

The Canadian Friend

Volume 104, Number 4

October 2008



Reflections on CYM

John Woolman

Reports



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Editorial:

Dear Friends,

Canadian Yearly Meeting proved full of riches. Even getting there was special. I did not relish ten hours riding bus, as my cousin sped me to the Saskatoon depot at 3:30 a.m. She had tried to find a friend or family with whom I could travel. Always Lutherans were back and forth to those Bible School towns. "No matter", I reassured her. "I must be meant to ride the bus". I slept till the sun rose near Battleford and my seat mate began to tell me of returning to Winnipeg to care for her mother, of her twin sister and her wonderful boys, both home schooled. "My nephews are so interesting. One is in Ghana with Engineers Without Borders, and one is a Quaker." (Silently I gasped.). "I really should find out more about Quakers" she said. Wow! All this on the heels of my one question: "Could you tell me the time please?"!

"What's his name?" I asked casually while feeling inwardly excited and aware that this seat had clearly been reserved for me "Kelly Ackerman" was her reply! I made acquaintance with his aunt on that bus, and in the evening sat with Kelly in the Co-op sharing food. Although his aunt had told me Kelly was working somewhere in Ontario at a Quaker camp, (that had to be NeeKauNis) I rather suspected I'd find him in Camrose!

Now, I would tell her how I marvel at Quaker commitment to patient listening and the kindness and care that lies at the root of all they faced together during CYM: concerns with fairness and justice, caring for this planet, and John Woolman's challenge. His life alone would say enough.

Thanks to all for gifts of welcome, encouragement, and support. You made my week at CYM special too.

I look forward to receiving your submissions for December. Share the Experience of Spirit in your lives. How has way opened? Or, what have you understood to be Ministry, what has been given you to share, or given you to hear as a leading? (Deadline is October 17th) Both this issue and December's promise thoughtful insights into our Quaker faith and practice.

I trust all of you who were not with us at CYM will feel as though you had been, and those who were together in Camrose but could not be everywhere at once, will experience the fullness of the week as you read this journal.

Blessings, Sherryll-Jeanne Harris

P.S. Thank you to the Friend who called in August with kind words while I was on holiday. My family mislaid the note and I never learned your name. Appreciate that you called. Sjh

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Cover: Photos of the Food Co-op trailer painted by the Young Friends during week of CYM. Take a good look as sadly you won't be seeing it next summer. We are grateful to all who made the Co-op such a success this year. I was fortunate to be Dale's "sister" from time to time getting the chance to dine in Co-op while Evelyn used my pass to eat in the Dining Hall with her real sister Dale. Editor and cover photographer, Sjh.

Canadian Yearly Meeting Epistle 2008

Greetings to Friends everywhere from the 175th Canadian Yearly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends

“To turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives.”

(John Woolman, Plea for the Poor, Chapter 3)0

Led by the theme, “Feeding the Body, Nurturing the Soul”, 148 Friends of all ages gathered in Camrose at the Augustana Campus of the University of Alberta for the 53rd unified Canadian Yearly Meeting.

Friends nurtured their connections with each other, both in the cafeteria and in the food co-op, which has a concern to use locally grown, organic food. The distance between these two “Meetings for Eating” sometimes feels (sic) very great.

Throughout the week, we wrestled with the many challenges facing us as Friends: our vast geography makes it more difficult to remain connected, and this difficulty is deepened by our unease with the environmental impact of our use of fossil fuels. Canadian Yearly Meeting includes Friends with a diversity of beliefs. We seek always for all our members to feel at home within our Society, to treat each person with dignity and respect, and to help heal those wounded by prejudice. These efforts affect our relationships with other Quaker bodies, especially Friends United Meeting. The implementation of the recommendations of the Consultation and Renewal Working Group addresses some of these issues. Other recommendations, when implemented, will change many areas of our structure, functioning (sic), and relationships. We yearn for a clear identity as Canadian Friends, knowing that to do so we must speak in words and listen in tongues.

“John Woolman’s Bible Study”, led by Rachel Findley (Strawberry Creek MM, Pacific Yearly Meeting), brought the prophetic voice and Biblical centredness of Woolman to our hearts and minds. We were led to ask ourselves how our practices contribute to the privations and troubles of others, and to the devastation of the earth. In order to live with radical faith, we were encouraged to find the prophetic voice for our time, and in patience seek to find “the stones ... safe to step on”, and take the time “necessary to see where to step next”. (John Woolman, *“On Ministry”*, 1772).

In response to the needs of our diverse membership, different opportunities for worship were available. We offered a silent retreat led by Elaine Emily (Strawberry Creek MM, Pacific Yearly Meeting) and a pre-CYM workshop on “Conflict in Meetings” led by Rob Hughes (Vancouver MM) and Meredith Egan (Vancouver MM). A memorial meeting celebrated the grace of God in the lives of Friends who had died since our last Yearly Meeting. Knowing that it is our spiritual life in which we live, and through which we and our world can be transformed, we strove in all our worship to attend to the inward Light.

Young Friends and Young Adult Friends face the same challenges as adult Friends to maintain relationships and build community. Both groups worked together to complete a job description for the new position of Youth Secretary as a step on the way to increasing connections.

In the Children’s Program, younger Friends played together, and worked together. They explored identity through making plaster casts of their faces.

Following our annual picnic, the Sunderland P. Gardner lecture, “Know His Voice That Feeds and Leads You” was presented electronically by Ellen Pye who though not physically present, was with us in spirit. Ellen spoke of her spiritual journey and how her identity as a Friend was forged. She reminded us to query ourselves as to how the truth has prospered among us. After the lecture we celebrated the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. (There was cake!)

Because the campus was undergoing construction, our silent worship and other sessions were held amidst mechanical noise and falling trees. In the presentation, “How are we called, How shall we act?”, we were reminded of the addictions and inconsistencies of our modern world, and Friends shared deeply both their concerns and the ways they are led to care for the earth. Our fears for the future of our world, because of the devastation

of the earth and the many conflicts among people, were lightened by the understanding that even in this great darkness love is at work, and that God's vision of the harmony of humanity and nature will help us find the way compatible with true wisdom.

"Teach me Thy way, oh God, and lead me in a plain path." Psalm 27, Verse 11

"In the name of the oneness; in the name of the divine breath; peace be unto all."

Quote from Ellen Pye's SPG lecture (photo right)



"A prerequisite for prophetic communication is to be quiet before God in order that we may hear the voice of God and act accordingly. And we need to be aware that anyone may prophesy and transmit the Divine message, through word and action. At times we may not be aware of our own prophetic communication. The prophetic impulse brings positive energy, but may also lead to a struggle against our own wishes and desires."

Excerpt: Epistle from Norway Yearly Meeting 2007

read by Clerk Dale Dewar



The 'DRIP hat' trio, L-R: Jane Orion Smith, General Secretary of Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC); Jennifer Preston, CFSC staff person for the Quaker Aboriginal Affairs Committee (QAAC); and Lynne Phillips, co-Clerk of QAAC. CFSC hosted a cake celebration on Wednesday, August 13, 2008 to commemorate the passage of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP). A number of Canadian Quakers played a small but vital role over decades of work in assisting in the creation of the Declaration and its passage in the General Assembly in April 2008. Photo by Michael Phillips.

First time at CYM:

Thoughts during Meeting for Worship
for Business

by Rosemary Meier

Attenders and f/Friends
share means and ends.
The Word and the Light,
when shared are right.

We with yellow labels
had heard some CYM fables.
Yet we arrived in Camrose
with Quakerly purpose.

As light needs a night,
Silence needs right
words and right ways –
though the process may faze –
to guide how to strive
to bring Friendship alive.

Expectations stay high,
sleep is laid by.
We think and we talk.
we eat and we walk.
Night is short and day is long,
dawn start, to last note of song.

Agendas are broad,
meeting time we afford:
in the Quaker fraternity
time frame is eternity.

Ideals we do hold,
adventurous and bold,
to stretch and elevate.
We pray. And we wait.

Where is the way?
Our feet may be clay –
we are of the earth,
but in a Quaker universe.

Rosemary Meier, Toronto Monthly Meeting

Life of the Programme Committee

by Margot Overington

Once in a while someone asks, “How does the Sutherland P. Gardner Lecturer get chosen?, or “Who decides where we are going to meet?” These are two of the long-term responsibilities of Programme Committee, which is a collection of Friends from across Canada. If you want to know the mandate of our little group, the information is available in Organization and Procedure. But that’s the dry part.

The ‘alive’ part involves two get-togethers. The fall of the year preceding CYM, we usually gather at the site of the upcoming Yearly Meeting. We walk around and decide what will happen in the various spaces available. Believe it or not, we do a “hearing test” in the room chosen for business meetings. Although hearing is not always the best, we try to supplement the natural sound with hearing systems and microphones. I hear you, sometimes it’s terrible!

It is in the October meeting that we struggle to resolve the competing needs of Food Co-op, tenting, dorms, personal spaces, accessibility, food needs and restrictions, cleanliness, environmental responsibility, Friends’ needs for quiet times and spaces, exciting programmes for children, safe areas for playing, access to public transportation, and of course, costs. In case that’s not enough of an agenda, we also consider the Sutherland P. Gardner (SPG) Lecturer and Bible (or Quaker) Study Leader for the next 2 - 3 years. (If there is a special Friend that you would like to see as either the SPG Lecturer or a Bible (Quaker) Study Leader, drop me a line, and I’ll bring your suggestion to our fall meeting.)

Leading up to Yearly Meeting, local members of our Committee work with Local Arrangements Committee (volunteers from the closest Meetings to the CYM site) on issues of transportation, children’s programme, and childcare needs.

In August, it hits like a tornado. Our goal is to arrive on site before anyone else, a feat that is becoming more difficult in recent years as Friends eagerly anticipate a variety of “Pre-CYM” options. However, we still manage to make it in enough time to have every appearance of knowing what we’re doing! Most of the time.

The Committee arrived around noon Thursday, and I followed the pack, dragging my suitcase into the dorm around 5 p.m. I could see that the Food Co-op was well underway, with tents in place, stoves, refrigerators, tables and benches organized by the dedicated Friends who take on this project with zeal. Once all was said and done for arrival day, I fell into bed at 9 p.m., which was midnight by my internal clock. It was a long day.

The next morning, we set up computers, registration, children's areas, and started the process of greeting early arrivals. It's always such a joy to see Friends arrive at CYM. It's one of my favourite times on Programme Committee. Some wonderful people I haven't seen for several years, and some I see almost every year, but it's such a pleasure to connect again, even if it's only with a shared smile and a wave as backpacks and suitcases are carried to the dorm.

This year the workshop dealt with conflict resolution in Meetings, and there was a silent retreat as another option. So lots of Friends came early for one or the other. It was wonderful catching up with people over shared meals, that is, when we weren't sharing our meal as a committee in the office. We did a lot of work at mealtimes. Given that we're not a group to miss meals, it pretty well guaranteed attendance at PC meetings.

After the first few days when the job of registration was complete, we helped organize audio visual equipment for Special Interest Groups, responded to the needs of the Clerks or various Friends trying to make some part of CYM work smoothly. It seemed that when registration ended, the task of transportation for the end of our week together loomed larger and larger. But thanks to the dedicated efforts of Edmonton Monthly Meeting Members, it was a smooth transition for everyone.

And now that the rooms have been closed, and the last Friend has left the site, we look forward to our Fall meeting in Kemptville, Ontario, as we start preparations for next Yearly Meeting, August 14 - 22, 2009. See you there!

Margot Overington, Halifax Monthly Meeting



*Looks like the Abbot family were pleased with the arrangements!
Vivian and Ed Abbot of Oro Ontario, with grand children Cory, and Christopher, son Steve,
grandson Kevin and daughter-in-law Andrea of Saltspring Island.*

Thoughts From the Clerk

by Dale Dewar

“How was Yearly Meeting for you?” Some Quakers asked me. “Fearless clerking?” As the centring process progresses, the clerk leaves behind self-awareness and becomes one with the meeting. How then can one have fear?

On a personal level, failure is my greatest fear. I can handle “good enough” and love the sweet smell of success, but the spectre of failure pushes my panic buttons. In clerking, failure is not really an option because - if it occurs - the entire meeting has failed. This hardly makes it a personal thing. Furthermore, there is a certain faith in the character of the members that makes the “shared failure” more of a gift and challenge. Since the function of the clerk is merely to be open to the sense of the meeting - to be afraid is not really an option.

Each morning before Meeting for Worship for Business, the Agenda Committee meets. This committee is composed of the clerks, recording clerks and representatives of the meeting. The responsibility for the CYM Meeting in Session is shared. In essence, this meeting is also the Clerks’ worshipping “support group”. It can also function in debriefing a previous session.

Biggest beef: People who stand to speak without having listened - with their hearts open - to those who have spoken before them.

Biggest reward: Sensing that the will of the meeting has coalesced.

New Challenge: Looking for a name.

Behind the closed doors of Agenda Committee, the Clerks pondered the Report of the Discipline Review Committee (in Documents in Advance):

We note the recent introduction of the term “Presiding Clerk” in Canadian Yearly Meeting and ask Friends to carefully consider its use. Early Friends, in naming the role of clerk, deliberately chose a name that denotes a lowly position in the secular world. They consciously avoided the use of a term denoting leadership as they recognized that a Meeting for Worship is under divine cover. In their terms Christ Jesus presides over a Meeting for Business.

The Agenda Committee did as Discipline Review Committee asked. It pondered the dilemma: Was the Committee correct in the historical derivation of the term, “clerk”? Did “presiding” arise from the term “present” or “president”? What could the clerks use to distinguish the three positions: “Presiding Clerk”, “Incoming Clerk” and “Mentoring Clerk”? Would “Sitting Clerk” satisfy Discipline Review Committee’s concerns? Someone pointed out that historically, the “Clerk” was a “recording clerk”, and in a time when many did not write, was a more educated and powerful person in the Meeting.

In *“Klein’s Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language, 1971*, the root of “preside” means “to sit in front of, to guard, to watch, to protect”. This is everything that a clerk is meant to be! Unfortunately, the same root word gave rise to “present”, “president” and “sit”. The *Oxford English Dictionary 1996*, states the current usage of preside to mean “be in a position of authority, exercise control or authority”.

On the other hand, the root of “clerk” is “belonging to the clergy, clerical”! Early Quakers would certainly have been aware of this connection. The *Oxford English Dictionary 1996*, lists many meanings for clerk, one of which is “clergyman”; it also includes “a senior official in Parliament” and “a person employed in an office, bank...etc., to keep records, accounts, etc”. Should we also be giving consideration to the usage of “clerk”?

When Yearly Meeting is in session, the clerk’s function is most aptly described by the root meaning of “preside” but the exact appellation of the Clerk is up to Canadian Friends. As Clerk of Canadian Yearly Meeting, there is no doubt about the function. It is my privilege to serve.

*Dale Dewar, Prairie Monthly Meeting
(Balancing below with daughter Shauna)*



First Time at the Other Side of the Table

by Anne Mitchell

This was not my first YM but it was my first at the other side of the table as incoming clerk. And what a strange experience it was. Although I only clerked a couple of the business sessions I was emotionally drained. I'm not sure why. Perhaps it was trying to be alert at all times and get a sense of what was happening as we conducted our business? I have clerked many of the Meetings for Worship for Business at Toronto Meeting during my six years as co-clerk, so I do have some experience. But something unexpected nearly always happens.

At YM some of the 'unexpecteds' for me were: how to make sure that all the births, marriages and deaths have been correctly recorded; how to manage microphones; how to indicate that the clerk wants to speak; how to recognize or not recognize those who wish to speak; how to not offend those who are not recognized to speak. On reflection, it would probably help our business meetings if we were to resort to some old Quaker ways: have space between speaking for reflection on what has been said; stand if you wish to speak and remain standing until you are recognized, or what you wanted to say has been said. Remember too that it is in right order for the clerk not to recognize you. Sit if the clerk stands. And some of the new ways? If we are going to continue using a microphone there need to be two of them. The clerk should always have a mike.

Different points of view were heard. Business was conducted. Friends worshiped together. Friends had fellowship together. And we did get through our agenda.

Anne Mitchell, Toronto Monthly Meeting

A Vignette of Meetings with the 'Microphone'

by Bill Curry

This year we had to use microphones. For a room meant to have good acoustics the Chapel has a troublesome echo. The Clerks were asked if a sound system could be found. A mike was provided, so we had to learn a new mode of meeting - with microphone walkers, and care not to hold it too close.

At the final Meeting for Worship for Business, with closing expressions of gratitude, our worship became an enthusiastic 'popcorn meeting' - we were thankful for so much and so many. Though I don't speak much in Meeting, this time holding my seat was no option. I felt such strength in our week together as I stood to express assurance of communicating through the year, with appreciation for the new Publications Committee and welcoming the new editor of Canadian Friend.

But I had not waited for the mike. I'd noticed another Friend holding it but thought she was the new 'runner', not the next speaker. When she finally spoke, with gratitude for Friends not at the Yearly Meeting yet present with us, I realized I'd spoken out of turn, just before being elided by the Clerk about ground rules for passing the microphone. I was surprised, and humbled to realize I had not understood, nor respected the message of a Friend holding the mike still, in worship.

The next voice spoke of the microphone as our Talking Stick, with a Quaker manner of passing it to, and respecting, each speaker.

Many Friends expressed gratitude for being able to hear everything so well. Of necessity, we have learned some good ways to use this tool. Likely, we will want to have a good sound system again. If so, we'll need early briefing on the benefits and limits of 'Quaker microphones'.

Bill Curry, Prairie Monthly Meeting

Reflections on my First CYM

by Robert Kirchner,

I became convinced and joined a Meeting last year in Sheffield, U.K., while on sabbatical. During this period I read a number of inspiring works about Quaker worship and business. I had some taste of the worship through Sheffield Central Meeting, but the few business meetings I attended there didn't grapple with any substantive issues. So I came back to Edmonton eager to join in the life of the Monthly Meeting and came to CYM particularly eager to experience the Quaker business process.

It was excruciating. *A report is received, a proposal is approved, I think we're home free, the recording clerk tries a minute, I hold my breath ... But of course, some Friend stands up and needs to speak to the minute. The proposed minute ties in with some other minute that we already approved, or some other report we haven't received yet. Other Friends stand and speak to the connection between this minute and, say, the FUM affiliation issue, and it goes on. I'm trying to breathe deeply and hang on to shreds of patience.* Yes, the points Friends are making are valid, sometimes crucial. This is the Quaker discernment process I've read about and admired, but I hadn't realized how painful it can be to sit through. I'm not much of a praying man, but I pray now for patience, a spiritual lubricant to get us through the friction of labouring over these issues.

Other parts of CYM more than made up for this discomfort. I'm thinking particularly of the worship sharing which broke out Tuesday night after the ecology panel presentation. Friends spoke movingly of our world as the Titanic, the iceberg already struck, the poor folk on the lower decks already drowning. Friends spoke of letting go of attachment to unjustly acquired and maintained comforts and security that underlie this crisis. For the last three years, well before joining Quakers, I've been under great concern about environmental catastrophe and the future of human civilization. Frankly I wondered whether I was going mad. The world as we know it appears to be coming to an end. But in all the media, in conversations with family, friends and colleagues, I encountered at most a dim superficial awareness of the issues, if not vehement or mocking denial, that left me feeling acutely isolated and powerless. I was afraid to raise the issue; afraid of sounding like a lunatic street-corner Jeremiah.

Nevertheless, with support from Friends, and Brothers in Mankind Project (a Men's organization I belong to), I've been finding my voice. But to be in a room with over a hundred Friends who *get it*, who have the courage to put aside glib denial, to wade into that scary swamp in pursuit of the Truth, that ministered to me deeply, knowing that I am now part of this courageous and loving family.

I also unexpectedly found that this family I have joined is broader than just the thousand-odd (no pun intended) Quakers of Canada. During the morning walking meditation sessions (thanks to Friend Margot Overington) I had the strong sense that the trees, the flowers, the grasses are also my Friends. I was delighted that I was at last waking from the mental illness that kept me from communicating with them. Leaves fluttering in the wind looked to me like "Quaker cheers", whether directed at me or just expressing general joy in the sunlight and breeze. In despair over environmental concerns, I have sometimes slipped into thinking of humanity as a disease that the earth would gladly be rid of. We are indeed living amid a human-caused mass extinction event (estimated at 200-400 species PER DAY at current rates), and it seems likely that it will be our own turn very soon. Yet, I sense that the trees I met in walking meditation are not hostile or indifferent to us -- that would be a projection of our culture's inner emptiness and guilt -- they love us, and would mourn our extinction, as I am learning to mourn theirs. And who knows what wonderful new expressions of God/dess' love may develop from either our passing or survival?

During CYM's special interest groups, I struggled with Quaker traditions of "speaking truth to power". I am frustrated with classic liberal political activism in the form of petitioning government figures, and/or electoral campaigning. I conclude that such efforts seem to lead at best to superficial, symbolic changes, that leave fundamental unjust power structures untouched, perhaps even distracting our attention from these structures. One Friend at CYM particularly spoke my mind on this issue: we should not try to speak truth to "power", we should be speaking truth to *people*. Another Friend suggested the simple step of getting out and talking with our neighbours. In the past when I was politically active I ran the gamut of political orientations from Reagan supporter to anarchist. I always started with the assumption that my views were 'correct', other views were 'evil' or 'deluded', and that my job was to campaign, to mobilize, to

persuade (if not coerce) others into acknowledging the 'Correct Position'. Quakers know very well that we dare not approach our own Business Meetings in this "creaturely" spirit. We must speak our own truth, but also listen to the truths of others, always remaining open to the discernment of a larger truth that unites us. *Do we approach all our social activism with this same sense of Spirit-led discernment? Do we listen?*

Returning home after CYM, I am full of enthusiasm around making changes, large and small, in my life, in the direction of simplicity, and bringing ideas from CYM back to my Monthly Meeting. I was immediately reminded that I can't make these changes without practising what I preached in the previous paragraph. Exercising though it may be, I must listen to my family, and to my Friends, as well as speak my own truth.

*Robert Kirchner,
Edmonton – Prairie Monthly Meeting
(Photo of Robert below)*



Monday Morning August 11, 2008

Worship began with Dale reading Psalms 24:

“The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” Psalm.24

Ministry:

“We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show a loving consideration for all creatures, and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life. Rejoice in the splendor of God’s continuing creation.”

(Advices and Queries #42)

Key Lessons

by Bert Horwood

Rachel Findley’s Bible Study was remarkably powerful. She led us into various Biblical images through the gates of John Woolman’s life and writing. I was deeply moved as these lessons showed me ways of persuasion and example I had not properly learned before. The key lessons for me were **“attending to the guide”** and **“paying the price”**. “Attending to the guide” means spiritually testing each action before taking it, and not rushing off along what seems to be the right path without mature discernment. “Paying the price” means that in my witness I must first fully practise those things I enjoin others to do. It also means that I must be willing to accept the sacrifices which accompany an action.

Bert Horwood, Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting

The Australia Project: Implications for CYM and our Ecological Footprint

by Susan and David Stevenson

For several years we have been traveling to and from New Zealand to study the ecology of lichens in the temperate rainforests of the South Island. In 2007 when we were planning our final trip, we decided to spend an additional month traveling in Australia. Then when we read the final report of the Consultation and Renewal Working Group, Recommendation B-1 leaped out at us: *that CYM examine how Australia Yearly Meeting (AYM) is organized, how well it works, and whether any well-functioning aspects of their structure could be models for CYM to deal with cost, distance, and associated vitality issues.*

It seemed like a way was opening for us to do this work. It would mean a different kind of holiday from the one we had planned, but we had already talked about traveling by train, and trying to get to the interior of the vast continent. What if we visited with Friends along the way? We let the idea grow. It began to seem like an opportunity both for service and our own spiritual growth. We promised ourselves we would include personal time for the things we love to do: hiking, photography, and nature study.

As we started to do our homework we realized that we would need help, both from Canadian and Australian Friends. In September 2007, Vernon Monthly Meeting responded to our request for a traveling minute, and also decided to take on the study of AYM as a Meeting project (see C'nR Recommendation B-2). The timing worked perfectly. Our traveling minute was endorsed by Western Half-Yearly Meeting in October and Representative Meeting in November.

Jude Pembleton, AYM Secretary helped us arrange our itinerary, and contacted the Meetings and Worship Groups along the way on our behalf. We purchased rail passes that allowed us up to 15 days of train travel for a fixed rate.

Meanwhile, with the help of our Monthly Meeting and a few other Friends we planned our discussion questions. AYM, like CYM, covers a large country with a small population of Quakers. However, it has a

more regionalized structure than we have. We wanted to know how this regionalized structure meets Friends' needs for spiritual nurture, fellowship, and doing business; what lessons we might bring home to Canada. How are isolated Friends and remote worship groups supported? How are children and young adult Friends involved in the life of the meeting? As well, we hoped to learn how Australian Friends address environmental concerns, use electronic communication, and fund the work of their Yearly Meeting.

We were in Australia from mid-March to mid-April 2008. We spent a day with Jude Pembleton in Brisbane, where we had our first group session. Then we flew northwest to tropical Darwyn (temperature 34C, humidity 100%) to visit with members of their small Meeting. We had almost a week of personal time in the wetlands of Kakadu National Park, and the dry country west of Katherine. After a 2-1/2 day train ride from Darwyn to Adelaide, we resumed our visits with Quakers. Our final two weeks were an intense series of meetings with Friends in Adelaide, Melbourne and the surrounding area, Canberra, and the Blue Mountains west of Sydney. Throughout our travels Australian Friends welcomed us, hosted us, and organized meetings on our behalf. We are most grateful.

Back at home we took our photos and draft recommendations to Western Half-Yearly Meeting and received valuable feedback from a Special Interest Group. Next we sent a complete draft of the report to our Monthly Meeting and received another set of helpful comments. In August we reported to CYM with recommendations for Friends to season.

The report is now posted on the CYM website (www.quaker.ca). We hope that Friends will read the report and discuss the recommendations in their Monthly Meetings, so that they will be prepared for further discussion and possible decisions on these recommendations at CYM 2009. We are excited about the possibility of changes within CYM that could reduce our ecological footprint, and make the Meeting function better. We are grateful to our Australian Friends for sharing and worshiping with us. This has indeed been an opportunity both for service and for spiritual growth.

Susan and David Stevenson, Vernon MM

ECOLOGY AT CYM

by Arnold Ranneris

Are we open to radical simplicity in order to respect and nurture everything that lives? Can we question the doctrine of unlimited growth in order to reduce pollution and consumption. Can we speak truth to all people, as well as to those in power, getting to ordinary people with things they can do in their lives? What is the economy for? What is fair? How big is too big? How can we get there (i.e. to the Moral Economy)?

(Minute Presented to YM from Special Interest Group on Ecology")

Awareness of environmental concerns was very much in evidence during CYM Week. Following Beverly Shepard's article (for CYM clerks) "Greening CYM: Does It Matter?" published in the summer issue of *The Canadian Friend*, Programme Committee and the Food Co-op were mindful of being as green as possible at the site in Camrose.

The Tuesday evening plenary session was given over to a sharing time: "Ecological Issues: Moving Forward". Friends representing several groups made presentations: Quaker Ecology Action Group (QEAN), Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC), Quaker Ecology Witness (QEW), KAIROS, Quaker International Affairs Program (QIAP), Quaker Institute for the Future (QIF), and the Moral Economy Project. After these the Meeting moved into centred sharing on how our entire Yearly Meeting could and should move forward to address the threats that relate to so many of our Quaker values and testimonies. The "Sustainability Minute" of CYM (2001) was read. An excerpt follows:

Friends believe we are all manifestations of the Creator, the Divine Spirit of God. We have come to realize that indeed all life forms are exquisitely interrelated and interdependent, thus all life is sacred. We envision and call for, therefore, a clear responsibility to live in harmony with all life on Earth. As we seek

non-violent ways of meeting the needs of our species and the other species with whom we share this Earth, we are inspired to do this with a renewed respect for Creation which goes beyond self-interest.

During worship-sharing, the image of the Titanic was offered, noting that there are many places, people, and created beings which are on the "lower decks", dealing now with the results of environmental degradation. At the same time, we were reminded of our own Quaker Testimonies, the power of love and hope and the Spirit. Resources abound in the form of technology, web sites, people of all ages, and the periodical "Faith and the Common Good". Also Quaker Ecology Witness (QEW) which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, is a wonderful resource and action network for Friends.

Rachel Findley's Bible/Quaker study on "John Woolman and the Spirit of Prophecy" gave clear pointers to alternative Spirit-led ways of living, rooted in simplicity, equality and community. [See article on p. 17]

Special Interest Groups provided focus on specific concerns: Alberta Tar Sands Developments, the Nuclear Chain, the Deadly Aftermath of Depleted Uranium, and a QEAN-sponsored special interest group (SIG) on "What Are We Led to Do with our Ecology Concern?" One concrete decision made was to support the KAIROS delegation to the Tar Sands. Another was to have a representative from QEAN on the KAIROS working group on Ecological Justice.

A Summary Report with Advices and Queries/Questions was given at the Closing Session, which will be printed in the 2008 CYM Minutes and Reports. For now let us ponder "Can we speak truth to all people, as well as to those in power...What is the economy for? What is fair? How big is too big? And how can we reach a Moral Economy?" (Excerpt from Minute presented to Yearly Meeting from the Ecology Special Interest Group).

Members of the Religious Society of Friends in Canada are very much focused on keeping these concerns on the Agenda and action list of the entire Yearly Meeting.

Arnold Ranneris,

Victoria Friends Meeting, and Clerk of QEAN

Whale Watching

by Jay Cowsill

An oral form of this reflection was offered recently during worship sharing at Canadian Yearly Meeting. It came to me in terms of the way I distinguish comedy from tragedy for beginning university students. Comedy, I suggest to them, proceeds from a low esteem for humankind. Its characters are typically portrayed as muddleheads who get themselves into all sorts of difficulties due to mistakes of all kinds: wrong assumptions, errors in judgment, and so forth. But some benevolent principle in the universe, interested in us and our welfare, inevitably operates in mysterious ways to put things right once more before the curtain comes down.

The comic view reflects the long-held assumption that the universe in fact was made for us, and that we are the principal interest within it. Tragedy on the other hand, assumes that humans are noble but that we struggle against overwhelming odds, for the principle in the universe, if there is one, is ill-disposed towards us or, worse yet, not interested in us at all. Tragedy focuses on fate, but tragic as opposed to comic fate is the thing against which we so nobly but so hopelessly struggle. When the curtain comes down on tragedy, we have come to realize that we are flawed in a way for which there is no solution: the very thing that makes us noble in the end destroys us.

Analyzing the large contours of the Christian Bible, Northrop Frye demonstrates that it was compiled over the centuries by a bunch of comedians. It begins with the loss of paradise and ends with its restoration in the vision of a new heaven and a new earth. In between, humans make all sorts of choices that merit their destruction, but a benevolent principle in the universe - call it what you will - continually intervenes to restore us. The frustrating delays we now experience in the necessary movement to green the earth are attributable, in part, to the perseverance among us of the comic view, that regardless of the mistakes we make, things will come right in the end. The more pessimistic among us have already adopted the tragic view. Struggle as we must, they tell us, our fate is sealed. It is already too late for us.

Contemporary thinkers on environmental issues have challenged the age-old assumption that the universe was made for us. But there have always

been those who have suspected that it wasn't. I am reminded of a midrash a professor of mine once included in a lecture on the Book of Job, one that strikes an interesting balance between the comic and the tragic views. It has to do with the proper time for prayer. When you go to pray, an old rabbi insisted, you must bear in mind that there is a proper time for it as there is for all things. Don't go to pray at 3:30 AM: that's the wrong time. Don't try 8:45 AM or 2:30 PM either. For prayer to be effective, it must be offered between 6:00 and 6:02 PM. God is interested in you—but not exclusively. God has a busy schedule that includes other interests. God doesn't sit around all day long waiting for humans to pray. At 2:30 PM, God goes whale watching. If you need to pray, you must pray not on your schedule but on God's, from 6:00 to 6:02 PM. After all, the universe was not made for you.

Jay Cowsill, Saskatoon Allowed Meeting

Vignette on the Way

by Bill Curry

The amazing shifting labyrinth we traversed between sleeping and eating and meeting - ground disappearing around the young Martin Luther statue, overnight fences where none had been - brought me along the morning path with Kathleen Hertzberg, agreeing we'd awakened to an experience of "way closing".

Though tested by massive machines, falling trees and some muddy crossings, in fact during CYM we experienced Way Opening in many ways; certainly some moving of the Spirit filled our hearts.

We met Kathleen another time when her brightly coloured umbrella would not open properly. One friend, then another, gave it a try. When it failed to work as a full umbrella, Kathleen put it over her head and carried on with her usual enthusiasm, outclassing all the outrageous ladies' hats of the Queen's Ascot Derby! Though the way of the umbrella would not open fully, sufficient shelter from the rain was achieved.

Bill Curry, Prairie Monthly Meeting

Only the Earth and the Sky

A song for Tom Findley by Dave Greenfield

From somewhere
He made his way,
Out of the mists of time
Into the twentieth century.

And maybe
His destiny was shaped
One morning
When his daughter came home
From Sunday school,
'Cause they wouldn't let her wear
Her running shoes.
She said "I'm never
Going back there again.
I wanna become
A Quaker instead."



From somewhere
He made his way
To Friends World College, 1968.

With a million young rebels
Dreaming of a new dawn,
And a thousand revolutions
Going on, going on, going on.

From somewhere,
There came a dream.
He told it to his students
One soft winter eve.

He said, I wanna
Get into a canoe
And canoe across the continent
With only the earth and the sky
The trees and the moon.
Only the earth and the sky,
The trees and the moon.

From somewhere
He made his way.
He paddled his canoe
From somewhere near the Great Lakes

To the northern-most tip of Alaska,
To meet the Alaskan Eskimos
Who had become Quakers,
A long long time ago.

And then the time came
For him to turn around,
And somewhere in western Ontario
He settled down.
Weaving a dream,
Living in tune,
With only the earth and the sky,
The trees and the moon.
Only the earth and the sky,
The trees and the moon.

And it seems like it must be
A thousand times
He has got on the bus
In the middle of the night
To come to Prairie Monthly Meeting,
And Western half Yearly Meeting,
And Canadian Yearly Meeting.



From somewhere
He made his way
Out of the mists of time
Into our sacred space.

With only the earth and the sky,
The trees and the moon.
Only the earth and the sky,
The trees and the moon.
Only the earth and the sky,
The trees and the moon.

Dave Greenfield, Prairie Monthly Meeting.

Tom Findley has been a member of CYM and Prairie Monthly Meeting, since he paddled his canoe away from the industrial centres of American society and settled in western Ontario. Both Tom, and his daughter Rachel were present this year at CYM, so I decided to perform this song at family night.

John Woolman and the Scriptures

Rachel Findley's Sharing

by Jane Zavitz-Bond

Rachel Findley's sharing of John Woolman and the Scriptures was the mortaring bond for CYM this year. The attendance was high and continued so each day, evidence it drew and held us. The hour gave a supportive base to each day's events. John Woolman is common ground for Friends! At the very least we know he was key to Friends giving up slavery, but there's so much more to Woolman.

Rachel's full and wide knowledge of Woolman and related study gave her quiet responses to questions and comments added understanding, as she reflected not as an academic which she certainly is, but in the spirit of Woolman. She had her clear outline, but it was allowed to expand as we proceeded. Her discernment and comfortable assurance permitted openings for new awareness: the gift of a teacher prepared for a 'Meeting for Learning'. This was a joy and a blessing for us all. She taught us to keep open to new thoughts not blind recanting. The Truth continues; our understandings of it grow. The Book of John is called 'The Quaker Gospel'.

The Bible references made Woolman a connecting link some had not found opened in that way before. David Hackett Fischer, in *Albion's Seed*, states that Friends used the New Testament oftener, and certain verses more often in their sermons and writings. Woolman heard and knew these so well that they are interwoven in his writing. To have these verses brought to life is what Bible Study is about. John Woolman approached life permeated with his faith. Rooted in his Quaker home and heritage he was then at home in the world. The common ventures of life, meeting humans in society anywhere remain much the same! May we seek to apply his approaches today, and find the next step when the next stone in the river crossing has yet to be revealed, or is sunk below the surface in the muck and we must grope for it and go on. We go in faith and love, speaking to that of God in everyone and walking cheerfully over the earth. And, yes, we found our ecological concerns also belong in Woolman's approaches for us today. An orchardist within an agricultural community, he

practised sustainability. Sensing the interrelatedness of all nature, Woolman knew that "...the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof...".

Speaking out of the opening worship, perhaps Rachel's quiet presentation permeated the thoughts of those present like the gentle rain and watered the day's responses without being recognized as 'impacting'. Woolman's life was like that. He was, as Jesus was: clear, direct, and honest, but not adversarial in manner. Others could hear and consider rather than rebut, for his responses went to the heart of a matter, rather than were critical of others for their actions. May we follow such paths, growing as we go. "Love one another as I have loved you... Thy neighbour as thyself...", tap God within, and speak to that same Presence in others. John Woolman did this in his life and way opened.

For me John Woolman's Journal is Quakerism's common ground. Our rural meeting communities have felt at home in his Journal over these many years. His upbringing and life at Mount Holly, in New Jersey (then a Quaker Province) allowed him to follow leadings that permitted him to grow in new understandings for living and seeking. There was an 1803 edition of Woolman's Journal in James Haight's bookcase at Locust Grove when I arrived in 1950. His words were important to Friends from its first publication in 1773. Various editions were referenced, but Amelia Mott Gummere's 1922 volume is a rich resource. Regardless of the edition, John Woolman's life experience helps us today: his relevancy is testimony to his faithfulness to truth. The shared human experiences are clear and useful. The Archives' Dorland Collection holds various editions, several written by Friends I have known. A shared literature is less common in society today. For those present the foundation base was deeper and wider, and the crossings now in turbulent times have more stepping-stones to share.

We are grateful to Rachel Findley for sharing with us, and allowing us to be part of that growing time each morning.

Jane Zavitz-Bond, Yarmouth Monthly Meeting

Bible/Quaker Study

by Arnold Ranneris

I began to read the Bible in what I sometimes call the Quaker way - that is, reading with both the analytical mind and the intuitive mind, leaving plenty of space for the Holy Spirit. On the one hand Biblical scholarship and all the light science can provide; on the other hand, savoring and resting in the meaning, pausing from time to time to stare off into space...(William Taber, former teacher at Pendle Hill.)

Reading the Bible and reflecting on the life and words of John Woolman was the theme of Rachel Findley's daily study series at our Yearly Meeting this year. She gave it the title *John Woolman and the Spirit of Prophecy*. (Rachel is from Strawberry Creek Meeting in the Berkeley area of California. She is the daughter of Tom Findley, no stranger to our Yearly Meeting.) She presented the Biblical writings and excerpts from John Woolman's writings in a symbiotic context. The writings of J.W. included those from his Journal, *A Plea for the Poor*, and *Considerations on the True Harmony of Mankind*.

John Woolman's life (1720-1772) encompassed many stresses in Colonial America: the "Indian Wars"; the slavery debate; controversy between the colonists and England; and vast economic disparities. In listening to the Divine Teacher (one of his many synonyms for the Spirit of God), and his own Inner Voice while pondering the Bible's teachings, he made observations of lasting wisdom. *"May we look upon our treasures ...and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions, or not... My mind was deeply engaged in this visit (to Long Island) both in public and private; and at several places where I was, on observing that they had slaves, I found myself under a necessity in a friendly way to labor with them on that subject, expressing as way opened the inconsistency of that practice with the purity of the Christian religion and the ill effects it manifested amongst us..."*(Taber).

Rachel said, "The Bible, read in the way William Taber writes above, was and continues to be a Living Word for our generation." She noted that prophecy provides energy for hope and transformation. "New melodies come to those centred in God." Through careful study we can recover a system of covenant and trust in God providing for what we really need. She

stressed that Woolman was a "systems thinker", and the roots of many of our current concerns around ecology, equality, and economics find resonance in his writings. He lived a life of radical simplicity, with a vision of the Peaceable Kingdom as envisioned in Isaiah 11: 6-9. He had a close affinity with the prophet Jeremiah and a deep understanding of the teachings of Jesus. He often spoke of "a life hid with Christ in God", and the parables of Jesus such as the rich young man, the camel and the eye of the needle.

Woolman had compassion for those locked into systems of oppression: slaves, the poor, the Indian people of the colonies, and the sailors aboard the ship on his voyage to England. He felt compassion for the Creation itself, for animals and the earth. He often made reference to our need for transformation, as Rachel did when she challenged us to live more simply. "Our hearts being thus opened and enlarged, we feel content to a use of things as foreign to luxury and grandeur as that which our Redeemer laid down as a pattern."

One could go on citing Bible text and Woolman's writings, but Rachel continually gave the challenge back to us: *"Who or what do you trust? What lights your path? Do you see yourself as 'walking in the Light? How could I do you listen with an open heart to a prophetic message? Are there shadow selves hidden in your public demeanor? With whom do you identify in Jesus' parables?"*

She recommended Michael Birkel's recent book, *A Near Sympathy*, for further reflection on John Woolman. There are other pamphlets, both in the Pendle Hill and Canadian Quaker Pamphlet series, which can be used for study. The pamphlet prepared by Ruah Swennerfelt/Louis Cox, *Walking in the Light* (Quaker Earthcare Witness) has further reflections and queries. Also a book by Michael Birkel, *Engaging Scripture; Reading the Bible with Early Friends*, is available from our Quaker Book Service.

Arnold Ranneris, Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting



Dancing with Linkages: The Quaker Spirit, FUM and Us

by Dave Greenfield

One of the topics that emerged at CYM 2008 was the question of our relationship with Friends United Meeting (FUM). When Canadian Yearly Meeting was formed out of three pre-existing yearly meetings in Canada in 1955, it inherited a membership in both Friends General Conference (FGC) and (FUM). FGC is the largest body of liberal unprogrammed Friends, while FUM is a more programmed Christo-centric Friends' body historically ranging from moderately liberal to moderately evangelical. It is fair to say that over the past fifty years Canadian Friends have come to relate more strongly to the unprogrammed worship and diverse spirituality of FGC. CYM has remained a member of FUM largely out of deference to the historical involvement of some Canadian Friends.

Both FGC and FUM have been impacted by the progressive currents of the past forty years or so, including the anti-war movement, the women's movement, the gay and lesbian movement, and the emergence of an interest in other world religions. In FGC the space has tended to exist to accommodate these various progressive currents. In FUM however, there seems to have been a strong reaction against such currents, particularly against a more universalist spirituality and same-sex unions. As well, my sense is that over the past several decades, the addition of a number of evangelical Yearly Meetings from East Africa has tilted the balance in FUM away from whatever moderate liberalism there was, toward a stronger reactionary evangelical position.

These issues have come to a head within FUM over the hiring policies of the FUM organization which does not allow either gay or lesbian employees, or employees in non-traditional opposite-sex relationships. In addition, some very homophobic comments were made in a sermon during an FUM board meeting in Africa, and in February 2007 the FUM leadership re-affirmed the Richmond Declaration, a hard core redemptionist and Biblical literalist document dating from 1887.

The Richmond Declaration emphasizes the "fallen" nature of humanity, our need for "redemption" through Jesus, and the need to subordinate human reason to a fairly literal interpretation of the Bible. It also seems to deny the existence of the Inner Light.

The full text of the Richmond Declaration can be found online by way of a word search for "Richmond Declaration of Faith". As well, a good article on the Richmond Declaration by the contemporary American Quaker, Chuck Fager, can be found at www.quaker.org-against-richmond.html.

In addition to the content of the Richmond Declaration, concern has been expressed about the spiritual soundness of the process through which the Richmond Declaration was re-affirmed.

All of this led to a certain amount of spirited discussion on the floor of CYM 2008, with several individuals calling upon CYM to withdraw from FUM. For my part, up until my attendance at CYM 2008, I had largely favoured remaining in FUM because I felt that FUM could somehow help to nurture a liberal Christian presence in CYM. After hearing some of the people speak in favour of a withdrawal from FUM I realized that the kind of universalist Christian spirituality that I value could best be nurtured gently from within CYM. After reading the Richmond Declaration I also realized that my kind of universalist Christian spirituality is light-years away from the fall-redemption theology of the Richmond Declaration. Withdrawal from FUM may even help us to nurture a more liberated, mystical universalist Christianity among those in CYM who feel drawn to such a path.

CYM is one of five yearly meetings which have a joint membership in FGC and FUM. The other four are New York, New England, Baltimore and South Eastern yearly meetings. All four of these have posted epistles on their web sites over the past year or so conveying similar concerns regarding FUM and calls have been heard within these Yearly Meetings to withdraw from FUM, while others have called for a "one step at a time" approach. One Monthly Meeting in Baltimore Yearly Meeting has recommended a mediation process involving various sections of FUM.

My general sense is that CYM cannot remain a nominal, inactive member of FUM, allowing practices that we, in the context of our own Meeting would consider to be unjust and manipulative. Either we must care enough about FUM to join with other

Quakers working for justice and spiritual soundness in FUM, or we should withdraw from FUM and acknowledge that CYM and FUM have moved in significantly differing directions.

An argument can be made for remaining in FUM, not only on the basis of our historical relationship with FUM, but also from the perspective that we are called to be present to those who are experiencing the pain of injustice and process manipulation. Some have speculated that affirming the Richmond Declaration may have been intended to send a signal to more liberal-minded members of FUM that they are not particularly welcome, in the hope that liberals within FUM would walk away. It could very well be that we are called to do the unexpected, to remain in FUM and resist these evangelical and reactive tendencies.

Alternatively, an argument can be made for leaving FUM. One may argue that our home today is with FGC and other liberal unprogrammed meetings, and that our time and energy are best spent helping to build the presence of liberal, love-centred universalist Quaker Faith and Practice around the planet. The splits that occurred in Quakerism over a hundred years ago are best left alone. We can continue to interact with other strands of Quakers, (including FUM), in an atmosphere of mutual respect, through Friends World Committee for Consultation, working together when we choose, while respecting each other's differences.

A third option would have CYM withdrawing from FUM, while those Monthly Meetings whose members tend to identify with FUM could join FUM as individual Monthly Meetings.

I mention the different options and arguments in the hope of encouraging healthy, respectful discussion among Canadian Friends. Above all in these matters let us be guided by love, and by a careful listening to the Spirit within us all.

Dave Greenfield
Prairie Monthly Meeting

Does CYM Belong in Friends United Meeting?

by Gale Wills

Wrestling with how Canadian Friends will respond to the current policies of Friends United Meeting (FUM) took up much of our time at Yearly Meeting this August. David Greenfield in another article in this journal has written a very useful description of the issues and the context in which they have arisen. While many present were familiar with the background to our discussions, some were not. In part this may be because many of us have a sense that FUM is simply one of the "alphabet soups" that Yearly Meeting is connected to, mysterious and often regarded as irrelevant to our own faith and the work of our Monthly Meetings.

I am writing this to ask you all to please sit up and take notice. The alphabet soup is in the end, very important. Organizations with which we are affiliated provide very useful resources to us and help us keep our channels open to Quakers worldwide. In doing so, I also need to state my own bias. Personally I think it is time that we lay down our membership in FUM. My reasons primarily rest on what I see as an irreconcilable theological difference between FUM's insistence on the authority of the Hebrew and Christian bibles interpreted in a traditional way and the theologies of Canadian Friends. But there is much history and background to be learned, and I do think that the whole question requires us to give it full and thorough consideration.

Friends United Meeting (formerly known as Five Years Meeting) was originally established with the hope that a form of ecclesiastical discipline could be exercised over Yearly Meetings and their "subordinate" Monthly Meetings. While the authority of FUM was never realized, there have been sporadic attempts to exercise such authority on the part of some elements within FUM. An early attempt was the adoption of the Richmond Declaration of Faith, developed by North American Orthodox Yearly Meetings and approved at their gathering in Richmond, Indiana in 1877. FUM now insists that this Declaration is not intended to be binding on member Yearly Meetings, but at the same time the minutes of the Board meeting held in Kenya in February 2007 where the Declaration was re-affirmed includes the following: "we are not plowing new ground,

but rather declaring the basis that has always gathered us together as FUM. Many Friends urged that Friends not allow any deviation from our biblical foundation, lest we be led astray.” When FUM attempted to reaffirm this Declaration in the early eighties, the five dually affiliated Yearly Meetings, including CYM, protested on the grounds of its apparent credal nature and the matter was dropped. When it was reaffirmed at FUM’s General Board Meeting in Kenya last year, representatives of three of the dually affiliated Yearly Meetings in attendance, similarly protested and stood aside. Thus some Canadian Friends’ reaction has not only been that this reaffirmation of the Declaration of Faith constitutes a creed in our eyes, but also that the process whereby “unity” was reached was flawed.

Most of the arguments that I have heard as to why we should remain in membership with FUM rest on the assumption that it is important for us to dialogue and to continue to wrestle with our differences. But I cannot fathom how we can “wrestle” with the entrenched beliefs in something like the Richmond Declaration of Faith. We would not assume that our beliefs would prevail in matters of faith with any other religious community. Why this one? Is it simply because we have a common root and are all called Quakers? Maybe there is a compelling rationale and if there is, I will certainly listen. Honest, informed wrestling with these concerns is our collective responsibility.

This matter will return to Yearly Meeting next year. I trust that we will benefit from careful consideration of the issues between now and then.

Here are some references for further study that should be helpful to our continuing dialogue.

- the letter sent by CYM to the General Board of FUM last summer. It is published in the October '07 issue of the Canadian Friend. (There has not been a direct response to this letter, so far).

- the Richmond Declaration of Faith – web page: www.fum.org/about/declarationfaith.htm

- Elizabeth Cazden’s insightful and revealing pamphlet circulated to all Meetings and Worship Groups by C’nR. Preferably read the whole thing, but especially pp. 6 & 7. Don’t let the title throw you off - “Fellowships, Conferences, and Associations: The Limits of the Liberal Quaker Reinvention of Meeting Polity.” It is worth the read!

- CYM’s Organization & Procedure, pp. 9 - 11, 13 - 16, 28 - 29.

- Google Quaker History. Look for references to FUM, the Richmond Declaration and to the Manchester Conference. In particular, go to Chuck Fager’s website and read David Murray-Rust’s booklet, Chapter 5.

Gale Wills, Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting

Reflections on the Proposal to Leave FUM

by Thomas Mathieson

One of the liveliest discussions at this year’s session of CYM was the question of whether we should continue our membership in FUM. I came into the discussion as a relative newcomer to the issue, knowing that I didn’t have very much of the necessary information, and quite solidly in the “undecided” camp. I came out of the discussions starting to lean more toward the “Let’s get out” camp, not because of any arguments which I heard in favor of leaving FUM, but because of an argument which I didn’t hear in favor of staying in. Let me illustrate by drawing a parallel to the experience of a worship group which I attend.

We have a very warm and friendly worship group with a very open atmosphere in which we feel free to express our own experiences, perceptions, and beliefs. The members of the group tend towards the liberal if not radical end of the spectrum of Christian theology. We would not be recognized as Christian from the perspective of a Fundamentalist.

There is one exception, however, in that one attender who comes on a sporadic basis is a member of a fundamentalist evangelical church. She will sometimes break into long sermons in the middle of meeting for worship. These sermons only cease when someone elders to her. She also passes out tracts as gifts at Christmas, hoping that she might lead some of us to repent and become good Christians and be saved. Some of us have entertained the question from time to time as to why this woman keeps coming to meeting, as she obviously doesn’t feel in accord with any of us. We generally arrive at the conclusion that she is there to convert us. The question arises as to

the compromise of integrity, which takes place when she comes ostensibly on the basis of fellowship, but in actual fact she is setting herself up above us, wanting to impart the truth to us, which dispels the possibility of true sharing.

It's easy to see the compromise of integrity in this example, but do we see it in the case of the analogous relationship between Yearly Meeting and FUM I heard lots of arguments to the effect that we should stay in FUM so that we might be able to influence them into changing their hiring policies, and into rescinding the Richmond Declaration. I did not hear one person stand up at yearly meeting and say, "I attend FUM gatherings, and I have friends there, and I look forward to being with them, and sharing with them."

I can't help but feel that there is a compromise of integrity if we maintain membership as a token of fellowship, when there are no personal expressions of an experience of fellowship within the auspices of FUM It has often been said that the divisions within the church are not between the denominations but across them. Most of the Friends that I know tend to have a liberal outlook, and feel closer in spirit to liberals of other denominations (and other religions) than to Christian Fundamentalists.

If there is a genuine sharing and fellowship that happens between members of Canadian Yearly Meeting and other people in FUM then we should continue to enable it. Perhaps there are lots of people who look forward to fellowship at FUM gatherings, but for some reason, just didn't think of mentioning this as an argument for maintaining membership. If there are such people in our meeting, I for one, would appreciate hearing such expressions from you. It would help to ease my feeling that we are compromising our integrity by staying in FUM

Thomas Mathieson, Vancouver Monthly Meeting

Reflections on CYM Gathering

by Sabra Peil

When I attend the August gatherings of CYM, I always wish at some point that the rest of the world could see how we do things.

Items of business come from the bottom up... not the top down. This is most obvious when one looks carefully at the C'nR Report which came out of consultations with every local group and interviews of Friends experienced with local and Yearly Meetings.

Discussion may be passionate, but respectful and non-confrontational when we are at our best, which we usually are. In a group I heard an ill-considered remark flung out at which a Friend could have taken offense. But the response was tempered with respect, and we all learned from it.

- Greed, ambition, profit are out. What God would have us do is in.

- Someone who irritates me no longer does because I have finally had a chance to listen.

- So we're perfect, right? Well, not really. But we seem to be working on it.

We do laugh often. In Business Meeting, when concern was raised about a committee member having to travel and burn carbon, the clerk suggested 'transubstantiation' as a remedy.

CYM is two gatherings, it seems to me: those Friends I see every day and those I never saw all week.. The divides are around where we eat, how old you are, and whether one attends Meetings for Business. There's lots going on, and we can't all be in the same place at the same time. But it will be interesting next year when there is no food co-op and we all break bread together in one dining hall.

Sabra Peil, Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting

Remember the tents? Well one day a young fellow was looking Augustana campus over trying to decide if it were the place for him. I came upon him gazing at the tents in wonder. He turned to me and said: " I've heard they are short on housing here but tents? That's worse than I imagined!!" (Ed.)

CYM Ecumenical Interfaith Report

The Ecumenical Committee was formed as a Standing Committee of Canadian Yearly Meeting through the leadings of Ed Bell and other Friends. The Canadian Council of Churches defines Ecumenical as “the commitment to search for the fullness and unity God intended for Creation”. In due time Canadian Friends included Interfaith in this Committee’s scope.

The Consultation and Renewal (C’nR) recommendation to lay down the Ecumenical Committee stimulated vital examination of the purposes and potential of Friends’ ecumenical participation. Acting on Keith Maddock’s suggestion to initiate an e-mail list, members of Ecumenical Interfaith Committee (EIC) explored ways Friends are (or may become more) engaged locally, regionally, nationally, internationally.

Canadian Friends are drawn from many religious backgrounds. Some Friends attend local services with other churches and religious bodies when opportunities arise. We affirm the value of ecumenical experience at every level, and wish to increase Friends’ opportunities for ecumenical relations and interfaith understanding.

Friends are active with the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC). Rosemary Meier represents us on the Governing Council, and several other Friends participate in specific CCC committees, including KAIROS. Canadian Friends likewise maintain links with the World Council of Churches.

On our behalf, Peter Harkness contributed to the CCC study of interfaith perspectives. He referred to our limited resources, shaping program priorities, which include “peace work, environmental awareness, and the initiative to end torture”. CYM 2008 has appointed Peter to the new CCC Interfaith Reference Group.

Intended consideration of the C’nR recommendation to lay down EIC did not arise, due to CYM agenda constraints. It is laid over to CYM 2009. We recommend continuation of the Ecumenical Interfaith Committee.

We recommend a year-long process to review and clarify the Terms of Reference for Ecumenical Interfaith Committee. We recommend, and wish to contribute to, ecumenical education as a vital part of the Education process proposed by Consultation and Renewal Adopted by CYM 2007.

*Submitted by Bill Curry Prairie Monthly Meeting
& Keith Maddock, Toronto MM*

Biotechnology at CYM

by Anne Mitchell

At CYM I was able to show the film *The World According to Monsanto* one evening. This is a powerful film of the control of Genetically Engineered crop production. It is available from the National Film Board. As well, I distributed fact sheets: one by Keith Helmuth on Quaker Testimonies and Biotechnology, and one by Susan Holtz on a Quaker perspective on Biotechnology. These fact sheets are available for Quakers to consider and discuss in terms of way forward.

What will be the impact in the long term on food security, biodiversity and the livelihood of communities, of this rush to develop and commercialize technologies such as foodcrops, fish, trees, and biofuels? This commercialization is being done in the absence of policy framework, transparency, public engagement, or even a nod to the precautionary principle.

As many of you know, with the support of the Quaker community in Canada, I was privileged to participate in the World Council of Churches Global Consultation on Genetics and New Biotechnologies, as part of the delegation from the Canadian Council of Churches. This consultation in December 2007 in South Africa, was hosted by the South African Council of Churches (SACC) acknowledging South Africa’s role as a science and technology centre on the African continent. The initiative for the consultation grew simultaneously from the Canadian Council of Churches and the National Council of the Churches of Christ USA, together with the World Council of Churches and the SACC. Envisioned as an opportunity for networking among concerned people, members of advocacy groups, theologians, scientists,

and representatives of churches and ecumenical partners, the consultation boldly faced the complexity of the issues born of scientific advance and commercial interests. The outcome of the consultation was diversity expressed as solidarity.

Some 45 participants from all regions of the world sang and danced to a Kenyan song whose refrain repeated: "Let us sing to the Lord." They wanted to remind themselves of the beauty and wonder of creation, even while confronting the stark challenges of new technologies. Only a few kilometers from Soweto and the Apartheid museum, in the opening session we heard the stark rejoinder: "Biotechnology in many of its current applications, like the apartheid system before it, thrives on and leads to the indignity of persons and communities."

Delegates expressed the desire to foster science to serve the common humanity. Delegates who are closer to peasant communities and other marginalized groups spoke from their experience that communities can be devastated by the intrusion of genetically modified seeds and bio-piracy. Some concluded: "Biotechnology now serves primarily to enhance corporate profit and thereby reduces human beings to mere consumers."

Quakers who are concerned could: find out more about these technologies; organize public events to discuss the issues; raise questions about these technologies at all-candidates meetings during the election period; make a public commitment to purchase only, or mainly, organically produced food for a specified period while publicizing and explaining that action.

Information and background materials from this consultation are on the World Council of Churches website.

Sources for further information include: Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy at www.cielap.org; Canadian Biotechnology Action Network at www.cban.org; Canadian Council of Churches at www.ccc.ca; Quaker Institute for the Future at www.quakerinstitute.org; World Council of Churches at www.oikoumene.org.

Anne Mitchell, Toronto Monthly Meeting

Report on the 2008 Pre-CYM Workshop: Conflict In Meetings (or... solving all our problems in one day)

by Meredith Egan & Jon Karsemeyer

Most of us are members of the Religious Society of Friends in part because we want to belong. We want to be a part of a religious community that responds to our needs: for community; for fellowship; worship; and for seeking Truth. And for most of us at some time we experience conflict in our Meetings.

Conflict is part of life. While conflict and error are natural and human, the way we respond and consciously choose to be with conflict can determine the quality and texture of our spiritual life and experience of being. It is a part of every relationship: our relationship to God, our partners, our family, our friends, our enemies, the environment, the world, ourselves. And the cracks in our relationships brought about by conflict can be places where Light can emerge, and make itself known.

About eighteen Friends and attenders gathered in Camrose, Alberta, before Yearly Meeting this past August, to spend a short time exploring what we know about conflict in Meetings. Friends Rob Hughes and Meredith Egan co-facilitated various exercises and discussions. It was a fruitful and engaging time, and much wisdom was shared.

Caution was expressed about "professionalizing" conflict resolution and handing our responsibilities over to "experts" rather than faithfully attending to these situations ourselves. We were gently reminded that faithfulness is about how we live *with and in* conflict, not merely about how we resolve, or fail to resolve it. In our general discussions conflict was repeatedly acknowledged to be a normal, natural part of life, and-how we live in the midst of conflict can determine the quality of our life and relationships in the Spirit, as much as how we deal with, deny, or resolve it.

Ruth Morris' work in Restorative Justice; Sentencing and Healing Circles; Alternatives to Violence Project; and Transforming Power, were remembered and referred to. People had a chance to

share their stories, their frustrations and awe when transformation happens. Some shared different methods they had tried with success. There was a general consensus that we are served in our pursuit of harmony when we are open to learning and changing ourselves, rather than others.

There was acknowledgment that our Quaker processes can serve us in times of conflict and we need to be familiar with them. We spoke of the value of Threshing Sessions, Committees of Care and of Clearness, as well as the need to sometimes agree to lay issues down until Spirit provides further leading. Some time was spent sharing various resources Meetings have developed worldwide, to refer to in times of conflict. There was encouragement to do this in Meetings before conflict emerges. There was an acknowledged need for access to resources and support for Meetings and Worship Groups in the midst of conflict, especially those without the stewardship of experienced Friends. Some Friends who experience long-standing conflicts in their Meetings continue to struggle, and we hold them in the Light

Meredith mentioned there are Friends who are experienced in mediation and conflict-resolution, and that CFSC through Quakers Fostering Justice has some resources available to Monthly Meetings, including grants to fund workshops.

The day-long workshop was held gently in an atmosphere of worship and compassion. There was gratitude expressed to CMMC and Programme Committee for coordinating the workshop, to one another for the wisdom so graciously shared, and to the service of our facilitators.

Meredith Egan is a member of Vancouver Monthly Meeting and the CFSC Programme Coordinator of Quakers Fostering Justice. Jon Karsemeyer is a member of Toronto Monthly Meeting and attended the workshop.

VIGNETTE - AWAY

by Bill Curry

It seemed strange to go on the road after being gathered in good spirit with Friends. The trail away from Camrose came sooner than expected. Stepping-stone parables became immediate. Margaret Slavin was losing sight in one eye and after gathering her bags and a

quick Friday supper, we were en route to the hospital in Edmonton. In an instant, we were headed into the unknown. On the way, we reflected on Rachel Findley's Bible Study, John Woolman's example, discussions of prophetic presence, and way opening.

After the hospital maze with its endless waits, the Ophthalmologist diagnosed a detaching retina and arranged eye surgery first thing in the morning. Leaving Margaret on her own at a hotel after midnight, I headed back to Camrose. She said she felt calm overnight though she'd been more afraid than she could say

In worship Saturday morning we held Friend Margaret in the Light during her operation. And Friends contributed to fully cover her unanticipated hotel and taxi expenses.

Although we missed Family Night we experienced the relationship of spirit and medicine, and were grateful to learn of the care given her in the hospital and during her grueling bus trip home. We continue to pray for Margaret's full recovery.

Bill Curry, Prairie Montly Meeting

(photo below)



Youth Program Epistle

The Children's Program began each day with a period of silent worship, with each group member taking a turn breaking the silence.

Though the group was small, we had fun with communal art projects: painting the new Food Co-op trailer, and making plaster casts of each other's faces and arms. We enjoyed field trips to the walking trails, the Camrose Railway Museum, and the Aquatic Centre. Friends felt disappointed that the water slide was broken, but the climbing rope and the floating boats helped to compensate.

A lot of program time was shared with the teens. This time included a workshop on speaking in Meeting,

an afternoon of tie dying, and a Quaker treasure hunt. Some Friends felt that the children's program was too much time each day. However, this feeling was not shared by all.

Younger Friends also enjoyed evening games of Contact Wink with the older Young Friends

We would like to thank the adult Friends who helped with the program. Thus ends our epistle.

(Jessie Thompson read the epistle from the Young Friends aged 5-12. We thank Jesse Thompson and are grateful to have young Friends among us.)

Children and young people need love and stability. Are we doing all we can to uphold and sustain parents and others who carry the responsibility for providing this care? A&Q #24



The Spaces Between Us, by Ebony Campbell and Ruth Urban-Shipley. In worshipful silence, pairs of Young Friends explored art together using acrylic, crayon, glitter and other media on two white intersecting circles. Later they talked about the courage it takes to enter into one another's space, and how to create a shared vision in the silence. The courage and silence seemed to help Spirit emerge. Young Friends agreed that this art could be used to encourage fund-raising for the Youth Secretary Position noted in the C'nR report.

Meredith Egan, CYM Youth Programme Leader, Vancouver Monthly Meeting

Letter From the General Secretary, Friends General Conference

Dear Friends,

I very much enjoyed my second visit to the annual sessions of Canadian Yearly Meeting. I was impressed with the good and centred way in which Friends conducted their business and listened to one another, and the Spirit, on controversial matters. There are clearly many very seasoned Friends in CYM. At Friends General Conference, we value our connection with Canadian Friends very deeply.

I was pleased to learn more about the work of the Consultation and Renewal Working Group and the manner in which Canadian Friends are considering the conclusions and recommendations in C'nR's Final Report. Other Yearly Meetings could learn from your experience.

Speaking of which, I want to tell you about how, at the request of CYM Friends, I became involved in the response to Recommendation G-1, ***“that CYM employ a Youth Secretary on a part-time basis”***. At the request of Kelly Ackerman and Meredith Egan I met with the group of young and young adult Friends early in the week as they conducted a brainstorming session on the kinds of things they would like to see a Youth Secretary do. I listened as this group came up with an excellent list of ideas based on solid thinking and an openness to the Spirit.

Later in the week, a small group of young Friends asked me to look over a draft of a job description they were preparing for the proposed new position. It looked very good, and I made one or two suggestions. The young and young adult Friends at your annual sessions were really getting under the weight of this concern. Many of these younger Friends want to engage more deeply with Quaker Faith and Practice, with each other, and with older Friends. (Many expressed interest in the FGC Youth Ministries Program, and several had attended the Gathering.)

When the job description was brought to the full Meeting for Worship for Business, Friends seemed to support it enthusiastically. I believe that creating such a position, and then hiring an able and committed young adult Friend to fill it, could do much to invigorate not only the young Friends, but some of your older Friends and Meetings as well.

I have heard older Friends speak of the importance of working with younger Friends “because they are our future”. But I now understand that younger Friends need to be part of our “present”. Many bring an openness, new leadings, and new energy to our meetings and events. There are a number of young ministers in our midst, and too often, we older Friends do not know or appreciate them.

So I am very thankful for my opportunity to attend Canadian Yearly Meeting, and I am excited about this opportunity you appear to have. By moving forward with this plan to hire a Youth Secretary, you can work to strengthen a truly inter-generational and dynamic Religious Society of Friends across the 3,000 plus miles of your Yearly Meeting, and probably connect more strongly with younger (and older) Friends in the U.S.A. as well. I expect that you will need to raise some special funds for this purpose, and I have faith that you will find the funds if you go directly to Friends and ask. Don't forget to involve younger Friends in this part of the project! I've seen it happen in FGC, and I've seen the love and energy that have been generated by the coming together of the generations.

Thank you for your loving faithfulness, dear Friends.

Bruce Birchard, General Secretary,
Friends General Conference

Epistle from Young Friends at CYM

After settling into the swing of CYM at Augustana Campus, the teen young Friends began their adventures with Meredith Egan's guidance. A plethora of activities filled the days, while masses of games and chatter occupied all the remaining unprogrammed hours. The teen theme for the week was the five testimonies.

Monday covered Community, which included activities on relationship building, listening, and stepping outside your comfort zone. Tuesday surrounded Integrity; Vince Zalezny spoke of his life journey and his experience with the Jamaica project and CFSC. Wednesday was Peace, and Young Friends (YFs) talked about peace and war and what causes both. In the afternoon the YFs went early to the picnic site and spent the time playing games and discussing their lives. Thursday's testimony was Equality and they did an inter-generational population/resource exercise with Shreddies. The wee Friends also participated in this activity and later joined the teens for tie dying. Friday's testimony was Simplicity, and involved cucumber exercises. Many activities created amazing and open environments including the worship sharing sessions that allowed YFs to grow as a group. Games played were theatrical and amusing, including Exhalation Ping Pong, a variety of card games and the infamous Contact Wink.

The topic of the development of a Youth Secretary position brought great excitement to all levels of the young Friends groups. When the proposal for Young Friends to draft a job description for this position was brought forward, the list of names of those wanting to contribute was almost as long as the total YF attendance. The level of inspiration was so high that a draft job description was completed by Thursday afternoon and presented to the Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting Business meeting for approval and recommendation to the greater body.

Some Young Friends experienced CYM Business meeting sessions through the eyes of a clerk; learning not only how different it is from the current Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting Business meeting practices, but also that clerking a meeting may prevent

you from readily speaking your mind. Others had the opportunity to dance randomly with local teens while adventuring through the parks of Camrose.

The overall experience was educational, enjoyable, emotional and exhilarating. Many Teen Friends have been enticed to come to next year's CYM to further develop their friendships and maintain their earnest and electrifying bonds. They all look forward to another excellent year.

(Jonathon Trofymow and Rachel Urban Shipley read this epistle. Friends found it an exhilarating experience to learn of the Young Friends' work and energy. We thank them and Meredith Egan who guided the programme.)

Reflections on CYM

by Peter Stevenson

At Canadian Yearly Meeting this year I noticed that the pace of my life went up several notches. I was helping out with the children's programme and had all kinds of business meetings, CYM committee meetings, Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting meetings, and Clearness Committee meetings. I was also helping out with the food co-op. There were old friends I wanted to connect with. I was to rehearse a song for family night. And on top of it all, I was getting only two-thirds of the amount of sleep that I usually get at home. I was busy.

I would expect that after a week of busyness and business I would come home exhausted, and the slower pace of being at home in the summer would refresh me. However, my experience was exactly the opposite. I found my week at Yearly Meeting to be remarkably calm and centred. Although there was always somewhere to be, I didn't feel stress or guilt for not doing a good enough job. I came home from Yearly Meeting feeling refreshed and full of life. But when I arrived, the neglected garden and e-mails were intimidating. My long list of things I wanted to do this summer but haven't done yet began to rear its ugly head. Although I actually had less to do in any given day, I was feeling more stress and less peace than I had at Yearly Meeting.

How could this happen? What was I getting at Yearly Meeting that I do not get at home? First, I had lots of time for worship. There were short periods of silent worship during the children's program and in all of my meetings. Sessions like Bible study and the Sunderland P. Gardner Lecture provided longer periods of worship and grounding points for my day. Although I have a nightly silent worship practice at home and a weekly Meeting, I have not created space during my days for centring down. Even though I spend time at home by myself, I have spent many days rushing around without any time for reflection until evening.

Another aspect of Yearly Meeting that helps me to stay centred is the open communication. Many people there make an effort to share their lives and their joys and difficulties with each other. When I have done this I have often felt lighter, sometimes like a burden has been lifted off me. Also, at Yearly Meeting, I make an effort to share with people when I feel uncomfortable with, or grateful for things that they might be doing. I really care about the people there, and I want to make sure I am in good relationship with them. When at home, I can go for weeks or months without really sharing myself outside of my immediate family, and it can feel isolating. It is also easier to think, "I don't feel comfortable with what that person is doing, but since I don't know him that well, I guess it doesn't really matter". However, when this happens a lot it begins to matter.

A third difference between my time at Yearly Meeting and at home is the amount of time spent in front of a computer. I didn't use a computer at all during the week of Canadian Yearly Meeting. However at home, I find that I can spend hours in front of the computer, writing, checking e-mails, and searching the Internet. This might not seem like it would necessarily affect my stress level, but I have found that after spending a lot of time in front of a computer, regardless of what I was doing on it, I have felt pretty consistently un-centred.

The last difference with Yearly Meeting is that it is structured. Because I have a schedule in my hands, I know that the week is planned already, and all I have to do is focus on what I am doing at the moment. Stress often creeps into my life when I am thinking (or worrying) about things to come. I didn't have to worry about what would happen later in the week because it was already planned. The difference between this and my time at home is not merely one of time

management. Canadian Yearly Meeting is not only managed, it is also prayed for. If I take the time to pray for and organize my days at home, perhaps they will not seem so stressful.

Yearly Meeting can be an example for me of how I can maintain a sense of peace even if my schedule is full. I hope that I can move beyond waiting for the next Quaker gathering to re-centre myself. Perhaps if I remember to find times during the day for quiet reflection, to care enough about the people around me to want to keep in good relationship with them, to limit my time in front of a computer and to find time afterwards to re-centre, and to pray for my days at home, perhaps if I ask for God's help to do these things, then I can better maintain that sense of peace that I get from Quaker gatherings and that I value so much.

Peter Stevenson, Vernon Monthly Meeting



photo by Ted Garver

Footnotes from the Canadian Quaker Archives to CYM

Augustana University - August 8-16, 08

by Jane Zavitz-Bond

The business session of CYM included a number of items the Archives supported. When the reprinting of Deborah Haight's, Sunderland P. Gardiner address of "The Meeting" was arranged, Daphne Davies asked for a photograph. I received a lovely late-in-life portrait from Deborah's nephew, Donald MacPherson, with his written permission for rights to republish the pamphlet.

When Margaret Fraser, the Friends World Committee visitor to CYM, told of the 70th anniversary of the Swarthmore World Conference, I remembered the original report of the first Five Years Meeting in 1902 is in the Archives. Among the Canadian delegates were Burton Hill, a Young Friend then, and Arthur Dorland, Fred Haslam, Arthur Clayton, Alex Hay, Phyllis Awmack, Raymond Booth, Dorothy Cutler, Frank Dorey, Dorothy Cutler, Louise and Jessie Rorke, W. Lloyd G. Williams, and Charles A. Zavitz. There were 18 in all. We have good reports of the sessions in the Archives!

During Friday's Family Night fun, Steve Fick sang and played "*They Called the Wind Maria*". It is interesting to note that this famous song was written by a former student at George School, a Quaker boarding School in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where several Coldstream and Yarmouth Young Friends went after 1910 (most recently Amber Clark - 1994-98).

Another young performer was wearing an Earlham T-shirt, which brought to mind the Quaker schools founded as a result of John Joseph Gurney's travels to North America, upon his encouragement to establish schools for the youth. Earlham was named for the Gurney family home. Pickering, Olney Friends School, and Guildford, also were results of his concerned efforts, and gifts of 'nest egg' funding.

This June after the FUM Triennial at High Point, NC I went to a meeting where my Harvey progenitors had lived prior to coming to Ohio in 1806, only to discover the pastor there had been to Pickering to

research J. J. Gurney. It is a small world! Remembering his time in Canada he was generous in hospitality.

The items of business are similar and the deep concerns the same. In the beginning of our week at Camrose the Russian and Georgian conflict was reported. Just before leaving for CYM I found a letter in the vault from Charles Zavitz, who was writing to Albert Rogers on Friends' business, and added a note about the donation of funds to support the famine in Russia in 1921-22. He was a field husbandry specialist, and suggested a certain wheat that would do well in the soil of the Russian region. I hope it was sent. At that time Mary Haines had sent word that elderly in the area were starving by choice so that the children could eat and live, and there would be some wheat left for seed in the Spring. This was before the CFSC was founded in 1931, when Charles was the first Chairman, and Canadians felt led to make an official organization to work for Peace, and to relieve the suffering in the world. We continue that concern.

I end these footnotes with last lines of Rufus Jones' closing Minute for the Swarthmore World Gathering of Friends in 1937. "***Eternal Lover of Thy children, bring us to Thy life, make us sharers in thy love and transmitters of it. Help us to become serene and patient in the midst of our frustrations, but at the same time make us heroic adventurers, brave, gentle, tender, but without fear and with radiant faces.***"

Jane Zavitz-Bond, Yarmouth Monthly Meeting

The Clerk read the closing Minute:

"Friends, we are privileged to have spent a week together restoring and building links in the Quaker community. We are reminded that we are very much in the world by the construction occurring around us, and by the deer that appear outside our windows. May we return to meet again in 12 months' time (inshallah) and be reminded to live one moment at a time. As we rise from worship look forward to seeing many again next year. We meet next August 8 to 15 in Kemptville, Ontario. May we travel safely and well. Shalom."

Around the Family: Pelham Executive Meeting

The Art of Peace Festival, put on annually by the Arts Council of St. Catharines in partnership with Project Ploughshares, was held on June 7, 2008 in Montebello Park, St. Catharines. Don Alexander, Barbara Bucknall, Rob Nunn, and Barb Smith of Pelham Executive Meeting staffed a booth, which featured a CFSC display and an opportunity to make 'Just Poetry' with magnetic word kits. Rose Marie Cipryk facilitated a storytelling segment called "Witness to Conflict" in which individuals told personal tales of conflict that altered and shaped their lives. Two of the speakers were former sex trade workers protesting the murder of one of their number whose murderer had received a prison sentence of one day. A second speaker, Rose Kasamba, is a refugee who has found a peaceful life in St. Catharines after enduring brutal persecution in the Congo. Other Friends participating in the Festival were Fiona McMurrin at the Council of Canadians table and Trevor Cobain representing Ten Thousand Villages.

Rose Marie Cipryk,,

Vancouver Monthly Meeting

The Harry Appleyard Memorial Strawberry Tea took place at Marine Park in Burnaby, with about 20 Friends attending. Thomas Mathieson suggested we consider holding the Tea in conjunction with a July 1st Canada Day event hosted by the Lao Buddhist Association in Langley. Many diverse religious groups participate.

Catherine Smith reports that Glen Wilson was very happy to host Rachael Maxey, Barbara Bazett and herself for a worship meeting on his beautiful Mayne Island farm, Sat. July 12. They had Meeting for Worship under some trees, overlooking a valley and hills, with a much deeper quiet than we can hope for at the Meetinghouse. The farm is also quite close to the beach at Bennett Bay. It was agreed the Meeting should try to go again next year, with a bit better organization and with a picnic on the beach after Meeting for Worship.

Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting

We welcome into membership: Catherine Harding and Marge Reitsma-Street
We note the deaths of Jean Carr, on June 26 and Chrystal (Betty) Kleiman, in July
An "Island Friends Gathering" was held in Nanaimo on July 19th, with attendees from our Worship Groups. The event was held in a park, with activities emphasizing the wonder of our out-of-door opportunities for re-creation. Lynne Phillips has become an active member of Aboriginal Neighbours, an ecumenical network on Vancouver Island which is working with First Nations in many ways. Work to upgrade and re-paint our 1913 Meetinghouse has commenced. We acknowledge support from CYM, Victoria City Heritage, and individual donors. Rachel Singleton-Polster will begin a two-year term at Pearson College of the Pacific in September.

Climate Change is Real — We need to do our part

Join Us! Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives Presents



Carbon Sabbath Initiative

A group process directed to help you understand and deal with how to:

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- Advocate for Just and Sustainable Energy

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Come to a One-Day Training Workshop in Your Area!

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To register go to: **www.kairoscanada.org**
Cost: Suggested donation of \$10.00 to offset the cost of lunch

Last Words

by Lesley Robertson

At Vernon Monthly Meeting's Retreat, at Sarah and Trevor Chandler's home the first weekend in September, someone asked, "What stood out for you at CYM this summer?" I immediately knew the answer - the Bible Study. Through the years I have very much appreciated the Bible Study and the Quaker Study that happens every morning at CYM. This year I enjoyed the Bible Study and the Quaker Study in one package as Rachel Findley skillfully combined the Biblical basis for the motivating energy behind the life of John Woolman. For me, she made the Old Testament come alive, and made me want to re-read the Journal of John Woolman with new appreciation.

Just as John Woolman asked himself practical questions about how to use his anger in a positive way; how to decide to give up a successful business which was taking up too much of his time, and live a simpler life so he had more time for spiritual growth, so did Rachel ask us to look at our lives and ask such questions as "Do we know what is enough? In what do we find our security? Who or what do we trust?" I found her gentle confrontation with these and other questions gave me food for thought and meditation for some time to come.

Tom Findley has been part of CYM for as long as I have been attending, but this was the first time I had met any of his family. The father-daughter relationship was a delight to behold.

Lesley Robertson, Vernon Monthly Meeting



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The following titles have been added to our stock. For a complete listing of QBS books, see our 2008-2009 Quaker Book Service Catalogue, which was included in the July 2007 edition of *The Canadian Friend* and is also available on the CYM website, www.quaker.ca/qbs.

The Quakers: A Very Short Introduction

by Pink Dandelion, Oxford University Press, NY, 2008. A handy, compact booklet of Quaker history, traditions of worship and practices. (142 pp; \$11.95)

Sing and Rejoice

by Christine A.M. Davis. The Sunderland P. Gardner Lecture, 2007. Canadian Quaker Pamphlet No 66, (Argenta Press, 2008). Christine Davis speaks of good personal relations with individuals and communities as Quaker outreach in our daily lives. The booklet contains four illustrations from the Quaker Tapestry. (30 pp; \$7.00)

Quakerism: A Theology for Our Time

by Patricia A. Williams, (Sessions of York, 2007). A philosopher of science, the author explains for general readers the Inward Light as found in Barclay and George Fox and how it is uniquely suited for our time. (198 pp; \$26.00)

Editor: Sherryll-Jeanne Harris
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Please Note: You the reader create this journal. Your submissions and suggestions for themes that resonate with you are necessary for *The Canadian Friend* to thrive. **Do not delay!** Send articles, poems, and thoughts today. cf-editor@quaker.ca

Themes & deadlines for upcoming issues

Due date: 17 October 2008 for December Issue

Theme: **Experience of Spirit in My Life / Experience of Ministry**

Future Theme: **Varied Quaker Thoughts On Community**

Due date: 16 January 2009 for March issue

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