

Morningside Matters

The Newsletter for Morningside Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

www.morningsidemeeting.org

May 2016 Calendar

Weekly	Sunday	Meeting for Worship	Riverside Church 490 Riverside Drive, room 12T (childcare provided in room 13T)	11:00 am
Monthly	First Sunday	Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business Bible Study: Philemon	room 12T room 12T	rise of meeting 9:30 am
	Second Sunday	Peace & Social Concerns Committee meeting: everyone welcome.	room 12T	1:00 pm
	Fourth Sunday	Welcome Breakfast: An easy way of getting to know other members and attenders. Just tell the cashier you're with the Quakers. The tab is picked up by our hosts, the Ministry & Counsel Committee	Riverside Café	9:30 am
Monthly, Quarterly, Yearly Meeting events	May 14	Have a Voice in the Future of Quakers in New York City	Brooklyn Meeting	10:00 am – 4:00 pm
	May 15	“Breaking Down the Box”: video on solitary confine- ment	15 th Street Meeting	1:00 – 4:00 pm
	May 20-22	NYYM: From Seed to Flower – How Are You Being Led?	Powell House	
	May 22	Prison Worship Group Reunion	Room 12T	rise of meeting
	May 21	Annual meeting of the Friends Home Association of New York	Pennington House, 215 E 15 th St.	
	May 28	Memorial Meeting	Friends Cemetery in Pro- spect Park	11:00 am, followed by potluck
	June 3-5	NYYM & NEYM: Forgiveness	Powell House	
	June 17-19	Quaker Party: New York City gathering of Young Adult Friends (www.nyym.org/?q=YoungAdultFriendsParty2016)		
	July 24-30	NYYM Annual Sessions	Silver Bay, New York	
October 7-9	Morningside Meeting Retreat	Stony Point, New York		
Events of interest	May 13-15	2 nd Annual “Stoking the Fire” Conference (www.fum.org)	Sophia, North Carolina	
	May 23	NRCAT demonstration against solitary confinement	Fenton and East Gunhill Roads, Bronx	6:00 pm
	May 27-30	Friends Conference on Religion and Psychology (frcp.quaker.org)	Lebanon Valley College, Anville, PA	
	Weekly start- ing June 2	Downtown Manhattan Outdoor Meeting (www.downtownmeeting.org/)	Labyrinth Footpath, NW corner of Battery Park	6:00 – 7:00 pm
	July 3-9	Friends General Conference (www.fgcquaker.org)	St. Joseph, Minnesota	
	July 24	March for a Clean Energy Revolution (eve of Democrat- ic National Convention) (www.cleanenergymarch.org)	Philadelphia, PA	

Newsletter Submission Guidelines: The purpose of the newsletter is to inform members, attenders and other interested people of Meeting news, including member interviews, news of Friends, other Quaker-related subjects, news of Quaker organizations, upcoming events, Meeting-sponsored projects, book reviews, etc. Articles and pictures are welcome. The deadline for the newsletter is the Sunday of the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business. Please e-mail your material in Word or text format to morningsidequakermeeting@gmail.com by the end of that day

Reflection

Is Evil Necessary?

“The mystical teaching of the Baal Shem Tov...says that evil has a divine nature within it. As the Zohar describes, ‘There is no sphere of the Other Side (Evil) that entirely lacks some streak of light from the side of holiness.’ Rather than destroy it, our task is to uplift it. This adds considerable complexity to the law, for whereas, tradition would have it black and white, the mystics say that there are an infinite variety of shadings, each of which can be raised to new heights.

Kabbalah teaches that in reality, evil as we know it can never be eradicated, even if we wanted, for it fulfills a primary function in creation. Without something pulling us away from the Divine, we would be overwhelmed by God, we would lose our free will, and creation could not exist as it does now.

The old paradigm views good and evil as a simple dichotomy: God is in one direction, and Satan is in the other. The new paradigm suggests that God is in every direction, represented by light, and Satan is also everywhere, represented by veils. From this viewpoint, evil is defined as a force that dims the light....”

Rabbi David Cooper, God is a Verb: Kabbalah and the practice of mystical judaism, Riverhead Books, 1997, New York, p. 160

Morningside Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Minutes of the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

May 1, 2016

OPENING: After an opening silence the Clerk read the following to be considered:

“...it is when we are anchored in Meetings (no matter what the style of our worship may be) where pure fellowship and common life is deep and sustaining, where we are known in our weaknesses and strengths and are still loved and held up by our fellows, where our worship is centered around the transforming power of the spirit that Jesus promised would invade us, melt us down and renew us, and send us out again—that we find our powerhouse that is alone adequate to support our outward testimonies.”

Douglas Steere

A. MINISTRY & COUNCIL: Charlene Ray reads the report of Ministry and Counsel, dated May 1, 2016 (attached).

1. Friends accept the report.

B. TREASURER'S REPORT: David Fletcher distributes the treasurer's report of May 1st, 2016 (attached). Pamela Wood reads some of the highlights the report, as Naomi Paz-Greenberg is absent.

1. Friends accept the report with (a) a deletion to the April 1, 2016 disbursement to the library and (b) agreement that the hospitality budget and expenses for April 2016 will need some clarifications.

C. COMMUNICATIONS: Corona Machermer reads the report of the Communications Committee, dated May 1st, 2016 (attached).

1. Friends accept the report.

D. CLERK'S REPORT: Pamela Wood reads the 2015 State of the Meeting Report of the Woodbourne Worship Group (attached). Pamela also reads the Clerk's Report of May 1, 2016 (attached).

1. Friends accept the reports.

E. PEACE AND SOCIAL CONCERNS: Corona Macheimer reads the report from the Committee on Peace and Social Concerns, dated May 1st 2016.

1. Friends approved the report with corrections.

F. ATTENDANCE:

Susan Carmody, Pamela Wood, Mason Jenkins, Corona Macheimer, Matthew Bell, Joyce Richardson, Bernard Richardson, Artis Klavins, David Fletcher, Sally Campbell, Bryan Oettel, Charlene Ray, Tim Dalton, Rob Stevens,

Tom Goodridge, Calvin Ramsey, Kathy Stackhouse, Lucille Adinolf, Ernie Buscemi, Vince Buscemi, Richard Schmidt, Nancy Britton, June Tano Charlotte Ehrman

G. CHILD CARE: Child care for Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business was rendered by Ernie Buscemi.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Carmody,
Recording Clerk, Morningside Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Ministry and Counsel Committee Report

1. M&C met on Thursday April 28th. The next meeting will be Wednesday June 1st at the home of David Evans.
2. Bible Study will be May 8th at 9:30 am.
3. Our next welcome breakfast will be on May 22nd at 9:30 am hosted by Jack Patterson in the Riverside

Cafe. All are welcome. If any Friends have an interest in hosting a breakfast see an M&C member.

3. M&C currently has 5 support committees.
4. M&C is trying to gauge interest in a mid-week meeting. If you are interested please put your name on the list by the door.

submitted by Mason Jenkins

Peace & Social Concerns Committee Report

Peace & Social Concerns meets on April 10, 2016, at 1:00 pm, following Meeting for Worship.

Attending: Sally Campbell, Pam Wood, Naomi Paz-Greenberg, Richard Schmidr; Kathy Stackhouse, Bryan Oettel, Corona Macheimer (clerk)

The meeting begins with a few minutes of silent worship. The status of various projects and concerns is discussed. This report is not a report of those discussions. Rather, it is an account Peace & Social Concerns activities during the past month. There is one action item for Business Meeting, which is presented below in bold face.

1. The Matching Fund Campaign in response to the appeal from the Friends Peace Teams African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI), which was approved at Business Meeting on March 6, has raised \$360 to date. It is probable that the sum is not larger due to the failure of the clerk of Peace & Social Concerns to broadcast the appeal as widely as planned. The original idea was to send off an initial sum at the end of March and the remainder at the end of April, when the campaign was to end. **The clerk asks that business meeting approve sending \$720 to AGLI now (the \$360 contributed plus \$360 in matching funds from the Crumlish Bequest) as soon as possible, and that the campaign be**

extended to the end of May so that the wider appeal may be made.

2. The legislative priorities that Morningsiders deem most important for the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) to pursue in the next congress (2017-2018), as discerned by a special called meeting of Peace & Social Concerns on February 28, were forwarded to FCNL on April 15. The Priorities are attached.
3. On April 10, as part of a new campaign by Amnesty International to supplement the Write for Rights Campaign, Friends sent letters of support to Chelsea Manning and signed letters petitioning various Myanmar officials for the release of activist Htin Lin Oo. It is reported that the Amnesty campaign helped raise the profile of Htin Lin Oo, and that he has been released by the new government of Myanmar.

Upcoming Events:

1. Rummage Sale on May 8 at 15th Street. P&SC are participating and will share in the proceeds. Details on delivering items for the sale and helping in the sorting and pricing will be circulated as soon as possible.
2. The second annual Transformative Practices & Restorative Justice Conference will be held on May

6 at Lehman College. Registration begins at 7:30 am. The keynote address is at 9:00 am. Friends who wish to attend should pre-register at the website as conference presenters, so they will not be charged a registration fee. The best way to reach the website

for details of the conference program is to Google the conference.

Respectfully submitted,
Corona Macheimer

FCNL Legislative Priorities

April 14, 2016

Dear Friends on the FCNL Policy Committee:

Where are Friends called to focus their congressional advocacy work in 2017 and 2018? What follows is the response to the above question discerned by Morningside Monthly Meeting. The format of our response is an adaptation of the online form, with our response to the last two queries on the online form, which ask for comments on the process, presented first, followed by the list of our priorities. [That portion of the online form that asks for contact information has been omitted from this version of our response.]

How the group was organized:

On February 28, at a special meeting of the Peace & Social Concerns Committee (a committee of the whole) gathered to discern which issues we felt should be FCNL's legislative priorities for the 115th Congress. (While the intention was to engage in worship sharing, as it turned out, the meeting involved more of a discussion.)

Twelve Friends participated. A few participants were aged between 40 and 61. Most were over 61.

Comments:

As it turned out, the suggested framework for discernment did not work very well for us. There were none of the nine priorities for the 114th Congress that we felt should not also be priorities in the 115th. In particular, "supporting solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change" has become ever more urgent. However, we found ourselves reaching unity on "lifting up" certain concerns that may be perceived as sub-sets of current priorities: while they may be mentioned in the current edition of "The World We Seek," they are not specifically included among the 9 current legislative priorities.

We found that the concerns we would like to see "lifted up" were generally related to two kinds of issues:

1. Those having to do with reducing violence (domestic and international, political, as well as physical) and
2. Those having to do with enhancing the "commons" (social and political, as well as environmental)

Priorities in the first category:

- Advance policies to reduce weapons violence, including not only "gun control" laws, but, for example, repeal of the measure that currently prevents the federal government from funding studies of the effects of gun violence.
- Advance policies to promote the use of transformative practices and restorative justice programs to reduce the appalling violence (both physical and moral) that is now inherent in our criminal "justice" system and that also afflicts our immigration system.
- Advance policies aimed at combating the violence of racial, sexual and ethnic prejudice and discrimination, including accurate depictions of our history. Friends are deeply concerned about the rhetorical violence that currently afflicts our politics, and in particular, the fact that so many seem to feel that such rhetoric is "just saying what we really think."
- Advance measures to curtail the policy of assassination by drone, as well as other tactics used in the "war on terror," which may not always involve physical violence, but which are violations none the less, such as the entrapment of Muslim "suspects" by law enforcement.

Priorities in the second category:

Morningsiders felt that Friends should be focused on raising up as an issue how we as a nation deal with "the commons," especially in the face of efforts since the 1980s to gut measures aimed explicitly at "promoting the general welfare."

Priorities should include:

- Measures to protect and enhance social security and the social safety net in general and to reduce income inequality.

- Legislation aimed at encouraging maximum participation of all citizens in the political process, including restoration of the Voting Rights Act, an end to systematic efforts at voter suppression, and the reduction of money's influence in politics.
- Repair and enhancement of the nation's infrastructure, while maintaining maximum access to it for all, regardless of wealth. In our view, "infrastructure" includes everything from the ground we walk on, the air we breathe, and the water we drink to public libraries, schools and parks. It also includes the internet, access to which should be expanded and the "neutrality" of which should be maintained.

One more thing: Several Friends expressed concern that, while conscientious war tax resistance has been a persistent Witness of Friends from before the American Revolution, the Quaker lobby makes no mention of the Peace Tax Fund Bill, ever. (Nor, indeed, in the current edition of "The World We Seek" is there even any explicit reference to reducing funds for the military.) This has the appearance of relegating the Witness of many Friends, past, present, and future, to irrelevance. While we recognize that FCNL's lobbying priorities are necessarily limited by available resources, and that enactment of the Peace Tax Fund may seem a forlorn hope, we feel that at least some lobbying on the Peace Tax fund Bill would constitute a Witness: a win would be one more legislator considering the issue and signing on to support the measure.

In Friendship, Corona Machermer

Communications Committee Report

While the committee was unable to schedule a meeting in April, we will have updated mailing labels ready for the Finance Committee mailing scheduled for May 9. We also plan to provide the text for a new Address Book, which will be sent to members and attenders to check. We plan to publish the new Address Book, which is desperately needed, before the end of May.

At the request of Ministry and Counsel, a 4th Sunday at which the committee will offer a "primer on the technological concerns of the meeting" related to the website and the various email systems has been tentatively scheduled for May 22.

Respectfully submitted,
Corona Machermer

Treasurer's Report

Morningside Monthly Meeting
Corrected Treasurer's Report May 1, 2016

	Feb 2016 YTD	Mar 2016	Apr 2016	Apr 2016 YTD	Budget
Disbursements:					
NY Yearly Meeting		3,849.50		3,849.50	15,396.50
Peace & Social Concerns/Friends in Unity w Nature			1,900.00	1,900.00	12,800.00
Misc. Contributions					300.00
Matching Fund for Friends Peace Teams AGLI					
Scholarship/Relief		200.00		200.00	2,500.00
Communications		375.00		375.00	2,790.00
1st Day School/ Child Care	320.00	185.00	225.00	730.00	3,350.00
Hospitality	51.61		151.55	203.16	200.00
Breakfast					750.00
Clerk, M&C	25.00			25.00	200.00
Finance					300.00
Library	22.74			22.74	300.00
Total Disbursements	419.35	4,609.50	2,276.55	7,305.40	38,886.50
Income					
Contributions	1431.80	380.00	3,330.20	5,142.00	38,886.50
Matching Fund for Friends Peace Teams AGLI			200.00	200.00	
Book & Rummage Sale					
Interest	1.69		2.91	4.60	
Total Income	1,433.49	380.00	3,533.11	5,346.60	38,886.50
Net Income	1,014.14	(4,229.50)	1,256.56	(1,958.80)	0.00

In Kind Contributions of 19.96.

Assets	Ending Bank Balance	36,671.16
	Hospitality Petty Cash	300.00
	Cash at Schwab	500.00
	Cash for Child Care	200.00
	MMM Retreat Deposit	1,100.00
	Total	38,771.16
Liabilities	Crumlish Bequest	(1,000.00)
	Hope Lives for Lifers	(82.03)
	Huntington House	(243.93)
	Total	(1,325.96)
Net Worth		37,451.55

Clerk's Report

Plans for the Rummage Sale at 15th Street, on Sunday, May 8 are proceeding. Items may be left in the small room off Andy Doan's classroom after 4 pm. They may be left in the closet under the stairs to the lower level near Andy's classroom anytime during the day. To get into the building, buzz the NY Quarterly Meeting; they will also help with directions. Margaret Lew is also willing to drive items delivered to her house. An email with contact information will be sent around.

The Quaker Party, being held from Friday, June 17 to Sunday, June 19. There are registrations coming in from all up and down the East Coast. They are aiming for

about 140 beds beyond the Brooklyn Meeting house. The form for registering is accessed through a link, which will be sent around. If you have any trouble let me know. I can probably put the information in for you.

Ann Kjellberg, Clerk of Trustees, has announced that there will be a day-long discernment about the future of the NY Quarterly Meeting in the years ahead and how we should care about our spaces to support that future on Saturday, May 14, from 10 am to 4 pm, at Brooklyn Meeting. Lunch will be served.

The State of the Meeting from Woodbourne is read.

State of the Meeting Report of the Woodbourne Worship Group

Quakers: State of the Meeting Report Woodbourne Worship Group-2015

It has been another year of interest for us here at Woodbourne. At our third week meeting with our civilian members we spent a portion of time discussing our State of the Meeting Report for the year 2015. Everyone gave input/feedback and the recording clerk documented everything. For one, there was a consensus that "coming to the meeting weekly is felt as a sense of peace and gladness to see one another and spend time together." The inside members expressed joy for the volunteers who come worship with us and how their thoughts have expanded our awareness to the outside community.

One civilian member expressed the historical progress of the meeting that he witnessed for the several years that he's been coming to Woodbourne namely going from once a month meeting to every week which started about three years ago. Many members expressed amazement at the "solidity and respect" that comes along with "such diversity and constant change." Since several members were released this past year or transferred, the group remains steadfast and grounded in the Quaker way.

We mourned over the tragedy at Mother Emmanuel Church and collectively contributed to a letter of support and condolences for those affected. The letter was also served to New York Yearly Meeting and Friends General Conference in Philadelphia. The tragedy led to heartfelt discussions about the state of race relations in America and other racial tragedies throughout the country. It was acknowledged by one and all that our individual passionate concerns are presented in a gentle manner with no disrespect to anyone.

One area of concern for our group and other Quaker groups in New York State prisons is the DOCCS policy that states a guest to any religious group is only allowed to attend three(3) times and can only continue to attend if they convert/register with that religion. The problem with that is that Quakers allow an all-inclusive meeting. According to our Faith and Practice manual we welcome any and everyone to attend our meetings and worship with us regardless of their religious attachments. We believe in the presence of god in everyone. We have many consistent attendees who worship with our group weekly and contribute with their diversity. The DOCCS Policy is in conflict with our Quaker way and we hope that the NYYM Clerk and General Secretary will be able to address this matter with DOCCS officials.

There was an acknowledgement of our eldest volunteer and a confirmation that as far as she could remember the meeting has been here at Woodbourne since 1991, approximately 25 years. We conducted a series of special clearness meetings for the first time with a focus on parole and helping a member to deal with his crime(s) regarding remorse, responsibility, and reconciliation. It was something that was innovative, enlightening, insightful, and beneficial for everyone involved. We also appreciate our interfaith connection with the Protestant community at the Christian Renewal Festival in May. Our December Christmas worship was very momentous cause we invited some guests to partake in our meeting and Quaker worship.

In conclusion, we of the Woodbourne worship group extend our gratitude to the New York Yearly Meeting and the Morningside Meeting who provide us with financial assistance to sustain the necessities of our worship group. We also appreciate the connection we have to the Morningside Meeting who share with us their meeting agendas and delegated a beautiful soul to communicate with us. We hope to meet more folks from that meeting and we hope to meet the General Secretary and NYYM Clerk as well some day. Until next year, forever onward in progress and growth, much love and respect. Guided by the spirit!

In the light...

Emergency Contacts Wanted!

You are encouraged to provide the meeting with your emergency contact information. Ministry & Counsel is collecting the name, relationship, telephone, and email information of your primary and secondary emergency contacts. Please send this information to Charlene Ray at moneycoach@earthlink.net or see her at meeting.

CAIC Lobbying Report

by Sally Campbell

CAIC (The Campaign against Isolated Confinement) sponsored their third Advocacy Day on April 12th that I was glad to be able to attend. Last year when Pam went there were about 100 people coming to lobby state legislators from both upstate and down to pass the HALT (Humane Alternatives to Longterm) Solitary Confinement Bill. This time there were about 220 and we were able to meet with over 90 legislators.

Before we made our visits we heard from several speakers including Benjamin VanZandt's mother, whose son committed suicide in solitary last fall. There was also a very realistic reconstruction of a solitary cell which one could go inside to get the smallest hint of the horror of this torture.

My group of 5, who worked very well together, included a mother of a prisoner and someone who had been in solitary herself as well as three women who feel strongly

about this concern. We met with staff members of 3 legislators, one of which became a sponsor almost immediately. We will be following up with the other two who seemed quite favorable.

Thanks to all who have signed the petition.

To view a short video on Lobby Day, go to: <https://youtu.be/z99h989IHb0>

Please consider attending one of the demonstrations on the 23rd of each month (reminding us that prisoners are in their cells usually 23 out of 24 hours a day). On Monday May 23rd at 6:00 pm it will be in the Bronx at Fenton and East Gunhill Roads.

To learn more you can borrow the NRCAT video "Breaking Down the Box," which is in the Morningside Library, or you could go and see it at 15th Street meeting on Sunday May 15th.

Quaker Party

(From Emily Provance)

Dear Friends,

As of today (April 22nd), we are 56 days away from the Quaker Party! Already, Friends are registered from New York, New England, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and North Carolina Yearly Meetings. Woohoo!

NYC Friends have been amazing in their support so far - thank you so much! Now, we need places for all of these visitors to sleep... Brooklyn meetinghouse will be open for a sleepover, but there will be so many visiting Friends that we'll need considerable in-home hospitality in addition. Our target is 140 beds, couches, and squares of floor space, and thus far we have 20.

Can you make room for one or more visiting Friends in your home on Friday and Saturday nights, June 17th and 18th?

Here is a quick, simple, online form to offer hospitality:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1grzffhInA8gWf5g86T-dmY1eSPoR6Z1bmbmluw3pbHM/viewform>

Job Opening: Campaign Director at EQAT

EQAT, the Earth Quaker Action Team, a Philadelphia-based grassroots, nonviolent action group including Quakers and people of diverse beliefs fighting for a just and sustainable economy, is looking to hire a full-time campaign manager. For more info:

http://www.eqat.org/jobs?utm_campaign=eblast_5_4_16&utm_medium=email&utm_source=earthquakeractionteam#op-117861-campaign-director

Money in Politics: What's FCNL Doing About It?

By Becky Steele, Friend in Residence

I'm writing this just after seeing a nicely raucous parade of protesters pass by FCNL on their way to the Capitol, shouting, "Money Out of Politics! Money Out of Politics!" You might see them on the news and wonder: What's FCNL doing about this?

Answer: Listening.

Question: Really? Just listening?

Of course, there's more. Actually, we're pretty excited about it.

We're starting to see that the undue influence of money in politics might be a symptom, not the disease itself. We're thinking more broadly, and it's opening up possibilities for action.

The problem is the fundamental disconnect many of us feel between us and the representatives we elect. How can we take back politics, build integrity, and restore faith in democracy?

Switching our perspective from a negative "anti-money" focus to a positive "how can we promote democracy" focus has been very energizing. Even in the wake of Citizens United, there are steps we can take to promote democracy – many of which we've been calling for all along:

- Expanding public financing of campaigns
- Encouraging broader participation by "the people," for example matching or giving tax credits for small campaign donations
- Increasing accountability and transparency
- Pursuing congressional capability to set reasonable campaign contribution limits

This presidential primary season has shown that surprising things can happen when people feel their involvement in elections matters. Meanwhile, members of Congress are feeling the pressures of incessant fundraising themselves. You can help keep the issue in the forefront. As the election continues, write letters to the editor. Ask candidates to tell you how they plan to

address concentrated money in politics. Urge them to take a public stand about their own campaigns. For example, Rep. Beto O'Rourke (TX) has refused to take PAC contributions since November 2014. Would your representative agree to do the same?

Unfortunately, the pathway to progress is blocked by the current framing of this issue in partisan terms. Some useful bills, including a public financing bill and a disclosure act, are supported so far almost exclusively by Democrats. Republicans in the House have introduced a few new bills, including one to strengthen the FEC, a bill addressing credit-card contributions, and another limiting Congressional "dialing for dollars." For the last few years, FCNL has supported a constitutional amendment addressing money in politics, but amendments proposed in Congress have seen no significant movement. Congress continues to view this issue through an extremely partisan lens.

So FCNL's been quietly doing what we've done in the past when partisan discord made it seem like nothing good could happen – we've started a quiet "listening tour" of conversations with staffers from offices on both sides of the aisle. We're listening. It's been interesting.

One thing I didn't expect was staffers saying they're not hearing much from their constituents. As a former member of FCNL's Policy Committee, I recall that, when input from Quakers around the country on our priorities for lobbying came in, "Citizens United" or "money in politics" was usually number one. Maybe folks feel it's pointless to talk to members of Congress, so they don't.

So the march going past our doors is important. Congress needs to hear that lots of folks "out there" care. But it's also important to work, step by step, to make progress through quiet conversations and other paths for building and maintaining ties between members of Congress and the constituents they have the honor to represent.