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FRIENDS JOURNAL

Quaker
Thought
and
Life
Today

Nurturing



Younger Friends

**An
independent
magazine
serving the
Religious Society
of Friends**



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■ AMONG FRIENDS

Imparting Our Values

When my children were young, I remember how challenging it could be to share my Quaker values with them—and to help them to appreciate those values—when the world, through contact with their friends, classmates, TV, and advertising, provided so many alluring alternatives. We struggled with requests for Barbies and hand-held video games, among other things, and pondered how to honor the child and still make our personal values clear. Our children accompanied us to meeting, to yearly meeting, and eventually lived with us for three-and-one-half years at Powell House, New York Yearly Meeting's retreat and conference center, where my husband and I served as co-directors. For a few years, they both attended a Friends school. They grew up attending First-day school in a large urban meeting and a small rural one. They sometimes helped us serve at a local soup kitchen or gather articles for American Friends Service Committee's Material Aids Program. We helped them learn to respect and appreciate people who were very different from themselves, and to care about social and economic injustices and concerns. Yet, through all of this, it was never entirely clear to me that they would choose to be Quakers as adults. In our family, all of these things laid the groundwork, but what made Quakerism their own was when they began to attend Quaker youth gatherings—at Powell House, in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting before and after the development of the Burlington Conference Center, at Friends General Conference Gatherings, and more recently as participants in the Philadelphia Young Adult Friends group. It was in those places, in the presence of their Quaker peers and, until fairly recently, with the guidance of caring Quaker adults, that they claimed and began to possess as their own the faith in which they'd been raised.

I remember a conversation with an elder Friend in my meeting who once told me that, born a Quaker, he resigned his membership in adolescence so that he could make up his own mind about his religious beliefs. The meeting was startled. He later rejoined meeting as a convinced Friend, and to him that was key to his understanding of and commitment to his religious values. I think there is a profound truth in that story. Ultimately, we all must search our hearts to decide what our values and beliefs are and how they will direct our lives.

During the years that I was raising my family, I would have been thrilled to have read the articles that appear in this issue. They are packed with excellent, even luminous, suggestions about how to impart our values to our children. Many are offered to us by Young Friends themselves. Whatever the size of your meeting, however many children are present on First Day, here there are many wonderful ideas that can be modified and incorporated into your practices.

Nurturing younger Friends doesn't stop at the level of family or monthly meeting, however. Quaker organizations and institutions have a unique opportunity, and to my mind an obligation, to bring younger Friends into the life of their organizations. I'm very glad, for instance, that Friends Committee for National Legislation has run an excellent internship program for years, and that Pendle Hill, Friends General Conference, and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting have appointed young adult Friends to coordinate their work with YAFs. Here at Friends Publishing Corporation, we have young Friends (under 30) serving on our Board, staff, and in our excellent internship program, as well as regularly submitting work that is published in our pages. These are important opportunities to engage with and serve Friends—and to develop the skills that will be needed as they become Quaker leaders.

Susan Corson-Finnerty

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*Front cover photo
by Seth Barch, from the
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An instructive "fishbowl"

My work in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting as peace and justice coordinator has shown me the need we have as Friends to make sure we are listening well to our young people, and are truly accessible to them. With an increase of the presence of recruiters in schools, even beyond the requirements of the government allowance of their presence, young Friends are asking for adult support.

I urge us as Friends to be thinking about how our lives demonstrate our faith as Friends living into the Peace Testimony. Given that we are a noncreedal faith, how are we teaching this to our youth and not relying simply on modeling, which may not be engaging? How are we building relationships with them? How are we framing opportunities to hear their concerns and possible calls for help?

A recent event at Caln Quarter offered a presentation and a "conversation." The presentation was a quick, dramatic offering of the quandary of a youth facing mandatory Selective Service registration at age 18. Later, a "fishbowl" was created, with youth in the center sharing their concerns. Little by little the audience was invited first to ask questions, then to join the fishbowl, replacing one of the students. In this way, youth—whose voices are often lost in conversations with adults—were able to keep the frame of the conversation about their concerns, and ultimately to come up with some ideas. And adults with compelling memories of similar experiences 40 years ago were able to share.

Meetings must consider more carefully how to structure opportunities for multigenerational sharing. Friends also would do well to consider how their lives live out their faith, and how they tell those stories with intention to each other.

Joan Broadfield
Chester, Pa.

In support of a Friend's ministry

I write in behalf of Fallsington (Pa.) Meeting in support of the ministry that George Price has been led to provide involving the Quaker sweat lodge.

For more than 20 years George has been led by the Spirit in his ministry with young people. He leads workshops for many organizations including Friends General Conference (FGC); George School; Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Young Friends; Temple University; Haverford College; Bard College; and many yearly, quarterly, and

monthly meetings. His ministry is not just the sweat but includes breathing yoga, fire circles, cold water rebirthing, and many other activities that are designed to provide young people access to the mystical aspects of meeting for worship.

George has an undergraduate degree in Native American History and Culture from University of New Mexico where he studied with, among others, Alfonso Ortiz, a preeminent Native American scholar. Additionally George studied with traditional teachers Wallace Black Elk, David Winston, and Hawk Little John, among others, who all encouraged him to facilitate sweats. George also holds a master's degree in Social Work from Rutgers University. It is our experience that George takes great pains to ensure that what he is doing is culturally sensitive as well as psychologically healthy.

George has been a member of Fallsington Meeting for over 40 years. We have created several oversight and clearness committees for his ministry over the years and we find that his ministry is truly Spirit-led. We are concerned about the process that FGC has used to discern the rightness of this leading. No one from FGC has contacted George's home meeting to hear our witness. We believe that if others wish to know whether George's ministry is healthy that they should communicate with those who know him best—his home monthly meeting.

We are saddened by the way FGC has treated one of our gifted youth ministers. Our hope is that FGC will facilitate real communication around this issue. Fallsington Friends Meeting looks forward to communicating with FGC with the purpose of healing all of the parties affected by this issue.

Lisa Bellet Collins
Morrisville, Pa.

Too technical

Regarding "Is Saving Seed a Human Right?" by Keith Helmuth (*FJ* Sept. 2006), a friend asked me to read this article and sort it out for her. She was interested in the topic, but the way it was written made it difficult to understand. I have been involved in professional agriculture for over 30 years and was very interested in the topic as well. This article would have been excellent for a scientific journal, but it is too technical for *FRIENDS JOURNAL*. The author needs to be aware of his audience and write in simpler terminology. I am afraid too many readers would have gotten lost early in the article and not finished it.

Howard Avery
Yancheng, Jiangsu, China

Revolutionary possibilities

I just wanted to let you know that I treasure Judith Fetterley's article, "Sexism as a Spiritual Disaster," (*FJ* Feb.). And, more to the point, I refer people to it when I speak publicly about it—which I do regularly and always with a fascinated response. I think it is one of those pieces that could quietly revolutionize the way people think about gender, spirit, and truth.

Carol Lee Flinders
Tombales, Calif.

Appreciation of Friends' many spiritual paths

Thank you for publishing Susan Furry's Viewpoint, "Recognizing that of God in each other," in March—"That Friend speaks my mind."

Bless you for giving us such rich and varied insights into the spiritual life of Quakers today. What a great publication!

Lucinda Selchie
Swanville, Maine

Humility as a remedy for prejudice

Thanks to Rosemary Bothwell of Jenkintown, Pa., for her letter, "Necessary Reading" (*Forum*, *FJ* March). One of the ways to overcome prejudice is to follow the Quaker teaching of seeing God in each one. Gandhi said that one should be so humble that one feels as if one is the servant of everybody. He further said that one has to reduce oneself to zero. Out of all the assets, humility is the greatest.

Bothwell's letter shows how far we have to go and how much work needs to be done. Any time we engage in prejudice we make ourselves our worst enemies.

Vinod Gupta
Springfield, Ill.

Simple solution to light bulb conundrum

Regarding Jim Kenny's concerns about light bulbs, "How may Quakers does it take to dispose of a light bulb?" (*Forum*, *FJ* April): George Fox's response to William Penn seems appropriate; use the sword (light bulb) as long as it seems appropriate (until it burns out), then replace it with an energy-efficient one.

However, the rush to energy-efficient

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Nothing has taught me more about the constancy of God's presence and continuing creation than being a parent. From the moment Simon slipped from my body with his hands stretched out, reaching for the Light, I have experienced his presence, his relationship with his father and me, as an expression of God's love for us. Don't get me wrong; there is as much muck and struggle in that relationship as in any relationship between child and parents; but even in the struggle—maybe especially in the struggle—I see God's work. Each day there are moments when I perceive the mystery of a greater parent at work. When Simon

He asked, "Mama, will I live as long as God's love?"

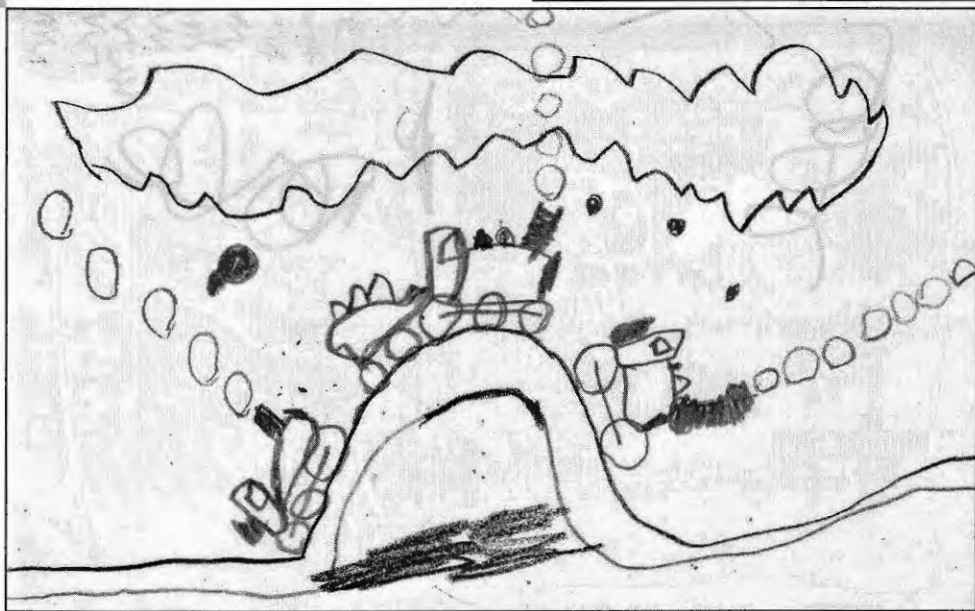
was a baby and we rode the train into Center City Philadelphia, he would smile broadly at each passenger he encountered and try to make a connection. If someone was standoffish, he would get frustrated and work harder to get a response. I was inspired by how each person was for him a new and wonderful surprise. In parenting I've found that keeping that connection central in my relationship with him is key—trying to be aware of the Spirit palpable just beneath the surface and struggling to communicate with that, both in him and me.

Parenting has been an experience of the sacred ordinary, encountering God by surprise sometimes several times a day. I believe my job is to awaken to these moments, to listen for them and witness them fully, and to respond faith-

Lucy Duncan is a member of Goshen Meeting in Goshenville, Pa. She serves Friends General Conference as associate secretary for programs and the bookstore. She is also co-clerk of Quakers United in Publications. Lucy lives with her husband, Graham, and son, Simon, in the caretaker's house of Friends Southwestern Burial Ground in Upper Darby, Pa. Lucy has been a platform storyteller since 1983.

fully as they arise. When I can't, I've made a practice of talking this over with Simon. We end each day with me lying next to him in his little bed, talking about the blessings we experienced in the day, the times we saw glimmers of God, and the times when we weren't so faithful. This has given me many opportunities to tell him how much being with him and watching him has been a blessing in my life and to tell him I'm sorry when I've acted out of anger, or been hurried, or made a bad decision. Sometimes the sacredness of a moment can be discerned in hindsight. This practice has been a way for him to start noticing God in his life, too. Recently he spoke about how much he appreciated a friend, a boy, and said, "When I grow up, I'd like to marry him. It's okay because mommies can marry mommies and daddies can marry dad-

almost four, we were in the car, heading home when he asked me, "Mama, who will die next?" Several people close to us had died in the past year, including my mother. I replied, "No one knows when they will die, but Nani (his name for my



dies." Another night I was slow in initiating our "blessings" conversation. He said, "What about blessings, Mama?" I told him that his huge smile when I came home had been a blessing, and that my walk from his school to work with the bright day and approaching spring had been another. When I asked him what had been blessings in his day, he said, "Oh, my whole day was a blessing."

About a year ago when Simon was

mother) and James were very sick and we don't know any one right now who is very sick, so maybe no one close to us will die anytime soon." Then he asked, "Mama, when will I die?" I said, "I don't know, but you are very healthy and young. It's likely you will live a long, long time, probably more than 3,000 weeks." He asked, "Mama, will I live as long as God's love?" I replied, "Yes, God's love will be with you as long as you live, and when you die you

will be with God's love." I don't know what inspired his question, but four months after this conversation a very close friend of ours was diagnosed with terminal cancer and two months after that, Simon was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect requiring serious surgery. I listened and noticed his understanding, so young, that dying is happening all the time, that each of us is vulnerable, and that God's love is very long.

Simon draws all the time: pictures of oceans with long eels and spiky-toothed sharks, pictures of smiling trains on tracks, or his friends in forts or on islands eating coconuts. One time when Simon was four, we had dinner at a friend's house and Simon noticed some special objects set nicely on a corner shelf. I watched him walk to the shelf, come back to draw, and then go back and look again. He drew most of the objects on that shelf, arranged together: a bowl of glass balls, a stone egg with a wooden figurine of a woodsman, and a little porcelain teapot with tulips on it with a soapstone mother. When he drew the teapot, he first drew the bowl of the pot and the spout, then looked at it again and added the tulips. He drew six pictures and arranged them next to the objects he had drawn. He then invited each person present to pick out a picture, gleefully presenting his work as a parry favor to each guest. I constantly witness his creative energy, his acute awareness, and his willingness to share his gifts.

For a while now Simon has drawn various versions of Noah's ark; he loves animals and the story has fascinated him. He draws large ships with elephants and giraffes sticking out, floating in oceans full of whales and fishes. He also draws rockets filled with animals, flying to Mars and visiting aliens. One time he was quietly



Simon Duncan Garner, and (page 6) his drawings of objects on a shelf and trains

building in the living room and then invited me in to look at his creation. He had made a construction of little chairs and milk crates, reminiscent of Noah's ark with many of his stuffed animals carefully cradled throughout and the word "oloeoon" taped to a board, raised aloft. Simon told me that this sign said "alone," that he had created his "alone ship," on which he could sail away all by himself. I love that he understands the importance of solitude, but likes to have quiet companions along for the ride.

Once recently I drove Simon to school and he wanted to take his yellow boots in with him. He hasn't been that good

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Courtesy of Lucy Duncan

Prayer—God's Love Shines like the Son

My son says of a bean plant he's recently planted,
"Its invisible strongness is quite considerable."

May Life, invisible,
blossom within our broken hearts.

My son runs beside me as I ride my bike,
Joyfully racing me around the graveyard.

May we all be accompanied by joy, by wind and by unending love
in the bountiful garden we inhabit together.

When I complain that my husband has left coffee cups lying around, my son says,
"Yes, mama, but he listens to me."

May we each be blessed by the ability to perceive
the gifts of our family and neighbors.

One night when I'm angry, my son invites me to read to him and to cuddle,
later we talk about what helps each of us calm down and I tell him he helps me.

May each of us know a gentle, forgiving God
whose love seeps like water into our dusty skin.

—Lucy Duncan

QUAKER EDUCATION:

Thoughts on Our Words, Our Silence, and a Very Cool Milk Jug Raft

by Kat Griffith

G. K. Chesterton once said that most educational debates more or less dead-end at "Let us not decide what is good, but let us give it to our children." Having sat in on more than a few discussions of First-day school and youth programs among Friends, I think Chesterton has us pegged. I have found Friends like me—in the liberal, unprogrammed tradition—to be very challenged in coming to agreement about what the essentials of our faith are, and how (or even *whether*) we ought to communicate them to our children. Sometimes we seem paralyzed by doctrinal disagreements. Sometimes

I have come to a heretical belief: that our reliance on silence is one of our problems.

our own childhood experiences of being force-fed unpalatable doctrines seem to have made us unwilling to share with our children any spiritual or religious beliefs at all. We who are long on mystical experience and short on systematic theology may feel that putting our experiences or beliefs into words somehow diminishes them. We may even believe that Friends are found, not made; that there is nothing we can or should do to influence the spiritual course of our children's lives.

And I think: Now isn't this odd? What else are we so shy about? We speak our

Kat Griffith, a member of Winnebago Worship Group in east-central Wisconsin, is a home-schooling mother of two, one of whom, Savannah Hauge, also has an article in this issue. Kat's last article in Friends Journal addressed her encounter with conservative Christian home-schoolers ("Conversations from the Heartland," October 2006).

minds all the time about global warming, the arms race, and gender and racial equality without worrying that we are force-feeding our children something unwelcome, or failing to respect their independence of thought. We don't think it diminishes the truth of our environmental awareness or the sacredness of the Earth to talk about these issues. We don't regard it as a form of political child abuse to speak our minds clearly and forcefully about the issues of the day. Many of us claim that our social/political/environmental witness grows out of our faith. Why do we think it's right to talk about the fruits of our faith, but not the roots? Why do we think it's right for our kids to know our deepest convictions on racism and nuclear arms, but not our deepest experiences of God?

I have come to a heretical belief: that our reliance on silence is one of our problems. I once tried to articulate to a Jewish friend what was so hard about transmitting the Quaker faith to children. I finally blurted out, "Well, silence is kind of a hard way to convey your beliefs." He just about fell off his chair laughing at the thought that anyone would attempt such a thing. That was the first time it really hit me that this was what many of us were in fact trying to do! When you think about it, is there anything much more ambiguous than silence? Would you trust silence to communicate to your kids the fact that you are totally crazy about them? Would you rely on silence to save them if they were about to step on a rattlesnake? Would you trust silence to convey your hope that they will wash the dishes after dinner?

No? So why, then, do we trust silence

to convey these other huge, important, and incredible things? That there is a God. That God loves us. That God has a will for us and will guide us if we listen. That if we do so, we will discover the incomparable joy of alignment with the Holy Spirit's will, the peace of being "in a place just right." That God will give us hope, direction, solace, and strength. I mean, wow! We sit there in silence, thinking it's unseemly to *say* anything, hoping our kids will just *get* it?

Don't get me wrong; I love silence. It is one of my favorite vessels for worship, and I hope that by experiencing it each week my children will come to find richness in it as well. But by itself I believe it is totally inadequate as a tool for sharing our faith with each other, with newcomers, and most especially with our children.

At its best, and at our best, silence can help us to go deep, to a place beyond



words, to a union with all that is holy. At its best, silence can help us transcend our human differences, unite in the Holy Spirit, and find a deeper ground of our being than words can ever convey. But at its worst, silence is a habit and not a conviction. It can be a means of avoiding encounters with the Divine as we avoid potentially difficult encounters with each other. It can enable us to avoid the responsibility of both scrutinizing and sharing what is—or isn't—in our hearts.

I contrast our silence with the worship I have experienced in programmed Friends Meetings in El Salvador. Salvadoran Friends fill the silence with Scripture, song, and vocal prayer and preaching. The essentials of their faith are clearly articulated, over and over, out loud, and in public. There is joy in their proclamations of faith. There is little doubt about what it means to be a Friend. Relative to unprogrammed Friends, they do have a narrow range of beliefs and practices. Also relative to unprogrammed Friends, Salvadoran Friends' language of faith is concrete, personal, and passionate. They have decided what is good, and they are not shy about giving it to their children. More often than not, their kids seem to get it, and experience it as a gift, not an imposition.

Let me be clear: I am not pushing for programmed worship, nor do I envy the doctrinal limits of a biblically literal, non-universalist Christian faith. However, I believe it is possible to communicate our faith far more effectively than we do, whatever the specifics of our beliefs. My experience, though, is that when liberal, unprogrammed adult Friends talk about God and faith, it is often with verbal distance and impersonality. It reminds me of what I once heard nuclear power plant operators call a meltdown: "core relocation." It is not only our silence that fails us, it is our words, too!

I recently attended a programmed family worship session at a monthly meeting with a lot of small children. At one point, when the leader introduced the "talking stick" we were going to use, a toddler pointed out rather forcefully that "sticks don't talk." This was much more than cute—it was a reminder that life, and faith, are necessarily concrete, literal, and personal for small children, and that language that avoids concreteness and literalness and being personal will not serve us well in nurturing their faith. We did actually talk about God and faith in that meet-

ing, which I thought was great, but it seemed that every adult who said anything about a higher power referred to it as "the Divine." One adult did ask, helpfully, if the leader would explain what he meant by that term, but in general I believe the references to God were at a level of abstraction that provided little toehold for the young children in attendance. Unprogrammed Friends also have a lot of "code" expressions—a kind of group-speak—that I think is bewildering, exclusive, and off-putting to many newcomers as well as to children. For example: "The Friend speaks my mind." Really, can you think of an odder, colder, more impersonal way to say, "Yes, that's just what I think, too!"

When our children were small, my husband and I had a nightly "circle time" during which, among other things, we each named God. The kids used to come up with names like "Snow Maker," "The One Who Holds Us in His Hands," and "Big Hugger." Compared to those terms, how compelling does "the Divine" or "that of God" sound for describing the daily miracle that should be at the center of our lives?

If you want to call faith—and the love and transformation that should follow it—"core relocation," you can, but I'll ask a preschooler for better words any day!

It's fair to say that my kids enriched and emboldened my faith, often naming gifts I had not even noticed, much less thought to be thankful for. Their unpretentious words gave sturdy legs to my sometimes rather disembodied ideas. Something similar occurred for me in El Salvador. Despite initial touchiness about the "J-word" (born of experiences of its use as a weapon) I gradually became accustomed to the deeply personal, intimate petitions to Jesus that formed a staple of Salvadoran Friends' prayer life, and which rested on the experience that Jesus was palpably present among us. While such a literal belief in the presence and attention of Jesus had never been convincing, much less attractive to me before,

it became so when I was among Salvadoran Friends, and it emboldened and enriched my faith much as my children's words had. Literalness became not a millstone to be abandoned, but a source of sustenance, immediacy, and delight. (I



Photos by Laurence Sigmond

confess that when I come truly close to the Spirit in prayer, in a state of deeper surrender than I often manage, I usually lapse into Spanish. My left-brain "thought police" are definitely English speakers!)

I think many unprogrammed Friends are uncomfortable with literal, concrete terms of faith because these terms seem to leave no room to grow. They mean only one thing, and we are afraid they may straitjacket our or our children's faith and prevent spiritual growth. Certainly, this can happen. There are expressions that admit of no ambiguity, that leave no room for the creative tension of paradox or differing interpretations, that cut Truth down to the size we are today. But I believe that the worse danger lies in not trying to find words at all, or imposing terms like "the Divine" on children who have no idea what that is, but know perfectly well what a hug is, what sun and

snow are, and what big, capable hands are for. I have also come to believe that the literalness of words doesn't have to be a limitation; it can be a portal into truths we may not have considered.

Many unprogrammed Friends seem to think we should wait until our children are teens before trying to share our faith with them. Our beliefs seem too complex, too nuanced, or too sophisticated to be understood or appreciated by small children. I believe this is a big mistake—and that if we truly have nothing of value to share with our children, then it is our faith that is limited, not the kids! I once attended a workshop on nurturing spirituality in children with a Friend who had taught at a Quaker college for many years. She had always had her students write a spiritual autobiography, and she learned something through reading well over a thousand of these over the years: those who had faith as young adults usually found it before they turned 12. Those who had not experienced it by that age generally did not find it at all by their college years. We seem to worry that an eight-year-old's faith will prevent a more mature faith later. It appears that we should rather worry that an eight-year-old's lack of faith will prevent *any* faith later!

I believe there is a growing sense among many unprogrammed Friends that we haven't been doing a particularly good job of raising up our children in a living, vital faith. While I believe that there are many reasons for this, I think two of them are the silence that forms the bulk of our time together as Friends (and which is often our principal faith message to our children) and the language we use when we do talk about our faith. I also think that our failures in regard to our children are simply an extension of our failures with each other.

I believe that the silence of unprogrammed Friends has allowed a diversity—unprecedented and rich, but sometimes problematic—to flourish among us. The richness: we are surrounded by Friends who may have a different way to access the

Divine than we have, whose vocabulary of faith points to different truths that could enrich us too, and whose spiritual practices could offer us new doors through which we may encounter God. How is our diversity a problem? We may find that people who claim the Quaker faith have beliefs that are significantly at odds with our own. Our silence may be filled not with unity in the Spirit, but with fear of the alternative to silence: engagement with each other on issues that matter and on which we disagree. When we do talk about our faith we often fail to venture beyond our safety zone. Either we speak with distance and impersonality about deep matters of the heart, or we confine ourselves to the progressive pieties that may be the only specifics upon which we easily agree. We give our children the fruits of our faith—our social, environmental, political witness—without nurturing the roots and vines that produce the fruits. We become mere harvesters, not tenders of the plants, and certainly not planters. We should not be surprised when the fruits wither on the vine, come forth less abundantly, or one day simply run out. Nor should we be surprised if our children ultimately find neither our silence nor our words nourishing, and go elsewhere in search of spiritual sustenance.

If unprogrammed Friends are to grapple with the dangers and experience the richness of the diversity that has blossomed among us, we will need both our

silence and our words. If we are to delve deeper into our own faith as individuals, we will need both our silence and our words. If we are to share the riches we find with our children, we will need both our silence and our words. We needn't assert certainties we don't feel. Tentativeness when one is approaching a deep mystery is not wrong. The words can only point to the experience and the reality; they can never fully embody it. But we need to try! How about laying down our 11-foot verbal poles and getting up close and personal with our God and our faith and each other? How about grappling together, in words and in silence, with questions that matter?—What is the nature of God? How do we know? What does God want of me and for me, and how do I know? What takes me deeper into the joy of faith, what takes me further from it? What are the boundaries that describe our shared faith? *Are* there boundaries? Are there religious views we reject as incompatible with Quakerism? Which ones? Why? Can we enter into conversation with those who hold them? Are we willing to be transformed by the encounter, and perhaps admit we have been wrong?

I once heard a story about the economist Frank Knight, who saw a plaque on a wall with a quote from Lord Kelvin that read, "If you cannot express it in numbers your knowledge is of a meager and unsatisfactory kind." Knight considered this, nodded, and said, "Yes, and when you *can* express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meager and unsatisfactory kind!" My Friendly version of this is, "If you cannot express it in words, your faith is of a meager and unsatisfactory kind, and if you *can* express it in words, your faith is of a meager and unsatisfactory kind!"

I believe our children deserve to see us grapple, out loud as well as in silence, with our own deepest convictions. They deserve our best efforts to articulate what we find true and holy and transformative—and our humility in knowing that we cannot fully convey our deepest experiences. They



Dave Minden

deserve to be invited into the Living Waters in which we wade and swim and flounder. Both my swimming and my raft of faith may be clumsy and inadequate, but there is joy, delight, and challenge to be found in immersing myself in the water and learning to float in it. I owe it to the children in my life to invite them into the water, and to climb aboard to share and help build the raft. More than once when I have done this their faith has challenged my unbelief, sustained me through doubt, and kept me afloat in ways that surprised me.

My son built a raft last summer: 44 milk jugs lashed underneath a wooden pallet. I find it's a pretty good metaphor for building a life of faith—all we need, really, for staying afloat in the Living Waters. Bjorn didn't have to be a nautical engineer to build it; it didn't require fancy materials; he didn't have to be older than nine to succeed; and the raft didn't have to win the America's Cup to be a triumph. It holds up a lot of kids, it's a blast to paddle around and jump off of, and everybody who sees it says, "I could do that! That looks like fun!"

And I think: Why should First-day school be any different? I want to build a raft together with our kids that will sustain us, delight us, and allow us to paddle around together. The verbal equivalent of milk jugs and wooden pallets—sturdy, functional, accessible, and unselfconscious—will do us just fine, I believe. □



CIRCLE TIME

by Savannah Hauge

I loved it when we would sit down to have Circle Time. First we would light the candles so we would have something nice to look at and because candles are just pretty. Sometimes it was so dark and scary outside I didn't want to look. I wanted to look at the candles instead.

The next thing we did was sing "This Little Light of Mine." My favorite part was where you shouted "No!" I always asked, "When is the 'no' part, Mommy?" Back then, it was my favorite song. I hummed it a lot.

Then we would say who we were grateful for. My brother, Bjorn, would usually say he was "gwapeful" for Daddy. The next thing we did was have names for God. That was when you would think of a name that you thought described what God did for you and your family that day. For example, Daddy might say, "My

name for God is 'Comforter,'" or Bjorn might say, "My name for God is 'Daddy-Maker.'"

Next we would talk about holding people in our hands. When we held people in our hands, it meant that they were somebody special or they had been having some problems lately. We thought God should hear that we cared about these people

and would be loving to them.

After that we wrote prayers on prayer cards. They were always fun. They were made out of beautiful colored paper. Sometimes the prayer cards had dots. Still others had fringes. They were all so pretty. We always hung the prayer cards on the tree in the living room. I would usually dictate my prayer to Mommy or Daddy.

The last thing of all was blowing the candle out. Me and Bjorn usually fought to blow the candle out. We usually had three candles so one of us got to blow out two. Sometimes Mommy and Daddy would have to blow one out to keep us from fighting.

Sometimes we did circle time lying down in Mommy and Daddy's bed, all squinched together. It was always cozy and warm. But half the time we fought to go on the right side because that was the side with warm, snuggly Mommy. I never wanted to get out of that cozy comforter to brush my teeth. Mommy and Daddy usually had to tell me that there would be no story unless I got out on the count of three.

When I would lie in bed listening to my mom, my dad, and Bjorn say their prayers, I would feel warmth in my heart, the kind of warmth that made me feel special, special to be in my family, to be in it right then! □

Savannah Hauge attends Winnebago Worship Group in east-central Wisconsin. Now 13 years old, she wrote this essay when she was 8 for a homeschool writing workshop.

Laurence Sigmond

TOGETHER-TOGETHER:

That's How We Nurture Each Other

W by Chris DeRoller

When I asked my 14-year-old daughter, "What is a functioning Quaker adult?" she looked at me quizzically and responded, "I dunno." I tried a different tack: "Who do you know who's a functioning Quaker adult?" Immediately she named two couples in our meeting, and then added a third sometime later.

Adult that I am, I began analyzing why she had chosen these six Friends. All are very different in personality and style, yet they all have certain things in common: an intensity of being, a generosity of spirit, humor, kindness, depth, and strength. They are people whose presence you want to be in. You feel challenged there, but safe

I begin this way for three reasons. One, it reminds us that we need to reflect on what we are aiming for—what a functioning Quaker adult ought to be. Two, it demonstrates one of the most important ways that we get there—we ask our children important questions and listen to their

dreds of young people 4th grade and up. For the past six years we have been leading weekend groups of 20 to 80 youth. Our themes vary. Our activities vary. The needs of the group and individuals are diverse and changing. Yet we have found that every young person wants two things:

Photos:
Workshops in process
at Powell House.



It is beautiful to watch people unfold and open as they hear their gifts recognized.

and supported too. My daughter liked my list. "What qualities made you pick these folks?" I then asked. She hesitated, then answered, "You've already said it. I can't say it as flowingly or as eloquently." I regretted not asking her first, but I coaxed her to try anyway. She thought about it for a few moments then wrote out her list: a loving questioning of everything, compassion, empathy, they don't just stand on the fence, they actively work for a better world, they're humble. It was my turn to pause and think, "Wow!"

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answers. Three, we pause—we leave space. We are careful that our desire to share does not close down our children's voices.

My husband and I work with hun-

to be loved, and to be listened to. And those wants don't disappear when we enter adulthood. So for whatever we do to nurture our youth, these two pieces, loving and listening, must be prerequisites.

We have also learned that our youth need to be appreciated. They need to be counted on. They need structured time in which they are challenged with new ideas and where they interact with a wider circle of people. They also need unstructured time to hang out with new friends and old. They need help naming and expressing their encounters with the spiritual dimension of life. And they need role models, people who

inspire them. If we provide these things, we will help them grow into productive, loving adults—maybe even Quaker ones.

Community is how we do it. We need to spend a lot of time together—not in-the-same-building-together, but together-together. Pot lucks, picnics, and social justice activities are good unstructured venues for being with one another. Young Friends often need special invitations and enthusiastic reminders that the date of the event is approaching. They may need to be picked up or dropped off. Encouraging them to invite friends may increase their comfort level and it's a great form of outreach.

Intergenerational sessions provide the structure and space for people, young and old, to be present for one another. Bonds form, growth happens, and joy is nearly always a by-product. Sessions should begin in a single-layer circle where everyone can see and be seen by everyone else. (Of course, the littlest members of the group are allowed to wander about. I consider it a gift of grace to suddenly find a tiny hand on my knee and two big eyes staring up at me.) A name whip, where each person shares his or her name and gives a short answer to a question, allows each person a chance to be heard and gives a glimpse into the lives of everyone else present. This is a very simple exercise, which gives very big results.

There is a tremendous amount of variety about what can happen next. Some-

times we explore a topic together. Breaking into small groups allows for more time for each person to speak. We try to do these in a worship-sharing format where people speak from their experience and don't challenge what others have said. This opens up space for younger and quieter Friends to feel safe sharing. It's also great practice for meeting for worship for business and for receiving and giving messages in meeting for worship. It's important for adults especially to be disciplined and to refrain from going on and on. Remember to pause, give space, and allow our children to find the words to express their experience.

Too much talk is draining, so we generously sprinkle the sessions with games. Those that are more silly than competitive and get people to mix with each other are the best. *Adventures in Peace Making* by William Kreidler and Lisa Furlong is a great source of such games. We also use several from *The New Games Book*, *More New Games*, and *Play Fair* (this last one is a book of non-competitive games by Matt Weinstein and Joel Goodman). Games, done right, break down barriers and open up hearts. They help us to touch, share emotions together, and get to know each other in a different way. They are an important part of intergenerational work and shouldn't be skipped for more "meaningful" activities.

As a closing, we often do an affirmation activity. There are many different for-

mats, but in each one individuals share the inner qualities that they admire in one or more people in the group. There is joy and power in discovering and naming the gifts in others. It is beautiful to watch people unfold and open as they hear their gifts recognized.

Other structured activities that have drawn our meeting together include intergenerational workshops. Several inspired ideas have come out of our meeting's First-day School Committee. One year a group of youths and adults in our meeting met for First-day school in November and December and made a comfort quilt to be passed around to people in need of some loving thoughts. The quilt has been to several homes since its completion. It is a wonderful, tangible sign of our connection to and love for one another.

Another group of youth and adults met to create a "Journey Book." They generated a list of what they would like to know about one another. Questions included:

- Where were you born, and where did you grow up?
- When did you start attending Quaker meeting? Why?
- Why do you attend meeting now?
- What is your favorite thing to do?
- What is your favorite childhood memory?
- What do you do for a living?
- What do you believe about God?
- What do you do when you worship?
- Have you had any mystical or spiritual experiences?
- What is the scariest thing that ever happened to you when you were standing up for what you believed in?

The group then interviewed people of all ages in our meeting and put the interviews together in a binder. The binder has traveled through the meeting allowing us to know more about each other.

Recently, in First-day classes, we've been scheduling monthly fishbowl exercises focusing on Quaker testimonies. This is a wonderful exercise in listening. These activities allow our young Friends to come up with engaging and challenging questions. Here is a sampling:

- Do you feel like you live your life with integrity?
- Do you feel you had integrity as a kid?

Continued on page 52



How Monthly Meetings Can Support Their

by Elizabeth Walmsley

I first came to meeting when I was five years old, with my parents and my stuffed frog. The frog was made for signing, and the first person who I met was a nice lady who signed it! We went into meeting, and there were two other girls, sisters, with whom I went out and played. There was no First-day school. A few Sundays later we tried a different meeting, with many more kids and a larger First-day school program—but when my parents asked me which meeting I preferred, I immediately responded that the first meeting was for me because the nice lady there had signed my frog.

Over the years that we went there I never had more than two or three other kids who were the same age as me, but the adults of the meeting who were *not* my parents took a strong interest in talking with me about spiritual and theological topics during First-day school time. As I became a teenager, the meeting started to recognize my gifts and expertise in certain areas. I became a member when I was 12, and was then invited to join the Worship and Ministry Committee when I was 14. My longtime First-day school teacher picked me up and took me home again for all of this committee's meetings, since he was on it too. At this point, I had an identity as a member of

programs, which had thoughtful, spiritual leadership, and then I attended the Young Friends program when I was in high school. Knowing that I was involved in this program, my meeting regarded me as an authority on it, and so they asked me to deliver a Forum address for them about Young Friends. Again, I was being asked to fulfill my duty as a contributing,

into a functioning Quaker adult. The only essential thing is a supportive, aware, and involved membership. Adults need to value the contribution their youth can make to the rest of the meeting's life, and not box them into the category of "First-day school participants for whom we need to find a volunteer to plan and teach them something." Meeting members can

take responsibility for the spiritual growth and developing community responsibility of their younger members and attenders—and they need not leave it to the parents and the First-day school committee. The longtime members, the experienced Friends, the committee members, and the elders all play a part in calling on their young people to step forward as contributing meeting members. If one has no ownership of what is happening in a community, one is generally not very interested or invested in the process of making the community function. This is just as true for people under 14 as it is for those over 14.

But one cannot simply issue a general invitation to join a committee and expect numerous 7- or 12-year-olds to respond eagerly. It is up to experienced Friends to make the effort to get to know each of the young folk individually, and to then consider and evaluate what

gifts, skills, expertise, or presence that person has that they could contribute to the meeting—and then to figure out the format in which they could contribute it. Perhaps it would be in leading a forum or joining a committee. Alternatively it could be more practical: like organizing a social event or a fundraiser at the meeting, or providing hospitality after meeting for worship. After having come up with a suggestion, the meeting must then personally invite that particular young per-

Giving real responsibilities to our youth is one of the most supportive things we can do.

our meeting's community who had responsibilities, and it was a completely separate identity from that of my parents, who happened to be extremely committed and involved members in their own right.

I went to all three years of my yearly meeting's Middle School Friends pro-

gram, which had thoughtful, spiritual leadership, and then I attended the Young Friends program when I was in high school. Knowing that I was involved in this program, my meeting regarded me as an authority on it, and so they asked me to deliver a Forum address for them about Young Friends. Again, I was being asked to fulfill my duty as a contributing,

responsible member of my meeting's community who had a valuable, under-represented perspective: that of being young. The fact that I was 15 years old was irrelevant, except that it made me an excellent resource to them on the topic of being 15.

My experiences illustrate that it does not require large numbers of kids the same age or an impressive First-day school curriculum for a young person to feel supported in a monthly meeting, and to grow



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son to serve in that capacity. The invitation is best delivered in such a way that the person being invited has time to think about it rather than being put on the spot. It is also important that their parents not only know that this is happening, but are able to explain to their child what kind of responsibility it would mean, so that the young person can make an informed decision.

On a more casual level, there are ways to invite people under 14 to step forward as contributing members of their meeting community that do not involve such a commitment or serious evaluation process. These jobs are still meaningful. For instance, asking some of the young people to be the greeters who shake people's hands as they walk into meeting for worship, or inviting newcomers to make nametags for themselves. (This second task can help young people realize that they recognize a lot of the faces at meeting, as they go about the job of discerning who is new.) Someone could have the job of facilitating the announcements at the end of meeting by calling on the people with their hands up, or calling the names on the announcement list (depending on how a meeting does it.) If facilitating announcements at a meeting requires some specialized knowledge, then a young person can do it in conjunction with an adult who has the specialized knowledge and who can jump in with it when appropriate. The adult can also prompt the younger person with people's names, which will help the younger person learn the names. If a meeting or quarter does meal events like a Christmas breakfast or a strawberry festival, where there are tables set out, young folks can be the ones who keep the tables stocked with baskets of muffins or bowls of strawberries and pour beverages for people. Anyone worried about allowing a 9- or 10-year-old to pour a hot drink might consider that sometimes (depending on the

individual) the best way for people to learn things is to do them.

I was asked to do many of these things myself when I was growing up, and I found them all to be effective ways in which the meeting made me feel that my talents and skills were being acknowledged and appreciated. I was a "wait person" for the tables and ran the cash regis-



ter at our Christmas breakfast, and I helped sell baked goods as a fundraiser after meeting for worship—both when I was about 9 or 10 years old; when I was 16 years old, I served as greeter and invited newcomers to make nametags for themselves. None of these invitations ever felt like too large a task, or degrading in any way. Rather, I gained confidence by being asked to serve my meeting, I appreciated being asked to serve in a number of different ways, and in the process I was

being transformed into a contributing and responsible member of my meeting.

One may wonder how asking young people to serve the meeting nurtures them and does not make them feel as though they are just being "roped into labor." I see two reasons as to why it is very important. Firstly, paying attention to individuals and acknowledging their gifts, skills, talents, and presence is an irreplaceable act of love and support. As a young person emerges from the group identity of "kids who run around at Meeting," or "kids who are gluing cotton balls onto sheep for Easter," it is very satisfying and sometimes long overdue to finally acknowledge them for the talented individual that they are. Naming someone's talents shows that person that they are recognized for who they are as an individual, and are therefore cared about. If their talents are not acknowledged or nothing at all is said, a young person will feel ignored, invisible, and certainly not valued or taken seriously—and taking our youth seriously is one of the most supportive things we can do.

Secondly, we want to support them specifically in becoming functioning *Quaker* adults—not just functioning adults. In order to properly nurture and support the gifts that people have, gifts that are going to serve them well in the business of being Quakers in the future, one needs to guide them along in developing those gifts, starting now. They need the adults in their life (not just their parents or the First-day School Committee) to be Quaker role models, and those role models need to be involved in helping to create younger members' and attendees' learning experiences of what it means to be a Quaker. (A lot of newcomers to Quakerism could do with this experience too, not just our youth.) Being a Quaker does not just mean sitting in silent worship for an hour on Sundays. Not only do we let our lives speak at other times, but we also owe service to our monthly meeting, and this is an important part of what we are supporting our youth in learning. □

Laurence Sigmond



One of the most powerful moments of my spiritual journey when I was growing up came when the youth director of the Episcopal church community I was active in told us teenagers: You are not the future of the church. You *are* the church.

This statement landed on me like a pronouncement of Truth. It affected both my activity in the church and my inward attention to my relationship with God. Seeing myself now as a relevant member of the church with something important to offer, it was clear that attending church was important, and I went nearly every week until I left for college. I was also involved in other activities: the youth group that ran a groceries program for low-income and homeless people; a youth prayer group that I started with adult help; and the Church Vestry (the decision-making committee of an Episcopal church), which I was asked to join after I insisted there should be youth representation.

Multigenerational community means accepting the power, the gifts, the fun, and the potential of all of its members, regardless of age.

The truth that I *was* the church revved up my yearning to be at the center of the center. I remember walking in the woods, sitting in school, hanging with friends, and always being aware that the Power that unites creation resides in me. I remember struggling with the fact that my family owned a house and two cars while so many people had so much less. I remember being furious when I discovered that our downtown church was locked up at night and anyone needing solace would just have to wait until the next morning. These beliefs, ideas, and experiences were always with me, even before words to describe them could get in the way of my experience of them. But with the "Pronouncement of Truth" came the permission to say and live out loud: "I am a spiritual creature, I am this church, I am responsible and accountable now even as I am a child." These are the understandings that one simple sentence opened up for me. Children are not the future of the church; they *are* the church.

Now that I am an adult, my role is to make space in this adult-oriented world for the recognition that children and youth are not the future of Quakerism

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but the *now* of this Religious Society. Quakerism even has this message built into its basics: each of us has that of God within us. This understanding is a powerful place to start. However, it does not give a single clue about *how* we can nurture and support children's inclusion in the *now* of Quakerism.

There are two well-intentioned and frequently used ways that adults in any community first try to include children in the structures of adult-dominated culture. I identify it as a positive sign when adults go in these directions because it means that they recognize the importance, the gifts, and the strength that come from valuing children as the *now*. One of the ways adults include children is by inviting them to participate in the adult community. My first experience of this was when I was asked to serve on the vestry of St. Paul's Church. They genuinely wanted my input and presence. They recognized my commitment to creating God's Kingdom, they loved me, and they respected my ideas and work in the church. I felt honored and trusted.

And then I felt bored beyond belief. I went to meetings that began at 8 o'clock on a school night and lasted for hours. Those grownups just talked and talked and talked—and drank coffee. They did not have one ounce of fun, and they didn't—as far as I could tell—try to change



the world in any kind of way. Including me in their meetings was a valuable impulse, but by simply doing their same old thing in my presence, I was not able to add what I had to give: my idealism, my willingness to risk everything to manifest the Divine, and my desire to have fun while doing the work. The end result was pretty unsatisfying for everyone. The same impulses underlie Friends' actions when they invite teens to their adult business meetings or they ask kids to please give their opinion about a topic. These impulses are wonderful and important aspects of including kids in the community. They tell kids how much adults value their ideas, thoughts, and presence. It can be a way of letting them know how much adults love them. But adults need to be aware that they are asking kids to function as adults when this is how they

include them in the *now* of Quakerism. A deadening result is that the community is denied what the kids really have to offer, like a sense of fun and silliness, a remembrance that friendship and playing is essential to living well, a belief that anything is possible, and a manner of processing ideas that is sometimes more rooted in art and movement than in words.

A second way that we include children in the structures of the Quaker community is by ensuring that there are programs for them. First-day school, Junior Yearly Meeting, and weekend events for middle- and high-schoolers (and even elementary kids in New England Yearly Meeting) are the standard opportunities for kids to be active in the Religious Society of Friends. Just as adults need their committee meetings where they can talk and talk and drink their coffee, kids need these oppor-

tunities for gathering. Here is where they can express their spiritual connection and their creative idealism, and where their funny/angry/active/joyful/shy energy is expected and welcomed. In addition to the wonderfulness and perfect appropriateness of youth programs, there are some tendencies here that adults need to watch out for when focusing on recognizing children and youth as part of the *now* of Quakerism.

One of these tendencies is for adults to feel complacent about kids' noninvolvement in the wider Quaker community. When kids have high-quality, spiritually grounding, action-oriented programs, it's easy to believe that they've got everything they need. They do have an essential part of what they need—but it becomes easy to miss the fact that the kids' Quaker experience is frequently separate from the adults'.

Another tendency adults need to be aware of is the desire to want to teach children everything adults know, everything adults believe and love. While this is necessary as one ingredient in adult interactions with children, it is not sufficient. If adults take up all of the children's time teaching them, adults are not allowing them to learn the basics: God is within them—they can experience God all on their own without adult intervention, even without adult teaching. Adults certainly make time to learn and study, but that is only one piece of faith. Adults also worship, explore their own and others' leadings, and participate in outreach/peacework/social action.

A further tendency adults have when it comes to children's programs is to expect that anything that smacks of kids should be handled by the First-day School Committee (often peopled

Barbara Benton



Nate Ryan

with young parents and newer Friends). An example is a monthly meeting that truly cherishes its children, but that tried to give its First-day School Committee the additional tasks of teaching kids about worship and maintaining the garden (since it was mostly kids who used the garden). These decisions meant that no one on the Worship and Ministry Committee or the Building and Grounds Committee of that meeting needed to include children in their thinking or action. By relegating children's participation in Quakerism only to youth programs, we run the risk of isolating the children from the adults and the adults from the children.

A third alternative is necessary to welcome Friends of all ages into being the *now* of our existence. In addition to being open to children, including youth as members of the adult structures, and supporting the children's structures, we need to intentionally plan ways to include adults and children in monthly and yearly meeting structures that are meaningful for each of them. I call this building multigenerational community. It is not *inter*-generational because we are not trying to find ways for different generations to interact with each other. It is *multi*generational because we are multiple generations coming together for the same purposes: learning, worshiping, serving God, and having fun together regardless of age in order to bring community into a deeper relationship with each other and with the Divine. A successful multigenerational experience is one that allows kids and adults to interact while being reflective and expressive in a way that is meaningful for everyone.

Children's frank, simple, concrete, and magical ways of seeing the world can expand an adult's understanding of a question. An adult who listens as earnestly to a young person's answer as to a peer's validates the child's position in the community. A teen's belief that we can and should change significant chunks of the culture today can jolt us all out of our complacency.

Multigenerational community is about asking the community to recognize the power, the gifts, the fun, and the potential of all of its members, regardless of age. It

asks all members to be accountable to and respectful of each other, even if we wiggle a lot or talk too long. It is not appropriate for every situation—but when it is, the adult Quaker community needs to be willing to engage in some significant give and take. It needs to give itself the time, space, and resources to figure out how to meaningfully include everyone, and it needs to take the risk of being playful in the Spirit and of trusting children to be centered in the Spirit as children and adults move forward together.

These ways of being in community together are not part of our dominant culture and don't come naturally to many of us. We may believe with all our hearts that they are important; we may want to create space in our meetings for all of us to be significant in our *now*. But that doesn't give us the tools to do it. Last year

action offered to those who wanted them. However, at every single planning meeting, someone would propose adding just one more business meeting on just one afternoon. Maybe childcare could be offered then, or maybe parents could just not participate, the planners thought. The planning committee needed constantly to remind itself that it made this plan for a reason and the afternoons were going to be open! In the end, we did have open afternoons except when there were workshops that included children's and multi-generational options. And, can you believe it? In addition to the children's programming being successful with fewer stressed-out kids, all the business was completed *and* adults reported feeling more positive about yearly meeting Sessions than they had in years. But it took an enormous amount of discipline and



Philadelphia Yearly Meeting changed the structure for its annual Sessions so that the afternoons were open for recreation and time to connect with friends outside of business. This change was prompted by the children's program insisting that kids were not well served by being in programs eight to ten hours a day while their parents spent that much time in business sessions (and one could think that adults were not well served either). Everyone on the planning committee agreed that the afternoons would be largely unprogrammed with opportunities for recre-

trust to make these changes. Changing the culture is hard; we don't always see where it needs to be changed, and we don't always want to make the changes when we do see them.

At a Philadelphia Yearly Meeting problem-solving meeting recently, a Friend stood up to offer a solution to the yearly meeting's difficulty in finding enough people to staff all of its committees. She said that soon the baby-boomers will be retiring and we'll have a huge crop of new

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Finding My Quiet Voice Within

by Jill Bottum

It is you, Mom and Dad, who brought me into this world.
It is you who had the vision to raise me as a Quaker.
It is you I have to thank
for the memories and the spiritual peace:

A blender whirrs as Dad mixes
banana eggnog for breakfast in the car.
The morning rush lingers
in loud car talk and eggnog mustaches.
We arrive a bit late and climb the stairs
at the Lutheran Student Center.
As we climb, the rush of the morning begins to
melt away.
With my parents, I join the circle of Friends
And in the silence
learn to listen to my quiet voice within.

My head is pressed close to another.
Robin's short dark hair touches my lighter curls.
We are learning about Quakers of long ago,
Or peace, or friendship.
But most of all, we are connecting
with each other and other friends.
Later Robin and I
climb the stairs hand in hand
and rejoin our parents
in the circle of Friends and in the silence
learn to listen to our quiet voices within.

I listen to the sound of my mother's heart
beat a rhythm with the music in the room as
I lay my head upon her chest.
I feel so cozy and safe.
I know I should have been in bed long ago.
But Nightingales at Wild Rose is special.
and in the singing
I learn to listen to my quiet voice within.

It is summer.
Potluck and picnic time.
After volleyball and more food
than anyone could imagine,
I curl into Bimsy's big bean bag chair

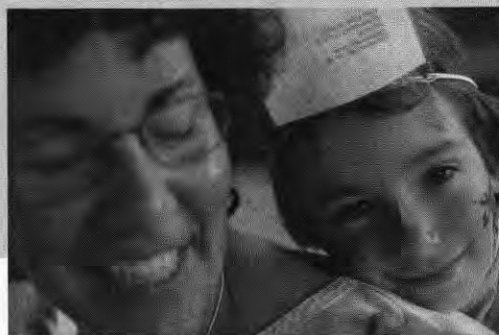
with Cherry & Betsy for Meeting for Worship.
With my parents nearby, I am part of the circle of Friends
and in the silence
learn to listen to my quiet voice within.

It is late. Folk dances still flutter my skirt.
My mother takes my hand and leads me away.
Flashlights slice the night.
Over my shoulder I yearn for the dancing as we sing
"This little light of mine,"
on our way to bed.
As we near the cabin, we walk in silence
and in the silence
I learn to listen to my quiet voice within.

Rain taps a steady beat on the cabin roof.
The teens within press their faces to the windows.
"We'll get drenched if we walk all the way down
to the main meeting house for meeting for worship,"
pipes up a voice.
"Why not hold our own?" offers another.
Without my parents nearby, I am part of the circle of teens
and in the silence
learn to listen to my quiet voice within.

A small hand clutched in each of mine,
I come to the silence
gazing out the windows onto the land.
I reflect on the circle I have traveled.
I look across the room at my parents
and then next to me at my children.
I hope and pray that I can give my children
the gift my parents have given me.
I once again settle into the silence
and I listen to my quiet voice within.

*Jill Bottum lives in
East Troy, Wis.*



Children, War Play, Violence (and Barbies)

W by Pamela Haines

hen I started out on the adventure of parenting, I assumed that I was too smart and enlightened to have war play in my family. Two boys and many years later, I have quite a different perspective. I'm certainly more humble, but I'm no longer satisfied with the old question of how to prevent childhood practice for war. I've found questions that seem bigger and deeper. Where do we experience violence in our homes? How does conflict fit into power dynamics and sex-role training? How can we actively engage with the emotional needs of children engaged in play that we find troubling?

We have some solid ground from which to start the exploration of these questions. One of the most wonderful things about being parents is that we are reminded



Pamela Haines with son Timothy Esser-Haines

How does conflict fit into power dynamics and sex-role training? How can we actively engage with the emotional needs of children engaged in play that we find troubling?

every day of a central tenet of Quakerism: that of God in everyone. We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the human beings who are our children are good. (If only we could remember that their parents are just as good!) Just as our deepest longings are to be aligned with the spirit of God, so too is that true for our children. Thank goodness our job as parents is not to take the basically sinful nature of children and transform it into something god-

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ly by rigorous applications of virtuous practices. The job is not even to take the blank, neutral slate of a newborn and write on it to create a loving and compassionate human being. Our job is simply to speak to that of God in our children.

Just as there is something innate about our children's goodness, they (and we) have an underlying tendency towards love and towards treating other people well. Nobody has to be trained out of a nature that is violent at heart. Connection to goodness can be obscured, but it doesn't have to be taught. As parents, we get to act from a wellspring of love and compassion as best we know how, to reach for the same in our children, and to reflect what we see back to them. It's like manners. Children don't need to be trained in good manners; they need to be *treated with* good manners.

But we also have to set policy. In our effort to raise peace-loving children, it's easy to lump conflict, violence, and war play together and try to avoid them all completely. We also get a little satisfaction, perhaps, in being against war play. It is one concrete way of standing on our principles. But conflict and violence are two enormous, complex, and overlapping

phenomena—and I see war play as a very small subset, to the extent that it has anything to do with either.

As Quakers, we are pretty ambivalent about conflict. On the one hand, we are deeply committed to reducing the levels of conflict in the world, seeing the ever more destructive ways it is waged as a major scourge of humankind. On the other hand, we ourselves are in significant conflict with many of the values and assumptions of the world around us. We understand the importance of bringing that conflict to the surface, of speaking truth to power.

This conflict about conflict plays out in our families. Many of us are strongly attached—by belief, training, or fear—to “peace at any price,” making the avoidance of conflict a positive goal at home. Yet in reality, our lives are full of conflict. Spouses argue, rules are resisted, siblings use each other, and all bring their upsets home where it's most safe to let them out. If we can't acknowledge conflict openly—in ourselves and in our children—it just goes underground, becoming inaccessible to resolution. Somehow we need to see war play—or perhaps our conflict with our children about war play—as embed-

qualities (though many of us hate to admit it), violence is another story. We are less conflicted about violence. According to the dictionary, to violate is "to infringe, to break through a boundary without right." Its opposite is "to respect." While we are used to thinking of violence as physical, emotional violence may be just as damaging. It is possible that war play may be less violent than some adult behavior in our families that isn't subjected to such close scrutiny.

The other big framework within which war play must be considered is that of sex role training. Male training is the issue most clearly at its root. While many parents make heroic efforts to avoid passing traditional, narrow sex role assumptions on to our boys, we can't avoid it. The assumptions are in the air, and little children have long, sensitive antennae. They pick up tones of voice and facial expressions from relatives and people on the street. They take in the images from television, advertising, and stores. Most of all, they learn from older children, whom they watch like hawks for clues about how to carry themselves. (While some would argue that boys are innately wired for aggression, we'll never know for sure until the world treats little girls and boys with exactly the same expectations of humanness; only then can we consider what interesting biological differences might remain.)

Through play, children are trying to figure out the roles that are assigned to their respective sexes. While our attention is pulled to male training and the violence of war play, however, it is no more human to be trained as a passive sex object than as a soldier. Yet girls' sex role play often doesn't set off the alarm bells in Quaker families that war play does. We need to remember that along with our Testimony on Peace we also have one on Equality; Barbie play deserves equal scrutiny with war play.

Many parents are aware and proactive around general sex role training—offering information and options outside narrow role stereotypes, modeling alternatives, shielding their children as best they can from the crudest stereotypes, noticing if they seem to be internalizing messages about who they have to be, and encouraging them to be fully human. Yet war play persists. I have worked at a preschool with lots of little boys who were deter-

Being around them and all their friends in the midst of endless war-type play, running what seemed at times to be a full-scale munitions factory in our basement, struggling to introduce nonviolent themes into their games, and trying all the while to stay relaxed, flexible, and unworried (no mean feat!), I have some observations about how to interact with this phenomenon.

It's been very helpful to me to move away from the simple moral position that war play is bad. That position boxes us—and our children—into a very narrow space. If play that they find so irresistibly attractive is bad, how can *they* be anything else? I've learned to look at war play not as a *cause* of violent behavior, but as a *result* of messages about power and violence that they are getting from the outside. Letting go of the urgency of stopping immoral play, taking a firm hold on my understanding of how good our boys are, noticing the quality of the play, and looking for roots of violence, I see a tremendous amount of variation.

I have seen children in friendly agreement, engaged in energetic fun with no violence (that is, nobody is getting violated) that many people would label as war play. In our house rubber band guns were all the rage for a couple of years. The basement factory was busy, and the boys and their friends spent hours racing up and down the stairs, jumping out from behind doors, and gleefully shooting each other with rubber bands. It was a high-energy form of entertainment that everybody loved, and when I found rubber bands in obscure places months afterwards, I smiled at the memory of the pleasure they had given.

Sometimes people are genuinely fascinated with some technical aspect of a war toy or the skill involved in using it. I've seen a little boy shoot a foam dart gun over and over again, working to perfect his aim. The activity was pure personal challenge and skill-building, with no relation whatsoever to war.

At other times, however, the theme of the play is war, and there is a troubling tone. One child is consistently in the victim or the bully role, or the game is being used as a way for a child to express anger. Or there is a rigid war script being played

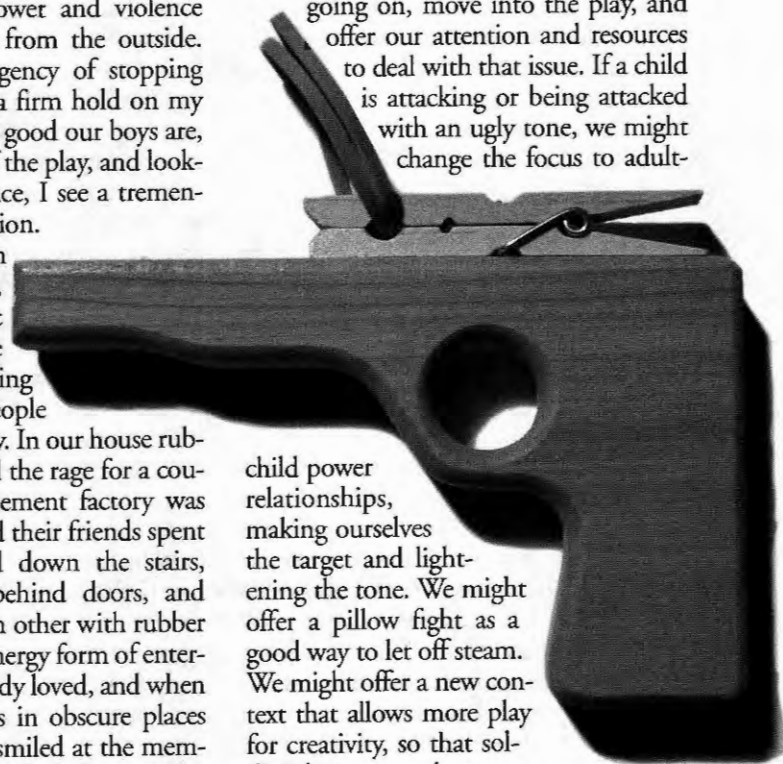
of these situations to be dealt with—but chances are it's not war. More than likely a child is acting out an experienced hurt in an attempt to get help. The question here is not how to keep children from playing war games, but how to help them with the issues they present in their play. How do we love a bully? How can we invite our children to express their anger? How can creativity be injected into lifeless scripts, or more interesting alternatives be offered?

In a way, these questions are more challenging. They can't be answered with a statement of belief. They require us to think and to be actively engaged with our children as they play. We get to make our best working guess about what is really

going on, move into the play, and offer our attention and resources to deal with that issue. If a child is attacking or being attacked with an ugly tone, we might change the focus to adult-

child power relationships, making ourselves the target and lightening the tone. We might offer a pillow fight as a good way to let off steam. We might offer a new context that allows more play for creativity, so that soldiers become explorers or Olympic athletes.

If we watch closely, the right response can emerge. I have a memory, still as fresh as the day it happened, of a little three- or four-year-old boy in a play group pointing his finger at me. How to respond to "Bang, bang, you're dead!" was still a puzzle for me. I didn't want to moralize, but couldn't hit on an engaging alternative. Yet he kept persisting and I kept experimenting, knowing that there was something he was looking for, some reason for



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Follow the Child

by Ann Jerome Croce

I am an introspective kind of Friend who considers every decision carefully. It takes me days to mull over a ten-minute conversation and months to work up to buying a new pair of jeans. Imagine my surprise when I became the mother of a child who has always known exactly who she is and what she wants.

One of my first clues was when we would play that game where the baby sits in the high chair and drops a toy from the tray onto the floor. My role, of course, was to pick up the toy and return it to the tray,

My baby, living ten hours from home at age 12?

again and again. But Elizabeth wrote her own rules. Whenever I handed the toy back to her, she hurled it down again with a pointed purse of the lips: what she had dropped, she intended to stay dropped.

Elizabeth was a people-person even as a young child. By age four she seemed to know more people in our town than I did. She'd circulate while we waited for our order in restaurants; and when we rose to leave, the whole room would call out, "Bye, Elizabeth!" Her self-confident forays often brought me to the brink of panic in stores, and her innate trust in human nature made our "Don't talk to strangers" discussion incomprehensible.

One evening when she was 12, Elizabeth catalyzed a turning point in our lives. Discouraged by the local prospects for middle school, I was perusing websites of alternative schools, fishing for ideas about how we might meet her needs in our small Florida town. I heard her come through the doorway behind me, stop just off my

left shoulder, and after a one-breath moment announce, "I'm going *there*."

There was an unimaginable step. It was the Arthur Morgan School, a Quaker boarding middle school in western North Carolina. It looked idyllic on the website—but my baby, ten hours from home at age 12?

Boarding schools have been the backbone of Friends education since the 18th century, fostering both conviction and lifelong commitment. Countless Friends have been in my position as a parent, weighing the benefits of a boarding school education against the costs. A Friends boarding school is a more dedicated Quaker community than many of us can provide at home, offering a context in which children can grow into young adults with confidence and a fully grounded experience of Quaker values and process.

My own life's course was touched profoundly by the two years I taught at Westtown School, where I experienced Friends community at its fullest and best. I have yearned for a similar community for both myself and my children ever since. But even as an as-yet-childless 22-year-old dorm faculty member, I was certain that I could never send my own children away to school. My students there were vibrant and excited about entering into adulthood with gusto, and as frustrating and challenging as teenagers could sometimes be, I knew that when I had one of my own I would want to keep him or her close to me for as long as I could.

Moreover, the youngest students at Westtown were ninth graders, and nearly all of them seemed to me too young to be away from home. Even some of my Westtown juniors and seniors struggled with the separation from their families. Elizabeth would be entering seventh grade. It



was unthinkable.

And yet, as we explored Arthur Morgan School from a distance and then with the three-day, two-night visit required of applicants, the unthinkable seemed increasingly unavoidable.

As a parent, and I think especially as a Quaker parent, it's natural to do a lot of self-questioning. How can we maintain simplicity in our home? Did I model peacemaking in dealing with that conflict on the playground? Does the Testimony of Equality tell me anything about how to deal with a three-year-old having a tantrum? But in the face of true clearness, there is no guessing.

I found myself grateful for my understanding of Quaker "calling," for AMS clearly was one for Elizabeth. As she put it, "I just knew in my gut that I was going there, that there was something important that would happen to me there. It didn't feel especially like it was an exciting good thing or a scary bad thing—just that it was." We enacted our own informal clearness process within the family and with a few Friends from our meeting, and from her enduring clarity I learned my own mandate: support this child's calling.

Other parents' reactions revealed to me what I was learning about parenting a

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Quaker child. There were those who were shocked: "How can you think of letting her go so far from home?" There were those who were critical: "I would never let my child go so far away." There were those who tried to jump on the bandwagon but ended up on some other cart: "You're right—an exuberant kid who's a kinetic learner couldn't make it in the local schools." These reactions only highlighted for me what Elizabeth was really doing in following her Inner Light. At a very young age, she had experienced what many Friends wait a lifetime to feel, a calling that transcends worldly concerns and obstacles. Her clarity about her decision to attend AMS made it easy for me to adhere to that resounding dictate of Maria Montessori: "Follow the child."

Arthur Morgan School was founded in 1962 by Elizabeth Morgan, whose vision was shaped not only by her Quakerism but also by Mohandas Gandhi and the educational philosophies of Maria Montessori, Arthur Morgan, N.S.F. Grundtvig, and Johann Pestalozzi. Their ideas guide a hands-on, holistic, and learner-driven curriculum that fosters responsibility, self-

are heated with wood that has to be chopped and stacked; meals must be prepared and cleaned up; buildings and grounds have to be cleaned; and students walk at least a mile a day up and down the hill between the boarding houses and the classrooms. Then there are the emotional challenges arising from adolescents living together 24 hours a day, as well as from the baggage that each person brings with them. Most of the students are boarders, and many share a bedroom for the first time. And extended off-campus trips requiring strenuous physical activity and long travel with others can make things intense.



talking, and music-making, simplicity guides daily life. The AMS style of fashion is imaginatively assembled from mountain gear and thrift stores, and the buildings at the school were constructed by volunteers over the years, using many local and donated materials. The testimonies of Nonviolence and Equality are woven into the fabric of everyday interactions as well as into the curriculum. Students can choose from courses on topics such as Native peoples, civil rights, gender and GLBT issues, and hunger and homelessness, alongside their regularly required courses in language arts and mathematics.

As a Friend, I value Quaker testimonies and process for their intrinsic worth. As a parent, I've seen how appropriate they are in the formative education of adolescents. AMS students have a kind of self-confidence that is seldom seen in middle schoolers. When you visit, every one of them will look you in the eye, smile, and greet you, and if you sit down to lunch with them, they can hold extended conversations on their experiences and will ask about yours. They play, tease, and push limits like anyone else their age, but it's evident that for

the most part these impulses come more from adolescent mischief than from insecurity. They know from experience that they are capable of working hard and effectively and that they matter in the world. They are comfortable in their own skins.

They also know from experience how to build community. Students who break the contract they signed when they agreed to come to AMS can be sent home for a few days with a list of queries that they must answer in writing. This applies to breaches of respect for others, such as bullying, in addition to infractions such as alcohol use. In explaining this use of queries to a friend in Elizabeth's presence I referred to it as a system of discipline, and she corrected me: "It's not like a punishment or anything—it's a chance for them to think about what they did so they can come back to school and participate better. It's not discipline; it's learning." Elizabeth has already begun to lobby for more Friends education after she graduates from AMS: "Now that I've lived in a community like this, I know I can never live without it." If her life takes her places where she feels the lack of real community, AMS has given



awareness, and engagement with the community and the world. AMS is located in the Celo community northeast of Asheville, and the natural environment of the Black Mountains provides the backdrop for hiking, mountain biking, and daily gratitude for the beauty of nature.

Life can be challenging at AMS. Everyone participates in chores at least three hours a day, more on dedicated workdays. The 27 students and 14 staff constitute the entire population of the school—no groundskeepers, no maintenance crew, no janitors. Much of the school's food is grown organically on site. The buildings

Quaker process is the mechanism that guides the school—and, in my observation, makes it all work. Conflicts are quickly brought to light and discussed until they are resolved. Weekly all-school meetings and house meetings provide a structure for regular communication of concerns, and clerkships rotate among students and faculty. Corporate decision-making prevails, with students invited to participate in decisions where appropriate. Moments of silence punctuate each day.

With no-television and no-candy policies, home-grown meals made from scratch, and free time spent in reading,

Ann Croce

Courtesy of Arthur Morgan School

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Why Young Friends Need Elders— AND WHY THEY NEED US

T by Micah Bales

o be a Young Friend is to be in transition—to be in a time of great possibility, uncertainty, and formation. Often, to be a Young Friend is to be rootless, at least in comparison with those younger or older. It frequently means having a great deal of mobility vis-à-vis other generations. To be a Young Friend often means being open to a great variety of ideas and ways of looking at the world, not only in the theoretical sense but in the experimental sense. We are often very willing to apply new ideas to our lives to see if they work. We are exceptionally flexible and willing to learn, and thus we allow a point of entry for new perspectives and ways of operating into the Religious Society of Friends. Very significantly, Young Friends often have profound emotional flexibility. We do not yet have decades of divisions

tion, inner refinement, and spiritual warfare. When God speaks to Young Friends we are ready to obey with the entirety of our beings and to let the Holy Spirit speak and act through us in ways that will let none doubt the living presence of the Kingdom of Heaven in the world. The Spirit of Christ fundamentally shakes our reality and alters our ways of relating to the world and to our community.

Many Young Friends are on fire for God and are ready to express the Love we have experienced in the world. This has been underscored recently at the 2005 World Gathering of Young Friends in Lancaster, England, and at the Young Adult Friends Gathering this past February in Burlington, New Jersey. Many Young Friends are ready for all-out revolution, calling for total life change (repentance) and revealing the blasphemy of the principalities and powers that claim to rule over our world. The Spirit is with us, we have the fire; but we need guidance. Young Friends have energy on all levels, creativity, openness, and fresh eyes to view

discipline our elders can provide, as well as their love and acceptance. Both sides of the equation are crucial; we need supportive environments where we can feel free to explore our faith and our gifts, but those supportive environments can only be created in a space where our elders are being truly open and honest with us. A part of openness, at least in the context of the Religious Society of Friends, is sharing the tradition of our religious community and providing a space where Friends can learn spiritual discipline. Elder Friends render us a great disservice when they refuse to hold us accountable to our identity as Children of the Light. This is critical business for our future as a community. After all, where will Young Friends learn what it means to be a Quaker if not from our elders?

Some elders—as well as many Young Friends—understandably fear the word “discipline,” perhaps in many areas of their lives, but certainly in the religious sphere. One of the main reasons that many Friends were initially attracted to

Quakerism was a sense of openness and freedom to explore without being coerced or judged. It should be made clear that “discipline” is not used to mean a relationship of domination by one Friend or group of Friends over another. Instead, it is used to suggest that there is a common understanding and faith that draws us together as Quakers, and that there can be modes of imparting our understanding as a community—our tradition, our symbols, our language, our shared calling—that do not require the domination

of the individual by the group. The basis for discipline amongst Friends must be relationships of love, not domination. But Young Friends, and perhaps others, do need discipline to help us learn how to live as Friends and to take part meaningfully in our religious community.

The Spirit is with us, we have the fire; but we need guidance.

and disputes behind us, so we are in a position to look past personality conflicts and engage the issues that are before us rather than focusing on our sense of having been offended.

Above all, Young Friends have tremendous energy on every level. Young Friends have immense physical energy—for projects, travels, labor, and taking risks. We also have great mental energy and often the ability to focus on many new projects, since we are not yet tied down to any particular life mission. Finally, many Young Friends have awesome spiritual energy. Our relationship to the Spirit is far more likely to be one that guides us to prepara-



old disputes, but we need love, community, tradition, and yes, discipline. Young Friends have enormous gifts to offer the Religious Society of Friends as a body, but we also have acute needs if we are to deliver our gifts to the wider fellowship.

We need the wisdom, guidance, and

Dave French

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We need elders to be leaders now if there is to be any Quaker leadership in future generations. One of the primary roles of leadership is nurturing new leaders, and our elders need to make sure that they are doing so. How are elder Friends helping Young Friends develop as leaders, as ministers, as children of God? Are older, more experienced, and more established Friends taking up their responsibility to younger, less experienced, and less established Friends in their communities? How do Friends support and care for emerging leaders amongst us? How do Friends make themselves available to

keys to the integration of youth in our religious communities. Elders do well in inviting Young Friends to spend time with them outside of meeting for worship, business meetings, committee meetings, or other Quakerly obligations. Invite us out to lunch. Developing ordinary, human relationships with Friends is deeply motivating, especially for Young Friends, who are often in the process of sorting out where we belong in the world. The value of providing a space for community, relationships, mutual friendship, and vulnerability cannot be overstated. Once established,

ministry and leadership of young Friends. One such step would be the formation of support committees for Friends who want to deepen their relationship with God and discern the will of the Spirit for their lives. Elders willing to serve on such committees as supportive, grounding presences in the life of a Young Friend would be invaluable to the development of a generation of powerful Quaker leadership. Established Friends could also open their homes to Friends who are traveling in the ministry. Young Friends are often well equipped to carry our traveling ministry, thanks to being relatively unattached, as well as to their physical stamina and ability to visit other communities with openness and humility.

Finally, elders can be financially supportive of budding young ministers. This seems like the most obvious suggestion of all, and a place where Friends seem to be doing a fairly decent job. Yet it is worth mentioning briefly. For all of our strengths, youth are not typically in a position to have access to a great deal of wealth. We often rely heavily on our elders for the expenses associated with education, travel, projects, and event-planning. Elders would do well to consider or continue to support Friends who are seeking training as ministers. This could include support for those who are exploring attending schools for theological training such as Earlham School of Religion, Quaker centers such as Pendle Hill or Woodbrooke, or a variety of other training opportunities that exist throughout the world. Spiritual support and guidance during the process of discernment and during the course of study, and financial support to enable studies, are both very important.

We also greatly need the support of our elders as we undertake new projects and gatherings as Friends. The World Gathering of Young Friends in August of 2005, for example, would not have been possible without the financial support of elder Friends across the world. That gathering was a seed planted for the future of our global religious community. Let us pray that Friends will continue to plant and care for these seeds as they sprout in a variety of ways.

If elder Friends do take the initiative to provide support for us on all of these levels, from the most personal to the organi-

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share their experience, tradition, and expertise with younger Friends?

There are, of course, many simple things, seemingly small things, that can make a difference in the lives of Young Friends and in their development into leaders in the Religious Society. One basic step that any elder can take to encourage youth in their community is to take an interest in them as individuals. This could take the form of speaking with them on First Days, learning about their lives and experience, inquiring about where they come from in all senses, and finding out how they see themselves fitting in among Friends. Little gestures are surprisingly important; a hand-written note, or even a brief e-mail or phone call, can be miraculous in its ability to give Friends a sense of connectedness to others in their community. Beyond these inordinately powerful, simple gestures, elders hold many other

new opportunities will open up for all involved. It is at this stage that elders might offer emerging leaders opportunities to give ministry in a variety of contexts where the elders are already involved. Some elders might be in a position to offer the youth in their midst apprentice relationships with them and the opportunity to learn practical skills in the process. While this is most immediately obvious in the pastoral setting, it is equally true among unprogrammed Friends. Many Young Friends would be thrilled, for example, to be included in the clerking process in their monthly and yearly meetings. In most Quaker communities, Friends are involved in a variety of projects where youth could participate and learn leadership skills.

There are further steps that individual elders and the Quaker fellowship as a whole can undertake to encourage the

Chris Pifer

What Would Tom Fox Do?

by Peggy O'Neill

My 15-year-old son Jonathan dragged his tired body in the door, trailing his sleeping bag and pillow, exhausted but with a peaceful smile and an air of happiness. He had just returned from a Baltimore Yearly Meeting Young Friends weekend (they call it a "conference") and he just wanted to go to bed. Before collapsing, he uttered a puzzling declaration: "I just met the most awesome guy in the world—Tom Fox."

"Tell me about him," I asked, in my best open-ended manner. My son shrugged, continued his stagger toward the bed, and mumbled over his shoulder, "I don't know, he's just a guy—but he's really cool."

How could this quiet, middle-aged, balding man in boring khakis and cap have captured my cool son's admiration?

I was intrigued, not just to hear about this Tom Fox, but also to find out more about what happened during these weekends. Jonathan was noticeably affected by his experiences there. He seemed happier, more relaxed, and more self-confident. He was less grumpy around the house too!

I decided to ask Jonathan if I could volunteer to be a FAP (Friendly Adult Presence) at a conference. The answer was an

Peggy O'Neill is a member of Richmond (Va.) Meeting and a faculty member at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she directs educational programs about preventing abuse and neglect of people with disabilities. She also teaches Sacred Dance and designs jewelry. In 1999, Peggy felt a strong leading to serve Young Friends and has since been Religious Education coordinator as well as a regular Friendly Adult Presence and workshop leader for Young Friends throughout Baltimore Yearly Meeting and at the Friends General Conference Gathering.

emphatic "No!" But after each weekend event, I continued to express interest in going, and at last he let me come along (and give rides to his friends) as long as I did not act like a mom while we were there. Our agreement was that he would call me by my first name just like everybody else, and that I would treat him no differently than I treated all the other Young Friends. This is how I finally got to be a FAP.

When I met Tom Fox, I was puzzled. How could this quiet, middle-aged, balding man in boring khakis, white polo shirt, and cap emblazoned with "Farm Fresh" have captured my cool son's admiration? It actually took me a while to figure this out, since Tom was so understated and subtle.

Tom Fox is now well known because he was killed in Iraq while serving with Christian Peacemaker Teams. The journal he kept while serving there has been an inspiration to peace-loving people all over the world. Through his example he taught us the importance of being present to witness the pain inflicted by our country's policies, and to lovingly minister to those who suffer the most, the Iraqi people.

Tom learned how to be a presence in people's lives through his many years of service to Young Friends. He was passionate about Young Friends and he felt called to serve them as a mentor, friend, teacher, and spiritual companion. An entire generation of Young Friends throughout the country, and especially in Baltimore Yearly Meeting, were blessed with Tom's presence.

When news of Tom's murder finally arrived after his long captivity, there was an outpouring of emotion from Young Friends around the country. At memorial services held for Tom, current and former Young Friends attended in large numbers. They spoke about their love for Tom and what they learned from him. They wrote songs about him and told stories about their experiences with him, some funny, others profound. They also asked themselves hard questions about how Tom's

witness for peace affects their own life choices. They honored him through their support of Christian Peacemaker Teams. Several former Young Friends are now considering working with CPT themselves, and many others are actively looking for ways to live their lives as witnesses to peace.

A verse from one of the songs written for Tom expresses the sentiments of many Young Friends:

*I'm remembering back to when you were
a FAP.
You had a silent and a powerful presence.
You had so much wisdom that you kept
inside but we knew you were wise.
Your silence was the evidence.
I learned from your eyes not to speak all
the time.
To be wise means to not have to prove it.
And we talk about patience and love all
the time but you showed me that
someone can do it.*

—from "There's a Spirit in Iraq," by
Jon Watts, from *The Art of Fully Being*,
<www.bullandmouthrecords.com>.

So what did Tom do with Young Friends that was so powerful in helping them find their voices as Quaker adults? Here are the observations of some of us who learned from Tom's passionate convictions about working with Quaker youth as we served alongside him in Quaker camps and at Young Friends gatherings:

Ted Heck, co-clerk of Youth Programs Committee for Baltimore Yearly Meeting, who served as a FAP with Tom for many years, remembers watching Tom during business meetings at BYM Young Friends' Conferences. Tom seldom said a word, but always paid close attention to everything that was going on. When he did speak, he usually addressed protocol or process, offering information to help Young Friends make informed decisions. On the rare occasion when he gave his opinion, Tom was careful to stick to his

observations of the facts. It was clear that Tom's intention was never to push Young Friends in a particular direction, but rather to help them find their own way.

What Tom said to Young Friends, through his words and his behavior, conveyed these messages:

I respect you, I trust you, I love you—most of the time, I even like you!

I encourage you to take responsibility for

that Tom always seemed sublimely content and consistently entertained by Young Friends' antics and fun. While he sometimes joined their conversations and activities, often he just watched and listened. Tom had the enviable and amazing ability to really *be* in the moment without needing to influence it, and to fully appreciate Young Friends without needing to criticize or change them.

In *The Power of NOW*, contemporary

Langley Hill meeting. At a previous conference, three female Young Friends had decided to be "kitchen elves" around 4 AM, so the job would be done when everyone else got up. Protecting their only decent shirts, they worked in their bras, anticipating that the other Young Friends would be thrilled to find a clean kitchen—which they were. But what interested Young Friends more was what they called "topless dishwashing."

At the next conference, when it came time to clean up, someone yelled out "topless dishwashing!" Tom just shrugged, said "Okay," took off his T-shirt, and got to work. The energy tinged with sexuality turned into hysterical shrieks and laughter as the teens cleaned alongside Tom, girls in their sports bras, boys shirtless. Tom's action had diffused the tension, meeting the Young Friends right where they were. When another FAP complimented him on his quick-witted response, Tom simply replied, with a half smile, "You use what God gives you."

Tom Horne, another long-term FAP, is grateful to Tom Fox for many years of constant help and support for his children, who grew up in Young Friends, and believes this influence was a very important factor in their development. Tom

Nate Ryan

Tom Fox (right) with Young Friends



yourself, for your behavior, and for the consequences of your behavior.

I know you will act responsibly given the opportunity to discern what is right for you, individually and as a group.

I know that I can trust you to do what is right.

I love you even when you make mistakes. In fact, I expect you to make mistakes. You are human just like me, and I have certainly made plenty of mistakes.

Nothing you are concerned about is unimportant or not worth my time to discuss with you.

Whether he was in the kitchen helping to prepare a meal, leading a workshop, or just hanging out, Tom Fox obviously enjoyed Young Friends. Ted Heck noticed

spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle describes the practice of being present in the now as one of the essential tools for achieving enlightenment. Tom Fox was fully present in the moment with Young Friends, and said that he felt more spiritually connected when he was with them than at any other time.

In her eulogy for Tom Fox on April 22, 2006, Lauri Perman, clerk of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, reported that before Tom left for Iraq for the last time, a Young Friend told him that she didn't want him to leave. He looked at her, smiled, gave her a hug, and said, "I'm leaving, but we have the memories, and we are here together now."

Laurie Wilner, who knew Tom as a fellow FAP and co-worker at Baltimore Yearly Meeting, remembers the way Tom handled an awkward situation that arose during a Young Friends conference at

Horne observed the calmness that Tom Fox brought to the difficulties of working with teens. He also enjoyed Tom Fox's sense of fun and playfulness. A favorite memory is laughing uproariously with Young Friends, who had been playing Duck, Duck, Goose, when his son, Sam Horne, tapped Tom Fox on the head to be the goose. Sam figured that the older man could not catch him, so started his circuit at a relaxed pace. But Tom took a shortcut across the circle—definitely against the rules. Sam was impressed that a man of such wisdom who had everyone's respect would actually break rules, and wrote in his online journal on March 11, 2006: "That's Tom Fox. He was not limited by any box people get put in. He was wise but full of laughter. Every bit the adult that watched over us, and every bit

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Young Friends Need More SUBSTANCE

by Zachary Hoyt

What I have appreciated most about Friends is the way they have welcomed me into their Religious Society, both in New York State where I now live, and in Maine where I grew up. My family began attending Portland Meeting when I was 12, and I was glad to be in a place where the adults didn't seem to think it too



small engine repair. He knew how to do a great many things but needed help with them, and I did not have much experience but could do things if he told me how. I also remember several other elders in that meeting: in particular, one a retired doctor with whom we carpoled, and one with whom I had conversations about books we were reading.

When I was 15, my family moved to St. Francis Farm, a Catholic Worker community in upstate New York. When we had been at the farm for about six

I got the impression from some that they would have preferred me to be elsewhere, and that they expected all people my age to have the interests and values of the popular U.S. teen culture.

abnormal when I attended meeting for worship and meeting for business. In the Methodist church we had previously attended, adults didn't seem to expect adolescents to be interested in church; they expected we would spend our time in malls with people of our own age. I was homeschooled, and meeting seemed similar to homeschooling: not having a minister was like not having a teacher, and both tended to be open-ended rather than having a predetermined plan. During the next two summers I attended Friends

Camp in central Maine. I enjoyed the beauty of the camp, China Lake, and the people with whom I became acquainted. I found a great deal of value in 45 minutes of silence in a field every day at sunset, and in the way conflicts were resolved and decisions made with a modified form of Quaker business practice.

Around that time I began attending Adult Religious Education at Portland Friends, which had joined with the teen group to study Earth care and Friends involvement with nature, and I found those sessions to be thought-provoking. Twice annually the meeting had a day when Friends worked together on upkeep of house and grounds, and I found that many of the best conversations I took part in were on those days. Working together offered time for longer conversations than were possible after meeting, and there was more time to stop and think before speaking.

In Portland Meeting I was especially grateful for the opportunity to spend time with one older Friend who I came to know initially from talking with him after meeting. I started doing yard work at his house, and he would come and pick me up as I lived quite a distance away. The length of the trip gave us time to talk about a wide variety of things, and I always found what he said to be well worth pondering. I learned a great deal about practical matters also, as the work I did with him branched out to home and

months, Portland Friends asked my sister and me to serve as speakers at a quarterly meeting session on how Friends were currently trying to live out the Peace Testimony. I found that experience valuable, because it made me think carefully about the choices I made. Once my family had our feet under us at the farm we began attending Syracuse Meeting. When I became involved with removing a wall to make the meeting room larger, I got to know some Friends better: the family I stayed with, the man from the house committee who was in charge of the project, and the retired social worker who had done a great variety of things and told fascinating stories of his life as we worked. As my 18th birthday approached, Friends were very helpful when I began to think about draft registration, and I met with a clearness committee which included people who had been in military and alternative service in World War II or involved with draft counseling during the Vietnam War.

When I was 16, I attended the youth program at New England Yearly Meeting and enjoyed seeing some of the people I had met at Friends Camp, participating in small group gatherings, and volunteering for a day at a nature center. I found the worship and business with the teen group somewhat insubstantial, and I would have

Zachary Hoyt, a junior member of Portland (Maine) Meeting, is involved with Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting in New York. He is in his seventh year as a full-time volunteer at St. Francis Farm, where he attends regular worship at the farm each day.

Kickapoo Valley Young Friends Choir

by the members of the choir

Hanna: The Kickapoo Valley Young Friends Choir was started during a now-annual First-day school fundraiser for a school in El Salvador. We decided to sell Singing Valentines. Later, Joan, our coordinator, brought together the young Friends who were interested and put together a larger repertoire for the Valentines.

Joan: In the fall of 2003 we started the First-day school year with meeting for business for the first time. Kickapoo Valley Meeting has been experimental and never completely satisfied with how to provide religious education for a small group with a wide age range. It seemed to make sense to encourage the kids to be more involved in the decision making. Their Singing Valentines raised money for scholarships for San Ignacio School in El Salvador Yearly Meeting, with which Northern Yearly Meeting has a sister yearly meeting relationship. That year the choir sang "Magic Penny" more times than any of the kids cared to, but they did decide to do the Singing Valentines again next year. I brought in a collection of camp song books looking for love songs that kids might like to sing. A song they chose was one for which I had learned a slightly different tune than what was written, but they weren't satisfied with either and made up and agreed on their own version. I was impressed by that—and by how good they sounded singing together. I realized they had just taken their first steps in becoming a choir. I remembered that my own

experiences singing in choirs as a kid were a significant piece of my becoming a Quaker. The joyful experience of the breath of God through my body, and breathing together and listening with the group, have been among the more tangible experiences of touching God. We don't know how to share the central Quaker experience with our kids. They don't sit in meeting for worship much. They don't share our adult lives much. Talking about experience is not the same as sharing it. Perhaps in a "Quaker process" choir, I thought, the kids could share that experience of meeting God. I

our teacher, prefers to be called the coordinator, which I think is quite comical. It is challenging at times, but we all work really hard, listen to each other, and blend quite well. The members of the choir are close like family, and I think we are welcoming and flexible.

I like the fact that we can pick what we want to sing, and sometimes those choices can be as crazy as bloody Irish ballads. If a song doesn't have an alto part, Joan is kind enough to create one with her excellent skill at harmony. She can also transpose music so that it is more in our comfort range.



I hear joy in their voices together and I shake and cry.

I enjoy it when our choir sings at the Farmer's Market during the summer to raise funds. Last summer we raised money for the Heifer Project by singing and by selling homemade jam. So we also get to use our sales and cooking abilities.

Our choir makes decisions based on consensus, meaning that we listen to everyone's ideas and seek to compromise. I had to get used to this style of decision making because I am used to voting, but I think it works out fairly well.

May: My experience in the choir has been fun as well as aggravating. I'm proud to be in the choir, though I don't always completely agree with decisions. Mostly the choir is run by consensus and this does slow us down when making decisions, but it is most effective for us as a Quaker choir. I have plenty of fun singing with my sisters and friends. And I like the songs we sing; usually they're fairly easy to learn—the difficult part is making them sound interesting.

Hanna: The small size of our group makes us flexible. We can arrange the

proposed this to them, and they were for it. We're continuing to work out what that means.

Alisha: I have really enjoyed being part of the choir! It consists of the three Chakoian sisters, Kelsey, and me. Joan,

The Kickapoo Valley Young Friends Choir members include Kelsey Britton (age 14), Hanna Chakoian (age 17), May Chakoian (age 14), Zoe Chakoian (age 8), Joan Francis (age 58), and Alisha Haak (age 17). Kickapoo Valley Meeting is located in Gays Mills, Wis.

Photo courtesy of the Kickapoo Valley Young Friends Choir

the altos are satisfied, and it does not take much time to get a song together enough to see if we like it. The style we use comes from our Singing Valentines. We tend to sing a *cappella*, both because we mostly travel with our music, and because we enjoy singing that way. We use music from the *Friends Hymnal*, *Rise Up Singing*, sheet music from a store, and music we heard on the radio. We enjoy humorous songs and have a lot of fun picking songs to offer as Singing Valentines; but we also sing serious music. For the Viroqua area Caroling of the Choirs, a multi-church performance, we sang "Christmas in the Trenches" by John McCutcheon. We have also brought carols to nursing homes.

Joan: So what is a "Quaker process choir"? It's a choir in which listening is more important than technique. A choir in which all decisions are made by consensus—what we sing, in what key, what words, what tempo, how it's arranged, what parts where, what notes, and so on. We don't sing the music as it is written, but as we hear it. I may do more of the initial arranging since I have a few decades more experience, but they rearrange what I write or suggest. I am not a choir director; I see my role more as that of a clerk of meeting. Listening is my most important job—an active listening that draws the group together.

The choir has become part of the meeting's outreach to the larger community in a variety of ways. The kids like raising money for worthy causes; we include kids whose parents have tenuous connections to Quakers; and at the Caroling of the Choirs, we sang "Silent Night" in four languages.

The kids have taken this vision and played with it, with success and continuing struggle as well as fun. Consensus decision making is not easy; they're working on it. Singing together by listening rather than as directed is a challenge. They do it well and want more difficult work. I hear joy in their voices together and I shake and cry.

Hanna: There is a balance in the group that is fine if we have one new member who integrates well and has the necessary skill; but we can be easily overwhelmed. At one point we took in six new members at once, and the

came the idea of a preparatory choir, with standards to be met before new members can rehearse and perform with the choir.

May: For a few months the choir was more than doubled. It went from 5 to 11 or 12 people. Most of the newer kids were new to singing in a choir, and unused to listening to the people around them. It was an aggravating time for all involved. The older choir members felt that we were being held back. Often we were exasperated by the lack of experience of many of the newer members and their inability to sit still.

The newer members probably felt overwhelmed, too. They started in January, after the holidays, and they didn't have time to adjust before we did Singing Valentines in February. After that, many of the newer kids decided to drop out. That's when the idea of a pre-choir came up, to give beginners experience, and a chance at being accepted.

Joan: One new member at a time we can manage; but with six or seven we didn't do so well. Everyone was frustrated. So we're planning to try a preparatory choir, for new members to get enough experience to be prepared to come into the older group.

Hanna: A part of having such a small choir is being able to goof around and tease each other without it getting out of control. It can feel like a bunch of siblings—actually, my two sisters are in the choir.

Zoe: It's sort of fun, and we even have fun being bored. We just sort of play around. I like most of the songs that we sing, and I think that Joan is a good coordinator.

Kelsey: Of all the choirs I have been a part of, I enjoy this the most. I like choosing nearly all of the songs we sing. We can hear everyone's voice in the group, and harmonize and blend by listening to each other breathe. I am glad it is not a very large group, because with more people the listening and blending became harder.

Hanna: Recently we officially became recognized by the meeting as the choir, rather than simply part of the First-day school program. □

Y by Gail Eastwood

You can raise a Quaker without First-day school, without lesson plans, even without figuring out "what every Quaker child needs to know about Quakerism"—but you can't raise a Quaker without community. Young people raised among Quakers become Quakers for much the same reason people who come to Quakerism as adults do. They get hooked on the experience of spiritual community; they become passionate about the truths learned by plunging into the living water together. Even if no one ever quoted Scripture to them—"love ye one another"—still they understand, hunger for it, and come back for more.

I never set out to raise Quakers. Being new to Quakerism myself, it would have seemed presumptuous. Being a member of a very small and invariably silent worship group, there was no First-day school to offer. There were stories and songs in the home, silent grace at dinner time—but no religious education curriculum, and the stories in the home were more likely Buddhist dharma tales from their storyteller father. There were certainly books—read-alouds at a young age; and as the children grew older a choice book tailored to his or her nature might be offered, or simply left out on the table to be grabbed. Add all of this to the conversations in the family and you have a "no lesson plan" version of spiritual instruction. These things are all part of raising children—but none of this would make them Quakers.

"It takes a village to raise a child," says the African proverb. Well, it takes a meeting to raise a Quaker. The Quaker communities that raised my children were the teen meetings—meetings of young people and their adult leaders and other adult friends—of the yearly and quarterly meetings. These infrequent but intensely experienced meetings can have a huge impact on young lives.

Going to Pacific Yearly Meeting was, at first, another homeschool offering on my part. Not a professional teacher, and a lazy non-teacher at that, my chief gift as a homeschooling mom was the ability to notice the

Gail Eastwood, a member of Humboldt Meeting in Arcata, Calif., is co-clerk of Pacific Yearly Meeting's Religious Education for Children Committee.

Meeting to Raise a Quaker

difference between the “clunk” or “ding” reaction when a resource or experience was offered. Yearly meeting for my pre-teen son was a bigtime “ding!” It became a necessary event in our year. Participating in Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) for five days in the summer, starting at age 11, leavened Michael’s whole year.

Like many other young people, Michael bonded to meeting for business and worship sharing long before he had any comprehension of meeting for worship. The catch, of course, is that to participate effectively in meeting for business or worship sharing, you have to “get” sitting with expectation and acceptance in the Silence. From the results, the JYMers seemed to take to it as though born to it, and it is indeed supremely innate to the human spirit to sit together in a sacred circle. The year we adults at Pacific Yearly Meeting were struggling painfully with our somewhat legalistic minute on the civil right of same-sex marriage, JYM brought to plenary their own penetrating and simply worded minute. For the teens, the experience of connection with the Spirit leading to heartfelt action left a lasting imprint. For the rest of us, the JYM minute helped us to see past our conflicting emotion to the heart of the matter—to the reality of how much we do love and celebrate each other. And I believe that many of us, while loving the ring of truth, also loved that the message came from our children.

The girls entered JYM five years after Michael, my daughter Faith and first one friend (because it would be more fun with a friend) and then two more friends (because they heard about the good times and asked to come). By that time there was also a quarterly teen program and they all absolutely had to go every quarter—never mind the seven-hour drive each way. The exuberant energy of four girls, myself, and all our gear in a little Subaru was fantastic! The girls explained

to me that teen Quaker gatherings were the place where they could be their real selves and be accepted—they could say whatever they wanted or needed to say. They talked intimately in worship-sharing mode about drugs, about relationships between men and women, and about sexual orientation. They thought together about war and about the planet. They learned to run meetings, to appoint clerks and committees, to plan their own gatherings, and to respond to things that happened at those gatherings. They rough-housed and stayed up late—sometimes just “hanging out” and sometimes in a late-night worship that would start at 11:00 and leave most of those gathered in tears. God bless their gifted (and often under-appreciated) adult leaders who entered into and guided their community!

that helped me raise them is deep.

The weakness of the teen meeting system that I experienced was its isolation from the rest of the community of Friends. Looking back, I have wished for these children to have also had the experience of being cherished by a monthly meeting from early childhood. I have heard adult Friends talk movingly of the love and acceptance they felt as children from elders in their monthly meeting. I also wish for more of the adults in our

To participate effectively in meeting, you have to “get” sitting with expectation and acceptance in the Silence.



monthly meetings to share the life and light of the young people. So many young people drop out of meeting starting at around age 11—about the age when the great mystics of many traditions were experiencing their first searing mystical experiences—and about the age when the teen meetings were beginning to make their deep impression on the lives of the children in my care.

The Quaker abolitionist John Woolman was deeply fixed in his mid-20s on his

As young adults, four of five of these children are still actively involved with Quaker community: one a member of a meeting, another an attender, and another attending a Quaker college. Most notable, though, is that all four are active in the young people’s community that drew them to Quakerism in the first place—active in yearly meeting, and in the Western Young Friends New Year’s Gathering. It is a joy to watch them go off to New Year’s Gathering together and to share the deep commitments of their earnest young lives. My gratitude to the meetings

concern for slaves and slaveholders. He traveled extensively in the ministry, speaking his message with earnest love. Where can we find among ourselves the young Woolmans of today? Are they embedded in our meetings, or have we cut many of them loose a decade or more earlier? If we as meetings could stay in contact with our teenagers, we might have more fire and less comfort—and that might well be a good thing for us and for the world! □

Joanne Clapp Fullagar

Friendly Partners Program

by Elizabeth Claggett-Borne

When our Quaker children become teenagers our meetings lose touch with them. They seem to disappear into the abyss of websites, soccer games, and iPods. I've heard parents say that their 14-year-old's schedule is so full, they feel he needs to sleep in on Sunday.

Elizabeth Claggett-Borne is a member of Friends Meeting at Cambridge (Mass.), where she offers programs for children.

As teens distance themselves from their parents, other adults need to step in to show that they care.

I feel that our teenagers need Quaker guidance even more than when they are younger. In 2001 our meeting started a program called "Friendly Partners" to match adults in the meeting with children when they become 12 years old. Girls are paired with women and boys with men.



As the first event, we arranged for the group of six adults and six youth to work an evening at a soup kitchen. We hoped the partners would set up biking, day trips, and service projects such as Habitat for Humanity to help mentor the youth.

My teenage son helped work on his partner's boat, painting it for the season. Later that summer they went out fishing together. Other pairs continued working at the soup kitchen, planting at the meetinghouse, or beading necklaces together. The entire group participates together in the annual Boston AIDS walk. We hoped that some of these encounters would bring up wonderings and talk of God, faith, or moral issues.

Our premise has been that as teens

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AIDSWalk photos by Skip Schiel

Why High School Sucked and How Young Friends Saved My Life

by Jon Watts

Shortly after graduating from high school I read an article stating that the reason adolescents place so much emphasis on social hierarchy is because our educational institutions deny them power over the rest of their lives, leaving them grasping for control over *something*. I didn't yet have a clear sense of the truth in relating those two patterns, but I was captivated by the truth of each individual statement: being cool (valued) is what life was all about; high school was a prison.

After middle school I left the public school system. Tired of being publicly shamed for whatever differences were apparent about me, I spent my freshman year of high school at a magnet school in the city with other alienated kids. In my sophomore year I freely returned to the public school system because, having become quite popular at the magnet school, I believed I would no longer be shamed. My understanding was that whatever inward problem had made me the target of public ridicule earlier on had now changed. People wouldn't make fun of me when they saw how cool I was now.

It only took a few weeks for me to realize that I was on the bottom of the stack again. I became confused. Had I somehow lost the value I had gained at my other school? When cool kids would crack a joke in class, everyone (including the teacher)

would laugh, affirmation pouring over them like a warm bath. I still remember the awkward silence, the teacher's disapproving glare, and the tangible distancing of the kids sitting nearest to me after I would make a similar joke as if that inner panic and humiliation were still living inside of me. I stopped cracking jokes.

Before I realized that my coolness (value) is rooted in my inward relationship with myself and not assigned by outer standards and comparisons, I was deeply affected by what people thought of me—or *seemed* to think of me. That no one would sit with me in the cafeteria at lunch left my relationship with myself in turmoil. My internal dialogue did not contain supportive messages for this struggle: "What is wrong with you that no one wants to talk to you?" Or, "What is wrong with you that you are so worried about it?" Or simply, "What is wrong with you?" I spent more time wondering why people didn't like me than I spent relaxed, enjoying each passing moment. I developed performance anxiety around my

and hyperanalysis of my own behavior became an obsession.

The prison-like aspects of my school were taken for granted. Of course we were ranked, compared to our peers, and given certain privileges according to our ranking. Of course the timing of events throughout the day wasn't based on or considerate of our needs and comfort levels. Of course we couldn't go to the bathroom without permission. Of course we were obligated to pledge allegiance to the flag each morning. Of course we were threatened and intimidated into behaving in a macro-manageable way. Of course! How else would the institution function? If we had more freedom, we would only abuse it. I saw other students laughed at

When I attended my first Young Friends conference, I couldn't believe what I was seeing.



Jon Watts, a member of Richmond (Va.) Meeting, is 24 years old. He attended Shiloh, Catocin, and Teen Adventure camps in the Baltimore Yearly Meeting camping program. He has been the Kenneth Carol Quaker Studies and Biblical Scholar at Pendle Hill for '06-'07 after graduating from Guilford College and the Quaker Leadership Scholars Program. In his year at Pendle Hill, he has recorded an album and participated in forming a Quaker-based record label. For more information, visit <www.bullandmouthrecords.com>.

peers ("Did I say that right?" "Have I just revealed my inner worthlessness?" "Has this interaction caused my value to shift in other people's eyes?"). My self-awareness

and shamed by students and teachers alike for questioning the fairness of school policies and the "right" of students to be considered in the decision making process.

My understanding of the belief system that fueled the behavior of that institution and the passive acceptance of its power and oppressive rules is that its framework consisted of the belief that adolescents are less than human. It seemed to be saying, "You're not capable of determining even your own basic needs, so they have been determined for you."

During my senior year of high school, I recorded an album that I released and sold to friends from school, Young Friends, and, later, to campers at Shiloh Quaker Camp. One of the songs on the album was entitled "Standard Education." The chorus goes:

Jon Watts

*Kids/don't gain their freedom until after
grade twelve!
year by year/hopes and dreams escaping up
to the shelves!
it's not just that we've lost faith in Santa's
elves!
we've also stopped believing completely in
ourselves.*

Artistically, I look back at that time laughingly, but I am impressed with how articulately I expressed the truth of our condition.

I hid my Quakerism until late in my junior year. I was not interested in providing one more difference for my peers to pick on, and I certainly couldn't explain it to them. It seems clear that if I hid my Quakerism, with all of the Quaker communities I belonged to, a young person who is less active in the Religious Society of Friends must be even more hesitant than I to make his or her "quirk" public. A child of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, I spent five summers going to Quaker camps. I was very active in my meeting, First-day school, retreats, and special events. I even grew up in an intentional community that sprouted out of my local meeting. All but one of the families in the community were Quaker, and there were seven of us children who grew up together. We were all great friends, laughing, joking, and playing outside until late at night. But when riding the school bus, it was as if we didn't know each other. Rarely would we sit together, and almost never would we acknowledge one another passing in the hall or sitting in the cafeteria. As the youngest of the five boys, this behavior was passed down to me without my understanding it. I didn't question it, nor did I question the message that I received from it: that there is some kind of shame in admitting to others our Quakerism and our relationship to one another in community.

When I attended my first Young Friends conference early in my sophomore year of high school I couldn't believe what I was seeing: these conferences were planned by people my age; the business meetings were clerked by people my age; the food planning, decision making, cleaning, finances, and newsletter were all done by people *my age*. These people who normally couldn't be trusted with a decision about going to the bathroom were in charge of an entire Quaker meeting and gathering of 80 or more people for five

weekends a year. My first reaction was to be incredulous. I had internalized the idea that someone my age was not capable of the types of responsibilities that these kids were taking credit for. Surely there was some adult behind the scenes making all of the real decisions. Surely they didn't trust *teenagers* to responsibly care for their own community. Surely the Friendly Adult Presences (FAPs) were there to control us, and not only for the stated reason of legality and hospital trips. Surely we would spend the whole weekend seeing what we could get away with before we got in trouble, right?

But when the lights went off at night, I was surprised to find the Young Friends following the guidelines that I had assumed were just for show. The Young Friends' minutes on drug use, leaving the gathering, cigarette smoking, and sexual activity were not only formally read at the beginning of each business meeting but were referenced in personal conversations as topics to be taken seriously. These were not abstract and limiting rules provided by an outside source but real and personal commitments derived from within the community, held deeply and carefully. It was then that I first began to seriously consider issues of accountability—how to maintain my own and also encourage it in others. There *were* those of us whose sensitivity to authority, power, and hierarchy took longer to wear off and whose need to rebel continued despite the lack of any clear oppressor to rebel against. But for the first time since we could remember, most of us just relaxed. We could be young and it was okay. We slowly stopped making decisions based on whether or not we would get in trouble and instead based them on what was good or bad for our community. We had been given something to care for, and we did. We cared.

When I related my conference experiences to my peers in high school, I emphasized the aspects that I thought they could relate to ("you mean that guys and girls sleep in the same room and you get to do *whatever* you want?!" with a little exaggeration. I didn't think that I could explain the personal sensation of being freed by the affirmation of my full humanity and my ability to care responsibly for my community (and myself) because my high school friends had never experienced anything like it. Looking back, I see this as one of the

deepest tragedies of this story. When I see my old high school friends now, seven years later, they are working corporate jobs that they hate because they *still* haven't experienced anything like it; they still haven't had their ability to care for their own lives affirmed. Their Truth (their discomfort in their jobs) isn't valuable to them. When they receive cultural messages instructing them to base their self-worth on their jobs and material possessions, they don't question; questioning has only gotten them laughed at. I am convinced that the experience of the Quaker business process (whose nature is to accommodate the questioning individual) has the power to snap someone out of it. It certainly did that for me.

My own process of coming to understand that I was capable of caring and responsibility was slow. It took three years before I fully trusted that the adults at conferences were there to love and support us, not to control us. I had to see it all for myself before I could fully believe it. In my senior year of high school I was the assistant clerk, so I saw and participated in all the behind-the-scenes business. It was sometimes my responsibility to hold meetings with members of the community who hadn't respected the guidelines on drugs, sex, or leaving the gathering. Then I would meet with the Executive Committee and sometimes we were called to ask Friends to leave the conference. So we really were in charge. We



were doing the difficult work. There really wasn't some adult somewhere pulling the strings. I can't describe how powerful and deep the reverberations of that realization have been in my life. If I could be a capable and full human being when my culture and its institutions were sending me the opposite message, what other cultural beliefs had I internalized that did not

serve me or my community well?

Teenagers are a group of people so oppressed and powerless that they sometimes make decisions that hurt themselves just so that they can be the ones making their decisions, just so that they can have some power over *some* aspect of their own lives. Is rebelliousness inherent to the age group as is so often heard, or is their rebellion a reaction? Would teenagers rebel if their Truth was affirmed and accepted by the larger society and its institutions?

The answer to this question, in my experience with Young Friends, is no. With no one to rebel against, we turned our energy inward and began healing our brokenness. We engaged in good business process (as only Young Friends can: lying all over each other in a giant cuddle puddle). We wrote good minutes. We made balanced decisions regarding our needs and the needs of the host meeting. We organized workshops based on what interested and engaged us. We played and played and played. And we finally—fully—relaxed. And because the FAPs had proven themselves willing to let us have our community, we listened to them. When Tom Fox, Michelle Levasseur, Tom Horne, or Peggy O'Neill spoke out in a meeting (which happened somewhat rarely), we could trust that they were speaking from a place of caring, trust, and love, and not out of a need to control us.

The most miraculous thing of all is that *I* relaxed. For five weekends out of the year, I was able to release my anxiety about my value and its connection to the social hierarchy and the judgment of my peers. At Young Friends conferences, I based my value on my love for the community and how actively and responsibly that love manifested itself. I was free to make social blunders in front of my peers without spending hours afterwards wondering what was wrong with me. I knew that a different life was possible.

I returned to my home meeting in Richmond, Virginia, and with the approval of the meeting and support from a several key adults, reorganized the Young Friends program to be based on the model of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting program. Previously run by a top-down decision-making model in which Young

Friends who showed up on Sunday morning were simply told what activities they would be doing that day, attendance had dwindled to two or three of us each First Day. Those of us who did attend hardly knew each other. It was rare that I would see the other Young Friends more than once or twice a year, and even if we did show up on the same Sunday, it was just as rare that the planned activity would facilitate community building in a way that spoke to us. The most common feelings I remember experiencing in that adult-run Young Friends program were awkwardness and boredom. At the very least, our First-day meetings certainly did not speak to my condition.

So at the beginning of my senior year, Richmond Meeting sponsored a picnic for the Young Friends. After some food and games, the adults split off and the Young Friends met without them to envi-



sion the coming year. We brainstormed ideas and shared our visions of what the Young Friends program could be. It didn't seem to matter what we came up with so much as the fact that it was *us* coming up with it. The significance of that gesture—the adults leaving—was deep. We could speak to one another in our common language without having to translate. We were free to be engaged. One thing we decided was that we would hold a series of lock-ins: overnight events held in the meetinghouse in which the Young Friends themselves decided the activities. We played wink. (If you want to know what this game is, ask anyone who has gone to Young Friends' events.) We sang whatever we wanted. We got to know each other in a comfortable environment that we created ourselves. We talked about the year and our vision for the Young Friends program. We planned the activi-

ties for each First Day together.

By the end of my senior year of high school there would be 15 Young Friends on any given First Day, and that number was growing. People were telling their friends about this amazing place where young people were trusted to make decisions for themselves (or to not make any decision at all, if that is where the Spirit led us!) That is a rare thing in this culture, so it attracted attention and interest quickly. Young people who had never heard of Quakerism were starting to come to Richmond Meeting on Sunday just to experience an institution that supported them, affirmed their experience, and spoke to their condition.

Friends, teenagers *can* make decisions for themselves. They can lovingly and responsibly engage in group decision making. Many young people won't tell you that; they may not know it. Most of them won't seek out responsibility in their community because they don't yet know that they are capable of being responsible. Most young people have had the opposite message repeatedly communicated to them by adults in authority. They need to be given the opportunity to explore community process in their own way, without judgment and with love and support. They won't understand what you're giving them, and at first they may not trust that you are really letting go.

If I hadn't been given the opportunity in high school to see that I was a full, capable human, my journey would look drastically different. Without that experience I wouldn't have made some of the more daring decisions in my life that now have me living a dream. I feel passionate about sharing my story so that perhaps a few more adults in power will have the courage to back off from their young people with love and patiently allow them to be. I feel deeply blessed by and grateful to the Religious Society of Friends. And sometimes I feel worried about what it means to live in a society of people who grew up believing that they weren't capable of making their own decisions and that they were less than human because of their age. I pray that every person will find an institution that will affirm them by allowing them to experiment with their own humanity, capability, and Truth, but I especially pray for young people. This is the greatest gift that we have the power to give them. It's in our hands. □

Finding Our Place as Young Adult Friends

S by Adam Waxman

Sometimes I feel as though I lived during the period of Quietism in Quaker history. I attended what may be a unique meeting for worship among Friends, the one at Guilford College, from which I graduated in May as a Quaker Leadership Scholar. Our attendees were regularly 90 percent under age 25. The big difference between these worship sessions and the more intergenerational ones in which I have participated, either at my home meeting in Philadelphia or other places, was that the unprogrammed meeting for worship

When we all fell into silence for the first time a discernable, palpable power possessed the room.

at Guilford would go for months, sometimes semesters, without anyone feeling moved by the Spirit to share a message. Meeting was more like meditation, with the exception of meeting for business. There was some attempt by the leaders of the Scholars program to deal with this issue, but it raised questions: Was the Spirit lacking among our group of young Friends? Did God not have a purpose for us? There were times when I wondered how much we, as a group, could access God. I found what might be the beginning of answers when I attended the Young Adult Friends Conference organized by Friends General Conference, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and Pendle Hill, February 16–18 in Burlington, New Jersey.

Adam Waxman, a member of Chestnut Hill Meeting in Philadelphia, Pa., graduated from the Quaker Leadership Studies Program at Guilford College this year with dual degrees in Political Science and Religious Studies. He is living in Washington, D.C.

The conference in Burlington snuck up on me, and I got my registration in at the last minute. It wasn't until I looked at the guest list that I sensed how exciting the gathering was going to be. I'd been involved in Philadelphia's Young Friends program while in high school, and it became a deep, important part of who I was spiritually. Like many Young Friends, however, leaving for college caused me to lose touch with a large number of the people with whom I had built spiritual community. Looking at the attendee list, it appeared that many of my old spiritual companions would be attending this gathering, and it would be a time to renew old friendships and find fellowship with other young Friends from across the country.

"Renewal" is the best word I

of those gathered in New Jersey.

After an eight-hour drive with three other young Friends from Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina, I joined about 70 or so other Friends for opening sessions in the theater on the second floor of the Burlington conference center. As we gathered, Betsy Blake, another Greensboro-based Friend, called us all into a moment of silence to pray for those who were still on the road or in the air. I can't speak for every Friend in that room, but when we all fell into silence for the first time, I felt something powerful. I'm one who rarely feels moved to speak during worship, but there are occasional moments when I feel touched by a worship experience, and this was one of them. A discernable, palpable power possessed the room. We were gathered in purpose with one another, and I felt the Spirit move through us.

It was eye-opening to compare this experience with the one immediately following it. Friends sat down and introduced themselves, saying why they came to the gathering. For many, a primary reason for attending was a desire to reconnect with Quaker life—the term "fell off the bandwagon" was used in describing Quaker practice more than once. Throughout the weekend, particularly during worship and discussion about who we were as Friends, there was a sense that we as younger Quakers lacked a certain amount of

identity, and that we felt disconnected from the larger Religious Society.

Overall, I think that this gathering was a good place for that reconnecting. It's a testament to the skill of the conference organizers that I wanted to attend every workshop in the formal Saturday afternoon program: on writing as ministry, diversity among Friends, listening to leadings, and more. There were moving instances outside the structured program, too. I especially recall a single important moment of fellowship Saturday evening



can think of to describe the gathering as a whole. Over 100 young people from many geographical locations and Friends traditions came together for the weekend. We worshiped together corporately and in small groups, wrestled with our diversity as a spiritual community, discussed social action as influenced by the Quaker testimonies, and tried to discern what our role as Young Adult Friends was in the Religious Society and the world at large. I remember vividly several events that pointed to a larger hand behind the work

when, after the structured workshops, several Friends gathered around dinner to discuss the now-defunct Young Adult Friends of North America (YFNA).

I'd heard about YFNA from my friend Nathan Sebens, whose parents were active in it during its heyday in the 1960s and '70s. Nathan and other Friends have spoken movingly about how YFNA brought together Friends from all across the country, from different theological perspectives, and called them to do important spiritual and political work together. YFNA eventually dissolved, largely due to the fact that opposition to the Vietnam War drove many of its activities, and the war ended. We Friends in Burlington discussed whether the time was ripe to re-form an organization like YFNA. Our sense was that YFNA was indeed a needed institution, one that could provide fellowship and spiritual direction for many Young Friends from across the country. We also talked about the possibility of including Young Friends from Canada and Mexico. We acknowledged that this would add a layer of complexity, but would be worthwhile nonetheless.

Someone brought up the idea that it might be helpful for a new movement among Young Friends to find a unifying issue to work on together, as opposition to the Vietnam War had been before. This idea immediately caught our imagination. Numerous ideas were suggest-

Continued on page 66



Seth Barch

The Clarence and Lilly Pickett Endowment for Quaker Leadership

Clarence E. Pickett was executive secretary of American Friends Service Committee from 1929 to 1950. For their leadership in the peace movement and as vigorous advocates for the oppressed, the persecuted, and the disadvantaged, Clarence Pickett and wife, Lilly, were known throughout the world. Clarence's leadership and that of his colleagues and successors built AFSC from a relatively obscure Quaker organization to worldwide recognition that led to Friends receiving a Nobel Peace Prize in 1947.

In remembrance of the Picketts, ad hoc meetings in the 1980s that included Armand and Rachel (Pickett) Stalnaker; Wilmer Tjossem and Steve Cary, both informal AFSC representatives; John Wagoner, president of William Penn College (now University); and Doris Jean

Newlin, president of the Penn board—the Picketts were alumni of Penn—noted that encouraging future leadership among all Friends needed more specific attention.

In 1990 an endowment was incorporated with \$3,000 capital that has since grown to over \$700,000. The mission of the endowment is to solicit nominations of promising young Quaker leaders and in turn recognize them with stipends, averaging \$3,000, in support of self-initiated, hands-on Quaker projects. So far 65 grants have been made, all administered by grantees' monthly meetings.

Nominations are due in Oskaloosa by January 15 each year. By mid-April nominees are invited to have provided applications and references, and in early May the seven trustees, at their annual meeting, make final selections. Grants are for service-based efforts and not for academic study. Most grants so far



Mike Goren

have been for internships in Quaker institutions, Quaker-related projects at home and abroad, creative ventures in Friends schools and colleges, local peace promotions, and conflict-resolution efforts.

More complete information is available at <http://pickettendowment.quaker.org/>. The website also includes forms for those submitting nominations. Endowment coordinator is Allen Bowman, 1720 Kemble Drive, Oskaloosa, IA 52577; e-mail abmb4190@mahaska.org.

FORGING THE TIES THAT BIND: Supporting Quaker Youth

by Maia Carter Hallward

I have often wondered why I alone of my three siblings am still active in Quaker circles. We all attended meeting each week as children; we all went to Quaker schools for most of the way through 8th grade (my sister also attended a Quaker high school); and our parents are active in our Quaker meeting and in the broader world of Quaker education, spirituality, and organizational life. Despite these commonalities, neither of my siblings

There were times when I drifted away from regular Quaker practice, but I kept returning. Why?

remains active in Quaker circles. Although there were also times when I drifted away from regular Quaker practice, I kept returning. Why?

Welcoming Matters

I moved away to boarding school when I was 16. No longer under my parents' immediate supervision, it would have been easy for me to sleep in on Sunday mornings and skip meeting for worship. Yet I walked the two miles or so to meeting each week because of the sense of grounding I left with and, perhaps more importantly, because of the connection I developed with one young couple who cultivated a Young Friends group among the few of us that were in the meeting. It was the effort Becky and Paul put into developing and maintaining a relationship with me—and the relationship I had with the other high school student in the meeting (although she was a few years

younger than I and living with her parents)—that kept me going each week. I still have fond memories of a weekend retreat they organized with us. Although there were just two or three of us, a couple of other Young Friends came from three or four hours away, and a few others came from the next city over. We cleaned sweet potatoes, had worship and discussion, and slept on the meetinghouse floor. Through it all, I remember the love and care Becky and Paul gave us—they treated each of us as if we were the most important people in the world. Whenever they engaged in conversation with us they really listened, and we discussed things that mattered. One of those Young Friends has recently reentered my life through the delightfully small world of Quakerism; she too has special memories of that weekend.

However, it was not just the nascent youth group that kept me engaged. One week a greeter I had just met learned that I needed a ride to the airport to attend a college interview; she offered her services on the spot. Another Friend came and spoke, upon my invitation, to the small War Resister's League group at my school. I appreciated that although I was "only" a high schooler, there without parents, and away for all school holidays, Friends in the meeting made me feel welcome and important.

I almost drifted away from Quakerism during college. It was hard to get to meeting in the morning after I was on Resident Advisor duty until 2 or 3 AM, and there weren't others my age at the local meeting. Although there was one couple, friends of my parents, who reached out to me and talked with me on the weeks we were both in attendance, I never got to know anyone else in the meeting. No one went out of their way to make me feel welcome in the same way as the meeting I attended while at boarding school. As a result I did not feel the same desire (or sense of "obligation" in the positive sense) to attend, so I contributed equally to my sense of disconnect.

Teaching at the Ramallah Friends

School right after college brought me back to regular Quaker worship. Part of my job included supporting the local meeting and, since they met in the building where my apartment was, I had no excuse not to attend. But I *wanted* to attend because the meeting was my support community; it was the place where I could restore my soul after a rough week of classes. Although our meetings were often composed of only two or three or, if we were lucky, as many as ten, the worship was deep and revitalizing. Yet it wasn't just this proximate community that strengthened my relationship with the Religious Society of Friends; it was also Friends from the meeting where I was a member who wrote to me, sent me packages, and held me in the Light. Without these two communities of emotional, spiritual, and physical support, I do not know whether I would have survived those two years or if I would have remained active with the Religious Society of Friends.

Returning to the U.S. after a year in Jordan (where there was no Quaker meeting and Sundays were the first day of the work week), I missed meeting and was anxious to find a worship community again. But I felt lost in a large sea of faces, and after several weeks of hanging around after meeting and having only one person ever talk to me, I started to leave as soon as meeting ended. Then came the September 11, 2001, attacks and Washington, D.C. went into shock. I went to meeting seeking space to listen, healing silence, and companions in worship. Instead I found a crowded room full of hurt, confused people who, rather than heeding the "still small voice" within, shared their personal pain, grief, and anger in political terms. When a second week's meeting for "worship" lacked any silence whatsoever and messages once again were more political than spiritual, I stopped attending meeting. Between the lack of welcome, the absence of grounded space for worship, and my heavy graduate course load, I felt I had better ways of using my time.

Maia Carter Hallward is a member of Friends Meeting of Washington (D.C.) and attends Atlanta Meeting in Decatur, Ga. She teaches International Affairs at Kennesaw State University. She is assistant clerk of Friends General Conference's Youth Ministries Committee.

Forging Bonds

I did not return to meeting for several months. When I did, it was partly because I had not yet found a community of belonging and wanted to feel more settled in my new city. My mother repeatedly insisted that I try the meeting's Young Adult Friends (YAF) group. So I joined the YAF listserv, partly to humor her, and partly to be able to tell her (finally!) that I had done so when she asked again. It took several months before I actually went to an event advertised on the listserv, a worship-sharing group that was re-forming after a period of dormancy. I thought I would be able to connect to people on a different level if the gathering was spiritual rather than merely social; I was thirsty for deep, "real" relationships. In this group of a dozen or so YAFs I found what I had not found in the larger meeting, and so I made sure to keep my Friday evenings free to attend these gatherings. After attending a couple of worship sharings, I began to recognize people at meeting on Sundays, and as I gradually grew more involved in YAF I became more and more comfortable within the larger meeting. Finally, I had people to talk to after the rise of meeting. And, better yet, I met my husband that first night, which has a whole other set of implications for my continued involvement in the Religious Society of Friends. Not only do we share a religious faith and practice—as well as a supportive faith community—but we do not have to deliberate over whose religious services we will attend each weekend. We motivate each other to attend meeting and have each other for moral support as we venture out to meet new people and get to know the workings of ever wider Quaker circles.

Despite my increased involvement in YAF and the relationship with the man who is now my husband, my attendance at meeting would likely have continued to ebb and flow if it were not for certain (sometimes older, sometimes not) seasoned Friends who got me onto committees and the board of William Penn House. It was my active participation in

the life and operations of the local Quaker community that finally changed my relationship to it. Before I knew it I was very involved in the meeting (I even became clerk of a committee), and suddenly that sea of faces was full of people I knew well. When a dear Friend approached my husband and me about the possibility of putting our names forward to the Nominating Committee of our yearly meeting for service on Friends General Conference's Central Committee, we were excited to extend our circles of involvement even wider. The condition we placed on such service, however, was that we could do it together. Too often our Quaker commitments were time-intensive and resulted in many afternoons or evenings apart. We wanted to have an opportunity to serve *together* and have it be a spiritual practice that we shared, especially as a newly married couple still learning our way together. It has been one of the best decisions we have made.

Practical Matters

From a practical standpoint, I have



been lucky geographically. There has usually been a Quaker meeting close to my home. My sister, in contrast, has none within a reasonable distance. I have further been blessed by having found spiritual (and social) friendships both within my peer group and with chronologically older Friends; both have been vital to my continued association with the Religious Society of Friends. I remember that having Jeff, a member of my Quaker youth group, send me a supportive look in the

halls of our predominantly pro-war high school each day gave me strength to carry on in my minority disapproval of Operation Desert Storm. This shared bond not only helped me through the school day, but it also made me want to continue spending my Sunday afternoons at the meetinghouse. A community of peers, though, lucky as I was to have it, would not have been enough to keep me active in the meeting as my older friends graduated and went off to college; and in any case, many in the group came only to youth group and not to meeting for worship. Rather, my bond to the meeting as a faith community was nurtured and sustained by older Friends, such as my First-day school teacher or members of our first Friendly Eights group, who cared about me and my spiritual journey. These Friends took me out to a welcoming dinner when I applied for membership after a long period of discernment, connected with me about playing the same musical instrument, sent me care packages of my favorite teas in the midst of a cold and lonely Ramallah winter, and held me so strongly in the Light at various points in my life that at times I could almost feel the warmth. Too many Young Friends or YAFs have found themselves the sole member of their age group, with little support structure for youth groups or weekend retreats. Many others have reported feeling invisible to older Friends within their meetings, at least in the sense of having more to discuss than school. I am lucky that this has not generally been my own experience within Quakerism.

Looking Ahead

Six months ago we moved 11 hours away from the meeting where we met, got married, and got super-involved. It was hard to leave our community of Friends and to start in a new meeting from scratch. No one, with a few exceptions, knew who we were or that we were committed Friends with significant leadership experience in our previous meeting. After hanging around after meeting for several weeks and not finding people to talk to during the coffee drinking time, I began to just go home after-

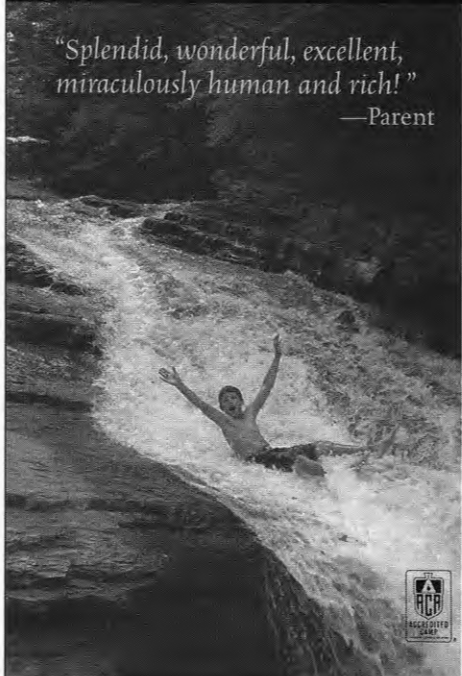
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wards, especially as it was a 45 minute to an hour drive. With a new job and a long drive to meeting, it had become much harder to join a committee or attend outside activities. But then those of us who were in our 20s and 30s began talking, wanting to build a YAF community as a place to start relationship-building. Although I only knew one or two of the other YAFs when we issued an open invitation, the desire for community was strong enough that folks drove all the way out to our house for an afternoon and evening of fellowship. It was great; I finally got to know a few additional people in the meeting, and even though I do not see those people each week, I feel a deeper sense of connection than I did before. After all, knowing eight people is better than knowing two.

In December, four months after moving to our new home, we had our first child. The change in our status at meeting was sudden and startling. I did not anticipate the amount of attention we received with a new baby in tow. All sorts of people began to come up and talk to us, ask if we were new, and wonder where we were from. We have begun to meet other couples with young children and have been welcomed in a way I had not been welcomed in years. Spending time in the nursery, I have been able to engage in one-on-one conversations with the weekly volunteers and thereby learn more about individual members than one does during meeting for worship. While I am excited to finally begin to connect with people in the meeting—and hope it continues—I also feel a bit frustrated that I did not receive the same attention without my son.

I often wonder what my son's experience with Quakerism will be. Will there be an active First-day school group as he gets older, or will he be one of only two or three kids his age? Will he have older mentors in the meeting who care about him deeply and listen to his needs, concerns, and spiritual struggles? How will he fare as a high schooler or when he goes away to college? Will there be Friends to reach out to him, make him feel welcome, and help show that Quakerism is relevant, vibrant, and spiritually refreshing? Will he always be as welcome as he is now? Will I? I sure hope so. □

A Young Friend at the UN

by Jill Terrell

Upon graduating from Beloit College last year, I began work at Quaker United Nations Office in New York as a program assistant, eagerly applying my interests and studies at the international policy level. QUNO works out of the Church Center of the United Nations, a center for faith-based nongovernmental organization (NGO) initiatives, located directly across the street from the United Nations. But QUNO's unique quiet diplomacy and bridge-building work is carried out at Quaker House a few blocks away. Diplomats, staff, and nongovernmental partners are invited to Quaker House to discuss issues of Quaker concern in a quiet, off-the-record atmosphere. I work with Jessica Huber, one of the Quaker UN representatives in New York, on the Emerging Conflicts and Crisis (ECC) program, which centers on under-attended conflicts that need greater involvement of the international community, big emergencies on the Security Council's agenda, and areas of potential major conflict. QUNO's ECC advocacy at the United Nations is rooted in the peacemaking, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution work carried out by numerous Quaker agencies, including American Friends Service Committee, Canadian Friends Service Committee, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, and local Quaker community-building organizations.

The regular exchanges between QUNO and Quaker service agencies greatly enhance peacebuilding efforts at the international policy and local levels. Working at QUNO I regularly participate in providing rhetoric-free, credible feedback from what is happening in the field, since the information that ambassadors and UN officials regularly receive is often politicized. The attitudes, concerns, and policy recommendations generated by presentations in Quaker House are spread throughout the UN community. Our work in creating the space for exchange between the most vulnerable populations worldwide—including Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories, the internally displaced people of northern Uganda, or the people starving in North Korea—and the policymakers who are trying to quell conflict is a key ingredient in helping the UN fulfill its primary role of peacebuilding and preventing violent conflict. For example, Kathy Bergen, director of Friends Interna-

tional Center in Ramallah, recently gave a thorough yet troubling account at Quaker House of the travel restrictions placed on Palestinians living in the West Bank. Her account served as an entry point for a broader discussion on the issue with UN officials and NGO representatives.

What brought me to QUNO? Why do I have such an interest in international affairs? As a child, my parents took me to Wilmington College's annual Westheimer Peace Symposium and there I developed a love and admiration for people building peace locally and around the world. My personal quest for this began when I was 13 years old, when I took part in peer mediation initiatives at my public school. After that I participated in relationship-building at the community level; and later, in college, I studied International Relations with an emphasis on Peace and Conflict Studies. I studied abroad in Ireland where I learned about the Northern Ireland peace process and the challenges facing all levels of government in implementing the Good Friday Agreement. Focusing on divided-island questions in another setting, I wrote my undergraduate honors thesis on the "Cyprus problem" and prospects for island reunification.

The history of Quaker bridge-building and opening the space for dialogue at the UN is based upon the idea that there is that of God in each of us, and working at QUNO has given me a wonderful opportunity to apply this profound principle at the UN and witness its effects. QUNO's work does not stop there, however, but addresses the great need at the international level to achieve durable peace and security for the affected populations. It was disheartening for me to hear recently from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, how the international community has to struggle to implement the multifaceted strategies to achieve sustainability of peace or prevention of violent conflict. UN peacekeeping missions have traditionally been the sole mechanism for bringing peace to war-torn regions; however, leaders from all regions of the world are becoming more and more skeptical of the military-based approach of peacekeeping operations. Consequently, QUNO sees a great opportunity to support the newly established Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), which seeks to operationalize positive peace at the international level by leading countries to establish distinctive political, economic, and community-building approaches. Quakers continue to encourage diplomats at the UN to consider fully the most innovative alternatives to military use in peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts.

Although QUNO's work is often done

behind the scenes, I believe that the people and their communities where QUNO has focused its efforts reap the benefits tenfold. For example, people in northern Uganda are beginning to experience peace for the first time in 20 years. As Richard Foster, a Quaker theologian, writes in *The Celebration of Discipline*, "If a secret service is done on their behalf, they are inspired to deeper devotion, for they know that the well of service is far deeper than they can see. It is a ministry that can be engaged in frequently by all people. It sends ripples of joy and celebration through any community of people." My experiences working in the NGO community at the United Nations affirm this statement. I call on Quakers young and old to continue carrying out their own "secret" ministries that will have a ripple effect locally, nationally, or globally. Working at the global level may seem overambitious for individual ministries, but that is where QUNO comes into play, carrying the expertise and the capacity to extend God's love and grace across the spectrum, locally to internationally.

Jill Terrell, a member of Wilmington (Ohio) Meeting, has been a program assistant at QUNO for the 2006-07 program year. Information on the work of Quaker United Nations Office is at <www.quno.org>.

A Letter from Bolivia

by Andrew Esser-Haines

Fourth Month, Fifth Day, 2007

Dear friends and family,

I know that it has only been a week since I last wrote, but last night, in conversation with a dear friend, I had an insight and wrote a note to myself about identity. I am tall, white, from the United States, Christian, and male; and all of this leads to hostility at times. So I want to explain how I live with these identities, especially in Bolivia.

I am called a gringo (whitey) almost daily. I think I have some sense of what it feels like to be a minority in the United States and to be singled out for my skin color alone. I know that I do not experience the oppression of centuries that minorities in the U.S. do (and have), which makes me balk because constantly being asked where I'm from really is something for which I am not prepared.

That said, I have begun to realize that I do need to claim my white U.S. identity, and to

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with that identity. I claim my male identity knowing that men have committed atrocities against women and against other men, and denying that identity will not end injustice. It seems that the only way to make things better is to claim that identity and try to live a life in accordance with my principles even when they conflict with those of many other men, whites, Christians, and U.S. citizens. In other words, I must try to change things from the inside.

So, what does that mean? For me it means saying yes, I am a Christian, and this is what my Christianity looks like. I do not feel the need to Christianize the world—I have an understanding that God speaks to everyone individually and we are all doing the best we can to follow that still small voice. My faith follows the life of Jesus more than the words of the Bible; it follows the idea that love is the first motion, as John Woolman put it. I try to live a life that shows love and caring rather than judgment and ire. I feel as though that is my Christianity, and in so living it I offer a different vision of what a Christian might be than many have. I do not take pride in the many deaths that have happened in the name of Christianity, but I do recognize that they are part of my past.

In being a U.S. citizen traveling in Bolivia I need to say yes, I am a gringo; yes, my country's president is George W. Bush; yes, it is my compatriots that are currently in Iraq; no, I do not agree with my country's current administration; and I do not agree with most of our mainstream politics. But we are a country of democracy (at least that is what we are told to believe), and the majority of U.S. voters did put Bush in power.

More than the politics, I need to say "Sí, soy estadounidense" (yes I am from the U.S.); I need to say yes, I know your language; yes, I have some idea of your history; no, I have not gone traveling to Lake Titicaca; and no, I am not here as a tourist. Yes, I have a community here; yes, I am still very ignorant and hoping to learn more. No, I did not come to Bolivia to drink in your culture and leave. I came to live with you, to learn with you, to share some skills and information that I have and to thank you for sharing that which you have. I know my country is not doing well by yours at this moment, but only through our shared conversations, and our building of this community across the borders, will things change. Then I will be able to help my communities in the U.S. understand a little more of another life.

This is how I try to work daily, and to find grace in moments of anger—when another child of God has chosen to show his distaste for people of my skin color by spitting on me.

my principles; I want to say, if only you knew me, if you knew that I was at this very moment walking to work with your children, you would not despise me. In those moments I remember why I am here, and how necessary it is to offer a different perspective of what a tall white man might be doing in Bolivia, both to my people in the U.S. and to the people I come in contact with in Bolivia.

I find myself thinking of those people around the world trying to walk in this grace, of those in the U.S. who are forced to do so, and of those around the world who have found different ways to expose and denounce these generalizations and mindsets that are so often based in hate and fear. Our world is hurting and there is much to be done, yet all we can do is live our lives the best we can. That is my project, it hurts often, and I feel useless at times, but the more I can step out of those places and have faith, the better my life goes.

That is it for now. Thank you for sharing in this journey with me.

Faithfully,
Andrew

Andrew Esser-Haines, a member of Central Philadelphia (Pa.) Meeting, was on leave from January to June from his studies at Earlham College to work with the Bolivia Quaker Education Fund in La Paz, Bolivia.

Interning at FCNL

by Maureen Brookes

Graduating from college, moving away from home, and starting a first post-graduation job are rites of passage into the adult world. At least, that's what all my "Happy Graduation" cards told me. Getting to the point of actually feeling like an adult has been a more gradual process for me, and I'm certainly not all the way there yet. But I've been working as a communications program assistant at Friends Committee on National Legislation for just over six months now, and I do feel that the internship program here has helped me gain confidence and feel more equipped to transition out of school and into the workforce.

Starting a new job is always nerve-racking, but the first two weeks at FCNL were fairly easy—orientation sessions and some introductory calls and e-mails to people I'd be working with in the future. None of the calls

were all that complicated, but I was new and a little nervous, so I probably sounded a little shaky on the phone. My voice must have given something away, because as I ended a call with one woman, she said, "Okay, honey, have a good day."

"Honey"? I cringed as I hung up the phone. How embarrassing! Apparently, I sound like a 12-year-old.

I won't lie—being 23 has its perks. But I don't necessarily want to seem so young that I elicit the motherly instincts of someone I don't even know who is supposed to be my peer. Since starting work at FCNL the week before, I hadn't encountered a single task that I felt unable or unready to handle, but this one phone conversation abruptly caused me to question my fitness for the job.

When many people my age leave school and start their first post-college jobs, they still have to ward off the perception that they are too young to be given real responsibilities—I have friends who have been stuck doing busy-work for months after taking jobs they thought would give them great experience.

I've been lucky in that, since that early phone call, I've adjusted to my job and haven't felt overwhelmed because I am too young or inexperienced. I've also noticed a more inclusive attitude toward young staff at FCNL than at most other workplaces. Our opinions are valued and we are trusted to do substantive work. I think this attitude is in large part due to the fact that FCNL is a Quaker organization, informed by the Quaker belief that truth is available to everybody, no matter what their station. FCNL has a relatively flat hierarchy, while maintaining a clear structure with staff who are responsible for particular tasks and accountable to supervisors and, ultimately, to the executive secretary.

This structure of FCNL and many Quaker bodies allows and encourages young people to play an active role in meetings and organizations and to take personal responsibility on social justice issues at an earlier age. For me, the more involved I feel in a project, the more invested I am in its outcome. If I feel challenged, I do better work. So I think FCNL and other Quaker groups are wise to make the efforts they do to include young adults in their work.

Another benefit of working at FCNL that I believe stems from the organization's Quaker mission is the opportunity to work with other young staff. Our office is well populated with new interns, second-year interns, and former interns. This commitment to the internship program shows me that FCNL recognizes the benefits of allowing young people to work collaboratively. I'm aware that my internship is a learning experience, and I feel that I am learning more by sharing this experience with my fellow interns. We maintain a constant dialogue about the issues we work on and there is always someone available to talk with if I have a question or need feedback on a project. I think that Quaker young adult programs operate under a philosophy similar to FCNL's internship program—they understand the importance of giving engaged young people the chance to work together and become part of a community of activists their age.

Our society often treats young people in a way—and it can be very subtle—that can make them feel powerless and think they are too young to do anything important. But there really is no age requirement to start doing meaningful work. Clearly, greater responsibility comes with more experience and knowledge, but I think a lot of employers underestimate how much a young staff person can learn in a short period of time. I think that the other FCNL interns and I are more invested in our work than we might have been had we worked for another organization because we feel that we each play an important role in FCNL's work.

Maureen Brookes, a member of Haddonfield (N.J.) Meeting, graduated from Wesleyan University in 2006. Information on FCNL's internship program is at <www.fcnl.org/young>, and weblog entries from FCNL program assistants may be found at <www.fcnl.org/intern_blog>.

Interning at FRIENDS JOURNAL

FRIENDS JOURNAL has a diversity of volunteer internship opportunities available year-round. Every internship is a highly involved, hands-on experience. Placements are available in each department. Interns may be of any age from high school students to senior citizens, but most are college-age. They are very active participants in producing the magazine. We encourage all readers of FRIENDS JOURNAL to have a look at the lively statements by past interns that are posted on FRIENDS JOURNAL's website, <www.friendsjournal.org>. For those interested in the program, job descriptions of internships and instructions on how to apply are also posted there. —Eds.



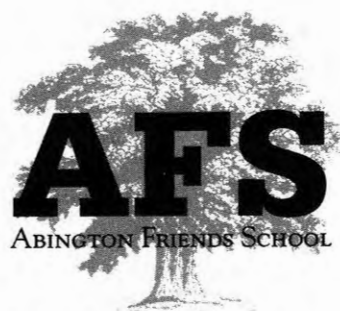
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Back to Africa: Benjamin Coates and the Colonization Movement in America, 1848–1880

Edited by Emma J. Lapsansky-Werner
and Margaret Hope Bacon.
Pennsylvania State University Press,
2005. 385 pages. \$50/hardcover.

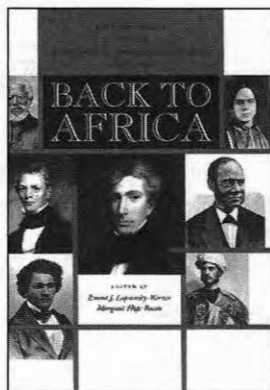
Benjamin Coates (1808–87) was an Orthodox Friend destined to remain a bachelor because the Quaker woman he loved was, to use his derisive Orthodox word for a Hicksite, a “Hixity.” With no wife and no children, he poured many of his energies into the rather unpopular movement called colonization, an effort to encourage emigration of freed African American slaves to what many whites took to be their motherland, specifically the American “colony” of Liberia.

Now we have 162 letters to and from Coates regarding his activities, most interestingly his efforts to demonstrate to black and white potential supporters that emigration would be a way to end slavery and discrimination, while increasing profits and civilization by developing cotton culture in the so-called Dark Continent. He wrote and sometimes argued with a wide range of interested people, from Frederick Douglass, a black leader who rejected colonization, to Henry Highland Garnet, who supported the idea. He was able to maintain friendly relations with all, despite disagreements on colonization.

The authors offer readers a better than 50-page introduction to the letters and show how the complexity of antebellum abolitionism weaved in and out of reform efforts within U.S. society. They highlight how the efforts to achieve a Hicksite Reformation led Quakers—mostly on the “left,” such as Lucretia Mott—to be more aggressive on the question of anti-slave agitation and led the Orthodox to be more retiring in the same struggle. Always determined, Coates adopted the Hicksite approach yet maintained good relations with those with whom he disagreed.

A man of more than moderate wealth (he engaged in the dry goods and woolen trades as well as book publishing, all of which might compromise his abolition testimony against the use of products made with slave labor), he published a booklet in 1858 on cotton cultivation in Africa. In it, he averred that encouraging Africans to grow cotton there would reduce the worldwide price of the white fiber, lead to prosperity for growers, and sever slavery in the Western world at its economic root.

The book’s editors have done an excellent



job of making these letters accessible to a wide audience. They have occasionally missed identifying a few people mentioned in the letters—not all of them obscure, for they neglect to tell readers who explorer and writer David Livingstone was—but their efforts demonstrate that at

least one 19th century Friend seldom condescended to blacks and was able to engage them as fully equal to others. For this reason, if no other, they are to be applauded.

—Larry Ingle

Larry Ingle is a member of Chattanooga (Tenn.) Meeting.

Sparrow Seed: The Franciscan Poems

By T. H. S. Wallace. Friends United Press,
2007. \$15/softcover.

In a person’s lifetime only a few acquaintances bring both tears and joy as one realizes the chords of faith have been deftly struck. Terry Wallace’s volume of poetic meditations on the life of St. Francis of Assisi is such an acquaintance.

These imaginative reconstructions in verse of conversations with the founder of the Franciscan order convey the deep faith that the 15th century mystic saint and his followers shared. In “Dancing Before Cardinals,” the defining work of the volume, a monologue by Francis before the Church Fathers in Rome is recounted:

You see the truth of me,
Fathers, small like my Friars, those
Little brown sparrows of men.
God counts them over and over.
He gave them a home in the air,
Their food and their feathers.
They’ve no pride, just the pleasure
Of wings, their dip and glide and slip
On the rippling wind. They’re simple
By nature, Fathers. We who aren’t
Must be simple by grace.

The volume comprises a series of vignettes concerning Francis and his closest friends, retold in the voices of his followers. These episodes are historically true; however the effect of hearing the monologues in the voices of witnesses to Francis’ life is like that of great symphonic music—we know our souls have been pierced by the arrows of the Divine Presence. The poems resonate with the pro-

found and sustaining faith of those who count themselves among Christ’s closest acquaintances—and they carry the echoes of Christ’s teaching to his followers in the throes of daily encounter with those among whom they lived and prayed and sought salvation as they begged stones to rebuild the Church on its one true foundation. The time in which Francis lived was one of bitter struggle between the devout Christian community and those who would corrupt the Church from within and without. To the powers and principalities alike, Francis’ antidote was absolute adherence to the vows of poverty, chastity, truthfulness, and obedience to Christ in all things. Terry recounts a conversation between Francis and his first convert, Sister Clare, as they pledged their lives to prayer in “Francis Proposes to the Lady Clare,” as follows:

I give you my hand, its scars,
These bare feet with their blessing of dust,
And our Lord’s love filled with fools.

I promise you the beauty of a man
Shorn of swagger and brag, love’s
Essential poverty, its ragged sheep.

I give you water’s cleansing kiss
And the only Son you will ever bear
As we spend this night, two

Candles burning in a rude church.

The poems sear us with the rarified atmosphere of the ascetic’s life as they admonish us to confront our own inner complicities and submit to the refining fire of a God whose power burns up all that is contrary to Truth within our own spirits. For this is surely the attraction of the lives of the saints to every succeeding generation of the faithful: they challenge us to witness to the ever-present miracle of grace as it is poured out in the context of our own age. Hear the words of those who observed miracles in the midst of tragedy as they witnessed the door of the church fall upon their beloved Sister Clare, and as they raised it to find her alive and unharmed, in “The Day the Door Gate Fell on Sister Clare”:

It seemed
Like Heaven’s Gate and all she had to do
Was wait in faithful patience and it would
Be lifted up to her salvation.

The choice of simple conversation between intimate acquaintances reflecting on the details of their own struggles with conversion and faith reminds us that these are plain folk like ourselves whose lives have been forever transformed by the rash and uncompromising demands of their Lord who answers every objection with the words: “Follow thou me.” The simplicity of Terry’s language belies

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the depth of these poems. If we do not hear echoes of the voice of the Spirit calling us to be faithful as we read, we will be missing the richness of imagination with which the poems were conceived. Few poets today are writing with such a finely honed religious sensibility paired with the literary craftsmanship to convey it. This slim volume will carry its weight in gold long after the pages have yellowed.

—Lucy Davenport

Lucy Davenport is a member of Reedwood Friends Church in Portland, Oreg. She also attends Bridge City (Oreg.) Meeting.

Last Witnesses: The Muggletonian History, 1652–1979

By William Lamont. Ashgate, 2006. 267 pages. \$99.95/hardcover.

Quakerism arose as one in a menagerie of radical sects during the Commonwealth period, in mid-17th century England. The Familists, Grindletonians, Ranters, Levellers, and others faded away (at least in name). Until fairly recently, it seemed that Quakers were the sole survivors of that remarkable, creative turmoil. However, in 1974, improbably, it was discovered that one other radical sect from that time had survived—the Muggletonians, so named after the longer-surviving of the two prophets of the movement, Lodowick Muggleton. The Last Muggletonian, the farmer Philip Noakes, had in his possession the Muggletonian archive, in about 100 wooden apple crates, recovered from the rubble of their reading room during the Battle of Britain. This remarkable collection included published tracts and books, letters between sect members, and records of monthly meetings, reaching to the effective end of the fellowship in the middle of the last century. Using this trove of documents, William Lamont has traced the 300-year life of this little group (never more than 250), in a book that is by turns fascinating, challenging, and irritating. At nearly \$100, this is not a book for most people to purchase, but it's a good one to seek in libraries or used-book stalls.

The sect was mystical in its foundations, but also materialist and skeptical. John Reeve, a London tailor, heard the voice of God in 1652, announcing that he was one of the Two Last Witnesses spoken of in the book of Revelation; the other, Muggleton, was to be his spokesman, the Aaron to Reeve's Moses. Founded on this moment of divine intervention, the sect nevertheless eschewed prayer, worship, or most recognizable kinds of religious practice.

Divine Songs written by adherents in the 17th–19th centuries were sung, but not as part of any order of worship. Monthly meetings, including plenty of food and drink, were devoted to mutual support and reading and discussion of books and tracts from across the years, or letters sent to the community from distant members. Free discussion was encouraged and helped keep alive an unusual alternative reading of Scriptures, starting with the nature of God—matter came first, then God, who was made of matter. Jesus was God, who had given the rule of the cosmos into the hands of Moses and Elijah, as caretakers while Jesus performed ministry upon Earth. Having intervened decisively to inaugurate the final dispensation, that of the Spirit, God essentially took no notice of our pleas for attention—thus, prayer was not only useless, it was pernicious because it was a self-delusion.

The commitment to a materialist vision had many implications, which Muggleton worked out in detail in several books of commentary written in the years after John Reeves's death in 1658. The body and soul perished together at death, both being material, only to be resurrected and reunited at the last judgment. Hell was seen to be an internal state. The Devil is in the mind, the "spirit of unclean reason."

A key claim, which put the Muggletonians at odds with Friends from the beginning, was their emphasis on the physical event that provided Reeves' revelation. Unlike the Quakers, for whom the "voice" being heard was inward, the Muggletonians relied upon a specific, objective, and (if anyone else had been present) verifiable event—if you had happened to be there, you too, could have heard the Voice. The Muggletonians pointed out that Quaker "revelation" was highly subjective and therefore untrustworthy: "The Quakers, 'harkening to the light within them,' do procure 'many strange visions and motional voices, but they being groundless and nonsensical they come to nothing.'"

The Muggletonians, disdainful of the idea of external "powers of evil," were severe against superstition and especially witchcraft, and it may come as a surprise to some Friends to realize that on this score Quakers were vulnerable to severe criticism. Early Friends were convinced that the renewal of revelation in their day would be attended by miracles and wonders. Muggleton saw these claims as evidence of Quakerism's faulty views, and engaged in more spirited battle with Friends than with any other rival sect. Outsiders saw some similarities between the two movements—in addi-

Last Witnesses
The Muggletonian History, 1652–1979



William Lamont

tion to the absence of ceremony, and the rejection of educated and ordained clergy, for example, the Muggletonians proclaimed pacifism before Friends did, and they had a doctrine of Two Seeds that might sound like the Quaker teaching, though their seeds were very different and planted, as it were, in

different kinds of ground. It was important, therefore, to make the distinctions clear. Fox, Penington, and others spent a great deal of energy refuting the Muggletonian attacks, and the enmity continued down to our own times, though muted somewhat with the passing of the years—Muggletonians in the U.S. write wryly to their relatives in Britain about the difficult choice they'd have in the 1928 election, because on the one side stood Al Smith, a Catholic, and on the other hand Herbert Hoover, a Quaker—truly a rock and a hard place. But by then the theological dilemma was softened with a smile.

The story is challenging to Friends because it raises questions about how much any kind of Quakerism now living has to do with the Quakerism of the Valiant 60, who lived in a world that, for all its familiarity, seems in other ways very remote, for example in the intrusiveness of the supernatural in every aspect of life and in the expectation of Apocalypse (toned down or expunged after 1660 in the rhetoric of both sects, part of what Christopher Hill called "the experience of defeat"). The Muggletonians and Friends were reconstructing reality according to their revelations and assumed that they were part of a coherent, historical narrative with implications for present action and the world's future. This reconstruction, which was both an intellectual and a spiritual effort, was sharpened and furthered by debate and polemics, carried on in the language of Scripture and spirituality, rather than psychology or sociology—yet psychological insight and social analysis were present, sometimes in impressive degree, in the combative pamphlets that filled the air of the Commonwealth. Our blogosphere has something of the same flavor, but most Quaker blogs that I have seen address in-house conversations and controversies, and we are not much given to debating Catholics or Congregationalists, Methodists or Muggletonians, in ways that deepen our own witness, and ability to proclaim it.

—Bryan Drayton

Brian Drayton is a member of Weare (N.H.) Meeting.

Central City (Nebr.) Meeting was presented the "Peacemaker of the Year Award" late last year at a Peace Conference co-sponsored by the University of Nebraska Omaha School of Social Work and Nebraskans for Peace. The statewide award recognized Central City Meeting, which has a current membership of 50 persons, for the contribution that "the corporate body of this Friends meeting has made to the cause of peace in our state and the larger world." "Several members of the meeting have been recognized individually over the years for their witness for peace," Don Reeves, clerk of the meeting, said. Members of the meeting have supported peaceful concerns through involvement with Friends Committee on National Legislation, Friends Committee on Indian Affairs, American Friends Service Committee, Quaker Earthcare Witness, and mission work of Friends United Meeting. The meeting also is active in support of the local food pantry and crisis center, a youth diversion program, and statewide groups such as Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty. In all their efforts, it was noted in the presentation of the award, Central City Friends "are as concerned with building a sustainable world, in all its dimensions, as in protesting war and injustice." Receiving the award for Central City Meeting were Don Reeves, members Kenneth and Mildred Mesner and Lois Schank; and attenders Lynn and Sam Zeleski and Caryl and Roy Guisinger. —*Central City Meeting newsletter; telephone and e-mail conversation with Don Reeves*

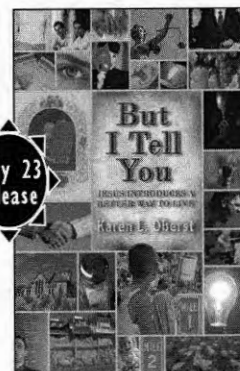
McCutchen Friends Home in North Plainfield, N.J., has closed after more than half a century of providing care for older adults. The Quaker-sponsored facility opened in 1951 after a bequest from Margaret McCutchen made a Victorian mansion, the family homeplace, available to Friends. Since then, six independent apartments and a nursing home with 25 beds were added to the property located in an historical neighborhood near Rahway-Plainfield Meeting. Margaret McCutchen was not a Friend but was familiar with and supportive of Quaker ministries, according to James Whitely, chairman of the property's board of trustees. "When the family home became too much for her to manage, Margaret McCutchen approached Philadelphia Yearly Meeting about taking over the property. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was not interested, so New York Yearly Meeting was approached and accepted the property as New York Yearly Meeting Friends Home," he said. In recent years, financial problems as a result of rising costs, declining admissions, extensive building repairs and maintenance, and the New Jersey Provider Assessment Tax have led to the closing of the home. "This was

a most difficult decision for the board to make, but we felt it was necessary as stewards of the McCutchen," James Whitely said. "The home has incurred annual operating deficits of over \$500,000 in each of the last three years and the future outlook is even less optimistic." With the approval of New York Yearly Meeting, the property is now for sale. The last group of residents to be provided for at McCutchen Friends Home were relocated to other care facilities. —*Rahway-Plainfield Meeting newsletter, telephone conversation with James Whitely*

Southeastern Yearly Meeting has suspended its formal membership in Friends United Meeting over the concern that the personnel policy of FUM is discriminatory against persons who may be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender in their sexual orientation. If unity on this issue is not achieved in two years, its membership in FUM will be ended permanently, according to a minute approved by SEYM in April, after two years of discernment among its monthly meetings and committees. "We were concerned that our responses to this issue threatened our unity as a yearly meeting," a statement released by Susan Taylor, clerk of SEYM, acknowledged. While some in SEYM felt the need to remain in membership with FUM, the need to lay down membership "was solidly grounded in the need not to be part of an organization that practices exclusion," the statement affirmed. At issue is the FUM personnel policy that states, in part, that sexual relationships "should be confined to the bonds of marriage, which we understand to be between one man and one woman" and that the "lifestyle of volunteers under appointment to Quaker Volunteer Witness, regardless of sexual orientation, should be in accordance with these testimonies." In its discernment process, SEYM experienced "the strong call to the work and witness for social justice for our gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender brothers and sisters. We are called to acknowledge the ongoing oppression, prejudice, exclusion, and violence these brothers and sisters are subject to in our culture." According to the minute affirming its suspension of its formal membership in FUM for two years, SEYM "will make no financial contributions" to FUM during that time. Instead, the funds that would have gone to FUM "will go to support FUM-related activities or outreach at the discretion or suggestion of SEYM. We will offer both financial and spiritual support to representatives to FUM as our members come forward to carry out those duties. If at the end of the two-year period our membership is not in unity to renew the relationship, SEYM will permanently lay down our membership in FUM," the SEYM minute states. Susan Tay-

you and our fellow humans is radical. Making peace instead of war is radical. Forgiveness is radical. We are called to a new lifestyle that affects all our relationships."

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**FRIENDS
JOURNAL**

lor said that copies of the minute recorded by SEYM at its annual session last year, the report from the working group that focused on the discernment by the "total body" of Friends attending business sessions, the minute approved by SEYM this year, and a cover letter have been sent to Sylvia Graves, FUM general secretary, and to Brent McKinney, clerk of the FUM General Board. "This will be a time for reflection and evaluation of SEYM's relationship with FUM," McKinney said. SEYM represents 24 monthly meetings and worship groups in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. It is also affiliated with Friends General Conference. —*Information from Susan Taylor, clerk of SEYM; Lyn Cope, administrative secretary of SEYM; SEYM web site; and Brent McKinney, clerk, FUM*

Arthur M. Larrabee has in mind two concerns he hopes to accomplish as the newly appointed general secretary of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. "I want to see all 104 monthly meetings claiming yearly meeting as their faith community, and I want to see yearly meeting grow its membership," he said in a brief moment during his busy first months as general secretary. He also hopes to avoid language he feels is divisive. When asked if he is a "birthright" Quaker, he responded, "I don't use the word 'birthright' because it is divisive." He then said, in answer to the question, "I grew up in the way of Friends." An attorney, Larrabee was approved by Interim Meeting, acting on the recommendation of the General Secretary Search Committee, to succeed Thom Jeavons as general secretary of PYM. Jeavons resigned in February 2006. Mark Myers served as interim general secretary until Larrabee assumed the office this past March. Larrabee, who is a member of Central Philadelphia Meeting, has been active in yearly meeting. He was clerk of the yearly meeting from 1992 to 1995 and has served as clerk of Interim Meeting since September 2006. He is also known by Quakers as a consultant and teacher on the subjects of clerking and decision making. In its recommendation to Interim Meeting, the search committee said of Larrabee that he has a "clear grasp on the challenges and—in his way of thinking—the opportunities before PYM" and that he also has the ability to "articulate and act out of" his "deeply spiritual center." —*<www.pym.org>; telephone conversation with Arthur M. Larrabee*

Friends International Center in Ramallah (FICR) continues its peace work after the creation of the Palestinian Unity Government that includes Hamas and Fatah. It hopes "the world will engage with the new government and end the economic boycott that has so impoverished ordinary Palestini-

ans." FICR recognizes it will take a long time to improve the humanitarian situation in Palestine because there are few funds and the humanitarian situation is desperate, especially in Gaza. The Center supported an international conference on nonviolence held in the West Bank village of Bil'in April 18–20. For the past two years, many Palestinian villages along the Green Line have been nonviolently resisting the building of the Israeli government's wall. Bil'in has been the center of joint Israeli-Palestinian nonviolent protests against the dividing wall.

Quaker Peace Network, Africa Region, of Friends United Meeting has been working to end the government-rebel war on the southern slopes of Mt. Elgon in Kenya. The effort includes an open letter to the president of Kenya on ending the violence. It also sent a fact-finding team to gather and report its observations. On a designated day at the end of April, Kenyan Quakers visited and offered humanitarian aid to the refugees who are taking shelter in various Friends churches. —*<www.kenyaredcross.org>; Friends United Meeting*

The National Religious Campaign against Torture, chaired by FCNL, has been leading an educational campaign encouraging congregations to show the HBO documentary "Ghosts of Abu Ghraib" during October 21–28. In a nationwide project called Spotlight on Torture, NRCAT has made DVD copies of the film available to 1,000 congregations, on a first-come, first-served basis. Each participating congregation will receive a free copy of the DVD, and a facilitator's guide for leading a discussion after the film is shown, among other resources. This film is for mature audiences. Signup is at *<spotlight@nrcat.org>*. See *<www.tortureisamoralissue.org>*.

FRIENDS JOURNAL welcomes news items (see p. 2 for contact information). Please include your e-mail address or phone number for follow-up. Upcoming events require at least three months' lead time. FRIENDS JOURNAL requests to be added to all Friends meeting and institution distribution lists for newsletters and other publications. The editors regret not all submissions can be published.

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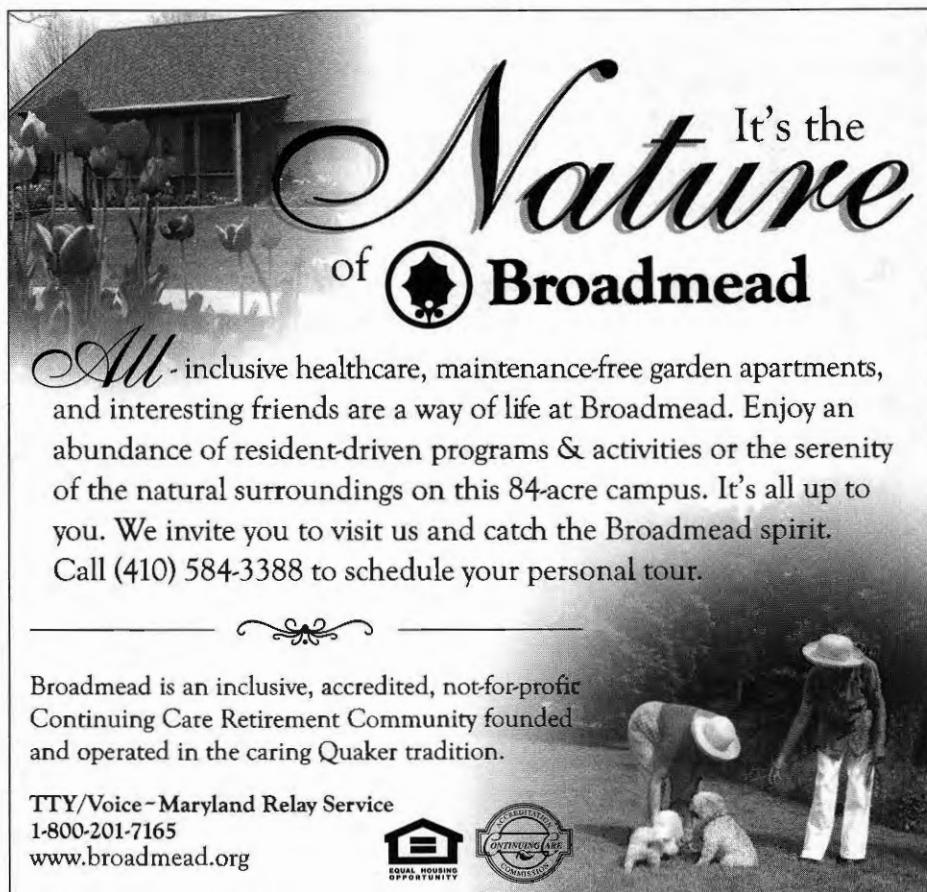
Upcoming Events


- August—Kakamega, Chavakali, Malava, Elgon East, Tuloi, Lugari, Vokoli, Nairobi, Bware, East Africa (Kaimosi), Elgon, East Africa (North), Vihiga, Central, and Chwele yearly meetings (all in Kenya)
- August—Tanzania Yearly Meeting
- August 1-4—Iowa Yearly Meeting
- August 2-5—Western Yearly Meeting
- August 3-12—Central Yearly Meeting, U.S.
- August 4-9—New England Yearly Meeting
- August 4-11—Canada Yearly Meeting
- August 10-13—Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting
- August 15-19—Ohio Conservative
- August 16-19—Jamaica Yearly Meeting
- August 23-27—Uganda Yearly Meeting
- August 28-31—France Yearly Meeting
- August 30-September 3—North Carolina Yearly Meeting

Opportunities

• October 5-8—Young Quakes Conference 2007, at Oakwood Friends School in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. High-school-age Friends from the United States and Canada are invited to this conference, sponsored by FGC's Religious Education Committee and hosted by New York Yearly Meeting. Young Friends will explore the questions, joys, and challenges of living revolutionary faith. Cost is \$115; limited financial assistance is available. There will be interactive workshops, Quaker-friendly Bible study, discussions, presentations, games, worship and worship sharing, singing, and building community. For more information, contact Michael Gibson, Religious Education coordinator, at (215) 561-1700, <michaelg@fgcquaker.org>, or visit <<http://www.quakeryouth.org/calendar/living-a-revolutionary-faith.php>>.

• September 1—Deadline to send to Friends General Conference your high-quality photographs or digital images of the exterior and/or interior of meetinghouses for a permanent art display in the newly renovated FGC offices in Philadelphia, Pa. Images should emphasize the architecture and surrounding environment of the meetinghouse, and should not include people. Images can be e-mailed to <connections@fgcquaker.org> or mailed to 1216 Arch Street, 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107. Include the name of the meetinghouse, address, and any additional historical information; and whether you would like your print returned and where it should be sent.





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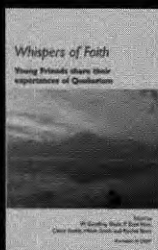
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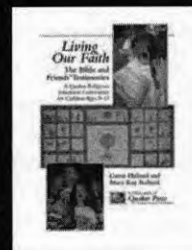
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Quaker Press of FGC/Quaker Books of Britain Yearly Meeting, 2005, 164 pp., paperback \$12.00



Living Our Faith: The Bible and Friends' Testimonies

BY GWEN HALSTED AND MARY KAY REHARD
Quaker Press of FGC, 2006, 166 pp., spiral bound \$25.00



Positive Parenting for a Peaceful World: A Practical Guide for the First Twelve Years

BY RUTH TOD
Gaia Books, 2005, 143 pp., paperback \$14.95



Becoming Fire: Spiritual Writing from Rising Generations

EDITED BY ALEXANDER LEVERING KERN
Andover Newton Theological School, 2006, 224 pp., paperback \$12.95

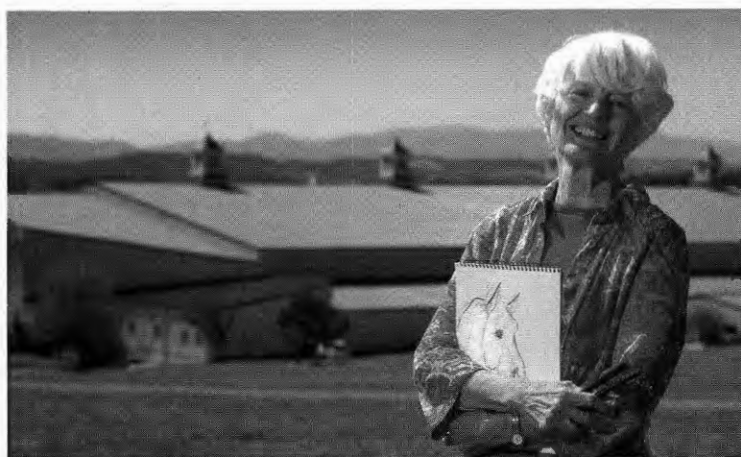
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Jo McMurtry on the art of retirement.

Josephine McMurtry will soon be enjoying her new two-bedroom apartment and patio at Kendal at Lexington. A retired English professor from the University of Richmond, Jo looks forward to using the new wellness center with indoor pool, and being closer to her family living in the Lexington area. Add to that the nearby Virginia Horse Center, where she can indulge in one of her greatest passions—sketching horses. New apartments and cottages are being added to the community as part of the Phase II expansion, offering a variety of floor plans and options. Reservations are being accepted, so call us today at (800) 976-8303 or e-mail admissions@kalex.kendal.org.
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A Sacred Walk

continued from page 7

at bringing things home from school, so without thinking, I said, "No," brusquely and without explanation. He got very upset and I told him, rather harshly, that he couldn't take them in because he wasn't good at bringing things home again. I parked and he cried and was angry. He was slow to get out of the car and resistant to heading in to school. I was firm, unyielding, and Simon continued to cry. I was thinking of how I was supposed to handle this, be firm, not give in, and be the authority, but I knew underneath that I was being unreasonable. Finally, I took a breath and asked him why he wanted to bring the boots into school. He told me that he couldn't climb a mountain of snow in the yard that hadn't yet melted unless he had boots; that he hadn't been allowed to climb it the day before and really wanted to. I told him my concern that he hadn't been good at bringing things home and that if he promised to make every effort to bring these home today, he could take them in. I told him that if he could show me that he could remember to bring them home, I would be more willing to let him take things in to school. Simon cheered remarkably, took the boots in, climbed his mountain of snow, and brought the boots home again. When I'm able to stop the voices that tell me how I am supposed to be a parent and instead step back and listen to him and my own inner guide, we are both able to get what we need and to respond respectfully to one another.

Simon's surgery, a repair of a constriction of his aorta, was scary and hard on Graham and me. Simon took it in stride, though. He packed his things the day before the surgery and said, "I'm all set for a nice stay at the hospital." Even now he says that his hospital stay was fine. But for me his surgery and his subsequent seizures have been reminders to pay attention, enjoy him, and listen.

Since two weeks after Simon's surgery, most mornings he and I take the El train to 30th Street Station on the way to his school. On the train he peers out the window, looks at his reflection, and often draws pictures in his little journal. When we get off the train, we walk past the huge art deco train station and post office. He often balances himself on the cement border of the sidewalk, sometimes "tight-

rope" walking across the metal rods that are all that is left of some of it. We cross the street and Simon runs to the edge of the Market Street bridge to look at the Schuylkill River, to see how dirty it looks today and whether any seagulls are about. He races me across the bridge, sometimes pausing to smile at a homeless man who often feeds the seagulls there. He gets to the end of the bridge and stops in a little nook under a two-foot stone eagle where I can't see him. He says "boo" when I catch up with him, then races down the ramp to walk along the river. We pass a big mural of a whale in the ocean, where homeless men and women are often asleep beneath it on little ledges, with their shoes lined up in neat rows on the nearby steps. Simon hides behind a column at the end of the ramp and peeks out at me again, with a huge smile on his face. We round the corner next to the river and he stops to look over at it, often flinging one rock in and watching it splash. He continues on, climbing the big rocks on the grass, then races under the Chestnut Street bridge to wiggle in and out of the young redbud trees planted there. He races me to the railroad tracks and we always check to see if we can find whether the penny we left there the day before has been flattened. Simon climbs a hill of rocks and comes rushing down as he continues on around the corner toward the park near his school. We pass the community garden and the street on which his friend Anna lives, then walk down a little side street of blue and brown row houses behind his school, lined with maples and ginkgo trees. He races me to the door and we take the elevator up to his preschool, always full of paint, pattern blocks, children's bright art, light, and quite a bit of love.

This walk is my favorite part of the day. It feels sacred to me—this chance to walk with him, to be with his ebullient self and walk in a place that feels to me to be a little microcosm of the problems and possibilities of the contemporary world. Simon experiences our walk with delight and wonder most days, and it is a blessing to be able to see this world a bit through his eyes. □

Together-Together

continued from page 13

- What are some things you have faith in?
- Do you ever have doubts? What are they?
- Are discoveries in faith an act of will or should it just happen?
- What's the difference between a message and a thought?

In one version of the fishbowl we divide into two groups: older Friends (adults) and younger Friends. The young Friends make a large circle while the adults sit clustered in the middle. The outside circle doesn't get to say anything while the list of questions is given to someone in the inner circle who reads one. The inner circle then discusses the question among themselves. When that group has completed the list of questions (or when half the time is up), the groups switch places and roles. A variation of this is to have a group of four to six chairs in the middle and everyone else in the silent outer circle. When someone has something to share, he or she taps a person in the middle and takes that place in the discussion. Again, adults need to be disciplined and not join in the conversation when they are sitting in the outer circle. When truly silent and fully listening, wonderful insights can be garnered.

We have spent much time on the community piece of our faith tradition, because for many of us, this is where our search for a spiritual home begins. Yet the mystical piece is just as important. Our faith is experiential: it can't easily be taught; it has to be experienced and practiced. I think we do a disservice to our children by sending them off during worship and expecting them to pick up how to do it in 15-minute snatches at the beginning or end of meeting. Just as we spend time with our children in discussions, games, projects, picnics, and potlucks, we need to worship with them.

This past New Year's, more than 60 of us gathered in a large, sloppy circle for closing worship. We hadn't planned for babysitters or a First-day program, so we were all together from ages 2 on up to 80. Some of us were in chairs; others were sitting on pillows on the floor. In the center was a pile of cushions and a bunch of plastic building pieces. Our youngest members played earnestly but quietly in the center. Our slightly older ones eyed us beseechingly and after a nod of the head

they too entered the center and interacted in a respectful, intentional (and fairly quiet) manner with the youngest and their toys. The rest of us worshiped. Messages were shared. Silence enveloped us. We were gathered. I found myself thinking, "What an incredibly precious gift to give to our kids: a safe space to play quietly, ringed by love and covered with the Holy Spirit."

We help our youth experience our faith by:

- sharing our own spiritual experiences and practices with them
- adjusting our worship space to accommodate quiet playthings and comfortable places to sit or lie
- adjusting our expectations of worship to allow for the wanderings among us of the littlest, to allow for the occasional, "I'm using that!" or "Hi baby!" "Hi Daddy!"
- expecting our elementary school kids to be reflective and quiet (though maybe not still) for as long as they can and allowing them to come and go as they need to

We nurture our children and each other by being fully present and listening to one another in discussions, workshops, gatherings, and worship. This is how we grow Quakers, young and old. This is how we change the world for the better. □

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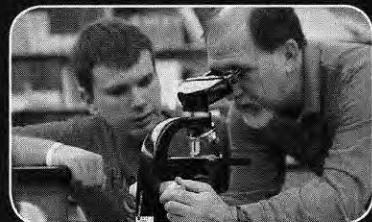
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young volunteers with time to sit on committees. Many people in the room nodded their heads, agreeing. By this timetable, people my age will be free to participate in yearly meeting in another 30 years! Well, I do believe that we have something to offer now. And our feisty children, our eye-rolling middle-schoolers, our insistent teenagers—they all have perspective, spirit, action, and love that they can offer to the *now* of the Religious Society of Friends as well.

Here are some specific suggestions for including children and adults in multi-generational community:

LEARN

Four times a year, invite the adults to come into First-day school for the 15 minutes the kids are usually in worship. Plan an activity that includes movement or art as well as a vocal response. Ask adults to limit their response to two sentences—it's a rich discipline for them and it keeps the kids from getting bored from their talking! Don't pander, make the topic something important (in fact, with kids in the room, sometimes you can risk more talking about stuff adults shy away from): Who do you think Jesus was? When have you noticed God active in your life? (Use the word God—just try it out if it's new to you; the younger kids will be comfortable with it.) Act out a Bible story and a related story from Quaker history using adult and child actors.

If your meeting has a daylong retreat, plan a children's program on the same topic at the same time. Plan to begin and end with activities and worship together. Plan at least one time when everyone comes together. You may ask teens to invite their friends to come, and ask them to help plan it. Make sure that the multi-generational times are interactive and have some movement and color—don't just sit around and talk! Adults will learn by interacting in different modes than the ones they are used to.

Plan adult and children's First-day school to study the same topics at the same time. Plan one day when you all do a project together expressing what you've been learning about—perform a play, write a book together, or go on a treasure hunt for items that illustrate concepts from your studies.

FELLOWSHIP

Once a week have the meetinghouse open for anyone who wants to come to eat dinner together. Have 20 minutes of worship. While eating, ask everyone to share a sentence about how their lives expressed their faith, or didn't, in the past week.

Have secret buddies.

Celebrate birthdays every month with a cake with everyone's name on it who had a birthday.

SERVICE

Designate someone from each committee to go to the First-day school and report to the kids what the committee is doing (use short sentences and take visual examples). The adults all know what the work of the meeting is from reading the newsletter and hearing announcements, but these communications tend to be long-winded and go past the kids.

Invite the kids to send a representative to relevant committee meetings and business meeting to share what they are doing. Plan the meeting for a time and place that is convenient for the kids as well as for adults. Make arrangements with the kids' parents for transportation.

Be sure that committee meetings are accessible to parents. Always offer childcare before anyone asks (ask older kids to provide it as a service to the meeting, or pay them). Meet in times and places that are possible for parents to attend. Children who grow up with parents involved in meeting and who get to play with other kids from meeting while their parents do their thing feel more connected. (My kids *love* committee meetings—especially yearly meeting committee meetings, where they can see their friends from other monthly meetings who they otherwise see only at annual Sessions.)

Constantly look for concrete ways in which kids can be involved in your work. If they are hearing about the work, they may come up with their own ideas. When my daughter was six she asked when she would get to be on a committee. I asked her what kind of work she'd like to do and she said she wanted to have a sale that benefited homeless people. Our meeting actually has such a sale and I contacted the clerk of the committee who invited her to come help sort and price the kids' items for it. When someone kindly asked her if

she was helping she said no and explained that she was the clerk of the children's corner. My four-year-old son who loves to cook wanted in on the action, so he helps prepare food for members of the meeting who need help with meals.

Invite kids to be part of a committee once in a while or on a regular basis. When you do this, make sure that the time and place is convenient, make transportation arrangements with the children's parents, and make sure that everyone knows everyone's names (kids don't always know all those grownups' names, but know them more by their jobs—the one who is always in the kitchen, the one who always makes announcements about marches). Include action and color in your meeting—it will be good for adults to think in a new way as well. Write ideas down on puzzle-shaped pieces instead of newsprint and color-code them; limit how long you talk; plan the first part of the meeting to be about ideas, and then release the kids when you talk about details. You need to be willing to go somewhere new when you invite kids' participation. They are going to want some action and they're probably going to want to do something fun to raise money. It's not fair inviting them if you don't go with their ideas when it's possible. (It isn't always: kids in my meeting want us to welcome all the homeless people of Philadelphia into our houses every night, for example.)

WORSHIP

Children are walking (or being carried) into meeting for worship with a deep, innate, powerful connection with the Spirit, even if they don't name it as such. But they are not necessarily walking into the meeting room with the skills or the knowledge of how to use that time. Kids need to learn how to worship in the manner of Friends, and they are not always going to learn quietly. They will learn what's going on less by being told to be quiet than by adults inviting and welcoming them into that space, knowing the kids will not always be successful. Adults can choose to sit next to a child or invite a family to sit with them. Most importantly, adults can sink deep into that place of Love, opening themselves to the Divine, even while kids are fidgeting

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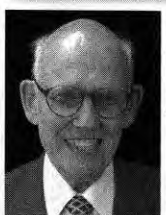
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next to them. A gathered meeting has a palpable sense to it, even to those who don't know what's going on. Children can feel that sense and learn more from that than any number of reminders of what the point of worship is.

Adults have varying ideas about what expectations to have of children in worship. Discuss among the adults what the meeting hopes for the kids in worship, then plan how to support it.

Here's a variation of worship sharing that works for kids: create small, mixed-age groups with as little fuss as possible. Explain that, after Friends have a moment to center into God, you are going to give the groups a *query*, a question that is important to think about. People are asked to share with the others in their small groups—in one sentence (look significantly at the adults when you give that direction; it's the hardest part for grownups)—their responses, the answers that are right on the top of their hearts. Say something like this to the adults: "We adults like to take a lot of time pondering queries and allowing our responses to come together carefully. This is different! We're going to share our hearts' responses in one sentence without censoring." Allow the group a short moment to center (be sure to tell them that's what you're doing—adults will probably know but younger children may not). Then give them the query. Here are some samples that are good for this exercise: What is God? When do I notice God? What is the most important thing? What do I want most? What does God want most? I call this "heart-sharing."

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playing out this fantasy. I began to notice that he looked scared and lonely. This was not surprising. You'd have to feel that way on some level at the point of pretending to eliminate another human being. It looked as if this little boy belonged in someone's arms.

I'd been experimenting with dying, and trying out a loud dramatic ending to give some substance to the game and make it a little more interesting for me. Now I added to it some physical contact. As I died, I fell on him with great drama—and care. Our bodies got all tangled up together, and I explained that I couldn't move since I was dead, so he had to exert some effort to wiggle free. The change in tone was incredible. His face relaxed, and his high-pitched, scared, and forced-sounding laugh changed to irrepressible chuckles that I could share with him. He was delighted with the chance to show how strong he was in struggling free, and he was immediately ready to repeat the shooting so he could be fallen on again. We were in warm, lively contact, and I could see the fears rolling off with the laughter.

The scenario hadn't changed. He was still pointing a finger and saying, "Bang, bang, you're dead." I was still entering into his game, and ending up the "victim." But in a more significant way, the play had been completely transformed. It had started as a game of dominance, loneliness, and fear—a game that played out all that's inhuman in the way men (and women) are trained in our society. Yet it had become a game of closeness, laughter, and physical challenge—all parts of being human that we would wish for everyone.

What surprised me most, though, was not the *extent* of the transformation, but how *easy* it was. As soon as I noticed how scared and lonely he looked, it was easy to think of how to change the game. And as soon as he was offered an alternative, he was ready and eager to take it. Our little boys do not want war training. It does not come naturally. It does not fit well. If we can remember this, we have tremendous power to help them out.

While we stretch to find a human response to the war games that our precious children play, it makes sense to campaign against the selling of war toys as well. Though some may disagree, I am

not so worried about homemade toy weapons. Children have power over their own construction. They have exercised their imagination, their skill, and their creativity—and they know the reality of what they have made. Store-bought war toys seem much more dangerous. They can be extremely realistic; they usually come with narrow negative scripts and seductive advertising budgets; they glorify war and killing; they're expensive; and they crowd out alternatives. As we campaign against war toys, however, let's remember gender equity and consider a campaign against sexual submission toys intended for girls as well. It may well be the women who will have to lead us out of this war mess in the adult world, and our little girls need all the reminders of their real power that they can get.

There are also many positive things we can do to raise nonviolent world citizens—which may have as much or more impact than how we handle war play. When we treat others with complete respect (especially those less powerful, such as our children) we are offering a clear alternative to the model of military (and these days primarily Western) world dominance. When we invite the world into our lives (via foreign visitors, our choice of TV programs, books, vacations, and restaurants) we are offering real contact with people who can't then be a "faceless enemy." When we share world history and geography across cultural boundaries, we change the illusion that our experience is the only one. When we model conflict resolution—not using our greater power to win and not caving in to pressure, but listening and showing respect, being flexible and creative about solutions—we are giving our children tools for a lifetime. And when we talk openly about what we love, we are inviting them to the deepest truths.

Perhaps most of all, we can stay close to our children, including our sons, by snuggling, being soft, playing hard together, and not letting them go off lonely and strong. We can remember their goodness and show our love and confidence in them even—especially—as they are trying on the less-than-human role models that our world offers them. □

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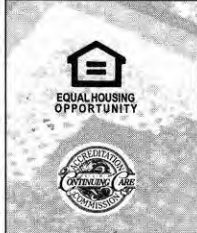


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Follow the Child

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her the vision and the skills to build it, and I suspect that she will never settle for less.

Sending Elizabeth to AMS is the single major parenting decision about which I have no regrets at all, but still I can't say that it has been easy to have her so far from home. She is in her second year there now, and though I've gotten used to missing her, I don't miss her any less as time goes on. It has been especially difficult to be so far away when she has been ill and I wanted to nurse her even though I knew she was getting good care at school. When she achieved an enormous goal like hiking almost 50 miles through the mountains, I wanted to be there to celebrate with her. When our family dog died and the rest of us went out for a meal to remember her and commemorate her life, I was sad about the dog but my real grief was that Elizabeth was with us only by phone.

Even these feelings, though, have been an education for me. I've had to recognize that they are purely my own issue. Sometimes it is so difficult to separate our emotions from our impulses as parents that we mix them up and make mistakes. Parenting with integrity requires self-awareness, and I have gained that in these two years.

My favorite memory of Elizabeth's time at AMS so far is a moment that taught me how my role as a parent has been transformed. Two Decembers ago, the phone rang at 8:00 AM on a Saturday—of course a time that is only for emergency calls. It was Elizabeth, beside herself with an emotion that it took me a moment to recognize as joy. "Mom, I'm outside in my pajamas and slippers and when I stick my tongue out I can catch one, and there's only my footprints, nobody else's." It was her first snowfall. She was the first to wake up and see that the world had turned smooth and white overnight, and she had run right outside, grabbing the cordless phone on her way. It warmed me to realize that she chose to share this moment with me. Motherly admonitions about coats, hats, boots, and mittens melted on my own tongue as I realized that my role was, once again, to follow the child. "Darling, that's amazing! Is it good packing snow? Can you make snowballs? Tell me how the forest looks!" It was almost as if I were there frolicking with her in the snow. □

Laurence Sigmond

Young Friends Need Elders

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zational, and if they work to create relations of love and respect between individuals and generations, they will create a space for discipline. Young Friends are desperately thirsty for guidance from our elders, but there must first be a vibrant relationship that enables such guidance. When elders have shown their love for us and their concern for our lives as individuals and as Friends ministers, they are in a position to speak with authority in our lives. This is not a relationship of domination, but one of loving concern and guidance. When those who love us speak to us in concern and out of their experience, we are obliged to listen to them, and perhaps even to take their advice over our own perception of a situation, trusting them and their proven record of loving us and looking out for our best interests.

An example of this arose for me in my yearly meeting while I prepared for the World Gathering of Young Friends (WGYF) in 2005. I had applied and been accepted to attend the WGYF, but it turned out that the total cost of my trip would be in the range of \$2,000. In the days before Great Plains Yearly Meeting, I became firmly convinced that it was absurd to spend that much to be in England for a week. I spoke up in the yearly meeting sessions and expressed my concern in no uncertain terms. To my great consternation, my yearly meeting was quite set on sending representation to England. In the end, both I and another Young Friend were sent to England, quite against my own judgment.

Having my elders set aside my concerns and act in direct contradiction to them was a deeply humbling experience for me. But it turned out that they were right: the WGYF *was* worth the cost. Indeed, the gathering in England was one of the most important events of my life. My elders did not simply accept at face value what I told them; in fact, they completely contradicted me. But they spoke with authority, and—I am now convinced—they spoke with a sense of the will of God. The basis of discipline is speaking with authority in relationships

of love, even when it does not fit in with the understanding of the person being brought under discipline.

Discipline sometimes means the ability to say no in love. It is a legitimate role of elders to speak with authority to matters of community faith and practice. It is in such a context where statements such as "you can be a Quaker and believe whatever you want" are challenged in a loving spirit. Young Friends are looking for communities that not only can love and support us, but have something to teach us and can hold us accountable. We are thirsty for elders who can provide a model as living compasses to keep us on the Way.

Young Friends are in a place of great transition and trials, which gives us at once great strength and great vulnerability. We



are, for the most part, physically able, mentally flexible and, in many cases, spiritually aflame. We have so much strength, passion, and spirit that we want to share with the wider body of Friends. But we need guidance. Young Friends need the support of elder Friends on every level, from the mundane and personal to the organizational. And we need discipline. Young Friends need discipline that stems from loving support, holding us accountable, and speaking with authority in our lives. We need assistance in finding and staying on the Way. Elders, we need you. □

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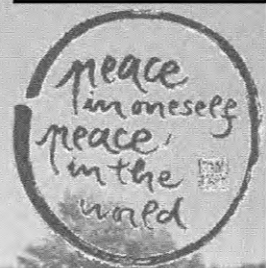
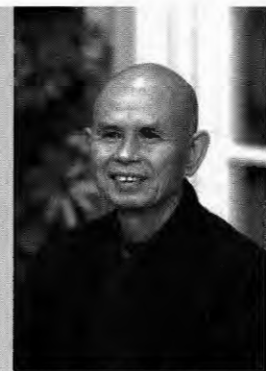
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the child we loved to play with. I'll keep that memory the closest. It's his smile I will see when I think of him, his smile, his laugh, and that he cheated at children's games."

Tom Fox believed in children's spirituality, and he was truly dedicated to helping Young Friends find their own spiritual paths. He believed they could have direct, mystical experiences of the Divine. At Opequon Quaker Camp (where he volunteered every summer to do whatever was needed—kitchen manager, workshop leader, bus driver, cook, grounds maintenance guy), fellow staff member Coleman Watts remembers that Tom shared regularly at fire circles with the children (ages 9–14) about the techniques he found helpful for centering during meeting for worship. The summer before his kidnapping, Tom co-led a workshop called "Spiritual Path," and he taught the campers one of his favorite meditation techniques, "Focusing," which can be used to receive guidance from the Inner Light (See "Focusing on the Light" by Nancy Saunders, *FRIENDS JOURNAL*, Jan. 2003).

Workshop co-leader Elizabeth De Sa remembers when Tom told the children that he tried to exude peace, even when looking down the barrel of a gun. They really got it—that this was about real life issues, not just behavior or beliefs for meeting on Sunday. It did not occur to Tom that children might not have the patience or the interest in these subjects. He trusted them to learn about Spirit in their own way.

Tom Fox also served as a role model and a mentor for many adults who worked with Young Friends. One important lesson learned from Tom's example is that Young Friends don't need rules or direction from adults. They need role models—adults who demonstrate through their own choices and behaviors the options available to Young Friends to act on one's beliefs, and who have faith in young people's abilities to find the best direction for themselves. They also need information from adults to help them make informed decisions, particularly from adults who are willing to share their knowledge and experience with Quaker process, while allowing space for Young Friends to follow their own process. This is a delicate balance that is difficult for

July 2007 FRIENDS JOURNAL

many adults. It is hard to be present and supportive of Young Friends without imposing one's own agendas. Tom achieved this balance more easily than most, and he showed other adults the way to love Young Friends, sharing our own journeys with them, and then letting go with trust in their wisdom and strength.

Laurie Wilner remembers one of the more difficult pieces Tom Fox left with her, a statement he made when he was clerk of Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Youth Programs Committee: "Any form of control other than self-control is oppression." Tom went on to say that sometimes some people need some amount of oppression (the two-year-old running toward the street) but that it is important to realize that if it is not self-control it is oppression. As her 17-year-old son, Sean, prepares to leave for college, Laurie finds these words of wisdom particularly profound.

Tom Fox felt that this work with Young Friends was of the highest importance. He knew that these empowered young people could change the world. He deeply appreciated the privilege of being present to contribute to Young Friends' spiritual journeys. He knew that simply through being present he could make a difference in their lives.

With the help of Tom Fox and other dedicated FAPs, and with the patience of my son who helped me learn from my blunders, I finally learned how to be a Friendly Adult Presence. My son and I became much closer and more accepting of one another as a result of our experiences together in Young Friends. The positive changes carried over into our home and made me a more conscious and intentional mother, as well as a more understanding friend to the other young people in my life. Sharing their spiritual journeys has been a precious gift. □



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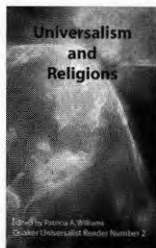
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More Substance

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liked the opportunity to attend those sessions with the rest of the yearly meeting. I would also have liked to go to the morning Bible half-hours, which some long-time NEYM attendees had told me were very good.

The following summer we attended New York Yearly Meeting sessions. My own inclination to attend adult sessions was reinforced when a Friend around my own age from Syracuse Meeting told me that she had not been comfortable with parts of the culture of those gatherings and did not think I would be either. When I tried to register for the adult program at the start of sessions, some people tried to convince me to attend the youth program, but in the end they accepted my choice. During the week some adults related to me just as they would to anyone else they did not know, but others who saw me at business sessions or talking with older Friends seemed concerned at the presence of a teen and asked me if I wanted to be with those of my own age. One went so far as to tell me he was concerned that I was somehow maladjusted. I got the impression from some that they would have preferred me to be elsewhere, and that they expected all people my age to have the interests and values of the popular U.S. teen culture. For me the highlight of that yearly meeting was worship sharing in a small group each morning. I met wonderful people, talked with some of them afterward, and met others through those conversations. One who could have been my grandfather even invited me to sail with him on the lake one day when it wasn't raining. I have since come to know many of them better through our regional meeting, and some more intimately since we began participating in a group that meets periodically for extended worship. I became involved with the Alternatives to Violence Project through some of these connections, which has been a very enriching experience, especially now that I am old enough to participate in AVP workshops inside prisons.

I have heard the view expressed by teens and sometimes by their leaders that Friends should do more "fun" things with their youth. I have participated in several youth programs of various sorts with Friends, and I found that gatherings that primarily focused on fun left me feeling

that I hadn't found centering and spiritual experience. In my opinion there are many places devoted to fun, but groups devoted to religious experience are less common.

Here at St. Francis Farm a part of our mission is to host retreat groups, which are primarily composed of high school and college students who spend time ranging from a day to a week with us. Hosting groups has helped me to see how the group experience is different for a participant than for a leader. The students join us for our half hour of silence each morning and participate in the work and life of the farm. Some participants have at first found the silence frightening or boring, but over the course of the week have come to value it. A few have even written to us to say they tried to follow that practice in their own lives. Groups help us with the farmwork—gardening, construction and repairs, and food preparation. They also go with us to sites in the area to work with children and to do yard work and home repair for elders. Some group members do not like the work and do as little as they can, but others tell us that if they had stayed home they would have just watched TV, and that they found our work much more meaningful.

Childcare is often provided during meeting for worship, and in my limited experience it seems that often it is the teens who are least involved in the regular life of the meeting who volunteer to help with childcare. This is very kind of them, but I wonder if it makes the experience of the children less of being part of a meeting and more of doing something fun while their parents are busy. It seems to me that a similar pattern is present at times in the activities planned for the youth groups at large Quaker gatherings. My experiences suggest that some young Friends are not seeking more fun, but instead more substance and the option to be included as a part of the larger Friends community rather than being segregated by age. □

Friendly Partners

continued from page 32

distance themselves from their parents, other adults need to step in to show that they care. Our meetings need youth, and we must say so directly to them and mean it. Also, we as a meeting have been uncertain about when the appropriate time is to ask a young person if they want to join meeting. If the young adult is in college, with little contact with the meeting, that's an awkward time to ask them to join meeting. Many times we had never reached out to them when they were living locally.

After a careful screening of volunteers, we asked Friendly Partners for a yearlong commitment, with a willingness to extend it in the future. Parents gave their consent for the match. Most pairs have stayed together over the years. One single mother invited the adult Quaker over to dinner to hang out, without any agenda. The 16-year-old boy surprised the adults by playing his guitar for them.

We asked Friendly Partners to meet three or four times a year and that they pray for each other in whatever form suits them. We also asked that when the youth is 17, or a senior in high school, the teen be willing to do a project at the meeting with any help needed from their Friendly Partner. For most, this has been a description of their life as a Quaker up to this point. They give their testimony at a 30-minute forum to which the entire meeting is invited.

Sometimes the pairs drift apart and sometimes the youth eschews meeting. The adult partner lets them know that the young person can call anytime or just go out and get a pizza.

What structure does your meeting have to stay in touch with its youth, even when they curl their nose up at First-day school? □

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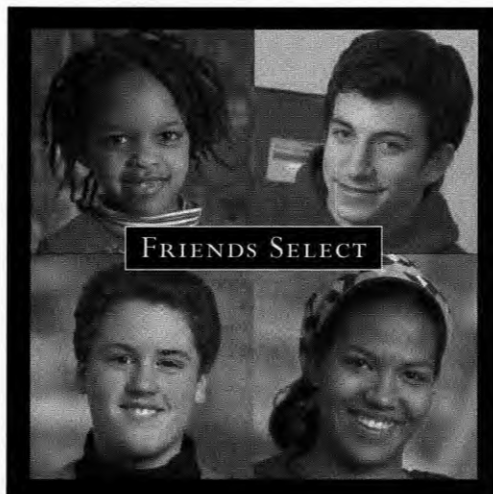
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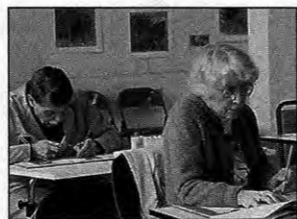


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Finding Our Place *continued from page 37*

ed, and soon a political discussion took over. Which issue had the most resonance to unite people across different theological and political lines, to give young Friends a unique, needed voice today?

It was clear to us that these answers would not be found that night around the dinner table in Burlington. But I sensed that we would find the right answers, and that we would be led to them as a Young Friends community "as way opens." I felt that the energy gathered in Burlington came from more than just those who were there, and that we were gathered for a purpose.

I think that purpose is one of renewal. It's no secret in our Religious Society, across geographical and theological lines, that we're struggling to attract and maintain the interest of young people. That's not because Friends don't have something to offer young people. The concept of continuing revelation that is central to Friends holds a deep resonance for those of us who have grown up in a world where it seems most people have stopped listening for the word of God. Friends across theological and political lines also emphasize service in a way that remains attractive to young people. I sense deeply that God knows young people need and want what Friends have to offer; the question then becomes, what can our Religious Society do to build itself among young people?

This discussion needs to include several different issues, namely how young people can be integrated into the Religious Society, and how it can support and nurture its young people as they find their way in the wider world. These two questions are separate, but closely related. I believe there are several institutional and local measures that Friends at large, and monthly meetings in particular, can take to draw in young people as well as to help us find our place in the wider world.

I'll start with a relatively minor suggestion, based on my experiences in college. As I wrote earlier, unprogrammed meeting for worship was always well-attended at Guilford. That worship was at 5:00 PM—or 5:30 on Friday afternoons. Let's face it: young people like to sleep in, later on Sundays than worship is scheduled. Meetings need to add a worship oriented towards the schedules of young people.

My relationship with Friends involves

far more than weekly worship. It has involved nurturing my spiritual gifts and guidance in discerning my place in the world. Friends, nationally and regionally, can do much to help guide young people and nurture them. A good example is the Pickett Fund for the Development of Quaker Leadership. Named in honor of Clarence Pickett, an early leader of American Friends Service Committee, this fund supports service projects of young people who show promising leadership potential. I received support from the fund during my sophomore year of college, and the project I did helped provide invaluable direction for where I am now. The Religious Society of Friends needs to provide more than just spiritual experiences and fellowship. It needs to provide a moral compass to guide activities and provide direction in our life work.

Older Friends can provide guidance and experience to season and temper the leadings and callings of younger Friends. Young Friends depend on this to find their place in the Religious Society and the wider world. Ultimately, Young Friends' place among Friends and their role in the wider world are intertwined. In finding our role in the world, younger Friends will also find their place among the Quaker community. This has been true for me personally.

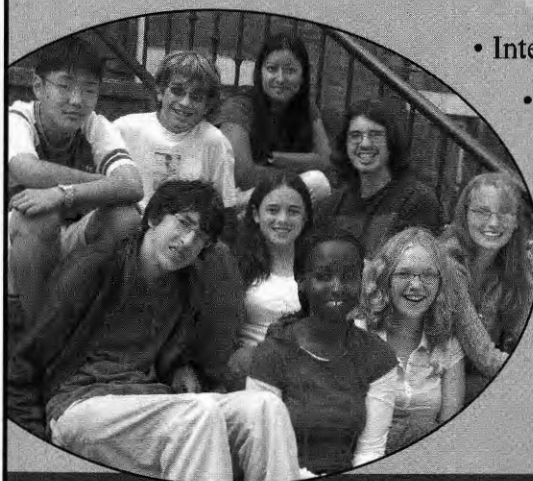
Quakerism has provided me not just with spiritual experiences, but with a sense of purpose. I felt a sense of purpose among the young Friends gathered in Burlington, but I also sensed a group of young people looking for purpose. I can't shake the feeling that it came from somewhere other than our own minds—that it was written on our hearts. We have a collective truth to speak to the world. Friends have much to offer the world, and much to offer young people; and young people have much to offer Friends as well. This might not always be apparent; in New Jersey, I certainly heard a lot of questioning about where we fit. I feel that the conference in Burlington was a turning point for young people within Quakerism in the United States and Canada—we know there's a place for us, a role we have in the world, and we're working to open the way forward for ourselves and our faith. □

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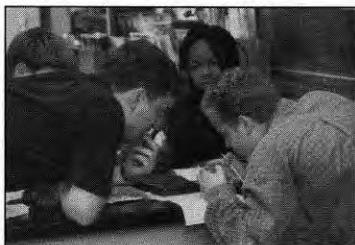
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■ MILESTONES

Deaths

Bechtel—*David Albert Bechtel*, 68, on April 3, 2006, in Sarasota, Fla., after struggling valiantly for nearly ten months with stage four lung cancer. David was born on March 18, 1938, in Mansfield, Ohio, to Kathleen Heath Bechtel and Henry Bechtel. Dave was a member of a German American family whose founding grandfather had emigrated from Austria-Hungary. When Dave was a young child, his family moved to the Cleveland area, where he grew up, graduating from Parma High School in 1956. He attended University of Toledo until his senior year, when, eager to make his way in the world, he began a series of sales jobs that continued until retirement. In 1963 he married Carol Vander Meer. In 1964 the couple moved to Connecticut, and in 1967 Dave started Bechtel and Company, selling measuring instruments throughout New England. In the 1970s he founded Valmet, Inc., selling high-precision electronic measuring instruments, manufactured in Germany, through a national network of manufacturer's agents. Dave grew up Presbyterian, and followed the Presbyterian faith until relatively late in his life, serving as Deacon and Elder. During his years in Connecticut, increasingly concerned about the human and material costs of violence and war, Dave joined the peace movement and helped to found an ongoing public peace vigil in West Hartford. In 1989 Carol began attending Hartford (Conn.) Meeting, but Dave remained Presbyterian. In 1991, he volunteered to open a United States office for the Canadian peace organization Earth Day International, selecting Washington, D.C., as the site, and moved the family there. That venture was short-lived, but Dave developed new sales work in Washington, and began to work actively on his peace concerns as he and Carol attended Friends Meeting of Washington. Both eventually became members, and Dave served on the Finance and Property Committee and the Hunger and Homelessness Task Force, making soup, organizing a monthly meal, and serving it to homeless people for many years, through the Salvation Army's Grate Patrol. As retirement age approached, Dave and Carol decided to try living aboard a cruising sailboat, a dream Dave had developed during his years in Washington. For three winters, they cruised the waters of Florida and the Bahamas, but eventually settled in Sarasota in November 2003. Plunging into both peace and meeting activity, Dave and Carol transferred their membership to Sarasota Meeting. Dave served as clerk of the meeting's Peace and Social Concerns Committee, as a member of both the Meetinghouse and Trustees/Finance committees, as well as serving on the national board of Friends Peace Teams. In addition to peace work with the meeting, Dave represented them on the Southwest Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice, where he soon became treasurer and a member of the executive group. In 2005 he organized a silent peace vigil in downtown Sarasota's Bayfront Park that continues to meet every Friday afternoon. During this period, he read extensively on the character and influence of the military-industrial complex on U.S. life and spoke frequently on this topic. He had intended to pursue the study of this issue as one of his principal activities. He became part of Sarasota Meeting in the autumn of 2003 and was a welcome, vigorous presence for all through his committee service and his warm, loving discussions during coffee and fellowship peri-

ods. His life experience in the business world enriched the meetings for worship with a concern for business. During his two brief years with Sarasota Meeting, Dave served energetically on numerous committees and special threshing sessions, and influenced many people deeply. Friends held two meetings for worship in his home during his last days, meetings in which the community truly gathered and joined spirits. Dave is survived by Carol, his wife of 43 years; their children, Anne Daniels, Karl Bechtel, and Jane Bechtel Brown; three grandchildren, Carol Rose Daniels, William David Daniels, and Audrey Anne Brown; and his sister, Sandra Bennett.

Kloepfer—*Ruth Kloepfer*, 91, on May 24, 2006, in Pasadena, Calif. Ruth was born on August 15, 1914, in Coraopolis, Pa. to Daniel Crane McCoy, a Presbyterian seminary student, and Bessie Adelaide George Watt McCoy, a school teacher. When Ruth was nine months old, the family moved to Hanover, Pa. Ruth was proud of the fact that at age seven she could prepare a complete family meal, including mashed potatoes, while her mother was doing laundry. In 1921, the family moved to Fresno, Calif., where Ruth, who had previously been homeschooled, began attending public school, entering at the third grade. In 1926, her family moved back east to Fairpoint, Ohio. When she was 16, Ruth graduated with honors from St. Clairsville High School and at 17, she entered Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio, and worked her way through by selling Avon products door-to-door, cleaning houses, waiting on tables, and working in the kitchen of the small college inn where she stayed. When she was 18, H. Warner Kloepfer came to Muskingum College to interview Ruth's roommate for a job selling Bibles during the summer, and ended up recruiting both of them. After that summer, Ruth continued selling Bibles, both as an additional source of income and to spend time with Warner. Ruth graduated from Muskingum College at age 20 with majors in both Speech and English and taught high school English in a small town in Ohio. Warner and Ruth were married in May 1936. They lived in Lancaster, Pa., until they moved to Athens, Ohio, to attend Ohio University. In 1938, Ruth received a master's degree in Speech and English. The next year they moved to Columbus, Ohio, where they had their first child, and were introduced to Quakerism. They soon became members of Columbus Meeting. After receiving his PhD, Warner took a teaching position at Dakota Wesleyan in Mitchell, S. Dak., where Ruth gave birth to two more children. In 1946 Warner taught in Emporia, Kans., where their fourth child was born. The family moved to Clarksville, Ark., where Warner was Dean of Students at the College of the Ozarks. During the years Ruth and Warner lived in South Dakota, Kansas, and Arkansas, there were no Friends meetings near them, so they attended Presbyterian churches. While they were still living in Clarksville, Ark., Ruth started supplementing the family's income by selling silver for Prestige Silver Company. This involved direct sales using word-of-mouth leads. Soon Ruth was one of their top salespersons. In New Orleans, she started training others to sell silver and eventually became a sales manager with Family Record Plan, a position she held for over ten years. However, her sales team refused to continue working with her when they learned that Ruth's

daughter, Ruanne, had started dating a black man. Ruth used the opportunity to switch to a completely different line of work, becoming director of rehabilitation at the Orleans Parish Prison, where she served for almost ten years. New Orleans had a small but active Quaker meeting to which Ruth and Warner transferred their memberships. The Quaker meeting in New Orleans also met in their home. In 1982, when Warner died suddenly, Ruth became more involved with her Quaker meeting in New Orleans. Later on, she lived briefly with her oldest daughter in New Orleans and then her son in Pittsburgh, Pa. In 1991, she moved to California where she lived with her daughter Karol for the remaining 15 years of her life. Permanently located in California, she promptly transferred her Quaker membership to Orange Grove (Calif.) Meeting. On behalf of Southern California Quarterly Meeting, she represented the Quaker point of view in both the Southern California Ecumenical Council and the Inter-Religious Council of Southern California. Her social concerns led her to be active in issues related to the criminal justice system and illegal immigration, as well as race and peace. For a number of years she was active on the Middle East Peace Education and Southern California Area Program Committees of American Friends Service Committee. Meanwhile, her religious interests led her to participate in numerous satsangs sponsored by the Blue Mountain Center of Meditation in Petaluma, Calif. In 2002, she joined an esoteric study group called Researchers of Truth, or Erevna, based in Cyprus. Before breaking her forearm just before her death, Ruth had recently joined Yogi Bhananda's Self-Realization Fellowship. Ruth had an outgoing personality and a vibrant soul, bringing her strong faith, deep love, and unceasing optimism wherever she went. She was predeceased by her husband, Warner Kloefer. Ruth is survived by her son, John Kloefer; her daughters, Jean Kloefer Watts, Karol Kloefer, and Ruth (Ruanne) Kloefer Peters; 12 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren, one great-great grandson; many nieces and nephews; her brothers, James McCoy, Lowell McCoy, Pressley McCoy, and Wayne McCoy; and her sisters, Elverne McCoy Tipton, Besse McCoy Manney, and Mary Esther McCoy Barnes.

Loft—Eleanor Riddle Loft, 96, on June 12, 2006, at home in Sharon, Conn. Eleanor was born on October 12, 1909, in Wellesley, Mass., to Gertrude H. Riddle and Lincoln W. Riddle. Eleanor graduated from Wellesley College in 1931 and earned her MA in Religious Education from Union Theological Seminary, serving on church staffs in various locations. In 1942 she joined the Religious Society of Friends, and in that same year she and George Loft were married under the care of New York Meeting. She and George undertook extended periods of Quaker service, first as AFSC representatives in British Central Africa in the 1950s; then as non-governmental representatives at the United Nations in New York City, where she supervised activities at Quaker House; and finally in raising funds abroad to support Quaker technical assistance programs overseas. At the time of her death she was a member of the Quaker Worship Sharing Group in Cornwall, Conn. An active musician and birder, she served on the board of the Housatonic Audubon Society. She is survived by her husband, George Loft; and her daughters, Deborah Loft and Jean Seiler.

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Forum

continued from page 5

bulbs has its own unrecognized environmental conundrum. Ordinary incandescent bulbs do waste electricity (more than 90 percent goes to heat). However, they are relatively innocuous environmentally—a bit of brass, a bit of tungsten, a bit of solder, some glass, while fluorescents have mercury (not good) and chemical phosphors coating the inside of the glass (what happens to that in the landfill?).

How to save energy? Easy. Turn off the lights—both incandescent and energy-saving bulbs. That's why God made the sun.

*James Baker
Nelson, B.C.*

Letters of note

I especially enjoyed the correspondence in the April Forum.

*Viola Palmer
Waikanae, New Zealand*

Gone before doomsday

I read with interest the subject article on your website, "Managing Conflict and Natural Resources through Good Clerking: The Legacy of Gilbert F. White," by Robert E. Hinshaw (*FJ* April). In light of the growing concern over global warming (unfortunately based to a significant degree on the way in which we in the U.S. squander energy), I thought it worthwhile to suggest that we raise the driving age to 18 nationwide (with narrow exceptions for family farms). This would take millions of teenagers off the roads and oblige them to ride school buses or public transport to high school (or, God forbid, walk to school). These resources should be diverted to improving public transport and education. After all, they are in high school to learn and to prepare themselves for a productive adult life.

I hear the argument frequently that teens need cars to get to part-time jobs. I never had a car until I graduated from university and I somehow managed to do some part-time work. I maintain that the job is often mainly providing resources to buy and operate a vehicle—what a waste!

We in the U.S. drive 1.8 times as many vehicles as the average of all Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. Our cars consume on average twice the fuel per mile of those in the European Union countries. I am sure that we drive more miles per vehicle per year. We insist on using large pickup trucks and SUVs as regular passenger cars. These are allowed to consume about one-third more



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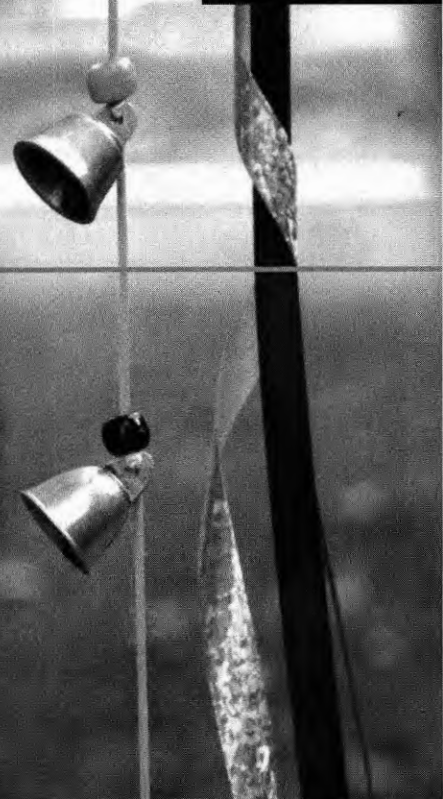
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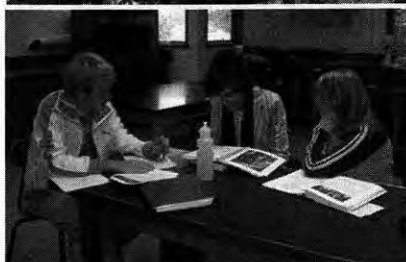
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fuel per mile than regular passenger cars. This is really stupid public policy.

With all of our technological prowess we should be able to set a much better example in this world of ours. Were China to adopt our way of life in some future generation, the planet would be doomed and there would be a major world war over water, energy, food, and more. I will not be around to see this doomsday scenario play out, but it surely will happen if major changes are not made in the way we live and consume non-renewable energy sources.

Lewis Clark
Venice, Fla.

For Barbara Benton

Congratulations, Barbara, for your 30 years with FRIENDS JOURNAL! To Susan Corson-Finnerty's tribute in her column in the May issue, I add a personal thank-you for your commitment. Thirty is the number of years, more or less, that I have been a reader of the JOURNAL. During these three decades, the JOURNAL emerged as an even stronger voice for the faith witness and experience of Friends. Your contribution has been invaluable, we now realize. You have brought to the pages of the JOURNAL a visual statement of simplicity and integrity that enhances and strengthens the editorial content. The result is a high standard for FRIENDS JOURNAL to follow for the next 30 years. Again, thank you.

Robert Marks
Bowling Green, Ohio

Questioning minds and military recruiters

Thank you very much for your May issue. I'm happy having this to read and share.

Anyone wishing to avoid military service probably only needs to ask any recruiter any one of the 36 questions in Don Lathrop's "Questions to Ask Military Recruiters and Yourself." The recruiter would surely deem the questioner unfit for military service. Many people already in the military are waking up to Truth and beginning to ask questions.

I greatly appreciate the diverse articles of interest in this issue.

Gerald Niles
Monticello, Fla.

A journal by the imprisoned

Sandy Spring (Md.) Meeting publishes *The Prison Journal*, a compilation of writings of prisoners. This journal serves as an outlet



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for inmates to see their writings or artwork in print. It is relatively new, with only two issues having been published thus far. We are currently seeking works for our third issue, due to be released this coming fall.

This new journal was started by the Prison Committee of the Sandy Spring Friends Meeting. This committee regularly conducts spiritual meetings in a prison, seeks understanding of prisoner issues, and provides post-release assistance.

We are accepting short essays, poems, and drawings (no larger than 8" x 14") from current inmates from all geographic locations. Submissions must include prisoner name and ID number. Please have them sent to: *The Prison Journal*, Sandy Spring Friends Meeting, 17715 Meeting House Rd., Sandy Spring, MD 20860; or e-mail: <prisonjournal@gmail.com>.

We will send free copies to all inmates who send in submissions. Anyone who would like to view a current issue can download it from the Baltimore Yearly Meeting website, <<http://www.bym-rsf.org/quakers/index2007spring.shtml>>.

John Worley
Sandy Spring, Md.

Impending tragedies

The shootings reported on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg struck me harder than I would have expected. Then I remembered that I had been on campus three times: twice while attending FGC Gatherings and in 1976 when a Virginia statewide conference for teachers of business took place on VT's campus. I have many good memories of Blacksburg as a result of those visits. So, the violence reported in the news this week conflicted with the calm, beautiful campus I remember.

As I prayed about what had occurred and held the people directly affected by the shootings in the Healing Light, I wondered about the man who did the shootings. The violence seething in Cho, the killer to be, was identified by many people well before he went on his rampage on campus. Why was nothing substantive done to help prevent such a scene as we witnessed? Why was there no intervention for a man who clearly was a danger to his community and himself? These questions are up to the Virginia Tech community to answer. Yet, pondering these questions opened a leading for me that I'd like to share.

I asked myself, "What am I doing when I see an 'accident waiting to happen'? What am I doing to help prevent someone I know from doing something that could result in

injury or death to my loved ones as well as to other people? What can I do to prevent random violence in my community?"

This line of thought helped me to crystallize my responsibility to resolve another "accident waiting to happen." Last night, my brother and I sat down with my dad to discuss his driving ability, an issue we had tiptoed around for months. We asked dad when he would know when it was time to discontinue driving his car. At 81 years his reaction time and memory, we fear, are failing him more than he will admit. My brother and I see him as a potential danger to himself and everyone else in the community, yet he does not agree. So we asked him how he would know when it was time to give up driving a car.

His response was: "My driving is as good as it ever was and I am not giving up my car or my license." We talked about how my mom lost her driver's license after she turned into a lane that had an 18-wheeler coming towards her. Luckily, nobody was badly hurt, but it could have been a school bus or a person. Mom had said after the accident, "I didn't even see the truck coming in my direction." Dad did remember that incident and he became less defensive about our concerns for his driving.

The norm in our culture seems to be that people wait until they are in an auto accident before they will admit that it is time to quit driving. Talk about "waiting for an accident to happen"! After a relatively short and painless discussion, where we used many "I" messages, way opened. My dad would take a driving test at a local driving school and we would all get a written evaluation of his abilities.

Luckily, my dad is also concerned about hurting others, so he agreed to this course of action. If he had not, my brother and I were prepared to take more drastic action to preserve his and the community's safety. We were prepared to take his car keys from him and make alternative arrangements for his transportation needs.

Dad would have been angry at us, but I know that there were times when he told us "not to play in the street" and we had to listen to him. Now, our roles have become reversed and we need to look out for his safety, as well as those of innocent bystanders in our community.

Let us each find one "accident waiting to happen," and then let's apply our skills as peacemakers and problem solvers and community builders to remove that one possibility from our communities.

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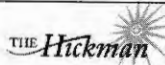
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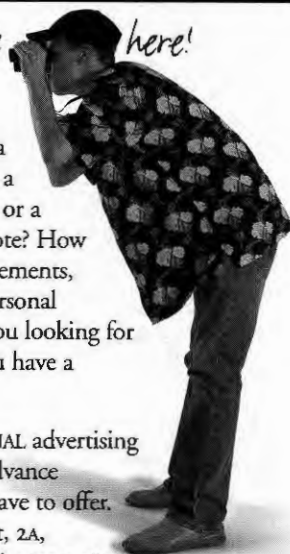
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- Establish an FGC charitable gift annuity that offers you income for life as well as generous tax benefits.
- Include FGC in your charitable trust.

For more information, please contact Michael Wajda or Julia Sibley-Jones in the FGC Development Office at 215-561-1700 or plannedgiving@fgcquaker.org.

Sarah Richardson



FGC

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*Together we can nurture
the future of Quakerism*