

ILYM June 2008

NOTE: Read this aloud. Please. Or for our Spanish speaking Friends (a.k.a. "Amigos"): Por Favor.

Dear clerk/captain/person in charge of reading letters that are sent to you of _____ Yearly Meeting,

We, the members of the Adult Young Friends at Illinois Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (a.k.a. Quakers), wish to write you a letter (this is the letter, there is not another one coming, sorry, but we do not want you to waste precious moments sitting at the mailbox, you understand right? We thought so.).

Now that we have gotten the formalities out of the way, what is up? How you been? We are sorry that we have not spent a lot of time together. We thought it would be nice for us to rectify (hehe, that is a funny word: rectify) this situation by sending you a letter along with our epistle from our yearly meeting sessions in 2008.

Let us tell you a little bit about who we are. Illinois Yearly Meeting meets every year on our YM grounds located outside of McNabb, IL (the recent census puts McNabb at population 350 – which is 100 people up from the last census!). It is amazing to wander around looking at the stars during the night time. We have a retreat every year in January call a "Tsunami Retreat." This was named because the middle school group called their retreats "Tremors," the high school group called their retreats "Quakes" and we felt this was the natural progression (we will note that we came up with this name and had a few retreats before the Tsunami disaster in Asia; it was not meant to be offensive).

If you write one, please send us your epistle, we would love to read it. If you want to send us a letter along with it, we would enjoy hearing from you as well. One thing that we would like to know about your group is if you were a fruit, which fruit would you be? We would be corn...we realize that corn is not a fruit, but in all honesty, we are surrounded by acres of corn. We hope you are well and enjoying your yearly meeting sessions.

XOXO,

Illinois Yearly Meeting (ILYM) Adult Young Friends (AYF)

p.s. Edgar, we are sorry for using your dad's prosthetic toes for golfing. We did not know what they were. And we are especially sorry for hitting them into a group of puppies

IYM AYF Epistle 2008: The Mystery of the Short Corn

Welcome all to the reading of the ILYM AYF Epistle of 2008. Yearly Meeting started on 18th day of 6th month in this here year 2008 and ended on 22 nd day. Many of us trickled in throughout the long weekend from various cities and towns in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

The AYF community was relieved to notice we had narrowly missed the full moon (that way we did not have to chase away the werewolves this year!). We are also excited that the greater yearly meeting has changed our title from "IYM" to "ILYM" so that we can distinguish ourselves from the other IYMs such as Indiana Yearly Meeting, Iowa Yearly Meeting, Idaho Yearly Meeting, and the lesser known Indonesia Yearly Meeting. However, there have been concerns about a conflict that may arise with Ilbaska Yearly Meeting, which is situated deep in the heart of the Chilean jungle. Even though we recognize the tensions caused by having the same acronym, we hope to avoid starting the dreaded War of Passive Aggression.

During our time together, we wrestled over topics such as A) How can we integrate AYFers that are not a part of our already established crew and B) Do Blondes really have more fun? (We came to consensus that at least we are not bald). During our Meeting for Business 2 , we met with a member of the ILYM Site Envisioning & Developing Committee to discuss ideas for a future set of buildings that may be in the plans for yearly meeting grounds. Ideas that we thought would put a future retreat center to good use are 1) a family weekend retreat in the fall and spring for ILYM families to bring their children to foster relationships among the youth, 2) a retreat for the multiple Chicago 3 Monthly Meetings to get together as a whole unit, and 3) a retreat for Quakers to get together with other spiritual groups to learn from each other.

After discussing what we would hope to use the new facilities for, we talked with the SE&D rep about what the new facility could look like. Ideas for the new dorm room included higher ceilings so that bunk beds could be utilized to maximize the space. In addition, we offered our artistic talents to spruce up that various rooms; AYFers could spray paint in the style of graffiti art on the walls of rooms the lyrics to traditional Quaker hymns such as the Lucretia Mott Song, and in one of the rooms we could paint a mural of famous Quakers like George Fox 4 and Margaret Fell 5 (We could call it the Honeymoon Suite!). We understand there may be a disagreement about what should come first, the plans for the buildings or how the buildings would be used. AYFers look at this these two items as the crust and the filling to a pie, without both there is not a yummy dessert.

Our second major topic for Meeting for Business was past and future, the Tsunami Retreat. ILYM AYFers were very pleased by the retreat last January 6 , and we heard a strong call to continue this tradition in 2009. We hope that Kristen Richardson, the AFSC representative, will help us find someone to lead a workshop called "Nurturing Activism" (a.k.a. Creative Engagement Addressing Our Activist Wants"). We hope this also helps us form our relationship with AFSC as well. Our final major piece of business was to submit to the greater ILYM a description of who we, the Adult Young Friends of Illinois Yearly Meeting, are.

Of course no ILYM session would be complete without the Friday evening ho-down dance. The very next day, we traveled, equipped with less than accurate directions, to Mathassen Park once again to walk down into the canyon to witness the Illinois waterfall. We also listened to traditional Irish song “Finnegan’s Wake” 8 in honor of a current ILYM AYFer who has relocated to other parts (we are coming to kidnap you!).

We cheer ILYM continuing to hold yearly meeting sessions in June rather than July (That’s why the corn is so much shorter, we are here over a month earlier, duh!). AYFers have noticed that the heat is much less prevalent during this trial year of holding the sessions in June (the other side of the pillow is actually cool!). Random mention of fireflies: we have them. As we travel to our various Midwest homes, we will head that oh so important advise, “Objects in mirror are closer than they appear.”

We will leave you with the immortal words of Tom Hanks, “There is no crying in baseball.”

See you on the flip side,

The Adult Young Friends of Illinois Yearly Meeting

Footnotes:

1. ILYM has a website: www.ILYM.org. For a good time call 815.882.2214
2. Meeting for Business is a meeting where Quakers conduct business
3. Chicago is a major US city located in the northeast part of Illinois
4. George Fox was the founder of Quakerism (and he looked fabulous in those old leather britches).
5. Some of us learned about Margaret Fell at the 2008 nationwide (plus Canada) YAF retreat held on the Earlham Campus (That’s called a “shout out”)
6. To learn more about the month of January search it at www.Wikipedia.org.
7. In the past, Quakers have been kicked out of the Religious Society of Friends for dancing
8. We listened to the version by Irish punk rock band Dropkick Murphys; this version can be found on their 1998 album Do or Die
9. Random footnote #9: Casey is illiterate