Dialogue Across the Earlham Campus

For this issue of ESR Reports celebrating our 50th anniversary year, two of ESR’s graduates, both of whom teach at Earlham College in the Religion department, talk with each other about their experience of ESR over the years. Michael Birkel (MA ’78) has been teaching at Earlham College since 1986. Mary Garman (M.Min. ’77) began in 1988.

MG: To start our interview, how did you happen to come to ESR, and what were your first impressions of the place?

MB: I first learned of ESR while a college student. I was taking a course on Quakerism with T. Canby Jones, and there was a poster for ESR on the wall outside the classroom. For some reason, I found the idea of studying Quakerism there suddenly very attractive, though I had already applied to doctoral studies in musicology. When that did not prove as deeply satisfying to my soul as I’d hoped, I came to visit ESR to consider studies there. My first impression of the place was that the students were very hospitable. After all, my hosts were two ESR students by the name of Mary and David Garman! Little did I know then that you would be my colleague teaching at Earlham College and that our families would become dear friends and even next-door neighbors. What about you?

MG: David and I were resident friends of the Kalamazoo (Michigan) Friends Meeting in the early 1970s while he finished up his alternative service. I was working at the College, when a former professor handed me a postcard from ESR, 

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If you would prefer only to receive an electronic form of this newsletter, please email Mandy Ford fordma@earlham.edu with your email address to opt out of the printed newsletter.

**“I am thankful for ESR and the good work that it continues to do, for its students and for the Religious Society of Friends.”**
—Michael Birkel

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**DIALOGUE continued from page 1**

...telling me about this “new seminary” that looked experimental and exciting. We came to visit in March—amazed to see daffodils in bloom! —and David, early one morning, sat and talked with Ella Brewer (former housekeeper for ESR and a wise and wonderful woman). We moved here during a phone strike, I remember, and I felt alienated and unhappy for about a year while David flourished. He especially loved classes with Gene Roop and Jim Yerkes. What do you remember about your days as a student?

**MB:** As a student at ESR, I cherished the warm relations between faculty and students. The support and the pedagogy from such scholars as Hugh Barbour, Alan Kolp, and Jim Yerkes, and the friendships forged among students as we studied, ate, worshipped, and argued exegesis together was edifying. There were challenges, of course, and not all the conflicts were uplifting, but I felt a strong community spirit. What about you?

**MG:** I enrolled at ESR a year after David. Most of my memories are of the few other female students. I was nurtured by Pat Jones, Wanda Coffin, Linda Kusse, Debbie McGrady, Linda Pickard, Sadie Vernon and others as we raised feminist questions in the ESR community. We also formed friendships with some of the staff at FUM—this is when I met my life-long friend, Dortha Meredith—and with students at Earlham College, including Misty Gerner, Stephanie Crumley (who joined as soon at ESR and is now on the faculty), and Gwen Halsted. Among the faculty Jim Yerkes was especially supportive. He encouraged a group of us to attend the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in 1977, where we met some of the foremost scholars in the emerging field of feminist theology.

Those are some of my student memories. I do remember meeting you when you were a prospective student. Who knew you’d marry Gwen Halsted and that we’d end up as neighbors? What was grad school like for you as an alum of ESR?

**MB:** When I began my doctoral program at Harvard, I soon realized how adequately ESR had prepared me for further study. I was and remain grateful for the academic rigor that ESR had offered me a student. Because I now travel around from time to time in the Quaker world, I meet other ESR alums regularly. I get to see the good work they do, and it is often quite heart-warming. How did your ESR experience get you ready for the next steps in your life?

**MG:** My early experiences as an alum of ESR happened while David and I were serving as co-pastors in Western Yearly Meeting. When we came back to visit, faculty took time to listen and offer encouragement. Only now do I fully appreciate their generosity. While we lived in Indianapolis, I was involved in a serious accident, and for about two weeks different faculty members phoned me to check on my well-being. During those years I was invited to teach a course or two, including the fabled “Canoe-Trip-That-Never Happened” course (with Alan Kolp) that created lasting bonds among our students.

When I decided to go to graduate school to prepare myself to teach, and I started classes, like you, I was grateful for the ways I was challenged academically and personally at ESR. (I don’t remember being grateful at the time!) As we drove away from Richmond that summer I thought, “Well, that chapter of my life is now officially over.” Those ties remained, however. People at ESR continued to keep me on their radar while I was a graduate student, including an encouraging phone call on the night before my qualifying exams. How do you connect your ESR years with your teaching at Earlham?
MB: I've been teaching at Earlham since 1986, and I've had a neighborly relationship with ESR over the years—literally since 1998. As a member of the Religion Department, I have valued the goodwill and helpful relationships that prevail between my department and ESR. We have assisted each other in teaching courses that the other has needed. Jay Marshall's technical theological term for this is "horse trading." Speaking as one of the horses, I have taught a variety of courses at ESR over the years: church history, Quakerism, Biblical Hebrew, and Christian spirituality. I also have had some fine ESR students in my courses at the college, including some who are now on the seminary's faculty. I always feel warmly welcomed when I visit Jay. I have opportunities for shop talk with scholars at ESR, discussing Quaker topics with Steve Angell, spirituality with Stephanie Ford, and reading and translating Biblical Hebrew with Nancy Bowen. How did you make your way back here after graduate school?

MG: I've been here since 1988. Like you I have divided my teaching time between the college and the School of Religion. I continue to urge students from both schools to find ways to interact in and out of the classroom. Who knows what the future will bring?

My gratitude toward ESR continues to deepen and grow as I think back on the ways it has touched my life. I began as a spouse of a student, later became a student myself, and then a graduate. As an alum I served on committees and made financial donations, and also received care and encouragement from the faculty during the difficult times of my life. Along the way I became a colleague to my former teachers, and received another gift: acceptance and mentoring that smoothed my way as a rookie teacher.

MB: Like you, Mary, I am thankful for ESR and the good work that it continues to do, for its students and for the Religious Society of Friends. We both live literally across the street from ESR now, and it is a neighbor that is easy to love.

MG: Recently I have attended the memorial services of some of those ESR teachers: Charles Thomas, Emily Cooper, Wil Cooper, Tom Mullen, Ella Brewer. All I can say is: Thanks be to God for these blessed souls!
John Punshon gave the best long-lasting advice I ever received: “Those who try to help, seldom do!”

One of those terrific students with whom I take great pleasure in having a continuing friendship, took me into a cornfield one night to bay as a wolf at a full moon to help open up my spirit and senses. I don’t recall opening up as much as laughing my head off. But, I don’t think it hurt me any either!

Another advantage for me at the reception’s desk was that my husband, David, and daughter, Linda, were both students at ESR—another way for me to be even more involved with the ESR community. When David was a student in 1968-1972, those first years of being introduced to ESR were filled with challenging ways of looking at life. Living in “Brick City” there were delightful new folk to meet and who, over thirty years later, are steadfast friends. Classes were open to spouses and many of us were able to take advantage of those resources. I remember sitting in on a class on psychology taught by Bill Rogers. When asked why I chose to be there, I replied, “I feel like a sponge, just soaking up everything.”

When returning to ESR in 1985 as a secretary/receptionist, I was still a sponge but got paid for sitting in the best seat in the house while sponging! Thank you ESR for gracing my life. Please continue for 150 years more!

Phyllis Wetherell lives with family in Maine.

Whither Islam in Iran?
By Steve Angell

“Let the People of the Book know that they have no control over the grace of God; that grace is in his hands alone, and that He vouchsafes it to whom He will. God’s grace is infinite.” Qur’an 57:29, trans. N. J. Dawood.

“Strive always after ready bliss; for Adam, when by Fortune left,/ Abandoned the Abode of Peace, and of the Garden’s joy was reft./ Drink one full cup or two, and then from Life’s bright banquet turn aside/ Check thou, to wit, too eager hope that happiness may ever bide.” Hafez, Divan, 15, trans. Herman Bickwell.

I brought my copy of the Qur’an to Iran, and managed to read it in its entirety during the two weeks that I was there, in late April and early May, 2009. The Divan of Hafez I purchased in the home town of Hafez, sultry Shiraz in southern Iran. It is difficult to understand Iran fully without coming to the realization that some Iranians love the Qur’an most of all; some love Hafez most of all; and many Iranians love both of these books.

Our guide, Mana, was an Iranian that loved Hafez, but who could do without the Qur’an. Mana was thoroughly secular. She chafed under Islamic dress restrictions, although she was clear just how far she could push them. “There are more Iranians like me every day,” Mana announced brightly, one of the first things that she told us. She had been a graduate student, undoubtedly a brilliant one, who had mastered the study of what she had loved, pre-Islamic Iranian culture.

But, for her, the seventh-century Arabs who had brought Islam to Iran were just unfortunate foreign invaders. When asked about Islam, her answers were short and concise; when she was asked about Persian culture, her answers were passionate and effusive.

A few days into our stay in Iran, the counterpoint to Mana showed up. Elham was a friend of one of us 24 Americans on this expedition. Elham was very traditionally Muslim, in a typical Iranian way. She wore the chador, which exposed her face, but covered the rest of her body in a swath of black. On festive occasions, a colorful cloth peeked out from her chador and covered her throat. When Elham first saw Mana, she told her, “You are not dressed right.” Mana ignored her. Elham accompanied us on some of our bus expeditions. When I asked Elham about Shiite Muslim holidays, she answered, but she was much more interested in asking me about English
usage. My dog’s name was “Sojourner,” I admitted at one point. “So what does the word ‘sojourner’ mean?” She asked.

Although Mana and Elham found it a challenge to encounter each other, each in their own way was extraordinarily hospitable to us Americans. And that was our experience all over Iran. My sense was that their hospitality was not just a result of Iranian culture, although indeed hospitality is engrained in Iranian culture. Instead, their hospitality, and that of other Iranians we met, was based on a genuine interest in America and Americans, not based on a desire to make the past thirty years of difficult relations to vanish (there are real issues that divide our countries), but rather based on the knowledge that such issues are so much easier to work with when there is genuine friendship and dialogue between our two countries, not just at the level of leadership, but also at the level of people-to-people relationships. As I was about to board our tour bus in Tehran, an elderly Iranian man with virtually no English stopped me. “French?” he guessed. As there are virtually no Americans in Iran now, his guess was a good one. “No, we are American,” I replied. “American? I am so happy!” he stated with a huge smile. May further moves toward peace and reconciliation, toward further dialogue and better understanding of our two beautiful countries and cultures, bring us much more happiness!

Steve Angell, Leatherock Professor of Quaker Studies

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**Christian Spirituality Position Filled**

ESR has completed the search for a professor of Christian Spirituality. We are excited to welcome to the ESR faculty Carole Spencer. For the past seven years, Carole has been Adjunct Professor of Church History and Spiritual Formation as well as Director of Friends Center at George Fox Evangelical Seminary in Portland, OR. She earned a Ph.D. in Theology at the University of Birmingham, UK in 2004. Her dissertation was published as *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism: An Historical Analysis of the Theology of Holiness in the Quaker Tradition*, Paternoster Press, 2007. Carole is a Recorded Minister in Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends and has traveled widely among Friends speaking at conferences and other gatherings. She joins the ESR faculty at the rank of Associate Professor and begins her position in July with responsibilities on campus beginning in August. We ask that you join us in welcoming her to Earlham School of Religion.

**Publication Announcement**

The Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries provide compact, critical commentaries on the books of the Old Testament for the use of theological students and pastors. In addition to providing basic information and insights into the Old Testament writings, these commentaries exemplify the tasks and procedures of careful interpretation, to assist students of the Old Testament in coming to an informed and critical engagement with the biblical texts themselves.

From the book, “The effects of the Judean refugees’ trauma would be far reaching. Certainly an individual named Ezekiel might have experienced persistent reactions to trauma for the length of time covered by the book. Moreover, the experience and effects of exile were not limited to Ezekiel, nor even to his generation. The book’s existence attests that others in the exilic community, and beyond, found their experiences reflected in its words.”

Nancy Bowen, Associate Professor of Old Testament

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**50th Anniversary Celebration Travel**

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For updates and more information on 50th anniversary celebration events, go to esr.earlham.edu/50years.
The ESR anniversary road show continues to take the school’s story around the country. After the inaugural September festivities in Richmond, ESR brought the celebration to Arch Street Meeting in Philadelphia. There an alumni/ae panel comprising Micah Bales, Shirley Dodson, Beth Lawn, and Eric Mayer along with a public Friend panel including Susan Corson-Finnerty, Carolyn Evans, Arthur Larrabee, and Ed Marshall III, addressed the theme, “The Intersection of Faith and Practice in Life and Ministry.”

November found the celebration in Grinnell, Iowa. Tim Seid led a workshop titled, “Discovering the Goal of The Christian Life: Personal and Corporate Transformation,” in which he compared Paul’s focus on moral exhortation with the language and themes found in Greek moral philosophy. Later in the afternoon, Jay Marshall presented a workshop on “Creating Vitality within the Local Congregation.”

Friends in Western Yearly Meeting had two opportunities to celebrate ESR’s 50th.

Earlham Trustee, Peggy Hollingsworth, arranged for a cake and good cheer at Western’s Administrative Council in November. Later, Friends gathered at Carmel Meeting in Carmel, Indiana in December, where David Johns helped Friends think about “Quaker Theology for our Time” and Lonnie Valentine engaged attendees in an interactive workshop on “Conflict Transformation.”

In late January, a delegation of students and faculty traveled to North Carolina, where Friends had requested a wide range of workshops.
Jay Marshall introduced Friends to “Quakerism 102,” in which they explored how ESR helps students move beyond the romantic platitudes with which Friends define themselves. Later he and Jennie Isbell presented a workshop on “Vitality in the Local Congregation.” Stephanie Ford provided guidance on prayer in her workshop, “Friendship with God: The Heart of Prayer.” Pastors had an opportunity to hear Phil Baisley’s latest research on “The Quaker Preacher and Quaker Preaching. Young Adult Friends had the opportunity to be in conversation with Micah Bales and Stephanie Crumley-Effinger on the theme “Discerning God’s Call in Your Life.” The next day five ESR students preached at meetings in the area.

February found ESR celebrating in Whittier, California. Earlham’s College Archivist and Curator of the Friends Collection, Thomas Hamm, introduced Friends there to the history of Friends in the West in his lecture, “California Quakers: Community, Controversy, Connection.” Later that day, Jay Marshall and Jennie Isbell helped Friends make connections with their past and consider how those connections might continue to influence contemporary Friends. The following day, ESR student, Evelyn Jadin, brought the message in meeting for worship, after which Friends gathered for a celebratory lunch and program.

ESR traveled to Evanston, Illinois for its March celebration. Under the theme of “Non-Traditional Service: Ministering Among and Beyond Friends,” three ESR alums and one current student presented workshops that demonstrated the range of ministries that are nurtured at ESR. Rob Sambosky spoke on prisoner re-entry. Julia Pantoga introduced her ministry of hospitality. Paul Buckley addressed the ministry of serving peculiar people, while Jennie Isbell spoke on the ministry of money.

In each location, ESR has felt the appreciation and support of Friends. We are grateful for the opportunity to say, “Thank you.” Together we have been able to cast our vision for the future. ESR hopes that seeds for support have been sown among those who experience ESR’s continuing relevance for ministry among Friends and the wider world.
Nowadays
ALUMNI/AE NEWS

Oh Holy Night: The Peace of 1914 has just been published by Michael C. Snow ’81. It is available from Evangel Press, Nappanee, Indiana. His first book, Christian Pacifism: Fruit of the Narrow Way, was published by Friends United Press and was featured on the cover of Quaker Life. Oh Holy Night emphasizes that even the darkest nights of human history can be enlightened by the presence of the Savior, Jesus Christ. The book flows from the letters written home by soldiers that describe the spontaneous truces that occurred along the Western Front at Christmas in 1914 when enemies became friends.

The cover and drawings were done by Michael’s ‘daughter’ in Romania. For more information see the author’s website: www.mikesnow.org.

Dennis Ginoza ’71 retired after 38 years of ministry. He served as a United Methodist pastor in Hawaii and California. ESR is remembered as a place of academic excellence, Quaker quietude and spiritual development, and deep sense of community. He and his wife Sylvia reside in Fallbrook, California.

Frances Forster Stacey ’00 recently moved to Orlando, Florida, and loves guests. Her new home meeting is Winter Park MM. She recently traveled to England for daughter Charlotte’s wedding, and to Seattle for son Adam’s college graduation. He is now in Naturopathic medical school in Portland, Oregon, and Frances would love to reconnect with Friends there. She is learning how to use Facebook, and welcomes connections there, and also on Linked in. She and husband David do seminars and consulting with entrepreneurs and small businesses, helping them to develop strong business models so they can attract investment. She gets to use her business chaplaincy skills a great deal, and marvels at the resilience and creativity of the entrepreneurial spirit. Their website is www.DavidStaceyInternational.com and they would love to connect with more Friends in the business world.

Susan Jeffers ’99 continues teaching online Bible courses for the Brethren Academy and online Biblical Greek for Bethany. She has recently also begun teaching a similar online Biblical Greek course for Knox College of the University of Toronto.

Ingrid Fabianson ’01 is now the Community Relations Director at Islands Convalescent Center in Friday Harbor, her home town. She considers it a great job with wonderful people. Ingrid continues to connect with Ann Miller on a regular basis and tries to stay in touch with her ESR friends.

Jeff Crim ’04 is now the chaplain and bereavement coordinator for Heartlite Hospice in Dalton, Georgia.

Tyler Connoley ’02 graduated from ESR a second time in December 2009, now with an M.Div. He was ordained in the United Church of Christ on October 10th, and is working as a chaplain at Gila Regional Hospice in Silver City, NM. Nancy Bowen preached the sermon at his ordination. His book, The Children Are Free, has recently been translated into Spanish and may soon be translated into Nepali. He also contributed to a devotional called Queench!, which is available from Found Pearl Press. Now that he’s finished with school (again), Tyler hopes to get back to working on a novel that has been rattling around in his head for years.

Suzanne LeVesconte ’09 is continuing her studies at The General Seminary (Episcopal) in New York City. She is working on an Anglican Diploma and a Masters of Sacred Theology, expecting to graduate in May ’11.

Beth Lawn ’03 is still living in the Philadelphia area and working part-time as a chaplain in a retirement community and almost full time as a regional staff person for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. She is the grandmother of two sweet little girls from her older son, Russ, and his Polish wife, Aleksandra, and spends as much time as possible enjoying the childhood of her granddaughters. The health of Beth’s younger son, Greg, who was injured in an accident almost eight years ago, has finally stabilized. With God’s grace (and much perseverance) Greg has secured a full-time job with the Social Security Administration and he and his wife, Becca, are hoping to buy a home soon and start to move into “normal” society. Beth has an extra bedroom and welcomes company anytime.

James Helmuth ’71 is a licensed psychologist and has had a private practice in counseling psychology in Akron, Ohio for the last 25 years. He recently published a book called Crossing The Bridge -From Mennonite Boy to Gay Man. The website for the book is: www.crossingthebridgebook.com. This memoir book tells of my positive time studying at ESR for two years.

Brent Bill ’80, (Mind the Light: Learning to See with Spiritual Eyes) and Beth Booram (Picturing the Face of the Jesus: Encountering Christ Through Art) are offering a series of workshops titled, “The Art of Faith: Awakening Your Senses to the Wonder of God.” The workshop uses a creative blend of artistic elements, contemplative exercises, and interactive activities. “The Art of Faith” helps participants learn the value of experiencing a daily round of beauty through using our five physical senses. It also reminds attendees that God created soul and body and teaches them anew to see their bodies as transmitters of spiritual wisdom. Four workshops are scheduled through March, with more in the planning stages. For information on the workshops visit theartoffaith.net or email artoffaith@brentbill.com

Victoria Burke ’00 is studying as a student at Pendle Hill this spring. She is taking an art class with a former classmate, Carol Sexton, whom she first met when they both attended Clear Creek Meeting in 1996.

“I am having a special experience here at Pendle Hill. There is a group of true seekers gathered here. My favorite part so far is the small group where we share about our lives and experiences each day. The theme is always related to the class we were in together that day. It makes for a deeper experience and getting to know each other in a meaningful way. It reminds me of my first year at ESR. And it reminds me that I am still glad and grateful that I went to ESR, graduated, and became a pastor and a chaplain. Continuing on that path toward the oneness of all with God is still most important to me.”

Judith Applegate ’82 is now working as Coordinator of Short Term Education Programs at Pendle Hill.
Jay Marshall preached at Hopewell Meeting in Dana, Indiana, and offered workshops in Iowa and North Carolina Yearly Meetings.

David Johns was one of fourteen seminary professors from across the country selected to participate in a year-long colloquium for mid-career theological educators with the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Religion and Theology. He is publishing an article in Quaker Religious Thought titled: “No Apology Required: Quaker Fragmentation and the Impossibility of a Unified Confessional Apologia.” In January David also led a student group to Latin America for the third time. He continues to strengthen connections with both the Centro de Estudios Ecueménicos and the Instituto Mexicano de Doctrina Social Cristiana. In addition, he will convene a panel at the Christian Spirituality section at the American Academy of Religion meeting in Atlanta on the theme, “Digital Spirit? Spirituality and New Social Media.”

Stephanie Crumley-Effinger, Director of Supervised Ministry, has been visiting ESR’s ministry interns this winter and spring in places both near to and far from the School of Religion’s Richmond campus.

I highly recommend Harriet Lerner’s The Dance of Connection, first published in 2001 by HarperCollins and available from Harper in paperback. Written from Lerner’s training and long experience as a therapist working from a family systems perspective, and subtitled How to Talk to Someone When You’re Mad, Hurt, Scared, Frustrated, Insulted, Betrayed, or Desperate, Lerner’s text provides readers with insights into negotiating difficult relationships and addressing unhelpful patterns that occur even in wonderful relationships.

Part of a series of books that Harriet Lerner has written over 20+ years beginning with The Dance of Anger, The Dance of Connection is an extremely useful resource. Lerner offers stories from her practice and her family life to illustrate principles for acting and speaking from one’s own values to address detrimental patterns and impasses in relationships with family, friends and co-workers. One of its particularly powerful stories is an account (pp. 229-232) of a mother whose son had cut off relationship with her. Lerner recounts how the mother became clear that even though her son was acting as if he didn’t have a mother, her values didn’t allow her to act as if she didn’t have a son. Exercising enormous patience, respecting her son’s need for distance, and accepting that he might never change his mind, she incrementally offered low-key opportunities for re-connection, and slowly barriers that separated them were diminished.

The book invites a reader, or someone using its principles to help another person, to identify one’s own faith and values for relating, and intentionally apply these “us[ing] words and actions to create an emotional climate in which people can be open and thoughtful, feel respected, appreciated, and heard, be more of their best selves, and give the relationship the best chance of succeeding” (p. 156).

—Stephanie Crumley-Effinger
Director of Supervised Ministry

Open-Hearted Ministry: Play as Key to Pastoral Leadership by Michael S. Koppel is a wonderful resource for infusing creativity into a local meeting or one’s leadership style. Using the metaphor of play, Koppel explores how we deplete our energy by focusing too much on things like institutional expectations, guarding against criticism, and spreading ourselves too thin. The book offers new ways of thinking about education, pastoral care, and leadership. Each chapter includes questions and ideas for applying to a variety of situations. Grounded in sound spirituality, an insightful understanding of how people function, and many real-life, this book is appropriate for groups or individuals who want to think about ministry in new ways.

—Jim Higginbotham
Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care
The fall and winter season was a time for spiritual and intellectual growth at ESR, not only in the classroom, but also through our campus events. October was a rich month, as we hosted both our Friend in Residence program and our annual Ministry of Writing Colloquium. During the week of October 12, ESR welcomed Alan Kolp, former ESR Dean and currently the Moll Chair in Faith & Life and Professor of Religion at Baldwin-Wallace College, as Friend in Residence.

While on campus, Alan participated in many community activities, including presenting the Common Meal message on “Contemplation: A Quaker Pastoral Academic Benedictine Oblate’s Perspective.” He also offered a workshop on the topic of “Innovating with Effectiveness, Leading with Integrity,” was the guest lecturer for an Introduction to Pastoral Care course, and provided one-on-one meetings for students. It was a joy to have Alan back on campus and provide both information and inspiration to our community.

On October 30-31, we welcomed author and poet Julia Kasdorf as the keynote speaker for our annual Ministry of Writing Colloquium. Her presentation, “Ruin, Relic and Resurrection,” was the highlight of an inspiring day on the ESR campus, well attended by alumni, friends, Earlham College students, and writers from the area and abroad.

The evening of the 30th gave attendees the opportunity to hear readings from all eight of the Colloquium presenters, including Kasdorf, ESR alumni/ae Steven Cleaver and Amy Lyles Wilson, and current ESR student Patty Willis, among others. The morning of the 31st began with Kasdorf’s thought-provoking address, which readied attendees for the day’s workshops and time to reflect on their own writing. A wide variety of workshop topics were offered, from marketing and publishing to crafting dialogue and writing narratives for children.

The day concluded with an emotional presentation of the 2010 Mullen Ministry of Writing Fellowship. The fellowship, named after the late Tom Mullen, was presented by his wife, Nancy Faus Mullen. Nancy shared a loving and fittingly humorous tribute to Tom and joined Susan Yanos in presenting the 2010 Fellowship to current ESR student Patty Willis. Patty’s fellowship project titled “Dancing Bird’s Apprentice,” will talk about the spiritual journey of Patty’s ancestor and namesake, a Mormon and midwife, and how her journey ties to Patty’s current spiritual path. The variety of presenters and their genres, as well as the mix of participants made this year’s Colloquium a rich gathering. Thanks to everyone who made the 2009 Ministry of Writing Colloquium a great success!

As with October, February brought yet another Friend in Residence to ESR, as well as one of our yearly campus events, all within the last week of the month. Elizabeth “Betsy” Meyer visited as our spring Friend in Residence, and provided guidance on discerning spiritual gifts to our students, faculty and the wider community. Betsy is a part of the spiritual formation program of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, and has memorized the Psalms as a part of her own spiritual journey. During the week, she spoke at Common Meal and shared how God has worked in her life to form her through daily living. She provided two workshops during her stay on “Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts,” and on “Transforming
meaning. At ESR, those tracks nearly always include the power of encounter in which the divine and human intersect afresh, offering new meaning, insight, or value. Encounters contribute to the depth of relationship, giving them the power to inform and illumine us for years to come.

As part of our anniversary celebration, we have asked some good friends to remind us of ways ESR has been and continues to be important for them. Alums Mary Garman and Michael Birkel demonstrate the deep affection that abides even as roles and relationships change. Phyllis Wetherell, the former “voice of ESR,” reminds us of the wide range of encounters and activities in which inspiration and meaning may occur. Once again, I’m joyfully surprised at the energy and rhythm of life that occurs at ESR, and the deep meaning that develops in the process. All who have a connection with ESR could add their own sets of footprints to the collection. Perhaps you’ll send us yours!
More snow than normal fell in the Richmond, Indiana area this winter. Every snowfall offers a moment of revelation for me because of the tracks that interrupt the smooth, frozen, white canvas that covers the ground. Footprints left by the likes of cats, rabbits, and squirrels show the flow of life that transpires, often unnoticed in areas that appear otherwise calm or deserted. In that moment of recognition, I’m joyfully surprised at the energy and rhythm of life.

A myriad of tracks covers the terrain of group life as well. Footprints parade through the histories of families, churches, and even academic institutions. At ESR, some of those are left by intentional class discussions and assignments designed to stimulate learning. Others occur in conversations on couches beneath Emily Cooper’s Peaceable Kingdom quilt, or while sharing lunch on wooden benches near the porch of the ESR Center. Those tracks often go unnoticed by most, until someone pauses long enough to reflect on their importance, and then share the story.

Various points of reminiscence this year have reminded us:

• Of the many lives touched by Clyde Johnson’s quiet, consistent ministry of hospitality at Ichthys House

• Of Tom Jones’ and Elton Trueblood’s dreams for a Quaker school of ministry prior to the successful launch of ESR

• Of the small hallway in Barclay Center crammed with students and faculty prior to Common Meal, and the worry that the large Gathering Area in the new building might diminish the sense of community

• Of how seemingly unimportant comments or actions have a greater impact than anyone anticipated or realized in the moment.

Reflection and reminiscence help to reveal the tracks where life has held deep meaning.

Continued on page 11