



# Jesse and Peter's bicycle trip

By Jesse Thompson

June 5th, two days after leaving home in Prince George, Peter and I passed the most beautiful place on Earth. At least, that is how we would think of the view we saw as we climbed, pushing our bikes, towards McLease Lake that morning.

The feeling, the motion behind what became a two-month long bicycle trip through BC and Alberta began at the 2004 Canadian Yearly Meeting in Windsor. There was much energy and enthusiasm in the Young Friends' community due to the upcoming World Gathering of Young Friends. The question was asked: "How can we make this year important and meaningful for the growth of all Young Friends, not just the few able to attend the World Gathering?"

Peter felt a leading to visit Young Friends with the intention of building connections, and help-

ing to discern what it is that Young Friends desire from their Quaker communities and how to make that vision a reality.

Peter and I both felt best traveling by bicycle. Though it would limit the amount of people we could see, we would be moving through the world in a more sustainable manner than if we'd taken the bus or flown. We decided to concentrate on visiting Young Friends in BC and Alberta. In the end, this ended up being only British Columbian Young Friends.

In each community we visited, we met with Young Friends, Young Adult Friends, and any others who were interested in contributing to the discussion.

We met with people who felt their most genuine and fulfilling connections were with other Young Friends and longed for more con-

nection and community, and others who, while enjoying CYM and Half-Yearly Meeting, were content with the level of their interactions with other Young Friends. The majority fell somewhere in between, but again and again we heard the desire for more connection and, especially more communication throughout the year and between gatherings. Two themes recurred in our conversations: the desire for a web site, and the desire for more frequent and regional gatherings.

The web site was collectively envisioned both as an on-line community with methods for communication such as chat rooms and message boards, and as an information source. At the 2005 Yearly Meeting, steps were taken towards making this a reality. There is now a Canadian Young Friends web site at [yf.quaker.ca](http://yf.quaker.ca). Thank you to Marika, who is currently acting as the webminder for the site.

During Yearly Meeting, though regional gatherings were discussed no firm plans were made.

**Young Friends  
who attended the  
memorial gathering  
for Chris Cheetly  
all spoke of  
how beneficial they  
found the gathering and  
expressed the thought  
that perhaps it could  
be used as a model of  
how regional gatherings  
might be organized in  
the future.**

The morning of June the fifth was cold as we walked our bicycles up that hill through a misting rain. It was about half way to the top

that we saw the most beautiful place in the world. A waving light green field stretched out before us, dotted with clumps of poplars. The field dropped away abruptly down to the Fraser River, and on the opposite shore the day's first golden rays shone off the steep cutbanks. One week later, we had made it to Nanaimo and had experienced our first meeting with Young Friends.

Over the course of a month and a half, we visited close to twenty Young Friends in ten communities. We were both very grateful for the generosity and kindness of those we visited and stayed with. In the end, we experienced a deeper connection with people across British Columbia and, as we traveled through mountains, deserts, rain and dust, a greater connection to the land we both grew up in. ☞

*Jesse Thompson is an attender of Prince George Allowed Meeting.*

## **Home Mission and Advancement Committee**

**invites applications for  
the position of**

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*THE CANADIAN  
FRIEND***

**Extended deadline  
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## **Sylvia Graves has been named Interim FUM General Secretary**

Sylvia Graves has answered the call as Interim General Secretary of Friends United Meeting (FUM) beginning March 6, 2006. She follows Retha McCutchen who retired 28 February 2006, after 11 years of service.

Sylvia was recorded as a Minister of the Gospel by Western Yearly Meeting (WYM) in 1997, has led retreats and workshops, filled the pulpit in meetings of WYM, and been a camp director at Quaker Haven, Indiana.

Married 38 years to Dale Graves, they are the parents of two grown children: Eric and Maria. Sylvia and Dale have recently returned from serving on an FUM work team in Belize. She has attended all but one FUM Triennial in the past 25 years, including the 2002 Triennial in Kenya.

Her vision during her tenure is "to join hands across theological and journey differences to do the work of the church rather than doing the work for the organization. The organization needs to support the ministries of our believers." ☞