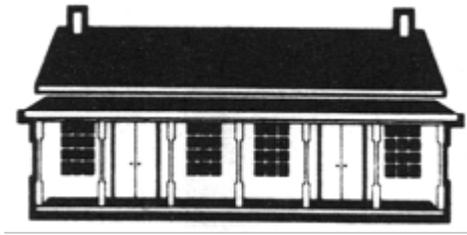


Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative)

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EPISTLE TO FRIENDS EVERYWHERE

7/30/2011

There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are varieties of service, but the same Lord. There are varieties of activity, but in all of them and in everyone the same God is active.

— 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

To Friends Everywhere:

Greetings from Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative), where Friends from monthly meetings and worship groups in Iowa, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota and South Dakota are gathered for our 134th annual session on the beautiful campus of Scattergood Friends School. We meet for our daily sessions of worship with attention to business in the Hickory Grove Meetinghouse which is now the school meetinghouse.

As we listened to the epistles from other yearly meetings around the world we were reminded that in our loneliness and emptiness we hear the deep cry of our need to meet together and know one another in that which is eternal. We are grateful for our connection to this wider community of Friends and for your epistles which enrich our life together.

Our theme for this Yearly Meeting was “Our Quaker Testimonies.” In daily Bible study we explored the Biblical roots of our testimonies noting that the Ten Commandments were God’s testimony to his chosen people. We followed the threads of Biblical testimonies through the history of our yearly meeting. Two Friends shared about living the testimonies at La Casa de los Amigos in Mexico City where Friends, volunteers and guests are drawn into deeper community through a ministry of hospitality and presence, and the practice of *lectio divina*. Another Friend led us to reflect on our testimonies as a witness to Truth and God’s Love. Integrity requires that we let the Light into the dark corners of our lives so we can see honestly and clearly the measure of Light we have, and as we are faithful, our gifts become part of the Beloved Community. Several Friends shared their rich experiences of growing up in this yearly meeting in the 1930's and 40's. We learned about life in the rural meeting communities and how the experiences of studying at Scattergood School, and living the testimony against war, drew Friends into the larger world. We noted that the weight, responsibilities and consequences of the witness against war were carried by both the conscientious objectors and their meeting communities. Bridget Moix of FCNL reminded us that Friends have a history of living our testimonies in times of doubt. Through patient waiting, trust in God and acting from our faith we give others courage, and together we can change our troubled world. Our Junior Yearly Meeting and Young Friends

groups shared with us their full week of service, swimming, camping and canoeing. We enjoyed the presence of these youth and we hope we provide them spiritual refreshment.

During our business sessions we delighted in approving the revision to our Book of Discipline after more than 15 years of committee work. We affirmed, with John Woolman that “There is a Principle which is pure, placed in the human Mind, which in different Places and Ages hath had different Names; it is, however, pure and proceeds from God. It is deep, and inward, confined to no Forms of Religion, nor excluded from any, where the Heart stands in perfect Sincerity. In whomsoever this takes Root and grows, of what Nation so ever, they become Brethren.”

While our older monthly meetings are re-structuring to accommodate a declining membership, new groups of Friends are looking for ways to affiliate with us and young adult Friends have assumed greater responsibilities during these sessions. We care about the vitality and spiritual health of our meetings. We understand that community is the fruit of living our testimonies through our daily, small faithful acts of love.

May the love and joy of God’s Spirit bless you in the coming year.

On behalf of Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative),

Deborah Dakin, clerk

EPISTLE FROM ADULT YOUNG FRIENDS

Dear Adult Young Friends from around the and world:

It is with great joy that we share our experiences at IYMC this year. For most of the week, the young adults were occupied with various tasks. Our Friends participated in various committees throughout the week and regularly attended meeting for business. While we found that we did not have much time to share with other young adults, we enjoyed some very meaningful conversations with one another. We greatly enjoyed the presence of two young couples in our group and felt enriched by their love. In looking to the future, our group feels that it is important to also look to the past. We feel that our generation should take the time and the care to record the oral history of the meeting as told by the elders. We do not want the hardships and love faced by the previous generations of our meeting to go unrecorded for future generations of IYM(C) members. Some of the young adults are also very interested in visiting other yearly meetings to see how the young adults at other meetings work and some of you may see us at your own yearly gatherings throughout the next year.

With love and light,

Adult Young Friends of
Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

EPISTLE FROM YOUNG FRIENDS

To Friends everywhere:

First of all we feel that we have to point out that Dae did indeed visit the shingle that she placed on the roof of the greenhouse during our service project last year as we indicated in our previous epistle that she would. Thank you.

For our service project this year, we spent an afternoon on the Scattergood farm picking pears and moving a beast of a water barrel we named Mufasa. Ansel and Denali picked 3 crates of pears between them, and dropped many pears on Thomas's head, who was napping under the trees.

On our way back to the main campus, we picked vegetables for our Friday night activity.

Speaking of which, we made pizza and had a cupcake decorating competition. Chelsea was the grand champion. But in the end we were all winners. Dae wants to make sure that's clear. She worked really hard on her cupcake presentation. Sarah and Matt Mickle helped us make the pizzas. They are expert chefs. The pizzas were absolutely delicious. Scrumptious. We would like to sincerely thank them for their effort and generosity.

We resumed our canoe activity this year. There were many hilarious moments. Half the canoers took a little time to swim and float downstream, leaving their canoes on a sandbank. They underestimated the energy it would take to swim back upstream to retrieve them and the remaining canoers had to split up, take a canoe each, and rescue the floaters. Chelsea and Maya accidentally canoed over a tiny log. It was a "you had to be there" moment.

One morning we participated in a very cool mini-workshop with Alternatives to Violence Project Facilitators. It was eye opening to hear how they interact with prisoners. They showed us some of the activities they do. For example, we played a tossing game emphasizing teamwork led by Mama Marge.

Yeah!

We came away with ideas for future activities that we're pretty excited about.

We were all moved by the stories Friends told from the 1940s during Thursday's evening panel. We didn't know that Quakers were prisoners during World War II. We learned a lot about C.O. status and what families had to go through during those times, not just those in prison. We also learned that what happens at Scattergood stays at Scattergood. Thanks, Birdie.

Yeah!

Overall it was an amazing week full of memories and laughs. We welcome new Young Friends and hope that those who are graduating will continue to spend time with the program during future gatherings. Thank you to all, and to all a good night.

Yeah!

Young Friends of
Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

EPISTLE FROM JUNIOR YEARLY MEETING

Dear Friends:

We are a small group this year, with four most of the time and three others participating part of the time. But we've done a lot. We have made little wooden boats, played the Yoga Garden Game. During The Yoga Garden Game we learned different yoga poses. The music visitor, Bill, brought his banjo and played different songs. We went to the Scattergood Farm, there were lots of animals and hay bales to jump on. We learned these testimonies: equality, peace, stewardship, integrity, community and simplicity. Integrity means let your life speak. Your outer self reflects your inner self. Stewardship means protecting and caring for the earth. At Scattergood we eat a lot of food that is grown in the garden here. It has been hot here this summer. Only one place here has air conditioning, so we stayed cool by swimming in the pond and sitting in front of fans. We had a lot of fun at Scattergood, especially swimming in the pond. When we were at the pond we tried out the wooden boats that we made. On our camping trip we found a toad and cricket and made s'mores.

In Friendship,

Junior Yearly Meeting of
Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)