

Among Friends

Winter 2006



One of many scenes at IYM 2006

Published by Illinois Yearly Meeting

***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/Summer Issue 2007 need to be in the hands of the editor NO LATER THAN April 20, 2007. 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. The maximum size of an article should be 2 to 3 single-spaced typed pages.

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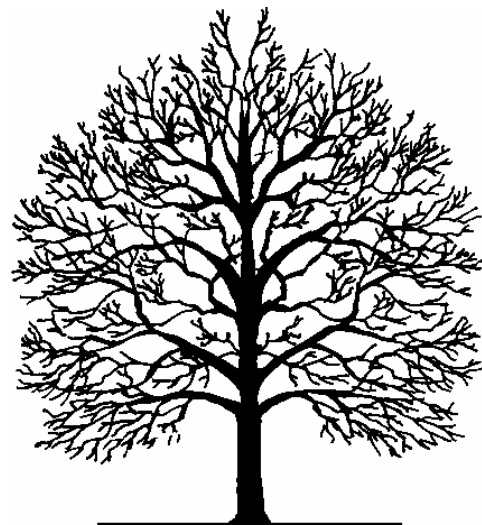
From the Editor:

This issue begins on the cover with the enthusiasm and energy of children and ends with a tribute to all elders we have lost. The poems speak to all of us and the ones that have come before us. We are thankful for their wisdom, actions, knowledge, and love.

In between the covers are stories of the vitality of Friends in Illinois Yearly Meeting of all ages.

Pray for peace.

May we continue to grow.
Cindy Reynolds



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Newly restored Clear Creek Meetinghouse, gathering site for Illinois Yearly Meeting

Report from the Dream Gathering Project

By Mariellen Gilpin, Ruth Milledge, and Michael Terrien

The Dream Gathering Project has had two missions: clarifying and forwarding the *mission* of Illinois Yearly Meeting, and reaching a sense of unity about the *future* of the Yearly Meeting. Dream Gatherers visited each monthly meeting in the spring of 2005 and synthesized the hopes of monthly meetings. The Dreamfest Report was presented at the annual session in July 2005. In September 2005 a subcommittee of the Dream Gathering Project studied the Dreamfest Report and formulated several recommendations, which were presented to Fall Continuing

Committee in October 2005.

Among the recommendations presented at Fall Continuing Committee 2005 were:

1. The creation of an Advancement Committee, separate from Ministry Committee, charged with deepening relationships between monthly meetings and between monthly meetings and IYM, developing leadership in monthly meetings and yearly meeting, reaching out to monthly meetings and educating our newcomers in creative ways.
2. The enlargement of Ministry Committee to include traveling ministry to monthly meetings, ongoing spiritual growth, and discernment of leadings of the Spirit.

3. Discernment by Site Envisioning and Building Committee and Maintenance and Planning Committee of the role of planning for systematic, scheduled inspections of each system of the IYM facility, to insure its safety and well-being, and also planning and development of new functions of the facility and land acquisition.
4. The support of Youth Oversight Committee and Adult Young Friends through the hiring and supervision of a part-time paid youth coordinator.
5. The support of Peace Resources Committee's recommendations for our Quaker response to a militarized world.
6. Formation of an ad hoc committee with representatives from Peace Resources, Youth Oversight, Ministry and Advancement, Site Envisioning and Building, Maintenance and Planning, and

Development Committees, to design uses for the proposed year-round Retreat Center at McNabb: peace events, environmental events, youth programs.

7. The holding of an annual Winter Retreat for sharing who we are and who we want to be; Winter Retreat 2006 was to further season these recommendations for consideration at Spring Continuing Committee in March 2006.

The responses of Standing Committees were collated and presented at the Winter Retreat, February 11-12, 2006. At the Winter Retreat, we reviewed the report and noticed the synchronicities and serendipities in the work of the various Standing Committees. They looked at the *value* of the reports, the *trends* in the reports, and made *recommendations* as their gift to the Standing Committees. The interest group reports from the Winter Retreat were summarized



Fellowship on the lawn at Illinois Yearly Meeting 2006

and presented to Spring Continuing Committee March 4, 2006. The report from the Winter Retreat marks the beginning of IYM's process of now responding to the felt needs of the monthly meetings.

It was the sense of the Winter Retreat participants that their recommendations should be sent to the Standing Committees for further discernment, and that the Standing Committees should each report back to the monthly meetings by Fall 2006, so that the monthly meetings can see the responses of the Standing Committees to their felt needs.

An important synchronicity/serendipity that turned up at the winter retreat was the number of interest groups that felt called to provide training, spiritual nurture, and outreach to monthly meetings through workshops and retreats at other times than the annual sessions. We're learning it isn't just teens that want mid-winter Quakes!

Discernment of Gifts is one piece of the Dream Gathering findings that needs further study.



Birthday celebration of a Quaker Youth Pilgrim during visit to IYM 2006

This piece isn't happening, and the Quaker conversation needs to continue. There's a huge interest from our monthly meetings, and IYM Ministry and Advancement committee is overburdened and understaffed already. We asked our monthly meetings what their needs were, and now we can't just drop this vital concern.

The Dream Gathering Ad Hoc committee recommended at Yearly Meeting the formation of an ad hoc committee to consider Discernment of Gifts in cooperation with Ministry and Advancement committee. We recommended holding four face-to-face meetings of this committee in Urbana, which is sort-of central to our widely separated meetings. The task of the Discernment of Gifts Ad Hoc committee would be to identify the barriers to discerning of gifts and putting them to use, and to make recommendations how we do it better. Margie Haworth, Sue Davison, and David Shiner are working now to name Friends for a Discernment of Gifts Ad Hoc committee.

The Illinois Yearly Meeting at the 2006 summer session recommended another Visioning Retreat on Discerning Gifts at Menno Haven in February 2007. We're dreaming of having several keynote messages delivered by special guests from outside the yearly meeting, followed by small group discussions of the topic. Thus, we

would have maximum input of knowledge and inspiration to kick off the discussion. The general theme would be “Discernment of Gifts” and each speaker could choose how to address it in his/her own way. Are you interested in helping plan Winter Retreat ‘07? Write Mariellen at m-gilpin@uiuc.edu or 818 West Columbia, Champaign, IL 61820. The more the merrier!

Building Changes Completed in Campground

By Bill Howenstine

Though finishing “touches” were not yet completed, the six new cabins and the relocated Junior Yearly Meetinghouse were



Friends gathered outside Junior Yearly Meeting house in its new location



New cabins on campground enjoyed at IYM 2006

able to be used during Illinois Yearly Meeting. By late spring the Junior Yearly Meetinghouse had been moved across the road to its new location in the southeast section of the campground. Now it has a new roof, three rooms instead of two, and a porch, which formerly had been on the east end of the old dormitory. Additional electrical work, repairs, and painting may not be so obvious!

As for the six new summer cabins, most of their wood came from the old dormitory, carefully dismantled by members of the Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage of northeast Missouri. For example, 12' x 16' sections of the dorm floor were removed entirely to become the floors of the new cabins. People staying in the cabins can look at those floors as an enduring monument

to an important chapter of IYM history. The new siding of the cabins (covering salvaged dormitory plywood) is stained “mushroom” color, blending harmoniously with the campground setting. Friends who attended the Clear Creek Meeting Open House on October 8 praised the appearances of the buildings, including the recently painted Meetinghouse with its renovated front porch and steps. As a side note, it is worth pointing out that almost \$1,100 was received from the sale of scrap metal from the dismantled dormitory. Throughout all this building project, a strong effort was made to be environmentally “green.”

The ground where the Junior Yearly Meetinghouse and the dormitory stood has been graded, and during a work day on October 18, members of the Environmental Concerns and the Maintenance and Planning Committees raked and seeded in a turf grass mix to protect the soil from erosion. Now that plot of land is ready for the next phase of the IYM vision – the construc-

tion of the “Peace House on the Prairie”, which will have new kitchen and dining facilities, meeting rooms for use by both IYM and Clear Creek Meeting, and year-round indoor sleeping. The Development Committee, and the Site Envisioning and Building Committee, together are laying the groundwork for a major fundraising campaign for this purpose.

2006 Quaker Youth Pilgrimage Epistle, August, 2006

“I feel...in possession of a large measure of hope for the future of Quakerism” — Cristina Van Regenmorter, leader, 2006 pilgrimage

To all Friends everywhere,

The Quaker Youth Pilgrimage 2006 brought together 26 young Friends and four leaders from Europe and the United States. Over the month spent together

the group traveled in and around Ohio, Indiana and Illinois exploring the diverse branches of Quakerism.

We met meetings, some programmed, some unprogrammed, for worship, discussion and potlucks. The potlucks were just one of many ways in which Friends fed our bodies and souls. We were provided with gracious hospitality through home-stays in



Ground being prepared for next phase of IYM vision



Young Friends from Pilgrimage being introduced at IYM

Cincinnati and Indianapolis. The opportunity to experience different branches of Quakerism brought up many questions, some of which were easy to answer, but for others further thought is needed.

During our travels we learned about a network of escape routes for those fleeing enslavement, known as the Underground Railroad. We visited museums and heard people speak about the support Quakers and others gave freedom-seekers trying to reach Canada.

A much-needed break came in the form of working alongside Habitat for Humanity in Richmond, Indiana. This was a very hot but enjoyable time, where

we all learned new skills such as building walls and roofing. On leaving the house it was rewarding to see the progress that had been made in just three days.

Being able to attend Illinois Yearly Meeting provided us with an insight into how other yearly meetings work. We were warmly welcomed and included and saw a strong sense of community at work.

The pilgrimage has taught us a lot and also provided time for a great deal of fun. We found enjoyment in playing existing games and making up new ones.

A few days were spent in Chicago. While there we visited Chicago Public Radio, heard Voices for Creative Nonviolence and played in Millennium Park fountains to



Friends on Quaker Youth Pilgrimage arriving at IYM.

escape the heat. We spent our final night in Chicago sharing a potluck with local Friends, and dancing in a thunderstorm under an orange sky.

The pilgrimage ended with a final retreat at Quaker Knoll Camp where we had Bible studies and discussion. There was also plenty of free time for relaxation, singing and dancing.

As we walked together in community we were challenged by queries regarding the nature of God, Quakerism and how to live meaningful lives. We leave with vivid memories and close friendships.

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness, and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying for one another, and helping one another up with a tender hand. —Isaac Penington, 1667

Signed on behalf of Quaker Youth



Moving of Junior Illinois Yearly Meetinghouse at Clear Creek

Pilgrimage 2006.

Monthly Meeting News:

Clear Creek Open House

By Grayce Mesner

If you were one of the seventy-seven guests that attended Clear Creek's Autumn Open House, you would have been greeted at the door and found yourself looking at a beautiful array of cookies and cakes. After filling a plate with a slice of cake and cookies brought in by various members, you would have seen displays of Clear Creek's projects and watched a Power Point presentation showing the various stages of the building's restoration.

You would have taken a tour with Carol Bartles throughout the IYM building and listened as she told of its history. If history and humor is the combination you enjoy, you were fortunate to be here. Jim Bumgarner regaled us with his stories about what it was like to be a young Quaker boy growing up around the life of Clear Creek Meeting. Kay Drake acted the part of one of the first Quaker family members to travel into this area. She told of their trip as they emigrated in wagons to the mid-west.

For a change of pace the visitors of our Open House were offered the opportunity to enjoy a ride in a surrey with a fringe on top. At that very slow pace there was time to feel yourself unwind and leisurely talk with fellow riders while enjoying the view of newly harvested corn fields.

The perfect end to our Open House was with Maurine Pyle. She read from a book by Phillip Gulley. We laughed over the foibles of his Har-

mony Friends characters and their plans to install a new kitchen oven in time for the famous noodle dinner.

For those of you who were here during IYM. You must see the newly completed cabins. The new hardware is on the meetinghouse screen doors (it looks great against the white door).

Helen Jean Nelson, 1918 –2006

Helen Jean Nelson showed her love through her consistent commitment to Clear Creek Friends Meeting and Illinois Yearly Meeting. The two historical documents she authored and coauthored on Clear Creek and its community preserve our historical information for future generations.

The IYM 150th anniversary was documented by Helen Jean with a book filled with clippings of Yearly Meeting minutes, reports and photographs of Friends and our property. This book gives the reader a good perspective of the Yearly Meeting, its growth and changes over our 150 history.

Helen Jean served as Clerk for the Monthly Meeting and Yearly Meeting, gave the Plummer Lecture and served as Yearly Meeting Trustee after her father's passing for the rest of her life. She served as a representative for IYM to FCNL and FWCC. Even at 88 years of age she was consistently asking about the progress and changes on the meetinghouse grounds. "How do we like the new piano?" was her last question of me, three days before her passing.

In her later years, Helen Jean became an elder with kindness and wisdom. Asking questions, encouraging good action, listening, smiling and caring were her gifts as an elder. Her skills in listening helped shape the understanding of a situation. Her approach included sharing her oral history, asking questions, listening and lifting up a concern or joy. Anyone who could spend time with Helen Jean would grow as a Friend .
—Carol Bartles

For those of you who may be musically inclined, our almost new piano is ready and waiting for an enthusiastic crowd of players and singers. We hope to see you soon!

Downers Grove

By Sue Styer and Carol Mangiaracina

We continue to labor on the plans for our new meetinghouse. The bids were nearly twice as high as our budget, mainly due to the passage of time and the increased cost of materials, as well as our dream of "hardwood versus plain pine" materials. We are looking at ways to cut costs, by finding where we could put in our own labor, substituting less-expensive building materials and simplifying the existing plans. These changes may require that we get a new design.

Peace and recycling were the themes underlying the DGFM presence at Heritage Fest from June 23-25. The folding of origami cranes has become a peaceful tradition in memory of Sadako Sasaki, a 12 year-old radiation victim of the bombing of Hiroshima. Her attempt to fold 1000 cranes was cut short by death but finished by her friends. Teaching children to fold cranes from recycled paper provided a no-pressure way to meet families and answer questions about Quakers. Joe Davison reported that the only unhappy participant was a young man who found his finished crane would not fly like a paper airplane.

On June 30, several Friends went on a field trip to the Illinois State Museum, Lockport Gallery to view a quality collection of quilts representing artists from the 1800s to the modern period. They shared lunch, quilts, and fun and saw 24 historic quilts made by IL residents. Of note were the three quilts (1937-1945) pieced by Albert Small, a dynamite handler in an IL quarry.

Christine Bruder has moved into the home of her son and daughter-in-law, Charles and Linda Bruder, after a fire during the last week of September destroyed her home. Christine was uninjured and removed safely by firefighters. Friends

are thankful for her safety.

We welcomed two new members, Sarah Sainsbury, and Laura Hans. We celebrated many weddings this season. In April, Mike Ero went to England for the wedding of his son Michael and bride Charlotte. On August 5, Rebekah Fitchett, daughter of George and Judy Fitchett, married Kristian Damholt at McDonald Farm in Naperville, IL. On August 8, Sue and Joe Davison were in Cape Town, South Africa, for the wedding of their son Jesse to Tammy. On the same day in Sophia, Bulgaria, Pam and Bruce Wolfe attended the wedding of their daughter Meredith to Marsel Tadger. Laura Hans and Martin Zelder married on September 1. We wish our Friends every happiness in their future together. We were also blessed with the birth of Aaron Lamar Aguirre Jr. He was born to Amanda Studhorse on July 30.

We were happy to reacquaint with old Friends. At the end of June, James Baker returned to take part in the National University of Health Sciences (Lombard) Centennial Celebration and visit friends. Barbara and Joe Matt visited in July. We were also delighted to have Martha Davis and Betty Clegg visit in September. Martha was on her way to the North American Fruit Explorers conference in Kentucky. Betty was checking on her Lombard home and about to spend some time with her daughter Judy and family.

We were sorry to see the McMahon family leave because of an employment opportunity in Florida. We sent them off with a picnic/going away party in July.

We held a spiritual growth retreat on October 7 and 8 at Menno Haven Camp and Retreat Center at Tiskilwa, IL. Nineteen Downers Grove Friends and the Pastoral Secretary of Chicago Monthly Meeting gathered the first night in Lost Meadows Room in the activity building to get acquainted and enjoy some snacks. After breakfast the next morning, we hiked over a wooden

bridge and down the path that meandered past wetlands and fall flowers to the activity building. After worship, we considered "Images of God" or "Companions Along the Way." It was a splendid autumn day, so we took some time outside to appreciate the peace, quiet and seasonal beauty that Menno Haven offers. After lunch, a small group considered the query, "How can we live in greater harmony with the Earth?"--outside, of course. The rest of us gathered indoors to learn about the gift of silence.

Lake Forest

By Pam Kuhn

We are saddened by the loss of Alice Hayes who died on October 13. She was 84. We remember her most as the hostess of the annual picnic at Ragdale, her summer home in Lake Forest on the edge of a big virgin prairie. On the property is a log cabin that actually was the first meeting place of Lake Forest Friends Meeting in 1952.

Mary Ellen Sarbaugh passed away on October 6. She was a sojourning member at Lake Forest Meeting from Gwynedd Meeting north of Philadelphia. Some years ago she moved to Foulkeways and reunited with her home meeting which is across the street.

Also in the news, we have new babies, William Patrick Brown and Abigail Estelle Stacy.

Our member, Genevieve Wimp-McCann, is Minnie Jane Quaker Artist-in-Residence at Pendle Hill for the year.

Jason, Michelle, and Abigail Stacy moved to Edwardsville, Illinois-- lucky you, St. Louis Meeting!

We have embarked on a listening project concerning meeting finances. The idea is for each Friend (who is willing) to be interviewed by two Friends, one asking prewritten questions and the other noting down a summary of the answers. Unlike a survey, a listening project allows for

exploration by the interviewee and there may be some follow-up questions when appropriate. At the end of the project, the answers will be compiled and read by one or two Friends who will write up a summary. Our goals include talking about finances in a safe place, helping Friends who have been swept along in the budget process to really think about issues, and to gather ideas or common trends in our meeting. Listening to each other is a pleasure.

We have had some interesting forums including one by Vanessa Julye from the Friends General Conference ad hoc Committee on Race and Racism. We also enjoyed a visit from Julian O'Reilley of Pendle Hill who gave a presentation to us about this Quaker study center. Former IYM Friend Paul Buckley came to talk to us about his research on Elias Hicks.

Our adult discussion group decided to read three Pendle Hill pamphlets: *Traveling In* by Douglas Steere (#324), and two by Bill Tabor, *Four Doors to Quaker Worship* (#306) and *Prophetic Stream* (#256). We find that reading Pendle Hill pamphlets works well for our fall curriculum.

Milwaukee

By Elizabeth Evans

As the leaves fall, those of us in Milwaukee Meeting who know and love IYM are adjusting to the decision we made at our September Meeting for Business to lay down our membership in IYM. When Northern Yearly Meeting was formed out of Northern Half Yearly of IYM in 1975, we could not discern a path to leave IYM and thus continued our membership in both for the past 31 years.

As you know from our report at Annual Session this past year, we do believe that this dual membership has taken its toll on our meeting. Being

a part of two yearlys has meant confusion and uncertainty for newcomers and resulted in many people coming to our meeting who have never experienced the complete relationship a monthly meeting should have to its yearly meeting. I wonder if we have believed that we had to struggle through some questions alone because we are have not been familiar with the close corporate relationship that would make reaching out to our Friends in our yearly second nature.

We hope to discern our leaving process within the next few months, or as long as it takes. The matters before us include the timing of the end of our formal membership, a financial plan, and how we might support those who wish to remain involved in IYM. Since we have been members of IYM for 56 years, we need to move through this leaving with some grace and some grieving. We know that we are well loved and welcomed anytime at IYM gatherings, and we look forward to frequent contact with northern Illinois Friends through the Regional Gathering.

For many years we could not face breaking each other's hearts around leaving one yearly or the other. It finally became apparent that continuing to shy away from a decision was hurting our meeting, and we began to recognize the need to consider the injury to the meeting as a greater harm than the heartbreak we would cause individuals. In order to make it possible for us to move forward to this decision, we have recognized the deep spiritual connection that individuals from our Meeting have with IYM by minuting our commitment to continue to support those who want to maintain their close connection with IYM. We hope that our IYM Friends will also help us in this regard, so that those who wish to continue to call IYM their spiritual home will be able to remain engaged in the important work they are called to do in spite of our status as a "legacy" meeting.

"For many years we could not face breaking each other's hearts around leaving one yearly or the other." — Milwaukee

Farewell to Milwaukee Monthly Meeting

Illinois Yearly Meeting Friends learned during annual session that Milwaukee Monthly Meeting was in the process of choosing one yearly meeting; and that subsequently their clerk notified their Ministry and Advancement Visitor of the final decision to affiliate with Northern Yearly Meeting. The letter was written by Joan Pine, the Ministry and Advancement Visitor and seasoned by Ministry and Advancement Committee for presentation to Milwaukee Friends during their final hosting of Continuing Committee.

Dear Milwaukee Friends,

With understanding as well as sadness, we receive your Meeting's decision to withdraw from membership in Illinois Yearly Meeting. We are aware that this decision required many months of discernment and still is difficult for a few among you to accept.

You have been a cherished member of our Yearly Meeting family for many years. We are deeply grateful for your active involvement in all of that time, for the leadership skills of your members, and for your Meeting's important contributions to our communal life and work. Our shared experiences of deep worship and memorials, inspiring speakers and noisy dinners, thorny business sessions and thoughtful workshops, spontaneous laughter, heartfelt worship sharing, and singing on the porch have created lasting bonds.

We have rejoiced in the burgeoning growth of your membership, in your remodeling and stewardship of your beautiful meetinghouse, in your witness to social justice, in your riverside acreage's testimony to earth care, and in your active support of the wider organizations of Friends. Your energy, commitment, and creative ideas have enriched and inspired us all.

We want to assure you that the dissolution of our formal ties will not diminish our love for each of you as Friends. We will always welcome any of your members and attenders to our annual sessions and our monthly meetings. We are delighted that many northern Illinois Friends will continue to participate in the regional gatherings that you began. We look forward to seeing many of you often at FGC Gatherings and in activities of FWCC, AFSC, and other Quaker bodies. And we trust that our shared history will encourage individuals and families traveling north and south to continue the practice of Friendly visits.

As you now look ahead to fulfill your decision of commitment to a single yearly meeting, we are pleased that Northern Yearly Meeting can continue to benefit from your many talents and resources. We join you in the hope that this undivided focus will release more energy for your wider participation at the yearly meeting level and beyond.

So we say to you fondly, "Farewell and Godspeed," as we commend you to Northern Yearly Meeting's love and care.

Your Friends in Illinois Yearly Meeting

South Bend

By Denise Thompson-Slaughter,

The year 2006 has been one of ups and downs, growth and loss, for South Bend Meeting. In February, the meeting was much blessed to celebrate the wedding of clerk Monica Tetzlaff and member Brad Laird. This was the major social event of our year, as the wedding was well-attended and guests at the reception were entertained with music and well-fed with soups, salads, and lasagnas contributed potluck style. We were doubly blessed that Edna and Floyd Wynn came from their retirement village, over an hour away, in order to attend the wedding; for we did not know that Edna, beloved long-time member and one of our few birthright Quakers, would be taken from this world in April.

A memorial meeting was held to honor her, and a lovely memorial book was procured and started for the meeting by our librarian, Madelyn Godsey, with a photo and written memories of Edna filling the first pages. We hope it is a long time before our next entry in the memorial book, but under Madelyn's leading, the meeting has been examining how we can improve our preparedness and services for such losses in the future.

In May, South Bend Meeting held the first of what is hoped will be annual retreats. A number of members and attenders "retreated" for a lovely weekend at Quaker Haven, an hour or so away from South Bend, and held a visioning session led by IYM Field Secretary Maurine Pyle. Our "visioning" continues as we consider whether we have a particular mission in South Bend and whether our future involves having our own meeting house or not.

We are fortunate that new members and attenders continue to find us in the Charles Martin Youth Center on Sundays, and our meeting continues to grow. This growth is, however, sometimes offset by people leaving. We were sorry

to say goodbye to member Kate Gibbons this summer, as she left for graduate school in Canada, and to the Melendez-Gallagher family, just beginning to apply for membership after several years of attending and contributing in many ways to our meeting. But John was offered a dream job in Utah and—who can blame them—off they went! All these F/friends will be much missed.

Happily we have a new F/friend by transfer from Oakland (Chris Morrissey, a graduate student at Notre Dame) and another by conviction (Jessica Tannenbaum, a law-school student at Notre Dame working on immigration issues)—plus a number of new attenders in the last year or so, some of whom are in the process of applying for membership. "Make new Friends, but keep the old; one is silver and the other's gold" is a good song to remember for this small meeting, so much in flux.

Our newlyweds Brad Laird and Monica Tetzlaff kindly decided to open their home to Kally Thierry, a refugee from Chad who, as a Christian, endured torture and imprisonment. Jessica Tannenbaum helped work on his case for political asylum, which he now has been granted. He is currently trying to get his driver's license. He was an ambulance driver in Chad, and hopes to find employment in the medical field. In the meantime, South Bend Friends have tried to help out with his support. If Friends in other meetings can help out with this endeavor, either financially or with job leads, please contact: Monica Tetzlaff, Clerk, South Bend Friends Meeting, c/o Charles Martin Youth Center, 802 Lincoln Way West, South Bend, IN 46616 or leave a message on our answering machine at (574) 232-8258..

Urbana-Champaign

By Mariellen Gilpin

Meetings for worship in our new meetinghouse are often completely silent, but also we're hearing new voices sometimes, and seeing new and younger faces in worship. Sometimes there are instants when we sense a gathered quality. I'd like to see two or three instants back-to-back, before I'd be willing to declare we've had a gathered meeting for worship, however.

We have a live-wire Peace and Service committee under convener Jay Mittenthal. They are planning to focus on global warming in the upcoming year. Barbara Kessel has created a radio show called *Acting on Faith* on a community radio station. We are supporting coal miners in the Danville area, which has led to outreach to the Friends United Meeting Quakers there, where many of the coal miners attend worship. Peace and Service has also worked with other area churches on a Hiroshima Day commemoration, and co-sponsored several peace and justice events with some of those churches.

Study group is currently reading the *Journal of David Ferris*, edited by Martha Grundy. David Ferris lived about the time of the Revolutionary War. He grew up Presbyterian and attended seminary. He reflected deeply and convinced himself of the Quaker view long before he attended a Quaker meeting. He left seminary months before ordination, giving up a job he fully expected was his, with no idea where the Spirit was calling him. At his first worship among Friends he felt he'd come home. He was moved to speak in worship but resisted the calling — for 22 years. Once he began to speak, he traveled thousands of miles in the ministry. We're expecting to read next some materials that IYM's Peace Resources Committee has recommended, with the idea of inviting Peace Resources Committee to give a workshop in

Urbana in the spring.

We have been delighted that some of our brand new attenders are not waiting to be invited to participate in the work of the meeting, but are volunteering to get involved. Also, Deborah Jadhav, Kim Thoren, and Charlotte Green have applied for membership and are meeting with their clearness committees now. We have organized Friendly movers for Deborah and Charlotte, both of whom have moved into houses very near me. As you may know, central Illinois is not plagued with any of those annoying differences in elevation called hills and valleys, so we have decided to call our neighborhood Pendle Flats.

We're holding silent retreats about every two months. At the July retreat we ended the final worship on a rainy afternoon with a double rainbow. Jacqueline Hannah organizes the retreats. You're all welcome to join us for these — let me know (m-gilpin@uiuc.edu) and I'll put you on my e-list to receive announcements of silent retreats and other Friendly events.

*"We're realizing that, thanks to a Mortgage Challenge Grant, we're within a year of retiring the mortgage on the meetinghouse." —
Urbana-Champaign*

We're realizing that, thanks to a Mortgage Challenge Grant, we're within a year of retiring the mortgage on the meetinghouse. Fundraising Committee, with convener Ann Lowry, has invited us all to participate in a Meeting for Brainstorming, in order to discern together what our spending priorities should be next. After worship on October 8, committees will present up to three dreams what they'd do if they had more money. Individuals may also present dreams. We will discern together what to undertake.

Religious Education Committee, with co-conveners Sandy Bales and Kim Thoren, expect to make a proposal at the Meeting for Brainstorming: hiring a Religious Education Coordinator, who would spearhead efforts to have a set curriculum and a more consistent teacher, so the

kids can develop a sense of continuity and community.

To speak or not to speak: that is the question. Knowing when and how to speak in worship is sometimes an obstacle to worship for Friends. Maurine Pyle is coming October 20-22, to give an all-day Saturday workshop on speaking in worship. Friends in nearby towns are also invited to attend this workshop. We'll have a shared brown bag potluck lunch on Saturday for this event. In preparation for Maurine's visit, the query for October will be: *Have you ever suppressed delivery of a message in worship? What happened to the message? Y'all come!*

Opportunities and Reports:

High School Friends Invited to New York City Trip over Spring Break

By Marti Matthews

High School Friends of Illinois Yearly Meeting are invited to participate in a trip to New York City, principally to visit the United Nations and the Quaker U.N. Office (QUNO), and to do service work with the poor in NYC. Details of the trip are still in the planning, but basically, the dates will be March 24 - April 1, 2007.

We will travel either by train or plane. We'll possibly stay at the American Youth Hostel, where people from all over the world gather; the hostel is in the university neighborhood, and a walk from Harlem. Staying there includes breakfast. We expect to work with the Youth Service Opportunity Project, a Quaker-run volunteer organization, perhaps working with the homeless. We will spend one or two days visiting the United Nations and QUNO, perhaps other Non-Governmental Organizations with offices at the UN, such as the Red Cross. We



hope to take a bus tour of the whole city, a ferry ride to Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty, possibly do Ground Zero of 9/11.

It may work out that we can take a train down to Philadelphia and visit the Quaker offices there and also do some volunteer work in Philly for a day. All of this is yet to be worked out in detail. If anyone knows of other Quaker projects we could visit or places to stay, please let the planners know.

A rough estimate of costs is around \$600 per Friend. We ask a down payment of \$100 by January 10th, 2007. This is sponsored by the Quaker Volunteer Service, Training, and Witness Committee of Illinois Yearly Meeting. Questions: contact Marti Matthews at martim1234@sbcglobal.net, or Julia Pantoga at jpantoga@core.com. Mail downpayment to Marti at 746 N. Taylor, Oak Park IL 60302; make check out to Illinois Yearly Meeting with notation "NYC."

Go to Kenya with IYM Friends!

By Dawn Amos

In 2007 there is a special opportunity for IYM Friends. The African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI) will organize a shared work camp for Friends from Illinois Yearly Meeting and Lugari Yearly Meeting in Kenya. The project is to build a structure to serve as meeting space and nursery for the HIV Women's Group. Work campers would stay in the large home of Florence Mahayo. The location is between Kakamega and Eldoret (near the smaller town of Turbo). This is western Kenya, near the border with Uganda, not far from the Serengeti National Park and Lake Victoria.

Dawn and Mark Amos have committed to attend, and they will be bringing their daughters Delia (11), Marlina (8) and perhaps Miranda (19). If you have ever considered attending an AGLI work camp, perhaps joining this IYM

group is the perfect opportunity! Consider bringing the family!

Travel will be for 4-5 weeks from late June to late July, but planning should begin right away. You'll need to fill out the AGLI application with support from a clearness committee. You should get your passport and immunizations. Together with the Amoses, we will solicit financial support from individuals as well as monthly, quarterly and yearly meetings and other organizations, and hold fund raisers that also spread the word about AGLI. For each adult we will need to raise about \$3,600.

While the work camp building project is important, the richness of this opportunity lies in forming new friendships in Africa as we work side by side. Is God calling you to immerse yourself in a distant corner of creation?

To learn more, visit www.aglionline.org and contact Dawn Amos at 866-262-1625 or dawn@amoses.net.

Grants for the Study and Practice of Christian Mysticism

The Elizabeth Ann Bogert Memorial Fund for the Study and Practice of Christian Mysticism, administered by Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas, makes annual grants of up to \$1000.

RECENT GRANTS: A variety of proposals relating to Christian mysticism are given consideration by the Grants Committee. Projects funded in 2006 included: a 10-day writing retreat for prayer and research into the mystics and their spiritual senses; a study of the relationship between permaculture and Christian mysticism; publication of an anthology of accounts of mystical experience; establishment of a library section on Christian mysticism in a state prison; travel costs to visit key landmarks in France

important in the life of Joan of Arc, assisting completion of two one-woman plays for performance.

APPLICATIONS: Grant proposals should be no more than two pages and include a statement of the applicant's working definition of mysticism, a description of the project, the specific amount of money requested, the way in which a grant will be used, other sources of funding, and plans for communicating the results to others.

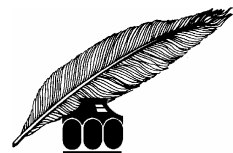
Seven typed copies of the proposal should be mailed to Bogert Fund Secretaries, Vinton and Michelina Deming, 4818 Warrington Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19143. Two or three people familiar with the applicant's work should mail letters of reference directly to the secretaries.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Proposals and references for 2007 grants are due by March 1, 2007. Decisions will be made by the committee in May; grants distributed in June. Recipients are asked to send a progress report within a year. A brochure describing the fund is available. Inquiries may be sent by email to the secretaries at muccidem@verizon.net.

Call for Articles for *What Canst Thou Say?*

By Mariellen Gilpin

What Canst Thou Say? is a newsletter on Quakers, mysticism and contemplative living — a worship-sharing group in print, with each writer contributing his or her experience in response to a central theme. Themes for upcoming issues are as follows:



February 2007

The Workplace

Guest Editor: **Fred LaMotte with Patricia McBee**

To turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives.... (John Woolman). Have you sorely needed spirituality in the workplace? What are your spiritual practices at work? Have you known God's presence on the job - God's interest in that repetitive task, difficult customer, office gossip, intransigent boss, dysfunctional colleague, wrongly-ordered profession? How were you changed? How has your working changed? Deadline November 15, 2006

May 2007

Unseen Hands

Editors: Kathy Tapp and Mariellen Gilpin
Nothing in death or in life, in the realm of spirits or superhuman powers...in heights or depths...nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God. (Romans 8:38). Have you ever felt you were being helped by unseen hands? Who do you think your helpers were? What did you learn from the experience? How has it affected your spiritual journey? Tell us your stories. Deadline February 15

August 2007

Hospitality

Guest Editor: Maurine Pyle with Mariellen Gilpin
Do not neglect to show hospitality, for by that means some have entertained angels unaware. (Hebrews 13:2) Have you made room in your heart for the other, the one who is different from you? Have you been challenged to shed prejudices and be taught by God through the stranger? What was it like? Did you have second thoughts? How did you make room for the other? In sharing the gift of hospitality, have you entertained angels without knowing it? Deadline May 15

November 2007

The Feminine Face of God

Editor: Judy Lumb

For in wisdom there is a spirit intelligent and holy ... she pervades and permeates all things because she is so pure. Like a fine mist she rises

from the power of God, a pure effluence from the glory of the Almighty. (*The Apocrypha, Wisdom of Solomon 7:22-5*). It is hard to find feminine aspects of the Divine in the Bible. Where else can we find Her? What is your experience of the feminine in the Divine? Deadline August 15

We'd love to hear from you. Articles can be from 350-1500 words long. Don't worry about writing perfectly. You can send it directly to me at m-gilpin@uiuc.edu. Articles should be in electronic form, if at all possible, but we're happy to accept a handwritten story, if necessary.

When you write for *What Canst Thou Say?*, here are some things to keep in mind: Articles that best communicate to our readers generally focus on specific events and are written in the first person. There is a special richness when the writer goes beyond describing the experience and tells how it has changed her/his attitude and/or behavior. However, mystical experiences and contemplative insights may transcend editorial processes, so please consider these guidelines as gentle assistance rather than limitations. In general we shy away from articles that expound on theoretical or theological propositions. With joyous expectation we look forward to receiving your contribution to our worship-sharing group in print.

If you can open pdf attachments, I can email a back issue to you. Save a stamp and save a tree. *What Canst Thou Say?* is \$10 for four issues a year. Subscriptions can be sent to WCTS, 1035 Hereford Drive, Blue Bell, PA 19422-1925, or whatcanstthousay@verizon.net.

Project Lakota 2006

By Bobbi Trist

My journaling group sits in the cool, darkened room on this hot, bright summer afternoon, listening to Native American flute music. The cool, sweet music is so different from the Lakota chants and drumming I heard so often during our recent stay on the Pine Ridge Reservation: at the Oglala Lakota College graduation, at the powwow the same afternoon, at the Leonard Peltier commemorative ceremony and walk the next day, in 100 degree heat, and on KILI Radio out of Porcupine.



Oglala Lakota College graduation

This soothing music is in total contrast to the lives of poverty and discrimination the Lakota and other first nations endure. That didn't end after Wounded Knee I in 1890; it continues today. The Black Crow family received no help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The agency claimed that the spring storm that ravaged the family's own mobile home, *and* the newly donated double-wide awaiting hook-up, did not register as a tornado in "Rapid" (City).

Register in Rapid, a hundred miles away!?! All



Double-wide, turned on its side

Midwesterners know that tornadoes can be a house wide, a block wide, a mile wide and totally capricious. And who made up those rules, anyway? If your home is destroyed, it's destroyed. What does it matter if it was a twister or straight-line winds? That double-wide, turned on its side, each half separately, will corrode on their land forever, joining the dead hulks of trucks and cars found everywhere in the dry hills of the rez.

The Red Cross took some minimal pity and gave the family \$100. One hundred dollars! Project Lakota spent nearly \$2000, which bought only material enough to repair the two narrow ends of their trailer, plus replace all the broken windows. That wasn't enough for the long walls where the shutters were pitted with hail holes and the siding was deteriorated beyond recognition.

But most of all, I saw the effect of this life on the children. I observed the great enthusiasm of little granddaughter Sarina, who came out

so joyfully every day to help us three women — sometimes for real, by scrubbing a lawn chair for our use or holding a tape measure, sometimes in solidarity, by concentrating so hard on learning to hammer.

Sarina is four. Her three aunts, ages 13, 15, and 18 — two still in school, the last with a baby and one on the way — had totally lost that spark. The girls helped intermittently, listlessly, except for the last evening when we were remounting the cable dish. They'd been without TV for two days! There's not much other entertainment in the beautiful, wild, desolate setting that is their home. In the end, we did make their dwelling



Before and after

Most of the money used for the building materials came from our sale of Linda's quilts among Quakers of IYM and beyond. When you buy or contribute, you can make an immediate difference, one family at a time. Even more important is the awareness that "Third World" conditions exist here in the richest nation in the world and among people with a great spiritual heritage that has enriched all of us in this country in many ways.

Bobbi Trist is a member of Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting. Bobbi and Ellen Baranowski spent 12 days on the Pine Ridge Reservation last summer with Project Lakota co-founder Candy Boyd, repairing housing and attending Lakota ceremonies that were open to outsiders.



Four year old Sarina, helping.

more wind- and water-tight. We left some of the windows for Ed and his son Kevin to install; they seemed determined to accomplish that before winter. Both of them had helped us when they could, in spite of working full time. I choose to believe that our eight days of hard labor gave one family some hope and the belief that they are not entirely left to their own devices, after all.

Project Lakota Update

By Greg Woods

Each year we find more hopeful signs that things are changing for the better on the Pine Ridge Reservation. But each year we also see a major discouraging sign: the effect of federal budget cuts. The cuts happen to finance the enormous bill of the war on terror. Each year the federal government keeps cutting grants that used to help with housing on Pine Ridge. The local groups, like Partnership for Housing, we work with are relying on Project Lakota

and other similar groups to make up the difference, but we cannot make up the millions that the government used to give. At the same time, the cost of building supplies has been rising, so it cost a lot more to do anything.

This past summer we helped two families in particular: The Tom Casey family and the Richard Broken Nose and Linda Bull Bear family. Tom Casey's house was destroyed by fire a couple years ago. Right now his family is building a house through Self-Help Housing, a part of Partnership for Housing. Tom has been very instrumental in running KILI 90.5 FM, "The Voice of the Lakota Nation." This radio station, based in Porcupine which the American Friends Service Committee helped to start two decades ago, has won several awards including the Best Native American Radio Station. We hoped to raise \$4,000 to help with the moving costs. In actuality we raised \$3,000 for the moving cost. The organization is still working on finding money for the foundation. Over the rest of the year, we helped Self-Help Housing with three or four other houses.

The mobile home of Richard Broken Nose and Linda Bull Bear has been hit three times by big storms resulting in further damage to their home, resulting in damages to their belongings, including two quilts that were going to be mailed to Bobbi Trist and Ellen Baranowki who have been selling Linda's quilts over the past year as a fundraiser for the Broken Nose-Bull Bear's log cabin. One of the storms destroyed the mobile home they were going to live in while some repairs (fixing holes in the floors and walls) were being done to their own mobile home. This summer Candy, Bobbi, and Ellen worked on replacing the siding on the mobile home and left supplies for the family so they could continue making needed repairs.

Over the next year, we want to raise money to help finance the construction of a log cabin for the family of Richard Broken Nose and Linda Bull Bear of Oglala. This family is a part of the

tiospaye that is made up of traditional Lakota families like the One Feather family, who we helped in the past. It would be wonderful to be able to raise \$60,000 plus. But being realistic, we imagine that it will take a couple years to raise the full amount. Our goal for next summer is to raise \$14,000 to put in a foundation for the log cabin. Then in the following years, we would continue to raise more to finish the house in two or three years. But if we raise more than expected, we can speed up the building process and help this family into a more adequate housing quicker.

Once again, along with this work, Candy and I are busy trying to juggle a new job and finishing up a degree at Earlham College respectively. But we hope to start working on identifying possible grants to help Project Lakota finance more housing on the reservation, particularly with the tiospaye. Also we started slowly sending out to a mailing list of 1,200 that Gerald One Feather gave us to help with our fundraising efforts. We are excited at the possibility of growing our donor base.

Please consider about making a donation to help continuing this project. You can mail a check to Project Lakota c/o Diana Pascoe, 7429 Brunswick Ave., St. Louis MO 63119. Please make the check out to St. Louis Friends Meeting with Project Lakota in the memo.

Olney School

By Grayce Mesner

This semester the student body seems to be particularly positive, with 36 returning students and 25 who are new to Olney. Both the junior and senior classes are at full enrollment.

Olney has worked in recent years to make the academic curriculum a primary focus. They regularly review their curriculum and offerings to make sure that they are offering students what they will need to best prepare them for college as well as life. It was decided that a re-

sequencing of the science courses was warranted to better prepare students for college-level science courses and better align the science curriculum with the math curriculum and the developmental strengths of the students.

They have two new teachers on board to provide the needed upper level math courses for the 18 students in Algebra II, the 21 students in pre-calculus and nine students in Advanced Placement calculus.

For the first time they are offering freshmen a biology/life sciences course with an emphasis on the environment and significant hands-on field and lab work. This course will be taught by long-time Olney teacher, Leonard Guindon, and integrated to some extent with the freshman humanities curriculum taught by Abby Chew. Their hope is that Olney students will come away from their first year of high school with both a heightened interest in scientific inquiry and a deeper awareness and appreciation of the natural world around them.

They have a new music teacher, Aaron Harris, who has encouraged participation in a large campus choir, numbering more than 30, as well as providing individual music lessons on a wide variety of instruments.

Included in the report from Rich Sidwell, head of school: "A prepared mind, a healthy lifestyle and experience in spiritually guided community are the combination that sets a balanced pattern for approaching the future with confidence. We know that this rapidly changing world is full of uncertainty. Our graduates need to be resourceful, understanding and resilient. They also must know how to address problem solving creatively and collaboratively. If they can learn such processes here in a nurturing environment they will be better prepared to face the uncertainties with optimism."

For more information about Olney, visit their website at www.olneyfriends.org, call 740-425-

3655, email to mainoffice@olneyfriends.org or write to them at 61830 Sandy Ridge Rd., Barnesville, OH 43713.

Associated Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs

By Grayce Mesner

Since I did not get to the annual meeting in North Carolina this year and I don't think I've received an *Indian Progress* report since then, I went to www.acfiaquaker.org and pulled up the Executive Committee's report from that meeting. Selected minutes are:

1. A 4% raise was approved for the Center Directors at Kickapoo (Woods) and Mesquakie (Whites) beginning January 2007.
2. The Choctaw Savings Account would be used to pay the outstanding bills at Choctaw.
3. They approved that the executive committee would enter into dialog with Evangelical Friends Mid-America Yearly Meeting, and Iowa Yearly Meeting in regards to transfer of property and funds for Kickapoo and Mesquakie respectively.
4. They approved the amended Articles of Incorporation as written concerning assets in the event that ACFIA would dissolve.
5. They commend and spiritually support the proposed internship program of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (NCYM) at the MOWA Choctaw Center. However, until the situation there is resolved, they could not officially endorse the program which NCYM hoped would start in summer 2006.

Evidently this transition took place. I've received mailings from NCYM showing that they sponsored a Sports Camp June 24-30 and a Vacation Bible School July 15-21. From a

mailing NCYM sent in Sept.: “On August 12, 2006 NCYM Representative Body approved to accept ownership of the MOWA Choctaw Friends Center property from the ACFIA. Darrin Allen is currently serving as Interim Director of the Center.”

The following information was gotten from their website - www.ncym.fum.org. Presently, ministry extended to the surrounding community includes a weekly community rummage sale every Tuesday, youth gatherings, community meals once a month, emergency relief and food pantry on a continual basis, and the establishment of an after-school tutoring program. NCYM is very excited about the possible ministry opportunities God has laid before them. They can use work teams and rummage sale items.

This information was gotten from their website - www.ncym.fum.org. Financial contributions can be sent to North Carolina Yearly Meeting, Darlene Pittman, 4811 Hilltop Rd., Greensboro, NC 27407 with MOWA Choctaw on the memo line. I have met Darlene as well as the rest of the NC contingent who always attended the annual meetings. They are a swell group of people - always positive, outgoing, and fun-loving. I think the MOWA Choctaw Center is in good hands!

Thoughtful reflections:

Are we Friends Seekers? Finders? Both!

By David Finke

For 40 years among Quakers I've heard eloquent explanations of how we are Seekers, how our pursuing a non-dogmatic path of openness to the revelations of Truth is what characterizes and unites us. There is much in this message with which I resonate. And, historically, it is true that there was a group in 17th-century England — calling themselves

simply “Seekers” — that met in silence, awaiting God's presence and guidance. Providentially, they met up with and in fact joined with that itinerant preacher George Fox. So far, so good.

But I've often wondered how many of them — after that break-through merging of vision and organizational energy — continued to call themselves Seekers, rather than the early terms Quakers adopted, such as “Children of the Light” or “Friends of the Truth”?

I believe it is likely that, after years of seeking, this group was relieved to realize and declare that they had *found* something. Probably, it was akin to the liberating discovery and revelation which Fox in his Journal reports was what led him out of an Ocean of Darkness into an Ocean of Light. Though they may not be the words that many of us use, Fox declared what he had found, after the various schemes and messages of men had failed him: “That there is one, even Christ Jesus, who could speak to my condition.”

Now I am “universalist” enough that I would never want to claim that God's presence is only known through the historic Christian faith, or that testimony to the Divine-human encounter can only be validly expressed with Christian metaphors. I also know that George Fox's sense of religious truth was culturally conditioned by his European environment, which had been nominally “Christian” for some 1400 years.

Having said all those disclaimers, I still wonder why Quakers sometimes seem to want to be stuck in a mode of forever “seeking” without the expectation of “finding.” Yes, I know that much of this comes from a very fitting humility: We blanch at the thought of coming across as persons with “all the answers.” We even sometimes say (in a quote that I've never seen attributed), “Quakers are the ones with the questions.” The person whom I most recently heard espousing the case for our being seekers

— a beloved Friend of great sincerity and depth — apparently made an either/or distinction between our being “seekers” and, on the other hand, “claiming to have Ultimate Truth.” That is a choice that I think is needless, which I’m unwilling to make.

My favorite theologian, Paul Tillich, helped me at an early point by describing that our grasp of truth may be “fragmentary, but in principle.” That is, we never have *all* the Truth, which by definition may be God’s province alone. And yet, we have enough of it to get on with living -- with vision, with purpose, with assurance of the companionship along the way of God and of Friends of the Truth. The sustaining measure of Truth given to us can fill us with joy, with courage, with the capacity to endure even the Cross, should that be our lot.

I urge us, Friends, to be bold and unapologetic with declaring — even if with less vehemence and passion than the earliest generation of Friends — that indeed we *have* found something, that we are eager to share it (not by “imposing” but rather by pointing the way). We should give up hoarding our discovery within little self-contained, self-satisfied, ingrown cliques and clubs. This is what it means — in the finest, non-exclusivist way — to be “evangelical.” Literally, that word means, bearers or messengers of Good News.

I believe, in fact, that it would be wrong to keep secret the revelation of God’s Love and Presence among us. Obviously, at some point, each discoverer must find this Truth in their own heart and soul. For integrity’s sake, it must not be second-hand religion, or claiming the virtue that others have demonstrated. Rather, it’s more like learning to walk, to swim, or to ride a bicycle: No one can do that for you, but it certainly helps to have encouragement and a pointing-of-direction from those who have been there already. (Just a little further down the road, not claiming to be on the mountaintop.) That sharing of a measure of truth is usually not

considered arrogant or “imposing” but rather an exercise of responsibility, a transmitting of culture which has survival-value. How much more responsible it must be, if we can share the Good News of what we have discovered, together as Friends? What better gift can we offer our sisters and brothers in the Human Family? Why should we assume that they wouldn’t be open and welcoming of this treasure entrusted to us?

A conversation-stopper I sometimes hear among our branch of Friends is that we don’t want to “proselytize.” That phrase, however, most appropriately has to do with enticing someone away from their own religious practice. If there is a danger confronting us, I don’t think this is one of our temptations. Rather, I’ve found it much more likely for Friends to practice what Jesus denounced as “hiding a light under a bushel,” rather than putting it on a candlestick where it can give Light to the whole house. The Light will give growth and Life, and is not to be feared.

Friends, are we ready to become less reticent in sharing what we have found? This treasure is too good to hide!

Circles of Wisdom: Another Look at the Quaker Clearness Process

By Maurine Pyle

The Quakers, once known by the sobriquet of “the peculiar people,” have been sitting in silence for over 350 years. In our American society it would be considered peculiar indeed to be seated peacefully in a state of expectant waiting. Over the years many people have wondered what these Quakers are waiting for. Quite simply, we are waiting to hear something beyond our own thoughts. We are expectantly waiting to share in a deeper wisdom that comes from within us and among us – the Light within.

Spending time waiting upon wisdom is surely a lost art in our American culture of goals and objectives, timelines and deadlines. Sitting does not look productive. Answers must be quickly accessed — electronically, if possible. Yet the Quakers today have not only continued with this ancient method of spiritual discernment, they have found expanded uses for it in everyday life.

What is meant by the term discernment? To discern, in its original meaning, is to sift. Imagine a Middle Eastern woman tossing grain into the air so that the wind may carry away the chaff, allowing nuggets to fall to the ground. In this same fashion the truth is discerned when Quakers sit in silence, hoping to hear a deeper wisdom than their own thoughts.

One method of seeking discernment is the Clearness Process. Most commonly Quakers use it in determining readiness for marriage or membership. Recently, however, Quakers and others outside the Religious Society of Friends have discovered other uses for this process that have opened doors of insight. This article is intended to explain the process so that someone seeking discernment can use it.

Here is how the Quaker Clearness Process works, in summary:

*First of all, it is vital to remind ourselves at the beginning that whatever is brought into this process is considered **confidential**. No reference should be made to the content which arises in a clearness meeting to any outside person.*

1. A “person with a concern” identifies a personal problem which needs clarification. This concern is often, though not always, described in written form. No more than a few paragraphs are necessary. The process of writing is helpful to the Clearness Committee in understanding the situation and it helps the focal person begin the discernment process beforehand.
2. Then the “person with a concern”

contacts several persons to request a Clearness Process. The selection of the members is usually made by the “person with the concern.” If the matter under consideration relates to membership or marriage, then the committee is appointed by elders of the Meeting.

3. At the appointed time, the Clearness Committee meets with the person who asked for help in a quiet environment. They gather in deep silence before beginning to speak.
4. Out of the silence, the “person with a concern” speaks to make a request for help giving a brief description of the problem under consideration. There is no discussion of the concern.
5. A convener chosen by the group will begin the clearness process by asking a query. Then after the focal person has answered, silence follows. Other queries will arise from within the group, always out of the silence.
6. A scribe may be appointed to write down the queries and summarize the responses if so desired by the focal person.
7. The queries should not be directive. The convener’s role is to guard against hidden advising or steering by the questioners.
8. When all the questions are exhausted, the convener may give the focal person an opportunity to speak. No summation of what has been shared is called for, but sometimes people like to close the meeting this way.
9. Then the group gathers for a few minutes of silent worship.
10. Often at the end of the session there is handshaking or embracing depending upon the intimacy of the group.

The purpose of the Clearness Process is to clarify a situation or concern. At the heart of it is the belief in a collective wisdom which will

emerge and that no single person has the answer. In order for the process to work, each member of the Clearness Committee must submerge the intent to guide or to guard the focal person. As Isaac Pennington, an early Friend, said: "There is that which is near you which will guide you. O wait for it and mind you keep to it."

Parker Palmer, a Quaker writer, says: "Behind the Clearness Committee is a simple yet crucial conviction. Each of us has an inner voice, a voice of truth, that offers the guidance and power we need to deal with our problems. The Clearness Committee is not to give advice or fix people from the outside but to help remove the interference so that they can discover their own wisdom from the inside out."

What are the uses of the Quaker Clearness Process? Truly they are endless. The process is often used in conflict resolution to enable a new truth to emerge that is beyond what is currently known. Some people have used it for matters of the heart or business. In the Clearness Process the original concern is revealed, explored, queried, and often, but not always, resolved. The gentle and focused attention of the committee provides a source of healing and light to the person in the center. Loneliness and guilt can be released. If no one person is being held accountable for the outcome, the greater wisdom of the Light can emerge.

As ancient Native American lore teaches, "Be open to the outcome, unattached to the outcome." From this process comes the higher truth we are all seeking."



Helen Jean Nelson, 1918 –2006, with Roxy Jacobs

The Meeting Place

By Sherry Monroe

Across the bowed heads
I see your face
A settled feeling comes over me
As if an anchor has found bottom
And held fast.

I relax into the silence
I do not have to wait for you to enter
You are here
Waiting
Quietly my thoughts slide next to you
We wait together.

Afterwards
We rise, pleasantries exchanged,
hands shaken,
smiles given and received.
We meet again over brownies and coffee.

We greet each other
Speech eases the separation in time
But more than words are said
Between words, before words, even before thought
That's where we meet
You and I.

There are times
One of us is not among those gathered here
But still the connection holds
We know the meeting place
Any time we wish to meet
We go there.

Revelation

By David Finke

*Reflections on the passing of
his father, in autumn*

The blazing orange/gold colors of fall leaves
were there all the time;
We could not see them, for the green.

The delicate majesty of the stars
is there all the time;
We could not see it, for the sun.

The Presence of Love, Order, Harmony
is here all the time;
We could not see it, for the noise and confusion.

The Eternal Reality
is here all the time;
We could not see it, for the transient we call life in time.



Hadley Finke, 1909 –2006, with David Finke