



Greetings to Friends Everywhere

The 40<sup>th</sup> annual session of the Meeting of the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association was held sixth month 10-13 2010 at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, North Carolina. As 215 Friends of all ages worshiped, learned and played we were able to follow our theme of “Discerning the Way” to renew and deepen our community of Faith.

Our plenary sessions, led by SAYMA Friends, addressed our theme as they shared their stories of discerning clearness for membership, marriage, communal concerns and outreach to the wider Quaker world.

Meetings for Business proceeded with careful discernment and a noticeable reduction in nitpicking. We approved two revised sections of our Faith and Practice, one on Community and the other on Marriage. There was a deep quiet experience of Joy that after many years of wrestling with the issues around marriage the Spirit led to Unity among us.

In a review of our finances and budget we recognized the impact of current economic conditions on our Monthly Meetings. We listened to each other’s concerns and challenged ourselves to respond creatively to a potential loss of revenue. By continuing to explore and discern our options we have faith that way will open to continue and possibly expand yearly meeting projects for our Monthly Meetings and support of Wider Quaker organizations.

Two areas identified from our State of the Meeting reports as concerns were support for increased ministry of all types and Outreach. Ministry and Nurture is exploring ways to provide consultations around Ministry to Monthly Meetings. The ad hoc committee on outreach is focusing on how to help monthly meetings open their doors to invite seekers in.

We are blessed with a vibrant youth program from our active, inquisitive Junior Yearly Meeting to the continuing growth of Young Adult Friends in active service to Friends and the wider world. The gift that pulls these two points together is our Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) program. Our delight continues at the growth of these young people as they experience their spiritual journeys into Quakerism and deepening their identity as Friends.

Even though early Friends felt that dancing and music were distractions from following the Spirit, our Hibbard Thatcher memorial dance and talent show brings all generations together in play and laughter that enlightens our spirits.

The Meeting for remembrance reminds us not only of our shared losses but celebrates these Friends as a way to keep our history alive.

Discerning the way forward is never finished. The Spirit continues to provide Yearly Meeting with jobs to do. We welcome these continuing opportunities.

*For Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association,*

*Dennis Gregg, Clerk*

## **Junior Yearly Meeting**

Greetings from the Junior Yearly Meeting of SAYMA, the yearly meeting deep in the heart of Appalachia. Our group was comprised of ages 2-11, and we had twelve attending. We are Ella, Nevin, Noah, Levi, Sarawilla, Julia, Oscar, Sylvan, David, Ayana, Marissa, and Imani, with Beth and Jonathan coordinating.

We decided to call ourselves the “corn nuts,” a name that came out because two of our members ate corn nuts before attending JYM. So this is also greetings from the JYM corn nuts of 2010.

Our theme was “Building Our Community,” so we spent some time discussing the Quaker testimony of community and what made a good community. There were times during our four days together that we were silly, grumpy, loud, quiet, relaxed or excited. Times that our community was too hot, or too cold. But there were many times that we were just right.

When we thought about our time together, the words we thought of were “fun,” “awesome,” and “great.” We built a fort out of over 50 cardboard boxes and masking tape, and we had lots of fun tearing it down all at once at the end of our time together.

Some of our other favorite things were eating ice cream in the cafeteria, having free-time to hangout, going to the pool and creek, making JYM T-shirts, playing ultimate ping-pong, going on the tree swing, blowing bubbles, playing the outside game “Beckon,” dancing the can-can Noah style, and spraying each other with water spray bottles.