

# The Meeting of Two Worlds

*East Coast Youth Group Beach Trip*

By Patrick Kennedy

Once again teenagers from East Coast congregations got together for an end of the year camping trip at the beach. This year, twelve teenagers joined in from D.C. and New York/Spring Valley. What made the trip that much more wonderful was the great group of young adults who were able to come: Anna Clair and Francoise Novotny, Jessica Mansbach and David Buckner from Spring Valley and Amos Dancey, Emma Heirman and Bert Mueller from the D.C. area. With Rev. Carol Kelly and myself there were 21 of us at the “primitive site” in Cape Henlopen, Delaware.

It was a magnificent Memorial Day weekend when we arrived at the site on Sunday afternoon. Everyone hit the beach right away. Before dinner we set up our tents and got the “kitchen” and grills ready for burgers, dogs and delicious salads. After supper, our group grew even larger: we joined in some fun, competitive and creative games on the lawn with some twenty 18-19 year-olds from the Takoma Park area who had grown up going to Quaker Summer camps! We played until we couldn't see each other too well. Then when it got so dark, we invited our new friends over to our campsite for a fire and singing. And sing we did - camp songs, oldies on guitar and choral songs. We learned new songs and taught the Quakers some new ones too. Our voices rose up with the flickering flames until we broke the singing with a campfire classic: s'mores.



Some of the young people stayed with us around the fire as we took up the topic for our trip: the meeting of two worlds. After describing the dynamic energy and beauty of the meeting place of surging ocean and land that we call the beach, we delved into the extraordinary subtleties and drama of human encounters. Each person is his or her own world. Part of it is revealed and part of it is hidden. When we meet, what is it that allows us to open up to someone? How can I approach others in a way that allows them to open up to me? We explored these questions genuinely, openly and often humorously and ended the evening with our first (relatively unsuccessful) attempt at an outdoor close of day service (two coolers for an altar and some lanterns on top...). This was followed by a silent, midnight walk to the beach where we beheld an almost full moon over

a dark dark ocean - an image that left a deep and solemnly beautiful impression.

The next day was spent at the beach after a morning gathering, building sand-castles, swimming, building a large group sculpture in the sand and most of all: meeting each other.