

Friends of North Pacific Yearly Meeting 2004 Epistle

August 24, 2004

To Friends everywhere:

The thirty-second annual session of North Pacific Yearly Meeting convened in Missoula, Montana from July 29 through August 1, 2004. We greeted old and new Friends with joy, and shared our experiences of travel and travail in arriving at this beautiful mountainous state. In worship each day, we shared that portion of the Light which flowed through each of us. We celebrated the lives and remembered the gifts of those no longer here.

Our Friend In Residence, Eden Grace from Beacon Hill Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting, spoke of how God moved through her during a life changing traumatic personal experience. She likened her journey to that of the Israelites in the wilderness. She affirmed that the path forward lay through the brokenness, illuminated one step at a time. We understood that she was willing to relinquish her willfulness and embrace her willingness. Soon she will be working as field staff in Kenya with Friends United Meeting in conjunction with the East African yearly meetings.

In epistles from around the world, we saw reaffirmations of the Quaker peace testimony, and its roots in our religious experience. Our own local State of Society reports also reflected enthusiastic work for peace. We know we are not called to do everything; but as one worship sharing group heard, “Where the passion of your heart intersects with the world’s need, that is the place to throw the frail ounces of your weight.” (author unknown)

The clerk patiently educated us about Friends’ business process. In speaking about our finances, he noted that we appear to follow the example of John Woolman in limiting our income, and of the Cadburys in expending money in support of our concerns. Margaret Fraser, general secretary of the Section of the Americas for Friends World Committee For Consultation (FWCC) and Patty Federighi from North Seattle Friends Church, Northwest Yearly Meeting, joined our FWCC representatives in presenting an overview of the committee’s activities.

The following minute arose from an interest group convened because of recent legislative attempts to restrict marriage: “In accordance with the historical testimony of the Religious Society of Friends on equality and marriage, the North Pacific Yearly Meeting opposes all attempts to deny legal recognition of marriage of same sex couples.” Yearly meeting approved and will publicize this minute.

Saturday afternoon, Friends scattered to various community work projects around Missoula.

During our traditional Community Night—full of music, skits, and laughter—we gave a standing ovation to our member Peg Morton, who described her ninety-day imprisonment for protest at the Western Hemisphere School For Security Cooperation (formerly the School of the Americas), where the United States military trains other militaries in the tools of torture and repression.

We threshed whether or not to lay down annual session in 2006 when Friends General Conference will be coming to the Northwest, then minuted our intent to have an annual session, without specifying the form or time that annual session will take place. We realized that we have become a precious community to each other.

Our meeting closed with worship.
Signed on behalf of the meeting,

Jon Prescott
Presiding clerk