

# The Canadian Friend

Volume 105, Number 2

May 2009



Young Adult Friends' Edition - Featuring The Sporadical  
Get Thee to Canadian Yearly Meeting  
Ask Margaret Fell

# The Canadian Friend

May 2009, Volume 105, Number 2

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

Submissions are always welcome, and need not share the theme of the issue. Send to:

Sherryll Harris

E-mail: cf-editor@quaker.ca

1829 Fern St.,

Victoria, B.C. Canada, V8R-4K4

Telephone: 250-370-0190

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Seán Hennessey, Business Manager

E-mail: cf-businessmanager@quaker.ca

Telephone: (250) 366-4372

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## Editorial:

*Dear Friends,*

*I have enjoyed collaborating with Rebecca Ivanoff, the editor of The Sporadical, to bring you this collection of articles contributed by Young Adult Friends. I am sure you will appreciate hearing from the many young adult writers who contributed to the 2009 edition of the Sporadical.*

*Following the Sporadical there are book reviews, and a plug for Canadian Yearly Meeting. I apologize to all of you who look forward to Around the Family. However I am certain the varied and thoughtful articles will make up for that loss. Small cost to hear from our young adult Friends.*

*Look for "Ask Margaret Fell". This column will appear occasionally. It offers light-hearted answers to those irritating little puzzles, which are too small to take to your Meeting, and too irritating to dismiss. Send your questions to the editor (see inside cover for address) and provide your identity. As "Margaret Fell" is a pen name, you may also use a pen name but the editor must have all identities.*

*I trust that you have begun to write for the Summer issue. What is on your mind? Do you have letters for the editor? Concerns? Ideas? What about your thoughts and experiences of various aspects of community? What about a Testimony that speaks to you, or that you have been giving thought to?*

*Looking forward to hearing from you,*

*Sherryll-Jeanne Harris*

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The Sporadical:  
A Publication of Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting



Branches of One Tree:  
Young Friends' Experiences of the  
Diversity of Friends

Spring 2009

# Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Message from the Editor<br>By Rebecca Ivanoff                                 | 5  |
| How Lucky I Am<br>By Katrina McQuail  | 5  |
| Living South of the Border<br>By Jaya Karsemeyer                              | 6  |
| Living as Friends, Listening Within<br>By Ravi Joshi                          | 8  |
| Quaker Youth Pilgrimage 2008<br>By Rachel Singleton-Polster                   | 9  |
| Following a Calling: an Interview with Liz Wine<br>By Rebecca Ivanoff         | 11 |
| A Diverse Community Speaks Truth Into My Life<br>By Rebecca Ivanoff           | 13 |
| Experiences That Have Made Me a Friend<br>By Amy Jean Singleton-Polster       | 15 |
| The Words We Use: an Interview with Edith Madrid<br>By Rebecca Ivanoff        | 16 |
| My Experiences of Quakers Abroad<br>By Aden Spurr                             | 18 |
| Thoughts on a Pilgrimage<br>By Nori Sinclair                                  | 19 |
| The Love of God: Drawing the Branches Together<br>By Micah Bales              | 20 |
| Letter from Young Adult Friends Conference                                    | 22 |
| An Open Letter on Friends United Meeting Affiliation<br>By Kody Gabriel Hersh | 23 |
| Reflecting on Relocation and Renewal<br>By Maggie Knight                      | 25 |
| Quaker United Nations Organization<br>By Francis Prescott                     | 26 |

Front Cover: Artist of the tree unknown. Group photo taken in Guatemala with Katrina McQuail, David Purkis, Aden Spurr, Rebecca Ivanoff, Edgar Madrid, and Jose Luis Caldaron.

## *Message from the Editor*

Dear Friends,

At the last Representative Meeting of Canadian Yearly Meeting in November 2008, Young Friends and Young Adult Friends were challenged to report about their efforts of building bridges between different branches of Friends around the world. This request was asked in response to a report given by the ad hoc committee that is looking at Canadian Yearly Meeting's relationship to Friends United Meeting. This committee wrote: "One reason (for CYM to stay affiliated to FUM) is the profound work that our Young Friends and Young Adult Friends are doing to build bridges across our differences. What started at the World Gathering of Young Friends in 2005 is continuing. Our Young Friends and Young Adult Friends deserve our support in their work. Young Adult Friends around the world feel a leading to reach out to one another within the Society of Friends to seek loving unity. One YAF said that 'Young Adult Friends would feel abandoned if CYM were to withdraw from FUM'."

The request to hear about the experiences of YF/YAFs in Canada as they encounter Quakers around the world directly tied into my hope for this issue of the *Sporadical*, for I knew we as Young Friends have stories to tell about our friends whose forms of Quakerism may differ from those we grew up with.

As a naturalist, I know that a diverse ecosystem will be resilient; it will be beautiful, healthy, and full of life. As I read over the submissions that have been gathered for this issue from the Young Friend community in Canada, I can tell you that in our experiences of the diversity of Friends we have found beautiful, loving relationships that challenge us to bear fruits. In this issue you can read how our differences create the fertile ground that the Society of Friends can grow out of. I hope you are as excited as I am about the future of Friends!

Yours faithfully,  
Rebecca Ivanoff

*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit  
through the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3)*

## How Lucky I Am

By Katrina McQuail

Kitchener MM, currently living in Seattle

I have always felt that my life is split across the political border between Canada and the USA. I was born and raised a Canadian by two previously American parents. My entire extended family lives in the USA and so I spent many a holiday sitting in the backseat of a car traveling down to visit with them. This feeling grew as I attended Friends General Conference (usually held in the US) Camp NeeKauNis and Canadian Yearly Meeting. As a dynamic young person in a rather stifling rural community, the deep kindred friendships I developed with my peers at these events became the sustaining relationships in my life. My relationships with my Quaker friends have always been first and foremost on my list of priorities.

Attending Earlham College in Richmond Indiana for my undergraduate degree introduced me to even more American and international Quakers and made me aware of opportunities previously unknown to me. One of these opportunities was the World Gathering of Young Friends (2005). I was selected to be one of Canadian Yearly Meeting's representatives to the WGYF. There, I met even more Young Quakers from around the world, learned about our diversity and differences when it came to practices, and our similarities in Spirit.

Though it can be exhausting and frustrating to have F/friend communities at such a distance, I would not trade them for the world. In some ways it has meant that I have led a very compartmentalized life - spending this week with this group of F/friends here, and then spending time with these F/friends there, none of whom knew each other, but heard about the others through me. But as we've grown, so have the opportunities and interest of Young Friends to attend gatherings other than their own camp or Yearly Meeting sessions, and so my world, though spread across the globe, grows smaller and smaller.

I feel having a diverse group of F/friends spread across the globe and theological perspectives has been such a gift. How lucky

am I to have F/friends who respect who I am as a person but challenge my beliefs in a way that we can have open dialogue and remain open? I believe that Young Friends today are so determined to have dialogue and gather together because they recognize that it is not our differences that are important, but our similarities and common beliefs. Why does it matter if one finds connection with a Higher Spirit through silent worship and one finds that relationship to the Divine through a programmed or evangelical Meeting? Shouldn't we focus on the fact that all of us are seeking that experience and believe in its value. The divide between Friends over petty issues and even really hard ones hurts my soul. How can we call ourselves Quakers and believe that there is the Light of God in everyone if we can't even see it in Quakers who practise their Quakerism in a different way, or due to their experience believe things that are different from what we believe? How can we say that we should split from a group because of those differences of opinion, instead of staying to have continued conversation? Of course it is painful to be in discord. It wouldn't be painful if the issues were not so important to us, or if we did not care about the group/people with whom we are in discord with. But that doesn't mean that it is better to walk away from that pain and conversation.

My relationships with Quakers outside of Canada have taught me that lesson. In Meeting with a group of Young Friends in Guatemala, we were discussing what made us Quaker and how we practised our Faith. To these Young Friends with their ability to talk about God and Christ as their Lord and Saviour and their expressions of Quakerism in their daily lives, I expect that we initially seemed to be unfaithful. However, through conversation (and a translator) we were able to explain how we were taught to practise our Faith and that our referencing a Higher Spirit was how we learned to talk about God. It was only a conversation - we weren't trying to figure out how to work together or questioning each others' beliefs - so that may seem like it isn't the same as some of the issues that Committees or Meetings or Larger Quaker Bodies are dealing with. But it is the same idea. Regardless of how we practise it, the language we use or what our opinion or

belief is on homosexual relationships, the role of women in society, plain dress or evangelizing, we are all members of the Religious Society of Friends and need to start seeing the Inner Light among Friends.

I think that Young (Adult) Friends from around the globe are aware of the need for dialogue, creating community, and learning about one another. That is why there are currently so many Young (Adult) Friend weekends, conferences, lectures, and gatherings. We can't get enough of each other. I think that the larger Quaker world could learn a thing or two from this group. You have to create community first and come together with open hearts before you can start having the tough conversations. I believe that is where we are failing ourselves. We do not teach Young Friends about the various types of Quakers or our history, we don't give them options for picking what type of worship they find most meaningful in creating their relationship with God/the Spirit/the Divine. We don't give them the words to express themselves in a spiritual or religious context or teach them to have an open heart to hear how other Quakers express themselves. We need to find ways to do these things. My F/friendships are as strong, deep, and meaningful as they are today because we are open and willing to discuss and work through our differences regardless or maybe because of our Quaker affiliation.

## Living South of the Border

By Jaya Karsemeyer, Toronto MM

I told Rebecca I wouldn't be able to write this unless it happened between 2 and 2:45 this afternoon. That didn't happen, but now it's 2 in the morning and apparently a slot of time has opened. For better or worse, that's how I sometimes feel about my involvement with Friends outside of Canada. A little spot opens and I am able to enter into that special space of fellowship and worship, though sometimes it feels busy and rushed, and too weighted down with the world. I start writing from Barnesville, Ohio where I am working as an Admissions Associate (recruiting students) for Olney Friends School, an *historic* boarding high school on 350 acres of rolling hills in rural southern Appalachia.

In 2007, I attended the Young Adult Friends Consultation in Burlington, NJ. Anna Peters-Wehking and I took a fifteen-hour bus ride from Toronto, and after numerous connections and very little sleep, we arrived at the large *historic* (are you catching a theme here?) Meeting House along with more than a hundred other Young Adult Friends. The weekend introduced me to quite a few issues affecting American Friends about which I knew very little. Among these was the desire to revive Young Friends of North America (YFNA) and to do other Quaker inter-branch work. One articulation of this unification impulse was to do work on an issue on which many branches were unified. The environment and peace work came up as top picks. I still feel that I only really know about YFNA from rumour and hearsay, but among the intriguing tidbits was that YFNA was in part shut down because of “free love” and other 60s ideals that weren’t entirely ‘jivin’ with Friends from “other” branches that I sometimes heard referred to as “less liberal”.

To learn of the existence of “other kinds of Quakers” was a bit shocking at times. I suppose I’d had a general sense that FWCC was an inter-branch organization and that there were Evangelical Friends in Africa (indeed, the greatest number of Quakers today are Evangelical and in Kenya). I don’t think I’d ever questioned why I hadn’t heard of “other” Quakers in Canada, or why there were separate branches. I think one of the most common challenges for Friends from FGC affiliated Yearly Meetings is to define “what Quakers believe”. (Yes! there are over 30 YMs in the US! Canadian Yearly Meeting is both FGC and FUM - Friends United Meeting - affiliated) If we’re such a wishy-washy bunch, how could we be drawing lines between “us” and “them”?

Asking why American FGC Friends don’t worship with the Friends across the street (literally) is a subtle and funny affair. I can’t say I’ve heard an answer that amounts to more than, “we’re cool with it. This works just fine”. Having thought perhaps self-righteously, that I was part of a Religious institution unafraid of having challenging and life changing conversations, I was shocked at what I still see as a fundamental weakness in structure. (Is it

not? Even as we try to undermine this structure, does “institution” or “Society” work best?)

The YAF conferences have been an incredible space in which to start the dialogues and friendships that address directly where ideological differences exist. (There was another at Earlham in Richmond, IN, May 2008, which 6 Canadian YAFs attended!) Travelling and working (and now living) with American Friends has certainly challenged me to articulate my beliefs more coherently. Do I believe in Jesus? And, what does that mean exactly? If not, why not? Although I have come to feel that I have, and receive, a great love for and from Jesus. I still struggle to have the “dialogic relationship” that Toronto MM elder and awesome goddess Kathleen Hertzberg had been challenging me to have for years. One light that my time with American Friends shines on my own life is how diverse our own beliefs are!

As a Canadian Friend among American Friends I got more curious about the history of our own Religious Society of Friends. (with some persistent nudging from the same incomparable Kathleen) This came in part from meeting Erin McDougall from BC who was studying Quakerism at Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, Indiana. (Yes! A Quaker college! One of many!) When she came to visit among Canadian Friends, Kathleen reminded us both that Canadian Friends have a distinct history. We no longer have the divisions American Friends have because we unified in 1955 at Camp NeeKauNis. This unification was initiated by Young Friends, among them the ever-wonderful Kathleen! Erin and I both rejoiced in reclaiming our distinct histories and have found the Canadian unification to be a source of curiosity and wonderment among American Friends. Our population of 1,000 to their 30,000 is among the reasons cited for not being an applicable example.

The Quakers of Barnesville, Ohio, where I now live, are historically Conservative. This does not mean politically conservative, but refers to conserving the practices of early Friends. For me this meant using thee and thy but not thou or thine (much to the amusement of my Old English professor) many years before I knew

Conservative Friends were in fact still alive. For example, “May I take thy coat?” or “Will thou have a cookie?” Some choose to wear plain dress: suspenders, a white shirt and black slacks for the boys; bonnets, dresses, aprons for the ladies. My experience of worship at the historic Stillwater Meeting House (which was responsible for Olney Friends School until ten years ago) has been wonderful. I recently asked to be a sojourning member of Stillwater MM.

It’s almost three in the morning. I am now at the Burlington Meeting House in NJ. Sarah Hartzell sits across from me holding me in the Light so I don’t collapse in the last leg of this writing I finish this article remembering my pilgrimage and first interactions with American Friends. I recall the part of the YAF conference that has stayed with me most. On the Sunday morning we worshiped more than

two hours and I experienced a breaking open of love. More than a hundred YAFs were awake together in the same room, and dare I say I was trembling with the greatness of it. This love was overpowering. It felt like Jesus had stopped just knocking at my heart and had thrown the door open. It brought tears and laughter and the kind of worship that feels like you’re being baptized in light. No ritual could compare to this vast loving Presence. We heard ministry that spoke of Jesus Christ and God by other names. The words felt small but true. The experience felt eternal. May we all invite God into our lives with such abundance and love! I pray that the way opens for all of us in Canada, and around the world, to heed the call. Praise be to God!

*Jaya is currently living in Barnsville, OH*

## Living as Friends, Listening Within

Experiences of the May 2008 YAF Gathering in  
Richmond, IN

Ravi Joshi, Toronto Monthly Meeting

Like many Canadian Young Quakers, I had not previously traveled to the US for a Quaker gathering, much less one of this magnitude. This gathering of all, was one where Young Friends

would be challenged to build community with Friends from many backgrounds, from many branches of Quakerism, from all over North America.

From the outset this conference provided a needed social scene for YAFs to connect and build lasting relationships. Through NeeKauNis, Friends in Canada and most of the US have the chance to meet and build this connection of fellowship and community. However, gatherings such as this weekend allowed for the same group of Friends to connect, with an expressed goal of building community between the different branches of Quakerism. That community was kindled early on by the reuniting of old friends, and in meeting new people. For me, I found I was meeting Friends I had never met before, Friends I had not seen in a long time, and Friends whom I saw yesterday and who live nearby. My personal favourites were the Friends who I had heard so much about through Canadian YAFs but had never met

The weekend was an incredible time to build community, in spite of our differences. I would soon learn that we built community *because* of our differences, but that wasn’t immediately apparent. Time was spent in worship, learning together, and often playing together. It was important to have the time to socialize and interact with each other, namely because it was a chance to talk about things other than the things we disagreed about. Friends who knew each other well spouted inside jokes and references. Friends who hadn’t seen each other in a while caught up, and stunningly, Friends who had just met each other were able to chat as though they had known each other for years. This led me to believe that we indeed had a lot in common, certainly more than we had been told about by our respective branches.

I was surprised by some of the rules that were set out for the conference. They included women being asked not to bare their shoulders, and for everyone to refrain from using foul language. We, the four of us coming from southern Ontario, compensated in particular with a 30 second ‘swear-a-thon’ before we made it to Earlham and it seemed to hold us over for the weekend. I suppose I didn’t find these rules overly constraining. However, these



rules inflamed my instinct to alienate others, label others and pass judgment on them.

I had based so much of my animosity on what I thought Friends from the other branches of Quakerism would be like. I felt like I could pin all of my personal hang-ups on what I thought were the tendencies of the other branches. In my head I did not find inspiration in their evangelical style worship, nor in their proselytizing tone, nor in their strict paternal theological framework. However, in reality I didn't know who "they" were. Because of the structure of the weekend, I couldn't even begin to label these people who I had grown to love and respect. This is a stark contrast to what we are used to in large part because we have tended to apply labels to people first, and attempt to find unity second.

The focus of this gathering was to find unity and community among Friends who may differ in social, political, and religious perspectives. This conference brought me to understand that these barriers have very little to do with the labels we apply to people, and that our differences on the whole are usually embellished by stigma and vague perceptions.

There were precious experiences in worship where the Spirit would seem to build itself on the foundation of our community and friendship (using a small "I" intentionally). If the weekend were to be reduced to a single question as to whether Young Friends of all stripes and walks of life could live in community and Friendship, I'm not certain that I, or anyone who was present, have a definitive answer. However, I am most certain that the connection we shared in building loving social bonds was essential for our worship to be even possible, let alone meaningful. We as Friends must be prepared to live in community, supporting each other with humour, play, work, and companionship, before our worship can truly take root in our spirit. I believe this is the ministry of all Young Friends to our community.

*Ravi lives in Guelph, ON*

## Quaker Youth Pilgrimage, 2008

Rachel Singleton-Polster, VIMM

This summer I was privileged to attend the 2008 Quaker Youth Pilgrimage (QYP) on a journey "Through Conflict to Peace", through England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. As a group of twenty-five youth hailing from Canada, the US, Mexico, Germany, and the United Kingdom, we learned and grew together spiritually as well as in the knowledge of our Quaker roots and beginnings.

I started on my journey August 15 when I flew to Philadelphia to meet with the other North American pilgrims and two of our leaders. We had the great opportunity to explore the "City of Brotherly Love" and learn about early Quakers and their role in and around the city. Being in Pennsylvania was particularly exciting for my cousin Elen, who attended the pilgrimage with me, and for me because it is where some of our family came from. We flew across the Atlantic and finally gathered as a whole group in Glasgow, where we were mixed into host families in order to adjust to jet lag and a whole new continent. I was blessed to stay with a lovely lady who took me to see "the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond" and more of Scotland's beautiful countryside.

Our journey as a whole group truly began when we hopped on a bus and drove through rolling green hills covered with sheep, to the 1652 country where George Fox roamed spreading the word of Quakerism. Here we stayed in the quaint old Yealand Conyers schoolhouse next to a beautiful Meeting House all surrounded by a most peaceful cemetery and equally tranquil countryside. It was here that we came together spiritually. We worshipped together in different ways, learning to appreciate both programmed and unprogrammed worship. During the ten days we spent there we had ample time to walk in Fox's footsteps. We climbed Pendle Hill to visit Brigflatts Meeting House where early Friends were arrested for their beliefs. (It was very foggy, so I must return when it is clear!) We saw the Quaker Tapestries in Kendal and Lancaster Castle where many friends were imprisoned. Of these many interesting and beautiful locations, my favourite was Firbank

Fell where we held Meeting for Worship in the company of several horses and sheep. Here is an excerpt from my journal on that day:

*...we went to Firbank Fell and saw George Fox's "pulpit" where he spoke to about 1000 people. I walked around by myself for a while and was really present. The surrounding hills and valleys were so beautiful, the stone walls curved across the fells just like I have always pictured England. I removed my sandals and I placed myself firmly on English soil and checked out my surroundings. I ran through the soggy ground dodging sheep poo all the way and felt the Spirit moving in me as I looked across all this beauty. We held Meeting for Worship with the horses looking across to the Lancashire Sea and it was rather gathered. The horses nibbled my toes and hair as I relished the beautiful day. I feel very at peace. I have many questions and I am so unsure, yet so relaxed...*

We walked to the train station and boarded a train bound for Holyhead, Wales, where we would catch a ferry to Dublin, Ireland. I was sad to leave England, but knew I would return soon as I was so touched by it. Upon arrival in Ireland some pilgrims pulled out their fiddles and played a jig while I did some Irish dancing to welcome us all to the Emerald Isle. In Dublin we volunteered for the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland and visited several cultural locations, then bussed our way north to Northern Ireland and Moyallon Centre. There we delved into learning about "the Troubles" and today's current political situation. We learned about the role Quakers had played and continue to play in conflict resolution, and also learned how diverse Quakers are in our beliefs. The theme of our pilgrimage was a journey through conflict to peace. In Northern Ireland we learned about this in a historical context, but also within our group, as we struggled to understand and appreciate each other's beliefs and find unity. We visited the Giants Causeway on a most beautiful sunny day and went for plenty of walks through the woods near where we were staying.

With but a few days left we ferried again across the Irish Sea back to Scotland where we spent our time in retreat at an old hunting lodge. Here we had time to just be together with the

amazing friendships we had formed. We played games, laughed, cried and had many hugs and cuddles. The last morning we had together a few of us climbed up a nearby hill. Here is what I wrote:

*As we clambered over fences through muddy fields the sun rose from behind a hill on our right. The mist was dotting the pastures and our faces were flushed by the cool morning air and the kiss of the sun. We climbed up, up, up, and I got quite out of breath, but partway up I paused with another pilgrim and as we looked over the countryside she said, "This is God", and it was the truest thing I had ever heard...*

We were finally separated at the airport where we had a very hard time saying goodbye to the European pilgrims. I spent a night in Philadelphia then left early the next morning to fly home. I cannot express enough my gratitude for this experience. I formed the most amazing friendships with Young Friends from around the world and I learned so much about my own spirituality. I found out what being a Quaker means to me, and what it means to others.

I would like to thank all those who supported me on this journey, both financially and spiritually. This experience was something I will never forget.

*Rachel, of Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting is in grade 12 at Lester B. Pearson United World College, Metchosin, BC.*



*Sisters together: Amy Jean (left) and Rachel Singleton-Polster*

## Following a Calling:

An Interview with Liz Wine of Wichita, Kansas

I first met Liz Wine at the World Gathering of Young Friends in England, in 2005. Being at a large Quaker gathering with Friends from all over the world can be intense at times, but within the powerful energy there are also moments of mirth. When around each other, Katrina McQuail from Canada, Lesley Vichez Espinoza from El Salvador, Liz, and I seemed to always be in a group giggling. We nicknamed ourselves the *'Four Crazies/ Cuatro Locos'*, and since that time a great bond has been formed. I have been honoured to have Liz as a friend over the last few years, and Katrina and I were able to stay with Liz in Kansas when we traveled southwards through the States on our way to Central America.

This summer, Liz told me about the calling she has to work in Rwanda with Evangelical Friends Missions for the next two years. The Evangelical Friends Mission (EFM) is the cooperative missions arm of Evangelical Friends Church International (EFCI) which has outreach ministries in Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Europe and North America. Evangelical Friends Missionary teams have been in Rwanda since 1986 and have helped built a strong Friends church and several schools. Friends in Rwanda seek not only to win new people to Christ, but also to be a force toward forgiveness, reconciliation and peace. Having little experience with evangelism and missionary work amongst Friends, I wanted to ask Liz about her calling to work with Evangelical Friends Mission. I thought her answers would be of interest to Canadian Young Friends as we look at the diversity of Friends around the world and the range of work that these different branches of Friends are doing in the name of Love.

**Rebecca Ivanoff:** *Liz, could you please tell us a bit about yourself?*

**Liz Wine:** Certainly! I am a 26 year old that currently lives in Kansas. I received my Masters of Social Work in 2007, and have been working as a therapist at an elementary school. I love to laugh, read, and be around people.

**RI:** What were your experiences of Quakerism growing up?

**LW:** I was brought up in a small, unprogrammed Quaker Meeting in Kansas. I was blessed to have several other kids (and then teenagers) to learn and fellowship with. Looking back on memories, the most poignant ones are outside the Meeting House on outings and at conferences (doing things such as canoeing and talent shows). I also attended Friends General Conference several times growing up, and enjoyed participating in their programming.

**RI:** Can you describe your calling to be a part of Evangelical Friends Mission?

**LW:** Yes, yes, I can! In March of 2008 I received an e-mail describing the need for teachers at a school for missionaries' children. When I received this e-mail, my body gave a physical reaction. I had a series of three dreams that also spoke to me about Rwanda. Yet, I resisted for several months. I call it my toddler reaction phase! In June, while at Great Plains Yearly Meeting, we were singing the hymn 'Here I am Lord' and I felt God nudging me to be reminded of that calling.

**RI:** *What will you bring to the people of Rwanda? What will you be doing while you are there? What kind of change are you hoping to bring about by going?*

**LW:** Oh my, those are quite some questions!! God knows the plan He has for me, and I know that it shall be revealed in the right timing. My own answers are that I think I will bring positive energy, openness to learning, and compassion. While I am there my main duty will be to teach at a school for missionaries' children, so that will take a large portion of my time. As time allows, there may be opportunities for other work in the community. As far as the change I am hoping to bring about - what God has laid on my heart so far- is for me to be an encourager to the children and their families that are involved in the school. I will continue to discern God's will for more specifics, as I am in Rwanda.

**RI:** *What does Jesus Christ mean to you personally?*

**LW:** To me, Jesus is my Savior, Lord of my life and my best friend! I have found freedom and JOY in Christ! A good quote I might also

reference is "There is one, Jesus Christ, who can speak to my condition" by George Fox. I totally agree with Fox! Quakerism has a rich heritage in Christianity, with an emphasis on personal experience.

**RI:** What was the most important event that led you to call yourself a Christian?

**LW:** My acceptance of Christ was a personal experience. It was actually at a Young Adult Friends Gathering in Burlington, New Jersey in 2007! After a long, yet gathered Meeting for Worship, I felt God had put something on my heart. I sought out a Friend and she shared her testimony with me. Christ's love compelled me deeply and I accepted Christ into my heart. I am a very visual person, and when this moment happened I had an image of Jesus and my heart merging!

**RI:** What does evangelicalism mean to you personally? How does your idea of evangelical work fit into your Quaker faith?

**LW:** To me, evangelical work means to share the love, the hope, the grace and the good news of Christ. I'm sitting here trying to think what else to write. Perhaps I have just written my missionary mission statement! :) Evangelicalism is sharing my story, and sharing how Christ has worked in my life; how I was lost and empty before Him, and now my joy overflows. I became a Christian because of the Holy Spirit moving in me, and also because of a Friend's powerful personal testimony, and so this is my vision of Evangelical work. In a Quaker context, it is helping people see there is One, Jesus Christ who can speak to their condition (George Fox). The gospel is the message of ultimate love and sacrifice. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" John 3:16.

**RI:** What does missionary work, or being a missionary, or working in a mission mean to you? How does missionary work tie into your Quaker faith and values?

**LW:** I am specifically going to Rwanda to teach missionaries' children. I envision this as not only providing educational support, but also emotional and spiritual nurturing. By teaching these children, their parents are released to do what God has called them to do. It's almost a

(good) pyramid scheme! To tie it in to Quakerism I would focus on the Quaker testimony of community. I will be working within a Quaker and a Christian community that is working to spread the good news of Christ.

**RI:** How does being a part of the Society of Friends impact your daily life?

**LW:** Silence is what I turn to when I need to consider a situation, am frustrated, or I just need a "mental time out". Silence is centering and allows me to be quiet, and allows God to speak! I also strive to seek that of God in every person while I am in my daily interactions. Community is also vital to me. I cannot survive without my spiritual friendships (face to face, over the internet, or phone).

**RI:** What are your thoughts on the diversity of Friends?

**LW:** Diversity rocks, but I pray that we would be more open in our communication with other branches. In order for Quakerism to survive, we need vitality. Conflict does not bring vitality. We need to acknowledge our differences with love, tenderness, and grace. We are "the great people to be gathered" that George Fox envisioned many years ago. How can we get back to this? We need to educate ourselves about the different branches. Assumptions don't do anyone any good. Inform yourself and then formulate your questions and concerns. Make it a point to have friends from other branches. I have friends from every branch and thank God for allowing our paths to cross. I learn so much from all my Quaker Friends!

**RI:** How can we best support Young Adult Friends in following their callings?

**LW:** Prayer, prayer, prayer and encouragement!! It can be a daunting task to follow a calling, but when a Friend has a calling and obeys, good support cannot be under-estimated. Phone calls, text messages, e-mails, notes in the mail- just to let them know you are praying for them is highly encouraging.

**RI:** Is there a website where we can continue to learn more about your work?

**LW:** Yes, I have a blog at <http://lizinthemist.blogspot.com>. I also have a Facebook group entitled "Liz is going to Rwanda". (... p.27)

## A Diverse Community Speaks Truth Into My Life

Rebecca Ivanoff, Yonge Street MM

This summer, during worship sharing at Yearly Meeting I became acutely aware of just how little Young Friends in Canada feel they have received regarding to religious education and understanding of the diversity of Friends worldwide. The tears in my fellow Young Adult Friend's eyes connected me deeply to the same feelings I have had in the past regarding Friends. This feeling of being unaware of the spiritual Truths that bind us together as a Society of Friends despite our vast differences, was with me as I prepared to attend the World Gathering of Young Friends in 2005. It was in preparation for this gathering that I first became truly aware of our great diversity. This diversity and the language used to address our differences, as well as our similarities, were so foreign to me, that I became unsure if I was a Quaker. In those months prior to the Gathering, I would say that "I grew up Quaker", never saying, "I am a Quaker".

At the World Gathering all the many branches of the Quaker family tree joined together in Lancaster, England. We had representatives from Yearly Meetings who are affiliated with Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, Conservative Friends, and Evangelical Friends International, as well as Yearly Meetings who were unaffiliated, or simply connected to the wider Quaker community through Friends World Committee on Consultation. Over the week we shared our styles of worship, gathered in small base-groups, went on out-trips into '1652 country', and listened to the teachings of four elders. Every day we had at least two of the speakers talk so that we had different views and language expressed for similar topics. One speech that spoke to me most deeply was when the elder said, that in order to bear fruit you must first have experienced the Spirit and loved the Spirit, and that a community is needed for this to happen. A community is needed to help point you in the right direction, to spur you on, and to hold you accountable. We all need a community which will speak the truth into our lives.

At the Gathering I was able to be a part of a community where each of us was committed to seeing the Light in each other and each other's faith and practice, regardless of our own. We came together to learn from each other, to explore new ways of thinking and of sharing Truth. What united us at the Gathering was our deep seeking to have a relationship with the Divine. We found that we did not have a unity of doctrine, nor of things seen, but one of Spirit. We learned not to listen to words but to the Spirit behind the words.

As our community formed, we asked ourselves "What fruit shall we bear?" We came to an understanding that our fruits are our lives, our witness and our love for one another. The 2005 World Gathering inspired among many of us a hunger to carry forward the bonds of love and friendship born there. These bonds nurtured our spirits as they challenged us to broaden and deepen our faith. Since the gathering, Young Adult Friends have sought to establish connections between Quaker communities from different branches of the Quaker tradition and/or geographical regions, for the purposes of learning, growing, nurturing, and being nurtured in our spiritual lives.

As you may remember, as part of the planning for this World Gathering, a twinning initiative was started to help participants prepare. Canadian Yearly Meeting was twinned with Junta Anual Amigos de Santidad (Friends of Holiness Yearly Meeting, Guatemala). This created dialogue and sharing between Young Friends of diverse backgrounds before the Gathering, and an opportunity to fundraise together. As part of the fundraising we had a big dinner and silent auction at Friends House in Toronto. All the recipes we used for our meal came from my new friends Karen and Edith. Because of this twinning I have formed strong friendships with a number of wonderful people in Chiquimula, Guatemala.

When I traveled through Central America in 2007 with Katrina McQuail, Aden Spurr, and David Purkis, we stayed with Jose Luis, whom Katrina and I had met at the World Gathering. Our friends Karen and Edith (also met at the World Gathering) came to join us as well. During our time in Chiquimula, we were taken on a

tour of the local Quaker landmarks. Chiquimula is home to 20,000 plus Evangelical Friends, in two Yearly Meetings and one independent Monthly Meeting. With Édgar Madrid, Edith's father and a pastor, we were taken to see the Quaker Theological Seminary, the offices and transmitter for Radio Verdad (Radio Truth), as well as many of the Quaker Churches.

One evening we all went to Karen, Jose Luis, and Edith's Church, to the Young Friends session. We introduced our Yearly Meetings, and ourselves, and talked with the youth about unprogrammed Quaker Meetings. We got lots of questions, some really hard to answer, but all of them intelligent and spirit-filled questions. Karen was an amazing translator and explained things to the group in a way that let me know just how much she understood of both my experiences of Quakerism and that of her fellow Young Friends. Samuel, who we also met at WGYFs and who belonged to the other Yearly Meeting in Chiquimula, took us up into the mountains to his family farm. He would stop and explain to us about the plants, fruits, veggies and people around us. We got to hang out with his two-year-old daughter as we toured the area, seeing his family and friends harvesting beans by hand. We ate apple-bananas, picked a huge bag of oranges, and his mother let Katrina and me attempt to make tortillas. That evening we went to Luis Carlos' Church (the one independent Monthly Meeting) for a very different view of Meeting for Worship, in which we did not understand much of the sermon about the different types of love, but enjoyed the music and company. Having the opportunity to laugh, sing, and talk about faith to the Young Adult Friends in Guatemala is something I thank God for. I feel deeply enriched by these experiences of reaching across the boundaries of Quaker traditions.

Here in North America, there is a broad and growing movement of Friends who are drawn to, and deeply invested in, inter-faith relationship-building. Much of this energy is centred in Young Adult Friend communities. We have been holding conferences and gatherings that reach across theological, cultural and organizational lines. We have asked ourselves "Who are we?", "What are we called to today?" "Do we have a collective identity as Young Adult

Friends or a collective witness?" We are also holding the question in our hearts: "How is God going to use the Religious Society of Friends; the whole Religious Society of Friends?" One of these important gatherings was held in Burlington, VT in 2007. After this gathering, one Young Adult Friend wrote:

"We were covered in the Holy Spirit, bonded together in Love, a gathered people under the headship of the Spirit of Christ. We were broken, tender, and open to the ministry of the Lord. And the underlying message that the Inward Teacher had for us was simple yet profound: We start with love. Often Friends, reaching across the divides of differences in theology, culture, and ways of viewing the world, wonder what it is that makes us all Friends. "Why are we called to be together?", we ask. This weekend, I felt that we were given the answer: We are called together because of our love for one another. If we stay low to the ground, if we stay vulnerable and tender to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, there is no limit to how God can act through us. The ministry of young Friends, the ministry of these valiant Quaker men and women, will shake the countryside for miles around." (<http://lambswar.blogspot.com/2007/02/powerful-gathering-of-youngadult.html>)

When I heard about the YAF conference at the Earlham School of Religion in May 2008, I applied to attend even before I had booked a flight back home from Honduras. I knew I needed to be there. The conference was called 'Living as Friends, Listening Within' and was organized by Young Adult Friends from all branches of the Society of Friends in North America. Though personally challenging and overwhelming, over the weekend it was amazing to see a Society growing and lifting each other up. It was so good to see friends that I love and cherish, and also good to meet new friends.

One of the reasons I was nominated to the Canadian Yearly Meeting's ad hoc committee to look at our relationship with Friends United Meeting was because of my experiences with the diversity of Friends. In our interim report to Representative Committee in November 2008, our committee reported that one reason to stay affiliated to Friends United Meeting is that our Young Friends and Young Adult



Friends deserve our support in their work building bridges across our differences. Young Adult Friends around the world feel a leading to reach out to one another within the Society of Friends to seek loving unity. One YAF said that Young Adult Friends would feel abandoned if CYM were to withdraw from FUM.

This energy and desire to work together in loving understanding that is bubbling up out of the YAF community in North America is something I hope is shared with the wider Quaker body. Recently a YAF who I have met at different Quaker gatherings wrote in an open letter to FUM, that really speaks my mind and heart. One part reads: "I believe that everything we do to create and maintain authentic, deep relationships among the different branches of Friends is a step toward a more vital Quakerism. Because I carry this conviction, I am proud to be from a dually-affiliated yearly meeting-- and sad and scared that we may cease to be one, and others may follow in our wake... I want to live out the next 60-70 (God willing) years of my life in a Quakerism that is committed to deep seeking, to dialogue, to relationships that challenge the people who are in them. I want to give that to my children and grandchildren. Long after the personnel policy is a dead issue, the fruit of our commitment to dynamic engagement, fellowship, and spiritual bridge-building (or the absence of that commitment) will be manifesting in the quality and vibrancy of religious life in Quakerism."(<http://unwaverbandsoflight.blogspot.com/2008/12/open-letter-onfriends-united-meeting.html>)

The deep seeking and dialogue that relationships with Friends of diverse traditions allows, has meant that I can now say with conviction, "I am Quaker". Because of this I have requested and been accepted into membership at my local Meeting. The relationships that I have formed with YAFs from different branches of the Quaker tradition and geographical regions, allow me to learn, grow, and be nurtured in my spiritual life. This diverse community allows us to deconstruct the 'us and them' categories, to pose hard questions, and pushes us to be more honest with ourselves and one another. I pray that the seeking continues, and that it spurs us all, regardless of age and theological standings, into action.

## The Experiences That Have Made Me a Friend

Amy Jean Singleton-Polster, VIMM

When I was contacted to see if I'd like to contribute to this Sporadical I knew I wanted to write something, but because of exams I was a bit pressed for time. Next it was Christmas, and visiting family and friends, and suddenly the holidays are almost over. As YF and YAF we are all so busy, and often it seems school and work take up way too much time. Add in the spatial challenges for YF in Canada and it's easy to see why gatherings (at least in the west) with more than a dozen YF or YAF are rare.

However, for myself, YF gatherings have been the experiences that have made me a Friend. In 2004 I traveled on the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage (QYP), organized by FWCC. We traveled in England, the Netherlands, and Germany. The connections made on this trip will last a lifetime, even if we never have the opportunity to all be together again. (Just today I met my new roommate on exchange from Ireland, we were chatting and it turned out she knew one of my close friends from QYP and he had been over at her house in Ireland just last week!) In 2005 I participated in the World Gathering for Young Friends (WGYF). At WGYF there were 226 participants from 58 different Yearly Meetings and nine different unaffiliated regional groups. The WGYF for me was an amazing experience. It stretched me, strengthened me, and challenged my beliefs. It forced me to examine how I live my life. To me, the greatest challenge for myself was understanding the beliefs of different Friends, particularly Friends from more Evangelical Christ-centric churches, and how that fit into my own beliefs and how I defined myself as a Quaker.

Both QYP and WGYF are pivotal points along my spiritual journey. The links made between Friends around the world are what hold us together through the good times and the bad. In 2005 at WGYF we pledged to build bridges between our Quaker communities to bring us closer together. I wonder what am I doing today, and what are all Canadian Young Friends doing, to build bridges between our

Quaker communities? Are we building new bridges? Tearing them down? Or managing to maintain the few we have constructed?

I guess I challenge you all, and myself, to at least try and maintain those special connections with Friends. To do something as quick as taking a few seconds to e-mail a Friend with whom you have lost touch. In our busy lives it's a good place to start keeping our bridges strong.



*Amy Jean of Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting, is in first year of the Island Medical Program at the University of Victoria*

### Words We Use to Identify as Young Friends: An Interview with Edith Madrid, Chiquimula, Guatemala

Having had the opportunity to discuss with my friend and fellow World Gathering participant, Edith, about our differing experiences of Quakersim, I wanted to share her thoughts with fellow Canadian Young Friends. I was able to interview her via e-mail for the Sporadical over Christmas, 2008. I find her words both different from those I'd personally use, but also inspirational. I ask you the questions I asked myself after reading her responses. Which parts do you resonate with? Which questions would you answer using different language/words? Would you be able to answer these questions easily? For me, questions about faith are challenges, but ones that bring rewards. As we have been reminded at YAF gatherings, let us speak in words and listen in tongues.  
Rebecca Ivanoff

**In a few sentences, can you tell us about yourself?** *Yo soy una persona muy amigable, amable, y que me gusta respetar a los demás. Amo a Dios por sobre todas las cosas y me gusta compartir, ayudar y edificar a otros, para que sean mejores personas.*

I am a very friendly person, kind, and I like to respect others. I love God over everything. I like to share, help, and build others, so that they may be better persons.

#### **What does being a Quaker mean to you?**

*Para mí significa ser un pregonero del Evangelio de la paz, en medio de un mundo lleno de violencia y maldad, ser luz en medio de las tinieblas, reflejando a Jesucristo en nuestros corazones, porque Jesús dijo: Yo soy la luz del mundo. (Juan 8:12); ser guiados por el Espíritu Santo, el Espíritu de Dios, en todo lo que hagamos, demostrando el amor de Jesucristo hacia los demás.*

To me, it means to publish the Gospel of Peace, in the midst of a world full of violence and wickedness; to be light in the midst of darkness, reflecting Jesus Christ within our hearts, because Jesus Christ said: "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12), being guided by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, in all we do, showing Jesus Christ's love towards others.

#### **What does being a Young Friend mean to you?**

*Compartir con otros jóvenes Amigos una linda amistad, compartir nuestras opiniones, nuestros proyectos, nuestros deseos, y brindar ayuda al que lo necesite, ya sea una ayuda emocional, espiritual o economica*

Sharing with other young Friends a beautiful friendship, sharing our opinions, our projects, our desires, and bringing help to those who need it, whether they need emotional, spiritual, or economical help.

#### **What do you do as a Young Friend?**

*Yo trabajo para una Estación Radial Cuáquera en Guatemala, una Estación Radial Evangélica, llamada "Radio Verdad", desde hace más de 10 años, como Administradora y haciendo grabaciones para algunos programas de Lecturas Bíblicas en Español e Inglés, programas de Consejería, programas musicales, mensajes cortos que edifiquen,*



*presentaciones de algunos Programas, etc.*

I work for a Quaker Evangelical Radio Station called "Radio Verdad" ("Radio Truth") since over 10 years, as the the Administrator and doing some recordings for some programs of Bible Reading in Spanish and English; also for programs of counseling, music, edifying short sermons, and some other program presentations.

#### **What do you do with other Young Friends?**

*Nosotros nos reunimos para realizar diferentes actividades como convivios navideños, fiestas de Cumpleaños, bodas, aniversarios de la Estación Radial, actividades en el Seminario Teológico Cuáquero y la Iglesia, y principalmente en los Servicios religiosos.*

We meet together for different activities, like Christmas dinners, birthday parties, weddings, the Radio Station's anniversaries, activities with the Quaker Theological Seminary, with the Church and, mainly, with the religious services.

#### **How do you put your faith into actions?**

*Le doy ayuda económica a los pobres, les regalo comida, ropa o algo que necesiten. Regalo Biblias, libros cristianos, o algún audio cristiano que ayude a las personas a cambiar sus vidas, a cambiar sus malos hábitos, o sus malas acciones para que lleguen a ser mejores personas, personas de integridad en un mundo corrupto, personas con el temor de Dios en sus corazones, ese temor santo y reverente hacia Dios y su Palabra, en otras palabras, que respeten a Dios y a sus mandamientos.*

*I provide economical help to the poor. I provide them with food, clothes or anything they need. I give Bibles out, Christian books, or any Christian audios, which help people change their lives, change their bad habits, or bad actions. I do this so that they may come to be better persons with integrity, in a corrupted world; people with God's fear in their hearts, having holy and reverent fear towards God and His Word; in other words, people who respect God and His commandments.*

#### **What is your relationship with your Meeting/ Church?**

*Nuestra relación es de hermanos y hermanas en Cristo Jesús, demostrando el amor de Dios y cumpliendo así el mandamiento que Dios nos*

*dejó que nos amemos unos a otros, porque Dios es amor. (1 Juan 4:7-8).*

*Our relationship is like brethren in Jesus Christ, demonstrating the love of God, accomplishing God's commandment of loving another, because "God is love"(I John 4:7-8).*

#### **What do you know about the diversity of Friends?**

*En mi viaje a Inglaterra, a la reunión de los Amigos Jóvenes, el cual fue celebrado en Agosto, 2005, tuve la oportunidad de conocer a muchos jóvenes cuáqueros de diferentes países del mundo y conocer la diversidad de Amigos que hay en el mundo, y compartí lindos momentos con los Programados y No Programados y conocí las diferentes formas de pensar, las diferentes creencias sobre Jesús, las costumbres, el comer saludable, las reuniones silenciosas, las formas de vestir y la diversidad cultural. Fue muy hermoso, especialmente que, a pesar de todas las diferencias que nos caracterizaban, nos unía una linda amistad, respeto y sinceridad.*

*On my trip to England, at the Young Friends Gathering, celebrated in August 2005, I had the opportunity of meeting many young Quakers from different countries, and realizing the diversity of Friends there is in the world. I shared beautiful moments with Programmed and Unprogrammed Friends, and I met the different ways of thinking, the different beliefs about Jesus, different customs, and we ate healthy food; the silent meetings, the ways to dress themselves, and cultural diversity. It was beautiful, especially that, despite all differences which characterized all of us, there was a beautiful friendship, respect and sincerity that united us.*

#### **What is your relationship with different 'types' of Quakers?**

*Es muy buena. Yo mantengo comunicación con algunos Cuáqueros Programados y No P experiencias, proyectos, y hasta clases de Inglés/Español.*

*It is very good. I e-mail with some Quakers, Programmed and Non Programmed, and we share beautiful remembrances, experiences, projects, and even English/Spanish classes.*

# My Experience With Quakers Abroad

By Aden Spurr

My first experiences with Quakers began at Camp NeeKauNis. It is such a beautiful place to spend your summers meeting new people and then getting to know them so intimately over 10 days or less; working and playing, learning and growing. There are always people from all over the place at camp. Kids and adults from the United States, Europe, and other parts of Canada (as well as other parts of the world) coming and sharing what gifts they have with each other. From these people that attended and volunteered at camp I learned many useful skills, from how to make peanut butter cookies, to how to re-roof a building in seven days; or the correct use of a chainsaw at 6 in the morning. There was always someone with some piece of wisdom, a joke or a just a hug. Unprogrammed meeting on First Hill, listening to the cicada drone and watching the ants crawl through the grass. Just sitting on a hill with anywhere from two to one hundred people in silence. This always was (and is) a very calming and centering thing for me.

Camp NeeKauNis led to Young Friend retreats held at Meeting Houses all around Ontario, where I met even more wonderful people and learned even more about the world. I could be myself, and not have to worry about what the other kids thought. Likewise they could be themselves. The diverse community that we managed to create in even less time was something that I will always be thankful for, and good Friendships that continue even though I don't see most of them as often as I would like.

As we got older, my friends became even more involved in Quakerism. I started to learn more about Quakers in Canada and around the world by hearing stories about CYM, FGC, and the World Gathering; stories about the coming together of people from multiple backgrounds to share ideas and to listen and learn about each other, to have fun and worship together. And here again community was built, much the same as in my own experiences.

Last year I was fortunate enough to go on a Grand Americas adventure with three Friends, Katrina, Rebecca, and David. The four of us met in Richmond, Indiana (where Katrina had gone to University) to start our road trip through the States. While I was there, I got a small peek at life at a Quaker school. I saw a much larger, more diverse, and complex version of what I had experience growing up at NeeKauNis and YF Retreats. Our travels brought us to Guatemala where we spent some time in Chiquimula visiting with some Quakers that attended the World Gathering with Katrina and Rebecca. They were so gracious and kind. Taking us around to all the local spots. Giving us tours of their schools and Meeting House. Visiting the radio tower that broadcasts Radio Truth to the world. And then seeing the actual broadcasting booth and the 2 computers that send out the signal was pretty cool. We had the chance to sit in on a Young Friends night that was really interesting. We told them a bit about how we practise Quakerism, and learned a bit about them as well. The kids were very eager and intelligent and it made me happy that gatherings of this kind happened other places as well. Our hosts gave us the chance to go to a service put on at their Meeting House that was completely different than how I had known Quakers to worship. But my small understanding of Spanish aside, I could feel and see that it was the same to them as sitting on the Hill at NeeKauNis is for me.

I've met a lot of really wonderful people on my journey, not all of them Quakers, but enough that I feel the better for it. It always amazes me what a few energetic, motivated and sometimes quite stubborn Friends can accomplish and create.

*Aden, of Sebright, Ontario, is currently finishing a Glassblowing certificate at the Haliburton School of the Arts. He has enjoyed many summers volunteering at Camp NeeKauNis*



## Thoughts from a Pilgrimage

By Nori Sinclair

In 2002, I flew to Baltimore, Maryland to join my fellow pilgrims for the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage (QYP). From there, all 25 Young Friends would begin our journey, retracing George Fox's 17<sup>th</sup>-century footsteps in the United States. While on my pilgrimage, I tried to journal every day to capture what an amazing time I had during that month. Some of my (deeper) journal extracts from that time formed the basis of my reports back to the Canadian Friend and my Meeting. They still speak to me, so I'd like to include them here.

*I don't know which thought is scarier: that I'll never be able to return to my old life or that idea that I could, thus forgetting my experiences. (August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2002)*

*I've never seen fireflies before- we were catching them my first night here. When you look up at the sky, it's impossible to tell the shooting stars from the fireflies, so I make a wish on both. You can never have too many wishes." (July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2002/August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2002) "I think I have mostly figured out why I hesitate to call myself a Christian. The word now has a negative connotation because people have done so many evil things in the name of Christ, quite literally giving Christians a bad name. (August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2002)*

*God is that which is good within us all. God is not some grey-haired old man up in the sky watching over us. God is the spirit that prompts right decisions, the space within us filled with love for all the things around us. And God is all around us- in the sunset, the frog and the leaves- all that is beautiful and necessary. But all this is just the tiniest portion of God's power, mercy and love for us all. (July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2002)*

When I wrote my report after the pilgrimage, I described it as "warmth in the pit of my stomach". Like all strongly emotional events, I felt it in my gut. Looking back, the whole month seems to glow with a special light.

I wish I could say, six and a half years later, that I have changed as much as I thought I would. I already knew then that Quakerism was home and that Quakers were my family, but I

have yet to find what I'm looking for in Meeting for Worship (likely because I rarely attend and am therefore still not an official member).

However, I do still talk to some of my fellow pilgrims. We used to keep in touch via an MSN Group website, which we only recently let lapse in favour of Facebook. Each pilgrim stands out clearly in my mind, their energies fuelling a diverse group of people that I was honoured to travel with.

It wasn't just the other pilgrims that made an impression on me. For unprogrammed Young Friends, which we all were except for one semi-programmed North Carolinian pilgrim, it was a real challenge for me to connect with the more "churchy" Friends Meetings. To quote my 2002 report:

*I can see that a faith that cannot be questioned or challenged is a faith that is weak. I learned that sometimes we have to accept things without understanding them, but that we should never accept things without question. I learned that Quakerism is much bigger than my former vision of it. Programmed Meetings with much more Christocentric and politically conservative views flourish in the States and challenge me to figure out what it is that links Quakers beyond our roots. I still don't know the answer to that one. I have more clearly defined my perception of God, as well as realized that God defies definition by my limited comprehension. I'm still challenged by the silence - so often I find it filled with my own worries and insecurities instead of the calming presence of God, but I do feel the importance of seeking that presence in my life.*

This hasn't changed. I wish I could explore these types of Quaker Meetings again, as I found that discovering what religious practices simply feel wrong to me are often the best way to find out where I fit in our diverse, challenging, wonderful Quaker family. In some ways, I guess the pilgrimage never truly ends: the road simply changes.

*Nori lives in Calgary where she is studying journalism. See photo on page 27*

## The Love of God: Drawing the Branches Together

By Micah Bales, Great Plains Yearly Meeting

*Micah Bales is a member of Heartland Friends Meeting, in Wichita, Kansas, a part of Great Plains Yearly Meeting (FUM). He is a recent graduate of Earlham School of Religion and is presently engaged in travelling ministry among Friends in Great Plains Yearly Meeting and the wider region. Micah was one of the planners of the YAF gathering at Earlham in May of 2008. Since meeting him at the World Gathering of Young Friends in 2005, I have witnessed Micah's growing concern for promoting and nurturing friendship between Friends from different branches of the Quaker family, and for the encouragement of young adult Friends worldwide. Knowing of this ministry, I asked him to write about the current Young Adult Friend movement. (Ed.).*

It's easy for younger Friends to get discouraged. For some of us, we grew up in our local Meeting, and now, in the process of becoming adults, we're unsure of how we fit in anymore. Our Meeting was a place where we could get still and know God in a way that we had never found before. But lately we have had the nagging suspicion that there is more to life in the Spirit than just attending Meeting for Worship once a week, buying fair trade, and participating in social activism. For many of us, there is a growing sense that something is missing. Even if we can't articulate it, we know that God desires more from us than the lives that we are presently leading.

This discomfort is a gift of the Spirit. It is the Seed of Christ aching within our hearts, calling us to a truer and deeper life than we have ever dared to live. The Light is pressing on our hearts, asking to come in. The process of giving ourselves over to the Light within begins with asking our Creator: "What is *your* will, God? Show me how I am to live and give me the strength to walk in *your* way". However, as we allow the Light to shine in our hearts and reveal the brokenness, rebellion, and alienation from God that we carry within ourselves, we are often tempted to project our own struggles onto others. Why aren't *they* living up to what God is

calling us to? There is a lot of truth in questions like this. In many cases, Friends aren't living lives worthy of the calling that God has for us as a people. But change begins in the heart of each person. God is calling us to first be changed ourselves. When we open ourselves to the Light and allow ourselves to be stripped down and built back up in the image of God, we will be made into instruments of God's will.

Fortunately, we are not called to walk this often painful road of inward transformation alone. When God calls us into the love of Christ, God also calls us into fellowship with other Friends of the Truth. Some who had previously been strangers are revealed as brothers and sisters who are madly in love with God. Somehow we know them more deeply than we ever thought possible: We know them because God knows us; we love them because God loves us.

And we are often surprised by whom we are united with in gospel love. The basis of the Young Adult Friends movement is the bond of love that miraculously springs to life among younger Friends who are beginning to turn towards the Light and discover that there are fellow followers of Truth from across the Religious Society of Friends. Where previously we had assumed that our particular brand of Quakerism was the only authentic one, we now find that God is indeed at work in all the branches – among Liberal Friends, Conservative Friends and Evangelical Friends. God loves all of us and unites us in the bond of peace. God has let us know that we are being called to something larger than ourselves - or our branch of the Quaker community.

But simply loving others in some abstract way isn't enough. We find that God is calling us to be in relationship with Friends from other branches of Quakerism. In many ways, our differences are so great that sometimes it seems we have nothing in common besides a shared history. But God has made us a people. God has already united us in the Spirit and in the bond of peace. We are called to come together as the people of God. Some of us saw this in Burlington, New Jersey, in February 2007, when the Holy Spirit drew us together and showed us that we are indeed one body. And this past

May, in Richmond, Indiana, God revealed to us that we are called to reach across the scattered branches of Friends, as God once again gathers a great people in the name of Jesus.

As the Young Adult Friends movement comes alive in our generation, it is helpful to understand that God has been at work among Young Adult Friends for a very long time. For almost a century, Quaker young people have been key in doing the crucial work of cross-fertilization that keeps the Religious Society of Friends vibrant, diverse, balanced, and grounded in God. Perhaps God sees fit to use young people in this way because so many of us are newly convinced of the Truth; we have not had time to cool down, to become lukewarm, to forget about the urgency of the call that God has for us. We know what God asks of us: Everything. Our whole life. We know how big this is. Are we ready to live up to the Light that has been granted us? Are we willing to be transformed by our encounter with God and with other Friends of Truth? Are we willing to be stretched by Friends who think very differently from us?

Most importantly: Are we ready for the challenges that God will give us when we are brought together in love and truth? The Holy Spirit is not moving among Friends just so that young adults can have entertaining gatherings. God is preparing us for action. We cannot expect to go to YAF gatherings, Yearly Meeting, or Meeting for Worship and have our lives remain the same. God is calling us out of “business as usual”. Are we willing to have our lives radically changed, both as individuals and as a religious community? God wants to shake us up. If we are faithful to the voice of the Spirit, God will unite us in love and send us out into the world to announce and embody the righteousness and justice of Christ. Unity in the Spirit is just the beginning. We are united so that we may be used for God’s purposes. Are we ready? Are we listening?

## An Open Letter On Friends’ United Meeting Affiliation

By Kody Gabriel Hersh, Miami MM (SEYM)

At our annual sessions in the spring of 2006, my Yearly Meeting, Southeastern, wrestled for the second year in a row with the issue of our membership in Friends United Meeting. The body of about 150 Friends who were gathered there laboured late into the night on our last evening together, struggling for a unity that evaded us. As midnight approached, only a few Friends left to go to bed. Most stayed, yawning but intently focused. We are fierce, we SEYM Friends, and we are passionate. We have a burning thirst for justice, and a deep love and respect for our LGBTQ members. We also have a broad theological spectrum among us as individuals, and an equally deep love and respect for those - mostly Christian-identified Friends who draw support, sustenance, and affirmation from our FUM affiliation.

We finally crafted a minute that was cautiously and wearily approved in the wee hours of the morning. It stated that we would lay down our formal membership in Friends United Meeting for a discernment period of two years. At the end of those two years, if we did not find unity to rejoin, our affiliation would be permanently laid down. That was two years ago, which means that at this April’s annual sessions, we will revisit the issue once again, and presumably make a more or less final decision.

To say that this has been weighing on me doesn’t quite communicate the extent of my preoccupation. I have been worried, frightened, frustrated, and deeply concerned about this issue for the entirety of the past two years. Then, last week, the presiding clerk of FUM’s general board circulated a letter he had received from the superintendents of five large, fairly conservative FUM-affiliated yearly meetings in the United States, referring to “current undercurrents (in FUM) that erode unity and undercut important ministry”, and requesting that the board form an immediate, specific plan for confronting those issues. Since reading that letter, I have all but stopped sleeping.

When I lie awake at night thinking about this unsettling ambiguous letter, about my beloved Yearly Meeting, and about Friends United Meeting as a whole, I often find myself writing letters and scripting conversations in my mind. In these imaginary communications I explain to Southeastern Yearly Meeting, my Quaker family, why I, a transgender, queer, unprogrammed young adult Friend who couldn't talk un-ironically about Jesus until I was almost out of high school, am aching for us to maintain our relationship with Friends United Meeting.

First, let me say that this position is a huge transformation from what I originally felt and thought when our FUM membership became a live issue. As a queer person who has experienced a vocational call to religious service, FUM's personnel policy seemed to me not only wrong in a general, moral sense, but also personally painful. I didn't see much reason to stay in an organization with such a discriminatory policy - particularly since, as far as I could see, we didn't have much of a relationship to begin with. Growing up in SEYM, I was unaware for years that such a thing as programmed Friends or Friends United Meeting existed - despite the fact that they constitute the majority of Quakers in the world today. I was shocked when, probably in my mid-teens, I discovered that my ultra-liberal yearly meeting was actually a member of Friends United Meeting. It didn't make any sense to me, mostly because I was embedded in the "us and them" mentality of a culture - in Quakerism and beyond it - that sees Christianity as a monolithic entity of socially conservative fundamentalism.

The deconstruction of those us/them categories is one of the reasons I long for us to have a fully engaged relationship with Friends United Meeting. As long as we are members of FUM, they (Christians, programmed Friends--whoever) cannot be "the other". If we begin to think of them that way, our illusion will be shattered by the individual relationships that are facilitated by institutional affiliation. I don't mean to say that our cultural and theological differences across branches are superficial. I believe them in most cases to be quite profound. But over the past few years, I have made some wonderful connections with Friends from solely

FUM-affiliated Meetings, and I have seen that they are my spiritual kin. They are people like Terri, the wonderful, warm staff person whom FUM has sent to our annual sessions for the past three years, who has become a beloved part of our community. Or like my friend Cheryl, who is in a committed lesbian partnership and has laboured for years with her FUM-affiliated Yearly Meeting to have them endorse the recording that her monthly meeting has given her as a minister. Or like my friend Betsy, who loves Jesus, preaches like wildfire, and just opened a store in her town dedicated to eco-friendly living. FUM, like Christianity as a whole, is far from being a monolith, but we will never know that if we don't maintain meaningful individual and collective relationships within it.

But wait - we have lots of Christians in our Yearly Meeting! We can learn these lessons from them, right? Which brings me to my next point. I had no idea how theologically diverse my Yearly Meeting was, until we started talking about our relationship to Friends United Meeting. I don't think this is a coincidence. Our discernment process has asked deep questions: Who are we, in SEYM? What do we believe? What language do we, should we use? Is Christianity a part of our identity as Friends, and if not, what is our relationship to a Quaker movement that has seen itself through several centuries as primitive/restorationist Christianity? Simply having these questions posed, and held firmly in our collective consciousness, opened up space for Friends in our Yearly Meeting to speak their most authentic spiritual language. Suddenly we were talking about the Bible, and asking each other about Jesus. I experienced a new depth and richness in our worship as we became more comfortable hearing each other's truth spoken on its own terms. It was struggle that pushed us to be more honest with one another, and I fear that, should we decide to give up on the challenge of authentic relationship with FUM, we will slowly go back to the way things were. Our spiritual language will shrink back to a tight, sterilized collection of inoffensive words.

So, what about the personnel policy? We were advised early on in our discernment process that we should not choose to remain affiliated with FUM in order to change the policy.

To carry such an agenda would only frustrate us, and everyone else in the organization. The personnel policy is not changing anytime soon--not with the level of divisiveness that this issue currently carries in U.S. Yearly Meetings, nor with long-overdue efforts to more fully include African Friends in FUM's governance structures. But I believe that it will change, sooner or later. Sooner, if the Friends serving on the general board are given opportunities for loving, non-confrontational fellowship and service with LGBTQ Friends and their allies; later, if we all leave. Hearts and minds change through relationship, not rhetoric. No one will re-evaluate the personnel policy because we withdraw. They might re-evaluate the personnel policy because we stay, and appoint brave and faithful people to the general board who can be open about their identity as LGBTQ, or allied while focusing their attention and energy on FUM's powerful service work (instead of pushing, or being perceived as pushing, an agenda that detracts from that work). There are already people doing this work of transformation--serving openly on the board or in leadership positions in constituent Yearly Meetings, sometimes without ever mentioning the personnel policy directly.

And the work of FUM is worth being involved in. Having heard from those who are serving as staff and volunteers of its various initiatives, I have come to believe that FUM is doing important, transformative, and faithful work in culturally sensitive ways, and that work needs to continue as long as we are clear that God is leading us to it, and it has relevance for those served. From educational and medical initiatives like Kaimosi Hospital and Ramallah Friends' School, to support for Kenyan Friends' peace initiatives over the past year, the work that I see FUM engaged in is, I believe, part of what Friends are called to in the world. Unlike Friends General Conference, which understands its purpose as service to North American Quakerism, FUM is committed to manifesting Quaker faith through an embodied, outward-focused commitment to a transformed world. The work is powerful and precious.

Finally, I hope you will forgive me if I pull a card (to use a rather un-Quakerly metaphor). It is the card of youth. There is a broad, and

I think growing, movement of Friends who are drawn to, and deeply invested in, cross-branch relationship building. Much of this energy is centred in young adult Quaker communities. My generation - or at least, a large and energized subset of it - is not interested or invested in the kind of isolationism at best, spiritual one-upmanship at worst, that has characterized inter-faith Quaker relationships since we started splitting into factions in the first half of the nineteenth century. We have been holding conferences and gatherings that reach across theological, cultural, and organizational lines. We are also holding a question in our hearts: How is God going to use the Religious Society of Friends, the whole Religious Society of Friends? Is there some vision, some wholeness, to live into? Friends carrying a piece of the original message of the Quaker movement - and a piece of Quakerism's potential for a spiritually vibrant future? I believe that everything we do to create and maintain authentic, deep relationships among the different branches of Friends is a step toward a more vital Quakerism. Because I carry this conviction, I am proud to be from a dually affiliated yearly meeting--and sad and scared that we may cease to be one, and others may follow in our wake. I wouldn't be so invested - or experiencing such anxious insomnia - if I didn't think this is a critical historical moment for Friends. What one Yearly Meeting does for unity or disunity in a single Meeting for worship with attention to business can affect Quakerism for centuries to come - just pick up a Quaker history book and trace the impact of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting annual sessions in 1827, the year of the Hicksite-Orthodox split.

I want to live out the next 60-70 (God willing) years of my life in a Quakerism that is committed to deep seeking, to dialogue, and to relationships that challenge the people who are in them. I want to give that to my children and grandchildren. Long after the personnel policy is a dead issue, the fruit of our commitment to dynamic engagement, fellowship, and spiritual bridge building (or the absence of that commitment) will be manifesting in the quality and vibrancy of religious life in Quakerism. It is to that ultimate goal that I hope we will turn our attention and focused discernment.

*Kody is with Southeastern Yearly Meeting*

## **Reflecting: Relocation and Renewal**

By Maggie Knight, VIMM

In many ways, since I left Victoria to attend university in Montreal, my most meaningful Quaker connection has been through Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC). I went to Montreal Meeting a few times, but because it is located a long walk or an expensive metro ride away, and because attending means giving up several schoolwork hours, I have chosen not to go more frequently. A new Wednesday evening worship sharing group is becoming a regular part of my life, but in some ways I have yet to settle into it. I have stayed in touch with certain members of Victoria Meeting, but it is difficult to maintain the sort of communication Friends are best at, by e-mail. The more frequent e-mails from my CFSC standing committee, Quakers Fostering Justice, and from members of CFSC Nominating Committee, add a component of daily service. This helps me to keep strong a connection that I hope will last long after university.

I became a member of Victoria Meeting the summer before I left for university, a year and a half ago. During my membership process I recognized that my faith is the root of the activism and volunteer work I undertake. Being at a CFSC General Meeting is an incredible thing for a young activist. The expertise and quiet passion of the assembled Friends is often understated. I discover bit by bit the endeavours and experiences those around me have accrued. It makes me wonder when they began the life of an activist. Was it when they were in high school? In university? Through Friends? More impressive is that many have continued their work for decades, compared to my scant half decade. Personal conversations with CFSC members and staff, and the interview with Pashta MaryMoon for the last issue of *The Canadian Friend*, give me hope that I will be able to juggle the commitments of family life with my beliefs in social justice and environmental work.

I appreciate the chance to deepen my experience of Meeting for Worship for Business and to do social justice work through Quaker Process, which in many ways is very different

from the work I do with student groups. I am learning so much about the way Quakers work. The experience helps me to ground and explore my understanding of justice, and how it relates to my opinions, actions, and activism. I am thankful for the care that the rest of the committee shares for each other, and I look forward to seeing them the next time we descend en masse on Friends House in Toronto.

*Maggie Knight is a Young Adult Friend doing a BASc in Environment at McGill University in Montreal. In 2007-08 she served as YF representative to CFSC. She is now in the middle of her first year of a full membership. See photo on page 27.*

## **Reflections on QUNO Summer School**

By Francis Prescott

In July of 2007, I attended a two-week Summer School program hosted by the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in Geneva, Switzerland. I have wanted to write about my QUNO experience for quite some time, but have put it off due to busyness in my own life and a difficulty putting such an intense experience into words. Now I hope this will give the reader an understanding of the QUNO Summer School.

With its offices located in the *Palais de Nations* building – the home of the ill-fated League of Nations – the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) is the second biggest UN mission outside of New York. Most notably, the UNOG is home to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Health Organization, and the International Labor Organization (the latter two loosely affiliated with the UN). Geneva is also home to significant non-UN organizations including the International Red Cross and World Trade Organization.

QUNO was founded in 1945 and represents Quaker concerns at the UN through the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC). QUNO has Offices in Geneva and New York. Its Geneva office employs three full-time representatives, each focusing on a specific area of Quaker concern, namely, disarmament and peace, human rights and refugees, and global economic issues.



QUNO has special status at the UN allowing it to attend meetings, make statements and even suggest agenda items for the UN Economic and Social Council. Aside from its more formal UN functions, QUNO engages in research, provides liaison with NGOs, and facilitates confidential meetings between parties involved in issues of Quaker concern.

The QUNO International Summer School is held every July in Geneva. The program hosts twenty-five youths (under 25) from around the world. It is designed to give young Friends and non-Friends insight into the UN and international organizations. Participants attend various seminars from NGOs, UN agencies, and other international organizations.

Although I had taken some international relations courses as part of my Political Science degree, I knew little about the UN going into QUNO. While many of the UN's complexities still allude me, the Summer School program provided me with a crash course in international governance that was both interesting, and most importantly challenging.

The seminars covered a wide variety of subjects. From fair trade certification, international property rights, to the relocation of refugees, the QUNO program managed to pack numerous subjects into a very small amount of time. Although the schedule was at times overwhelming, the quality of the seminars was high. Many of the seminars touched on issues of significant importance which are not widely known (e.g. statelessness and small-arms management) making them all the more interesting.

However, the best feature of these seminars lay not so much in their content but in the diversity of the presenters themselves. Although we attended talks by UN officials, a majority of the presenters were from outside of the UN (e.g. NGO officials and government officials). The wide variety of organizations meant a wide variety of opinions were represented. Through this diversity of opinion, many of my previously held assumptions were challenged.

To my surprise, my biggest intellectual challenge came from the WTO. I had come into the QUNO program with a naïve view of

WTO viewing it as an 'evil' organization serving corporate interests. Yet, I was surprised with how candidly WTO officials spoke about their own organization. While defending free trade, many WTO officials spoke scathingly of previous WTO rulings (e.g. Generic AIDS drugs). For these officials, the problem lay not in the WTO, but the agendas of its member states. While I did not agree with everything the WTO officials said, their speakers certainly taught me that issues surrounding globalization are much more complicated than I had previously believed. Through this lesson in critical thinking I returned home a much stronger thinker.

While the QUNO Summer School has a remarkable curriculum, its true strength lies in the people who attend it. The majority of participants were from the UK, but there were also participants from the US, Canada, the Netherlands, Yemen, Kenya, Nepal and Bosnia-Herzegovina. While all of the participants were wonderful and enriched the program themselves, this diversity of backgrounds also added to the program's quality. The ideas discussed during seminars took on new meanings when viewed through other people's cultural lenses. The program was also enhanced by the presence of programmed Quakers.

The QUNO program certainly was a formative experience in my intellectual development. I have made lifelong friendships through it and highly recommend it to Canadian Friends and non Friends alike. If you know anyone under twenty-five with an interest in social justice issues, tell them about QUNO. Applications are usually due in March.

*Francis recently graduated from the University of Guelph with a Political Science degree. He is currently working in a group-home for cognitively disabled adults. He has applied to several Masters in Public Administration programs for the fall of 2009, and is in the process of deciding which school to attend. Although his schedule makes it difficult to regularly attend the Guelph Worship Group, Francis cherishes his involvement with Friends through YAF gatherings and Camp NeeKauNis.*

## Young Adult Friends' Conference: Living as Friends, Listening Within

Richmond, Indiana - May 23-26, 2008

Dear Friends Everywhere,

*"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect."* (Romans 12:2 NRSV)

In worship, in small groups, in conversation, we have been transformed. Friends affirmed their love for one another again and again. The act of coming together physically was a first step to enacting loving unity. We are hungry for connection and growth in grace with one another, and the healing of our divisions. We heard sermons and joined voices in song. Friends had opportunities to experience and participate in unfamiliar forms of worship. We felt the support of seasoned Friends who provided pastoral care and the many Friends that held the gathering in prayer.

Formal small groups gathered every day for checking in and more personal discussion of the challenges and joys of the conference. Small informal groups treasured free time where we found the space to address other concerns. These informal discussions created a foundation for the depth at which we arrived in worship. Earlham School of Religion professors, students, and alumni led workshops, while conference participants held interest groups on various topics. On Sunday, participants could choose between programmed (First Friends), semi-programmed (West Richmond) or unprogrammed (Clear Creek) worship in the community.

In Spirit-led worship we found that Friends spoke to the necessity of continuing in conversations about our similarities and differences. Friends were asked before the conference to consider the cultural norms of others present, and whether certain choices may impact our ability to find common ground. We began exploring scripture together in workshops, Bible study and programmed worship. This invited new challenges and opportunities to engage with texts important to the experience of Friends. We were reminded by Mark Walker that living in unity as a Religious Society of Friends will make us more effective in our work in the world. The discernment of corporate and individual leadings is one of the obligations we have to one another as a Society. We hear the need to acknowledge diverse leadings, such as Gospel, traveling, vocal, and eldering ministries. Recording these gifts is one way of making individuals and Meetings accountable to leadings.

Friends heard a call to find ways to share the good news that has been revealed to us at this gathering. We strive to carry this light with us when we return to our home Meetings and churches. We have invited one another to our respective Yearly Gatherings and to explore ways of opening our spiritual homes. May we share with the world the light and love that was a presence at this gathering.

In peace,

The YAF Conference Participants

What is your involvement in Friends World Committee for Consultation,  
Friends United Meeting, and Friends General Conference?

As Canadian Young Friends, we have been asked by Representative Committee to bring to the May Representative Meeting information about our involvement with these organizations.

Contact Jessica Klaassen-Wright who is our YF on Representative Committee, or the editors of the Sporadical, if you would like to share your experiences!

(Interview with Liz Wine continued from page 12)

**RI:** Is there anything else that you would like to share with Canadian Young (Adult) Friends?

**LW:** I've never met a Canadian Young Adult Friend I didn't like! Please feel free to e-mail me with any questions or feedback. I'd love to interact with you and hear about what you are doing!

*Rebecca is a member of Yonge Street Monthly Meeting, a member of the Camp NeeKauNis Committee, and a member of the ad hoc committee looking at CYM's relationship with FUM. She is currently proudly wearing her shirt that reads "Quaker Youth Speak Thy Truth" as she travels through Central America. By September she hopes to be enrolled in the MSc & ID program at the University of Guelph.*

Think Camp NeeKauNis  
Visit [www.neekaunis.org](http://www.neekaunis.org)



Nori Sinclair  
(above)

Maggie Knight  
(left)



## Welcome, Lee – New CFSC Intern!

CFSC is pleased to announce the appointment of Lee Webb as CFSC Intern.

If Lee (age 24) had to name a vocation, it would be facilitation; bringing opposing viewpoints together to achieve mutual goals. Maybe this calling arose out of his years in student government at the University of New Brunswick where he took a Bachelor of Philosophy in Interdisciplinary Leadership Studies. Maybe it came from working in a global community while completing a Masters in Applied Ethics in Norway. Or maybe it came from the sense of community he developed at Coldstream Monthly Meeting. Wherever it came from, Lee has used his experiences, plus a desire for sustainable communities and citizen engagement, to live a life rich in baking, biking, music, and discovery. He would like to learn as much as he can from his time at CFSC, to facilitate a greater involvement of citizens in decision-making processes.

We look forward to formally welcoming Lee to CFSC on May 1. Send Lee a welcome.

e-mail: [intern@cfsc.quaker.ca](mailto:intern@cfsc.quaker.ca)



...Let us not give up meeting  
together, as some are in the habit  
of doing, but let us encourage one  
another...

*The Bible: Hebrews 10:25 (New International Version)*



Contact the Editors:

**Rebecca Ivanoff**

10 Poplar Dr. Richmond Hill, ON L4E 2X6

[rebecca.ivanoff@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.ivanoff@gmail.com)

**Grace and Brigid Egan-Pimblett**

32469 Mitchell Ave. Mission BC V4S 0B2

[Grace.eganp@gmail.com](mailto:Grace.eganp@gmail.com)

[brigid.ep@gmail.com](mailto:brigid.ep@gmail.com)

# COME TO CYM 2009 IN KEMPTVILLE, ONTARIO!

Kemptville is about forty minutes south of Ottawa on Highway 416, an hour north of Kingston, an hour west of Montreal, and four hours from Toronto. It really is the year for Ontario and Quebec Quakers to re-experience having CYM in their back yards!

You could take a week's vacation to attend the full event. Financial assistance is available for Friends if needed. Apply through your Meeting to the CYM Travel Fund. But you need to apply early. June is as late as you should leave it. Children seventeen and under will have their meals paid for when their families are registered overnight. It's a lovely campus with woodsy walks. Check it out at [www.kemptvillec.uoguelph.ca](http://www.kemptvillec.uoguelph.ca).

If you have only a long weekend available to you, we suggest registering for the Silent Retreat, staying for Saturday evening's experience with Quaker Quest, for Sunday's morning Meeting for Worship, and the afternoon sessions about Friends General Conference, and Friends United Meeting. If you can, stay for Sunday evening's 'Experience of the Spirit in My Life' - a wonderful worship-sharing - and leave Monday morning refreshed.

But it would be a shame to miss Keith Helmuth. A Quaker worker in ecology and economics, he will be leading our study every weekday morning. Keith and Ellen operated North Hill Farm near Woodstock, New Brunswick, for almost three decades and were active in community-based enterprises (Farm Market Cooperative, Carleton Pioneer Credit Union). In the 1960's, on the faculty of Friends World College, Keith helped to run its East African program. In 2008 they returned to New Brunswick after ten years in Philadelphia, where he was associated with the Earthcare Working Group of that Yearly Meeting, with Friends Committee on National Legislation, and he helped found the Quaker Institute for the Future (2003). Author of two pamphlets and contributor to the QIF book, "Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy," (Berrett-Koehler 2009) he will help us understand an economic system that could fit Quaker values.

Wednesday is a special day at CYM! The late afternoon is a time for rest and recreation, followed by a special supper before we meet at 7:00 to hear our keynote speaker Helen Bayes. Born in England, migrating to Australia in 1966, Helen brings us an amazing background in the human rights of children, early Quakers, Christian Peacekeeping in the Holy Land, and FWCC Gatherings. Energized by a traveling ministry to every regional Meeting in Australia (with Friend Katherine Purnell) she asks us to consider who among us are being called to prophesy today, how they are supported, and what we are to do with these urges. "We will explore what it really means to live together in a prophetic community."

In preparation for all of this, consider taking your family for a few days the week before CYM for a taste of Camp NeeKauNis! Details for all the above and registration forms for Yearly Meeting August 14 to 22, were in March *Canadian Friend*. They are also available at [www.quaker.ca](http://www.quaker.ca).

*Carol Bradley  
Co-clerk of Program Committee  
Annapolis Valley Monthly Meeting*



*Keith Helmuth  
New Brunswick  
Monthly Meeting*



*Helen Bayes  
2009 Sunderland P. Gardner Lecturer*

## Book Review *by Ginny Walsh*

***Catching Forever***, by Laurel Dee Gugler  
(James Lorimer & Co. Ltd.)

She wears long dresses that cause her to stumble when she tries to play baseball. She feels like the doll that her mother has bought her for Christmas. And she so desperately yearned for a softball mitt! "What do you think of being shut up in this box when there is a whole, big world out there?" she asks of the doll. "Waaah!" is the response she gets and tries to stifle, so Mamma won't know she has been poking in the hiding place.

As a Mennonite who is "different", Rose seems to face unique challenges. However, this book is for all children making choices in the process of growing up. Any child who has feared bullying, rejection, or humiliation; who ponders what is right and wrong, or who yearns to be something that seems beyond his/her reach, will relate to her experiences.

With candor and imagination, Rose engages us in her struggles. Mamma is not the "tell-your-troubles-to sort of mamma". But in the branches of Grandmother Oak, her 'thinking tree', Rose finds comfort and strength. With Aunt Bette, who "doesn't believe in coloring books where you have to color inside the lines", she is free to explore possibilities, like the idea that maybe it is a sin *not* to dance! Other endearing characters, especially brother Daniel who loves all creepy crawly critters, play a part; but ultimately Rose's transformation relies on finding the "spunk" she didn't know she had.

*Catching Forever* is recommended for children ages 6-10. Six year-olds could enjoy the playful dialogue, humor, and suspenseful narrative if the book were read aloud. But the depth of insight and the subtlety of the poetry make it more appropriate for children eight or more, and that includes adults. Anyone would be inspired by Rose, but I think that young Friends especially will relate to this girl who works to find peace and courage to overcome life's conflicts in a loving way. Like Anne of Green Gables, Rose works her way into the readers' hearts, and will have them wanting to read the sequel, *A Piece of Forever*.

*Laurel Dee Gugler, a popular storyteller and author, participates in the spiritual life and work of Toronto MM*

*Ginny Walsh, Toronto Monthly Meeting*

## Book Review *by Carol Leigh Wehking*

***A Piece of Forever*** by Laurel Dee Gugler

How can we invite the children of western society to consider the possibility of looking at conflicts and their solutions in some other terms than war? Such a difficult issue, fraught with so many layers of history, emotion, family values, and societal imperatives. It is difficult to imagine a way to approach the topic in terms accessible to young readers. Thank goodness for Laurel Dee Gugler who has tackled exactly that. In her latest book, *A Piece of Forever*, Laurel draws on her own background to create Rose, a child of the fifties in Kansas, and a Mennonite.

Rose has one friend who is also Mennonite, but she's largely surrounded by schoolmates and teachers who are heavily invested in the aftermath of the recent wars. The issues that arise around school projects and preparations to celebrate Veterans Day (known now in Canada as Remembrance Day) create both internal and external conflicts for young Rose, as she struggles to sort out her own tangled thoughts. Rose wants to be friends with her classmates. Rose does not wish to betray her family and religious values. Rose wants to keep her one Mennonite buddy. Rose loves her younger brother, himself struggling to understand life and death and the customs and attitudes that surround both, and wants to gently offer him the degree of wisdom she has gained. She is surrounded by conflicts and must find a way to reconcile her own conflicting thoughts, as well as find a way to participate in Veterans Day while preserving her integrity.

It is a perilous route to navigate, but Rose, who found her "spunk" in the previous book, *Catching Forever*, manages, not without trouble, to do so. The book is peopled by characters who are interesting and have depth, and who illuminate and enrich the facets of the plot. Both the children and the adults offer various challenges and supports to Rose, as she makes her way through the confusion (and sometimes anguish) to assert herself. Laurel doesn't hold back on the tough questions, and uses the story of Sadako Sasaki and her 1,000 paper cranes to give Rose something to grapple with, and to find insight into the meaning of war to ordinary people. I hope this book will be read widely by children everywhere, as well as studied in schools to open important questions and offer alternative ways of thinking.

*Carole Leigh Wehking, Hamilton Monthly Meeting*

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# Quaker Book Service



***The Messenger That Goes Before*** by Michael Birkel, Pendle Hill Pamphlet #398. 2008, Sub-titled “Reading Margaret Fell for Spiritual Nurture”. Birkel Quotes and explains passages from her 17th century letters. (36pp. \$6.50)

***Sacred Compass*** by J. Brent Bill, Paraclete Press, Brewster, Mass. 2008. “How do you discover God’s will in your life every day?” is a question answered in “The Way of Spiritual Discernment”. (192 pp. \$25.90)

***Universalism and Spirituality*** edited by Patricia A. Williams. Quaker Universalist Reader #3. Quaker Universalist Fellowship, Columbia, Maryland 2007. A valuable source of spiritual wisdom. Six sections by 41 contributors deal with God, spiritual experiences, and spirituality in mysticism and science. (190 pp. \$9.10)

***Quakers in Conflict*** by H. Larry Ingle, Pendle Hill, Wallingford, PA 1998. A detailed historical study of the Hicksite Revolution in the early 19th century in America. (310 pp. \$13.00)

***Minding the Future*** by Christine A.M. Davis, Quaker Books, London, 2008. (She gave the Sunderland P. Gardner lecture at Canadian Yearly meeting in 2007) In this 2008 Swathmore Lecture Christine Davis draws on her experiences in Quaker, public, and economic activities in defining effective stewardship. (98 pp. \$15.00)

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**Ask Margaret Fell Q:** I’ve been called to jury duty. May I beg off on the grounds of being a Quaker? If it is my duty to serve, how do I deal with the legal requests to swear oaths? Law Fox.

**A:** Indeed, we all have a duty to support the laws of our country. But when Law and Faith collide the Friends of Truth have never hesitated to go against the Law. Thou canst refuse the oaths on grounds of conscience. There is only one standard of truth, both on the street and in court. Thou couldst quote Tommy in Miracle on 34th Street and say, “Gee Judge, everybody knows thou mustn’t lie, especially in court!” The court will ask thee to “affirm” which is a weasely way of asserting truthfulness without swearing. If thou refuest to affirm, thou’ll probably be dismissed from jury duty. Hurrah!

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