

## Advance Report: **Friends United Meeting Representatives**

Drafted 3/17/2012 for presentation to Spring Sessions, 4/14, approved 4/1 by Beatrice Beguin, Clerk of FUM Reps

New York Yearly Meeting's representatives to the Friends United Meeting (FUM) North American General Board for the 2011-2014 triennium are Beatrice Beguin, John Edminster and Regina Baird Haag. No alternates are currently under appointment. Each representative serves on at least one committee of the Board: Beatrice on Nominating, John on Communications, and Regina on Finance and the 2014 Triennial Planning Committee.

The Triennial Sessions held at Wilmington College in Wilmington, Ohio, July 27-31, 2011, whose theme, "**Transforming Lives**," alluded to the words of Romans 12:2, drew over 350 Friends from 28 yearly meetings, including 11 from New York Yearly Meeting, one of whom then wrote "Bringing the Triennial Back Home," published in the October-November 2011 issue of *Quaker Life*. In it, author John Edminster describes his meeting's call to learn to pray for itself and especially for its own meetings for worship, and to let God replace fear with "deep love and transformative faith."

The General Board has met twice since the 2011 Triennial Sessions, and the spirit there has been friendly, positive and hopeful as incoming General Secretary Colin Saxton and incoming Clerk Cliff Loesch (pronounced "lash") bring new energy and vision to the Board's work. They are looking to focus primarily on spiritual renewal in this new triennium called, in the words of George Fox's description of his vision from Pendle Hill, "**a Great People to be Gathered.**"

The February 2012 General Board meeting began with a report from the Restructure Task Group that stated, "We recognize that structural change without spiritual renewal will not result in the nature of transformation and growth that will lead to the vitality of FUM's ministry. For this reason we urge the members of FUM to participate in a season of spiritual renewal through prayer, reflection and action."

"During the Fall of 2012 (October 10 - November 18), FUM will be hosting 'Forty Days of Prayer for the Future of Friends.' FUM will make available a daily reading guide, complete with queries for reflection, focuses prayer suggestions, action steps and group discussion for renewal."

"At the end of the forty-day call to renewal, FUM will be encouraging each meeting to host an 'FUM Day of Discernment.' Interested groups will have access to a set of prayer resources and queries to help us listen to one another and God about the future of Friends. Responses from these listening meetings will be shared with the FUM office, synthesized and communicated back to yearly and local meetings. These responses will also be used by FUM in discerning any future organizational and ministry changes, as we seek to be more relevant and faithful."

To prepare FUM's constituent yearly and monthly meetings for the Forty Days of Prayer for the Future of Friends, the Restructure Task Group's Report states, "We are asking each Yearly Meeting associated with FUM to provide a 15 minute time for presentation during their 2012 annual sessions (or other suitable time) for an FUM representative to make a report on the *Great People to be Gathered* theme. In addition, we request time for a workshop/interest group to be held where the representative(s) can provide an update on FUM and go into greater detail around this effort. Yearly Meetings will be provided some introductory materials announcing the kick-off of this theme and are asked to make them available to their members."

Katie Terrell Wonsik, FUM's beloved and multiply gifted Communications Manager and Editor of *Quaker Life*, has announced her plans to leave those positions by June 30. As of this writing, we are still awaiting news of who is to succeed her. News of the open position and the job qualifications are posted on the FUM website.