

When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bonds. Your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction and you find yourself in a new, great and wonderful world.  
Patanjali, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC

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**This newsletter is posted on this website. You may wish to print off additional copies for Friends. If you are willing to receive your AWPS Newsletter on line please advise Kenneth Co, 1128kenneth@i-cable.com**



**March 2005**

**NEWSLETTER NO. 66**

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### **Editorial— Valerie Joy Associate Secretary, AWPS**

Dear Friends,

Our corporate witness to oppose the causes of war will be at the heart of the next Section Gathering in Seoul, 3-8 November. In view of the trend towards eventual Korean national unification, our theme “Building Peace and Living our Quaker Testimony in an Environment of Conflict”, will speak truth to powerful forces there. Korean Friends report ‘350,000 North Koreans live and work in South Korea. They face discrimination and hardship as they await the day of full re-unification. Once this takes place, massive social, political and economic problems will surface, leading to chaos and instability. Effects of this will not just be felt in N.W. Asia, but in the rest of the world as well’.

Our Friends in Seoul have booked a Protestant Church Centre, for the Gathering. The program will focus on the spiritual and moral aspects of the theme. Discussions will take place on human rights issues and the ecological responsibilities we share. A variety of interest groups will be offered. Each participant will be a member of a “Home Group”. Interpretation and translations will enable all Friends present to be fully participative. Music will play an important and fun role in our gathering.

" The Section Treasurer, David Bottomley and the Associate Treasurer Topsy Evans took advantage of a visit by David to Adelaide to meet for a discussion of the Section's finances. It was very helpful for them to have time together, for the first time. They looked at the overall financial situation, as well as the funding for the Gathering.

The Section finances will need to be used carefully as we have few reserves, and at present our income is less than our annual expenses. We must think of ways to increase our income, or lower our expenses, or both, if the Section is to continue its work in the years to come. Some of our affiliated Yearly Meetings have agreed to increase their annual donations, and there is a small trickle of individual donations, but we need to find alternative ways of raising money. We must also watch how we spend the money that we have. Please could all Friends think about this ?

With regard to the Gathering in Seoul, Korean Friends have done a marvelous job in finding a very reasonably priced venue. However, since we cannot provide backup funding from the general Section funds, we must budget carefully to cover the Gathering costs. Most unfortunately this will mean that we must reduce the number of Friends to whom we can offer subsidies. We hope that Friends will understand that this is done with great regret, as it may reduce the number of Friends who attend. If Friends can see a way around this problem, we would be very pleased indeed to hear from them.'

I will be away from regular emails for 3 months, whilst exploring in South America. From April to early July, please email Kenneth Co with your offerings for the July Newsletter. We really love to hear from you!

In Friendship, *Valerie Joy*

## **Executive Secretary's Annual Report 2003—2004**

After assuming the mantle, the first matter that came up had to do with sending official representatives to the Nepal Yearly Meeting to attend their annual meeting. There was keen interest, expressed by several Friends and at one point it looked as if three or even four Friends would be going to that function, two from section Office holders and two from Indian Yearly Meetings. Alas, at the end, none could go and we had to settle for a good letter of congratulations to serve the purpose. Since then, Nepal has been thrown into civil war which is still raging. Our thoughts and prayers are with our Nepalese Friends!

Letters of greetings were sent to other yearly meetings, and it is heart warming as well as uplifting to receive a feed back response from them. The task of sending those timely messages must be done more efficiently.

**Publishing the Newsletter:** So far, the Newsletter has come out pretty punctually. And to a large extent it has been appreciated. The task is handled by the two secretaries in tandem, which gives each person some breathing space as well as broadens the scope of articles. The plan is to gradually phase out sending hard copies to all readers who have email and to phase in posting it on the internet. This should save both on the costs of printing and postage, which now occupies quite a chunk of our regular expenses. That said, our Newsletter is still functioning/serving as a critical role of intra and inter sectional communication. Thus for some time to come, the tradition of Newsletter publishing should continue.

**Travels on Behalf of the Section:** As the Executive Secretary, I have represented the section twice, once to Birmingham, England (on WO business and so the expense was borne by FWCC) and once to JYM in Tokyo. On these occasions serious business was involved

and handled quite satisfactorily. Sensing the financial hard times, I was frugal to the point of being stingy.

Constitution Changes & the new AWPS Handbook: Under the able leadership of Topsy, Valerie and Dilawar, the Constitution of our section was brought up to date and the Handbook amended. These documents will be discussed at the Seoul section gathering for acceptance.

Section Financial Welfare: As is happening to the greater FWCC family, we in the ASPS are also faced with a financial crunch. Every three years, our section, in order to have broader representation, has pledged to underwrite the costs for Indian Friend representatives to attend the Gathering. This means huge outlays, and each time it happens there is a feeling of stress and feeling the pinch. Also, the consciousness has been preoccupied by the thought of money; where it comes from and how it should be used responsibly. At the writing of this report, the pieces of the jigsaw are not completely known. When the costs of running the Section Gathering is known and the number of Indian Representatives is finalized, our able Treasurers will then bring us up to date of what will be the health or ill health of the section financially.

Final Word: I must say, that one year on, I have learned a lot from assuming the post. I feel we have a great team going. There might be some differences of opinion on some issues, such as finance, but we as office holders do get along fine; motivated by the same desire of serving Friends of the Asia West Pacific area and through serving them, serving God whom we worship in the Quaker way! This team spirit will be put to test come next November when we gather together in Seoul for spiritual sustenance and for putting our heads together for finding best ways of running the business affairs of AWPS!

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### **Giving to the work of AWPS:**

Can you assist Friends from less well off countries attend the Section Gathering? Please send cheques to David Bottomley or to Topsy Evans— see front page for addresses.

Thank you in anticipation and also for your support for the FWCC World Office and to the work of QUNO.

### **Micah Challenge to reduce poverty**

Stuart Robertson, a north Queensland Friend writes: 'I have just signed the Micah Call. It's an excellent statement and I encourage you to consider signing it. Sign on-line at [www.micahchallenge.org](http://www.micahchallenge.org)

'The Micah Call explains why our generation has a unique opportunity to turn poverty around and how as Christians we have been shown by the prophets and by the teachings and life of Jesus that holistic engagement with the poor is integral to our discipleship. The Micah Challenge takes its name from Micah 6:8 *'What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God.'*

### **PBI (Peace Brigades International) returns to Aceh**

Aotearoa/New Zealand Friend Peter Watson, has written on behalf of Peace Brigades International: "At the request of our many local NGO clients in the province of Aceh, we are deploying a field team immediately to Aceh to assist with security and to assess the need for trauma counselling. Two team members arrived safely in Banda Aceh, and will be joined by another two. PBI continues to have the support of Komnas HAM (the National Human Rights Commission), who invite us to work in Indonesia.

We are seeking \$US100,000 to sustain our presence in Aceh for the next 12 months. We will continue our commitment to other areas of Indonesia: our networking team in Jakarta, our protective accompaniment program in Papua & Peace Education team.

PBI is blessed with a rare pool of trauma counsellors fluent in Indonesian. Our Aceh clients have indicated that this kind of service would be extremely useful on a short term basis, and we intend to assess further partnerships or services we can uniquely provide. We hope your funding could support this important initiative as well.

Donations can be made directly online at

<<http://www.peacebrigades.org>>www.peacebrigades.or cheques can be sent to: Peace Brigades International, Aotearoa/New Zealand P.O.Box 7268 Whanganui. Email: [pbiet@clear.net.nz](mailto:pbiet@clear.net.nz)

**Australia Yearly Meeting Epistle 2005  
from Christ Church Grammar School, Perth, West Australia**

Over 180 Friends met to share and learn, at a time when much is happening in the world. While we are gathered to look after business of the Yearly Meeting, to share our growth, joys and sorrows, and refresh our spirits, we are particularly aware of the challenges which have faced Quaker and other communities across the globe.

We were welcomed to Nyungar Land by Olman Walley and two of his brothers, a local indigenous dance group. This was a fitting introduction to the themes of peace and community, taking steps towards bridging the gap between us in the process.

Meeting as we have, only two weeks after the South East Asia Tsunami, we found many of our deliberations were influenced by this catastrophe - the work of the Donald Groom Fellow in Indonesia and Quaker Service Australia in Tamil Nadu, India being the most directly affected. In our thinking about peace we were also led to consider the impact of such events on communities and the environment.

The message of Backhouse Lecturer, David Johnson, to first find peace in yourself in order to work towards peace in the community struck true with Friends. It is easy to lose hope when surrounded by so much destruction and despair. At a time when Friends and their values are so relevant, we begin to reassess the way we present ourselves to the wider community, and wonder if it is time to make our presence better known. We have been challenged by Adrian Glamorgan's assessment of the 'State of the Society 2005' to consider how we might better reach out to the wider community, recognising that we do have 'something of importance' to say. The response to the 2003 ABC *Compass* program on Quakers demonstrated that there is indeed a longing for the things that the Society of Friends offers.

The Share and Tell sessions also tied in with the theme of peace and community, with 'AVP in India' and 'Building Sustainable Communities' as two of the topics explored.

The theme for this Yearly Meeting, and hence for the Summer School, was '*Keeping the Inner Light Burning Bright*'. The Summer Schools focused on spiritual renewal, through art, singing, dance, verse, laughing yoga, thought and discussion and silent meditation.

The Children's program has fostered an awareness of our spiritual selves through worship, service, story, sharing and fun. Adults and children have struggled together to contain the vigorous energy of youth, without suppressing its spirit. We have shared moments of deep stillness and joy. Responsibility for pastoral care and creative input has moved in a happy dance between adult participants. The Children's Program has deepened the experience of Quakerism through spirit in individual participants. It has touched many in the Yearly Meeting community.

Friends try to find the balance between stillness and action, and the line between sharing Quaker ideas and pushing them. We think about what being a Quaker' really means, and wonder about the role of Quakers in the community at a time of such tumult. We question if we support families and children well enough, if we are doing enough in the right ways, to ease the suffering we see around us. Once again we search for truth in the silence that holds us, with the intention of not only finding clarity, but finding doubt. We know that it is not one or two individuals who guide or inspire. Each of us here, on the banks of the Derbal Yerrigan or Swan Estuary, have brought our gifts, foibles, stories, sadness and joy to share. We have come together in love, optimism and faith. We will leave perhaps with answers, but also, we hope, with many more questions.

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### **Stirring Challenge from the 2005 Backhouse Lecture**

David Johnson spoke of the inner peace he sees as an essential basis for outer peace work. "The inner peace comes finally from doing God's work. The evidence is that it can be done. We need not despair ... let us not delay. There is not a day to be wasted" David Johnson 2005, *Peace is a Struggle*. Copies available from AYM office for \$11 incl Postage. Email YMSecretary@quakers.org.au

## **News of Friends**

**Devdas Shrisunder** writes of a cancer detection camp held at Friends Rural Centre, Rasulia at the end of 2004 . jointly organized by FRC Rasulia and Jawaharlal Nehru Cancer Hospital in Bhopal. Devdas writes “Before the camp we visited 30 + villages within a 25 km radius of Hoshangabad giving wide publicity about the symptoms of cancer. 176 patients were checked by medical staff under the guidance of Dr B. Sanyal. Biopsy samples of 19 suspected cases were collected and further investigated. Efforts will be made to provide free treatment to patients in poverty. Volunteers from Bhopal MM, Hoshangabad, Itarsi, Sogaphur and students from Itarsi and Sohagpur Friends schools assisted with catering. Thomas Baker (London) and Tirkey (Bhopal) were also tireless with their help. After a long gap, FRC Rasulia should re-establish its live contact with people in surrounding villages with its major mission– that of rural development”.

**Hari Khurana** from New Delhi Worshipping Group reports that 37 Friends have worshipped with them in 2004. Of these, three are regular attenders. They have welcomed Manab Chakraborty (Hong Kong), and Eileen Kelly and Sanjay Pahuja from Cambridge, USA.

**Michael and Tess Corbett from Australia** tried to make contact with resident Quakers, whilst on holiday in the Philippines recently, but to no avail– all were on holiday. Thanks for trying– see article on *Intervisitation*, page 10. Michael is offering to organize a ‘mini section gathering’ in Manilla on 30 October (to also include Friends from Singapore, Indonesia etc). With this amount of notice, a gathering certainly should take place. Email Michael to register your interest/support, on 4emcees@powerup.com.au

**Julian Stargardt, Clerk Hong Kong MM**, writes of the fund raising taking place in Hong Kong for victims of the tsunami. Julian also sent warm greetings to Australia Yearly Meeting.

**Let us be thankful for the extension of God’s work in all of these settings. Please email your “News of Friends” to Kenneth Co.**

### **Intervisitation– from the revised AWPS Handbook**

During the 2004 Triennial, participants took part in a Strategic Needs Analysis Process (or SNAP). The outcome showed the main priority was Inreach/Outreach which involved Communications & Publicity, Intervisitation & Events. Some suggestions made were to:

- develop sister relationships between meetings;
- encourage YM's to set up travel funds for intervisitation
- encourage support and learning
- encourage Young Friends and others from diverse backgrounds to visit one another

Many Quaker writings, such as the following encourage personal connections.

“Seek to know one another in the things that are eternal”, *Advices and Queries 18*

“Take time to learn about other people’s experiences of the Light”. *Advices and Queries 5*, Britain Yearly Meeting

“ We need to know each other. We need to tell the stories. We need to have opportunities where we can talk about our spiritual journeys...”, *This We Can Say- Australian Quaker Life, Faith and Thought* 4.1

“Visitation is the essential work of FWCC. Visitation is like opening windows and letting the light of understanding shine in. Friends meet “face-to-face and heart-to-heart” to share both that which unites and that which divides them in the life of the Spirit. With God’s help, open exchange builds understanding, respect, trust and love and renews awareness of a world-wide family of Friends” .

Website of *The Section of the Americas*

The Contacts List of the Handbook contains the most recent information on FWCC contacts around the globe. Detailed information is provided about FWCC affiliated Yearly Meetings in our Section. In addition, there are worshipping groups in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka, China and in other places where Friends are glad of contact from larger Meetings. Other contacts from non-affiliated Yearly Meetings, such as those in the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal and Taiwan may be available from the

contacts from non-affiliated Yearly Meetings, such as those in the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal and Taiwan and may be available from the Secretary.

If you are planning to travel, please contact the Clerk in your destination ahead of time, with details of your visit.

The following steps may make your visit more fruitful:

- Take a traveling Minute from your Clerk, which provides a spiritual link between your Meeting and the one being visited.
- Take care not to impose any hardship on Friends' hospitality, but give of your time and resources as you are led.
- Explore ways in which contacts can grow into ongoing friendship and mutual support.
- Write about your experience and talk about it in your home meeting.
- Submit articles to Quaker publications, in particular the AWPS Newsletter.
- Maintain contact with the Friends you meet and explore ways in which contacts can grow into ongoing friendship and mutual support.

Friends Centres in AWPS are listed at the conclusion of Contact Addresses in the AWPS Handbook— see the website, [www.fwccawps.org](http://www.fwccawps.org)

I would be grateful for Friends to share some of their experiences around intervisitation.

*Valerie Joy— Valerie@hotkey.net.au*

I think of journey as a search. We search for a self to be,

we search for other selves to love,  
we search for work.

Frederick Buechner

### **Tsunami Relief swings into action at Auroville, Tamil Nadu, India**

Joss Brooks an Australian Quaker, who has worked for over 20 years at Auroville, managing projects which include long term replanting of indigenous forests, water management, education to schools writes:

"After the initial relief efforts of feeding, distribution of clothing and essentials, we realized a long term effort of rehabilitation was needed. The Tsunami nerve center is fully functioning, with volunteers, telephones, emails to back up planning for local action, regional, national and international cooperation.

Five villages in the north, five in the south and the Auroville beach community are targeted. Village leaders have identified what actions are required. Cleaning away debris is found to have a positive psychological impact. The volunteers stay, working alongside the villagers, and in the process make positive, long lasting relationships.

Simultaneously a large distribution effort is under way, with goodwill being shown by local businesses, who often give away materials, and sporting materials which aim to help villagers overcome lassitude of a people who feel helpless, having to start their lives from scratch.

The next step is re-building houses, helping fishermen buy boats and nets, so they can recommence earning their living. The greatest gift in this crisis is the bringing together of local people, young and old, volunteers, all throwing themselves energetically into such a worthwhile cause. Joss thanks all supporters and those who have sent financial contributions. If you want to contribute, cheques can be sent to QSA, 119 Devonshire St Surry Hills NSW 2011, or if in India, direct to Joss Brooks, Pitchandikulam, PO 605101, Auroville, Tamil Nadu, India

## **Latest News from QUNO**

Both Rachel Brett and her assistant Megan Bastick (a Tasmanian human rights lawyer) are investigating the conditions faced by women in prison, and how this affects their children. Their research has been mainly in the Philippines and Sri Lanka, but they are now extending their research and consulting world-wide with:

- A) people working with women in prison
- B) Women prisoners
- C) Women ex-prisoners all with recent experience, ie within the last 2 years.

Readers of this Newsletter are asked to contact people (not necessarily Quakers), who fit the above criteria, who would be willing to fill out a questionnaire on this subject. If you know of anyone, or any group you think may be willing to respond, would you please ask them to contact Megan Bastick at [quno2@quno.ch](mailto:quno2@quno.ch) who will email them a questionnaire.

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QUNO has recently surveyed participants who have attended Lunchtime Meetings, and come up with interesting results. Participants are invited because of their interest in a topic and usually come from a range of organizations—UN staff, NGO's, Missions and relevant organizations.

A questionnaire was constructed and sent to past participants, with replies being anonymous.

The respondents were uniformly positive about their experience of meeting in such an informal and confidential environment. The choice of topics is seen as particularly relevant to people and organizations working on human rights and refugee issues. One respondent said, “There is simply no analogous forum in Geneva at this time”.

Many commented on the non-confrontational atmosphere achieved between participants, often with widely differing views. Real listening takes place between viewpoints that are usually seen as being in opposition. “They put difficult issue discussion into a context of friendly interchange. This helps enormously when actually policy formation takes place in, say the Human Rights Commission.... Confidence and trust is already built”.

The success of the meetings seems to rely heavily on the experience and expertise of the QUNO staff who invite the “right mix” of participants, and

create the non-confrontational atmosphere.

One most helpful comment was “the issue/agenda must determine who participates...it is wise not to include journalists. These meetings are relied upon to be confidential”. This confidential nature of the discussions is seen as most important by most of the respondents, and it enables them to speak freely and to explore new possibilities for individual or combined action– or just perhaps to see some merit in another viewpoint. “At times, a free floating discussion that just changes our thinking is more than enough”.

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### **Update on Aotearoa/NZ non-violent conflict resolution training in Indonesia**

Robert Howell reports on the successful outcome of a grant of NZ\$646,257 to continue training Indonesian police in non violent conflict resolution. This project began 7 years ago, with the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies in Yogakarta offering a MA in these studies, which involve both academic and practical work. The new project will assist 5 police each year for 3 years (total 15). Twelve of the police will come from the Police Training Colleges in the 12 eastern parts of Indonesia. Three will come from BRIMOB (the Police section allocated for dealing with areas where there are serious outbreaks of violence). The inclusion of BRIMOB is significant, as the UNHCR program which included them, has not , and the USA agencies are forbidden by the US Senate from engaging with BRIMOB, because of their poor human rights record.

In addition, funding for 5 six day workshops for 3 years has been granted. This will involve 600-700 civilian police in non-violent conflict resolution and community policing training.

A civilian police force trained in non-violent intervention strategies will bring new light in dealing with conflict in Indonesia.

### **Peaceful Society website**

Dale Hess, Victoria RM, advises that the Peaceful Societies website is now up and running, and suggests we visit this site: <http://www.peacefulsocieties.org>. He asks for feedback and ideas on improving it

## **Registration Form Seoul Gathering 3-8 November 2005**

**Name/s**

**Address:**

**Yearly Meeting:**

**Age:** 0-10; 11-20; 21-30; 31-40; 41-50; 51-60; 61 + please circle

**Visa:** (we suggest applications be made for a tourist visa and that you try to fit in some travel in South Korea)

**Diet:** Do you have specific dietary needs?

**Languages spoken:** Native      Fluent      Not fluent

**Will you be bringing items for sale-** books, cultural items?

**Will you offer a topic for an Interest Group? What is the Title?**

**Can you offer a musical or other contribution?**

**Arrival day/ time:** (Registration from 1.30pm on 3 Nov.)

**Departure day/time:** (following afternoon tea, 3pm, 8 Nov)

**Are you planning to attend Japan Yearly Meeting in Tokyo from 11-13 November?**

Will you require accommodation in Tokyo?

**Are you attending the short Gathering in Manila- see page 9**

**Registration and Accom Fee \$450 USD for Friends from Aotearoa/NZ, AYM, JYM, Seoul, Hong Kong MMs .This is for a 4 share room (on floor)**

**Additional Accommodation fee- western beds: Twin room US\$500; Single Room \$550.** Please mail your bank draft to Topsy Evans, PO Box 181, Glen Osmond, South Australia 5064. Some cash payments can be accepted at the Seoul Gathering. The Twin and single rooms will be suitable for those with mobility problems.

**Special fee for those paying before 30 June, subtract \$100 US, so it will be \$350, \$400, or \$450.**

**Numbers may be limited, so we ask for your registration form be sent to Kenneth Co- see address page 1, asap- closing date 1 July**

.An information pack will be sent to all registrants, including a Study Booklet, for use in your home meeting on the theme “



David Bottomley, AWPS Treasurer and Topsy Evans, AWPS Associate Treasurer, meeting recently in Adelaide, Australia

*If undelivered please return to  
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