



The Arboretum

Wilton Monthly Meeting of The Religious Society of Friends Newsletter, Twelfth Month 2007, First Month 2008

Meetings

Meetings for Worship are held the First Day of each week (Sunday) at 10:00 a.m. at 317 New Canaan Road, Wilton, CT 06897, (203) 762-5669. Adult Religious Education precedes Meeting for Worship at 9 a.m. Children attend the Meeting for the first 15 minutes and then attend First Day School.

Clerk's Corner

In the second and third centuries CE, early Christian leaders sought to define the original experience of the Christ. In doing so they sought to sort out the wheat from the chaff; they excluded a wide range of Christian sources from what was considered acceptable interpretation of the experience of Christ. They also borrowed freely from other religious traditions, not only from the Judaic traditions but from those of pagans as well. From the beginnings of broader exposure to knowledge, learning, through the discovery of artifacts which shed increasingly intense light upon events of the past and an exposure to the similarities of the experiences peoples

scattered over the earth, scholars have taken a new view of the religious experience.

In her book, *Beyond Belief, the Secret Gospel of Thomas*, Elaine Pagels of Princeton University explores these developments as well as the impact of other traditions on some well known mystics of our era. Most of us, for example, are aware of many who have been influenced by the Muslim, Buddhist or Hindi traditions. She is led to observe, "Thus even some devoted Christians have found that the impulse to seek God overflows the banks of a single tradition."

I often wonder what George Fox would have preached given the knowledge available to us today – I think I know.

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2nd/3rd Month, 2007

1st Day Sun	2nd Day Mon	3rd Day Tue	4th Day Wed	5th Day Thu	6th Day Fri	7th Day Sat
10 Meeting for Worship With a Concern for Business	11 MFWWCFB meets the 2nd First Day	12	13	14	15	16
17 R—Clerks R—Peace & Service Quaker In- quiry	18 Ministry & Counsel	19 11:30 am Nursery School Com- mittee	20 [Peace & Ser- vice meets the third First Day]	21 [M&C meets First Second Day after MFWWCFB]	22 [Nursery School meets 3rd 3rd Day]	23
24 P-House & Grounds	25 [House & Grounds meets the fourth First Day]	26	27	28	29	30
1 R—First Day School, Gillespie House	2 CFS Board of Directors Meeting	3 [CFS B of D meets First Second Day]	4 [Gillespie House Meet- ing provides dinner, every 1st 1st Day]	5 Finance, 7:30 pm	6 [Finance meets Thurs- day before MFWWCFB]	7

Committee meetings are held at the Meeting House unless otherwise noted.

P—Committee meeting held **Prior** to Meeting, 9 a.m.; **R**—Committee meeting held after **Rise** of Meeting
Please call the committee clerk if you plan to attend a committee meeting to verify time and location.

Please note: new clerks may have been established for the year commencing 7/1/05

Connecticut Friends School—Deedie Dominicali (914) 273-4807

Finance—James Hamilton (203) 854-5256

First Day School—Judy Mickle (203) 325-2334

Helen Gander Friends Nursery School—Martha Gurvich (203) 843-3433

Hospitality—Doris Munger (203) 966-1710

House & Grounds—Jim Holdsworth, (203) 831-0070

Nominating—Jeff Menoher- (203) 866-5610

Norwalk Clergy Association—Missy Conrad (203) 847-9790

Peace & Service—Diane Keefe & Regina McIlvain (203) 846-4403), (203) 682-6432

Ministry & Counsel—Jeff Menoher (203) 866-5610

Overseers—Sean Higgins, Tom Martin (203) 849-0012, (203) 222-0442

Minutes of Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business Twelfth Month 9, 2007

Attendees: Rich Francis, Marylin Atkins, Frances Salant, John Steer, Virginia Perry, Kim Tsocanos, Doris Munger, John Lee, Sean Higgins, Dana Raphael, Missy Conrad, Diane Keefe, Lois Alcosals, Woody Schempp (clerk), Jeffrey Menoher (recording clerk)

One of the most significant contributions which the Quakers have made has been their discovery of the value of silent communion and their practice of it as a source of strength and equipment... They open all their meetings with a time of quiet, even their meetings for business, and they approach every practical task with a period of hush. It may, I think, be taken as a demonstrated fact that hush and silence minister to a consciousness of mutual and reciprocal communion with God. The soul in these deep moments of quiet seems to be both giving and receiving, to be breathing in a diviner life, and to be pouring out in response its own highest and noblest aspirations and expectations. Different exponents of religious faith differ widely in their emphasis on what is essential in belief and form and practice, but the representatives of all faiths, of all communions, of all systems, or of none, might find themselves moved, quickened, vitalized, refreshed, and girded for the duties and tasks of life by periods of expectant, palpitating hush with others who are fused together into one group of worshipping men and women.

—Rethinking Quaker Principles, Rufus M. Jones (PH Pamphlet 8)

CFS/White Barn Theater property, Report by Kim Tsocanos

CFS approaching acquisition of White Barn - growing into school serving a broader community. What will be support from Meeting? 9 Friends met to discover how to help school.

Suggestions up for discussion as follows -

(1) Purchase Hastings hall

(2) To effect White Barn transaction closure by Dec 31 this year -

Loan school 75k\$ from capital fund at 5% interest, no payback for two years

Concern was expressed over small number of Friends present at business meeting; is it enough to make such a decision? Typical attendance is 12 to 16 Friends at a business meeting which was the number in attendance at this meeting. Further it was pointed out that this topic was laid over from last Meeting for Business and a well announced but informal meeting was held since last business meeting to hold this topic in the light.

While deadlines are often problematic for Quaker process, there is history of Friends being able to making decisions quickly when needed. How strict is Dec 31 deadline? Clarifying the point - CFS would like to close by Dec 31. Even with full capital, CFS not in control of closure, they are waiting for DEP grant. The current property owner wants to close by Dec 31 for tax reasons.

CFS will be taking on \$4 mortgage, for the land only. Can CFS support this for 2 years? To effect this the CFS board is seeking pledges that would cover 2 years of mortgage costs from "inner circle" of supporters, but has not yet attained these pledges; an additional \$8 million for construction and site work required for the entire CFS project.

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Minutes (Continued from page 3)

To close on the property before Dec 31 CFS needs, \$350 thousand for closing costs, and \$150 thousand to cover the 1st year interest on mortgage (half of the year one interest of \$300k thousand already has been donated.) Most of the funds needed have been raised already for closure on land purchase: another \$84 thousand is needed.

Concerns were expressed as the contract price was set near the peak of a declining real estate market. Appraisals will be needed for Hastings Hall, potentially White Barn estate land. Maybe CFS should wait, and potentially renegotiate transaction. Other concerns expressed concerned the developer's tax incentives to close transaction quickly; if not realized, forgiveness of interest payments or other CFS incentives may be withdrawn.

Original land parcel 18.5 acres. It was originally proposed that about 20 luxury houses be built on the site. One Westport lot was sold off leaving 15 acres; 5.5 acres have been placed in a conservation easement, roughly 700k\$ in value. Remaining land is more valuable as result conservation easement.

WMM Purchase of Hastings Hall would be in excess of 75k\$, and a lien on Hastings Hall may serve as collateral for loan to CFS.

WMM minute 2007-12-01:

It is the sense of those gathered that WMM shall provide a loan to CFS, if needed, of 75k\$ at an interest rate of 5%, for a period of 3 years, to be secured with 1st lien on Hastings Hall, contingent upon closure of CFS purchase of the White Barn property on or before Dec 31, 2007.

Finance report by Rich Frances

Assets:

\$100k in capital account

\$35k in checking account

HGFS \$6k payment due

Liabilities

5k\$ cost for facility analysis

Financially, we seem to be in good shape.

Meeting closed with the reading below and with silent worship.

Membership carries with it spiritual obligations. Each member is called to participate in the Meeting's spiritual life and to attend worship regularly. Members need to nurture each other's God-given gifts and talents. They seek guidance from one another and the Meeting in discerning God's will for themselves. They pray for one another.

The basic spiritual commitment creates practical obligations. The vitality of each Monthly Meeting depends on its members' investments of time, energy and financial support. Friends put practical meaning into their spiritual commitment through regular participation in Meetings for Business, service on committees or as officers, regular financial giving, taking part in service projects under the care of the Meeting, assisting in maintenance of Meeting property, and representing the Meeting in community and

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wider Friends' organizations.

-- Handbook, Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting

Minutes of Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business First Month 13, 2008

Friends gathered at around 11:45 AM. Those present were John Lee, Munro Johnson, Virginia Perry, Marilyn Atkin, Rich Francis, Hattie Herman, Diane Keefe, Lois Alcosser, Kim Tsocanos, Dana Raphael, Woody Schempp (clerk), Sean Higgins (recording clerk)

Meeting gathered in silent worship and clerk read a passage from NYYM Faith & Practice about marriage.

Early Friends believed that marriage depended on the prayerful inward life of the couple's deep, abiding commitment to each other and to God, not on the outward forms of ecclesiastic blessing or legal contract. Our witness today must uphold the same high standards for ourselves in our covenant relationships: standards of love, fidelity, and discipline that bear witness to the presence of the Spirit among us rather than to the self-interest and immediate gratification of desires prized in our culture.

Love reaches further than words, and we experience the Spirit long before any words. The family is a precious spiritual community, and we rejoice and are nourished in homes full of friendliness, refreshment, and peace, where God becomes real to those who live there and to all who visit. We joyfully acknowledge the sustaining, enriching presence of loving unions among us, and we want the meeting's strength to undergird these covenants.

Clerk handed out minutes from the previous Business Meeting in December, noting that it is our custom to have the previous minutes available *before* the current Business Meeting.

Clerk read the minute from last Business Meeting pertaining to a loan from Wilton Meeting to Connecticut Friends School

WMM minute 2007-12-01: It is the sense of those gathered that WMM shall provide a loan to CFS, if needed, of 75k\$ at an interest rate of 5%, for a period of 3 years, to be secured with 1st lien on Hastings Hall, contingent upon closure of CFS purchase of the White Barn property on or before Dec 31, 2007.

Connecticut Friends School co-head Kim Tsocanos then gave a progress report on the White Barn Theatre Property. CFS had received a lot of assistance from state and local officials in trying to obtain the \$450,000 in open space funds from the State of Connecticut but in the end everyone came to realize that it would not be possible for the check to arrive in time for the December 31, 2007 deadline. The seller of the property, who was anxious to close in 2007, acknowledged that everyone acted to good faith to meet the deadline and has continued to work with CFS on the deal.

The end result is that the status of the sale remains as it was at our December business meeting and that CFS would still welcome the loan of \$75k from WMM.

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WMM minute 2008-01-01: It is the sense of those gathered that the closing contingency for WMM to provide a \$75k loan to CFS be extended from Dec 31, 2007 (as stipulated in WMM minute 2007-12-01) to June 30, 2008.

WMM Treasurer, Rich Francis, had a concern about signatures that would be required for WMM to write a \$75k check. WMM signatories have changed. But because the IRS, for some reason, keeps dropping our tax-exempt status, the banks have been making it more difficult to change signatories. Rich explained what Woody and Sean need to do to get their signatures on file.

Rich also reported that approximately \$28,000 was deposited in WMM's account before the end of the year which brings the checking account up to about \$35,000. The capital account has about \$101,000. We have enough to loan CFS the \$75k.

Rich also asked us to consider whether or not we want to contribute a full \$21k (our full share) to New York Yearly Meeting or put more money in the capital fund.

In his role as a Helen Gander Friends Nursery School committee member, Rich Francis wants to acknowledge the gifts that Director Maureen Jackson brings to the Nursery School and, as one of WMM's outreach programs, to the Meeting community in general.

Clerk brought for a request from a local Al-Anon group to rent our space once a week. There was some discussion about who would be responsible for what. One suggestion was to ask a church that was already renting out some space for some tips or even for their rental agreement.

It was the sense of the Meeting that we are favorable to the idea of renting space to Al-Anon but we need to work out the details.

Clerk read a letter from long time member, Tom Martin, asking that his membership be transferred from Wilton Meeting to Friends Meeting of Austin where he now lives.

WMM minute 2008-01-02: Friends gathered approve (with regret) Tom Martin's request to transfer membership from WMM to Friends Meeting of Austin.

Diane Keefe announced that *Quakerism 101* is in the works and that Munro Johnson will be teaching it. It will be geared towards those folks who have attended in the last 12-18 months.

Diane also reported that, in March or April, experts in solar and wind energy will come to discuss what our options for upgrading the Meeting House might be.

Clerk brought a concern to Meeting that some key committees are not functioning. Items are sometimes submitted to a committee for action and nothing is done. There are a number of possible reasons.

Committee structure review has been held up in the past while waiting for the revised Wilton Meeting Handbook. The handbook is still not done.

Our numbers have dwindled for various reasons.

This year there was an attempt to consolidate committees and bring them up to date. However, there appears to be some confusion over who is on what committee and what the committee is supposed to be

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Minutes (Continued from page 6)

doing.

A number of friends have limited time that they can devote to committee work.

Clerk asked for help in discerning how to go forward.

Some time was spent discussing which committees were functioning to what degree. It was noted that some members have made valiant attempts to convene a meeting of their committee.

One Friend said that Adult Religious Education is very important.

One Friend said that without an agenda it is hard to engage people in the process.

One Friend pointed out that Linda Chidsey would have committees submit reports by email well in advance so agendas could be sent out in advance of meetings.

Munro suggested that those present who serve on the Physical Stewardship committee get together and define their roll since that committee's responsibilities is very diverse.

>>> Munro volunteered to facilitate that process.

Ministry & Oversight is also requested to meet for the purpose of defining their roll.

>>> Woody will ask a M&O member to convene.

There was some concern about the lack of committee reports at Business Meeting. At one point committees were asked to only bring action items to Business Meeting since full committee reports tended to make the meetings go very long. However, as a result, many have little idea about what committees are doing and newcomers have no incentive to get involved.

>>> It was agreed that this would be brought up for discussion at the next Business Meeting.

Ty Greise has asked to be released from the Adult Religious Education Committee because of his increased work-load.

WMM minute 2008-01-03: Friends approve Ty Greise's request to be released from the Adult Religious Education Committee.

One Friend brought a concern about harsh language in Scarsdale's proposed minute regarding Friends United Meeting's (FUM) policy of not hiring gays and lesbians. The Friend was especially concerned about the word "abhorrent" being not Quakerly and urged Friends to attend Quarterly Meeting where Scarsdale's minute will be considered.

Friend Missy Conrad asked to be recorded as standing against the word "abhorrent" as it appears in the Scarsdale Meeting proposed minute criticizing Friends United Meeting's hiring policies.

Missy is encouraged to write a letter to that effect to the clerk of Quarterly Meeting

As Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business was ending, Clerk reminded us that when we are unable to attend Business Meeting, we must trust – we must have faith, that those who are in attendance will do God's work.

Meeting closed with silent worship.

Minutes from Montclair and Scarsdale Meetings

Purchase Quarter and NYYM are asking meetings to hold in the light the relationship of NYYM to Purchase Quarter and NYYM are asking meetings to hold in the light the relationship of NYYM to Friends United Meeting. You may have read the report delivered at Fall Sessions regarding the experiences of representatives from NYYM at the FUM Yearly Meeting in Kenya. FUM has a hiring policy which excludes gays and lesbians which many find abhorrent. There are many other issues as well, including FUM's push for general acceptance of the Richmond Declaration of Faith. You may read the Fall Sessions report by visiting the NYYM web site or entering <http://www.nyyym.org/pubs/FUMRepsReport0704.pdf> in your web browser's address bar. Purchase Quarter is asking all meetings within the quarter to consider minutes from Montclair and Scarsdale Monthly meetings before the February quarterly meeting.

Montclair Monthly Meeting

The preaching of intolerance that would deny the rights and humanity of any person or group is not acceptable to Montclair Meeting, especially when made within a Friends organization. It violates Friends' traditional testimony against the death penalty. It violates Friends' testimony as to the human rights of each individual, that there is that of God in everyone. It violates John's letter in which we are told "to love each other and anyone who fails to love can never know God because God is love" (1 John Ch.4 Vs. 7-8). It violates the message of Jesus to "love one another as we love ourselves". Jesus made no "exception policy" to this commandment. He meant we must love everyone. It is also important to note that Jesus himself never once uttered a word about homosexuality. This leaves us to wonder just how concerned or condemning of homosexuality Jesus was, despite what is written in the books of Genesis, Leviticus or some of the Epistles of Paul. As Quakers, Montclair Meeting trusts more in the Spirit that revealed the Scriptures than in the words printed in the Bible, which are conditioned by the historical context and the limited knowledge of human sexuality available to the authors at the time they were writing.

We strongly believe that such statements of hatred encourage and give license to those who are prone to violent acts. Consequently, we find those statements to be inherently sinful and unacceptable among Friends. Montclair Meeting has welcomed members and attenders of all sexual orientations for many years. Although they are few in number, our gay members and attenders are near and dear to us. They are part of our heart. They are us and we are them. We cannot and will not abide any statement or policy that directly or indirectly suggests that they are less than any other one of us. We cannot and will not abide any statement that would suggest that physical or verbal attacks on them may be acceptable. Statements made at the General Board Meeting have made our gay members feel threatened and unsafe among Friends. This breaks our hearts.

Because of all that we have said above, Montclair Meeting now feels that we must wrap ourselves in the protective, accepting and loving arms of the Holy Spirit, in order to shield those who are vulnerable to attack from the intolerance expressed and condoned by Friends United Meeting. Our leading is that we must now hold ourselves separate from the intolerant forces within Friends United Meeting, and establish Montclair Friends Meeting as a safe place for people of all sexual orientations. We declare our Meeting to be a sanctuary where all people, but especially those gay Friends and attenders who feel attacked and threatened, can worship free from physical and verbal abuse, a spiritual sanctuary where they will not have to hide who they are.

We believe that young Friends and attenders are particularly vulnerable to such attacks, and we want them to know that no matter their sexual orientation, they will be welcome and safe within the Montclair Meeting community and to worship with us. They will be protected at our meeting and given sanctuary.

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We are strongly urging New York Yearly Meeting to do the same - to establish all of New York Yearly Meeting as a safe and welcoming place for people of all sexual orientations, and in particular to protect young f/Friends of any sexual orientation from verbal or other abuse and harm.

Approved by Montclair Monthly Meeting on Seventh Month 15, 2007

Montclair, New Jersey

From Scarsdale Meeting:

Friends noted that Scarsdale Meeting has been engaged for some time with the questions raised by FUM's policies toward gay and lesbian Friends whom we dearly love. Scarsdale Friends Meeting is in unity in finding these policies abhorrent. Although the meeting agreed that NYYM should remain affiliated with FUM, it recommended that NYYM communicate to FUM that it considers the personnel policies of FUM related to gays and lesbians contrary to the inclusive ministry of Jesus. The Meeting approved this minute. The clerk will send this minute to Purchase Quarterly Meeting and New York Yearly Meeting and request that it be put on the agenda of New York Yearly Meeting fall sessions. The clerk will also respond to Montclair Monthly Meeting, thanking them for sharing their concerns.

The First Meeting for Discernment

How is the Spirit moving in your monthly meeting?

What concerns have been laid upon your heart and into the collective care of your monthly meeting?

How is the Spirit moving in the yearly meeting?

What are we as a body called to at this time?

At this year's Summer Sessions, Friends approved creating Meetings for Discernment as a replacement for the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel. The first one will be held on March 15, 2008. The second will be a designated day of Summer Sessions at Silver Bay.

These meetings are a rare opportunity for us to practice our faith as Friends, listening together as to how the Spirit is moving in the YM. They also provide a venue for extended discernment on issues that require larger blocks of time than are normally available at YM business sessions. Through prayer and listening, Meetings for Discernment will connect as many Friends as possible, from all over our yearly meeting. Twice in the next year, we will have opportunity to bring seasoned concerns from our own meetings and to hear about leadings from other monthly meetings.

The recommendation NYYM approved said, "Significant blocks of time will be given to the Friends gathered, so that they can labor in God's time for discernment." We expect that younger faces will be part of the gathering; new concerns will be considered; more Friends will participate. The meeting is our opportunity to come together in extended worship. We'll listen to what is arising in monthly meetings. We'll "inform the body of the Yearly Meeting how best to serve all Friends on concerns that have arisen," and recommend right action.

At this time the Interim Steering Committee for Meetings for Discernment asks that every meeting select at least one Friend to attend these meetings. The term is three years. We urge meetings to appoint Friends who are under the weight of Quaker process, those people Friends go to for ministry and service, those who enjoy this kind of laboring together and who are in touch with the life of the monthly meeting. This may also be a time for Friends to come forward who have been less visible in Yearly Meeting affairs than in their local meetings.

These Friends should be:

- well seasoned in the life of their monthly meeting, and willing to bring forward their meeting's concerns
- willing to engage in and be nurtured by an extended session of a meeting for worship

Meeting for Discernment (Continued from page 9)

- willing to be a resource to their community, or bring back from the MFD information on who in the larger community is grappling with a similar concern
- willing to carry the discernment and actions of the Meetings for Discernment back to their monthly meeting
- willing to take responsibility for communicating concerns that arise on the floor of the Yearly Meeting sessions to their monthly meeting

In other words, it's an assignment that will entail communication, centered worship, and an awareness of movements of the Spirit.

While we ask for monthly meetings to appoint at least one Friend, please understand that all Friends are welcome, and encouraged, to join us in this worship and work.

The first gathering will be held on March 15, 2008, at Rochester meetinghouse.

More information in general about Meetings for Discernment is available in the 2007 Advance Report of the Transition Working Group, which can be found on the Yearly Meeting Web site at www.nyym.org/pubs/yb07-08 in the Advance Reports section.

The Citizens Appeal

As QUAKERS and as Members of the Religious Society of Friends we're concerned about the human rights and wellbeing of our country. We believe that there is ³That of God² in all people; that human life is sacred; and that mortal humans should not murder or kill each other. We believe the Golden Rule and the Principals of Non-Violence are applicable to all people on earth. We come together as concerned citizens to recommit ourselves to the perfection of that ³more perfect union² called for in the Constitution.

We hope that we can know the truth, and do what is necessary to ³establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, promote the general welfare and secure the blessing of liberty². We hold ourselves and our government accountable to us in accordance with our civil rights and the Constitution of the United States.

[Please note that preamble (above) says that "We are concerned about human rights and the wellbeing of our country" and that this version has certain "That clauses" that have been added.]

We submit the following APPEAL:

[PLEASE note that the following "that clause" brings into play the Golden Rule as mentioned in the Preamble above and "The Principals of Non-Violence" as documented by Martin Luther King JR. And Ghandi - that this too is mentioned as a human right.]

[PLEASE note that the following That Clause has been condensed from earlier versions, but that its content has not been changed.]

THAT the United States Government be more humane in the conduct of its affairs; that it treats all people with the dignity and respect they deserve as human beings; and that it does unto others what it would have others do unto it; and that in so doing it would enhance the general wel-

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fare of humanity. Its abiding purpose shall be to do what¹ is right and to do no harm. Our challenge is to trust others as we trust ourselves.

[PLEASE note that the following That Clause is NEW because many people feel that government secrecy is a very real part of our problem, that issues have been "spun", that other issues are exaggerated, and that we have been lied to. The American Public has been hoodwinked by secrets that have been kept to keep it from knowing the truth.]

THAT the U.S. Government replace its intelligence gathering spy network with a ³Truth Department² that keeps no secrets. Our world is fraught with suspicion; secrets built on secrets; secrets that should not be secret. Our challenge is to be forthright, to tell the truth; and to follow the truth as we are led.

[PLEASE note that the following That Clause is relatively NEW because I think the militarians are a troublesome part of our problem. If many of you don't think the militarians are part of our problem - then this That Clause may be removed.]

THAT the welfare of the United States is threatened by the militarians among us who are disdainful of the humanitarians among us. Everyone should know that deadly violence does nothing to mitigate the troubles in our troubled world; and that we should back off from the tough talk and give peace a chance.

[Please note that the following That Clause has been condensed about as far as I think it can be - and still keep the intent of its wording.]

THAT the United States before making war shall freely, openly and truthfully (no secrets withheld) inform the public and the world what its intentions are, why war is necessary, whose armed forces shall be used, how many innocent people may be killed, and how the war can eventually be brought to a just conclusion. Our most pressing need for now is to bring all wars to a just conclusion; that the murder of innocent civilians will end; and that peaceable alternatives shall be considered.

[Please note that the following That Clause is a condensed version of two previous That Clauses that referred to Prisoners of War.]

THAT all prisoners and detainees held by the United States be given the right to face their accusers and contest the legitimacy of their confinement in a court of law; or that prisoners of war shall not be tortured or subjected to cruel and inhumane treatment. These are civil rights guaranteed by the Writ of Habeas Corpus contained in the Magna Charta of 1215 and the Geneva Conventions agreed to in 1949. Now is not the time for anyone to make any special ad hoc interpretation of the civil rights of prisoners.

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Citizens Appeal (Continued from page 11)

[Please note that the following That Clause is NEW because Habeas Corpus is a human right guaranteed to our domestic prisoners, and because many of us think that terrorists are killers that may be housed in American jails.]

THAT the U.S. Prison System be reorganized, no longer to warehouse millions of criminals, but to provide a penitentiary environment that motivates criminals to become law abiding citizens in the outside world. The Death Penalty (for instance) doesn't work because dead criminals are unable to regret the enormity of their crime, unable to repent or make amends. Our challenge is psychotherapy for the criminally insane.

[Please note that the following That Clause is new because I think that our defense budget is going to bankrupt us, and that the cost of making war has a destructive effect on our human rights.]

THAT we Americans must face the fact that our economy has been severely disadvantaged by our \$Trillion\$ annual defense budget. We are now obliged to reduce our defense budget in order to have any financial capabilities left to meet disaster expenses here at home, and have any funds left after that to make our world a kinder and gentler place. We must rededicate our financial institutions and use them effectively.

[Please note that the following That Clause has not been changed.]

And THAT the Administration of the United States redirect its State Department to serve in its traditional capacity as the diplomatic arm of our government; that supports the peace keeping efforts of the United Nations; that sponsors Peace Corps Activities to help disadvantaged people beset by poverty, hunger and disease; and that our government provides a clear, unambiguous, free and open ³Voice of America² speaking to the humanitarian needs of every man, woman and child on earth.

[This document was started last year when a much shorter version was approved by the meeting. This year as Human Rights Day approached we tried to make it more specifically a "Manifesto of Our Human Rights". Maybe we should have called it that, but we called it a "Citizens Appeal". It was emailed to the Wilton Announcements Group and I got a lot of feedback, some of which is documented here.]

[Please give this Appeal your prompt consideration.]

Clerk of Wilton Quaker Meeting, First Month 13, 2008
317 New Canaan Road
Wilton, CT 06897

[Please note also that I have become a little proprietary about all this stuff and that it might be good for the Meeting to take it out of my hands.]

Your Friend, john@voxpax.org

Kenya (Continued from page 14)

two days before. Not surprisingly, blankets were their first request. They had clearly enjoyed the rice we delivered previously. Predictably it had run out since there were only two 50 kilo (110 pound) bags. The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has sent us a small grant for the Lumakanda IDPs. We hope to go to Eldoret tomorrow to buy more relief supplies; but then one never knows.

Parliament begins sessions tomorrow and both sides plan on sitting on the Government side of the building so this might lead to a crisis there. There are three days of demonstrations scheduled for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Desmond Tutu raised hopes which were dashed; John Kufour, the African Union president, raised hopes which were dashed. Now Kofi Annan is scheduled to arrive tomorrow along with a few other eminent Africans. People are not getting up their hopes again.

Human Rights Watch has issued a strong statement against the Kenyan Government for using excessive force ("shoot to kill" policy) during the crackdowns, restricting the media, and the illegal ban against demonstrations.

In earlier posts, David has written:

As part of the larger population of the province, the Quakers have been directly and indirectly affected by the violence. I mentioned a Luhya who was killed in Nakuru (I don't know if he was a Quaker or not). Another prominent Quaker's shop in Nairobi was looted and burned. If a Quaker lived in a Kikuyu's house, they were burned out. If they rented a house to a Kikuyu, it was also burnt. There are probably many more examples of death, looted shops, and burned homes among the Kenya Quakers that I do not know about. Of course indirectly everyone has been adversely affected. Prices have gone up, transport has been almost impossible, and anyone with a business has seen sales decrease. On top of this is the tension, the uncertainty of what will happen, the retreating into the home and with trusted neighbors only. Then there are the questions, "How can our society have fallen apart like this?" "Where have we gone wrong?" "Is this going to happen again?"

In my daily reports I try to highlight those things that I hear that the Quaker community are doing--digging latrines at an IDP camp, caring for people in Eldoret Friends Church, our beginning attempts at reconciliation here in Lumakanda, attempts to dialogue with the looters in Kakamega. All these are small initiatives in hard times. As the conflict here in Kenya is no longer is "news," and you hear little about what happens, I hope that you can stay informed about our Quaker brothers and sisters in Western Kenya.

Other sources for accurate news can be had at the following websites: Mary Kay Rehard blogsite: <http://www.updatesonkenya.blogspot.com> . Mix of international news articles and personal reflections with many links to good information.

Friends United Meeting: <http://www.fum.org/about/news/>. Provides links to news releases and updates.

Carol Holmes (Brooklyn MM) blogsite: | <http://among.wordpress.com/about-among-friends/quacarol/>. Carol has some of the earliest dispatches.

Friends World Committee for Consultation: | <http://fwckkenyanews.blogspot.com/>. Gives news updates and links to organizations to which one can make contributions.

We will periodically update the NYYM website pertaining to Kenya: <http://www.nyym.org/nurture/fum/kenya/>

This press release just came in today (January 15, 2008)*:
Kenyan Quakers plan for Peace Conference

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Kenya

Friends, this e-mail from Lee Haring, NYYM assistant clerk, and Christopher Sammond, our general secretary, provides valuable information from sources "on the ground" in Kenya. It also provides links to organizations providing aid in the growing humanitarian crisis in Kenya for Friends who might feel led to send assistance. It is rather long, but it is hoped that Friends will find it worth reading. The most urgent information is toward the beginning.

Dear Friends:

All of us are concerned over the heartbreaking news of violence, looting, and death in Kenya, a country that holds more Quakers than any other nation. Our clerk, Ernie Buscemi, promised you updates on the situation; she is busy with jury duty, so we are filling in for her. We now have more information on what appears to be a growing humanitarian crisis there, better resource information for news updates, and links to Friends organizations for Friends who wish to donate money to help the growing number of internally displaced refugees. We find that the news we are getting from the ground is significantly different from the news in much of the international media, evidently because the Kibaki regime has made efforts to downplay the degree of violence and disruption in the country. In particular, David Zarembka, of the African Great Lakes Initiative, sends out daily updates, many of which have been carried by the FWCC at: <http://www.fwcckenyanews.blogspot.com>

His updates can be found at: <http://www.service/work/travel> , <http://fwcckenyanews.blogspot.com/2008/01/david-zarembka-executive-director-of.html> and <http://www.aglionline.org/>. Here is one.

When we went to church yesterday, we found about one hundred 200-pound bags of maize (corn) in the back. After church, I asked George, the owner, why they were there. He replied that he had a big farm on the other side of the road where the Kalenjin are the dominant ethnic group. He feels he is the next target. "When they finish with the Kikuyu, they will then come for me." He has moved out all his furniture and taken it to the homes of his relatives nearby. This is another small indication that the violence is not essentially political, but a chance to plunder and loot. Today I heard two reports of cows being stolen. In the past this rarely happened in Lumakanda.

This morning, Gladys (my wife), and I went to Turbo where the Lumakanda IDPs have been transferred. I had heard that Turbo had experienced a rough time during the violence; but it is another thing to actually see an entire block of shops burned out. Many other shops in the town were destroyed. Some were wooden and burned up completely. After viewing the destruction we climbed the hill to the police station and found our "refugees."

They were most happy to see us. "You have followed us here," was a common comment. The women, in particular, were very pleased and welcoming to Gladys who had been part of the contingent that had brought them the first allotment of food. The refugees have been placed in a just-harvested corn field so there isn't even any grass. For the first night(s) they were sleeping on the ground in the open. Now, men were building eucalyptus pole houses with plastic tops and sides. A few had found iron sheets (perhaps salvaged from their burnt shops or houses) which make a more substantial wall. The wind is blowing very hard, almost constantly, so the plastic tarps were flapping loudly. I would think this din would make it hard to sleep at night; I guess they will get used to it.

The people in the camp told us that they had not received anything since they arrived from Lumakanda

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Kenyan Yearly Meetings and Quaker organizations will hold a conference 24-27th January at Sheywe Guest House, Kakamega, to analyze recent events in Kenya and discern God's call for Friends' ministries in this context.

The conference will bring together 60 participants, including the leaders of all fifteen Kenyan Yearly Meetings, the leaders of the Kenyan Quaker peace organizations, and others representing Friends programmes and ministries, including schools, hospitals, and evangelistic missions.

Participants will explore seven themes in small groups:

- Peace and non-violence as central to the gospel
- Trauma healing and post-conflict ministries
- Humanitarian needs, Internally Displaced People and vulnerable populations
- Ethnic conflict and reconciliation toward a harmonious society
- Preaching and evangelism in the present context
- The mission of our institutions of education and healthcare
- Global partnership and the role of our international/ecumenical partners

Worship and Biblical reflections will be woven throughout the programme. The purpose of the conference is to pray together for unity and purpose as Friends, to offer the gift of our Testimonies to our nation of Kenya during this time of unrest, and through the long process of reconciliation and healing that lies ahead.

Friends World Committee for Consultation <http://www.fwccworld.org> and Friends United Meeting <http://www.fum.org> are both accepting contributions to support the cost of the Conference and the implementation of whatever actions will emerge.

For further information, contact Eden Grace, Friends United Meeting, PO Box 478 Kisumu 40100, +254 735 479174. peaceconference@edengrace.org

Kenyan Friends have also sent a forceful pastoral letter to the two rival politicians, citing Friends' peace testimony and admonishing the leaders to move past their impasse. This is reported to be the first joint communiqué that the fifteen Kenyan yearly meetings have been able to find unity on in their history. It can be found at <http://www.fum.org/about/news/Friends>, then click on the Friends Church Pastoral 3.doc link.

This update came yesterday (January 14, 2008) from Sukie Rice of NEYM, giving news about the Care Center for Aids orphans in Kakamega.

Dear friends,

Today I have good news and bad news. Since I've sent so much bad news recently, I'll begin with the (well somewhat) good. Whew!

I spoke with Dorothy Saturday morning and again today (a snow-day in Maine so there's no school) and I have been receiving many other emails from people in Kenya. Boiling it all down, this is what I hear:

The Situation

Things have definitely settled down considerably and transportation is now possible, although petrol is extremely expensive. Police are opening and protecting roads. Example: On Thursday 20 bus-loads of people and over 75 private cars left Kakamega for Nairobi with armed guards surrounding them and they got through safely. UN food aid trucks are beginning to get through although there are FAR too few

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of them for the numbers of people in need. Most areas have not yet received any aid yet.

Shops are open a few hours each day and security is very, very tight on the streets of Kakamega. Some food is getting through and can be purchased although at very high prices. A cabbage that was 20 Kenya shillings (30 cents) is now 90 ks (\$1.20)

Care Centre: The children are back!

Schools are opening this week to help bring back a sense of normalcy. Over the weekend the CC van driver Raymond went all around getting the children and bringing them back into the CC. Dorothy said the children are very excited about being back at the CC, especially as many were without food. School was to begin tomorrow for elementary (1-8th grade) students, although not all teachers or students have been able to return for school opening. The feeding program is resuming and they will be making extra for the many hungry children in the area.

Some high schools have opened for the older children, although not Form I students (freshman). High schools have normally had students of different tribal backgrounds and students have all worked together, roomed together, played soccer together. Sadly, the Kikuyu students will not be going to the high schools in Kakamega at this time as they are all in protection refugee centres. This is extremely upsetting for them and their families that their children will be getting behind in school. It is unknown when that will change.

The Boys Dorm walls (exterior and interior) have all been completed and they were ready to put the roof on when the violence began. As soon as things are settled the construction will continue.

Refugee Centre in Kakamega

As you will recall from the last Up-date, about 3000 Kikuyus are holed up in the police station compound in Kakamega. All their homes and stores have been burned out. And many are there with nothing left at all except their lives.

Dorothy was able to purchase 100 blankets and 100 mattresses with the \$500 we sent (she must have REALLY talked the shop owner down as these together would normally be \$1300). She said the people were so grateful. Dorothy says many church people are going to the police station now to visit and pray with them, extend friendship and bring in a little food. She says the Kikuyu refugees are so bitter at Kibaki for bringing this onto them. They say he may like being President, but he does not have a scratch on him while they are paying for his stance with their lives.

The conditions at the police station are deteriorating. There is only one meal a day of maize and beans and the very young children have great difficulty digesting this. Many churches took up a collection last week and brought \$400 of food to the centre. Most people are sleeping in the open as there are few tents. Some have made make-shift shelters with black plastic and tin roofing. While I was speaking with Dorothy today the rain had begun and it was so strong that I could hear it over the phone. "What will happen to those poor people who are sleeping outside," she asked.

Many Friends are hiding people and she asks for our prayers that their homes will be safe. "We are trying what we can; we cannot see our friends suffer. They just want peace for their daily lives. Everyone is praying for one another that God will intervene."

The Bad News

Things may come to a terrible head between the leaders. On Tuesday there will be what looks like a

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show-down at high-noon at Parliament in Nairobi. The Kenyans have a Parliament that works a lot like the British system: The majority side is called the Government side and sits on one side of the hall; the minority (or loosing party) is call the Opposition and sits on the other side.

Because Kibaki considers himself President he plans taking his newly appointed ministers and taking the Government side, which would put Odinga and his ODM party on the Opposition side.

However Odinga plans on taking the Government side as he says he is the rightful winner of the election and has the largest number of Parliament Ministers in his party. Therefore that leaves Kibaki taking the Opposition side. Plus, Odinga has also called for three days of demonstrations Wednesday through Friday all across the country.

I do not need to spell out the bloodshed that can come from such an explosive situation. Dorothy says all of Kenya is on their knees that these two men will not do this but will lead with peaceful means. Kofi Annan is expected this week. But probably not in time to stop this disastrous situation. PLEASE pray that this will be avoided and that these men will stop their provocative actions and try to move the political situation forward peaceably. "Otherwise," Dorothy says, "it will be a lot of hell."

Not a Tribal Conflict

One final note. Many people are thinking this is a tribal conflict. Yes, it falls on tribal lines. But the cause of the conflict is not tribal. It is economics and opportunity; despair and frustrations; a growing divide between the very rich and very poor. And the blame falls in good part on the ministers of Parliament and their system that says, "winner takes all and the others are all losers." There can be a rebuilding of the country: in friendships, major lessons, and a change of the political system. But it will take a long time.

We will stand by them.

Mirembe. In peace, Sukie

An AFSC statement on Kenya can be found at <http://www.afsc.org/give/crisis-kenya.htm>. Another valuable source of information is Mary Lord, a much-respected former AFSC staff member, who writes, there is a well developed NGO sector, and the faith-based community has been very active in promoting peace and working to end violence. All of the churches sponsored a national day of prayer for peace last Sunday. Churches continue to provide sanctuary for refugees and families. There is a great deal of international attention to the crisis in Kenya, offering mediation and urging the leaders to find a peaceful way out of the stalemate. Kenya is too important to the region to be left to slide into chaos. Humanitarian aid is coming to the affected areas, although more is needed. Business and economic leaders are pressing for a resolution of the crisis.

In the midst of all the heartbreaking news, we are at least relieved to hear that all Friends known to Friends in NYYM and beyond seem to be O. K. Within New York Yearly Meeting, we learn from Dale Jacobs, Clerk of Orchard Park Meeting, that that meeting "has been in contact with Meshack Isiaho at Crossroads Springs Childcare Center, the orphanage we support in Kenya. He wrote that 'all are relatively safe for now'. Their movements in Hamisi are limited. They cannot go to the towns of course. Children are at home with guardians as it is a break between school years. The date of opening the school has been extended to Jan 14th when it is hoped that things will be calmer. The construction of the school progresses. They all appreciate our prayers and ask for continued prayers. Some of our other contacts in Nairobi have not been as fortunate, and have had to leave their homes and the city." Dale Jacobs concludes, "Pray for peace in Kenya."

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We ask Friends to continue to pray for Kenya, for the Friends there that are working for a resolution to the conflict and against further unraveling of their civil society, for those working to provide aid to the refugees of ethnic and class violence, for the many victims of the violence to date who may be grieving the loss of family members, and also be without the barest necessities of life. As Kenya slips from the forefront of our national conscience, please remember Kenya, and those who are working for a more just and peaceful society there.

Lee Haring, Assistant Clerk
Christopher Sammond, General Secretary

Letter from The Navaho Nation

This semester I am enrolled at Dine College taking Foundations of Navajo Culture. This course is required of all students, along with Navajo language. My teacher is Avery Denny.

I avoid the title professor when describing him because he reminds me more of a teacher, in the way of his whole-life example, than a professor. Every class includes at least one story from his life, which is to say a story that embodies the Navajo culture and history which we happen to be addressing at that time. Yesterday's story was so amazing Jim, my husband, insisted I write it up.

With the Treaty of 1868 the Navajo Nation was acknowledged by our government to be a sovereign entity. In anticipation of the centennial of that event, the Navajo Nation Tribal Council during the 1960's wanted to survey how the Navajo were faring in all aspects of their lives. In particular, they asked several institutions of higher learning to assess how their young people were doing as students at their universities. The word back to them from the University of New Mexico, Arizona State University and Northern Arizona University was not encouraging. Among the worst statistics: 50% of Navajo students dropped out of college during their first year, and 90% of incoming Navajo students never completed their degrees.

Education in the Western way has long been viewed by the Navajo as a necessary tool in life. The skills of writing your name and counting your own money were seen as useful by the Navajo leaders who negotiated the Treaty of 1868, and for that reason federal provisions for education as well as for health care were negotiated as part of the treaty. A century later the leaders of the Navajo Nation were finding that education to be deficient. Navajo youth were not benefiting as they should from the public schools, and in addition, they were neither as confident being nor as knowledgeable of Navajo ways as their elders were. The solution: a Navajo institution of higher learning that would provide a stepping stone to higher learning, technical training, and education in Navajo language and culture.

My teacher, Avery Denny, was a student at Many Farms High School in the '60's while this discussion was taking place. In fact, the first Navajo Community College classes were held at his high school, and he remembers seeing there a big table with cardboard replicas of the buildings that were envisioned for a college campus one day in the future. What the envisioning committee lacked was the capital to build and fund that institution. What they decided was to appeal to Congress for those funds, hoping that the Treaty of 1868 would be seen as entitlement for Federal help. Their idea of a tribal college, owned and operated exclusively by a Native American tribe, was a first. They would be breaking new ground in more ways than one.

This is the background for my teacher's story, which begins on a piece of land not far from Many Farms High School. On this particular morning Yahzzie Begay, a middle aged Navajo, rises as usual before

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dawn to run toward the east in order to receive the blessings given out every morning by the Holy People. My husband Jim characterizes the Holy People as the spiritual guardians of the Navajo, as their angels. After his run, Yahzzie Begay tended to the livestock, and then joined his wife for breakfast. Light was just breaking when she announced to her husband that she needed him to take the horse team to the Many Farms trading post and get her more kerosene and some wool for her weaving. There was a blanket she wanted to finish, and she needed the kerosene to be able to see to weave in the evenings.

Yahzzie Begay hitched up his team of horses to the wagon and drove them across the mesa top and down into the valley to Many Farms, a small but thriving place with many farms, just as its name suggests. At the trading post he enjoyed visiting with the other families who were there to do business, and heard from one of them about a ceremony that was going on over at Sam Billie's place. It was a ceremony for the college committee members, to pray for their success in establishing a new college. One thing that all Navajo understand is that ceremonies are open to everyone, and that includes the food, which is always present in abundance. Yahzzie Begay decided to avail himself of the hospitality of a meal before returning home.

At Sam Billie's he visited and ate with the others, not out of place at all in his moccasins and work clothes. Every man there would be similarly dressed, even the honored committee members who were understood to be the patients for whom the ceremony was being given. All Navajo ceremonies are seen as some form of healing: they restore health by restoring harmony, and as such strengthen and protect the ones prayed over.

Yahzzie Begay was so engaged by the activities at Sam Billie's that he was still there when it came time to begin the ceremony, sometime after dark. Instead of going home at that point he listened to the urgings of the others to stay for the ceremony, and decided to remain until the end of the sing at sunrise the next morning.

After the big breakfast that concluded the ceremony Yahzzie Begay was surprised to see the committee members dress themselves in Western suits and ties and put on Western shoes. They explained to Yahzzie Begay that they were driving that morning to Farmington, New Mexico, and from there they would be flying to Washington D.C. They had an appointment to address a joint congressional appropriations committee at the end of the week. They were going to present their proposal for funds to build the college. In fact, they said, since one of the committee members was unable to go at the last minute, "Why don't you come to Washington with us? We have a ticket to spare. It is a chance for you to see the world. Come with us!" And Yahzzie Begay said yes.

He instructed someone to lead his horse team to the top of the mesa, from where it would find its way home to his wife, and then Yahzzie Begay set off with the rest of the committee for Washington D.C. It was probably his first car ride to Farmington, certainly his first plane ride, and undoubtedly his first experience of urban developed America.

The Navajo committee members, who had traveled more widely, took him around to the sites. Their appointment with the joint committee wasn't until the last day of the hearings, and theirs was the last presentation on the last day. For the occasion, the Navajo committee members---lawyers, educators, and tribal leaders---had their proposal bound into nice binders, rehearsed their presentation and their answers to possible questions, got cleaned up with fresh haircuts and freshly ironed shirts. Yahzzie Begay watched it all, and even accompanied them to Congress, where they were all led to an anteroom and told to wait until they were called before the committee. And so they waited, and when they were finally called, they told Yahzzie Begay that he should wait for them there. Yahzzie, however, told them he

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needed to use the bathroom. They agreed he should go to the restroom and then return to the waiting room.

Yahzzie availed himself of the facilities, which were crowded with the congressmen who were on break from the hearing. They returned to their places, Yahzzie to his. Having seen Yahzzie Begay in their midst, however, this brown faced stranger wearing moccasins, work shirt and jeans, his long hair bound up in white yarn at the back of his head, they thought they had just seen an Indian chief. Hence, they were not disposed to listen to the Western attired Navajo committee members, ready with their fancy binders and formal presentation. There was a motion made to limit the Navajos to one speaker for fifteen minutes, which was seconded and passed. It was the end of a long day, and a long week, and they just wanted to wind things up. It was suggested by one of the congressmen that the Navajo speaker should be the tribal chief. The Navajo committeemen were understandably confused at this point, until it became clear that the congressman was referring to Yahzzie Begay, their erstwhile traveling companion whom they had left behind in the anteroom.

You can imagine their collective groan as Yahzzie Begay was led to the speaker's podium. In their minds they could see his taking up the whole fifteen minutes in one fell swoop---Navajo introductions are complicated affairs which entail the listing of one's four clans, your parents and grandparents names and where they are from, and then, if you are a guest, a summary of where you yourself have traveled from and where you are going.

Sure enough, Yahzzie Begay picked up the microphone and blew into it to see if it were working, just the way one does at the chapter meetings back home. He was going to launch into his Navajo introduction, they were sure of it. But instead he put the microphone back in its place, reached into the breast pocket of his shirt and pulled out a small leather pouch. Opening the pouch, he took out what the other Navajo knew to be a pinch of corn pollen and placed it on his tongue. The congressmen watched in fascination as he took another pinch and placed it on top of his head. The third pinch was placed on the ground at his feet and the last tossed toward the ceiling above him. Finally, Yahzzie Begay began to speak, in Navajo, the only language he knew, addressing not the congressmen, not the Navajo committee members, but Mother Earth and Father Sky. He was praying. The Navajo lawyers, educators, and tribal leaders knew this, and so by intuition did the congressmen. Yahzzie Begay's first words fell on the Navajo ears as a familiar litany of thanksgiving and petition, and then they heard him voice their very own desire for a school for their children, for blessings for their people, for help to build and sustain a place of learning that would keep alive their language and culture. There was silence when he finished, exactly fifteen minutes later. The head of the committee asked what Yahzzie Begay had said. Then a single question, the only one: Would the funding help to shape the Navajo people into the manner of this man before them? The answer was yes.

Without further discussion the committee voted to approve not just the \$27 million requested to build the college, but an additional three installments of \$27 million to run it. They also voted that the first check was to be made out to Yahzzie Begay. And so it was that all the committee members, both congressional and Navajo, lined up for a photo with Yahzzie Begay in the center holding a mock, poster-sized check, made out in his name for the sum of \$27 million dollars. That photograph hangs today in the Hall of Congress. My teacher, Avery Denny, has seen it there himself.

Mary Manning

Employment Opportunity—Washington Quaker Workcamps, William Penn House

The Coordinator plans and leads about 40 Workcamps each year. The Workcamps include working in distressed hamlets of West Virginia, reconstruction work in New Orleans, helping the elderly of Washington, DC remain in their homes through rehabilitation of those homes, serving as partners with other DC social service agencies that provide meals and services for the homeless, rehabilitation of city parks and working with public and private schools to address issues of poverty and privilege. For more information, see www.williampenhouse.org

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Please note: Any editorial comments expressed herein are solely the opinion of the newsletter editor, unless otherwise noted, and are not intended to represent the opinion of Wilton Monthly Meeting.

Alternative to Violence Project

On the first weekend in March, Friday Feb 29th, Saturday March 1st, Sunday March 2nd - there is a Basic AVP workshop scheduled at Purchase Meeting House and we are very excited about the facilitating team. Now, AVP is a wonderful process that works its special magic whatever/ wherever and whoever is involved - community is built, communication, cooperation and conflict resolution skills are developed and lives are transformed as people realize that there are different choices to be made on their journeys.

There is no such thing as a "star facilitator" or "super teams" - but every now and again we can hold up the experience of some individuals . Oh, did I mention that I'll be on the team? There's another good reason to do AVP at Purchase in Feb/March! Sign up - you know you want to! To register contact Fred Feucht at 914 769 1720 or e-mail jubilantjudy@mac.com

Peace, love and non-violence
Jubilant Judy Meikle

Letter to the Editor

Patience is the precious word we must hear when struggling with the issues of gays and FUM's conservatism. The forces of culture change are certainly moving towards acceptance of differences but they aren't there yet. Let's remember the struggle between the Hicksites and the Silent Meeting crowd. We split apart because they wanted a pastor and freedom to sing and we, the Silent Meeting Gang, refused. The result was they took off and so we are left with two broken parts. Quakers can't afford to argue to that extent these days. About the issue of keeping slaves or letting them free, we were willing to struggle for almost ten decades.

Patience please.

Dana Raphael, Ph.D.
Westport, CT
203-259-5995

Our Name

The Newsletter has been named **The Arboretum** in acknowledgement that trees thrive in the Light and, through photosynthesis, use it to convert suffocating carbon dioxide to life-giving oxygen for other life forms. They might serve as a metaphor for Meeting. Trees play a dominant role in the changing appearance of the acres on which the Meeting House rests. Our memorial garden is nestled amongst them. We trust you find the name agreeable.

To receive The Arboretum via email, please join http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WiltonMM_Newsletter/. An archive of previous issues is maintained at www.wiltonfriends.org