

gether personalized packets for refugee children.

Three spiritual support groups are meeting on a regular basis with a total of 20 persons participating. Friendship dinner groups are also in progress.

We continue movie nights at the meetinghouse on the second and fourth Friday evenings. On the first Saturday there is another movie night sponsored by Rex Nyquist of the Wider Quaker Fellowship. Then once a month there is a Boggle/Scrabble Night for a low-key evening of stimulating word play.

As is our usual custom, an Inquirers Group met for six sessions, starting in February. This group provides an opportunity for new attenders to learn more about Quakerism and our meeting.

Agnes F. Peacock, our oldest member (non-resident), age 106, died on March 22. Agnes was an active member of the meeting for many years until she moved to Indiana to be near family members.

Heartland Worship Group

By Roy C. Treadway

Friends in the Heartland Worship Group have focused our energies and prayers in the last six months supporting those in our group who have had significant surgeries. Since October, Paul Schobernd has had three surgeries, first for a broken ankle a day before he planned to have neck surgery to fix disc problems. That neck surgery took place several weeks later. Paul's recovery was slow and painful; by February, a dissolved disc required another neck surgery for Paul and another very painful recovery, which now seems to be taking place.

Roy Treadway's knee surgery in December was less dramatic but also valuable; his recovery is well along, and he is walking better than he has for over a year. Fortunately, he was on the

mend before Carolyn (Wilbur) Treadway had retinal eye surgery to remove a membrane in front of her retina. While she has recovered, her eyesight still remains poor in that eye.

We have learned much about suffering and healing and the emotional, physical, and spiritual value of supporting one another during these difficult times. Perhaps, we have also deepened in the Spirit to provide valuable witness to members and others in the world who are suffering.

We are pleased that two new attenders have joined us recently for worship. We are extremely saddened, however, that Wayne and Renae Benenson are planning to leave us after about 14 years for new uncertain challenges and adventures in New Mexico.

As the end of June approaches, we are preparing to help other Bloomington-Normal Friends greet about 1600 Friends from all over the United States and the world at the annual Friends General Conference gathering at Illinois State University. Beth Schobernd is co-coordinator of Local Arrangements while Carolyn (W.) and Roy Treadway are coordinating field trips. Our small worship group will be both challenged, and we hope blessed, by this involvement with wider Quakerism.

South Bend

Marjorie Kinsey

South Bend Friends still greet you from our temporary site, the Charles Martin Youth Center on South Bend's near West Side. After the usual innumerable meetings, we reached unity last fall on an interesting but demanding move. Only then did we learn that it depended on our future landlord obtaining a variety of variances. We still wait for those variances to move through the necessary city offices--and for the structure we would move into to be moved! By next fall we should either be in this new home or in the midst of another search.



In the meantime we tend to our ordinary and extraordinary business. At Christmas we again “adopted” the Kidco unit at the Children's Campus, a residential facility, and caroled at Portage Manor, the county home.

We learned a great deal from our experience assisting with the burial of the still born second child of our child care giver. Lena is a graduate student in psychology from Russia who has been at Notre Dame with her Russian husband for a number of years. Ever since she arrived, she has taken our children on the First Days when we do not have First Day School and is deeply loved by the children and the meeting as a whole. While Lena and her husband come from the non-religious background of the old Soviet Union, they wanted some grave side recognition of their love and some support from community which we provided as best we could. The occasion became a totally moving “giving back” which we will all remember.

We are grateful to Downer's Grove meeting for providing us with a video tape of “The Good War and Those Who Refused to Fight It.” Our local Public Television Station had refused to show it, but we were able to share it with some of the other peace churches in the area.

A potluck on March 24 welcomed Tim Walls and his family as he transferred membership from Stamford-Greenwich meeting. Most recently they had been in Louisville and at the Louisville meeting. Now they live in St. Joseph, Michigan, almost an hour from South Bend. Tim hopes to start a worship group there under the care of South Bend Monthly Meeting.

It is always helpful not to have a long drive, particularly during the Northern Indiana winter. Jordan Lee, a life long Friend who has taken a position in Warsaw, Indiana, immediately sought us out. While she will still be joining SBMM at times, we were pleased to be able to recommend the worship group initiated by SBMM members Ed and Jean Smith a few minutes away from Warsaw at North Manchester, Indiana.

Urbana-Champaign Meeting

By Terri Mittenthal and Mariellen Gilpin

Urbana-Champaign Friends continue to come to decisions with one another relatively comfortably, and there have been many decisions. We believe we actually are close to breaking ground for our new meetinghouse. We are fine-tuning plans and seeking the sense of the meeting about our priorities in the space we can almost afford. Friends have given time, energy and, most importantly, patience to this undertaking.

We continue to meet in a very pleasant room in the Illinois Disciples Foundation. Space is not the best for First Day school, but the Wee Friends do not appear daunted by their environment. Presently our Tween Friends are few and our Teen Friends have left us for the Unitarian Universalists, where there are many teenagers

and, therefore, much more fun. We hope that our new building will entice them back to us and also give the much-needed room in which these programs can grow.

Our children may be few, but they managed to raise \$60 trick or treating for UNICEF. The money went for children's relief in Afghanistan. Other outings for our smaller Friends included an Easter egg hunt, strawberry picking (which turned out to be just strawberry eating), and joining adults for Christmas caroling at the Champaign County Nursing Home. They also met one on one with their "Special Friend": a program pairing each young Friend with a not-so-young Friend to foster intergenerational activity, understanding and just plain fun.

The Fundraising Committee has worked very hard. They sent out letters, had a garage sale, and are still applying for grants. As of this writing over \$52,000 has been donated or pledged. This is a good beginning in our effort to raise \$100,000.

Peace and Service has been extremely busy. Meeting has supported the Campaign of Conscience for the Iraqi People (though several Friends stood aside), Charter school creation, petition to U.S. senators urging required waiting periods and background checks for gun purchases for private individuals at gun shows. The Meeting has cosponsored the Friday Forum Series held at the University YMCA, and has supported establishment of a citizen police board for the city of Urbana.

In response to 9-11 and the continuing war, what was planned to be a workshop for conscientious objection, similar to last year's event, expanded to a six-week series titled "Living Your Principles." A video of the PBS series on nonviolence, "A Force More Powerful," was used as a springboard for discussion. We were joined in this effort by the Channing Murray Foundation, Church of the Brethren, University YMCA, the Mennonite Church, Illinois Disci-

ples Foundation, the Independent Media Center, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and the School for Designing a Society.

The annual Peace Bazaar, held in conjunction with Community United Church of Christ, raised approximately \$3000, with the proceeds going to the Eastern Illinois Foodbank, Empty Tomb, the BOAST Academy after-school program, Oxfam, relief for Afghan children through UNICEF, and the Church World Service landmine eradication program.

Sunday morning study group finished with the parables and moved on to the *Tao te Ching*. Currently we are reading Matthew Fox's *Passion for Creation: The Earth-Honoring Spirituality of Meister Eckhart*. We will probably be moving to a weeknight so more Friends can share this experience.

Blue River Quarterly's program planning fell to us this last fall. People wanted to talk about the war, so the program became role-playing conversations with people in favor of the war. The children presented a skit on how Jesus would resolve conflicts they see in their own lives.

The spiritual discernment group continues to meet nearly monthly. They are only four in number now but hope to start new groups eventually.

Mariellen Gilpin continues to be on the editorial committee of *What Canst Thou Say?* – a small newsletter on Quakers, mysticism and contemplative living. Her issue's theme for last August was "Forgiveness." This August she takes a look at "God's Marvelous Workarounds."

We welcome new members Ian Hanson and Terri Mittenthal, and new attenders Cynthia, Kory and Conner Ching, and Jim Watkins.

Other Reports:

AFSC Appoints New Central Region Director

By Dawn Rubbert

Many of you were fond of Eloise Cranke who retired as Director of the AFSC Central Region the end of December. She often attended all or most of Illinois Yearly Meeting. Following a diligent, spirit led search, in which I took part, a new director began work officially on April 15. The search process was the most challenging I have participated in to date. We spent much time seeking clarity. When it came it was an epiphany shared by all.

Daniel Pearson, his wife and two small children, agreed to move to Des Moines from Kansas City to accept the position. He and his family were very active in the life of Penn Valley Friends Meeting. Dan clerked the Peace Committee and served in countless ways. I have it on good authority that the couple was considered a treasure by Kansas City Friends. Dan had worked for four years as Director of Program Administration for Children International.

Dan has been among Friends for many years. He attended a meeting in Cambridge while studying at Cambridge University. When working on his Masters degree in International Studies at the University of Denver he attended Mountain View Friends Meeting. His concentration was in human rights. While in Kansas City Dan has been working on another Masters degree in Public Administration. He speaks and reads fluent Spanish and has lived, worked and/or studied in Guayaquil, Ecuador, and Santiago, Chile. He worked on a kibbutz in Haifa, Israel and has experience with 14 additional countries in Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe.

Dan will be at the FGC Gathering this summer and expects to attend part of IYM this summer. Please seek him out and make him welcome.

ACFIA (Associated Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs)

By Grayce (Haworth) Mesner

For over 100 years, the Associated Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs has shared the Christian faith, principles and teachings with Native American communities. It began in 1869, when a group of Friends met with President-elect Ulysses S. Grant and his soon-to-be-named head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Ely Parker.

Friends were concerned about Native Americans who had been removed from their native lands and driven to the West. Grant was aware that many of the Indian agents, as they were called, were political appointees and their honesty was questionable

Grant asked Friends to suggest names of persons who would serve as agents because of their reputation for honesty and peacefulness. In June 1869, the ACFIA organized at Damascus, OH. The Committee supplied teachers, clerks and doctors at Native American centers.

Eventually the ACFIA stopped working with the U.S. government but continued as an organization to assist Native Americans. With the rapid changes in Oklahoma, the Friends consolidated their work into eight areas: The Seneca Council House in northeastern Oklahoma, Wyandotte about 14 miles from Council House, Hominy with the Osages, the Kickapoo Friends Center near McLoud, Otoe Mission (closed in 1927), Iowa Mission (closed in 1922), Shawnee Mission (closed in 1923), and Big Jim Mission (closed in 1939). The ACFIA has since opened a center in Alabama and another in Iowa. (The Mowa Choctaw Center, McIntosh, AL and Mesquakie Friends Center, near Tama, IA.)

The centers have attracted work teams from across the country. More than 100 years later, the ACFIA continues to be an advocate for Na-

tive Americans.

The MOWA Choctaw Center appreciates receiving the Box Tops for Education and Campbell's Soup Labels. They send thanks to those who help with the Adopt-a-Student program. Tuition is \$70/month for elementary students and \$35/month for preschool. Their newest needs-list includes children and adult clothing (all sizes), clothes for school uniforms (khaki bottoms and white or dark green tops), new underwear and socks, shoes in good condition, household items, small appliances, towels and wash cloths, sheets and pillow cases, spiral notebooks, toothbrushes and covers, head lice shampoo, crayons, markers, and colored pencils. Their address is P.O. Box 449 McIntosh, AL 36553. <mcfriendsa@aol.com> 251-829-6507

Friends World Committee for Consultation Report

By David Finke

Impressive developments to report from the annual meeting in Philadelphia of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, section of the Americas, held the weekend of St. Patrick's Day.

Our recent IYM presiding clerk Elizabeth Meritic was confirmed to be Clerk for the Section for this next period. She will convene at least 3 meetings of the Executive Committee before the next annual meeting (Houston, TX), and will bring her skills as recent Treasurer of the section to advisory work with the Finance and Development committees.

Besides contributing a Clerk, we are represented to FWCC by Nancy Wallace, present for her first meeting and serving on the Visitation Planning committee; David Finke, co-opted to clerk the Naming committee and co-clerk of the new Youth committee; and Jeannette Baker, working on the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage.

Mary Lord, known to us by recent visits to IYM as a staff member of FCNL and as clerk of Quaker Volunteer Service and Witness, gave a very moving keynote address in the historic 15th St. meetinghouse. (See article by Newton Garver, representative from NY Yearly Meeting for summary of Mary Lord's address.) (The address in full is available at: <http://www.quaker.org/fwcc/Americas/MaryLord.html>)

The convergence of the current military/political situation, the challenge of Mary Lord's address, and the decision to lay down participation in a dormant "New Call to Peacemaking" led an ad hoc group to bring a proposal which was eagerly accepted, with commitment of many Friends, both weighty and new, to work on its implementation. The recommendation as approved reads:

"FWCC Section of the Americas urges Friends churches and meetings worldwide to pray and listen deeply to God's leadings for our response to the growing dangers of global war and terrorism, and reach out to faith communities in our own area. FWCC Section of the Americas will call a special conference as soon as possible for Friends' response to the growing dangers of war and terrorism. Friends in the Section are encouraged to consult and collaborate with traditional peace churches and peace branches of other faiths about common action. We empower the working group to act on behalf of the Section."

Contact person for the upcoming conference will be Rolene Otero (Roteroto2000@aol.com), who welcomes other Friends' help in organizing.

In my view, one of the most impressive contributions to looking at Friends and their Peace Testimony came from Latin American Friends, growing out of their worship. They bring us much greater knowledge of what it is to work in atmospheres of terror and repression, while maintaining a vibrant, life-giving faith.

Spanish-Speaking Worship Group on the Peace Testimony

translated by Sara Palmer, 3/2002

We, Friends from different traditions, met to consider the four queries on the meaning of the Peace Testimony. Our answers can be summarized in the following points:

- The Peace Testimony is more important than ever today because of desires for vengeance at the world level.
- We should envision justice and peace as twin sisters; one depends on the other. Sometimes it is important to stand against the destructive policies of our governments.
- If we are peacemakers we should act that way, serving as a force for reason in areas of conflict.
- AVP [Alternatives to Violence Project] workshops are an important aid.
- As Friends, we should work to prevent violence. By reading and applying the Bible's teachings, we help bring up new and current generations in the knowledge of God and God's will. We should work more on preaching the gospel and on educating our children. We are being peacemakers when we teach the fulfilling of God's commandments. Jesus' teachings are our goal.
- Peace is respect for the rights of the other (Benito Juarez).
- There were comments in favor of visiting countries called "enemies" of the United States.
- We should raise a united, unanimous voice against war; speak truth to power.
- There was sharing about nonviolence movements in monthly and yearly meetings, such as AVP, Community of Allies and others, that we should offer to support and carry forward.
- [We should] look for the seed of war in our possessions.
- We can also do little things with great love.

The group's sense is summed up in Matthew 5:44: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you."

Mary Lord Challenges and Inspires at FWCC

By Newton Garver, representative from NY Yearly Meeting

The theme for this year was "The Meaning of the Peace Testimony for Quakers Today" and the keynote speaker was Mary Lord. Both the theme and the speaker were chosen well before the events of September, but Mary did not finish preparing her remarks until the night before she delivered them. Her talk was breath-taking. She began by telling about her difficulty in writing, about missing the deadline set by FWCC (March 1, so that translators might prepare for the simultaneous translation), and about still being stuck on Tuesday, March 12. It then came to her that perhaps she had not understood what message she was to deliver. So she stopped trying to write and prayed for guidance about what her message should be. Her prayers were answered and she was then able to write. At this

point in her talk she revealed the gist of the message.

The message Mary Lord brought is that the US government has brought us to the initial stages of a prolonged global war. She cited not only the repeated statements of President Bush and his cabinet members that Afghanistan is only the beginning, the increasing unilateralism that casts off the restraint of Europeans, the rejection of international laws and treaties, the new tactical nuclear weapons policy, the near certainty of an early attack on Iraq, the new interpretation of patriotism, the shift in budget priorities, the sharp curtailing of domestic liberties, and others things. She marshaled these facts with stunning effect, concluding from them that they amount to a religion, one that worships force and violence and the instruments of force and violence, and one that is wedded to politics through the somewhat arbitrary identification of certain persons and groups as evil, as agents of Satan. Like

any religion it has its myths, the central one of which is that nonviolent alternatives never work. She reminded us of the numerous popular images, such as those of Superman and of Gary Cooper in "High Noon," which reinforce this myth that force and violence are the only effective means for dealing with horror and intransigence and other evils. Religious fervor reinforced by this myth seems to grip the nation and to support the war policies of the Administration. So we should recognize the current state of affairs as the brink of a long crusade.

Mary did not predict the future. She did not say that we would necessarily go over the brink. She said that the prospective global war can still be stopped and Friends should work to stop it, but we should also be prepared to suffer through decades of war. Although the war policy has other weaknesses (such as its costs and its unilateralism), the one on which Quakers might best concentrate is the falsity of its central myth. Mary catalogued successes of nonviolent action, reminding us not only of Gandhi and King but also of Solidarity, of the Berlin Wall, of Nelson Mandela in South Africa, of Desmond Tutu and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and other instances. The myth of the necessity for force and violence can be sustained only by denying or obscuring these historical facts, and thereby denying the underlying truths about human beings that are the foundation of our Quaker faith.

Mary Lord closed by urging us to put on the armor of God. At the business session the next morning the agenda was augmented by expressions of concern that arose out of the profound impact that Mary's message had made, and an ad hoc working group was formed and instructed to report to a later business session. The final business session heard their report and empowered the working group to convene a conference as soon as possible for the purpose of

formulating and articulating Friends response to global war and terrorism, and to work with other peace churches on common actions. I found this an inspiring instance of the Spirit moving among Friends.

For a copy of Mary Lord's address, transmitted electronically, contact the FWCC SoA office at Americas@FWCC.quaker.org or go to <http://www.quaker.org/fwcc/Americas/MaryLord.html>

Finance Committee News

By Cathy Garra,

The backbone of the Illinois Yearly Meeting budget is the annual contributions from its Monthly Meetings. We also welcome gifts of all sizes from individual Friends and families to our general annual budget or to specific projects

...structural repairs are needed immediately on our 125-year old meetinghouse ...
— Finance

or funds established by IYM. This generosity has enabled many special projects to move forward over the years. Gifts can be made through donations of cash (checks), stocks, bonds or mutual funds. Our Treasurer

receives the checks and can help with the arrangements for gifts of securities.

Due to the unforeseen structural repairs needed immediately on our 125-year old meetinghouse contributions to restore the health of our Site Fund are needed at this time (see Site Envisioning article). We have the money in hand to do the anticipated repairs, but that will deplete most of the Site Fund, potentially affecting our routine upkeep of the site. Please consider an additional gift to the IYM Site Fund this spring or summer.

Not only is the meetinghouse beloved to us, but it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its wider significance. This status may enable us to compete in the future for State grants for upkeep projects. Such grant funding