

# *Among Friends*

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## **Picture a peace house on the prairie....**

- a retreat that would offer nurture and sustenance to peacemakers....
- a place to which we could invite fellow peacemakers to explore new paths to peace....
- a place that also would honor the land from which we came ....
- a place where we would study how to better live in peace and harmony ....

— IYM Site Envisioning Committee

**Among Friends** provides a forum about activities within the various meetings and worship groups which make up Illinois Yearly Meeting. It also provides pertinent information provided by Quaker organizations and by interested readers of our publication. Readers are reminded that signed articles and letters express the views of the writers, and not official positions of Illinois Yearly Meeting.

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**Please read:** All submissions for the Spring Issue 2004 need to be in the hands of the editor NO LATER THAN April 20, 2004. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!

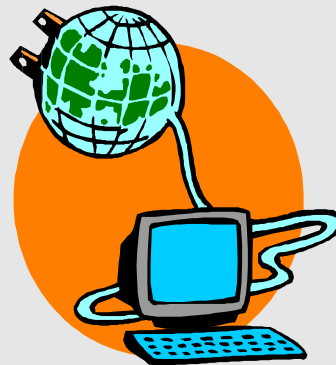
Informal articles about your meeting or worship group (NOT States of Society Reports), plus poetry, black ink artwork, and photos are encouraged and received with appreciation.

**From the Editor:**

In this issue the Site Envisioning Committee is presenting a bold challenge to us as we ponder the future.

As we write for *Among Friends*, let us remember that not all readers understand all of the acronyms the we have a tendency to use. Please make an effort to write out what those letters stand for.

Pray for peace and may we continue to grow,  
Cindy Reynolds



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## Note from the Clerk:

By Maurine Pyle, IYM Clerk



### Wild Geese Flying

In the early morning light as I walk to catch my train, I often hear overhead the rush of wings and honking calls of the wild geese. They lift my eyes to the sky and call attention to the sun's rising glory.

Last winter at IYM's leadership retreat Janice Domanik, our retreat leader, reminded us that Quaker leadership resembles the V formation of the wild geese. While the clerk is the most visible leader, acting as the "lead goose" so to speak, she is being upheld by the wing action of the followers, who are the committee clerks, administrative coordinators and volunteers. We all flap as one.

After a while the "lead goose" falls back exhausted and is replaced by the next goose in the V. So it is that Margaret Katranides, who has served as our able IYM clerk, is reversing roles with me and now is the assistant clerk. We thank her for her enlightened leadership and the strength of her faith to lead us to where we are now.

Together we form an effective team flying into the shining Light.

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## Illinois Yearly News & Reports:

### Vision of Future of the Yearly Meeting House

By IYM Site Envisioning Committee

This has been a particularly troubling time for Quakers and other peace communities who have struggled to give voice to the peace witness in a world swept along by fear, hate and revenge. We've asked: How can we be heard? How can we work in a deeper way for peace, a way that

will transform us as individuals and as a society? These questions were very much with us at Illinois Yearly Meeting this summer. And now, looking back, it seems we were offered answers.

As those at IYM will recall, two storms blew through, both in the late afternoon, one on Friday, the other on Saturday, storms that swept across the Illinois prairie with fierce winds, rain and lightning. They were at once frightening, invigorating and cleansing.

Other winds had been blowing through IYM much of that week, gentler breezes, yet strong and steady, not so fierce and frightening as the storms, but no less invigorating. They gave us hope and expanded our horizons as peacemakers. These breezes came in the form of speakers and workshop leaders who offered us visions of peacemaking and witnessing that resonated with us and fed our desire to work for peace in a deep, meaningful way.

There was another breeze we welcomed — plans presented by the Site Envisioning Committee for the future of our IYM home. Amid the buzz over the PowerPoint presentation and schematics, the committee was encouraged to remain rooted in the Spirit as we moved forward, honing the details of hiring an architect and developing a capital campaign. We were asked to stay open to a vision upon which we will build our future IYM home.

Looking back on this summer, it seems the Spirit was already presenting us with a vision — a vision that encompasses the future of the Yearly Meeting House and site and our desire to work for peace in a deep, ongoing way that will lead to a more peaceful society. As we sought a path to peace, one was pointed out to us. And it led home.

Picture a peace house on the prairie. A place of retreat that would offer nurture and sustenance to peacemakers. A place to which we could invite fellow peacemakers to help us as we seek

and explore new paths to peace, a place where we, in turn, could show others these paths to peace.

A place that also would acknowledge and honor the land from which we came and the space to which we return time and again for spiritual sustenance, a place where we would study how to better live in peace and harmony with this land and space.

This vision deepens our sense of place and our sense of Illinois Quaker history that began with Clear Creek Meeting in the 1830s. It also extends this sense forward, with a place that will draw and inspire younger Quakers and their fellow peacemakers for generations to come.

It is a powerful and inspiring vision. Of course, there are questions to be answered and details to be worked out. Some of these we have already begun to ponder. None, as far as we can see, are insurmountable. It is also likely this vision will grow and change in focus over time.

This vision fills us with hope and promise. We believe it is an answer to the questions we have been asking: What future do we want for our IYM home and how can we become more effective peacemakers? We humbly offer it to Illinois Yearly Meeting with the deep sense that it was offered by the Spirit with whom we seek to walk.

## A Meeting Vision

By Dawn Amos

Last year, sitting on the IYM meetinghouse lawn on a hot day at a Site Envisioning workshop, it struck me that if the McNabb site obtained air conditioning, it might cut us off from 125 years of sweating summer spiritual labor. I

fully recognize that the lack of air conditioning is just one of several factors that make the summer gathering inaccessible to many Friends, and I would love to see these friends welcomed by caring site improvements.

Yet this vision of repeated summer labor has stayed with me. I came to view each year as a turn on a spiral, building a very long “Slinky” coil, so long that it came to resemble a hose. A line along the length of the hose, connecting points on each turn of the spiral, represents the continuity of the return to each summer’s spiritual labor.

*“Picture a peace house on the prairie. A place of retreat that would offer nurture and sustenance to peacemakers.” — Vision*

This summer I sat in the IYM business session in which the Site Envisioning and Building report was considered. I was quite familiar with the work of this committee and had long since caught the enthusiasm for the potential we could achieve at the McNabb site. The meeting labored over this report. Some of the questions and concerns came from an incomplete familiarity with the committee’s work. Some concerns, I knew, could result in using the entire IYM meeting body to recapitulate the labor of the committee over the prior year or two. I began to feel dismayed that the meeting was not recognizing the divine guidance that the committee had sought and brought forth – or so it seemed to me, because I felt such faith in their work.

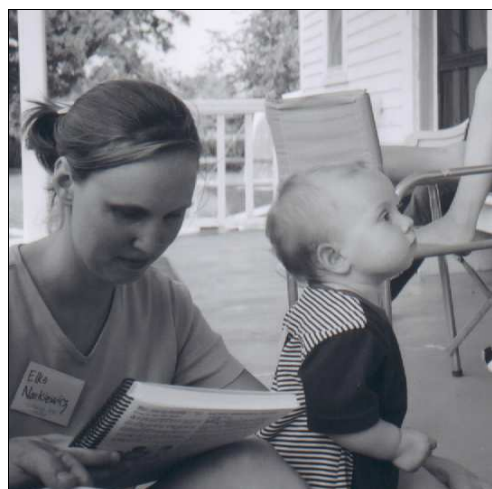
I began visualizing this business meeting, or a subset of those in attendance, at work in other places: at Continuing Committee, at Quarterly gatherings, and at committee meetings and workshops during the academic year. The same sense of spirit was evoked, but in my vision, connected to each group was that long coil of yearly historical work, and the coil snaked away back to the McNabb property. It was as if each distant gathering still had a grounding on Quaker Lane. It suddenly struck me that the coil was like an umbilical cord.

Things began falling into place very quickly. I suddenly perceived the proposed site plan as a paradigm shift. What do I mean by that? Some of you may remember that in 1979, home décor still included appliances in gold and avocado, with dials and large mechanical pushbuttons; autumn colored shag carpets, and wall hangings depicting bright red mushrooms. In or near 1980 the movie *Star Wars* came out. Things in that galaxy far, far away looked very different. The enemy troopers wore armor that appeared to be smooth white plastic with gentle curves rather than hard edges. There was a lot of sleek, shiny black and white in that film. I remember how amused I was when only a few months later, appliances and many other utility items appeared with that *Star Wars* design. It was as if the culture suddenly decided that the Space Age was no longer in the distant future; it had arrived and it was time to live it. The vision of the film transformed our expectations and our sense of technological maturity.

The report of the Site Envisioning and Building committee struck me as a similar shift in outlook and self-image. Whether or not we might miss our present simple, austere functional, rather rustic site amenities, this report was presenting a dramatically new vision of ourselves in the not too distant future. The report embodied a concept. I was given the word “annunciation.” For the Yearly Meeting to accept and approve the report was to accept conception. And as for any mother, it is God’s work to determine when and how to grow each feature of the infant. The spine, brain, face and limbs appear by the grace of God. The mother need only nurture herself, and God works the rest of the miracle. To accept a conception on these terms is itself something of a leap of faith. The Site Envisioning and Building committee has labored and produced for us a concept. IYM is pregnant with a vision. This vision will require much care and feeding, but when it comes to fruition, we will have a gathering place that will nurture our spiritual work in turn after turn of the years, living out the purpose for which

the Meetinghouse itself was originally conceived.

Toward the end of the business session, our clerk asked us to take a few minutes and listen to the Spirit. What I heard immediately amid our silence was the happy prattle of children. I thought of the teens’ “dorm” tent that had been blown down in the severe thunderstorm of the prior afternoon. I remembered Chuck Fager’s advice that we “secure our bases,” that we not lose sight of the forest for the trees, and that we teach Quaker history and practice to our children. I knew at that moment that the message of their happy sounds was that this site vision is for them – and I was overwhelmed with gratitude.



## IYM 2004 Building Peaceful Communities

By Dawn Rubbert

Blue River Quarter reached clearness on the above theme for next year. Confirmed speakers include: Janet Means from Lake Forest as the Plummer Lecturer; Mary Lord from Adelphi Meeting in Maryland and currently Director of AFSC’s Peacebuilding Unit will give the keynote lecture; and, on Saturday night, Christopher Sammond from Madison in Wisconsin will speak. We are still communicating with potential speakers for Thursday evening.

Janet Means was accepted into membership by the Lake Forest in 1973. She is also a sojourning member of Yarmouth Preparative Meeting which is part of Sandwich Monthly Meeting, New England Yearly. Active in Lake Forest Meeting for many years, initially Janet taught first day school. Then began service on committees, and eventually as clerk. Janet was the convener of IYM Ministry and Advancement for several years. As a licensed clinical social worker Janet has primarily worked with people who have HIV or AIDS and their significant others. Janet says she has been privileged to join with other Friends on their spiritual journeys over many years. She has three grown children and one granddaughter.

Mary Lord has developed and led a young adult program for Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) and was released by Baltimore Yearly Meeting to work on Quaker volunteer service, Friends Peace Teams and other projects. Mary worked until recently for FCNL starting up a new program on the peaceful prevention of armed conflict. She had been doing talks on the spiritual basis of our peace testimony and on the opportunities presented by the emerging field of conflict prevention. After September 11, 2001, Mary agreed to go to Philadelphia, on loan from FCNL to work as the Coordinator of the No More Victims Campaign, AFSC's response to September 11th and the emerging war. Next she became Interim Director of AFSC's Peace Building Unit, and currently is the Director of that same unit. The text of her powerful speech "Can Love Really Overcome Violence and Hate? Reflections on Friends Peace Testimony" can be found on the FCNL website. It was delivered to FWCC Section of the Americas on March 15, 2002

Prior to her work among Friends, Mary was founder and served for twelve years as executive director of ACCESS, a non-profit publisher, information service, and comprehensive database on international affairs based in Washington, DC. Previously, she was for six years the

Deputy Director of Physicians for Social Responsibility. Earlier, Mary was a senior policy analyst with the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare. She has also been a consultant to a number of public and private organizations, and has written on the changing role of nongovernmental organizations in international affairs.

Christopher Sammond has been active in Friends for almost 20 years. Most of his work with Friends has centered around building spiritual community. For the past four years he has served on FGC's Committee for Ministry on Racism, where he helped to discern the guiding framework for eliminating racism among FGC Friends.

This past summer he gave a plenary address at the FGC Gathering entitled "Radical Community as Active Peacemaking," which focused on the interrelationship between faithfulness, community, and proactive peacemaking in the world. He was co-clerk of the '98 FGC Gathering in River Falls, Wisconsin and he is currently serving as clerk of Northern Yearly Meeting.

Christopher has a passionate commitment to the reality of the presence of the Living God, and our capacity to discern how to work in harmony with and in obedience to that Presence. This passion animates his search for better and more faithful ways for communities and organizations to work in a more Spirit-led fashion.

**WORKSHOPS ARE BEING SOUGHT.** If you are interested in presenting a workshop related to the theme, "Creating Communities of Peace," or know someone you think would be appropriate, a proposal form is available in this issue of *Among Friends*, on the ILYM website or you can request one from Scott Searles at [searless@yahoo.com](mailto:searless@yahoo.com), 7709 West Chesley, Columbia, Missouri 65202. Completed proposals should be sent to Scott by March 31, 2004. The workshop committee will review all applications and seek clearness regarding their appropriateness.

**WORKSHOP PRESENTER INFORMATION FORM**  
**2004 Theme: Building Communities of Peace**

**Title of Workshop:**

**Name of Workshop Leader (and co-presenters if applicable):**

**Monthly Meeting of Workshop Leader:**

**Contact Information (Address, phone, email):**

**Brief Description of Workshop:**

**Workshop time:** (please circle)

2:30 – 3:45          or          1:30 – 3:45 with worship sharing included:  
\_\_\_\_\_ the query will be related to workshop content  
\_\_\_\_\_ the query will be one from the IYM theme  
approximate time allotted to worship sharing: \_\_\_\_\_ minutes

**Day(s) workshop will be presented:** (please circle)    Thursday          Friday          Saturday

If the workshop is for more than one day, will it be a **continuous** workshop with participants expected to attend all sessions?

Are participants free to join in on day 2 or 3 if they did not attend day 1?

Are participants free to attend other workshops on other days?

Will **identical sessions** be offered on more than one day?

**Qualifications for attending:**

Only women? Only men? Do attenders need to bring anything with them? Is there a limit on the number of participants? Etc.

**Equipment Needs:**

Are tables, TV/VCR, slide projector, chalkboard, or any other equipment needed for this workshop?

Contact for more information and return this form as soon as possible to: (Deadline March 31, 2004)

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