

The Canadian Friend

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Canadian Yearly Meeting in Review
Friends With Mother Earth: Attuning With Light and Air
Interviews / Letters to the Editor

The Canadian Friend

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Editor's Corner

“We need a new imprint on our soul”

I apologize to Siepko Lok for misspelling his name in the last issue. It is regrettable that neither myself, nor the proofreaders caught this error. Having a name that is frequently misspelled, I certainly sympathize.

Recently in Meeting, a Friend quoted John Woolman as saying, “Love was the first motion”. This says to me, let love be the reason, the energizing force, the impetus for our statements and actions. How wonderful. Everything, our approach, our actions, our words, would all be quite different if we first engaged from a place of love, if love was our first motion. Which got me thinking about Corinthians Thirteen: *If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part... now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

Sometimes we become so caught up in our ideas, our solutions, and our plans for fixing wrongs or setting others straight, that love is buried and lost. Yet love is the essential ingredient that's needed for deep listening and understanding. Love is all that matters in the end. Love is what we're here for, what we are called to be and do.

This love requires ego to step aside so Spirit can fill the space. Spirit-led, we'll recognize the Light in each other, and also importantly at this time, the Light and that of God in all forms of life. Keith Helmuth points out, “we need a new imprint on our soul”, to enable us to embrace the Earth and all creation as a whole-interconnected being, of which we are a part. Surely this new imprint will begin to form, once we choose to make love the first motion.

Blessings,
Sherryll-Jeanne Harris





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Letters to the Editor

Readers are invited to submit letters to the editor.

Please send your letters to:

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August 8, 2009

Hello Friend,

Is the Canadian Friend a waste of paper? A publication written by Quakers for Quakers, not really saying anything, but not ruffling any feathers?

Wouldn't it be interesting if we did open its pages to opinions and groups that would challenge our smugness? CF could become a powerful voice for those who never have a chance to express their views and opinions with the propaganda machines, represented by the Globe and Mail, and other mainstream publications driven by sensational news. We'd increase readership and attract advertising \$\$\$.

We can do better by going back to our roots of "Publishers of the Truth".

In Friendship,

Dan Poison

Yonge Street Monthly Meeting

September 3, 2009

Dear Sherryll,

As for the Canadian Friend, perhaps you can sense my impatience with what appears to be a publication that could be much, much more than it is.

Sorry to say this, but this magazine is dull, dull, dull. However, I'm not blaming you as editor. I appreciate that you are working under some constraints.

The publication does not have to be "flashy", but the design, content, and layout could use a judicious "makeover", so that it is more appealing to readers and prospective readers.

I would be happy to help you any time with new ideas for layout.

Kind Regards,

Pat Moauro

Coldstream Monthly Meeting

August 8, 2009

Hi Sherryll

Here is the wedding photo you requested.



Peter Stevenson

Jesse Thompson

Vernon Monthly Meeting

August 28, 2009

Hello Sherryll,

Here is a web site which I think might be of interest to Friends:
<http://www.spiralingmusic.com/pdfs/Minute%20of%20Silence.pdf>

The activities described are for children aged three to six and help them to understand the relationship between silence and peace, incrementally helping them to go into the silence. It includes a related song.

At the end of the material is a very interesting list of resources, for older children and for everyone, aged five to adult.

In Friendship,

Sarah Chandler

Vernon Monthly Meeting

August 7, 2009

Hi Sherryll,

I read The Canadian Friend from cover to cover and enjoyed it immensely. I'd like to write a personal response to these articles. I am sending you my response to Steve Fick's "Wall Journaling".

You do not have a 'letter to the editor' section that I can see. Let me know how I could contribute.

Thank you,

Anne Caza

Ottawa Monthly Meeting

Editor's Note: Letters to the Editor will be a regular feature. Readers are encouraged to send their thoughts, ideas, and suggestions.

Readers Respond:

Steve Fick's article *Wall Journaling: A Method for Personal Discernment* (*The Canadian Friend*, Summer 2009) speaks to the personal power of human beings. This power is available to all human beings, those marginalised and those not, those with apparent handicaps and those who are considered mainstream. We all have this power and the power speaks to the uniqueness of each of us. When I do 'wall journaling' the words, the patterns, the message are uniquely mine. It is an amazing process that speaks to the wonders of being human. Each person can count on a personal direction that will bring abundant joy!

Journaling is an empowering tool. Those like me who feel weakened in certain relationships can feel empowered after a journaling session. Through journaling, I gain confidence. My personal boundaries are strengthened. This enables me to save energy that would be otherwise spent longing to connect with this or that person, or in this or that way. There is more respect for the 'other' after a journaling session. I am more aware of the uniqueness of people and of their right to be who they are. I am stronger and stand taller.

Journaling is in the here and now. It is choosing to be guided by one's Self. When I wake up and would like to stay in bed, the stories in my mind will not let me enjoy the comfort of my mattress. I try to change the subject at hand but the mind continues to take me back or forward. Anxiety is the result. The only way to fight the anxiety is to live in the moment! However, the mind is not content in its idleness. I get up! And find bliss! It is there! It's in the morning! It's in my routines! It's in being aware when exercising these routines. It's in each moment that brings me forward! It's in my choosing to do what brings me great satisfaction and pleasure. I become as I choose! That is joy! That is power! That too is journaling!

Anne Caza, Ottawa Monthly Meeting

A Minute on Climate Change

by Britain Yearly Meeting

The crisis of global climate change represents a supreme test of humanity's collective wisdom and courage. Our immoderate use of the Earth's resources violates the entire biosphere, threatening the lives of millions of people and the habitats of thousands of species. Many of the poorest people are already suffering a changed climate. They are asking us all to act.

How has humanity produced this crisis? Our faith response is that prevailing social values have obscured what it means to live authentically on this Earth. In rich European countries we consume more than we need within an economic system that divides us as a society. In much that we do we cause harm to the planet and each other, without enriching our lives.

The Earth is God's work and not ours to do with as we please. We recall Gandhi's saying, often quoted by Quakers: "Live simply that others may simply live". As a Quaker community we do try to live what we believe, guided by the values of simplicity, truth, equality, and peace. Too often we fall short of honouring them.

Climate change is challenging us to ask anew what our faith leads us to do.

As individuals and as a community, we are now making the difficult decisions and plans necessary to limit our ecological impact to a sustainable level. With encouragement from one another, we are progressively reducing our reliance on non-renewable resources, while stepping up our campaign for wider social change. As a small religious society, we take heart in belonging to a community of faith groups, and others, working toward the same goals in a hopeful spirit.

We gladly take up our responsibility and call for unprecedented international cooperation, to enable the large cuts which are required in global emissions. This will be a difficult road to travel but we are prepared to support decision-makers in taking the radical steps necessary. We appreciate progress made and uphold decision-makers as they navigate conflicting priorities, yet we challenge them to hold faith with the goal and not bend to short-term expediency.

An inequitable global agreement on climate change could lead to forced migrations and serious conflict. Any agreement must put the world's poorest first; it falls to richer countries to bear the greater burden of responsibility for change. The goal is achievable but priorities will need to change. Currently the majority of states commit more resources to warfare than to tackling climate change.

Where we see crisis we also see opportunity to remake society, as a communion of people living sustainably as part of the natural world. By leading the simpler lives of a low-carbon society we draw nearer to the abundance of peace, freedom, and true community. Our faith in common humanity gives hope. Love, rather than fear, can still lead us through this crisis.

Susan Seymour, Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings, Britain Yearly Meeting, 2009

Some Things I Learned at CYM

by Sybil Grace

Canadian Yearly Meeting was close to me this year, so there I was in Kemptville, and it was as wonderful a gathering as anyone could wish.

The theme "Friends with Mother Earth" carried through right to having non-disposable cups for every break. None of this disposable stuff for CYM! Tim Weis from the Pembina Institute condensed a day's study into two hours, emphasizing wind energy over solar, as solar currently costs ten times more.

In his daily Quaker Studies, Keith Helmuth revived the early Quaker, John Bellers, a contemporary with Penn and Woolman.

Bellers was a visionary who inspired nineteenth century Robert Owen, founder of the cooperative movement.

At the end of the week, Keith presented one of my favourite people, Kenneth Boulding. Altogether a very thought-provoking experience, though I enjoyed the change of pace when Ellen Helmuth facilitated the third class and shifted us to art. And I did love Keith's reference to the bumper sticker, "oh no, not another learning experience".

Ellen Gabriel, a Mohawk, active at Oka, left us with a conundrum when she said, "I feel less safe carrying a gun, but I believe in the right to self-defence".

I am delighted by the ways my eclectic knowledge base was increased: Ishy was the last of his tribe in California by 1911;

the Adanaki believe the early light of dawn is the most beneficial

(I have seen only a few in my life); that you can build a fairy house with tree branches and persistence; that cicadas are large and blunt, bronze and green, and tasty to spiders; that Ohio has members in sixteen Yearly Meetings; that indiginous peoples in the east move counter clockwise in their ceremonies, while those in the west move clockwise with the sun; that CYM has amazing musical and stage talent.

There were heavy issues that will continue through many Yearly Meetings. Our visitor from Friends United Meeting (FUM) heard a strong reaction following her presentation. As I witnessed our divergent views on FUM's stand against gays, and for Christocentricity, I believed our lack of unity would of course take us out of FUM when it came time to renew our membership. But our historic position as a founder of FUM (through one of the three Yearly Meetings that grew into CYM) means that we must have unity to leave FUM. As I shared with others I learned I was not the only one dumbfounded by this situation. The dissent within FUM itself is a result of their decision-making process, which unlike ours, is not based on unity within the whole.

There is another deep issue for CYM as our concern grows for our carbon imprint. Should we consider updating Camp NeeKauNis to hold a biannual Yearly Meeting? The noisy ripples were still growing when the decision was made to discuss this at Monthly Meetings and reconsider next year.

The tents were flower colours, including plum and purple. Being in a tent facing east, the early sun woke me and I often joined Dale Dewar in yoga exercise. I learned that not all my muscles were happy to be there.

I believe this was the first CYM with no food co-op. What we lost in creative cooking we gained in all being together for meals. The tables under the large trees always had a breeze despite the heat, and were welcome after so much intensity on hard seats in enclosed rooms.

Sybil Grace, Ottawa Monthly Meeting



The Light of Presence and Presence of Light

Excerpts from Keith Helmuth's Quaker Studies at Canadian Yearly Meeting, 2009

When John Muir first ventured into the high country of the Sierra Nevada in California, he was especially struck by the reality of mountain light. John Muir was a person of clairvoyant openness to the experience of landscape, and the extraordinary quality of light in the high Sierra ushered him into a profound experience of presence. He called these mountains "the range of light" - a name that has entered the language of landscape and now has deep resonance for all those touched by the experience of this high country.

Mary Austin, a friend of John Muir, wrote in her classic book on the region, *Land of Little Rain*:

The first effect of cloud study is a sense of presence in storm process. Weather does not happen. It is the visible manifestation of the Spirit moving itself in the void... Hardly anybody takes account of the fact that John Muir, who knows more of mountain storms than any other, is a devout man.

Several years ago, on repeated mornings, I sat on a second story deck overlooking the town of Bishop, California and watched the first light reach the high peaks and snow fields of the central Sierra Nevada range. The presence that accompanied those times of mountain light has stayed with me in a special way, because we shared it with our twelve-year-old granddaughter Julia. This week-long adventure was a gift to her at a time of transition. My wife Ellen and I were eager to revisit California, and we had the good sense to recruit my brother Harlan into our traveling party. He is a storehouse of geographic and natural history knowledge from his many years as a cross-country trucker, and he proved to be an ideal traveling companion for us all, but especially for Julia.

We had come to Bishop to visit the Bristlecone Pine - a pilgrimage into the presence of the oldest living things on Earth. This was the primary focus of our trip and accomplishing this visit truly lifted us into an elevated state of body and soul. As for body, the Bristlecone Pine Forest we visited occurs above 10,000 feet on the cresting plateaus and slopes of the White Mountains - mountains that frame the eastern side of Owens Valley across from the Sierra. From these heights, the view of the Sierra range to the west is spectacular. To the east you gaze into the

desert environment of Basin and Range country. To the south, beyond the flow of still more shimmering ridges and hidden canyons, lies Death Valley. While the body has a little trouble at this elevation, I am happy to report that the soul experiences no hesitation. Soaring is the soul's natural response, and among the

Light is indeed, the 'closing circle' in which we abide with all creation.

The sun had set behind the Sierra, when after our first day with the Bristlecones we turned from the mountain road onto the valley road and headed north toward Bishop. The White Mountains were shading into a blue-gray twilight. I pointed out that the Patriarch Grove, where we had spent most of the day, lay just on the far side of the two most prominent peaks coming into view. Julia looked up at the mountains and said, "Really?" We were up there? All the way up there?" I said, "Yes, that's where we were". There was a long pause, and then in a hushed voice she said: "It makes me feel so small". I heard this expression, considered the experience from which it arose, and tucked it away in special memory.

The next morning we discovered that a day trip from Bishop through the Yosemite high country and on to Yosemite Valley could easily be accomplished, including a visit to the Tuolumne Sequoia Grove. Our pilgrimage would now encompass visiting the largest living things on earth, as well as the oldest. Although I had seen these trees fifty-seven years ago - when I too was twelve years old - I was struck, like Julia, into a kind of speechless awe as we entered the grove and came face to face with the first of these immense and towering trees.

We had planned our trip around a visit to the Bristlecone Pine and to now have the Sequoia added to our experience gave our pilgrimage an even more fully rounded sense of presence. From the open mountaintop light of the Bristlecone terrain, to the deep forest light filtering through the Sequoia grove, there was a reality of presence that manifested in our souls. There is a particular presence in the life of each

tree. There is a wider presence in the larger forest environment, which arises for us from the plenitude of Earth. And this is just a consideration of trees and forests. Think of what needs to be added with regard to a still larger experience of presence - the whole world of animals! And indeed, animal encounters graced our experience of Owens Valley and its mountain regions. Julia kept a logbook which included wildlife sightings. Of particular note was a coyote that passed so close to us that we could see the distinctive look of its face, and the twin fawns that emerged from under sage bush cover on the slope of Tioga pass, only a few yards below our vantage point. This is only a sampling of the wildlife we encountered, but enough to illustrate another important experience of presence.

Flying back to Birmingham, Alabama, where Julia lives, she was sitting with my brother. As we descended toward the city, Julia said to him, "The rolling green hills of Birmingham look so friendly. It's as if they are welcoming me home." My heart leaped when he told me this. For now it seemed to me that not only had the mountain lands of California provided a new perspective, but something like a new sense of landscape had also come into place. New eyes were seeing the green hills of home with new affection. What more could I have possibly hoped for from this trip? No matter how much we may travel, we all know that it is love for our home place that is needed to preserve or recreate the beauty and health of the living earth.

What is our hope for the future?

In the near term, we know we have to do everything we can to move our households, our communities, and our regional and national jurisdictions, toward an ecologically sound human-earth relationship. Creating opportunities for children that unfold into experiences of Earth's great beauty - experiences that help create a sense of ecological identity, foster love for the land, and develop an ethic of care for all life - is an important aspect of this work.

As you might have guessed by now, I have a passion for trees - trees and forests. In my study of trees and the literature of forests, I have found some especially interesting information - information that illustrates the human-earth relationship in amazing and significant ways. Here is one example.

In June of 2005 I attended the Annual Meeting of Friends Association for Higher Education at Haverford College. Those of you who have been to Haverford College know that the campus is something of an arboretum with an abundance of lovely old trees. I had

brought with me a new book by Joan Maloof, titled, *Teaching the Trees: Lessons from the Forest*. During a time between sessions I retired to the base of an ancient oak and began to read. The first chapter is titled "Old Growth Air" and tells the story of the author's visit to the last remnant of old growth forest on the State of Maryland's Eastern Shore. Included in her story is another story.

In traditional Japanese culture there is a practice called "shinrin-yoku", which translates as "wood-air bathing". This practice of taking time for regular strolling through old growth woodlands, of literally bathing in forest air, has long been known in Japan to produce good health effects. Now we might think of this in terms of general spiritual uplift or psychic rejuvenation, but

it turns out that something of a more holistic nature is occurring.

For example, Japanese researchers have discovered that when persons who are diabetic go wood-air bathing, their blood sugar drops to a better level of balance. These findings are stimulating further research. Whole research symposia are now being held on the health benefits of wood-air bathing. It has been scientifically discovered that trees continuously exhale a range of chemical compounds, and forest air is very different from the air of a non-forest environment. The human body, as we also know, is highly receptive and highly reactive to organic chemical compounds. So when we go for a walk in the woods and say, "Ah, that was refreshing", or somehow feel distinctly better, we may be responding to a much more embedded and holistic human-earth relationship than we realize.

Researchers in the Sierra Nevada have found 120 naturally occurring chemical compounds in mountain forest air, only 70 of which were identifiable. Isn't it interesting to think of the great sea of relationships from which we have emerged, to which we are biochemically adapted, and about which we often have an intuitive sense of response? Wood-air bathing - a stroll among the trees - is one such response - a behaviour I strongly suggest that should be taken as exemplary of the human-earth relationship at its best.

Think of what it would mean for the design of human settlement, social life in general, and economic adaptation in particular, if so simple a practice as wood-air bathing became a high level priority. From the standpoint of the present political economy, and a way of life keyed almost entirely to resource exploitation and the accumulation of wealth, such a priority seems quaintly bizarre. But I suggest that the destruction of forests that has rampaged across

this continent, and is still going on, is far more bizarre. I can just barely imagine a time, an economy, and a way of life, in which this rampage ceases, the restoration of forest land begins, and wood-air bathing becomes a wide-spread practice of health maintenance and attunement to the human-earth relationship.

Practices of attunement are critical for a sense of guidance. We cannot do without them. Ceremonies of all sorts offer attunement and provide guidance. For example, Quaker Meeting for Worship is a practice of attunement that results in guidance. The Abenaki First Light Ceremony is focused on attunement and guidance. Informal and spontaneous ceremonies are often among the most powerful experiences of attunement. Here is an example.

Many years ago I spent several periods of time in Mombasa, Kenya's coastal city. On my first arrival I was told by a longtime resident about an informal ceremony that occurred each month in the park on the bluff overlooking the old harbour. He thought it would interest me. Being of an anthropological disposition, I followed up on this information, and on the appointed evening a little before dusk, a leisurely flow of people began moving along the streets toward the park. Eventually, a large but unusually hushed gathering of residents collected on the bluff. Some had brought folding chairs, some blankets for sitting on the ground. Children collected in little groups. Some folks were eating. Families quietly conversed. Time that seemed out of time gathered the scene before me. Evening light faded and the darker hue of night rolled in abruptly as happens in the equatorial zone. Suddenly, an expression of delight came softly from the whole assembly. "Ahhhhhhhhh" There it was! The crescent edge of the full moon rising from the horizon of the Indian Ocean!

Now I have seen the rise of the full moon on many occasions, in many locations, but never before or since have I felt quite the particular quality of communal attunement to cosmic beauty that covered this gathering. How fortunate to live in a place, and in a society that spontaneously creates such civic ceremonies of attunement from the ordinary events of earth process, or in this case, cosmic process.

Attunement to the beauty and processes of earth is a program, as it were, of the human condition. We are highly malleable, but we are not a blank slate. Attunement and guidance are pervasive processes that shape and direct human malleability. We have come into being bearing the imprint of our origin.

We come from this earth with receptors of attunement ready for recording and remixing our response to the music of a larger life.

Quakers have a well-developed language of light. It is a central motif in our way of talking about presence, and about presence behind presence. This is not really as obscure as it may sound. Nor is it necessarily mystical. It may be mystical, but that is something extra that happens to some people. Presence is actually the plainest thing in the world if we are truly awake, if we truly understand. As the late Thomas Berry never tired of pointing out -

earth is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects.

In considering our experience of light we clearly have to start with the immediate reality of ordinary daylight, the reality of the relationship between our eyes, the sun, and the world around us. From the beginning of human experience this earth with all its various landforms and life communities has been the context in which consciousness, reflective thought, and spiritual sensibility have developed. The reality of light - ordinary sunlight - in which this whole story unfolds, is clearly our underlying and over-arching context, the context from which all our experiences and expressions of light come forth.

There is a tendency, in some forms of spiritual thought, to see the human as a kind of container into which an extraordinary form of consciousness has been poured, from a source completely beyond the world. While this view has certain attractiveness as way of explaining human uniqueness, it has only speculation to support it, and its effect is often to produce a sense of aggrandizement, alienation, and carelessness about the world around us. It is true, in the scheme of things that,

human consciousness seems quite extraordinary, but that may be only because we have such a partial understanding of whales, wolves, or even bees.

The fact that human cultures have from time to time created ways of life that are spectacularly at odds with earth's ecological integrity, is not evidence that we are of a superior spiritual nature. All the evidence places human emergence within the earth process. The light that has nourished this emergence, and which has found expression in our best understanding of presence, shines across the entire range of our experience, from the first hints of dawn, to the primacy of relationship, to the inward clarity of the soul at peace.

Light, as defined by its utilization in the body, is a nutrient. It is an essential component of biotic functioning. In this context, to say that light is also spiritually nourishing is not just a metaphorical statement. It is a precise description about the unity of body, mind, and spirit. The intuitive sense of the

importance of light that has been carried within human development and spiritual aspiration, probably since the beginning of conscious reflection, has, since the 1970's, been given a map of the pathways through which this unity is created. The scientific information on this relationship does not replace its intuitive grounding, nor reduce the spiritual to biochemistry. The effect is, in fact, quite the reverse. The biochemistry folds into the overall holistic relationship. Light is indeed, the 'closing circle' in which we abide with all creation.

Keith Helmuth

New Brunswick Monthly Meeting

Editor's Note: See review of *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy* by Peter G. Brown and Geoffrey Garver with Keith Helmuth, in the Summer issue 2009, The Canadian Friend.

Getting There - Testing the Waters

by Alison and Jim Prentice

Attending CYM for the first time took our breath away. Our first task was to get there, which was not simple as there seemed no straightforward public transportation between our cabin on Georgian Bay where we spend our summers, and Kemptville. Quaker kindness prevailed. As long as we could get to Toronto, Elizabeth Block from Toronto MM was willing to drive us to Kemptville and back, sight unseen. Thus began what we are sure will be a very good friendship.

The CYM location necessitated lots of walking and, for those a little slower than others, this proved challenging. The program was very full, but it was full of wonderful things and we wanted to be involved in all of them. Before breakfast, one of us committed to meeting for worship, while the other was drawn to the lovely exercise classes with Dale Dewar. We were fascinated with both the organization and the content of Keith Helmuth's lectures, which came right after breakfast, and were followed and enhanced by worship study. One of our small worship study groups included teenagers as well as elders, a wonderful combination. We also loved the small group sharing on the subject of conflict resolution that took place during the open Meeting of Ministry and Counsel. In one of our M&C groups, we learned much from each other and also identified a common theme: time. Many conflicts do become resolved if we are willing to wait and let time pass. Meetings for Business were lengthy. But we learned much from their conduct.

The special interest group meetings were marvelous

and we wish we could have participated in more of them. We learned a great deal from outstanding sessions on the huge and growing environmental costs of uranium mining and nuclear power (as well as the links of each to nuclear weapons) and the ongoing damage caused by development of the Alberta tar sands. Concerted action on both is sorely needed.

We will take to heart William Penn's words, as quoted by Keith Helmuth. "True religion does not draw men and women out of the world, but into it." Keith assures us that this means political action. "Be a prophetic voice, shaggy and wild!" Also from Keith, **we learned that strolling in the forest is essential to health. Some call it "wood air bathing".**

Finally, we loved meeting and talking to Friends of all ages from all across our country, as well as our visitors from the USA and Australia. We were inspired by the energy and wisdom of young Friends and we enjoyed seeing Friends from our own Meeting in a new setting. Friendly deeds were many and there was time for singing and fun. We came away refreshed and enriched.



Alison and Jim Prentice, Victoria Friends Meeting

This year at Canadian Yearly Meeting the theme was 'Friends with Mother Earth,' with minutes and reports being presented on the tar sands and nuclear power, and an endorsement of a Britain Yearly Meeting statement on climate change*. Conversations unfolded around questions of what personal actions Friends can take to reduce their ecological footprint.

Like New Year's resolutions, it can be tough to stick to our environmental commitments, especially when no one is looking. Luckily for our small, dispersed group technology has an answer. GreenNexus is an online community, formerly called One Million Acts of Green, that was promoted by the Canadian Broadcasting Company earlier this year. Its raison d'être is to encourage people to share their strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, record how much carbon participants have saved, and allow people to challenge themselves and each other to go forward.

One Million Quaker Acts of Green

by Lee Webb

In the spirit of environmental group therapy and direct action, a Canadian Quaker group has been started on the GreenNexus website, and I invite you to join it and see how seriously we can take the threats of climate change.

As I write these words, there are only seven members in our group, so there is lots of room for more. Despite our size we have collectively done two hundred-twenty-nine acts of green, which includes everything from not letting the water run when brushing our teeth, to reducing our air travel. In order to go further to where we need to be, there will be challenges posted periodically to encourage us.

Please, please come join us. October 24 will be a global day of action on climate change. That would be a good day to sign up by. This is a chance to show ourselves, each other, and the world, our friendship with the earth.

Lee Webb, Halifax Monthly Meeting

To join this GreenNexus group, first create an account through <http://www.greennexus.com> and register your acts of green, then search for the group Canadian Quakers and press the join button.

(*See page 5 for this Minute from Britain Yearly Meeting)

Is CYM Capable of Action on Climate Change?

by Bert Horwood

My experience of Yearly Meeting '09 was a roller-coaster ride from hopeful calm to dangerous irritation and back again. Irritation began early as it became clear that there was distinct resistance to the draft minute on peaceful energy. On Tuesday, the Programme Committee's report included two further proposals that might move Yearly Meeting as a corporate entity toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A third suggestion came from the floor. All three were dismissed by the assembly.

By that time I felt strongly that Friends did not grasp the critical nature of global warming. I had the impression that Friends felt, because we took a century to end the African slave trade, we likewise had a century to inch our way toward biospheric responsibility. No hurry, let's take our time, and like the hare, because we are smarter and faster, we will win the race. I was ready to pop.

Luckily for me, Keith Helmuth's Thursday Quaker Study reminded me that numerous Friends are doing everything they can as individuals to produce net zero carbon emissions. Yes! And I saw further light as a Special Interest Group on the peaceful energy minute moved from pious exhortations toward a more functional minute that included specific corporate and communal action by Meetings, Worship Groups, and CYM itself. The danger of an unseemly explosion from me receded. In keeping with our general collective inaction on these subjects, the peaceful energy minute was rejected for further work, and deferred to next year. But in the course of discussions I learned that at least one Monthly Meeting already buys power from only sustainable sources. Are there others? I wondered.

Our communal 'hare' is still running far behind,

but we are in the race, if the race hasn't already been lost. I have hopes now, that by Yearly Meeting 2010 our many committees and Meetings will have made substantial progress toward the radical changes and preparations which are called for to either resist climate change, or adapt to startling new realities as the planet shifts to a new, hotter, state. In this work, science and faith must get together to outrun the tortoises.

Bert Horwood, Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting

Pants A Million

by John-Paul Flintoff
(England)

What with climate change, and energy crises, and food shortages, it can be easy to be glum. But don't be! Chin up! Take a tip from someone who has pored over those issues for several years - only to conclude that the best way to deal with them is to eat, drink and... er, make things, because tomorrow we die.

It may not be climate change or food shortages that kills me - I may be run over by a bus this afternoon, or choked by a potato crisp. And as I falter for those last seconds I'm unlikely to look back on my life as one long attempt to prevent carbon emissions reaching a certain threshold. I shall remember, I hope, the fun I had. And that includes making things.



These ideas, if that's not too grand a term, have knocked around in my mind for years but became vividly real as a result of writing my new book. It's called *Through The Eye Of A Needle*, and subtitled, "The true story of a man who went searching for meaning and ended up making his Y-fronts" - because that's exactly what happened.

I gradually became aware of issues like climate change, peak oil and the exploitation of cheap overseas labour - then tried to do something about it all, culminating in my making an entire outfit, using local, sustainable materials, right down to the underpants.

As you may possibly have guessed, I offer readers the opportunity to laugh at me, or with me (the choice is yours). This is because I didn't want to write another of those "green" books that leave readers feeling miserable and are anyway read only by the converted.

People in the mainstream media - for which I work - have leaped at the chance to run stories about my experiments to make fabric out of nettle fibre, and knitting my own Y-fronts (briefs). So far as this goes, I'm delighted. But the point was not to show off about what I'd done. It was to inspire others to try the same.

But it's one thing to talk shamelessly about doing crochet on the London Underground, as I've done, and another thing altogether, in the Age of Dawkins, to bring anything like spirituality into a book. Only, I didn't want to do it any other way. I wanted to write a book not only about how we can affect change but also about why.

"The way we look at clothing influences the way we look at the environment, the economy and life itself."

There are too many "green" books, it seems to me, that take for granted our wish to 'Do Something' for the sake of our unborn descendants and people living far away. Well, I don't wish harm to anybody, but I don't see how I can really care about someone if I don't even know they exist, or what their name is. The only people I can really care about, surely, are my family and friends and in the widest sense, my neighbours.

Though brought up without any religious training, I recall Jesus saying something about neighbours, and I set out to try every Christian denomination. Over six months, I tried churches variously with or without clergy, hymns, musical accompaniment, fine clothes, incense, a broad ethnic and social mix, and transubstantiation - in short, a greater range of Christian experience than many practising believers encounter.

For a time, I carried a copy of *Advices and Queries* everywhere I went, till I'd fully absorbed George Fox's injunction that we be patterns, examples, and walk cheerfully.

I've also struck out into Buddhism, and read a bit about other faiths too. One that deserves to be better known was founded by an otherwise unreligious American, Callie Janoff, after she and a group of friends asked themselves, "If I'm a spiritual person how does that express itself in my life?"

They all came to the same answer: making things. "When we make things we are connecting to the part of ourselves that we imagine is the spiritual part, the part most resembling divinity." In playful mood, but also with great seriousness, Janoff set up the Church of Craft.

"Consumption eats self-esteem; creation makes it grow. I've written and said this so many times, but I believe it strongly: making things makes us happier, more whole people." By making my own clothes, using local, sustainable materials, I'm stepping lightly on the planet, which is a gratifying side effect. But this isn't a means to an end. Making things, whether they're clothes or fitted bookshelves (which I've also tried) is an end in itself, and provides its own reward: something to remember with a smile when the rising sea water, or that speeding bus, finally gets me.

Jean-Paul Flintoff

(This article was excerpted with permission from John-Paul, a journalist/broadcaster based in London, England. Previously published in *'the Friend'* September 4, 09. John's book titled: *Through the Eye of a Needle*. is "the true story of a man who went searching for meaning and ended up making his Y-fronts" (briefs). www.flintoff.org)

Our Promise

We have come together, aware as never before of an ominous threat to the wellbeing of all life on the planet. The threat that concerns us is climate change experienced as global warming and now being manifested by violent storms, receding glaciers, rising sea levels, drying up of rivers, drought and crop failures. Scientists have traced these changes to increasing levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in earth's atmosphere. For the past several decades they have been making dire predictions and issuing warnings with no significant moves being made to alleviate the situation. The main source of the problem is the immoderate consumption of fossil fuels and the squandering of these resources in military training and aggressive exploits abroad. The problem is caused by human activities, and it is human action that is now drastically needed to avert disaster.

We as Friends are committed to reversing this change in the world's climate patterns.

(Excerpt from CYM Epistle 2009)

Ask Margaret Fell

Editor's Note: Margaret Fell (1614-1702) was a key member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). After her first husband, Thomas Fell, a circuit judge, died, she married George Fox, a founder of the Quakers. Readers may direct their letters to:

**"Margaret Fell"
c/o The Canadian Friend**

Confused Friend



*Margaret Fell
c/o The Canadian Friend*

Dear Margaret,

Sometimes I get bored in Meeting for Worship. The other Friends are so enthusiastic that I'm reluctant to admit this. Does it ever happen to you?

Ennui

Dear Ennui,

Oh dear. 'Tis a fearful miserable thing to be bored. Thou might ask thyself who it is that is boring thee and then have a tender word with him, or her. Ask her (or him) to kindly stop. Or thou couldst attune thy heart, mind and spirit to the spirit working in the Meeting. I myself used to take my mending basket to Meeting to busy my hands when I felt ennui (alas, poor soul that I am, I must confess I did) but dear George saw it and eldred me thoroughly. Take heart, dear Friend, and put thy best energy of soul into the gathering.

Thy Lively Friend, Margaret



Isaac Klaassen-Wright, Maggie Knight, Jessica Klaassen-Wright, Rachel Urban Shipley, (back) Ahren Klaassen-Wright and Ben Urban Shipley

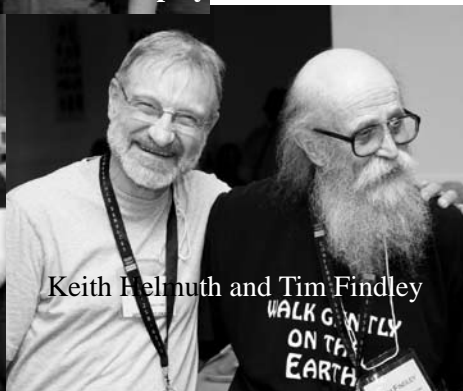


Rebecca Ivanoff and Nat Egan-Pimblett

A Fine Balance



Johan, Grace, and Brigid Egan-Pimblett



Keith Helmuth and Tim Findley



Catherine Verrall and bike

"The secret to salvation is only this - save us from our selfishness."
(J.G. Whittier poem quoted following Thursday's Quaker Study)



Margaret Slavin and Jo Vellacott



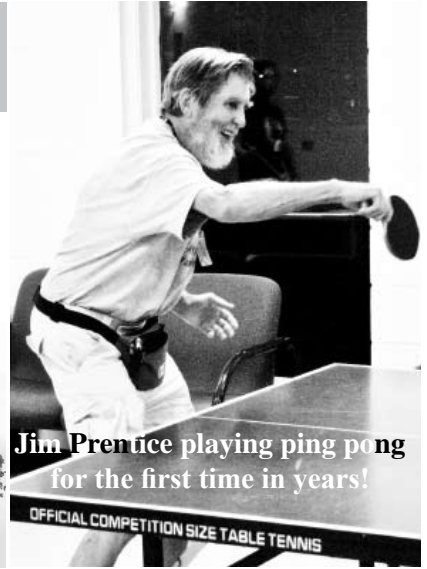
Young Friends gather

"We are to be a prophetic community - volcanic, upheaving, and shaggy." Helen Bayes.



Mel Early and Martha McClure

Kemptville lamp post



Jim Prentice playing ping pong for the first time in years!



P
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Jennifer Preston, Ellen Gabriel, Monica Walters - Field, Penni Burrell,

"If you want to get ahead, use the one you've got!" Jerry Ackerman

Oveheard from a young Friend: *"Of course I lack perspective, I'm only 16 years old!"*



Mel Powers, Zoe Laky, Ahren Klaassen-Wright, Devin Mercer



Celebrating Dana and Vernon Mullen's many years of dedication to Quaker Book Service. Anne-Marie Zilliagus (left) and Ahren Klaassen-Wright (right)

High Points

by David Millar

My personal high points were hearing directly from Ellen Gabriel about continuing Kanesatake Mohawk issues at Oka, speaking with a weighty young Friend Ravi Joshi, and from listening to Jean James, a Baltimore Friend in a thirty-year same-sex relationship, who told me from her own experience why we should stay in FUM. They all know how to ask the hard questions.

Seeing again old and young from the many Meetings across Canada is like a family reunion. After 30 years, the wider world of Quakers is finally opening up to me through my work with FWCC on forthcoming world consultations, the Moral Economy Project, and interfaith KAIROS/ROJeP. I mightily enjoyed seeing Young Friends take the lead on climate issues in the final minutes.

Once again I realize that our Meeting for Worship for Business could not have progressed after voices popped up on all sides of an issue, without the ability of our team of Clerks and Recorders to “read” the sense of Meeting. And I acknowledge the great efforts by preparatory committees who consulted all sides and seasoned issues before they reached the floor.



David Millar, Montreal Monthly Meeting

(For discussions of earth-care concerns join the Canadian e-mail group via <http://www.quaker.ca/Committees/qean>, Friends worldwide discussions on QEWnet.ning.com, and interfaith/youth events, as well as the informal Kairos site kecojustice.ning.com.)

Memories: Yearly Meeting In Saskatoon

by Jo Vellacott

When I first joined Friends in the mid-sixties I was told that Yearly Meeting was always held in Ontario, usually at Pickering College. For a few years this indeed was the case. But the Society of Friends was growing in the west, and in 1970 a great experiment took place - Yearly Meeting was held in Saskatoon.

Imagine a train with a whole railcar devoted to Friends, traveling together for several days and nights to take part in Yearly Meeting. I do not remember the details well, but I do remember the sense of enjoyment and the preparation, having time to chat, getting to know new people, and catching up with old friends.

I recall one incident in particular from that journey. In those days more Quakers adhered to the strict temperance practice of earlier Friends, but a number did not, and were concerned as to whether they may offend someone, in particular Fred Haslam. He was the much-loved and profoundly respected ‘Mr. Quaker’ of the day; secretary-treasurer and faithful servant of the Meeting. What would he think if they were seen to have a glass of wine with their railway dinner? Muriel Bishop, very much my Friendly mentor, was led to the conclusion that those of us who would normally have a drink should not hold back, and should on no account attempt to conceal our indulgence. Respect for Fred Haslam would be better shown by openness than by pretence.

The highlight of the gathering in Saskatoon was unexpected by most of us. I am sure there were some who were not as ignorant of Canadian Friendly history as I was, but I think few were aware that Quakers had been instrumental in helping rescue the Doukhobors from genocide in Russia in the very early years of the twentieth century.

We may have forgotten, but the Saskatoon Doukhobors (a substantial part of the city community in 1970) had not, and when they heard that we were coming to their town for our annual gathering, they planned a celebration for us.

On the afternoon of our mid-week break, the Doukhobors took us to the place of their first settlement, some distance outside Saskatoon. There had once been a schoolhouse staffed by a Quaker teacher. Now there was very little left, though farming members of the sect still lived nearby in the early Doukhobor tradition, and most still spoke only Russian.

I think few were aware that Quakers were instrumental in helping rescue the Doukhobors from genocide in Russia, in the very early years of the twentieth century. We may have forgotten, but the Saskatoon Doukhobors had not...

At our second stop, we got out of the buses, as I remember it, on to bare rolling prairie, and saw a group of people standing around a plain wooden trestle table set with a loaf of bread, salt, and a jug of water drawn from the nearby spring. These we learned, represent the necessities of life, and are the traditional Doukhobor symbols of grace and thanksgiving. As we stood, the figures around the table broke into song and came towards us singing in welcome. The Spirit surely moved between us.

Later we stood around the table as speeches were made, mostly in Russian. Kathleen Hertzberg, then Clerk of Canadian Friends Service Committee responded for us, and fortunately Jadwiga Bennich, CFSC General Secretary, a fluent Russian speaker, was able to translate and help us express our warm appreciation.

After this very special time we were taken to the substantial Doukhobor Prayer Hall in downtown Saskatoon. There in the church basement we feasted, on traditional food, starting with big bowls of borscht, provided by a largely English-speaking congregation. Upstairs in the main hall, we were entertained by an *a cappella* choir. Here, we blundered. Some of our musical Young Friends, wanting to reciprocate, took out their guitars and started to play and sing. Fortunately, some wise Friend noticed the cooling of the atmosphere. Indeed, one or two older Doukhobors were frowning and preparing to leave. While singing was an active part of their tradition, instruments in church were offensive. Apologies followed and were accepted as we parted with renewed love and understanding.

I can only write of this as I remember it, can only speak of it as I experienced it, and yet I cannot find the words to express how deeply it affected me - a fairly new Friend at that time- with a deep sense of the working of the Spirit.

*Jo Vellacott,
Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting*

Thoughts About CYM in Session

by Dorothy Parshall

After a hiatus of about fifteen years, or maybe sixteen, I was able to attend CYM this year. There were some very positive feelings and, well, some not so positive.

I was happy to see all the youngsters. What a great crop of children and young adults! All that joy and energy was exciting, and very, very positive, as it speaks well of the future of the Religious Society of Friends in Canada.

How marvelous too, to see our nonagenarians and the many not-quite-that-old Friends. And all those in between! We could call them "tweenies"? That vast and wonderful group of 'becoming-weighty Friends' in their 20s to 50s.

It was terrific to renew friendships that had been in limbo for many years - a clear indication that time is no factor in true friendship. It was terrifically special to be appreciated for words spoken long ago, and to be valued for my offerings over the years.

There was joy. There was music. There were wonderful silences and deep sharing. There was much to affirm the essence of what it means to be a part of the CYM community. That community was one of the most important parts of my life for many years.

CYM in session, was each year, the turning over of my year, the ending of one and beginning of the next - my New Year's Week, the most important week of my year. Then other bits of life intervened and I missed that sustenance, that connection with my precious Quaker community.

It was wonderful to be able to be back in that community. It was also difficult. Some things do not change and that is wonderful. Some things do not change and that is, to me, distressing. I was frequently reminded of Friend Julian Davies who was totally deaf in his last years. He begged people to use his hearing device. They often failed to do so. This caused me great distress then. My ten-year problem with auditory processing created similar frustration this year. I asked via the 'Quacker' for Friends to speak clearly and speak up. They failed to do so.

I do not believe Julian ever gave up. I did. The speaker system did not help me. The assistive device did not help me. It does not matter how loudly I turn it up, if people do not speak clearly then it is merely

loudly unclear rather than softly unclear. I felt left out and isolated by my inability to understand what words Friends were speaking. I could hear but was only able to process about ten percent of the words unless Friends spoke as clearly as John Calder and Virginia Dawson. Very few did. For the first time I gave up going to business sessions, and left CYM early, because I was worn out with trying to understand. Perhaps I could have accepted being present and given over the need to understand the words. That idea only occurred to me at this moment of writing. I will consider it for next year.

However, when people are asked to speak up and speak clearly, or when they are asked to use an assistive device and they fail to accede to these requests, I feel this could be considered passive-aggressive behavior. It does violence to those who need help, just as surely as taking away a wheelchair from someone who needs it. I hope Friends will consider this concept.

The first few days of CYM were rather shocking to me for other reasons. Although I do not watch TV, it caused me to think of the comment I have heard about not watching a soap opera for six months and then when one does, finding little has changed. There were some unfortunate situations, which I perceived had not changed. Perhaps these types of things are not as noticeable to those who have continuity of attendance.

In reading and listening to reports, I observed the wheel being re-invented. It was painfully apparent that Friends still do not read the minutes of previous years, pay little heed to the history of a committee, do not know what previous decisions were made, what was tried and found lacking, what was good but was forgotten by the next committee and so forth.

This has been a concern of mine for about thirty-five years as I have seen it happen again and again. There was a particularly painful time when the proposed HMAC report to CYM included a sentence which began: "For the first time..." The sentence went on to proudly talk about a "new" initiative which I knew had been done by HMAC years earlier. When I suggested this incorrect (untruthful) statement be changed, the response was that it did "not matter". Truthfulness matters and so do the feelings of those who actually carried out that initiative, and are now forgotten because new committee members did not do their work. It was changed.

I recently jettisoned twenty years of HMAC minutes, only about five inches of paper in two binders, with the blind faith that these are available and accessible in the archives. Or in the CYM

office? I am hoping there are copies available. I would be willing to help scan them into a computer to make them available to committee members. One new HMAC member spoke with me at length about his wish to become knowledgeable. He deserves all the help we can give him as he pursues the goal of becoming an experienced Friend.

Another distressing factor, which has not changed, is the wasting of Friends' time by failing to be prepared on the floor of Meeting for Worship for Business. John Woolman's strong feelings about this can be read in his Journal. (This may indicate that the problem is long term! Does that mean it is beyond hope?) That friend speaks my mind. There are many ways to waste time: those reports which are not in Documents in Advance, because they were not prepared in time; those which need to be read on the floor; those Friends who do not read the Documents in Advance and, hence, are unprepared to speak but speak anyway; those who do not speak clearly; those who do not give careful consideration to what has already been said before speaking themselves. None of this is in right ordering and all of it contributes to the wasting of precious time and resources.

As with anything, there were excellent bits and aggravating ones, joyful times, frustrating times, a full gamut of experiences. I hope I can make it next year.

Dorothy Parshall

(a former editor of The Canadian Friend)

Statement on Nuclear Power

Address by Marilyn Manzer to CYM 2009

Quakers took 100 years to come to unity that slave owning was wrong and must be opposed by Friends. There were reasons for supporting slavery: the economy could not exist without it and slaves of Quakers were better treated than those of non-Quakers.

The parallels with nuclear power today keep staring me in the face. We think we "need" nuclear power to supply the energy to keep us living in the way we have become accustomed. We are only promoting "good" nuclear power – the kind we use for lights and running computers – not the "bad" nuclear power that makes bombs and threatens the continuation of life on earth. We don't see the links between the "good" and the "bad".

(continued on page 23)

Interviews with:

Kathleen Hertzberg



SjH: What is your passion?

K: A number! The Faith of the Society of Friends; The Peace Testimony; Art; Human beings; Nature. The survival of our planet in spite of man's degradation of Nature. (Also) concern about what modern civilization is doing to nature and will indeed not stop that process.

I call our civilization "The Lemmings' Civilization"

(Lemmings are small Arctic animals, that from time to time gather in droves and throw themselves over into the arctic ocean and drown en mass!)

But the "Final Solution", though expedited by man's civilization, in fact does rest with nature itself.

SjH A particular concern at CYM?

K: There are a number. An important one was "same-sex marriage". I was glad that I had the copy of the current issue of Britain YM's "The Friend" dated 7th August, 2009, from which I could read to the YM. It reported in their Epistle that :

"We are led to enable same sex marriages in a Meeting for Worship under the care of a Meeting, as we currently do for opposite sex marriages."

SjH: How many CYM's have you attended?

K: I have attended all forty-seven CYMs. since we came to Canada in 1952 . When YM was held outside of Ontario for the first time in 1970 (Saskatoon) my husband and I both attended. A lot of history!

SjH: Is there a yearning you have for Friends?

K: My response to this question would take more time and thought than I can give here, but the words of George Fox when he first encountered the Westmorland Seekers, is precious and basic for me:

"Christ is come to teach His People
himself by His Spirit".

Jim Adamson

SjH: What does the theme 'Friends with Mother Earth' mean to you?

J: We should value the biosphere as we do our Mother.

SjH: A question you would like put to you?

J: **Exactly who are these Quakers and why so few?**

SjH: How has/does Spirit move in your life?

J: I seek to feel useful in practical ways that support the work of Friends. I have maintained a role in Camp NeeKauNis, currently with regard to the 'Carry on Discovering' Program, which is held each year in September. This year we will be discussing parts of the book *Quakerism, A Theology for our Time*, by Patricia A. Williams.



CYM Impresses New Quaker

by Pat Moauro

Earlier this year, everything seemed to fall into place. Joining the Religious Society of Friends seemed to make the most sense. All my years of spiritual searching had led me back to this modest group. I could not forget George Fox's trenchant comment that he discovered "that of God in every person".

That and other Quaker beliefs dove-tailed so closely with what I had come to believe and internalize, that there was nothing left to do but to make my association official and take my stand with these peace-loving people.

As a newly convinced Quaker, I didn't know what to expect when I attended my first Canadian Yearly Meeting in Kemptville. I just knew, as soon as my Meeting - Coldstream Monthly Meeting near London, Ontario - approved my membership earlier this year, that I had to attend CYM. I realized if I was going to be a member of the Religious Society of Friends, that I wanted to learn everything I could about Quakers.

Several Friends kept asking me, "Well, how are you holding up?" They expected that the long days and evenings of multiple activities would take their toll and I would be bushed and perhaps even frazzled. I could understand that if someone were to attend every single event and activity, starting at Meeting for Exercise with Dale at 6:45 a.m. and ending with singing and snacks in the Bell Hall lounge around 10:30 p.m. or later, then yes, I would likely be bushed and perhaps frazzled.

However, I'm pleased to say that I never became bored or tired to the point of exhaustion. Oh, I took an occasional break during a couple of mornings and afternoons, but managed to take in most of the activities and events - even the Meeting for Worship for Business, which I understand, can become somewhat tedious for some.

The Meeting for Worship for Business is an ideal place to learn about the inner workings of the Society and to listen to a variety of frank and honest expressions of opinions for and against a particular motion or proposition. Some Meetings during the week started to heat up as Friends disputed a particular viewpoint or put forward their views and conclusions. Despite the occasional pointed question and even mild conflict and disagreement, everyone treated each other with the utmost respect.

Clerk Dale Dewar of Prairie Monthly Meeting was the epitome of politeness and respect as she fielded questions

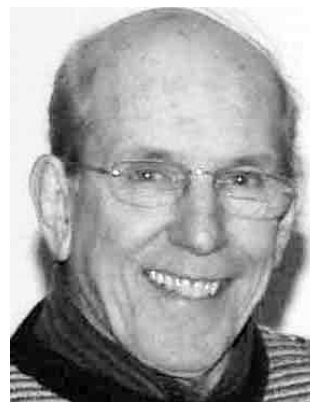
and issues on the floor, and gently guided the Meeting to a timely break when the allotted time had expired.

I was particularly impressed with the warmth, friendliness, and generosity of spirit that I encountered during my nine days at CYM. Complete strangers stopped, looked at my name badge, and struck up a conversation. Even while sitting alone in the cafeteria finishing my lunch or dinner, someone whom I had not yet met usually made a point to speak to me and ask how I was enjoying CYM.

I witnessed a number of selfless and loving acts. I saw people in long food lines encourage the elderly and people with physical challenges to move to the front of the line. I saw young Quakers carrying food trays for the elderly and physically restricted, and also taking them around in wheelchairs. Adults volunteered daily to work with young children in workshops and other activities. Volunteers at the Registration Desk were unfailingly helpful and cheerful, despite the long hours they put in each day.

It's been said that strangers are only friends that we haven't met. During CYM I met people who for a brief time were strangers, but these Friends soon became good friends.

From my first evening at CYM when I joined fellow Quakers at a Silent Retreat, to my last evening watching talented Quakers, young and old, perform on stage during a Family Evening of Entertainment, I can honestly say I enjoyed my entire nine days immensely. My advice to any new Quakers, or any long-time Quakers who have never attended a Canadian Yearly Meeting: Plan to attend at least one. You will benefit tremendously.



*Pat Moauro
Coldstream
Monthly Meeting*

A Horse at Meeting for Worship

by Ruth Lor Malloy, Toronto Monthly Meeting

"I can't", I said as friends suggested I sit in George Fox's chair. I didn't want to. There was something sacred about it. I didn't feel worthy. It's just a chair, they said. It's not an object of worship. We were in Swarthmoor Hall in England where the chair of the founder of The Religious Society of Friends currently resides. My friends were right of course. There was nothing mystical about this dark brown, ornately carved wooden armchair. I sat in it for Meeting for Worship. Thoughts of early Friends filled my mind. They had dared to meet in this room over three hundred years before. Many, like Margaret Fell, mistress of the house and the mother of the Quaker Faith, had been taken from here to jail. Worshipping outside the Church of England was against the law.

I felt humbled by the courage of these people. Over 13,000 early Quakers were eventually imprisoned for their faith, for our faith. It was one of the many lessons I learned during my trip there in June of 2009.

Nine of us were on a three-day pilgrimage in the footsteps of George Fox. These tours are organized by Swarthmoor Hall twice a year. This grey-stucco mansion was the centre of Quaker Faith and Practice from 1652 to 1691, until Swarthmoor Meeting House was built nearby. Swarthmoor Hall is now a conference centre, as well as a historical Quaker museum. It is in Ulverston in northern England, two hours by car from Manchester.

There we found the tiny Bible carried by George Fox, a piece of wood from the tree under which William Penn signed his treaty with the Indians, and a heavy, wooden traveling trunk with the initials G.F. and the date 1675.

Six of the rooms are decorated in 17th century style. They are full of pictures of Quaker history. There's a portrait of Thomas Fell, husband of Margaret. He was a judge and a member of parliament. His protection helped the fledgling faith grow. It wasn't until after his death that Margaret Fell was imprisoned. The history was fascinating.

The tour took us to Pendle Hill. We climbed for an hour up to its rugged, treeless summit, enjoying the ever-broadening view of the countryside, the flocks of black sheep, and the patchwork of green fields below. A discouraged George Fox climbed it in 1652 and wrote in his journal: "...from the top of this hill the Lord let me see in what places he had a great people to be gathered."

Bill Shaw, warden of Swarthmoor and our guide, took us to a natural amphitheatre on the side of the hill, a breath-taking setting where we had another memorable Meeting for Worship.

There was no historical plaque on this 395-meter high hill, but there was a plaque on the rock in Firbank Fell where Fox spoke for three hours that same year. There, he convinced 1000 Westminister Seekers that they didn't need

to worship God in a steeple house. They could worship God anywhere. This mass conversion at Firbank Fell was the first major step in the growth of the Religious Society of Friends.

There used to be a chapel nearby, but we saw no sign of it. Today, it is only a pasture with the one large rocky outcrop on it. Two horses were grazing there. Horses were the only living beings there aside from us. One of the horses bit my foot during another memorable Meeting for Worship.

We also visited several old Meeting Houses, built in the 1600s. They had elevated platforms for the people who frequently gave ministry and historical pictures on their walls. Each had a warden or Resident Friend. George Fox did not want to build Meeting Houses at first. After authorities seized Quaker homes, which were used for Meetings, and prosecuted their owners, Friends started building Meeting Houses so individual owners would not be affected. Fox personally financed the Swarthmoor Meeting House because he suspected that Swarthmoor Hall might not always be in Quaker hands. He was right about that, though it is now Quaker owned again.

At the Meeting House in the town of Kendal, we saw the impressive Quaker Tapestry, seventy-seven large rectangles of embroidered pictures with Quaker themes: work camps, George Fox speaking to the 1000 Westminister Seekers, the Nobel Peace Prize, etc. This Meeting House had been expanded to accommodate 800 people. Today, however, it has less than 100 members. I was beginning to wonder about the decline of Quakers in Britain.

Near Ulverston we visited the graveyard where Margaret Fell and other early Quakers are buried. There are no grave markers there. It would be interesting to find out why George Fox's grave in London and most Meeting Houses have grave stones.

I wanted to visit places of Quaker history. I wanted to find out how much we had changed from George Fox's vision. I was amazed to find he had spoken for three hours; that he and the 'Valiant Sixty' went around the countryside and the world preaching. Some of us tend today to hesitate even about telling friends that we are Quakers. Maybe we are going too far in the other direction. I wondered about the future of our movement, the diminishing numbers in our First Day School in Toronto, and our lack of programs for Young Friends. What is our future? The whole trip left me with much to think about.

I also wondered about the pasture where 1000 people once listened to George Fox. It didn't look like many people went there any more. It looked good only for horses.

What Is It To Be Human? St. Lawrence Regional Gathering 2009

by Margaret Slavin

St. Lawrence Regional Gathering this past spring led us into new considerations around “the sacredness of the land”. Our guest speaker was Robert Lovelace, a bit of a hero in these parts, since he walks the talk. Lovelace spent two months in the jail in Lindsay, Ontario, for refusing to allow uranium mining exploration on the unceded land of the Ardoch Nation near Sharbot Lake. In February, 2008, a justice of the Ontario Superior Court sentenced this indigenous leader to six months in prison, with a staggering fine of \$25,000, a further fine to the Ardoch First Nation of \$10,000, together with a fine of \$15,000 to Chief Paula Sherman, who had children at home and had reluctantly consented to withdraw from further protest.

Lovelace is a professor at Queen’s University; he knew his rights, both legal and moral. On May 28, 2008, the Ontario Court of Appeal rolled back these outrageous sentences, at the same time releasing six leaders of the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwg Nation (KI) who were also imprisoned on contempt charges for a similar protest against drilling for platinum on their traditional lands. A related issue that has gone by the board now but had some of us stirred up at the time, was that two white men who stood with the indigenous protestors were released without charges, adding a heightened appearance of racism to an already highly charged set of events.

Attendance at our Regional Gathering almost doubled, and included a few first-time attenders and friends of Friends, drawn by the theme and the guest. One of these, Jo Hayward Haines, reflected afterwards about the process she perceived as arising from the gathering: “For me, part of that process is what I experienced in the community of Friends. We kept a big space open at the heart of things. Mostly people were attuned to what seemed to be emerging from our attentiveness.” Certainly there was ample time for reflection, conversation, scattering over the fields on long walks, or in one case, foraging for wild food.

But the core of the weekend was the message brought to us by Robert Lovelace. I had expected some version of further inside stories about the Sharbot Lake protests, some form of a call to show solidarity and support. Instead, I heard an intelligent,

clear, history-based appeal to all of us to look to our own roots and our own understanding of what it is to be a human being on this planet. This is not the first time that helpful ministry has been brought to Friends from aboriginal experience!

Among my notes: “Raise your own civil rights. Given that we are all one, how do we come together to deal with peak oil and climate change? The value of a thing has to be tied to its use. We must shift from being a materially-based culture to being knowledge-based. **Indigenous means living sustainably. We all used to be indigenous. Say no to affluence.**”

The tensions between the Frontenac Ventures Corporation and the Ardoch First Nation are not, I came to see, an aboriginal issue, but a human issue. Lovelace startled me by stating that indigenous people already have in place the laws they need to protect their civil rights, though in many cases they lack the *capacity* to enforce those laws. In his view, it is the rest of us who need to look to our civil rights.

He pointed out that most of us, or our ancestors, came to Canada as the lowest-paid members of the societies we left. In Europe in particular, with the coming of the Roman Empire, we indigenous peoples were forcibly and intentionally disengaged from our languages, our spiritual connections with the Earth, our cultures, and our religions. The empire required slaves, soldiers, and the forests and natural resources, having depleted its own. We became people with a low sense of ourselves and of the space we needed in order to thrive on this planet. It became normal and even right to do to others what had been done to ourselves. Furthermore, it felt right to do it to our environment. We have displaced our value onto the acquisition of material goods, and the value of the land onto “exploitation of natural resources”.

As the child of these historical processes, when I hear that uranium mining may pollute waterways which flow near where I live, or when I hear that mining companies have the legal right to wreak havoc on privately-owned land without consultation or permission from those who hold deeds (or unceded treaty rights) to this land, or when I understand that my home is heated in the cold Canadian winter with a fossil fuel which has nearly run out - I hear

these things from a place of estrangement from my sacred connection with the Earth. When I hear that the Algonquin people in my part of Ontario knew the uses of 250 fruits and vegetables that are indigenous to this place (Lovelace urged us to count how many we currently know and use) - or news of the high percentage of Aborigines in our prisons, or when from personal connections I become aware of the humiliations forced upon the poor and on New Canadians and on anyone else in our society who is "different" - have I not come to feel that this is "normal"? It's too bad, but it is normal. What can you expect? What can we expect as human beings on this Earth? What is our value? What is it to be human?

In a current publication from KAIROS, *Christian Faith and The Canadian Tar Sands: a reflection on sustainability and energy*, I stopped before a challenging quotation from an unpublished paper by one Brian Walsh: "Western materialistic affluence coupled with two-thirds world poverty is normal. A proliferation of cheap and useless consumer goods is normal. Environmental collapse is normal. Dedicating one's life to economic growth is normal. People living for the weekend is normal. A throwaway society is normal. Deficit financing is normal. Rapid and greedy resource depletion is normal."

Is it possible that this sense of normalcy, arising from our own ancestral experience of oppression, is the reason why our voice as Friends so often feels muted? At least, mine does. Here I am in a Society which exists at its core to acknowledge the scary divine fire that calls each one of us into Mystery, and yet so often all I can do is be "nice".

The Algonquin way, Lovelace told us, is to bring all of our values - the economic, the communal, the love of land, the uses of it all - out on the table together, and "work it out". Make adjustments! Get along! Not "nice," but clear, firm, with a sense of mutual trust. And respect. In a knowledge-based culture such negotiations can be conducted by human beings who have developed a deep understanding of what it is to live on this earth.

Community will not always trump economy, but neither will the opportunity to make money always trump the existing peaceful use of the land. Decisions can be made when no one and no value is dismissed. This is not easy, but it is the only peaceful path toward working out difference.

Margaret Slavin, Wooler Monthly Meeting

Nuclear Power

(continued from page 18)

There were Friends, a generation ahead of me, who understood in the 1940's and 1950's when nuclear power was first thrust on the world, that this power was evil, seductive, and must be opposed. Our elders, Muriel Duckworth, Peggy Hope-Simpson, and Ursula Franklin, were among those who started the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, and have devoted their lives to showing us the connections between the nuclear industry, war, and ecological devastation.

Nuclear technology creates vast landscapes of radioactive uranium mine tailings that must be kept separated from the air, water, and land, yet no one has figured out a secure way to do this. This technology also creates radioactive wastes from nuclear plants and weapons that are so dangerous they must be guarded forever. No one has found a way to securely dispose of these wastes and it is quite likely that there is no way. All future generations will not only have to guard them, but figure out how to transfer them when the containment facilities wear out. No one knows what to do with old nuclear power plants and weapons that have become radioactive because of contact with the fission process. They also will have to be guarded.

I see a great evil in promoting the use of such dangerous technology just so we can keep our affluent life style. A nuclear plant produces electricity for 25 to 40 years. The hot deadly wastes last forever. Has anyone imagined the sheer amount of these wastes that will accumulate if we keep building nuclear plants?

There are many reasons for opposing nuclear power. It is responsible for greenhouse gasses. It is not clean and green. It is horrendously expensive and draws our public resources away from developing more sane and safe alternatives. It is inextricably linked to powerfully destructive weapons. It is susceptible to accidents from human error and to terrorist infiltration. But to my mind there is one reason to oppose it that dwarfs all these. That is the evil inherent in using power that is in such wrong relationship to the integrity of life on earth, that we leave a legacy of danger to all future generations of people, animals, and plants. I will keep talking about this in Canadian Yearly Meeting until all Friends understand that this is a greater evil than slavery, because once done, it cannot be undone.

*Marilyn Manzer
Annapolis Valley Monthly Meeting*

Engaging Christian Language: The New Covenant

In 2002, I traveled to Kenya to participate in a Young Friends work camp and to attend Friends United Meeting Triennial gathering. What I remember best about my experience at the Triennial was the Isaac T. and Lida K. Johnson lecture that Ben Richmond gave, which was called “What is the Work that Friends are Called to Finish?” In this lecture I was first introduced to the concept of the New Covenant, and to its centrality to the teachings of George Fox. For those who are unfamiliar with this term, it comes from the book of Jeremiah:

“The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt - a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, ‘Know the Lord’, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.” (Jeremiah 31:31-34, New Revised Standard Version).

In his lecture, Ben Richmond explained that there were three parts to the New Covenant, each of which has become central to my own theological understanding. They are based on a Christian understanding of the New Covenant, and assume that Jesus has inaugurated the New Covenant and that it applies to both Jews and non-Jews. The first aspect of the New Covenant is that God forgives our sins. This I can attest to experientially. Every time I have felt like I have done wrong and asked for forgiveness, I have felt forgiven, and when I have felt forgiven by God, I have been more able to forgive myself. This has allowed me to move on with my life and not get stuck in cycles of sin and guilt. The second is that the law is written in our hearts and that we need no outward teachers. The third is that this applies to everybody. These form, perhaps, the very foundation of our faith – that we each have direct access to God’s teachings, and that this inward revelation carries the greatest authority.

Although the content of the New Covenant is particularly meaningful for Quakers today, the New Covenant does not stand on its own. In fact, it defines itself in relation to the Mosaic Covenant. In order to understand the New Covenant, we must understand ‘covenant’. It’s a concept that I have struggled with myself. A covenant is a legal agreement that binds two parties to perform particular acts, or behave in particular ways. In the case of biblical covenants, they are usually handed down from God with no human input into their terms. Is this legalistic, reward-and-punishment model of relationship really a helpful way to understand my relationship with the divine?

As I read through the Jeremiah text today, I noticed for the first time that God identified himself as being Israel’s husband. This particularly struck me because I have recently married and was intending to discuss in this article how that has affected my understanding of covenant. To the Israelites, to be a husband was to be a master, and in fact the New Revised Standard Version gives a footnote after “husband” that says that it could also be translated as “master”. However, that has not been my understanding of my relationship with my new wife, Jesse. Jesse and I chose not to make vows at our wedding. Instead we gave our prayers for each other. We prayed that we would continue to love each other, that we would help each other to grow into who we need to be. We prayed that our marriage would enrich our spiritual lives. In short, we affirmed the importance of our relationship and our intentions to maintain in good relationship with each other. Unlike the master-servant relationship, the relationship that I have with Jesse can perhaps be a model for the kind of covenant relationship I can have with God. In this context, the New Covenant has new meaning. The sin that God forgives is not so much a transgression of law, but unfaithfulness in our relationship. I don’t need to follow God’s law in my heart because I am bound to it. Instead, I can joyfully work toward a mutually enriching relationship that meets both of our needs.

May the incredible hope, opportunity, and sense of responsibility that comes with the New Covenant, shine through any barriers that we might have from the language used to speak of it.

by Peter Stevenson, Vernon Monthly Meeting

(Editor’s note: Peter and Jesse’s wedding photo is on pg. 4)

Sacred Moments

by Sylvia Graves

Several years ago, as a representative of our local professional teachers' organization, I attended our state assembly. On the agenda was the selection of the association's principles, which would serve as the foundation of its work plan. Of the hundred resolutions we listed, there were two which I couldn't support. I knew several teachers who chose not to belong to the organization because of those two or some other two resolutions. So, the work toward the other ninety-eight would not get the support of those teachers no matter how worthy the resolutions were in helping children, promoting healthy learning environments, and/or raising educational standards.

You can, no doubt, give similar examples of "throwing the baby out with the bath water". Perhaps someone doesn't listen to public radio because of one or two views expressed that don't fit in his/her belief system. Therefore, the rest of the information and insight that might be gained is missed because the listener was irritated at some feature that was objectionable.

I witnessed a group of Quakers quickly turn against some very worthy efforts recently at the 2009 Canadian Yearly Meeting annual sessions. This is not meant to be critical of CYM for Friends there seemed to temper their reaction in time to heal the hurt. However this might serve as a caution to prevent our own tendency to reject the total cause because of being offended at some part of it.

An account of several ways indigenous people of Canada are still being denied justice and equality as citizens, was presented by Ellen Gabriel, a member of the Iroquois nation. She told very moving stories of current practices that indicate prejudices against her people, and lack of respect for their heritage by the Canadian government and citizens. Several Canadian Friends asked, "What can we do to help?" Ellen was glad to list some relatively simple actions that would make a difference. "Endorse the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; change curricula in schools to tell the truth; erect monuments to our people; call us indigenous and not First Nation people; learn to greet us in our languages." Canadian Friends seemed ready to get started until Ellen asked them if the Quaker Peace Testimony included room for defending oneself against physical aggression. As soon as she indicated that she was not aligned with the Peace Testimony if she couldn't protect her loved ones against attack by



using a weapon, it appeared that the whole body of Friends expressed reservations about supporting her, and therefore about helping the Indigenous people of Canada. Ellen's hurt was reflected in her tears as she felt the aggression of this group, who just moments before were enthusiastic peacemakers. The meeting ended with apologies and hugs of reconciliation. Thank God that our Canadian Friends were able to catch themselves before "throwing out the baby".

So it is with controversial issues. It seems to me that integrity in discernment includes looking at the big picture and seeing what we need to do for the greater good while we continue to labor tenderly with those issues that are askew in His kingdom.

Dear God, open my eyes that I may see the wider truth thou hast for me.

Sylvia Graves

General Secretary of Friends United Meeting

We have experienced this Power that is beyond our understanding move amongst us as we have struggled with discernment - for it is often more with struggle together, than with agreement, that we grow in the Spirit.

(from the Closing Minute August 22, 2009)

The Prophetic Community

The Sunderland P. Gardner Lecture 2009 given by Helen Bayes

Report by Eric Schiller

This year's SPG lecture was a brave entry into an important space in Quaker history – our prophetic place in the world. One thinks of Wilberforce railing against slavery in the British parliament. One recalls John Woolman in the face of prevailing sentiments of his day, peacefully meeting with indigenous communities in America. One remembers Quaker protesters facing the military war machine of our day and speaking truth to power.

Helen began her talk by telling us of her Quaker upbringing in England. She also alerted us that she was freely going to refer to "God" since this was the language that emerged from her depths. She also informed us she was going far back into the Old Testament accounts to look at the roots of our prophetic testimony. She then led us to consider the story of Elijah the prophet.

Helen could hardly have chosen a person and an era more designed to shock our sensibilities! A reading of the Elijah story reveals that he lived in an era of military strife and clash of ideologies (does this sound familiar?) Elijah was hardly a moderate, middle-of-the road compromiser. He fearlessly met evil as he saw it and confronted it. One reason that Elijah is so revered is that he seemed to be able to call upon divine intervention exactly when needed. More than once God responded to his call and brought down fire upon the earth. At the very least, these ancient stories seem to reflect a person of indomitable courage and influence among his people.

For Quakers, one act of Elijah surely causes great concern. He wins a standoff with the followers of Baal (an opposing, popular god in the region). He then orders the slaughter of hundreds of the prophets of Baal. Following this, Elijah enters into a period of some confusion. Not everyone agreed with his actions, especially Jezebel the wife of King Ahab. In disarray Elijah cries out, "O Lord take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers". The prophet is having a definite crisis of faith. It is after this that Elijah is led to realize that God speaks not in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but "in a still small voice". Helen does some creative interpretation here, by deducing that Elijah has realized his mistake in the slaughter of the prophets of Baal. If this is the case, it is the first time that an Israelite shows some remorse over a divinely inspired slaughter of the enemy.

So what can all of this possibly mean for Quakers trying to live prophetically in our day? Quite a bit, as it turns out.

Helen drew parallels between the story of Elijah and us. Elijah railed against the apostasy of his day just as we are dismayed about the materialistic, individualistic milieu in which we are immersed. In Helen's words, there is our "willingness to be satisfied with very little (spiritually)" and our readiness to be content with "quick and simple solutions".

Elijah is also a model of a prophet for our age. He is far from perfect. The "bruised prophet" needed to withdraw to his God. Today we Quakers can be described as "wounded seekers", and we also need to retreat to the source of our spiritual strength. Elijah had his courage rooted in his religious tradition. The prophet's life was a solitary one, but he needed to be upheld by his community. We today are not all called to be prophets, though we may experience some prophetic moments. Whatever our situation, the gathered community is our source of support. The gathered community should also recognize its own prophets, support them, and provide corrective counsel when needed.

Helen closed with this: "Let us try with terrible earnestness to be a prophetic community - upheaving, volcanic, renewing - as we are meant to be!"

We look forward to reading the full text of Helen's presentation soon in the Canadian Friend.



*Eric and Fran Schiller
Ottawa Monthly Meeting*

Interview with: Ed Abbott



SjH: I was excited when you stood during the discussion on Friends United Meeting – speaking specifically to gay marriage – and said, “a case of New Light has been given me”. Could you expand on this idea of receiving New Light?

Ed: I think of it as the light referred to in the Gospel of John, namely that Light that Lighteth everyone that comes into the world. It is what James Naylor referred to when he said “There is a Spirit that I feel”, or Isaiah when he referred to a “Still, small, Voice”. We are each called upon to live up to the Light given us and not to the Light given someone else, whether that person be priest, military commander, or whomever. This does not absolve me of the responsibility to be open to new Light nor of the need to live in the Light.

We are called upon to live up to the Light given us

As I understand it, Quakers are somewhat unique in holding that Revelation is ongoing. Slavery was once acceptable as was the death penalty for even minor offences. “New occasions teach new duties. Time makes ancient good uncouth. We must upward still and onward, who would keep abreast of truth.” Most Quakers believe war to be wrong and obsolete and work for the day when this is generally accepted.

SjH: How did Keith’s lectures resonate with you?

Ed: I found Keith’s lectures interesting and challenging and he has given me enough reading material to keep me busy for the winter. The theme: Friends of Mother Earth was well chosen. There is nothing more urgent than that we Quakers become familiar with the dire situation that threatens to wipe out all life forms on the planet. Overheating of the earth as a result of human activity has been brought about through atmospheric pollution with CO2 and other greenhouse gasses. Friends need to make this a political action priority in the anticipated election. This I would say is my major concern.

SjH: How many Canadian Yearly Meetings have you and Vivian attended?

Ed: I think this year CYM was the forty-third one I have attended, as I think I have missed only one since our return from India in 1965. It is Viv’s forty-fourth. Our first CYM was in 1955, the year of the first united gathering, when we were on home leave. We look forward to them as an opportunity to renew friendships and meet new friends. We have to admit it is getting more difficult and Viv remarked that this might be our last one.

SjH: What stands out for you this year?

Ed: I will long remember CYM of 2009 for the care that was pressed upon me by Michael, the male nurse and his accomplice who, noting my limping as we made our way between meeting, eating, and sleeping quarters, insisted on seeing my foot. When he saw how inflamed it was he insisted I visit the hospital. The doctor treated me for cellulitis and advised keeping off my feet. For the rest of the week I rode around like a Raja with everyone yielding right of way, providing push power, opening doors, and giving me priority in the food line. My condition improved quickly and before long I felt like an in-valid invalid. How can I forget such loving care?

SjH: Final words?

Ed: We are encouraged by the presence of young adult Friends but we long to see more of these active Young People.

*Ed and Vivian Abbott
Simcoe-Muskoka Monthly Meeting*

Quaker Book Service



The following titles have been added to our stock:

For a complete listing of QBS books see 2009-2010 Quaker Book Service Catalogue, which was included in the July 2009 edition of The Canadian Friend and is also available on the CYM website (www.quaker.ca/qbs).

Journeys in the Light by Jan Arriens, Pronoun Press, London, U.K. 2007. Twenty-five appealing and illustrated stories for young and old. They demonstrate Quaker testimonies and faithful living from the 17th to the 21st centuries, showing dramatically what Quakers believe. (179 pp; \$26.00)

Know His Voice that Feeds and Leads You by Ellen Pye, the Sunderland P. Gardner Lecture, 2008, Canadian Quaker Pamphlet No. 68, Argenta Friends Press. Ellen Pye tells of her early life in Europe and southern Africa (where she became a Quaker before she and her husband settled in Canada in 1978) and of her experiences and studies, giving her valuable insight into Quaker practice and action. (42 pp; \$7.50)

Ordering Instructions

Mail orders, enclosing payment by cheque or money order, should be sent to Quaker Book Service, Box 4652, Station E, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5H8. Phone orders cannot be accepted.

For orders from North America Please add the following mailing costs:		For orders outside North America
Value of an order	Postage Add-on	We require an extra 20% to be added to the total cost of the order to cover the extra mailing charges
Up to \$9.95	\$2.50	
\$10 - \$19.95	\$5.00	
\$20 - \$34.95	\$7.50	
\$35.00 - \$59.95	\$9.00	
Over \$60	\$10.50	

Notice Board

Quaker Center in Ben Lomond, CA (90 minutes south of San Francisco)

Personal retreats/Weekend programs

(831) 336 8333 or visit www.quakercenter.org

Winter Sojourn in Mahone Bay, NS? <http://www.mahonebay.com>

Alleson Kase and Ellen Agger are looking for someone(s) to enjoy their 2 cats and home while they are travelling next winter for TAMMACHAT Natural Textiles <http://www.tammachat.com> - from Nov. 30, 2009 to March 30, 2010. Their heritage home sits on 1 acre on the edge of town: a 15 minute walk to shops, post office and bank. High-speed internet enabled. House is ill-suited to young children. Contributions toward utilities much appreciated but not required. Please, no smokers and no dogs.

Contact: alleson@eastlink.ca, 902-624-0427

Hamilton Monthly Meeting met for a one-day retreat at Cedar Haven (Bev and Robbie Shepard's home) on 9 May, facilitated by HMM's Ministry and Counsel. Our topic was Reaching In, Reaching Out. This time of fellowship strengthened the connections among us and allowed us time to explore ways in which we might make Meeting accessible to new attendees.

Our dear friend **Denise Barron** died peacefully on 19 May. A Memorial Meeting to celebrate the grace of God in Denise's life was held at HMM on 13 June.

On 14 June we celebrated with **Rick McCutcheon and Tamara Fleming** (formerly of HMM and now members of Prairie Monthly Meeting / Winnipeg Allowed Meeting) on the occasion of Rick's PhD graduation from McMaster University.



*Beverly Shepard with grandson
Everett James*

(November 26, 1916 – July 06, 2009)

Her love, empathy and support touched many lives and we thank God for blessing us with her presence.

VANCOUVER ISLAND M. M. Duncan
Friends have joined with four other families
in the Cowichan Valley to provide support for
an Iraqi family who have come to the area.

We supported **Linda Hill** of Duncan Meeting who used her connections with the Cowichan Intercultural Society to present and prepare a concert series: "Songs & Stories from the Underground Railroad".

Maggie Knight of Victoria Meeting (and student in Montreal) received with our blessing a traveling minute of support to engage in travels in the ministry with Young Friends concerns.

We welcome **Amy Jean Singleton-Polster** back to Vancouver Island from UBC. She is now at the University of Victoria studying medicine.

Note our new website: www.vancouverisland.quaker.ca by **Helen Martin** of Mid-Island Allowed Meeting with input from VI Friends.

View From the Clerks' Table

by Beverly Shepard

At the rise of Canadian Yearly Meeting 2009, I had completed eight years as a clerk - of one kind or another - sitting at the clerks' table during Yearly Meeting sessions. I started with three years as recording clerk, then spent a year as incoming clerk, then two as presiding clerk, and a final two-year period as mentoring clerk. Eight years is a long time. I've watched many changes and developments from this unique vantage point. As a recording clerk I have felt keenly the responsibility of chronicling those events and processes faithfully and clearly. Our minutes tell much of our history and illuminate our soul as a Yearly Meeting, and they deserve the care we give them. As a presiding clerk I have realized how crucial is the recognition of a movement toward unity, or, occasionally, of the necessity of waiting until another time.

I've watched young people grow up. At YM in 2002 I was delighted to see some of the Young Friends who had attended Intermediate Camp at NeeKauNis when I was directing that program. The youngest of these were 16 that year. They were joyfully embedded in the teen program and had little time for such things as the regular business sessions. Now these and other Young Friends are clerking our committees, traveling to Quaker events around the world, visiting other Meetings and Yearly Meetings with concerns and ministry, and attending CYM business sessions with interest and passion.

Over these eight years I have seen conflicts arise, challenge us, and find resolution - sometimes with peace and satisfaction, sometimes with lingering hurt, and sometimes not at all. I have also seen us swept as though by a holy wind toward momentous decisions, in a unity vibrant with the Spirit. I have watched Friends care for each other, work together, shout, sing, weep, and laugh - yes, all in business sessions.

We have seen the Quaker International Affairs Program grow from infancy to influence. Our own CYM Faith and Practice has been born under the tender care of the Faith and Practice Development Committee. We've responded clearly and firmly to the draconian measures proposed by governments in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on 9/11, and in the process given comfort and support to American Friends. We endorsed the Earth Charter, and we have

experienced the huge and continuing growth of our concern for the environment. We reiterated and strengthened our affirmation of the peace testimony in response to numerous challenges. We have struggled, year after year, with our connection to Friends United Meeting, and means of coping with the diversity within that group. We approved a Minute of Record regarding same-sex marriage. We reviewed, revised, and revitalized our procedure for recognizing Quaker chaplains and we named a half-dozen Friends as chaplains. In half of those eight years our sessions included intense, prayerful, and thoughtful consideration of the conflicts in the Middle East. And we embraced the long and rewarding process of renewing our Yearly Meeting, enabled by the work and recommendations of the Consultation and Renewal Working Group.

One of the greatest blessings for me of these years at the clerks' table has been to watch Friends gather for our sessions. They come into the room - a hot, cramped room, or an airy, light room with views of the hills all around, or an old library with sections marked off with yellow "caution" tape, or a serene room with trees outside the windows, or a chapel with views of earth-moving machinery at work, or a vast gymnasium with no view of the out-of-doors at all - by ones and twos and threes, sometimes helping each other to walk or to see or to sit or to hear. They come in ready to spend hours each day, of a week that might have been a vacation but isn't, working and praying and discerning and deciding together in the Light. It is a beautiful sight. It uplifts and nourishes me.

The clerks sit together - and if we are fortunate, with a Young Friend at the table - to counsel one another, consult together, and support each other. We often laugh. Why not? We are blessed by the service to which we're called. If we seem to be having fun - and we often are - it's NOT an act designed to trick other Friends into accepting a nomination as Yearly Meeting clerk! We are genuinely enjoying our task.

At the end of the sessions this year, as I rode the train from Ottawa to Toronto, I noticed that my hands were stunningly clean. I live on several acres in the country, but I had just spent a whole week without pulling weeds, cutting wood, moving stones, mowing meadows, or digging dirt. I was dazzled by my hands! This is how we should all, always, leave Yearly Meeting: with clean hands, having been true to ourselves, to our Society, to our testimonies, and to each other.

*Beverly Shepard
Hamilton Monthly Meeting*

Last Words:

Loss of Silence

by Doris Calder

A tremendous amount of dedication and commitment on the part of many Friends goes into Yearly Meeting and I am glad to be part of this family of Friends. CYM has enriched my life for nearly fifty years. However I feel there is something we are losing.

Our recent Yearly Meeting offered a large experience. In eight days I almost felt as if I'd gone around the world several times. Fortunately for me it began with the silent retreat on Friday evening which continued through Saturday.

Every day was packed with wonderful Quaker Study and opportunities for new learning, but by Wednesday my brain was on overload. My body protested loudly. It would sit no longer. I was ready for the free time slotted from three to six. I left the campus out of necessity, though I felt I was abandoning those who remained behind to meet in important deliberations on behalf of Friends.

The mid-week break has traditionally been set aside to give Friends time to let go of weighty concerns for awhile, have a change of scenery, relax and enjoy one another's company. It was valued as an important occasion for building community and helped us to arrive at the Sunderland P. Gardiner lecture with hearts and minds prepared. This year I missed the intergenerational nature of that afternoon, which we used to share together as an extended family of Friends. Instead, it seemed to be a catch-up time for an overcrowded agenda. I am concerned that our urgent focus on the dire plight of the world leaves us scattered and uncentred.



Doris Calder
New Brunswick
Monthly Meeting

I'm concerned that we are losing our respect for the silence. I'm puzzled about this. Is it a symptom of our being caught up in a society in overdrive, of being bombarded by the internet and electronic media? Could it be that we're less grounded because of the collective insanity in the world? "Is there enough silence for the Word to be heard?" One specific example (I could give more) where silence was lacking was the Closing Worship on Saturday. The hour was mostly filled with a volley of continuous, no pause, popcorn 'thank-yous' and acknowledgements that at times bordered on the self-congratulatory. My head was reeling and I thought, "We're going off the rails". I read that a lack of centeredness is one of the symptoms of spiritual crisis, a lack of awareness of the spiritual nature of ourselves. If we lose conscious connection with our spiritual root we are lost. How can we effectively plant peace in the world until we have attained peace in ourselves and are constantly dwelling in that Peace?

Individually, and at Yearly Meeting, we need the strong sense that all our deliberations are rooted and cradled in the presence of God. We need to make time to go deep within and wait for the stirrings of the Spirit. I invite you to join me in becoming more personally committed to this.

Are we forgetting the wisdom of Isaac Penington? In 1661 he wrote: *"Give over thine own willing, give over thine own running, give over thine own desiring to know or be anything, and sink down into the Seed that God sows in thy heart..."*

Personally, I think fewer Special Interest Groups (SIGS) would be less overwhelming. There were twenty, covering a wide spectrum of topics focused on Friends' concerns with peace, justice, and environmental issues. I would have liked to attend all of them given enough time.

I look forward to a time when we can end Yearly Meeting knowing tangibly that we are connected to Spirit, and held in that place where words are not necessary, ready to continue our journeys with a mystical sense of deep connection and belonging in "That Which Is Eternal".

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Themes & deadlines for upcoming issues:

December:	Aspects of Peace
March 2010:	Earth Care
May 2010:	Varied Thoughts on Community
July 2010:	Young Adult Friends speak
October 2010 :	CYM Fall 2010
Due date for March	January 12, 2010
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