

July-August 2004

# The Canadian Friend

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## *In This Issue:*

- Diversity: Is there enough evidence to convict Quakers? •
- Dans quelle langue respirait ta grand-mère? • Two Yearly Meetings? •
- Walking in the Light • Turmoil in the house of Abraham •

# The Canadian Friend

July-August, 2004  
Volume 100, Number 3

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*The Canadian Friend* can be viewed online at: <<http://www.quaker.ca/cfriend/cfriend.html>>.

Dear Friends,

My prayer for this issue is best expressed by the Friends World Committee for Consultation's goal, "*Understanding of diversities while we discover our common spiritual ground.*"

The common spiritual ground of Quakers is largely based in the writing of Friends and others — especially George Fox's journal and epistles, which were often used to help early Friends build the blessed community, from their diverse backgrounds.

In this issue, Clive Doucet's article begins, "God must love diversity, for everywhere you see it." While we see diversity everywhere, we humans do not often love it, as he points out. Too often, when we notice diversity, we see only '*other*' rather than a reflection of the various aspects of ourselves.

Muriel Morrison wrote in *You Are My Darling Zita*, "And I understood more about seeing myself in others, too. The woman who, let's say, talks on incessantly, who would once have annoyed me, I now see that bit of me in her. Now I would stop and think, 'Aha! I am looking at myself.' And here is the important thing — take her and love her. She is to be accepted, she is to be embraced, she is not to be cast aside. She is part of you, and without her you are not whole. The ... shadows we see in other people are our own ... shadows."

Though questions of racism and classism have often been considered in our community, we still suffer from the limitations of being a very homogeneous group — being mostly white, middle-class, well-educated and having English as our first language. Many Friends in this issue challenge us and gift us with new hope for moving forward. Lynne Phillips offers us a view of "the real questions that circle in my head like an uneasy dog trying to settle in a comfy nest when fleas are the real problem." Sarah Chandler shares insights gained in a recent retreat with "Friends and Native Americans." Miriam Maxcy alerts us to how our choice of words may be unfairly judgmental as she presents us with a teaching about love from children in Laos, whom we may have considered disadvantaged and poor. Jack Ross reflects on some research that noticed, among other things, "the remarkably high"

level of education in the Friends he interviewed. These viewpoints, and that of others in these pages, may help us move forward if we do wish to bless ourselves with the riches and challenges of increased diversity.

Many of the greatest challenges we face in our entire lifetime are in our family relationships. This has certainly been true for me, especially in my relationships with my mother (whose photo is on page seven, by the way). It took my Mum and me almost our whole lives together before we were able to "dwell in unity, love and peace."

Soon, Canadian Friends will gather as a spiritual family. Relationships there are also often difficult, especially when we wrestle with controversial questions and seek unity from diverse positions.

Clive Doucet's article ends by saying that it is up to people to make sure diversity plays a creative role, rather than a destructive one, and that this is done "through politics and inclusive services as much as respectful thoughts." His phrase often comes to mind as I prepare this issue, in the midst of Canadian elections, and the stresses of the world around us, as well as within our own Society. I pray that we will increasingly find the way to hear each other heart to heart, rather than from the fears and presumptions that lead when we are head to head. Let us feel the Spirit in the words of George Fox's Epistle 132, 1656: "... take heed of presumption, lest ye go from the living God; but in the spirit dwell ... And this brings you to see and read one another, as epistles written in one another's hearts, where in unity, love and peace ye will come to dwell."

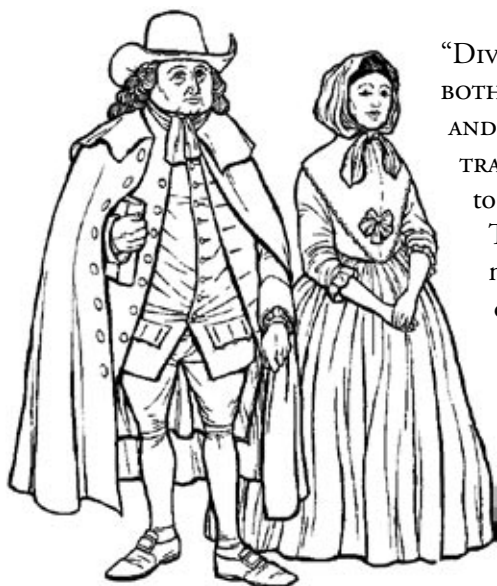
If you will not be attending the CYM gathering, please hold our beloved Yearly Meeting in prayer, especially from August 12 through 21, as we seek to read the epistles of one another's hearts.

In what language did the hearts of our grandmothers breathe? In what language does our heart breathe? Let us pray for it to be in the raw and powerful language of love for ... "Love gathereth into love." — George Fox, Epistle 384, 1683

In the Spirit of Friendship,  
June Etta Chenard

# Diversity: Is there enough evidence to convict Quakers?

By Lynne Philipps



“DIVERSE” IMPLIES BOTH DISTINCTNESS AND MARKED CONTRAST, according to my dictionary. This brings to mind the old quip, “If you were accused of being a Quaker, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” What constitutes

evidence: What we do

on Sunday mornings? Whether we show up at human rights demonstrations? Our clothes, books, cars, and houses? Where we go on holidays? What degrees we have or do not have? How we earn money? How we spend leisure time and surplus money?

How DO we distinguish ourselves as Quakers? I was boarding a plane recently behind a man with a shaved head, brown skin, and wrapped in a maroon garment that resembled a sari. I deduced that he was probably a Tibetan monk. I doubt that anyone gave me a second glance, wondering if I were a Quaker. Like most Quakers, I could board any plane without exciting the suspicions of airport security personnel.

Quakers were once distinguished by their dress, a fact we are reminded of when we shop for cereal and see the silly trademark on oatmeal boxes. So, if not in dress, are there any ways in which Quakers appear to be distinct in Canadian society? Do we behave in marked contrast to other Canadians? I know that Quakers and Canadians dislike preaching. So I will be up front. If I were on reality TV, the world would know that I have an income, drive a car, wear conventional clothes, take holidays, fly occasionally in airplanes, live in a house which is bigger than I need – in short, live with a footprint which is as heavy as

the atheists’ next door. I am not preaching. I am soul searching and I invite you to join me.

OK, so we have the testimonies and the queries to guide us in making choices. SIMPLICITY: anyone with a Dell computer, a Subaru, a house with more bedrooms than people, who flies in airplanes (even though I am flying to Quaker meetings!) cannot pass that test. PEACE: is it enough to make speeches at peace rallies, to walk in demonstrations, to write letters to the newspapers and government, to give money to CFSC and other peace organizations, to approve minutes at Quaker meetings calling for non-violent resolution to conflicts? TRUTH: I am on firmer ground. I only lie in stories but I get to call it “fiction”. Alright, so I told my friend she looked fine when she anxiously wondered if her newly coloured hair was too obvious (it was).

And so on. Do we seek to change the world by revolution or evolution? Is it enough to say “welcome” when a person of colour ventures into our meeting house for the first time, or should we be locating our meetings in their neighbourhoods? Should Canadian Quakers affirm simplicity by not flying – not to Quaker events, not for holidays, not even to visit our beloved? Should we be prepared to shorten our work week in order to have more time and energy to volunteer for service in our meetings? Should we refuse transfers and promotions, and forgo the prestige and money in order to stay near our meeting?

Friends, I meant to write something quite different when I sat down at my keyboard. Something more intellectual, more abstract, more theological. To my surprise and chagrin, what came pouring out of my fingertips were the real questions that circle in my head like an uneasy dog trying to settle in a comfy nest when fleas are the real problem. Are they your questions, too? I am a Quaker. Is there enough evidence to prove that I am an example of diversity, both in our society and in the Religious Society of Friends? How about you? ↻

*Lynne Philipps is a member of South Kootenay Worship Group of Argenta Monthly Meeting.*

*"If we could only hear each others' prayers,  
it would relieve God of a great burden" <sup>1</sup>*

RECENTLY, I ATTENDED AN AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE GATHERING of "Friends and Native Americans<sup>2</sup>" at the Friends' Meeting House in Boulder, Colorado.

We began each day of the gathering with worship sharing. The first morning we held in the Light the topic of 'religious values', after which we watched "In the Light of Reverence"<sup>3</sup>, a film that documents the struggle of three indigenous nations — Lakota, Hopi and Wintu — to protect their sacred sites. The second day, the proposed topic had been 'making it right'. However, the sense of the meeting was, as proposed by Inez Talamantez<sup>4</sup>, that we should reflect further on 'respecting Indigenous spirituality'. On the third day, the focus of our worship was 'interconnectedness'. I was greatly moved by a prayer from the Siddur<sup>5</sup> shared with us by David Segal<sup>6</sup>.

During our time together, we heard of repeated instances of the desecration of sacred places by diverse activities, from resource exploitation to recreation. Perhaps one of the most extreme is the use of 33 million gallons of ancient aquifer water per day to slurry coal from the sacred Black Mesa in Arizona to a coal fired thermal generating plant 200 miles away, while Navajo and Hopi water holes go dry and the sacred mesa is eaten away by open pit mining.

While it is a U.S. federal crime to climb Mount Rushmore (a monument to past American presidents), the Devil's Tower on the Wyoming/South Dakota border (which is sacred to the Lakota) is officially open to climbers, even while sacred ceremonies are being conducted there.

Telescopes from many nations are situated on Hawaii's sacred mountain, while native Hawaiians have to seek special permission to visit their sacred site.

During our meetings for worship, we were reminded that Indigenous Peoples' spirituality is rooted in the land. Chris Peters<sup>7</sup>, Pohlik-lah-Karuk, told us that the moral and ethical foundation of Indigenous societies rests with continuous, ongoing revelations. Sacred places are sacred to all of life. Their destruction, it is believed, has an impact on all of life, all over the world.

Gerald One Feather, Lakota, reminded us that the Sun Dance will be held in Lakota Territory this July. He spoke of the importance of listening to the environment, to the group and to the spirits. According

**We were reminded that  
when a language is lost,  
also lost are prayers,  
teachings and even thoughts.**

to Gerald, a spirit will speak only once, so it is important to be attentive, always fully present. He said there are

different levels of listening — the deeper you go, the more wisdom you get. Each level requires different skills.

Henrietta Mann<sup>8</sup> told us that, for the Cheyenne people, Bear Butte in South Dakota is the spiritual centre of the universe. In spite of disruption and oppression, the Cheyenne people continue to have strong prayer lives. They continue to perform their sacred ceremonies. According to 'Henri', one's spiritual journey is woven into one's life. The greatest assets for Cheyenne survival have been their loving connection to the land they call "Mother" and their strong spiritual rootedness. We were reminded of our relationship to earth, air, fire and water. Especially water: babies are 90% water, adults are 75% water, and elders are 65% water; by this we are related to water everywhere.

We were reminded that when a language is lost, also lost are prayers, teachings

# The Web of Faith Has Many Weavers by Sarah Chandler

and even thoughts. We heard the concern of many that ceremonies misunderstood and improperly performed could do serious damage, hence a deep concern about persons from other cultures performing or even participating in sacred ceremonies for which they have not been properly trained. In some societies, the only ceremonies one knows anything about are the ones that

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**...it is the total of all of us  
doing this [praying],  
with respect, with good hearts  
and clear minds, that helps to preserve  
the little balance we have left  
in the woven fabric of creation.**


---

one has been trained to do. Others are held in secret by those whose responsibility it is to conduct them. It is believed that only through the maintenance and proper performance of ceremony will the world remain in balance.

Although the Gathering was sponsored by Friends, participants came from many and varied faith backgrounds. I found myself deeply moved by the Jewish prayer, resonating strongly to the importance of spiritual rootedness in the land; stirred by the drumming and movement of Aztec dancers, and by Hawaiian chant. Lifting my eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my... I felt devastated by the large house that had obstructed the formerly panoramic view of the mountains from the meeting room windows, further devastated by the sight of more unnecessarily large houses being built on the foothills themselves, my childhood spiritual refuge.... What I felt was an infinitesimal fraction of the devastation felt by Indigenous peoples at the continuing des-

ecration of the Sacred in their belief systems.

The Gathering has left me with a sense that, however we pray, whatever our ceremonies, whatever our way of upholding the sacred, it is the total of all of us doing this, with respect, with good hearts and clear minds, that helps to preserve the little balance we have left in the woven fabric of creation. It is the absence of mindful prayer that allows the desecration of the Sacred to continue.

The Gathering of Friends and Native Americans in Boulder this spring offered those present a small window through which we can begin to hear one another's prayers. My prayer is that we will listen. ... 

#### ENDNOTES AND REFERENCES:

<sup>1</sup> While traveling in New Zealand last winter, I found a greeting card (credit: Gerar Toye, <<http://www.globalgypsy.com>>) that resonated strongly with me. The front shows a photograph of a young Hindu woman praying at a temple in Singapore. The caption to the photograph reads, "If only we could hear one another's prayers, we would relieve God of a great burden".

<sup>2</sup> Gathering of Friends and Native Americans: Outreach to Create New Partnerships, sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee, gathered in Boulder, Colorado of individuals present from many faiths for four days in April, 2004, to enter into a conversation about issues of concern to Indigenous Peoples

<sup>3</sup> Produced by Christopher McLeod and narrated by Peter Coyote and Tantoo Cardinal

<sup>4</sup> Professor of Native American Religion, University of California, Santa Barbara

<sup>5</sup> Book of Prayers, Judaism

<sup>6</sup> Legislative Assistant for the Religious Action Centre of Reform Judaism, Washington, DC

<sup>7</sup> Executive Director of the Seventh Generation Fund, Arcata, California

<sup>8</sup> University of Montana, elder with the American Indian Science and Engineering Society

*Sarah Chandler is a member of Vernon Monthly Meeting.*

#### QUAKER ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS: "ABORIGINAL RIGHTS, PEACE AND JUSTICE" EDUCATION AND RESOURCE KIT

As an Aboriginal person, I feel it every time I walk into a crowded room. I am less Noah Augustine than I am a Mi'kmaq Indian. As a minority person, I am always fully aware of my minority status. I can see its reflection in the eyes of the majority.

— Noah C. Augustine, "Aboriginal Voices, Quaker Voices", page 9

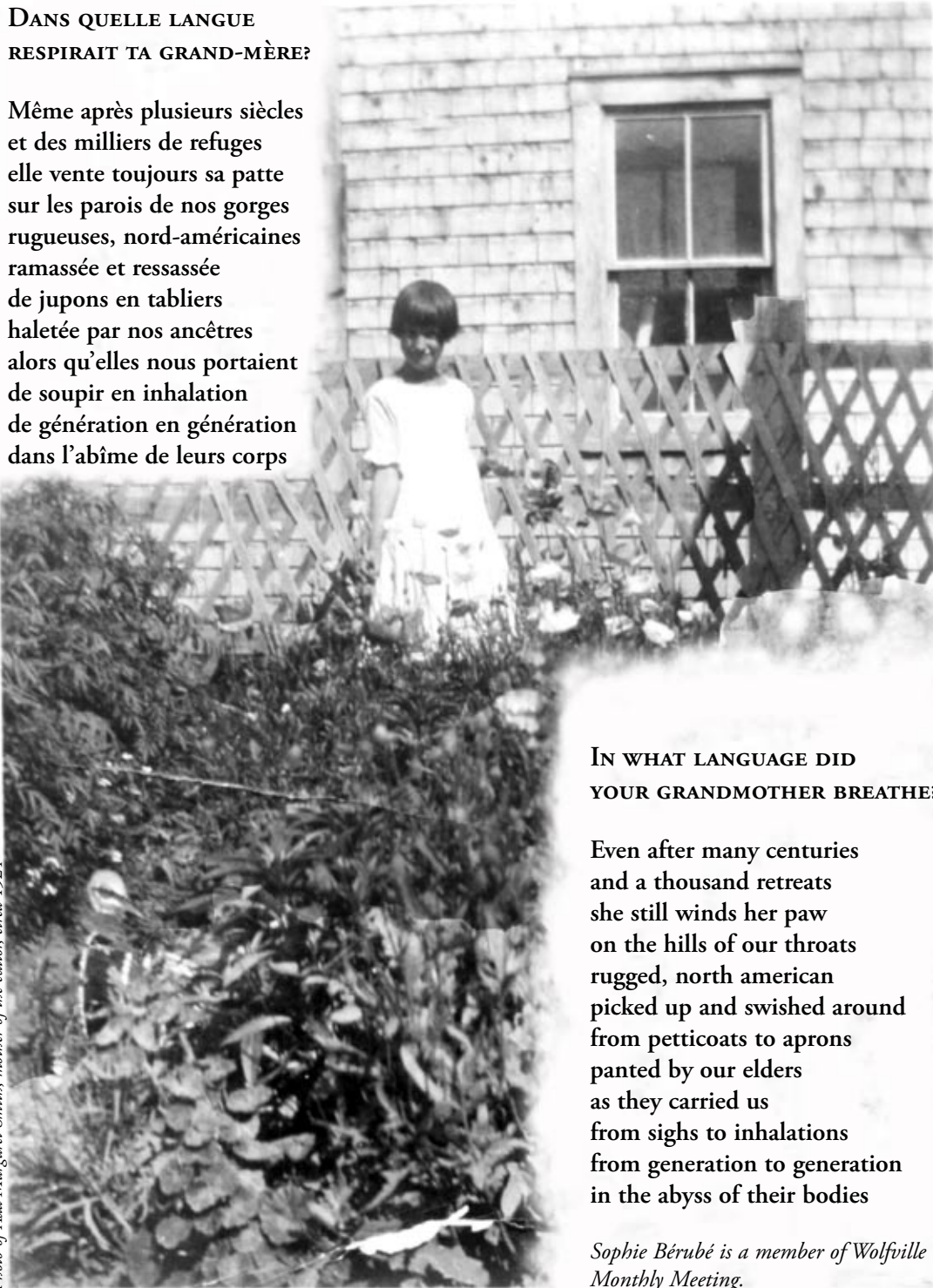
# Dans quelle langue respirait ta grand-mère?

By Sophie Bérubé

DANS QUELLE LANGUE  
RESPIRAIT TA GRAND-MÈRE?

Même après plusieurs siècles  
et des milliers de refuges  
elle vente toujours sa patte  
sur les parois de nos gorges  
rugueuses, nord-américaines  
ramassée et ressassée  
de jupons en tabliers  
haletée par nos ancêtres  
alors qu'elles nous portaient  
de soupir en inhalation  
de génération en génération  
dans l'abîme de leurs corps

*Photo of Ada Margaret Smith, mother of the editor, circa 1924*



IN WHAT LANGUAGE DID  
YOUR GRANDMOTHER BREATHE?

Even after many centuries  
and a thousand retreats  
she still winds her paw  
on the hills of our throats  
rugged, north american  
picked up and swished around  
from petticoats to aprons  
panted by our elders  
as they carried us  
from sighs to inhalations  
from generation to generation  
in the abyss of their bodies

*Sophie Bérubé is a member of Wolfville  
Monthly Meeting.*

# Tiger

## By Clive Doucet

*Tiger! Tiger! Burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry!*

— William Blake (1757-1827)

**G**OD MUST LOVE DIVERSITY FOR EVERYWHERE YOU SEE IT. How many kinds of cats are there? Tiger, lions, snow leopards, black panthers, African wildcats, Canadian lynx and yet they are all cats, they share much. That is the confusion the creator has sown, the creative force clearly loves diversity, but at the same time, every creature, every structure from galaxies to single cells are more alike than they are different.

It is as if the pulse of the universe is not that different from the pulse of the human heart constantly beating out an expansion followed by the beat of contraction, all that differs is the scale and the time line. One is eternal, the other a fragile moment.

For anyone who bothers to think about it, the differences between us human beings, the colour of our hair, our skin, our various sizes, are so trivial that only another human being would bother to notice it. The trouble is, we do. The very first thing that people notice about someone is the colour of their skin. It comes before gender or profession or force of character.

Quakers often profess because such details don't matter to God, then it shouldn't matter to people — there is that of God in all of us. I hold to this also, but it's amazing how many Quakers think and act as if all the harmonious life needs is God's perspective. It doesn't work that way.

Part of my childhood was spent in St. John's, Newfoundland. At that time, it wasn't colour or language. We all looked and sounded pretty much the

same. It was religion. If you were Catholic, you went to one school, one hospital, played on one hockey team, went to one church and, if you were Protestant, another.

There was a line through the community that was invisible to God, but Newfoundlanders sure knew it was there. It was the Catholic-Protestant line. I've spent a life-time seeing how easily diversity or differences, religion, colour, wealth, history can create richness but also very dangerous fissures between human beings. And God, as far as I know, can't overcome these fissures, at least not in the short term. Only people can.

**the creative force  
clearly loves diversity,  
but at the same time,  
every creature,  
every structure  
from galaxies  
to single cells  
are more alike than  
they are different.**

They can by building neighbourhoods, cities and nations that are inclusive. Inclusive places allow for all people to participate in society. It doesn't isolate people. Isolation is an automatic result of differences, because differences always separate people. The greater the differences, the greater the isolation. We don't get to draw on the richness that diversity can bring unless we create environments that are inclusive, that bring people together. This means

investing in public schools and recreation possibilities open to all, regardless of wealth. It means public transit that is accessible and useful for the old, the young and the poor because at the end of the day, public transit that works is about a lot more than just moving people. It's about social justice, sustainability, inclusive cities; just as libraries are about more than reading; hospitals about more than health; parks about more than play.

God loves diversity but it is up to people to make sure that it plays a creative role in our cities and not a destructive one, and you do that through politics and inclusive services as much as respectful thoughts. 🐅

*Clive Doucet, a poet and city councillor in Ottawa, is a member of Ottawa Monthly Meeting.*



# Walking in the Light

## By Miriam Maxcy

*Happiness is the walk  
Walk for yourself  
and you walk for everyone.*

– Thich Nhat Hanh

I WALKED INTO MY HUMBLE KITCHEN YESTERDAY. The windows were open and the sun was shining directly on my Lao mother, Meh. She was sitting on a short stool over a rattan table chopping vegetables into a massive bowl. I quickly sat down to help her. Meh spent most of the rest of the day in the kitchen infusing our feast with her generous love. While Meh was in the kitchen Pa was scurrying about the house, cleaning, sweeping and rearranging furniture, always with a smile on his face. My Lao sister, Pao, was on a secret mission she wouldn't tell me about, and my brothers, N and Neh were assisting where they were needed. When all the preparations were done, the house looked immaculate and we sat and enjoyed it as we awaited the guests who trickled in throughout the evening.

We ate and sang Lao songs, laughed and loved one another. The celebration of which there was so much love and care put into was for my birthday. I am thankful that there were friends present to witness the love that flowed through the house, that always does. I am constantly trying to convey to those around me how exceptionally and generously loving my Lao family is, but words do not carry the grace

in which they walk this earth.

My Lao family is among the number of teachers I am blessed to have in my life always but especially this year. As I reflect on the past months, the lesson that becomes so clear to me is the lesson of the transformative power of love. I have been taught this lesson all of my life through my own survival of poverty and violence; the survival was birthed in the love that was constantly fed to me through the hands of others, which I believe, were also the hands of God.

Upon arrival in Laos I was met with challenges that caught me completely off-guard. Those challenges were not rooted in Lao culture but within Christian culture. Those initial challenges were suffocating and at one point I didn't think I would find a place of community, where I would fit or where others would allow me to fit. Gradually, though, as I settled into Lao culture, with my Lao family, and in my workplaces, and began dialoguing internally and externally, I was able to breathe and breath deeply. More than that though, I was able to love more freely, despite the theological differences; this, in turn, gave

me the fuel to do my work from a place of love. There is something very absent in my life if I cannot come from a place of love in my witness and work. Through the love I receive daily I am able to love, and the work becomes so much more powerful in that essence.

I have witnessed the transformative power of love many times. Just last week I was participating in a story-telling workshop and some energetic boys were causing a ruckus. Someone went over to silence them very sternly and they continued to disrupt the workshop. Moments later, two women walked up to them, started joking with them, appreciating their playfulness but gently and lovingly asked them to be respectful and pay attention.

**I leave you with the image  
the children hold of peace,  
which I am certain comes from  
a place of love, of being loved:  
women harvesting, nurturing  
and balancing the world  
on their slight shoulders.**

The boys quickly settled down. This is a simple situation I am sure we all have experienced in our lives: rowdy kids and the immediate impulse to silence them. Yet that rowdiness, that rebel energy holds

*(continued on page 26)*

(WALKING IN THE LIGHT, *continued from page 9*)

so much power and creativity if we could only harness it. They are starving to be loved and empowered, and their energy is just waiting to be channeled and transformed into leadership.

I am reminded of a class I taught a couple of months ago. I was approached by one of my bosses and was introduced to a woman who is working for the Nobel Peace Prize Committee. She is traversing Asia in search of eight women who are working for peace. This inspired an English class with “Women Peacemakers” as the theme. I facilitated a discussion in my grade five, four and three classes about peace — asking questions about what peace is, what it means to be peaceful, what does it mean to work for peace? We then did a little meditation and yoga. At this point I asked the students to work in silence and draw a picture of a woman in their lives who they think works for peace. This was the most quietly I have ever seen these children work. Out of the silence came beautiful, colourful images of woman working for peace.

For these Lao children who live in the very pit of economic poverty their sense of peace was beyond moving. The images were mostly of their mothers, grandmothers and sometimes of their teachers doing the work they do every day: harvesting rice, cooking over a fire, balancing heavy loads on their shoulders.

As I write images keep flooding my mind; there are so many more stories to tell, birthed in this land that many judge as poor.

Living here I have been questioning my understanding of *poverty* and *development*. These judging words hold so much power over countries like Laos; in this, they are unjust words, judging words. I do not know what is best for Laos; Lao people know what is best for Laos, and it is for them to determine. So I leave you with the image the children hold of peace, which I am certain comes from a place of love, of being loved: women harvesting, nurturing and balancing the world on their slight shoulders. ❧

*Miriam Maxcy is a Young Adult Friend of Vancouver Monthly Meeting.*



## Canadian Yearly Meeting National Listeners



( PLEASE NOTE UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION. )

Canadian Yearly Meeting National Listeners, guided by Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel, are available to listen to any Canadian Friend disclose harm done on matters of sexual harassment or abuse, or any other topic a Friend may need to discuss.

If you need a listener, the first step is to approach a trusted Friend within your Monthly Meeting (MM), or to go to your MM Ministry and Counsel. If this path is not comfortable, you may approach a National Listener. Listeners seek to be present from a place of spirit-centred openness – to hold the caller and the situation in the Light, and to listen with tenderness. Though we are not therapists, we do know the healing that comes from simply being heard. We offer you a safe and confidential space in which to speak. One call might be all you need. If not, we have the task of discerning with you what a next step could be: whether a committee of care, of clearness, or of oversight might be appropriate; or how to find other possible resources.

All four National Listeners have experience in listening to issues around sexual abuse, as well as other concerns. Here is who we are and how to contact us:

- Alan Patola-Moosmann – Telephone: (604) 736-8596 (Alan has no e-mail at this time.)
- Dorothy Janes – Telephone: (416) 929-8812; E-mail: dorothyj@idirect.com
- Jay Cowsill – Telephone (306) 652-2407; E-mail: jmc590@mail.usask.ca
- Rose Marie Cipryk – Telephone: (905) 684-9924; E-mail: rmcipryk@cogeco.ca

Whenever possible, please contact us first to arrange a mutually convenient time to speak later.



# That of God in Every Byte?

By Gabriel  
Gosselin

THE INTERNET, 'NET' OR 'WEB' TO CLOSE FRIENDS, is a collection of digital information which makes the sharing of information rapid and widespread. Anyone can have a website to post an online journal, pictures, articles, anything. Many Quaker organisations have websites with vast quantities of information. While this information is certainly useful to someone, the question is who? Are they the same people who would read the information offline anyway? Of course we want to support these people and we might look to expand the audience at the same time.

Quakers believe that appreciating and cultivating simplicity as a way of life brings us more in touch with God, the spirit, whatever name we choose to give to the unexplainable that binds us all together. The web by contrast, is not simple. Ask my mother who often has computer questions for me. It's not.

Similarly, art is not always

simple. I have heard a good friend describe many steps involved in creating her artwork. Quakers value and nurture art and artists. Creativity in all forms can be simple or complex, but give the most to the audience when it is cared for. We nurture each other, artist and audience alike, through the creative process. Artists send a message to inspire or challenge the community, and the community supports the artist. The posters and written material we distribute are carefully considered in order to have the most impact and to best convey the desired message.

In order to continue supporting Quakerism, many meetings and organisations have decided to create websites, despite the complex underlying technology. After all, we can still make a simple website and remain true to the idea of simplicity. Right?

This is where I step in. I'm young, idealistic, and am still not clear on what role simplicity (or Quakerism, for that matter) plays in my life. I do, however, know (some) web design and computer stuff, in general. When I see a website with the bare minimum of styling, I see a blank canvas aching for some creative expression. In many places you will find all kinds of letter-sized posters stuck to utility poles. Only the more creative usually draw attention. This is the same idea in my mind.

I recently received a copy of *Quaker Faith & Practice* (thanks, Mom) which, not surprisingly, is quite simple. Whoever was responsible for the final presentation of the book, however, chose a less common typeface (Sabon, for those interested) making every page stand

out. Typefaces, are difficult to control on the internet, but other simple changes can have the same enhancing effect. Even without the download-requiring, latest-browser-feature-enabled kind of presentation, web pages can be creative. One could say they are the quilts of my generation. A patch work of information artfully assembled, with some skill and patience, to create a beautiful and valuable finished product.

In that light, I advise all meetings, regardless of size, to take some time to think about how you want your website to represent you. Chances are that you could find someone in your community who is a gifted artist who can give some thought to the overall look of a page, and then find someone who can take that look and make it happen on the web. The key here is to remain simple, yet elegant and eye catching and be willing to compromise — because different browsers can do very strange things to your beautiful pages.

The internet can be more than the information it contains. If we look at it as a canvas rather than complicated digital information, can we give ourselves permission to get creative? ➤

*Gabriel Gosselin is a Young Friend of Pelham Executive Meeting. He is willing to work on initial set-up or re-design of a*

*few sites free of charge. Please contact him at: <gabriel@offcentre.ca> for details.*



# Turmoil in the House of Abraham

By Laurel Dee Gugler



**I**N FEBRUARY, AS PART OF A CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAM (CPT) delegation to Hebron in the West Bank, I became acutely aware of the enormity of turmoil in the house of Abraham. The huge imbalance of power and profoundly disturbing evidence of the occupation were seen and heard in stories of Arab villages bulldozed, homes demolished, checkpoint indignities, land confiscation, water sources cut off, and economy choked by curfews. And, of course, the wall, which is well into Palestinian territory and, in many cases separates residents from their lands and their jobs.

Though Muslims and Jews are “blood brothers,” sharing the same father, Abraham, turmoil reigns in this very troubled Mid-Eastern family. However, as the above information is already known to the readership of *The Canadian Friend*, I offer the following examples of hope and of bridge-building among some Palestinians and Israeli Jews who do understand themselves to be blood brothers and sisters.

A Palestinian Muslim, said, “In the global family, all wars are civil wars.” He and an Israeli Jew, have come together to form a support group of bereaved families, all of whom have lost family members in the conflict. A suicide bomber killed the Israeli’s 14-year old daughter. Israeli soldiers killed the Palestinian’s brothers. In their pain these two men came together to support others and work toward peace. In area schools, they give lectures on peace-building and non-violence. They have also organized blood banks in which Palestinians donate blood for Israeli wounded, and Israelis do the same for Palestinians, indeed becoming blood brothers and sisters.

Father Elias Chacour, a Palestinian Christian and author of *Blood Brothers*, administers a school in which he brings together students and teachers — including Christians, Druze, Muslims, and Jews, though he is

regretful that the percentage of Jews is still small. Speaking to the commonality of all peoples, Father Chacour said, “I was not born first a Palestinian. I was not born first a Christian. I was not born first an Arab. I was born, first, simply a child, a tiny, vulnerable child in the image and likeness of God.”

A small (barely over five feet) but definitely mighty Palestinian Muslim woman advises us to treat all with respect and an appeal to simple logic, as demonstrated in the following interaction with an Israeli soldier.

When regular schools were closed because of curfew, she started an alternative morning school. The soldiers challenged her, saying “Go home. Don’t you know school is closed?” She said, “I could go home, but what about the children?” One of them said, “They can go home too.” She responded, “If you don’t allow school, they may learn to hate

you, so it’s better to have school.” He conceded. Since then he greets her in a friendly manner. “Hello teacher. Good luck!”

One more story demonstrating a powerful use of non-violent action: This occurred in 1999, but has become part of CPT history and storytelling. Hebron was under curfew. One Friday, the Muslims wished to go to Ibrahimi Mosque for prayers. They knew they might be stopped by soldiers, so asked CPT to be there as witnesses and for support. They decided that if they were not let in, they would pray on the streets. As they approached the border between Palestinian-controlled and Israeli-controlled sections, soldiers lifted their guns to shoot. CPTers raised their hands and shouted, “Don’t shoot. We come in peace, to pray. At this point, out came prayer rugs! Out came improvised “prayer rugs” — pieces of cardboard, spontaneously provided by surrounding market stall owners. And one and all, the group knelt to pray. The soldiers became confused.

**I was born, first,  
simply a child,  
a tiny, vulnerable child  
in the image and  
likeness of God.**

Violence was dissipated.

Many organizations are working in bridge-building ways. A women's group, *Bat Shalom*, whose Hebrew name means Daughters of Peace, encourages dialogue, especially between Israeli and Palestinian women. *Rabbi for Human Rights* monitors human rights issues for all regardless of cultural background. *ICAHD (Israeli Coalition Against Home Demolition)* has a self-explanatory name. *Library on Wheels for Nonviolence and Peace* provides children's educational, peace building mate-

rials in areas that have no access to public libraries. We met with many other organizations, including, of course, Quakers/Canadian Friends Service Committee, represented by Paul Pierce and Kathy Kamphoefner, a husband and wife team. Kathy spoke of suicide bombers and how such an approach, though obviously embraced by a few Palestinians, is generally so very much not in the nature of Palestinians, whom she described as non-violent and warm by nature. ☞

*Laurel Dee Gugler is an attendee of Toronto Monthly Meeting.*

## Seeking, Leaving and Finding by Harrison and Marilyn Roper

**D**URING THE VIETNAM WAR, we became deeply troubled about the contradiction of "praying for peace and paying for war." So we began to refuse to pay one-third of our federal income tax, accompanied by a letter of explanation to the IRS that we could not in good conscience pay the portion of our taxes that financed war and preparations for war. Finally, the IRS attached Harry's salary at West Chester University for the amount owed plus penalties and interest. Time to get out. With the graduation of both of our sons from high school and Ronald Reagan about to be elected on a platform of increasing the military budget, we decided to leave the comfortable Quaker cocoon around Haverford Monthly Meeting in Pennsylvania and move to a less expensive part of the country — northern Maine. Although we expected that we were leaving all behind, we actually found so much more. Thanks to Louis Green, a former astronomy professor at Haverford College (Harry's

alma mater), we were introduced to the financial world of municipal bonds, the interest from which is not taxable by the federal government in the U.S.. Sale of our home in the Philadelphia suburbs and purchase of a very inexpensive home in Houlton, Maine (three miles from the Canadian border) left a remainder of funds, which we invested in life-enhancing enterprises such as better sewers and schools. By quitting our jobs and becoming perennial volunteers, we could now legally avoid paying for war and preparations for war. Any surplus funds could become part of the Roper foreign and domestic giving program, in lieu of taxes. We slept better at night while still remaining active in the peace movement.

Free to live a simple life, the rewards of volunteering at the local hospital, day care centers and other useful places soon proved the old adage that volunteers usually get more out of the doing than those served. Harry also had more time to compose music, conduct

a regional chamber orchestra, and provide free music lessons in addition to firewood duties and operating our home's solar electricity system. We transferred our membership in 1982 from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to the newly formed New Brunswick Monthly Meeting, CYM, which has enriched our lives. And we are blessed that all our children and grandchildren live only two hours away by car, in Bangor.

Veterans of the civil rights movement in the U.S., we were uneducated in the deep concerns and wise ways of many Aboriginal people. Through the wisdom of Quakers on Canadian Friends Service Committee, like Phyllis Fischer and Betty Peterson, we have learned much. The most profound teachings have come through the unvarnished understandings gently conveyed by Aboriginal friends, especially Alma Brooks, and gkisedtanamoogk and his family. We are continuing learners of their ecological attunement and painful experiences, and hopefully, we are faithful allies in their struggle

for justice and peace. We find no dichotomy between their sacred ways and the spirituality and teachings of Jesus.

Quaker mystic, Thomas Kelly, reminds us that, “The early Quakers were founding no sect; they were reforming Christendom, that had slumped into externals and had lost its true sense of the immediate presence and the creative, triumphant power of the living God within us all... Our task isn’t to nurse the dying embers of a dying sect, but to be missionaries to Christendom.”\*

As Christ-Centered Friends, we have found fellowship in the ecumenical activities in our new hometown, and hope we have passed along our Quaker emphasis on peace, the value of silence, and “that of God in all persons.” We are care-takers of the circular garden around Houlton’s Peace Pole, which is under the care of the local Ministerial Association. For over two years, we have stood every Friday at noon in silent vigil for peace with other Friends from our Worship Group and kindred spirits.

Although times are currently very depressing in terms of passing a less violent and more sustainable world to our grand-children, our spirits are lightened by Thomas Kelly’s reminder that, “The world’s work is to be done. But it doesn’t have to be finished by us. We have taken ourselves too seriously. The life of God overarches all lifetimes.” (Steere, Douglas V. (ed.) 1984 *Quaker Spirituality: Selected Writings*. Paulist Press: Mahwah, NJ pp. 307-11) ☞

*Harrison and Marilyn Roper are members of New Brunswick Monthly Meeting.*



## *After a Hard Meeting*

*Surely our plan was peace.  
We came in here together  
each setting self gently aside  
on the old benches  
in this plain room  
where a song sometimes fills us —  
notes of a wild bird perhaps,  
or one common Word  
rising up to feed us,  
like a warm, nourishing broth.*

*On good days here I have  
witnessed a distant siren or  
some other sliver of  
ordinary, holy wit  
bind us to one another.  
And again today we came,  
Wanting to be with each other in  
tenderness, anxious to reach out,  
our own efforts at a newer heart  
in the envelope of our hands,*

*not meaning to mirror  
a world at war.*

— Janeal Turnbull Ravndal

*Janeal Turnbull Ravndal is a member of Stillwater Monthly Meeting of Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative).*

The drawing, “Lap with Hands and a Bowl” is by Vincent Van Gogh.

“Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying for one another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.” — *Isaac Penington, 1667*

# Becoming a Friend

## By Jack Ross

IN “WORKSHOP ON OUTREACH” (*The Canadian Friend*, Vol. 99, #3, p. 7), Anne Thomas cited data from Alastair Heron’s material on reasons for coming to a Friend’s meeting, and for returning. In 1963, I conducted a research project with similar objectives, but different methods. I had results similar to those in Heron’s work but identified added reasons for becoming a member that Canadian Friends might find applicable to our present concerns about outreach.

My sociological research consisted of about 300 questionnaires from the 850 members of Illinois Yearly Meeting. In addition, I interviewed another smaller group. Illinois Yearly Meeting had affiliation with both Friends United Meeting and Friends General Conference, through some individual meeting affiliations.

Like Heron’s English group, my respondents were attracted to Friends by contact with individuals. But seldom was a single factor alone sufficient. For example, those whose parents were Quakers frequently returned to meeting and active membership as adults after trying other affiliations.

A few, as in Heron’s data, found Friends via the library, or through a college professor. The educational level of Friends is quite high (summarised below), and thus I find the low number who used this means surprising. Information alone is rarely sufficient to start someone on the path to affiliation.

In general, what I call “Quaker culture” was needed as a beginning: family, friends, group contacts, and so on.

My data were gathered less than one generation after World War II. The war had created a crisis for young people. For men, it was military participation, either deciding about conscientious objector (C.O.) deferment, or jail after refusal of legal options. Some who had been in the armed forces went through a process of evaluation of the experience, then encountered Friends (my pattern).

### **For the potential C.O., a difficult decision had to be made, and it required digging deep.**

Religious beliefs were examined or sought for the first time. C.O. alternative service camps led to contacts with Quaker camp directors and other Friends.

A number of women, not faced with the draft, nevertheless went through a similar searching process, regarding war-related work or patriotic participation. An added number of women valued family unity in religious group participation so highly that they put off marriage until they found a Quaker man.

Another group was composed of youth who had been to an American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) project. The phrase “culture shock” (AFSC sum-

mer work in Mexico, for example) was frequently mentioned. Examination of one’s life goals and beliefs and commitments led to later searching for a Quaker meeting. This group was fairly large.

Coupled together, the C. O. and AFSC project groups constituted a large proportion of those who had no earlier Quaker parental or group contact but became highly committed, participated more, and held more meeting offices.

The education level of my sample was remarkably high, which I think we might also find in Canadian Yearly Meeting. Seventeen percent had a doctorate, and university graduation was the norm. Occupations were also unusual: the most frequent choice was librarian (did they value quiet more than others? I did not ask), with teacher of English a close second.

Few were converted, in the traditional sense of the revival meeting. A sudden, solitary conversion was not mentioned.

We have no draft, and the culture shock experience in context of Quaker culture seems rare among us, though I have no verification of that.

What I do not know is what the people who had contact and did not return were like. Is that the great group waiting to be gathered?



*Jack Ross is a member of Argenta Monthly Meeting.*

# Two Yearly Meetings?

## By Margaret Slavin

A SMALL MEETING ON VANCOUVER ISLAND sent their clerk to the Representative Meeting in May to suggest again that it is time in Canada for two yearly meetings. The suggestion was seasoned in various ways, including letters to western meetings and a discussion at Western Half-Yearly Meeting. When I heard about the idea from a Friend in Edmonton, the remark was made that it sounded like typical western alienation. "I don't think so," I said, "knowing some of the Friends it is coming from." I am disturbed by it, though, and perhaps my take on it will help your own take, until we come through to *how we are led*.

Although the proposal comes from several roots, the cost of travelling seems near the nub of it, and the impact on the environment. The spectacle of Friends hopping into airplanes and scouring trails of pollutants across the sky as we converge on Nova Scotia strikes some Friends as, at best, blindness and at worst, perhaps (no one has actually said this) hypocrisy. Bob McInnes hands me an article from *The Guardian Weekly*: "With Eyes Wide Shut," by George Monbiot. The author lists the facts as understood by most climatologists: average rise of zero point six degrees Celcius over the past century... water in rivers declining up to four times as fast as the percentage reduction of rainfall...

The article concludes: "So we slumber through the crisis. Waking up demands that we dethrone our deep unreason and usurp it with our rational minds. Are we capable of this, or are we destined to sleepwalk to extinction?"

Saanich Peninsula Meeting wants us to wake up, use our God-given reason, and show forth our understanding of the true situation by NOT attending yearly meeting, NOT travelling across the country in the name of Friendship. For them, I think it is like the testimony of wearing plain clothes or, as for John

Woolman, refusal to wear cloth dyed by slaves. Wars are being waged for oil and still we Friends drive our cars, fill in the empty spots on yearly meeting committees and apply for travel assistance. A few Friends have quietly stopped attending Yearly Meeting gathering, at least in part in protest against the consumption of oil and gas. Keith Helmuth will give the Sunderland P. Gardner lecture this year at Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM), and I wonder whether he would have accepted this invitation if CYM had been held this year outside the Atlantic region, not far from where Keith and Ellen used to live and close enough to where they live now in the States. We may hear more of this — at CYM.

... are  
we  
destined  
to  
sleepwalk  
to  
extinction?

Committee travel is another sore point for Saanich Peninsula Friends. Solutions I've heard are: committees can meet by email; committees can be eliminated and let's see if there's anything we actually miss; local committees in a Western Yearly Meeting would spend less even if they did travel to meet. Which raises the second compelling reason in favour of this split: if Something is local and affects your own life, you are more likely to feel ownership and to take part. The past split of Pacific Yearly Meeting into a gathering south of the 49th parallel and a gathering north of it, which then became part of CYM, has been beneficial for all concerned. Apparently it led to a significant growth in numbers in both groups.

It depends, of course, on the nature of the split. Saanich Peninsula broke off amicably from its parent meeting, Victoria MM, and both groups thrive. Whereas I am still a little stunned by my tour of Prince Edward County back in Ontario, across the bay bridge from where I grew up, in Belleville. At one end of a street is Wellington Museum, formerly the Meeting House of the Conservative Friends. Just



down the street is, or was, another Meeting House for the Hicksite Friends. Some time not that long ago — 1900? — there were 2200 Friends in Prince Edward County. Now there are NONE. So splits don't always lead to an increase in numbers. Anyway.

All concerned are clear that this split would be friendly — “not a spiritual split.”

**“This,”  
said  
Dee,  
spreading  
her  
hands  
in  
the  
gesture  
of  
giving  
a  
gift,  
“is  
what  
Friends  
need.”**

I had a helpful conversation with Saanich Friend Dee Heston, who is in unity with the Saanich proposal for a Western Yearly Meeting. Dee is a seasoned Friend who has been part of Edmonton MM, Argenta, the South Kootenay Worship Group and now Saanich. Interestingly, she is also a longtime Unitarian, and divides her time between the two groups, finding special nurture in both communities. Dee has been very much involved in a process in the local Unitarian Fellowship (more than 200 members and a strong program for children), out of which has come a program of small groups. Most members have now committed themselves to meet with the same group,

once a month, for at least six months, “whatever happens,” to discuss a range of topics of their choice, but beginning with a mandatory topic, “Covenant.” This means that they begin by defining what they will be for one another, their commitment to the larger fellowship and their commitment to the community (and the world, I suppose) outside the fellowship. “This,” said Dee, spreading her hands in the gesture of giving a gift, “is what Friends need.” I sat bewildered, memories of all the small groups with Friends I have attended over the years, worship-sharing with Ottawa Friends, with Victoria Friends and at Quaker gatherings.

But also I remembered the loneliness I felt when I came to Peterborough, and at first was not able to attend the once-a-month discussion group, and there was no mid-week meeting, no deep sharing of journeys. Now the once-a-month discussion has moved to a time when I can be there, and that helps a lot. Also, after silent worship we have “Afterthoughts,” when we often feel ready to share, and not just on the surface either. It is usually all Ruth Hillman can do to persuade us to desist and come and have tea. Sometimes she has to bring it around. And I remembered the afternoon in Guelph with two Friends, saying, “Meeting for Worship is central but — I need Something more.” What we seem to need, in a phrase, is a sense that others are accompanying us on the journey. I doubt we need to split our yearly meeting to get this, since Friends are in unity that our spiritual life and nurture begins in the local group with local Friends. However, aware and experienced Friends at the local level also know that some decisions have to be made — where and when to meet, whether to have a bank account, or a children's program, or a delegate to CYM. Surely spiritual nurture comes both from gathering with Friends and from doing “business.”

For my visit, Saanich Peninsula arranged a potluck and sharing early in the week. We met in the home of Pierre and Elizabeth Béguin, who give a gracious European flair to an otherwise normal Quaker potluck. I think it's that tea-tray on wheels beside the table, ready to bring food or cart dirty dishes away. Really, it is Elizabeth and Pierre themselves, and the intermingling of English and French. I always love too the formal portrait on the wall of Elizabeth as a young girl, being raised protected by kind servants and a loving family. The war changed all that. Elizabeth became a nurse and practised her profession under the most rugged conditions, in the interior of B.C.. Pierre took on the role of driving Elizabeth over the treacherous mountain roads. Pierre is a respected visual artist, and Elizabeth, the author of a number of books, including her engaging autobiography and a new one which is fragments from her journals, tracing her spiritual journey. She writes as Elizabeth Resford, and seems most proud

of a book she wrote on multi-faith issues, at a time when, as she says, “there was a lot of silliness about people wearing turbans and carrying knives.”

People had come to this gathering prepared to talk about creative journeys but the word hadn’t gone out to actually bring something to show and share. So there were no quilts or books or paintings, but the queries I’d prepared were handed around, and people responded with challenging conversation around creativity and spirituality.

“Margaret, is it ever right,” asked Elizabeth forthrightly, “to choose one’s duty over one’s art, or one’s art instead of one’s duty?” “Elizabeth,” I said, “you will not hear the answer to that from me.” I referred everyone to Corder Catchpool in the blue *Faith and Practice* book — the part in italics just before #109. The gist of it is that none of the signs that we all look for — “a feeling of certainty and joy in making critical decisions” mean that Corder or anyone else has truth by the tail. The nearest we can come to certainty is through what he describes as “Divine Guidance sought daily in the smallest concerns of life,” so that the larger decisions come from a centred place. Pierre had been examining the queries. “Chérie,” he said, and asked Elizabeth whether, when she is writing her books, she experiences joy. Elizabeth said that she did, really, because she loves words; she does love working with words. Pierre does too, which I know from the experience of working with him at CYM — we were on the epistle committee together for several years running, many years ago.

A few Friends couldn’t make it that evening, and on the Sunday I met other members of Saanich Peninsula Meeting. In addition to older Friends I remember from Victoria, the parent Meeting, Saanich now attracts a few new attenders. The clerk of Saanich Peninsula Meeting is Muriel Sibley, and Muriel and I have been dear friends now for quite a few years. We went out for dinner together before she flew off to Representative Meeting to present their proposal. She and I were not in unity about this. I don’t want CYM to split. I want us to preserve the opportunity for a national voice, and I want to continue to include the expertise and energy of western Friends. It’s fine with

me if we lay down CYM gathering every other year, and devolve more decision-making to local groups, regional gatherings and half-yearly meetings.

Saanich feels the national voice will still be there through Canadian Friends Service Committee, as it is with the arm’s-length organization of American Friends Service Committee in the United States. There is unity, too, about keeping an annual gathering for Young Friends and children. There was no mention made, at Saanich or at the Representative Meeting sharing, of the fact that as a Yearly Meeting we have established an international office in our nation’s capital, which is doing exciting and significant work around resisting the patenting of life forms. We have a broad country, stretched thin in the prairies, and the sprinkling of prairie Quaker families have worked hard to maintain connections. No one wants to abandon those tenuous small meetings to uncertain support. Yet our consumption of gas and oil is a seed of war and of global warming.

Muriel and I face each other over the delicious East Indian meal she insists on buying for me. It is so good to see one another again, but this Saanich proposal leaves both of us shaking our heads — me, because I don’t understand it, and Muriel, because she passionately believes it is inevitable but does not want to get on the plane and expend herself on the trip east. We are both women who know what it is to be in the grip of a leading. Mine right now is to visit all these precious groups in our country and through internet journals perhaps to reveal us a little, one to another. Muriel’s leading before the first Gulf War was to put her life on the line, literally, as she travelled to take part in

**Yet  
our  
consumption  
of  
gas  
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seed  
of  
war  
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warming**

an international peace camp on the border of Iraq. From their desert camp they saw the first missiles of that war streak through the night sky. It is from Muriel that I first heard and understood about the United Nations-supported sanctions against Iraq. We Canadians took part in a holocaust directed at children under five, and the very old. We continued with them for more than ten years, and only stopped when the west again rained down bombs. It is far too easy to say that Canada did not invade Iraq. We did the first time. We did attack Afghanistan. We would have gone into Iraq if the United Nations had agreed. Our Prime Minister is now promoting a different way of making these decisions, so that we won't get so far out of line again with "our most powerful ally." Muriel has mothered five children. We both know that the obscene race, to keep supplying oil and gas, kills. I remember how real and personal that first Gulf War became for those of us here on Vancouver Island, knowing that our Friend Muriel was there. Now it is

other Friends who go forth, including Jane MacKay Wright and Laurel Dee Gugler.

I waited to finish this report until Muriel returned from Representative Meeting. It turned out that she had not felt the need to mention the Saanich proposal until near the end of a worship-sharing session in which other voices spontaneously presented the possibility of splitting into two yearly meetings. The reasons were financial and environmental. The committee on "restructuring and revitalization" has been instructed to continue its work, without, I gather, any clear direction yet. "We'll still be Canadian Friends," Muriel reassures me. "That doesn't change." Saanich Peninsula Meeting seems clear about the future of our Canadian Society of Friends. Better listen, Friends. Listen expectantly. ☞

*Margaret Slavin is a member of Peterborough Allowed Meeting.*

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**Earth and the Sacred**  
*with Mark I. Wallace*

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**Spiritual Wisdom of Meister Eckhart and Catherine of Siena**  
*with Donald Goergen*

November 7–12  
**Friends' Testimonies: The Fruits and Practice of Our Faith**  
*with Chel Avery*

November 14–19  
**Nonviolence in Personal and Political Life**  
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# News from Baghdad, 10 April 2004

By Jane McKay-Wright

*(Note from the editor: In the last issue (Volume 100 #2), Jane McKay-Wright's article was cut off. I regret this error, and continue that report here.)*

The situation with Al Sadr is only one element of the violence, however. Disaffected Iraqis in cities such as Fallujia and Ramadi have been squaring off against U.S. troops for weeks. Someone attacks a U.S. convoy, then U.S. forces retaliate, then the locals retaliate, and on it goes. Unfortunately, U.S. forces appear to have risen to the bait, and raised the level of violence each time. They deploy hundreds of troops, tanks, military vehicles, helicopters, etc. and continue to scoop up whole neighbourhoods in hopes of finding one "bad guy." People working with the Americans have also been targeted and these are the news stories you see on television. The number of Iraqis who have been killed by U.S. gunfire in the past weeks is in the hundreds, however.

Sometimes what U.S. soldiers do is totally inexplicable. The ten-year old son of our friend, Hameed, a successful businessman in Fallujia, was sitting with other boys under a tree near his home outside the city at the same time as a U.S. convoy of Humvees was patrolling. For reasons no-one can understand, one of the soldiers took aim as he was sitting there and shot him through the arm.

Most of the Iraqis we know are fed up with the U.S. occupation but, despite this, are not advocating armed resistance. We think they are representative of the majority of Iraqis. In fact, the people we know are moderates who seem to want the U.S. troops to leave gradually, not all at once. They do want the U.S./Coalition forces to change their behaviour, however. They want U.S. forces to help them rebuild the civil infrastructure that has been destroyed, and to give them a chance at jobs. They also want the U.S. forces to stop jailing people for no reason, to stop shooting apart



houses and cars, to take responsibility for compensating the damage, and to start consulting Iraqis who live here, not just the expatriates on the "governing council." Iraqis tell U.S. they want security (safety) but the U.S. occupation has brought the opposite.

The three Canadian Christian Peacemaker Team members in Baghdad (Greg Rollins, Stewart Vriesinga, and I) had an interesting meeting yesterday with Canadian Brigadier-General Walter Natynczyk. He is on exchange with the U.S. army, works directly under the head of the U.S./Coalition forces, and is responsible for military planning and strategy. He said that they intended to cease offensive action, and to work for reconciliation and amnesty in the current situation. It seems like a good idea. Even a taxi driver I had today said this was the only way to go. The latest news, however, is that Fallujia has been surrounded by U.S. troops; people have been told to get out of the city; they are streaming out in cars and on foot; and military checkpoints are not necessarily letting them through. Sounds like a violent offensive is in the works. Our translator reported that the U.S. truce lasted for 90 minutes. Several NGOs have been working to get food and aid to the people of Fallujia. ☞

*Jane McKay-Wright is a member of Toronto Monthly Meeting.*



## WHAT CAN I DO?

Jack Ross

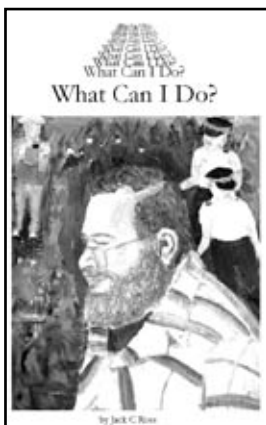
Root Cellar Press, 2004

Reviewed by Margaret Slavin

*What Can I Do?* is not easily classified — like the life it reflects, the thoughtful, faithful, varied and smiling life of Jack C. Ross. This collection of poems and essays includes poetry about getting along with one's neighbours, an essay on clowning, a truly inspirational account of non-violent response to street violence, and reminders of earthly delights: Hayden string quartets; Toasted cheese sandwich; Co-operative work; Ripe

nectarines. And gems like this: "Hell is the place/ where souls pass / on the golden street/ without greeting."

Jack and



# Book Reviews...Book Reviews

Dottie lived on Chicago's West Side during the days that Jack worked with American Friends Service Committee. Some of this collection comes from those years, and from Jack's trip south to recruit black students for interracial youth projects. Others were inspired by the years in Argenta, where they still live; from Lubicon Lake; from growing older; and, more recently, from jail time for issues about water. In between were years teaching sociology, and years with recurring non-violent action alongside First Nations people: Cree, Chippewan, Mohawk, and Shoshone. There's even the memorable talk given at Canadian Yearly Meeting 2002 by the 'Quirk of Barely Audible Meeting'.

Friends will love this book and, in dark days, we need it.

*What Can I Do?* can be ordered from the Root Cellar Press, Box 1557, Rossland BC, V0G 1Y0 for \$15 Canadian. plus \$2.25 for shipping and handling.

— Margaret Slavin

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## LIVING THE WAY: QUAKER SPIRITUALITY AND COMMUNITY

Ursula Jane O'Shea  
Quaker Books, 2003

Originally published in 1993 by Australia Yearly Meeting as the 28th James Backhouse Lecture, *Living the Way* has been republished since it now forms part of the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre's learning package *Hearts and Minds Prepared*.

Jane O'Shea traces the life cycle of the Religious Society of Friends, and examines its current state of transition, pointing to the unique aspects of Quaker spirituality and community life that have the power to revitalise modern Quakerism. The chapters form a fascinating flow: Spirituality; A generation of prophets: *The foundation of Quakerism*; A great multitude to be gathered: *The expansion of Quakerism*; Settling the flock: *Stabilising the Quaker Way*; 'Quaker caution and love of detail gone to seed': *Destabilisation and breakdown of the Quaker tradition*; and Way will open: *Quakerism in transition*.

In her introduction, Janey O'Shea informs us that she wants "to affirm that when Friends comply with the searching demands of the inward Light, we will find sure and certain guidance directing our lives, individually and corporately." Through her book, she asks "Friends to focus on the *how* of the Quaker way, exploring from the perspectives of the past, the limitations and possibilities of our future" in relation to modern day challenges. A most inspiring book!

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## FUNERALS AND MEMORIAL MEETINGS

Volume 2 of the *Eldership and Oversight Handbooks*, 2nd edition  
Quaker Books, 2003

Another reprint, this book was first published in 1998 by Quaker Home Service. Reprinted in the series of handbooks offering infor-

## Book Reviews...Book Reviews

mation, support and guidance to all those responsible for eldership and oversight — for spiritual and pastoral care, it is based on the experience and insights of Quakers in Britain. Complementing *Quaker Faith & Practice* guidelines, this book clearly sets out the tasks of funeral coordination, and gives information on low-cost and 'green' funerals. In addition to a clear look at responsibilities and delegation, thinking ahead to one's own funeral, preliminary planning of funeral, detailed planning of funeral, planning for the meeting for worship, duties of the day, introducing and closing the meeting, and tasks afterwards, there is also a section on the direct experience of Friends and meetings.

These 25 extracts are from contributions sent by many meetings, and include testimonies of personal experience. Two excerpts: 10.06 "We should attempt to ensure that our funeral arrangements match up to our spiritual needs at the time of bereavement." and 10.13 "Some meetings agree guidelines, and stress the importance of silence. However, music is permitted in moderation [in ours]. In one case that meant very modern pop music which did not seem out of place for a burial of a young man with such interests who had loving and very genuine friends."

The end of the book contains checklists for preliminary planning and for detailed planning, as well as lists of publications, organisations, a blank section in which to insert your own Meeting's notes, and a "Funerals and memorials form

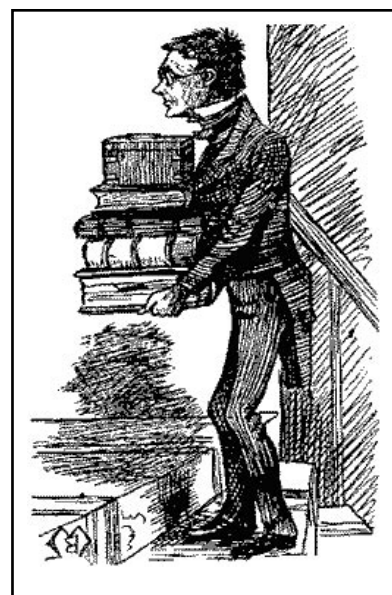
— guidance and information in advance" that can be photocopied, or adapted, according to your needs. This book is extremely useful and every Meeting should have at least two copies, one for reference, and one to loan to Friends.

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THIS IS WHO I AM: LISTENING  
WITH OLDER FRIENDS  
*Volume 9 of the Eldership and  
Oversight Handbooks*  
*Quaker Books, 2003*

This book will be useful to those responsible for pastoral care in Quaker meetings and elsewhere, and to people of all ages who listen to each other in love and friendship. The 'Spirituality and Ageing Group' that started at a conference at Woodbrooke, helped with the publication of this book. Photos of the hands of older Friends highlight the beauty and the wisdom offered in its pages. The book begins with two Friends' stories, which explain the sense of urgency behind the work, and give us an idea of what we lose by not listening to older Friends. The book ends with appendices that offer a brief history of the project, and a further reading list, as well as addresses useful for British Friends.

This little volume asks how far we, as Friends, recognise the often unanswered hunger for companionship in older Friends, and how well-equipped we are to respond. The authors address those who are aware of such needs, yet anxious about their own ability to respond in ways



that will be welcome. "There are suggestions for subjects which rarely arise in casual encounters but which may be crying out to be aired. The book also offers ways of entering into and sustaining such conversation. It is written in the hope of strengthening those qualities on which Friends most tend to pride themselves yet which may be less strong than we believe: the gifts of good listening and of faithful friendship." At every stage of life we need to know and be known by others. Many of us are thus blessed in our daily lives through countless interactions so familiar we hardly notice them. Some of us, however, suffer from a lack of knowing and being known by others. Loneliness is a part of life for all from time to time, and this book highlights that "old age is particularly a time when profound changes and relinquishments tend to coincide with a great risk of loneliness." The companionship possibilities suggested in these pages offers to enrich those who follow them in unsuspected ways.

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# Images of the Blessed Darkness

## By June Etta Chenard

A few years ago, sitting in meeting for worship with some f/Friends of African-American descent, suddenly I became painfully sensitive, as if I had nettles on my skin, to Friends' habit of equating the light with good, and dark with evil. How must that feel to dark-skinned people? How can they help but be influenced by these messages? Believing such images were outdated and violent, I thought of the darkness inside the womb from whence we all came, of the darkness of outer space; I longed for images of the beauty and goodness of the dark. And they came.

*The darkness hides not from thee;  
but the night shineth as the day;  
the darkness and the light  
are both alike to thee.*  
- PSALM 139:12.

*I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon  
you, which shall be the darkness of God.*

- T.S. ELLIOT

*Green vegetation and the ground on which we step are  
bathed in sunlight — but not plant roots, nor our own  
Inner Light. They work in blessed darkness.*

- FRANCIS HOLE

*Darkness within darkness.  
The gateway to all understanding.*

- TAO TE CHING

*To go in the dark with a light  
is to know the light.  
To know in the dark, go dark.  
Go without sight,  
and find that the dark, too,  
blooms and sings,  
and is travelled by  
dark feet and dark wings.*

- WENDELL BERRY

*Yet no matter how deeply I go down into myself  
my god is dark, and like a webbing made  
of a hundred roots, that drink in stillness.*

- RANIER MARIA RILKE

*Free from desire, you realise the mystery.  
Caught in desire, you see only the manifestations.*

*Yet mystery and manifestations  
arise from the same source.*

*This source is called darkness.*

- TAO TE CHING

*It is tempting in a culture that loves light to dismiss  
the dark way toward God as misguided, just as it is  
tempting in a culture that loves noise to ignore the  
gifts of silence. A contemplative approach to writing  
and prayer remains open to both.*

- PETER ANDERSON

*When it is dark enough, you can see the stars.*

- CHARLES A. BEARD

# Two Historical Quaker Weddings

ALLEN WALKER HUNT AND ROBERT JOHN HUGHES

Allen Walter Hunt, born in Bella Bella of the Heiltsuk First Nation, British Columbia, and Robert John Hughes, born in Vancouver, British Columbia, having declared their intention of marrying to the Vancouver Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, and having complied with the marriage procedure of Canadian Yearly Meeting, the proposed marriage was approved by that Monthly Meeting.

Allen and Robert then appeared on the first day of the fifth month of the year 2004 in a Meeting for Worship of the Religious Society of Friends held at the Vancouver Friends Meetinghouse. The marriage took place within a meeting for worship, held in the manner of Friends and honouring First Nations values. Tuma Young, a Puoin (two-spirited person) of the L'nu (also known as the Mi'kmaq) First Nation

, gave an opening invocation drawing on Aboriginal traditions, and explained the role of the Puoin in his community. Dorothy Stowe, a Quaker elder, gave an explanation of the rest of the proceedings according to Friends' traditions. After a period of silent worship, Allen took Robert by the hand and declared that he took him, Robert, to be his spouse; promising with Divine Assistance to be unto him a loving and faithful spouse so long as they both shall live. Then, Robert, in like manner declared that he took Allen to be his spouse; promising, with Divine Assistance, to be unto him a loving and faithful spouse so long as they both shall live.

In confirmation of these declarations they signed a Certificate of Marriage, which was also signed in witness by those gathered. Afterwards, a joyful celebration was held; and later, Robert and Allen left for a honeymoon.

JANE ORION SMITH AND JANET ROSS MELNYK

On the thirtieth day of the fifth month of the year 2004, f/Friends and family from across North America (and the United Kingdom) joyfully gathered for the Meeting for Worship for Marriage of Jane Orion Smith and Janet Ross Melnyk at Friends Meetinghouse in Victoria, British Columbia.

Janet and Jane Orion's understanding of marriage directly descends from the historic understanding of

Early Friends. "For the right joining in marriage is the work of the Lord only, and not the priest... it is God's ordinance and not Man's;... for we marry none; it is the Lord's work and we are but witnesses," said George Fox in 1669. In more modern language, Jane Orion and Janet believe marriage is a union forged by and through the Spirit. Through this spiritual joining, the couple becomes more of who they are — individually, together,



*From left to right: Tom Cairns, Susan Cairns, Jane Orion Smith, Janet Ross Melnyk, Pat Grant, and Denis Smith; Photo by Margaret Nicholson and Stephen Bishop. (For a photo of Robert and Allen, please see the front cover.)*

er, and in community — through a loving, supportive partnership. Because Quaker marriage carries no emphasis on ownership, property rights, forging familial allegiances, or creating a framework for children; its emphasis is on a spiritual leading/bonding that is about bringing God's love further into the world. Thus, Quaker marriage is not a private affair, exclusive to the couple; here, marriage is that which is to enrich, deepen, and gift the wider community.

Accordingly, attenders at a Quaker marriage are witnesses to this marriage, both the celebration and in support of the marriage over the couple's lifetime. Originally, Quakers had marriage certificates to prove they had been wed in the eyes of their meeting and the court, since early Quaker marriages were not recognised as they were not performed by a priest. Jane Orion's and Janet's marriage was the first legal same sex marriage held under the care of Victoria Monthly Meeting. ☞



# Friends Ways: A New Curriculum for Self-Directed Seekers and Learners

By the CYM Religious Education Committee

SEEKERS IN THE EXTENDED QUAKER FAMILY have benefitted by a variety of introductions to the history and theology of the Religious Society of Friends. *Quakerism 101*, for example, is a well-planned curriculum produced by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. However, as time constraints, and often distance from monthly meetings and gatherings, may be significant obstacles to making the best use of such resources, there is a place for more experimental learning formats.

When *Quaker Basics*, a project for isolated Friends in Australia, came to the attention of the Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM) Religious Education Committee, it piqued our interest at once. It is based on a well-structured plan of eight sessions, with required readings from *The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship* by George H. Gorman, *A Light that is Shining* by Harvey Gillman, and supplementary readings (with discussion starters), arranged in a loose leaf binder. The most distinctive feature of *Quaker Basics*, however, was the inclusion of articles written by Australian Friends.

With permission from Australia Yearly Meeting to adopt their curriculum as a template, we began to consider how a similar course could be “Canadianised”. This has involved doing some research into the testimonies of Friends in Canada, from the time of Timothy Rogers’ arrival in Upper Canada until the present day. Such a project, we realised, could never be considered complete, as our distinctive contribution to the worldwide tapestry of Friends’ experimental religion is itself a work in progress.

This curriculum is intended as the start of an

open-ended project, designed as much for seasoned Friends in need of a manageable structure to review the basics as it is for seekers who do not have the time or opportunity to participate in a time-intensive course designed for groups. It has been tested successfully by spiritual companions, and is presently being developed as a plan for mentoring. Flexibility of application is one of its main attractions. CF V.099 #2

**This curriculum is intended as the start of an open-ended project, designed as much for seasoned Friends in need of a manageable structure to review the basics as for seekers...**

Thematic content ranges from individual practice and the experience of silence through corporate practice, testimonies and concerns, gifts for ministry, organisational structures, and the meaning of membership. As an example of how traditional resources are supplemented with Canadian content, session two (addressing corporate practice, meeting for worship and vocal ministry) combines quotes from William Taber, *Quaker Faith & Practice* of Britain Yearly Meeting, and Patricia Loring; as well as poems by Elmay Kirkpatrick and Bonnie Day (from a Canadian Quaker Pamphlet anthology) and “The Meeting as Fellowship,” a chapter taken from *Extracts from Canadian Yearly Meeting Minutes, 1955-1993*.

While queries from Britain Yearly Meeting are interspersed among the other selected readings, there is ample space for developing queries of your own to facilitate discussion among peers or between seekers and mentors. We have copies available from the CYM Religious Education Committee’s Adult Traveling Library. To have a copy loaned to you, please e-mail: [kmlaing@exculink.com](mailto:kmlaing@exculink.com); phone Martha Laing at 519-775-2670; or write CYM RE Adult Traveling Library c/o Yarmouth Monthly Meeting, Box 105, Sparta, ON N5P 3S9. ☞

# The Clerking Corner: FGConnections

By June Etta Chenard

The recent issue of Friends General Conference's publication, *FGConnections*, is devoted to 'Friends & Clerking.' It is easily available, and its articles and resources are varied and well-done. This will, therefore, be the last clerking article, since Friends now probably have all the printed resources they need.

The first article of 'Friends & Clerking' is called "What's In It for Me? The Single Most Important Question Any Clerk Can Ask" by Arthur Larabee, who teaches the clerking workshops at Pendle Hill.

The next article is by Marty Grundy, well-known to many Canadian Quakers, and it is on the topic of "Recording".

Becky Phipps recounts "A Vignette," followed by "Thank You," written by Deanna Boyd.

Deborah Haines offers us "A Practical Mystic's Guide to Committee Clerking."

"Reflections on Being Clerk of a Small Meeting" is authored by Brian Drayton.

Next, Trudy Rogers, writes an account of "Hearts and Minds Prepared"; Marian Beane follows with "Thoughts on Clerking"; next, an article on "Youth Quake: Broadening My Quaker Horizons" by Casey Kashing; followed by teenager Jerry Hrechka's "Experiences of the Light from All Different Spectrums."

This exciting and informative collection includes an enclosed supplement that has a short list of available resources about clerking that are in print. In addition, a comprehensive list of resources for clerking (both in print and out, including many articles from journals) will be posted on the FGC website in the Quaker Library section: <[www.fgcquaker.org/library](http://www.fgcquaker.org/library)>.

The Quaker Press of FGC is also considering publishing a handbook about clerking. You can help them decide by letting them know if you need such a resource for yourself and/or your meeting. Send your message to: <[barbarah@fgcquaker.org](mailto:barbarah@fgcquaker.org)> or to: Quaker Press of

FGC, 1216 Arch Street, 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

The *FGConnections* is available for no charge, even for multiple copies for use in workshops and classes. It is also available on the website: <[www.fgcquaker.org](http://www.fgcquaker.org)>.

PS: If you look carefully at the photos, you can find familiar faces: Gabriel Gosselin, Gordon McClure and Liz Kamphausen, among others. 🐞



## THE SCARAB

In ancient Egypt, it is said,  
They often placed beside the dead  
Scarabs, whether carved or real,  
To be there when the dead must kneel  
Before their judge, to show the soul  
And represent it pure and whole.  
Another scarab rolled the sun  
Across the sky when night was done.  
What does the scarab mean to me  
Now that I am quit and free  
Of struggle, urgency and strife  
In these, my closing days of life?

It rolls its ball of shit and mould  
Which somehow looks like glistening gold  
Across the day from dawn to dusk  
With nothing strange or odd or brusque  
Except perhaps the car won't start.  
O scarab beetle of my heart  
Forget those many younger days  
When me myself I did amaze  
With many spurts of good and evil,  
Uncertain whether angel or devil.

All emotions are fleeting and brittle.  
I have found peace with my pet dung beetle.

*Barbara J. Bucknall is a member of Pelham  
Executive Meeting.*

# Imagine ...

## Quaker International Affairs Programme Report

### By Sarah Chandler

Imagine. ...

Imagine that you are a trade negotiator from a small developing country. You have been sent to engage in all of the various international negotiations at the World Trade Organization, United Nations, International Labour Organization and diplomatic duties in Geneva. Other countries have whole teams of 40 people or more and fly in experts for specific agreements. You are deeply concerned about the negotiations around patenting and what this patenting of seeds will mean for the farmers at home. You feel that you really don't understand all the issues that need to be considered; your time is constrained; and your country is under intense pressure to agree to a proposal put forward by a few major developed countries with multinational seed companies. As the tension increases, you are invited to participate in a seminar at which experts on this issue will speak, and you will be able to ask questions, off the record, to help you to strengthen your understanding and position. ...

Now, imagine that you are a government employee, who has just been given a new mandate to add to your already over-full portfolio. You have been asked to make recommendations on how your government should respond to pressure by pharmaceutical companies that don't want your government to endorse the rights of people in developing countries to have access to inexpensive generic drugs. This is out of your area of expertise. You ask a staff person to do some research on the Internet, and they find for you a detailed, neutral, technical paper on the subject, that you can use to inform yourself about the issues at stake. ...

Now imagine that you are an Aboriginal traditional healer. People have been coming to your community and asking questions about the plants that you use for medicinal purposes. They are taking away samples of these plants and samples of the medicines you make from them. These plants are

sacred to your people. Your knowledge has been passed down from healer to healer through generations. You have heard some people say that these people plan to steal these plants and medicines from you. Your entire community is concerned, because these people have told you that they came to help you find better treatments for your peoples' health problems. A delegation of your community members returns from a regional meeting with information about traditional knowledge and how it is threatened. You are able to understand better what is happening, and to discuss the options for responding as a community. ...

Now, return to being yourself, but ... picture yourself in five or ten years, having lost your ability to purchase the inexpensive, generic drug of your choice, because patents have made its production against the law. Imagine that your health care system is facing collapse because of the increased costs of providing medications. Imagine also that you have just been criminally charged by a seed company for saving seeds from your own garden, but seeds for which the company claims to hold a patent. Imagine that the last time you had a blood test at the clinic, someone took a sample of your DNA and patented it, without your knowledge or permission. ...

Finally, imagine that as you become aware of these possibilities, your Monthly Meeting decides to host a presentation from an expert who has been working on these issues in international fora, so that you and other Friends can better understand what is going on in negotiations that affect all life as you know it, and the future of us all. ...

What do all of these imagined stories have in common? They all illustrate the quiet, behind the scenes work done by Quaker organisations: the Quaker International Affairs Programme in Canada and the Quaker United Nations Offices (QUNO) in Geneva and New York. By working quietly behind the scenes, these organisations provide negotiators,

civil servants, and affected peoples with the information they need to better understand what is happening to our food, to our health, to biodiversity and to our options and rights.

Over the past three years, the Quaker International Affairs Programme (QIAP), along with our partners, has worked to produce technical papers, and briefing papers to help clarify these issues to those who are involved in negotiations and to those who are likely to be most harmed by the outcomes. Together with Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) Geneva, we have worked to bring experts together with negotiators and affected individuals and groups at seminars held in the margins of major trade negotiation rounds. Through these materials and information sessions with experts, decision makers can better understand the potential for conflict, violence, poverty and hardship, not to mention irreversible damage, that may arise from their decisions.

We have also sponsored experts to make presentations to Quaker meetings and to the general public in Canada.

QIAP and QUNO materials are available in printed form and on the web sites of both organisations: <http://www.qiap.ca> or <http://www.quno.ch>.

NOW, IMAGINE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE A PART OF THIS WORK! Support QIAP by making a donation to our programme in addition to your usual donation to CFSC and CYM. Become a Friend of QIAP. ... ask to be on our mailing list. Talk to any QIAP Committee member: Carol Dixon, Ottawa MM ([cdixon@web.ca](mailto:cdixon@web.ca)); Lucie Lemieux, Ottawa MM; Patti Hartnagel, Edmonton MM; Andrew Gage, Victoria MM; or to any QIAP associate: Sarah Chandler, Vernon MM; Jesse Clark, Ottawa MM; Keith and Ellen Helmuth, New Brunswick MM; Amy Kaler, Edmonton MM; or Maggie Julian, Vancouver MM (currently living in Ottawa). We welcome your interest. ☞

## Faith and Practice Development Committee Report

### By Molly Walsh

Our spring working session took place May second and third at Friends' House in Toronto, following Representative Meeting. We spent a busy two days reviewing modifications and additions to the draft chapter on "The Meeting Community." We received feedback from several meetings and some individuals, all of which were carefully considered. This can be a challenge when we get two diametrically opposed responses to a chosen excerpt. We noted that the term "gospel order" elicited many responses which required us to re-shape the way we present some of the selected material. The final draft chapter "The Meeting Community" will be pro-

duced in booklet form to be distributed at Canadian Yearly Meeting in Halifax and mailed to monthly meetings and worship groups. We thank everyone for their input and hope that the high level of interest in the work of the committee will continue.

At our upcoming meeting in November, we will be reviewing submissions for the next chapter, "Stages of Life" (covering Childhood, Youth, Maturity, Aging, Dying). Please send any excerpts for consideration to: Anne-Marie Zilliacus via e-mail at: [zilli@interpares.ca](mailto:zilli@interpares.ca) or by regular mail to: Dana Mullen, 4 Greensboro Crescent, Ottawa, ON K1T 1W5 by October fifteenth. The committee will also be happy

to receive excerpts on "Social Relationships," the next draft chapter to be considered (after "Stages of Life").

Three members of the committee will meet in July, prior to Yearly Meeting, to review and fine-tune our original outline. We expect to be inspired by a new volume produced by Australia Yearly Meeting, which was brought to our attention following the FWCC Triennial in New Zealand.

Betty Polster, after serving as clerk of the committee since its inception, has stepped down, being replaced by Molly Walsh. ☞

*Molly Walsh is a member of Montreal Monthly Meeting.*

# St. Lawrence Area Regional Gathering: Report on Uganda Projects By Claire Adamson

**S**T. LAWRENCE AREA REGIONAL GATHERING was held on Waupoos Farm, south of Ottawa, April 16th to 18th. Our breakfast eggs were from the farm's chickens. Horses and cows watched us from the farmyard, and a goat roamed on the lawn. Our beds, in heated cabins or in the farmhouse, cost \$15 per night.

The weekend began by role-playing to find content for songwriting. Each person chose a country to represent, and then described how this country might view the world. Based on these ideas and global issues, we wrote three songs which kept us singing into the night. They were:

"I got shoes, you got shoes, but not all children got shoes;"

"Walls: Hate, ignorance, fear, and pride, building blocks of all those walls that hide the other side; There are plenty of issues which divide us, but everybody's got a soul; Listening, respect, love, and the walls come tumbling down;" and

"We are the country of many voices."

Bill and Rosemary McMechan reported on projects organized by Uganda Yearly Meeting to which Quakers have contributed:

- The Quaker Meeting House in Masaba had been destroyed by a landslide. It has been rebuilt in stone, and now has a new sheet metal roof.

- A corn grist mill has been purchased and is set up except for an electrical hook-up which will cost \$1000.

- We have donated two water catchment tanks, which relieve some villagers of the six-mile walk to the river for water. Four more tanks would supply the

village.

- Young Friends would like contributions to set up organic gardening. Money for a revolving fund would start businesses such as brick-making, raising chickens, and milking cows.

- The Makalama Vocational Institute needs equipment.

- A Peace office in Mbale town would be helpful in coordinating Peace groups.

- A guest house at Bubulo would be useful when travelers need a place to stay.

Donations can be sent to Canadian Yearly Meeting, 91A – 4th Avenue, Ottawa, K1S 2L1, with "Uganda Project, Canadian Friends' Foreign Missionary Board" (CFFMB), on the memo line.

Susannah Cole of Peterborough Allowed Meeting has volunteered for a work camp in Uganda this summer with Friends Peace Teams, and is also looking for donations for her trip. It was agreed that St. Lawrence Regional Gathering offer support to Uganda on an informal basis. The connection would be two-way and spiritual as well as secular.

We wrote replies to letters from the children of Uganda on cards made by our Regional Gathering children.

Afterwards, we shared a fiftieth anniversary cake for Bill and Rosemary McMechan, and they departed to pack for their anniversary trip to Europe.

Revitalizing folk-dancing, and a perfect campfire topped off the evening. 🍷

*Claire Adamson is a member of Montreal Monthly Meeting.*

## DRAFT CHAPTER ON 'THE MEETING COMMUNITY' FOR THE NEW CYM FAITH AND PRACTICE

17. If all Meeting means to us is a soothing place to dip into once in awhile, we are missing the substance, the opportunity, the very message that early Friends experienced — that our reality can be changed, transformed through living together with God.

— Marty Walton, 1997

## Around the Family

### Halifax Monthly Meeting

On 30 May, Halifax Friends met over a brown bag lunch after Meeting for Worship, in a Meeting for Learning on the Nature of Discrimination Against Gays and Lesbians.

### ISLAND GATHERING

The Island Gathering was held on Vancouver Island in British Columbia 3 April 2004, with 49 Friends in attendance (Fern Street, 24; Duncan, 15; Mid-Island, 4; North Island, 2; Peninsula, 3; and 1 visitor). Feedback was very positive about the gathering. Comment sheets were very supportive of further gatherings being held. Some documents from the planning of this one will be put on file via the clerks, to aid any future committees. The clerks will contact Island groups by October of this year to see if any are interested in organizing a gathering in spring of 2005 or later. Our thanks to the committee that organized this wonderful gathering.

### ISLAND GATHERING WORKSHOP REPORT

The Cowichan Lake Island Friends gathering focused on "Living Lightly on the Earth". There, ten Friends met for a workshop entitled, Western (?) Yearly Meeting - Lite (er). In Quaker or "Claremont" dialogue, we explored our visions of a Yearly Meeting and its functions, and how to address both our concerns for the environment and our needs for cross-country connections. Our discussion included the possibilities of restructuring the current Yearly Meeting and of establishing a new, Western Yearly Meeting. We acknowledged the truth that good Quaker business process needs the participation of its members. In contrast, we noted that the Yearly Meeting is attended by only a quarter of Canadian Friends; frequently the same people from year to year. We were in unity in our distress at the amount of money and energy that travel to the Yearly Meeting session and its inter-sessional committees requires. We also concurred in a wish for better, deeper connections with Friends locally and

regionally. Where do we go from here? We must continue to seek clarity and the courage and discipline to act on our insights.

### NEW BRUNSWICK MONTHLY MEETING

Daphne Davey organized a public discussion evening in Charlottetown as part of Conscience Canada's "Peace Dialogues" week in April. She was also interviewed on CBC Radio, during which time she explained how her Quaker background led her to become a practicing conscientious objector.

### WOLFFVILLE MONTHLY MEETING

(Excerpt from "Letter from Canada" published in *New Zealand Newsletter* Vol. 86 No. 1, by Barbara Aikman)

... "We shared what our Yearly Meetings (Britain YM, South Africa YM, Uganda YM, and Canadian YM) and Monthly Meetings were like. We described our worship traditions, the peace and social action concerns of our Meetings and the challenges that face the spiritual well-being of our Meetings. This face-to-face, heart-to-heart encounter was continuing the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) goal: '*Understanding of diversities while we discover our common spiritual ground.*' During our sharing, Silver Khasufa Kutosi was very excited to learn that I was from Canada. 'All Canadian Quakers are my friends,' he said. Canadian Friends Service Committee completed peace-building projects in Uganda this year. They worked with over two thousand people from twenty communities. Also, Canadian Friends Foreign Missionary Board is funding projects. Silver's Meeting is accessing funds to build a Meeting House / Community centre. Their Meeting is struggling with keeping their young Friends from going down the road to other Christian churches, which have more music and programmes to attract them. He wrapped a present for me to take back to Canada for Bill and Rosemarie McMechan who have facilitated support to his Meeting."... My FWCC experiences have been

## Around the Family

transformational for me in many ways. I am thankful for the opportunities to experience how God works in the lives of Quakers from around the world.

### YARMOUTH MONTHLY MEETING

On 1 May, 2004, the marriage of Ted Godden and Cornelia Hoogland, members of Yarmouth MM, was solemnized, according to the manner of Friends, at the meetinghouse in Sparta. It was followed by reception at the Meetinghouse. Our congratulations and blessings go to these Friends.

### CANADIAN FRIENDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The CFHS annual meeting will be held 18 September 2004, at Scott-Uxbridge Museum overlooking the town of Uxbridge. The business meeting at 10 a.m.; after lunch there will be an afternoon bus tour of historical Quaker sites in the Uxbridge vicinity, to be led by Allan McGillivray. Dinner will be followed by an evening program. On Sunday, Friends will attend meeting for worship at Yonge Street Meeting House in Newmarket. *All are welcome!* Members will receive notice with CFHS Newsletter; others may obtain further details from CFHA c/o 16945 Bayview Avenue, Newmarket, ON L3Y 4X2; by e-mail at: <cfha@pickeringcollege.on.ca>; by telephone: 905.895.1700, extension 247 or 519.775.2463. Reserve a place on the bus, and for the meals. Come for part, or for the day.

### CYM National Listeners: Changes

There is a change in the Friends serving as CYM National Listeners. June Etta Chenard has resigned as a result of pressure from other work; she is being replaced by Dorothy Janes (details on page 26).

### EDUCATIONAL MIDDLE EAST POSTER

If you are interested in the Middle East, then you might want a copy of a full-colour, double-sided educational wall poster on the region. The poster, produced by a small non-profit in British Columbia called Knowers Ark, gives users a fast-track orientation to Mid-East

fundamentals such as oil, water, history, religion, economics, social conditions, modern and ancient cultures, 25 country profiles, 29 maps and 75 charts/graphs (all on one poster!). The poster can be viewed at [www.sunship.com/mideast](http://www.sunship.com/mideast). The map, used in over 160 universities and colleges (and by American Friends Service Committee), can be ordered by cheque or money order from Knowers Ark, PO Box 241, Mansons Landing, BC, V0P 1K0 (email: [mideast@sunship.com](mailto:mideast@sunship.com)). Cost: folded map – \$15; laminated copy – \$29.50.

### OBITUARIES

**JESSIE FERN BEARSS**, a birthright member of Pelham Executive Meeting, died 19 May 2004 at age 101. She was the daughter of William and Martha Willson. Services were held with Rev. John Fraser officiating, and she is buried in the Overholt Cemetery, Bethel.

### ELIZABETH R. (BETSY) BALDERSTON

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting announces with sorrow the death of Elizabeth R. (Betsy) Balderston, former executive secretary of the Friends Committee on Aging, on 17 April 2004. A Memorial Meeting for worship was held on 15 May at the Arch Street Meeting House. Betsy will be missed by her many Camp NeeKauNis and other Friends across Canada who have enjoyed the blessings she brought to them over the years.

### CORRECTION

Peter McClure is not an attender of Edmonton Monthly Meeting, as stated in the last issue of *The Canadian Friend*, but a member. In fact, Peter has been a member of the Society of Friends since childhood.

### COMPLIMENTARY COPIES OF *THE CANADIAN FRIEND*

Since most contributors to *The Canadian Friend* already receive this publication, and have told us they would rather not be sent an extra complimentary copy, we will no longer automatically send these out. Please note, however, that should any contributor ever wish to receive a complimentary copy, we would be glad to send one.

## For this issue

Layout  
Editorial Support

June Etta Chenard  
Barbara Smith

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

Submissions are needed, and do not need to be on the issue's theme. Please send them to the editor (address on inside front cover).

### Themes, deadlines and queries for upcoming issues

• ***Due date — 15 October 2004 (for December issue)***

***Theme: Our finances: Looking closely at our Treasures***

"May we look upon our treasures, the furniture of our houses, and our garments, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions." – John Woolman

Do you keep yourself informed about the effects your style of living is having on the global economy and environment?

• ***Due date — 15 December 2004 (for March 2005 issue)***

***Theme: Homeless***

"If we fail to address the roots of [homelessness] in which most of us are unwittingly part of the problem, we will need to look very carefully at the claims we make about our contribution to the world." (Quaker Faith & Practice, 23.23)

Seek to understand the causes of injustice, social unrest and fear. (Advices and Queries #33)

How are we unwittingly part of the problem?

### Acknowledgements

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