

THE Nor'wester

The Newsletter of
the Northwest Quarter of
New England Yearly Meeting of the
Religious Society of Friends
(the Quakers)

April, 2007

Calling All Youth

Members of Burlington Monthly Meeting's youth group (grades 7-12) are looking forward to attending the Quarter in June. We'd love to see other youth from around the Quarter, too! For more information, contact Helen Head @ helen.head@verizon.net or (802) 862-2267.

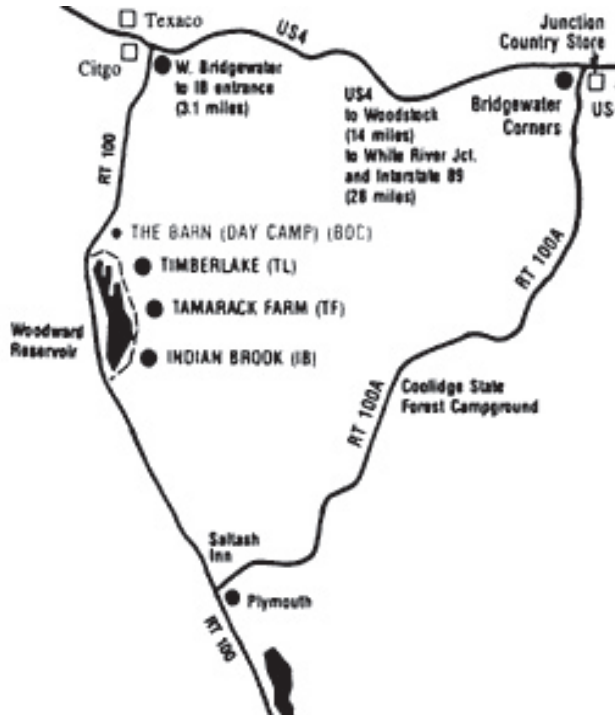
QUIT Conference

The Quaker Initiative to End Torture, QUIT will hold its 2nd conference June 1-3 2007 at Guilford College in Greensboro, NC. Information and registrations at the QUIT website <www.quit-torture-now.org>

Keynote speaker is Alfred McCoy, author "A Question of Torture" now in paperback.

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FCNL Supports Building

U.S. Civilian Reconstruction, Stabilization, and Peacebuilding Capabilities

The U.S.'s recent experiences with conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, and Sudan show that this country does not have the civilian capacity to build sustainable peace and has difficulty coordinating with the United Nations and other groups to restore law and order, establish good governance, and promote economic development after a conflict.

To address this situation, members of Congress are taking steps to provide the U.S. government with much needed non-military tools to help prevent the emergence, escalation, and re-emergence of deadly conflict. In February 2007, Representatives Sam Farr (CA) and Jim Saxton (NJ) introduced the Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act of 2007 (H.R. 1084). Senators Richard

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North West Quarterly Meeting

Minutes of Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

March 3, 2007

Meeting opened with silence.

Acting Clerk, Travis Belcher (Monadnock Meeting)

Changes to minutes of December 2006 Quarter.

In paragraph five (beginning, “Joanna Bombadil reported for...”) struck the following sentence: “In March we hope to receive reports from the Friends who are traveling with a concern about the dramatic reduction in participation in Quarterly Meeting and difficulty finding Friends willing to serve in key positions.”

Travel minute for Ruah Swennerfelt and Louis Cox (Burlington Meeting).

Ruah and Louis will walk 1,400 miles on the west coast from November 2007 to April 2008. They are walking following the example of John Woolman to visit Friends Meetings to share Woolman’s ideas of peace, justice and care of the earth.

Minute:

This letter is to serve as a Travel Minute for Ruah Swennerfelt and Louis Cox, members of Burlington Monthly Meeting and New England Yearly Meeting. After considerable discernment, Ruah and Louis were led to take a journey on foot, linking Friends Meetings from Vancouver, British Columbia, to San Diego, California, from November 2007 through April 2008. Ruah is General Secretary and Louis is Publications Coordinator of Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW), a Friends organization dedicated to helping people live in right relationship with each other and the earth. They are calling their walk The Peace for Earth Walk: Rediscovering John Woolman’s Message for the 21st Century.

The main purpose of their travels is to learn for themselves and to share with others the connections between peace, justice, and care for the earth, as well as the personal responsibility that a true understanding of this connection requires.

They hope that their journey will be a catalyst for action. They want to make Woolman’s message relevant to today’s Quakers within all branches of the Religious Society of Friends, instead of just looking at Woolman and his ministry historically, or as a saintly gesture beyond the reach of ordinary people. Aware of the environmental impact of transportation, as well as desiring to come in contact with broad cross-sections of the populations, Ruah and Louis are choosing to walk and to stay among Friends, as Woolman often did. (Anyone interested in learning more about Woolman can read *The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman*, edited by Phillips P. Moulton.)

This journey grows from the same roots as their marriage, a common concern for the earth. As part of their witness for walking more gently, Louis and Ruah live in a solar-powered house in rural Vermont, where they grow organically a lot of their own food and live frugally on lower-than-average incomes. They are part of a neighborhood community that shares meals, resources, responsibilities of the land, and fellowship to lessen their overall ecological impact. They serve on various committees or commissions in their town. They are active in the Peace, Justice, and Earthcare Committee of their Monthly Meeting and other Meeting work, as well as in a program which provides meals for people in need. They are also active in the Earthcare Ministry Committee of the New England Yearly Meeting.

The aim of their spiritual journey is to listen and to share about living richly, simply, and justly in a world with limited resources and to share their concern for the earth and its human and non-human inhabitants. They hope to inspire Friends to link Quaker Testimonies with public policies and Friends lifestyle decisions and the impact these have on the long-term health of the planet. They both hope that this experience will enhance their work with QEW as well as enrich and inform their world-views and understandings.

To learn more about Ruah and Louis’s plans visit the website www.peaceforearth.org.

4. State of Society 2006 Report, Northwest Quarterly Meeting.

(Previous draft approved with spelling correc-

tions a few changes)

Last year we wrote that our theme might be “deepen our core, so we can widen our welcome.” This year we have invited, from that core, more tender explorations of who we are and how we act. We come with such different backgrounds, personalities, lifestyles, and beliefs. And we are here together. This year we spent much more time together in the presence of our differences.

Our Ministry and Council programs this year began with Jonathan Vogel Borne leading us in “Anger, Conflict, and Forgiveness as a Spiritual Practise.” We experienced raging, and then how love and truth work together, and how we feel when one or both is missing. In June, we gathered in a circle and each spoke about some transition recently made, some threshold crossed. In September Margaret Hawthorne brought us a question from an FUM participant: What are our core values as unprogrammed, New England, Northwest Quarter Friends? In December we satisfied a two-year-old piece of unfinished business and held a threshing session around whether clerks should sign state marriage licenses. Several meetings in the Quarter have worked with this question this year.

Our newsletter, the Nor’wester, is finally out and running, on time and for less money, after a year and a half of difficulties. Meetings and individuals are using the newsletter to communicate with Friends around the Quarter. Alan Taplow also gathered and published the 2005 States of Society, which has been a different way to know each others’ meetings.

In September a set of queries came to us about the usefulness and value of Quarter itself. We have begun facing these questions, asking people who come and who don’t come what works and what might need to change.

We named a new recording clerk, our next Ministry and Counsel clerk, and a temporary business clerk who has been a consistent and involved attendee at Quarter, but who has reservations about whether Quarter needs to exist at all. This reflects our State: we are very Here, and we’re finding out what Here means and if it’s valuable. We are working in committees more this year, helping each other out. Two people have

done recording. Two people are getting out the Nor’wester. The clerks are working together between Quarters. Fewer children are joining us, but the older children still love being at Farm and Wilderness. We are asking more of our hosting meetings.

The Quarterly Meeting had a rousing discussion of our annual budget, and changed several items to better reflect our State. We have cut out one dance at Farm and Wilderness, to reflect the cost and the number of attenders. We will be holding two Quarters next year at meetings without meetinghouses, and will be paying the rent for this.

In all this, we have had strong Quarterly meetings with interest, involvement, opinions, and agreement. We have financially supported witnesses in New Orleans, Ramallah, at the Quaker Conference on Torture, and Quaker House, North Carolina, which works with survivors of torture. We minuted affirming the sacredness of life and opposing torture. We appended travel minutes for NEYM, and heard with love and sorrow memorial minutes for Phillip Towle and Alan Walker.

Quotes from various reports: “Quarterly Meeting is a larger sounding board to hear the Spirit through others.” We “have the courage to explore our differences and be with each other through them so that true unity can rise among us.” “We know and seek the power of gathered listening for the Living Spirit.” “Not peripherally, conflicts about flooring can help us learn to listen to one another and practise coming to unity.”

5. Treasurer’s Report.

Martha Ladam (Keene Meeting) reported the current balance is \$3,201.

We approved the bowl for Ruah and Louis’s Peace for Earth Walk.

(\$35 was collected and \$50 added from Quarter Treasury for a total of \$85.)

6. Peace and Social Concerns Report.

Joseph Tracy, Bennington Meeting, clerked. Individual members of meetings have partici-

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NWQM Hosting Schedule for Quarterly Meetings

June, 2007: Hanover
September, 2007: South Starksboro/Wilderness
December, 2007: Burlington

The hosting rotation:
Putney/Keene
Middlebury/Bennington
Hanover
South Starksboro/Wilderness
Burlington
Plainfield/Barton Glover
Monadnock/Quaker City Unity

NWQ Contact Information

Clerk:

Ministry and Counsel Clerk:

Treasurer:

Martha Ladam
123 S. Lincoln St., Keene, NH 03431
stbernardparish@otmail.com

Mailing List Coordinator:

Alan Taplow
844 John Fowler Road, Plainfield VT 05667
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Important Note: As of this issue, Ralph Stuart is retiring from the Nor'wester Editorship post after 6 years, so the position is now open. Please contact the Alan Taplow if you are interested in this form of service to the Quarter.



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pated in a variety of actions and activities (peace vigils, peace education, community gardens, local energy conservation and alternatives organizations and earth care work. However, it seems most Meetings have not found corporate leadings. Perhaps this reflects the individualistic orientation of American culture?

7. Future of Quarter at Farm and Wilderness discussed.

Travis Belcher has spoken to Marianne Cadwalader who remembers history of Quarter since the early 1950s. He also tried to contact David Bowen, current director of F&W to determine their interest in having June and September Quarters continue there.

Attendance was much greater as late as the mid 1990s. Is attendance down because of an aging membership in Friends? The terrain is too rugged for some older Friends and the accommodations too difficult. Should we seek moving to the Farm which is more accessible? Should we eliminate F&W as a meeting place? Should we cut out one quarter there – perhaps June when it is too cold to swim? Friends feel the value of F&W is largely or in part for families, so children can be included.

Friends agreed there should be no sudden change but that options should be discussed in June and suggest that the Director of F&W might visit with us in June.

We will be at F&W June 2-3 and September 8-9 in 2007.

8. Visitation to Meetings.

Joanna Bombadil and Cheryl Mitchell have been visiting meetings to get ideas for Quarter. Each has been to six. Joanna has visited with Friends in Bennington, Keene, and Wilderness. Cheryl has visited with Friends in Burlington, Middlebury, South Starksboro, and Wake Robin.

We requested that they organize and sift their notes and share with us – possibly at Quarter and/or by email, whatever they suggest.

Meeting closed with silence.

*Spencer Smith
recording clerk*

Ministry and Counsel Representative Session

March 3, 2007, Bennington

Another snowy March Quarterly Meeting! People from 3 meetings made it to M&C.

Quaker City Unity experienced their first death. The quick mobilization of the meeting to open the burial ground, dig a grave, and work together and with the family was “fast, centered, grounded, and supportive”.

Plainfield established an end-of-life committee, completed a memorial garden, and held two memorial services recently. Their mortgage is paid off (as of this newsletter); FUM held the mortgage, which reminds of us the various ways we are supported by the larger organizations of Friends. This year they have co-clerks, one “experienced” and one “understudy”, and they’ve been having First First Day meetings, before worship, with worship sharing and discussion.

Bennington has been spending lots of time with the nature of membership, in response to several requests. “We spent a lot of time reviewing the requests, grounded in the Spirit for guidance, established a response that’s true, for the health of the meeting.” “Not papering over the cracks” of strong feelings has been wonderful, and provides an opportunity for a “grounded sense of clearness”. Bennington is also beginning to address a meeting response to same-gender marriage, beginning with a discussion on marriage and family: “Begin by considering the ground of our deep faith and practise, that which nurtures us all.”

One person said, “Listening to Friends from other meetings, seeing that all meetings have challenges and situations, we’re in good shape; we have some hard issues, but we’re dealing with them.”

My term as clerk of ministry and counsel is over. Thank you for asking me to grow in this service. Meg Langworthy, of Middlebury, is our next clerk. I remind you that anyone is welcome to attend this representative session.

*Gratefully submitted,
Joanna Bombadil, clerk, NWQ M&C*

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Lugar (IN) and Joseph Biden (DE) have introduced similar legislation in the Senate (S. 613) .

Specifically, the legislation would:

- authorize significant funding for the State Department Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS);
- authorize a Conflict Response Fund, providing a contingency budget that would enable the U.S. to draw upon flexible resources at the onset of a crisis; and

- authorize funding to establish a Response Readiness Corps, which would include both federal and non-federal personnel with knowledge and technical skills in areas such as civilian policing, agriculture, health services, education, and conflict resolution and prevention. These civilian experts could be deployed in post-conflict, peacebuilding situations, as well as in the time before crises erupt to help prevent deadly conflict and state collapse.

Take Action

Please urge your representative to cosponsor the Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act of 2007 (H.R. 1084). By helping the U.S. government strengthen and develop non-military tools to prevent and resolve conflict, Congress can take a crucial step toward laying the foundation for a long-term vision of a world free of war and the threat of war. If your representative is already



Northwest Quarter of
New England Yearly Meeting of Friends
844 John Fowler Road
Plainfield VT 05667

Quarterly Meeting Program
June 2-3, 2007
Farm and Wilderness Camps
Plymouth, Vermont

Saturday:

2:00 Registration
3:00 – 5:00 Committee meetings
5:30 Supper
7:00 – 8:30 Child Care
7:15 –8:15 Program

Sunday

7:45 Breakfast
9:00 – 10:00 Meeting for Worship
9:15 – 12:15 Child Care
10:15-12:15 Meeting for Worship for Business
12:15 Lunch

John Ryder will be leading programmed worship on Saturday evening. Unprogrammed Friends are only 11% of Friends worldwide. Perhaps we will understand something more about ourselves and our way of worship by experiencing a programmed meeting. Many of us have experienced ritualized church services, but not pastored Quaker worship. How

does silence also become just ritual?

NEYM has a strong relationship with the programmed meetings in Cuba, and many connections with programmed meetings in Africa and other parts of the world. Friends come from visits with these meetings full of energy and gratitude, and they seem to leave experiences of silent worship behind them. We are all in a Quaker circle; are we willing to find the ways our faiths connect?

Hospitality for Quarterly Meeting: I can offer three bedrooms in Ludlow, 20 minutes south of Farm and Wilderness. Note: I only have an upstairs bathroom. If interested, call by May 26 (I'll be away after that): Joanna Bombadil (802)228-3386.

I can offer hospitality to 3 or 4 folks at QM in June. There are 2 cats at the house and the bedrooms are on the second floor. The house is approx 10 mi. south of F & W. For more info or to confirm, folks can call me: 802-649-1714 or email me: ericabrinton@hotmail.com