

New York Yearly Meeting Religious Society of Friends

InfoShare

Volume 7

February 2008

Number 1

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Advancement Consultation at PoHo

Herb Lape, clerk, Advancement Committee

The NYYM Advancement Committee will hold another Powell House Advancement Consultation the weekend of February 28–March 1, for those in Yearly Meeting who are called to renewal and advancement work. We have invited some Friends who have been engaged in this work, but there are no doubt names that we are missing. Please contact Herb Lape, clerk of Advancement Committee, lapeherb@gmail.com, with names of individuals in your monthly meeting that we might be missing.

Our thoughts for this weekend were to keep it simple and emphasize the importance of getting NYYM Friends who are called to advancement and renewal to work together to reconnect, share what we've done and learned in the past year, and rededicate ourselves to the work. There has been some good work in the past year that was highlighted in Christopher's report to Fall Sessions. This gathering will be an opportunity for renewal and rededication to keep the work going this coming year.

Financial aid is available.

Christopher Sammond's Travel Calendar

February 1– March 31, 2008

February

7–10 FUM Board Meetings—Richmond Ind.

16 Visit Albany Monthly Meeting, Respond to Concerns About FUM—Albany, N.Y.

23 Attend NYYM Task Group on FUM—Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

24 Visit Farmington Monthly Meeting with FUM General Secretary, Farmington, N.Y.

24 Respond to Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting Concerns About FUM with FUM General Secretary, Rochester Meetinghouse, Rochester, N.Y.

26 Respond to Purchase Quarter Concerns About FUM with FUM General Secretary, Scarsdale Meetinghouse, Scarsdale, N.Y.

29–March 2 Powell House, Advancement Consultation

March

- 7–9 Coordinating Committee Weekend, Powell House—Old Chatham, N.Y.
 15 Meeting for Discernment, Rochester Meetinghouse—Rochester, N.Y.
 21–23 Facilitate Retreat for Farmington Monthly Meeting—Farmington, N.Y.

Movements from Within and Without!

A conference for Young Adults
 PoHo, April 4–6, 2008

Crawling, running, rolling, strolling, moving and grooving! We all learn to move in one way or another, from learning appropriate facial expressions, to knitting, to dancing. There are also times during which stillness is best. As Friends, we are called to participate in social movements to make positive changes in the world.

Join the Circle of Young Friends to move in ways you feel led at this conference, facilitated by **Jill Smith**. Some activities may include: dance workshops, ultimate Frisbee, making crafts, walking to Dorson's rock, work projects, discussions of Quaker movements, past and present, and sharing how we are moved by Spirit. We look forward to seeing you!

Jill Smith was a JC while in the Powell House Youth Program, and after graduating she has co-facilitated a youth conference. Jill serves on the Young Adults Concerns Committee of New York Yearly Meeting, and has over five years' training in modern, ballet, and hip-hop dance, with over a year of experience teaching hip hop. She says, "Dance is my favorite language to communicate in; I hope you enjoy it too!"

Cost: \$200 adults; \$100 for ages 13–22; \$50 infants–12; \$100 commuters. Children's Program and Childcare with three weeks' notice

To register: Powell House, 524 Pitt Hall Rd., Old Chatham NY 12136; 518-794-8811; info@powellhouse.org; www.powellhouse.org.

4 Trains, 1 Bus

Reflections on the YAF Gathering in Brooklyn

John Lavin

I recently had the opportunity to visit with a group of YAFs (Young Adult Friends) from the Circle of Young Friends in Brooklyn. I found myself nervous traveling up to the meetinghouse, not knowing anyone there but happy at being welcomed warmly and making new friends!

While some of the divisions between different branches of Quakerism are known, we also found differences within our gathering, despite all coming from unprogrammed meetings/worship groups. Those differences were mostly with words, and how those words affect our imagery. We found difficulty with "God talk" and with our pronouns. But more importantly, we found our connection beyond those words, the Spirit moved in and among us. Though we had many words and meanings for it, we all felt it nonetheless.

Since the total group was no more than 12, we were able to go deep, share experiences, and respond much quicker than we would normally be able to do in a larger gathering; it was like being in small worship sharing groups all the time. I enjoyed the warmth and closeness that only comes with a small group, and I feel I could relax and open up and get to know every single person there. Together, we broke bread, played games, sung, worshiped, fed the worm-filled compost pile and made good use of the sippy cups.

The theme of the gathering was: "What does it mean to call ourselves Quaker?" So lastly, I'll share with you what I wrote in one of our sessions:

What is a Quaker?

A Quaker is a listener, a listener for the Divine. This Spirit that is found inside everyone, speaks to us if we'd only listen.

A Quaker is a doer, a doer of deeds that reflect on what they have heard within, if we'd only answer that call.

A Quaker is a seeker, a seeker of Truth that lies beyond worldly endeavors and yet works within them if we'd only look.

A Quaker is a speaker, a speaker of the Light that shows us what the Divine wants us to see if we'd only open our eyes.

A Quaker is joy, sharing gladness and triumph for all people everywhere if we'd only open our hearts.

A Quaker is sadness, bearing the world's tears from the ocean of darkness and bearers of others burdens to the ocean of Light if we'd only just help.

A Quaker is hope, hope for the Kingdom brought down on earth anew made by all if we'd only just build.

Do You Want to Coordinate an Interest Group at Summer Sessions?

At the 2008 Summer Sessions, the theme is "Spiritual Community across the Spectrum of Age." Interest groups will meet on Wednesday evening, from 7:45 to 9:30 P.M. People who wish to facilitate an interest group must contact the appropriate coordinating committee clerk (see below). The CC clerk will then consider the request and, if approved, send it on to the Sessions Committee interest group coordinator. While requests can be made right up to the time of Summer Sessions, we ask that you send them as soon as possible to the CC clerk so that the proposals can be considered at Coordinating Committee Weekend, March 7–9. Approved interest groups will be listed in May *Spark* and on the NYYM Web site.

Please keep this year's theme in mind as you consider holding an interest group.

Please send to your CC clerk:

- interest group title
- facilitator name(s)
- A 50-word description of the interest group program

Coordinating Committee clerks

General Services, Paula McClure, p.r.mcclure@att.net

Ministry, Deb Wood, dnbwood@aol.com

Nurture, Melanie-Claire Mallison, mallison@cnf.cornell.edu

Witness, Fred Dettmer, fdettmer@aol.com

Report from Torture Awareness Working Group

Torture Awareness Working Group, Patricia Chernoff, clerk; Fred Dettmer; Mara Kosmoska; Anita Paul

Many monthly meetings have ordered the *free* DVD of the HBO award-winning documentary *Ghosts of Abu Ghraib*. It is an excellent educational tool for raising awareness of the way torture is being used in various sites around the world, despite what our government tells us is our policy. You can still order a copy on the National Campaign against Torture Web site (www.NRCAT.org).

The site also features three or four things you can do each month to end torture. According to the staff at NRCAT, this will be a regular feature on the Web site. It is a way to keep informed of what legislation is being acted upon and what activists are doing around the country.

NRCAT continues to emphasize the importance of signing on to their statement, "Torture is a Moral Issue," as monthly meetings and as individuals. This is a way for NRCAT to gauge growing support around the country and to keep in touch with supporters. Monthly meetings may join NRCAT as endorsing or participating members and join the monthly conference calls as our working group is doing. New York Yearly Meeting is a participating member. NRCAT has been in existence for only two years and in that time has made remarkable progress in their work.

Another Web site well worth visiting is the Quaker Initiative against Torture site, quit-torture-now.org where you can access three wonderful curricula for teaching about torture, created by Philadelphia Quaker Peggy Brick, designed for one hour, three hours, or a whole semester.

Powell House Launches Earthcare Series with Special Offer to Meetings

NYYM Earthcare Working Group—Janet Soderberg and Liseli Haines, coclerks
Angela Manno, communications coordinator

The Earthcare Working Group of New York Yearly Meeting got its start at NYYM Summer Sessions in 2006. Under the care of the Nurture Coordinating Committee, their charge became to "lift up the spiritual basis of Earthcare within NYYM."

One of the fruits of their labor over the past year has been the Earthcare Curriculum, an ongoing series of courses that will be offered each year at Powell House to deepen our relationship with, understanding of, and care and witness for the Earth within the context of Quakerism.

As a way to inaugurate this exciting new program, Powell House is offering a "special" February through April: If you bring one person from your meeting with you, the price is reduced to \$175 per person. If three of you come from one meeting, the cost is \$150 per person. Four people, \$125 per person, and five people, \$100 per person.

The first two workshops in the Earthcare Curriculum in March and April provide the framework for the spiritual basis of Earthcare as well as the impetus and opportunity to discern and engage in corporate action. The August weekend will teach principles and practical methods for living and working in harmony with the Earth.

The weekend of **March 14–16, 2008, Marshall Massey of Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative), will lead “Earth in the Headlines: How Are We Called to Respond?”** In addition to proposing the creation of a nationwide Friends' committee on environmental matters in 1985, which became Quaker Earthcare Witness, an international organization with a permanent staff and well over a thousand supporters and volunteers in the U.S., Cuba, Canada, and Costa Rica, Marshall has continued to advocate Friends' coming together to act corporately on behalf of the Earth. He has proposed a number of far-reaching actions Quakers could take to make a significant impact on the health of the planet while putting Friends on the forefront of the environmental movement. Now the time has come to gather together with Marshall to discern the next steps that are urgently needed for our care of the Earth.

In this workshop, we will also explore the Quaker basis of Earthcare. Marshall's deep reflection on this perspective has moved many of us profoundly. For example, in considering the appropriateness of nuclear energy, he says, “We are looking at a world that says to future generations, ‘Our need, or maybe it's just our desire, for just one year of power at the rate we consume power, outweighs the suffering you future folks will endure from yet another Chernobyl.’ And how does that assertion look in the Light of Christ?”

To learn more about Marshall, his thought, his Nature Amendment and more, go to: <http://journal.earthwitness.org/>.

From **April 11–13, 2008, Angela Manno will lead “Eco-spirituality & Action.”** This workshop is based on the 8-week course Angela taught for New York Quarter, out of which the New York Yearly Meeting Earthcare minute emerged (*Befriending Creation* January–February 2008). A more detailed announcement will be sent next month, but in the meantime, to learn more about Angela and this workshop, please go to its listing on the Powell House website: <http://www.powellhouse.org/cgi/pohocalendar.cgi#26>.

We invite you to grow your environmental consciousness and that of others in your meeting! The more people attending from your meeting, the more Friends can carry on this work together sharing the same foundation. It can also be a way to develop a synergistic relationship among meetings within NYYM (and eventually beyond), in this very important work.

Save the Date! From August 1–3, 2008, Ethan Roland will lead **“Permaculture: A Toolbox for Sustainability and Beyond”** a theoretical and hands-on experience for living in harmony with the Earth.

To register, call or write Powell House, 524 Pitt Hall Rd, Old Chatham NY 12136; 518-794-8811; www.powellhouse.org; info@powellhouse.org.

Aging Resources Committee

Anita Paul and Barbara Spring, coclerks, Aging Resources Committee

Nurture's newest committee is Aging Resources, the coclerks are Anita Paul and Barbara Spring. Anita and Barbara became aware that, with the laying down of the McCutchen and the subsequent inauguration of Friends Foundation on Aging (FFA), there was an opportunity to design services to aid NYYM Friends and their families to identify and secure the programs and benefits designed to enable seniors to stay in their homes as long as possible and receive the care they are entitled to. Also, through intergenerational activities meetings could be guided in a variety of ways to support, cherish, and learn the needs of their seniors. Spiritual growth could be a hallmark of what it means to grow old as a Quaker.

Anita, an aging services caseworker, and Barbara, a Gerontologist, have outlined a program to train a network of Friends throughout NYYM. These senior resource specialists will be knowledgeable about programs and available to talk to seniors, their meetings, and/or their families and to make home visits and referrals. These specialists will also lead workshops and enrichment sessions with meetings. The initial concept has been approved by NCC and by FFA.

Anita and Barbara made a presentation to Northeast Regional Meeting in November that informed participants of the lengthy list of local services for seniors, from free insurance counseling to where to get hearing tested. Many of the programs were news to Friends. The committee's next meeting is Friday, June 6, at Anita's home, lunch provided. The committee is eager to have new members and open to any suggestions.

30 Years of AA at Brooklyn

Boyce Bengé, Brooklyn Meeting

On Sixth Day evening, Nov. 30, 2007, Brooklyn meetinghouse was the site of a large and important celebration marking the 72nd anniversary of the Brooklyn meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). First, about 200 folks

gathered in the social room to greet one another over a bite to eat. Then they moved upstairs to our meeting room to hear several speakers. By now the group had grown to more than 300, with many standing.

Brooklyn meeting of AA has been holding meetings on Wednesday and Thursday evenings at our meetinghouse for more than 30 years. It is not surprising that we have been sharing our space with recovering alcoholics for so long.

In 1935 a drunk who was to become one of the cofounders of AA lived with his wife at 182 Clinton St., just a couple of blocks from our meetinghouse. Late in that year he learned how to stay sober, and he soon began holding meetings with other "hopeless drunks" in his home, where they shared their experience, strength, and hope. Over the years the group has met in several locations, but they have been with us for more than three decades.

The group that celebrated in our meetinghouse in November is but one of thousands of such gatherings of recovering alcoholics in a worldwide fellowship with an impressive record of addressing the spiritual aspects of the disease. We Brooklyn Friends celebrate this remarkable occasion with them.

Friends Peace Teams African Great Lakes Initiative: How to Help Kenyans?

Many people are asking how they can help the Friends and others in Kenya. African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI) is accepting donations for the immediate relief/reconciliation work and for the ongoing reconciliation work that will be necessary. Folks in the U.S. can assist by sending funds (www.aglionline.org for information) to help with these efforts—already underway—and by publicizing the current situation in Kenya. The mobilizing of resources is an important step to support the needs of communities of which Friends are a part.

Dave Zarembka, AGLI Coordinator, lives in Lumakanda, Kenya, in Western Province with his wife, Gladys Kamonya, of Kenya. He is sending out reports daily, including historical perspective. If you would like to receive them directly just let me (Dawn Rubbert) know by email via Dawn@aglionline.org. You can also find these reports, and others at: <http://quakerservice.blogspot.com/>; thanks to the efforts of Mary Kay Rehard.

Sarah Mandolang Going to Africa

Friends may be interested to know that Sarah Mandolang, of Alfred Monthly Meeting, will be posting her 2008 trip to Africa at <http://www.consciencestudio.com/travel>.

Adapted from the Web site:

I am getting ready for a big trip. My travels begin in Philadelphia, where I plan on getting ready for my trip to Uganda and Rwanda by educating myself about Uganda, Rwanda, and some of the surrounding continental or world context, as well as figuring out with Friends there what my role will be at the school, the Upper Nile Institute for Appropriate Learning (UNI-FAT), where I will be spending most of my time. While in Uganda and Rwanda I will be traveling with three different groups.

The first group is the Friendly Folk dancers, the national Quaker folk dancing group, that have been invited by Quakers in Rwanda to come and do a tour. The Friendly Folk Dancers touring is a dancing ministry toward creating a world community and interconnecting the world's peoples through international folk dancing. Every time we dance a dance from another culture we are performing an act of peace. The tour performances include suites or sets of dances from cultures or nations that have been or are at war. Each set is introduced and explained as a prayer for peace. I will tour with the Friendly Folk dancers in Rwanda for 11 days.

The second group is Friends from Philadelphia going to UNIFAT. This group will be led by Chuck Esser, who has a longstanding supportive relationship with Abitimo the woman who started the school in 1986. Abitimo started the school for AIDS and war orphans; in recent years there have been returning orphaned child soldiers. While there I hope to help with peer counseling or cocounseling development, if possible facilitating Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops, organizing games and art projects with the children, helping with conversational English, meeting people, building relationships, learning a local language, and spending time each day keeping a log of my time there to be able to share my stories with others. I will be with that group in the beginning until they leave on March 12, and I will stay until May 12.

The third group is the African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI), a group that does AVP workshops. From the school UNIFAT sometime during my time there I will make a trip to Rwanda to participate with some of the AGLI work. The African Great Lakes Initiative has a workshop they do, Healing

and Rebuilding Our Communities, HROC, that I plan on attending in Rwanda. I hope to gather useful material and experience from that workshop and bring it to the work of developing something with the people in Aceh and North Sumatra in July. The people in Aceh and North Sumatra that we work with have expressed the need for reconciliation and rebuilding work. While there in Rwanda I also will spend a few days meeting the staff, sharing with them stories from Indonesia and the United States, seeing their home and making memories of my own to bring back stories to Indonesia and the United States.

New QUNO Director

Andrew D. Tomlinson has been appointed as the new Director of the Quaker United Nations Office in New York.

Andrew comes with twenty years of experience in international finance. His work has included projects in Mexico, the Far East, and Latin America. Most recently Andrew founded and managed a socially responsible investment fund.

He has had extensive experience leading and motivating small teams in difficult environments, identifying opportunities, mobilizing resources, and building consensus. Each of his business and personal references spoke of Andrew's commitment to live and model his Quaker values in his work and personal life. He has practiced leadership in a consensus environment while working as a trusted adviser with key decisionmakers.

Andrew is currently clerk of Chatham-Summit Monthly Meeting and in that role has a track record of facilitating decisions on complex and emotional issues. He has AVP training and has served on Ministry and Counsel, Trustees, Fundraising, Finance, and Property Committees.

New Director for Friends Foundation for the Aging

Warren Witte has been named executive director of a new foundation, Friends Foundation for the Aging (FFA). Warren is the retired executive director of Friends Services for the Aging, a position he held from 1992–2006. He is a member and former clerk of Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting (Philadelphia YM).

Friends Foundation for the Aging is the new name for McCutchen Friends Home, which previously operated a residential and skilled nursing facility in North Plainfield, N.J., on properties given to the organization by the

McCutchen family. In early 2007, it was the decision of the Board of Trustees in response to multiple external factors to close the Home, sell the properties, and pursue other ways to fulfill its mission of supporting the elderly.

The new Foundation will support programs that advance Quaker values in senior care, that provide new or expanded options to support seniors in their own homes, and that promote career development in the field of long-term care. It also expects to provide support to new initiatives in support of seniors in NYYM. Its geographic focus, at least initially, will be New York, New Jersey, and Eastern Pennsylvania.

For further information, questions, or comments, please contact James Whitely, Board president, 973-376-2392; jwhitely@comcast.net.

Coming Up at Pendle Hill

James Nayler and the Lamb's War, May 2–4, 2008: Quaker scholar and author Doug Gwyn will delve into Nayler's writings, which illuminate 17th-century English political turmoil, the early Quaker movement, and Nayler's own meteoric career from apocalyptic prophet, to stigmatized Christ-figure, to withdrawn quietist.

Rediscovering Elias Hicks, with Paul Buckley, May 5–9, 2008: This course is based on original manuscripts of Elias Hicks, at whose feet the early 19th-century Quaker schism is laid.

How Quakers Read the Bible, May 9–11, 2008, with Stephen W. Angell and Paul Buckley: Explore with the editors of *The Quaker Bible Reader* how Friends have approached the Bible historically and how we relate to scripture today.

Five Spiritual Principles, May 9–11, 2008, with George Owen: Five principles derived from early Quakers are the core of this weekend: Pay attention. Expect to be changed. Honor your connectedness. Choose beauty. Live radiantly.

The Unifying Legacy of Rufus Jones, May 12–16, with Stephen W. Angell: The Quaker Studies professor at Earlham School of Religion will present Rufus Jones as a giant of modern Quaker faith who can teach us about building bridges within and among faith communities, connecting deep mysticism with active peacemaking.

Nurturing Faithfulness, May 23–27, 2008, with Marcelle Martin, Laura Melly, and Beckey Phipps: Explore practices to identify and nurture spiritual gifts, leadings, and ministries, and learn a peer group process to support further discernment and faithfulness.

For details please visit [/www.pendlehill.org](http://www.pendlehill.org), or write or call Pendle Hill 338 Plush Mill Rd., Wallingford PA 19086-6099. You may register online or via phone at 800-742-3150 ext. 3 (U.S. only) or 610-566-4507 ext. 3 (world-wide).