

Bicycle Ride Planned for Illinois Yearly Sessions

By Roy C. Treadway



The Illinois Year Meeting Environmental Concerns Committee is making plans for a bicycle ride at Illinois Yearly Meeting on one of the after-
noons, probably

Friday or Saturday. We envision bicyclists leaving from the Meetinghouse and taking back country roads to such places as the Putnam County Nature Preserve and possibly wetlands along the Illinois River; some may want to stop for ice cream along the way. We expect the trip to take about three hours for modest bikers, covering 10 to 30 miles, depending on interest and ability. We will provide minimal sag wagon support to pick up bikers who are having problems, but (unless there are volunteers) no repair of bicycles or food. Each person riding in the bicycle ride will need to wear a helmet and supply her or his own bicycle and equipment.

The purpose of this trip is to raise awareness of the joy and challenge of biking as an alternative to the automobile as a means of transportation, to explore our natural environment and to encourage its preservation. We believe these activities are valuable and crucial ways to "build peaceful communities."

Nancy Halliday and Roy Treadway of the Environmental Concerns Committee are planning this event for Yearly Meeting. We would like to find out who might be interested in such a bicycle ride at Yearly Meeting and who would be willing to help with planning it or assisting with it at Yearly Meeting time. Thus, contact Roy Treadway, 309-454-1329, treadway@ilstu.edu, or 712 N. School St.,

Normal, IL 61761-1621 if you are interested in any of the following:

- 1) in riding in the bicycle ride at Yearly Meeting;
- 2) helping with the bicycle ride (sag van, checking bicyclists in and out, repair of bicycles, and so forth) ;
- 3) planning the bicycle ride.

Plant the Prairie at IYM Meetinghouse

Friends gathered on October 26, 2003, to hand sow prairie seed following Meeting for Worship at Illinois Yearly meetinghouse.

Recently, the IYM Maintenance and Planning Committee recommended to seed part of the recently acquired acre of land west of the Meetinghouse with a prairie planting. This planting will have about 40 forbs, a couple native shrubs and 10 native grasses.

All plant species were selected based on guidance from several local native plant experts. Any of the selected species could have been on the property when this land was first settled. Seed were selected from as localized seed source as possible.



1884 Experience at IYM

I thought Friends might be interested in the following passage from the *Autobiography of John J. Cornell*, published in 1906. Cornell was one of the most prominent Hicksite ministers of the late 19th century. In this passage, he describes his experience engaging in the old-time Friends practice of “dealing with states” at IYM about 1884. *Peter Lasersohn*

“While attending Illinois Yearly Meeting we held a meeting at the meetinghouse on Second day evening for young people — in place of a parlor meeting, as it was thought there was no parlor large enough to hold those who would come. As we started for the meeting I had a peculiar experience. I suddenly lost all power to think upon any subject. Nothing the eye rested on outwardly seemed to convey any impression to the brain. The mental activity appeared to have come to a stand-still, the mind a blank. It is almost impossible to convey the feeling endured to another. It was not suffering, but an entire stripping, and in this state we arrived at the meeting-house. While I was in this condition I took my seat and the Friend who sat beside me suggested that the young people be invited to take the front seats, which I mechanically did. Then he arose and spoke a little while, but it made no impression on me whether it was appropriate or not. I heard it mechanically and that was all. The first conscious impression was, get up, go down on that lower step near to the young people, and tell them why the parlor meeting was called there, which I did, but said, I have nothing yet for you. After standing a few minutes, though it seemed a good while to me, I had a sight of a state and the command was given to describe it, and then came another and another, until I stood there an hour and a half, speaking as rapidly as I could and be understood, until I believe every spiritual condition present had been described and appropriate counsel given, and when I closed there was scarcely any dry eyes in the room. I never in all my experience saw a congregation so melted. Many came to me in the course of the Yearly Meeting afterwards and said they would never forget that meeting, they had been comforted and encouraged as they never had been before.”

Administrative Coordinator Oversight Committee

By Dawn Rubbert

The following report was not given orally during Illinois Yearly Meeting (IYM) sessions. We wanted IYM Friends to be aware of the decisions made by this committee.

These are the actions about which we reached clarity. When “little things” come up and the Administrative Coordinator (AC) desires guidance the Administrative Coordinator Oversight Committee (ACOC) clerk should be contacted for input and a decision made together. The ACOC clerk will decide if further consultation is advisable.

Appropriate announcements will continue to be sent out via email as they are received. NOTE: By appropriate we mean this to include births, marriages, severe illnesses, deaths, change of address, upcoming monthly meeting events to which IYM Friends are invited, and major events.

To meet our commitment to keep Friends who do not use email in the information loop we agreed that Sharon would send, via regular post, a monthly “announcement digest,” a compilation of the email announcements. The monthly digest will be sent only to IYM Friends listed in the IYM Directory and having no email (or choosing not to receive email). One copy will also be sent to each monthly meeting. The first edition will request that Friends notify the AC if they wish to continue receiving the monthly di-

gest.

We discussed what kind of emails should be forwarded to the IYM email list by the AC. It was agreed that news regarding IYM F/friends, actions/announcements from IYM monthly meetings and IYM Committee related messages would be forwarded.

IYM Voices World Concerns

By Bill Howenstine, David Finke, and Ann Eckert at the direction of IYM.

(Approved 8/3/03)

Illinois Yearly Meeting has been asked if there are concerns to forward to the upcoming Triennial of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), for consideration and mutual endeavor by the wider body of Friends. During our annual sessions in 2003 we took an extended time of open worship to reflect on what central issues, arising from the life of our meeting, we would wish to emphasize. The following remarks are distilled from spoken ministry, were united with by the body, and we urge that they be conveyed by our representatives:

1. Because we are a part of FWCC, we were able to have participants in the Section of Americas' recent "Conference on Quakers' Responses to the Growing Danger of Global War and Terrorism" (the "Guilford Peace Conference" last January). Reflecting how one of our Young Friends — a delegate from this Yearly Meeting—responded to the "witness of God" in that gathering, we see three important strands coming together that are dear to the life of Illinois Yearly Meeting, and which we commend to Friends everywhere. At that conference, this young man who grew up among us heard of the massive suffering from genocidal strife in the Great Lakes region of Africa, and he also learned of Quakers' cooperative efforts involving Burundi Friends and the Alternatives to Violence project. God led this young man to seek the clearness and sup-

port of his Monthly Meeting to participate in a work camp project for rebuilding and reconciliation. We are inspired by the convergence of (1) a concern to learn more about and to express our historic Peace Testimony, (2) the availability of creative Spirit-led Quaker projects for hands-on volunteer service to alleviate suffering, and (3) the valuable resource of energetic young people being nurtured in our midst and growing into leadership for our Religious Society.

2. Illinois Yearly Meeting speaks from the land of prairies, where fires set by Native Americans and lightning burned back the forests, and permitted the deep roots of the prairie vegetation, to form the rich soil which is now a breadbasket of the world. The corn and soybeans which surround our historic meetinghouse and stretch to the horizon remind us of our wealth in a world of resource inequity. Our yearly meeting has had a growing concern for a right relationship with all of God's creation. We have established an Environmental Concerns Committee and instituted a recycling program. On our grounds we are planting native plant species. In our planning of a new building and renovation of the old, we are trying to be environmentally sensitive, utilizing recycled materials and energy-efficient construction. We have approved a minute on population and the environment. We have expressed our concern in the North American "Friends Committee on Unity with Nature" (FCUN) through 5 members serving on the FCUN steering committee. One of our members is treasurer of Right Sharing of World Resources.

We provide this background to underscore our belief that many of the world's problems—war and poverty especially—find roots in the over consumption of the world's resources by our growing population, and the tremendous disparity in access to these

resources among the world's people. As it fights for still greater shares of the world's fossil fuels, our larger society seems unmindful of the impact of environmental stresses, such as global warming, on all people—indeed all life on the planet. This growing concern has fed our long-standing Quaker concern for peace, a central focus for our yearly meeting.

We have shared these concerns with the hope that the FWCC Triennial will address these issues:

- the unsustainable growth in use of our natural resources by an unsustainable growth in the world's population.—the degradation of God's creation brought about by this resource consumption
 - the growing inequity in distribution of the world's wealth.
 - the need for increased devotion to the peace testimony of the religious society of Friends.
3. During the past year as the United States has pursued a course of war, many Friends in this country have also felt attacked, angered, fearful, and isolated; we want Friends and other people of the Earth to know of this. Friends have also shown a continuing concern about racism. These two issues seem to unite in a desire of Friends to take responsibility for the behavior of our larger society. How can we find our way into increasing international community in such a way as to help our country transform its arrogance and violence? Can Friends help us know that we are not alone in this, and that our dissident voices in this country are heard and embraced by the world's peo-

ples?

4. Our incoming clerk spoke of a clear vision that came to her as she sojourned and worshipped where Margaret Fell and George Fox had stood. She became even more aware of the Christian roots of Quakerism. And even without an insistence that all become Christians, she deeply felt that when we are ignorant of our roots, it harms us: it impedes our relationship with other (non-Quaker) Christians, and it prevents us from hearing genuine ministry from some in our own Meetings. We were urged to meet the fear that some of us have from the abuses in some versions of Christianity, and let God overcome this in us.
5. We ask the prayers of Friends as we resist and try to change policies of our government. And we are aware that for our efforts to be well-grounded and rightly-ordered, our social witness must grow out of the witness of God in our hearts, and that Presence in our gathered Meetings.

