

## Circle of Young Friends Epistle, 2007

The theme of this week's Yearly Meeting was stewardship, a word which one young adult Friend defined as "caring for the body which cares for you." It was an appropriate theme for this week, when an unexpected accident occurred, and stewardship was put into practice as we took care of each other and nurtured the feeling of a safe and loving community. More than 65 people attended the Circle of Young Friends (CYF) this year, and that strong presence helped us to keep the joyous spirit of Silver Bay, and of our friends who were affected by the accident, alive, in spite of these difficult circumstances.

Sunday night, we gathered in Field Memorial, all 65 of us, jostling for space on floors and chairs and couches while making room for 40-odd encyclopedia-sized copies of the newest Harry Potter installment, to go over the week's schedule, get to know each other, share our most recent communing or almost-communing experiences with nature, and play a suspenseful round of Head Honcho (the guessers emerged triumphant in the end).

Monday night, the Circle of Young Friends hosted an intergenerational game night. Our name whip about the strangest foods we've ever eaten revealed culinary oddities from garlic mustard to tiny pieces of wood and everything in between. We learned that human knots are easier if you accidentally form two or three circles, and that wizards will always beat giants.

On Tuesday afternoon, Joan Cope Savage, from Syracuse Monthly Meeting, delivered an illuminating lecture about stewardship with respect to the environment. She filled us in on environmental trends we should be aware of, and ways we can work as individuals to make positive changes in our everyday lives.

At Wednesday's Fun(d) Fair, we sold and facilitated the tie-dying of handsome CYF T-shirts, as designed and hand silk-screened by our own Robin Lindop, Saratoga Monthly Meeting, and Nate Osborne, Easton Monthly Meeting, respectively. Later that day, we were all affected by the injury and hospitalization of two of our friends. We gathered together in worship, in grief, and in love, to be present for each other through this tragic turn of events. Currently, we are happy and blessed to have one friend back with us, and continue to send him our love and offer him our support. We are hopeful for our other friend, who underwent a successful surgery and who has been doing well every step of the way.

Thursday, the Silver Bay employees versus Quakers ultimate Frisbee game proved something of a misnomer when the employees were sparsely represented. As usual, though, the Quakers were happy to go it (almost) alone, as cheered on by a lively pep squad. Later, young adult friends had a strong showing at the meeting for business. We presented a query to the meeting for discernment: "What is the role of young adult Friends in the Yearly Meeting, and how can we all work to nurture it?" Friends responded to the query in large part with the message that young adult Friends are adult Friends—that it is up to us, as a part of this community, to be involved in meetings, sit on committees, and make our voices heard. Several Friends raised the idea that older Friends can be a resource for us, helping us to find our way and discern our gifts. Other Friends brought up the point that, because of certain limitations, financial and otherwise, young adults need the support of the wider Yearly Meeting body to assist us. One Friend suggested that the CYF should be national, if not global, so that we may all feel the strength of the Quaker communities we grew up in, no matter where our paths may lead us. One Friend suggested that the clerk position be a paid internship, to alleviate some of the stress of balancing such a demanding role with the other responsibilities young adults face at this time.

At our ice cream social on Friday, we brainstormed more ideas to keep this mighty circle alive, and thriving. CYF currently has a Web site and a newsletter; following on the success of two young adult conferences this past year, there are two more planned for the upcoming year. In addition, Spark is planning a January issue focused on youth, with art and writing submissions from us and articles about what we're up to.

Thanks all for a rewarding week. As we continue to grow, we are excited for what lies ahead.

Graciously submitted,  
The Circle of Young Friends  
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