

YEARLY MEETING 2005

*Augustana College, University of Alberta
Camrose, Alberta
August 13-20, 2005*

“Weaving Our Past and Present Into Our Future”

Augustana University College has a beautiful campus with ‘interlock’ walkways; lots of trees; mainly oak, expanses of green grass; potted plants; a historic Founders Building and a vigorous statue of the young Martin Luther. It was, for most of us, unexpectedly cold, 10°C, and it started to rain shortly after we arrived. The rain continued until the day before we left. The rain was very hard on the campers, some of whom got so wet they had to move indoors. The rain was also very hard on those Friends participating in the food co-op.

The Meetings for Worship and for Business were held in the Chapel - large bright room. The acoustics were satisfactory if we sat near the front and there was an assistive listening device. Rick McCutcheon was Presiding Clerk; Gale Wills, Monitoring Clerk; Beverley Shepard, Incoming Clerk; Marilyn Manzer and Dan Cooperstock, Recording Clerks. The clerking was excellent and all the business was completed within the times allotted.

The inter-generational activity on Saturday evening consisted of a celebration of Fifty Years as a united meeting. There were four long sheets of newsprint spread out on tables in the Lounge outside the Chapel:

- the World
- Canadian Yearly Meeting
- Monthly Meetings
- Individual Friends.

All participants young and old were asked to record their memories of the past 50 years, and they did so in a more or less chronological order on the appropriate sheets. The finished works made an illuminating read. They were posted on the wall of the Chapel behind the clerks table and will become part of Canadian Yearly Meeting Archives later this year.

Quaker Study was presented every morning, Monday to Friday, by Anne Thomas who, as you know, is an exciting Lecturer. The focus was on the history of the Discipline, i.e. Faith & Practice and Organization & Procedure. The Discipline developed over the years in response to specific actions or events, e.g. the Naylor incident led to the Balby advices. The story was fascinating and the handouts were, of course, well researched and informative. The fifth and last handout was titled, “Mind the Light and Read the Discipline”! The presentations were followed by small group discussions.

Among the important decisions made at Yearly Meeting were:

- To support Baltimore Yearly Meeting's concern about Friends United Meeting's hiring policy which bans the appointment of anyone who is involved in a same-sex sexual relationship.
- To accept Wolfville Monthly Meeting's concern about the right ordering of the process whereby CYM develops policy. They believe that policy development should be undertaken by a body that is appointed by and accountable to the CYM business meeting.
- Barbara Meyer's call to the Ministry of Chaplaincy was recorded. Edmonton Monthly Meeting will report to Representative Meeting when its Committee of Care for Barbara is established. I had the privilege of being Barbara's buddy (mentor for first timer at CYM) at Yearly Meeting.

The Earth Charter was of considerable interest to Friends at Yearly Meeting. (I'm not sure if HMM has discussed the Earth Charter.) Several Special Interest Groups (SIGs) focused on the issue. There were 19 SIGs in all. Unfortunately, it was impossible to attend all the SIGs we wished to and we had to make choices.

On Thursday evening, we were introduced to a simple form of Forum Theater when groups of young Friends came forward to stand in focused tableaux (images), silent but intent, with blank faces, heads bowed in dramatic pictures. The audience was invited to participate and there was no lack of volunteers. For more information, see "Just Living", September 2005; the newsletter of the Quaker Committee on Jails and Justice (CFSC). It was an exciting and engaging experience.

Overall, Yearly Meeting 2005 was a spiritually enriching and rewarding experience. As always, it was wonderful to renew old YM friendships and develop new ones. Yearly Meeting Friends are special. I wish more Hamilton Friends could have the joy of participating in Yearly Meetings. Rick and Tamara are looking forward to greeting Hamilton Friends in Winnipeg next year at the Canadian Mennonite University in August, 2006.

Mona Callin
(09/29/05)