

Poplar Ridge Friends Meeting
Annual Report NYYM Reps
April 21, 2013

Rebecca Schillenback and Ruth Bradley continued as our representatives to the NYYM, attending spring, summer and fall sessions, as well as Meetings for Discernment as their schedules allowed.

Highlights of the yearly meeting activities and issues include:

Summer Sessions: NYYM sent four representatives to the World Gathering of Friends. In our meeting, we were fortunate to hear first-hand accounts from Christopher Sammond and A.T. Miller who attended the World Gathering.

As part of the summer session, a threshing session on recording gifts in the ministry was held. The principle of recording in our Faith and Practice is based, as it was for early Friends, on the recognition by monthly meetings of spiritual gifts within their meetings. The announcement of this session included the following: "Inclusion of recording in our Faith and Practice does not mandate any meeting to recognize gifts of ministry, but it does allow those meetings for whom the practice has value to continue to record gifts of ministry. Diversity of practice does not necessarily imply disunity. We find unity not in an outward conformity, but through the experience of listening to Spirit, being in the Life, and following as we are led to a place we cannot anticipate." Ruth and Rebecca both attended the session. One interesting note was that only one person from a pastoral meeting spoke to the issue. Our sense was that for pastoral meetings it is a settled issue, without the emotional conflict that many unprogrammed Friends have regarding the issue.

At Fall Sessions, November 2013, a minute regarding the process of High Volume Hydraulic Fracturing (also known as hydrofracking) was approved. It concluded: "We are called to stand against fracking, and invite others to join us in opposition to this practice."

At Spring Sessions, April 2013, the Priorities Working Group (members of which visited Poplar Ridge MM as part of their work) gave an interim report in which they shared their sense that nurturing the spiritual life of local monthly meetings needs to be the top priority of the yearly meeting, as many and varied Friends with whom they spoke shared how central to their lives is the Meeting for Worship and First-Day School.

Also shared at Spring Sessions was a first reading of a proposed definition of Worship Groups, to be included in our book of *Faith and Practice* (attached).

The Young Adult Secretary, Gabi Savory-Baily has completed a survey of YAFs; results are on the ym website.

While Friends at Fall Sessions approved the Development Committee's recommendation to establish an annual appeal for New York Yearly Meeting through April 2013, the Yearly Meeting Clerk of Financial Services forecasts a "14,500 deficit. It was emphasized that the recommendation approved at spring sessions includes General Services' plan to work on new solutions in the coming months, so that the current expected shortage might be resolved and a balanced budget might be presented for approval to the Yearly Meeting at Summer Sessions.

Rebecca attended the Meeting for Discernment in July 2012, the queries for which centered on truth: how we know what is true; how we share it as Friends; and where is the Spirit of Truth leading our Meetings? Neither Rebecca nor Ruth attended the Meeting for Discernment held in March 2013 at Brooklyn MM.

Submitted by Rebecca Schillenback and Ruth Ann Bradley