

Worcester Friends Meeting

Religious Society of Friends (Quaker)

901 Pleasant Street
Worcester, MA 01602
Tel. (508) 754-3887

e-mail: info@WorcesterFriendsMeeting.org
www.WorcesterFriendsMeeting.org



September - October 2009

QUERIES

What is fresh and vital in our meeting? How is the Spirit alive in our meeting? Are love and unity fostered among us? If differences arise, do we endeavor to reconcile them in a spirit of love and truth? How do we listen to and hear what is on the hearts of the members and attenders of our meeting?

Based on Queries from New York Yearly Meeting's Faith and Practice (1998)

Clerk's Corner Ninth Month, 2009

Karen Sargent

I bought a book at New England Yearly Meeting of Friends in August and have finished it and I would like to tell you about it. The book is *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy* by Peter G. Brown and Geoffrey Garver. Right relations is a Quaker term meaning to be connected with another person, or culture or even ecosystem in a way that is positive in a moral and practical way. This book states that the world economy is not in right relationship with the Earth and its ecosystems. The world and most countries economies are based on assumptions like ever increasing growth that can be seen as impossible when you take the ecosystems of the Earth which has finite energy and materials and operates best in a stable balance. Five questions are asked: What is an economy for? , How does it work? , How big is too big?, What's fair? , and How can

it best be governed? So they propose a new economic model, based firmly in the reality of the planet we live on. They analyze why so many well meaning reform efforts have failed. This model has as its basis that transactions are not encouraged unless they can contribute to the integrity, resilience and beauty of the ecosystems that they are embedded in.

I am leaving out most of the details which made the ideas in this book so compelling for me. However I find that this idea of right relationship is one that I think I can use to help guide my economic activity and my actions to help restore some balance to my relationship with the environment.

I recommend this book highly to anyone who is interested in a new model for an economy that can operate in a positive way with our environment and the other human cultures in it.

The Quaker Message



George Fox, one of the early founders of the Society of Friends in seventeenth century England, had as a youth suffered great anguish as he sought an answer to his spiritual quest. His answer came, after much reading of the Scriptures and visits to many ministers and counselors, when he heard a voice within him which said: "There is One, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition." "And when I heard it," he later reported, "my heart did leap for joy." He had found God directly without the aid of ritual or clergy, and henceforth his distinctive message was: Christ speaks directly to each human heart who seeks Him; listen to the teacher within; He placed His light within each of us, and as we follow the way He directs we shall be led into life and Truth.

- from *Faith & Practice* of New England Yearly Meeting, 1985, p. 53

Prayers Needed

Betty Poynton

Some of you will remember Susannah McCandless, who attended our meeting several years ago, when she was a student at Clark University. I spoke to her mother, Jean McCandless, who told me that Susannah has been diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia, which generally strikes people in their sixties. So the doctors at Dana Farber Cancer Center are trying to figure out how to help her. Susannah had gotten a great job over the summer, teaching at Mt Holyoke College. She is still going to try to reach this semester. Jean hopes that everyone who remembers Susannah will pray hard for her recovery.

Market Day

Market day is here again! Saturday, September 26, Worcester Friends Meeting will hold its Fall Market Day. Friends will be working together to assure its success as a fundraiser and a community-building event. Apple pie making at the Meetinghouse will be on Friday evening, the 25th. Friends will arrive at the Meetinghouse early on the 26th to set up and to welcome vendors. Friends and attenders who wish to be part of Market Day are encouraged to contact Betty Poynton or Karen Sargent. EVERY BODY is needed! "Many hands make for light work," lend your hands, give your time and cheerful energy to make the Fall Market Day a rewarding experience for everybody!

Contact **Betty Poynton 508-434-2739**
ejp4@fastmail.fm

or **Karen Sargent 978-874-2201**
karenegsargent@attglobal.net



A Letter to the Editor from California:

Thanks for continuing to send the monthly Newsletter - I enjoy reading about the meeting activities & I especially like a new addition, the Clerk's Corner.

Jean E. Johnson

Saturday, October 17 - Come and Celebrate the Opening of the Center for Nonviolent Solutions

After more than a year of planning and organizing, the Center for Nonviolent Solutions is ready to open. The Center, which has come together under the leadership of Friend Michael True, will be located on the third floor of the Worcester Friends Meetinghouse.

The group “seeks to promote alternatives to violence in resolving conflict at the local, national, and international levels.”

There will be a kickoff event at the Worcester Public Library on Saturday, October 17, at 10 AM, with coffee and Danish served at 9:30 AM.

Congressman Jim McGovern, an enthusiastic supporter of the Center, will be present to introduce the keynote speaker, Colman McCarthy.

McCarthy has been a nationally syndicated columnist for the *Washington Post* for 25 years. Respected as a pacifist, teacher, journalist and advocate of nonviolence, Colman McCarthy is the founder and director of the Center for Teaching Peace.

Michael True, life-time advocate for non-violence, said, “In my time in Worcester, most of the new projects for explicitly ‘nonviolent’ solutions have been started and maintained by very small, often ad hoc groups. These projects have tended to be reactive and short-term. A larger, institutional group that can manage long-term, proactive projects could be just what we need.”

The Power of Nonviolence, Fall 2009 by Mike True

Martin Luther King’s emphasis on the power of nonviolence to heal the social order is being recognized increasingly by activists, scholars, and

researchers, as indicated by the eight fall events listed below. Ten years ago, one could hardly imagine such sustained commitment to nonviolent social change in the U.S., through Nonviolent Peacemakers, Peace Brigades International, Catholic Worker communities, SOA Watch, etc.

Much work needs to be done to build cultures of peace in our communities and elsewhere, but

Quakers especially need to attend to many positive initiatives by people risking their lives in conflict situations around the globe. The good news is that the peace testimony, so central to the Society of Friends, is now being lived by people unaware of us.

This re-awakening to the power of nonviolence is attributable to activists, as well as to the writings of Gene Sharp, whom AFSC

recently nominated for the Nobel Prize for Peace. Iranians activists are referencing Sharp’s publications, such as *From Dictatorship to Liberation*, 2003, available free on the Albert Einstein Institutions website: www.aeinstein.org Amitahb Pal, in “The Iranian Example,” *The Progressive*, August 2009) quotes opposition leaders there encouraging supporters to “adopt the tactics of Gandhi, the tactics of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience.”

On Saturday, September 26, there will be a “Rally Against the War in Afghanistan,” from noon to 1 p.m., at Elm Park, Highland St. and Park Ave. Sponsored by Worcester Peaceworks:
Tel. 508-757-5873



Michael True, Professor Emeritus, Assumption College, is the author and editor of twelve books, including *An Energy Field More Intense Than War: The Nonviolent Tradition and American Literature* (1995) and *People Power: 50 Peacemakers and Their Communities* (2007).



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Mike lists the following local events that Friends may wish to attend:

Saturday, October 3, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., "Stepping Into the Tragic Gap: Nonviolence and Reconciliation with Nations at War;" the annual St. Francis Day Celebration of the Agape Community, Ware, MA with Kathy Kelly, Rabbi Sheila Weinberg, Raymond Helmick, S.J., Skip Schiel, and other activists involved in efforts to resolve the conflict in Israel/Palestine: peace@agapecommunity.org

Saturday, October 10, "Creating Positive Change Through Action," The Tri-State Youth Conference on Nonviolence at the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester: email: robtlejones@rcn.com Tel: 508-508-344-8166

Please contact Mike True 508-757-8228 for a more complete listing of local and national events aimed at encouraging world peace.

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Monday Night Movies at the Meeting House

The Worcester Friends will show the film Seeking the 36 on Monday, September 28 at 7:30 P.M.. This 52 minute documentary film is about a quixotic quest for the Thirty-Six Just Men of Jewish folklore, those humble, anonymous beings in each generation who are so virtuous that they keep the world in balance.

Filmmakers of Seeking the 36, Stephan Billias from Deerfield and Dennis Lanson from Gloucester, will join Friends for a pot-luck dinner at 6:30 PM. Invite your friends. There will be a discussion following the film's viewing.

A donation of \$5.00 is suggested. Please bring food to share if attending the potluck dinner. For more information, call 978-464-5146 or visit www.worcesterfriendsmeeting.org.

Future Monday Night Movies: October 26 – Ecological Footprint
November 23 – The Story of Stuff



Greetings from Margaret Cooley at Woolman Hill!

The dampness of a late summer dusk is falling over the meadows, and the first patch of leaves has turned orange in the maple tree just outside the main building...

We're excited about our new program season, which begins this fall with two compelling chances to spend time on the hill, in the company of other seekers, exploring internal and external realms.

October 9: The Wisdom to Know the Difference~ A weekend on discernment with Eileen Flannagan.

Often discernment comes down to knowing what we should accept and what we should try to change, the dilemma summed up by the Serenity Prayer. This experiential workshop will explore the tension between action and acceptance, as well as way opening and the effect of our social conditioning on discernment. We will focus on how discernment and self-knowledge can help us lead more peacefilled, productive lives. Come enjoy a mixture of presentation, discussion, small group sharing, and time for individual reflection.

October 30-November 1 Photography as a Spiritual Experience

Arthur Fink and Tony Stapleton are both Quaker photographers who carry their photographic work (or play) as a spiritual inquiry or expression. They

invite you to join in this weekend of photographing from within, which will include time for worshipping together, making pictures, sharing our work and process, and just enjoying Woolman Hill. Our goal is to broaden our vision, open our spiritual awareness, and, in the process, learn how to take more expressive pictures. This will not be about technical photography instruction, and all photographers are welcome regardless of technical knowledge or experience.

We'd love to have you back on the hill soon --- for more information on a program or to register, contact Margaret. Woolman Hill also offers individual retreat in one of their cabins.

With soft end-of-summer light,

Margaret

Margaret Cooley
Executive Director
Woolman Hill Retreat Center
107 Keets Road Deerfield MA 01342

413-774-3431
margaret@woolmanhill.org



Sunrise Cabin at Woolman Hill

Sexual Ethics and Spirituality

On September 20th, Friends at the Worcester Meeting were led in a Worship Sharing Group focusing on sexual ethics and spirituality. Gerry Sazama of Storrs Monthly Meeting and Kathy Day from the New Haven Meeting, both members of the NEYM's Working Party on Spirituality and Sexual Ethics, led 12 members and 1 attender into a prayerful sharing on this topic.

The Working Party on Sexual Ethics has been in existence since 2007 when the Young Friends and Young Adult Friends of NEYM asked that adult Friends be more open and honest about their beliefs concerning sexuality and spirituality. This request is connected to the difficulties Friends have experienced, and continue to experience,

about Friends United Meeting's personnel policy of hiring only persons who are not sexually active or in a heterosexual marriage. Gerry told us that as early as 1981, Young Friends were asking for more direct guidance about sexuality and spirituality. At NEYM, Friends have spoken of the deep hurt they have experienced because of homophobia, and they have encouraged all of us to look into our hearts and examine the connection between mind, body, emotion, and spirituality.

Those who attended the worship sharing group experienced profound sharing and insights. The openness and trust between Friends was deeply moving.

Fundraising as Ministry by Phil Stone, Clerk of the Trustees

At Sessions this past August I attended a two-day workshop, Convincement, Conversion and the Kingdom, led by Jennie Isbell of Earlham College. The course description said that it would be of interest to those Friends charged with fundraising and development responsibilities. I went with some skepticism, having attended such workshops in the past.

It turned out to be one of the most rewarding workshops I have participated in. We did not discuss the nuts and bolts of fundraising; this workshop was grounded in the Spirit.

Consider the following quote:

"Fund-raising is first and foremost a form of ministry. It is a way of announcing our vision and inviting other people into our mission. ... Fundraising is precisely the opposite of begging. When we seek to raise funds we are not saying, 'Please could you help us because lately it's been hard.' Rather, we are declaring, 'We have a vision that is amazing and exciting. We are inviting you to invest yourself through the resources God has

given you – your energy, your prayers, and your money – in this work to which God has called us.' "

– Henri Nouwen in the *Spirituality of Fundraising*.

The Worcester Friends Meeting has a vision that is amazing and exciting. We are the only Quaker Meeting in Central Massachusetts. We have a message to share, and many exciting programs underway. And, we have made it easier for you to financially support the Meeting by establishing an automatic giving program. A monthly contribution is easier on your household budget, and it also helps the Meeting's cash flow. If you are already participating, thank you very much!

If you haven't yet started, it's simple to do so. Mail a voided check to Mark Sullivan, Treasurer, along with a signed note designating the amount and frequency of your contribution (monthly or quarterly). Mark (and the banks' computers) will take it from there. Thanks so much!

The first book is *Imaginary Friends, Representing Quakers in American Culture, 1650-1950*

James Emmet Ryan is a scholar of American culture, not a Quaker apologist or even a Quaker historian. Nevertheless his book, *Imaginary Friends, Representing Quakers in American Culture, 1650-1950*, (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 2009) presents a panorama of Quaker spirituality, practices and history. He does this while tracing the perception of Friends by the rest of society through, yes, histories, Sewell's (1717), Clarkson's (1806), and Benizet's (1817), but also through well-received journals, Woolman's (1774 and 1872) and autobiographies, Sarah Greer's negative one (1851) as well as Frederick Douglass's positive one (1852.)

He picks up biographies, Mason "Parson" Weems on William Penn (1829), Lydia Maria Child on Isaac Hopper (1853), and Harriet Spofford on Whittier (1884.) He deals with Quakers in fiction, positively in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, negatively in *Moby Dick*, and sympathetically in *Evangeline*, and *Sister Carrie*.

Stage representations of Friends as objects of fun were presented as early as 1794's *The Quaker, A Comic Opera*, and as late as 1873's *The Dancing Quakers*. More nuanced presentations were John Murdock's *The Triumph of Love* (1795) Longfellow's *John Endicott* (1868.)

Popular songs appeared as sheet music with titles like *The Quaker Girls* (James Fields, 1851), *The Little Shaking Quakers* (Frank Bristow, 1883), *I Like Your Apron and Your Bonnet and Your Little Quaker Gown* (John Harrington and Alfred Lawrence, 1911), and *All the Quakers Are Shoulder Shakers, [Down in Quaker Town]* (Bert Kalmar, 1919.)

That greatest of all media, the motion picture, rounds out this romp through American popular culture. Ryan extensively discusses *The Quack Quakers* (1916), *Down to the Sea in Ships* (1922), *The Courageous Mr. Penn* (1942), *Angel and the Badman* (with John Wayne, 1947), and of course *High Noon* (1952 with Grace Kelly as the conflicted "Quakeress".)

The many titles I have listed are just a sample of the deep research that has been accomplished by this scholar who places himself "only at the periphery of the religious world of Friends.

The second book is *Nayler, Revolutionary to Prophet*

David Neelon's brief (178 page) biography, *James Nayler, Revolutionary to Prophet*, (Leadings Press, Becket, MA, 2009) delivers much more than its title promises. The book begins with a geography and social history lesson on the northern counties of England. The reader then gets a fully developed history of the rise of Puritanism from its origin in the reign of Elizabeth I, through its split into Presbyterian

and Independent factions, to its culmination in a theocratic police state under Cromwell.

The breakdown of relations between Parliament and the Crown leading to civil war is carefully explicated. Only then is Nayler introduced as a corporal in Thomas Fairfax's cavalry squadron. His abilities won him promotion to the post of quartermaster directly under General John Lambert in the army covering the Scottish border royalists and engaging in the pivotal battle of Marston Moor. In 1648 Nayler voted in a council of Lambert's officers in favor of the Army's trial of Charles I as a criminal starting the process leading to the king's execution. After the battle of Dunbar in September 1650, Nayler was discharged by reason of poor health and returned to his Yorkshire farm.

In October of 1651 Nayler met George Fox and was convinced. He joined Fox's itinerant ministry in the spring of 1652 after hearing God's voice coming to him while plowing. By that October he had been arrested for blasphemy and vagrancy. Nayler was imprisoned for several months after which he continued his powerful and successful ministry of preaching and pamphleteering in the north of England until June of 1655.

By this time he was considered a "head Quaker" and was sent to the ministry in London where his two associates promptly felt called to leave to take up a mission in Ireland. The author opines that over work in London combined with the divisive activity of a charismatic (in the bad sense) Martha Simmonds led to Nayler's frustration and depression. In this weakness he succumbed to flattery, broke with Fox, and in December 1656 permitted his adulators to lead him into Bristol on a horse while they sang hosannas.

This affront to the establishment led to his trial by parliament, lashings, branding, and an indeterminant prison sentence for the newly defined crime of "horrid blasphemy." The author believes that a contrite Nayler while in prison wrote his two greatest works: *The Lamb's Warre* against the Man of Sinne and *Milk for Babes and Meat for Strong Men*.

Released in the general amnesty that accompanied the 1659 end of the Commonwealth and the overthrow of Parliament by the army under General Monck, Nayler lived with Friends in London, and pursued a ministry of letters and pamphlets. It does not appear that reconciliation with Fox was ever complete despite exchanges of letters. On a journey to the north of England in October 1660, perhaps to return home, he got as far as Huntington where he was attacked by highwaymen, robbed, and beaten so severely that death came to this servant of God.

Copious quotations from Nayler's writings, some quite extensive, give insight into the mind of this true military, political, and religious revolutionary.

Worcester Friends Meeting Monthly Meeting for Business, September 13, 2009

Present: Katie Green, Betty Poynton, Betty Jones, Clarence Burley, Phil Stone, Michael True, Matt Shorten, Paul Gallagher, Josie Brown, Karen Sargent, Clerk

Meeting began with a moment of silence, followed by a reading from Peace and Reconciliation in New England Faith and Practice, 1985, p. 213.

Ministry and Counsel. Brian Poynton reported on the meeting at Sturbridge Village, and announced a threshing session on Sexual Ethics and Spirituality, with Gerry Sazama, Storrs Meeting, and Kate Day, New Haven Meeting, on September 20. He reported on Visiting Friends Ministry. Clarence Burley led a discussion at the gathering in Sturbridge, of Research Regarding a Meeting Between Quakers and Indians in 1777 in the Town of Easton, New York, by Margaret Bruchac .

Treasurer's Report. Mark Sullivan made the payment to NEYM, and distributed the monthly report. Monthly contributions through ACH is helping, generally, with the budget.

Market Day. Betty Poynton said that, so far, seven vendors have agreed to participate in the September 26 Fall Market Day. Mark Sullivan will purchase three tables, ten plastic tubs, and possibly a hand cart for use on Market Day.

Trustees. Phil Stone reported from the minutes of the last meeting. Trustees reiterated the importance of the building program. Fred Mikkelsen suggested a tentative way for expansion of the building.

Josie noted that wireless internet access is not available to the Meeting House.

Betty Poynton announced that Margie Angell died on September 4, at 96. A memorial will be held in Amesbury later in the fall, with Betty drafting a Minute for Worcester Meeting.

Cemetery. Brian announced that the Leicester Cemetery Project is proceeding, and that Peggy Smith has replaced Tammy Debois as head of the U.S. Cemetery Project. Friends agreed that work needs to be done to identify graves in the cemetery and that funds are available to document old sites.

Peace and Social Concerns. Josie announced that the film, Seeking the 36, will be shown on Monday, September 28, at 7:30 p.m., preceded by a pot luck at 6:30 p.m.. Stephen Billias, director of the film, will attend. Plans are being made for a pumpkin/apple orchard activity later in the fall.

Building and Grounds. Work needs to be done on the sign at the front of the building and gutters on both sides of the house require further attention. Fred Mikkelsen has been trimming bushes and tending to over-grown weeds.

Religious Education. Katie Green said that First Day School will work on preparing the space upstairs, and begin meeting next Sunday, Sept 20.

Michael True gave an up-date on the Center for Nonviolent Solutions. The office is scheduled to open in mid-October. The first important program will be at the Saxe Room, Worcester Public Library, Saturday, October 17, 9:30-11 a.m., with Colman McCarthy and Congressman James McGovern. Josie agreed to represent the Meeting in working with the Arrangement Committee preparing for the event. Michael called attention to many forthcoming events emphasizing the power of nonviolence, at Agape Community, Ware, in Worcester, Milwaukee, Memphis, as well as in India and Iran.

Opportunities being given Friends agreed to meet again on Sunday, October 9, 2009, or at the call of the Clerk.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael True

Assistant Recording Clerk

Loss of a Friend

by Betty Poynton

Margaret Angell died on Sept. 4, 2009 at the age of 96. A memorial service will be held for her on Sunday, October 25, at 2:30 at the Amesbury Friends Meeting House in Amesbury, MA.

Margie was a very active and much loved member of the Worcester Friends Meeting and the Worcester community. She and her husband, Russell, came to Worcester in the 60's to share the pastor's position at the Worcester Friends Meeting on Oxford Street. After retirement, they moved to Pilgrim Place, a minister's retirement community in Claremont, CA.

Margie kept her membership at Worcester Friends Meeting and considered Worcester her home meeting. Ministry and Council will be writing a memorial minute to go to Quarterly and New England Yearly Meeting.

Anyone with memories, activities and dates to help with the writing of Margie Angell's minute, please contact Betty Poynton at:

ejp4@fastmail.fm or 508-434-2739.