

The Canadian Friend

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- Broken open at the welcome table •
- Are we possessed? Legacy or burden? •
- Coincidence, serendipity or *Something Else?* •
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The Canadian Friend

July 2006
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From the editor's desk ...

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• **Articles, Poetry, Photos and Drawings**

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Dear Friends,

It was with some surprise that I opened the file for this issue and found — almost nothing. I had thought that there would be a lot of material. Not only because there always has been an abundance of submissions for every issue, but also because I thought that “how we deal with illness, aging and death” would inspire a lot of Friends. Not so.

Katie Aven has given us a very moving and inspirational article about her experience in dealing with a family tragedy and the healing she felt at the ninth assembly of the World Council of Churches. Molly Walsh sent in an interesting little piece by Ed Abbott. And that was all there was, no matter how I shook the file and looked again in the bottom.

Well, there was one more, but I had long been reluctant to publish it, simply because I had written it myself. However, the more I considered it, the more it seemed like it would be a good piece to include now.

Following heart surgery in 2002, Susan Bax was having serious health complications. I was very fond of Susan, but far away in Connecticut, and unable to visit. She was no longer able to talk, so I couldn't phone her. I made her a card, and felt moved by the Spirit when I wrote the accompanying message, based on reading material by Henri Nouwen.

Various people told me how Susan had appreciated that message, and some people asked for copies of it. So it seems appropriate to include it now as it does speak on dealing with illness, aging, and death.

There are many inspirational writings on this theme within the Quaker tradition. For instance, I have often appreciated Margery Still's 1990 writing (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 22.81):

“... A readiness and an openness to the approach of that dark night are necessary. ... the unconscious is preparing the pit, and down into it you will eventually be driven. Better go willingly, with all your armour on. For this is in fact the training ground of your spirit, where you will learn how much, through your own pain, you have to offer to others. And so the first and greatest step out of the dark place becomes recognisable: self-absorption begins to give way to empathy with a world of suffering you previously didn't know existed. People in the first shock of grief will be drawn to you, and you, no longer a newcomer to that world, will have found your listening skills.

As to that delicious and sustaining food you were accustomed in happier times to peck at, why, there it is again, and you haven't recognised it. The former sustenance was only fit for children, and has been replaced by helpings of insight appropriate to your increased maturity.”

June-Etta Chenard

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“The Mill, Powell River”
By Alfred Muma, a member of
Canadian Yearly Meeting, under
the care of Home Mission and
Advancement Committee

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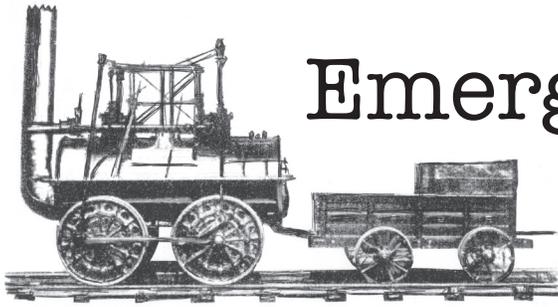
Quaker Book Service:
Book List Number 28
2006 – 2007

A Reminder

Canadian Yearly Meeting 2006
will be held at the Canadian
Mennonite University in
Winnipeg, from August 12–19.
Murray Thomson, a member of
Ottawa Monthly Meeting, and
well-known Canadian
peace activist, will be the
Sunderland P. Gardner lecturer.
A pre-CYM workshop
with George Lakey, of the
Philadelphia-based
Training for Change project, will
take place on August 11–12.



CALLIGRAPHY BY MINTA VERNON



Emerging Technologies

By Donald Alexander

On May 12, 2006, my early morning train is speeding through Niagara vineyards at 120 km an hour. I'm bound for Friends House in Toronto for a Saturday meeting about new and emerging technologies.

One hundred and eighty years ago, Quakers from Middlesborough and Darlington in northern England were daring enough to be the first "charter coach" tour group on the newfangled steam train. First in line to try the new technology.

The Quakers sat primly on their chairs on a flat car. Amid the fearful hanging on and the thrill of the 10km an hour speed, were some people considering the sweeping changes this emerging steam-engine technology could bring?

What about the pace of change? Distance would shrink. Could they ever imagine all the advances that would be made over the next century? A one week crossing of the Atlantic in a giant steam propelled liner; steam engines pulling express trains from London to Edinburgh in four hours. I'll bet they had hopes ... and fears. Could they imagine factories belching smoke and confining labourers in the works? The end of coal? Smog? Health effects? A sweeping technological change that would remake so many aspects of society?

In the comfort of my modern rail coach we're now rounding the bend through Hamilton. The steel mills are trying to contain their smoke emissions. How long has that been going on?

I'm now imagining some of the effects, hopes and fears of the new emerging technologies of the 21st century. We are being pulled along into the future. The pace of change is fast.

Before the day is out I'll be overwhelmed by all these new possibilities and risks.

It will be a task just to remember a few of the many new terms and words. The lexicon is overwhelming.

A good first-grade primer is the term "platform technology."

That's what we are dealing with: platform technology. New technologies with a common starting point but which, when put into practice, have hundreds and thousands of divergences. Think: printing press, steam engines, electricity generation and transmission, internal combustion engines, vaccines, digital chips. Now think of emerging technologies: bioengineering, gene therapy, nanotechnology, biotechnology, terminator seeds, genetic engineering, plant molecular farming.

Several members of Toronto Monthly Meeting have special knowledge of these emerging technologies. They are the ones who have issued an invitation to have a conversation about the best and worst of prospects for the future. There will be a chance to consider Quaker concerns.

A way forward is to consider where and how Quaker testimony connects with these new technologies and the economic and moral issues they raise.

There are thirteen of us. In the introductory remarks we hear that the technologies are evolving rapidly; there is a promise of great benefit but people have legitimate concerns and there is a great deal of uncertainty.

We have a variety of reasons for being here:

"I want to learn more and increase knowledge."

“... to seek clarity. There is too much information ... need basic information to start some discernment on the issue.”

“... to encourage others to engage with the federal government on the need to accept a precautionary principle.”

“... to clarify the research agenda — much of which is publicly funded but the research is privatised. The research agenda needs to be open and transparent. Public money is for the public good.”

“I want to develop a Quaker voice on these issues.”

A series of five fact sheets is available. We are fortunate that two of the Quakers present have been instrumental in funding, as well as designing, writing and researching the fact sheets. The information describes several major manifestations of the emerging technologies and outlines claimed benefits and concerns surrounding each.

The Canadian Quaker International Affairs Programme based in Ottawa has been active on one of the fronts for several years. The patents granted on seeds and plant varieties undermine agricultural biodiversity and threaten the rights of farmers to save seeds and maintain traditional farming practices.

The Quaker Institute for the Future (QIF) has embraced the topic. The emerging technologies and the policy surrounding them will be one focus of their research and publications. The Institute describes their process as “a meeting for worship for research.”

One of the fact sheets we had in front of us introduces the reader to genetic use restriction technologies that have been developed to protect companies holding patented crop varieties. Concerns are outlined and seem to outweigh stated benefits.

Benefits and hopes. Concerns and fears.

Plant molecular farming is the use of genetically modi-

fied plants to produce pharmaceutical products or industrial chemicals. The potential for new and more widely available and much cheaper pharmaceuticals is compelling. However, there are risks to biodiversity and human health.

Biofuels and biotechnology. The Canadian biotechnology strategy of 1998 proposes as its main theme that Canada should position itself to be a responsible world leader in biotechnology, including explicit attention to ethical and social responsibilities. However, “regulation of biotechnology in Canada is a confusing patchwork of legislation originally created for controlling other products, substances and processes.”

Genetically engineered trees. Trees are genetically engineered so they will have a particular attribute such as resistance to disease or altered characteristics to make pulp production or biofuel growth easier. Trees may be engineered to have a faster uptake of carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas, in order to help slow climate change. Pollen and seed from trees can travel for many kilometres. The “escape of genetic traits from genetically engineered trees into native forests could potentially have severe consequences.”

Nanotechnology includes techniques to manipulate materials at the scale of atoms and molecules. Promoters promise huge future and near-term breakthroughs in beneficial fields. For example, highly targeted delivery of medications would include cancer drugs going directly to cancer cells without the side effects associated with chemotherapy today.

“There is no formal ongoing mechanism for civil society input about nanotechnology policies in Canada.”

During the discussions at Friends House in Toronto we heard that the Canadian government “has set the direction and sees the technologies as the economic growth engine and job creator for this century. There is an increasing concentration of power between government and industry in setting the research agenda and the

**The Institute describes
their process as
“a meeting for worship
for research.”**

direction of these technologies. The government is in a conflict of interest situation — it is promoting these technologies but it is also supposed to be protecting the public good.”

One of the attendees said government no longer sees the public as its client but rather sees corporations and industry. Another suggested that we need to engage our government to develop a moral decision-making process which will include precautionary principles and a process of learning and discernment. There is a need for more public engagement.

I don't think the Quakers of Darlington and Middlesborough were “just along for the ride” on that first steam train ride 180 years ago. The Quaker testimonies would have helped them contemplate the wider implications of the new machines.

On my way home railroad analogies came to mind. With the fast pace of change and the corporate agenda, is the public being “railroaded?” I don't want to be “sidetracked” from public participation and consideration. Worst of all would be an exclusive research and patent regime that leaves me “standing at the station.”

THE FACT SHEET SERIES ON INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES WAS RESEARCHED AND WRITTEN BY SUSAN HOLTZ, A MEMBER OF HALIFAX MONTHLY MEETING SOJOURNING IN TORONTO. THE SHEETS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY (CIELAP) <http://www.cielap.org/>, 130 SPADINA AVENUE, SUITE 305, TORONTO M5V 2L4. THE CONVERSATION ON INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES WAS INITIATED BY ANNE MITCHELL, OF CIELAP, WHO IS ALSO A MEMBER OF TORONTO MONTHLY MEETING. ↻

Donald Alexander is a member of the Quaker Ecology Action Network, and an attendee of Pelham Executive Meeting.

Excitement at Camp NeeKauNis

By Beverly Shepard

A piece of property has been added to Camp NeeKauNis, approximately doubling its size and providing a winterised two-bedroom house. This has opened new possibilities for Canadian Yearly Meeting's only permanent camp. A house means there could be a full-time Resident Friend (RF); a full-time RF means someone would be available to oversee Camp for many different programmes well into the fall and starting earlier in the spring. More programmes mean more people will have the opportunity to spend some time at Camp, perhaps in an intensive workshop weekend or a quiet retreat, with skilled and knowledgeable leaders or just a group of like-minded Friends. What intriguing ideas are swirling about!

The Camp NeeKauNis Committee, which oversees the

operations and maintenance of Camp, has been considering these possibilities and planning the gradual introduction of new staff and programmes. Finances are always a major consideration, and Camp is certainly no exception to that annoying little rule of thumb! The Resident Friend will at first have to be a volunteer, willing to donate time to test some of the procedures and ideas. Some short-term programmes will have to be tried to see whether attendance will warrant the expanded season and create the increased income necessary to support a year-round Resident Friend.

It turns out we have a chance for a little “pilot project.” Several factors combined for the summer of 2006 to produce a period at the end of the summer when Camp is not occupied by any regular Camp programme. As I write this, plans

are afoot for a work camp (no fees, just help build and maintain Camp for your room and board), an ecology workshop with a focus on end-of-oil, and an arts workshop with a wide range of activities. Does any of this sound like something you'd like to do? By the time you read this, such programmes may be finalised and ready for registrants!

If you are interested, please contact Beverly Shepard at (905) 659-6119, bev.shepard@hwcen.org for details. Better yet, check the NeeKauNis website at <http://www.hwcen.org/~hmm/nkn/>, for more details and registration forms. ↻

Beverly Shepard, a member of Hamilton Monthly Meeting, is the Administrative Director of Camp NeeKauNis.

Hospitality: a Friendly perspective

By Jennie Wright

As Friends (as we Quakers prefer to call ourselves), we come in many shapes and flavours. Some of us meet for mostly silent worship; others have programmed Meetings that include sermons and hymns. Some of us speak of our relationship with Jesus; others prefer to speak of the Light within us. Our beliefs are, however, built on the same bedrock: two of the most important ones are a conviction that there is that of God in each one of us, and a commitment to simplicity. This bedrock colours our perceptions of hospitality.

For true hospitality to occur, there must be a spiritual transaction of some sort between the host and the guest. It is difficult for this to happen during the course of a lavish buffet dinner for eighty people, which is why this is not the particular image that springs to mind when we discuss hospitality. Simplicity, on the other hand, implies a paring down, a reduction of spiritual and physical clutter, the act of jettisoning unnecessary baggage. When you take this same buffet dinner and reduce the numbers, the traffic, and the food, you end up with a mental image closer to a group of people in one room, seated at one table, enjoying food and each other without distraction – something much closer to most people’s mental images of hospitality. This more simple setting allows a spiritual transaction to occur, without which we have people “entertaining” their guests instead of “offering hospitality.”

A simple act is not necessarily an easy act, only one in which the focus has narrowed. Giving hospitality can be inconvenient, tiring, and time-consuming. Receiving hospitality in the spirit in which it is offered can also be daunting. The greater the investment of oneself, however, the more significant becomes the

spiritual transaction. At its best, hospitality becomes a dialogue that goes beyond guest and host and becomes communication between the Light, or that of God, within each person.

In modern English our word hospitality implies only one end of this exchange between guest and host, and we think of the two words as antonyms. Earlier languages (and some modern ones, such as Spanish) show the two-way nature of the relationship much more clearly. The Latin word *hospes* implied both the words *host* and *guest*. This is not the paradox that one might think: a host cannot be a host without a guest, and it is impossible to be a guest without a host. For those of us who see that of God in everyone, these seemingly paradoxical ideas begin to merge. A *hospes* can also be guest and host simultaneously, but more on that later.

If we look back even farther, into the very roots of the Latin language, the paradox deepens. The Romans called their enemies *hostis*, from which arises our word *hostile* and *host*, as in a host of enemies). However, *hostis* and *hospes*, as well as the Greek word *xeno*, all arise from an Indo-European word *ghosti*, meaning guest, host, friend, foe and stranger. This made sense, since you could never be quite sure into which camp the stranger fell, that of friend or that of foe. We now have the words *hostile*, *hospice*, *xenophobia*, *hostel* — and *hospitality* — all arising from a common root.

We frequently hear references to “the sacred bonds of hospitality.” In the spiritual transaction that occurs during hospitality, a bond of trust is created. Friendship does not have to happen, but trust does. A word that comes to mind is that of companionship, whose root — *compan* — means to share bread. A perversion of this relationship, where people are involuntary guests who sometimes find themselves denied even the most basic necessities, is described by another word from the same Indo-European/Roman root — the word “hostage.”

Our spiritual health is tied to our finding a balance between the roles of host and guest. This was brought home to me when I was travelling in the mountains of southern Mexico, sometimes feeling like a permanent

guest. I stayed with many people who had very little themselves, all of them kind and gracious hosts, and began to fret that I was taking and taking, and giving so little in return. It is easy to get into this state of mind when your two hosts and their four children give you their only bed and sleep on the dirt floor of the kitchen during your visit. A friend pulled me up short after one of my lamentations and said very simply, "It keeps you humble." He was right, of course; if we begin to perceive ourselves only in the role of beneficent distributors of hospitality, and never as recipients, we lose sight of the true nature of this transaction. I have learned from experience that simplicity and balance are intertwined; and if we lose sight of one, it is harder to maintain the other.

We enter this world with nothing but the loan of a body, which must be returned on the date we leave the world again. This, therefore, must mean that our time on earth is spent living off God's beneficence as guests. Surrounded by miracles — a chick pipping its shell, an opening leaf, a dainty monarch butterfly tumbling out of the chrysalis it formed as a fat striped caterpillar two weeks earlier — I feel like an honoured guest indeed. And yet, with God's presence in each of us, are we not also the hosts of God? Hosts of the Spirit, guests of the Spirit, we do indeed walk in the glory of the Light. ☞

Jennie Wright is a member of Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting.

Broken open at the Welcome Table: A grieving Friend at the ninth assembly of the World Council of Churches

By Katie Aven

It comes as no surprise to me that I write this reflection for the issue of *The Canadian Friend*, whose theme is illness, aging and death. My trip to Brazil to spend two weeks among theologians, clergy and lay people from every denomination all over the world was one of my most anticipated experiences in many years. When the time came to go, however, it was the most difficult choice I have ever made: our beloved niece ended her life just two weeks before I was set to depart.

In the end, the decision to go was discerned and encouraged by my family, my meeting, and the members of the

Finance Committee of YM. It was a choice to go half a world away from my grieving family, from my husband, and from our home, in which our niece lived just a few weeks before her death.

I went to Brazil praying that the Spirit would go with me, hoping that grace would surround me. From a life of sudden, acute shock and grief, where we literally lived day to day, or even hour by hour, it was the only way I could imagine making it through almost three weeks in a foreign country, where I knew no one.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is a global ecumenical body, bringing together 340 Christian denominations worldwide, and providing a forum for churches to reflect, speak, act, work, worship, challenge, support, share and debate, together. Founded simultaneously with the United Nations (and continuing to have a strong relationship with the UN), the World Council of Churches is committed to the work of justice and peace, international affairs and human security, upholding the integrity of creation, and working together to understand and achieve the shared vision of the

commonwealth of God. It is a tall order, but my experience at the assembly demonstrated that there are millions of people all over the world who are working diligently towards these goals, and who are brought together by the WCC.

Canadian Yearly Meeting is a founding member of the World Council of Churches. We were represented at the first assembly (Amsterdam, 1948) by an 18-year-old Jane Zavitz-Bond, and have been present at every assembly since. Quaker membership is highly valued by the WCC: Friends have always sat on the WCC Central Committee, and together with the Mennonites and Brethren, we were instrumental in the establishment of the “2001-2010: The Decade to Overcome Violence.”

The assembly hosted representatives from every denomination in the world (with the exception of the world wide Pentecostal church). I met Ethiopian Coptic Bishops, Mennonites from Germany, and members of the African Methodist Episcopal church still recovering from Hurricane Katrina. I ate lunch with a Korean feminist theologian, a brother from the Taizé community in France, and a sur-

vivor of the Rwandan genocide of 1994. I prayed with parish priests from Pakistan, Indonesia and Nigeria, whose churches were burned during the assembly, a result of the riots surrounding the cartoon of the prophet Mohammed. I had long talks with an African and a Cuban Quaker about the status of women in our society, the issue of homosexuality, and the growth of Christian



LEFT TO RIGHT: ALEX KERN, FGC DELEGATE (CAMBRIDGE MM, NEW ENGLAND YM); KATIE AVEN, CYM DELEGATE (ANNAPOLIS VALLEY MM, CANADIAN YM); JANE MUTOLO, FUM DELEGATE (KISUMU MM, KENYA YM).

fundamentalism. I engaged the Evangelical Lutheran Bishop of Canada, the Anglican Primate and the United Church Moderator on the response of Canadian churches to the war cry from our southern neighbors. I made a new friend from the Heltsiuk First Nation in British Columbia, and together we listened to indigenous Brazilians tell their creation

story, which was both spoken and sung.

The hotel I stayed in housed all of the Canadians, all of the Australians, a smattering of Scots, and the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC). The MCC is a Protestant denomination that identifies itself as a church that embraces straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Christians and seekers. The MCC is the most marginalised church within the World Council of Churches; the issue of homosexuality continues to be unresolved within global ecumenical circles, and it was no different at the assembly. It was the most contentious and most explosive issue within the ecumenical forum.

I had shared my niece’s suicide with very few people at the assembly. On the one month anniversary of her death, the busyness of the assembly churned all around me. Seeking a quiet refuge, I found myself at the worship service hosted by the MCC. Their communion took place at the busiest time of day, a time when attending worship would mean missing out on something

else interesting and important. There were unconfirmed rumors that Bishop Desmond Tutu would be addressing the assembly at the same time as the worship. Despite what I might have been missing, I went.

The worship was simple. It was a humble liturgy of word and sacrament, a small mix of clergy and laity from many

contained by simple theological platitudes — we praised God. We rejoiced at God’s presence among us. We rejoiced in the work of the Spirit in our lives. We rejoiced that God involves Godself in our brokenness, not abandoning us but rather calling us by our name. Together we sang “I’m Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table One of These Days.”

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And for me, it was the single
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denominations. And for me, it was the single most powerful experience of inclusive, radical love at the assembly. We anointed each other and fed each other communion. We held each other and wept together as we recalled our grief, disappointments and disillusionments before God. Our weeping was not about who we love or why, but the bitter weeping of Peter when he realises he has denied Jesus three times. We wept for the love we have not received, and for the love we have been stingy with. We wept for ourselves, for others, for God. In our collective human brokenness – a brokenness not

When I returned to the assembly floor, I found that the rumors had been true: Desmond Tutu was addressing the council. This is what he said as I walked in:

“God reveals Godself to us in our moments of suffering, and through God’s grace, we are able to cope with our suffering. This often means working together, being together in our brokenness and suffering.

Grace is not a conceptual reality. It is an existential reality that touches all manifestations of life. Grace is experienced

by all, it is a fact of unity. It belongs to all peoples, all cultures, all races, all beliefs. Grace embraces all of humanity and creation. It has personal, communal and cosmic dimensions, which are interconnected. Grace is God’s transformative power; it is the incarnational reality of God who is with us.”

And then I knew it was God’s grace that got me on the plane, flew with me, walked with me among 4000 strangers in a foreign country. It was God’s grace that brought me into fellowship with the walking wounded around me, and steadied my steps as I learned to walk with my own wound. I knew it was God’s grace that penetrated my suffering and broke me open at the welcome table. What I learned is that being wounded means walking with grace.

In the deep brokenness in my heart, I discovered a graced hope that overcomes suffering. This is a hope which penetrates the suffering of illness, of aging, of death, of exclusion, and makes us believe again. For me, it is the hope — and belief — that my niece and I still have a future together, a future in which we will meet at the welcome table. ☞

Katie Aven, a member of Annapolis Valley MM, is the Yearly Meeting representative to the World Council of Churches. She was the Canadian Quaker delegate to the Council’s 9th Global Assembly, held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, last February.

Are we possessed? Legacy or burden?

By Helen Melbourne and Stephanie Deakin

When we come into the world, we come naked, vulnerable, without memories or needs that have not been met. As we progress through our lives, we acquire more and more objects and become more and more dependent on those objects to meet our needs.

We begin with those that meet our basic needs: food, water, security, and comfort. When these needs are met, we become more aware of our surroundings; objects become a source of learning. The next phase is the accumulation of possessions for the care of our family. As we age, we may inherit the worldly goods of previous generations, as well as the emotional expectations tied to these things.

Along with the benefits of material goods, there are costs. The costs can be financial, emotional, physical, and spiritual. We buy bigger and bigger homes to accommodate our stuff. We work more hours and spend more of our income. We create more trash. We don't allow ourselves uncluttered time and space to be spiritually grounded. We become mired in our things.

There are also environmental and social costs to ownership. The high demand for products creates the incentive for sweatshops, slave labour, and environmental degradation. Clear-cutting, industrial pollution, and the loss of agricultural land are all consequences of our consumerism.

It's time to start letting go. How do we choose what to keep, what to release, and when to acquire something new? At the end of our lives, what do we value most: objects or relationships?

Queries

1. What do we leave as our legacy for our families, our friends, and in the broader world? What is

truly important for them to remember about our lives? Often, we live mired in the past or treading water in the present. We do not give any time or thought to these questions. Does this come from too much busyness, or avoidance of activities that leave us sad or angry, or that bring up unresolved issues and matters from the past? Are we afraid that we will be forgotten?

2. While we are able to plan and make changes in our own lives, do we do so, or do we leave debts and material burdens for others to shoulder after we are gone? Remember that illness, disability or circumstances beyond our control may arise at any time of our lives. Query #29 of *Advices and Queries* tells us *"As far as possible, make arrangements for your care in good time, so that an undue burden does not fall on others."*

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We become mired in our things.

3. Do we keep things because they may still be useful, or only need repairing? Do we believe that we will use or repair those things, or finish those projects, in a timely manner? Are we willing to take the time to release these things to someone else who may be able to use them? Do we consider this time a part of our

stewardship of the earth's resources?

4. When we make transitions in our housing, do we, in a hurry or overwhelmed, make poorly considered decisions, and either keep everything, or dispose of too much or the wrong things? It may be helpful to meditate or take calm time to center yourself before you begin, or whenever stress overtakes you. If possible, do not make decisions when you are under pressure or fatigued. Allow the still small voice within to guide you.

5. We may hold onto the possessions of our deceased family and friends; is there another way to remind us of their love, and keep alive their memory? Do we keep things because we fear the grief that may still linger? Many of us are tactile, or visual, and in fact, we do need tangible reminders to bring back the sense of life and love, spirit of those who are gone.

6. Do we allow others to help us through the process of letting go? If not, is it because of an underlying sense of shame, or fear of losing control? Are we able to ask for help and accept help graciously? Have we been taught that emotions should be carefully controlled, and so letting go of possessions and memories is too private to share or have witnessed by others?

Let us choose any assistant carefully. Someone who is impartial, and non-judgmental will be more affirming of our emotions than someone who is invested in our process and actions, and who may lead us to make wrong choices.

7. If we are asked to help someone through the process of doing a will or power of attorney, or the process of releasing possessions, can we help them to make the decisions gently and with care, or are we in a hurry and unwilling to take the time to understand the stories and memories attached to their things? Are we too close to the person we have been asked to help? Would it be better for us to suggest an impartial and supportive person to assist? (This could be a friend, a neighbour, or a person who does such work for a living.)

8. Trust is critical in the choice of someone to assist in the process of letting go. There is more to

trust than financial honesty. Emotional support and spiritual generosity is also essential. So also is the practical knowledge of dispersal that honors the social, cultural and natural environments of our world. Can we be trusted to help in this way? Can we learn to trust the process of asking for and receiving help?

We've asked yourself the hard questions. Now what?

As we release ourselves from the burden of our possessions, we create room for our spirit to grow. It is important to be honest with ourselves — admit the need, acknowledge the difficulty, be aware of negative self-talk, and try to look ahead and anticipate the 'bumps in the road.'

We can be practical. Give things to our family and friends now rather than leaving them to be inherited. Sell things of material value. Donate things that are still usable but that we no longer use. Recycle as much as possible.

If you don't love it and you don't use it, why do you have it? — Peter Owen

It is necessary to take care of ourselves. Let us not try to do too much at a time or work when we are tired. The task will be less overwhelming if we stay mindful of our emotional reactions and our physical needs. We must also give ourselves permission to meet any changing needs. Can we find the middle ground between excess and deprivation?

Even though letting go is a difficult process, we have a responsibility to shoulder decisions ourselves. Otherwise they may weigh heavily on others who are already grieving. Leave the legacy of memories and example, not the burden of possessions.

Let your lives speak. ☞

Helen Melbourne, a member of Toronto Monthly Meeting, and Stephanie Deakin, a member of Victoria Monthly Meeting, offer professional organising services.

Change

By Kate Collins-Thompson

*Change
comes flying out of
an upstairs window
and lands with a thud
on a pile of rubble.*

*Change
drips from branches,
spills over gutters,
flows along the street,
emerges from a cocoon, and slowly dries
its wings
in the summer sun.*

*Change
flutters from an October sky
in the soft rain-sound
of falling leaves;
makes the ground ice-hard overnight.*

*Change pulls up the drive
in a moving van;
brings tears to every mother
seeing her first-born off to school,*

*And then,
Change creeps up,
taps us on the shoulder,
and surprises us
with the mystery
of
growing
old.*

Kate Collins-Thompson is a Member of Coldstream Monthly Meeting. The idea for this poem came to her once on a walk when she saw furniture and other items being thrown from a window as the first step in a renovation project on an old house.



“MOTHER AND DAUGHTER” BY JUNE-ETTA CHENARD

Fund Appeals

By Jack Ross

*Someday I shall receive
envelopes brown or white
sent by Quaker groups
that I imagine might
have clear plastic windows
to emit their Inner Light.*

Jack Ross is a member of Argenta Monthly Meeting. He wrote this poem in 2006.



In the Hall, Series # 1, by Alfred Muma

A light in the ward

By Ed Abbott

From time to time in medical practice, it has been a privilege to be called to minister to persons whose spirit and manner of living, and sometimes manner of dying, have moved me deeply.

One such was John, a small man, by occupation a cobbler, who came under our care at Belfast City Hospital. Despite much discomfort from Carcinoma of the oesophagus, he was ever cheerful and his friendly smile reflected an inner light and peace.

He explained to me that he cobbled shoes to pay his way while he lived his gospel. He was ever appreciative of the surgeon's inadequate efforts to remove the tumour and reconstruct the passage.

He could not help being aware that his time was limited and as I made the rounds one night he asked, "Am I going to die, doctor?" As I sought a comforting answer I replied, "Man is immortal till his work is done."

John replied, "If my work is done, I'm ready to go." He went that night and a light in the ward went out. ☞

Ed Abbott is a member of Simcoe-Muskoka Monthly Meeting.

A message sent to Susan Bax in July 2002

By June Etta Chenard

Dear Susan,

I have been praying so much for you and for all those who are caring for you. And, dear Susan, I have been almost pestering people in Toronto with e-mails and phone calls for news of you.

Oh, friend, each bit of improvement I hear sings a song of joy to my heart.

Tonight, I was reading how Henri Nouwen believed that Jesus fulfilled his vocation not in action only, but also be letting things be done to him. And it brought you to mind for you are such a strong and active person and now your ministry is to receive, and to allow things to be done to you and for you. Henri Nouwen continued, "All action ends in passion [being the recipient of other people's initiatives] because the response to our action is out of our hands." He says, "That is the mystery of work, the mystery of love, the mystery of friendship, the mystery of community — they always involve waiting."

Now your vocation, at this time, after so much hard work all your life, will be fulfilled not just in your actions but in your passion. What a glorious gift to God this new ministry may be — for you and for us all! How exciting it is for me to think of it in this way. Bye for now, dear one.

Your friend, June Etta ☞

June Etta Chenard is a member of Pelham Executive Meeting.

Coincidence? Serendipity? *Something Else?*

By Joy Belle Conrad-Rice

Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them. Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one; whereby in them you may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you.

– *George Fox, 1656*

In past autumns since emigrating to Canada, I have traveled with other Friends to Western Half Yearly Gatherings. In 2005, I experienced the fruits of a gathering not with Friends near northern high bush cranberries, but with myself and softball players on roads and ball fields bordered by sage brush and sand.

For several weeks in early October my consciousness altered from my normal daily to something else. The catalysts were twofold: being tuned into traveling to and from slo-pitch softball competitions and being tuned into my son. The circumstances were similar in that I was traveling solo in a state of heightened awareness and anticipation. Unexplainable things happened. I believe I was “walking in the Light.”

What was happening? How and why? The first I can describe, the second I cannot, for I have not the wisdom.

I am a person who gets high

on sport, that is, doing a sport. For most of my adult life the sport which has lifted me and sustained me away from mundaneness and towards sparkle is squash. Squash is mainly a winter sport, so three years ago when I discovered a women’s 50 plus slo-pitch softball team in Kamloops, I turned out for it. After three seasons of playing on local teams of both women and men, I found myself invited to play with a Vancouver based women’s 60 plus team headed for the World Senior Games in St. George, Utah. A warm-up tournament would happen first in Las Vegas, Nevada. Three other players from interior British Columbia would also be driving down.

The World Senior Games featured over 9,000 athletes from 54 countries in dozens of sports. My team placed first among eleven slo-pitch teams in our age group. Our warm-up tournament in Nevada had prepared us well for a high level of determined ball playing. My attitude traveling to and from these tournaments — and later to Olympia, Washington, to witness my son being admitted to the bar — was one of openness, optimism, and courage. By habit I was extending my antenna of communication, and reminding myself that I had been turning, turning, turning till I came down right.

Choosing to participate in these tournaments meant that I would not be able to travel to Canadian Western Half-Yearly Fall Gathering at Shekinah, Saskatchewan. For me to give up such a trip (highlights: the Flying Fox, high bush cranberries, worship sharing and chatting with Friends) was indeed telling. What I met up with instead was fresh engagement with that mysterious force we like to be open to and hope to experience at Friendly gatherings.

Unexplainable things happened.

I believe I was
“walking in the Light.”

While driving, I had several experiences that could be categorized as coincidence, serendipity, or Something Else. The first one happened the morning I left Kamloops to begin my trip south to Nevada. My three teammates had started from a neighboring town that morning. At the U.S. border crossing at Osoyoos, British Columbia, as I pulled up to the green light at Customs, my teammates pulled up in the lane next to me. We waved at each other and grinned. My spirits rose, as I thought perhaps this portends wonderful things to come! Coincidence? Serendipity? *Something Else?*

I spent the next two days driving through Washington state, eastern

Oregon, a bit of Idaho, and desolate Nevada, keeping my awareness primed to safety first, learning second. During this stage of my travels, I showered smiling, friendly empathetic attention on clerks at visitor centres, flaggers at construction detours, and strangers at rest stops.

The third day I made it to southern Nevada. I drove into the parking garage of the hotel in Las Vegas where my team was staying, found a parking spot, got out of the car, walked up a ramp, and

cashiers, hotel room housekeepers, the shoe shine man, a teammate of vexing personality, and umpires who never got enough validation.

By now most of the team had driven northeast to St. George, Utah, site of the World Senior Games. I had spent a restful day and night at nearby Overton, Nevada, studying up on ancient Pueblo people at a museum in the Moapa Valley. That magical afternoon I became acquainted with an archeologist who let me hold an atlatl (a throwing device usually

bling. Then as I drove into the parking lot of my team's motel, I saw a teammate from Kamloops walking toward her car and hailed her. She and two other teammates were on their way to the stadium for the opening ceremonies and did I wish to join them? Of course! I even helped them find it because I could remember where I had just driven. Coincidence? Serendipity? *Something Else?*

Our last day at the Games was punctuated by winning the gold medal, having won all our games. Needless to say we were thrilled, having put ourselves through extraordinary performance in the face of illness, injury, high heat, and fatigue. We had risen to the occasion as a group and prevailed.

My walking in the Light became running the bases, playing catcher, and switch-hitting. I took time to give thanks, whisper my own code-talk with my inner and outer Resource, and to let my spirit-filled energy flow towards everyone on the field, indeed the field itself, the birds, the soil, and the red rocks in the distance.

During our days at the World Senior Games I felt in tune with myself, my place in the universe, my coach, my teammates, the ball fields, the weather, the rocks and the desert. I felt balanced and fully charged.

Another unexplainable happened on my return trip. I reached southern Washington after caravanning for a day behind my coach and her husband, then losing them as a consequence of driving slowly

**I took time to give thanks,
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saw two people gesturing to me — it was the coach of our team and her husband from Vancouver, BC. They were getting their luggage after checking in. They were relieved to see me since they had not heard from me for several days. I was relieved, too, for seeing them meant that I had made it safely and on time. Running into my coach in a parking garage — Coincidence? Serendipity? *Something Else?*

The days in Las Vegas were filled with playing softball, watching softball, and resting up from softball. Again I found little ways to bring a smile to those I interacted with — unduly stressed hotel reservation clerks, restaurant waiters and

consisting of a stick fitted with a thong or socket to steady the butt of a spear or dart and extend the length) and pretend to throw it. Because of the mechanics of this ancient throwing spear, it could have been thrown by women hunters in prehistorical days. For thirty years I have wanted to grasp an atlatl. Meeting this archeologist on this afternoon — Coincidence? Serendipity? *Something Else?*

That evening as I arrived in St. George, Utah, I missed the exit turnoff that would take me directly to the team's motel. Instead, I took the next exit and meandered back to the motel via a stadium where I noticed many people were assem-

through the Nevada desert between gas stations, prudently conserving fuel. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to communicate with my coach to tell her my car hadn't broken down, because my cell phone couldn't connect with hers. Still slightly giddy with the joy of playing well, I carried on with my antennae out through Jackpot, Nevada, Buhl, Idaho, the Oregon Trail cities and into Kennewick, Washington. When I reached a hotel, I called my coach at her home in Vancouver, BC, from my hotel's landline. Having driven since six that morning, she and her husband had just arrived and she was on her way out to buy milk when she heard her phone ring. I had caught her at the right moment! Coincidence? Serendipity? *Something Else?*

An additional extra-communication occurred a week later. I had driven from Kamloops to Seattle, then to Olympia, the capital of Washington state, where my son was going to become a member of the Washington state bar association in a ceremony officiated by a judge for whom he had externed as a law student. He and his wife took their car, while I drove from a slightly different starting point. We both had to find parking spots. I arrived early and drove around near the capitol buildings in search of free parking on side streets — to no avail. So I meandered into visitor parking near the Temple of Justice, got out of my car, walked up to the parking ticket pay box, and lo and behold, my son walked up behind me! Coincidence? Serendipity? *Something Else?*

On the ball field while I was

playing defense and while I was batting, I opened myself up to out of ordinary focus. I called upon a combination of skill and responsiveness. I paused to recognise the

beauty of what we were doing, to appreciate the sunshine, the air, and the moment. Our inspired coach was the one who nudged, the players were the ones who executed outs and hits that led to wins, and the fans -- even the umpires — sometimes gave us smiling acknowledgment of athleticism expected from much younger legs.

Steely pitches from the pitcher for strikes, sprints from the outfielders for remarkable catches, stretches and gyrations from the infielders for crucial outs, and hits dropping into holes in the outfield for a winning run batted in — all this came through us. Something there was to help us play through injury, illness, heat, wind, and fatigue.

At the World Senior Games we thirteen women, ages 60 to 64, opened up synergistically to the best within us. Some would say it was Spirit within Sport exercising with glee.

Friends, these experiences capture my curiosity. What was going

on? I have had many such experiences; never have I understood them. Did my version of walking cheerfully over the world and answering that of God in every

**At the World Senior Games,
we thirteen women, ages 60 to 64,
opened up synergistically to the best within us.
Some would say it was
Spirit within Sport exercising with glee.**

person, action, and breath (I'm not exaggerating!) influence the rest of the players and others with whom I came into contact?

I find that there are times, often when I am going solo and in new circumstances, when I feel protected, almost as though I am accompanied by a "guardian angel." By staying faithful to staying open, I have again experienced the unexplainable. For over four decades I have been a seeker, have had many unexplainable experiences, some more profound and awe-inspiring than I describe here, yet the language with which to convey my extraordinary experiences is no more available to me now than in the past.

A friend says if you are connected to your spiritual self, it is going to show up everywhere. Wherever you go, you take Spirit with you. Maybe that's a simple way to express it. But knowing the how and why of these experiences is still a mystery to me. Perhaps it's meant to be. 🐉

*Joy Belle Conrad-Rice is a member of
Vernon Monthly Meeting.*

Thank you

By Margaret Slavin

Dear Friends in Canadian Yearly Meeting — from Vancouver Island, British Columbia, to St. John's, Newfoundland,

“Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.”
(#1 in *Advices and Queries*)

A prompting sent me to you, to 62 visits and 141 beds. At times you may have found me an odd package, a woman following a leading, with no agenda other than to encourage you (plead with you) to follow yours! The quilts and paintings and poems and parables you shared continue to awe me and give me hope that Spirit moves among us still, with passion and with grace.

My prayer is that we can remain open to these intimate promptings of love and truth, acknowledge and act on them, gladly entering the discipline of our powerful traditions — corporate discernment, expectant worship, and testifying to one another and the larger world. All we are called to do is to remain faithful “in the smallest concerns of life,” in the words of my favorite passage (#108) from the blue book, *Christian faith and practice in the experience of the Society of Friends*, so that when “greater matters” present themselves, we have

a chance of responding with some semblance of “the Will of God” — or however you yourself name the central mystery. Let us cherish the children, and cherish the child within each one of us as adults. We open channels for Spirit when we open ourselves to colour, movement and sound, and when we take passionate risks building circles of friendship.

Thank you for your hospitality, for all the good food, the vegetables from your gardens, the spe-

My prayer is that we can remain open to these intimate promptings of love and truth, acknowledge and act on them, gladly entering the discipline of our powerful traditions

cial breakfasts, Quaker guys making waffles, and Quaker women and men who measure apple juice into their muesli or, oh, that special cut (or was it uncut) Scottish oatmeal! Thank you for comfy couches and spare room beds, and for folk who gave up their regular bed to accommodate a travelling Friend. Thank you for supporting the travels with funds and hugs and rides and prayers.

I'm home now in Ontario to stay but look forward to seeing many of you again this summer in

Winnipeg.

The pamphlet of poetry has been confirmed for 2007. I will continue to collect poetry until the time of Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM) gathering this year. You can send it to me by mail at 206 Perry Street, Peterborough ON K9J 2J2, or by e-mail at: <writeaway@nexicom.net>.

The postcard project for the children will be kept open-ended by the Religious Education Committee for another year or more, to give kids and teens who haven't had a chance to make a postcard time to do so if they wish. [Make a postcard with an image on one side and on the other, whatever you want to say to introduce yourself to other Quaker kids. Send it to me and I'll put it into the scrapbook and bring it to CYM.]

At this point, the journals are still on the quaker.ca site, and I expect to make them available in a paper version soon.

The memory of our visits together is carried in my heart — a privilege and opening beyond words for the internal journey now, not the one on the bus!

Blessings,
Margaret
May 20, 2006 ☞

Margaret Slavin is a member of Wooler Monthly Meeting.

The City of Remembrance

By Amy Jean Singleton-Polster

When people find out I am a Quaker they always look a little puzzled and say “What, like the oats?”. After 18 years, I have grown accustomed to explaining that Quakerism is a form of Christianity and it is well known for being a fundamental part of the Underground Railroad. In Canada, Quakerism is a very open religion. By open I mean there is no creed, no one will tell you your beliefs are wrong, or you’re going to hell. In fact, a Quaker doesn’t even need to believe in God.

One could say that Quakers have four main testimonies: peace, equality, truth and simplicity. The idea behind equality is that everyone has ‘that of God’ or goodness, or ‘The Light’ within them. Even if the person has done some horrible things in their life, there is still goodness within them that makes everyone equal. Quakers worship in silence, and from that silence anyone who feels led to, can speak because Quakers don’t believe that you need a priest or a preacher to talk to God, or to have words of wisdom. After this long-winded explanation my audience will usually nod, and say that sounds interesting. But for me it is more than interesting, it is a way of life and an integral part of who I am.

The summer after I graduated from high school I didn’t do what most of my friends did, which was get a job and hang around the river.

Instead, I embarked on a journey. Although this journey only lasted a month, the memories will last a lifetime. I went to Europe on the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage with four leaders and twenty-seven other youths, fourteen from North America and fourteen from Europe. I flew to England with my best friend from Kamloops, the only other person I knew on the trip, and nervously wrote in my journal the whole way. I was sure everyone would be insanely religious, the type of people I pitied at school because they couldn’t think past their religion and refused to be open-minded because “it said so in the Bible.” The people on the Pilgrimage were just the opposite. Like myself, they were just average teenagers. But though they were average, the friendships we formed were not. In only a month we achieved an incredible level of understanding and friendship. The trip was filled with laughter and tears, anger and joy, peace and utter uproar and everything in between. We all brought different things to the group and although we certainly did not all agree on how to define God, if he existed, or even when bedtime should be, we respected each other, and each other’s beliefs.

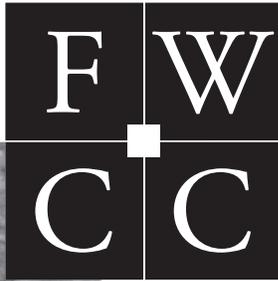
We stayed in England, the birthplace of Quakerism, for a few weeks, and then took a boat over to Amsterdam. We were all full of energy on the trip over, playing in the kid’s colourful ball pens and dancing madly on the five-foot dance floor.

In the Netherlands our activities and outings were focused on various aspects of World War Two. This related to Quakerism as some Quakers helped in hiding Jews. Also, the Dutch Quakers hosting us felt that it was important for us to gain an understanding of what went on during World War Two, so as to hopefully prevent a similar occurrence.

Growing up, I did not have a TV, and thus I read constantly, as though the world would cease to exist if I stopped reading. I read anything I could get my hands on, but I especially enjoyed reading stories. When I was ten until I was fourteen I devoured books about the Underground Railroad and World War Two. I was interested in the Underground Railroad because Quakers were often central characters in these stories. My interest in World War Two came about because my fraternal grandfather was Jewish, and although he had been lucky as he had been born in the United States, his family back in Czechoslovakia had not been so lucky during World War Two. In addition to this my maternal grandparents grew up in war torn England and would occasionally tell me stories about growing up during this era. Thus, I was especially interested in the Kit Pearson series, about war children coming to Canada from England, *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *I Have Lived a Thousand Years*, a true story from an Auschwitz survivor who was thirteen. Thus when I arrived in Amsterdam, I was full of anticipation about going to the Anne Frank house. 🐾

Amy Jean Singleton-Polster is a Young Friend under the care of Duncan Worship Group, of Victoria Monthly Meeting.

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Friends World Committee
for Consultation

SECTION OF THE AMERICAS

Comité Mundial de Consulta
de los Amigos

SECCIÓN DE LAS AMÉRICAS



ABOVE:

1937 Friends World Conference
Swarthmore & Haverford, PA

RIGHT:

1967 Friends World Conference
Greensboro, NC



The FWCC Founders Fund

As part of FWCC's recently announced \$2.5 million campaign, the Founders Fund recognizes family members and friends who were instrumental in the first 30 years of FWCC's history.

We welcome information and memories about Friends who attended one of the following World Conferences:

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1952 (Oxford, England)

1967 (Greensboro, NC)

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Canadian Yearly Meeting National Listeners for Young Friends and Adults



Canadian Yearly Meeting *National Listeners* are available to listen to any Canadian Friend disclose harm done on matters of sexual harassment or abuse, or any other topic a Friend may need to discuss.

If you need a listener, the first step is to approach a trusted Friend within your Monthly Meeting (MM), or to go to your MM Ministry and Counsel. If this path is not comfortable, you may contact a *National Listener*. Listeners seek to be present from a place of spirit-centred openness – to hold the caller and the situation in the Light, and to listen with tenderness. Knowing the healing that comes from simply being heard, we offer you a safe and confidential space in which to speak. One call might be all you need. If not, we have the task of discerning with you what a next step could be: whether a committee of care, of clearness, or of oversight might be appropriate; or how to find other possible resources. The *National Listeners* for adult Friends are:

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Ed Belzer: | Telephone: (902) 384-2730 | E-mail: belzer@ns.sympatico.ca |
| • Dorothy Janes: | Telephone: (416) 929-8812 | E-mail: dorothyj@idirect.com |
| • Rose Marie Cipryk: | Telephone: (905) 684-9924 | E-mail: rmcipryk@cogeco.ca |
| • Jay Cowsill: | Telephone: (306) 652-2407 | E-mail: jmc590@mail.usask.ca |

Additionally, the following *National Listeners* for Young Friends are now also available:

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Julie Paradis: | Telephone: (403) 284-5946 | E-mail: turtlekate@telus.net |
| • Peter Stevenson: | Telephone: (765) 983-2054 | E-mail: stevepe@earlham.edu |
| • Nat Egan-Pimblett: | Telephone: (604) 826-8859 | E-mail: data_dyne@hotmail.com |

Whenever possible, please contact us first to arrange a mutually convenient time to speak later.

Book Reviews...Book Reviews...Book Reviews

*Living with Nature's extremes:
The life of Gilbert Fowler White*
Robert E. Hinshaw
Johnson Books, Boulder CO, 2006
Reviewed by Winnifred Tanner

This biography documents White's myriad scholarly and humanitarian achievements during his long career as a geographer and exemplary citizen-scientist. His commitments as an active member of the Religious Society of Friends are integral to the book.

After graduation from the University of Chicago, he worked in the New Deal administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. In 1942, as a conscientious objector to military service, he joined the American Friends Service Committee, aiding refugees in France.

From 1946 to 1955 he was President of Haverford College, and from 1955 to 1969, he was a professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Chicago.

He moved to the University of Colorado in 1970, where he investigated the status of natural hazards research in the U.S.

He also contributed to the study of water systems in developing countries, the management and preservation of arid lands, environmental change, and international cooperation regarding water resources in the Lower Mekong delta, the Nile River, the Aral Sea and the Jordan River/Dead Sea. He examined national energy needs and management of nuclear waste in the U.S.

His awards, appointments and referenced publications are listed in the book. ↻

Winnifred Tanner is a member of Ottawa Monthly Meeting. In the past, she has travelled to Guatemala with Robert Hinshaw

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Going Home: Jesus and Buddha as Brothers
Thich Nhat Hanh
Riverhead Books, an imprint of Penguin Putnam, Inc., 1999
Reviewed by Don Woodside (in Hamilton MM Newsletter)

Thich Nhat Hanh has written a sequel to *Living Buddha, Living Christ*. It is a series of talks given at Plum Village, his retreat centre in the south of France, at Christmas. It is clearly written from a Buddhist perspective, but he is very sympathetic to Christianity. He outlines a series of deep philosophical differences between the two, but says if we look closely, the differences are not real. He says that each of us has a child waiting to be born, a child that is beautiful and in touch with the deepest truth.

He talks a lot about God. He quotes André Gide, who said, "God is available 24 hours a day."

He separates the phenomenal, conditioned world, which he likens to the waves of the ocean, from the noumenal, eternal world, which is like the water. The waves are like horizontal theology in Christianity, the truths about the 'interbeing' of all of us, and the effects everything has on everything else, while the vertical dimension is the water, God, the unconditioned source. We are each waves, and it is important that we understand the difference between

the interaction with other waves, and with the water, which is our very substance. If we can't love plants and rocks and people, he can't see how we can love God. More than that, we really can't talk about God; nothing in our language is up to it. "It is wise not to say anything about God." He goes on to quote Christian theologian Paul Tillich, who said, "God is not a person, but not less than a person." Thich Nhat Hanh thinks Christians waste a lot of time talking about whether God is a person.

He talks about how mindfulness, one of the key factors in Buddhist meditation, is a light shining on our thoughts and deeds, and is like the Holy Spirit, the energy of God. If we practice mindfulness well, we will see that nothing is born and nothing dies, and that takes away the fear of dying and becoming nothing.

When we relate on a deep level to other beings, when we see a person not as an idea but in their reality as part of 'inter-being,' then we meet Buddha and we meet Christ. We are born several times a day. This is resurrection.

We all need a home; for Buddhists, Buddha is home, and for Christians, Jesus is home. We are lucky to have concrete human representations like Jesus and Buddha; a notion of God is too abstract for a home. We need to cultivate our home. If we look deeply into ourselves, we will see everything, and it brings us home. "The most important practice of our time is to give each person a home." ↻

Don Woodside is a member of Hamilton Monthly Meeting.

The stone in your shoe: Report from Western Half-Yearly Meeting

By Kirsten Ebsen

At this year's 2006 Spring Western Half Yearly Meeting (WHYM) in Sorrento, B.C. the British Columbia Quaker Committee for Native Concerns (BCQCNC) invited Jessie Sutherland, author of the book *Worldview Skills: Transforming Conflict From The Inside Out* to give a special plenary session at the gathering. Although WHYM offers many special interest groups, it was felt a presentation addressed to all participants collectively, except for the very young, might be of interest. Informational sessions on timely topics of keen interest to Quakers have occasionally been offered at WHYM on Saturday nights. As usual, the family format continued to be followed on Friday and Sunday evenings. The focus on family intergenerational activities is one of the strongest features at WHYM.

Jessie Sutherland was born and raised in Vancouver. She has received very favourable international reviews for her book. Her hands-on experience working on four continents towards reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples includes work across Canada in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia, and in northern Indigenous communities.

In 2004, she launched Reconciliation Education Teleconferences where people from anywhere in the world can listen to a monthly featured speaker and join a lively discussion about reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people on the telephone. She has hosted a series on the following themes: Residential School reconciliation, What is reconciliation?, *Worldview Skills* for Transforming Relationships, and most recently, Weaving Webs of Community. This most recent series broadened the conversation from the usual First Nations, church, and government dialogues to featuring: Black Canadian – First Nations relations, Doukhobor – First Nations relations, Chinese Canadian – First Nations relations, Jewish – First Nations relations, Indo-Canadian – First Nations relations, and First Nations – African cross-cultural exchanges for peace-

building and reconciliation. Friends were inspired to learn how these teleconferences are building a unique network for reconciliation and infusing local initiatives with new strategies.

Jessie also talked about her work with “Kids from Ka-na-ta” that links First Nations and non-First Nations students in grades four to 12 for cross cultural exchanges. She developed (in collaboration with colleague Tsionni Fox from Akwesasne, Six Nations) *Worldview Skills* workshops for students, teachers, and parents. This project enabled her to visit schools and inspire projects across Canada. For example, a grade seven class in Nova Scotia made a video on different worldviews about trees by interviewing First Nations elders, scientists, loggers, environmentalists, and people on the street. For Jessie, these projects are hopeful signs because they foster genuine cross-cultural dialogue about how we view the environment at an early age.

In her book, *Worldview Skills*, she postulates a theory for reconciliation as “a parallel process of personal and political transformation from systems of domination to relationships of mutuality.” This includes the need to transcend the victim-offender cycles and a host of other paradigm shifts, which then enable the process to occur within a new framework. *Worldview Skills* is a continuation of the work developed for her M.A. thesis at the University of Victoria.

Her presentation at WHYM was titled “The Stone in Your Shoe.” This is also the name of one of the chapters in her book. She told Friends, “transforming pain into purpose is one of the most effective ways to transcend victimisation.” Some of the other skills required to actualise this process include what Jung referred to as individuation (or taking conscious responsibility for ones own actions), recognising our own mirrors — both positive and negative, creating rituals which help us to recognise the gifts inside our pain, and finding meaning and direction through close observation of nature.

She says, "When we transform our pain into purpose, turn enemies into friends, develop intimacy with nature, and share our gifts with the world, then we will know we are the spark for a new era rising out of the ashes." At the end of her presentation we broke into pairs and a lively discussion ensued. Unfortunately we ran out of time, as we could have talked all night. Sutherland's work is transferable to so many different levels: personal, regional, or international.

On Sunday, she held a four-hour workshop for young friends on the theme of motivation and performance.

I believe her work is compatible with our Peace Testimony. I also believe it is important for f/Friends to remain open to outside influences that are compatible with the work we do. Otherwise we could atrophy in the future, as some religious institutions have.

When all was said and done, the author appeared very much at

home among Friends. Joining us for the whole weekend gave her ample time to converse with all who were led to speak with her individually. It also gave her a broader perspective and understanding about Friends' activities on a regional level.

For more information about Jessie Sutherland's work and publications, please see: www.world-viewstrategies.com. ↻

Kirsten Ebsen is a member of Vancouver Monthly Meeting.

Progress report from the Faith and Practice Development Committee

By Molly Walsh

Our committee met May seventh and eighth in Toronto. Our task was to review monthly meetings' responses to "The Lifelong Journey" and to prepare it for publication in pamphlet form for the August, 2006 Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM) gathering. Each Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups will be mailed a few copies of this chapter following CYM.

The committee is pleased with this expanded chapter which incorporates material from an earlier chapter, "Stages of Life." Its content has been greatly enhanced by many rich excerpts sent from Friends across Canada.

In the fall of 2006 we will be compiling excerpts for our chapter "Faithful Lives." Valuable initial work was done on this at the 2005 pre-CYM workshop in Camrose, Alberta, and more material is still needed.

We would like to remind monthly meetings and our individual contributors that there is a careful process to follow when submitting extracts for consideration. A form entitled "*Derived Passage suggested for the Faith*

and Practice of CYM in the Religious Society of Friends" must be filled out and submitted with the extract, giving the details of the source of the passage. This form has been sent to Monthly Meetings as each chapter is undertaken and is also available on the CYM website, by e-mail from zilli@interpares.ca, or from any Faith and Practice Development Committee member.

We advise Friends to avoid long biographical accounts of Friends' lives, and suggest you rather concentrate on passages about "lives that speak" to our spiritual condition. Submitted extracts should have already appeared in published form.

The deadline for these extracts is October, 2006. We are looking forward to the exciting work which lies ahead. ↻

Molly Walsh is a member of Montreal Monthly Meeting

Report from the spring meeting of Representative Committee

By Ellen Pye

About 25-30 Friends gathered in Friends' House in Toronto for the Spring meeting of Representative Meeting in what was, indeed, spring weather, to begin with. Later on it changed, so we did not rue being indoors too much. As always, seeing Friends from across the country was a delight, although we knew this was not going to be plain sailing.

Three issues were at the forefront of our deliberations, with the committees concerned at a loss as to how to proceed and asking Representative Meeting (RM) to reach final decisions from the various options they presented:

The Nominating Committee of RM had had difficulties in filling various vacancies, especially the one of Clerk of RM. The present Clerk will not continue beyond CYM in August; it has become clear that it is not feasible for someone in full time employment to carry out this task, as there is no office support for the considerable amount of administrative work this position entails. Even YM Clerks, who do have that support, would find it hard to do this work adequately while working full time. (The present CYM Clerk is not thus burdened, but the incoming Clerk for 2006/2007 will be).

Program Committee had not been able to come to a decision on the site for CYM 2007, and this was now an urgent matter. The different

options all had serious draw-backs.

Finance Committee found itself unable to choose between three possible ways of dealing with a looming shortfall in the 2007 Budget and was also very concerned about a likely large deficit for 2006, due to unforeseen circumstances. Contributions showed a drop of about \$10,000 and office expenses were higher than expected by about the same amount, due to two unavoidable changes of Bookkeeper, which meant greatly increased hours so much needed training and orientation could take place, as well as catching up on back-logs.

After hearing the backgrounds to these issues, the Meeting held them in prayerful Worship during the Friday evening session, hoping that way would open to deal with them. The fact that we were stymied in the three most essential parts of the life of CYM at the same time, made me wonder if Someone was trying to get our attention. We seemed to have reached such a dead end, possibly because we had gone off the right track some way back. Perhaps we need to reexamine our road map and directions, in a practical as well as spiritual sense.

As we worked our way through the Agenda, one of these issues was resolved: CYM 2007 will be held at Kings Edgehill School in Windsor, Nova Scotia. Some of the negative aspects of this site are being dealt

with, and some remain, but we had to accept that finding a completely suitable venue would never be possible. The other two issues proved more intractable and will have to be dealt with at a further meeting at or by CYM.

These were not the only matters to be worked on, but the details of these can be found in the forthcoming Minutes, which it is hoped Friends will read.

Many Friends at the meeting seemed to have an expectation that the final report of the Consultation and Renewal Committee's final report in 2007 will provide solutions to all problems — a bit of a pipe dream, I fear, which puts unfair pressure on the members of that group.

We were blessed with inspired Clerking, which allowed us to be heard while keeping us on track, no mean feat, and which makes me regret that as things stand at the moment, we will be deprived of the skills of this Clerk. We were, as always, well taken care of by our hosts from Toronto Meeting, for which we expressed our heartfelt thanks. ☺

Ellen Pye is a member of Vancouver Monthly Meeting

Around the Family

Halifax Monthly Meeting

Adult Religious Education Committee reported that their first two workshops, "Sharing the Spirit," and "A Look at Friends, History and Beliefs" were well attended. We are progressing in our understanding of our spiritual life together.

Hamilton Monthly Meeting

At the June meeting for worship the children remained in the meeting room for the whole hour. Tables were set up to allow for children's drawing, crafts, etc, and adults were invited to join the children in these activities. This format has led to a very positive experience both for the children and the adults in meeting.

Response to Canada's participation in the war in Afghanistan. Concern was expressed about being a peace church in a country at war. Concerns were further expressed about the illegal nature of and the geopolitical motives for this war. One Friend will provide a summary of these concerns for the newsletter.

New Brunswick Monthly Meeting

An Alternatives-to-Violence Project workshop was held Apr. 21-23 in Dorchester, NB, facilitated by John McKendy, Vince Zelazny, Linda Foy, and inmate and "outmate" facilitators.

The Quaker Pamphlet Series Editorial Board has met and clarified roles and responsibilities of their clerk, secretary and pamphlet editor. It was agreed that Edith Miller will continue as clerk, Vince Zelazny as secretary, and Maida Follini as pamphlet editor for the Murray Thomson 2006 Sunderland P. Gardner Lecture.

New England - Atlantic Friends Gathering

This eastern coast gathering will take place on Thanksgiving weekend, October 6-9, at Green Hill Lake Camp in Greenhill, New Brunswick.

Ottawa Monthly Meeting

We note that Dee Reynolds, sojourning in Toronto, has changed her name to Kate Dee.

"Simplicity Circles" have started meeting, using Cecile Andrews' book, *Circle of Simplicity: Return to the Good Life* as resource.

A memorial service for Stephen Long, Peggy Land's stepson, was held on 26 April at Rothwell United Church. We are holding the Land-Long family in the light during this difficult time.

Pelham Executive Meeting

In June, 2006, Pelham Executive Meeting joyfully welcomed Fiona McMurrin into membership.

Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting

Kate Johnson, Wooler Meeting, sojourning at Thousand Islands, received her M.Div. from Queen's Theological College on May 10, 2006. Kate was valedictorian for her class. Well done, Kate!

Toronto Monthly Meeting

O. John Hawkins, a beloved Friend, died on 5 May 2006, and Toronto Monthly Meeting held a moving memorial meeting for him on the May 10 at Friends House. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Religious Education Committee of Canadian Yearly Meeting

Remember that Quaker books can be borrowed, postage free, from the Canadian Friends' Travelling Library. Borrow a couple for inspirational summer reading. Or spice up your plans for your fall Half-Yearly meetings. Find out more. On the internet, visit: http://www.quaker.ca/Religious_Education/index.html. Send an e-mail to: AdultLibrary@quaker.ca or ChildrenLibrary@quaker.ca. Telephone: 519-775-2670. Or write: CYM Travelling Library c/o Yarmouth Monthly Meeting, Box 105, Sparta, ON, N0L 2H0.

Canadian Yearly Meeting: Coming soon to a place near you?

Sites need to be found for Yearly meeting in 2007 and 2008. Programme Committee has asked that Friends look for appropriate sites. We ask that Friends be mindful of potential sites during their summer travels.

Around the Family

Who is Amy-Jean's Grammy?

I have been asked who is Grammy in "Grammy, my greatest mentor" by Amy-Jean Polster (*The Canadian Friend*, March, 2006). Oops, I hadn't noticed that Grammy's name was not included. She is none other than our beloved Friend, Betty Polster, who was shown in the photo with Amy-Jean, along with the article. (I know, this was not helpful if you had never seen Betty before.) My apologies to all concerned.

New Korean PM has Quaker connections

South Korea's first woman prime minister, Han Myeong-sook, has Quaker connections. Her husband is Park Sun-jun (known to many Friends outside Korea as "Joon" Park). Early in their married life, the couple had been political prisoners for years. Joon joined Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting when he, Myeong-sook, and their son, Gil, were residents at Pendle Hill. Joon is now active in Seoul Monthly Meeting.

They left Pendle Hill in 2001, when Myeong-sook was asked to return to Seoul to serve as South Korea's Minister of Gender Equality, which she did until 2003, when she became Minister of Environment.

Casa de los Amigos, Mexico City

On October 27 to 29, Casa de los Amigos will hold their 50th anniversary Jubilee celebrations, and all are invited. During the celebrations, we will reflect on the Casa's 50-year history, and sound in the era by revealing the Casa's new peace program. There is a resurgence of interest in the Casa, both from Mexico and internationally.

Casa's new executive board, composed of Quakers and other Casa friends from Mexico and the United States, will soon be seeking new members, and are interested in the possibility of some Canadians joining them. Canadian Friends have always been involved in the house, which is a place that is cherished and well-used by

many Canadians. For more information, visit www.casadelosamigos.org, or contact 50aniv@casadelosamigos.org.

Quakers near the Salish Sea

There are over 30 Friends Groups in the area of the Salish Sea, most of which are listed below. How many have you visited? To find information on groups who are part of Canadian Yearly Meeting, go to www.quaker.ca. For North Pacific Yearly Meeting go to www.npym.org. For Northwest Yearly Meeting, go to www.nwfriends.org.

- North Island Worship Group (Canadian), • Mid-Island Allowed Meeting (Canadian), • Duncan Worship Group (Canadian), • Saltspring Worship Group (Canadian), • Fern St. Meeting (Canadian), • Saanich Peninsula Monthly Meeting (Canadian), • Vancouver Monthly Meeting (Canadian), • Bowen Island Worship group (Canadian), • Cranberry Commons Worship Group (Canadian), • Coquitlam Worship Group (Canadian), • Fraser Valley Worship Group (Canadian), • Agate Passage Friends Meeting (North Pacific), • Bellingham Friends Meeting (North Pacific), • Eastside Monthly Meeting (North Pacific), • Olympia Friends Meeting (North Pacific), • Shelton Worship Group (North Pacific), • Port Townsend Friends Meeting (North Pacific), • Whidbey Island Worship Group (North Pacific), • Salmon Bay Friends Meeting (North Pacific), • Lopez Island Worship Group (North Pacific), • Tacoma Friends Meeting (North Pacific), • Vashon Friends Worship Group (North Pacific), • Buckley Worship Group (North Pacific), • University Friends Meeting (North Pacific), • South Seattle Worship Group (North Pacific), • Marysville Friends Worship Group (North Pacific), • Valley Friends Church (Northwest), • East Hill Friends (Northwest), • Household of Faith (Northwest), • North Seattle Friends (Northwest), • Peninsula Evangelical Friends Church (Northwest), • McKinley Hill Friends (Northwest), • Olympic View Friends (Northwest).

(from *Island Friend*, May-June 2006)

The 1999 Sunderland P. Gardner lecture, "To Dwell in the Power of Truth," given by Jack Ross, was not recorded at that time. Since then, Jack has made a studio CD that includes Michael Miller's piano composition. Copies can be purchased for \$6.00 from Jack Ross, General Delivery, Argenta BC, V0G 1B0.

For this issue

Editor June-Etta Chenard
Editorial Support Donald Alexander, Erika Koenig-Sheridan, Barbara Smith
Graphics Katie Aven, June-Etta Chenard, Alex Muma, Minta Vernon

Please help! Your articles, poetry, drawings and photos are needed!

Submissions are needed, and do not have to be related to the issue's stated theme. Material from Young Friends is always especially welcome. Please send all submissions to the editor, whose contact information is on the inside front cover.

Themes, deadlines and queries for upcoming issues

- Due date: 25 August 2006 (for October issue)
Theme: **Canadian Yearly Meeting in session**
Articles, drawings, photos, reports about our Canadian Yearly Meeting gathering in Winnipeg.
- Due date: 15 October 2006 (for December issue)
Theme: **Portrait of Canadian Friends**
Short biographical sketches of various Canadian Friends will highlight this issue.

The Canadian Friend can be viewed online at: <http://www.quaker.ca/cfriend/cfriend.html>.

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