadly), as well as the interplay of these experiences with my connection to Friends and other

peace communities, I have a rather idiosyncratic view. I side with those on both sides of the Taiwan Straits who like neither oppression nor war, and want to avoid the ensnaring logic of both.

My connection to Friends has intersected to some extent with my experience of Taiwan. My family has had the good fortune to overlap a couple of times, by serendipity, with Fifteenth Street Friends who were in Taiwan when we were there: Steven and AyJy, and their daughter Nation. The first time this happened was when both our families were enjoying the protected openness of Taiwan during the pre-vaccine

height of the COVID pandemic. And we met them there again more briefly this January, and had a delightful time. Nation is now nine, and great at being an instant big sister to our five year old son Nathan.

In the past couple of years, I have also befriended a historically significant long term Taiwan human rights activist, Linda Gail Arrigo, and gotten a richer sense of the political history there from our conversations and emails. I owe this connection to Linda's late sister Jean Maria and thus, indirectly, to the community of psychologists concerned with peace and human rights she was a leading light of, a community that has

played a formative role in my more recent life. So communities of peace and human rights advocacy have continued to give me an independent sense of investment in Taiwan.

During our most recent visit this January, Linda suggested we could get the flavor of contemporary discourse in Taiwan from a political event in a historic Presbyterian church. That event made a lasting, and ominous, impression on me. Its unspoken assumption—all too common, unfortunately—was that peace work and human rights work are sometimes competitive values.

TO READ THE ENTIRE ARTICLE, VISIT NYM.ORG/SPARK.

The People are Waking Up

FROM PAGE 1

techniques. That stuck with me. Being in dialogue is a fluid dance that sparks genuine engagement, and I know I learn so much through conversations with friends on emerging topics. An important one of late has been wealth inequality.

Class consciousness is on the rise. While it can be a slippery slope between awareness and despair, ignorance is not bliss. Knowledge is power. And the right question at the right time can be transformational. So what are the questions we need to be asking?

My faith is guiding me to listen more, to myself, and to my carefully selected teachers. I'm also feeling led to ask questions more loudly. I want to start honing in on those juicy questions that engage critical thinking to help us progress to where we know we need to go, which is a post-capitalism world. The work of the Post Growth Institute has been a brilliant beacon by facilitating beautiful offerings like the "Offers and Needs Market," and so has adrienne maree brown's work on Emergent Strategy. There are many others lighting and leading the way.

For the vast majority of us in the working class, the situation has become untenable.

And we are coming together like never before. Some are saying it's no longer right vs. left, but bottom vs. top. As a Quaker I know better than to relish in any adversarial dynamic,

but the imbalance has become so undeniable that it can no longer be ignored.

The people are waking up.

How then, do we as a Quaker community address this?

How can we as Quakers reclaim and embrace our radical roots?

How can we act with a moral clarity similar to that of Lucretia Mott, who helped lead the abolition and women's rights movements, and advocated not buying the products of slave labor?

How can we show up with the fervency of old Friends like Benjamin Lay, who sprayed fake blood on wealthy slave owning Quakers at the Burlington, NJ Meeting?

How do we organize and build bridges for the emerging environmental and economic justice movements with the vision and diligence of Bayard Rustin who mentored Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in nonviolent civil resistance?

Rather than shy away from them, how can we as Quakers reclaim and embrace our radical roots?

What does evolving past strategies look like to branch out for organizing and movement building?

Reflections on FGC Retreat for Friends of Color

FROM PAGE 3

deny or ignore it. Candidly sharing stories with other POC made me realize my inherent racial identity has impacted my life in many ways: everything from my familial culture and upbringing, to having instinctive safety concerns when out by myself (especially as a woman of color), to even seemingly subtle things that are actually important.

Case in point: I recently filled out medical forms for a new doctor, and I took notice of how I always opt out of answering demographic questions about my race. There's an intentional reason for that; thankfully I've never personally experienced discrimination or mistreatment in a healthcare setting, but I'm well aware of how common it is for POC to be dismissed by medical professionals, have care be denied, or even suffer abuse or negligence.

Another example: I've only ever dated white men, yet I always had a deep-seated insecurity that prospective dates aren't genuinely attracted to me. I'd also worry about whether their families would even accept and welcome me.

These are just some of the different ways my racial identity affects my perspective, worldview, decisions, and more.

It was very spiritually nurturing to share an intimate weekend with fellow Friends of color. It was refreshing to hear their stories and to be able to speak freely of my own experiences. I knew that they would

innately understand me regarding certain issues that never even cross the minds of non-POC folks.

It was particularly therapeutic to be able to openly voice concerns and fears about the political climate of our country, right before what was arguably the most consequential presidential election to date. The fear of being stripped of our fundamental rights under the new administration is a frightening reality for many of us in marginalized groups. I felt solidarity and security at the retreat, only to be devastated by the election results just a few days later. But I'm grateful to now have a community of peers who deeply "get it," knowing that we can brave whatever is to come, together.

I'm still somewhat new to actively being a part of the Religious Society of Friends, having grown up Catholic. I found Friends and attended my first meeting about seven years ago, but I've only confidently welcomed identifying myself as Quaker and started fully immersing myself in Quaker spaces within the past year. I'm still learning what it means to integrate Quaker practice into my daily life, and while I'm still in the process of seeking, I know that I absolutely relish Quaker community settings. I feel closest to the Divine when among Friends, so I treasured being part of that special retreat weekend. It warmed my heart and fed my soul.



"I Dream of Trees" — a new oil painting by Sybil Perry, oil on linen, 24" x 24."

A Tender Time Book Review

FROM PAGE 4

F(f)riend's, and family's concerns preceding those of the individual, who gets the final say.

"Chapter 6: Circles of Care: The Loving Meeting:" By offering an almost dizzying array of ways that we can give aging, dying, and death their due, the authors imply we can reinvigorate our meetings.

"Chapter 5: Circles of Care: Friendship" can be a big "F" or a little "f" thing. It's a delicate dance that we as individuals do because for the dying person and their family members, especially the caregiver, knowing where and when an outsider fits in is an open question. Suffice it to quote Maya Angelou, as Nesbitt and Zimet do: "Nobody, but nobody/ Can make it out here alone."

"Chapter 4: Circles of Care: The Primary Caregiver" describes a lifetime partner as the model, though it doesn't exclude others from assuming the role. Given its weightiness, emphasis is on all the ways you can share the burden, as in the previous two chapters, and prepares you for witnessing death and grieving. Most of all, you learn to engage in "the ministry of presence."

"Chapter 3: Gifting the Future" is the "your money or your life" proposition. It can be material or spiritual. Feeding your progeny or the worms. Enuf said.

"Chapter 2: Reaching the End:

Spirit-Led Dying" is a misnomer because this is all about the medical and legal ways of having your last wishes carried out.

"Chapter 1: Completing Your Life: Spirit-Led Aging" is, in fact, the real McCoy. Here's when the "tender time" of the book's title is like "Love Supreme," jazz great John Coltrane's greatest tune. It evokes Jesus' saying, "For wherever two or three of them are gathered, there I am."

Imagine Patricia Nesbitt and Kristin Zimet as camp counselors around a fire, but instead of telling spooky tales, they reassure us that it's never too late to set our lives on a godly plane (and hand us the hard-earned tickets at the gate).

"To Our Readers": Here you will discover: "Dear Friends, We all eventually face that tender time when we come to grips with mortality. Why do we call it tender? The end of life is a time when you are exposed and newly vulnerable, as a green shoot is tender; but given forthright, gentle handling, you can open to growth...Tender comes from a root that means "to stretch, and **this final stretch of life will surely stretch you** (emphasis added)."

NY Quarterly Meeting's Concern for Quaker Living Group has been reading and discussing A Tender Time. Find out more at nycquakers.org/events

Report from the Quiet Committee (QC)

By MARY BETH W. DIMARCO (SYRACUSE MEETING)

The Flower and Finance Subcommittee (FFS) of the Stewardship and Finance Committee (SFC), the only committee with access to a budget, has been approved to purchase 1,234 seedlings from any and all NYYM Regional Quakers (whose gardens date back to early 1800s and are now in need of pruning, but I digress.)

The Flower Power Planters (FPP) — the 2nd subcommittee of the (FFS) — will meet in traditional, Quaker-approved overalls to complete said garden tasks. Garden tools and seeds will be gratefully accepted and/or appropriated.

The Groovy Movie Stars Subcommittee (GMSS) have branched out to an ambitious seven nights a week schedule. The target goal to cover minimal operating costs has not been raised by the anticipated voluntary popcorn fee. Kernels will now be gratefully accepted (and expected) in lieu of an entrance fee for future showings.

The Children's Playroom will now double as the Syracuse Friends First Day Yoga Studio (SFFDYS). These non-lively sessions will begin immediately after First Day Worship and all are encouraged to attend. Due to the sturdiness of the newer foam play mats, yoga practitioners will be all set to stretch out and shimmy in true Quaker (or is it Shaker?) fashion.

The Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Cake (MWCC) has been meeting joyfully and excitedly before Meeting for Worship (MW) at 8 a.m. Bewildering discussion was had about the abundance of new members showing up, coffee in hand. Recipes are regularly circulated and tested. The unanimous, yet surprising, winner has been the Silent Donut, coming in only one variety: plain.

The Membership Committee (MC) has been happily tasked with attending the (MWCC) to observe the exciting sense of growth, discern new recipes, and ascertain a long-term level of culinary commitment.

The Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Health (MWCH) has received approval to add to its ever-popular line of Quiet Vitamins and Supplements. The QQ Vitamin (Quietly Quaker), in white tablet form, will have no markings. The benefits, as per NYYM, are calm demeanor, increased attendance, and faithful membership, across

every region of the state. No participants were available to comment further. It has been noted that none of the members from (MWCC) are members of (MWCH).

The Hospitality Subcommittee for Hilarity and Mirth (HSHM) has been having a lot of fun in the newly formed Fun Fridays in Anticipation of Meeting for Worship 2nd Subcommittee (FFAMWSS). Minutes haven't been received regarding the joyous details but members have noted feeling more light-hearted when they come to the meetinghouse.

The Mysteries of the Universe Subcommittee (MUS), has been tasked with discovering all the happy details associated with High Hilarity. One concern continuously raised is, how loud is too loud? Not Too Loud (NTL) will now be the guiding term for all meetings. Members discerned the association between High Hilarity and Spiritual Joy. It is hoped that laughter will be ongoing and that joy will be deeply felt.

The QBook Club has now become digital. Each member will now be fitted for a Qring. This was determined to be easier than carrying a book around. When one's Qphone scans the ring's Qcode, the digital form of one's literary interest will be broadcast onto one's home QTV. That way, in enlarged format, members can sit back, relax and read their assignments, quietly in the comfort of their Qchairs.

This Qcode will also provide the QZoom link, needed for discussions. An added bonus of sporting a Qring is that, when one stands perfectly still for seven seconds at the back door of the meetinghouse, the Qcode can unlock the new digital lock.

The Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Snow (MWCS) has been meeting since November. Due to the outdoor nature of meeting in the back parking lot, minutes have never been taken nor received.

Gentle shoveling techniques were reviewed and Westcott neighbors have reported witnessing silent snowball tosses amongst members.

Qshovels, in soft gray, are now available for loan or purchase. Proceeds will go to the newly formed Hot Chocolate Subcommittee (HCS), under the guiding light of the Hospitality Committee.

The final committee to report is the QSong Committee for Healing

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and Prosperity (SCHP). Despite the fact that most MW takes place in an atmosphere of silence, the SCHP has proposed that the meeting adopt a tune appropriate for gatherings, outside of worship. It was agreed that "Sounds of Silence" by Simon and Garfunkel would fit the bill and appeal to the generally older population of QBoomers. Lyrics will be hyperlinked for those who have forgotten or for those too young to know.

— Submitted, in all humility, by the MWCH

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

By EMILY PROVANCE (15TH STREET MEETING)

This puzzle is challenging! Refer to the answer key at nyym.org/spark

ACROSS

- 3. "This is to me the hour of greatest _____." (MD)
- 4. toy company once owned by Quaker Oats
- 7. "Abundantly _____ for our help is the grace afforded us!" (JS)
- 11. a condition in which there are no perceived obstacles
- 12. city in which the Quaker Oats company is based
- 15. moment of unexpected inspiration from God
- 16. "Let the eternal _____ search you." (MF)
- 17. an inner conviction that impels one to follow a certain course
- 18. a statement of an item of business approved
- 20. a shared perception of God's will

DOWN

- 1. recipe that first appeared on Quaker Oats box in 1908
- 2. "Stand still in that _____ that brings peace." (GF)
- 5. a process to ensure that decisions are grounded in God's will
- 6. sports drink acquired by Quaker Oats company
- 8. a letter of serious import
- 9. to set free a Friend for religious service
- 10. a commitment between persons with God as the third party
- 13. protagonist in 1971 candy movie financed by Quaker Oats
- 14. to show evidence of religious convictions
- 19. "I give myself this advice: do not fear _____." (EF)

James Earl Carter, Jr. (October 1, 1924 – December 29, 2024)

By DR. JOSEPH OLEJAK (OLD CHATHAM MEETING)

At 100 years of age Jimmy Carter has shed his mortal coil and joined his creator.

He'll be remembered less for his legislative and presidential accomplishments and more for his true commitments as a humanitarian and peacemaker in presidential retirement.

Notable among his many contributions to American life and the world as a whole are his work in the area of disease eradication, home building, nuclear anti-proliferation and peace negotiations.

One of the most powerful stories of his post-presidential period was the eradication of Guinea Worm Disease, a water-borne illness untreatable by drugs or surgery. In Carter's words, "it can only be treated by love and respect of people," by teaching them how to filter water and care for those afflicted with the disease. By the time Carter passed there were only 14 cases left worldwide, compared to millions when he first left office. His example serves as a reminder of the power of love.

Carter's love is also shown through in his work for Habitat For Humanity. Often in overalls with a hammer in his hand, he was humble enough to do the work that was

good enough for another carpenter 2000 years ago. He helped construct over 4,447 homes in 14 countries.

In the realm of peace-making it was Carter who brokered a deal between Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat to bring peace to a fragile Middle East after the 1967 war — a task no president has been able to accomplish since. Carter was a diplomat but was also guided by his deep faith in God. He understood that any compromise that does not end in progress for all parties was no compromise at all and likely to fail.

Carter used this notion when he brokered an end to a nuclear standoff with North Korea. He was a nuclear engineer as a naval officer and understood how nuclear energy worked. He was also no fool. He saw that the nuclear brinkmanship that Clinton was engaging in was dangerous and could have led to war with South Korea costing millions of lives. Carter was willing to step into that situation and step on toes in the US State Department to bring about a positive outcome. He averted a nuclear showdown by offering light water reactors in exchange for allowing the IAEA into the Pyongyang reactor building to inspect. Something that no president has



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been able to do since.

As a final coda to his presidency, Ronald Reagan removed the solar panels from the White House. Carter wanted to move the US away from dependence on foreign energy. By killing solar power and alternative energy in its infancy, Reagan set the stage for the long 20 year war in Iraq and Afghanistan. The war for oil could have been completely side stepped had we followed the energy policies of Jimmy Carter, never mind the effects of 40+ years of burning fossil fuels on the climate.

As we move into the new political reality of 2025 we should look to the goodness and God-centered politics that Jimmy Carter believed in and practiced. Substance over triviality. Honesty over lies. Clarity over distractions. Integrity over short-cuts.



You are Invited to New York Yearly Meeting's Spring Sessions 2025

The next gathering of New York Yearly Meeting Friends is Spring Sessions, April 4-6, 2025. This will be a hybrid gathering, accessible both online and in person at Oakwood Friends School in Poughkeepsie, NY.

What is Spring Sessions?

Spring Sessions is one of the three times a year that members of the New York Yearly Meeting community gather to worship, conduct business, and have fellowship together. New York Yearly Meeting encompasses all of the Quaker meetings within New York State and parts of Connecticut and New Jersey. These gatherings are open to anyone who is interested in Quakerism or the Quaker meetings in our area.

Meetings for Worship and Business

At Sessions we gather in meetings for worship with a concern for business. Business meetings are preceded by an hour of worship to help us spiritually center and gather ourselves together. This worship will be a mix of unprogrammed worship (silent, unless someone is moved to speak) and programmed worship. Worship may include readings, singing and playing music. At business meetings the clerk leads us through an agenda of items, including the hearing of reports

and the discernment of issues that require an action on the behalf of the gathered body of Friends.

The business meeting agenda and reports to be read in advance of Spring Sessions will be posted at nym.org/spring-sessions-2025.

Schedule

Friday Evening

The weekend will begin with a gathering on Friday evening for extended worship offered by the Worship at Sessions Committee. Worship will have elements for the diverse beliefs among us. There will be periods of silent worship with vocal ministry, there will be a few songs, a prepared message given, and there may even be a period of prayers for healing of ourselves and our country.

Saturday

On Saturday, we will hold meetings in the morning and afternoon. Meetings for business will be preceded by an hour of worship.

A plenary will take place Saturday evening; details will be announced.

Sunday

On Sunday morning, we will worship together and have one final meeting for business.

All of those meetings will be held both in person and online, and will be fully interactive,

using the dynamic camera set-up available in Oakwood's theater.

For details on attending in person on Oakwood's campus, please see below.

Accessibility

Online: Live closed captioning will be turned on during Zoom meetings. If you are joining the meeting on a computer or laptop, click the button on the bottom menu labeled "Show Captions". If you are on a phone/tablet, on the meeting controls toolbar, swipe and tap the Captions (CC) icon.

In Person: Those attending Sessions in person may find closed captioning to be helpful when sound is quiet or garbled. Closed captions will be visible on the screen to the right of the stage. Friends who would like to read the captions may wish to sit closer to that screen. Those with mobility issues, special needs, and/or young children should feel free to go to the head of the food line in the cafeteria.

How do I register?

Registration will be posted at nym.org/spring-sessions-2025. The opening of registration will be announced to the NYM email list—visit nym.org/subscribe to join this list. You can also call the NYM office at 212-673-5750 for information and help with registration. You must register, even if attending online. Join us!

Information for Attending In Person

Oakwood Friends School in Poughkeepsie, NY, is part of New York Yearly Meeting and will once again host us for Spring Sessions. The school's campus is a suburban park-like setting. The yearly meeting will be using the theater, the dining hall, the library, and one or two dorms. For more information and an interactive map of the campus visit www.oakwoodfriends.org.

Childcare

Friendly childcare will be provided if requested on your registration form. Please request childcare by March 15 to ensure availability.

Meals

Meals will be available at the Oakwood School dining hall for a small fee. Spring Sessions begins with dinner on Friday and ends with lunch on Sunday. Meals should be requested in advance using the NYM Spring Sessions registration form (available soon!). You can specify food preferences and allergies on the registration form.

Meal Prices:

Breakfast: \$10.00 per person

Lunch: \$13.50 per person

Dinner: \$17.00 per person

For children under 12:

Breakfast: \$6.00 per child

Lunch or Dinner: \$10.00 per child

Lodging Options

On Campus A limited number of rooms are available in Oakwood's Newlin and Reagan dorms, which are up a small hill from the library

and theater. Dorm rooms have two twin beds and share a bathroom on each hall. The nightly rate of \$70 covers the entire room and two sets of linens (sheets, blankets, towels, and pillows).

Home Hospitality A few area Friends are offering home hospitality: a bed, sofa, or floor space at no cost. If you're interested in this option, please indicate this on your form. Space is limited.

Hotel NYM has reserved a block of rooms at the Hampton Inn & Suites Poughkeepsie for the reduced rate of \$129 (+tax) a night. Rooms will be released to the public a month beforehand (March 4) but the rate will still be honored if rooms are available. Call the hotel at 845-463-7500 and use code NYM to reserve. The Hampton Inn is very close to Oakwood's campus; address is 2361 South Rd. Poughkeepsie, NY.

If you'd like to stay on campus or ask for home hospitality, please indicate that on your Spring Sessions registration form. If you'd like to stay in a hotel you must contact the hotel directly.

Costs

The suggested registration amount of \$100 helps offset the costs of holding Sessions, including space rental, staff time, and tech costs.

You are welcome to Spring Sessions no matter how much you can afford to pay. If you underpay for Oakwood meals or housing, the balance will be automatically covered by the NYM Equalization Fund. If you pay more, that amount will help offset the costs of Sessions and will count as a donation to NYM.



Opening worship at Summer Sessions 2024 in Oakwood's Theater.

If you need help paying for your transportation or off campus housing costs please contact registration@nym.org or call the NYM office at 212-673-5750.

Transportation

Oakwood School is at 22 Spackenkill Road in Poughkeepsie, NY, just off Rt. 9 on the east side of the Hudson River. Parking is available at the school. The Poughkeepsie train station is a short taxi ride away from the school. Metro-North and Amtrak trains stop at the Poughkeepsie station.

Arrival

When you arrive on campus please head to the Collins Library near the center of campus — address: 87 Friends School Lane, Poughkeepsie — to check in and receive your name tag.

Registration Will Open Soon

More details will be announced once they are available. Stay connected by joining the NYM email list at nym.org/subscribe and checking nym.org/spring-sessions-2025.