

# The Canadian Friend

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Quaker Youth Voices

Summer 2010



# The Canadian Friend

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## Editor's Corner

Spirits rose. After two years of collecting and editing submissions from around the world, the youth editorial board unveiled the fruits of their labour: *Spirit Rising - Young Quaker Voices*. Producing it was hard work that involved great spirit. Differences of thought and expression were cause for much discussion, despair, and triumph.

Sarah Hoggatt, a member of the editorial board said, "...we learned to join the threads of our diversities together, while respecting and preserving our unique practices. Our hope for those who read *Spirit Rising* is much the same - that people will hear voices and come to appreciate these voices...in a spiritually foreign tongue. Though listening may be difficult at times...our prayer is that people see the heart they were written with and recognize where the words come from."



For this issue dedicated to Quaker Youth I am privileged to have permission from Quakers Uniting in Publications (QUIP) and Friends General Conference (FGC) to include articles from *Spirit Rising*. My hope is that you will get the book. Once you pick it up you'll likely want to read it from cover to cover.

Serendipitously, Australian Yearly Meeting has just published *Finding Our Voice: Our truth, community and journey as Australian Young Friends*. It's available through Quaker Book Service (pg.17).

The letter from Christina Tellez and Rachel Singleton-Polster sharing their experiences as students at Pearson College, reminded me of a conversation I recently had with a woman I met on the train from Seattle to Chicago. Her son was soon to move to New Mexico where he was taking a teaching job at one of the ten World Colleges. He had applied to Pearson but was offered the job at its sister college in Montezuma, New Mexico. Having just attended the Pearson College *One World* gala at our local Royal Theatre, and been moved by the Palestinian student and the Israeli student standing together as friends; having seen Rachel Singleton-Polster dance; having witnessed the joy and camaraderie among those youths from around the world - I was pleased to share my enthusiasm with this mother for her son's new position.

Reading Olivia Henry's reflections (page 10) infused me with hope. On the heels of a trek I took with other Friends to our Legislature to champion the wild salmon, I needed to hear this from a young Friend: "Life and living things are so much more precious to me now, because I understand their capacity to be lost. I am eager to fashion a new world, a better world..." And when Jaya Karsemeyer writes: "We are not a seated people, Friends", I am reminded of Harriet Hart's desire to dance the Queries!

Read and rejoice with these youth.

Blessings, Sherryl



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Cover: Harriet Hart of Britain Yearly Meeting and Katrina McQuail of Canadian Yearly Meeting at Quaker Hill, Richmond, Indiana, celebrating the launch of *Spirit Rising* on April 23, 2010. Quite the cake! This photo and those on pages 13 and 31 by taken by Pat Moauro, as requested for The Canadian Friend. Photo (page 4) of Rachel Singleton-Polster (left) and Christina Tellez in England during the 2008 Youth Pilgrimage, supplied by Christina.



*Letters to the Editor*  
Please send your letters to: Sherryll Harris, Editor  
E-mail: cf-editor@quaker.ca



Dear Sherryll,

It is April and we have just begun our exams. Times have been hectic with the end of the school year approaching, but Rachel and I want to tell you of our experiences here at Lester B. Pearson, United World College of the Pacific.

Spring has finally come! We are sitting enjoying the sun looking over Pedder Bay (Metchosin, Vancouver Island) reflecting on our year together. This fall, I joined Rachel at Pearson College, a two-year full scholarship program where we study the

International Baccalaureate along with two hundred students from over one hundred different countries. Pearson is part of a global movement called United World Colleges, which has a mission statement of "Making education a force to unite peoples, nations, and cultures for peace and a sustainable future". Rachel is finishing second year and is looking forward to working as the Canadian Friends

Service Committee (CFSC) intern this summer. I am coming to the end of my first year and am looking forward to returning as a second year student in September. Rachel and I had met three years ago at CYM in Windsor, NS, and we became fast friends on the 2008 Quaker Youth Pilgrimage to the UK and Ireland. It has been wonderful to have another Young Friend here at Pearson, to share memories and companionship on our spiritual journey.

There is a beautiful Spiritual Centre on campus where we meet twice a week in silence with other students. Looking over the arbutus trees and the rippling turquoise bay is always a grounding experience in our busy life. We have also taken some students to Meeting in Victoria on a couple of occasions.

Pearson College presents us with many opportunities. We have interesting and engaging classes. For example I take Marine Science, which has given me the chance to visit Race Rocks Marine

Ecological Reserve, and learn first hand about the beautiful Pacific Ocean (I sometimes miss my home and the Atlantic). Rachel has taken a class in Social and Cultural Anthropology, which has been eye opening and has sparked her interest for further study at Mt. Allison University in the fall. Beyond academics we have explored the natural beauty of BC and Vancouver Island by kayaking, sailing, scuba diving, swimming, and hiking.

Another aspect of Pearson College is living together in the community with two hundred students and many faculty members and their families. We each share a room with three girls from different countries. This is a fun, and sometimes a challenging environment to live in. Living at Pearson College has shown us that living peacefully is not just an idealistic wish but a possible reality. The relationships that we have built here have shown us that people from all backgrounds are in essence human beings with similar hopes and fears. We have

learned that although we are not bringing peace to the Middle East or solving global warming, if we can live peacefully in a setting such as Pearson, there is hope for peace on a larger scale. As a fellow student wrote: "The conflicts first start on a smaller scale, between city-states, religious groups, neighbours, peer groups and perhaps even roommates. So if we can solve our problems about the overhead light, the heater, and who is going to vacuum, we can lay the foundation for going forth and solving some of the more serious matters in the world."

We are fortunate to have a supportive community of Friends, as we learn and grow as Young Friends here at Pearson. With this support and our experiences from Pearson College we hope to continue: "Living adventurously".

In Peace,

*Christina Tellez, Halifax Monthly Meeting*  
*Rachel Singleton-Polster, Vancouver Island MM*

[Photo: Pilgrimage in England]



*"They say that home is where the heart is, I guess I haven't found my home.  
And we keep driving round in circles. Afraid to call this place our own"*

*(Are We There Yet by Ingrid Michaelson - Everybody - 2009)*

## Where My Heart Is

*Elen Cheatley*

I left Quakers for two years. I hit the pause button and just stopped. Instead, I tossed myself into high school, joining every club, taking a full course-load and trying to make as many friends as I could. I became an encyclopedia, knowing everyone and everything. I decided I would try and be as close to my high school as I could. These were my last two years; I wanted to leave knowing I had done *something*.

But I started wondering, was it all really worth it? Would any of these people I was busy making friends with, care about me once I left high school? Would any of it matter later on in life? That's when I started questioning why I had left Quakers in the first place?

I couldn't really find a good answer. I had just finished the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage in 2008 and had an amazing experience. I knew more than I ever thought I would. I had knowledge and stories, but I still didn't feel like I wanted to be with Quakers. Even though they loved me and respected me, it didn't feel like it was home yet. It wasn't like I was rebelling from a strict religious upbringing. I had always been told I could believe what I want and it didn't matter if I was a Quaker or not. But some part of being Quaker felt like an expectation.

I was raised in a Quaker family and was the third generation of people of my family to be considered Quaker. My grandmother, who I dearly love, is considered a Weighty Friend, which sometimes makes it feel as if I have large boots to fill later in life. I'll admit, some part of me was running scared.

I came back to Quakers, but not because of some

joyous realization, but because of the death of a friend. In February, a friend walked into the ocean, not being able to deal with her anxiety. It was a sudden blow that no one was expecting. I was lost, with questions I could not find the answers to.

My peers at school seemed to accept her death and move on, but I still felt uneasy about it. I hadn't come to terms with it. So again, I made myself busy: stage-managing, doing schoolwork, applying to universities, and trying my hardest to be the best high school student I could. It didn't work. So I got a job, and started working long hours, and I will admit, I'm now

a workaholic. But my job has helped. Everyone I work with is now an amazing friend, and their maturity is a refreshing change from high school. They understand me and understand why I am there.

But still, I felt at a loss. So my mother decided to register me for Western Half Yearly Meeting and sent off the cheque. She knows I have a terrible time saying no; that I would be racked by guilt if she couldn't get her money back. I wonder if she planned this so

I couldn't back out? I tried to claim schoolwork and shifts I couldn't miss, but I agreed to petition for time off and was granted the weekend. Maybe she knew something I didn't.

Once I returned (to a Quaker gathering) I found what I had been missing: the people, the place, the love - what I had needed all along.

The first night at the first Meeting as we sat in silence I felt the weight lift. I knew this is where I belong. This is my home.

*Elen Cheatley*

*Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting*





## When I Attend Quaker Meeting

*Max Dixon Murdock*

When I attend Quaker Meeting with my family and I see all the other people sitting in what seems like a deep sense of peace, I find myself experiencing envy. I cannot seem to find my peace during Meeting. I find myself in a more peaceful state of mind late at night when I am beginning to drift off to sleep. I believe that a more controlled sense of peace will come with age, and I hope that someday I won't feel as restless during Meeting so I can participate in the stillness and peaceful mood.

*Max Dixon Murdock (12)  
Vancouver Monthly Meeting*

## How Does God Find and Touch You?

*Flynn Dixon Murdock*

Every year me and my family go to Tofino, a beach fishing town on Vancouver Island. As a day trip we always hike to Schooner Cove, a huge beach where having fun is involuntary. Because it is relatively empty, the walk through the woods is nearly silent. As I walk along the path and observe the unearthly beauty I start to fall behind my family who continue on ahead. This is when I usually have a chat with God.

I feel warm when I talk with him. I tell him about problems I've had and I feel like someone (other than my family) cares. This walk that my family takes is a time when I meditate deeper than in a regular Meeting House.

It seems I feel closer to God on walks in beautiful places with no one else around. And afterward I feel enlightened and I find myself thinking about what I can do.

*Flynn Dixon Murdock (14)  
Vancouver Monthly Meeting*



[Both pieces originally appeared in *Spirit Rising*. Reprinted by permission from Quakers Uniting in Publishing (QUIP) and Friends General Conference (FGC)]

# Dot – To – Dot

*Keava Mckeogh*

I used to ride to “Quiet Meeting” on the back of my Dad’s bike. I would sit in the corner with felt-tips and dot-to-dot books trying to colour between the lines and not make too much noise. Later, I remember wriggling and fidgeting on the laps of friendly strangers, studying the facial expressions in the practically silent circle.

I wonder how much time I spent in that circle over the following years in the ten minutes before creeping out to read, shout, sing and draw in Children’s Program. I spent that time making faces at the other kids, watching the ducks out the window, counting different types of shoes, reading books from the library trolley, asking forgiveness for having snuck a spoonful of Nutella, listening really hard to see if God would talk to me.

I still remember the pride I felt the first time that I sat through a whole Meeting; how nervous I was the first time that I gave a reading.

Now, after ten years of Meetings, I realize how much I’ve changed. I still know how many beams there are across the Meeting House ceiling and how many bars on the window, but I could no longer tell you the ratio of shoes to sandals or how many people had their eyes shut last Sunday.

I’ve been to quite a few discussions about how different people spend their time in Meeting for Worship; been given suggestions and things to try. But those ten minutes I have twice a month are different every time I listen to, and reflect on the readings and ministry. I breathe deeply; I admire the beautiful world out the window; I give thanks for the people who are present and think of those who are not; I try to clear my mind of daily worries; I try to focus on my feelings, sometimes I just stare at the ticking clock waiting for it to be over. I’ve felt enlightened, relaxed, happy. I’ve made resolutions and I’ve come to feel a sense of peace. But I wouldn’t claim to ever have cleared my mind completely or to have heard the Inner Voice.

Watching the younger children in the Meeting as they wriggle and whisper, I’m reminded of how far I’ve come...and how far I have to go.

*Keava Mckeogh (16)*

*Waikato-Hauraki Meeting, New Zealand YM*

# The Blessing of Prayer In My Life

*José Luis Cuellar Avalos*

From the moment of my conversion, I learned the importance of prayer. I saw how prayer changed lives in church, the ways that prayer caused people to act, and from then on I practiced prayer. I remember one occasion in my family when we encountered a tremendous spiritual and material crisis.

The problems accumulated and it seemed as if there was no escape. It was extremely painful to see my father and mother being consumed with worry. My refuge, and the only place where I felt comfortable and without worry, was the church. Listening to the preaching and the praises gave me hope that the problems were temporary and that all this would pass; and I remember one Sunday, when the pastor’s sermon was about a case similar to mine, I realized that there were thousands of cases like mine, but in his sermon the pastor spoke of how important prayer is in the life of every person, whether in moments of happiness, of sadness, or of pain. That was when I began to take prayer seriously, practicing prayer every night before I went to sleep, before eating any meal, and each time I left my house. And it was incredible how instantaneously I felt the results. It was then that my family and I decided to have a time of prayer as a devotional worship when we could speak with God.

The truth is that I saw the joy in the faces of my family after finishing our prayer. And little by little the problems lessened, until finally we found a way out of our uncomfortable situation. It is because of this that prayer is a blessing in my life. The very act of speaking with God is very important. Today, there is not a day that I don’t give thanks to God for what he has done in my life. And this Bible verse inspires me and helps me to continue practicing prayer: “Call to me and I will respond and tell you great and mighty things that you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3).

*José Luis Cuellar Avalos (21)*

*Member of Christian Friends Congregation*

[Both articles on this page appear in *Spirit Rising*. Reprinted by permission from QUIP and FGC]



block out the sun, turn  
on all the lights

*mankind you've done it*

*this is not playing god  
god would not be so silly*

*to kill something just to meet it*

*wanting a why  
is no excuse*

*to destroy the what*

*mankind you haven't done it*

*can is not should  
made is not understood*

*you have not done it at all*

*god would not be so silly*

*block out the sun  
turn on all the lights*

*kit wilson-yang*

*Hamilton Monthly Meeting*

[Reprinted from *Spirit Rising* with permission]

## OLD EASTERN WHITE PINES

Giants of the forest

Standing tall

Connecting

Streams

Ponds

Forest

Earth

With the sky

Old, rough bark shows the passage of time

Needles soft as birds' feathers

Branches make the sound of rough water

As the wind blows through them

Crown of the tree bent by the west wind

Roots Move the moss hummock of the bog

At the feet of the giants

Let me sit at your trunk

And be moved

As you have been moved by the wind

For a hundred years

Giants of the forest

*Christopher Bowyer lives in Tillsonburg now and attends  
Meeting in Sparta*

[My poem Old Eastern White Pines (right) was inspired by the large old eastern white pines on the eastern edge of the Stapleton Tract, in the northern end of Huron County. I spent a lot of time studying, admiring, and hiking in their large presence. I love to see large eastern white pines wherever I travel. Their presence makes me feel at home. Christopher Bowyer.]





# A Walk With Elizabeth

*Jessica Klaassen-Wright*

For the past eight months I have been traveling with the Katimavik program. Katimavik is a youth volunteer program that takes groups of youth to three provinces. In each of these places you live with your group for about three months and volunteer around the town or city. My second placement was in Sheshatshiu, Labrador, an Innu reserve outside of Goose Bay. During my stay there I had the chance to go on a week-long walk with Elizabeth (Tshaukuesh)Penashue, and her husband Francis Penashue, up Cartwright road. We camped in traditional Labrador tents and packed up to walk to a new camp each day. It was one of the greatest things I have ever done.

Elizabeth is an amazing woman. She has sixty descendants to her name and she is very passionate about keeping the Innu traditions alive. She is sixty-five years old and she still walks hundreds of kilometers while pulling her gear behind her. One of the reasons for her walks and canoe trips is to teach her children and grandchildren the ways of the Innu people. It hurts Elizabeth that so few of her people participate in her walks, and that there is not enough interest in learning about the old ways. Elizabeth is also an environmental activist and a huge believer in protecting the land. Many of her walks are in protest to projects that are potentially damaging to the environment, such as the development to the Churchill River.

Elizabeth was born in the bush. She told me time and time again how there were no doctors, no women there at her birth. Her father helped her mother deliver her into the world. She was born somewhere near Churchill Falls. She lived in the country, moving from camp to camp until she was fourteen. An early memory for her is pushing her mother's sled from behind to help with a heavy load. The Labrador wilderness was her life and her family only came to rest in Sheshatshiu for two months or less out of the year.

I watched her face in flickering candlelight while she told me about the changes that came to her people. There was a priest who lived in Sheshatshiu. When she was little she didn't understand that this priest and the government were connected. The Innu people who came to Sheshatshiu were afraid of the priest. They went to church, sent their children to school and stopped going to the country because they were scared of what this priest could do to them. She remembers a day when her mother told her and her siblings to ready the tent because a visitor was coming.

It was the priest and he came with a smiling face and told them what a beautiful home they had. She was young and didn't understand what was being said as she stood watching the priest talk to her parents. He told her father that if he didn't stop going to the country and taking his children out of school, that all the money they were being given for food would be taken away. When the priest left, her parents had a fight that she also did not understand.

Her father didn't heed the priest and continued to take his family into the country because it was what he knew. That didn't last forever.

Gradually, more and more of the Innu people stopped travelling and stayed in the villages as they were told.

Elizabeth knows that things will never go back to the way they were, but she wants to bring a change and an awareness to her people before she goes. She has so much to offer to her community and she is a wonderful teacher. She taught me how to handle a caribou, how to bake Innu foods, how to keep my snowshoes on, as well as many Innu words. When I walked with her she always had stories to tell about her childhood or about the life she leads now. I loved listening to her. She is a woman full of wisdom who inspired me to live simply and to really stand up for what I believe in. I am so grateful for the chance to know her and to be a part of her blazing life.

*Jessica Klaassen-Wright*

*Prairie Monthly Meeting*



# Reflections on a Quaker Childhood

*Liv Henry*

I eat leaves. Onlookers have been disturbed by the six foot-two giant of a girl swooping down to pluck at the undergrowth with a casualness usually reserved for nose-picking or public spitting. In childhood, I came to know the subtle scents of the plants, their secret names, and through a perilous process of trial and error, which were good to eat. And eat I did, gorging myself on sultry hibiscus, indulging to excess in sweet lippia leaves, growing fat on the natural knowledge I gained with each discovery.

This natural knowledge was the basis of my childhood, an odd kind of youth of perpetual bare feet, bedtime stories from National Geographic, and tofu substitutes for every possible food. During the sullen summer months I steeped in the swimming hole of Bull Run Creek, instead of the chemical marinade of a conventional pool whose chlorine depths were disappointingly free of beavers and water snakes. My frantic escapes from harassed wildlife provided more entertainment than any inflatable toy. Delivering lambs in the spring was more delightfully gory than any television show, and the bouncy newborns were more endearing than their static, stuffed imitations. Getting lost in the rollicking Blue Ridge foothills was encouraged, just as bee stings were celebrated as character building.

Left to my own juvenile devices in a vast organic playground, I discovered the necessity of self-reliance that did not exist in society: the world of prowling teachers, suspicious nurses and attentive mothers. Alone but not without resources, my blossoming cuts were treated with the clear gelatin of jewel weed and then bound with stachys leaves, while clothes ripped in play were pinned with hawthorn spikes. Far from watchful eyes, my ten foot fall from a rickety hunter's nest had to be dealt with in painful, bloody isolation.

There is something about the American South that nurtures legend, that cradles, spans, and slaps it into infamy, and in such a tradition the fame of Randy Peyton's herd was born. Rumored to have three of the most unpredictably violent bulls in the county, the herd

overwintered on Suicide Hill, prime sledding territory for reckless tobogganers such as myself. Confident that no temperamental cows would harass a person of my backwoods skill, I had barely entered the pasture when I was deftly surrounded by a ring of meaty Anguses out for blood. Inspired by a recent infatuation with Jack London, I dove to the ground and packed snow in an arc above my head, burrowing an icy, camouflaged cocoon. The cattle remained still, motionless menaces. It was a charged standoff, my personal Cold War. A little past nightfall, the herd, bored with their fruitless vigil moved on. Erupting from my wintry stronghold, I galloped home, frozen and utterly humbled. This benign rebuke of my childish hubris inspired in me a profound humility.



The authority of Mother Nature over her human children was a lesson thoroughly instilled in me by a band of murderous cows, by a provoked wasp horde, by a ruthless river current. But what I learned and understood in childhood is still unrecognized and disregarded by the vast majority of adults, who fill the wetlands and wonder why floodwaters ravage their homes; who poison the air and lament their diagnosis of lung cancer; who sit prostrate in front of the television like piglets suckling from a sow. It is this breed of adult that triggered in me a Peter Pan-like dread of growing up.

Eighteen now, and confronting this looming threat of adulthood, I try to maintain my girlhood habits, my simple wonder at life. But the battering ram of *progress* makes casualties of so many wild, free things, tempting my spirit toward cynicism and despair, for the forces of industry and vice have felled so much that cannot be resurrected. However, with this new and strange maturity comes a snapping, striving sense of purpose that holds me hostage with its urgency, refusing me sleep, hunger, and peace. The need to protect wilderness is all-consuming and undeniable, like I am but an instrument of some greater design. Life and living things are so much more precious to me now, because I understand their capacity to be lost. I am eager to fashion a new world, a better world, in which no child is taught that it is dirty to eat leaves.

*Liv Henry Goose Creek Meeting, Baltimore YM*

[Reprinted from Spirit Rising with permission]

# World Consultation

Nat Egan-Pimblet

We know that climate change and other shifts are happening all over the world, and we are asked to discuss what we are experiencing, speaking and hearing, worshipfully. Do friends speak with one voice?

Friends World Committee on Consultation (FWCC) has launched *Global Change* - a worldwide listening project to hear first-person Quaker testimony about environmental, social, and spiritual impacts - from Bolivia to China and Jamaica to the Arctic.

FWCC is a very broad organization. Every Quaker is included - the whole rainbow! It's a wonderful way to share what we care about, to learn how Friends around the world are being impacted, and to work toward unity in "that which is eternal".

This global listening project is very exciting. There has been a desire for worldwide exchange between Friends, and some have been working toward collecting minutes, writings, and testimony. We are hoping that the project will inspire testimonies from everyone all the way down to the grass roots level. We look forward not only to the formal Global Change report, but also to the spiritual transformation, life-style changes, and active protection work that it will engender.

The World Council of Churches calls this *Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation*. There is a simpler word: Eco-justice. And there is a Quaker phrase common to both universalist and evangelical Friends: "right sharing of the world's resources". A number of Meetings have already begun to discuss these concerns using the Quaker book *Right Relationship* and the *One-*

*Book Study Guide* by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

We can help by volunteering; by supporting Young Friends in their leadings; by making changes however small, that put us and our Meetings on the path of integrity and simplicity. Quakers everywhere are encouraged to gather in clusters of any size and in any place, to reply to queries written by an international ad hoc committee of FWCC (see the box below). A project coordinator has been appointed: Samuel Mahaffy of Northwest Yearly Meeting. You can direct questions to him at [samuel@fwccglobalchange.org](mailto:samuel@fwccglobalchange.org).

FWCC is asking for full reporting on the cluster meetings - notes, audio, and even videos of the meetings that can be posted on the website to enrich the exploration. 'Listening committee' volunteers will translate, compile, and post all testimonies to the website. Later, a special Representative Meeting will discern the Quaker voice(s) and forward a report to the World Conference in Nairobi 2012.

Canadians may find a way to meet in our own regions, thereby offering an opportunity to more Friends to participate. Volunteers are needed to help facilitate clusters, to serve on listening committees, and (attention Young Friends!) to record and edit videos. Think about whether you or your Meeting could organize a cluster anytime in the next year, at which you could hold worship sharing around one or more, or all of these queries.

Some testimonies from the FWCC Section of the Americas spring 2010 meeting are at [fwccglobalchange.org](http://fwccglobalchange.org). Click on Resources, then Videos.

Nat Egan-Pimblet, *Worshipping at Montreal MM*

## FWCC Queries on Global Change

- How has global change affected our communities and us?
- What actions have we taken in response to global change as experienced in our area, to express our responsibilities toward all creation? In what ways have my own activities or those of my community contributed to positive or adverse local and global change?
- How do changes around us affect our relationship with God? How does my relationship with God affect my responses to the changes around us? What role does my faith have in my life and in the life of my community? In what ways do I, and my Friends Church, or Meeting community, bear witness to our testimonies in our daily lives?
- What stories or experiences from past times of catastrophic happenings - perhaps from scripture, perhaps from the record of local or regional events - may inspire us to respond to the changes the world is facing today?
- How can we bear witness to the abundance God offers us and testify to the world about ways in which justice, compassion, and peace, may address significant disruptions, stress, and tensions.
- How can we support one another in rekindling our love and respect for God's creation in such a way that we are messengers of the transforming power of love and hope?



## The QUIP Experience

Authors, editors, and publishers were finding their way home to various states and countries. From my bus window a bumper sticker caught my eye: Grace Happens. I smiled. Journeying to Quaker Hill (Richmond, Indiana) for the annual QUIP conference (21-25 April) was one amazing experience of grace, and every story shared was all about grace. It's ubiquitous. It just happens, and we are asked only to open our eyes and hearts to it.

Friends, who write and edit and publish, united for four days to network, learn, support each other, and celebrate together. We are Quakers Uniting in Publications (QUIP) supporting sound business practices, and nurturing the future of Friends' writing, via all avenues – old and new. Members share publications they write or edit. The body encourages memoirs, journals and books: fiction and non-fiction in both print and electronic form. And, according to John Lomuria - a Young Adult Friend from Kenya - QUIP produces hot cakes.

John referred to one particular hot cake: Spirit Rising - Young Quaker Voices. Through grace and much work, Spirit Rising is finally in print. The book, proudly launched at the QUIP conference, was a particular highlight for John and the several other dedicated youth editors and their mentors. Collecting and editing stories submitted from Young Adult Friends around the world was a work of grace in the lives of the editorial board, culminating in a book with two hundred and ten submissions from seventeen countries. The editorial team spent two years collaborating. Mentor Lucy Duncan, of Quaker Press, said the team "...listened, laboured, and loved together through their differences. They undertook a rare and brave work."

Later, Sarah Hoggatt – member of the editorial board - wrote in her blog: "...we learned to join the threads of our diversities together, while respecting and preserving our unique practices. Our hope for those who read Spirit Rising is much the same - that people will hear voices and come to appreciate these voices... in a spiritually foreign tongue. Though listening may be difficult at times...our prayer is that people see the heart they were written with and recognize where the words come from."

The Writers' Conference offered lectures and discussions focused on the ways and means by which we share our Quaker faith and practice, and tell our

stories. Keynote speaker extraordinaire Tom Hamm (Earlham College Archivist, Curator of the Friends Collection, and much loved Professor of History) captivated us with the fascinating history of Quaker publishing. We've been at it in all sorts of ways since 1652, with a new publication once a month for the following eight years - till 1660!

Workshops and interest groups geared to every interest included: Journalism On-line, Writing as Prayer, Lifting up International Voices, Writing as Ministry, and Spiritual Storytelling. One participant shared a valuable bit of wisdom from workshop facilitator Susan Yanos: don't forget to pay attention to technique and content as we minister with our writing.

Zachary Moon (below) and Callid Keefe-Perry discussed The Embodied Word. They spoke of transformation and challenged us to read and write as whole persons. Let's imagine that God's Spirit can show up in any place we are. Let us be mindful of the living Presence. After all, Liz Oppenheimer noted, we are stewards of ministry of the Spirit. We need to connect to the Light-essence within before we can express the Light to others.



Blogging was a popular topic. Liz Oppenheimer, author of *Writing Cheerfully Over the Web*, shared that blogging helps ameliorate her sense of isolation within her Meeting. Blogging helps her find the vast family of Quakers - all the branches of the same family tree with the same root. Blogger Martin Kelley - Philadelphia-area Convergent Friend and publisher of *QuakerQuaker.org* - joined us via Skype for a panel discussion with Liz and Sarah Hoggatt. He sees blogging as a catalyst that gets Friends to talk and know one another across lines, much as the Conscientious Objector movement has for Friends historically. At the same time he cautioned that bloggers must realize when it is good to shut the computer off and when it is good to be silent.



*Martin Kelley (background) Philadelphia-area Friend and publisher of QuakerQuaker.org. Sarah Hoggatt, member of Spirit Rising editorial team, and Liz Oppenheimer, Twin Cities Friends Meeting. St. Paul, Minnesota. QUIP photos taken for The Canadian Friend by Pat Moauro.*

Harriet Hart of the youth editorial board (Britain Yearly Meeting) asked how moving Quaker faith into the virtual world affects the nature of our faith, and possibly disempowers it. Others felt it is not the media that matters but the message we share. Lucy Duncan expressed the hope that we learn to embrace the variety of publishing tools as a means to hear one another and feel the presence of God together, while conference publicity coordinator and writer Stephen Dotson cautioned: "Without these tools we could become inaccessible and irrelevant to rising generations of Friends and the wider world."

In the closing plenary session, author Brent Bill (*Awakening Your Senses: Exercises in Exploring the Wonder of God*) challenged us to care more for the essence we are called to share, and worry less about the technology by which the message is published. He asked that we check our priorities. Are we in the book business or in the message business? Ask 'what am I called to write', not 'what do I want to get published'. Remember that our voices should call people together, not separate. "Be revelatory not as a star, but as a fellow pilgrim, as a transparently honest encourager along faith's path." Consider: What is to be shared? What do we have to give? "Whatever we do, we must do it beautifully, to honor the work and the God who calls us to it." Finally, Brent asked that we be honest, revelatory, and hospitable.

Ours is a ministry of hospitality, and I would add - grace. The Friends who planned all the details of the QUIP conference and cared so well for everyone, leap to my mind. They personified this ministry of hospitality and grace, while facilitating excellent learning and opportunities for us all.

A new planning team is already at work to create the 2011 QUIP Writers' Conference, 28 April to 2 May at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Center in Birmingham, UK. Check [www.quakerquip.org](http://www.quakerquip.org) for more information.

*Sherryll - Jeanne Harris*

*Victoria Friends Meeting*

## Young Friends Epistle

### Western Half-Yearly Meeting 2010 -Sorrento, BC

As in other years, the teen and young adult Friends seemed to disappear, leading many to wonder what it is they do the weekend of spring Half-Yearly Meeting. On Friday evening, the young Friends invited Linda Hill to lead them in a series of activities and games, introducing the group to one of the major themes for the weekend: inclusiveness. This theme was developed throughout the weekend by spending quality time together, playing group games, and being mindful of others. Many of the young Friends decided that they would like to hold their own worship-sharing. Samuel Stevenson, the teen-program coordinator, led a workshop on creative writing and its spiritual uses, inspiring some young Friends to write submissions for the Canadian Friend.

Each year the teens contribute to the Sorrento Centre by participating in a work project with the centre staff. This year, young Friends traveled to - and helped at - the new Sorrento Centre farm. Planting squash, caging tomatoes, and weeding various fruit and vegetable beds, were just a few of the ways that they helped out.

Sharon Wright and Frank Klaassen recently purchased a one-hundred-and-sixty acre property outside of Saskatoon. They discussed the possibility and potential of sharing this land with the young Friends as a place for them to have retreats. This idea, as well as others, excited young Friends.

\* \* \* \* \*

# I Think I Have a Crush on Jesus

Stephanie Speicher

I think I have a crush on Jesus. That dark and dusty auburn hair, the long white robe, those sensible yet fashion-forward cloth sandals that just scream “itinerant messiah, generous ascetic”. They really do me in. And when he comes over, there’s something about the way he rests joyful and happily expectant, waiting on my couch and turning his head to take in the scenery even though he’s seen it a dozen times before, that brings out the glee in me. Turns me back into the kid architect of piano and blanket forts and the inventor of suspicious kitchen creations that were never so much palatable as intriguing in their color and viscosity. He invites my own joy and creativity out to play with a gilded and bubble-gum smelling sticky-sweet spider-man valentine. And heavens, I can’t ever figure how he gets it under my door. His timing is acute and his sweetness surprising even as it confuses me. What did I do to deserve this? Someone said the other day-and I’m still trying it on to see if I believe it - that he’s crazy about me. You can be crazy about a lot of things- good Thai food, size-ten black boots at the goodwill, or a Smashing Pumpkins song on the radio that you haven’t heard since sixth grade - but me? I’m still trying to get used to that. And wait, can I just talk about how funny he is for a minute? That man has jokes about nuns, giraffes, and ice cream cones that confuse the hell out of you cause you don’t know whether to laugh or blush first.

Of course, like a lot of things I really appreciate now, I didn’t at first. We grew up together Jesus and I, and now it’s hard to tell if my memories are extravagantly colored or if he really was the terror I remember. My grandma first mentioned this kid she knew, and JC’s old man bless her heart, but all the things she told me made me more pissed off than pleased to meet him. The two of them together, Father and Son, sounded like the pair you’d never stop long enough to talk to cause they might laughingly bring up the time Jr. won the derby car race by pushing all the other cars off the road. The younger one especially sounded like he had some anger control issues. I remember one of Grandma’s friends talking about how Jesus could hold you lovingly in his hand, and then either comfort you like a baby or crush you in his fist if you messed up. Maybe just like a barbie doll your head would pop

right off. Now I don’t know where you’d learn how to do that growing up in Nazareth, but it sounded like some pretty messed up version of kung fu or tai chi to me. And then there were all the stories about what would happen to you if you weren’t on this Jesus’ team, like he was some neurotic megalomaniac or something. The way I heard it, he was kinda caring - he liked the Jews, tolerated the Hindus, the Buddhists, and maybe the Muslims too - but definitely a little less - but if you didn’t bat for him you’d be sitting on the bench for not just nine whole innings, but the rest of frickin’ eternity. And you definitely didn’t get any cherry pepsi down there.

Try as she might, Grandma just couldn’t sell him to me. I had had enough of control freaks. (My family churns them out like poor vision and a tendency towards halitosis). I wasn’t going to go looking for another one. I’ll tell you though, I was a tiny bit curious to catch a glimpse of him. Was he eight feet tall with a flushed and furious face, mashing his teeth and his hands together because everyone was playing dodge ball and he wanted to play tiddlywinks? Or did he look like the other JC that sometimes showed up along with the apple juice and graham cracker crumbs?

We sang *Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world* in Sunday school. And all over the walls, along with our cotton ball sheep were pictures of a glossy-haired, white-robed angel-man smiling in a portrait that reminded me of the Vaseline smiles of Glamor Shots girls. I thought, singing those bouncy songs and seeing this pretty man with other kids leaning into his sides, that he was ours. He loved the same jump-rope games and summer forts that we did. He probably hid his buttons, foreign coins, and muppet temporary tattoos in a box under the crumbly sycamore roots just like we did. He was on my side and would let me stand between his knees and gasp and cry while he listened to how unfair it was that dad made me leave the table because I wouldn’t wash my hands for a second time.

He was a refuge too in those loud, cymbal crashing church services. The adults would use their outside voices and hold their hands, palms up to the sky and pray and pray and chant “thankyoujesus” without pause, like believing in Christ meant you never had to take a regular human breath anymore. They forgot that they looked ridiculous and that they were just letting all their weirdness hang out right where everyone could see. I wondered if it was Jesus that made you free like these people seemed to be. I’d felt the Holy



Spirit move in me - Hallelujah! - and I too wanted to cry and clap and be held by the fervent prayer ladies at the front of the church. Then, instead of stories of judgement and exclusion told to me about the man, it was the story I told myself about what I couldn't be - soft and vulnerable - that kept me separate from him.

Growing older, I heard more stories, enough to drown out my own sweet sensitivity and the Sunday school record player. Any curiosity I had about exploring a different tale wasn't enough to get close to the man. There was something else called prostrate, which for a long time I thought was a part of the male anatomy, so I was a little confused when folks said I needed to do that at Jesus' feet. I was wondering just how that might look until someone told me it meant to get down low and admit how my life, at age twelve, was a damned mess without Jesus. Well, my hard adolescent self would never submit to that. And I knew I loved my dad, my cat, and my lesbian aunts and none of them were *saved* except the cat. (Just kidding, he's a heathen named Hercules). And all that love inside me made me feel good. Like I was good. My life wasn't a mess and even if I did join the Jesus club, I'd never be able to stand on the same side of the pearly gates as my family. And that was enough. I gave up finding any middle ground with Jesus. The man eventually lost any significance for me [with] his complicity with exclusion - and as I grew older and gained a liberal lexicon - with bigots, racists, and homophobes.

The warmth of my home church still held me though, as long as they didn't say "Christ" too often and talked more about the gifts of the Buddha than the Holy Spirit. Anything that had nothing to do with a messiah was what I wanted. So I learned about energy and sage smoke for purification, creative visualization, chanting "om" and speaking with spirits that had passed on. I became bilingual as I learned to translate funda-speak: words like "prayer" and "blessing" became "meditation" and "juju".

It surprises me now that the things that kept me an eager youth group attender back then, were the ties that eventually brought me back into relation with JC. Even in the middle of my rebellion against my church family- only instead of dyeing my hair, I was studying Wicca- I showed up for workdays in food pantries and week long service trips to rebuild houses in the Appalachians. While I refused the Lord's prayer and apostles' creed, I knew, experientially, the value of buying the smelly rambling man a Wendy's sandwich and coffee and then having a conversation with him. I learned in Honduras after Hurricane Mitch that we

work with others not to build them new schools and irrigation systems, but to remind them that they're not forgotten by the rest of the world.

It makes me angry now that I was in my early twenties before I learned that Jesus understood these things also. That there was sweet redemption for those who were broken, rest and new life for the weary and oppressed, and a spotlight of grace for those who just felt so overlooked and lonely. Growing up, I had a sense of what was required of me to be in relation with the poor and the examples of a few lovely ladies who I envisioned walked with me occasionally to tell me what they knew- Mother Teresa, Dorothy Day, the daughter of my minister who left for Kenya with three large suitcases of medicine for a hospital there and only a small backpack for herself. But my discovery of this man Jesus felt so different from all of that. This was the being that had flown into the hearts of the justice-filled women I adored to feed, and washed them in courage and faith. He was their sustenance and cloak, for the tired hopeless days. Good Lord, it was like he was their saviour.

The story of how I became reintroduced to this man is not important. It was just that gradually other people's stories of a damning Christ were replaced with my own experiences of slowly finding a friend and confidant. My mother acted as bridge at times, helping me link the spiritual education I had been seeking with his mystical and Divine acts. She introduced me to his gentle presence in visualizations where her prompting would lead me to seek out beautiful settings in which to sit and seek comfort from him. And I was entranced by folks in the Catholic Worker movement that seemed liberated by following Christ's example, but never bound up.

But becoming friends with this *new* vision of Jesus was so slow. First, walking in a world of young, smart, and cynical warriors for Truth who had long ago left their own marginalizing messiah on the side of the road, I felt as if I were breaking union vows by inviting mine to the party. I kept him in my pocket for a while before I finally felt comfortable shyly introducing him, like a bad boyfriend, to a few friends and family members. And then there were starts and stops where I would wonder if he was the same old red-eyed avenger with a different face. I'm still angry that he was for centuries the Church's Great Tool, brandished over the heads of non-believers in a play for power and domination. Was he still bringing oppression into my life or the life of others? Was I being duped just like all the other sheep?

I turn to what little I know about our Friend, George Fox, when I have these doubts. In my most private spaces, in the dark hallways of my mind and squeezing recesses of my heart, I know him to be a sweet comfort to me. This I know is true, experientially. And the ecstasy of this bond does indeed save me when it seems that shame and ego will swallow me up.

Do I need Jesus? He and other teachers have taught me to know that the Divine saving grace I seek is found within. One thing I really appreciate about this guy: he knows I'm spotty with commitment and he's not looking to be a superlative in my life. And for this I'm grateful because rather than a crutch or a ticket into everlasting life, this man can be the runway that starts my journey home. Hallelujah.

*Stephanie Speicher (26) USA. Unaffiliated*

## We Are Struggling to Find Out Who We Are

*Leonard Sshivage*

The many Quaker cultures - Liberals, Evangelicals, Conservatives, ethical and the like - cause confusion in the church in Africa and even elsewhere. The many missionaries who came to Africa from Quaker families gave their own individual messages from where they came from [and their] cultures.

We are struggling to find out who we are in [our] Meetings because in one Meeting we are carrying Evangelicals, Friends United Meeting (FUM) members, Conservatives and everybody. The flock is never one because those who were taught by Jefferson Ford are with different ideas of Quakerism as compared to those of Edgar Hole. We are struggling to [make] our house to come to one unity in Christ Jesus.

Technology is bringing the Quaker families into one village all over the world. However, the internet is [causing] more division since different ideas are [availabl]. The silent worshippers think they are on the right track and those who go verbal celebrate their track.

From the electronic media, we see our nominal Quaker [numbers] and shy from the faith because of the many confusions in the way of our messages. Distinctiveness and doctrines are challenging. I remain to be a Quaker minister of truth amid the challenges.

*Pastor Leonard Sshivage (36)*

*Kitale Village Meeting, East Africa Yearly Meeting, N. Kenya*

## Book Review

### *Coming into Friendship as a Gift; The Journey of a Young Adult Friend*

By Christina Van Regenmorter  
Quaker Press (FGC) 2008

This small pamphlet (28 pages) was published through the Youth Ministries Committee of Friends General Conference in 2008. It is a treasure for Young Friends and for Meetings that are attempting to help them feel at home. The Committee writes in its introduction: "If we want a vital Religious Society of Friends we need to be courageous enough to go outside our own comfort zones..."

The pamphlet is made up of two essential parts: the account by Christina of finding her own way into the Quaker fellowship and network ("...a beautiful account of a younger Friend's journey into and within Quakerism", the Editor says). The second part consists of queries and resources directed to older and younger Friends.

Christina Van Regenmorter discovered a Friends Meeting while in India in June 2001. She had left her Pentecostal faith tradition in the US and was studying in New Delhi. She says: "Spirit guided me into New Delhi Friends Meeting". Upon her return to Michigan, she began the journey of connecting with a small worship group - Holland Preparatory Meeting - which consisted of about a dozen adult Friends and met in homes. Here she began to receive gifts: sincerity, trust, affirmation, accountability, support, friendship, love, and opportunities to serve. She concludes: "There was an understanding that I was carrying a Light within me so beautiful that I could not help but shine."

The Appendices include: *Helpful Practices to Enfold Younger Friends and/or Newcomers* (4 pages of queries and suggestions) and *Books and Magazines for Young Friends*.


Outreach and Education Committees would do well to study and apply these suggestions. The pamphlet is available from Quaker Books or from the Friends General Conference Bookstore.

*Arnold Ranneris*

*Victoria Friends Meeting*

[Both articles (left) reprinted from *Spirit Rising*, with permission from QUIP and FGC]

# Quaker Book Service



## Quaker Book Service

The following titles have been added to our stock. For a complete listing of QBS books see our 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](http://www.quaker.ca/qbs).

***The Prophetic Community*** by Helen Bayes, Canadian Quaker Pamphlet #69, Argenta Friends Press, 2009. The 2009 Sunderland P. Gardner lecturer explores our Quaker past, present and future as we obey the call of God, individually and as a religious community. (42 pp \$7.50)

***Rooted in Christianity, Open to New Light: Quaker Spiritual Diversity*** by Timothy Ashwood and Alex Wildwood, Pronoun Press and Woodbrook Quaker Study Centre, London, 2009. A remarkable and valuable unity is reached by Ashworth, once an Anglican and then a Roman Catholic, and Wildwood, a scientific rationalist, as they come together now as Quakers to examine the spectrum of unprogrammed Quaker beliefs, worship and practices in Britain and to agree on a mysterious Reality to guide us as individuals and in our community. (115 pp; \$23.40)

***A Piece of Forever*** by Laurel Dee Gugler, James Lorimer & Co., Toronto, 2008. This book for young people tells the story of a young Mennonite girl as she maintains her beliefs in peace and non-violence to her friends at school, during the time of the war in Korea. (164 pp \$8.95)

***Finding Our Voice: Our truth, community and journey as Australian Young Friends.*** The Religious Society of Friends, Australia, 2010. Many Young Friends have contributed dialogues and varied inputs, expressing a single consistent voice on what it means to them to be Quakers, in an original approach to this annual lecture. (62 pp \$15.00)

## Ordering Instructions

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For orders from North America Please add the following mailing costs:		For orders outside North America
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\$35.00 - \$59.95	\$9.00	
Over \$60	\$10.50	



# Worship

*Katrina McQuail*

From an outside perspective my relationship with worship must seem tense and sporadic at best. I am always incredibly busy, packing my life full of commitments and projects. Movement, noise and chaos flow with me, almost inextricably linked to my core being. In the last few years I have rarely made it to Quaker Meeting on a regular basis and though I have formalized my membership with Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting, I am still searching for a Meeting community that I am physically near and also meets my spiritual and community needs.

I think it is the constant chaos and busyness of my life that makes my relationship with worship that much more important to me. I attempt to find ways to commune and connect with the Divine in my every day, not just waiting for Meeting or a Sunday to build that relationship. I shy away from labeling my actions and interactions as worship, because that feels too limiting. But the moments when I find myself most at peace and closest to God are boringly ordinary and everyday.

Worship, when I am by myself, looks like baking, cooking, or going for a walk outside. It is quiet, with a purpose, but not one that distracts from my ability to be open to the Spirit and centered. External noises add to, instead of distract from, the experience. I believe that my creativity and relationship with God are bound together, that I would not have one without the other.

My worship community is spread across the globe. This is something which is incredibly frustrating at times, but it also creates very special bonds and intense relationships because you really have to work to maintain them. I choose to worship with people I trust and feel safe with. This does not mean that I have to know them before I worship with them. That would make attending a new Meeting almost impossible. Instead, it is simply a gut feeling that I get. If I were to attend a Meeting and feel uncomfortable or unsafe, I would be unable to worship. I cannot open myself up to the inner light and that of God if I feel my safety could be compromised.

Worship and my relationship to God are very personal things, which is why I love the Quaker style of worship I grew up in. I think it is so incredible to meet with a group of people and settle into silent worship together. The energy that is created by a diverse group

of individuals seeking the Divine together, knowing that God speaks to each person and that on occasion the messages you receive are meant to be shared because they are for others, just awes me.

I wish more of my group experiences of worship included singing or music. Not that I am a hugely talented musical individual, but I feel that music and dancing are ways of celebrating God and the miraculousness of our existence, and that we don't always need to be serious and quiet to show our reverence and deep connectedness to the Divine.

Being in such a transient and transitional phase of my life has made it hard for me to find a Meeting and feel really connected to my faith community that way. I love visiting other Meetings, but do not find them to be a calming and centering experience. Too often I am distracted by meeting new people, seeing what the Meeting House or space looks like, experiencing the little ways in which different Quaker groups worship - differently or similarly. I find it difficult to start attending a Meeting when I know that I will only be there for a short or set amount of time. I am afraid of becoming attached and involved and then having to leave it when I move, and then having to go through it all again in the next place.

I have long term relationships with the Friends General Conference Gathering, Camp NeeKauNis, and Canadian Yearly Meeting, as well as with the worship groups and Meetings I attended as a child. So when I go back to visit them or attend yearly sessions I can slip back in without a hitch. It doesn't feel like I have been away from those communities for sometimes over a year.

Worship brings me closer to the people I am with because, despite our different beliefs, lifestyles, and personalities, we obviously all have the desire to strengthen our relationships with the Divine, create community, and continue seeking together. I think that the various ways that Quakers worship together celebrate individuality and similarities. It is an incredible gift for me to be able to pray with Friends in their style of worship and then be able to share with them my preferred way of prayer. I give thanks every day for the bounty of my life.

*Katrina McQuail (26)*

*Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting*

[Originally appeared in *Spirit Rising: Young Quaker Voices*.  
Printed by permission from QUIP and FGC]

# Invite Your Body to Worship

*Jaya Karsemeyer*

Let us be ready for worship.

One of my blessed elders here in my new community at Stillwater Meeting (Ohio Yearly Meeting, Conservative) told me about her resentment of the admonition to “come with heart and mind prepared....When I attended Olney Friends School I had cows to milk Sunday mornings...you must run to worship!” she said. “But milking cows really puts you in a rhythm. You’re attentive to the task, just being there with the udders, one squirt, two squirts, the sound on the metal bucket, that had to be preparation enough - and I think it was.”

We are so often busy in the body; there are places to be, people to see, tasks that require our attention at every moment we try to set aside. Making the space to “come with heart and mind prepared” does not always look like stillness as I once imagined.

As a child, I was silent through Meeting for Worship. Unlike my brother, who seemed to want to wrestle every surface or hand extended to him, I sat in my parents’ lap, or on the floor, or a friend’s lap. Was I prepared? Had I contemplated a querie or centered my thoughts? The intellectual definition we assign this activity does not allow for a child, or perhaps any non-intellectual, to prepare. I trust in my wise child self - that I indeed had “heart and mind prepared” as did my brother. Or perhaps I had body prepared? A child’s body is always prepared for its journey of worshipful discovery.

Children’s first gestures have joy and wonderment in movement before they have will. As the individuated self develops, baby bodies read and define space. Body-mind centering is one method used in Dance Therapy and other disciplines, to recall the development of physical sensation. As you lie on the floor you direct your attention to the different locations from which early movement originates. It is not until an advanced stage that a child reaches for an object. This shift from discovery-movement to willful-movement is dramatic. In preparation for this desire-guided stage the neck must strengthen so the head lifts easily, and the hand follows the eye’s gaze. The whole body falls into line with what the eye sees. There is a loss of wonder, in a way. Instead: reaching, acquiring, holding, owning.

Our bodies have so much to teach us. When we listen, they are offering us a constant commentary on our thoughts and actions. Nay, the body has a mind of its own. It is not just the obedient servant of the mind. Too often we treat the sacred vessel of our lives like a support system for the head. Injury and illness are reminders of the importance of caring for, maintaining, and spending loving time with our bodies. When we pretend the body is just the high-maintenance support system for the brain, we commit that sin Descartes introduced, and thankfully revoked. Unfortunately, much of society’s structures proclaim the falsity of his erroneous mind-body-division theory.



Let our worship affirm the unity of mind, body and spirit. Indeed, Friends owe their name to this mystical and life-affirming connection. Did we not tremble in the presence of the Lord? And now? That would be a little embarrassing, I guess? Are we ashamed of what moving in the Spirit looks like? We say, “moved by the Spirit” but this rarely errs from the seated or standing position, chairs in a circle or lines facing one another. Were there chairs on Pendle Hill?

We are not a seated people, Friends.

*Jaya Karsemeyer (29)  
Toronto Monthly Meeting*

[Originally appeared in *Spirit Rising: Young Quaker Voices*.  
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# Ruffling Our Feathers Can Help Us Fly:

**a call for true seeking and greater attention to  
spirit in business meeting**

*Maggie Knight*

*“What is unique to the Religious Society of Friends is its insistence that the discovery must be made by each man for himself. No one is allowed to get it second-hand by accepting a ready-made creed....the discovery points to a path and demands a journey.” Elise Boulding, 1954 (from the draft of *Canadian Faith and Practice*).*

My involvement with Friends Business Meetings started with the Camp NeeKauNis Committee when I was sixteen. Since then I have served at various times on the Peace, Earth, and Social Action Committee of Victoria Monthly Meeting, the Quaker Youth Secretary Committee, and the Canadian Friends Service Committee, as well as co-editing the *Sporadical* for two years. The Quaker way of doing business is central to my experience as a Friend. Meeting for Worship for Business can be the most deeply spiritual part of Gatherings for me, and Quaker practice has informed how I conduct other organizing and activism work. However, there have also been many instances when it seemed that Friends were letting their egos get the better of them, or merely wished to hear the sound of their voice in Meeting for Worship for Business. I frequently feel that Friends are not seeking to discern what is best for all, in a truly spirit-led process.

This type of organizational conservatism or lack of willingness to change is common in structured groups, so I have generally inclined to accept it and do my best to push for more spirit-led business when the opportunity presents itself. Two things made me decide that that wasn't enough: Dan Poisson's letter printed in the Fall 2009 Canadian Friend which criticized Friends for “smugness” and “not ruffling any feathers”, and my experience speaking with Quaker youth last summer as part of my Quaker Youth Journalism Project.

The Quaker Youth Journalism Project was born out of a funding opportunity through the Millennium Excellence Awards and my desire to reconnect with young Quakers. Last summer I asked young Quakers to share their thoughts on their faith, the Quaker community, and life in general. The Young Friends and Young Adult Friends I talked with ranged in age from early teens to early-thirties, but there was a striking

degree of similarity in their response to my questions. They are drawn to Quaker community through family or friends and find a home in a community of Young Friends. I'm sure it is not news that gatherings at Canadian Yearly Meeting, Half-Yearlies, retreats, and Camp NeeKauNis are central to their experience. Many Young Adult Friends expressed that they spent time with other youth in Quaker settings for a long time before discerning that they truly wished to be Quaker.

However, I also asked what pushes them away from Friends. The answers were clear: “weighty” Friends taking on too much ownership of processes, tokenism regarding involvement of youth, and long bureaucratic decision-making processes. “Five years might seem like a short time to get a Quaker policy approved to some people, but that's longer than I'll be in high school.” While we Young Friends do not always get all our business done in a timely fashion, my experience has been that we seek to perform deeply spirit-led business. Sometimes we get it wrong, but we are trying in good faith. When the Committee for Consultation and Renewal spent time with a meeting of Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting in 2006, members told us that they experienced some of the most centered spiritual sharing they had to that point encountered.

I am not writing to say that Quaker youth have all the answers or are exemplary Friends in every way, but I do think that the level of self-exploration and spiritual growth that youth embrace as part of growing up, can offer spiritual vitality and leadership in our Friendly communities across the country. If we want the Religious Society of Friends to remain strong for decades to come, we know that our youth are important. If we want, as a community of Friends, to address some of the most challenging issues of our time, it is not enough to go by Quaker rote and give the official Quakerly opinion. We need to be open to new ideas, to evaluate new developments in science, and to seek truth without blinders - perhaps we will reach a “traditional” Quaker conclusion, perhaps not, but the integrity of the process is crucial. We need willingness to do business in a way that is truly Quakerly - to step away from our egos, our “weightiness” and “how-everything-has-always-been-done-before” - in order to truly come together and to continue down our communal path of Friendship with deep discernment and attention to Spirit. The dove does not take flight without a little preparation - let us not be afraid to ruffle our feathers.

*Maggie Knight, Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting*

# Gleaning from the Archives A Glimpse Back in Time

## The Canadian Friend

(Aug-Sept. 1965 p. 9)

### YOUNG FRIENDS YEARLY MEETING

Saturday afternoon—After some discussion at the beginning of our Meeting as to the methods of conducting business, it was agreed that we return to the Friends procedure of consensus for business decisions rather than continue the more formal Parliamentary method used hitherto. The Treasurer's report revealed a balance of close to \$700 and decisions regarding the use of this included a reminder to Young Friends that a travel fund exists which can be used upon application to the Treasurer. It was agreed to provide funds for Alice Muma to travel to Young Friends of North America Biennial Conference in Indiana (Aug 28 – Sept 4). It was decided not to appoint formal councillors from adult members, but when necessary Young Friends would approach adult members known to be interested in their problems, and meanwhile, any Friends so interested should feel welcome to attend Y.F. meetings. The new executive appointed was Clerk, Roger Muma; Assistant Clerk, Pennie Petrie; Treasurer, Susan McClure; and the office of Associate Clerk abolished. Some nominations were made to Yearly Meeting Committees and Bill Cutler and Jim Gardiner agreed to serve on the planning committee for Camp Neekaunis [sic] seminar (Aug. 20 – 22, see p. 15). Regarding the Y.F. periodical "Quaker Seed" it was decided (a) to publish it four times a year in an attempt to raise the quality; (b) to produce it in a central location (Toronto) under the editorship of Alice Muma (assistant editor, Roger Muma); (c) to include minutes of Y.F. business meetings to inform those unable to attend. Young Friends present agreed they should establish closer fellowship with western Young Friends and suggested a note of encouragement be sent notifying them of eastern activities and seeking further communication from them. The group was then addressed by Marshall O. Sutton on the "Meaning and Purpose of the Society of Friends".

He outlined what he felt to be the four purposes with their meanings; the first to bring ourselves and all others nearer to the knowledge of God. For Friends

this means primarily an inward experience. Secondly, we should join with others in seeking the truth. This seeking is experimental, there must be doubts and each individual must be entirely honest in it. The third purpose is to know Jesus and his life, to be a part of the Christian tradition. Through this commitment we can build bridges to all kinds of religious groups.

## The final purpose is to create a "blessed community" -

to put brotherhood into practice. From this concern has come the peace and service testimonies. Marshall Sutton then gave a short outline of membership in the Society in the first years of its existence, and then spoke of the Society today. Friends are no longer the only ones who are pacifists as many young people feel the same way. There are more and more teachers in the Society. The world task of Friends is growing more important all the time and would seem to be to build a world family and carry forward the concerns of the world-wide group of the Religious Society of Friends.

Alice Muma, Editor of the "Quaker Seed", the quarterly magazine of Canadian Young Friends.

*Contributed by Kyle Joliffe, Yonge St. MM*

We did a lot of challenging things in this period... Cleaned windows for seniors, helped with Lizzie Fry sales, demonstrated at the US Consulate for civil rights, vigils for peace etc. We had fun, worked hard, spoke out...and did a lot of walking.



Walk from Toronto to Camp NeeKauNis, June 1963. Bill McMechan, Beth Savan, Audrey Field (now Duff) Steve Petrie, Ruth Prince (behind Steve) Garth Haines, Roger Muma, Helen Gardiner (now Melbourne) unknown.



# Confessions of a Quaker Gangsta

Asa Fager

It all started as a joke. I had been to YouthQuake in 2001 and learned a song called *Come and Fill Me Up*. Surprise! The song had some pretty intense sexual subtext to it. I thought it was hilarious. Andrew Fox, being the musical whiz that he is, learned to play it on the guitar in a matter of minutes. At Friends General Conference (FGC) the following summer Andrew and I decided to play it standing on a wall outside the dining hall. This was Blacksburg, VA.

People gathered and listened. Some even sang along. Ben Hustis had also been at YouthQuake that winter and promptly jumped up to sing with us. The crowd got bigger. When the song was over, people wanted more. They wanted a show.

Tim Shea and Drew Thilmany joined in the fun somewhere along the line. Tim's an incredible poet and a natural rapper. Drew's abilities on the guitar and at keeping rhythm kept us together. We busted out a rap version of *The George Fox Song* and people went nuts for it. Someone threw up a copy of *Worship in Song* and we started pulling out songs at random, rapping them the best we could. *Simple Gifts* and *The Lucretia Mott Song* got their due. We destroyed a song about Harriet Tubman. And I don't mean that in a good way.

Suddenly we were a hit. People wanted more. Over the course of the next couple days we created *gangsta* names for ourselves. I was Funk Master Friendly. Tim was Quaka Flav. Andrew was MC Silentz. Drew was Quaka Breaka. Stephen Dominik, our counselor at the time was Ol' Weighty Gradpaw. And Ben carried my favorite of the names: DJ Consensus. We performed again on the last day of the gathering, on the same wall. This time the word had spread a bit so we had a larger crowd. But did we bother practicing? No.

Normal, Illinois came next. We played three shows that week. One *oldschool* style, where we traded off song by song with Kat Burke, each of us picking out favorite hymns; the next in the Lemonade Gallery; the final as the headline act for the high school dance. Again, we were a hit. People ate it up. Ate. It. Up. My dad actually *bought* a tape deck so that we could record that last show.

It was after the Lemonade Gallery performance that someone dropped the bomb: *Ministry*. That's

what we were doing. Apparently. But no, they must be confused. This was just an elaborate joke.

Johnstown, PA. 2004. Suddenly it wasn't a joke anymore. Drew brought a drum set. Andrew had a guitar and a bass. There was a big show planned for the end of the week. And, mostly through the persistence of my dad, we had a tour scheduled for the week after the Gathering. This meant we had to get serious. We had to come up with a set list; we had to practice. Tim and I had to actually learn the words to the songs. We spent the whole week locked up in a room practicing. There was practically no time spent with f(F)riends. Which is what the Gathering is all about, right?

Our big show was amazing. Nearly the entire Gathering showed up. A group of middle-school girls (Drew and I were both workshop leaders for that age group) worked their way up to the front row and had written out Drew and Asa Rock! one letter at a time across their stomachs. Suddenly we had gone from six guys goofing off, to rock stars.

Then came the tour. Brooklyn Friends Meeting, Pendle Hill, Camp Catocin, Sandy Springs Friends Meeting, and Snow Camp, NC. That was when things got really tense. Drew didn't come along with us that week, and Madi had a music career all her own to upstart. But the rest of us spent the week on the road. The Catocin show was the best of the tour. Which is funny, because it was the one I was most nervous about. Most of the kids at this camp weren't even Quaker. But the kids absolutely loved it. We were selling t-shirts and CDs after the show and every kid was climbing over the other to make sure we autographed their latest purchase.

I missed the next FGC. Amherst, MA. I had moved to Seattle after dropping out of college, needing a drastic change in my life. I couldn't afford to fly across the country, not to mention miss an entire week of work. The rest of the boys put together some kind of performance. They never claimed to be the Gangstaz.

Over the next year, Steve spent a lot of time trying to convince the six of us that he was on a mission from God. I'm trying to put the band back together. It didn't work. But sometimes to this day, every once in a while, I wish that it had.

And finally, our triumphant return to Blacksburg. Here we were. Five years since the beginning. Where it all began. Sure, we put on a performance. Standing on the same wall where it all began. And we gave it our all, don't get me wrong. But it wasn't the same. We all knew it was over. Or was it?

I think it was Steve's idea, but I can't be sure anymore. Anyway, all of a sudden, almost without discussion, we were going to Drew's house in New Hampshire, and we were going to record an album. And not just some shaky DIY-style straight to computer recordings like before. We were really going to do it. We had the technology.

And we did. Over the next five days we wrote, recorded, and produced a full-length record. Except something was different. For the first time, we weren't literally surrounded by Quakers. We were just five guys in the middle of the woods, mostly sitting around a fire circle, trying to make some music. We reached the decision that we were no longer the Friendly Gangstaz Committee. We changed our name to The Fantastic 6. (Partly because of the *Fantastic Four* movie that came out that summer). And with the change of the name came a change of style. We weren't covering old Quaker hymns anymore. This was new, original music. This was serious.

The album itself was pretty awesome if I do say so myself. Considering the time frame I think we did a pretty amazing job. A lot of styles and emotions were covered, with each of us chipping in an equal piece of our own throughout the record. Then we all went home. Sure, there had been a lot of talk about how and when we were going to release this record. We never did. This time around it really was over. For good.

A couple gatherings ago, in Tacoma, a kid shouted to me from across a courtyard: "Yo! When are the Gangstaz doing their reunion show?" I shouted back: "We're not, dude. It's dead!" He shouted back: "No, it's not!"

Which brings me back around to that dropped bomb. That big word passed so casually in conversation. *Ministry*. Were we really doing something different? Quaker kids goof off, right? It's a time-honored tradition. We just goofed off a little louder than everyone else. Then again, for a few brief moments, we made Quakerism cool. Sure, we weren't out on the street corner handing out pamphlets. No, we weren't throwing the Book at anyone. Religion is about more than that. And, while I feel like a lot of Quakers may try to downplay this fact, we are a Religion.

Does that statement raise a lot of questions? Yes. Do I have an answer to any of them? No. But maybe, just maybe, the Gangstaz showed a generation of kids (maybe a couple) that being a Quaker was more than just going to Meeting; more than just sitting in committees; more than my old foe 'business

meeting'. It was something to aspire to. Something to be awesome at. Something to be proud of. And that, Friends, is awesome.

Consider for a moment, seven kids, all from different walks of life. We got together once a year just to hang out with some of our favorite people. Most of the guys don't even claim any real religious conviction. They're just fond of the community. But when we added some music to the equation, six guys and a girl who had been friends for a long time all of a sudden had a connection that couldn't ever be broken. Even after the music was over. Every year we get together as if nothing has ever changed.

While we were recording the album in New Hampshire we had a phrase we would shout out to get everyone in one place: "Quakers Assemble!" (Also the name of the album itself) We'd all be in different places out in the woods, someone would scream it out, and then we'd all be together.

What I'm getting at is that there's a bond between the seven of us. One that will carry on with us for the rest of our lives. No matter where or when or whatever, we will always be able to get together as if nothing has ever changed. Thick and thin, and so on. And that feels very Religious to me.

Oh, and did I mention we were in a movie? No joke. The documentary *Rock School* features a five minute interlude about us. You can find it in just about any video store. Check it out. We're superstars.

And thus, I'll leave you with our favorite chanta:

Raise your hands.  
Quiet yourself.  
Raise your hands.  
Show me what you're working with.

*Asa Fager. (left in photo) Langley Hill Meeting, McLean, VA. Married to Jess, lives in Philadelphia.*



The Friendly Gangstaz Committee

## Report:

by Ben Segel-Brown

In 1987, the Church Council of Justice and Corrections (CCJC) - an ecumenical group of eleven Christian denominations - spearheaded the campaign against the return of the death penalty in Canada. As an intern with the Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) I recently attended their conference in Montreal. It served as a good introduction to the work of Quakers Fostering justice.

This year's conference looked at the needs of victims, and was focused on restorative approaches rather than penal justice. 'Victims' was used to mean those negatively affected by crime, including those harmed by the incident, their friends and family, and often also the aggressor. The conference looked at how people are helping to restore health to all victims, as well as building healthy relations between these two groups.

One woman, Carole, suffered crippling depression after the murder of her son at the hands of a bike gang. It's been a long journey to find answers and peace. Carol described her experiences with Victim-Offender Encounters (VOE) as an important step on her path toward recovery. Through the program Carole spoke with men who belonged to bike gangs and had committed murder (not of her son). They shared the effects of the murder on their lives. She came to the conclusion that the psychological effects of the murder had been just as intense for her son's murderers as it had been for her, and were compounded by the effects of their years in prison. Participant, Réal, spoke of his experiences as both a victim of abuse and as a participant in VOE. Victim-Offender Encounters was a profound positive experience for him also.

Another story that stuck with me was that of Margot Van Sluytman, a poet and author of *The Other Inmate*. Decades after being devastated by the murder of her father, she finally found healing in encounters with her father's murderer. The murderer's wife found Margot through the inter-net and donated to her work as a way of showing support. Since this meeting Margot facilitates writing workshops for victims of crime. She helps them find healing by finding their voice.

I also attended a workshop: *alternative measures programs in the juvenile justice system & victims*, presented by Regroupement des organismes de justice alternative du Québec (ROJAQ). Our presenter used colourful cards to show an overview of how the Criminal Justice system deals with youth, and where

his organization fits in. After a youth has been charged and processed by an attorney - if the facts of the case are not in dispute and the offence is minor - the youth is referred to a social worker. The social worker usually determines a fair sanction (or punishment) and tries to identify and eliminate the circumstances that led to the offence.

ROJAQ offers two services that can be used by social workers. First, they can help match youth with appropriate community service opportunities that work to reconcile youth with their community (as required by their punishment). Secondly, they offer mediation between the victims and the offenders of minor crimes. This mediation requires commitment from both victim and offender. The effect on both participants is often transformative, because the process humanizes the other and brings both parties to understand each other's mind sets and situations.

Further discussions focused on the challenges of integrating restorative justice into our country's penal justice system. We recognized that the uniformity of penal justice was necessary for maintaining law and order, but insufficient for the needs of the people involved in the system.

I have a concern about the upcoming changes to the youth justice system under Sebastian's Law. The law will add deterrence and denunciation as sentencing principles; impose longer minimum sentences for certain crimes; redefine violence to include being reckless even when no harm is caused; require the court to consider giving adult sentences for certain crimes; facilitate the publication of the names of young offenders; and prohibit young people from serving their terms in adult correctional facilities. Basically, the law will lead to more frequent use of prison sentences, reject the possibility that youth can change, and ignore the negative influence of prisons. It will also ignore many interventions we know to be helpful (based on research) and advance interventions that will increase incidences of crime and victimization.

The problems of our justice system run deep and one of its key issues is its inability to deal with victims of crime, and its failure to restore positive relationships between the victim, the offender, and their communities. CCJC has a role to play in curing this. I am glad this group of Church leaders has taken a deep interest in the inadequacies of our justice system.

*Ben Segel-Brown, Ottawa Monthly Meeting*

## Notice Board

### *Education Program Coordinator Wanted*

The Home Mission and Advancement Committee (HMAC) of Canadian Yearly Meeting is seeking applicants for a Coordinator of the newly formed Quaker Education Program (QEP)

#### **Purpose of the QEP:**

- to foster learning about Quaker faith and practice
- to communicate information about how Yearly Meetings serve Friends
- to disseminate knowledge about Quaker history, discipline, and organization
- to promote understanding of the practice of spiritual discernment among Friends
- to enhance understanding of Friends' testimonies as lived experience

This is a part-time home-based position to coordinate and implement the Quaker Education Program of the Home Mission and Advancement Committee (HMAC) of CYM

#### **Responsibilities:**

1. Working to develop web-based learning opportunities and audio visual resources in cooperation with the Publications and Communication Committee (P&C)
2. Developing and managing an easily accessible data base for Quaker education
3. Supporting, coordinating and recruiting for visitation associated with the Quaker Education Program

The Coordinator will report to a Quaker Education Program Sub-Committee composed of two HMAC committee members and at least one other Friend appointed by HMAC

This position begins in November 2010. It is 21 hours per week with a six month probation period followed by a two-year term. A full job description is available on request

To apply for this position, please send a letter of application stating why you would like this job, a resume, and three references by September 1, 2010 to:  
Ellen Helmuth, 150 Chapel St, Woodstock, NB E7M 1H4

Email: [ellenhelmuth@gmail.com](mailto:ellenhelmuth@gmail.com)

Phone: 506-325-3546

**Quaker Center in Ben Lomond, CA (90 minutes south of San Francisco)**  
**Personal retreats/Weekend programs**  
**(831) 336 8333 or visit [www.quakercenter.org](http://www.quakercenter.org)**



# what might die

*samuel stevenson*

"Walk in the light, wherever you may be  
walk in the light, wherever you may be..."

There are places on this lake  
where people have left  
their stories  
behind -

and this lake  
is deep -

the wind  
across the water  
keeps changing

and the steep cliffs that hold  
the old road  
erode

Here, am I Grandson?  
Branch of a fir?  
Born of a Son?  
Heir to a faith?  
Somewhere to belong?

Here, I am Tourist.  
Someone tell me my story,  
I was not here to hear it.  
I don't know where to look  
for the memories you've left behind.

Not even a story.  
Just give me something to look after,  
something that might die  
without my keeping it alive.

\*\*\*\*

"Will you swear on the Bible?"  
I will not", said he,  
"For the truth is more holy than the Book to  
me."  
"If we give you a pistol,  
will you fight for the Lord?"  
"But you can't kill the devil with a gun or a  
sword."

It's 1952 -

Two families:  
one ton-and-a-half truck,  
a two-wheeled trailer,  
three Model A Fords trying not to swerve,  
and a four-wheeled trailer carrying  
five-thousand pounds of meticulously packed  
home-canned preserves.

They ground their way up the west coast  
away from the black lists, their teaching  
roles,  
Loyalty Oaths, government control,

to a country of the north  
with no flag or anthem -  
a place to work hard  
and together,  
to sit in silence  
moved by God  
like aspens  
by the weather.

They called this maneuver "compound low":

On the steep downhill slopes  
my grandmother would slow,  
so that Grampa and she were  
bumper to bumper,  
two Model A low gears holding back the  
trailer's epic load.

And that's how they rolled.

Carried by steamboat to their new home,  
bear meat cooked on the stove,  
Grampa saved the pelt.  
Wet cottonwood  
that first winter  
that didn't burn,  
so much as melt.

"There's an ocean of darkness  
and I drowned in the night  
'till I came through the darkness to  
the ocean of Light."

Seven families now, and a co-operative is  
formed:  
they build each other's houses,  
grow each other's food,

3/5<sup>ths</sup> of your pay to the co-op, and 2/5<sup>ths</sup> to you.  
Equal pay for any kind of work,  
doesn't matter whether you do it wearing  
slacks or a skirt.  
Yet once they'd tilled the soil and bought all  
the right tools,  
the last thing they expected to grow  
was a school.

It went like this:

Kids and staff making decisions like Quakers  
by consensus,  
learning the intricacies of wildness craft and  
statistics,  
Silent Meeting before class, a little break  
from logistics.  
Twenty years pass and now students look  
back, and they miss this  
time in their lives when those in charge  
could still listen  
and though something is always lost in  
translation  
those students have tried to pass this faith  
on to the next generation that's us.

Now, this school sent its classes to visit  
Doukhabor families –  
another tradition committed to use peace as  
its bearing,  
they, too, held onto the simplicity vision  
they, too, threatened Canada's image of  
women,  
they, too, knew that God speaks to each  
individual  
and ask only that we take a moment to  
listen.

They had something in common.

It was during these outings my Dad met a  
close friend  
and started spending summers with them  
It's with fondness he remembers the way  
the communal house shook  
with the heartsoaked hymns and gospels of  
the Living Book  
and the meals – beginning with borscht and  
ending with stuffed  
Vareniki and piroshki and leftovers for lunch

A different family, from a faraway place  
who knew what it was like to base  
everything from school to food on faith.

This land had something to offer both  
Doukhabors and Quakers  
and it had something to do with being so  
legally unshaped.  
no flag, no anthem, no oaths, no king,  
just Salt, Water, Bread and enough Silence to  
make your ears ring

Now times, they are a-changin' again.  
My grandfolks got old & moved to the city  
Grampa died a decade ago and Grandma just  
last spring  
I barely got to know them and now  
I'm left  
with remembering.

"With a book and a steeple and a bell and a  
key  
They would bind it forever, but they can't,  
said he.  
O, the book, it will perish, and the steeple  
will fall,  
But the Light will be shining at the end of it  
all."

So I stand on the shores of this lake  
and there are stories all around me,  
under my feet, under my skin,  
in the back of my mind from when I was  
too young to listen or  
wasn't paying attention.

And I want to know what's next.  
What am I here to look after?  
What is it that might die  
without my keeping it alive.

The lake is deep.

The wind  
across the water,  
keeps changing.

And all I can hear,  
is silence.

*Samuel Stevenson, Vernon Monthly Meeting*

# Transitions

*Nori Sinclair*

Sometimes it feels like being a young adult is all about transitions. For starters, finishing school after continuously attending it since Kindergarten is a big adjustment. I had just completed the academic portion of my journalism degree and, along with my fiancé Nathan, was at the point of deciding what to do next. Would we stay in Calgary where most of his family is? Move to Vancouver Island to be closer to mine? Choose somewhere entirely different just for the heck of it?

Having the opportunity to choose where to live is both exhilarating (We can move anywhere!) and daunting (We can move anywhere?). How do you figure out what is important to you in a community? How do you find that elusive home, a place, and people you feel connected to?

This type of concrete transition comes so rarely – while change is constant, having a clear decision to make doesn't happen so often. When you have the chance to choose what you want to do with very little outside pressure, what do you choose? How do you decide?

In the end, Nathan and I chose Victoria. We liked that it's near my family, love the climate, the ocean and its general feel. There's no question that having family here made the move much easier, but we also lost something by leaving Calgary and moving away from the community we've built up there, including Nathan's family and our school friends.

Though I have been living in Calgary for almost four years, I never thought of it as being home long-term. I was surprised at how sad I was to leave, how I actually feel homesick for the city I didn't feel much affection for. I've discovered that transitions are not easy, especially because it seems impossible to have everything you want in one place.

But we're here – so how do we make it feel like home? I'm impatient for friends, for that community that doesn't come instantly. I hope to find a home in the Meeting here, even though I still find Sunday mornings a challenging time for spiritual engagement (but that's an entirely different discussion). I hope that Nathan and I are lucky enough to have chosen a place that makes us feel at home – and patient enough to let it grow around us.

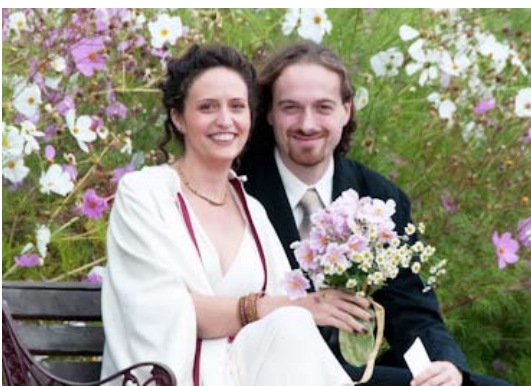
*Nori Sinclair, Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting*



Nori Sinclair and Nathan Dick (Calgary MM) are engaged. She is working as a communications intern for Sierra Club BC.



Maggie Knight and Nat Egan-Pimblet  
Nat is entering his last year of a BSc in Physics at McGill University. "I'm spending my summer doing astrophysics research for a professor in Montreal. I live near Mount Royal with my lovely girlfriend Maggie and four foster cats."



Erin McDougall and Andrew Esser-Haines (of Philadelphia) on their wedding 2009. They live on Erin's family farm - Mayne Island, BC.

## Around the Family Around the Family Around the Family

### Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting:

Cousins, Elen Cheatley and Rachel Singleton-Polster, graduated in June. Elen graduated with honours from Esquimalt High School and plans to train to be an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) and ultimately a Primary Care Paramedic (PCP). Rachel completed her International Baccalaureate at Pearson United World College in Metchosin, BC. She is working this summer as an intern for the Canadian Friends Service Committee in Toronto. Rachel will attend Mt. Allison University in Nova Scotia in the fall.

Amy Jean Singleton-Polster finished her second year of medical school in the UBC Vancouver Island program and is doing a month of studies at Dawson Creek hospital.

Maggie Knight is sojourning in Montreal, entering the final year of her Bachelor of Arts & Science in Honours Environment and Economics at McGill, and as someone said: "being environmental".

### Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting

Rachel McQuail and Robin Sanders are installed in their new house in Kitchener. Rachel wrote: "My husband Robin Sanders and I were married in a Quaker ceremony on my parent's farm on June 14th 2008, and we are expecting our first child in early July." (This child) will be the first grandchild for Tony and Fran McQuail.

Katrina McQuail is back on the family farm with her parents for another season of farming. She is involved in Friends General Conference's (FGC) High School Program as a co-coordinator and the Youth editorial board for Spirit Rising.

Ethan Chiddicks is currently on a three month adventure in the Seattle, WA area working on an educational tall ship.

### Guelph Worship Group

Diana Shepard Stephens' little guy Everett, is coming up on a year now. Emily Shepard lives with Diana and family "I've had a great time being a part of my nephew's life the past few months", she wrote.

Francis Prescott (from Guelph) and Liz Brauer are engaged and planning their wedding for 2011.

Editor's Note: I did not wish to overlook anyone. These represent the Friends who responded to my call to Meetings for information about Young Friends. Please contact me if you were missed so I can be sure to include you in a future issue dedicated to Quaker youth. Sjh

### Vancouver Monthly Meeting

I recently moved to Vancouver from Philadelphia, PA to be with my wife, Sara. We live in New Westminster and are quite happy.

I'm attending the West Coast College of Massage Therapy. I was certified as a massage therapist in the states but the standards are significantly higher in BC, so I have had to go back to school. I am very passionate about massage as my vocation, as it is a wonderful healing tool that is under utilized in the world today. I will be spending the next two years in training before looking for work in the field.

Sara is not Quaker (yet) but she has been attending Meeting with me, and other events that Vancouver Meeting has held. She is a research coordinator in the psychiatry department of University of British Columbia.

We are both avid swing dancers and we try to get out several times a month to the local swing and blues dances in the city.

Sincerely, Tristan Wilson

### Yonge Street Monthly Meeting

Rebecca Ivanoff is in Honduras working on her fieldwork for her Master's at the University of Guelph. Her house in Guelph is home to Hannah Ivanoff and Bethany Von Bezold - University of Guelph graduate and student. They host many young Friend events and feed us pizza made from their brick oven.

### Yarmouth Monthly Meeting (Sparta)

Ellen Laing was married summer 2009 and is living in Portland, Oregon.

Grayden Laing is living in Toronto, working as a video editor as well as continuing to do his stop-motion animation.

### Hamilton Monthly Meeting

Anna Peters-Wheking is out in BC being involved in sustainable agriculture, community building, and doing her lovely photography.



## *Notes from the Youth Editorial Board*

*Sarah Hoggatt - Harriet Hart - Katrina McQuail*

One thing I want you all to remember is that the words are not enough. Words themselves have no power. The power lies in where the words come from. The power lies in the love in which they are spoken and the love in which they are lived out. May love be our highest goal.

*Sarah Katreen Hoggatt  
Freedom Friends Church, Salem, Oregon*

As I remember, the beginning was joyful, full of laughter and excitement. Ten of us gathered in Greensboro, North Carolina, in April 2008 to vision the book that we were to create and edit. We were working with a concept. I had dreams of what it would include. I had hopes for the dialogue it would initiate. I saw it as an act of sharing that would encompass the whole world and build bridges between Friends far and near. Coming from Britain I was keen to hear stories shared, and faith vocalized, in a way that seemed lacking in my Yearly Meeting.

As the editorial board's work progressed, we learned about each other as individuals, we learned about the different cultures we came from and the different traditions that fall under the Quaker umbrella. I was challenged to listen deeply for sustained periods of time, to hear very different expressions of faith; to accept that not all Quakers dance the way I do. And as we worked through those struggles I had a growing fear: I became concerned that the book we were working to produce would not build the bridges I wanted to see among Friends, but would make our differences more pronounced and our divisions deeper.

Now that we have a book in our hands, a wealth of voices, rich and diverse, I am excited once more. I am energized by the difficult conversations that we have engaged in. I am buoyed up by the voices that resonate with my experience. It is my intention now to invite people to participate, to begin sharing their own stories, to begin listening and embodying their own faith. This is not just a book, it is a project that requires interaction and conversation.

*Harriet Hart  
Britain Yearly Meeting (Yorkshire)  
Currently studying at Pendle Hill, Pennsylvania*

The process of coming together with other Quakers to edit *Spirit Rising – Young Quaker Voices*, to create an inclusive wide spectrum of Quaker views and experiences, forced me to articulate and enter into conversation about my beliefs. The difficult part of being one of the few Board members from the liberal, unprogramed Quaker tradition, was trying to represent and articulate the non-creedal, Spirit-led, diverse beliefs of our community - some of which I do not hold.



Ten young friends (with support committees and elders) from five different countries and from all spectrums of Quaker faith communities, came together with the desire to learn, understand, be open, and listen intentionally. These efforts did not make it any easier to hear some views, and it forced me to listen for the Spirit behind the words. I was transformed by the process of seeing that of the Spirit in other Quakers and accepting the difference that exists between their beliefs and my own.

After crafting the call for submissions in April 2008 we each started the process of soliciting submissions, leading workshops, and publicizing the process. April 2009 as the toughest face-to-face meeting we had.

Having viewed all of the submissions, we began selecting pieces for the book. The content of the pieces was unfamiliar to some, thus we learned to explain practices and ideologies even if they weren't our own. We practiced patience and being open. It was exhausting. The most difficult aspects were continuing the work of soliciting pieces by e-mail, the editing, determining the order of the pieces, and the final discussions when we had to cut some pieces that had already been accepted. This was especially difficult because of the impersonal nature of e-mail, and because people were not in the same gathered, Spirit-led engagement when responding to an e-mail that just popped into their life.

Overall, my experiences with the Editorial Board were full of joy. That is not to say that all of our interactions were pleasant, or that we as a Board came out enlightened, or open to all other forms of Quaker practice, or that we were able to fully appreciate each of the pieces in the book. Numerous people have asked me about whether reading the book is transformative and if it is challenging. I feel as though the transformation comes from having conversations with people about the content of the book, and allowing yourself to be vulnerable, open, and changed. The challenging part is to really hear the pieces that conflict with your beliefs and not just write them off as absurd, naïve, or heretical.

The process of the book was not always perfect, and there were very hard moments that made me wonder why I was called to this purpose. I believe that we did the best we could, given the time, energy, and resources available to us. There are definitely pieces and voices missing from the book and for that I am truly sorry. I carry the concern that the book we created to bring the Quaker community together - through greater understanding of each-other - could just as easily create deeper divides.

I invite you to pick up the book, read pieces, create opportunities for conversation and open yourself. This is a book for all ages and should be used as a resource and starting place for conversation and dialogue, not as a definitive statement of different Quaker traditions and beliefs.

If there is anything I have taken away from this experience, it is that you can't make assumptions about what others believe - like your best friend or your parents. If you intentionally have a conversation and are open, you may be surprised by what you learn.

*Katrina McQuail, Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting*

## Last Words:

by Erin McDougall

# To Love Well

Oriah Mountindreamer said: "When I imagine myself as an old woman at the end of my life and ask myself how I will evaluate my time here, there is only one question that concerns me: did I love well? There are a thousand ways to love other people and the world - with our touch, our words, our silences, our work, our presence."

I believe, like Oriah did: "...each moment in which we love well, by simply being all of who we are and being fully present, allows us to give something essential back to the Sacred Mystery that sustains all life."

When we leave here [Earlham College] we will travel to different corners of the world, to fill different roles, to live out our lives in our own unique ways. As we seek to make the world a better place, we will be faced with the challenge to stay true to ourselves, to be the person we were born to be; to remember, even in the hard moments when it feels easier to sink into the wall behind us, that we must shine brightly, stand strongly, and love fully. It is a lesson we will be learning all our lives.

To love well means that we must have the courage to go where we feel deeply led, even if it means that we step into an abyss of what we do not know and can not imagine. To love well means that we must learn to be radically vulnerable to enter into a deep mutual covenant with those around us, and with that Mystery which we cannot see, and still hold fast to the truth in our souls as we know it.

To love well means that we must be fully and completely the person we were born to be. We started this journey much before Earlham, but being here has given us a depth of understanding of what it means to be ourselves that will sustain us through the years. We have a community that will remind us of who we are when we have forgotten, and we have found passions that will keep us tethered to that bright shining core, that make us the unique humans beings we are.

*Erin McDougall*

*[Excerpt from the speech Erin gave at graduation from Earlham School of Religion, May 2010.*

*(See photo on pg. 28)]*

# *The Canadian Friend*

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CYM

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Celebration - Joy - Wonder

March 2011

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