

Epistle of Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) August, 2013.

To Friends Everywhere:

*Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands,
Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing.
-Psalm 100: 1-2, KJV*

Friends from nearly a dozen states representing more than 20 monthly meetings in the US and Canada, gathered for a week in late July and early August to consider the theme "Make a Joyful Noise". Amidst lush green cornfields surrounding the campus of Scattergood Friends School, we met to seek God's will in attending to the business of the Yearly Meeting. We continued in this joyful practice, which we have observed previously for 135 years.

Our first evening gathering titled "Expressing our joy", featured a panel of Friends who shared elements of their lives that bring them joy. These joy experiences included awareness of connection with nature, of the joy of parenting, of the satisfaction of doing work that enhances children's lives, and of the joy of a new found relationship with Jesus. One panel member noted that when she experiences authentic joy, she really needs to share it somehow. In the discussion that followed, and in many experiences of the week, we came to understand that the seeds of joy are intertwined with gratitude, awe, beauty wonder and connection.

There were many opportunities for Friends to connect and share their joy throughout the week. Programs and interests ranged broadly from sessions that included how to build a library in Kenya, to how to remain faithful, to how to support and encourage vocal ministry, to how to do something about environmental justice concerns. A folk concert by a Young Friend gave a different voice to the issues of our various concerns. Most days began with quiet worship and bible study and concluded with group singing. Much of the joy of Iowa Yearly Meeting in session is in shared effort as we labor with each other, and as we are served and serve one another. Much joy is experienced in small circles and quiet conversations. One friend described the spiritual refreshment and change that she experiences as a weeklong embrace; another stated that our joy comes from the "Source". This was affirmed in the presentation by visiting Friend Deborah Shaw, who spoke to the passage from John 15:11, that our joy is complete in our reciprocal relationship with the Spirit.

As a Yearly Meeting, we are especially grateful for the presence, energy and vitality of a larger group of junior yearly meeting youth and young friends than have been able to participate in past years. Once again their management of and participation in the talent show closed our week with great joyfulness.

Through the week, we were graced with much joyful noise, much joyful quiet, and serving each other with gladness. And we go forth to do the same.

In God's love,

Deborah Dakin, clerk
Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

Our our yearly meeting next year will be held 7th month 22 to 7th month 27, 2014. Please consider joining us!

Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

Religious Society of Friends

Young Friends Epistle

Saturday, August 3, 2013

Dear Friends Everywhere,

The Young Friends of Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative (IYMC) would like to tell you the story of our good Friend, F/friendly Fred the Fly:

Fred was born on the Scattergood Friends School Farm at the beginning of the 136th annual sessions of IYMC. That same day, he happened upon what some humans would call, “High School Young Friends.” He found them to be F/friendly and decided to follow them around for the rest of the week’s activities.

Fred buzzed behind the nine Young Friends in attendance and joined them for introductions, but unfortunately, he couldn’t talk. He followed the youth outside for a game of Ultimate Frisbee. He flitted after the Young Friends to the Scattergood pond for an afternoon swim. He sat in on talks about music and spirituality with Deborah Dakin (Clerk of IYMC), Deborah Shaw (Visitor from North Carolina Yearly Meeting Conservative), and Bill Deutch (Rockin’ Accordion Player.) He took part in a capture the flag game with the younger Friends of Junior Yearly Meeting. He was the first to reach the flag, but he couldn’t move it. So, he decided to tag people, but that didn’t seem to do much either.

One morning, he tried to tell the Young Friends that Meeting for Worship was earlier than it had been before, but they were busy playing cards, and he watched his Friends walk in on Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. He joined the teens on the Scattergood Farm for a service project and flew around encouragingly while they tore down an old greenhouse. He participated in the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshop in which the Young Friends learned and practiced ways to communicate nonviolently. He attended an evening concert by singer/songwriter Andy Juhl.

He was disappointed that the group could not go on their annual canoe trip due to some untimely thunderstorm warnings, instead, he got to watch the teens go bowling after a delicious ice cream outing. He had a refreshing swim at a swimming pool with the Young Friends, but would have preferred it to be less chlorinated. He helped the Young Friends write an epistle, for which the Young Friends were very thankful. Overall, he experienced a week full of Spirit, Blessings, and Spicy Uno with the IYMC Young Friends.

In Love,

Thomas, Claire, Neal, Emily, Sebastian, Jake, Kylie, Trixie, Jonah, and (of course) F/friendly Fred the Fly. IYMC Young Friends 2013.

Epistle of IYM(C) Junior Yearly Meeting August 2013

Dear Junior Yearly Meetings:

At Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) this year we had 13 people age 5-13. We had Bible study and discussed Psalms 8:5-9 and what it means to have "dominion" over the other living things on the earth. Then we read Matthew 5:1-11 and thought about the meek and why the meek would inherit the earth. Also in Matthew 5:14-16 we read about lighting our lamp and making our light shine.

On Thursday, when we were discussing the meek inheriting the earth, a crop duster flew right over our building. This was both exciting and disturbing. The crop duster did not seem "meek".

We went to Suzan Erem's farm, where she is helping the land recover from bad treatment. She is taking care of the earth by letting prairie grass grow back where it used to live naturally. The grass has roots that are 20 feet under the ground and keep the earth from washing away into the Cedar River. We picked mulberries and blackberries. Suzan is being gentle and meek with the earth.

We helped Don Laughlin make a dragon kite. Tomorrow we are going to try to fly it if there is wind.

We did pottery with Shumpei Yamaki, the Scattergood pottery teacher. We got to try hand-building and throwing pots on the wheel.

We shelled and cooked black beans from a garden.

We gathered apples, cut, boiled and milled them into applesauce for the yearly meeting folks to eat on Saturday morning for breakfast. We took the apple cores and bad apples to the baby pigs at the farm.

We played capture the flag with Young Friends.

We attended meeting for worship with the adults each morning. The first day, we tried to notice things outside us, like an ant, a crack in the ceiling, and the speed of the fan. The next day we tried to notice things inside us. We noticed a very calm feeling, feeling good and almost warm, feeling love, and having expanding thoughts. We noticed that if you forget to notice what's going on inside, you might not notice feelings, especially small ones. Bigger feelings like sadness are easier to notice.

On Friday night we had a picnic, played ag and watched a movie and had microwaved s'mores and pizza since it was raining outside.

We made up a skit about Grimm's Fairy Tales that we will perform on Saturday night.

Peace in motion,

Josh, Emily, Vivian, Eric, Morgan, Kieren, Callum, Gillie, Mia, David, Simon, Evelyn, Chris