
Meeting Reports:

Clear Creek

By Jeannie Marvin

The Hindis of India express their spiritual lives with in the banks of their rivers. The Quaker practice of centered silence often feels like one of these rivers.

Most of the time our spiritual river at Clear Creek flows calmly and steadily.

However, during our Monthly First Day School the rapid and lively energy of children creates a faster moving current. It is within this current, that interrupts our sleepy path, that we experience spiritual movement, clarity and grace.

The children are a force of life. When we open to being in their presence, we are forced to grow. They are the sunlight whose warmth encourages us out of our adult cocoon.

So we gather around a picnic bench or tree, give them crafts so that they may express their connection to God or Spirit, a bulletin board to answer a question within their own time frame and after lunch activities so that we may all join in



celebrating wind and open sky.

They give us a break from being too serious, too intent on contemplating our navels. It is their laughter that shakes the molecules in the air, sending cobwebs from our brains and transforming the air around them into an awakening.

Our fears are often the material of dams and blocks within our spiritual rivers. It only takes one child whose persistent energy reminds us daily to keep moving beyond our fears --for their sake and for ours.

Downer's Grove

By Sue Styer

Our New Meetinghouse committee has been working with the architects to complete the design of our new building. We will soon be ready to seek bids from the builders. We have raised over half of the funds needed for the construction. One nearly painless way that we raised capital was last year's Fall Festival and silent auction. There were many crafts, baked goods and antiques (and near-antiques) available for bidding. Games for children, snacks, and the Jones Family String Band and Square Dance Players rounded out the day. We also participated in the Downers Grove Heritage Fest in

June, and although we didn't raise a lot of money, we spread the word about Quakers in the western suburbs. We also find that participating in these kinds of activities are fun and help build fellowship in our meeting.

Another way we built fellowship was through the workshop in May on vocal ministry by Benjamin Lloyd of Haverford Meeting. There were exercises for us to do to help us build trust, and discussions on how to discern the Inner Voice. Those who speak too quickly in meeting were encouraged to be more discerning, while those who rarely speak were encouraged to be more

open to leadings.

There were several comings and goings at Downers Grove. We said goodbye to James Baker on his return to his native Canada last spring, after being with us for over 10 years. He plans to spend lots of time with his family, especially his three grandchildren. We also said goodbye to Martha Davis and Jonathan Thron in July. They moved to New Mexico for job opportunities. Martha is an avid gardener and faces a new climate to test her skills. Donna Sprinkle and her daughter, Heather, moved to North Carolina to be near family. In June, we held a reception to honor our high school graduates, Bridget Anderson, Emily Ostergaard, and Hannah White. We welcomed our newest members, Deborah and Isabel Davison, and Lorraine Bartnik this fall.

And finally, Betty Clegg shared with us a message carried to a Washington, DC, antiwar rally by former DGFM members Dale and Marion Hess: When Jesus said, "Love you enemies," I think he probably meant, "Don't kill them."

Evanston

By Bob Dixon-Kolar

Anticipation, joy, delight, and gratitude—these were the emotions felt by so many Evanston Friends on returning home for worship at our newly renovated Meetinghouse. After four months as Sunday guests of the Music Institute of Chicago, worshipers arrived at Meeting, welcomed by the new sweeping staircase that leads up to the main entrance. At the rise of Meeting, those of us who had not been in the building since work began, surveyed the impressive, lovely changes throughout, often stopping to admire the details, the craftsman's care with crown molding and trim. Joan Pine, whose coordinating role in this renewal project was so critical to its success, commends and thanks the architect and contractors for their fine, consci-

entious work. She also thanks the many Friends—and friends of Friends—who have shared their insights, resources, guidance, and skills in the planning and fulfillment of this renovation project. Joan offers this blessing: "May the renewal of our historic old building help it to remain a place of peace, love, transformation, and service for generations to come. Welcome home."

Lake Forest

By Pam Kuhn

Community reminds us that we are called to love, for community is a product of love in action and not of simple self-interest. Parker Palmer

After laboring off and on for two years, in May 2005 Lake Forest Friends Meeting formed a Minute on child membership. In this time, we discovered the importance of articulating the Meeting's responsibility for the education and nurturing of our children on membership matters and clearness committees especially during the Middle School years. We also established a plan to meet individually with all high school students so that we may get to know

"May the renewal of our historic old building help it to remain a place of peace, love, transformation, and service for generations to come. Welcome home." — Evanston

them better before they go off on their own. During this meeting, we make sure that the young adult understands the membership process. We recognize that at times the membership process may need to be adjusted to suit individual needs.

Now after by a request from our Finance Committee, we feel led to examine our practice of giving. Starting on August 28, we have met twice monthly in threshing sessions called "Reflections on Giving". We are guided by queries such as, "What is the nature of giving and what does it mean individually and corpo-

rately?" The threshing sessions have been well attended and we have brought thoughts and ideas to the Light that have led to a deeper understanding of financial matters. From this depth, we now see the need to have a "Listening Project" so that each Friend may individually consider, speak, and be listened to concerning reflections on giving.

In addition to the threshing sessions, Lake Forest has continued with our many small groups within the Meeting. The Bible study group, which meets weekly, has taken up the study of the Gospel of John. Our discussion group, which meets before Meeting for Worship, has been reading two Pendle Hill Pamphlets, *Creeds and Quakers* by Robert Griswald and *Living in Virtue, Declaring Against War* by Steve Smith.

The First Day School started off the year with a dramatization of the book, *Old Turtle* by Robert Wood. Janet Means Underhill played the old turtle while the children took on the roles of the animals, wind, rain, etc. The adults enjoyed being the audience. One week, the kids made cards and filled baskets for a family misplaced by Hurricane Katrina. First Day School will continue the year studying Quaker values.

We have few bits of exciting member/attender news.

- September brought a new baby to our Meeting, Graeme Lewis Cunningham, son of Dreiske Arnold and "Michael" Cunningham.
- In October 2005, Michael Terrien received the "Blessed are the Peacemakers" award from the World Council of Churches "for inspiring, courageous and faithful efforts to build a just and peaceful world." Michael was nominated through the efforts of Janice Domaniuk and Tom Paxson. To learn more about Play for Peace visit www.playforpeace.org. Michael is the Executive Director of Play-for-Peace, an international organization that

brings together children in conflict using cooperative play.

Oak Park

By Will Rutt

The Oak Park Friends Meeting has begun to work with other community members in military anti-recruitment efforts at three west suburban Chicago high schools. Leafleting at the schools, equal time information tables in the schools, and support of student peace groups already existing in one of the schools are some of the anticipated tactics. We hope to provide assistance to students and their parents in opting out of military recruitment activities. Great assistance from the Chicago office of American Friends Service Committee has been of benefit.

Anyone who lives in the west suburban area of Chicagoland is invited to join in our group. For further information you may call me at 708 484 9728 or e-mail me at willrutt@sbcglobal.net.

Rolla Intergenerational First Day School For The Small Meeting

By Jane Driber*

Like most small meetings with just a few children, Rolla (MO) Friends Meeting struggled to provide the children with a comprehensive and consistent First Day School. For years we tried different methods without much success. Attendance and support were sporadic; materials were limited; and the persons teaching were relatively inexperienced in the Religious Society of Friends.

Then one fateful day in 1998, the meeting decided to have a William Penn Day. All the members contributed to this in their own way—one person giving a short history, others enacting the story, another leading us in song, another presenting a related craft activity, and so on. The end result was an intergenerational en-

terprise that we all enjoyed, and I wondered if such would also work for our First Day School. I asked the members if we could set aside the last First Day of every month when we have potluck to be Intergenerational First Day. They were fully supportive, and this became a regular event.

The advantages were soon apparent. Intergenerational First Day School (IFDS) began to create community among us. The regularly scheduled IFDS at the end of the month improved attendance of children. Parents, grandparents and guardians knew exactly when a First Day School would be offered at our meeting. And through IFDS we not only learned about Quakers, we learned about each other through discussion and activities. The group was able to contribute to the children's understanding and knowledge more than one person alone. But most of all we were learning together. The members of our meeting had been raised in our religious traditions; so, the knowledge gained was valuable to the adults as well.

I also found that preparing for an IFDS once a month was much more manageable. The task of preparing for an IFDS was more of a spiritual journey than a burden. The added enthusiasm, participation and support of the meeting inspired me.

Having a fixed general agenda for the IFDS made planning much easier. The following general format was developed:

- Silent Worship (15 min)
- Introduction to the lesson or to basic principles (5 min)
- Story or lesson (10-20 min)
- Related activity or discussion (10-20 min)
- Songs (5 min)
- Closing with circle and holding hands.

This agenda is conducive to children's learning, because no one part goes on for too long, and everyone knows the pattern, creating a tradition and security. Another advantage was simplification for planning. Each lesson was supplemented by a handout, often with a picture illustrating the lesson, and it was followed by, or integrated with, a related activity. That could be a game, art or craftwork, cooking, brainstorming, awareness activities, a demonstration, role-playing, problem-solving, etc.

The activities were from the books listed below. These can all be ordered from the FGC Bookstore (except *The Friendly Seed* and *Color Me Quaker*, now out of print, but available on loan from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library).

They teach us about ourselves and each other, build character and community, and provide opportunity to develop ability to solve problems and express ourselves.

We found it to be helpful to have a set of ground rules, based on our goals and needs and reviewed briefly at the

start of each session. These included the following:

- Everyone is invited to share knowledge, insights and observations, keeping them simple out of respect for the younger members.
- Ask questions rather than tell.
- Everyone is free to pass or decline.
- The activity or the lesson or the rules may be changed by agreement.

When very young children are present who would not be able to understand the activities, they can be kept in the group by providing pictures from *Color Me Quaker* (S. Combs, FUM Press, 1987) or providing balls of clay for creative activities, or giving them helping roles. When the agenda is finished, they will appreci-

“The task of preparing for an intergenerational first day school was more of a spiritual journey than a burden.” — Rolla

ate being given an opportunity to show what they did. In a case where adults with serious physical limitations are present, it will be necessary to select activities that would be appropriate for them.

In the realm of ministry, there were service projects that we took on. Some came from Yearly Meeting regarding how we could help people in other countries. Sometimes we sent health, food and first-aid kits to people in need. We took food to friends and Friends when they were sick. We sent greeting cards and letters to public servants to promote social change. Sometimes these could be coordinated with a lesson, or simply in response to a need.

Resources

- For Quaker history: *Procession of Friends* (by D. Newman, FUM Press, 1992). *George Fox and the Valiant Sixty* (E. Vipont, Quaker Press of FGC, 1997), and *Quakers on the Move* (FGC Relig. Ed. Committee, Quaker Press of FGC, 1996) The last one was especially helpful, because it includes exercises and suggestions and was written for children to understand.
- For Friends practices, *The Friendly Seed* (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1983) and *Opening Doors to Quaker Worship* (Religious Ed. Committee of FGC, 1994).
- For meditation, *Meditating with Children* (Integral Yoga Publications, 1995) and some of the exercises in *Opening Doors to Quaker Worship* (see above).
- For teaching Bible stories, *Jesus, Who Was He?* (Mary Snyder, Quaker Press of FGC, 1991) and, of course, the Bible itself.
- *Teaching Queries* (by Sally Farneth and Elinor Briggs, PYM, 1995) was used to teach the Queries, and for prayer we used *Opening Doors to Quaker Worship* and *Friendly Seed*. However, the best teacher of prayer was the example of the adult members and how they talked to God.

Of course, there are other books that could be

very useful. See *Quaker Books* (the FGC Bookstore catalog, www.quakerbooks.org) and the catalog of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library (<http://library.pym.org>).

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St. Louis: Reaches Out to Aid American Indian Victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

By Debra Penna-Fredericks (October 2005)

After learning about the plight of the Houma Indian tribe, many of whose tribal members were devastated by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, St. Louis Religious Society of Friends Meeting and Oxford, Mississippi Friends Meeting reached out to the St. Louis community to send bedding and money to aid the southeastern tribe. With the collections in hand, Debra Penna-Fredericks and Candy Boyd from the St. Louis Friends Meeting went down to the bayou country to deliver them and to offer aid to the Houma this past weekend.

Upon reaching the impacted area, the St. Louis relief volunteers witnessed first hand what hurricane damage really means. The Houma are primarily located in bayou areas, south of New Orleans, especially concentrated in Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Jefferson, LaFourche, and Terrebonne Parishes. Tribal communities in St. Bernard and Plaquemines were more than 90% destroyed, often leaving only a few pieces of wood or a small memento, such as a plate, to represent what had once been the home of one of the Houma families. St. Bernard only opened to its previous residents this past Sunday and some communities still are not open to their former citizens. Most, if not all, of the homes left in those hardest hit areas will likely be condemned and require rebuilding. Dulac, in Ter-



A volunteer Houma tribal member and Candy Boyd of Saint Louis work on stocking and cleaning the shelves in the Houma Relief Center.

rebonne Parish, a community along the bayou that houses many of the famous bayou shrimpers, suffered primarily from severe flood damage. There are large boats that were moved from somewhere in the bayou onto land 200 yards or more from the normal water line. Many of the boats, the livelihood of most of these people, were destroyed by the rough waters that tossed them about like toys. Now they sit upside down and at 90 degree angles in the water, looking eerily as if they were left behind years earlier in a ghost town.

Dulac residents spoke of staying in the Community Center to stay safe from the floods, as they normally might during a hurricane and high water problems, and then being forced to evacuate because the water level rose to 5 feet inside the center. An amazing thing about these bayou residents is that they all told their tales with a smile and a gentle voice, glad to have their lives, family and their friends nearby.

Indeed, St. Louis Friends volunteer workers, Candy Boyd and Debra Penna-Fredericks learned that the Houma simply did not complain about their plight despite the noticeable lack of publicity and the lack of assistance from federal and large agencies. When the volunteers first arrived, they were greeted with smiles and felt

welcome immediately. They were ready to get right to work, but instead found themselves being introduced around by their gracious hosts. But there was no lack of work to do, they soon learned, and they quickly found themselves busy helping in the Houma Relief Center, an old store that has been closed for years and has now been set up by the Tribal community in order to help their members survive. The Relief Center was stocked with donated goods from other small organizations as well as donations from other Indian tribes and one or two corporations. After the arrival of the donations this past weekend, the Houma Relief Center has run out of storage room, with overflow being stored at the home of the Tribal Chief, Brenda Robicheaux and her husband, Mike Robichaux, known fondly by the tribal members as "Dr. Mike".

Candy and Debra worked at the Relief Center helping to sort the donations, stock the shelves, greet people and help tribal members find necessities when they arrived. In addition, the St. Louis volunteers spent time going through part of the hardest hit area and passing out water to the people who had returned to their broken and flood-ruined homes. This work gave the volunteers the opportunity to meet the tribal members and learn about their beautiful spirits as the volunteers heard the heartwarming and heartbreaking stories of these people who lost everything except their spirits and loved ones. They learned about the people who were living with several families in one house because the families who had moved in had lost their homes completely and the house in which the people were living was still intact, missing only parts of the roof or maybe some walls and floors. Sometimes the people lived in tents inside the houses to protect them from the elements. The volunteers learned that those who were lucky lost only shingles and needed roof repairs. Those lucky tribal members were especially generous to their other members who needed more help. And the Friendly St. Louisians learned that the Houma were truly self-sufficient. They are a people who were ac-

customed to taking care of themselves and it showed in the work they had already done since the hurricanes. They had cleaned their yards and started cleaning the moldy muck from their flooded homes in the communities where the water had already gone down. Some of them had even taken the moldy walls and flooring out of their homes, anxious to begin the repairs.

Among the more heartwarming experiences for the St. Louisians were the occasions when the volunteers saw the children and dogs playing out in the flood damaged yards. It was such a solid reminder that life simply continues, no matter how hard things get. The Houma will survive; there is no question about that. But sadness also hangs over this tribe because there are 3,500 tribal members still unaccounted for. Though the St. Louis relief volunteers rarely saw anything but smiles on the tired faces of the Houma, they did see tears well up in the eyes of the tribal members if the topic of the missing people came up. The missing are thought — hoped — to be in shelters among other hurricane evacuees. But many of the missing tribal members do not speak English and the Red Cross just arrived at Raceland, Louisiana to begin working with the Tribal Chief this past weekend and so the true fate of the lost will not be known for a long time.

Debra and Candy from St. Louis Friends will be holding the Houma in the Light (a Quaker way of prayer) while the Houma await word of the fate of their missing tribal members. The St. Louis women also learned that the Houma is a people not accustomed to asking for help. The volunteers observed that the primary need now would be money and volunteers to help the Houma clean up and rebuild their communities. Most of the tribal members were self-employed, living in impoverished conditions without insurance, and they will need aid from others if their lives will be rebuilt. Many lived as shrimpers and lost their boats, their only livelihood, as well as their homes.

This tribe has a long history in America and the Friendly St. Louisians are hopeful that others in America will reach out to them to help keep them together in the southeast where they have lived for generations so we can preserve our American history.

A citizen of Dulac just came up with an inexpensive means of raising their homes to avoid future floods in order to continue living where their fathers and grandfathers before them lived and there is now hope that the people along the bayou will be able to have their homes raised or have new homes built on the raised platforms.

In response to the plight of the people impacted by the recent hurricanes and in recognition of the likelihood of future disasters to other communities, the Friends Meeting in St. Louis has set up a Disaster Response Committee. See end of following story for contacts and information.



Houma Indian Relief Volunteers Pegleg George Crader and Debra Penna-Fredericks show that all it takes is a smile and a warm heart to volunteer at the Houma Relief Center.

American Indians Largely Ignored and Misunderstood by FEMA and the Red Cross

By Debra Penna-Fredericks, St. Louis Meeting (October 2005)

After American Indians were hard hit and, in some cases, devastated by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, their cries for help to FEMA and other major national agencies went unanswered for as long as a month in some areas and have still been unanswered in other areas that are home to the Houma Nation Indian tribe.

The Red Cross and Salvation Army did respond with help in the Dulac Community Center, a place that serves one of the numerous hard hit areas, about 2 weeks ago. But it wasn't until this past Saturday, October 9, that the Red Cross and FEMA set up an official office in Raceland, LA, home to the Houma Relief Center and Tribal Chief, Brenda Robichaux, to begin aiding more of the tribal members and begin taking applications to help the Houma people rebuild their lives.



Boat washed up on land.

Even with the newly set up office in Raceland, many difficulties still face the Houma Indians whose lives do not meet the bureaucracy of the FEMA. Among other things, such agencies have been stubborn about insisting that the Indians fill out applications on their own. However, due to laws in Louisiana preventing most Indians from obtaining education until just a few decades ago, many of the Indians are incapable of



It soon became difficult to tell the communities from the sea.

filling out their own applications. In addition, many of the Indians do not speak English and so need help from interpreters when filling out the applications. The agencies also overlook the fact that these people who are spread out along the bayou have lost everything, including their vehicles, in the hurricanes, so getting to offices far away may present difficulties.

But these are resilient people and they are finding ways to help themselves. Tribal Chief Brenda Robichaux is working hard to find creative ways to help meet the needs of her people despite these challenges. The Houma, which was the Indian tribe most impacted by the hurricanes, primarily live along the bayous along the peninsulas south of New Orleans, scattered throughout the Louisiana parishes of Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Jefferson, LaFourche, and Terrebonne. As a result, 3,500 tribal members were devastated by direct wind damage, losing everything, with an estimated 1,000 homes completely gone. Another 3,500 were affected by unusually high flood water from the bayou and flood damage due to the levee breaks. Many of these remaining homes will be condemned due to the damage they sustained.

The Houma is one of at least four Indian tribes in the southeast that were impacted by the hurricanes and other tribes have reported experiencing similarly slow response by FEMA and national relief agencies. They have been receiving most of their aid from other Indian tribes and grass roots efforts, such as that of the St. Louis

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), who, with donations from other St. Louisians and Friends from Oxford, MS, responded to the Houma this past weekend by sending a load of bedding, monetary contributions, and two volunteer relief workers. A variety of groups have sent many generous donations, which have been gratefully accepted by the tribes. The greatest need is for monetary donations in the foreseeable future. Many of the tribal members were fishermen who lost their boats as well as their homes and will have difficulty paying for the repairs on their homes or replacing their homes. Most are currently in shelters, or living with other families; some have gone back to flood-damaged homes because their shelters closed. All are helping one another and themselves with beautiful smiles on their faces. As a volunteer nurse reported, one flood victim said, "I ain't got no stress. I wake up in the mornin' with this smile on my face, and I go to bed at night with this smile on my face." Such is the wonderful attitude of the Houma.

St. Louis Friends will send more relief teams in the future, including two long weekends in October. If you are interested in volunteering, please call 314-647-0193 or e-mail quakersresponse@yahoo.com. Tax deductible donations may be sent to St. Louis Friends Meeting, 1001 Park, St. Louis, MO 63104. Please make the check payable to "St. Louis Friends" and write "Houma-Disaster Response" in the memo. Every penny of this fund goes to the effort to rebuild the Houma Nation, with no money for overhead or administrative costs. For more information about the Houma and to make direct donations to the tribe, go to www.unitedhoumanation.org.

South Bend Friends

By Marjorie Kinsey

South Bend Friends have an expanded space. No, we are still at the Charles Martin Youth Center and set up for Meeting for Worship in the enormous general purpose room, but we have rented a larger space for our official occupancy of the Center. The space has greatly re-

lieved the crunch on our lively First Day School. Activities for three age groups can go on at once in the new rooms.

We still look with wonder and joy at the explosion of energy that is the First Day School and are ever grateful for the faithfulness and inventiveness of several parents which keeps the children involved, happy and learning. We are also joyfully receiving

new members and attenders. Seasoned younger Quakers have arrived this year from both coasts. But other interested folk have sought us because of reading about Quakers or remembering long ago experiences. They have found us through our telephone answering machine and through our web site.

Indeed, South Bend Friends are becoming electronically attached with a web page at Quaker.org and a Yahoo group for our own mailings. We are grateful to those members who have used their technological expertise to bring us closer together.

Other programs are providing opportunities for fellowship and discussion as well as learning about Quakerism. For one, a librarian has come forth from our midst to catalogue and order what had been our ever-shrinking number of books. We now have an accessible library shelf and check out system as well as an active acquisitions and gifts initiative. Among other activities has been a group working on our response to Katrina victims and considering our relations to the myriad of international emergencies.

And we also have opportunities to gain perspective on Quakerism though study together. Over the summer two groups began reading Barclay's Apology. Member Tom Slaughter, history professor at Notre Dame, is writing a book on John Woolman which we will be able to read and discuss in draft form. Quakerism 101 and other programs are in the wings.

Urbana-Champaign Meeting

By Mariellen Gilpin

Urbana-Champaign Friends continue to benefit from having our new spiritual home, with increased attendance by newcomers to the Society of Friends. Michael Phillips and Jacqueline Waters have become new members of the meeting, and got married under our care October 1.

Friends turned out in droves for the marriage and merrymaking.

Evan Carter Ching has joined his parents, Kory Lawson Ching and Cynthia Carter Ching, and his big brother Connor Lawson Ching. His parents say Evan is a much more laid-back baby than Connor was, so much so that it has been a big relief to see Evan become more 'assertive' in recent weeks.

We received an unexpected gift of \$5,000 from the estate of Gardiner Stillwell. We used the gift to pay down some of our mortgage—only \$20,000 (more or less) to go. Gardiner's gift will save us \$3,400 in interest alone. We'd like to put in some library shelves, because our library is now stacked on blocks and boards and needs a permanent home. But we're expecting high heating bills this winter, and so we are urging one another to be frugal.

The IYM Dream Gathering, Part II, was held at our meetinghouse on September 17. We cooked for 20-30 Friends, and five showed up! We assured one another that where there are five Friends, there will be six opinions, but we still managed to finish in a timely fashion after an intimate little meeting. After worship the next day we invited Friends for a bodacious potluck with the leftovers—and there were still leftovers to carry home with us afterwards!

Roy and Carolyn Treadway came in June to present a workshop on nuclear power, and our meeting put together two carloads of Friends to attend and speak at a Nuclear Regulatory Commission hearing about a second nuclear power plant at Clinton, IL—both Bloomington-Normal and Champaign-Urbana are downwind from Clinton. We think the NRC has its own methods of crowd control: they held the hearing at 7:00 on a work night, and then dimmed the lights for about an hour while they showed a Powerpoint presentation. When they turned up the lights at the end, most of the Clinton folks had gone home to bed and didn't hear the actual

discussion of the pros and cons of nuclear power.

Cecile Nyiramana's presentation at the meeting-house drew a small crowd of both Friends and people from other churches, even though we had very little advance notice. We will try to get the word out sooner next time, if African Great Lakes Initiative-Friends Peace Teams will let us know sooner. The assemblage was very moved by Cecile's story of genocide and forgiveness. Keep 'em coming to Urbana-Champaign, David Zarembka!

We commemorated the 60th anniversary of the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by inviting other churches to participate. Six churches helped with planning the event, and 17 churches and religious groups, along with the Physics Department and the Center on Disarmament and Arms Control at the University, co-sponsored a talk by an expert on nuclear terrorism. A few days later almost a hundred people gathered at a local church to view the film on Sadako, a little girl who died of leukemia as a result of fallout from the bombings, then fold paper cranes and decorate peace lanterns. The evening ended with a procession to a nearby park to float the peace lanterns in a fountain. The peace lanterns left the group in a reflective frame of mind at the conclusion of the Hiroshima Day events.

The Tuesday evening study group read several Pendle Hill pamphlets over the summer, and this fall has begun reading Brent Bill's *Holy Silence: The Gift of Quaker Spirituality*. When the little Baptist congregation leaves our premises for their own worship space in a few weeks, study group plans to have a spiritual journeys series on Sundays at 9:30, before worship begins at 11:00. We look forward to hearing one another's stories of our journeys toward God.

The November *What Canst Thou Say?* (WCTS) issue on God's Humor involved contributions from a number of Illinois Friends: Chris Johns created cartoons, and Michael Phillips, Jean

Mayes, Mariellen Gilpin, and Maurine Pyle contributed brief articles. It seemed that most of the articles were examples of an intimate relationship with God, in which the humor was brief and often poignant. This issue was largely the work of Judy Lumb, the WCTS editor who writes from Belize. For the February issue we will catch up on some of our backlog of articles waiting for a theme — the theme will evolve from the content. The May issue will contain Friends' stories about Jesus' life and power and presence among us today.

We look forward to having tea with Maurine Pyle, IYM's new Field Secretary, at our new meetinghouse on the weekend of November 4-5. We expect to have a Family Worship on October 30, and there will be a Christmas Eve hymn sing with Brenda Koenig and Drew Phillips leading the singing. Stay tuned.

Project Lakota:

Report from Pine Ridge

By Pam Timme, Oak Park Meeting

Carrie Melin, my daughter Christina and I had the privilege of spending the first part of August volunteering for Project Lakota at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Once again, I would like to thank Oak Park Friends Meeting for contributing to our travel expenses.

Project Lakota was started in 2000 by Candy Boyd, Greg Woods and Candy's daughter, Maya Suffern. Its purpose is to raise funds to buy materials for housing construction and rehabilitation for the Lakota Nation (at the Pine Ridge Reservation) and to provide scholarship money for volunteers traveling to Pine Ridge. It is under the care of the St. Louis Friends Meeting.

Some of the not-for-profit organizations Project Lakota has worked with include Self-Help Housing (Partnership for Housing), Tiwahe Tipi

Okolakiciye Tiospaye (Family Home Organization), and Habitat for Humanity. Self-Help Housing is a program in which the families who will live in the homes help to build them. The houses in this program are built in a construction lot on the reservation, and when finished are moved to their final location. Tiwahe Tipi is a tiospaye (family group/clan) housing cooperative to build log cabins in and around the town of Oglala. Habitat for Humanity is on the reservation and builds a house approximately every three years. Project Lakota also works with individuals not connected with the above organizations that have housing needs.

My lasting impression from this trip was of the sense of continuation of the Lakota Nation and culture in the face of over a century of disasters and oppression. I heard some people speaking Lakota in their everyday lives, saw them taking pride in and participating in traditional dancing, singing and drumming at the pow wow, saw traditional prayers being given, and listened to humorous remarks, ghost/spirit stories and family history stories.

Background Information

The following is a very brief overview of the complex and tumultuous history of the Lakota (western Sioux) over the last 150 years. (For more detailed information, please see the book and movie list at the end of this report.) The Lakota people originally lived over a large territory which included portions of what today are North and South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Colorado and Nebraska. They depended on the buffalo (tatanka), which roamed these plains, for food, shelter and clothing. The Black Hills, or Paha Sapa, which are sacred to the Lakota, were at the center of this land. In response to a successful military campaign by Lakota leader Red Cloud against western forts along the Bozeman Trail, the United States had promised much of this area to the Lakota in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. But, unfortunately for the Lakota, gold was discovered in the Black Hills in 1874 and the treaty was broken. A century

later, in 1980, the United States Supreme Court stated, "A more ripe and rank case of dishonorable dealings will never, in all probability, be found in our history." In addition to invasion of the Lakota's territory by miners, soldiers and settlers, the buffalo had nearly been exterminated. By 1893 it was estimated that there were only 300 buffalo left in North America out of an original estimate of at least 30 million. By 1876, the U.S. ordered all Lakota bands onto reservations. Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull led the resistance which culminated in the destruction of Custer's Seventh Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876. By the late 1880s some Lakota were living on reservations while others were attempting to live in their traditional manner. The "ghost dance" was being performed by many western tribes including the Lakota in hopes of returning America to its pre-European state; the government was trying to suppress this threat. In December 1890 a band of 350 men, women and children led by the elderly and ill Big Foot were on their way to Pine Ridge, seeking safety. They were intercepted and disarmed by U.S. soldiers near Wounded Knee Creek (now part of Pine Ridge Reservation), and most of them then massacred. The bodies were left to freeze in the snow for three days, and then buried in a mass grave. Black Elk, a Lakota holy man, said, "I did not know then how much was ended. When I look back now from the high hill of my old age, I can still see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch as plain as when I saw them with eyes still young. And I can see that something else died there in the bloody mud, and was buried in the blizzard. A people's dream died there. It was a beautiful dream."

From that time through part of the 20th century, many Lakota children were forced to go to schools where they were prohibited from speaking their language or practicing their religion. Religious ceremonies, such as the sun dance, were banned and other attempts at forced assimilation were made. In the early 1970s, a

civil war-like atmosphere developed on Pine Ridge Reservation. Two hundred AIM (American Indian Movement) members and traditionals, in protest against injustices, treaty violations, and the corrupt tribal council head, Dick Wilson, occupied the Wounded Knee site for over two months. They were surrounded and besieged by FBI agents, but their supporters slipped through ravines at night with food and supplies. For the next three years, there was much violence against AIM supporters on the reservation by Dick Wilson and his supporters, called "GOONS". Today, Pine Ridge Reservation includes the second poorest county (per capita income) in the country. (The poorest county is also in South Dakota, and is home to the Crow Creek Sioux Reservation.) There are high rates of unemployment, alcoholism, car accidents, suicide, diabetes, and infant mortality. Life expectancy is among the lowest in the Western Hemisphere. Housing is substandard and overcrowded.

Leonard Crow Dog, a Lakota spiritual leader and author of the book, *Crow Dog: Four Generations of Sioux Medicine Men*, said, "Whites say not to blame them, they aren't involved. It's their ancestors who did wrong. But they should be involved. They are living on our land. We are still third-class citizens. We are still invisible. Indians are in jail. Indians are starving. You should take some responsibility, not for what was, but for what *is*. We can't put all of you back on the *Mayflower*. So we've got to live with one another as best we can. I look upon my white friends who have for so long supported me as brothers and sisters. I don't look at the color of their skin. Many young wasichus have come to Crow Dog's Paradise, often staying for weeks or months. I feed them and give them shelter. There are many good, understanding white men and women. The only trouble is, there's not enough of them."

Our Experiences at Pine Ridge

Carrie, Christina and I left for South Dakota on Monday, August 1. It took us two days to drive

each way, we worked for seven days, and we took two days off to sightsee in the Badlands and the Black Hills. When we drove up to the campground, Candy welcomed us with a smile and the silent applause sign and we pitched camp before it got dark. The camp, on the shores of Lake Oglala, was very pretty. There was a shelter for supplies and cooking, a solar heated shower, two outhouses, and a canoe. There were connections for RVs up the hill from the tent area, and there were several RVs parked there most of the time we were there. The owner of the campground had four grandchildren who lived with their mother on the property. They came down to the campsite to visit us often, and were very cute and fun. Greg Woods and his friend Caleb Paul, from Earlham, joined us at the campground for a few days.

We arrived at Camp Oglala with a load of 34 backpacks and 2 boxes of school supplies courtesy of Illinois Yearly Meeting. Many individuals donated the items, and the kids at IYM packed the backpacks with school supplies as a service project. We brought most of the backpacks to Loneman School, which goes up to the 8th grade. We also gave some "little kid" backpacks to Ingrid One Feather, who teaches kindergarten. We saved four backpacks to give to the kids at the campground. They were very excited to get them.

We worked on two homes. The first was a log cabin. Our job was to scrape black mold off the outside walls with bleach and then caulk and paint the walls. Black mold has invaded the area in recent years, and can cause medical problems and even fatalities in infants, the elderly, and people with pulmonary problems or damaged immune systems. It was hot, dry, dusty work! The second house we worked on was part of the Self-Help Housing program. There were two houses on the construction site when we got there; one had just been completed and we got to watch it being towed away down the road toward its final destination. We worked

inside the second house, putting compound on drywall seams and around the window frames. It was a little cooler by then – down to the 80s. Since there was no bathroom or outhouse at the construction site, we drove about a mile to the Oglala Lakota College to use their facilities. The college was quite impressive – it had a small but beautifully done museum exhibit on the history of the Lakota.

And what did we do for fun? We went to the pow wow four evenings in a row. It was quite an experience. People brought their own chairs and sat in a large circle around the dance area. Drummers and singers provided the accompaniment for the wonderful dancing. The drumming circle gradually moved around the circle throughout the evening. There were food and craft booths surrounding the circle. There was also a rodeo and a skateboard contest elsewhere on the grounds.

We also went to the groundbreaking ceremonies for a casino expansion. A medicine man performed a ceremony, and we were all treated to a meal of buffalo and fry bread. We also had a good meal the night we were invited to the home of Mercy Iron Crow, whose home had been built through Self-Help Housing a few years ago. On another day we went to Wounded Knee, walking through the cemetery and the little museum with displays about both Wounded Knee I and II. We also went to the badlands that day, a Sunday, and ended the day on a remote high mesa called Sheep Table Mountain, where we had Meeting for Worship. From where we sat we could see the Black Hills in the distance, and rain falling, far away, in a circle all around us. On the last day we took a trip to the beautiful Black Hills, where we had the pleasure of seeing many buffalo and other wildlife.

If you would like to learn more about the Lakota people, the following is a list of books and movies I have either read or which have been recommended to me. I have put an asterisk next

to books and movies that I own; I would be happy to lend them out. (I would not recommend any of the movies for younger children, due to violence.)

Books

Black Elk Speaks,* as told through John G. Neihardt
Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West,* by Dee Brown
Crow Dog: Four Generations of Sioux Medicine Men,* by Leonard Crow Dog and Richard Erdoes
Lakota Woman,* by Mary Crow Dog
Mount Rushmore: An Icon Reconsidered, by Jesse Lerner
On the Rez, by Ian Frazier
Waterlily, by Ella Cara Deloria
I also read a very interesting book about the most recent Native American group to live in the Chicago area, before their forced resettlement west of the Mississippi River in the 1830s – *The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire*,* by R. David Edmunds.

Movies

"Dances with Wolves", a fictional story of a Civil War soldier who joins a Lakota tribe.
"Incident at Oglala",* a documentary about the Leonard Peltier case of the 1970s.
"Skins", a fictional movie set in Pine Ridge about two close-knit brothers, one a tribal policeman and the other an alcoholic.
"Thunderheart", a fictional treatment based on the real-life shooting of two FBI agents at Pine Ridge in the 1970s.

One of the books I read in preparation for the trip, *On the Rez*, by Ian Frazier, had an intriguing theory on the American ideal of equality: "Surrounded as we are today by pavement, we assume that Indians have had to adapt to us. For a long time much of the adapting went the other way. In the land of the free, Indians were the "original free": early America was European culture reset in an Indian frame. Europeans who survived here became a mixture of identities in which the Indian part was what made them American and different than they had been before. Influence is harder to document than corn and beans, but as Indian people today sometimes talk about the need to guard their culture carefully, so that it won't be stolen from them. But what is best (and worst) about any culture can be as contagious as a cold germ; the least contact passes it on. In colonial times, Indians were known for their disregard of titles