

help build stable and sustainable housing for Lakota families following devastating tornadoes



in 1998, which damaged or destroyed hundreds of homes in the Oglala Community. The only houses left standing in the wake of these tornadoes were log cabins. In the past 150 years since the Lakota have been forced to live on the reservation and alter their nomadic lifestyle, it has been the observation of the Oglala elders that log cabins provide the most stable and sustainable housing in the harsh weather of the high plains. Gerald One Feather shares this log home with his wife, handicapped son, and several other children and grandchildren. As a tribal elder, he also uses his home as a meeting place. Project Lakota provided much financial and volunteer support to bring this home from a dream to reality.

Linda Bull Bear's Quilts

Linda Bull Bear's Indian heritage goes back to the time when her grandfather visited Wash-



ington D.C. to plead for public schools on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Little Wound School in Kyle was named after him. Today Linda lives with her husband, Richard Broken Nose, and some of their children and grandchildren in this trailer in Oglala. Linda sews these beautiful quilt tops using designs created by her middle school daughter. Then Linda and another Lakota woman hand quilt the tops and bind the edges to finish the quilts. Linda learned to hand-quilt from her mother. We would like to encourage meetings to use one of these unique quilts to hold a quilt auction, or other fundraiser for Project Lakota and the log cabins.

Richard Broken Nose's Trailer

Richard Broken Nose is one of the few remaining traditional medicine men in the Oglala Lakota Community. The tiospaye housing co-op had chosen him and his family to receive the next log cabin, which will replace this trailer.



In addition to a large extended family, Richard also provides hospitality and housing to those who visit him for his healing arts from as far away as Canada. Unlike standard American doctors, traditional medicine men and women do not accept money for their services because they do not consider it spiritual to do so. Healing comes from the heart and spirit. The community and the world at large traditionally meet the needs of the healer. We respect Richard Broken Nose and his medicine man skills very much. His wisdom has been invaluable to Project Lakota and we would like to help the Oglala Community provide him and his family with a warm, safe home.

Reflections about Pine Ridge

By Greg Woods, Columbia Meeting

Each summer when I travel around the Pine Ridge Reservation I see a little more economic progress, a new house here or a new taco stand there. These would be very small details in most other areas of the country. Something that I wouldn't even notice. But on Pine Ridge these small details give me (and everybody else) a little more hope that things are finally changing for Pine Ridge. This summer as I passed by the Oglala Lakota College near the town of Kyle, I saw construction had begun on a new motel/restaurant/gift shop. When the construction is finished it will be the only (and quite possibly the first) motel on the reservation. Then just a little ways down the road I saw yet another new business -- a construction yard. To me these are bigger signs that things are improving economically for the people on Pine Ridge.

While there is more economic progress, Pine Ridge is still a place of great financial need. It is hard to state statistics on this, because the government census says that there are only 28,000 people living on Pine Ridge (this is a revised number because they agreed with the tribe that the last census figure was wrong), but I have heard that the population could be as high as 70,000. Regardless of the population count the number of people living below the poverty level is higher here than for the rest of the U.S and most parts of the Western Hemisphere. Last summer as I traveled around and interviewed people for a possible fund raising video, I heard stories of families living in trailer houses that were so poorly insulated that their children suffered from illnesses related to the cold conditions. In one instance a baby died due to the cold condition in the family's house. Also, I saw storm damage from several years ago that had never been fixed because the families didn't have the money for repairs. There are stories like these all across the reservation.

I am still appalled that in America people are

still dying due to inadequate housing/lack of housing, especially children. This past year has been especially hard for a lot of organization trying to help the housing crisis on Pine Ridge. Federal funding has been cut for many programs on the reservation, so that the government can continue funding the war in Iraq and in other places. Even though we are a small organization, Project Lakota tries to help replace a small fraction of the money lost from the cuts in Federal funding. We have helped several housing organizations including Partnership for Housing.

Other Reports:

Sustaining Peace: FWCC and Environmental Concerns Committee hold joint weekend

By Elizabeth Mertic

The sun shone on about 30 Friends from Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Wisconsin when Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) co-sponsored with IYM's Environmental Concerns Committee a program called "Sustaining Peace" September 9-11, at the meetinghouse in McNabb. Our time together began with a meal of soup and bread on Friday evening followed by a campfire at which Bill Howenstine spoke about "The Bible and the Environment." We retired to our tents for a good sleep and awoke Saturday morning refreshed.

David Finke, Roxy Jacobs, Brad Laird and Roy Treadway each presented their interpretation of the theme of Sustaining Peace. Susan Lee Barton, FWCC Midwest region staff person, brought us up to date on the happenings in the Midwest as well as in the Americas. She called us to know FWCC more closely by inviting us to attend the Annual Meeting in Chiquimula, Guatemala in March 2006.

David Finke has posted his message online — go to the IYM website to download and read this thoughtful interpretation of what it means to live peacefully in our modern world.

We hope that the other three panelist's messages will also be made available online at a later time.

During the afternoon some of us traveled to a cemetery near the meetinghouse to see how native prairie plants are coming back to the open space now that the cemetery premises (burials discontinued) are no longer mowed. Others sought the familiar Friends cemetery where Benjamin Lundy is buried. A surprise awaited these adventurers: Friend Lundy made an appearance to tell his story.

After these field trips Friends were offered workshops where the morning speakers were available for discussion. Friends who stayed for the night made peace collages following a delicious meal. Some of us joined Clear Creek Friends for worship the next morning.

My Experience at World Gathering of Young Friends

By Greg Woods

Sometimes words escape me when I try to eloquently describe a powerful experience. I feel this about my experience at the World Gathering of Young Friends in Lancaster, England from August 16-24, 2005. Interactions with other Friends at the gathering have challenged me to be a better Friend, to speak my truth to others more, and to deepen my own spirituality.

My base group (a group that met together daily) was bilingual with both Spanish and English being spoken. The group included several Latin American Evangelical Quakers. They helped me to see the Bible in a new light. Where I grew up in mid-Missouri, most of my experience with the Bible came from evangelical Chris-

tians. Most of the evangelicals in my area use the Bible against people, to condemn them for their sins. This caused me not to read the Bible before. But during our base group sessions the Latin Americans Friends shared how the Bible helped reach God and they talked about their love of Jesus coming from this holy book. Since coming back from the conference I have started reading the Bible.

At the conference, the whole group worshipped together up to 5 hours a day. During these worship times, I realized I want more worship in my own life. In my regular life, sometimes I am just too busy even to take one hour a week for worship. Even though at Earlham there is an unprogrammed meeting on campus just a couple minutes walk from my room, I have only made it half dozen times during the last two years. I am going to change this, because I want my life to be more Spirit-led. Now, a lot of the time I just feel totally lost in the world.

During the whole conference I felt the loss of the Africans and Indian Friends who had their visas to England denied. During the first couple days, I was even angry about it. Immediately the conference took action with forming an ad-hoc committee to talk about this and after a week of planning they decided to hold another gathering in Kenya on Oct 20-24. Each section of the world, besides Africa, appointed two representatives to go to this gathering. The representatives for North America are Mark Sailor (Intermountain YM) and Holly Baldwin (New England YM).

I wonder what we should do as American Quakers, when our fellow Quakers from the third world cannot attend worldwide gatherings. It isn't a worldwide gathering when we have overrepresentation by American and European Quakers and under representation from Africa and India. Next March there will be the FWCC Section of Americas Annual Meeting in Guatemala. Maybe this could be the beginning of a solidarity movement with our Friends in the third world: If you can't come to us, then we

will come to you.

At the end of the gathering I realized I wanted to work with high school age youth more and deepen my spirituality and help others on their spiritual journey.

Thanks to all that helped to make it possible for Ruth and me to go to the gathering. Also the money that was donated will help the two Lugari YM representatives go to the gathering in Kenya.

Associated Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs

By Grayce H. Mesner, Clear Creek

The first summer camp held at Mesquakie Friends Center in Iowa drew 26 campers from the Mesquakie settlement in Iowa and the Ojibwa settlement in Canada. The directors, Victor and Brenda White, were pleased with the camp's first year in that location. The Quivering Arrow Camp, held on the grounds of Council House Friends Center in Oklahoma had around 30 campers from Kickapoo, Council House, Hominy and Wyandotte.

The Associated Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs (ACFIA) has a new Executive Secretary since Keith Kendall stepped down. Chuck Townsend expects to primarily keep communication between the Executive Committee and the Center Directors and secondly to meet regularly with the Center Directors. Besides that, he hopes to keep yearly meetings and monthly meetings informed of the ACFIA work. If your meeting would like him to come and share the work of ACFIA, contact him at chucktii@earthlink.net. His job is also to raise funds for the ongoing missions activity. So it is hoped that not only will he inform the people he visits, but also a monetary response is a result.

Their income continues to be less than current

expenses. With the worker salaries averaging slightly over \$10,500 per year it is critical that they maintain their health insurance, and as we all know that has been increasing. Monthly meetings could also add ACFIA into their budgets and give an annual amount or have a fund raising event once a year to benefit this branch of the Quaker organization. Donations to ACFIA may be sent to P.O. Box 2326, Richmond, IN 47375.

As I reported in the summer 2005 report, the spring annual meeting will be near Highpoint, NC from March 30-Apr. 1. I will not be planning to attend, but if there is someone who could, who has family out there to visit, or has been looking for an excuse to head east let me know!! You can get more information about ACFIA at www.acfiaquaker.org.

Olney Friends School

By Grayce H. Mesner, Clear Creek

This school year there are 57 students who attend the Olney Friends School at Barnesville, OH. This includes 16 international students from Rwanda, Ecuador, China, Serbia, Vietnam, Japan, Uganda, Poland and Korea.

The school's publication *The Olney Current* just marked the 100th year of print. This alumni magazine started out to promote the school and encourage ways to improve it. It also served as a voice for Ohio Yearly Meeting, publishing numerous articles about Conservative Quaker ideals. It was a good record of the Ohio Yearly Meeting history through the early 1950's. Eventually the publication became the alumni news outlet and has become the "family letter" for the school's graduates.

The classes at Olney offer diverse and interesting studies. The senior humanities class is reading and discussing Plato's *Republic*, reenacting the parable of the cave. The junior humanities is studying archeology and its uses in the investigation of the Neolithic Revolution

which witnessed the transition of Homosapiens from hunter-gatherers to farmers. The sophomore humanities class is studying Native Americans before European contact. Members of the Peace Studies class attended "Courage to be Non-Violent", a conference in Indianapolis, sponsored by the Mennonites, Bretherens and Quakers.

Art classes include ceramics, photography and drawing. The garden class traveled to the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet) in Athens, Ohio, where they prepared their garden fresh vegetables for salsa. They canned a total of 165 jars of hot and "not so hot" salsa which was then available for purchase at the Olney Homecoming on October 15, 2005.

The fall sports season options are running, coed soccer and coed field hockey. The soccer team is again (Sept. 30) traveling to Scattergood Friends School in West Branch, IA, for their annual game. The team, with Leonard Guindon, is again staying at our IYM meetinghouse Friday night as they travel to Iowa.

For more information about Olney activities, use their website at www.olneyfriends.org since it is becoming a primary source of information about the school.

Personal thoughts:

Right Sharing Daily

By Noel B. Pavlovic, Duneland

A few years ago, it occurred to me that I could think about right sharing on a daily basis and save money to contribute to Right Sharing at the same time. My simple idea was to label an old peanut butter jar with the words "Right Sharing". At the end of the day, if I have change in my pocket, I put it in the jar. The jar is placed on a central and prominent chest of drawers in the house. At the end of the year around Christmas time the whole family makes a trip to the

bank to have the accumulated change counted. We then contribute that sum to Right Sharing. We can decide then if we want to augment the accumulated change to contribute more. The total sum collected usually is in the range of \$20 to \$30. This right sharing jar is also a daily reminder of our wealth, right sharing, and the needs of others. It has been such an easy idea to implement that now we have a second jar labeled "IYM Wind Mill" thanks to Chip Rorem!

Can Friends Acknowledge "Sacred Places?"

By Joan Pine, Evanston Friends Meeting

As Monthly Meetings change the location of their worship or the appearance of their Meetinghouses, and as Yearly Meeting plans a new configuration of buildings in McNabb, the term "sacred space" is sometimes heard. Is this a concept that Quakers can embrace, or does it counter the teachings of our forbearers that all of God's creation is to be revered? A personal meditation on these questions is shared below.

The notion of sacred places has a venerable beginning. It is recorded first in the Hebrew Bible in Genesis 26:23, in which Isaac is described placing a pillar of rock at a site where God spoke to him. Then in Genesis 28:16-22, following the story of Jacob's wrestling with the angel, we read the beautiful words, "Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place--and I did not know it!' And he was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'" The scene ends with Jacob setting up a pillar, changing the name of the place to Bethel (holy place), and promising God a tithe in return for God's care and sustenance.

Jacob's words describe the emotions of many of us who have experienced a powerful sense of Divine Presence. Because we are creatures on a physical plane, the experience must come to us

in a physical setting — whether it be in front of a sunset or starry sky, inside a church or Friends Meeting, at a McNabb dormitory, or Pendle Hill in England or Pennsylvania. When that happens, we want to preserve the experience in our memory. Marking the place (whether physically or in our hearts) as sacred because of what happened to us there helps us do that. We can never return to that place without a recollection that it was where we felt close to God. And that recollection may help us open ourselves to the Divine more readily when we are in that physical location again.

It is clear from the passage that Jacob did not confuse the place with God; he did not worship Bethel, but he called it a holy place because he found God there. Neither do I think anyone views Pendle Hill to be a manifestation of God nor that any Friend believes the same of IYM's deteriorating dormitory. So it is my view that to call a place sacred is not to worship the place but to name it as a location where a special or powerful experience of the Divine occurred for you or for someone else. I suspect that Pendle Hill in England was such a place for George Fox (and remains so for many Quakers) whether or not the word "sacred" was used.

As a balance and a corollary we have many accounts in Scripture of Divine encounters in a variety of forms and locations: the burning bush to Moses; the still small voice to Elijah hiding in the mouth of the cave during an earthquake, fire, and wind storm; a figure "high and lifted up" to Isaiah in the temple; the stranger walking with the grieving disciples on the road to Emmaus -- to name a few. (If we knew today where any of these places were, I suspect we would want to mark them.)

The people of Israel went so far as to build a temple to house the ark of the covenant, but even Solomon in dedicating the building prayed, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I

have built!" (I Kings 8:27) Thus, God is neither synonymous with sacred spaces nor limited to them.

When the woman at the well asked Jesus where one ought to worship, Jesus did not respond directly but instead turned the subject to the nature of worship: "God is spirit, and those who worship God must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24) I take that to mean that the "where" doesn't matter because the Spirit blows where it will. I find a similar message in Jesus' parable of the wise and foolish virgins. The lesson is that we must always be ready with our lamps lit (i.e., with eyes open and hearts attuned) because we never know when or where the Divine may speak to us. Nevertheless, it must occur in some physical place, and when it does, that space may seem to us to be sacred ground.

I understand how our Quaker and Puritan ancestors were offended by the ostentation of stained glass windows and other artifacts in houses of worship, the reliance on images, the misuse of icons, and the emphasis on form rather than substance. Obviously, they could (and had to) worship in many places and settings. But I wonder if there was no one of them who ever returned to a place of encounter with the Divine in the hope or expectation that some real sense of that Presence might still linger there or might more easily recur?

Perhaps we have reached the rocky road of semantics again. "Sacred" may have different connotations among us, just as we have discovered that the word "marriage" does. Perhaps "sacred place" is too strong a term to describe the Baptist church in La Grange where I was baptized as a twelve-year-old -- the beginning of a spiritual journey that brought me at last to Friends. I would not worship there today. But whenever I visit a friend who now lives across the street from the place, I am reminded that it continues to carry a special meaning for me that I can't describe in any other words.