

The Canadian Friend

Vol. 104, No. 2

May 2008



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Get Thee to Camp NeeKauNis
Protest and Truth Telling
Around the Family

The Canadian Friend

May 2008 Volume 104, Number 2

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

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Editorial:

Raised by a Conscientious Objector who spent the '50s in the southern States struggling along with Blacks for civil rights, I learned early about protest and truth telling. All risked their lives with the Ku Klux Klan every day. For some, the only protest available was running away. I remember visiting a family of sharecroppers who had no alternative to enslavement to their landowner than to escape in the night to Birmingham, to live in hiding, fearing for their safety.

Through the '60s I spent holidays, and later as a young adult I lived with a family friend many readers knew - Mildred Fahrni. She was invariably off to an embassy or somewhere conspicuous with placards to protest war and injustice or advocate for war resisters. As a kid participating in this unpopular action I was uncomfortable and embarrassed. Telling the truth was difficult.

She did what Spirit asked of her before the protest marches were popular; stood alone with no apologies or doubts. In 1982, at a particularly large Peace march in Vancouver, I remembered those earlier years and was proud of her commitment before the crowds joined in, before it was an easier, less conspicuous stand to take.

Effective non-violent truth telling is not easy or convenient. I wish I were as brave as Mildred or her friend Muriel Duckworth, of whom she spoke many times (see pg. 22). Thank God for the Mildreds and all those we know who have been and are unpopular for the sake of justice and peace.

This issue tells stories of various ways Quakers protest injustice and tell the truth. I particularly love the scene set by the song *The Rajah*. Elizabeth Fry saw the truth of the situation and also knew the tools with which to overcome injustice. She understood, as Daisy Anderson states, "supported people become empowered people". (See Daisy Anderson's article "Speaking Truth to Empower", next issue).

May we find inspiration and identify new role models.
May we become role models.

Sherryll-Jeanne Harris

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ALWAYS UNCHANGED, EVER CHANGING

by Beverly Shepard

You're sitting on a handmade wooden bench - or perhaps on the grass - at the top of a gentle hill, looking out over a tree-edged bay. It's quiet. Blue sky and blue water are separated only by the line of deep green. A gull flies over the bay. A wren carols in the rowan tree. A hummingbird darts to the feeder for a few sips. All around you are Friends like you, sitting quietly in the hush of worship and gratitude for the beauty of creation. It almost feels as though God might reach down and touch your cheek. Maybe that's already happening.

That's Meeting for Worship at Camp NeeKauNis. It's a magical place, and the Hill where generations of campers have worshipped together for 75 years, is especially miraculous. So many spirits are gathered; their work, play, joys and concerns permeate the ground, stones and the wood of the buildings. If you have never been to Camp NeeKauNis, the only Quaker camp in Canada and one of the great treasures of our Yearly Meeting, you have missed an experience of some of the best that the Quaker faith has to offer.

Camp isn't just a place to send your kids! It's particularly loved by a devoted group of adults, who keep it going and keep it affordable by doing everything from mending screens to cooking, to building cabins, to teaching crafts. There really is something for everyone at NeeKauNis.

This is an especially good year to consider coming to Camp. There are five new programs offered on weekends during the season from May through October, covering a wide range of interests: Quaker Peace Witness, 21 Plus (a mini-camp for adults in the traditional style), Spirituality and the Creative Process, Birding, and Spiritual Practices. You could get a taste of Camp without having to take time off work or plan for an extended stay. Our regular programs for children from ten years and up and for families of all kinds are still in

place and welcome new campers.

In recent years there have been some big changes at Camp. The size of our property was doubled by the acquisition of a neighbouring property, as well as the house on it. This protects our beloved space from encroachment by development on the west side, as well as preserves many acres of habitat for wildlife, trees, and plants. We have a wheelchair-accessible cabin, running water in all the cabins, new gardens, a hardwood floor and more windows in the Meeting Center, skylights in the dining room, and many kitchen improvements. The comfort and accessibility of Camp improve while the spirit - both of the people of Camp and of its beautiful natural setting - remains, persists, and grows.

But improvements and expansion cost money. Our camp is struggling financially. Practically everything we do is done entirely by, or with the huge support of unpaid volunteers. We are faced with raising our rates again this year, and probably every year for quite a while. They are still about the lowest costs you could find anywhere for the type of accommodation and programs you'll find at Camp, but for some they may pose an obstacle to coming to Camp. We strongly encourage Friends across Canadian Yearly Meeting to help support Camp NeeKauNis by attending or by donating or both. Even if you're unlikely to come to Camp yourself, you can help someone else to come by donating directly to the Bursary Fund. This helps to reduce fees for those who need this assistance and provides travel bursaries for eastern and western Friends. Donations to any aspect of Camp, of course are warmly welcomed. The Memorial Fund honours many Friends who have died and provides funds for special projects. The General Fund keeps us going!

Whether for a one-week or ten-day summer program, or a weekend in spring, summer, or fall, come to Camp! It's your camp, and there's nowhere else like it. We welcome you!

Beverly Shepard, Hamilton Monthly Meeting

Family Camp Kaleidoscope

We move, shift,
Come close in new ways,
Seemingly random,
But we are reflected
In each other's love,
The Light shines through,
And lo! A new pattern -
Awesome in beauty,
Never before seen,
Never after Quite Forgotten.

Beverly Shepard, Hamilton Monthly Meeting

Visit our website at www.neekaunis.org, or contact Amanda McKinnon, 10 Cynthia Ct., Barrie, Ontario, L4M 2X4, 705-792-4194

amv0015@hotmail.com for a newsletter

Resting in God's Hands at Camp NeeKauNis

Report on Work Camp Summer 2007

by John Lavin

In a nutshell I had a wonderful vacation, working at Camp NeeKauNis. Working may not sound like most people's kind of vacation but it really did provide the kind of rest I was looking for. Putting myself to work doing what I apprehend as God's work shouldn't be a vacation, it should be my full-time job. There was no better example of the saying by Jesus, that "one cannot serve two masters", than in the work I did at NeeKauNis. I spent money and didn't gain any in return. What I did gain was immensely more valuable: community, friendship, service, song, and skills. I hope I always remember the feeling of community I had at camp, sharing meals and chores, as well as having fun swimming, kayaking, running, and windsurfing.

The most important thing was this: in all that we did, we shared in it together. I wonder if this was how tribes in simpler times functioned? Why have we lost this capacity to work and share together? Community seems to provide so much and take so little. The world of the 'independent' traditional family never felt so small. I'm not saying it was all one big love-fest. There were disagreements and difficult times to get through, but it seemed so much better and easier addressing them together.

I'll remember how the exact time and day didn't matter anymore. Judging what time it was could adequately be measured by the sun's position in the sky. I'll remember being immersed in God's Creation as I felt the cool breeze, the warm sun, and heard the rustle of the trees from the wind blowing off the bay. I learned that we have a precious gift to be treasured and that we pretty much have been given all we need yet we want more, ever more and may well destroy that precious irreplaceable gift through our greed. I'll remember the almost 40 beds I had a big hand in making and how generations of campers will be able to share in that small sliver of Light shining down on them that I was able to see and feel so closely.

For one week, I made something: something for others, something greater than myself with meaning beyond my own lifetime. It is a good feeling. I hope to have it more often!

At night heading for bed I saw so many stars in the sky that I had not seen before because they are usually obscured by light pollution. It made me wonder what else in our lives we have obscured through our own interference, through our own pollution? What walls have we built up barring us from Truth? I'll remember how easily those walls were broken down with His power guiding me, for after all God's leading put me there in the first place, and my experience is a testament to the rightness of that leading.

John Lavin, YAF from West Chester, PA.

Reflections:

Friends' World Committee for Consultation Triennial 2007

by Virginia Dawson and Rick McCutcheon

The 22nd FWCC Triennial was held in Dublin, Ireland in August 2007. We were privileged to represent Canadian Friends. The opportunity to engage in worship, business and fellowship with over 300 Friends from 41 countries was very special. All four sections of FWCC were represented from all the different branches and worship traditions of the world Quaker family.

Based on the concerns that Yearly Meetings had forwarded to the World office, working groups were held on six different topics: Human Rights, Young Friends, the Environment, Outreach, HIV/AIDS and Violence. The Human Rights group divided into four separate sub-groups: civil liberties, modern day slavery, racism, and sovereignty for indigenous peoples. This latter group was extremely exercised by the attempts of certain governments, (including Canada) to weaken the force of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Canadian Friends Service Committee with assistance from Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) had engaged in much consultation and dialogue to advance support of the Declaration. It was passed in September by the General Assembly but without Canada's supportive vote.

The group on Outreach spoke of the importance of reconnecting to our roots in early Quakerism and engaging with our present day diversity to strengthen our understanding of what it is we want to share in outreach. The importance of in-reach among ourselves was emphasized as an integral part of outreach.

The HIV/AIDS group presented minutes that specified direct action by FWCC in relation to the AIDS epidemic. This advocacy was later determined not to be part of FWCC's mission.

Those meeting about the environment reiterated the urgent threat to life on earth by environmental destruction. They commended the model of Trees for Africa, adopted by Dutch Friends to compensate for air travel to FWCC meetings.

The final working group was on violence. There was a wide-ranging discussion on violence in all its forms. Many present had direct experiences, especially those from Africa, the Middle East, Central and South America. Others spoke of their involvement in different programs to prevent violence: with families, in conflict resolution and with Alternatives to Violence Programs (AVP) and of the value of such Quaker sponsored conferences as Quaker Initiative to End Torture (QUIT) and *Friends' Peace Witness in a Time of Crisis*. After the report to the plenary session, a minute urged Friends, both individually and corporately, to re-focus in worship and action on personal and collective violence.

During the report on FWCC's ecumenical work, Friends were concerned to hear that Canadian YM, as recommended in the Consultation and Renewal report (CnR) was reviewing its historic membership in the World Council of Churches. Our withdrawal would have a major impact on the ability of Friends and the other Peace Churches to have a global voice and influence. So this matter needs to be reviewed in light of these concerns.

FWCC is thinking about a theme for 2012, when they will meet in Nairobi, Kenya. Based on our membership in CYM there will be spaces for at least three delegates. Perhaps we can start now to engage both spiritually and financially to plan for this event. To attend a world gathering is truly to experience blessings and enrichment.

*Virginia Dawson, Yonge St. Monthly Meeting
Rick McCutcheon, Prairie Monthly Meeting*



Cemetery near Ottawa Parliament Buildings

“For what it’s worth”... Montebello and Me

by Fiona McMurran

*There’s something happening here
What it is ain’t exactly clear
There’s a man with a gun over there
Telling me I got to beware....*

For What It’s Worth, by Stephen Stills (Buffalo Springfield) 1967

I’m sitting on a patch of rather damp grass on Parliament Hill, on a brilliantly sunny Saturday afternoon in August—wondering what I’m doing here. This is the first day of a demonstration against the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) a secretive process involving the heads of state of Canada, the United States and Mexico, and thirty CEOs of large corporations, ten from each country. Tomorrow, Prime Minister Harper will meet with Presidents Bush and Calderón, as well as those CEOs, behind closed doors at the Chateau Montebello, for their annual SPP Summit. Today, Parliament Hill is filled with representatives of many different organizations from all parts of Canada, the U.S., and Mexico. What unites us is the hope that our action will finally bring the seriousness of this threat to democracy and national sovereignty to the attention of our fellow citizens. All around me are protesters, of all shapes, sizes, colours, and, particularly, ages. I’m surprised to see so many, like me, in late middle age. I try to identify distinct groups by their banners. Are those red ones the International Socialists? I easily spot Council of Canadians members by their bright yellow banner with the red maple leaf in the middle. The Ottawa Unitarians are here, I note. I catch fleeting glimpses of members of our little

group from Niagara, handmade signs held high. There are about a dozen of us, ranging in age from 19 to 78. We belong to an offshoot of the Niagara Chapter of the Council of Canadians, formed barely a month ago out of concern for the rapid erosion of democracy we see around us. Helen, an intrepid veteran of many decades of protest, draws my attention to the roofs of the Parliament buildings. Can it be? Yes, it's true: there *are* what appear to be police sharpshooters up there. Despite the sun, I feel suddenly cold.

The speeches come to an end, and the crowd prepares to march along Ottawa's streets. My friends go with them, but I stay on Parliament Hill; I have to sit out this part because my bad hip won't let me do any more walking. I sit on the steps as the public address equipment is taken down. The whole scene has an unreal quality. The Parliament Buildings are like Victorian-era cut-outs against the unbelievably blue sky. It's all so benign, somehow. Then I remember the sharpshooters, and look up; but the roofs are deserted now.

Mere days ago I was at CYM. Another reality altogether. A distinctly more *real* reality. And I'm thinking: is what I'm doing now spirit-based? How do you know that when you're in the thick of it? Later, for instance, at the forum sponsored by the Council of Canadians, I will find myself getting very angry at the words of the participating Liberal MP, and yelling at her along with other members of the audience. Quakerly? Hardly. But I *am* angry. I'm angry at the platitudes, at the deceit. It smacks of contempt for all of us, the electorate.

Next morning, we join hundreds of others boarding buses lined up outside the PSAC building in downtown Ottawa, to travel the few kilometers to Montebello, Quebec. Each bus is captained by a member of the organizational coalition, along with an assistant. They take our names and contact information, and give us a rundown of what to expect, and what to do if we get into any trouble. Outside the town, the buses

are stopped next to the huge wire enclosures set up on the grass to contain us. We are supposed to allow ourselves to be herded into these cages, on the promise that we'll have audio and video access to whom, or what, exactly? No one on either side actually believes this plan is going to work. Thanks to some negotiating by our bus captains, the buses are allowed through into the town itself. We are dropped off outside the old train station. Across the road, some Montebello residents seem mildly curious, but not hostile. Some even indicate support. Circling overhead are large military helicopters. A particularly huge yellow one stands out, and we're speculating: Is Bush in that one? Is it full of military police? Ours? Or theirs?

Here's Maude Barlow, Executive Director of the Council of Canadians, with supporters in tow. Maude intends to present Prime Minister Harper with petitions bearing the signatures of 10,000 Canadians opposed to the SPP. We let them go ahead of us, and then fall in behind, starting to march towards the closed gates to the Chateau Montebello. My little group splits up, some moving into the advance brigade, others of us bringing up the rear. But we don't get very far. Word filters back to us: there's a line of police in front of the gates. They won't let us in, and now, despite prior agreement, they won't accept the petitions. What do we do now?

Across the road to our right is a cemetery, raised a couple of feet above street level, enclosed by a low stone wall. From our viewpoint, the headstones seem enormous. Then, one by one, armoured police appear amongst the headstones. The sight is incongruous, somehow: the police in their Star Wars outfits, in this graveyard that looks as if it's been there for centuries. I find myself wondering if some of these headstones might mark the graves of soldiers of the two World Wars. What was it they fought for? Ah, yes freedom, I think it was. Preserving our democratic way of life.

And then I realize that I've moved up closer to that cemetery, to that line of police, so that I can look into the eyes of those nearest me. At this

distance, the armour looks idiotic. It's a costume, that's all. I'm standing there, leaning on my cane, and I start to laugh. I feel quite ridiculous: a middle-aged woman with an arthritic hip, leaning on a cane, confronting what? Who is this young person before me inside this battle gear? Would he really lift his hand against me, an unarmed fellow-citizen, because he had been told that I am a threat to the unpopular head of another state? Would he? And would he think differently without the costume? Without the uniform does he think for himself? (I recall Plato's warnings about mimesis, not only of its effect on the audience, but also of its effect on the performer.) Did I really call out, "Take off that stupid mask, and let me see your face. I am just like you, you know?" I don't know.

Here they come: the Black Blocque, the anarchist group from Montreal we've all been waiting for. What strikes me first is how terribly young they all are. The props they carry are deliberately crude, made of heavy cardboard painted black. This technique is designed to avoid provoking a violent reaction: these young people are doing street theatre. (So are the cops, if truth be told. The difference is, the cops don't know it.) Now one young woman begins to sing, and a couple starts to dance. The Raging Grannies come by in a car decorated with flowers. It comes to a stop, and the Grannies pour out and start to sing.

In front of the gates, the main group stands in rows, silent, passively facing up to the line of armed police. And now there's a commotion, an ebb and flow of people, shouts and cries from the front. The police have begun pushing the protesters with their shields, trying to shove them away from the gates. Now they've started in with the tear-gas a young woman is helped past me, gasping and sobbing from the effects. And here comes the pepper spray. The group at the gate starts to break up, many moving back towards us, some running, trying to avoid the chemical assault.

My brother, one of the main protest organizers, gets my colleagues to move me back to safety in case I get knocked down. There is shouting just across from us, and a group converges around the altercation. Sarah joins us, coming from the direction of the diner. She left the front line to wash the pepper spray out of her eyes. "They've arrested three men," she says. I have to phone the emergency number in case they need legal representation. Then Marie appears, also from the diner. "I don't know what's going on," she says. "They put those guys in the police van, but I'm sure I saw them getting out the other side."

We don't know what it means until the next day, when the video clip is posted to UTube, and we see the outing of the three police *agents provocateurs*. Put there to cause trouble, to turn this carefully organized, family-friendly demonstration into a riot. Why? That's what we want to know. If all that is truly at stake is the continental standardization of *jelly beans* (!) why the high-level summit, with the attendant expensive security measures? Why the need to discredit us, or belittle us, the citizens, simply because we consider that truth telling on the part of government is a necessary concomitant of democracy?

On the drive home in our rented van that night we're all pretty quiet. The events of the last two days have affected each of us differently, but we share a sense of the seriousness of this issue. The effect of the police presence at Montebello has been to allay my own doubts about the necessity for this action: public attention is at last being focused on the SPP. It *feels* right, which is as close as I can get to a leading at this particular moment. Yet I know that the politics of confrontation are but another kind of theatre. There are other ways of speaking truth to power, and I must explore them, too. Above all, I must never avoid that difficult but vital question: Is this action spirit led?

Fiona McMurran, Pelham Executive Meeting

Truth and Protest

by Muriel Sibley

When I was young, Truth was,
I was too busy and worried for Protest.
Now, Truth be told, I am too tired for Protest
and sometimes too tired for Truth.

Still, my heart, stretched and scarred
from years of exertion in sorrow and joy,
shivers when approached by news of misery.
I crowd the starving poor, the homeless sick,
into that yet sanguine chamber already stuffed
with the addiction of my daughter,
the death of my friend, my many loves.
I pack in global warming and
uncontained development;
loss of habitat together with divorce
and pain, my own and others'.
Trying to contain it all, after all.

When I was younger but not so young,
When the children were sleeping through the
night but not yet likely to sleep around,
When marriage was an Ark and I,
supported on the uncertain sea by faith in Love,
could in Truth, Protest,
I shook my fist at the sins that left
us this iridescent ocean
swarming with desert-dwelling jellyfish;
at the blind and fearful warring of my kind –
spilling their shining youth into the sand.
Then, I could believe in land,
could spend my faith,
could take my stand.

(Deserts surge and swell over the earth,
birthed and fed by blood and greed.
Make room, my heart!)

Increasing years give me a duller vision
but a longer view,
slower discernment but a more urgent quest:
What, How and Where be True?

As ocean waves pass on the light and motion,
we rise and fall back, each taking from the other.
I know my turn will come again
to help Truth prosper.
As my heart, that elastic womb
makes space for yet more woe (and joy – there)

Muriel Sibley, Saanich Monthly Meeting

Book Review:

*Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote
Peace-One School at a Time*

Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin.
Penguin Book

Reviewed by Dick Preston

War is not the answer. But what can truly help the remote Islamic villagers of Afghanistan and Pakistan (and other poor and remote peoples)? What kind of people are they, and why are they shooting at us? For answers, someone has to go there and find out. Someone did. And that someone has provided us with a truly inspiring book.

Greg Mortenson is a big, handsome American ex-service man. He trained as a nurse, worked in Emergency, and lived out of his car to save money to support his near-fanatical passion of mountain climbing. In a failed attempt to scale K-2, the Himalayan peak second to Everest, he reached his physical extremity, and became lost from his guide on the way down. He wandered into a remote Pakistan village, and was saved by their hospitality. I use the word 'saved' with some deliberation.

Greg stayed in the home of the headman for several days, recovering from exhaustion and exposure. As he began to look about, he asked the Headman if he could see their school. With visible dismay, the headman took him, and here were the children, without a school building, without a teacher, a few with slates, and the rest writing in the dirt. It was cold. The boys and girls were working at their literacy on their own. Greg was deeply moved and made a life-changing decision. He solemnly promised the headman that he would go home, raise money, and return to build a school.

He tried. Letters (250 of them), were sent to affluent people who he thought might donate but fetched up nothing. Finally a fellow climber connected him with a man who supplied the

necessary funds. Then he learned the hard way, how to do business in Pakistan. Everything moved very slowly but eventually the school was built. By the time the book was published, 55 schools, mainly for girls, had been built. He was actively supported by many Islamic leaders, by an Afghan warlord, and especially by the villagers who provided the land and labour.

Why was education so important? To offer an alternative to the children who would otherwise grow into a world where the poor and illiterate have few options – one of them to join the Taliban for a good salary as a soldier; an alternative to the hundreds of Saudi-funded and staffed Wahhabi madrasas, where fundamentals of conservative Wahhabist Islam are taught. Greg's secular education aimed to teach children literacy, numeracy, languages, and to imagine the world beyond their immediate experience.

Fifty-five community schools, for a better future for children, for less than the cost of a Cruise missile!

Dick Preston, Hamilton Monthly Meeting

“ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE” WORKSHOPS IN UGANDA

by Sheila Havard

Mary Edgar is a Friend from Yarmouth Monthly Meeting who is conducting Alternatives to Violence (AVP) and income-generating workshops in conflict-ridden areas of Uganda. After doing 20 workshops during her six months in Uganda in 2006-2007, she returned in October 2007 for a further six months.

The workshops are mainly attended by ex-combatants, although local councillors have

sometimes participated. For several generations, many Ugandans have been soldiers almost continuously, from colonial times through the upheaval of Idi Amin's years until recent times, and have never learned any other skills to earn a living. After being disbanded, these combatants returned to their villages to be met with ostracism and contempt because they had been 'on the wrong side'. They frequently found their homes and livelihoods destroyed and their families scattered. Such ex-combatants, stigmatized and deprived of the means to earn a living, are just ripe to be enticed by military recruiters. This coupled with their poverty, creates a potentially inflammable situation in a country of inter-tribal friction, high population growth and intense competition for resources, including land.

Once immersed in this culture of violence, former soldiers returning from the bush know no solution to disputes other than violence. AVP workshops are an attempt to break out of this vicious circle.

The three day workshops are organized by a small non-sectarian Ugandan NGO, National Reconciliation Aid Foundation (NAREAF), which is run by an ex-combatant pastor. It is entirely dependent on donations. Sometimes the workshops are accompanied by training in income-generating skills, such as bee keeping and organic farming. A related organization, the West Nile Disadvantaged Widows and Orphans Association (WENDWOA), runs handicraft workshops.

Participants' reception of the ideas advocated by AVP is striking. Mary Edgar wrote last spring: "I was most struck by the gentleness of most of the participants... the pain felt by these ex-combatants was obvious. The outside was tough, but the inside was hurting... I was amazed how receptive they were. They don't like violence, but they have learned from a young age that this is how problems are solved... they were like sponges - absorbing peaceful, non-violent methods to solve their various disputes..."

Fund raising has been entirely organized by Mary, with the help of Yarmouth and Coldstream Monthly Meetings. When funds run out, workshops grind to a halt. It is a cardinal principle of AVP that participants must be volunteers and therefore not paid for attending. This principle is difficult to apply to an impoverished country. Participants at NAREAF workshop are not paid for attending, but do receive food, itself a form of enticement. They are also given a small transportation allowance, but many from further afield are excluded because the allowance does not fully cover their travelling costs. After the basic level workshop, higher levels train facilitators who, it is hoped, will organize future workshops. NAREAF is attempting to follow up with those who have taken the basic level, to reinforce their skills, and research is being conducted into past participants' progress.

Although originating with the project developed by American Quakers in the 1970s for use in penal institutions, NAREAF's AVP has been adapted to the local culture. For instance, instead of relying exclusively on memory, reinforced by experiential exercises, participants are provided with notebooks to jot down the more formal teaching. However role-play is still used extensively and enthusiastically, and it is helpful because it brings common real life conflicts into discussion so that non-violent solutions emerge. Unfortunately the manuals are still mainly in English.

Other organizations elsewhere in Uganda also offer AVP and a number of Ugandan Friends are trained facilitators. An AVP newsletter is being created to foster communications, with the remote goal of creating an "AVP Uganda".

NAREAF's AVP has been reworked to address homemade problems. By a process of 'listening to the culture', by discernment, by finding out what the Ugandan clients themselves really want, it has been possible to adapt it to local needs and avoid merely imposing a Western solution (which might be outwardly accepted but inwardly rejected).

AVP is still a drop in the bucket in Uganda but it is very much needed and has the potential for growth.

If you wish to support this project, cheques may be made out to Yarmouth Monthly Meeting and sent to Kerrie Gill, R.R. #3, Ingersoll, ON N5C 3J6. Information: kerrie_gill@yahoo.ca

Sheila Havard, Coldstream Monthly Meeting

A Critical Moment: *How to support U.S. War Resisters*

Recent Momentum:

The War Resisters Support Campaign has been busy at work since our victory at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration where a motion to give U.S. war resisters sanctuary in Canada passed in December.

The Campaign has won the support of the New Democratic Party (NDP), the Bloc Québécois, and a number of principled Liberal M.P.s. Momentum is building towards a vote in the House of Commons this spring on the motion that passed in committee.

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzWgHAFzdn>

Recommended Action of Support:

CALL, WRITE OR FAX YOUR M.P. Find out where your Member of Parliament stands on the motion to let U.S. war resisters stay in Canada. Particular focus is needed on members of the Liberal Party, and on Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion and Prime Minister Stephen Harper as well:

To find your M.P. using your postal code:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Menu=HOC>

Let the campaign know about your efforts. Send us a report: E-mail: resisters@sympatico.ca

Some Messages About Protest and Truth Telling

From a May 2004 conversation with Jack Ross

By Linda Hill

During a life of following spiritual leadings to stand up for social justice, Jack had more than a nodding acquaintance with jails. I'm sure he drew on these experiences to help himself deal with the imprisonment he faced during the last few years of his life. During this time his lively mind bubbled over with wonder, delight, and an outrageous sense of humour about social and environmental justice issues. Gradually he became trapped by a degenerative illness that stole into his body and caused everything Jack did to take place in slow motion. However, he never stopped following his leadings to reach out to others through writing and clowning, to teach us about protest and truth telling. I loved his subtle protest against his slow motion existence in an article published in the Summer 2007 Edition of *The Canadian Friend*. In his good-bye tribute to Bud, a friend he met at the seniors' retirement home in Nelson, Jack said, "I think maybe we were moving toward a comedy routine based on silent exaggerations".

I am so thankful I had the opportunity to spend some time with Jack at Western Half Yearly Meeting in 2002, 2003, and 2004. I treasure the clowning workshop he facilitated in 2003. I often turn to his "What Can I Do?" book when faced with difficult situations. I hope you will laugh a bit and learn a bit while reading these excerpts from an interview with him in 2004.

About his book: What Can I Do? "Friends are always concerned about justice and wrongs done to other people. Usually it isn't until we get to the point of tension or crisis that we ask, What can I do? The purpose of my book is to be helpful when the crisis comes. How are we to be prepared to do something? (For example), the essay *The Graceful Man*. Here is a man who did an enormous amount to prepare me to answer the question, What Can I Do? He was always referring to the basis of spiritual life as the necessary process

to deal with problems."

About Clowning: "Humour is one thing I'm particularly fond of. The world is a wonderful place; full of things that never fail to delight me. To me that is important, because some draw the conclusion that people involved in social justice are sadistic or masochistic, and do this because they have to. I want to raise the point that we do this because we are led by the spirit, the same spirit that leads me to tell jokes.

Clowns or Fools are nonviolent, willing to take risks and be simple. You do something that is completely outrageous. Your innocence, naiveté and simplicity make it possible to survive the opposition to what you are doing. Clowns have to be nonviolent in the sense of learning the emotional basis of nonviolence and the techniques to cope with violence.

A question I often pose to people in workshops is, 'Why do children come up and start hitting clowns?' This is a frequent occurrence. For the most part people don't answer. They find it puzzling. They think perhaps the children are afraid. I think that this is partly true. I have seen the fear in young children. I remember I was doing a solo act and a young baby started to cry. So I took my red nose on and off, and got a bit of a laugh. Then I put the red nose on her mother's nose and got a laugh out of that. Then I gave my nose to the child and that was my nose gone for the day. But it was worth it because she got over the fear and realized I was just a person doing something different. The other half of the answer is that being assaulted by a child from a child's world against a clown who is not going to fight back, shows that violence is there in children. So what I am saying is that the clown or the fool has a lot of power to change emotions. The clown and the clown demeanor have a very strong effect on people."

About non-violence training: “I developed a unique form of non violent tactics. While the AVP model is a personal response to violence (to try to avoid being violent), my approach was at the group level to help people develop tactics to deal with difficult situations. To me this is the most important thing that I have done. I think I’ve conducted about fifty non-violence trainings. I think by and large they have been strategic and individual successes. None of them have been failures. Most of them had to do with people in the community sensing that something was going to happen that would be difficult to cope with. Very rarely do people come to nonviolence training for any other reason. I remember one case in Ashcroft where people called me in because they were protesting the dump site they were going to put there. So I built a workshop along those lines. We had a round of introductions to the people there and it got so emotional that I decided to cancel my plans and hear them out. It lasted all day. The leader said that if I hadn’t done that there would have been a riot. The catharsis was necessary. And that is what I do, I come in with plans and if they fit the situation I go with them and if something else is needed I go with that.

The reaction of people to non-violence training courses is that it was a very important thing, but nothing happened. In other words, because of the non-violence training, nothing happened. Newspapers never write about things that didn’t happen. I’m just waiting for the New York News to post the headline: ‘Nothing happened!’”

So as I say goodbye to Jack, I want to thank him for dedicating his life to protesting and truth telling through spirit-led writing, teaching, and clowning. As we remember Jack, let’s think about all the ways his actions helped nothing to happen.

Linda Hill, Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting

Protests Remembered

by Toni Bacon

Half a century ago, when the now iconic Peace Symbol was in its infancy and the ridiculous Civil Defense Program of the United States was in its glory - children were ducking under their desks to protect themselves against nuclear attacks - I experienced my first official ‘protest demonstration’. At the time I was working at the Philadelphia International House in the former Whittier Hotel, a building owned by the Religious Society of Friends to house and offer activities for International Students.

Although I had accompanied my mother to a few Quaker meetings as a child during World War II, and had spent my sixth grade at the Philadelphia Friends’ Select School, in 1960 I was preoccupied with my job and forthcoming marriage, and had very little idea of what Quakers did or who they were.

The Cold War era had created a bizarre form of national hysteria and the backyard bomb shelter craze, largely stimulated by the press and construction firms, was enjoying a boom. Many major US cities, Philadelphia included, were holding annual “Operation Alert” citywide air raid drills. Essentially these were duck-and-cover actions on a grand scale. When the sirens blew everyone had to get off the streets into designated shelter buildings.

The big day of my first-ever protest arrived when a couple of Friends from work invited me to join a demonstration. We gathered with quite a large crowd of people in an open space near City Hall, under the watchful gaze of the large bronze statue of William Penn. The sirens blared. Cars pulled over, drivers and pedestrians hurried to buildings marked with shelter signs, and the protest group in the bright sunlight stood quietly and opened umbrellas. Posters were displayed with the words, “Shelters are as useless as umbrellas”.

Looking back to that day I realize that it was an important moment, for it wasn’t too long after that

event that increasing public protest resulted in the abandonment of "Operation Alert". Our protest triggered a realization that a group of dedicated people could in fact have some influence over the actions of the government.

By 1962 my husband and I had immigrated to British Columbia and I had settled into a comfortable domestic life preoccupied with home and three young children. But in truth I was neither comfortable nor settled. Resonating with Betty Friedan's feminist message to pay attention to the inner voice that said, "I want something more than my husband and my children and my home", and deeply disturbed by the upheaval and aggressive actions of my once beloved homeland, I badly needed some way to do something.

Reenter the Quakers. In 1967 a visiting Philadelphia Friend invited me to attend Vancouver Meeting. I found the Religious Society of Friends not only offered me a way of deepening my inner spirit but also provided an outlet for my activist leanings.

In keeping with the Peace Testimony of the Quakers, a number of Vancouver Friends were involved in establishing the Vancouver Committee to Aid American War Objectors. I eagerly volunteered to help, and became the coordinator of the Housing Committee with the job of finding temporary accommodation for young draft-dodgers whose conscience had led them to avoid military service. They believed the Vietnam War to be an immoral war and chose refuge in Canada rather than terms in jail.

Often, there were no vacancies, and so our big old house became an unofficial hostel and gathering place. In the course of the following year about 50 young men passed through our doors or spread their sleeping bags on the living room floor. We shared many meals, and listened as they told some profoundly moving stories. A number of war objectors became good friends and many went on to become outstanding Canadian citizens.

During this time I had attended the Vancouver

Meeting regularly and further explored Quaker beliefs and traditions. But our family moved often, and in the intervening years, even though I was involved with many protests about many issues, I had only fleeting connections with the Society of Friends. I always knew however, that when there was a demonstration about some matter of importance to the community and the world, there were most likely Quakers in the crowd, standing in support of peace, the environment or social justice, and often willing to risk harassment or even jail for their beliefs.

Today, even though my participation in demonstrations, marches or vigils, is often curtailed by arthritic knees, the computer age has conveniently allowed me to continue protesting from the comfort of my apartment. And thanks to a renewed connection and commitment to the Society of Friends, I also know that no matter where I may reside, a gathering of Quakers will always provide a supportive and rewarding spiritual home base for truth telling.

Toni Bacon, Victoria Meeting

Telling My Truth

As a history teacher and as a woman

by Alison Prentice

In the beginning my protests were individual: phoning a landlord to protest his refusal to rent to a Trinidadian woman of colour or presenting a brief to the Toronto Board of Education, defending a downtown poor parents' organization that had grievances about the treatment of their children.

By the late 1960s and early '70s protest marches were part of my husband Jim's and my life. When the NDP national convention met in Winnipeg we marched around a big supermarket on behalf of Hugo Chavez and the California grape workers. At the University of Toronto we marched to protest war industries recruiting on campus and occupied the president's office to

protest the university's failure to create a day-care centre.

By the late 1970s and early '80s, the most important focus of protest for me was telling my truth as a woman. One memory is of demonstrating against a group of entertainers who seemed to be pitching sexual violence to teenagers. Perhaps the most vivid is of marching in an International Women's Day parade that ended in a blizzard in Toronto's Nathan Philips Square. Nevertheless we stood a long time to support the struggle in Toronto for more and better day-care.

Most of my feminist work was indoors however, and had to do with gender biases in the teaching of history in universities and schools. When I started teaching, women's truths were largely absent in history courses and the movement to alter this became my passion. We soon learned that it wasn't just a case of 'add women and stir', for women in the past, as in the present, often initiated new directions, especially in important areas like peacemaking and social justice.

In the beginning, it took courage to say our truths out loud. The next step was telling our truths in textbooks, courses and programs, which seems to be the work of a lifetime.

Alison Prentice, Victoria Meeting



Editor's note:

Last month at Story Teller's Guild I was excited to hear Cathy Miller sing her song *The Rajah Quilt*, about the good work of Elizabeth Fry.

The Rajah Quilt was made by convicts on the ship Rajah in 1841, inspired by Elizabeth Fry, a Quaker prison reformer in the Newgate Prison, London, England. It was found in 1987 in Edinburgh by Janet Rae, while researching "Quilts of the British Isles". The label, embroidered on the outside border (photo below left, middle of right edge) of the quilt reads:

"To the Ladies of the convict ship committee, this quilt worked by the convicts of the ship Rajah during their voyage to Van Diemens Land is presented as a testimony of the gratitude with which they remember their exertions for their welfare while in England and during their passage and also as a proof that they have not neglected the Ladies (Elizabeth Fry's) kind admonitions of being industrious. June 1841."

The chorus of the song (opposite page) is a partial list of the bundle of sewing supplies given to each of the female convicts in Newgate Prison by Elizabeth Fry. These provisions were carried by the 180 female prisoners on board the Rajah as it set sail from Woolwich, England on 5 April 1841, bound for Van Diemen's Land. When the ship arrived in Hobart on 19 July 1841, these supplies had been turned into the inscribed patchwork, embroidered and appliquéd coverlet, now known as the Rajah Quilt.

View the beautiful quilt in colour online at <http://www.nga.gov.au/RajahQuilt/>

You may also wish to hear the song by Cathy. For information: www.singingquilter.com



The Rajah Quilt

Lyrics by Cathy Miller - the Singing Quilter

We set sail on the Rajah, transportation had begun
On the 5th of April in 1841
Bound for far Australia with our great and public shame
It was the 19th of July before we'd walk on land again
Farewell to our future, goodbye to kith and kin
Good riddance to old England's towns, will I ne'er see them again?
The crossing would be risky, maybe some of us would die
I thank God for my safe passage, I thank God for Elizabeth Fry.

She gave to us one thimble, a single ounce of pins
100 needles and one small bodkin
9 balls of sewing cotton, a pair of scissors and some thread
2 pounds of patchwork pieces and a Bible
To earn our daily bread

Some said we were evil, some said we were no good
So they shipped us off around the world like we were cords of wood
No thought to our future, out of sight and out of mind
No other reformation, save the work of Mrs. Fry
She knew we'd fall on hard times, with nothing else to do
We might have to sell our bodies when our prison time was through
But with new skill at the needle, there's no lack of honest toil
And it filled our days along the way to Van Diemen's soil.

CHORUS

By the time we got to Rio, several quilts were done
We sold them for a guinea each, and shared with everyone
It was the first honest money some of us had ever made
And the first thing of beauty we ever had to trade
For the last half of our journey, we sewed with loving touch
A quilt for the woman who had given us so much
With broderie perse, the finest patches we could clip
The hours quickly passed aboard the convict ship.

CHORUS

For we were whores and we were mothers, young and healthy, old and frail
We were ripped out from our homeland and sent to Hobart's gaol
With loneliness and sorrow there was no lifeline and no rope
But each one carried with her a bundle filled with hope
It was such a small investment for the future of a land
To pull the Desperate up with such a gentle, caring hand
With Mrs. Fry's conviction in faith and industry
We started our new lives with some respectability.

All that, with just one thimble....

Book Review:

Bound for Canaan: The Triumph of the Underground Railroad

Fergus M. Bordewich, Harper Collins, 2005

Reviewed by Catherine Verrall

This engrossing book tells the stories of thousands of people whose acts of kindness, bravery and desperation, grew into the miracle of the Underground Railroad. For many white people at that deeply pious time, a prime motive was to save their own souls, as their God demanded justice, and love for God could not be separated from love for all God's human creatures. At first isolated individuals, most of them Quakers, felt the outrage of God impelling them to do something. Gradually a movement of inter-connected persons from all walks of life fermented. Eventually many African-Americans and whites, risking disgrace, horrible punishment, and death, were operating in all northern states and eastern Canada.

I was struck by the way people allowed their lives to be totally and secretly disrupted. Night after night, year after year, they were wholly committed while at the same time carrying on their usual public duties. Women's contributions were not often recorded. But when the knock came in the middle of the night the women rushed to prepare food, find clothing, nurse the ailing, arrange beds, and worry about their husbands and sons out on hazardous missions. Women and girls circulated petitions, sold homemade goods to raise funds and acted as 'conductors'.

As the movement developed organizational and political dimensions, Quaker women also did the public speaking. Unlike other women, Quaker women always ministered as equals with their men. So women like Lucretia Mott were an inspiration to other women who wished not only to free the slaves, but also to achieve equal rights for themselves. Women such as Elizabeth Stanton became suffragettes because they had seen that Quaker women were "vocal, self-reliant, politically astute, living the kind of engaged and

intellectually liberated life that Stanton felt so painfully denied".

Bound for Canaan offers a fascinating study of how a movement grows from grassroots to shake nations, combat evil and create good. Quaker Isaac Hooper and his collaborators in Philadelphia became the first cell of the underground. They "set the model of co-operation across racial and class lines" which the Movement followed. This book shows humanity as we are- with our peculiar gifts and skills and weaknesses. Not all Quakers were "saints". In 1842 Levi Coffin and 7 other Quaker activists were disowned by their Indiana Yearly Meeting for alleged 'divisiveness on the subject of slavery'. Then about 2,000 of their fellow Quakers (about ten percent of the Yearly Meeting) formed their own Anti-Slavery Yearly Meeting. Said Coffin: "We asked only freedom to act according to one's conscientious convictions." Quakers rarely invited Blacks to join the Religious Society of Friends. Some were amazed at Isaac Hopper's willingness to eat with Blacks.

Canadian writer Lawrence Hill (author of the equally gripping novel (*The Book of Negroes*) wrote the Introduction, giving the Canadian context. He shows how *Bound for Canaan* is an essential part of Canadian history, because so many of the more than 100,000 escaped slaves finally arrived in Canada. Their life experiences emboldened them to claim their rightful place as contributing citizens in their Canaan Promised Land. It is also an essential part of Quaker history.

Today, as with slavery, our daily lives are inextricably tangled with modern forms of enslavement. The sacred web of creation and all its beings are enslaved to our human life-ways. This story of the struggle against slavery then, can be an inspiration to us now.

Catherine Verrall, Regina Allowed Meeting

Consider an Action

by Muriel Sibley

Even at a remove of seventeen years I remember the mounting shock and anger so many of us felt as the U.S.A. built up rhetoric and arms to enable the Gulf War of 1991. To my partner, Cal Revelle and me, the reaction to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was inflated and based on much more than the purported aims of international justice and humanitarian aid. Oil came to mind, and power.

One evening in mid-December 1990, while listening to CBC, we learned of a group of Internationals who planned an unarmed camp on the border of Iraq, to witness in an attempt to deter the impending war. Citizens of the world were invited to join them before January 15, the date George Bush the First threatened to bomb Iraq.

After private and mutual soul-searching with a Committee of Clearness from Victoria Monthly Meeting, and discussions with our children (they expressed both anxiety and support, as I imagine the children of soldiers must do), we decided that one of us would join the Peace Camp while the other stay home to mind the pottery, the sawmill, and the children. Since my passport was valid and Cal's expired, the division of responsibility was clear. Huge efforts on the part of Friends got me outfitted and flying to Iraq in less time than I would have believed possible.

The Gulf Peace Team was eighty men and women from sixteen countries living in tents in the Iraq desert, pressed up against its Saudi border about 200 miles north of Kuwait. The Iraqi government officials were respectful of the campers, but we stressed our independence from them; we paid for our expenses and expressed neutrality in our public statements. However on January 27 we were politely but firmly told to leave. The Iraqi army bases near the camp had requested permission from the government to commence firing on the Allied planes that had flown nightly bombing missions overhead from

the Saudi side of the border. Apparently, as long as the camp was there, the Iraqis would not draw the Allies' fire by shooting at them.

The experience challenged my physical, mental and spiritual skills. I learned much about group dynamics, politics, and myself. I truly believed in 1991, that enough of us working together could stop the war. Of course theoretically, that was true. It is also true that most people can't leap into full-time protest, even if they would like to. An ailing parent, small children, and lack of support are only a few of the many possible reasons.

From the vantage point of 2008, I wonder whether such protests as the Gulf Peace Camp are valuable as experiments in roughing out ideas that later find fuller expression in other ways. *Voices in the Wilderness*, led by the American Kathy Kelly, who was at the Gulf Peace Camp, came into existence in 1991. It organized dozens of illegal trips from the U.S. to Iraq, carrying medical and school supplies to the Iraqis, and information about the realities of the ongoing war back to the States. Perhaps some of the Truth of the Gulf Peace Camp was re-packaged into the Global Peace Force, which sends international teams of ordinary people to hot spots such as Sri Lanka to facilitate communication and reconciliation.

I have huge respect for those who have the stamina and optimism to commit to the ongoing hard work of social and political peacemaking. Mass demonstrations grab attention for a short time, and are necessary to keep us all awake and aware, but the real job is more humdrum and more vital. It involves relating to others in a daily discipline of seeking truth and speaking truth, of keeping optimism in a troubled world, and bouncing back from disappointment and grief.

Most of us aren't capable of doing it all of the time. Still, once in a while, if we are attentive, we may hear a call to action. And our action may cause another to consider an action.

Consider an action!

Muriel Sibley, Saanich Monthly Meeting

I know Protest; What is Truth?

by Lynne Phillips

Years ago I belonged to a U.S. Quaker e-mail discussion list from which I copied the following quotation attributed to a book on logic: "There are many things I believe to be true and one of the things I believe to be true is that some of the things I believe to be true are not." It instantly became one of my favourite slogans for humility practice.

Why? Because being a bookish sort, I was also impressed by Eric Hoffer's thesis in *The True Believer* (1951) that there are people who can only see the world through their own narrow lens. During the ages of eight to fourteen, I belonged to the very fundamentalist Independent Bible Church. I know how it feels to Believe because as a fundamentalist Christian, I tried (unsuccessfully) to convince my family to take Jesus Christ as their Personal Saviour. I was convinced that if they didn't, when they died they would go to hell and suffer eternal damnation and torment. As a child that certainty struck me as Truly Awful, so I was very emotional and exasperatingly persistent. When the constructed world-belief of my childhood began to crumble under adolescent scrutiny, fuelled by fascination with space science, biological science of evolution, and science fiction, I started asking questions of the Church Elders. My experience of the full fury of True Believers towards the apostate finished the demolition.

Following a classic pattern, I flipped to atheism. But my early spiritual life, skewed as it was, did have a deep core of the numinous which I experienced as transcendent love and serenity. It pulled me back into spiritual practice via meditation. I have morphed into a kind of universal deist. I can worship and co-exist with Quakers who do not insist on Belief in a Creed. I prefer to believe in a universe conceived and embraced by god – unknowable but not unknown when experienced by humans in human terms (lover, mother, father, shepherd, friend, etc.). I have no proof that god is

a loving god but I would rather live in a universe with a loving god. I do have proof of planetary benefits when we cherish and protect all living beings and their life support systems.

I am uncomfortable with the word Truth in the Quaker query "How does the Truth prosper among Thee?", but I realize that among other forces, we are motivated by belief. We live unpredictable lives and our actions have unintended consequences, both good and bad. Uncertainty has not stopped me from having opinions or from taking action on issues however, because paradoxically, not acting is an action. Does 'prosper' imply results or actions?

I have organized and protested for many causes. I have protested against the testing of A-bombs and H-bombs in the atmosphere, against segregated lunch counters in the southern United States, against the Korean war, the Vietnam war, the Gulf war, the Iraq war, the Afghanistan war, and the minor wars – the invasion of Cuba, for example – and probably some wars and invasions that I can't even remember any more. I also support literacy, libraries, and equal rights for women, children, Aboriginals, etc. If the weather is pleasant, I am likely to demonstrate for any number of good causes.

However, I want to make the most effective protest that I can (probably because I participated in too many feel-good-but-futile protest events in Berkeley during the free-love, free-speech era of the 60s). To this end (here's the educational pitch) here's some advice from *The Better World Handbook: From Good Intentions to Everyday Actions* by Ellis Jones, et al. (2001, New Society Publishers). They say that if you want to influence business and government, the most effective means also requires the most personal effort. From most effective to least effective (aka quick and easy): 1) Personal meetings, 2) Handwritten letters, 3) Phone calls to key staff members, 4) Phone calls to

the receptionist, 5) Handwritten faxes, 6) Typed letters, 7) Typed faxes, 8) E-mails, 9) Form letters and postcards, 10) Form e-mails from web sites. This list was verified for me in a conversation with a staff person from the U.S. Friends Committee on National Legislation, a lobby group in Washington, DC. He said petitions get very little consideration – too easy - but hand written letters or visits to a representative in your electoral area get far more attention and that sometimes as few as ten letters can sway a vote. When I asked why organizations still use postcard campaigns as a protest gimmick, he said that signing a postcard is a symbolic act of good intention that may lead to further action. Further information from a Canadian government civil servant: letters are usually read by an assistant who tallies them after checking the first page. Thus, be sure to state your position in the very first paragraph and don't waste your time over pages and pages of prose unless you want to hone your writing skills.

One final favourite slogan on Belief and Protest: The trick is to stay open but not so open that your brains fall out.

*Lynne Phillips, Victoria Meeting
Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting*

Seeking The Truth

by Diana Mitchell

Years ago in a heated discussion a friend stopped us all cold by asking, "What *is* truth anyway? Can you define it?" We got out my biggest Oxford Dictionary before we'd exhausted our limited knowledge, but came up dry. The dictionary offered lean academic viewpoints without flesh. Most unsatisfactory. For Seekers, as we all were, it was strangely upsetting. We simply hadn't been able to pin down what truth is.

All we had in the end was each person's belief that s/he knew in any given moment what the truth of the matter was. After that, I filed 'truth'

in the back of my mind's file cabinet until some often-irksome situation required another go at it.

Each time the result was similar. "What IS truth?" I would sometimes wonder. Yet most often I was certain I knew truth when I heard or saw it. The fact that others occasionally would be equally sure something else was The Truth continued to bother me.

I spent the majority of my professional life giving expert testimony in courts, making solemn affirmation that I would tell The Truth, where others swore on the bible to do the same. Each time I stood to make my oath, I had a sense of foreboding: could I do this? There was a slim nagging suspicion there was more than the truth I believed in. Maybe someone else would say this was not the truth. Then what would happen?

Sometimes I saw people caught by facts, so that what had been said was shown to not be the truth. Something else was, well...truer! Then there were times someone would be found to have told an untruth. The word 'lie' was somehow so much easier to define than the word 'truth'.

Truth telling is looked on seriously everywhere, however in a court of law there are penalties of a special kind should a person be caught failing to tell the truth under oath. The results could include public embarrassment, maybe a short stay in jail, a fine, or being refused as an expert in further trials. But these consequences of failing to tell the truth are mild in comparison with what people experienced in the past and some will experience today. In Canada we no longer drown, burn, hang or beat folks for failing to tell the truth. However, we can do some mighty nasty things if the truth a person tells is not the truth someone in power wants to hear. Ask someone who phones the mortgage company to say s/he can't pay for a few months due to straightened circumstances.

Truth telling cost my own family members a lot about two hundred years ago. They had joined with other Friends to form a co-operative store,

(cont'd. on pg.25)

Advices and Queries 37 & 38

Are you honest and truthful in all you say and do?...If pressure is brought upon you to lower your standard of integrity, are you prepared to resist it? Our responsibilities to God and our neighbour may involve us in taking unpopular stands. Do not let the desire to be sociable, or the fear of seeming peculiar determine your decisions?

Book Review:

Muriel Duckworth: A Very Active Pacifist
by Marion Douglas Kerans

Reviewed by Arnold Ranneris

Muriel Duckworth stands in a line of strong Canadian women who helped to shape the fabric of a caring society in the later decades of the twentieth century. They were to be found in churches, universities, political parties, and peace and social movements like the Voice of Women. They were particularly active from 1950-1990 and made a profound impact on our country.

Muriel's life is recounted wonderfully in this book. Born in 1908, she was exposed to the tragedies of the century: wars, depression, nuclear threat, political divisions. As well there were promises of new beginnings: women in higher education, national and Global initiatives for peace and disarmament, and the great awakening of feminist consciousness. This culminated with, but was not limited to International Women's Year (1975).

The book describes her formative years in Montreal and at McGill University; the awakening to the implications of her Christian faith through the Student Christian Movement (SCM); her years as a mother of three, married

to Jack Duckworth whose ministry was expressed through the YMCA.

Later in Halifax she became more publicly active for peace and disarmament through Adult Education, the Voice of Women, and the New Democratic Party. Mary Kerans writes of Muriel's commitment to the Voice of Women (p.153). In her day-to-day experience within the Voice of Women, pacifism never meant negating or smothering conflict. She felt she had never belonged to any organization whose members were so passionately committed to their cause.

While the peace and women's movements were the focus of Muriel's work and service, we can see that her broader goal was social justice. What started in the SCM movement "to create the kingdom of God on earth" became, by the last decade of the Century a vision for a "New Society" based on partnership of women and men. I like her definition of spirituality as "... what links you with everything in the world and is related to creativity and caring, and in a sense, suffering along with people who suffer".

It is most fitting to remember Muriel in this issue of *The Canadian Friend* with the theme of "Protest and Truth telling".

*Arnold Ranneris, Victoria Meeting
Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting*

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Long Distance Calling....



by Margaret Slavin

How can our Society of Friends become a real fellowship/community of friends?

The Society of Friends arrived in the world as an ecstatic movement spread by eager Publishers of Truth. The Meeting for Sufferings, the parcels of food and supplies that were sent into the prisons, the passionate respect for one another and equally passionate denunciation of church leaders and members of the judicial system led to a community of care for one another which did not have to think much about how it came about; it just happened.

We experience a version of this still when we find ourselves drawn into protest of the same sorts of issues—essentially the exploitation of the poor to enhance the lives of the rich. Here in Peterborough we are reading Quaker history, including a passage from J. Sykes, *The Quakers: a look at their place in society*, which argues that the oppression faced by early Friends quite simply came from fear that they were prepared to turn the world upside down and instigate social revolution. “Gathering strength at an astonishing speed, ably promoted, nationally organized, it appeared to be sucking in all the remnants of previous radical protest.” It is still the experience of Friends that to share a sense of spiritual leading in action with others forges deep bonds.

The theme of this issue of Canadian Friend links protest with truth telling. In the tumultuous history of early Friends, we not only see George Fox riding his horse up beside Oliver Cromwell’s coach to speak truth to power, but we see Friends speaking truth to one another, insisting that action must rise in truth from the inner Light.

Fox constantly cautioned Friends to effect change by speaking to people’s hearts, and to leave the historical outcome to God.

Tensions remain with us from this commitment to non-violence, but at our best we experience a tenderness for one another, a love, and a vigorous respect. This is the way we began, and when we listen well this remains the experience of Friends today.

Resources: *Fostering Vital Friends Meetings*, by Jan Greene and Marty Walton; *Grounded in God*, ed. Pat McBee.

Send your question to writeaway@nexicom.net or mail to 206 Perry St., Peterborough, ON K9J 2J2.

Margaret Slavin, Wooler Monthly Meeting

OF ALL THE SONGS

Of all the songs we sang
in Quaker Meeting
two stand out

Two stand in for all the songs
of all the world in every faith
with beauty grace believing

Two songs hold it all together
we sang “Last Night
I Had the Strangest Dream”

We sang “This Little Light”
by truth in whom we bring
every song we sing.

Bill Curry - CYM 2007

Around the Family:

Edmonton Monthly Meeting

Edmonton Meeting has been pleased to welcome into membership three new members - none of whom are new to Friends. Dawn Parker was an attender at Fern Street Meeting in Victoria from August 1999 until becoming a member in 2004. Jeffrey Dudiak was raised under the care of Pelham Evangelical Friends in Fonthill, Ontario, from which meeting he has transferred his membership. Jeff moved to Edmonton in 1999 with his poet wife Julie Robinson (who joined EMM last year) to take up a post teaching philosophy at The King's University College. Since this time they, along with son, seven-year-old York, have been attending Edmonton Meeting. Becky Luckert was raised in a Quaker family. Her parents met as students at Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania. Becky spent most of her childhood years in Arizona, as a member of Flagstaff Friends Meeting, and later the Pima Meeting in Tucson. Becky renewed her attendance at Quaker meeting after moving to Edmonton with her husband about 15 years ago. They have two children.

Ottawa Monthly Meeting

Betty A. Hurst, a long time member of Ottawa Monthly Meeting, died on Saturday, 8th of March, 2008, at the age of 87.

Simcoe Muskoka Monthly Meeting

Simcoe Muskoka MM has received a welcome injection of energy from the arrival amongst us of new residents of Foxfell: Judy Gilbert, and Janet LeSole and Lloyd Stringer with their two daughters, Jocelyn and Natalie. Meeting continues to be active on a number of peace and social action fronts. One new committee is concerning itself with the formation of a government Peace Ministry; the weekly peace vigil (begun before the onset of the Iraq invasion) continues in downtown Orillia, and a discussion occurred with our local M.P. on the subject of War Resisters. The Duckworths have emerged from a period of caring

for injured family and resumed their invaluable work with AVP. Led by Allan Millard, Citizens' Action continues to oppose the building of a recreational facility on highly contaminated land. Our quiet, deep Meetings for Worship sustain all these efforts.

Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting

We welcome to Membership Dana Griffith of Victoria Friends Meeting, and note the deaths of Myra Waller on Oct. 4, and Marlene Jones on Dec. 12. Memorial Meetings were held at Fern St. Meeting House on Nov. 17, 2007, and Jan. 12, 2008. Vancouver Island and Saanich Peninsula Meetings hosted the HMAC meeting at the Meeting House Nov. 3-4, 07. Later in the month we very much valued the visit of Ruah Swennerfelt and Louis Cox of Quaker Earthcare Witness Nov. 26-30. We appreciate the input and reporting of our three CFSC reps., Ro Fife, Stephanie Deakin, and Lynne Phillips. Our PESAC committee is encouraging action in support of legislation for U.S. War Resisters, and the KAIROS 2007-09 campaign "Re-energize".

Montreal Monthly Meeting

PaixQuebecPeace conference: Claire and David, along with others, are helping some very bright and enthusiastic McGill students organize the PaixQuebecPeace conference on 4 Feb., 2008, with online follow-ups on Peace-education.ca and TakingITglobal.org. Environmental action: Three members of MMM -- Peter Brown, Geoff Garver, and David Millar, are involved in the Quaker Institute for the Future's forthcoming book and worldwide outreach project.

Argenta Monthly Meeting

Jack Ross died on Sunday December 23, 07. He was buried in the Argenta cemetery on December 26. A Memorial Meeting is scheduled for May 4th, in Argenta. He will be missed by all of his long-time friends in Argenta and the extended Meeting community. We of the Nelson Worship group are grateful for having him with us these last years.

(cont'd. from pg. 21)

then another and another, much to the fury of other English merchants. When asked why they were doing this, they told the truth: the profit others made on goods was unconscionable in the eyes of these Quakers. They determined to sell for a much smaller profit margin.

As a result of telling this truth and the popularity of their prices, they suffered public and private thrashings, loss of property to vandalism, high criticism, and ostracism. Customers were afraid to go near, let alone into the co-op stores. Business dropped off for a while.

The Quakers who had formed the co-ops eventually saw the Light. They moved to North America to seek greater opportunity for what they hoped would be lives free of greed, where a New Breed would value truth, simplicity, neighborliness. For a long time this is exactly what they did experience. But times change.

We know truth telling can still pose dangers today. Tell the truth about refusing to accept political corruption, to join the military, to sanction clear-cutting and you may get red-carded by immigration authorities, beaten up by police on the protest line, jailed for refusing to stop this

form of truth telling, and possibly shunned by your neighbors. Doubtless we are no closer to The Truth in politics than we ever were. As individuals we still can't define The Truth. The best we can do is to know *in a moment* what it is.

A Friend today in Meeting for Worship said that if there were a chest with 'Truth' marked on it we would find bits of truth inside, experiences of truth telling, epiphanies where truth was revealed. But we would not find The Truth.

Another Friend said this is because truth is a construct, not a thing one can see or feel, as we can a chair. A truth can be defined but 'The Truth' cannot, nor can it be experienced. It is what linguists refer to as a nominal fallacy. It is a notion, an ideal, but not a thing.

So, I believe it is left to each to know a truth and to tell that truth, realizing it as our own, while others may have their own truths. It is therefore up to each of us to be tolerant of those whose truths are different from ours, when that is possible. It is left to each of us also to do our best to hold to a belief that truth telling is one of the foundations of a just, kind society. In longing to know The Truth, we all are Seekers.

Diana Mitchell, Saanich Monthly Meeting

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Seeking Feedback on National Listeners' Program

Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel has been asked to evaluate the National Listeners Service. If you have spoken with one of the Listeners and would like to provide some feedback, we would appreciate hearing from you. We offer these queries:

- 1] If you have used the services of the Listeners, how did you find them helpful?
- 2] If you did not find them helpful, what would you have preferred done differently?
- 3] Would you recommend these services to others?
- 4] Would you like to see these services continue?

You can send an e-mail to suestarr@klondiker.com. Or phone Sue Starr at 867-633-2012. If you wish to remain anonymous you are welcome to write to Sue at 22-35 Lewes Blvd., Whitehorse, YT Y1A 4S5.

Sue Starr, Clerk of Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel, Member of Prairie Monthly Meeting

NOTICE:

Would you like a pen pal?

Perhaps you know someone who is isolated by geography, no e-mail, poor health, 'thinned out' social contacts, or other factors, who would like to communicate with a friendly Friend via regular post. If so, drop a note to Diana Mitchell in Victoria. She and others are looking for letter writers to begin a Friends Letter Network with like-minded folks around the world.

926 Falaise Crescent, Victoria, B.C.,
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Around the Family:

Gospels in Pelham Executive Meeting

Five members of Pelham Executive Meeting met for weekly two-hour sessions in February and early March to read and discuss the Gospels, starting with Mark. All Gospels were taken in their entirety, to appreciate the differences between them and the development in Christian belief that they represented. Rob Nunn, who has been attending a Bible study group for some time, and Fiona McMurrin, who is a classical scholar, led the discussion.

Every participant shared freely and had different views on each gospel. Mark and Luke won the most approval and Matthew and John the least, as bearing the seeds of anti-Semitism.

No one really altered the views they had brought to the discussion, but I think it fair to say that we all went more deeply into those views and listened as respectfully to each other's views with a few exceptions, as if we were in Meeting.

My grandfather liked to quote the stanza from the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam:

*Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went.*

We came in and we left as Quakers, and we found so much to inspire us that we want to continue the discussion at some future date.

Barbara Bucknall, Pelham Executive Meeting

EVA KOCH SCHOLARSHIP 2009



We are now taking applications for the Eva Koch Scholarship, offering full board and an honorarium of £500. It is tenable for 14 weeks and is to be taken in 2009. We are seeking proposals in any area of Quaker Studies. The majority of the research will take place at Woodbrooke (Birmingham, UK) where recipients will have access to our well stocked library with its major Quaker collection. No postgraduate qualification is necessary. Closing date for applications: 17 September 2008.

Interested? For an application pack contact:

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre,
1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham, B29 6LJ, UK
Telephone 0121 472 5171
enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk
www.woodbrooke.org.uk

This issue

Editor: Sherryll-Jeanne Harris

Editorial Support: Gerald Harris, Diana Mitchell, Judith Monroe, Michael Phillips, Sheilagh Simpson

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

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

Themes, deadlines and queries for upcoming issues

Due date: 15 May 2008 (for summer issue)

Theme: **COMPASSION**

Due date: 26 August 2008 (for October issue)

Theme: **CANADIAN YEARLY MEETING IN SESSION**

Future Themes: **VARIED QUAKER THOUGHTS ON COMMUNITY
HISTORY ISSUE**

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