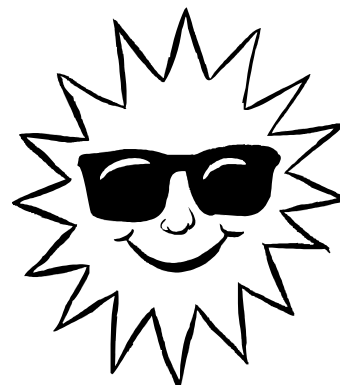


Southern Appalachian Friend

Newsletter
of the
Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting & Association
of the
Religious Society of Friends

SUMMER 2005



Monthly Meetings & Worship Groups

Anneewakee Creek Worship Group
Douglasville, GA (770) 949-8079

Asheville (NC) Friends Meeting
(828) 258-0974

Athens (GA) Friends Meeting
(706) 353-2856

Atlanta (GA) Friends Meeting
(404) 377-2474

Auburn (AL) Worship Group
(334) 887-9688

Berea (KY) Friends Meeting
(859) 986-9262

Birmingham (AL) Friends Meeting
(205) 592-0570

Boone (NC) Friends Meeting
(828) 263-0001

Brevard (NC) Friends Meeting
(828) 885-2889

Celo (NC) Friends Meeting
(828) 675-4456

Charleston (WV) Friends Meeting
(304) 756-3033

Chattanooga (TN) Friends Meeting
(423) 629-2580

Clarksville (TN) Worship Group
(931) 647-9284

Clemson (SC) Worship Group
(864) 654-6680

Columbia (SC) Friends Meeting
(803) 252-2221

Cookeville (TN) Preparative Meeting
(931) 268-2592

Crossville (TN) Friends Meeting
(931) 277-5354

Foxfire Friends Meeting
Johnson City, TN (423) 283-4392

Greenville (SC) Friends Meeting
(864) 246-6852

Gwinnett Worship Group
Norcross, GA (770) 315-9478

Huntsville (AL) Area Friends Meeting
(256) 837-6327

Memphis (TN) Friends Meeting
(901) 274-1400

Murfreesboro (TN) Worship Group
(931) 389-6340

Nashville (TN) Friends Meeting
(615) 329-2640

New Moon Worship Group
Barnardsville, NC (828) 626-2572

Oxford (MS) Friends Meeting
(662) 473-3670

Royal Worship Group
Blountsville, AL (205) 429-3088

Sevier County Worship Group
Sevierville, TN (865) 429-1807

Sewanee (TN) Worship Group
(931) 598-5031

Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting
Black Mountain, NC (828) 664-0092

West Knoxville (TN) Friends Meeting
(865) 694-0036

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SAF Submissions—Next Due

Date: 10/01/2005

Submit meeting or worship group news, original articles, opinions, poetry, announcements, humor, gripes, worries, and cookie recipes to:

SAFeditor@SAYMA.org

or by mail to:

SAF c/o Susan & Kim Carlyle
PO Box 439
Barnardsville, NC 28709
(828) 626-2572

(Please include your name and phone number.)

* * *

For resource-saving, electronic delivery of the SAF, send your name, e-mail address and monthly meeting or worship group name to

SAFeditor@SAYMA.org

SAYF Calendar

August 26-28, 2005 Nurturing/Steering Committee Meetings

Wren's House in Black Mountain; Program planning: SAYF SC Co-Clerks and NC Co-Clerks; Lead FAP: Wren Hendrickson

September 23-25, 2005

Retreat at Chapel Hill Meeting House; Program Planning: Chapel Hill YFs; Lead FAP: Wren Hendrickson

October 21-23, 2005 tentative: Work Camp at Penn Center, St. Helena Island, SC; Program Planning: TBA; Lead FAP: TBA

November 11-13, 2005 Retreat at West Knoxville Meeting House; Program Planning: West Knoxville YFs; Lead FAP: Kathleen Mavournin

January 13-15, 2006 Retreat at Atlanta Meeting House; Program Planning: Atlanta YFs; Lead FAPs: Ceal & Mark Wutka

February 24-26, 2006 Nurturing/Steering Committee Meetings Athens, GA; Program planning: SAYF SC Co-Clerks and NC Co-Clerks; Lead FAP: Cathi Watkins

March 10-12, 2006 (tentative) Retreat at Asheville Meeting House; Program Planning: Asheville YFs; Lead FAP: TBA

April 21-23, 2006 Retreat at Berea; Program Planning: Berea & Knoxville YFs; Lead FAP: TBA

June 8-11, 2006 SAYMA Yearly Meeting; Program Planning & Lead FAP: Wren Hendrickson

SAYMA Calendar

September 10, 2005: Fall Representative Meeting; Nashville, TN

October 01, 2005: SAF Submission Due Date

December 3, 2005: Winter Representative Meeting; Atlanta, GA

April 8, 2006: Spring Representative Meeting; Birmingham, AL

June 7-11, 2006: SAYMA Yearly Gathering; Warren Wilson College, Swannanoa, NC

September 9, 2006: Fall Representative Meeting;

December 2, 2006: Winter Representative Meeting;

April 7, 2007: Spring Representative Meeting;

June 6-10, 2007: SAYMA Yearly Gathering;

From the Editors:

If you had the misfortune to not be in attendance at our yearly meeting in June, the epistle that opens this edition of SAF will give you a flavor for what you missed. We also have a story of an Atlanta Friend's Mid-east peace witness, news from Quaker organizations, and excerpts from the State of the Meeting reports from across SAYMA-land.

Epistle of SAYMA Year 2005

Dear Friends,

Returning again to what seems like home, we gathered together 8th – 12th Day, Sixth Month, 2005, for our 35th annual session at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, North Carolina.

As we have increased the length of time we are together, the tension between fellowship and business seems to be subsiding. With this expanded time the business itself has become an opportunity for fellowship and a building of the body. We were blessed by the blossoming of many blue dots on the nametags representing first time attendees, the vitality of the vibrant group of teenagers, and the joy of our Junior Gathering participants.

Our business sessions were imbued with a growing awareness of the palpable presence of the Spirit among us. This deep current of living water carried us as we progressed through our agenda.

After a couple of years of seasoning, we were able to come to unity on the Earth Charter. We minuted our endorsement of the Earth Charter, noting that although not perfect, it is “an invitation for spiritual practice and social action, recognizing that this may require us to make changes in the way we live.”

We heard a minute forwarded to us by the Central Committee of Friends General Conference about their experience of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer Friends. We were asked to go deep to see how the minute spoke to our condition.

As we labored to respond, we affirmed a deeply felt sense of unity and blessing while not knowing exactly what this will require of us, yet trusting that both the Spirit and the process will transform us and the work will be carried out. As our witness, we include the fruit of our labor here.

SAYMA's experience has been that spiritual gifts are not distributed with regard to sexual orientation or gender identity. SAYMA's experience has been that our work has been immeasurably enriched over the years by the full participation and spirit-guided leadership of gay lesbian bisexual transgender and queer Friends. We will not go back to silencing those voices or suppressing those gifts. Our experience confirms that we are all equal before God as God made us and we feel blessed to be engaged in the work of SAYMA together.

We call upon ourselves as individuals and in our monthly meetings to take this minute into our hearts and take action as we are led.

Through our work with these minutes we affirm both the value and need of seasoning concerns, and the imperative of being faithful to the Spirit in the moment. Further, a growing understanding of Friends is that our work is not done when we commend the minute to paper. We must also write it on our hearts and live into it.

The service of Young Adult Friends continues to deepen in our meeting. This year they assisted at the Clerk's table during business sessions. The presence of YAFs and teenagers in worship sharing and workshops added richness and new perspectives. Teens are also exploring the possibility of serving on yearly meeting committees. In lieu of the usual report from the SAYMA appointed representatives to Friends General Conference, three of our Young Adult Friends shared their experiences from attending the FGC-sponsored consultation on youth ministries. Our hearts were opened by the burning truths that they learned and shared with us. Among these were the sense of isolation and grief that Friends feel when no longer in their home meetings, loss of past communities while moving into new life phases, and the desire for YAFs to be of service as well as served. Most significantly, we heard the realization that Friends of all ages yearn to be known at the deepest level.

(Continued on page 4)

(Epistle from page 3)

At our first plenary session we heard some of our wider Quaker organization representatives speak with deep feelings and tenderness of the mission and work of those organizations, and how that work fits with the priorities and values of our yearly meeting. We were grateful for the reminder that these organizations are so intimately connected with the work that we are led to do. With each organization's unique mission, they are able to extend that work beyond our capacity. The representatives also shared the joys, challenges, and spiritual rewards of service to both wider Quaker organizations and SAYMA. Surprisingly, many representatives were initially called to service simply because they had been asked. (Friends, let us affirm our nominating process!)

At our second plenary session, Keith Helmuth, of Canadian Yearly Meeting and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, spoke to us from his work, "The Angel of History, The Storm of Progress, and the Order of the Soul." Despite the gravity of the trajectory we are on towards the destruction of humanity and the earth's biosystems, Keith offered hope beyond fatalism. This hope is based upon the Life in the Spirit with attention to natural history. He favored us with terminology and expressions that made fresh our testimonies by applying them to an ecological world view. We were relieved and uplifted to hear that humankind can escape the trap of fatalism engendered by the "history of Moral Will" by embracing the option of "mutually enhancing human-earth relationship."

In closing, we find great inspiration in the story of a Young Friend who viewed his relationship to his Meeting as sitting on a rock in the sea. Solidly supported by this foundation, he was able to look around in security and peace while viewing the wonders of the surrounding scenery. At some point, a transformation occurred when he felt the Spirit moving in a powerful way. In his sensing of the power of continuing revelation, his old image of his relationship to his Meeting changed. It was revealed to him that the rock he had been sitting on, was actually the solid back of a swimming whale, carrying him through the deep current of the Spirit into an unknown and anticipated future. ♦

ESR Offerings for August

Earlham School of Religion offers two week intensive graduate courses August 1-12 on campus in Richmond, IN. Available for credit or audit. Registration date: July 18, 2005.

August offerings are:

**Intro to Spiritual Formation
Writing as Ministry
Pauline Psychagogy: Spiritual Formation & Pastoral Care in Early Christian Communities
Perspectives in Christian Education Quaker Spirituality
Constructive Theology**

Find course summary information at

http://esr.earlham.edu/esr_access/oncampus.html

To register or for more information contact (800)432-1377 or apply at esr.earlham.edu.

FWCC Makes Plans through 2007

At meetings held last month at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham, UK, the Friends World Committee for Consultation [FWCC] Central Executive Committee made its plans through the next two years until its 22nd Triennial to be held in Dublin, Ireland in 2007.

[Among its business decisions in May, the CEC] approved a new Memorandum of Understanding between FWCC and the American Friends Service Committee concerning the management of the Quaker United Nations Office in New York. FWCC is the holder of general consultative non-governmental organization status at the United Nations on behalf of Friends. This document memorializes the practice of AFSC management in place since the QUNO New York office was set up. Newly-instituted will be the naming of half of the Quaker UN New York Committee from the FWCC sections. For the first time, this committee will have world-wide representation.

The CEC affirmed that the 22nd Triennial will be held at Kings Hospital [school] in Dublin, Ireland August 11-19, 2007, at the invitation of Ireland YM. The theme will be 'Finding the Prophetic Voice for Our Time' based upon 1 Corinthians 14:1 [Good News]: Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. This gathering will mark the 70th year of FWCC's founding at the Second World Conference of Friends in 1937.

For further information, contact Nancy Irving, at world@fwcc.quaker.org

Marching for Peace in Bethlehem

by Joe Parko (Atlanta)

There was a joyful atmosphere in Bethlehem's Manger Square on Palm Sunday – after all, it was a holy day for this predominantly Palestinian Christian town where Jesus was born at the place marked by a star in the Church of the Nativity that overlooks the square.

A colorful crowd had gathered under a bright blue sky to mark the occasion. Children carried red, white, green and black balloons – the colors of the Palestinian flag. But drawing the most attention were the shepherds and their donkeys. Wearing no costumes, but just their everyday clothes, the shepherds looked as if they had stepped straight from the pages of the New Testament.

The crowd had plans to do what any Christians would do if they were so close to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday – walk into the holy city waving palm branches to commemorate that peaceful procession some 2000 years ago.

But this year was different. The Israeli military has closed off Bethlehem from Jerusalem and will not permit Palestinians to leave Bethlehem. I was there in Manger Square as the Quaker representative with fifteen members of Every Church A Peace Church, an organization of U.S. churches devoted to making Jesus' message of peace a central focus in every American church. We were there to support our Palestinian brothers and sisters in this non-violent procession to protest their unjust imprisonment in their city. We were there to witness to our Christian belief that peace for Israel is inextricably linked to justice for the Palestinian people.

We set off with the donkeys and children leading the way, refusing to be discouraged by the looming military barrier we all knew was in our way a mile down the road to Jerusalem. Our peace songs merged with middle-eastern music as the crowd weaved through the streets of Bethlehem. We marched holding banners and balloons, waving palm branches to the beat of the music with flags flapping in the breeze.

Our banners and signs conveyed various messages: "American Christians for Palestinian Justice," "The Wall Must Fall," "Keep Hope Alive –

Free Palestine," "Set all God's Children Free," and "Jerusalem for Everyone."

After a half-mile of marching, the children and donkeys were led away from the march to keep them out of harm's way. Despite the threat of tear gas and rubber bullets, the crowd continued the last leg with the chanting growing louder: "We demand freedom," "No justice- no peace," "We come in peace," "Let us pray at our holy sites."

We walked through a narrow gap in Israel's ugly 28-foot high concrete apartheid wall which is rapidly surrounding the town of Bethlehem. As we moved toward the military check-

point we formed rows and linked arms.

The soldiers seem surprised when we continued to walk forward as if they were not there. "Don't mind us. We are going to Jerusalem to pray," one marcher called out as we approached the soldiers.

The soldiers quickly tried to organize themselves into a rough human barrier in front of us. We kept walking forward forcing them to step back. We were slowly making ground when the military commander came over and demanded to speak to the person in charge. We could see army jeeps scurrying to block the road ahead and more reinforcements were called from nearby guard posts.

Our group stopped and a leader in the Bethlehem community, Dr Ghassan, an elderly and stately, grey-haired man, spoke to the commander quietly.

"We are just taking a walk to Jerusalem to pray for Palm Sunday, as is our right," he told the commander. "We want to go to Jerusalem to pray. We have a right to go to pray in Jerusalem."

More reinforcements quickly arrived. The soldiers linked arms and began pushing and shoving us back. Cries of "Please: no violence" came from the marchers.

The two groups stood looking at each other. A bunch of unarmed Palestinians and Americans wanting to pray in Jerusalem facing some twenty young Israeli soldiers carrying automatic weapons, who were not allowing them to pass. It was a face off. The only difference was that we stood strong and confident. The young men and women of the Israeli Occupation

Joe Parko was the Quaker representative on the Every Church A Peace Church (www.ecapc.org) delegation to Palestine and Israel from March 11-23. They went there to show our support for both Israeli and Palestinian peace groups. On Palm Sunday, they participated in a peace march with the Palestinian people of Bethlehem.

(Continued on page 6)

(Bethlehem from page 5)

Forces in front of us were hesitant and nervous despite the guns they were carrying.

Various people in the crowd spoke to the soldiers: “We want to go and pray, this is our holy day. Please, we want to go to Jerusalem.”

Dr Ghassan addressed the soldiers: “You give Israeli Jews the right to go and pray at Rachel’s tomb in Bethlehem. I think we have the same right to go to pray in Jerusalem. These are peaceful people demanding a human right – the right to pray in their mosques and churches. Do you ask Jews who come to pray in Rachel’s tomb if they have a permit? This is illegal and the world is watching.”

The soldiers shuffled uncomfortably and tightened their locked arms. With their orders not to move an inch, the marchers had a captive audience to talk to.

“You don’t have to be here, you can go back to your family,” someone said to them. “You should not be here and you know it. You don’t want to be here. This is the wrong place for you.”

Others spoke. “Stand for peace. Stand for the right of people to pray in their holy sites. You can join us.”

“Does anyone deny you the right to pray? How does it feel if someone tells you cannot pray?”

“If you let us go to Jerusalem we will pray for you too!”

Leaders of the march tried to hand a written message to the soldiers, but they refused to take it and didn’t respond to our questions. “You receive orders not to talk to us?” asked Dr Ghassan. “People don’t just follow orders;

sometimes they follow their hearts and you have good hearts. If you live in a democracy you have a right to talk.”

At the far end of the front line a Palestinian woman with a silver cross around her neck patiently held a large bunch of palm branches. She stood in front of two young female soldiers, trying to talk with them. Behind the front row of soldiers, more reinforcements arrived and started talking in groups, discussing tactics, their guns glinting in the noon-time sun.

After speaking some more to the commander, Dr Ghassan reported back to the crowd: “They have ordered us to go back to Bethlehem. They are threatening to use violent force against us. They are refusing to distinguish between us and Israeli Jews who come to our city to pray in Rachel’s tomb without a permit. They are proud of this discriminatory policy. When I said: ‘This is racist’, they said ‘This is how it is, let it be. This is the way it is, you have to abide by it.’ They want

Joe has prepared a Power Point presentation with photos of his peace pilgrimage to Palestine & Israel. He would like to share his experience with Quaker Meetings around the southeast. Please contact him at parkoj@bellsouth.net.

to block us and push us back to Bethlehem. They have ordered us to disperse or they will use force. But we are not interested in a confrontation; we don’t want to have violence here. Those people are willing to use violence and we are not willing to do it.”

At that point, the marchers decided to peacefully defy the soldiers by sitting on the road. Everyone then began to sing. Using the melody of “We shall overcome,” the theme of the demonstration was reinforced in robust song. “We shall walk in peace... one day; We will pray in Jerusalem....one day; Justice peace and love....one day.”

As we sang, I could see some the soldiers begin to visibly relax, their fingers moving off of the triggers of their guns.

After about 20 minutes of singing, Sami Awad, the director of the Holy

Land Trust, a Palestinian peace organization, stood up and read a statement to the soldiers. “I come to you with a message from our people,” he said to them, and began to read:

Asalaam’alaykum (Peace be with you)

We in the Bethlehem community have come to you today with a message on behalf of our people. We represent the family members and friends who are imprisoned by these concrete walls and wire fences that now create the Bethlehem open-air prison. You, like the prison guards, control our freedom and ability to live as human beings with dignity in this holy land.

Our strong delegation of civilians comes to you without weapons but with great strength and commitment to deliver the message of just peace. In the name of security, you do not permit us to travel to work, to school, and to worship in our holy sites in the city of Jerusalem. Your government deprives us each day of basic human rights to self-determination. Each day you keep us from being with our families at weddings, funerals, graduations, birthdays and religious holidays. Although Al Quds (Jerusalem) is only 20 minutes from Bethlehem, we have not been allowed to pray or worship at our holy sites.

Each day as you come to our city, you serve the system of violence that keeps our people imprisoned and without the ability to live the

(Continued on page 7)

(Bethlehem from page 6)

life of a normal human being. With your guns, tanks and insults, you teach our children to hate.

However, we believe each of you has the power and choice to choose a different ending to this story. We appeal to your conscience and humanity as individuals and as soldiers who may feel there is no way out of this system. Put your guns away, and join us in the fight for peace and freedom.

Signed, The People of Bethlehem

“This is a message from us to you,” Sami Awad concluded. “We are moving back now, but we will return. This is not the end of this story.”

During our encounter with the soldiers, the media was swarming around us. Reporters and TV cameras from Europe, Canada, and the Arab world documented the event. The American media was notably absent. One of the Palestinian marchers told me that non-violent Palestinians do not fit into the American media stereotype.

The Palestinian woman wearing her cross started to hand out her palm branches to the soldiers. They didn't take them so she let them fall gently at their booted feet.

“This is for you, for Palm Sunday,” she said almost in tears. “It is holy, holy. This is to keep the land holy...” Her voice trembled with emotion but she continued, “At least we have some palms here to keep this land holy, to keep Bethlehem and Jerusalem holy...”

As the crowd dispersed the soldiers looked a bit bewildered, some shaken. A crowd of un-armed, non-violent, singing people asking to pray left them baffled and fidgeting uneasily with their guns. They were prepared for violence but non-violence seemed to confuse them.

“You have chosen violence, but we have chosen peace,” said Dr Ghassan. “But we will return.”

As we headed back to town I shared the sorrow of the Palestinian woman searching for someone who would take her palm branch. I felt the heart-break of the little town of Bethlehem, and I prayed to the One who rode the donkey into Jerusalem on this day so long ago. I prayed for peace in this troubled land and I prayed for justice for the Palestinian people. ♦

Yearly Meeting 2005 Evaluations

from Errol Hess (Foxfire), YM Planning clerk

I've pulled a few responses which may be of general interest to SAYMA Friends from 9 pages of evaluations. My comments will be in *[brackets]*:

⇒There's nothing better than being in a room with a large group of Quakers to gather armor for the outside world.

⇒Need rooms listed for Men's & Women's & FLGBTQ worship.

⇒FLGBTQC evenings after 9:00 are for fellowship, not worship.

⇒Would like to see the Women's center, along with others, receive more noticeable support from the Planning Committee—room in program, time, coordinators. *[The SAYMA Yearly Meeting Planning Committee is made up of representatives of groups (such as JYM, YAF) and persons with a role in the operation of the yearly meeting (such as registrar). The one way to be sure your area of interest is not neglected is to have a representative on the committee. We meet four times a year, at each representative meeting and immediately at the end of yearly meeting. Even if you can't come to meetings, you may wish to review documents such as our advance program when it is in draft form. My only inkling that these centers were needed was from reading about them in previous years' programs.]*

⇒It is good to know the date of YM as soon as possible. *[Yearly meeting dates are chosen two years in advance and are available on the SAYMA web page, in the newsletter, and from your meeting's clerk and SAYMA representative.]*

⇒Need to indicate on advance material whether dorm is air conditioned or not. *[This is impossible as we cannot know till registration is complete which dorm you will have. You can indicate on your registration whether or not you need an air conditioned room.]*

⇒Don't expect the registrar to handle all on site arrangements (like golf carts!) She's already doing her share! Could there be an on-site assistant available at the registrar's desk to answer the other questions, so the registrar can do her job more effectively? *[Any volunteers? The registrar does more work than anyone—not just at yearly meeting but in preparation before it starts. We need a co-registrar, but nominating committee was unable to find one.]*

⇒What happened to the care committee for complaints (or complainers)? *[I haven't any idea. Anyone?]*

⇒Can we bottle the presence of the Spirit that we experienced and release it in our dry times? *[A franchise is being investigated.]* ♦

June '05 SAYMA Census Results

by Mary Calhoun (Foxfire), Administrative Assistant

This number is what Quakerdom will use – 1,245 SAYMA members and regular attenders. Local counts were supplied by 77% of our meetings and worship groups. Estimates were made for three more meetings. Why does the census matter?

√ It's the life of our yearly meeting in numbers reflecting human events. Friends have a tradition, and reputation, of keeping good historical records.

√ Several wider Quaker organizations (WQOs) use SAYMA's census total to set the number of representatives we may appoint: Friends General Conference (FGC), American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), and Friends World Committee for Consultation(FWCC).

√ Among US and international ecumenical organizations, Friends are valued facilitators of dialog. And it is through large Friends bodies (WQOs) that chances open for Quaker representatives to further serve with ecumenical groups, to teach Friends' manner of discernment and clearness committees.

The collected life events of SAYMA follow below. My thanks for insights that came from visitors I talked to at Yearly Meeting gathering: Dorothy Day (FGC), Nancy Wallace (FWCC), and Bruce Birchard (FGC).

Marriages or ceremonies of commitment:
of members or attenders, under care of monthly meeting: 2
of members or attenders, not under care of MM : 2
of non-attenders, under care of MM: 1

Births or adoptions: 7
Deaths: 3

Memberships transferred to MM : 11
Memberships transferred out of MM, or withdrawn: 7
Attenders became members of MM : 21

ACFIA News

We have just completed a most meaningful **136th** Annual Meeting of Associated Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs (**ACFIA**) at the Back Creek Friends Meeting near Fairmount, Indiana, April 7-9. Our featured speaker was Richard Twiss, president and co-founder of Wiconi International, and a member of the Rosebud Lakota/Sioux Tribe. The next annual meeting dates: **March 30 - April 1, 2006**, at Marlboro Friends Meeting, Marlboro Road, Sophia, North Carolina (near Highpoint); **March 29-31, 2007**, at First Friends Meeting, 2010 Chester Boulevard, Richmond, Indiana; **April 3 - 5, 2008**, at Kickapoo Friends Center, near McLoud, Oklahoma — to celebrate the 125th anniversary of Friends ministry among the Kickapoo in that area.

Also please note that I have retired as Executive Secretary of ACFIA as of Annual Meeting this month. Our new Executive Secretary is Chuck Townsend, 2601 South 680 Road, Wyandotte, OK 74370; Phone: (918) 787-4390 chucktii@earthlink.net He also is pastor (as of Feb. 1, 2005) of the Council House Friends Meeting there.

— H Keith Kendall

(Earth Charter from page 12)

gap between rich and poor is widening. Injustice, poverty, ignorance, and violent conflict are widespread and the cause of great suffering. An unprecedented rise in human population has overburdened ecological and social systems. The foundations of global security are threatened. These trends are perilous-but not inevitable.

The Challenges Ahead

The choice is ours: form a global partnership to care for Earth and one another or risk the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life. Fundamental changes are needed in our values, institutions, and ways of living. We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more. We have the knowledge and technology to provide for all and to reduce our impacts on the environment. The emergence of a global civil society is creating new opportunities to build a democratic and humane world. Our environmental, economic, political, social, and spiritual challenges are interconnected, and together we can forge inclusive solutions.

Universal Responsibility

To realize these aspirations, we must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities. We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked. Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature.

We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community. Therefore, together in hope we affirm the following interdependent principles for a sustainable way of life as a common standard by which the conduct of all individuals, organizations, businesses, governments, and transnational institutions is to be guided and assessed. ♦

Earth Charter Next Issue

In the Fall issue of SAF, we'll explore the first principle:

I. RESPECT AND CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF LIFE

1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity.

a. Recognize that all beings are interdependent and every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings.

b. Affirm faith in the inherent dignity of all human beings and in the intellectual, artistic, ethical, and spiritual potential of humanity.



Philadelphia
Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

**Epistle from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Called Session on Climate Change**

Approved June 4, 2005

To Friends everywhere, greetings from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, gathered in called session, 4 June 2005 in Philadelphia, to seek leading on the issue of climate change.

The science of global warming is detailed, technical, and not without controversy. Nonetheless, we can see the evidence of the reality of climate change, we are aware of ways in which societies and individuals affect it, and we know options for political and personal decision making. This is not a matter to be left to scientists or to governments.

In fact, it is a matter to which Friends are distinctly suited to speak. Our respect for individual and collective seeking of truth and right action gives us the responsibility to witness to our measure of truth, answer to the truth of others, and seek together the rightly ordered way forward....

We entered a deep period of open worship to discern our leading. Friends spoke movingly of both the dire need for action and the responsibility of Friends to be a model and a partner with other religious and civil groups for acting in faith and witnessing in works.

A few Friends have faithfully been under this weight for years, but the time has arrived for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to engage the concern corporately. As distilled in our minutes of the session, we resolved the following:

Friends at this session unite behind the desire that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting incorporate this concern about the rise of global climate temperatures and its dangerous implications for life on our earth into the body of its work in the world. We feel ready, with divine assistance, to assume the challenges of being prophetic witnesses to protect our earth. We call upon the Yearly Meeting, in all its manifestations, to seek ways to hold our members lovingly accountable to live in God's world in a more environmentally sustainable fashion and to join other like minded groups and organizations in supporting this concern.

Signed on behalf of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting,
Gretchen Castle, clerk

Excerpts from State of the Meeting Reports

Anneewakee Creek. Attenders continue to support each other in their callings for social concerns which include serving in a local hospice program, supporting Mem Stopping Violence (working to change the patriarchy by helping men to stop battering women), working with Uplifting People (helping to reduce recidivism in GA's prisons)....

Asheville. We have several concerns regarding the safety and size of our meetinghouse. We have an aging structure, with an outdated deck and bathrooms that are not wheelchair compliant. We have issues with mold, and infestations that are common with a house of this age and use. Our House and Grounds Committee struggles with decisions regarding our space and safety, and the idea of moving, rebuilding, or splitting the community looms in the future.

Athens. We held discussions and worship sharing on a variety of topics including: aging, war, and a letter-writing campaign to local officials. At the behest of two of our members, we began an ongoing series of dialogues about Growing the Meeting. We have found these discussions spirit-filled and stimulating, and they have helped clarify the meeting's goals.

Atlanta. To deepen the quality of worship and to assist individuals in achieving clarity of ministry with the guidance of the Spirit, Ministry and Worship committee initiated worship sharing after 4th and 5th week meetings and wrote newsletter articles focused on aspects of worship and guidelines for speaking out of the silence. Also, we are looking for solutions to the problem of inaudible messages during Meeting for Worship and formed an Ad Hoc committee on Hearing Assistance to address this concern.

Berea. ... we would like to host some type of celebration of our new meeting house, with an invitation to the wider community to join us. We would like to include in this celebration some type of remembrance of the Friends who have passed away. It seems appropriate, as we plan for our future outreach and witness, that we remember those who, through their wonderful spirits and gifts, brought our spiritual community to the place we are today.

Birmingham. One major concern has been sending aid to Africa; we have viewed videos on Sudan and we have sponsored a Rwandan orphan in Rwanda. We are especially concerned with the AIDS epidemic and have scheduled a social concerns discussion with Katrina Julian of UAB Medical Center on that topic. We have a Quaker Oats box in which Friends drop change during coffee breaks for various international groups providing aid to various populations.

Brevard. Although we do not have a local "Quaker" project per se, our members are engaged in many activities in the community: volunteer work with the Center for Dialogue which our Meeting helped start, a local bread kitchen, Children's Center, war protests and peace vigils, work against the death penalty, and writing or calling state and national legislators. We believe we are an important presence in our community and in the world, and we remain committed to making that presence ever stronger.

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Environmental Ponderings

by Alice M. Wald (Columbia)

What watershed do you live in? (A watershed is the region draining into a river, river system or body of water.)

The question set me to reflecting on my early experiences with water. When I was six or so my family would ride up the mountain to the Sumter National Forest. It has a wonderful branch on the edge of a clearing. I remember how clear the water was as it tricked over the smooth brown rocks next to the mossy bank. Of course I couldn't help but take off my shiny Sunday shoes and gingerly stick my toes in! The water was cold and clear as it flowed over my toes. What a delightful relationship the water and my toes had. Even now I smile at the memory. Have you had a similar relationship?

Today if we want to experience cool, clear water, we're more likely to purchase it in a plastic bottle. What a contrast to dangling our toes in a sparkling mountain stream. Currently there are three large international companies whose business and profit is selling you water. Thus, as a tradable commodity, water can be carved up and parceled out to those who have the ability to pay.

The United Nations has taken the position that clean water is a *right* that everyone has. Those who want to privatize water define it as a *need* to be purchased. As I see it, clean water is a right that all citizens have. It's a relationship we can't live without.

As you may know, 70-85% of every single cell in the human body is composed of water. Reckon that's one of the reasons health experts say we should drink at least 8 glasses of water a day?

Songs often use word images that point to the relationship between people and water. One example is the old African American spiritual, *Down by the Riverside*. "Goin' to lay down my burden, Down by the riverside, Down by the riverside..."

There's already a "burden," however, in some of our lakes, rivers, and streams. I'm talking about unsafe levels of mercury from coal-fired power plants. Eating fish that contains methylmercury can harm the human nervous system. Infants and children are particularly sensitive since their nervous systems are still forming.

The contemporary song, *Downstream*, by Joyce Johnson Rouse points to the importance of getting along with our neighbors for water's sake if not our own. "We all live downstream from somebody, We all live upstream from somebody, too." No doubt about it, we need to see ourselves as neighbors whether we are next door, next county, next state, or even next nation over.

To wrap up, let me tell you the watershed I live in. A deed from 1896 says it best: "...on the South side of Cane Creek, waters of Little River, waters of Keowee River." ♦

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Celo. The clerk did need to step in to end a discussion that sprang from our habitual close, "Does any Friend have something to add that did not rise to the level of ministry out of the silence?" This reminded us that this grey area between worship time dedicated to listening and speaking out of the silence and announcements needed further attention as to proper ordering of these "borderline" messages. Celo Friends wonder if other SAYMA meetings have experience with this issue.

Charleston. Referrals from SAYMA resulted in thoughtful discussions on faith and the environment, which continued through consideration of Lester Brown's *Plan B*. Friends struggled to express their concerns for the environment in spiritual terms and in accord with Quaker testimonies, often finding their technical expertise distracting them from the central issue.

Chattanooga. Chattanooga Friends have focused on enriching the experience of meeting for worship by encouraging Friends to worship and speak true to their leadings from the Spirit. Through our newsletter, second hour discussions, and committee meetings, we have discussed how we know when there is a message, whether the message is for us individually or for us as a corporate body, and when to speak during meeting for worship.

Columbia. Our vibrant group of 16 Young Friends included ages 18 months to 19 years of age and their energy and enthusiasm has greatly blessed our meeting this year. First day School has had a series of programs on Bible Study, biographies of significant Friends, craft projects, and community service projects....One of our young friends serves on our Ministry and Nurture Committee. Young friends have also ably led several of the adult second hour of worship....

Cookeville. This year the Meeting has worked to provide information on military enlistment in the local high school. Along with the Veterans for Peace group, several in the Meeting set up a literature table in the school commons to inform students of their options, such as the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps, to suggest questions that students should ask recruiters, and to point out the effects of war on returning veterans. After the principal received a complaint about some of the literature, extensive meetings and negotiations ensued with him, the school board, and the director of schools. The ACLU, the national Veterans for Peace, and Quaker advocacy organizations contributed advice and counsel to our efforts. Ultimately, in awareness of federal court precedents concerning discrimination against or denying access to a speaker solely to suppress a point of view, the school administration agreed to accept our presence in the school and our efforts to help students fully realize what a decision to commit to the military could mean in their lives.

Foxfire. One Sunday in late January we were outnumbered by visitors! Oh happy day! All have been back, and five (one family) have become regular attenders. The newcomers have

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What Happens When the Gas Runs Out?

submitted by Daryl Bergquist (Royal WG)

[this article appeared in the Blount (AL) Countian]

The current resident U.S. population is 4.6 percent of the world's population. We consume just over 25 percent of the world's oil production. This is 5.4 times our share – that's according to the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Daryl Bergquist, a solar and energy efficiency consultant residing near Blountsville, points to the time when demands for gasoline and oil will be greater than the supply. "We are extracting and consuming these limited resources at ever increasing rates," he says, "rates much greater than those at which they are being replenished. At some point, then, the rate at which we extract and consume will begin to decline."

At what point will this occur?

"That's the big question," he says. The longest predicted time is a couple of decades from now. Many sources indicate it has already occurred. That will mark the end of the era of abundant cheap oil. After then, oil will become increasingly scarce and the price will continue to rise.

Many financial analysts speak of declining fields, oil companies not replacing the oil they extract with new reserves, and exporting countries (like Indonesia, currently a member of OPEC) becoming oil importers. A Google search of "oil prices" has found such articles daily.

The International Energy Agency in its 02/10/05 Oil Market Report predicts world demand for oil will exceed world supply in the first quarter 2005.

What does this mean? There will be less and less oil and we'll be paying more and more for it. This is significant because:

- ◆ The majority of the world's energy and the feedstock for many materials come from oil and gas.
- ◆ The world's finances are based on an economy that must expand to remain solvent.
- ◆ Over the past century, an ever-increasing consumption of oil has fed this expansion.
- ◆ The world's supply, and therefore consumption, of

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given us an opportunity to revisit Quaker process and history. For several years the acronym QPE, meaning "Quaker Process Exercise," has been on our calendar for second hour every fourth Sunday. In the hour, anything related to Quaker process is discussed. Recently, we had a lengthy and meaty brainstorming session about childcare and what we want from children's religious education.

Greenville. ... As a Meeting, we make efforts at leading simple, environmentally-responsible lives....Given our concerns along these lines, we would like to close our report with a verse...

- Work with joy.
- Pray with love.
- Dream from your heart.
- Share what you have.
- Live simply.
- Love deeply.
- Thank God always.

Memphis. The meeting was also challenged this year by what seemed at times to be inappropriate vocal ministry. Ministry and Nurture considered ways to nurture the Meeting through this time which necessitated patience and gentle elderring. This may not have changed the behavior, but it was an opportunity for us to deepen our spiritual community as we sought corporately to seek that of God in a difficult situation.... We have also seen the development of character and leadership as Young Adult Friends, who have grown up in the Meeting, begin to take on roles of responsibility, such as recording clerk and yearly meeting workshop leader.

Nashville. The Nashville Friends Meeting is a spiritual community with many parts. Our new Meetinghouse, which we have had for almost two years now, has served well in attracting new attenders. Indeed, we have so many attending now that we have instituted the wearing of nametags. The growth in numbers has been accompanied with a deepening of Spirit during Meetings for worship. The gathered silence is often so deep, so profound, that our worship often runs an extra 10 to 15 minutes longer than before. Many of our community are comfortable in speaking from the silence, and the messages are from the heart.

Oxford. At rise of meeting, the children and adult return [from First Day School]and share what they have learned – this may include skits, songs or arts and crafts. We realized that for every single person at meeting, this time with the children is the highlight of our life together. In the same way that spoken ministry emerges out of the silence, we are all ministered to in a "gathered" way by the children. The adults who teach, and all of us who listen so eagerly each Sunday, learn as much or more than the children. Parents expressed "profound gratitude" for the nurture given their children. One person commented that we have the most emphasis on children of any meeting he had ever attended.

Royal. We have a desire to have other people share in our wonderful experience. We are a small group of Friends which

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oil will soon be contracting.

What can we do? Reduce our consumption of oil and gas for the following activities:

- ◆ Transportation, including for food and supplies
- ◆ Heating and cooling
- ◆ Lighting, appliances, and water heating
- ◆ Agriculture and manufacturing
- ◆ How do we do this?
- ◆ Cooperate – use the same energy for several people, such as sharing rides.
- ◆ Energy efficiency – use less energy to accomplish the same tasks.
- ◆ Conservation – doing less and wasting less.
- ◆ Co-generation – use the same energy to accomplish multiple tasks.
- ◆ Renewable energy – sun, wind, small-scale hydro, bio fuels.
- ◆ Growing food and providing other needs locally.
- ◆ Integrated whole systems design (including design of communities).

“Useful knowledge and technologies exist, and more are being developed every day,” says Bergquist. We need to apply them wisely. This means a change in how we, as a society, live.

“From my own experience, it can be a change for the better,” Bergquist concludes. ◆

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allows for a safe place for us yet we are somewhat cautious and protective of it. Would new attenders be accepting of us? Some of us are fearful of this yet trusting of the individuals that will hopefully come and worship with us.... We find it challenging and rewarding to be Quakers in a rural area in the South.

Sevier County. We cherish our silence and our fellowship. We are reluctant to move beyond our present purpose: worshipping together followed by fellowship and exchange of ideas, recipes, good snacks, garden bounty, and our individual outreach into the community.

Swannanoa Valley. We have also enjoyed a group book study on *Engaging the Powers* by Walter Wink, a film series on violence/nonviolence, and a study of the book *When the Rain Returns* which is about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and was co-authored by our Clerk, Tony Bing.... many members of our meeting our involved in community service locally. Some areas of involvement include teaching and tutoring at the Swannanoa Valley Youth Development Center, helping local people with basic needs through SV Christian Ministry, participation in Asheville’s National Day of Solidarity with Palestinians, and sponsorship and participation in an Earth Day conference offered locally by Caring for Creation: Interfaith Partners of WNC.

West Knoxville. Friends have also been deeply involved in the care and nurturing of members of our community who are facing illnesses and physical struggles. A number of Friends have been participating in physical and spiritual healing sessions with a member of our Meeting who has been undergoing surgeries and subsequent treatments for cancer. Our community bonds and our spirits have been strengthened through these Friends’ acts of faith, love, prayer, and caring. ◆

Earth Charter Endorsed at Yearly Meeting

After seeking truth together for the last two years, SAYMA Friends have endorsed the Earth Charter. It is a document that seeks to provide guidelines on how people might live in harmony with one another and with our only planet. From the EC preamble:

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

Earth, Our Home

Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. The forces of nature make existence a demanding and uncertain adventure, but Earth has provided the conditions essential to life's evolution. The resilience of the community of life and the well-being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters, and clean air. The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.

The Global Situation

The dominant patterns of production and consumption are causing environmental devastation, the depletion of resources, and a massive extinction of species. Communities are being undermined. The benefits of development are not shared equitably and the

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