

New York Yearly Meeting Religious Society of Friends

InfoShare

Volume 8

December 2009

Number 6

Editor, Paul Busby, paul@nyym.org

Extracts from Fall Sessions Minutes

All the minutes are on the Web site at www.nyym.org/pubs.

2009-11-09. The GSCC clerk introduced Treasurer Susan Bingham (Montclair) who gave the Treasurer's report. As of October 31, 2009, the closing balance of the operating fund was \$143,018 and the net difference between income and expenses was (-)\$60,986. This net is greater than we usually have at this time of year; she reminded us that in 2008, the difference was (-)\$13,391. She noted that this gap narrows every year in November and December, and she expects the same to happen this year. The full report has details on all funds, section and committee expenses and income, and is on the NYYM Web site or you may contact the Treasurer to obtain it. Friends received the report.

2009-11-23. Christine DeRoller (Old Chatham), clerk of the Young Friends In Residence (YFIR) Committee, introduced YFIR staff members Anna Obermayer (Binghamton) and Franklin Crump. Natalie Braun (Old Chatham), also on the staff, is in Ecuador. YFIR is an emerging program for New York Yearly Meeting, a dual program for young adult leaders and sixth- to ninth-grade youth. The young adults live in intentional spiritual community, participate in the local meeting, and facilitate youth (6th–9th grade) retreats. The YFIR staff are currently living in Beloved Community House in Newfield, NY, and working with their host meeting (Perry City) leading Quakerism 101 programs and other activities....They are looking for Friends to serve on the support committee, as elders and as spiritual mentors. Friends received this report.

2009-11-25. The WCC clerk introduced Elizabeth Enloe, Regional Director of the New York Metropolitan Regional Office (NTMRO) of American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), who spoke about the pain of contracting (AFSC program activities have been reduced by half) and closing some offices, as well as about the opportunities that AFSC has for the future...."We are present where people are experiencing violence" has become the unifying theme of all AFSC programs. AFSC is working with NYYM committees who share in this work....

2009-11-29. Steve Mohlke (Ithaca), clerk of Financial Services, indicated that Budget Saturday in mid-October ended with a \$30,000 gap. Through cuts and fundraising that gap is now \$4,000. This is one percent of the budget. We

have a short-term problem of how do we get a budget for 2010, and a long-term problem of how do we deal with the unsustainable practices in this budget. The Financial Services Committee recommends that Coordinating Committees reduce their budgets by a minimum of one percent....

2009-11-35. Steve Mohlke (Ithaca), clerk of the Financial Services Committee, summarized the budget proceedings to date. All four Coordinating Committees reported that they have committed to reduce their budgets by one percent, which means that Financial Services has a balanced budget to recommend. The details of the actual cuts will be available to be approved at Spring Sessions. Friends approved the proposed 2010 budget of \$520,440, which includes expected income of \$520,440, including the anticipated covenant donations of \$458,350.

2009-11-39. Frederick Dettmer, clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee (WCC), reported that a minute on access to health care was approved by Brooklyn Monthly Meeting ...was endorsed by New York Quarterly Meeting..., and was forwarded to the Yearly Meeting. Similar minutes have been approved by other monthly and regional meetings. Following discernment, Witness Coordinating Committee proposes the following minute:

We are deeply concerned that the medical treatment currently provided in the United States is beyond the reach of many people.

Our belief is that every person should be treated compassionately. Each of us has unique value, and all deserve to live to the best of our potential. Health care is a basic necessity of life that our society has an obligation to provide.

Every person should have access to quality medical treatment.

We seek a just, sustainable, and simplified health care solution.

The Clerk of the Yearly Meeting is directed to (1) send a letter containing the Minute on Access to Health Care to all relevant elected Federal officials, (2) forward the Minute to the monthly meetings, inviting them to take action on the Minute as they discern to be appropriate, and (3) in consultation with the Communications Committee, send the Minute to media within the areas encompassed by New York Yearly Meeting.

Friends approved this minute.

2009-11-40. The WCC clerk referred the body to the written material provided concerning becoming a cosponsor of a commission being formed to hold a hearing...to investigate and issue a report on rights of conscience among persons in the military. He then brought the following minute for consideration, based on the WCC Minute #11-09-04:

New York Yearly Meeting (1) approves becoming a cosponsor of the Truth Commission on Conscience in War, and (2) asks the Clerk of NYYM, the Clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee, the Committee on Conscientious Objection to Paying for War, and the Peace Concerns Coordinator to carry this concern forward, including naming representatives. Friends approved.

2010 Summer Sessions to Be a Week Earlier

Sessions Committee clerk John Cooley reminds Friends that Summer Sessions 2010 will be the third week in July (July 18–24), as it correctly appears on the back cover of the new yellow *Yearbook*. This is one week earlier than we have usually arranged. The change happened because of Silver Bay YMCA scheduling. It does not represent a long-term change in dates. Be careful to check well in advance for dates each year you plan to attend.

Christopher Sammond's Travel Calendar, December 1, 2009, to January 31, 2010

December

- 1–8 Vacation
- 18 Visit Attica Prison Worship Group, Attica, NY
- 26 Visit Auburn Prison Preparative Meeting, Auburn, NY

January

- 8–10 Facilitate retreat for Circle of Young Friends, YFIR House, Perry City, NY
- 22–24 Attend Spiritual Nurture Working Group retreat, Powell House, Old Chatham, NY

Are You on NYYM's E-Mail List?

NYYM maintains a global e-mail list to inform Friends of important information and events in the Yearly Meeting. It's a low-volume list—usually no more than two or three messages a month. It's used only within the Yearly Meeting—addresses are not shared with anyone else. Messages are sent as blind copies, so no one can see the e-mail addresses of recipients. To be added to the list, please e-mail your request to walter@nyym.org.

HEAP Program Can Help with Energy Bills

From Aging Resources Consultation and Help (ARCH) for NYYM: Many seniors don't know that they're eligible for HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program). HEAP will send your fuel provider a check to help you pay for heat this winter. Any senior is invited to apply if their monthly income falls below the monthly income amounts below for each state in NYYM. Your local Office for the Aging will help you fill out the form. Contact ARCH if you have any questions: Anita Paul, 518-374-2166 or anitalouisepaul@juno.com.

in household monthly income annual income

New York State

1	\$2,030	\$24,360
2	\$2,657	\$31,884

New Jersey

1	\$2,031	\$24,372
2	\$2,732	\$32,784

Connecticut

1	\$1,805	\$21,660
2	\$2,428	\$29,140

These income levels are higher if there are more people in your household.

Pacific YM Seeks Full-Time Youth Coordinator

Pacific Yearly Meeting seeks fulltime Youth Program coordinator to enhance the spiritual development and nurture of our preteens through young adults. Coordinator provides program support and coordination of youth activities; assists monthly and quarterly meetings in engaging and educating their young people; develops an infrastructure that brings Friends together as a faith community; and provides a role model experienced in Friends' worship and practices. Frequent travel required. Expenses reimbursed. \$18 an hour plus overtime, starting with two-weeks' vacation, holidays, sick leave, and benefits. Quaker meeting membership required. By January 12, 2010, e-mail letters of interest and résumés to Lanny Jay at landbird@comcast.net.

(See www.pacificyearlymeeting.org for Youth Program proposal and related appendices.)

Monthly Meeting Seeks Coordinator (BYM)

Stony Run Friends Meeting in Baltimore is seeking a full-time meeting coordinator/secretary. The qualified individual should be a Quaker comfortable with unprogrammed worship, having a minimum of two years of related work experience. Serving a large meeting, this senior staff person will have responsibility for some individual tasks, supervision of a small staff, and extensive work in support of Meeting committees. Competitive salary and benefits. For more information, contact Search Committee c/o sroffice@stonyrunfriends.org. Deadline for application is March 1, 2010.

Pendle Hill Seeks Kitchen Manager/Chef

Pendle Hill, the Quaker retreat and study center in Wallingford, Penn., is looking for a kitchen manager/chef. The kitchen manager/chef will have the responsibility for efficient management of the food-service operation while focusing on Pendle Hill's core food philosophy and providing excellent customer service. The Kitchen Manager/Chef has the major responsibility for day-to-day kitchen and dining management and supervision.

Qualifications:

- Experience in kitchen management and cooking for large groups, and a working knowledge of nutrition are very desirable.
- Experience in breadmaking and dessert preparation.
- Experience in processing and preservation of garden produce.
- The ability to work under pressure, a willingness to be flexible, and the ability to work with a wide range of people (staff, students, and volunteers) are important.
- The ability to work irregular weekly and weekend hours.

Cooking and serving should be approached with love for the food and for those we serve, as well as with joy for your contribution to the process.

This is a full-time, exempt position. On-campus residence is required. All staff at Pendle Hill spend a few work hours each week contributing to the community through meal time, housekeeping, or maintenance work. Irregular and weekend hours will be required.

Interested? Please submit a current résumé, contact information for three references, and a cover letter describing your interest to Joe Garren at Pendle Hill, 338 Plush Mill Road, Wallingford PA 19086 or jgarren@pendlehill.org.

Please mention in your cover letter how you heard about this opportunity.

AVP Workshop at Westbury

A basic Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshop will be held at Westbury Meeting, 550 Post Ave., Westbury, N.Y. 11590, January 8–10, 2010.

AVP has touched hearts, souls, and minds around the world, leading to effective and positive personal change. The program has been used with impressive results in prisons, war zones, and locations where violence too often is taken for granted as the way of life.

Based on the recognition that there is a power that can transform us, a power we have all experienced and to which we all have access, AVP incorporates values of respect and self-worth, as well as teaching important interpersonal skills, into a fun yet challenging workshop experience.

The cost of this workshop \$50, including meals and snacks; some scholarship assistance is available. Registration due: December 30, 2009.

For more information contact Daisy Palmer, 516-333-7173; nordpalmer@aol.com

Spanish-Speaking AVP Facilitators Wanted

Friends Peace Teams' Peacebuilding en las Américas (PLA) Initiative welcomes Spanish speaking facilitators of the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) to work as volunteers with its partners in Colombia, El Salvador, and Guatemala. These programs are ongoing, so schedules can be arranged to accommodate your travel plans. A new program of AVP work with members of the Honduran resistance movement to the military coup will help reinforce their nonviolent option as the conflict continues. We are also working with Nicaraguan AVP facilitators to develop a national organization that can be self-sufficient.

International volunteers for this work need to be fluent in both English and Spanish, and have experience with AVP, trauma healing work, or other experiential education work.

In January–March and May–September, PLA coordinator Val Liveoak, plans on being in Central America and Colombia, working with AVP facilitators and facilitators of the new Community-based trauma-healing workshops. Val would welcome the accompaniment of an elder/companion for some or all of this time. Potential volunteers should speak enough Spanish to get around, be spiritually centered, and in good health. Knowledge of AVP or trauma-healing work is a plus.

All volunteers are required to complete an application, have a clearness process, and raise funds to cover their travel expenses and support the program in which they volunteer. Deadlines for applications for any of these volunteer positions are at least six weeks before travel.

For more information please contact: Val Liveoak,
PLA@FriendsPeaceTeams.org; 210-532-8762; Skype: valliveoak.

Fifth NYYM Meeting for Discernment

The next NYYM Meeting for Discernment will be February 20, 2010, from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., at Purchase Meetinghouse, hosted by Purchase Quarterly Meeting. The backup date is Saturday, March 6, 2010, at the same time and location.

All Friends are welcome. Lunch and childcare will be provided. Some financial assistance for travel is available. Please look for the registration form at www.nyyym.org/events/m4d10.html.

This winter's Meeting for Discernment will again be a day-long meeting for worship that will provide an opportunity for Friends from around the Yearly Meeting to come together to learn about the Life of the meetings that make up NYYM, and to hold what is shared in our hearts. All are invited to come to Purchase Meeting, where we will consider queries from the perspectives of our monthly meetings and worship groups. This Meeting for Discernment will again be an opportunity for Friends to name what is emerging in our meetings—a time to share a sense of the life of our monthly meetings and worship groups. It will be a time for all who are present to prayerfully consider what we can learn of Love and Truth from that which arises in our gathered worship. Through this, we seek to be led to a deeper sense of the fullness of our meetings and our yearly meeting. All Friends are welcome.

Each monthly meeting and worship group is asked to name one or two Friends to participate in the meetings—ideally one older and one younger seasoned Friend. Those who are able to accept appointments of two or three years can bring an important depth of experience to the Meetings for Discernment, while those who are new or can serve only a single year can bring valuably fresh perspectives. If you are still considering who might serve, consider Friends who are sensitive to the movement of the spirit in your meeting; Friends who have the gift of listening deeply; Friends in your meeting to whom others go for ministry and counsel; Friends who hold your meeting in love and care.

Vouchers for \$50 are available to assist with travel expenses for your meeting's appointees to the Meeting for Discernment at the Purchase Meetinghouse. (Please address requests to Janet Hough.) Saturday lunch and childcare will be provided, covered by a \$10 registration fee per person (payable on site). For those who wish, the host committee will help arrange hospitality for Friday night so Friends can arrive rested on Saturday morning, and for Saturday night for those who would like to stay to worship on Sunday with Friends in one of the meetings in Purchase Quarter: Amawalk, Chappaqua, Croton Valley, Housatonic, Purchase, Scarsdale, and Wilton.

Janet Hough, Chappaqua Friends Meeting, clerk, Steering Committee for Meetings for Discernment, janet.hough@verizon.net; 914-769-6885

Global Call to Prayer, Meditation, and Intention

For the Successful Conclusion of the Copenhagen UN Climate Conference
December 11–13, 2009

Patricia Chernoff for the Earthcare Working Group

Adapted from www.globalcalltoprayer.org:

The Global Call to Prayer, Meditation, and Intention is an interfaith initiative uniting all people as one family with one intention. Through a collective act of intention prayer, meditation, hoping, wishing, imagining, and intending we call for a strong, fair, and effective outcome at this year's UN Climate Conference.

The Copenhagen Conference is possibly one of the most important meetings of political leaders in the history of humanity. The climate future, and thus the fate of humanity and all life on Earth, will be largely determined in Copenhagen. It must constitute a turning point toward a low-carbon world economy, without which we are headed toward certain disaster. We ask you to join in this mass mobilization of essential will. Our focused intention to influence these negotiations will persist for the entire duration of the talks from December 7–18. Keep this intention in your mindfulness, in your formal and informal prayers, in your internal and external communication with others from now until December 18, and especially during the conference.

Through collective intention and prayer, we can real-ize (make real) that which today may seem elusive. By joining as a united humanity in this manner, our leaders will more readily hear us. By grounding our intention in action together, by contacting and demonstrating to those leaders the strength of our concern and convictions, we will become a clear actualized force of change.

Along with this call to prayer, which is actually much more than simply prayer, please read, endorse, and share widely the Interfaith Declaration on Climate Change, within your homes, workplaces and families of faith. If you concur with its spirit and intent, endorse it as an individual or on behalf of your organization. But most importantly, we urgently ask that you continually, mindfully, and actively in-tend (inwardly tend) the thoughts at www.globalcalltoprayer.org, in the privacy of your mind and home, and in your public places of worship, prayer, gathering, and mediation. For more information e-mail contact@globalcalltoprayer.org or contact Patricia Chernoff, patriciachernoff@verizon.net. Patricia's information is in the *NYYM Yearbook*.

Feeding the Fire Retreats

Lu Harper and Anne Pomeroy, Spiritual Nurture Working Group

NYYM's Spiritual Nurture Working Group launched the "Feeding the Fire" series of retreats at Powell House November 20–22, 2009. The series covers topics of faithfulness, prayer, different ways to center in worship, the balance of individual and community in our monthly meetings, and living into the fullness of our spiritual journey. Although each workshop is designed to be attended individually, the sequence of retreats is designed to lead us deeper.

For the first retreat of the series, 31 Friends gathered at Powell House November 20–22 to explore our **Yearning for God**. Using the image of fire to represent our spiritual condition, Barbarajene Williams provided us kindling to fuel the divine spark within us all. She warmly invited us to find our own kindling, and to leave kindling behind for others. We shared our experiences of life, God, and how they connect. We further explored sounds and images that spoke to us of our yearning. We shared what in our yearning makes us come alive and what gets in the way of spiritual aliveness. We shared our practices for being present to the working of Spirit in our lives. A rich part of the retreat was when Friends volunteered to carry the "kindling" from one session to the next, feeding the fire anew at the start of each session. The retreat ended with inner fires refueled and a desire to seek ongoing spiritual renewal.

The next retreat will be **Faithfulness**, led by Deborah Saunders on January 22–24, 2010. Faithfulness fuels our inner fire. In this retreat we will delve into our personal experiences of faithfulness and share about the joys and challenges as well as what we fear about faithfulness. We will ask ourselves, as Quakers, how our faith community supports our faithfulness, what the

community's responsibility to individual faithfulness may be, and what happens when our community does not support our faithfulness. This promises to be a transformative weekend.

Queries for "kindling":

- How does our faithfulness fuel our inner fire?

From our kindling: "Some of you know this holy, recreating Center of eternal peace and joy and live in it day and night. Some of you may see it over the margin and wistfully long to slip into that amazing Center where the soul is at home with God. Be very faithful to that wistful longing." (*A Testament of Devotion* by Thomas Kelly)

- Our longing leads to a desire for greater faithfulness. Where do you notice your own yearning for spiritual growth? Where is your yearning for a deeper relationship with the Divine leading you?

If your heart yearns for a deeper relationship with the Divine and a hunger to live in the Power that transforms us and our world, the retreats in this series may speak to you.

Faithfulness: January 22–24, 2010, Deborah Saunders

Living a Life of Prayer: April 30–May 2, 2010, Mary Kay Glazer

Different Ways In: August 20–22, 2010, Vonn New

Becoming a Body: The Individual and Community: October 29–31, 2010,
Jenny Isbel

Trusting in the Slow Work of God: January 21–23, 2011, Christopher
Sammond

Living in the Power/Spreading the Fire: April 29–May 1, 2011, facilitator TBD

FLGBTQC Midwinter Gathering

"Stitching Our Quilts, Waving Our Banners"

All Friends are warmly invited to the 2010 Midwinter Gathering of Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns (FLGBTQC) at the Graymoor Spiritual Life Center in the Hudson Valley of New York State. The Gathering will be Friday, February 12, to Monday, February 15, 2010, with the theme "Stitching Our Quilts, Waving Our Banners." Join us!

FLGBTQC is a North American Quaker faith community that affirms that of God in all people. Gathering twice yearly for worship and play, we draw sustenance from one another and from the Spirit for our work and life in the world. We

are learning that radical inclusion and radical love bring further light to Quaker testimony and life.

We intend our theme of "Stitching Our Quilts, Waving Our Banners" to provide an opportunity for us to explore the diverse ways we build relationships and communities, how we build and claim pride in that diversity, and how we build mutual support and accountability with our wider communities. We will have a keynote speaker and a panel to speak about the variety of our relationships and how our Meetings support us in that diversity. There will also be a threshing session and time in our meetings for worship for business to consider how to bring to life the FLGBTQC Midwinter Gathering 2009 epistle, which speaks of "bringing Quakers together to help us all understand what is meant by 'that which God joins together.'"

The weekend will also include the opportunity to participate in small-group worship sharing each morning, workshops and interest groups, evening social activities, free time to relax and explore the beautiful grounds, and all-community worship each day.

Details on childcare, financial aid, transportation, our program, and the site are available online at <http://sites.google.com/site/midwinter2010> or by contacting us at nymidwinter@gmail.com, 410-236-3372. Registration materials are also available at that Web site. Register early to ensure on-site housing!

From FUM Task Group of NYYM

John P. Menzel and Melanie-Claire Mallison for the FUM Task Group

For two years the FUM Task Group has held concerns which are put forth in the report to Summer Sessions 2009 and the proposed minute. The task group labored in worship and prayer over its charge to find ways for all of us in the New York Yearly Meeting to walk with one another and to know ourselves better as individuals and in a loving community. There is tremendous diversity and we can learn about our own internal responses to perceived differences in this community.

At Summer Sessions the report and statement were presented, but Friends were not united in approving the statement. Instead the Nurture Coordinating Committee was charged with sending out the statement for further input from monthly meetings.

We are asking each meeting to consider prayerfully the statement and the report and send responses to the NYYM Nurture

Coordinating Committee by February 2010. The Nurture Coordinating Committee will then consider the responses and how to move forward.

We have been called to reach out and seek a way to unity for our Yearly Meeting. We believe that if there is enough love and compassion among Friends the way to unity will be illuminated.

NOTE: The FUM Task Group report appears on pp. 71–73 of the 2009–2010 *Yearbook*. To read it on the Web site, go to www.nyym.org/pubs/yb09-10 and click on either of the links to the *Advance Reports*.

The proposed minute reads:

Our experience as Friends that there is that of God in every person is the basis for our clear understanding of the equality of all persons. We treasure our diversity. We are called to love one another, accepting our differences in all their forms: in race, theology, sexual orientation, manner of worship, and financial means. We know that the richness of our different experiences gives us a strength and vitality we hold as a blessing and as a sign of God's manifold expression.

FUM Chain of Prayer

The annual Friends United Meeting (FUM) Chain of Prayer begins January 1 and continues through May 23, 2010. Meetings in North America, Africa, Cuba, Jamaica, Ramallah, and Belize make a "Chain of Prayer" by signing up for a day to pray for the ministries of FUM as well as its member monthly meetings. Some meetings have special prayer gatherings, others ask individuals to sign up for half-hour time slots and many take up a special offering for FUM's ministries.

For your Meeting to participate, submit the online registration form. You may also print this form and mail to Chain of Prayer, Friends United Meeting, 101 Quaker Hill Dr., Richmond IN 47374.

A month or more before your day on the Chain of Prayer, we will send your meeting publicity materials, information on the meeting for which you will be praying, and some prayer concerns from FUM's ministries.

The meeting can e-mail Kim Schull, kims@fum.org, or go to www.fum.org and scroll down to the bottom where it says Chain Of Prayer and enroll or print the form and mail it in.

Invitation from *Quaker Life*

Kim Schull

We invite all monthly meetings to include us in their mailing for newsletters or bulletins that they send out monthly or quarterly. We love to hear what is going on, and we pick up some articles for *Quaker Life*.

Send your newsletters and bulletins to Kim Schull, Friends United Meeting, 101 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond IN 47374-1926; kims@fum.org.

Marriage-Equality Letters to N.J. Governor

Committee on Ministry & Counsel, Chatham-Summit Meeting

Several years ago Chatham-Summit Monthly Meeting (CSMM) labored with the issue of equality in marriage. After several months of discussion and discernment, we arrived at a sense of the meeting that was recorded in a "Minute on the Recognition and Celebration of Committed Relationships" and expressed support for all committed relationships, whatever the sex of the committed partners. (The minute is available on the Web at www.nyym.org/nurture/gender.) Our discernment process led us to the following wording: "It is...our direct experience that [all] committed, loving and spiritual relationships that are enduring, unselfish, mutually tender and supportive are greatly beneficial to individuals, to our Meeting community, and to society as a whole."

Now that the election is behind us, predictions are that the New Jersey Legislature will very soon consider the Marriage and Religious Protection Act, which defines marriage as the legally recognized union of two consenting persons in a committed relationship. The incoming governor, Chris Christie, has promised to veto any equality-in-marriage bill, so advocates are working to get a bill on the desk of the current governor, Jon Corzine, before January.

On Sunday, November 8, 2009, at the rise of meeting for worship, Ministry and Counsel Committee provided letters and stamped envelopes to facilitate members' contacting legislators in support of this legislation. The letters cited our beliefs as Quakers and reflected the spirit and rationale expressed in our Minute on Committed Relationships.

We completed over 40 letters to New Jersey legislators, asking them to extend the rights and benefits of marriage to all committed couples, regardless of their sexual orientation. Many Friends expressed appreciation for having printed letters and legislator contact information at the ready and were glad to be given reminders and encouragement to act on this issue. Given the

success of the letter writing on November 8, Ministry and Counsel may sponsor additional letter-writing opportunities in subsequent weeks.

The bill has a good chance of becoming law, but only if it gets to Jon Corzine's desk by early January.

A Labyrinth at Conscience Bay Meeting

Carolyn Emerson & Elaine Learnard, Conscience Bay Meeting

Our labyrinth has been at least two years in the making, from conception to completion. A member presented the idea to us as a way to work together as a community toward a pursuit that we can all enjoy in a spiritual way. He spent much time researching labyrinths, his enthusiasm led us to go forward to select a pattern, and he managed the construction. We purchased a template for the classical Baltic design from the Labyrinth Company. With a double spiral center, both a very short path and a long path lead to the center. It is a six-circuit design, well suited to the fairly small space on our property. We decided on materials that would be as maintenance-free as possible, so the path is laid out in mulch, with a brick border.

We held a labyrinth dedication on September 27, 2009, with about 20 in attendance. It was led by Linda Mikell of the nearby Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Stony Brook. Linda gave a brief history of labyrinths, and Friends provided some background on Friends, on Conscience Bay Meeting, and on our labyrinth project. The rain stopped just in time for us to walk the labyrinth without umbrellas. Many of us poured water into the labyrinth center from places important to us, such as Conscience Bay and the rain of the whole earth, and we stood in silence together as everyone finished. We had great snacks and visited with our guests. Granville Fairchild took wonderful pictures, which you can see at www.gcfairchild.com.

We find that, because Quaker worship entails sitting in silent contemplation, walking the labyrinth can be a continuation of that contemplation, in which the body is involved in a different way as it navigates toward the center, while the spirit moves toward centering.

Rochester Friends Explore Quaker Quest

Andrew Wolf, Rochester Meeting

Quaker Quest provides a way to nurture a meeting's spiritual vitality, as well as to welcome visitors and seekers. Quaker Quest began in London in 2002 with an original group of 12 Quakers who wanted to share the values of

Quakerism with people in their London community. They ran Quaker Quest sessions every Monday for a year. It became a true leading for each one, and they continued to offer Quaker Quest for another five years. The Quaker Quest core group in London has trained a number of meetings around Great Britain. In the U.S., Friends General Conference (FGC) offers volunteer trainers and matching funds to assist meetings that are interested in Quaker Quest.

Quaker Quest is a series of meetings that are open to meeting members, attenders, and the public. The typical Quaker Quest sessions include three central elements: (1) three Quakers speak from the heart about the topic of the evening; (2) participants break up into groups of three for small-group discussions about the topic; (3) after a brief introduction to silent worship, participants experience a short (30-minute) meeting for worship. Topics are chosen by the individual meetings, but some examples include "Quakers & God," "Quakers & Peace," "Quakers & Worship," and "Quakers & Simplicity."

On November 7, 2009, Rochester Friends Meeting took the initial step. A Quaker Quest traveling team came to present a basic workshop to help us learn more and begin to discern whether Quaker Quest is right for our meeting. The workshop covered the details of what Quaker Quest entails and included a sample Quaker Quest session. More than 30 people, primarily from Rochester, attended, and at worship sharing the following morning about half of the people who had been at the session the day before shared that they had found it an energizing and enriching session. At meeting for business November 8, we decided to begin forming an exploratory committee to help shepherd the Quaker Quest process in the community. We are not yet clear that we would like to start a Quaker Quest program in our meeting, but there is unity in the meeting that Quaker Quest has the potential to enrich our meeting through inreach and outreach.

Typically, after discerning to move forward with Quaker Quest, meetings have followed a similar progression to plan and prepare for the workshops. First, a core group of six to eight people needs to be formed as the body that plans all the Quaker Quest sessions. Second, we would receive another ½-day training session from the FGC Quaker Quest team. From that point, it generally takes six months for a meeting to begin a process of "inreach" and planning prior to beginning open sessions.

For more basic information about Quaker Quest, please see the Web sites below. For information about the status of Quaker Quest in Rochester Meeting, feel free to contact Andrew Wolf, andrewbrownwolf@gmail.com.

Quaker Quest in the United States and Canada is a project of FGC:
www.fgcquaker.org; www.quakerquestfgc.org; www.fgcquaker.org/ao;
www.quakerfinder.org; www.quakerquest.org.

FCNL: Epistle on Quaker Engagement with American Muslims

In November 2009, the General Board of Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) approved "An Epistle Encouraging Quaker Engagement with American Muslims."

The epistle says, in part,

As Quakers we are called to "answer that of God in everyone." Our work begins with ourselves and our own country. This work must include our embrace of the "other," in order to replace "tolerance" with understanding, respect, and sustained collaboration on issues of mutual concern. Especially since September 11, 2001, American Muslims have been wrongly stereotyped as foreigners, unbelievers, and terrorist-sympathizers.

If we stand together to practice equality and justice, we can enhance our understanding of American Muslims and theirs of us and raise American Muslim visibility in a positive way, which is of special importance to Muslim youth. This would encourage similar efforts by others, help amplify American Muslim voices, and make our education of the public and policy advocacy more effective....

...Intercultural teamwork will not just happen. It requires intentional and coordinated programs and policies to extend ourselves as Quakers and as Americans to our American Muslim sisters and brothers. Some Quaker groups have attempted to respond, especially since September 11, 2001, to local calls for support by Muslims. Many Muslim organizations voice readiness to engage with us on education of the public, civil liberties, political participation, meeting human needs, and conflict resolution in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and other parts of the world. FCNL staff have cultivated increased interfaith contacts in its work on civil liberties, nuclear disarmament, immigration, and peaceful prevention of deadly conflict. Together we can build on this good work.

The full epistle is at
www.fcnl.org/issues/item.php?item_id=3761&issue_id=128.

From William Penn House

As we consider all the things to be thankful at Thanksgiving, we at William Penn House are thankful for all that 2009 has been. Individuals and groups from around the world came through our doors. Workcamps, programs, and hospitality have deepened the roots of all that we do, based on our core beliefs in the goodness of all people, and the belief that all people can make a difference—sometimes by merely bearing witness. You may read about the highlights of our year at <http://williampennhouse.org/>.

We consider ourselves to be successful when we can be a part of making the world better for all people. We are forever mindful of our responsibilities and commitments to all those in need and to do what we can to break the cycles. Expect to see even more in the next year as we work with schools, yearly and monthly meetings, and other groups, developing collaborations in the belief that when we work together in the spirit of creativity, we can accomplish so much more than we work as simply partners. It is a work that calls us to find common ground through love and witness. Environmental and social-justice work in our backyard, in our neighborhoods, and in places throughout the country with a growing community are all part of the landscape.

Consider bringing your group, your family, or just yourself to stay with us and to see this city through different lenses. It can make a difference in how you see your own world as well.

Meeting for Worship at Historic Meetinghouse

All Friends are invited to meeting for worship at the historic Quaker meetinghouse in Genesee Country Village and Museum, **Sunday, July 11, 2010**. Gather in the parking lot no later than 10:30. We will enter as a group. Worship is from 11 A.M. to noon. A dish-to-pass (potluck) lunch will follow worship at the Nature Center pavilion (bring your own table service and a few spares).

More details will be forthcoming as the time approaches. Meanwhile, you may see full information at www.nyym.org/events/genesee11jul10.html.