

Representative Meeting of Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM) Held the 15 and 16 November 2002 in Ottawa, Ontario Reporters: Marilyn Church and Arnold Ranneris

*“Representative Meeting is the body that is entrusted with the general care of those matters which affect the life of Canadian Yearly Meeting between the full sessions of Yearly Meeting. Each Monthly Meeting in CYM sends a delegate, and as well, the Clerks of all Standing Committees of CYM are in attendance.” (Organization and Procedure, 6.4)
We meet twice a year.*

After a welcoming dinner at Ottawa Meeting House on that clear, chilly Friday night, and hugs of greeting all around, 27 Friends from all over Canada settled into silent worship. That first chance to worship together after many months apart turns quickly into a sacred place. The Clerk read from *Christian Faith and Practice*, number 354.

The reports from Meeting and Worship Groups across the country heightened our sense of joy, as we all spoke of increasing numbers, renewed interest and boosted energies being put into our service to the community, our work around peace and social concerns. There were no “must do’s” or “ought to do’s”, but all over, the sense that we CAN do.

We are always happy to have Young Friends join our Meetings, and this time, the Young Friend who was present had never attended Representative Meeting before. When he commented on this to the Clerk, and wondered what it would be like, she asked him if he’d attended Monthly Meeting for Worship for Business. His response was “Yes”, to which she replied, “Well, it’s just like that, only it takes two days!”.

Representative Meeting provides an opportunity for Friends who have been working in detail on a specific project to explain that project to other Friends who may have paid it very little attention, or who may be new to the process. We are not experts, but there is great value in having to explain issues to non-experts on a regular basis. Though the minutes we approve are detailed and informative, they do not always reflect these workings, which do, indeed, help us to avoid a hierarchy based on knowledge and experience.

There were several items brought forward during our meetings which need the seasoning of the Monthly Meeting, and individual Friends as well. These are listed first, followed by points of information which do not require work, but are of interest.

Membership Registry: Several Meetings voiced strong concerns about the proposed membership form. We are asked to look at it more closely, to give more detailed input. It should be noted that the Yearly Meeting database is terribly outdated and unorganized. There were questions as to whether this was indeed a disadvantage, and as to exactly what information needs to be stored in a central list. Many Friends had strong concerns about privacy, especially if the information is communicated by use of the Internet, and stored on personal computers. It was felt that the genealogical information requested on the sheet is too much, and again an invasion of privacy.

Monthly Meetings should keep detailed information on their members and attenders, but how much of this information does the Yearly Meeting office need?

Home Mission and Advancement Committee (HMAC): Daphne Davey reminded us about the availability of some funds through the Quaker Education Fund, which could be used, for example, to help our Meeting host a clerking workshop. Simcoe Muskoka Meeting is hosting such a workshop, with Betty Polster facilitating.

The Canadian Friend is experiencing a financial crisis. We are all reminded that a donation of \$27 per year per household would cover the costs of production.

We are asked again to look at the issue of Isolated Friends, and to contact Bert Horwood (Co-Clerk of HMAC) for more information on this. What does our Meeting do when a member moves to a more isolated area? How can we all help in the nurture of Isolated Friends?

Nominating Committee: Friends are needed to serve on HMAC (one from the central region) and Programme Committee (one from the east). As well, Yearly Meeting would benefit immensely from the naming of a second Assistant Clerk.

Treasurer's Report, and Finance Committee: Dan Poisson (Yonge Street Monthly Meeting) reported both as the Treasurer, and as a member, of Finance Committee. Please respond to the *Annual Appeal for Donations to CYM*, which has gone out in the mail. Pauline McKenzie (Vernon MM) is the new Clerk of Finance Committee.

Friends General Conference: A gathering is being planned for 2006, to be located in Vancouver. The organizing committee is requesting an estimate be made of the numbers of Canadian Friends who would attend a gathering in Vancouver, and the number of Friends who would be willing to volunteer for the implementation.

Lynne Philips also circulated 'Questions for Reflection on Gifts in the Ministry', which she is using to write an article for the next *Canadian Friend*. These questions could lead to some good discussion at Monthly Meetings.

The ad hoc Committee on the CYM Outreach Gift: Applications have been received which total more than the \$50,000 donated. Friends are asked to complete the work for any applications which may not have yet been submitted, and send them to Marilyn Church by the end of 2002. The committee will then make the final decisions in the new year.

Items of Interest

The Memorandum of Understanding between CYM and Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) will be signed, which then completes the process of incorporation of CFSC, in compliance with government regulations.

Personnel Committee has fine-tuned the Personnel Policy, making it as fair and equitable for CYM employees as possible.

Delegates to the Friends World Committee for Consultation (Section of the Americas) witness for Peace Consultation are Andrew Gage (Victoria Monthly Meeting) and Anna Peters (Hamilton Monthly Meeting). This consultation takes place in January, but all can participate now on the website. Jane Orion Smith and Rick McCutcheon are on the panel.

Nominating Committee named the following Friends to committees: Godfrey Spragge (Thousand Islands MM) to Friends Foreign Missionary Board, Tuulia Law (Ottawa MM) to CFSC, and Tim Benson (Wooler MM) to the Board of Trustees.

Prince George Worship Group has become an Allowed Meeting, under the care of Vernon Monthly Meeting.

Gordon McClure submitted the statements issued by the Peace Caucus of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and asked that we announce the proposed Peace and Sustainability conference of the Caucus, to be held in March, 2003.

Canadian Yearly Meeting will be held 2 to 9 August 2003, at Sedbergh School in Montebello, Quebec.

Our Meeting ended with the expression of appreciation to Ottawa Friends for their hospitality arrangements. We were treated to a pot luck dinner on Saturday night, and many of us partook in Meeting for Worship Sunday morning, before heading home through the snow storm. □