

# RIDGE LINES

Woolman Hill Newsletter *Spring 2009*

[www.woolmanhill.org](http://www.woolmanhill.org)

107 Keets Road Deerfield MA 01342

413-774-3431

## HILL HAPPENINGS

When this arrives in your mail, we'll probably have just finished our spring Whistle-While-You-Work weekend. If you were with us, thanks! If you weren't, we wish you had been... + We're thrilled that the Young Adult Friends (YAFs) of New England Yearly Meeting will be holding their "YAF Camp" at Woolman Hill the last week of May. + Many thanks to Chris Corcoran and Abigail Adams, Kevin Cunningham, Victoria Dickson and David Ahlfeld, Peggy Hsiao, Hunter Kratt, Dick Kelly, Stephen Thomas, Jim Lyons and Jill Horton-Lyons for recent donations of material goods. + Welcome to new board members Sorrel Hatch, Stephen Haynes and David Zevin! + Thanks to board member Victoria Dickson, we now have beautiful greeting cards for sale. The cards feature photographs of Woolman Hill scenes taken by Sue Reilly, Mark Fraser, Kevin Lee and Seth Guyette. + Several recent local events have celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Wally Nelson's birth. + Midweek worship in the Meetinghouse continues on Wednesdays, 5:30-6:30pm (Jim Lyons: 413-548-3940, [jim@winterberryfarm.org](mailto:jim@winterberryfarm.org)).

## UP HOUSE, DOWN HOUSE, RED HOUSE, BROWN HOUSE!

Big news on the hill is that the Red House, a sweet little cottage just across the lane from the main building, is now available to guests. With two bedrooms, a bathroom, kitchen area and sitting room, the space is ideal for individual retreats, overnight get-aways, and as supplemental housing for groups renting the conference center. The cozy bungalow is all one level, perfect for those wishing accommodations with a few extra amenities and a bit more comfort and privacy than the main building.

We are able to offer the Red House to guests due to the hard work undertaken throughout 2008 to convert the Brown House (formerly the Traprock Peace Center) into two units, with an upstairs residence suitable for staff housing. In typical Woolman Hill fashion, we were graced with fantastic people with the right skills at the right time: David Ahlfeld, Bick Corsa, Stevie Goodale, Kai Holden, Jontz Johnson, Steve Howes, Mark Fraser and a handful of other volunteers poured hours of love and elbow grease into the project. They added windows, installed a new kitchen and bathroom upstairs, replaced old ceilings, installed new flooring, put up new exterior siding, painted interior walls, added lots of insulation, and literally transformed the place. With so much volunteer help, services performed well below normal rates, and judicious use of second-hand and recycled materials, all of this transformation was done for a mere \$37,000. A septic system, required for the two-unit designation, will be installed later this year at an estimated additional cost of \$18,000.

Our conference center coordinator, Steve Howes, and his partner Jensey Graham moved out of the Red House and into the upstairs Brown House apartment in January. They are delighting in the cheerful space with its views of Mount Toby and the Woolman Hill campus. And they're already happily at work putting in their new garden space.

Unfortunately, the downstairs of the Brown House is not zoned for short-term guests, and equipping it with the requisite metal staircases and sprinkler system would be prohibitively expensive. The board and staff are currently weighing options for a financially viable use of the space. One idea is to set it up as an extended retreat facility for someone in need of a month to ponder their next steps, to write a book or work on an art project, or to simply be away from their routine for a lengthy respite... We'll keep you posted as plans emerge!



**SUMMER SOLS TICE RETREAT  
FEATURED INSIDE!**

**“THE LIGHT WITHIN:  
WHAT DO QUAKERS, YOGIS  
AND CELTIC CHRISTIANS  
HAVE IN COMMON?”**

**CONTEMPLATIVE, INTERFAITH,  
REJUVENATING, FUN!**



Financial Summary  
Oct 07 - Sep 08 Fiscal Year

|                          |          |       |
|--------------------------|----------|-------|
| Income                   |          |       |
| Woolman Hill programs    | \$20,350 | 15.5% |
| Facilities rentals       | 76,000   | 58%   |
| Donations                | 32,700   | 25%   |
| Investment Income        | 2,000    | 1.5%  |
| Total Income             | 131,050  | 100%  |
| Expenses                 |          |       |
| Personnel and related    | 72,600   | 60%   |
| Maintenance/util./insur. | 34,640   | 28%   |
| Supplies/office expense  | 9,430    | 8%    |
| Advertising/publicity    | 3,230    | 2.5%  |
| Other                    | 2,000    | 1.5%  |
| Total Expenses           | 121,900  | 100%  |
| NET INCOME               | \$9,150  |       |

Thank you again for hosting us and making our stay comfortable and joyous. I loved our warm, cozy group conversations in front of the wood stove and the worship in the beautiful meetinghouse.

Program participant, March 2009

## STAFF SHIFTS (aka Personnel Permutations)

Over the years, Woolman Hill has been blessed with staff members who give their life energy to help the organization run smoothly. Mark Fraser, after a record-breaking nine years as co-executive director, has stepped down from the post. Eager to put more of his energy towards the physical labor he loves, and hoping for less responsibility and fewer hours, Mark has now taken on the role of Facilities Manager. He will continue to dedicate a portion of his time to development work, as well as to hosting some of our rental groups. He and his family (wife Daphne, daughter Mary, and son Sullivan) will also continue living on the Hill, in the green farmhouse at the end of the lane. Margaret Cooley, now in her fifth year working at Woolman Hill, has assumed the role of sole executive director and the additional hours that job requires. Steve Howes remains in his role of Conference Center Coordinator.

During Mark's nine years as co-director, he functioned in a plethora of capacities. He managed fund-raising, finances, and budgets; prepared scrumptious meals for board members and program guests; gave impromptu cello concerts; ran a successful capital campaign; and performed a number of employee searches. He oversaw the reconstruction of the North Dartmouth Meetinghouse, the complete renovation of the Brown House, and the upkeep of all of the Hill's buildings. Mark also managed health and liability insurance policies; got the hill certified as a public water source (and took the requisite water samples and training courses); negotiated with other residents of the hill and with the Fruition Project; met with town officials; set up for and cleaned up after board meetings. All of this Mark did with a cheerful smile and an admirable frugality. Luckily for Woolman Hill, we get to keep Mark's enthusiastic energy, his extensive knowledge of the physical plant, and his cost-saving habits. Luckily for Mark, he gets to give up the headaches of insurance dealings, payroll taxes and balance sheets. We're afraid, however, that he's still likely to get his fair share of unplugging stopped-up toilets, deciphering local building codes, wrestling with Our Dear Tractor, and other mixed blessings... Thank you, Mark, for your time at the helm of the Woolman Hill boat! We're glad you're still sailing with us.

## OUR PAL PERRY

We want to thank Perry Norton for five years of loyal service on the Woolman Hill board. Along with Scott Nielsen and Karen Will, Perry put in countless hours of volunteer labor on major projects like restoring the meetinghouse, the yurt, and the back storage room of the main building. Perry's gentle nature, his warm love of those associated with the hill, and his well-honed carpentry skills have been a blessing to us and to the hill. We miss seeing him as often as we used to, but we're pleased he's still a part of the Woolman Hill extended family!

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Thank you so much for making this space available to me. My weekend in this beautiful cabin was exactly what I needed – time and space to step back from my life and sit with myself, find my center. I will return home relaxed, grounded, and refreshed – a better partner, a better parent, a better friend. Thanks again for a warm welcome. I look forward to coming again.

Cabin guest, April 2009

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## THE NEED TO RETREAT

*Board member Nick Roosevelt loves to spend time on the hill - basking in silence, in community, and in the natural world.*

Dear Friends,

There comes a time in our lives and in the lives of those we love when we feel the need to take time out to be with That Peace Within. Why do we look forward to get-aways, to marking our calendar, to bearing the burdens of our daily life with more levity? For me it's like sun burning through fog, something to hold onto when things look bleak.

Whether it's to the beach or to the Hill, we define the time for a new perspective. Even for those of us who are skilled at holding joy in one hand and suffering in the other, the need to retire, to re-enter the stillness and fill up with goodness, comes upon us periodically. This notion reminds me of Mother Teresa from Calcutta. When I was in India, I asked her how she could do what she does seven days a week, and she answered, "I fill up at night and give it away by day." Would that we were so empty, that we could fill so completely seven days a week.

Whatever challenges we are embroiled in – be it family, work, a high powered life of dedicated service or these oh so tough times – there comes a time to retreat, to be empty, to re-charge, and do the deep remembering required of all of us to re-experience our connections to all of life. This often happens in the company of others who are like-minded about attending to one's interior life.

We deserve it. Time out. More than a Big Mac! The internal life is home, our bodies temples of understanding, beyond words. And it is to this sacred space we retire. We do not go anywhere. We are simply at ease, at home, left with the sense that we and humanity are not two.



Too often we sleep walk, dreaming, knowing there's a witness to the dream. It is time with this witness we want, time with That Consciousness watching thoughts pass like battleship clouds streaming over Ireland trailing a world of blue; time with the one who bears witness to the history of its people, the planet, and our solar system; the one who was there before language, and the big bang, and the intrinsic hum of each of its particles.

To retreat means to take time out for your true self by any name, remembering, as many of us do, that a name is a portal, a door, a calling out to the mystery available when the door is removed. Many retreat in order to call on that name, and to wait. For Quakers it might be "waiting on the Light"; for Yoga practitioners it might be the experience heralded in the Upanishads, "the cosmic spirit shines in the lotus of the heart no larger than the size of a thumb"; for Moslems, the sound of Allah – praise be His name – and the opening that follows. For each of us, whether spiritually inclined or not, we know when our mind is asking us to SLOW DOWN.

As a board member and friend of Woolman Hill, I invite you to stay tuned to the new and really exciting opportunities coming up this next year. Yes, so many venues to choose from – but this, the Hill, is like a Nature's Gate. The landscape itself has been, and still is, considered by many to be a "power spot." So whatever retreat, workshop or conference you use as a reason to go deeper into your practices, you might feel as many of us do: Woolman Hill is a place where heaven and earth come together. Expect it to be so, and it will be.

## PROGRAM NOTES

From the vitality of monthly meetings to journaling to song, our 2008-2009 season has featured a great breadth and depth of programs. The final program of this season is a particularly exciting combination of interfaith exploration and solstice celebration (read more about it below!). We're looking forward to other upcoming programs, including Radical Simplicity with Jim Merkel, workshops on eldering, clerking and recording, photography, and Sabbath-Jubilee, as well as perennial favorites like the year-end silent retreat, journaling and nature weekends. We also hope to have on-line registration available next season... So keep your eyes, and hearts, open for more details!



**"Even though years separated my visits to Woolman Hill,  
your flyers are always tempting (and reassuring).  
Finally I could align things to come back!"  
Program participant, spring 2009**

## SCINTILLATING SOLSTICE: CELEBRATING THE LIGHT WITHIN AND WITHOUT

Nick Roosevelt *has been instrumental in developing the first offering of our four-season retreat system.*

Woolman Hill is delighted to invite you to our first annual Summer Solstice Retreat - "The Light Within: What do Quakers, Yogis, and Celtic Christians Have in Common?" An overview of the tentative retreat schedule follows, to give you a better sense of the general rhythm of the retreat, and to entice you into embarking on this great adventure with us!

The schedule remains flexible, depending on weather and other factors, but it will look something like this: Our mornings will begin with a guided meditation by Swami Dayananda, or a meeting for worship, followed by a hearty breakfast. For much of the morning we will enjoy silence and the beautiful sounds of June. There may be free time or the practice of "finding your place in the landscape." After a delicious lunch, you will choose a group session with our guests (you may choose from one of the three traditions), both to learn more about that tradition and to share your experiences of the day. Afternoons will also include plenty of free time, and a Hatha Yoga class for beginners and the more experienced. Evenings will be reserved for presentations, Q&A, and entertainment. Saturday evening promises to be particularly special: a Celtic concert and storytelling with the most beautiful Kate Chadbourne, followed by a solstice bonfire. (Even if you do not make the whole retreat, you may come for just the Saturday evening concert! And bring a picnic to eat on the lawn before the music begins...)

Each day we will enjoy special presentations by our guest speakers, who will share practices from their respective traditions. During the introductions of our speakers on Thursday evening, each one will give a brief history of their tradition and a practice you can use during the retreat to stay connected to "The Light Within." On Friday morning, Swami Dayananda will speak on the goals and practices of Yoga, including those that contribute to a healthy body and a peaceful mind. On Friday evening, Dr. Gareth Higgins and Kate Chadbourne will introduce us to Celtic Christianity through song and story telling. On Saturday morning, our illustrious panel of Quakers - Daphne Bye, Mark Fraser, and Scott Nielsen - will share the practices they have used to guide them on their spiritual journeys. You will leave the retreat with practices you can use to deepen and quicken your own journey. Please remember to bring clothing for all weather, and - if you like - cameras, journals, musical instruments, drawing materials... And be prepared for lots of goodness and friendship!

Information about the retreat and about the Saturday evening concert is available at [www.woolmanhill.org](http://www.woolmanhill.org) or 413-774-3431. More information about Kate Chadbourne is available at [www.katechadbourne.com](http://www.katechadbourne.com); about Swami Dayananda at [www.yogaville.com](http://www.yogaville.com); and about Gareth Higgins at [www.godisnotelsewhere.wordpress.com](http://www.godisnotelsewhere.wordpress.com).

### **S O L S T I C E C O N C E R T & B O N F I R E** **7:30pm Saturday June 20**



**KATE CHADBOURNE**  
Celtic music and story-telling

**Come as early as 6 pm and bring a picnic!**  
**Suggested donation of \$15 at the door.**  
**To RS VP or for more info:**  
**[www.woolmanhill.org](http://www.woolmanhill.org), 413-774-3431**

THE FANTABULOUS, YIPPEE-SKIPPEE,  
JUST-FOR-FUN-NO-STUFF  
COMMUNITY TAG SALE

*Many thanks to board member Helen Armstrong  
for carrying out this brilliant idea of hers!*

Most of us don't need more STUFF. So in this tag sale we just offer you fun:  
New knowledge and skills! New friends among Friends!

Time away at lovely places!

In exchange, we invite donations to Woolman Hill. A donation of \$50 (or more ? ?) per event is suggested. Board members and other Friends offer these activities. Get more information and make arrangements to suit both parties by phone. If you have questions about the process, you may contact Helen Armstrong at 860-742-2796. Meanwhile, browse our exciting Tag Sale Table and select a new adventure to try!

Summer day at lake cottage: boats, swimming  
(south of Boston MA) Perry & Bonnie Norton 617 699 9130

Telephone coaching for perplexed parents  
(any location) Judy Hyde 860 742 8338

Private yoga or meditation instruction  
(northeast CT or Deerfield MA area) Nick Roosevelt 860 429 6881

Individual tennis instruction  
(Northampton MA area) Stacey Dakai 413 527 3084

Visit a natural area, get your questions answered  
(in or around Monterey MA) Bonner McAllester 413 528 9385

Spring wildflower walk  
(Amherst/Deerfield MA area) Ken Hoffman 413 253 9427

One night or more at cottage. Beds for six, plus cots for more.  
Electricity, cold water, gas stove. Swimming at town beach.  
(South Tamworth NH) Helen Armstrong 860 742 2796

Lunch and an afternoon to swim, hike, canoe on pristine pond  
(Hartland CT) Carl and Nancy Mason 860 379 7707

To make arrangements for the following, please phone Helen at 860 742 2796:

Sailing on 28-foot John Alden sloop: lunch for 2-3 people and  
some sailing instruction (Mystic CT) Karen and Phil Will

Six-legged critter crawl (Cheshire CT) Kim Stoner

Breakfast and a hike (Hartford CT area) Bill Upholt & Mary Lee Morrison

Learn to make perfect pies (Worcester MA area), Barbara Sullivan

Have *you* something else to offer in a Fun Tag Sale? (Of course you do!) Please advertise it to your community, find a purchaser, and donate the proceeds to the Hill. Or if it's not in demand where you live (lessons in Urdu? how to cook cattails? identifying jellyfish?), tell us and we'll put it in the next *Ridge Lines*.



*Photo by Mark Fraser*

RECENT PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

Renovating the "bunk room"  
Repaired banister in main building  
New cushion covers for couch  
New-to-us furnishings in Red House  
Painted Red House exterior  
Painted exterior of Meeting House  
New curtains in Woodshop cabin  
Plantings: 3 Sargent cherry trees,  
3 arbor vitae, 9 red oaks  
Pruning of Baldwin apple orchard  
Brown House Downstairs!  
Brown House Upstairs!  
Brown House Exterior!  
Hurrah, Hurrah, Hurrah!

ALSO OF NOTE

Though on a much smaller scale than the Brown House construction, the renovation of the "first floor bunk room" in the conference center (just to the left of the main entrance) deserves a mention of its own. To the dismay of the younger crowd, but to the delight of the less mobile and the energy-conscious, the bunk room loft was removed and replaced with a lower ceiling. The concrete slab floor was covered with insulation and then a plywood floor, and the exterior door was replaced. These changes have resulted in the most energy-efficient and cozy bedroom in the main building!



Newsletter Editor: Margaret Cooley

To receive this by e-mail, or to be added to or removed from our mailing list, please contact [margaret@woolmanhill.org](mailto:margaret@woolmanhill.org), 413-774-3431, or write to 107 Keets Road, Deerfield MA 01342. We welcome questions, feedback, articles and artwork for Ridge Lines.

*Printed with vegetable-based ink on recycled paper.*

WOOLMAN HILL STAFF

- Margaret Cooley... .. Executive Director
- Mark Fraser... .. Facilities Manager, Development
- Steven Howes..... ..Conference Center Coordinator
- Becca Howe ... .. Cleaning
- Molly Snedden ... .. Kitchen Manager
- Rob Zilin... .. Bookkeeper

Woolman Hill Board of Directors: Helen Armstrong, Marcianna Caplis, Chris Corcoran, Victoria Dickson, Rachel Donovan, Sorrel Hatch, Stephen Haynes, Judy Hyde, Bruce Kay, Hunter Kratt, Jim Lyons (clerk), Tom Powers, Nick Roosevelt, Barbara Sullivan, Mary Kate Tedoldi, David Zevin

WOOLMAN HILL

Quaker Retreat Center  
107 Keets Road Deerfield MA 01342  
413-774-3431 • [www.woolmanhill.org](http://www.woolmanhill.org)

WOOLMAN HILL, a Quaker retreat and conference center situated on 110 ridge-top acres in western Massachusetts, is dedicated to fostering, developing and strengthening the testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends. Named for John Woolman, an 18<sup>th</sup>-century Friends' minister and abolitionist who preached simple living and economic and ecological responsibility, our rustic facilities offer a quiet, peaceful atmosphere for retreats, meetings, gatherings and celebrations. Our newly renovated historic Meeting House seats up to 100 people. Our accommodations include a 150-year-old farmhouse that sleeps 25 and has kitchen facilities to serve 50. Four small cabins provide up to 20 additional sleeping spaces, and are also available for individual sojourns.

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