

Welcome to the 2007 Illinois Yearly Meeting reading of the epistle for the Adult Young Friends (AYF):

Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls of all ages...
Quakers, Shakers, and everyone under the sun...
LET'S GET READY FOR SILENCE!!!

Dear Epistle Diary,

We gathered at these hallowed Illinois Yearly Meeting grounds on the 7th month of year 2007 from 25th day through 29th day.

We gathered as a group for the first time since our AYF "Tsunami" retreat last January at the Evanston Meeting House in Chicagoland. We noticed a significant difference in the "cornstalks to people ratio" between the two locations; this place also appears to have bright dots in the evening sky, which I am told are called "stars."

It has become apparent in discussion throughout the past year that IYM AYFers have entered, or will soon enter, a transition period in their lives. In worship sharing we milled over queries such as a) Where do we find ourselves now? b) What's next? c) What positive aspects are we anticipating? and d) What hardships might we encounter? A common theme that came out of the worship sharing was "community." This community has become a family to many of us over the years. However, a critical thought that resonated throughout the group was the need for a similar community outside of the IYM AYF during the rest of the year. Many of us recognize that this search for a community may lead us to new places throughout the country and the world.

INSERT "KICKIN" SEGWAY (and pause for affect)

For our out trip, we traveled through the cornfields to find a hidden gem within: Mathiessen Park. To all you "stereotypin' fools" out there that believe that Illinois is 100% flat, Mathiessen Park will prove you wrong...most of us in the AYF community being "stereotypin' fools" ourselves, were incredibly shocked. In the woods at the park, we climbed about 50 feet down stairs just to find ourselves atop a canyon. When venturing another 50 feet down to the bottom of the canyon (that's a total of 100 feet below cornfield level!) we encountered beauties such as caves and even a waterfall!

We spend our evenings by carrying out the traditional chillaxin' methods of the past: jaunts to the railroads and the Quaker grave yard, discussions over classic card games such as spades, hearts, and the newly popularized Crazy 8's...even though the 8's claim that they are the only sane ones of the deck.

Oh IYM AYF, I cannot wait to see you at this January's "Tsunami" retreat, and then, of course, next summer again at yearly meeting. I will leave you with the immortal words of Tom Hanks, "There's no crying in baseball!"

With love,

The Adult Young Quakers of the Corn

p.s. That George Fox fellow is so dreamy, I wouldn't mind getting into those "shaggy, shaggy locks."